



30 DAYS REPORT CARD



300 UNITS OF FREE ELECTRICITY FROM JULY 1



LAUNCH OF ANTI-CORRUPTION ACTION LINE (+91 9501-200-200)

25,000 NEW GOVERNMENT JOBS ANNOUNCED



REGULARISATION OF 35,000 CONTRACTUAL WORKERS

DOORSTEP DELIVERY OF RATION ANNOUNCED



- Private schools instructed to not increase fees
- Anti-gangster task force set up and directed SSPs and Police Commissioners to take strict action against gangsters
- Over ₹1000 crore received for Rural Development Fund with concerted efforts
- Photographs of Shaheed Bhagat Singh and Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in Government Offices
- Compensation worth ₹101 crore plus released to farmers
- One MLA - One Pension
- Withdrawal of excess security from all MLAs
- March 23 declared as public holiday to mark Shaheedi Diwas
- MLAs directed to remain available 24x7 for the general public
- Farmers assured that every single grain of farmer's produce will be procured smoothly
- All DCs asked to upgrade rehab centres within a month

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I,Suman D/O Satyaram Yadav,R/O, Village Siddhaur Hariya Gaur Basti,Uttar Pradesh-272163,have changed my name to Suman Yadav
0040610217-3

I,Shrinkhla,W/O-Franklin Paul,R/O-Pocket-8/30-31,3rd Floor,Sector-23,Rohini,Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Shrinkhla Shrivastav Paul.
0040610248-2

I,Sharvan S/O Ram Dev Kamat,R/O C-1/38,Gali.No-1, Dayalpur, C-Block, Karawal Nagar,Delhi-110094,have changed my name to Sharvan Kamat,for all future purposes.
0040610217-10

I,Satyaram S/O Brij Lal Yadav R/O,Village Siddhaur Hariya Gaur Basti,Uttar Pradesh-272163,have changed my name to Satyaram Yadav.
0040610217-2

I,Ruchi Sethi W/O- Gurpreet Singh Sethi R/o: A-1/129, Janakpuri, New Delhi-58,Have Changed My Name to Ruchi Kaur Sethi for all Purposes.
0040610248-1

I,RUKHBAR JAHAN,D/O MOHD NAZAR R/O F9/24 2ND-FLOOR,GALI.NO.6/4 ZAKIR-NAGAR OKHLA NEW-DELHI 110025,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME RUKHBAR JAHAN TO RUKHSAR JAHAN, PERMANANTLY. 0040610248-4

I,Paranjit Singh S/O Gurbachan Singh R/o-4/65, First-Floor, Punjabi Bagh West, N.Delhi-110026,have changed my minor-daughter's name Manriya to Manriya Kaur.
0040610223-6

I,Nisha Agarwal,W/O-Late Dr. P.R.AGARWAL,R/O B-52,Mayfield Garden-Behind Hilton Hotel,Garden Inn,Sector-50,Islampur,(97)South-City-2,Gurugram-122018,have changed my name to Neesha Agarwal,for all, future purposes. 0040610248-9

I,NASEEM KHAN S/O MUNEER Khan R/o 2/8 ANSARI ROAD-DARYA GANJ NEW DELHI-2,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NASIM KHAN. 0040610217-1

I,NARESH GUPTA,S/O OM PRAKASH GUPTA,R/O Y-17, GREEN PARK MAIN DELHI-110016,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NARESH KUMAR GUPTA. 0040610217-4

I,Krishan Rani,D/O Nihal Chand Bansal W/O Ashok Singhal,R/O-F-61,Preet Vihar,East Delhi-110092, Have Changed My Name To Krishna Singhal, For All Purposes. 0040610217-9

I,KULDIP SINGH S/O KULWANT SINGH R/O-12,5F,VISHWAKARMA PARK,LAXMI NAGAR, DELHI-92,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KULDEEP SINGH, FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040610217-5

I,Jasvinder Kaur Bhamra,W/O Trilok Singh,R/O 8/110, Ramesh-Nagar, Delhi-110015,have changed my name to Jasvinder Kaur.
0040610223-2

I,Himanshu S/O Late Naresh Kumar, R/O-RZ-A25A, Chanakya Place,Pankha Road, Part-1, Gali.No.14, Near-Janakpuri C-1, New Delhi-110059, have changed my minor daughter name Aradhita to Aradhita Singh,for all future purposes.
0040610197-1

I,Gourav Goel S/O Ashok Kumar Goel R/O 19, Right Ganj, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201001 have changed my name to Gourav Goel. 0040610223-3

I,FAMIDA KHATOON W/O ASGAR ALI R/O 13-B,4TH FLOOR,NETAJI SUBHASH MARG,DARYA GANJ,DELHI-110002,HAVE CHANGED MY,NAME FROM FARMIDA KHATOON TO FAMIDA KHATOON FOR,ALL PURPOSES. 0040610248-10

I,Dhanpat R/O.H.NO- D7/304,Tulip-Petals, Putauid-Road,Sector-89,Gurgaon Haryana-122001,Have Changed my Minor Daughter's Name Komakshi to Komakshi Singh. 0040610217-8

I,Dhanpat R/O.H.NO- D7/304,Tulip-Petals, Putauid-Road,Sector-89,Gurgaon Haryana-122001,Have Changed my Minor son's Name Pratyush to Pratyush Singh. 0040610217-7

I,Arvind Kumar Dudeja,S/O Prabh Dayal Dudeja,Resident-1329, Dr.Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi-110009,have changed my name to Arvind Dudeja.
0040610217-6

I,Aqil Ahmed,s/O-Achhan Ahmed,R/O-522 gali no.7 Holambika klan Delhi,have changed my name Aqil Ahmed to Akil Ahmed,for all purposes. 0040610248-5

I,Suhail Moin Khan S/O Mohammad Moin Khan R/O Flat No.108, Tower No.66, Ganga Apartment, D-6, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110070, have changed my minor daughter name from Mahira Suhail Moin Khan to Mahira Suhail
0040610223-11

I,Saranjeet Singh Bansal, S/O Balvir Singh Bansal, R/O B-2/10, Block B-2, Sewak Park, Delhi-110059, have changed my name to Saranjeet Singh.
0070781360-1

I,Om Prakash S/O Late Shri Ushnak Rai, R/O 1677/2, Govindpuri Extension, Kalkaji, New Delhi-110019, inform you that my name has been wrongly written as Om Parkash in my daughter Nidhi Malhotra's school record but the actual and correct name is OM Prakash.
0040610198-1

I,Monica Kapoor W/O Rohan Kapoor R/O-130, Pocket-3, Sector-24, Rohini, Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Monica Arora
0040610248-8

I, Mahesh Singh S/O Chander Singh R/o-168, Pocket-13,Sector -24, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Mahesh Singh Bist
0040610248-7

I, Kumari Mamta Yadav D/O Shriram Yadav R/O Quarter No-325, Type-2, C.P.W.D Colony, Kamla Nehru Nagar, Block-5, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201002 have changed my name to KM Mamta Yadav for all future purposes
0070781332-1

I, Kiran Sharma/ Kiran,W/O Mohan Lal, residing-C-2/332, Second Floor,Janakpuri, Delhi,have changed my name to Kiran Pawar,for all purposes.
0040610248-6

I,Rahul S/O Satish Mitra R/O B-82, Rampuri, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011 have changed my name to Rahul Dev.
0040610223-4

I, Girish S/O Vijay Ram Joshi R/O Flat No-201, Royal Homes, Shaberi, Radha Swami Satsang, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, UP-201301, have changed my name to Girish Joshi for all future purposes.
0070781339-1

I, Bhart Mahtta, D/O Shyam Vinder Mahtta, R/O-A-48, Yojna Vihar, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Bharti Mahtta for all purposes.
0070781335-1

I have changed my name from Sunil Kapur to Suneel Kapur. For all future purposes I Shall be known-as Suneel Kapur S/O Late Satpal Kapur R/O 1242 ATS Dolce, Sector Zeta-1 Gr. Noida G.B.Nagar.
0070781346-1

I Vipul Basu Mandal S/O M.B. Mandal R/o A-166/UG-1, Dilshad Colony, Delhi-110095 changed name of my son, aged-15, from Victor Mandal, to Victor Basu Mandal.
0070781337-1

I Preeti Daughter of Mohinder Singh and Wife of Kuldeep R/o House No-129, Nehar Pull Kess Wala Mohalla, Jatkothr, Jat Khor, Delhi-110039, have changed my name to Sweety
0070781362-1

I,Suman W/O Rahul Dev R/O B-82, Rampuri, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011 have changed my name to Suman Arora.
0040610223-5

I,Trilok Singh Bhamra,S/O Rajinder Singh Bhamra,R/O 8/110, Ramesh Nagar, Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Trilok Singh.
0040610223-1

I Ashok Rajpal S/O Sh. Hardayal Rajpal R/O 204, Ground Floor, Kohat Enclave, Pitampura, Saraswati Vihar S/O, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed the name of my minor son from Hardik Rajpal to Harshill Rajpal for all purposes.
0040610193-2

I Amit Chaudhary S/O Shri Om Pal Singh Residing at H No.1450/B-1, 2nd Floor, Usha Apartment East Jyoti Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110093 have changed the name of my minor son Rishu aged 7 years and he shall hereafter be known as Rishabh Chaudhary. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection
0040610196-1

I,JATIN S/O RADHEY SHYAM residing at, HOUSE NO-215, UNITY APARTMENTS, POKKET-23, SECTOR-24, ROHINI, DELHI-110085 have changed my name from JATIN to JATIN SARAN for all future purposes.
0040610208-1

I,Manisha Bahel,W/O Shri Puneet Bahl,R/O-B-91, Derawal Nagar,Delhi-110009,have changed my name to Manisha Bahl.
0040610248-3

My original 1st and 3rd semester marksheets of DICE from Chhotu-Ram Rural Institute of Technology has lost.finder contact:Mayank Pathak, S/O,Anand Kumar,R/O-WZ-476A, Madipur-Village,New-Delhi-110063.
0040610223-11

MY MBBS 1st year (Swami Rama Himalayan University Jollygram) Marksheet No.5564 Enrollment No- SRHU16000094 Registration No-DD16 14301044 is actually lost somewhere, inform if found, Devashish S/O Gaendra Kumar, Residence C-7, Arshiwad Bhawan, Lane No-2/10, Adarshnagar, Jollygrant, Delhi-Doiwala, District Dehradun (Uttarakhand).
0070781374-1

Ravi Khanna (Advocate) A-38, Kalesh Colony, New Delhi-110046 Contact:-91-11-49774545

Notice is hereby given that Mr. Radhey Shyam Bansal (hereinafter referred to as the said purchaser), is purchasing Plot No. B-21, Swasthya Vihar, Delhi, area measuring 274.50 sq. yds. (hereinafter referred to "said property") from Mr. Rahul Sharma who is it's absolute owner vide Gift Deed dated 29.12.2021 registered as Document No. 8408. Any person, body, individual, institution having any claim and/or objection in respect of the said property by way of sale, exchange, lease, lien, mortgage, charge, encumbrance, gift, trust, easement, maintenance, inheritance, testamentary deposit or otherwise or having in their custody any title documents pertaining to the said property shall communicate the same to the undersigned at the address within 10 days from the publication of this notice with documentary evidence in support thereof, failing which all the claim, of such person shall be considered to have been waived and/or abandoned. Any objections raised after the completion of the 10 days shall not be binding upon the said property or purchaser.

Public Notice
To be known to all that my client Shri Ved Hariwal of Shri Kishan Chandel resident of B-1613, Jahangir Pur, Delhi-110033 is the owner of Property No. B-1581, in Block-B situated at Jahangir Pur, Delhi-110033. The original Agreement to Sell and consideration receipt which executed by Shri Ram Lal in favour of Shri Subhash Chand Arora in respect of Property No. B-1581, Jahangir Pur, Delhi, have been lost. An MGR vide U.P. No. 316348/2022 dated 16.04.2022 to this effect has been lodged in Police Station Crime Branch, Delhi. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original document, may write contact with above named person at above address/Phone No. 9711801886. Sd/- VINOD KUMAR BHARADWAJ (Advocate) Enrl. No. D-625/2022

Public Notice
My clients Sh. Munim Chand S/o Sh. Rewan R/o Ho. No. 57-A, Harjanj Mohalla, Jona Pur, New Delhi-110047 has severed his all the relations with his son Raja Nehelija and his wife namely Indira D/o Mahendra and disowned/debarred them from his all movable & immovable properties and assets. My clients shall not be responsible for any acts and deeds done by them in any manner. ASIF ALI (Advocate) Ch. No. 685, Saket Court, New Delhi-17

It is certified that I JC-690262H Subedar Reem Bahadur Hamal Thakuri My Son Name Abinash Hamal Thakuri has been Recorded in my Service Document but My Son Name Avinash Hamal Thakuri has been Recorded in my matriculation certificate so I want to change my son Name as Per matriculation certificate Name For & Abinash Hamal Thakuri Read & Avinash Hamal Thakuri

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
(E-Mail: serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel/Fax:- 0680-2404287)
No. RFP // 1414 //RWC/BAM/Dated. 13.04.2022
1st Corrigendum to Bid identification No. Online Tender/50-2021-22/BPR
The partial modification of bridge works vide above identification has been made as follows:
1. Date of availability of tender: 20.04.2022 to 04.05.2022 upto 3.00 PM instead of 06.04.2022 to 20.04.2022.
2. Date of opening of Technical Bid.: 05.05.2022 at 11.00 AM instead of 21.04.2022 at 11.00 AM
3. Date of opening of Financial Bid: Will be intimated later on.
All other contents will remain unchanged.
Sd/- P.K. Jena Chief Construction Engineer
R.W. Circle, Berhampur
OIPR- 25071/11/0008/2223

Bagrana Branch: Jai Laxmi Nagar, Agra Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302031
Ph. No. 0141-2682357/804010650 E-Mail: bagran@bankofbaroda.com
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property/ies)
(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002)
Whereas, The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the Bank Of Baroda under the Sanctioning and Reconstructions of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 05.02.2022 calling upon the Borrower Mr. Devendra Singh Shekhawat S/o Shri Ghisu Singh Shekhawat to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs.20,19,974.94 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Nineteen Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Four and Ninety Four Paisa only) as on 05.02.2022 (Inclusive of interest up to 23.01.2022) together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.
The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section (4) of said 13 of the Act read with rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) rules, 2002 on this the 11th day of April of the year 2022. The Borrower/Guarantors/Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda, Bagrana Branch, Jai Laxmi Nagar, Agra Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302031 for an amount Rs.20,19,974.94 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Nineteen Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Four and Ninety Four Paisa only) as on 05.02.2022 (Inclusive of interest up to 23.01.2022) and future interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.
The Borrowers attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of Time available, to redeem the secured assets.
Description of the Immovable Property
All that part and parcel of the Equitable Mortgage of Immovable House property situated at Plot No. 11, Shanti Vihar Colony, Village-Sumer, Agra Road, Jaipur, Rajasthan-302031 Admeasuring area 121.23 Sqm. in the name of Mr. Devendra Singh Shekhawat S/o Shri Ghisu Singh Shekhawat. Bounded by: North: 30 feet wide road, south: Other Plot, East: Plot No. 12, West: Plot No. 10.
Date: 11.04.2022 Place : Jaipur Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA
At : Ichhapur, Post : Shree Baladevjew,
Email: eerwsskendrapara@gmail.com
Identification No. RWS/104/2021-2022
Letter No. 2741 / Dated. 31.03.2022
2nd Corrigendum
This corrigendum has been made for the NIT-104 invited online vide this office letter No. 1525 / Dated. 04.03.2022 with date for selling, closing, clarification and opening which was on dt. 02.04.2022 (selling date), 21.04.2022 (closing date), 04.04.2022 (clarification date) 22.04.2022 (opening date) as per 1st corrigendum has been amended and to be read as 24.04.2022, 12.05.2022, 25.04.2022 and 13.05.2022 respectively as follows.

Executive Engineer,
Kasauli Division,
HPPWD Kasauli
On behalf of the Governor of HP.

पत्रांक--22(ii) /#0 दिनांक--13.04.2022

झारखण्ड सरकार
राजस्व, निबंधन एवं भूमि सुधार विभाग
--: आवश्यक सूचना --:

न्यायालय पीठासीन पदाधिकारी-सह-मंत्री, अ०ज०जा०, पिछड़ वर्ग कल्याण एवं परिवहन विभाग, झारखण्ड सरकार द्वारा छोटानामपुर कारखानेकरी अधिनियम, 1908 की धारा-49 (6) के तहत सुनवाई की जा रही वार्दों की सूचना का प्रकाशन निम्नवत् किया जाता है। जिसमें प्रतिवादी मेसर्स रोहन कोल कम्पनी प्रा० लि० एवं Executive Director, M/s National Mineral Development Corporation Limited, Khanij Bhavan, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028 के प्रतिनिधि / विद्वान अधिवक्ता अनुपस्थित हो रहे हैं। जबकि पूर्व में अन्य वार्दों में प्रतिवादी मेसर्स रोहन कोल कम्पनी प्रा० लि० एवं Executive Director, M/s National Mineral Development Corporation Limited, Khanij Bhavan, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028 के प्रतिनिधि / विद्वान अधिवक्ता उपस्थित रहते थे। इस सूचना का प्रकाशन इस आशय के साथ किया जा रहा है कि दिनांक 03.05.2022 को माननीय मंत्री के कल्याण कॉलेज, बलिवार रोड, मोराबादी, राँची स्थित न्यायालय में प्रतिवादी मेसर्स रोहन कोल कम्पनी प्रा० लि० एवं Executive Director, M/s National Mineral Development Corporation Limited, Khanij Bhavan, Masab Tank, Hyderabad-500028 के मालिक / उपरोधक अथवा प्रतिनिधि अथवा अधिकृत अधिवक्ता के माध्यम से निश्चित तौर पर उपस्थित होंगे, अन्यथा नीचे तालिका में वर्णित सभी वार्दों में एक पक्षीय आधार पर कार्रवाई की जायेगी।

क्र	वाद सं	वादी का नाम	प्रतिवादी का नाम	मौजा/थाना	खता	प्लॉट	रकबा	कुल रकबा ए० में
1	01/21-22	राजू सोरेन वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	5	669	0.73	0.73
2	02/21-22	रतिलाल मुन्ने वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	19	29, 65, 813 21 23 25 26 27 34	0.21 1.64 0.24 0.86 4.32 1.88 0.86 0.08 2.08	12.59
3	03/21-22	चंद्रिका मुण्डा वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	नापाखुर्द	217	2117 2506 2507 2508 2509	0.14 1.24 0.24 0.05 0.08	14.77
4	04/21-22	दसाई राम मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	20	664	0.63 0.32	0.95
5	05/21-22	रामदास मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	14	54 56 807 19 55 57 740 791 792	0.51 0.08 0.75 1.77 0.87 0.43 1.24 2.28 0.24	10.71
6	06/21-22	परमेश्वर मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	23	734	0.56	0.56
7	07/21-22	नागेश्वर उराँव वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	1	763 100 101 13 102	0.85 0.19 0.03 1.56	2.65
8	08/21-22	ओररलाल मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	11	743	1.24	1.24
9	09/21-22	सुनील हेम्रम वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	18	731 731 836 836	0.45 0.08 0.40	1.33
10	10/21-22	महादेव मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	24	48 49 61 62 797 798 799 808 811	0.22 0.99 0.04 0.11 0.47 0.06 2.36 6.60	13.79
11	11/21-22	चरकु मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	12	20 22 35 38 39 40 42 43 44	0.91 1.62 0.34 2.09 1.12 1.98 0.10 0.33 1.96	21.13
12	12/21-22	बसंत तिक्की वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	17	03 05 08 10 12 13 16 17 111 113 114 04	0.43 0.98 0.07 0.06 3.16 0.01 0.29 0.34 1.35 0.70 0.05 0.04	9.58
13	69/21-22	सोना साव वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	18	671 731 671 731 836 731 731	0.41 0.04 0.24 0.04 0.41 0.04 0.04	1.22
14	70/21-22	दीनू गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	04	124 128 727 663 666 124 128 727 663 666	0.175 0.01 0.1 0.65 0.7825 0.2725 0.495 0.2355 0.525 0.03 0.1	5
15	71/21-22	शाहदेव गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	22	745 746	0.22 0.12	0.34
16	72/21-22	महेन्द्र कुमार भोक्ता वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	24	747 748 749 758 774 775 753 660	0.03 0.02 0.17 0.41 0.03 0.29 0.02 0.65	1.62
17	73/21-22	करम गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	25	116 119	0.16 0.21	0.37
18	74/21-22	सोहन गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	1/1	117	0.67	0.67
19	75/21-22	बसंत गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	29	125	0.54	0.54
20	76/21-22	बिराज गजू वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	03	76 77 78 80 81 82 83 89 90 91 92 93 94 99 103 104 105 107 108 102 123 140 141 144 146 147 148 149 710 718 759 760 66	0.45 0.03 0.14 0.32 0.03 0.02 0.04 0.23 0.28 0.01 0.86 0.51 1.37 2.04 0.05 0.06 2.53 0.02 0.14 0.06 0.44 0.37 0.94 0.01 0.18 0.12 0.13 0.13 0.50 1.67 0.16 1.02 0.23 0.04 0.08	15.20
21	79/21-22	सावन मांझी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	24	808	0.29	0.29
22	80/21-22	मालो देवी वगै०	रोहन कोल क०	पर्सौरिया	10	786 750 751 752	1.67 0.04 0.11 0.03	

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MHA proposal: SPs, DIGs who don't serve at Centre can't get stint later

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

IN ANOTHER move that is set to be opposed by the state governments, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed that an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who does not come on Central deputation at the Superintendent of Police (SP) or Deputy Inspector General (DIG) level may be barred from Central posting for the rest of his/her career.

This comes close on the heels of the Centre sending a proposal to states to amend the All India Service Rules that would allow it to call any IAS (Indian Administrative Service), IPS or IFS (Indian Forest Service) officer on Central deputation, with or without the state's consent. In another revision of rules in February, the Centre also scrapped the empanelment requirement for DIG-level IPS officers on central deputation.

The latest proposal, sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), is seen as an attempt to address the shortage of officers at the SP and DIG levels at the Centre. According to sources, there are over 50 per cent vacancies at both these levels in the different Central Armed Police Forces and Central Police Organisations.

Currently, the rules state that if an IPS officer does not spend three years on Central deputation till the Inspector General (IG)

EXPRESS NETWORK

KERALA: DAY AFTER PFI LEADER HACKED TO DEATH, RSS WORKER KILLED

BORIS JOHNSON TO BEGIN INDIA VISIT ON APRIL 21
PAGES 9, 11



Police personnel at the spot where the clashes took place in Jahangirpuri, in Northwest Delhi, on Saturday. Praveen Khanna

Communal clash on Hanuman Jayanti in Delhi, 6 policemen among injured

ANAND MOHAN J & MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

COMMUNAL CLASHES broke out in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a Shobha Yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti on Saturday, police said. According to officers, stones were thrown in the area, and the situation re-

mained tense until late night.

This is the first major communal flare-up in the national capital since the February 2020 Northeast Delhi riots, which left 53 people dead and many more injured.

While no casualties were reported on Saturday, police said 10-12 people were injured, including six officers. They had been taken to hospital and were recuperating.

After the violence, police in all 14 districts were put on high alert and senior officers were asked to be on the ground. "Commissioner of Police, Delhi has directed that in view of communal situation in Jahangirpuri, all officers up to the rank of Special Commissioners of Police of both zones shall be in the field and ensure that communal situation is not disturbed in any part of Delhi. Rest of the officers shall

also be on alert," read a message that went out to all senior officers of the Delhi Police.

Police said that during the yatra, an argument broke out between two communities. "Things escalated, and both sides started pelting stones at each

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RELATED REPORT
PAGE 6

India unshakeable... culture of harmony, inclusivity, says PM

SOHINI GHOSH
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16

UNDERLINING THAT India has remained "unshakeable and resolute" despite "changing circumstances over thousands of years," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Saturday that "our faith and culture is of harmony, equality and inclusivity".

