



IN BRIEF

OPDS SUSPENDED IN PGIMER
Chandigarh: In view of the indefinite protest by the Association of Resident Doctors against the NMC bill, all routine services in PGIMER including OPDs and elective procedures will remain suspended till further notice.

PUNJAB RELEASES ₹71 CR FOR ASHIRWAD SCHEME
Chandigarh: Punjab Finance Department, on the directives of the Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh, on Friday released funds to the tune of Rs 70.72 crores on account of outstanding payment under the Ashirwad Scheme.

UT NOTICES VICTIM ASSISTANCE SCHEME
Chandigarh: UT Administration notified the victim assistance scheme for providing funds for the purposes of assistance to be given to the victim or his or her dependent (s) who have suffered loss or injury or both as a result of the crime and who require rehabilitation.

APPOINTMENT LETTERS TO 35 CLERKS GIVEN
Chandigarh: Punjab Water Resources Minister Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria on Friday handed over appointment letters to 35 new clerks saying that the recruitment drive was necessary to accelerate the pace of work and bring efficiency in the Department's working.

PUNJAB VB NABS ASI FOR TAKING ₹25,000 BRIBE
Chandigarh: Punjab Vigilance Bureau on Friday nabbed an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI) posted at Police Post Jejo, Police Station Chabewal, Hoshiarpur, red-handed while accepting bribe of Rs 25,000.

PSPCL'S CENTRAL ZONE HELD TREE PLANTATION DRIVE
Ludhiana: Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (PSPCL) Central Zone Ludhiana's Chief Engineer (Operations) DPS Grewal on Friday said that for true commemoration of Guru Nanak Dev's 550th birth anniversary, a Van Mahotsav was celebrated in various offices of SE P&M, Ludhiana, SE East, SE West, SE Suburban, SE Operation, Ludhiana, and Khanna circle under the Central Zone Operation, Ludhiana.

CAMBRIDGE ENGLISH SIGNS MOU WITH GHARUAN'S CU
Chandigarh: Chandigarh University, Gharuan has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Learning Wings Education Services, Jalandhar, and Cambridge Assessment English, a department of the University of Cambridge, UK.

20% JUMP IN SHOOLINI UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS
Shimla: The nine-year-old Solan-based Shoolini University has emerged as the top private university in Himachal Pradesh and has achieved about 20 percent increase in fresh admissions this year.

PUNJAB TO CREATE AWARENESS ABOUT RARE DISEASES
Mohali: State Institute of Health and Family Welfare, Mohali, with support from Lysosomal Storage Disorders Support Society (LSDSS), on Friday organized the first Rare Disease Update programme in Mohali.

TWO ARM-SUPPLIERS ARRESTED IN FATEHABAD
Chandigarh: Haryana Police's Anti-Narcotic Cell has arrested two persons of Uttar Pradesh and seized six illegal pistols from their possession in district Fatehabad.

PU SECURES 15TH RANK IN TIMES EDUCATION RANKINGS
Chandigarh: Panjab University has secured 15th rank amongst Indian universities and institutes in the subject of Computer Science in the prestigious 2019 Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings.

Hooda sounds poll bugle

Parivartan Maha Rally in Rohtak on August 18

Sounding the poll bugle, former Haryana Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda on Friday announced to hold a "Parivartan Maha Rally" in Rohtak on August 18 saying this was to dislodge the "corrupt and non-performing" Manohar Lal Khattar government in the upcoming assembly election.

Session of the state Assembly, Hooda said that the present government in Haryana has failed on all fronts and People are waiting for the polls in October to oust this corrupt and non-performing government. "We will be holding a Parivartan Maha Rally in Rohtak on August 18, which will signal the countdown and eventually lead to dislodging of this government in the polls," he said.

We will be holding a Parivartan Maha Rally in Rohtak on August 18, which will signal the countdown and eventually lead to dislodging of this Govt in the polls
The two-time chief minister said that he would be holding a meeting of the party workers in Rohtak on August 4 ahead of the rally. Addressing a news conference before the Monsoon

the people have made up their mind to throw them out." "The issues in Lok Sabha polls and Vidhan Sabha polls are different. In the Vidhan Sabha election, people will cast their votes by judging the performance of the Khattar government," he said, adding, "in the Lok Sabha election, they (BJP) raised the issue of pseudo nationalism." Asked if the Congress was likely to enter an alliance for the state election, he said, "No decision has been taken on this... However, we can have a tie-up with like minded parties. People are looking for a strong alternative and the Congress can provide that."

