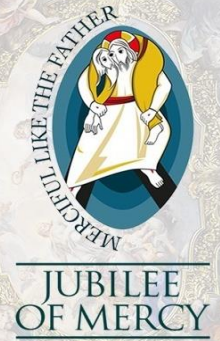




# HITGUJ

Pune Jesuit Province Newsletter

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PUNE

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**From the Provincial's Desk:**

## **Province Apostolic Planning**

I am grateful for the opportunity I had to visit all the communities and the institutions of the Province. I am glad that the Jesuits entrusted with responsibilities for various ministries are working hard to serve those entrusted to their care. It is encouraging to see that ministries are kept alive in spite to the severe difficulties that have arisen due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Your efforts to reach out to the people during these difficult times will be gratefully remembered by your beneficiaries. Uninterrupted services during such times are recommended and also very much needed.

My visits and my interaction with Jesuits have made me aware of the need to diversify our ministries in a manner that is relevant and also creative. It is true that we need more personnel and resources to do so. Therefore, it is imperative to plan our ministries effectively. The best help that is currently available to us are the **Universal Apostolic Preferences** (UAPs). They are meant to guide us as we move ahead with our Province Apostolic Planning. As Fr. General has recently reminded us, the UAPs enable us to see the bigger picture and the road ahead – a road where the guidance of the Holy Spirit is vital. To ensure the role of the Spirit, apostolic planning has to be combined with communal discernment.

In his recent letter to me Fr. General has requested me to “re-work this document (Province Apostolic Plan) over the coming year during which the communities will pray over and absorb, change and come out with a new version, say for a five-year period, keeping in mind that monitoring and evaluation should figure prominently in the new plan”. I therefore invite all our communities to take up this challenge of moving ahead with apostolic planning through communal discernment. Needless to say, that **interior freedom**, which is an outcome of our daily personal prayer, is a necessary prerequisite for fruitful discernment. The apostolic planning which we have initiated has to be made **specific and concrete for each community** so that implementation can take place within a given timeframe. To help us with this process, I will request the same apostolic planning committee, headed by Fr. Francis Patekar, to assist the Superiors of the various communities. **May the Holy Spirit lead and guide us** as we begin fine tuning our Province Apostolic Planning.

### FR. GENERAL HAS APPOINTED

- **Fr. Sean O. Carroll**, Provincial of the United States West Province.

### FR. PROVINCIAL PROGRAMME

**05 February** – Meeting with the **Bishop of Aurangabad**

**06 February** – Ordination of **Dn. Pravin T.**

AGM of **Vidya Bhavan Trust**

AGM of **District Jesuit House**

**09 February** – Meeting with the advisory team of Xavier Institute of NRM

**18 February** – Province Consult

**19 February** – AGM of Ashankur Trust

**22 – 27 February** – JCSA meeting

### GENERAL CURIA

In a letter sent to all Major Superiors, **Fr. Arturo Sosa** announced the **71st Congregation of Procurators to start on 16 May 2022**. It will be held in Loyola and will be preceded by a week of Spiritual Exercises to allow the delegates “to attend more deeply to the Holy Spirit who is active in our Society.” An announcement 16 months in advance, isn’t it a bit early? No, it isn’t! A Congregation of Procurators brings together delegates from each of the administrative units of the Society - Provinces and Regions. They must be elected in a Provincial Congregation and they have the duty to visit Jesuits and Jesuit works in order to prepare a picture of the situation of the Society in their Provinces and to answer questions that the General suggests to them for further discussion during the meeting. Such an assembly therefore requires a long preparation. The first role of the Congregation of Procurators is to decide whether a General Congregation should be convoked, after having informed Father General of the “state of the Society.” From the 31st GC, another purpose was added: to deal with important matters at the level of the universal Society. This greatly expanded its role. This meeting allows a representation of the ‘grass roots’ of the Society, since the Procurators are not Provincials. In his letter of convocation, Father Sosa situates the next Congregation of Procurators within the framework of the Ignatian Year, with the same theme: Seeing all things new in Christ. More specifically, he writes: “the Congregation can be a time when we examine together the lights and shadows of the Society, the particular challenges that face us, and action of the Holy Spirit, who calls us to ever greater generosity in the service of Church and our world.” With regard to the issues that the Superior General asks the Provincial Congregations to deal with, the first is the follow-up given to the broad project of the Universal Apostolic Preferences, paying particular attention, according to the wishes of Pope Francis, to the first one, that of “showing the way to God with the help of the Spiritual Exercises and discernment.” And secondly, the Ignatian youth ministry and the link with the promotion of Jesuit vocations. (taken from Newsletter from Rome, 20 Jan 2021)