In an address via virtual mode after unveiling a 108-feet statue of Lord Hanuman in Morbi in Gujarat's Saurashtra region, the Prime Minister said the project of establishing four such statues in four corners of the country is a reflection of the resolve of Ek Bharat, Shreshth Bharat (one India, best India). The life of Lord Ram, he said,

was an ideal example of Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayas (taking everyone along with everyone's effort).

"For me, 130 crore people of this country take the form of Lord Ram. It is through their resolve, their work that the country is moving forward," he said. "Hanumanji is that power and support who gave the right of honour and respect to all forest species and forest dwellers. He

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Sonia steps in, calls old guard, Prashant Kishor to plan Cong revival

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

IN HER first major move after the Congress's humiliating defeat at the hustings, Congress president Sonia Gandhi assembled Saturday a group of veterans and poll strategist Prashant Kishor to plan the party's revival for the 2024 general elections.

Kishor made a detailed presentation at Sonia's 10, Janpath residence — Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra too were present — after which the party president decided to set up a panel to look into his proposals.

Kishor is said to be eager to work with the Congress. The party recently brought in one of his former colleagues as a strate-



Kishor signals may join party; Sonia forms panel to look at his proposals

gist for Karnataka. Sources said the leaders asked Kishor to join the party formally — this would prevent him from working with other parties as a poll consultant, a major concern for a section of the leadership.

Sources said Kishor was open to the idea of joining the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Bypolls: TMC wins Bengal LS, Assembly seats; victories for Congress and RJD too



TMC leader and actor Shatrughan Sinha after winning the Asansol LS bypolls on Saturday. PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A LITTLE over a month after it won elections in four states, the BJP suffered a setback in by-elections to four Assembly and one Lok Sabha seat, the results of which were announced on Saturday. The party could not win any of these elections, including for an Assembly seat in Bihar, where it is in power with the JD(U). In West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra,

candidates of ruling parties emerged victorious.

The Trinamool Congress won both the Asansol Lok Sabha and Ballygunge Assembly seats, a signal that Mamata Banerjee continues to enjoy broad support in the state that she swept last May, even though the margin of the TMC's victory in Ballygunge did come down.

In Asansol, TMC candidate Shatrughan Sinha, a former BJP leader, won a prestige battle against BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

RESPONDS TO LETTER FROM PM

Seek meaningful talks with India, peaceful ties: Shehbaz to Modi

Pak PM says his country is committed to regional peace

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

SEEKING "PEACEFUL and cooperative" ties with India, Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's new Prime Minister, has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, saying this can be achieved through "meaningful dialogue".

The Sunday Express has learnt that in a letter received Saturday, Sharif also said Pakistan remains committed to "regional peace and security".

Sharif, younger brother of former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has replied to a letter which Prime Minister Modi wrote a couple of days ago, shortly after they exchanged messages on Twitter. In his letter, Modi had called for "constructive engagement".



PMs Sharif, Modi exchanged messages on Twitter earlier

In New Delhi, officials read the Pakistani response as "positive".

Ties between the two countries plummeted after the Balakot air strikes following the Pulwama terror attack in February 2019 and the end of J&K's special status under Article 370 in August that year. The two countries have downsized High Commissions and there are no full-time High Commissioners in each other's Capital.

On April 11, hours after Shehbaz Sharif asked him to come forward to address the Kashmir issue so that the two countries could concentrate on tackling poverty and unemployment, Modi congratulated him on his election as Prime Minister and said India desired peace and stability in a region free of terrorism.

"Congratulations to H. E. Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on his election as the Prime Minister of Pakistan. India desires peace and stability in a region free of terror, so that we can focus on our development challenges and ensure the well-being and prosperity of our people," Modi said in a Twitter post.

Responding to this, Shehbaz tweeted: "Pakistan desires peaceful & cooperative ties with India."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

AAP keeps Punjab poll promise, free power up to 300 units a month

Must pay entire amount if over 600 units used in 2 months

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 16

FROM JULY 1, domestic consumers in Punjab will not have to pay for power up to 300 units per month. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann made the announcement as he completed a month in office.

Mann also said that bill arrears up to 2 KW until December 31, 2021, would be waived for all consumers, farmers would continue to get power free, and there would be no change in the power tariff for in-

EXPLAINED Will add to subsidy burden

FREE POWER will substantially increase the subsidy burden on the state. The Punjab government already picks up a Rs 6,000 crore annual subsidy tab for free power to farmers, and Rs 4,000 crore for charging nearly 22 lakh SC/BC/BPL families less.

dustrialists. For many domestic consumers however, receiving the benefits of free power will be contingent on restricting their consumption below 600 units for every billing cycle of two months. Therefore, anyone who consumes more than 600 units will be billed for the entire consumption, not just for the excess above 600 units.

This condition will not apply to Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, Below Poverty Line (BPL), and freedom fighters consumers, who will get 600 units

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Meet the man who has the most unenviable job in Sri Lanka: Ali Sabry, Finance Minister



NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN
COLOMBO, APRIL 16

AS SRI Lanka's Justice Minister, Ali Sabry had to defend his government's decision not to allow burial of Muslims who died of Covid. There was stiff criticism from the community, even his family, but he put aside his own religious beliefs.

Now, the 51-year-old Sabry, a lawyer, is his country's new Finance Minister, assigned the Herculean task of putting a de-railed economy back on the rails.

He replaced Basil Rajapaksa who resigned earlier this month along with the rest of the cabinet — this was a move by Basil's brothers, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, to appoint fresh faces in the hope of placating the angry people on the streets demanding that the ruling family "go home".

Hours after his surprise appointment, Sabry sent in his res-



Sabry: Need to fire fight immediately

ignation.

In an interview with The Sunday Express at his law chambers in a quiet lane of Colombo's Kollupitiya, Sabry said that de-

spite his own reservations, he decided to continue in his new assignment as a national duty.

"I thought I am not an economist, I am not familiar with this area. So I thought somebody who is more suited would be ideal to do the job. That's why I resigned. I waited three to four-five days, and in this crucial time, we appealed to anyone (to become the Finance Minister). But no one was coming forward. And then I thought at this given time, so many things are at stake, we need to protect the institutions, and we need somebody to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

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FROM PAGE ONE

Sonia steps in

Congress — in the past, he consistently denied any such plan. The meeting gave two messages: Sonia, who had taken a back seat and was planning to relinquish charge once again this August-September, wants to put in place a mechanism to try and revive the party's fortunes; and, the Congress has finally accepted that it needs external help to find its feet again. Some of the leaders said Kishor told the meeting he was ready to join the Congress without expectations and demands but wanted his road map implemented to help strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

Sources said he wants the Congress to concentrate on some 370 Lok Sabha constituencies, nuance its political messaging, revamp its communication apparatus and address certain organisational weaknesses. Apart from the Gandhis, the meeting was attended by senior leaders A K Antony, Mallikarjun Kharge, Digvijaya Singh, Ajay Maken, Mukul Wasnik, Jairam Ramesh, Ambika Soni and K C Venugopal. Barring Wasnik, none of the G-23 leaders were invited to the meeting.

Some of the Congress leaders said what Kishor said in his presentation were "known facts" but agreed that the party needed a focused approach. "With graphs and all, he was telling us about where we have lost our votes... how we deteriorated over the years... region specific and state specific," one leader said.

Others were upset with the idea of bringing in Kishor. "A 137-year-old party of Gandhi, Nehru and Patel has been outsourced. This is the biggest insult that you can heap upon yourself, showing that you are incompetent and disliked by the people so you have to bring in somebody who purely works for money," one leader remarked.

The G-23 leaders were annoyed that none of them, barring Wasnik, had been called to the meeting. "So, all those gestures of reconciliation and promises of inclusive and collective thinking were a sham. It exposes the hypocrisy of the leadership. This (involvement of Kishor) may further deepen the divide and only time will tell whether it will be helpful or totally counter-productive," a leader said.

Venugopal said a decision on Kishor's suggestions, including on whether he will join the party, will be known in a week. "Prashant Kishor has made a detailed presentation for the 2024 election strategy. It needs some detailed discussion and the Congress president will set up a small group to discuss this entire presentation. That group will submit a report within a week's time for a final decision," he said.

Asked whether Kishor will join the party or will be its strategist, he said all details will be known within a week.

Kishor suggested that the party should contest alone in a few states where it is strong and has remained either in the first or second position in previous elections.

The meeting comes against the backdrop of feverish talk in the party — and much opposition too — on bringing in Kishor for election strategising. He has had many meetings with Rahul and Priyanka but the decision by Sonia to invite him for a presentation before the group of senior leaders signals that the party is serious about working with him.

A section of the party wants him for the Gujarat campaign but he is said to be insisting on the induction of Naresh Patel, chairman of the Shree Khodalldham Trust which manages the temple of Goddess Khodiyar, the patron deity of the Leuva Patel community, near Rajkot. But Saturday's meeting indicates that the party wants him to play a role beyond Gujarat. Some party leaders claim Kishor wants Patel to be projected as the party face in the Gujarat Assembly elections.

Kishor has had a volatile relationship with the Congress. In the middle of last year, he met the Gandhis with a proposal for revival of the Congress but many of the senior leaders were not warm to the idea of handing him the charge of strategising.

In December, he hit out at the Congress, arguing that its leadership of the Opposition is not the "divine right of an individual, especially when the party has lost more than 90 per cent elections in the last 10 years". Let Opposition leadership, he had said, be decided "democratically."

Bypolls

by a massive margin of 3,03,209 votes. The seat had been won by Babul Supriyo for the BJP in 2014 and 2019, but the former Union minister switched to the TMC in September 2021, and became its candidate in the April 12 Ballygunge Assembly by-election.

Supriyo won the seat in South Kolkata by a margin of 20,228 votes, winning 51,199 votes. The CPM's Saira Shah Halim got 30,971 votes and finished second. The BJP's Keya Ghosh got 13,220 votes and lost her deposit.

In Bihar, the RJD took back the Bochaha Assembly seat in Muzaffarpur district after over two decades. The EBC Mallah leader Mukesh Sahani's Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), which was ousted from the NDA recently, celebrated the result, saying "its purpose of defeating BJP was served".

The Bochaha seat was with the VIP, and the by-election was

triggered by the death of its MLA Musafir Paswan. The RJD candidate Amar Kumar Paswan defeated the BJP's Baby Kumari by a margin of 36,653 votes, while the VIP's Geeta Kumari got 29,279 votes. Paswan, who joined the RJD recently, is the son of Musafir Paswan.

Amid a public fracas between the BJP and Shiv Sena, the victory of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidate in Maharashtra's Kolhapur North Assembly seat came as a relief to the ruling alliance and a setback to the BJP. The Congress's Jaysree Jadhav emerged victorious with a big margin of over 19,000 votes. Jadhav, the wife of deceased Congress MLA Chandrakant Jadhav, defeated Satyajit Kadam of the BJP.

A section of the Shiv Sena was initially not keen on supporting the Congress candidate but relented after directions from Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. As the result was known, the Sena mocked state BJP president Chandrakant Patil, who had said he would quit politics and go to the Himalayas in the event of defeat for the party's candidate.

Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said "the victory is creditable in the face of false charges being raked up by BJP against MVA leaders and its attempt to defame the government... All the three constituencies of MVA who fought unitedly have set a good example... This should be replicated across Maharashtra."

In Chhattisgarh, the ruling Congress won the Khairagarh seat in Rajnandgaon district by a margin of over 20,000 votes. The BJP candidate came second, while NOTA got the third highest votes. The seat was held by Devvrat Singh, who belonged to the royal family in Khairagarh. Formerly with the Congress, he had won the seat on a Janta Congress Chhattisgarh Jogi ticket.

Both the BJP and Congress had fielded candidates from the OBC community. The Congress's Yashoda Verma won 87,640 votes against the BJP's Komal Janghel, who got 67,481 votes. The JCCJ candidate got only 1,218 votes.

AAP promise

free in all cases. "If they utilise more than 600 units, they will pay only for those units," Chief Minister Mann said. The free power ceiling for these categories of consumers is currently 200 units. The Chief Minister also announced an incentive for bigger consumers to cut their consumption.

"I have a request for well-to-do families," he said. "If they can reduce consumption by up to 600 units in two months, they will get 600 units of power free." Punjab, Mann said, will make power the cheapest in the country for consumers of all categories. "The Chief Minister of Delhi has made power cheapest in the country. That is why we have taken guidance from him; sent officials to him to take advice," he said, referring to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal.

"The money that you save on power, you can spend on your children. Your life will become easier. We will fulfill each and every election promise over the next five years. We will save the exchequer money and return it to the people," Mann said.

In June 2021, Kejriwal had first promised 300 units of free power every month to consumers in Punjab, on the lines of Delhi. Consumers in Punjab were at the time paying the most for power in the country.

There are 73.80 lakh domestic power consumers in the state. Nearly 62.25 lakh — almost 85 per cent — consume up to 300 units per month. The government's subsidy bill on this account is expected to cross Rs 5,500 crore annually.

The free power bill for farmers amounts to Rs 6,000 crore per annum. The subsidy bill for 21.83 lakh domestic SC/BC/BPL families comes to about Rs 4,000 crore. This group of beneficiaries pays only Rs 1.19 per unit of electricity up to a load of 7 KW.

Former Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi had cut power tariffs by Rs 3 per unit in November last year. He had said that 100 units of power would be charged at Rs 1.19 per unit for all domestic consumers. (It was Rs 4.19 per unit then.) Thereafter, consumption between 100 and 300 units was billed at Rs 4 per unit instead of Rs 7. For more than 300 units, the charges were Rs 5.76 per unit against the earlier rate of Rs 8.76 per unit.

In its first tariff order issued recently, the AAP government had retained these tariffs.

PM Modi

is an important formula for Ek

Bharat, Shresth Bharat," he said.

He said Ram kathas are organised in different parts of the country. "Be it in whatever language or dialect, the spirit of Ram katha binds, unites one in the devotion to the Lord. This is the strength of the Indian faith, our spirituality, our culture, our traditions. This is what, even in the troubled period of slavery, unified different sections, different classes to come together to resolve for the freedom of the nation... strengthened efforts".

"In spite of the changing circumstances over thousands of years, India has remained unshakeable and resolute. The flow of our faith and culture is of sabbhav (harmony), of sambhav (equality), of samavesh (inclusivity). Thus, when the time came for good to conquer evil, Lord Ram, in spite of being capable and able, took everyone along, unified everyone, people of all composition, small and large beings, took their help. And after bringing together all, he finished this task — this is Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayas. His life is the best evidence of this, of which Hanumanji is an important part... We have to come together with this spirit, to achieve our resolve for the nation and to make it shine brighter," he said.

He said a "mini-Japan" was taking shape in the Saurashtra cities of Jamnagar, Rajkot and Morbi with specialised industrial hubs creating jobs. He praised the Kathiawad region for emerging as a power centre, with its tourism and pilgrimage centres.

Recalling his long association with Morbi, Modi said the Machchhu dam failure in August 1979 had led to flooding and deaths. "When the earthquake came in Bhuj, Kutch (2001), the lessons learnt from the Morbi incident, the experience, came to use. The way Kutch has flourished after the earthquake goes to show how Gujarat has the strength to turn disasters into opportunities, as learnt from Morbi. Today, be it ceramics manufacturing, or clocks, Morbi has become an industrial hub for these. Before the Machchhu dam, all one could see in all four directions in Morbi were brick kilns and big chimneys. Today, it is said that on one side there is Morbi, on the other side Rajkot and on the third side Jamnagar."

"Jamnagar's brass industry, Rajkot's engineering industry and Morbi's clock and ceramic industries have become like a triumvirate... seems like a new mini-Japan has been established," he said.

MHA proposal

level, he/she will not be empaneled for central deputation. MHA sources said that due to the existing rules, most IPS officers come on central deputation only at the IG level, leading to severe shortage at the SP and DIG levels. Most states don't relieve SPs and DIGs for central deputation as they have enough vacancies at these levels. Since there are fewer posts at the IG and above levels, these officers are then sent to the Centre.

Sources in the IPS said the Centre was taking a short cut that would hurt the services. "IPS officers at the SP and DIG levels are not coming to the Centre because the states are not relieving them... Why should an IPS officer miss a chance to serve at the Centre at a senior level because the state did not allow him to go? Also, this may be counter-productive. If the states don't relieve the officers, there would be no further empanelment. The Centre will eventually not get enough officers at the IG and above levels as well," said a senior IPS officer.

Sources said the situation has arisen due to the then A B Vajpayee government's decision to reduce the size of new IPS batches as part of its cost-cutting measures. From 80-90 new officers, the IPS batches were cut to 35-40 officers (in 1999-2002, the average stood at 36). On the other hand, an average of about 85 IPS officers retire every year. "While the number of districts in some states has doubled in a decade or so, the availability of officers was cut to one-third," said a former MHA official.

In 2009, there were over 1,600 vacancies against a sanctioned strength of over 4,000 IPS officers. The then Manmohan Singh government tried to correct this anomaly by restoring the earlier intake. The IPS batches were increased to as much as 150 — in 2020, the intake was 200. As on January 1, 2020, there were 908 vacancies against a sanctioned strength of 4,982.

Earlier, most states, including those with NDA governments like Bihar, criticised the Centre's proposal to change the IAS and IPS service rules, calling

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Seek meaningful talks with India, peaceful ties: Shehbaz to Modi

Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes including Jammu & Kashmir is indispensable. Pakistan's sacrifices in fighting terrorism are well-known. Let's secure peace and focus on socio-economic development of our people."

Modi's congratulatory tweet was similar to the letter he sent to Imran Khan in August 2018 when he became Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Congratulating Khan on his assumption of charge, Modi had expressed the hope that the smooth transition of govern-

ment in Pakistan would strengthen and cement the people's belief in democracy. He recalled their telephone conversation in which they spoke of their shared vision to bring peace, security and prosperity in the subcontinent to make it "free of terror and violence", and to focus on development. They had spoken in July 2018, days after it became clear that Khan looked set to be Prime Minister.

With Shehbaz Sharif taking charge, New Delhi is watching developments in Islamabad,

Rawalpindi and Lahore with "cautious optimism" for a headway in bilateral ties.

Top sources said the change in regime may offer a "diplomatic opening". According to sources in the strategic establishment, the implications may be far-reaching.

Emerging from the shadow of his elder brother Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz, the PML-N president, is known to be close to the Pakistan Army — he was Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province. The Sharif family has been an advocate of

better ties with India.

Officials pointed out that the core concerns of the two countries remain the same, and Shehbaz is well placed to resume the bilateral conversation. Better trade ties with India could provide the much-needed boost to Pakistan's economy. Known to be focused on infrastructure projects — construction of roads, bridges and flyovers and transport projects in Pakistan Punjab — Shehbaz is keen to deliver before the next Pakistan elections in 2023.

Stone-throwing in Delhi on Hanuman Jayanti, six policemen among injured

other. They damaged public property and torched vehicles," a senior police officer said.

Senior officers rushed to the spot and additional forces were called in, said police. "Police tried to control the crowd during which several personnel were injured," an officer said.

On Saturday night, the area had been locked down, roads were barricaded, and police in riot gear had been deployed in large numbers. The roads were littered with glass shards, bricks, and stones. A burnt out shell of a scooter lay on the road.

Auto parts mechanic Akash Thakur (20), said he had parked his bike and was headed to join the Shobha Yatra that was passing through Block B, near Kushal Cinema, when the clashes broke out.

"I ran for my life. When I came back to where I had parked my bike, I found it was missing. We were celebrating peacefully," Thakur said.

Mastan (27), a resident of Block C, said he was out buying fruits at the time. He claimed that those in the rally raised slogans such as "Bharat mein rehna hoga toh Jai Shri Ram kehna hoga."

He also alleged that some people carrying saffron flags had tried to enter a mosque, and that the violence had esca-

lated because the police presence in the area is usually thin.

"The stone pelting took place from both sides. We tried to stop the clashes, appealed for peace," Mastan said.

Cab driver Ajay Kumar (27) said he sustained injuries to his leg as he fled the violence. "I had come to check on my parents when I heard news of a clash. There was fierce stone-pelting, and while I managed to escape from the area, my Swift Dzire car was destroyed by the mob. How will I earn my living now?" he said.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal condemned the violence and appealed for calm. "The incident of stone pelting during a Shobha Yatra in Delhi's Jahangirpuri is condemnable. There should be strict action against those who are to blame. I appeal to everyone — hold each other's hand and maintain peace," he tweeted.

Kejriwal said he had spoken to Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal. "He assured that all steps are being taken to ensure peace and that guilty will not be spared," the Chief Minister said.

In a press release, the L-G's office said: "L-G has condemned the incidents of violence and stone pelting in the National Capital as unfortunate and said that none behind

these activities will be spared. He took stock of the situation along with CP, Delhi and has appealed to the people to maintain peace...and cooperate with the police in maintaining law and order..."

BJP leader Kapil Mishra said the incidents in Jahangirpuri should be treated as a terrorist attack. He alleged that the area was known to harbour "Bangladeshii infiltrators", and that people had been mobilised for the 2020 Delhi riots from the area. "They should be identified and their homes should be bulldozed," he said.

Manoj Tiwari, the BJP MP from North East Delhi, said, "There has been stone pelting in Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Hanuman Jayanti... This incident did not occur all of a sudden; it is a conspiracy. Police should immediately conduct a probe and take strictest action against the culprits. Though the situation is getting back to normal... there should be a thorough probe on who are the culprits, where the stones came from... Their houses should be checked for weapons, and their IDs. I can say with confidence that several incidents are taking place through a conspiracy. I would also request Chief Minister Kejriwal that this is not the

time to shirk responsibility, but to work collectively and step forward to punish the culprits. Please maintain harmony."

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said the violence was "not a coincidence but a huge conspiracy". "The culprits... should be punished and Delhi Police will definitely ensure that. I will speak to the Home Minister too. But the question arises that in several unauthorised colonies of Delhi — whether it is Jahangirpuri or Jamuna Paar — Bangladeshis and Rohingyas are staying illegally in large numbers and the Delhi government is giving them electricity and water connections. The Delhi government is answerable as to why they are providing protection to such people."

The Delhi Police Commissioner said on Twitter: "In today's incident in NW District, the situation is under control. Adequate additional force has been deployed in Jahangirpuri & other sensitive areas. Senior officers have been asked to remain in field and closely supervise the law & order situation & undertake patrolling. Strict action will be taken against rioters. Citizens are requested to not to pay heed to rumours and fake news on social media."

it an attack on the federal structure of the Constitution.

Ali Sabry

govern. And talk to the IMF, talk to the Indian government, you need somebody to represent your country and your nation. So, with reluctance, I thought that I will take my resignation, and do my level best," he said.

He resigned because "there was a lot of pressure" from his family members not to accept the appointment. "Also, a lot of people were talking about whether I was the right fit for this job. At the beginning, I thought it better to offer the job to someone else who is better." But no one came forward. "This is not the time to just shy away from responsibility. You put your image and your personal glory and personal comfort on the side and do the job for the nation. It's the nation's call," he said.

The task is unenviable. Sri Lanka has a crippling dollar shortage and cannot import many of the essential goods that it needs for people's daily needs including milk, fuel, rice and medicines. As of April 12, the country had temporarily suspended repayment of all external debts, totalling about \$51 billion. And it has appealed to Sri Lankans living abroad to send remittances home to help the country tide over the crisis.

"It is a difficult task, most

challenging because Sri Lanka has never had this kind of economic crisis since independence. I understand the important thing is to prevent it from deteriorating further, at least to arrest it until some proper decisions are made. So we need to fire fight immediately, protect the vulnerable here and then find a way for the balance of payment crisis until normalcy returns," said Sabry, a friend of President Rajapaksa and, until recently, head of his personal legal team.

"It's not about me, it's about the country," he said. "We need to protect the institutions, the central bank, banking system, its credibility, its association with payment gateways, friendly relationships with international multilateral organisations, foreign countries. These need to be protected and salvaged, at least for the time being."

Being a lawyer, he said, what was helping him was his "skill to analyse and present a case and also to listen".

Sabry, whose religious identity sits uneasily with some of the actions of this government, had resigned once before as Justice Minister over the appointment of a controversial Buddhist monk, affiliated to the extremist Buddhist group Bodhiu Bala Sean, as head of a presidential task force constituted to study a proposal for "one country, one law". The ap-

pointment raised concerns among Sri Lanka's minorities. The monk, Galagodaatte Gnanasara, had been arrested for anti-Muslim violence, for a week, and was released on bail. He was convicted later for contempt of court, but received a Presidential pardon.