HP to make adventure activities safer :Chief Sec

Himachal Government is trying to promote adventure activities in the State in a planned manner with special emphasis on reducing risk factors, Chief Secretary B.K Agarwal said on Friday. Presiding over a meeting of senior officers of tourism, forest, police, disaster management authority and sports here to discuss regulation of trekking, adventure sports and pilgrimage activities in the state, the Chief Secretary said efforts are on to make adventure activities like river rafting, trekking and paragliding etc. safer so as to minimize the risk to human life.

Director, Atal Bihari Institute of Mountaineering and Allied Sports Col. Neeraj Rana informed that the Institute is organising 15-days training programme on river rafting for which only the successful trainees are being given license. A detail discussion was also held to reduce the risk on adventure tourism activities like paragliding, river rafting and pilgrimage.

PUNJAB & SIND BANK
GURUWARA SRI KANDH SAHIB, BATALA
PHYSICAL POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)

Whereas the undersigned being the "Authorised Officer" of Punjab & Sind Bank, under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of the Security Interest Act 2002 in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with security interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a demand notice on the date mentioned against account calling upon the respective borrowers / guarantors to repay the amount as mentioned against account within 60 days from the date of notice / date of receipt of the said notice.

Moderate to heavy rainfall lashes Haryana, Punjab



Moderate to heavy rains lashed various parts of Punjab and Haryana on Friday. According to the Met Department, the maximum temperatures settled below normal levels in various parts of the region.

Chandigarh, the joint capital of Punjab and Haryana received 7.1 mm rainfall and recorded a maximum temperature of 29.5 degree Celsius, four notches below normal.

Bhiwani was lashed by 50 mm rainfall while Ambala recorded 31 mm rains. Karnal recorded 2.2 mm rains till Friday evening. After rains, Ambala settled at maximum temperature of 29.6 degree Celsius, four notches below normal, Karnal recorded 30.2 degree Celsius, three degrees below normal. Among other places, Hisar saw a maximum of 31 degree Celsius, five notches below normal.

Himachal seeks World Bank funds for projects

Himachal Pradesh Government on Friday urged the International Finance Corporation (IFC), a wing of the World Bank, to finance various projects, especially in sectors like tourism, hydropower and affordable housing.

Senior state officers, led by Additional Chief Secretary Shrikant Baldi, held discussions with the delegation of the IFC in New Delhi to explore the possibilities of financing various projects. Baldi told the IFC representatives that the state has developed a land bank and suitable land is available for setting up various kinds of industries.

MANOHAR MEMORIAL P.G. COLLEGE, FATEHABAD
Applications are invited for one regular Govt. Aided Post of ASSISTANT PROFESSOR of Computer Science (Gen.)

PUNJAB & SIND BANK
BRANCH: JANDIALA GURU, DISTT. AMRITSAR
Public Notice to Borrowers / Guarantors under Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002

CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD
8, Jan Marg, Sector 9-D, Chandigarh, Ph. : 0172-4601826
PUBLIC NOTICE
It is hereby notified for the General Public that the following person(s) have applied for the Transfer of allotment of the below said Dwelling Unit under the Blood Relation Transfer Policy in their names under Regulation 16 of the Chandigarh Housing Board (Allotment, Management and Sale of Tenements) Regulations 1979 :-

Table with columns: Sr. No., Name of the Applicant (Proposed Transferee), Name of the Allottee / Transferee (Transferor), D.U. No., Cat., Sector. Row 1: Sh. Baljit Singh S/o Late Sh. Bansri Ram, Smt. Bimla Devi W/o Late Sh. Bansri Ram, 433, HIG-II, 45-A CHD.

In case anybody has any objection in respect of transfer of the allotment of the above said Dwelling Units, he/she may submit the objection, if any, in writing within 15 days of the publication of this notice before the undersigned alongwith documentary evidence, if any.

CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD
8, Jan Marg, Sector 9-D, Chandigarh, Ph. : 0172-4601826
PUBLIC NOTICE
Before Secretary, CHB Exercising the Powers of the Estate Officer, UT Chandigarh
Subject : Mutation / Transfer of ownership Dwelling Unit No. 5356-3 of Category IV, M.H.C., Manimajra, Chandigarh on the basis of Sale Deed in the name of Sh. Karambir Singh S/o Sh. Rameshwar Das from the name of allottee/transferee Smt. Geeta Kadian W/o Sh. Rajesh Kadian

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public and all concerned that the Dwelling Unit No. 5356-3 of Category IV, M.H.C., Manimajra, Chandigarh stands in the name of allottee/transferee Smt. Geeta Kadian W/o Sh. Rajesh Kadian. Now transferee Smt. Geeta Kadian W/o Sh. Rajesh Kadian has sold the above said Dwelling Unit to Sh. Karambir Singh S/o Sh. Rameshwar Das vide Sale Deed Executed and registered in office of Sub-Registrar Chandigarh on 07-05-2019 of Sh. Karambir Singh S/o Sh. Rameshwar Das has requested this office for transfer the above said dwelling unit in his name on the basis of sale deed.

PUNJAB & SIND BANK
(A GOVT. OF INDIA UNDERTAKING)
Possession Notice (For Immovable Property)
Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of PUNJAB & SIND BANK, under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 8 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice, under section 13(2) calling upon the following borrowers / guarantors / mortgagors to repay an amount mentioned in the notice being outstanding as on the date(s) mentioned along with future interest, expenses and other charges within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

ORIENTAL BANK OF COMMERCE
RRL CLUSTER OFFICE, AMRITSAR
SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES)
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Oriental Bank of Commerce under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of the Security Interest Act 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices on the dates mentioned against each account and stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of the said notice.

CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD
8, Jan Marg, Sector 9-D, Chandigarh, Ph. : 0172-4601826
PUBLIC NOTICE
Before Secretary, CHB Exercising the Powers of the Estate Officer, UT Chandigarh
Subject : Mutation / Transfer of ownership right in respect of Dwelling Unit No. 490 of MIG Category in Sector 61, Chandigarh on the basis of Transfer Deed in the name of Smt. Savita Bhardwaj W/o Sh. Bhushan Bhardwaj from the name of allottee/transferee Sh. Bhushan Bhardwaj S/o Sh. Shiv Kumar.

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public and all concerned that the Dwelling Unit No. 490 of MIG Category in Sector 61, Chandigarh stands in the name of Sh. Bhushan Bhardwaj S/o Sh. Shiv Kumar. Now, Smt. Savita Bhardwaj W/o Sh. Bhushan Bhardwaj who has applied for Transfer of ownership right in respect of said Dwelling Unit on the basis of Transfer Deed in her name which was Executed and registered in office of Sub-Registrar Chandigarh on 16-02-2016

CHANDIGARH HOUSING BOARD
8, Jan Marg, Sector 9-D, Chandigarh, Ph. : 0172-4601826
PUBLIC NOTICE
Before Secretary, CHB Exercising the Powers of the Estate Officer, UT Chandigarh
Subject : Mutation / Transfer of ownership right in respect of Dwelling Unit No. 3190-A of Category EWS in Sector 52, Chandigarh on the basis of Sale Deed in the name of Mrs. Sunita Kashyap W/o Sh. Mohinder Pal Singh from the name of allottee/transferee Sh. Rajwinder Singh S/o Sh. Kabal Singh.

It is hereby notified for the information of the general public and all concerned that the Dwelling Unit No. 3190-A of Category EWS in Sector 52, Chandigarh stands in the name of allottee/transferee Sh. Rajwinder Singh S/o Sh. Kabal Singh. Now, Sh. Rajwinder Singh S/o Sh. Kabal Singh has sold the above said Dwelling Unit to Mrs. Sunita Kashyap W/o Sh. Mohinder Pal Singh vide Sale Deed Executed and registered in office of Sub-Registrar Chandigarh on 12-07-2019.



















Markets rebound as IT, auto stocks shine

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex overcame a weak start to end nearly 100 points higher on Friday, led by auto, IT and finance stocks, even as global markets dived after US announced fresh tariffs on Chinese imports.

gainers' list by spurting 6.02% (0.14%). Bajaj Auto, Maruti, M&M, Tech Mahindra, Hero MotoCorp, TCS, L&T and Tata Motors.