### AROUND THE PROVINCE

#### YOUNG PRIESTS TRIDUUM:-

A Triduum for the young priests of the province was held at De Nobili College, Pune from 29<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. There were 9 of us who journeyed in this triduum. The young priests included Fr. Vikram Shingare who was ordained in 2016 to Fr. Jaya Singh in 2020. A variety of topics were discussed during this triduum. Fr. Dinesh Braganza from Papal

Seminary animated these three days. During these three days the young priests shared their joyous moment, challenging moments and moments of growth. Each one participated wholeheartedly and made the sharing an enriching experience. On the second day Fr. Jaya Singh celebrated the Holy Eucharist and on the third day Fr. Vikram celebrated the Eucharist. This triduum was to help us priests

to be more effective and affective in the Journey of priesthood. Fr. Siju Varghese, our PCF accompanied the young priests in the triduum. Fr. Agnelo Mascarenhas, our Provincial joined us for the meal after which he addressed the young priests and gave the gist of the letters of Fr. General and UAPs, he also shared his concerns for the young priests. At the end of the Triduum, Fr. Savari was selected as the coordinator for the young priests to work with Fr. Siju, PCF, to facilitate these programs.

### WORDS FROM VINALAYA :-

Our Juniorate life has always been enthusiastic with a variety of activities and studies. We have started 2021 with lots of energy and hope. The season of Christmas was very colorful. While Vinayalaya was shining with decorations, we organized games and different community activities. The Christmas



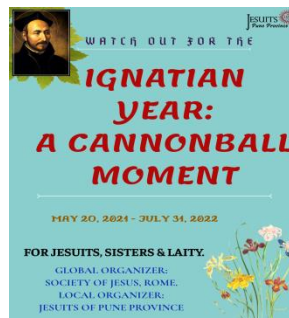
Mass was celebrated by Fr. Aubrey. During the last three days of the year 2020, Fr. Rayan of Karnataka province guided us in our Triduum

and prepared us for the renewal of the vows during the New Year's midnight mass. We experienced the rejuvenating touch of God to give our best in the mission of our formation. On 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> January, Fr. Jivan Mendonca, gave us a few sessions on '**Critical Thinking**'. In today's online world, we are hounded by a huge amount of false information. We need to

critically scrutinize it before accepting. The meal table-readings add more spice to our food! Fr. Robert's autobiography, 'The Treasured Memories', being a source of inspiration is being read during the afternoon table-reading. Fond memories of Goa-Pune Jesuit ambience come alive. Our community life is nurtured by various activities such as common recreation, birthday celebrations and so on. In our Marathi classes, our hearts are more educated than the brains. Fr. Tony George, our teacher gives us lessons on mystical spirituality from the lives of Indian Saints. We have also begun preparing for our annual drama and annual exams in March and April.

### IGNATIAN YEAR :-

WATCH OUT! All eyes are on the 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2021, when we shall have the Inauguration of the 500th Year of the incident which changed the life of St. Ignatius of Loyola – THE CANNONBALL MOMENT. Fr. Arturo



Sosa, our Superior General wants it to be a year of "conversion" for each one of us Jesuits and for all those with whom we are associated.

God has wrought wonders through the life of "Inigo" the name by which

Ignatius earlier went.

The planning at the Roman Curia has been systematic and well thought-out.

Pascal Calu, the Communication

Coordinator is in regular touch with all the Assistency and Province Coordinators. In the



South Asian Assistancy, it is POSA and Fr. Francis Pudhicherry, Head of the Department of Spirituality at Jnana Deepa Pontifical Institute, who are taking the leading roles in promoting this Ignatian Year (IY). Webinars are going on and much preparation is afoot for the big events on 20<sup>th</sup> May and for the whole year 20<sup>th</sup> May 2021 –31<sup>st</sup> July, 2022, in all the provinces of the world. Newsletters are being regularly sent via email. In our own province the IY team appointed by Fr. Agnelo, our Provincial, has also been active and plans are being made both, for the Jesuit



fraternity as also for the laity, which includes our schools and parishes. Regular emails will also be sent out through the Socius.