Rajapaksa refused to accept his resignation even at that time, and Sabry continued, after telling the media then that the matter was "in limbo".

Asked about how he views his government's position on minorities, he said, "I am working hard to restore order, restore stability, restore supply lines and protect the rest of the economy, and if we divide ourselves in terms of race, religion, or anything of that sort, it is going to be even more difficult. I hate any sort of division, wherever it comes from. This is not time for divisions, this is time for unity, this is time to put a strong united effort to protect our country."

All over the world, and even in the most liberal Western democracies, he said, "some people will try to ignite differences among races and religions for their political survival. That's been there since time immemorial, but the majority should understand that these are short-term divisive tactics that will not work. No country can progress unless you think as a country. There is no solution that is separate for each and every one of us.

People should understand that."

He said Sri Lanka needs bridge financing of \$3-4 billion to tide over the next 6-9 months to pay its import bills. He said it was "too premature" to say if India was giving an additional \$2 bn, but "the indications are positive" and "Indians have clearly indicated they will stand by Sri Lanka until it stands on its feet again, and normal life can commence... India had been a true friend in need".

The next steps, Sabry said, in the medium-term priority, was to focus on the balance of payment crisis, and after that pursue a development agenda that will put the economy back on track.

"We need to be realistic, it has happened over a period of time, we have lived beyond our means," he said, pointing to the several tax cuts implemented by President Rajapaksa. He said possible areas of fiscal consolidation were taxes, realistic prices for commodities.

"Every day, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is incurring a loss of about a million. Some of the state-owned enterprises are continuing to make massive losses. Ultimately, that also has to be funded through public funding. So I think it's time for us to reflect on what is right, and what is good in the long term for the country, and not take just popular decisions," he said.

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Body of student shot dead in Canada brought home

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16



Kartik (top) was cremated on Saturday in Ghaziabad.
Prem Nath Pandey

AMONG THE crowd of family and friends gathered outside Kartik Vasudev's (21) home in Ghaziabad's Rajendra Nagar on Saturday afternoon, waiting for the body to arrive from the airport, were his childhood friends. "He wanted to come back in the summer, we had made a list of things we wanted him to get for us," said Kamal Thakur (21) an engineering student, who studied with Kartik at DAV Public School, Sahibabad. "He was gone only for a few months, but was always in touch. He would give us minute details of his life there... tell us about his assignments, the

purchase of a phone and the EMI he was paying for it," said Chirayu Baliyan (21), who also studied with Kartik. Kartik was shot dead outside a subway station in Canada's Toronto last week. His body was brought home to Ghaziabad



where his funeral was held. "He would ask us to shift there, so we could recreate a mini Rajendra Nagar... He always wanted to go abroad and was living his dream. He had the life he wanted there... a good college, good friends," said Kamal, who

lives in the same neighbourhood. "He was a good student and was always punctual. We would get scolded all the time, but not him. If we were to go somewhere, he would be waiting 15 minutes in advance," Kamal recalled. The body arrived in an ambu-

lance around 4 pm, placed in a coffin inside a box, leaving the family inconsolable as the cover was lifted. He was cremated at Hindon Ghat. "The flight landed around noon, but it took some time to complete the process at the airport. He had gone in January..." said Preeti, Kartik's aunt.

Kartik was studying a global management course at Seneca University. He was travelling to work at a restaurant when he was shot outside Sherbourne subway station. The Toronto Police have arrested a 39-year-old man, Richard Jonathan Edwin, in con-

nection with the murder.

Jitesh Vasudev, Kartik's father, said, "There is no update on the investigation. It's a long weekend there, and the next hearing is expected to be on April 20. We need justice, and we plan on travelling to Canada to make sure everything is on track..."

Gaurav Vasdev, Kartik's cousin, said the motive of the attack was unclear. Edwin had shot another person two days later. "The embassy and Canadian police helped us bring the body back. They fast-tracked the process which usually takes about 15 days."

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Cases cross 400 mark, capital's positivity rate shoots past 5%

EXPRESSNEWSERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

DELHI RECORDED 461 new Covid cases Saturday, up from 366 the previous day. The positivity rate shot up to 5.33% on Saturday when 8,646 tests were done, a dip from 9,275 tests on Friday when a positivity rate of 3.95% was recorded.

The number of Covid cases has been on the rise over the past few days. While 299 cases were recorded on April 13, the number increased to 325 on April 14, and further to 366 on April 15. A week ago, on April 9, the num-

ber of fresh cases stood at 160, when the positivity rate was 1.55% and 10,312 tests were done.

The number of active cases a week ago was 581, less than half the current number of active cases (1,262).

Meanwhile, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia Saturday said cases may have been rising, but there is no need to worry as hospitalisation is low. He reiterated that instructions have been issued to schools to follow the government's SoP if they detect any case. "There are only six Covid patients admitted at Lok Nayak hospital," he said.

District authorities have ramped up testing, contact tracing and vaccination campaigns. Officials said random Covid testing will restart at Metro stations and places that see high footfall like markets, bus stops and railways stations after the DDMA meeting on April 20.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday had said that the capital has increased its resources to be able to handle an increase in Covid cases.

There are 1,262 active cases in the city, going by the Delhi government health bulletin. A total of 772 Covid positive persons are in home isolation, while 59 peo-

ple, including suspected Covid positive patients, are admitted to hospitals. Of the 29 Covid positive patients admitted to hospitals, 11 are in intensive care units, and eight are on oxygen support. A total of 27 patients admitted to hospitals are from the city, and two are from outside Delhi. The city recorded two deaths from the infection Saturday. No deaths were recorded on April 13, 14 and 15.

A total of 9,508 people received a dose of the vaccine over the past 24 hours. Of these, a total of 5,250 were precaution or booster doses, while 1,724 people received their first shot, and 2,534 people took the second dose.

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- Facility of DBT has ensured protection of economic interest of the poor & needy amidst challenges of pandemic

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- Under Pradhan Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana, accidental insurance cover of ₹2 lakh provided at a premium of ₹12 per annum- 28.19 crore people enrolled
- Under Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, life insurance cover of ₹2 lakh provided at a premium of ₹330 per annum - 12.66 crore people enrolled
- Atal Pension Yojana provides guaranteed monthly pension after 60 years of age, over 4 crore people enrolled

Funding the Unfunded

- Under Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana, loans to the tune of ₹18.60 lakh crore provided through 34.42 crore loan accounts of entrepreneurs
- For setting up of greenfield enterprises under Stand-up India Scheme, loan of ₹14.5 thousand crore disbursed to 1.35 lakh SC/ST and women entrepreneurs
- Pradhan Mantri SVANidhi Yojana provides easy micro-credit to street vendors; 30 lakh street vendors received credit amounting to ₹3.2 thousand crore



“ Our development parameter is very simple. It is about how the poorest of the poor can benefit from development. The upliftment of the poor is our priority and the poor is central focus of our economic agenda ”
- Narendra Modi

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VACCINATIONS IN
LAST 24 HOURS

9,508

PATIENTS IN HOSPITAL:

OXYGEN SUPPORT

VENTILATOR SUPPORT

DELHI TOTAL
CASES

18,68,033

April 15

April 16

Total

	Total	Vacant
HOSPITAL BEDS	9,735	9,674
ICU BEDS	2,197	2,176

	Cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
April 15	366	209	0	9,275
April 16	461	269	2	8,646
Total	1,262*	18,40,611	26,160	3,75,49,472

*Total active cases in Delhi

	Apr 15	Apr 16
NOIDA		
Cases	43	70
Deaths	0	0
GURGAON		
Cases	150	171
Deaths	0	0

COMMUNAL CLASHES

At violence-hit Jahangirpuri, a common refrain: 'We live in peace, outsiders ruined mahaul'

ANAND MOHAN J & MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

STREETS OUTSIDE a mosque in Jahangirpuri wore a deserted look, shops were shuttered, and the streetlight illuminated a chain of men standing guard through the night.

But it wasn't just the mosque they said they were protecting; the men said they were also watching over a Kali Mata mandir nearby.

Sajid Saifi, an electronics shop owner who lives in the area, said: "Hindus and Muslims have always lived together here. I have eaten prasad at this temple and Hindus celebrate with us on our festivals. This has never happened before; outsiders have ruined the peace."

Jahangirpuri's block B and C, where the communal clashes took place, is home to a working class population including fish sellers, mobile repair shops and clothes retailers.

Hours after the violence, advocate Shiv (35) sat outside his friend Amir's home. "We all became friends because our father and grandfathers have been friends. Some from the rally tried to climb the mosque; I feel bad seeing this. It was just yesterday that I helped distribute *sharbat* and water among my Muslim friends, and today outsiders tried to ruin our bond. We will not allow it to happen," he said.

Pappu Kumar (17) was also out on Saturday night, in solidarity with his friends, Aneez and



Security tightened at Jahangirpuri, Saturday; (left) Shiv Kumar (extreme left) said outsiders tried to ruin their bond.

Praveen Khanna/Anand Mohan J

Nafees. "I celebrated Holi with them. It feels strange that something like this happened," he said.

His friend Nafees said, "We also treat the Kali Mata mandir like our own. I am on talking terms with the Pandit... I say *Ram Ram* when I see him," he said.

However, there is palpable fear in the area. Kalu (50), a fish seller, held his 11-year-old daughter and watched the police vans zip past his home. He was supposed to drive to a fish market in Haryana and buy 12

quintals of fish like every other day. "I am scared to go out. There is fear that some people want to fight. *Saara mahaul kharab kar diya bahar ke logon ne*," he said.

Working with peace committee: Police

According to police, the 'Shobha Yatra' had police permission. Special CP (law and order of Northern zone) Dependra Pathak said late Saturday night: "The situation is under control. We are going to each house and

requesting all residents to maintain peace and harmony. We are prepared to deal with any rumour mongering or unruly elements. We are in constant dialogue with members of the peace community." He said "a few policemen have been injured and one was shot at".

An officer said there was a deployment of around 50 policemen in Jahangirpuri along with PCRs, MVPs and drones.

Sources said that following clashes in other parts of the country, the DCPs had already been informed by senior officials and the special branch to be on alert. "They were asked to make adequate arrangements during such processions," said an officer.

AAP slams BJP for felicitating 8 who 'attacked' CM home, calls for boycott

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

LEADERS OF the Aam Aadmi Party Saturday hit out at the BJP for felicitating eight men accused of attacking Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence.

Kejriwal, without naming BJP, tweeted, "If someone commits hooliganism in America, he goes to jail, in India he goes to a specific party. If someone molests a girl in Europe, he goes to jail, in India he goes to this party. They will never make good schools. They need lakhs of illiterate goons, thugs and unemployed people for their hate politics. Our country needs to boycott parties that support hooligans, criminals if it actually wants to become a world leader."

He was responding to party MP Raghav Chadha's press conference earlier in the day on the same issue. Chadha said that in the US, if somebody indulges in hooliganism, he is put in jail: "In



AAP MP Chadha called the BJP a 'party of goons'

India, they join the BJP. In European countries, if someone harasses your mothers and sisters, they go to jail. In India, if they do this, they go to BJP!"

Chadha also called the BJP a party of "goons and ruffians". "BJP has become a party of goons and ruffians... We have no qualms in saying that they have become 'Bharat ki Jaahil Party'. Their goons and ruffians attack AAP leaders. They have attacked and vandalised the home of Arvind Kejriwal, who is the elected Chief Minister of Delhi, who is world

famous, a former Income Tax Commissioner and an IIT alumnus. The BJP calls them... felicitates them, honours them with *siropa* (robe) and shawl, clicks photos of them and issues press releases," he Chadha. He also cited instances of BJP members "vandalising the home of Deputy CM Manish Sisodia" and "entering Delhi Jal Board's underground reservoir in Sonia Vihar".

Chadha also said the BJP government did not want to build schools or provide employment as they needed "illiterate goons for their army". "BJP will never build good schools and colleges for you. They won't do it because they want an army of illiterate goons. If people get access to education, how will BJP get illiterate goons? They will also not produce employment opportunities for you. If BJP does this, how will scores of unemployed ruffians and goons join their army?" he said.

"The question in front of us today is, do we want to make India a lawless state like Pakistan or Sri Lanka? Or do we want to

make it a developed nation where our competition is with the most developed countries like European countries, the US and Japan?" said Chadha.

He said the country will progress only when "people boycott a party like the BJP... and call them traitors". "Today, if the BJP is most scared of anybody, it's Arvind Kejriwal. Their lumpen elements are most scared of Kejriwal's education model," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia also spoke out against the BJP and appealed to people to boycott those who "engage in bullying and petty politics".

"The BJP not only protects goons and thugs, but also treats them like heroes, honours them at its office. The BJP's true face is out in the open, its role models are gangsters and goons, not freedom fighters and martyrs. It is high time... its politicians are boycotted and the country starts discussing science, education and employment," he said.

Noida Police on high alert after clashes in Northwest Delhi, step up security

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, APRIL 16

NOIDA POLICE remained on high alert following clashes between two communities in Northwest Delhi on Saturday evening. Shortly after the incident, Prashant Kumar, ADG Law and Order, stated that an alert has been issued to state police departments to maintain vigil against anti-social elements.

On late Saturday evening, patrolling was carried out in all three zones — Noida, Central



Officers also took out a flag marches in crowded areas

and Greater Noida. Officers also took out a flag march in crowded areas.

Police are maintaining security measures in metro stations, markets and areas with mixed

population.

Security will also be stepped up on routes where processions will be taken out in order to prevent any clashes or law and order situation, said police.

Areas where history sheeters have been found active are also being monitored, officials said.

An appeal has been issued to the public to immediately inform police in case of any anti-social activity that could disturb peace in the region.

Similar police activities will be carried out in different parts of West UP as well, officials said.



NOIDA DAY



ADVERTORIAL

Noida, the smart hub of the future

Investors such as Samsung, TCS, Microsoft and Data Center, among others, have made substantial investments and vouch for the ease of doing business

ZIPPING highways connecting cities across north India, an airport that connects the world to the heart of Uttar Pradesh, Metro corridors for ease of living, manufacturing and knowledge hubs and a smart city with character, Noida has emerged as a sustainable and growth-oriented model for the future.

Noida has attracted the most investment among cities in the last four-and-a-half years. It received nearly Rs 64,000 crore in investments, which helped it create more than 4.5 lakh jobs. According to data, large domestic and international investors have put a lot of money into the market over the last few years.

Noida is governed by three authorities: the Noida Industrial Development Authority, the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority and the Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority, all of which are located in Gautam Budh Nagar district. In the last one-and-a-half years, the three development bodies have sold almost 3,000 acres of land to investors from across the country and beyond. The three authorities have indeed made it easier for businesses to invest in Noida. In the previous four-and-a-half years, the Noida Authority created 1.5 lakh jobs by investing roughly Rs 22,000 crore. It is now planning to build a smart village.

Investors such as Samsung, TCS, Microsoft and Data Center, among others, have made substantial investments and vouch for the ease of doing business. The city has purchased more than 39,146 acres of land for Rs 2,500 crore in order to build mega-data processing centres. Microsoft has purchased 60,000 acres of land on its own, with ambitions to invest Rs 1,000 crore in the IT industry. INGK Company has also purchased 47,833 acres of land for an investment of Rs 5,500 crore in the real estate industry.

Through MSME Park, Apparel Park, Toy City and Medical Park, there is a huge investment. The Yamuna Expressway Industrial De-



velopment Authority (YEIDA) is all set to establish new benchmarks with its Film City and Jewar Airport, the biggest in India and perhaps South Asia.

YEIDA has given 150 acres of land in Noida for the Apparel Export Cluster, paving the way for Uttar Pradesh's first textile park. With a projected investment of Rs 8,365.73 crore, 152 companies are scheduled to set up units within the textile park, employing around five lakh workers. In the first phase, work on 91 textile and apparel facilities is well under way, with production set to begin soon. Two lakh people will be employed after these 91 textile and apparel companies are completed.

The state government's objective, according to industry department sources, is to create a global garment hub that can tap into the lucrative international textile supply chain, which now includes Bangladesh, Vietnam and Indonesia as significant producers.

According to sources, in the last four years, 66 prominent entrepreneurs have submitted bids to invest Rs 8715.16 crore in the textile and apparel sector. Twelve textile factories have already been established, with the development of 18 more currently under way. The goal is to get the 18 textile facilities up and running this year. Furthermore, produc-

tion in 17 additional textile facilities is anticipated to begin next year.

The Uttar Pradesh government intends to build more integrated textile parks in the state's major textile manufacturing districts, including Meerut, Agra, Jhansi, Gorakhpur, Varanasi, Lucknow, and Kanpur divisions. According to exporters, the Apparel Park is likely to attract roughly Rs 2,500 crore in investment and generate an extra 5,000 crore in foreign exchange yearly.

In Sector 24, Noida, an Apparel Training and Design Centre has been established to teach skills to garment factory craftsmen. NAEC plans to build a similar centre in the park to train workers and place them in the garment industry.

In GB Nagar, there are roughly 3,000 garment production units in operation, employing approximately 10 lakh people directly or indirectly. The district produces readymade garments worth Rs 30,000 crore annually, of which Rs 25,000 crore is exported and the remainder is sold domestically.

The new Noida International Airport in Jewar is a significant benefit for commercial and residential real estate in Noida. Greater Noida and the Taj Expressway. It will alter the dynamics of real estate in the NCR, bringing Noida at par with Gurugram. Land prices,

apartment and office rents in the region are currently much lower than in Gurugram, and the gap will close significantly if the airport is completed on time. As a result, the rates will begin to move as well.

Despite Noida's stronger infrastructure and access from Delhi, corporates and MNCs have traditionally favoured Gurugram over Noida due to its closeness to Indira Gandhi International Airport. This disparity is set to vanish over the next three years. The real estate market in Noida has already begun to reflect expectations of a property boom. The sectors of Greater Noida and Noida closest to Jewar are the main beneficiaries of this.

In the next few years, the Jewar airport will play a critical role in the overall growth of the Noida and Greater Noida sectors. The airport will provide much-needed connectivity to these locations, boosting confidence in real estate across asset classes.

Due to the seamless connectivity and high-end infrastructural developments like Film City, Jewar Airport will attract a new section of corporate class, including HNIs and UHNIs, who will be evaluating the city for long-term income opportunities. In this context, real estate will emerge as one of the brighter options. As a new class of corporate buyers and investors enters the market, demand for residential and commercial real estate will change dramatically. With multiple firms exhibiting interest in the region for investment in the electronics sector, as well as the forthcoming international airport, an electronics and mobile accessories hub near the region could become a reality.

In addition, compared to the Yamuna Expressway, where the airport is being built, Faridabad is already a populated micro market. As a result, the former has a better probability of appreciating than the latter. So Noida is now an incubator of possibilities and with its futuristic outlook and apt resource mobilisation is set to drive transformation across North India.

PARAMOUNT
GUIDED BY TOMORROW

Paramount Group's projects are ready for possession



NCR-based real estate developer Paramount Group's residential projects are ready for possession, like Paramount Golf-foreste located opposite Zeta sector, Greater Noida. It offers villas, studio apartments, lockable office spaces and apartments which are open to sales for interested buyers. Paramount Emotions, located in Greater Noida West, and Paramount Floraville, in Sector 137, Expressway, have already been delivered and families are already residing there.

The Paramount Group has com-

pleted multiple projects in the pandemic period and expanded to many prime areas and regions. It has developed projects to establish better connectivity and provided homes to thousands of buyers.

The group is offering luxurious villas, studios, apartments and lockable office spaces. Multi-range two-room and three-room apartments are also available for customers at affordable prices.

The group has delivered multiple ready-to-move-in projects in different locations.



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families in NCR*

LIMITED UNITS AVAILABLE

Opposite Zeta Sector, Greater Noida



Actual Image

THE *Villa Royale*

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₹1Crore to ₹1.75 Crore*

📞 83760 77777



Actual Image

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STUDIO
APARTMENTS



₹19 Lakh*

📞 83760 66666



Actual Image

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LOCKABLE
OFFICE SPACES

₹17 Lakh* onwards

📞 83760 55555

*terms & conditions apply



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Disclaimer: All specifications, design, layout conditions are only indicative & some of these can be changed at the discretion of Builder/Architect, these are purely conceptual & constitute no legal offerings. 1 sq. mtr.=10.764 sq.ft. | 1 acre= 4047 sq.mtrs. (approx.)



Member of HARSCO



member of CREDAI

Man kills his wife, son, confesses on WhatsApp group; held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A 40-YEAR-OLD man has been arrested for allegedly killing his wife and son by smothering them in their house in Shahdara district on Saturday afternoon. Police said initial investigation revealed that he was upset owing to a financial crisis as he lost his job during the lockdown.

DCP (Shahdara) R Sathiyasundaram said the incident took place around 3.40 pm. The accused was a chartered accountant, but after losing his job, he had been running a grocery store in the area.

"We were informed about the incident by his parents. We visited his house and found the bodies of his wife on the bed and their 15-year-old son on the second floor," he said.

The father of the accused told police that they had called him to their house for tea. A senior police officer said: "He informed them that he allegedly killed his wife and son. He left the house saying he would commit suicide."

"Later, in a WhatsApp message on the family group, he confessed to allegedly killing his wife and son. He also said he had lost his mind," the officer added.

The boy was a Class IX student, police said, adding that crime and forensic teams have visited the spot to collect evidence.

2 arrested for trying to snatch woman's chain

New Delhi: A day after a senior citizen couple suffered minor injuries in an attempted chain-snatching incident in Outer Delhi's Mianwali Nagar, police arrested two men on Friday night. "The complainant said as he and his wife were taking a stroll, a motorcycle came from behind and the accused tried to snatch his wife's chain. He tried to chase them but fell and suffered injuries," an officer said. ENS

SALUTE THE SOLDIER
27 APR 1964 TO APR 1994
Twenty eight years ago you made the supreme sacrifice for the honour of the Regt and Country while serving in the icy glacier of Siachen. Your heroic deeds epitomize valour and sacrifice that acts as a source of inspiration & strength to us.
GUNNER
TAMIL SELVAN
CO & All Ranks 17 Para Fd Regt (8 RAJPUT)

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: SUNDARGARH
AT/PO- SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020,
E-mail address- serw_sundargarh@yahoo.com
No. Tender Online - RWCCESNG-06 of 2022-23, Letter No. 884 /Dtd. 12.04.2022
e-Procurement NOTICE
1. Type of the Work : Bridge (BSY)
2. Class of Contractor : As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure
3. Time of Completion : As specified in the column-5 of the Annexure
4. Detail Projects : As per Annexure attached
5. Estimated Cost : As specified in the column-4 of the Annexure
6. Other details :
Procurement Officer Bid Identification No. Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From To Last Date & Time of opening of tender Technical Bid Financial Bid
1 Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh RWCCESNG-06 of 2022-23 18.04.2022 11:00 AM 02.05.2022 5:00 PM 30.04.2022 5:00 PM 04.05.2022 11:00 AM Will be intimated separately
Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Sd/-
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Sundargarh
OIPR- 25133/11/0009/2223

उत्तर प्रदेश गन्ना शोध परिषद, शाहजहांपुर
पत्रक: 215-16/सात-17/2022-23 दिनांक: शाहजहांपुर 11 अप्रैल, 2022
ई-निविदा सूचना
उ.प्र. गन्ना शोध परिषद, शाहजहांपुर के लिये पंजीकृत फर्मों से निम्न कार्य हेतु ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र उ.प्र. की ई-प्रक्रियामेंट की वेबसाइट <https://etender.up.nic.in> से प्राप्त एवं देखे जा सकते हैं। निविदा के साथ Earnest money की धनराशि 12,000/- व निविदा मूल्य रु. 590/- FDR/BANK DRAFT/NEFT/RTGS के माध्यम से निदेशक, उ.प्र. गन्ना शोध परिषद, शाहजहांपुर के पक्ष में देय होना अनिवार्य है। NEFT/RTGS द्वारा परिषद के बैंक, बडौदा उ.प्र. ग्रामीण बैंक ब्रान्च-लोधीपुर, शाहजहांपुर के खाता सं.-56800100001699 IFSC Code-BARB0BUPGBX (Fifth character zero) में जमा किया जा सकता है। जिसकी स्कैन कापी अपलोड करना अनिवार्य है। देशद्वारा को फर्म का निर्माता/अधिकृत डीलर प्रमाण पत्र/ पंजीकरण प्रमाण पत्र, आवेदक का पैन नं., जी.एस.टी. के प्रमाण की स्कैन कापी ई-टेंडर के साथ अपलोड करना अनिवार्य होगा।
कार्य का नाम- क्लोरोट्राय निली प्रोल 18.5 प्रतिशत एससो 364 पैक ऑफ 150 एमएल शाहजहांपुर
कार्य की अवधि- 15-20 दिन
ई-निविदा प्राप्त तथा वेबसाइट पर अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय- 26.04.2022, 12.00 बजे तक
निदेशक
उ.प्र. गन्ना शोध परिषद,
शाहजहांपुर

GOVT WELFARE SCHEMES
7 in 10 have availed of PDS scheme; lack of documents occasional hurdle

Ration reaching people, work to be done on direct cash transfer, reveals survey of urban poor

JYOTI MISHRA & CHANDARANI

THE CENTRAL and state governments have introduced various welfare schemes targeted at the poor and the marginalised sections of society — to avail ration, pension, even gas cylinders. In part 4 of this series, Lokniti-CSDS's study on the urban poor of Delhi tries to see the outreach of some popular welfare schemes and whether the targeted groups are indeed getting the benefits they are supposed to.