On the other hand, SBI was the biggest loser, dropping 2.76%, even as the country's largest lender posted a standalone net profit of ₹2,312.02 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal, driven by higher income and reduction in bad loans.

Tata Steel, NTPC, ONGC, Power Grid, Vedanta, ICICI Bank and ITC were among the other major laggards. "Global market was weak due to escalation in US-China trade war, but India recovered in the second half of the trading day on optimism as government mulls over exempting FPI from super rich surcharges.

"Additionally, better domestic macros like GST collection, PMI and monsoon forecast in August provided a relief hoping that economy will improve by H2FY20," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sectorally, BSE telecom emerged as the biggest gainer by surging 3.63%, followed by auto (1.07%), teck (0.91%), consumer durables (0.79%), information technology (0.65%) and capital goods

Power was the biggest loser, tumbling 1.30%, followed by utilities (1.03%), oil and gas (0.86%), realty (0.82%), bankex (0.62%), industrials (0.32%), basic materials, energy (0.29% each), FMCG (0.27%), health-care (0.25%), and finance (0.01%).

Foreign investors continued their selling spree and offloaded shares worth a net ₹1,056.55 crore on Thursday, as per provisional data with stock exchanges.

Meanwhile, the rupee was trading 52 paise lower at 69.58 against the US dollar (intra-day). The global oil benchmark Brent crude futures soared 2.28 per cent to USD 61.88 per barrel.

Elsewhere in Asia, Shanghai Composite Index slipped 1.41%, Hong Kong's Hang Seng plunged 2.35%, Japan's Nikkei shed 2.11%, Korea's Kospi lost 0.95% following ratcheting up of US-China trade tensions.

In European markets, Frankfurt's DAX was trading 2.45% lower, and Paris CAC 40 dropped 2.62% in their early session. London's FTSE declined 1.76%.

The US Dow Jones Industrial Average ended 1.05% lower on Thursday.

Airtel to shut down 3G network across India by March 2020

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom major Bharti Airtel on Friday said it expects to shut down its entire 3G network across the country by March 2020, the process for which has already started with Kolkata service area.

The company said it was keeping razor sharp focus on driving greater realisation and Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) but emphasised that tariffs need to move up in long term for industry viability.

The process of switching off the 3G network has already started with Kolkata in the recent-concluded June quarter. By September, the shutdown will be affected in 6-7 more circles and between December and March the entire 3G network would be shut down, Gopal Vittal, CEO (India and South Asia), Bharti Airtel, said during the company's post earnings call. "Yes, we do see an upgrade when someone moves from 2G to 4G... On spectrum, probably by April 2020, we will really have only 2G and 4G. So all our spectrum will sit on 4G other than the administered spectrum which is on 2G, plus a small slug of spectrum that we require to

run our 2G networks...everything else will be sitting on 4G band," Vittal said.

The company has added 8.4 million 4G customers and has 120 million data customers of which about 95 million are on 4G. Data usage by Bharti's subscribers has now reached over 11 GB/month.

Airtel had said on Thursday that in line with its focus on network experience, it had reformed spectrum from 3G networks to 4G across both the 900 as well as 2100 bands and begun the process of shutting down 3G networks in India. This has enabled the company to deliver improved indoor coverage as well as enhance capacities, it had said. The company has emphasised that tariffs need to move up in the long-term for industry viability.

Badal Bagri, Chief Financial Officer of the company, said that the broader industry which has consolidated to three large players continues to see "some semblance of stability". "While we have witnessed revenue growth despite any outright tariff increase, we continue to believe that prices need to move up in the long term to ensure industry viability," Bagri said.