The WhatsApp service will be utilized for this purpose, using the "Pune Jesuits" group. You are requested to take a look at the same and pass on the communications to people in your zone of ministry. On this same topic, Fr. Lisbert D'Souza, an ex-Assistant to Fr. General, will be addressing all the Jesuits from the Western Zone provinces on 12<sup>th</sup> February, at a webinar, at 6.30 pm. The link, ID and password for accessing the same will be sent a couple of days before the event.

### ST. XAVIER'S CHURCH, PUNE -:

We are delighted with the dawn of the New Year. A ray of hope has shone amidst the people of God, as people are getting back to normal with new norms of life. Amidst this we have regular masses catering to the people. On Sundays we have increased one more Eucharistic Celebration so that people could come and join for the Mass with SOPs given by the state of Maharashtra and Diocese of Pune. Confirmation students had their retreat on 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of January, Fr. Joe, Sr. Flavia RJM and

Fr. Anthony gave them a retreat and helped them to grow in faith. The whole retreat was surrounded with the theme in relationship with God, oneself, others and nature.



As part of the retreat the children enacted Bible passages and also shared about themselves. Children took part actively in the sessions and helped each other to build the bond. The retreat was concluded with the Holy Eucharistic Celebration. On 26<sup>th</sup> January being our Republic Day, Mr. Joe, one of the eldest members of the parish, unfurled the National Flag. Fr. Anthony gave a small message on the constitutional rights of the individual. As part of the preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, confirmandis along with their parents and God Parents had the sacrament of reconciliation.



We are grateful to all the priests from the community who made themselves available for the service of the parish. Eight Children of our parish received the Sacrament of Confirmation on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2021. The sacrament was conferred by the Bp. Thomas Dabre, Bishop of Pune. The theme for the Holy Eucharist was

“Empowering with the Gifts of the Holy Spirit to be the Witnesses of Jesus.” These eight children walked the aisle with candles in their hands representing themselves. The children along with their Sunday school teacher Sr. Flavia prepared the liturgy and made it their own. The Bishop in his homily beautifully explained the theme and asked them to continue to be witnesses in the world. He also shared the challenges faced as a witness and spoke about the missionaries. The whole ceremony was beautifully planned and executed. The altar was adorned with flowers and the choir with their melodious singing helped each one present to pray. Fr. Joseph D’Souza SJ, our Parish priest, thanked all those who helped to make the day a successful one.



A special word of appreciation was expressed to Mrs. Noella, the Sunday School Coordinator, who coordinated throughout the pandemic along with her vibrant team members and kept the online catechism classes and activities going every Sunday ensuring that all the children attend the classes regularly. Though the physical presence was restricted yet she coordinated and followed the syllabus, programs and was in constant touch with the Catechism Centre and parish team. The whole Catechism School team worked hard and did a commendable job during the pandemic. The Parish Team is grateful to them for their precious time and following up with the children. Their patience, kindness and generosity are wonderful gifts to all of us. The ceremony was appreciated by the Bishop. On the second of February the Management,

Sisters and Staff of St. Anne’s High school celebrated the Feast of St. Claudine with great enthusiasm and zeal. They had Holy Eucharist in the Church followed by their freshments. It was an awesome sight to see everyone dressed in purple Colour of St. Claudine. We continue our faith Journey and sharing our experiences with others

### SATARA -:

In 2011 I left Satara for Beed and in 2021 exactly after ten years I am back. What a change after ten years! How life goes on with its inevitable changes! Things don’t remain the same or stand still however much our minds refuse to think beyond what we leave behind. Children and plants are bound to grow as nature’s dharma, but we tend to think of them as mere children and plants even after the passage of long period of time. Here in Satara, the plants have grown and so too the children; nevertheless, while looking at them now, the images of their earlier childhood and planthood do not fade away so easily. The children I taught catechism and gave first Holy Communion are either in college or working or married and settled. It is incredible to see such a vast change in them. One sure needs new eyes to see new reality. Glad to be back to Satara, a place full of challenges and opportunities. My second coming was inaugurated on the 21st of January in the presence of fellow Jesuits from Pune and Kolhapur, particularly Frs. Joe D, Socius, and Denis Borges, Superior. There was one Sister also from the convent to hand over some keys. Speaking of keys, forgetting to carry certain keys when stepping out, if one is alone, can be quite disastrous in this house. Nothing puts the fear of God in me more than a couple of keys. Hope I don’t start looking for the keys after I am shut out. We had the inaugural dinner in a