PDS, Jan Dhan Yojna

The findings from the survey suggest that close to seven in ten (69%) surveyed households have benefited from the Public Distribution System (PDS) scheme through which people get ration at subsidised cost.

Close to a quarter (23%) of households also reported that they opened their accounts under the Jan Dhan Yojna introduced by the BJP-led central government, which helped people avail the benefits of various schemes launched during Covid-19.

During the pandemic, the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana was introduced, which provided Rs 500 to women having a Jan Dhan account. The study found that a mere 9% of households said they got the amount. However, if the household had a Jan Dhan account, amongst them a little over one-fifth said that they got the benefit under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

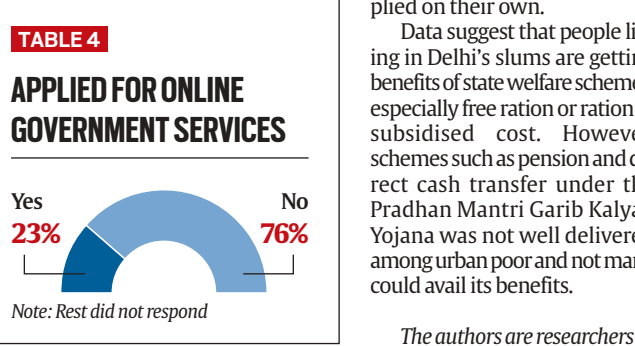
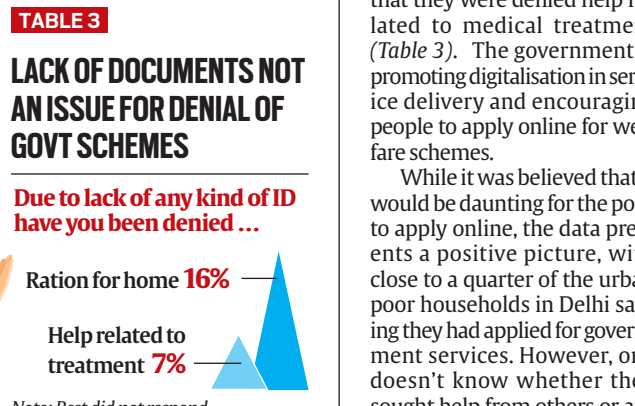
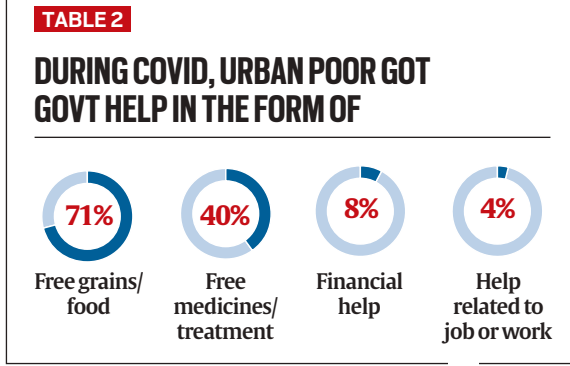
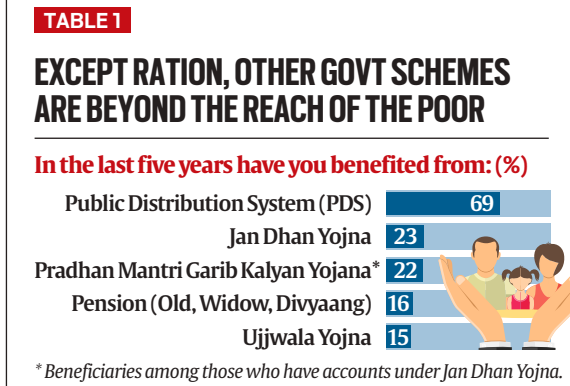
Sixteen percent of households benefited from the pension scheme and 15% received gas cylinders under Ujjwala Yojna, a central government scheme (Table 1).

Though not many urban slum dwellers could avail the benefit of the Direct Cash Transfer by the central government under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana during Covid-19, they got other forms of assistance from the government during the pandemic.

A little over seven in ten



The findings from the survey suggest that close to seven in ten (69%) surveyed households have benefited from the Public Distribution System (PDS). Archive



(71%) households got free ration provided by the government and two-fifths said they received free medicines and treatment. Merely 8% of households got financial help from the government during Covid (Table 2).

benefits of any schemes. However, data shows that lack of proper documents became a hurdle at times in availing these services. Sixteen percent of households in the survey said that they were denied ration due to the lack of identity proof documents and 7% said

that they were denied help related to medical treatment (Table 3). The government is promoting digitalisation in service delivery and encouraging people to apply online for welfare schemes.

While it was believed that it would be daunting for the poor to apply online, the data presents a positive picture, with close to a quarter of the urban poor households in Delhi saying they had applied for government services. However, one doesn't know whether they sought help from others or applied on their own.

Data suggest that people living in Delhi's slums are getting benefits of state welfare schemes, especially free ration or ration at subsidised cost. However, schemes such as pension and direct cash transfer under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana was not well delivered among urban poor and not many could avail its benefits.

The authors are researchers at Lokniti-CSDS, Delhi. For the study, 1,080 people spread across 55 slums covering all 11 districts of Delhi were interviewed using a structured questionnaire by means of face-to-face interview method. The interviews were conducted by trained field investigators for three months (November 2021 to January 2022).

How DLF built colonies in Delhi for aspirational Partition migrants



Among the colonies planned by DLF in the capital was Greater Kailash I and II. Praveen Khanna

ADRIJA ROYCHOWDHURY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16



Kushal Pal Singh, chairman emeritus of DLF

MORE THAN a year before the Partition, Chaudhary Raghendra Singh had already forecast the effect of a large-scale migration into India and especially Delhi. Singh was then working as a transport officer in the Punjab government. He resigned in 1946 and established a company with very small capital called Delhi Land and Finance Ltd (DLF), with the objective of developing areas to give accommodation to the millions of people who would be running from Punjab to Delhi for shelter.

"Delhi was then a sleeping metropolis," said Kushal Pal Singh (93), chairman emeritus of DLF. "There was hardly any demand for housing at that time. There were no takers for land either since no one predicted the influx of Partition migrants yet," added Singh, who is also the son-in-law of Chaudhary Raghendra Singh. He explained that coming from an agricultural background, it was easy for his father-in-law to relate with and convince the farmers, whose land had to be acquired.

Long before the DLF turned Gurgaon from a humble hamlet to one of the fastest growing cities in India, it was in Delhi that the company created some of the city's most opulent neighbourhoods. The company started out with Model Town in North Delhi. Delhi was at that time largely limited to the contours of the old city, and that is where the migrants first came.

Eventually, Chaudhary Raghendra Singh once again envisioned that the growth of New Delhi would happen southwards, on the suburbs of the habitation. Thereafter took birth the South Delhi neighbourhoods of Greater Kailash I, Greater Kailash II, Hauz Khas, Kailash Colony, South Extension and a few others. In the course of a decade, and before the Delhi Development Act of 1957 made land development in Delhi an exclusively government affair, DLF had established a total of 22 colonies in the city.

Kushal Pal Singh recalled that the DLF planned these colonies keeping in mind the growing aspirations of Indians. "We believed that every house would have at least two cars, and hence broad roads of 12-14 metres were planned. The supply of water too was planned with the vision that the needs of every home would grow over time," said Singh.

Singh is aware that the colonies planned by private developers like the DLF were not focused on providing mass housing to migrants, which was being largely managed by the government. "We were targeting the millions of moderately wealthy or affluent sections among the migrants who could pay for rebuilding the lifestyle they had left behind in west Punjab," he said. Manjit Singh Khurana moved to Greater Kailash I in the mid 1960s. He recalled that his father, a well-known businessman of iron, steel and timber in Lahore before the Partition, bought the plot on which his house stands for Rs 25,000.

"We were staying in a plot allotted to us at Khan Market at that time. When my father decided to move to GK I, my mother was particularly unhappy about it, since it was so far away from the main city," he said. "But at that time, we never thought that this area would become so developed and turn into one of the poshest localities." Khurana recalled that GK-I was a largely desolate area at that time, with hardly any markets or other avenues for recreation. "We would go for movies

in Rivoli at Connaught Place and follow it up with dinner at Kake Da Hotel," said the 78-year old.

But the development of colonies in Delhi by DLF was rather short-lived. The Act of 1957 barred all private real estate developers from acquiring land in the city. "The administration had decided that urban development needed to happen on a socialistic pattern. So, it was decided that whatever land was required for development must be acquired by the government under the large-scale land development and acquisition policy and private developers should be given a limited role of construction," said AK Jain, urban planner and former commissioner of planning in the DDA. "The idea was to dispose of properties on a subsidised rate to Economically Weaker Section (EWS) and Low Income Group (LIG) families."

Consequent to the Act, the DLF was virtually out of business and had moved to manufacturing electric motors and batteries, recalled Singh. Subsequently, in the early 1970s, he was asked to take over the company and revive it from its near bankrupt status. Singh at that time was in the Army and was also involved in horse breeding.

"With the government laws against private developers, the company having no money, and I having no knowledge and background in business, I had no idea how to revive DLF," said Singh.

Sometime in the next few days, on a summer afternoon while Singh was resting under a *kikar* tree in the desolate village of Gurgaon, he happened to meet Rajiv Gandhi by a stroke of luck. Gandhi's jeep had broken down and he sat with Singh while it was being repaired. "The entire birth of urban development policy of Gurgaon started under that tree," laughed Singh. In the next two hours, he explained to Gandhi about his vision of turning Gurgaon into a city.

Consequently, and through Gandhi's help, Singh met former chief minister of Haryana, Bhajan Lal, who altered the laws in the state to allow the DLF to step in. Thereafter the millennium city of Gurgaon was built up with the land that the 700-odd farmer families sold to Singh.

A majority of people who moved to Gurgaon were from Delhi, who wished to fulfil their aspirations of a better lifestyle at a lower price. "The creation of Gurgaon exemplified the aspirations of the Delhi middle class at that time," explained Ranjana Sengupta, author of 'Delhi metropolitan: The making of an unlikely city' (2007). "This was an invented city built for those who wanted a mix of a downtown commercial corporate hub and an upper middle-class suburb."

Ammonia in Yamuna up again, water supply hit in capital

New Delhi: Water supply was disrupted in parts of Delhi once again when ammonia levels in the Yamuna river remained high Saturday, according to the DJB. The concentration of ammonia in the river was 7.4 parts per million, seven times the level of around 1 ppm that the DJB's water treatment plants can process.

On Saturday, DJB Chief Engineer Jagdish Kumar Arora wrote to Chief Engineer of Haryana Irrigation Department Sandeep Taneja, asking for "pollution to be stopped immediately" and to "increase/maintain flows". When contacted, Taneja said, "We will sort out the problems of the DJB. These minor problems crop up." ENS

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
JAMMU DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY MEGA PROJECTS DIVISION JAMMU
FRESH NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
e-NIT No. JDA-MP/2022-23/e-NIT/04 Dated 11.04.2022
Executive Engineer, Mega Projects Division Jammu on behalf of Vice Chairman JDA e-bids from the firms dealing in the similar nature of works whose particulars are given below:-

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Approx. Cost	Earnest Money (in Rs.)	Cost of document (in Rs.)	Contract Time	Class of Contractor
1	Outsourcing of facility Management Services involving Housekeeping, Sanitation, Operation and Maintenance including Technical Services (Electrical and Mechanical) for General Bus Stand-cum-Multi Level Car Parking, Jammu	Mega Projects Division	Rate to be quoted by the Contractor for One Month.	100,000/-	Rs.1500/-	Two Years	The Firms Dealing in the similar nature of works.

1. Date of Publishing 11.04.2022
2. The Bidding documents can be seen and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 11.04.2022 (1800Hrs) to 25.04.2022 (1400 Hrs).
3. The Pre-Bid Meeting shall be held in JDA Vikas Bhawan, Rail Head Complex on 20.04.2022 at 12:00 PM.
4. The Bids shall be deposited in electronic form at the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> from 11.04.2022 (1800Hrs) to 25.04.2022 (1400 Hrs).
a. The technical bids received will be opened on 26.05.2022 (1500Hrs).
b. The complete bidding process will be online.
5. Bid documents can be seen at and downloaded from the website <http://jktenders.gov.in> Bid documents contain qualifying criteria for bidder, scope of work, bill of quantities, terms and conditions and other details.
Sd/-
Executive Engineer
Mega Projects Div. JDA
GBS Jammu
DIPU-225-P22

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PMGSY (JKRRDA) JAMMU.
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDERS
E-NIT NO.-CEJ/PMGSY/1050F 2022-23 DATED: 13/04/2022
Chief Engineer, PMGSY (JKRRDA) Jammu on behalf of The Government of Jammu & Kashmir, invites e-tenders on %age Above/Excess (+) OR %age Below/ Loss (-) basis (i.e. on Percentage-Rate Basis) from approved and eligible Contractors registered with JSK State Govt, CPWD, Railways or equivalent or other State Govts up to 5.00 PM on 27.04.2022 for the following work including Defect Liability & Maintenance Period of three years for Stage-I and five years for Stage-II and five years for Bridge/Spaer construction.

S. No	Name of Work/Package No.	Approx. Cost (Rs. in Lakhs)	Estimate (Rs. in Lakhs)	Time Allowed for completion	Class of contractor
1.	Balance work for Construction and Maintenance of road from Pheokan to Pheokan Package No. JK05-99/Phase-VIII, Stage-II, Block Daraul, District Jammu, Length 2.225 Km. Adv. Cost excluding maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 49.08 Lacs	49.08	15.13	02.19	03 Months
2.	Balance work for construction and maintenance of road from Kalsota to Upper Stary, Package No. JK05-99/Phase-VIII, Stage-II, Block Daraul, District Jammu, Length 2.225 Km. Adv. Cost excluding maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 27.28 Lacs	27.28	3.97	31.25	03 Months
3.	Balance Work for Construction and Maintenance (Extension) of road from 1040-101 km 70th to Ucharni Package No. JK12-411 under Regular PMGSY (Roads), 2018-19 Block Kalsokan, District Rajouri, Length 6.300 Kms +1.000 Km) I excluding maintenance but inclusive of GST = Rs. 39.96 Lacs	39.96	4.80	44.76	03 Months

1. [a] The Bidding documents can be downloaded from the website <http://mcpscastenders.gov.in> from 05.55 P.M On 16-04-2022 to 27-04-2022 [5.00PM].
Sd/-
Chief Engineer PMGSY (JKRRDA) Jammu
For and on behalf of The Government of Jammu and Kashmir
DIPU-44D22

9 GOVT & POLITICS

Maya expels Brahmin leader Nakul Dubey from BSP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, APRIL 16

BAHujan SAMAJ Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Saturday expelled former minister and prominent Brahmin leader Nakul Dubey from the party for "indiscipline" and indulgence in "anti-party" activities.

BSP sources said the action was taken following reports that Dubey might "switch over the party".

A former MLA from Lucknow, Dubey is considered a trusted man of party national general secretary Satish Chandra Misra. Dubey had accompanied Misra when the latter had addressed 'Vichar Gosthis' across Uttar Pradesh last year to woo Brahmin voters and develop a "bahichara" between Brahmins and Dalits ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections. Dubey, too, had addressed these rallies.

Dubey was a Cabinet minister in the last Mayawati government between 2007 to 2012.

UK PM ARRIVES IN AHMEDABAD ON APRIL 21, TALKS WITH MODI APRIL 22

Johnson set to discuss ties with PM amid 'threats from autocratic States'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16



Johnson is expected to announce major investments

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson will visit India next week, in the backdrop of Russian invasion of Ukraine that has led to some divergences in Delhi's and London's positions on the crisis.

Johnson, who arrives in Ahmedabad on April 21, is expected to announce major investment in key industries in both the UK and India, boosting jobs and growth at home, as well as new collaboration on cutting-edge science, health and technology.

In New Delhi, he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 22 for bilateral talks "in the face of global economic challenges and threats from autocratic states", a British High Commission statement said.

The High Commission said that Johnson will visit India this

Third time materialising?

BORIS JOHNSON was supposed to come to India for the Republic Day celebrations last year, but the trip was cancelled. He was thereafter expected to come to Delhi in April last year but that visit was

EXPLAINED

also cancelled due to the Delta wave of the pandemic. His visit comes in the backdrop of Russia's invasion on Ukraine and the two sides are expected to talk about Covid-19, Russia-Ukraine conflict and China.

week to "deepen our long-term partnership for peace and prosperity with a fellow leading democracy, in the face of global economic challenges and threats from autocratic states".

In Ahmedabad, Johnson will have a meeting with leading businesses and discuss the UK and India's "thriving commercial, trade and people links", the statement said. This will be the first time a UK Prime Minister

visits Gujarat, India's fifth largest state and ancestral home of around half of the British-Indian population in the UK, it said.

Johnson, who will meet Modi the following day, will hold "in-depth talks on the UK and India's strategic defence, diplomatic and economic partnership, aimed at bolstering our close partnership and stepping up security co-operation in the Indo-Pacific", the British High Commission said.

democracies and friends stick together. India, as a major economic power and the world's largest democracy, is a highly valued strategic partner for the UK in these uncertain times.

"My visit to India will deliver on the things that really matter to the people of both our nations — from job creation and economic growth, to energy security and defence."

Last year, Modi and Johnson had agreed on a UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, announcing more than £530m in investment into the UK and committing to a deeper bilateral relationship across trade, health, climate, defence and security, and connecting our people. India was identified as a priority relationship for the UK in the 2021 Integrated Review and was invited by the UK as a guest to last year's G7 in Carbis Bay.

The statement said he will use the visit to drive progress in the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) negotiations launched earlier this year — a deal with India is predicted to boost "our total trade by up to £28 billion annually by 2035 and increase wages across the UK by up to £3 billion".

Speaking ahead of the visit, Johnson said: "As we face threats to our peace and prosperity from autocratic states, it is vital that

13 Opp leaders issue joint statement against hate speech, communal violence

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

LEADERS OF 13 Opposition parties, including three Chief Ministers, on Saturday came together to speak out against recent incidents of communal violence and hate speech.

They argued that the "silence" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government against those "who propagated bigotry and incited and provoked society through words and actions was an eloquent testimony to the fact that such private armed mobs enjoyed the luxury of official patronage".

The joint statement was issued by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, her Tamil Nadu counterpart and DMK chief MK Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM chief Hemant Soren, RJD chief Tejashwi Yadav and NC chief Farooq Abdullah.

The other signatories included CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury, his CPI counterpart D Raja, Forward Bloc's Debabrata Biswas, RSP's Manoj Bhattacharya, Muslim League's P K Kunhalikutty and CPI(ML) Liberation's Dipanker Bhattacharya.

The statement came on a day Gandhi, in an article in *The Indian Express*, hit out at the government against the politics of polarisation.

"There is much talk from the Prime Minister of acknowledging India's multiple diversities. But the harsh reality is that under his ruling dispensation, the rich diversity that has defined and enriched our society for centuries is being manipulated to divide us and, worse, to harden and get more firmly entrenched," she said in the article.

In the statement urging people to maintain peace and harmony and demanding stringent punishment for perpetrators of communal violence, the Opposition leaders said: "We are

extremely anguished at the manner in which issues related to food, dress, faith, festivals and language are being deliberately used by sections of the ruling establishment to polarise our society."

"We are extremely concerned with the growing incidents of hate speech in the country by people who appear to have official patronage and against whom no meaningful and strong action is being taken. We strongly condemn the recent outburst of communal violence witnessed across several states. We are deeply concerned, as reports indicate that there is a sinister pattern in the areas where these incidents have occurred. Incendiary hate speeches preceded the aggressive armed religious processions unleashing communal violence," the statement said.

The leaders pointed out that "social media and the audio-visual platforms are being misused with official patronage to spread hatred and prejudice," and questioned the silence of the Prime Minister.

The leaders vowed to "work together to strengthen the bonds of social harmony that have defined and enriched India for centuries" and "combat and confront the poisonous ideologies which are attempting to entrench divisiveness in society".

"We reiterate our firm conviction that our country will prosper only if it respects, accommodates and celebrates its many diversities in full measure. We appeal to all sections to maintain peace and foil the sinister objective of those who wish to sharpen communal polarisation. We call upon all our party units to independently and jointly work for peace and harmony," the statement added.

While Mamata's decision to be part of the joint statement is interesting, given her party's strained ties with the Congress, the absence of leaders of four parties — SP, BSP, AAP and Shiv Sena — stood out.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

As Cong wins, Baghel delivers promise: 33rd district in Chhattisgarh

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, APRIL 16

HOURS AFTER Congress won the bypoll to Khairagarh Assembly seat in Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday delivered on his pre-poll promise and declared Khairagarh-Chuikhada-Gandai as the state's 33rd district.

This is the sixth district declared in the state since Congress came to power in 2018.

Revenue Secretary N N Ekka confirmed that work to form the new district has begun.

Baghel had promised that the new district would be declared within 24 hours of a Congress MLA being elected. "We have managed to do it within hours," he said.

Congratulating newly elected MLA Yashoda Verma, who defeated BJP's Komal Janghel by more than 20,000 votes, Baghel declared the district formation. He also announced that Salhewara would be declared a tehsil, and Jalbandha would be an up-tehsil. Verma had come to Raipur to express her gratitude. Speaking at the event, Baghel recounted the speed of his government: "Rahul Gandhi-ji had promised loan waiver in 10 days; we did it in 2 hours of coming to power."

Khairagarh is an important seat for BJP as well, with former CM Raman Singh coming from the region. Singh, along with Union minister Pralhad Patel and Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, campaigned in the constituency regularly.

Raman Singh said after the results, "We accept the will of people, but this election was swayed by the promise of making a new district. They have no proof of work; no work has happened in the constituency..."

TMC wins in Bengal, BJP slide continues

ATRI MITRA
KOLKATA, APRIL 16

CONTINUING ITS winning streak in West Bengal, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Saturday swept the bypolls, retaining Kolkata's Ballygunge seat while wresting the Asansol parliamentary constituency from the BJP. The fresh election outcome again highlighted TMC's supremacy and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's dominance in state politics, which has been continuing for over a decade now.

The BJP is the principal Opposition party in Bengal, but the bypoll results indicated a further erosion in its support base in the state. The saffron party not only lost its Asansol constituency to the TMC — which clinched it for the first time ever — but its candidate also came third in Ballygunge seat and lost her deposit.

The poll results also saw a sharp rise in the Left's vote share in Ballygunge, where the CPI(M) candidate became the runner-up. In Asansol, the CPI(M) retained its vote share although its candidate came third. Congress candidates lost their deposits in



TMC supporters celebrate in Kolkata on Saturday after Babul Supriyo's victory in the Ballygunge byelection. Express

both constituencies.