BUSINESS CORNER

HDFC Q1 NET PROFIT RISES 46% TO ₹3,203 CRORE

New Delhi/Kolkata (PTI): The country's largest mortgage lender HDFC Ltd on Friday reported a 46 per cent rise in standalone net profit to ₹3,203.10 crore for the first quarter ended June 30. The company had posted a net profit of ₹2,190 crore during the corresponding April-June period of 2018-19. Total income (standalone) increased to ₹12,996.11 crore in the first quarter, as against ₹9,951.98 crore in the same period of the preceding fiscal, HDFC Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

EXIDE NET PROFIT UP 7% IN JUNE QUARTER

Battery major Exide Industries on Friday reported a seven per cent on-year increase in standalone net profit to ₹224.29 crore in the first quarter of the current financial year. The company had posted a standalone net profit of ₹209.92 crore during the corresponding quarter a year ago. During the April-June period, its net turnover was ₹2,779.25 crore, as against ₹2,772.46 crore during the quarter ended June 30, 2018. Commenting on the earnings, Exide MD and CEO G Chatterjee said demand of automotive batteries remained under pressure, while growth in UPS, telecom and other infrastructure segments continued in the reporting quarter. The Kolkata-headquartered company is focusing on cost control and technology upgradation as strategies to improve the bottomline.

GODREJ AGROVET Q1 PROFIT DOWN 4%

Godrej Agrovet on Friday reported 4 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at ₹77.6 crore for the quarter ended June 2019. It had posted a net profit of ₹81 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to ₹1,712.8 crore during April-June 2019 from ₹1,488.2 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year, the company said in a statement. Godrej Agrovet is into animal feed, crop protection, oil palm, dairy,

poultry and processed foods businesses.

BSE NET PROFIT DROPS 19.8% TO ₹41.3 CRORE IN JUNE QUARTER

The BSE on Friday reported a 19.8 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to ₹41.3 crore for the quarter ended June 30, mainly on higher expenses. The bourse had posted a net profit of ₹51.5 crore for the corresponding period of the previous year, the BSE said in a filing to the National Stock Exchange (NSE). Its total income was marginally up at ₹166 crore, compared with ₹164.20 crore in the June 2018 quarter. Total expenses were higher at ₹119.10 crore, against ₹108.69 crore in the year-ago period. On a standalone basis, the stock exchange reported a profit of ₹34.4 crore, down from ₹51.8 crore during the quarter ended June 30. The exchange said it proposes to buy back 67.65 lakh fully paid-up equity shares of ₹2 each at ₹680 per equity share through the tender offer route. The number of shares proposed to be bought back represents 13.06 per cent of the company's total paid-up equity capital. The total size of buyback will be a maximum of ₹460 crore.

ETHIOPIAN AIRLINES TO LAUNCH SERVICES TO BENGALURU FROM OCT 27

Africa's largest carrier Ethiopian Airlines said on Friday it will launch passenger flight services to Bengaluru from its hub Addis Ababa from October 27, which will be operated four times per week.

The Ethiopian national carrier currently connects the capital city Addis Ababa with New Delhi and Mumbai. These services are operated twice daily.

Besides, it also operates cargo services Mumbai and New Delhi, Chennai, Bengaluru and Ahmedabad.

Ethiopian Airlines will launch flight services to India's silicon valley, Bengaluru from Addis Ababa from October 27, the airline said in a release.

NIFTY 50

Table with columns: SCRP, NIFTY 50, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

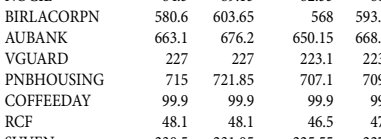
BSE 500

Table with columns: SCRP, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

BSE Sensex AUG 2019



NSE Nifty AUG 2019



NIFTY NEXT 50

Table with columns: SCRP, NIFTY NEXT 50, OPEN, HIGH, LOW, LTP, CHANGE. Lists various stocks and their performance metrics.

TOP GAINERS TOP LOSERS

Table with columns: Share, Airtel, 6.02, SBI, -2.76, Asian Paints, 2.71, Tata Steel, -2.50, Bajaj Auto, 2.49, NTPC, -2.50, etc.

TOP GAINERS TOP LOSERS

Table with columns: OMAEX, 201.3, 201.3, 198.2, 199.6, AMBUJACEM, 195, 202.1, 193.8, 199.3, etc.

TOP GAINERS TOP LOSERS

Table with columns: OMAEX, 201.3, 201.3, 198.2, 199.6, AMBUJACEM, 195, 202.1, 193.8, 199.3, etc.