nearby hotel which I had passed by many a time in my earlier avatar but never entered, having no need to do so at all. But things are different now. At the moment I am an all-rounder, doing everything except cooking. For cooking, there is a vacancy and anyone can apply. D. Albert, S.J.

### SNEHASADAN RAHURI :-

2020 was one of the most challenging year we have experienced so far. It has made people of all races, caste, colour, creed come together to accomplish a common task. God's wonderful hand was always there in all that the common

people did to respond to the needs of the hungry and thirsty. In midst of all the fear and anxiety the



year ended very fast. The Pandemic year did one thing good that is, the year gathered all the families together. Deepened the union among the families. People began to invoke God in every Church, Temple, Mosques and all other religious and Holy places. Though it was a year of great human disaster, yet the year was full of God's grace. Leaving behind all that took place in the year 2020, we have happily embraced the New Year 2021 with joy and happiness come what may. Though there was lot of fear in the beginning of the year, now the people have started their normal life. Everyone is busy with their work. Our Snehasadan Mission here in the city and in the villages, have given strict instructions about the safety. They have to wear masks, and make use of the sanitizer when they come for the Mass. They need to follow instruction given by the

Government, and take all sorts of precautions to protect themselves. Almost for a year our



faithful were deprived of the Holy Eucharist and the Word of God. As we have begun the



Masses, we can see that they are so happy and their faces radiating with bright light. Once again, they are ready to receive the BREAD OF LIFE AND THE WORD OF GOD that sustains

their faith. On December 20th 2020, I announced that we will be celebrating Christmas Masses in three villages, they were very happy. We could see the joy on their faces. Three fathers went to three villages and gave them the Christmas Mass. During the Christmas week, not to deprive the little children, they had few competitions and sports to make the children feel that they are in the joyful week. From January 2021, we have started our daily village Masses. We are following all the instructions to keep the

faithful safe from any danger. And all the people are cooperating. Thank and Praise the Lord. With the necessary permissions from the Government department, some of the villages have started to have their Annual Yatras at the village level. On 30th January 2021, we have the Yatra of village Digras. The village Committee met the village authorities and took all the permissions and followed all the guidelines given by them and organized a very good programme. Rev. Fr. Valent Fernandes, S.J was the main celebrant. He gave a very good sermon and enlightened our faithful by explaining to them the power of the Rosary, and through the Rosary how our Mother Mary works wonders in the families and in individuals' lives. The Yatra was graced by seven fathers and four sisters from different places. I thank all those who took active part in organizing the Yatra, and congratulate the organizing Committee. God bless them all and keep them safe from all harm.

### **SOCIAL CENTRE, AHMEDNAGAR -:**

The New Year brought in great tidings for the Social Centre with the first visit of our provincial, Fr. Agnelo Mascarenhas SJ. The



visit had a manifold effect for Social Centre. The office and field staff were very happy to welcome the new Provincial and Chairman of the Social Centre with great enthusiasm. Fr. Provincial was given a brief history and introduction to the works and effects of Social Centre. He then addressed the gathering and

showed great interest in the activities and appreciated the outcome of the 52 years of



service to the marginalized. He was happy to know that this yeoman service has blossomed into the Xavier Institute of Natural Resource Management that is affiliated as a specialized institute by Savitribai Phule Pune University.

He also visited Ashakiran and spent some quality time with the children and the Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery who are looking after the daily needs of the children. He shared his views with the children and Sisters and encouraged them to make the best use of this



opportunity to grow and make a difference in their own lives and for others. The

Annual General Body Meeting of Social Centre was held under the Chairmanship of Fr. Agnelo SJ as the new Chairman and getting the entire overview of the work done and future plans.