While the Trinamool's candidate in Asansol, actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha, bagged the seat with a margin of over 3 lakh votes, the party's nominee in Ballygunge, former Union minister Babul Supriyo, won the seat with about 20,000 votes, which was a sharp drop from the party's previous victory margin of about 75,000 votes.

Some in the TMC said the drop in the party's margin of victory in Ballygunge came after there was a "negative campaign" against Supriyo because he

switched to the party from the BJP and had a "perceived communal image".

Senior TMC leader and minister Firdad Hakim, however, said: "The results have again proved that we never do politics based on 30% or 70% people. We always reach out to 100% of the voters..."

Soon after the bypoll results came out, BJP MP Saumitra Khan targeted the state BJP leadership.

"When inexperienced politicians run a political party, then this kind of result is expected," Khan said in a video message.

BJP president Sukanta Majumdar said the party would introspect. "There are lot of factors which played a role for this electoral result. We will definitely introspect. But it is true that a large number of people could not vote due to TMC's terror."

Since the Assembly elections last year, when it won 77 seats, the BJP has failed to win any elections in West Bengal, including bypolls late last year, and February's civic elections.

With the Left getting its foot back in the door, the BJP now has the twin challenge of tackling both them and the TMC.

The Left is now looking to attract a bigger share of the minority vote, which has largely gone to the TMC since the 2011 Assembly elections.

In the Ballygunge bypolls, the CPI(M) candidate, Saira Shah Halim, did well in Muslim-majority wards. Leaders, including Halim, have pointed out that the Left's agitations on issues such as the death in February of student leader Anis Khans and the violence in Birbhum in March had helped the CPI(M).

— WITH INPUTS FROM
SANTANU CHOWDHURY

Snubbing Sahani, taking Bhumihars for granted cost BJP in Bihar's Bochahan

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, APRIL 16

THOUGH THE Vikasheel Insaan Party (VIP) finished third in the Bochahan bypoll on Saturday, its leader Mukesh Sahani was seen distributing sweets, highlighting the BJP's "mistake" of snubbing the Extremely Backward Classes (EBC) Mallah leader and ousting the VIP from the NDA.

Another key message from the Bochahan loss for the BJP is considering upper caste Bhumihar its pocket borough. A fair chunk of Bhumihar voters reportedly backed the RJD candidate



RJD's Amar Paswan gets the Certificate of Election after winning in Bochaha. PTI

instead of their predictable choice, BJP.

RJD candidate Amar Paswan, son of former Bochahan VIP MLA Musafir Paswan whose death necessitated the bypoll, had jumped

the ship at the last minute and won the Bochahan bypoll by 36,763 votes against runner-up Baby Kumari of the BJP.

The important aspect of Bochahan bypoll result seems to be that BJP can no longer take EBC Sahani/Nishad votes for granted. Even though BJP has several leaders, including MP Ajay Nishad, in its ranks, VIP chief Mukesh Sahani seems to have been able to split Mallah and some other votes from BJP. VIP got over 29,000 votes in the Assembly segment that has over 35,000 Mallah votes besides over 55,000 Scheduled Caste (SC) votes. This means the VIP seems to have cut away not

just substantial Sahani votes but also some SC votes.

Another takeaway of the Bochahan bypoll is the unusual shift of Bhumihar voters towards RJD. About 20-25 per cent Bhumihar voters are said to have supported RJD. While this may not be hinting at shifting political affiliation, it could be sending a message to the NDA regarding the minuscule representation of its community in positions of power. A local factor was former BJP MLA Suresh Sharma, a Bhumihar, disassociating himself from the Bochahan campaign. Sharma has been upset with the BJP after losing 2020 Assembly polls.

Farmers celebrate high prices, worry over lower yields, input cost

GOPAL KATESHIYA
GONDAL (GUJARAT), APRIL 16

DILIP GAJERA, a farmer from Masitala village of Gondal taluka in Gujarat's Rajkot district, watches as his kapas (raw unginned cotton) is auctioned at the agricultural produce market committee (APMC) mandi yard in Gondal. He is excited as he loads the auctioned sample bale onto his tractor trolley and drives to the weighbridge. The weight slip reading is 25 quintals — at Rs 12,930 per quintal, that's worth Rs 3,23,250.

The 42-year-old has every reason to smile. He has harvested nearly 95 quintals of the fibre crop on 28 bighas of his 30-bigha holding. Gajera's earlier lots of 34.2 quintals and 35.6 quintals, sold in November and March, fetched him Rs 8,905/quintal and Rs 9,555/quintal respectively —

well above the government's minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 6,025/quintal for long-staple cotton.

"How can I complain," he asked, "when the average realisation for my crop last year was Rs 5,500/quintal (less than the corresponding MSP of Rs 5,825)?"

There are other happy faces too at the auction desks of the Gondal APMC.

Mulji Parmar from Ran village in Kalyanpur taluka of Devbhumi Dwarka district, has sold 10 quintals of jeera (cumin seed) at Rs 19,805 per quintal. The seed price traded at Rs 12,500-13,000/quintal at this time last year.

Mansukh Rangani from Rampar Mota village of Paddhari taluka in Rajkot, watches mandi labourers weigh and bag 125 quintals of wheat that has realised Rs 2,530 per quintal, against the MSP of Rs 2,015.



Cotton at the APMC mandi yard in Gondal, Rajkot. Gopal Kateshiya

And Keshu Bhandari from Sumra in Dhrol taluka of Jamnagar, is satisfied with the Rs 6,655/quintal that he has received for his 50 quintals of the crop — well above the MSP of Rs 5,550.

Gondal is one of the biggest APMCs in Gujarat, and attracts farmers from across the Saurashtra region. This is the time when they market their rabi (winter-spring) crops of wheat, chana (chickpea), jeera, dhaniya (coriander) and saunf

(fennel). Many also bring cotton and groundnut — which are kharif (post-monsoon) crops harvested from late-October — to sell now, hoping to get higher off-season prices. Their bets have paid off this year.

At the back of the farmers' minds though, are two major concerns. The first is over yields.

Cotton yields have been impacted by pink bollworm insect attacks, while unseasonal/excess rain during January and sudden

spike in temperatures after mid-March have hit wheat and jeera.

"Never in my wildest dreams had I seen cotton prices this high," says Ramji Bhuvra, a 7-bigha farmer from Kharachiya village of Rajkot taluka. However, he adds in the same breath, his kapas yields have been only 2 quintals per bigha, a third of the levels in good years. "The higher prices will simply make up for my production shortfalls this year," he says.

Likewise, the per-bigha wheat yield from Mansukh Rangani's five bighas has averaged only 5 quintals, down from the 8 quintals last year.

On April 9, the Mumbai-based Cotton Association of India slashed its estimate of the country's cotton crop for 2021-22 by 8 lakh bales of 170 kg each. Its latest figure of 335.13 lakh quintals is also below the production of 353 lakh quintals for the previous cotton year (October-September).

In the case of wheat, the Centre is yet to revise downward its all-time-high output estimate of 111.32 million tonnes released on February 16.

Farmers like Rangani, Bhuvra, Gajera, and Bhandari have no doubt benefitted from high international prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

This links up with the farmers' second worry. As global prices of agri-commodities have risen, so have the prices of diesel, fertilisers, and crop protection chemicals, which are all fossil fuel-based.

"The continued increases in fuel and nutrient prices make me nervous about the coming kharif planting season (from June). How much more will we have to pay?" asks Hareesh Savaliya (51), who harvested 27 quintals of kapas from his 5-bigha holding in Kotda Sangani village, around 32 km from Rajkot city.

CORRUPTION CASE

Court refuses to extend CBI custody of Anil Deshmukh

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, APRIL 16

A SPECIAL CBI court on Saturday refused to extend CBI custody of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh, stating that the grounds put up by the central agency were not good and satisfactory.

The CBI, which had arrested Deshmukh in connection with a corruption case on April 11, has sought to extend his custody by three days.

"In my view, sufficient CBI custody of accused Shri Anil Deshmukh has already been granted. Pertinently in earlier remand applications, the CBI had based their grounds for seeking custody as per the allegations about exercising influence over the transfer and posting of officials and considering the said grounds, CBI custody was granted. Therefore, in my view, since sufficient CBI custody was granted, the grounds for further custody... are not good and satisfactory," Special Judge D P Shingde said in his order.

The CBI had arrested Deshmukh, his staffers Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde as well as dismissed Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze in the case. While it had sought Deshmukh's custody, the agency had requested that remaining accused be sent to judicial custody as their custodial interrogation was not needed.

Special Public Prosecutor Ratandeep Singh told the court that Deshmukh has been accused of taking bribes for transferring and posting police officers. The CBI remand plea said that the police officers who paid bribes have to be identified and confronted with the former minister.



Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh

Deshmukh, through his lawyers Aniket Nikam, Inderpal Singh and Geeta Chataula, opposed the CBI plea stating that he has already been in custody for 11 days. Nikam said that the central agency had in its remand plea only given stereotypical reasons for seeking extended custody. He also argued that there was no progress in the probe.

"The agency is seeking further custody of a 73-year-old man on flimsy grounds. There are no details of the progress made or confrontation done with others in custody," Nikam said.

The court directed that all accused, who were already in judicial custody in a separate money laundering case lodged by the ED, along with Waze also being in NIA custody for the Antilia terror scare case, be returned to jail.

Meanwhile, a separate plea filed by lawyer Shekhar Jagtap, representing Palande — seeking directions to the CBI to preserve CCTV footage from the CBI office where the accused were interrogated — was disposed by the court saying that the lawyer is at liberty to approach an appropriate forum.

Jagtap had said that there was no CCTV camera at the interrogation room of the CBI office in violation of Supreme Court guidelines.

INTERFAITH ELOPEMENT

Day after houses set on fire, tension, fear envelope Agra area

AMIL BHATNAGAR
AGRA, APRIL 16

A DAY after a mob set fire to two structures and vandalised homes belonging to the family of Sajid Qureshi in Agra's Ranukta area, accusing him of allegedly kidnapping a local woman from another community to elope, fear was palpable among residents of the area on Saturday, despite heavy deployment of police personnel.

Many tenants from the minority community have shifted temporarily, and most markets remained shut on Saturday as a precautionary measure.

While a video has surfaced in which the woman purportedly says that she went with Sajid on her own accord, a group vandalised Sajid's house, demanding accountability.

Police said there is no action liable against Sajid since the woman is an adult and has not mentioned coercion.

On Saturday, burnt pages, broken almirahs, twisted railings and melted furniture lay scattered in the small alley. Household items covered in soot were visible from afar. At every second turn in the colony, a couple



The inside of a house that was set on fire by a mob in Agra on Friday. Gajendra Yadav

place. All we know is that we were lucky to live. People are beginning to leave the area."

Senior Superintendent of Police, Agra, Sudhir Kumar Singh, said: "A meeting was held in the area before the incident (of vandalism). No action can be taken against Sajid until the statement of the victim is taken. It is likely

that the men who carried out rioting are from within the area. We are scanning footage and questioning people to assess more things."

Eight people have been arrested in connection with the violence, and several others are absconding. The woman is currently with her family and her

statement will be recorded, police said.

Sajid and his family are not traceable, police said. Local residents told *The Sunday Express* that Sajid and the woman live barely 100 metres apart and knew each other for long. After they eloped on Monday, the woman's family lodged a complaint of alleged kidnapping against Sajid. Protests by members of Hindu community in the area also began.

On Friday, a meeting was held close to the woman's house in which more than 200 people gathered. The crowd was angry about the fact that Sajid had allegedly eloped with a Hindu woman and that he needs to present himself before the community.

"There was tension about their religion — the agenda of the meeting was to hold Sajid accountable. Everyone believes he coerced her into this," a local shopkeeper who was present there said. "As the meeting was going on, we learnt that someone had set fire to his house. The meeting dispersed after that."

Eyewitnesses and neighbours said more than a hundred people carrying petrol bombs, rods and sticks barged into the

family's home. "It felt like they were on a mission. They even managed to uproot railings on the parapet," Mustaqeem, a neighbour, said. "They threw petrol bombs, set fire to cylinders to lead to a bigger blaze. Thankfully, no one was in the house."

Sajid and his five uncles own adjacent houses in the area. The mob set fire to one of them and vandalised the extended rear part belonging to other relatives. Sajid's father works as postmaster and kept letters and telegrams in the house, which all got burnt.

A warehouse where Sajid's uncle ran a shoe manufacturing unit was also set on fire. Sajid himself runs a gym in the vicinity, local residents said.

"Before the arson, there were workers in the warehouse. When they heard about the meeting and calls for action, they immediately left. Their fear proved to be true," Aqeel, a local resident, said.

Police had earlier said a group called Dharm Jagran Samanvay Sangh was found to be actively involved in the vandalism. Police are ascertaining more details about the group and its members, and their possible link in connection with the incident.

GORAKHNATH TEMPLE ATTACK

ATS invokes UAPA against accused

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, APRIL 16

THE UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) on Saturday invoked the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against Gorakhnath Temple attack accused Ahmed Murtaza Abbasi.

"On the basis of evidence collected during the interrogation, electronic surveillance and financial transactions, the UP Police added sections 16, 18, 20 and 40 of the UAPA against Ahmed Murtaza," said an ATS official.

On Saturday, Abbasi was produced before a Gorakhpur court, which sent him to judicial custody for 14 days.

"The prosecution informed the court about the decision of ATS to also impose sections of UAPA on the accused and sought extension of his custody. Considering this, the court extended the judicial custody of Abbasi for 14 days," said senior lawyer PK Dubey.

The official said that they would now appeal to get the case transferred to the NIA/ATS special court in Lucknow for further hearing.

The ATS, which is investigating the case, had brought Abbasi to Lucknow and questioned him in detail about his foreign visits in 2016 and his dubious money transactions to different accounts, said the official, adding they also found that the accused was in touch with people outside

India and collected information about them.

Besides Abbasi, his father Muneer Ahmed was also questioned about his son and his activities.

According to the official, the ATS has been waiting for the forensic report of Abbasi's cellphone and laptop that were sent to a laboratory for examination. "We are yet to verify a few details provided by Abbasi during the interrogation. We need to cross-verify information provided by him," added the officer.

The UAPA allows the investigating agencies to get a longer remand of the accused and an extended duration to file a charge sheet.

Abbasi was sent to the Gorakhpur jail after the hearing.

An IT-Bombay graduate and a local resident, Abbasi was arrested on April 3 for allegedly attacking police and PAC personnel posted at Gorakhnath temple with a sharp-edged weapon while trying to forcibly enter the temple, whose chief priest is Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Police, who booked Abbasi on the charges of attempt to murder and promoting enmity between two groups, had described the attack as part of a "serious conspiracy" that "could be called a terror incident".

Abbasi was initially sent to police custody for 12 days.

Abbasi's family, however, said he had been undergoing treatment for depression since 2017.

WITH PTI INPUTS

Goa Archbishop says need to overcome 'divisive forces'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, APRIL 16

IN HIS message a day before Easter, Archbishop of Goa, Daman and Diu Filipe Neri Ferrao spoke on the importance of harmony and mutual respect among people and the need to overcome "divisive forces" active in Goa.

In a video message, he said: "Easter invites us to make this joy infectious by extending our hands to all people of good will and working together for peace, harmony and mutual respect among men and women of different social, cultural and religious traditions and by overcoming divisive forces that seem to be active even in our own state."

The Archbishop's message for peace and harmony comes days

after clashes broke out between two religious groups in South Goa's Vasco on the evening of Ram Navami on April 10. While nobody was seriously injured in the incident, tension prevailed in the Baina area of Vasco following which three FIRs were registered, 14 persons were arrested and released on bail later.

A day earlier, Goa CM Pramod Sawant had asked villagers and families to be vigilant about religious conversions. "We have seen that in various parts of Goa, people are moving towards religious conversion. Taking advantage of different things... such people are being taken in (in this manner). We say that by mistake, in such circumstances, there should be no religious conversion," Sawant had said at the installation ceremony of a temple at Jalmi Wada.

Karauli violence script written elsewhere, says Giriraj Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAIPUR, APRIL 16

UNION MINISTER for Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Giriraj Singh on Saturday condemned the Karauli violence saying its script was written somewhere else.

"Its script was written elsewhere, be it by the PFI or SIMI," he told reporters in Jaipur during his visit.

"Scuffle broke out but there was full preparation on roofs (in Karauli). This was

a 'prayog' (experiment). It is also an experiment when swords are waived, firing is done and SP is injured in Madhya Pradesh," he told reporters.

The minister also said that a high-level inquiry should be ordered into the Karauli violence. Several shops and vehicles were gutted in fire after communal violence broke out when miscreants pelted stones on a bike rally which was being taken out on Nav Samvatsar, the new year day under the Hindu calendar, in Karauli on April 2.

NOTICE AGAINST POSTING ANTI-GOVT CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Such regulations already existed... earlier notice led to misinterpretation due to its wording: TIFR

PALLAVI SMART
MUMBAI, APRIL 16

DAYS AFTER the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) instructed its staff and their family members not to post "anti-government content", photographs and videos of institute facilities on social media platforms since it "could lead to serious security consequences", in a statement on Saturday, it explained that its earlier notice has led to a "great deal of misinterpretation" due to its wording.

The notice, while insisting that such regulations already existed, also clarified that no new restriction has been imposed on family members and visitors of the staffers.

The institute has come under the spotlight after its April 13 notice referred to observations notified by the Department of Atomic Energy, which runs this autonomous institute. This notice received severe criticism, questioning the gag order and its purpose.

On Saturday, TIFR issued a statement saying, "Unfortunately, the wording of the notice was such that it has become subject to a great deal of misinterpretation. As a matter of fact, photography on the TIFR premises (not in the residential part) has always been forbidden, and for government employees, making public criticism against the institution or the government has always required prior permission."

"...The purpose of the notice was to clarify that both the above pre-existing

rules also apply to social media as well as to other media, such as TV or print media. No new restriction on family members and visitors of staff members are being imposed or are intended to be imposed. This notice is being issued to clarify this point," it added.

While the statement clarified that it was not forbidden to post photos and videos of the residential part of TIFR, the April 13 had categorically spoken of "residential colonies", while asking the staffers to refrain from uploading any photographs or videos.

Also, while the April 13 notice asked the staffers to apprise their family members about the rules, Saturday's clarification mentioned that no new restriction has been imposed on the family members.

Government of Uttar Pradesh
Office of the Project Director (Nodal Officer), Atal Bhujal Yojna
Ground Water Department
State Program Management Unit,
9th Floor, Indira Bhawan, Ashok Marg, Lucknow-226001, Uttar Pradesh.
Ph. No. — 0522-2287068, 2287233
Website: www.upgdw.gov.in, E-mail: upgdw.atal@gmail.com
Notification No.: 22 /GWD /ABHY /392 DWLRs /2022-23
Lucknow: Date: 12 April, 2022

India
ATAL BHUJAL YOJNA
IBRD 8874-IN under Program for Results.
Abridged Version
Invitation for Bids (IFB)
(Goods and Related Services)
(E-Procurement)

Subject: Supply, Installation, and Commissioning of 392 nos Digital Water Level Recorders (Vented/ Non-Vented Pressure Type) with telemetry, including rain-gauge, fencing, and establishment of Data Acquisition system along with its maintenance for Real time ground water level monitoring.
(Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)

Price of bidding document (non-refundable)	Rs. 5000+ 18% GST= Rs. 5900.00 only
Date of commencement of Downloading of bidding document	19-04-2022, at 15:00 Hrs IST Server Time
Virtual Pre bid meeting	29-04-2022 at 15:00 hrs IST
Last date and time for receipt of bids	20-05-2022, at 15:00 Hrs IST Server Time
Time and date of opening of bids - Technical Part	20-05-2022, at 15:30 Hrs. IST Server Time

Interested parties may view and download the IFB with Bidding Document containing the detailed terms and condition free of cost from the website <https://etender.up.nic.in>

(V.K. Upadhyay)
Project Director and Nodal Officer,
Atal Bhujal Yojna
Ground Water Department

UPID-174921 Dt.14.04.2022
www.up.gov.nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF UTTAR PRADESH
UTTAR PRADESH CORE ROAD NETWORK DEVELOPMENT
PROGRAMME (UPCRNDP)
REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB)
E-Procurement Notice
(Engineering, Procurement, Construction ("EPC") Contract
following Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)
NATIONAL OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT

Date: 16 April 2022

- The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank toward the cost of the Uttar Pradesh Core Road Network Development Project and intends to apply a part of the proceeds to cover eligible payments under the contract for construction of works as detailed below.
- Bidding will be conducted through national open competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IFB Borrowers, July 2016, Revised August 2018" ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.
- The Governor of Uttar Pradesh through Chief Engineer, Externally Aided Projects (Roads), UPPWD (Implementing Agency) now invites online Bids from eligible Bidders for the construction of works as tabulated below:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Contract Package No.	Cost of Document (Rs.)	Period of Completion (Days)
1	Engineering, Procurement and Construction Contract for Up-gradation and Maintenance of Path - Garaula section of SH-42, from Km 74.550 to Km 110.390	UPCRNDP/UPG05/2022	5000/- including GST	Construction Period - 730 + Maintenance Period - 1825

Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below during office hours. Bidders are advised to read the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III - Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 3.14 and 3.15 of the "Procurement Regulations" setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

- The bidding document is available online at <http://etender.up.nic.in> under the organization head "PW-1 - Externally Aided Project (World Bank Tenders)" [website] from 20-04-2022 to 20-05-2022 for a non-refundable fee as per column no 5 of the table above. This fee is to be paid online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> without Reg. as per instructions given in BDS Clause 6.3. The bidders would be responsible for ensuring that any addenda available on the website is also downloaded and incorporated.
- For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this project, may obtain the same from the website: <http://etender.up.nic.in> in the invitation for bids under UPCRNDP is published on this website under the organization head "PW-1 - Externally Aided Project (World Bank Tenders)". Any prospective bidder can login to this website and view the invitation for bids and can view the details of works for which bids are invited. The prospective bidder can submit bids online; however, the bidder is required to have enrolment/registration in the website and should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC), for signing and encryption issued by a Certifying Authority licensed under Controller of Certifying Authorities of India, in the form of a smart card/token. The DSC can be obtained from any authorized certifying agencies. The bidder should register in the website <http://etender.up.nic.in> in using the relevant option available.
- Bids comprise two Parts, namely the Technical Part and the Financial Part, and both parts must be submitted simultaneously online on <http://etender.up.nic.in> on or before 17:00 hours on 20-05-2022 and the Technical Part of the bids will be publicly opened online at the address given below on the same day at 17:30 hours, in the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend. The Financial Part shall remain unopened in the e-procurement system until the second public Bid opening for the Financial part. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The electronic bidding system would not allow any late submission of bids.
- All bids must be accompanied by a Bid Securing Declaration.
- A pre-bid meeting will be held on 02-05-2022 at 15:00 hours at the office of Chief Engineer, Externally Aided Projects (Roads), UPPWD, Nirman Bhawan, 95, MG Marg, Lucknow-226 001 to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Instructions to Bidders of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.
- Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to this bid.
- The address(es) related to above are:
(a) Name & Designation of Officer: Chief Engineer, Externally Aided Projects (Roads), UPPWD.
(b) Official Address: Nirman Bhawan, 95, MG Marg, Lucknow-226 001.
(c) Email: oesupppwd@gmail.com
(d) Telephone: (+91) (522) 2236495

Chief Engineer (EAP)

FORM NO. 15
BEFORE THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
Wing A, B & F (2nd Floor), Karpuri Thakur Sadan, Kendriya Karamchari Parishad (GPOA), Near Rajiv Nagar Thana, Ashiana -Digha Road, PATNA-800 025
O.A. NO-259 OF 2021
Indian Bank (earlier Allahabad Bank), Sonbarsa Branch
-----Applicant
Versus
M/s Kundan Traders and Others-----
-----Defendants-----
SUMMONS
ISSUED UNDER RULE 23 (VIII) OF THE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL (PROCEDURE) RULES, 1993

- M/s Kundan Traders, Lalbandi Road, Sonbarsa, District-Sitamari, represented through its Proprietor Satish Raj
- Satish Raj Son of Tej Narayan Singh, R/o Village-Purandaha Rajwara @Majurwa, P.O.-Chakki Majurwa, P.S.-Sonbarsa, District- Sitamarhi-Borrower and Mortgagor.
- Devendra Singh Son of Jadamandan Singh, R/o Village-Purandaha Rajwara @Majurwa, P.O.-Chakki Majurwa, P.S.-Sonbarsa, District- Sitamarhi-Guarantor.
- Alok Kumar Singh Son of Vaidyanath Singh, R/o Village-Purandaha Rajwara @Majurwa, P.O.-Chakki Majurwa, P.S.-Sonbarsa, District- Sitamarhi-Guarantor.