BULLION | Last 7 Days

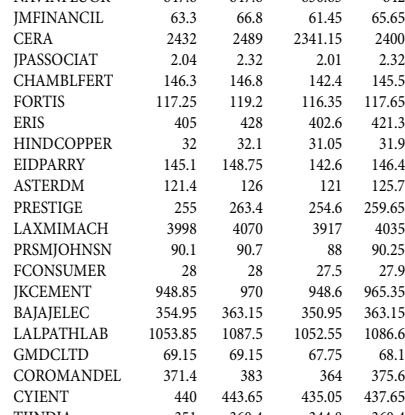


Table with columns: DCAL, 209.4, 209.6, 201.7, 201.7, NH, 219.75, 222.5, 215.25, 216.35, etc.



SHORT CIRCUITS



RAVEENA TANDON

It has been raining cats and dogs and many puppies and kittens are in need of good homes. People can help animals by contacting PETA India if they are looking to welcome a dog or cat into their homes, by getting their own animal companions sterilised, and by supporting the sterilisation efforts of non-governmental organisations.



DIA MIRZA

This is to clarify and put to rest all kind of speculation that is being bandied about by a certain section of the media regarding my separation with Sahil. It is unfortunate to see the level of irresponsibility exercised. What is even more unfortunate is that our colleagues names are being tarnished and maligned by media.



VIKRAMADITYA MOTWANE

Censorship is a stupid thing. There should be certification, and not censorship. People are smart enough to understand that if a film is meant for kids, then kids will watch it and if a film is meant for adults, only adults will watch it. I have not understood till date why we censor adult films.



ERICA FERNANDES

I always wanted to be a part of a dance show and it happened with *Nach Baliye*. It's one of the most glamorous and biggest dance reality shows on Indian television and I didn't even blink before saying yes to be a part of it. Will the audience get to see more of us on the show remains to be seen.

HIMESH RESHAMMIYA

Sameer Anjaan has made a significant contribution to my career. My first song was written by him and then he helped me with several blockbusters. Although there was a break in between, now we are back together working on Ramesh Taurani's forthcoming project. I'm excited to work with him again.



CONVERSATION 60 MINUTES

EFFORTLESSLY SIMPLE

Actress SONAKSHI SINHA believes that sometimes the best way to get across a difficult message is through humour. By AYUSHI SHARMA

Turned out in all-white — a lacy bralette draped with a short cropped jacket and culottes paired with sporty shoes — I could feel the peaceful aura which actress Sonakshi Sinha exuded at a single glance. We are like yin and yang, as I am dressed in black. Both perfect for an ideal exchange of ideas.

Though she has adorned simplicity, her choice of roles are bold and more complex. In her latest outing *Khandaani Shafakhana*, she plays Baby Bedi, who is a quick-witted small-town medical representative from an orthodox Punjabi family. Despite her earnest efforts, her modest income never matches up to the mounting bills, which results in multiple loans and creditors knocking at her door constantly. One day, she is presented with an unique opportunity. She must choose between her utterly ordinary life or bail her family out of their perennial money crunch by running a sex clinic, which she inherits from her estranged uncle. The conditions in his will are a tad bit unusual. What follows is the no-holds-barred journey of a girl in a world where people prefer to hush up things. This small-town girl will break all the taboos around sex, open hearts and ultimately, minds.

Sonakshi says that there is a social taboo around the 'sex' word itself. We have made it abnormal to say it out loud or discuss it openly with anyone, within families or even with friends. That's just how, as a society, we have been brought up. Yes, things are changing gradually. She says one of reasons why she did the film was, "Because I am one of those people who never had this conversation with my parents. And this despite the fact that I come from a liberal and modern family. So imagine, if I am having this issue, what people in small towns are going through and how they must be feeling. It is surprising to see sex being treated as a taboo especially in a country, which is so heavily populated. In the trailer, there's a dialogue — *Duniya mein 17 per cent abaadi vale hum aur baat toh aise karte hain jaise 130 crore log parshaad vale kele khake pratat hue hain*. (We constitute 17 per cent of the population and we talk as if this appeared as a blessing of God). Envision a country like this. Maybe this is the reason why India is over populated because we do not have proper sex education and we don't talk about it openly."

The actress feels that this shouldn't be the case. "Whenever there's a condom advertisement, one probably feels awkward and acts innocent. But why? Is practising safe sex a crime? No, right? Then why does this happen," she asks, clearly referring to our history where ancient texts reveal that sex was considered a mutually pleasurable act and premarital sex was accepted. But today, sex talk, sex education and everything related to the topic have a stigma attached to them.