In the evening, Social Centre had a combined birthday celebration of Frs. Titus, Thomas, Patrick and Sch. Roshan with the Holy Eucharist and then for a fellowship meal. It was indeed a great joy to have this joint celebration which enhanced the day. The

Social Centre was blessed with the visit of our very own Provincial and also the new



Provincial of the Sisters of St. Joseph's of Chambery, Sr. Anila. The provincial had come to visit Ashakiran and replace Sr. Carmela with Sr. Sarita who will do her MA in Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development. It was a tearful farewell for Sr. Carmela as she would be missed by the Community and children for her dedicated service. The activities of Social Centre are now gearing up with the implementation of various programmes for Watershed Development and empowering the girl child. The process of admissions for the new academic year in MA in Natural Resource Management and Sustainable Development is on.

#### **SNEHASADAN PUNE -:**

On the 10<sup>th</sup> of January, I attended a wedding of 2 couples, all involved in Lokayat, at the Lady Hawabai School, Babajan Chowk. While these inter-caste marriages were registered before the Registrar for Marriages in the Court, the couples made their marriage commitment to each other before all the invitees and in front of special guests and associates of Lokayat. The entire program was planned and executed by Lokayat members. The commitment they made was in keeping with the Lokayat vision of

equality of the sexes, supporting each other, beyond stereotypes of all kinds, as well as beyond caste and religious prejudices, as they continued to spread the new humanism of Lokayat. The joy and fun of all those taking part in the celebrations, with its music, dance, and poetry, was very contagious. Besides our interaction with Lokayat, we also allow an organization called, "Parivartan mishra vivha sanstha", run by Mr. Vilhas Wagh, to conduct their monthly meetings here. They aim at overcoming the Caste system by promoting inter-caste marriages. The couples are introduced to each other here. Due to the lockdown we stopped their meetings for a while. They began again on the 24<sup>th</sup> of January, but I told the social worker in charge to limit the number of people coming here at any given time and to encourage them to leave once their work is done. This year we organized a webinar on the 28<sup>th</sup> of January from 10.00 a.m. to about 12.45 p.m. on the topic "The Role of Religion in Nation-building within the framework of the Indian Constitution", focusing on the Constitution itself, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Jainism and Judaism. It was organized jointly by the Snehasadan Institute for the Study of Religion and the St. Vincent Commerce College, off Shankar Shet Road, Pune. Most of the Speakers were eminent personalities: two had done their doctorates, one was a (rtd.) Chief Commissioner of Income Tax, another was a motivational Speaker for CEOs, and an engineer and a school Teacher, duo. This made the Seminar very enriching. While the first session drew 50 viewers, there were 35 constant viewers. It was a good learning experience as it was the first one we were organizing.



**OBITUARY:****FR. JOHN BELSER 27.01.1927- 10.01.2021 (93/72):**

The last time that I met Fr. Belser was in 2016 when I visited him at the Jesuit house in Basel. He was then in a wheel chair. It reminded me of the first time that I had heard of him. It was when I was still a Junior in Vinayalaya. It must have been in late 1963 when I was assigned to help Br. Lawrence, who was an electrician, so that I could get a Wireman's license. Once Br. Lawrence was asked to put up some electrical decorations for a Convent in Bandra because of some anniversary celebrations. I was there to help and was then present for the Holy Mass on the day of the Anniversary. The main celebrant was Cardinal Valerian Gracias. Those were the days when the Second Vatican Council had allowed the use of local languages instead of Latin. However official translations were not yet available. I can never forget this part of his sermon: "Dear Faithful, I am so happy that the Second Vatican Council has allowed us to use local languages for Mass but that will take

some time. But there is a Jesuit who is ahead of the Council....!" I came to know later that that one Jesuit was Fr. Belser. Soon after the Council Decree Fr. Belser had got the Liturgical prayers translated into Marathi and had started using it. In 1964 when I was assigned to St. Joseph's Technical Institute there were days when he would come to Pune and stay with us. When he said Mass for us, he would bring along his exercise book in which he had the translation of the Liturgical prayers.