Whereas, the applicant has instituted an application U/S19 of the Recovery of Debts and Bankruptcy Act, 1993 against the defendants for the Recovery of a sum of Rs. 41,36,145.66/-

The above mentioned defendants are therefore hereby directed to appear before this Tribunal in Person or through an advocate or duly authorized Agent in support of their defense to show Cause within 30 days from the date of publication or on 18.05.2022 10.30 A.M. (forenoon) as to why defaults prayed for should not be granted.

Take notice that in case of default of your appearance on the day mentioned herein before, the proceeding will be heard and determined in your absence.

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal on this the 5th day of April, 2022.

REGISTRAR
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL
PATNA

GOVT. OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, DRAINAGE CIRCLE, CUTTACK
GANDARPUR-753 003
E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.-ACEDC-CTC-01/2022-23
email id :- sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com

1	Name of Works	Renovation by Dredging of Basulei Nalla from RD 6.50 KM to 11.52 KM under DIP.
2	Total number of package.	1 no. individual package.
3	Amount put to Tender	Rs. 6,58,24,694.00
4	Bid Identification No.	ACEDC-CTC /DD-JSPR - 01/2022-23
5	Period of completion	11(Eleven) Calendar months.
6	Avadability of Tender On - Line.	19.04.2022, 16.30.00 Hours to 10.05.2022, 17.30 Hours.
7	Date of Opening of Technical Bid.	11.05.2022 at 10.00 hours in the O/o the Additional Chief Engineer Drainage Circle, Cuttack
8	Class of Contractor	Special And Super Class.
9	Bid Security	Bid Security Declaration
10	Cost of Tender paper	Rs. 10,000/-
11	Procurement Officer	Additional Chief Engineer Drainage Circle, Gandarpur Cuttack, -753003.

* Tender will be accepted if registered in the CDMS Portal.
Further details can be seen from the Govt. web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum/ Cancellation if any required will be published only in Govt. web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in /Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer
Drainage Circle, Cuttack.
OIPR- 32174/11/0001/2223

HIMACHAL PRADESH
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
e-Procurement Notice
INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No. 1, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost.	Starting date for downloading Bid	Earnest Money	Deadline for submission of Bid
1	Construction of Fly over at Chakker Bye pass Shimla (SH- Civil work) (Under Shimla Smart City).	52003520	25-04-2022	1054050	13-05-2022
2	Construction of Fly over at M.L.A Crossing Shimla (SH- C/O Civil work) (Under Work) (Under Shimla smart city).	52824754	25-04-2022	1056500	13-05-2022
3	Construction of Fly over Bridge near vidhan Sabha Shimla (SH- C/O Civil work) (Under Shimla Smart city).	110701760	25-04-2022	2214100	13-05-2022
4	C/O Car parking with Oak land Tunnel on MRR via Lakkar Bazar (SH- C/O Building portion , WS & SI and C/O Septic tank etc.) Under smart city Shimla.	59989229/-	25-04-2022	1199800	13-05-2022
5	Widening of Kalka Shimla Cart road from chainage 1477680 to 1477775 (SH- Construction of Viaduct from chainage 1477680 to 1477775). (Under smart city Shimla)	41932000	25-04-2022	839000	13-05-2022
6	Construction of Balance work of Govt. degree college at Kothi tehsil and District Shimla (SH-C/O building portion with civil work, water supply and sanitary installation site development rain harvesting tank and septic tank etc.)	111162896	25-04-2022	2223250	13-05-2022

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptender.gov.in. The executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.
0313/HP

In Khargone, when curfew is relaxed, a mother steps out to look for missing son

IRAM SIDDIQUE
KHARGONE (MP), APRIL 16

SIX DAYS since he stepped out after violence erupted in Khargone city of Madhya Pradesh over Ram Navami processions, Mumtaz, 65, is still looking for her missing son, Ibraish Khan, 28.

In the days since, she has scanned even the mortuary of Khargone government hospital and looked at the unclaimed bodies.

On April 10, as clashes broke out in Khargone city, the family said, Ibraish left home in Islampura area at 7.30 pm to offer evening prayers. He did not return. After waiting for four days, the family lodged a missing complaint on April 14 at the city's Kotwali police station.

"The police did not allow us to step out (before that), as curfew was imposed. We would go outside and the police would send us back, saying, 'chalo ghar jao, woh aa jaega; abhi curfew hai' (go home, he will be back; curfew is on now)," Ibraish's cousin, Saina Khan, said.

On April 12, when the district authorities relaxed curfew between 10 am and noon, the entire family moved to different directions to look for Ibraish. "We searched the jail, rivers, drains...even brick kins. But there is no trace of him," said Mumtaz, who sets out on foot looking for her son as soon as curfew is relaxed for two hours, twice during the day.

Saina said Ibraish, who did odd jobs, had left home at 7.30 pm for a mosque in Anand Nagar, which had also witnessed clashes that day. "Some of his friends and people from the locality who had last seen him said Ibraish was held by some policemen, but that they



Ibraish Khan

do not know what happened after that," she said.

With 148 people arrested so far in connection with the clashes, Saina and her family first went to Kotwali police station to check the list of arrested men. They were told by police that Ibraish does not feature in their list of people arrested in connection with the violence.

As Ibraish did not return even after three days, the family started going out of home to look for him in the two-hour window when curfew restrictions were relaxed.

Mumtaz said, "We just want the police to tell us if he is alive... He has a wife and small child who are waiting for him to return."

Rohit Keswani, Superintendent of Police in charge of Khargone, said, "We have found an unclaimed body and also have some people referred to a hospital in Mandleshwar. We will take the family for identification soon. We have also received another missing complaint and the police are probing these cases."

He said had the person been arrested or detained by police, they would not have registered a missing complaint on it.

The family, after having searched the hospitals and streets of Khargone, are now visiting MY Hospital in nearby Indore district where a few other patients have been referred.

EXPRESS NETWORK

After online classes for 2 yrs, students protest offline exams Universities call it step towards restoring 'normalcy', but students across states seek 'parity'

**SHEETAL BANCHARIYA,
PALLAVISMART**
NEW DELHI/MUMBAI, APRIL 16

WHEN ALLAHABAD University announced to conduct offline exams on March 24, it sparked widespread protests.

University officials countered that the move was "in line with restoring normalcy" and was taken after a high-power committee — formed to look into students' representations against offline exams — submitted its report in favour of pen-and-paper exams.

University's public relations officer Jaya Kapoor said: "Some of the protesting students sprinkled petrol on themselves and it became a law-and-order situation. The administration requested the Vice-Chancellor to reconsider the decision. So, on March 25 it was decided that all second-year students would be promoted and third-year students' exams would be held online."

Several universities have decided to hold offline exams for the semester ending in May-June 2022. But with little clarity over hostel arrangements, exam

schedules and hybrid class timetables, the decision has been met with opposition in most states.

On April 13, Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant announced additional 15 minutes for each hour students sit for an offline exam.

Since February 28, students and faculty at the Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal's Santiniketan have been protesting against the decision to hold offline exams without reopening hostels.

"Initially, when the hostels were not operational and senior batches began attending offline classes on December 1, 2021, students rented rooms. Since there is limited accommodation in the Santiniketan area, first-year students were unable to find housing. They continued to take online classes and are now hesitant to take offline exams," said Somnath Saha, a final-year BA economics student at Visva-Bharati University.

"The 26-day movement helped us secure our demands and online exams will begin on April 18. The demand for reopen-



Students of Rashtrasanta Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University stage a protest against offline exams. File

ing hostels has been officially met, but in reality, things are still not clear. So protests are on," said Chaiti, a student at the university's department of art history.

Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty refused to comment. Lack of accommodation is also why engineering students of Kolkata-based Jadavpur University have been protesting the decision to hold offline exams.

"Students in their final semester do not want to relocate from their hometowns for the remaining few months of their courses.

Also, no one is willing to give their property on rent for a few months," said Akash Sekh, a second-year master's student of international relations.

However, the university has already released the schedule for offline exams and for some courses, the exams will commence on April 24.

Calls to University V-C Suranjana Das went unanswered.

At Delhi University, students have been demanding that their end semester examinations be conducted online. The university

reopened in February and has also decided to hold offline exams for students in the second, fourth and sixth semesters.

Semester exams for the first, third, and fifth semesters will be held in online OBE mode.

"The majority of the course-work has been completed online and we have attended just over two months of offline classes. So, the mode of exams should be revised," said Himani Singh, a sixth-semester BSc Home Science student at DU's Lady Irwin College.

However, Pankaj Arora, DU's dean of students' welfare, said: "In order to return to normalcy, we must return to offline exams."

He said: "Due to Covid, the 'odd' semester was shorter than usual and we decided to keep their exams online. The 'even' semester offline exam duration has been increased by 30 minutes. The university is also willing to issue a directive to individual colleges to hold mock tests."

In Maharashtra, confusion over the format of the final exam has triggered a debate. The Maharashtra Student Welfare Association (MSWA) has started a social media campaign to "bring uniformity" to the assessment for-

mat after writing to the Chief Minister.

"The final-year students will be competing with each other for admission to higher education courses and in the job market. If their assessment is done in different formats, the competition will not be fair," said Vaibhav Edke, MSWA president.

While Savitribai Phule Pune University (SPPU) and Rashtrasanta Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University will be holding offline exams, Mumbai University has announced a more "blended approach" — exams of traditional courses will be online, whereas for professional courses it will be offline. Also, many autonomous colleges in Mumbai have decided to hold final exams offline.

"For professional courses, students were anyway writing descriptive answers for 60 out of 100 marks for the past two exams," said Vinod Patil, Director of Board of Examinations and Evaluation, Mumbai University.

Countering the students' demand for "uniformity", he said, "Anyway there can't be parity as courses, curriculum, exam pattern and evaluation methods are different in all universities."

10% discount for Sunny Leone fans at meat shop

KIRAN PARASHAR
BENGALURU, APRIL 16

A MEAT seller in Karnataka has announced a 10 per cent discount for fans of actor Sunny Leone.

Prasad K N, 27, has been running his meat shop — DK Chicken — in Mandya district, around 100 km from Bengaluru, for nearly two years. He says reading about the philanthropic work undertaken by Leone inspired him to offer the discount.

"Due to her past work in the porn industry, she is often looked at as a sex symbol. To know her, I looked into her life, which was really interesting and inspiring. I was surprised to see that she has done so much for society. From adopting a daughter to running a school and extending help during the pandemic, she has really been an inspiration," Prasad said. To avail the discount, customers have to show that they follow Leone on Instagram and Facebook, have at least her 10 photos on their phone, and have commented on social media posts about her movies.

Maoists claim airstrike in Bastar jungles, forces deny

GARGI VERMA
RAIPUR, APRIL 16

CHHATTISGARH POLICE and the CRPF on Saturday denied conducting any airstrike in Bastar after Maoists released a press note with pictures and alleged that security forces conducted strikes in the jungles of South Bastar using drones.

The banned Communist Party of India (Marxist) on Friday alleged in a two-page press note that the security forces bombed Kottam, Rasam, Eraam, Sakiler, Madapa, Duled, Kannemarka, Potemangum and Bottam areas on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday.

Calling it a lie, Bastar Inspector General P Sundarraj said that these are part of Maoist conspiracy to distract and scare people.

When contacted, CRPF D-G Kuldip Singh denied there was any operation carried out against Maoists. "No such operation has taken place," he said. "Also, we come in aide of the state police; state police lead operations."

The Maoist release, issued by Dandakaranya Zonal Committee's spokesperson Vikalp, alleged that more than 50 bombs were dropped within an hour, targeting them. No injuries were reported, it mentioned.

In April last year, DKZC had alleged a drone strike and released the picture of a fallen drone.

Bastar I-G Sundarraj said: "In Bastar, like the rest of country, security forces are involved in protecting life and property. The Maoists are trying to malign our image out of desperation at losing ground. Their leaders, all outsiders, are misusing tribal people. It is time people see their real, violent faces."

The CRPF said in a statement, "CRPF denies all allegations leveled of any attack on Maoists using drones. Maoists are losing support of the locals due to good governance, which is why they are spreading lies."

WITH ENDS-DELHI INPUTS

Now special court's relief to Aakar Patel, order asking CBI to recall notice upheld

Way lookout circular issued shows lack of understanding of relevant law: court

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A SPECIAL court on Saturday upheld a trial court's order asking CBI to withdraw a lookout circular (LOC) issued against former Amnesty International India chief Aakar Patel. The court noted that the LOC issued was based on "wrong interpretation and understanding of the law", and cautioned CBI by stating that its power to "investigate and prosecute is not an unbridled power".

In the order, Special Judge Santosh Snehi Mann also set aside the trial court's order asking the CBI director to issue Patel an apology. The CBI had issued the LOC in connection with a case registered against Amnesty International India in 2019 under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act. Patel headed the organisation at the time. Patel, due to travel to the US to deliver lectures at universi-



Aakar Patel

ties, was stopped twice from leaving the country.

Judge Mann has asked Patel to appear before a trial court and furnish a bond for his appearance and asked him not to leave the country without the trial court's permission.

The judge said that the "manner in which the LOC has been issued shows lack of understanding of the relevant law, and hence need for orientation of the officers (concerned) of CBI, not only sensitization but also to bring objectivity in the actions is not out of context". The court said, "LOC issued against the respondent is bad in law, hence cannot be sustained. Order of the trial court

quashing/setting aside the LOC does not suffer from any infirmity and is a well-reasoned order based on the principles of law."

The court, however, noted that a "balance should have been struck qua the prosecuting agency that the respondent accused may flee from the country, and fundamental right of the respondent accused to travel abroad, by putting conditions taking recourse to section 88 CrPc, which empowers the court to take bond for appearance". The judge said the court's observations are "not of the nature of exercising power of superintendence, they are out of concern and the petitioner (CBI) is expected to take them in right spirit".

It said CBI's power to "investigate and prosecute is not an unbridled power". The court said, "In glaring cases of excesses committed in actions, there may arise the need for fixing accountability. In the present case, LOC was issued on wrong interpretation and un-

derstanding of law, and not out of malice or ill will. Hence it is not a fit case to call for fixing the accountability for issuance of LOC."

On trial court's directions to the CBI director to tender a written apology and its general observations on monetary compensation, Judge Mann said that "it is a settled legal proposition that trial court can step in to compensate for police excesses and illegal actions of the State when fundamental rights are violated."

The CBI had argued that LOC was issued considering that Patel was an influential person and well-connected with entities outside India, because of which he may evade the law. On this, the court held this submission has "no force in law to support and sustain". "Subjective satisfaction of the IO to assess the situation for issuance of LOC must flow from the objective criteria," the order read.

FULL REPORT ON: www.indianexpress.com



COACHES DERAIL, MUMBAI OFF-TRACK

Commuters were left stranded after three coaches of the Chalukya Dadar-Puducherry Express derailed after colliding with the CSMT-Gadag Express near Matunga station in Mumbai on Friday night. The Central Railway took over 15 hours to restore services. Almost 100 local trains and 13 long-distance trains were cancelled. Ganesh Shirsekar



Rajkiya Bhrmanshil Pustkalay (Library on Wheels), built on a truck in 1958, at Dumka State Library Literature Festival. It has travelled thousands of kilometres in Jharkhand. Express

bished by Odisha-born poet and bookseller Akshay Bahibala, who travels with his "Walking Bookfairs" — a van full of books — in small towns to promote books. Writers from the tribal com-

munity such as writer-poet Anuj Lugun, winner of Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in 2019, and Mahadev Toppo, a leading Adivasi litterateur from Jharkhand, discussed on how

Adivasi are perceived differently. The perception that the tribal community is backward, and that it does not know the ways of the world, is "unfounded", Lugun said. "Sosobonga, which are orally recited epics of Adivasi, particularly in Mundas and Asur communities, tell us about how there should be balance between nature and humans," he said.

Toppo said the lockdown culture has existed for long in the Adivasi communities. "For a few months each year, in a bid to protect baby animals, growing shrubs and plants, Adivasi don't venture into forests. When the viewpoint of Adivasi is such, how can an Adivasi person be called uncouth or ignorant? This is the real challenge in front of upcoming writers and generation to bring this view out to the mainstream."

'Pandemic may have increased learning poverty, help children adjust first'

AS OFFLINE classes resume in schools across the country, Central Square Foundation (CSF) founder **ASHISH DHAWAN**, who works closely with the Centre and many states on addressing foundational learning gaps, believes authorities should help children adjust before picking up textbooks.

Dhawan, who is also a founding member of the Ashoka University, is currently setting up Convergence Foundation, which will work across many areas in the social sector, including women empowerment and air pollution, by setting up organisations along the lines of CSF, which primarily works on school education.

He spoke to **SOURAV ROY BARMAN** on a variety of topics, including the government's NIPUN Bharat programme, which CSF helped develop and implement, foundational learning deficiencies deepened by the pandemic and higher education reforms announced by the UGC. Excerpts:

Before the pandemic, you had cited a World Bank report to say that 55% of India's 10-year-old children lack foundational learning skills, which is classified as learning poverty. What has been the impact of the pandemic?

The percentage may have risen to 65 per cent now. The question is how to bring it down to 20-30 per cent over the next decade? We know learning is breaking down early and we have to go to Class I, II, III. If you can't do basic math, addition, subtraction, then how do you do fractions in class IV or V? How do you do algebra in class V or VI? So



Ashish Dhawan

these are basic foundational skills that every child needs to master by the end of class II. The committee that drafted the National Education Policy (NEP) understood this and said in the report that this should be India's top priority in school education and should be pushed in mission mode. And then the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat programme was launched.

How does NIPUN Bharat work?

It will prioritise foundational learning in a large public system. So for classes I, II and III, the government has created a separate project, where it will pay for all the teaching-learning material, teacher professional development assessment. The Centre also sets goals and objectives and handles the monitoring aspect. The implementation is done by the states. The CSF has MoUs with 12 states. We have project management units that work at the state level. So it's a team of people who

KERALA

Day after PFI leader's murder, RSS man killed

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 16

A DAY after a local leader of the Popular Front of India (PFI) was hacked to death, an RSS worker was killed the same way in Palakkad district of Kerala on Saturday afternoon.

Police said S K Sreenivasan (45), an RSS worker and former office-bearer, was attacked by a five-member gang who stormed into his two-wheeler shop in Melamuri, a BJP stronghold in Palakkad.

Quoting eyewitnesses, police said the attackers parked their motorcycles outside Sreenivasan's shop. Wielding swords, three of them stormed into the shop and hacked Sreenivasan several times, before escaping on their motorcycles. CCTV footage showed the suspected attackers reaching the street outside Sreenivasan's shop on three motorcycles.

BJP leaders alleged that the PFI was behind the attack. The PFI did not react to the charges.

On Friday afternoon, the PFI's Elappally area president, A Subair (44), was hacked to death outside a mosque. According to police, Subair and his father were on a motorcycle when they were hit by a vehicle. As they fell on the road, some men emerged from another vehicle and attacked Subair before fleeing the spot.

The PFI had alleged that the RSS-BJP was behind the murder; the BJP district leadership had denied the allegation.

Police confirmed that a vehicle abandoned by Subair's killers was registered in the name of RSS worker S Sanjith, who was killed last November, allegedly by members of PFI and its political outfit Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Subair was also a member of the SDPI.

Sanjith's family said the vehicle was parked in a workshop before his death, and they had not got it since then.

Another vehicle which is suspected to have been used by Subair's attackers was found abandoned. Police have found that it was "rented" to a person named Rameshan, who is ab-



SK Sreenivasan

sconding since the incident. The FIR calls Subair's death a "political murder". Four RSS-BJP workers who were allegedly involved in an attack on a PFI worker last year are being questioned.

"The conspiracy behind the murder is clear. By killing a local PFI leader, RSS wants to foment communal trouble," state PFI president C P Muhammed Basheer had said on Friday.

Meanwhile, BJP's state general secretary and senior party leader in Palakkad, C Krishna Kumar, alleged that the PFI was behind the attack on Saturday. "Police could not prevent the killing of the RSS worker when armed criminal gangs were roaming in the city. Yesterday, we already denied the role of our workers or any Sangh Parivar men in the killing of the PFI worker," he said.

"Police neglected the PFI plan to trigger violence across the district. Melamuri region in Palakkad had reported communal violence in the past, but the police did not take any precautionary steps. The ruling CP(M) and its police force have surrendered before terrorists," state BJP president K Surendran said. Opposition Leader in Assembly V D Satheshan said the killings were a fallout of the state government's communal appeasement. "The CP(M) is appealing both the SDPI and RSS, which they call social engineering," he said.

Police have sounded an alert to prevent further violence. About 300 police personnel have been deployed in Palakkad, where Additional District Magistrate K Manikandan has issued prohibitory orders till April 20 "sensing that religious hatred may emerge in the wake of the two killings." State DGP Anil Kanth warned that strict action would be taken against those who spread religious hatred through social media.

work with the Department of Education on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN).

NEP helped institutionalise FLN at a time when the pandemic was not on the horizon. But as children return to school after a long gap, what are the interventions required to help them cope?

States have a four-six month catch up. So, the idea is to keep the textbooks aside for the time being. Right now, if a child is in class III, the truth is he never attended school in class I or II. So in the first few months, teach them the most basic concepts.

Then only do we even open the class textbook and then in the next six months, the goal should be to catch up with the key concepts.

Should NIPUN be redesigned to address the specific needs arising out of the interruption caused by the pandemic?

No, I don't think so. The NIPUN goals remain the same. Within NIPUN, each team needs to do some catching up. We will still do formative assessment, have a teacher guide with lesson plans, have a workbook, need reading material in the classroom and need a math kit to make it easier for kids to understand abstract concepts in complete form. So I don't think NIPUN needs to be redesigned, because it is a scheme for the next five years. Within NIPUN, the Centre has told the states to

take their time to catch up.

During the pandemic, we saw schools were the first to close and last to open.

I think that mindset will change now. People have to internalise that life has to go on even if you face the next Omicron. I was in New York for Christmas, New Years and kids had to go back to school in January when Omicron was raging in the US. There is no greater risk in opening schools and our policymakers now need to internalise that because what we didn't do early on is any form of cost benefit analysis. We should have started school earlier. If you do a cost-benefit analysis, there is a risk, but the cost of keeping kids at home for two years is not being measured and it's an impact on a whole generation of kids. So, I think people will internalise now that we can't do this again.

The latest UDISE report has shown a sharp drop in private school enrolment and rise in government school enrolment. What does this indicate?

That is purely an economic thing. The temptation of English and accountability lure parents into sending their kids to private schools. And normally, you need income above a certain threshold to do it. So, if your income has been hit, that's the demand shock. Covid also had a supply shock, where schools were shut for so long and there was no revenue. They couldn't justify charging. They couldn't do zoom classes. As a result, parents were not willing to pay. So, many private schools even closed down.

FULL INTERVIEW ON: www.indianexpress.com

Across THE AISLE



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Hate speech thrives and divides

THE HIJAB, *halal* and *aazaan* controversies are rocking the state of Karnataka. They have been manufactured as part of a carefully designed campaign to divide the people of Karnataka into two camps — Hindus and Muslims — ahead of the State election in 2023.

■ *Hijab* is a dress where the girl/woman covers her head when she steps out of her home. Hindu women in north India, Sikh women, Christian nuns and some others (including Sikh men) also cover their heads.

■ *Halal* is meat from slaughtering animals or poultry, according to Islamic law, through a cut to the jugular vein or windpipe and draining all the blood. Other religions have rules for preparing food: Judaism prescribes *kosher* food and many Hindu sub-divisions prepare food according to certain rules.