Sonakshi feels that such subjects, when merged with an element of humour, stays with the audience. "If you ask my opinion, yes, comedy does help a lot in putting across a subject like this. But I don't believe it is the only way to express the message. There have been films with



social messages, which are serious but they were a bit different. This kind of subject needed humour. Also, what are films? They mirror the society, right? So it's human nature, if you show somebody where they are going wrong, they get defensive but if you do it in a funny manner or joke about it, they always listen. It becomes more palatable. Humour just makes people think without offending them, of course," explains the *Dabangg* actress.

She is happy to become a flag-bearer for women by taking up a subject like this. Does she think a male protagonist would have been better for the role? Or if it was a male filmmaker directing her, would she have been as comfortable? "There have been films with male protagonists but I am really happy to take up sex as a subject. It's important as well as relevant in today's day and age. It is something that should be discussed and thought about to make a difference in the future. For this particular role, a female protagonist was required," she says with great zeal and goes on to add, "Honestly once you decide to do a film, if it was this particular theme and even if it was a male director, I would have done it with conviction and I would have stood by my decision. I think, that's exactly when you throw all your embarrassment out of the window because once you are committed to do something you have to put your heart to it. However, I feel, the kind of sensitivity that Shilpi (Dasgupta) has directed this film with definitely did make me a lot more comfortable. She has done it so beautifully that it's not even border line cheap or vulgar in any manner. It's a very well-made, intelligent and

**“The reason why I did the film was because I am one of those people who never had a sex conversation with my parents. And this despite the fact that I come from a liberal family. So imagine, if I am having this issue, what people in small towns are going through. It is surprising to see sex being treated as a taboo”**

funny film. As I said before, it's always good to express these kind of emotions and thoughts with humour."

Sonakshi is one such person, who believes that roles and characters that are played on-screen shapes you in real life. "Your roles always teach you. I take away something from most of my roles. It's like the role is a part of yourself and at the same time, you take something from it. I could easily relate with the character of Baby Bedi. And it's not only me but every other girl as she is one of those, who somewhere, when she was a child, had a dream of becoming a doctor but due to family responsibilities, she had to let go of that dream. You'll see how she comes back to following it. I am sure a lot of people will be able to connect with her. I did too, in certain ways," she says.

What was Sonakshi's understanding of the role? And how did she prepare for it? She answers in a manner that leaves nothing to doubt. It seems she has a habit of taking everything with ease and that is the reason why she appears so confident be it on-screen or in front of the media. She tells us that her way of preparing was to speak with the director. "There was no research involved as such. I spoke to Shilpi because she had a certain vision for it. She showed me a few videos of some medical representatives — how they talk, how smart and straight they are, what they say to sell a particular product. We did readings with the dialogues. It was very helpful. It gets you into an easier flow," says she. Just the way in which Sonakshi speaks, I sensed how effortlessly simple she is.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar

VINTAGE HEART

Actor VARUN SHARMA doesn't mince words while talking about the need for sex education in India. While he might have made his mark in comic roles, he doesn't allow that to temper his conversation when talking of serious issues, says CHAHAK MITTAL

Can you imagine actor Varun Sharma aka Choocha of *Fukrey* in a serious and intense avatar? Probably not. It would be difficult to even imagine him beyond his idiotic yet endearing and comically sweet roles.

I have been waiting for sometime and anticipating that he would be comic in real life as well. As I walk up to him, he asks for a short two-minute break with the sweetest request ever made, "Hello, I am extremely sorry can I please come back shortly?" As I nod a yes, he smiles and leaves to keep his just-made promise intact. He returns and as we start talking about his latest, *Khandaani Shafakhana*, it turns out that he is as adorable as he seems to be in all his roles. And in some parts, serious too, depending on what is up for discussion. He still wants to keep certain things in the old school format yet follow the new changes in society and accept them with open arms. Just like he does in his film.