Born in Olten, Switzerland, on the 27th of October 1927, he was named John the Baptist and baptized on the 30th with water from the Jordan, which his father had brought back from the Holy Land. He came from a family of 6 sons and 7 daughters. His father was a doctor and his mother a housewife. He did his schooling in Olten and later in Sarnen, passing out at the age of 19. He was immediately admitted to the novitiate in Rue, France, for the South German Province. In 1947, the Swiss Jesuits were established as an independent vice province. After his novitiate John was sent to India together with hisco-novices, Hermann Bacher, Henry Volken and Dominic Zemp. They had to learn English and Marathi, which they did in Bombay and Poona. John did his philosophy studies in Shembaganur and theology in Kurseong. John did his Tertianship in Hazaribagh. He was sent to Rahata, the start of many years of missionary endeavour in the Ahmednagar District. Later he worked in Songaon. While in Songaon he had got the St. Anna Sisters to build a small hospital there. In addition, he repaired diesel pumps with the help of boys in order to irrigate the fields of jawar, wheat, bajra and other crops. He also started a small training center where 50 young men were trained to operate and repair water

pumps. The equipment that he had in this center he passed on to the Electro Technical Institute which Fr. Bacher had started in Shirampur. During the years of famine, when surplus grain and milk powder from the USA was received to be distributed, he started food for work projects. He succeeded in building a 6km. long road with the help of a thousand people of different tribes and castes. This had made the Government official so happy that he came to inaugurate it.

In addition to his pastoral ministry, he promoted the education of boys and girls. He built a girls' boarding school which he entrusted to the Sisters of St. Anne from Hyderabad. The pastor Fr. Wasserer, was using a bicycle. So, John fetched a motorcycle from Rahata, and also brought along an old generator to light up the Songaon Church. He was supported financially by his family, and he readily helped people in need. He had a very good relationship with the children. On being transferred to Sangamner, he bought plots of land in various villages and built chapels for the local Catholics. In Ghulewadi, he dug wells, and built a hostel for boys, who studied at the local college. He promoted the education of Adivasi children in Sancur and Botta. He

also translated the new Mass texts as well as the short breviary into Marathi.

He returned to Switzerland in 1985 and he was missioned to Zimbabwe. He had to learn Shona, He worked for ten years in Kariba, which is close to the Victoria Falls. He then worked in Chinhoyi for some years. His last assignment was as a Chaplain of nuns who ran a high school for girls. Due to health problems he returned to Switzerland in 2006. He lived in Jesuit communities in Zurich and Basel. Later, with other older Jesuits, he was placed in a nursing home in Menzingen. There he passed away on January 10th 2021. He was buried on January 18th 2021 in the Province cemetery at Bad Schönbrun. John Belser will be remembered as a Jesuit Missionary who worked tirelessly for the greater glory of God in different missions in the face of difficult obstacles. During his mission in India, he was very focused on the poor, the tribals and the marginalized. He was not only ahead of Vatican II but also ahead of the thinking of many of us. He is now abundantly blessed for being the special person he was.

( Written by **Fr. Anthony Sequeira** and **Br. Noel Oliver**, with inputs from Frs. Luis and Jacob and Kenny Misquitta)

### BIRTHDAYS IN FEBRUARY

#### FEBRUARY

- 08 John D'Cruz
- 19 Arockiaraj Patrick
- 22 Subhash Tribhuvan
- 23 Jeevendra Jadhav
- 27 Nihal D'Souza

#### MARCH

- 05 Goodwin Johnson
- 08 Redison Joseph
- 09 Peter Ankush

### REMEMBER THE DEPARTED IN YOUR PRAYERS

- ❖ **Fr Ronald Victor Menezes**, (KAR), 48/26, at Bengaluru on 14 January.
- ❖ **Fr. Ambrose Augustine**, (PAT), 87/58, at Patna on 16 January.
- ❖ **Fr. Maxim Crasta**, (GUJ), 54/32, at Pillar Hospital, Vadodara on 19 January.

- ❖ **Fr. Anthony A. D'Souza**, (BOM), 94/77, at Mumbai on 27 January.
- ❖ **Fr. Lancelot Pereira**, (BOM), 90/71, at Mumbai on 28 January.
- ❖ **Fr. Arwind Minj**, (HAZ), 42/ 20, in Hazaribag on 26 January.
- ❖ **Br. Stephen Kerketta**, ( RAN), 75/57, at Ranchi on 30 January.

**AD MAJOREM DEI GLORIAM**

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