■ *Aazaan* is a call to prayer broadcast from mosques five times a day, often through loudspeakers. Hindu and Christian places of worship toll bells. Hindu religious festivals are usually accompanied by reciting scriptures or playing devotional music that is amplified through loudspeakers.

CENTURIES OF CO-EXISTENCE

Hijab, halal and *aazaan* are not new practices. They have been part of Islam ever since Islam came to India. The people of Karnataka (and the old Mysore kingdom) had accepted these practices

for centuries; no one objected to them, and no Muslim objected to Hindu religious practices. To put it shortly, Hindus, Muslims and Christians — as well as followers of other faiths — have peacefully co-existed with each other.

Until the BJP entered Karnataka. The BJP has ruled Karnataka for a few terms, in a coalition or alone. In recent years, it has ruled by enticing legislators from other parties to switch sides — the effort was labeled as Operation Lotus. The BJP faces a State election in 2023. Its governments have been non-performers and its position in Karnataka is quite shaky. Opposition parties have learnt to build protective walls to counter Operation Lotus. Hence, the need to build another narrative that can polarize the voters and attract the majority of the Hindu votes. The BJP has enough evil geniuses who have the capacity to craft state-specific strategies: one such strategy is the deliberate effort to kick up controversies around food, dress and prayer in Karnataka.

The sudden proscription of *hijab* in schools and colleges by the state government was challenged in Court. A Full Bench of the High Court of Karnataka framed the question as “whether wearing of *hijab* was an ‘essential religious practice’”, and ruled that it was not. The question was irrelevant. The only relevant question was whether the State had the power to proscribe *hijab* and thus violate the right to privacy (and agency) of the Muslim student and her right to education. An appeal has been lodged in the

Supreme Court and it is hoped that the real issues will be addressed and resolved.

HATE SPEECH THRIVES

Such controversies lay the ground for hate speech. There has been an abundance of hate speech on both sides, though the initial provocateur, in many recent cases, was the Hindu zealot(s). Sadly, few prominent citizens of Karnataka spoke up: among the notable exceptions were the historian Mr Ramchandra Guha and the industrialist Mrs Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw. The peddlers of hate speech turned their ire on the two!

Hate speech has crossed all bounds in some states, especially Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. A repeat offender is Yeti Narasinghanand, working as a priest in Dasna Devi temple. Last year, during a Hindu religious congregation in Haridwar, he had made derogatory remarks against Muslim women, was arrested and after some weeks released on bail. On April 3, 2022, he delivered a speech at a self-described ‘Hindu Mahapanchayat’ in Delhi when he said “to protect your sisters and daughters, take up arms.” Among the dire predictions he made was that a Muslim will be prime minister of India either in 2029 or 2034 or 2039! The police recorded an FIR but did not arrest him or move for cancellation of his bail.

Another horrifying example is the case of Mahant Bajrang Muni, a self-styled religious leader. On April 2, 2022, a video showed him addressing a gather-

ing in Hindi. He said, while the crowd cheered him, “If anyone from your community harasses any girl in the area, I will pick up your daughters from your homes and rape them.” The target was obvious. The National Commission for Women demanded his arrest. He was arrested eleven days later.

TOLERATING INTOLERANCE

Ironically, acts of violence, intolerance and hate were committed on the day celebrated as the birthday of Lord Ram, who is *Maryada Purushottam*, the epitome of righteousness. These acts and utterances cannot be dismissed as extreme rants by agent provocateurs. They have the support of the BJP and the RSS who are determined on a course to consolidate and expand the Hindu core of India which now lies in the Hindi-speaking states.

Hartosh Singh Bal, writing in the influential *Foreign Affairs*, has observed, “More than 400 million people either do not subscribe to Hinduism or do not practice the kind of Hinduism that the RSS holds supreme. They will nonetheless be subject to what is, ultimately, an imperial project that attempts to homogenize the Hindu population while ensuring that India’s Muslims and Christians are relegated to second-class citizenship.”

Amidst growing intolerance, the studied silence of the highest authorities of the country is not a mere lapse of governance.

Fifth COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH
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Bulldozing justice

LET ME start with a question. Would it be right for the homes of policemen and officials in charge of law and order in Khargone to have their houses bulldozed? I ask because when violence breaks out in a public place it is because the local administration fails, and it must be held accountable. But instead of the tortuous process of inquiry commissions that take decades to give their verdict, would it not be better to punish officials without due process? It is keeping this question in mind that we need to examine the demolition of the houses and properties of those charged with rioting in Khargone. What happened was outrageous because it was a violation of the fundamental principles that govern the rule of law, but public outrage has been subdued by the voices of those who believe that it serves Muslims right.

On social media I have heard jubilant ‘new’ Indians celebrate what happened in Khargone. I have engaged with them to point out that without the rule of law democratic countries become autocracies and what prevails is the law of the jungle. And the response has been that if the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had waited to punish rioters through due legal process they would have remained unpunished for years. This is true. And there is a solution that is so obvious I feel foolish repeating it here, but it clearly needs repetition.

The reason why the justice system moves so slowly is because it is broken and badly needs fixing. There are some obvious reforms that can be made effortlessly. The most necessary of these, in my view, is to scrap the ludicrous procedures that exist from colonial times. An example that comes immediately to mind is that of Aryan Khan. On the day that he was given bail he would have been able in another country to walk out of court immediately. But, not in India. Here he was taken back to the cell in which he was confined for a month and made to wait another two days for the procedures of his release to be completed. Why do these procedures exist?

Why does it take the courts 20 years of deliberations before punishing those responsible for the bombings that killed nearly 300 people in Mumbai in 1993? Why do judges need to write short novels to make their judgments? Why do the police need thousands of words to make charges that could be made in a few paragraphs? Why do lawyers succeed in delaying trials? Why are there no deadlines for trials to end? These are only some of the questions that need urgent answers, but the answer cannot be to establish the law of the jungle instead of the rule of law.

What we saw in Khargone was the law of the jungle. The Home Minister of Madhya Pradesh defended what happened on the grounds that those who throw stones will have their homes reduced to stones. Well, what would he say to the old lady whose picture appeared on the front page of this newspaper last week? Hasina Fakhroo is in her sixties and clearly too old to be a rioter, but her house was reduced to rubble before she could prove that it was built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Long is the list of cases in which people have been punished without due process, and the list does not begin with Narendra Modi coming to power as the Congress party would have us believe. An example from supposedly benign Congress times is that of Lalit Modi. All the cases that were made against him have been thrown out of court, but he was hounded out of India as a result of a shameful media trial in which those responsible for upholding the rule of law played an ugly part. More recently this happened in the Sushant Singh Rajput case where the media was manipulated through calculated leaks to turn his suicide into a murder case. A young woman’s life was destroyed by TV anchors who declared her guilty on primetime. Should these anchors have their homes bulldozed? When should we stop using bulldozers?

Once we give officials the right to bulldoze the homes of suspected rioters and the right to seize the properties of alleged offenders, we establish the rule of the jungle. Once we allow income-tax inspectors to raid the homes of alleged tax evaders without proof that they have evaded taxes, we do the same. This is a practice that has been going on much too long.

What has changed since Narendra Modi took office is that somehow it is always Muslims that end up spending months in jail in cases that are bailable. It is shameful that this happened to a standup comedian for a joke he had not cracked. Shameful that student leaders and journalists, nearly always Muslims, spend months in jail on usually dubious charges. Let us then ask what happens to a country in which senior political leaders and high officials show total disdain for the rule of law on the fallacious grounds that the process of justice takes too long. The answer is that they are in clear violation of the Constitution of India, and the consequences are grim. When the rule of law is weakened, it weakens democracy because the rule of law has to be sacrosanct in democratic countries.

The message behind BSP’s loss in UP polls

Dalitity

VIVEK KUMAR



THE 2022 Uttar Pradesh election verdict is a latent function of deep communal and casteist mobilisation. However, it is being camouflaged under the garb of development and good governance. On the one hand there was ‘Kairana, Kashi, Ayodhya, Mathura, Jinnah, Assi-Bees, bulldozer’ (against a particular community), Teen Talaa’, and on the other side, the mobilisation of Brahmins, non-Yadavs (Kurmi, Lodh, Gujjar, Jaat, Rajbhar, Maurya, Saini, Nonia, Chauhan, Nishad, Nai), and non-Jatavs (Pasi, Dhobi, Kori, Khatik, Valmiki, Dhanuk) became the fulcrum of electioneering. Above all, the mainstream corporate media, YouTube media, pollsters, and so-called intellectuals, on the basis of flop-rallies by leaders of two political parties, described the UP elections as bipolar. Once this perception crystallised amongst masses, they forgot unemployment, price rise, Covid deaths, Hathras case, Unnao case etc.

This false consciousness created a strong perception that the contest is between the BJP and SP and that the BSP is not in the fight at all. So the Muslims, OBCs, and a few upper-caste voters who have traditionally voted for the BSP, deserted it. Had this section voted for development and good governance, for which the BSP had the best record during its 2007-12 term in UP, they would have picked the party again.

It is a fact that in this election the BSP lost approximately 74 lakh votes in comparison to 2017. The SP gained 1.26 crore and its ally, the RLD, gained 10 lakh votes. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BSP had tied up with the SP and RLD, and since the Dalit vote is often based on ideology, therefore in all probability, the BSP votes have shifted to the SP and RLD to defeat the BJP.

So did the BJP raise its tally? Of course, because of the Congress (which lost approximately 32 lakh votes) and the Shiv Sena (did not contest). The voters of these parties have no hesitation in voting for the BJP. It is in this context that the theory that the Dalit vote has shifted to the BJP is nothing but an

ignorance of history.

Historically, non-Jatavs have always voted for the BJP (or the Jana Sangh). At one point, they were also considered Congress vote bank, before shifting to the BSP. This narrative was constructed to save the so-called upper-castes from being questioned — why did they vote en-bloc for the BJP?

That the BSP is the B-team of the BJP is another narrative which speaks volumes about caste prejudice. In Goa, the Trinamool Congress contested polls for the first time and did not win any seat, and in turn helped the BJP to retain power. Yet, nobody calls the TMC a B-team of the BJP. Mamata Banerjee also travelled to UP to campaign for the SP.

The caste prejudice in Indian politics is not only towards the BSP’s Mayawati. Take Congress’s Charanjit Singh Channi. In Punjab polls, Jat Sikhs and Hindus did not vote for Channi although he is a well-educated and seasoned politician. It is established fact that in Punjab, the Akalis and the Congress come to power alternatively, and the Jat Sikhs, Hindus and Dalits have voted for the Congress for 70 years. However, this time, AAP weaned away Jats, Hindus and non-Ravidasis and Ramdasias from Congress by projecting a Jat Sikh as CM.

Then what is the way forward for BSP? The answer lies in the fact that the BSP is not only a political party, it is a social movement. Losing and winning an election is part of the movement and till the gaps in democracy are filled, BSP will remain relevant.

Nonetheless, after five elections (UP polls — 2012, 2017, 2022 — and two general elections — 2014, 2019) it has been established that the mainstream society is not ready to accept the BSP as a centrist party, even though it is hailed for its good governance, social justice (land distribution), pro-poor schemes (Ambedkar Village, Kanshiram Housing Schemes), and development (with GDP of the state on a par with the national numbers during 2007-12).

Therefore, it has to reinvent its old ideology and identify elements which exploit Bahujans in institutions of governance, education, production and social life. It has to repeat its 2007 performance to provide representation to Bahujans in institutions of governance to strengthen democracy.

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Suraj Yengde, the author of Caste Matters, curates the fortnightly ‘Dalitity’ column

life & WORK

DILEESH POTHAN



The world through my eyes is just as colourful

ALL THROUGH my childhood and teenage years, I noticed some inadequacies in my vision. For instance, when I picked up a dull-coloured shirt, others would call it bright. But I never knew I was colour-blind. My ‘inadequacy’, I presumed, had to do with how I saw certain colour combinations. I just told myself that my colour sensibilities were a little different from everyone else. After being associated with a few film projects as assistant director, working on some television productions, and making short films and video albums, I joined a film institute in Kochi as faculty. I was about 28 years old then.

At the institute, I was asked to help with the admission process. Some lecturers on the panel insisted that we also make arrangements for a colour-blindness test while selecting candidates. We put up some colour boards and I was given the responsibility to spot the colour-blind candidates.

That is when I realised that I was colour blind.

I realised the problem but I knew nothing about it. So, I started reading up. Since I was also an aspiring filmmaker, I was nervous about my future.

Once it became known that I had colour blindness, people around me also became curious. They would show me things and ask me about its colour. Even now, some friends ask me in jest, “What is the colour of this shirt?” For me, however, it was less about not recognising a particular colour and more about the realisation that I may be seeing a different world.

I was told my problem is with Red and Green, among the most common forms of colour blindness.

Then, I came across a report that said that even British-American film director Christopher Nolan is colour blind. It came as a huge relief. The fact that an internationally celebrated filmmaker was also colour blind gave me immense confidence.

So when the Supreme Court issued an order directing the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) not to exclude candidates suffering from colour



A still from Pothan’s *Kumbalangi Nights*. Facebook/Kumbalangi Nights

blindness from its courses on filmmaking and editing. I welcomed it wholeheartedly. The petitioner — a student who was denied admission to FTII’s Diploma in Film Editing course in 2015 after he was diagnosed as colour blind — had also cited Nolan’s example.

Looking back, I feel that if I hadn’t known about Nolan, things would have been far more challenging for me emotionally in the early part of my career. My transition, from suspecting that I had a problem with my vision to thinking that I had ‘lesser’ colour sense, to finally understanding that I had colour blindness, was slow.

The SC order said that “colour blindness is not a form of blindness but a deficiency.” So true. I would say that there might be a problem in my vision, but not in my sensibility.

Shyju Khalid, a renowned cinematographer, once told me, “While we see a largely dull world and all the dirt around, maybe you have a graded vision.” In films, colour grading refers to curating colours carefully to convey an atmosphere, emotion and style.

However, at times, the condition does

make me conscious at work. To counter it, I have developed an immersive working style, engaging deeply with cinematographers and designers to avoid any conflict. Until the recent Supreme Court order, I didn’t even know about the FTII case. When a prestigious institute denies admission to a colour-blind aspirant, it ruins the dreams of many. More importantly, it makes someone feel inadequate or unqualified.

Now, however, we know that there are many colour-blind actors and filmmakers. I believe that the scope of our vision is significant too. The colours and patterns we see are so different and beautiful. In a way, we can see the lives around us more closely because we are denied many colours. The Supreme Court order said, “Art is non-conformist in character...” Very true. The perspective of colour-blind people should be welcomed as the influence of cinema on people is also different and relative. I would go as far as to say that being colour blind is not an inadequacy but an extra advantage for a filmmaker. That’s how I see the apex court’s order.

Pothan is an acclaimed director, producer and actor, associated with Malayalam films such as *Kumbalangi Nights* and *Joji*.

As told to Arun Janardhanan

On the LOOSE

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AFTER DEPICTING blowzy romance via wind machines, designer wardrobes and incredulous coincidences, celebrity filmmaker Karan Johar’s latest foray into the business of love is a down-to-earth endorsement of *www.itiimshaadi.com*. The website, promoted by the very aptly named company Alma Mater Matters Pvt Ltd invites registrations only from alumni of top institutions, with the explanation that “people desire companionship of matching intellects with similar experiences”. It’s perfectly natural that like gravitates towards like, the latest examples being Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt. But Johar has been receiving a lot of flak on Twitter for promoting a “regressive and discriminatory” approach to marriage, as if India’s

Searching for love (conditions apply)

unabashedly conservative wedding protocols have ever been anything else.

Internet matchmaking has become ubiquitous even in India, taking on the space once occupied by newspaper matrimonial ads. It can be overwhelming, sorting through lakhs of *jeevansathi.com* and *shaadi.com* profiles, constantly worrying about a potential prospect misrepresenting themselves. A friend of mine was alarmed to discover that someone she matched with on Tinder was a truck driver before starting a transport business. I pointed out that Russell Crowe was a waiter before making it in Hollywood to which she snapped she had nothing in common with people in the trucking industry. Right or wrong, we are all shameless traditionalists when it comes to choosing life partners, operating in our own little gilded circles, reluctant to consider an outlier. If one is venturing outside of one’s

comfort zone, a filtering is required. That’s where *itiimshaadi.com* scores; it makes no bones about sifting out the grain from the chaff, so to say.

It is worth noting that there are over 1,500 matrimonial websites in India, catering to orthodox Hindu demands, largely based on caste. Minorities (Muslims and Christians) would be wasting their time on many of them (however, they have their own specific websites full of equally tasteless idiosyncrasies). A glance through the top five matchmaking sites is a revelation; candidates who fail to identify their own caste and graciously tick “caste no bar” in their quest for a mate have a far smaller pool of responses to choose from. There are two reasons for this. One, Indians are hopelessly insular and casteist. Two, a lack of full disclosure is viewed suspiciously; perhaps a candidate is hiding an unflattering past. Under the heading “Caste

No Bar” I repeatedly saw: “SC/ST Please Excuse”, contradictory yet noteworthy — this is a rare specimen indeed, who stops short of taking a deep plunge but is at least, willing to look beyond his own sub-caste.

It is to be wondered that after all this painstaking anthropological streamlining and pairings based on socio-economic hierarchies, if, a few years in, people do a rethink and decide these yardsticks were wholly idiotic — and that giving oneself up to mad passion might have been more conducive to happiness. But romantic inexperience leads to the fear that the lovers one chooses may be chronically wrong (and there’ll be no one to blame). Mate selection is an issue in other countries too. In the West they go about it like normal adults, picking partners with a shared vision for the future, and similar interests. Critically, mummy-papa are not involved and nobody cares

what a partner’s random ancestors did, 300 years ago. Indians approach their personal lives the way they do a 12th Board examination — industriously, the virtues of continuity of society hampered into them.

This attitude of risk averseness has led to an over-dependence on tribe and a cynical distrust of romance. After all, most of literature concerns the perils of scandal and doomed love; in *Anna Karenina*, Anna leaves her husband for Vronsky, condemning herself to a life of despair and death. Lydia, in *Pride and Prejudice*, is reduced to poverty by eloping with the county rake, Wickham. In this era, the path to true love may be paved with choices, but the safest is going en route the only destination that matters: a carefully strategized marriage.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films



At the Galle Face in Colombo. Since April 9, thousands of Sri Lankans have gathered here demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his family members step down. Reuters

GALLE STORM

Amid crippling shortages, collapse of the economy and a political impasse, protesters across Sri Lanka have come together under the rallying cry of "Go Gota Go". NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN travels along the island country's uneasy fault lines, from Colombo in the south to Jaffna in the north, to find that the protests may have served to paper over some of these cracks

GALLE FACE is Colombo's showpiece sea front. China and India have cheek-by-jowl real estate here. The Taj Samudra is an old property, dwarfed by the towering Shangri-La of the Hong Kong chain of hotels. And next to it, India's Larsen & Toubro is constructing an ITC hotel. Out in the water is the Chinese Port City project, coming up rapidly on reclaimed land.

Nearly seven decades ago, the Federal Party representing the country's Tamils held a one-day *satyagraha* on the green next to the sea, opposite what was then the parliament building. It was a peaceful protest against the Sri Lankan government's 'Sinhala Only' legislation that took away the official language status of Tamil. But the demonstration was broken up as mobs armed with sticks attacked the protesters, cracking skulls as the police looked away. The rest is history.

That same site is now the centre of another peaceful protest. Thousands of mostly young Sri Lankans have gathered here daily since April 9 demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and other family members in office, including his brother Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, step down. The old parliament building now functions as the presidential secretariat.

On a patch of green between President Rajapaksa's office and a soaring statue of SWRD Bandaranaike, the prime minister whose controversial language policy had brought Tamils out on the streets seven decades ago, a tent city of protesters has sprung up. Called 'Gota Go Gama' — named after the angry 'Go Gota Go' slogan resounding on the street these days — this symbolic village of resistance has come up against the Rajapaksa regime. Hundreds of people have been camping at the site, with the numbers swelling in the daytime.

The protests began in March as small candlelight vigils at traffic junctions in Colombo. The demonstrators were protesting long power cuts imposed by the government because it did not have enough dollars to buy the diesel needed to run the power plants.

Since the middle of last year, essential items have been in short supply as imports have been restricted and prices have skyrocketed. With supplies dwindling, shops have had to restrict purchases and even those with money found themselves shut out. Queues stretch outside fuel stations and government-run fair price shops, with people waiting three to four hours to fill their vehicles or plastic cans. Double lines of cars wait for petrol, with people discussing if it is better to return for a refill at quarter tank or empty.

The protests have grown, bringing out students, teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and other professionals and youth. The government has so far not cracked down.

Unarmed police regulate the traffic around the area which leads to Colombo's main business district. Vehicles honk in solidarity with the protesters as they pass through.

What next? Beyond their assertion that the Rajapaksa must go, not many at the protest site know what the future holds in store for

them and their country.

"I know they are not going to resign just because we are asking them to go. But the pressure of the people is important. Our voices will be heard in Parliament and Parliament has to make its decisions based on that," says 43-year-old Rebecca David, a rights activist who has been at the Galle Face protests from the start.

The government had declared a full-week holiday for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on April 14, hoping people would stay indoors. But that had the opposite effect: New Year's Day saw the maximum turnout at Galle Face, with the atmosphere festive and carnival-like.

"Now it looks like people won't give up till they get a result. They want to see the President step down," says David. "They want to see change."



March 31 was a turning point for the Rajapaksa. That day, hundreds of people protesting the shortages marched to the President's private home in the Colombo suburb of Mirihana Pangiriwatta. Many of them were middle-class residents of the area and were shouting slogans seeking the President's resignation. "Prosperity for rulers while hardship for people" was one slogan. They attempted to break through the barricades and clashed with police, who had to use water cannons and tear gas. Police vehicles were torched.

Until then, President Rajapaksa believed that as the architect of the military victory against the LTTE, he and his brothers had earned enough goodwill from the people to see them through the crisis.

The protests had actually begun much earlier in the countryside, as farmers shouted themselves hoarse against the overnight switch to organic farming and the ban on chemical fertilisers — measures taken to save precious foreign exchange. But until the protests reached Colombo, the Rajapaksa were sanguine. But that day of violence outside his house served as a reality check for President Rajapaksa. He is now said to be sequestered in his high-security official residence in the Fort area of Colombo, while his elder brother, the Prime Minister, is in his official residence at Temple Trees.

A day after the incident, on April 1, the President imposed an emergency and the police imposed a curfew in the capital, its suburbs and several outlying areas. In defiance of the curfew, protesters marched through the streets, daring the police to arrest them. By April 5, both curfew and emergency had to be withdrawn. On the same day, the government appeared to have lost its majority. A group of 42 parliamentarians belonging to the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, an alliance partner of the Rajapaksa's Sri Lanka Podujana Party, said they had withdrawn from the coalition.

But for those who believed this was a "regime change" moment for Sri Lanka, there was disappointment. No challengers have emerged from the Opposition to overturn Prime Minister Rajapaksa. President Rajapaksa, who got all his cabinet ministers to resign — Prime Minister Rajapaksa remained in office

A LETTER FROM SRI LANKA



— invited all Opposition parties and groups to form a national government to deal with the crisis. There were no takers for this either.

Meanwhile, the Rajapaksa are only too aware that there are few protests outside Colombo and its suburbs, and that if they wait it out, the weary protesters may head back home. The protesters know that too — that every moment of delay caused by the political impasse will only serve to strengthen the Rajapaksa's resolve to cling on.

There is also suspicion that India's \$2.4 bn financial assistance, while bringing much needed food and fuel to the country, is helping the Rajapaksa.

Most analysts trace the economic crisis to ill-advised tax cuts that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa ordered after his 2019 election. The cuts came into effect just before the pandemic, at a time when the 2019 Easter bombings had already gutted the tourism industry.

But some economists believe the problem began much earlier, in the years after the war ended in 2009. Armed with an IMF bailout, Mahinda Rajapaksa, then president, went on a borrowing spree for non-paying infrastructure projects.

As Sri Lanka now prepares for tough negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ahilan Kadirgamar, who teaches economics at Jaffna University, warns that those already crushed by the pandemic and the economic failures of the government would be the most affected by the conditions that the international lending agency is bound to impose.