The film that revolves around Baby Bedi (played by Sonakshi Sinha), a young woman who inherits a sex clinic or a *shafakhana* from her late, estranged uncle. Amid a range of challenges and backlashes from the society, she tries to break taboos and ultimately open several minds. Varun, who plays her brother, Bhooshit Bedi, follows and believes in multiple stereotypes about sex disorders just like the other small town people. Completely opposing the idea of woman sexologist, he questions her, "Tu ladki hokar shafakhana chalayegi?" He says that the film's real essence emerges from this fact as how even a sibling is against his sister when she decides to take up a job which is not considered to be appropriate for a woman. Contradicting his dialogue, Varun questions, "Kya dikkat hai ek ladki ke sex clinic chalaane mein? (What's the harm in a woman running a sex clinic?) If people are fine with a female gynecologist and can consult them for their problems, why is a female sexologist a problem? The film tries to say that it should be looked upon as just a profession. Nobody goes to a doctor for fun. It's a treatment for sexual disorders just like there are treatments for other diseases. And we should also look at it that way only."

Sexual disorders are common but we hardly talk about them and this leads to various problems, especially in a taboo-ridden society like India. This is something which the actor realised during the film. He says, "People do suffer from them in a large number but never discuss them. And we never even pay attention to them as they are not considered important. And due to this, there have been so many times where when two people are going to get married and the guy is aware about his sexual problem but he doesn't discuss it. Neither with his family, nor with the girl's. It is finally revealed after the two get married and that is when the problems begin to arise. This has led to the break down of so many marriages in India."

Indeed, an example of impotency in men and his difficulty in discussing it was evident in one of the episodes of Amazon Prime's *Made In Heaven*, where the girl gets to know about her husband only after they are married. Varun says, "The man needs to accept it rather than hide it as a weakness and maintain an illusion. This would in turn affect not just his life but also his partner's. *Aur isiye, baat karni bohot important hai especially family ke saath*. Sex education, hence, is a must. In metros, it might still be surfacing among the higher classes now, *lekin*

*chhote sheheron me nahi* (But not in small towns)."

Recalling his teenage years, the actor says that he, too, hadn't received any sex education. He adds, "I learnt and found everything myself through internet and discussed it with my friends. I am from the 90s and at that time, the atmosphere wasn't this liberal. There was not much exposure. We couldn't talk to our parents about even our bodily changes and issues so openly like kids do today in big cities. And I realised these things much later than at the time that I was grappling with them."

And talking about small towns, the actor from Punjab points out that whenever he would cross a bus-stand, he would read 'Sex Clinic' written on a wall in bold letters, it immediately caught his fancy. "I used to stop and wonder how boldly the term (sex) has been written. A term, which we cannot even utter in regular language. I found it to be very fascinating, different and new. I am sure there would have been a number of people who thought like that. The film, through its *desi* humour, is trying to change just that — so that we aren't taken by surprise. It aims to normalise it. If we are able to do it, then we succeed and it would be amazing. But if not, people will enjoy the film and return home. Simple!" says he.

Hesitation is one of the reasons why, in future, Varun wants to create an open relationship and share a friendly space with his children so that they can easily talk to him about just anything. He believes that this should be the ideal case too. "Ideally, one should go to the family first and then to the internet only to verify. But the case is reverse today. People refer to the internet first before going to their families. Earlier, even though we might have not conversed on sex-related subjects, we still spent more time with each other at home and had fun. Today, mobile phones get the highest attention," he says and goes on to add, "Thodi si cheeze vapas se old school honi chahiye. (Some things should be back to being old school.," says the actor, who will soon be seen in *Chhichhore* and *RoohiAfza*, a horror comedy.

The actor, who has become a comedy icon in the eyes of most youth, never fixed or planned to pick up the genre. He says, "Maine kabhi socha bhi nahi tha main comedy karunga. (I had never even imagined myself doing comedy.) I never thought I could do it. When I did theatre and shows, I only did intense roles. Ironically, *Fukrey* was my first attempt at comedy and I got accepted so beautifully by the audience. And this is the biggest thing for someone who is making a debut. After that, I felt that I could make someone smile and laugh. I realised this genre has chosen me. I now love it. I enjoy spreading happiness and I just hope to do this for most of my life. There are many other genres too, which I want to explore but I would not do just any film for the heck of it. Until I am not convinced or feel that I would be able to do justice to my role, I won't take it up. But of course, never leaving comedy. *Mujhe mazza aata hai yaar iss cheez me*," he laughs and ends the conversation with his beguiling smile, bunny teeth and warm handshake.

Photo: Pankaj Kumar