"The people who have come out on the streets today due to economic hardships are affected by cuts to social welfare and public services. Working people are going to be most affected as IMF conditions lead to austerity measures and market pricing of goods and services," predicts Kadirgamar.



One noticeable aspect of the street protests is the secular language of the participants. If

there is one refrain other than Go Gota Go, it is this: "The Rajapaksa divided Sri Lankans by race, language and religion. We will never allow anyone to do that again".

Tamils and Muslims, two of Sri Lanka's minorities that have long suffered othering by the majority Sinhala-Buddhists, are today among the protesters.

Jaffna parliamentarian M A Sumanthiran believes it is an important moment in Sri Lanka's history of ethnic relations that the protesters are even taking Tamil causes such as post-war justice and reconciliation, addressing war crimes, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, among others.

However, the view from Jaffna is somewhat different. Here, there are no queues outside grocery shops or petrol pumps. However, fishermen, whose boats need diesel or kerosene, are among those hit by the shortages. At the Gurnagar jetty, fishermen have placed plastic cans in the queue, hoping supplies will arrive soon.

The times are tough, but the Tamils who have lived and survived the war years say they have known worse.

When the LTTE was in control of the peninsula, the government would send only limited quantities of petrol, diesel, kerosene and food rations by ship from Colombo, calculating that most people had fled, and the supplies would fall into the hands of the Tigers. There was no cooking gas either, as the government feared these would be used to make explosives. Ditto with batteries. Medicines were in short supply too. After the bombing of Chunnakam power station, the peninsula, which used to get a total of one hour of power supply from this thermal plant when the war began between the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE, lost all access to electricity. A generation of Jaffna students grew up studying with the help of kerosene lamps or dynamo-powered bicycle lights. Even after all these years since the war ended, homes still have a wood stove.

"In Colombo, they feel the shortages more because of the shortage of fuel, gas and power cuts. Here, we don't feel it that much because we are used to this kind of scarcity," says Rakesh Kannan, a general practitioner in Sydney, Australia, who is visiting his family in Jaffna.

At the Nallur Kandasamy temple, where he was offering prayers on Tamil New Year's day, Kannan points at the parking lot, where two-wheelers and bicycles outnumber cars to say that petrol shortages were not a Jaffna problem.

He recalls the shortages from his time as a student, including when he was an undergrad student at the Jaffna teaching hospital: "I studied with a kerosene lamp."

While Colombo has long been accused of neglecting Jaffna's post-war economic development, in the present crisis, the war-torn Northern Province city appears to have been protected by its food self-sufficiency — farmers grow rice and vegetables — and a stoicism developed through its own war-time experiences. "People are saying very proudly that we didn't die of a power cut then," says Sumanthiran. Plus, Jaffna benefits from dias-

pora remittances, though not to the same extent as during the war.

Rajan Hoole, founder of the Jaffna University Teachers' Human Rights that stood up against the violence and repression of the Tamil Tigers, says Sri Lanka is now "paying the price for the original sin of the 1948 Citizenship Act", which rendered stateless and disenfranchised the Malayala Tamils or Indian Origin Tamils (ethnically different from the Tamils of northern and eastern Sri Lanka) who worked in the tea plantations and who made up around 11 per cent of the population at the time.

"Until the mid-1960s, this 11 per cent was earning 65 per cent of our foreign exchange. They were the mainstay of the free education and free health we enjoyed... It has caught up with us now," says Hoole.

So far, there has been only one protest in Jaffna over the economic crisis. On social media, some in the Tamil community have mocked the Sinhalese outreach to minorities to join the "Sri Lankan" protests, asking why the majority community had displayed no such solidarity when the Tamils were suffering during the war years.

Despite this bitterness, says Sumanthiran, there is an acute awareness, especially among students, that this problem is as much a crisis for them as it is for the Sinhalese, that landless workers and the very poor among the Tamils would be hit the hardest.

Sumanthiran says the present crisis even offers an opportunity to address the Tamil question, through the abolition of the executive presidency, as some in the Opposition are demanding.



In many ways, it is ironic that the statue of SWRD Bandaranaike at Galle Face has become a beacon for the protesters. Google now throws up "Driving Directions" to the statue, with real-time information on how long it might take to reach the centre of the protests.

Bandaranaike, an Oxford-educated lawyer, was a founder-member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and among the earliest to mine Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism for political advancement. His advocacy of "Sinhala Only" set the country down a path that the Rajapaksa, who were members of the same party until 2015, rounded off to their advantage six decades later, by claiming to have restored Sinhala pride with the defeat of the LTTE.

In the years since, a new generation has come of age. They may not know much about Sri Lanka's failures of the past, but they are in the midst of a massive breakdown now, and sense that majoritarianism does not have the answers.

Standing near the towering Bandaranaike statue, D M Disanayake, a lawyer in his 40s, says, "The Rajapaksa were heroes for winning the war against LTTE. After the Easter Sunday attacks, people thought the Rajapaksa are the sole protectors of the Sinhalese... They were swayed by triumphalism. Now people's eyes have opened."

THE PROTESTERS

The protests have seen students, teachers, lawyers, doctors and nurses gathering at at Colombo's Galle Front

SHEMODYA JAYASEKARA, 23

Under-graduate student at the University of Sabaragamuwa in south-central Sri Lanka, studying Food Business Management



It is her first day at the protests and she is accompanied by her parents. Her father works in the security division of Colombo Port, and her mother is a home-maker. "I came because the ruling leaders do not give us what we expect from them. The economy is in a crisis. We have money but food is not available. We have cooking gas for now, but we don't know if we will get a refill. There are long queues," she says, adding, "I hope to work in this country after I finish my studies, but I see so many undergrads without jobs. We have been at home for two years and our university has not resumed physical classes because there is no power."

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AQEEL AHAMAD, 22

Engineering student at Moratuwa University in suburban Colombo



"Everyone is affected by this government, by the family running this government. We want a democratic

country... a peaceful environment... not an atmosphere filled with communal and ethnic racism," says Ahmad, who is accompanied by his father, a businessman. "One of my aunts in Kandy was affected in the riots of 2018 — her house and vehicles were torched. I face racism in public places, even in my college," he adds.

Blaming the Rajapaksa family for "every problem in the country", he hopes "people will vote next time for eligible candidates without being driven by ethnic, religious concerns or money"

DM DISSANAYAKE, IN HIS 40s

Lawyer



"Civil society activists and others had been warning people that if Rajapaksa come to power there will be an

economic crisis because they never had a proper economic plan. But Rajapaksa were heroes for winning the war against LTTE," said Disanayake. After the Easter Sunday attacks, he adds, "people thought the Rajapaksa are the sole protectors of the Sinhalese... They were swayed by triumphalism. Now people's eyes have opened."

M K RAGUNATHAN, 68

Retired as a consultant physician at a government hospital in Galle



"I have seen how politicians have divided this country using religion, language, caste. In the last two years, the economy has deteriorated in a way that was not even seen during war years," says Ragunathan, adding, "With so many protesting here, I didn't think it was right for me to sit at home. I came here as a common man to volunteer my services as a doctor."

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REBECCA DAVID, 43

Rights activist



"The Rajapaksa are not going to resign just because we are asking. But the pressure is important. When we demand

here, our voice will be heard in Parliament," says David, who has been part of the protests "since the beginning". David and her group are also starting "Teach Out" sessions for protesters to inform them "the Constitution, the powers of the president" etc.

Urging India to "help the people, not the government", she adds, "People suspect that the BJP government is helping our government because they are quite similar in many ways".



A FIGHTER FOR DEMOCRACY

TAIWAN LEADER PENG MING-MIN DIES

Peng Ming-min, a victim of World War II who endured Japanese imperial rule, brutal Chinese martial law and decades of exile to become a leading fighter for democracy and self-determination for his native Taiwan, died here, the nation's capital, on April 8. He was 98. His death, at the Koo Foundation Sun Yat-Sen Cancer Center, was confirmed by Lee Chun-ta, director of the Peng Ming-min Foundation.

TOP OF THE WORLD



Singapore Minister Lawrence Wong.

SINGAPORE

Lee says Finance Minister will be next PM

Singapore: Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Saturday that Finance Minister Lawrence Wong would succeed him as the city-state's leader. Wong was chosen as leader of the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) so-called fourth generation team, according to an announcement on Thursday, paving the way for him to become Prime Minister. "The plan is for Lawrence to succeed me as PM, either before or after (if the PAP wins) the next general election. It is due in 2025 and will surely be a tough fight," Lee said in a social media post on Saturday. Lee, whose father Lee Kuan Yew was the island nation's independence leader, has been PM since 2004. **REUTERS**

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban summon Pak envoy to protest strikes

Kabul: Taliban authorities on Saturday summoned Pakistan's ambassador in Kabul to protest against military strikes inside Afghanistan by Pakistani forces, the Afghan foreign ministry said. A local Taliban official and residents said 36 people were killed in air strikes on Friday. A statement from Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said Pakistan's Ambassador in Kabul had been summoned over the recent attacks in Khost and Kunar provinces and given a diplomatic demarche to deliver to Islamabad. **REUTERS**

FRANCE

Climate change activists block Paris square

Paris: Climate change activists forced the closure of a main square in central Paris on Saturday to protest against the environmental programmes put forward by France's remaining presidential candidates. The Extinction Rebellion had said on its website that it planned to block a major Parisian location to disrupt the electoral cycle and its "business as usual" attitude. Hundreds of people gathered in Paris' 9th district brandishing banners targeting the candidates, chanting slogans. **REUTERS**

ZELENSKY: MARIUPOL'S DEFENDERS CONTROL ONLY SMALL PART

Russia renews strikes on Kyiv



Firefighters work to extinguish fire after a Russian attack in Kharkiv on Saturday. AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV, APRIL 16

Russian forces resumed scattered attacks on Kyiv, western Ukraine and beyond Saturday in an explosive reminder to Ukrainians and their Western supporters that the whole country remains under threat despite Russia's pivot toward mounting a new offensive in the east.

Stung by the loss of its Black Sea flagship and indignant over what it alleged were Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Russia's military command had warned a day earlier of renewed attacks on Ukraine's capital and said it was targeting military sites. Smoke rose early Saturday from eastern Kyiv as Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported a strike on the city's Darnytsky district. He said rescuers and paramedics

EXPLAINED
Can Moskva warship be replaced?

NO, RUSSIA has two other ships of the same class, the Marshal Ustinov and the Varyag, which serve with Russia's Northern and Pacific fleets respectively. Turkey, which controls access to the Black Sea via the Bosphorus, will not let them enter at a time of war.

were at the scene, and information about possible deaths would be provided later. The mayor advised residents who fled the city earlier in the war not to return for their safety. Kyiv was not the only target

Saturday. In eastern Ukraine, an explosion believed to be caused by a missile struck Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, according to firefighters and AP journalists at the scene.

The strike near an outdoor market along with residential and industrial buildings killed one person and wounded at least 18, according to rescue workers.

Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelensky acknowledged on Saturday that the Ukrainian forces still defending Mariupol control only a small part of the port city, and face a better-equipped force that is six times larger than their own. Zelensky described the area as "not a very large part" of the city. "Nevertheless, our guys are heroically defending," he said, speaking to Ukrainian media outlets. "We are grateful to them for that."

Boris Johnson barred from visiting Russia

RUSSIA IS barring Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior British officials from entering the country over their support for Ukraine, the Russian foreign ministry said on Saturday.

Britain has supplied Ukraine with new anti-ship missile systems, armoured vehicles and other military equipment. And Johnson made a surprise visit last week to Kyiv, where he promised to send more military equipment to Ukraine. "The Russophobic course of the British authorities, which aims to incite negative attitude toward our country, is detrimental to the well-being and interests of the British people," Russia's foreign ministry said. **NYT**

Nepal seeks help from nationals living abroad to build up forex

REUTERS
KATHMANDU, APRIL 16

NEPAL IS asking citizens living abroad to deposit funds in domestic banks as part of efforts to ensure the financial system has enough liquidity and to preserve foreign exchange reserves, finance minister Janardan Sharma said on Saturday.

Speaking to Reuters, he denied Nepal was facing an economic crisis despite the impact of soaring commodity prices as the tourist industry, a key source of revenues, struggles to recover after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Nepal this month imposed curbs on luxury goods imports to rein in capital outflows. By depositing their savings in Nepal, overseas Nepalis would continue to "maintain their link and benefit from 6 to 7% interest" offered by Nepali banks, Sharma said.

He added that if 100,000 Nepali nationals living abroad deposited \$10,000 each in Nepali banks it could go a long way to help Nepal overcome the current liquidity constraints.

Pennsylvania varsity professor slammed for comments against Asian-Americans

LALIT K JHA
WASHINGTON, APRIL 16

LEADING INDIAN-AMERICANS, including US Congressman Raja Krishnamoorthi, have slammed a law professor from University of Pennsylvania for her disparaging comments about the Asian American community, with a specific disdain for Indian-Americans.

In a recent interview to Fox News, Prof Amy Wax from the University of Pennsylvania alleged that "Blacks" and "non-

Western" groups have "a tremendous amount of resentment and shame against western people for [their] outsized achievements and contributions."

"Here's the problem. They're taught that they are better than everybody else because they are Brahmin elites and yet, on some level, their country is a sh*t-hole," Wax, who has a long history of inflammatory remarks, said.

She also said the westerners have outgunned and outclassed the Asian-Americans in every way. "They've realised that we've

outgunned and outclassed them in every way... They feel anger. They feel envy. They feel shame. It creates ingratitude of the most monstrous kind," she said.

The comment was condemned by the Indian-Americans across the US. "After President Trump left office, I thought the days of calling others 'shithole' countries were over," Krishnamoorthi tweeted. "I'm disgusted to hear this UPenn Professor define Indian-American immigrants in such insulting terms," he said. **PTI**

Won't interfere with protests: Lanka Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, APRIL 16

THE SRI Lankan Army on Saturday said they would thoroughly uphold the Constitution and not resort to violence amidst the anti-government protests across the island nation against the worst economic crisis.

Referring to the social media speculation that the military may be used by the government to launch a crackdown on the



Demonstrators near the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo on Saturday. Reuters

week-long protest near the presidential secretariat, the Sri Lankan Army, in a statement, said it would not resort to violence to quell the anti-government demonstrations.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan police on Saturday removed several empty trucks parked at a protest site near the presidential secretariat, possibly averting a crackdown on the protesters agitating against the government's handling of the island nation's worst economic crisis.

Putin, Saudi Prince discuss bilateral ties

Riyadh: Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman on Saturday. The Saudi Press Agency said the two discussed bilateral relations and "ways of enhancing them in all fields."

The Saudi readout of the call said the crown prince affirmed support for efforts that would lead to a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. The kingdom recently announced \$10 million in humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees. The Kremlin's statement added the two also discussed the ongoing conflict in Yemen and their joint work on an oil output agreement. The oil pact has kept a cautious lid on production by major producers, supporting oil prices. **AP**

Billionaire vows to rebuild Mariupol

Kyiv: Ukraine's billionaire has pledged to help rebuild Mariupol, a place close to his heart where he owns two vast steelworks that he says will again compete globally. Rinat Akhmetov has seen his business empire shattered by eight years of fighting in Ukraine's east but remains defiant, sure that what he calls "our brave soldiers" will defend the Sea of Azov city reduced to a wasteland by seven weeks of bombardment. "Mariupol is a global tragedy and a global example of heroism," Akhmetov said. "My ambition is to return to Mariupol and implement our plans so that Mariupol-produced steel can compete in global markets as before." **REUTERS**

Sweden prepares for more clashes as far-right protests continue

ASSOCIATED PRESS
STOCKHOLM, APRIL 16

POLICE IN Sweden say they are preparing for new violent clashes following riots that erupted between demonstrators and counter-protesters in the central city of Orebro on Friday ahead of an anti-Islam far-right group's plan to burn a Quran there.

Kim Hild, spokeswoman for police in southern Sweden said that the police would not revoke permission for a planned demonstration by the Danish right-wing Stram Kurs party in the southern town of Landskrona on Saturday because the threshold for doing that is very high in Sweden, which values free speech.

Police said, however, that the rally would be moved to another undisclosed location, according to TT. Stram Kurs' leader Rasmus Paludan was also planning a Quran burning in Landskrona, the agency said. Hild said police were preparing for the demonstration and possible violence with extra resources "given what has happened in recent days" in the Nordic country.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RESIGNS

Former Pak PM Ashraf appointed as House Speaker



Raja Pervaiz Ashraf (right) takes oath as the 22nd Speaker of National Assembly. Reuters

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 16

RAJA PERVAIZ ASHRAF, a former Pakistan premier, was on Saturday appointed the 22nd speaker of the country's National Assembly after he was elected unopposed.

Ashraf, 71, from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was administered the oath of office by PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq, who was initially chairing the session.

Meanwhile, Qasim Khan Suri resigned as deputy speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly on Saturday, less than an hour before a session of the House where voting on a no-trust motion against him was to take place for favouring Imran Khan.

Sharing a copy of his resignation on Twitter, Suri said his move signified his association with the vision of his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), and democracy.

Ashraf, meanwhile, was the lone contender for the Speaker's position as no other candidate had submitted nomination papers against him. The office of the Speaker fell vacant after Asad Qaiser resigned on April 9 after failing to implement a decision by the Supreme Court to hold a no-confidence vote against ousted prime minister Imran Khan.

After taking the oath, Ashraf thanked his party leaders for deeming him worthy of the po-

Shehbaz's son Hamza is Punjab CM amid violence in House session

Lahore: Hamza Shehbaz, the son of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was elected as the new chief minister of Punjab on Saturday in a ruckus-marred election that saw Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party and its ally PML-Q boycott the crucial assembly session.

Scuffles broke out between the treasury and opposition leaders during the six-hour-long session in the Punjab Assembly. PTI-PMLQ coalition candidate Parvez Elahi sustained injuries, while Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari, who was siding with the PMLN-PPP candidate Hamza, also got thrashed. Police arrested three PTI lawmakers on the charges of torturing Mazari. **PTI**

He also thanked the prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and the members of the assembly. He said a "new tradition" had been initiated in parliamentary history, adding that the speaker was the custodian of the house. **PTI**



Chinese astronaut Ye Guangfu after landing at the Dongfeng site in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Saturday. AP

Chinese astronauts land after six months on space station

Beijing: Three Chinese astronauts returned to Earth on Saturday after six months aboard their country's newest orbital station in the longest crewed mission to date for China's ambitious space program.

The Shenzhou 13 space capsule landed in the Gobi desert in the northern region of Inner Mongolia, shown live on state TV. During the mission, astronaut Wang Yaping carried out the first spacewalk by a Chinese woman. Wang and crewmates

Zhai Zhigang and Ye Guangfu beamed back physics lessons for high school students.

On Saturday, state TV showed images from inside the capsule as it traveled at 200 meters per second over Africa before entering the atmosphere.

The trio were the second crew aboard Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace. Its core module, Tianhe, was launched in April 2021. Plans call for completing construction this year by adding two more modules. **AP**

SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN BECAME THE ONLY WOMAN HEAD OF GOVT IN AFRICA WHEN HER PREDECESSOR SUDDENLY DIED

Tanzania's first woman President wants to bring nation in from the cold

ABDILATIF DAHIR
DODOMA, APRIL 16

SHORTLY BEFORE midnight on a spring night last year, Samia Suluhu Hassan, then Tanzania's first female vice-president, appeared on television to announce to a shocked nation that the President was dead.

President John Magufuli, an autocrat known as "The Bulldozer" had denied that Covid existed in his country, rejected Covid vaccines and died after a weeklong absence from public view amid unconfirmed reports that he had contracted the virus. His death catapulted Hassan,

62, to a historic position as Tanzania's first female President. Known as "Mama Samia," she is currently the only female head of government in Africa. On Friday, she met in Washington with a fellow path-breaker, Kamala Harris.

Since taking office, Hassan has set off on a different path than her predecessor: She encouraged Covid vaccinations by publicly taking the shot herself, lifted a ban on pregnant girls in schools and began to amend some Magufuli-era economic regulations to lure back investors.

But her first challenge, Hassan said in an interview last week at the state house in the capital, Dodoma, was to over-

come the notion that a woman could not lead Tanzania.

"Most of the people couldn't believe that we can have a woman President and she can deliver," Hassan said. "The challenge was to create a trust to the people that yes, I can do it."

She said other African female leaders — including Liberia's first female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Sahle-Work Zewde, the president (though not head of government) of Ethiopia — quickly came to her support, urging her in a virtual meeting to remain confident, seek counsel and listen to her inner voice.

"They all gave me courage that you can do it," said Hassan.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan at Chamwino State House in the capital, Dodoma. NYT

Since ascending to power in March last year, Hassan has positioned herself as a unifying na-

tional figure willing to challenge the establishment and bent on bringing her country in from the

cold after five years of isolationism under Magufuli, who rarely traveled abroad.

Tanzania, a nation of 60 million people that borders eight other countries in eastern, central and southern Africa, was long seen as a bulwark of stability in a region torn by ethnic strife and civil war.

But Hassan, who is expected to run Por president in 2025, takes the helm of a polarised nation with a battered economy and growing unemployment, a slow pace of vaccine deployment and a growing clamor for constitutional overhauls.

In addition to meeting US officials during her trip to the

United States, she is also set to court investors, seek assistance in improving public health partnerships and promote Tanzania as a vibrant tourist destination.

In Washington, one issue Hassan is likely to face is the war in Ukraine. Tanzania was among the African nations that abstained from the United Nations vote condemning the war — a move Hassan said was in line with Tanzania's long-standing position of nonalignment.

Pushed on this, she said that in "Tanzania, we don't know why they are fighting," adding that Russia and Ukraine should sit down to talk. "The world has to convince Putin not to fight,"

she said.

Hassan, who is soft-spoken and comes across as reserved, said that as vice-president, it was "tough" working with Magufuli at times, and that she argued with him on several issues, including his Covid denialism.

As president, she said, her main priority was to revive the economy, build thousands of schools and health clinics, extend clean water and electricity to rural areas and complete key infrastructure projects — including a railway line and a major hydropower plant. She said more than 250 new businesses had already been registered in the country last year. **NYT**

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW The Creative Spark

Mumbai-based artist Atul Dodiya on turning to watercolours during the pandemic, the complexity of self-portraits and his new exhibition in Delhi

Rinku Ghosh

NAME: PRATHAM Sharma; Designation: Project Manager; Preferred pronoun: she/they; Preferred honorific: Ms, Mx. This is the email signature of an IBMer on the office intranet as part of a sensitivity drive that respects an employee's mind over body and validates self-worth. IBM is not the only workplace to break down male/female binaries of identity through language and perception. In the corporate sphere and outside of it, expressions of gender identities are being repurposed to become more inclusive and empathetic. The first step to this is the language one uses, for it determines the way one sees the world and oneself.

Language is key to connecting with marginalised groups such as the LGBTQIA+ as they break out of gender/sexual stereotypes and define themselves through a larger prism. Pronouns like "he" or "she" come with definitive expectations of how one should express one's identity. While this works for people who think in the way of the gender they have been assigned at birth, it is normative and limiting for people who are gender-neutral or still to figure out their identities. It has prompted them to move beyond conventional pronouns to non-binary ones such as "they".

"Our earliest form of communication was gestural, we pointed out things to each other. With the evolution of language, pronouns replaced this behaviour and became, among many things, representative of a personal point of view. Words like 'they' are deictic, which means their meaning can vary according to contexts, time and place. So, it is with pronouns that people are crafting their acceptance within the existing scheme of things and redefining a corporate culture that reflects the society of our time," says Rukmini Bhaya Nair, professor of Linguistics and English, IIT, Delhi.

Making variable pronouns a natural part of introductions in the social space takes the awkwardness away from a mixed gender group. Zainab Patel, head, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), Pernod Ricard, India, a transgender herself, says, "Such a practice unboxes identity, encourages empathy and makes colleagues non-judgemental. Empathy is key to an organisation's cultural growth. As a man-



GETTY IMAGES

How Indian workplaces are slowly waking up to gender sensitivity

agement policy, it works because it shows that the company is willing to come down to everybody's comfort level. That's more important than hiring to ensure a diversity quota."

At the Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, executive director Keshav Suri, 37, has trained his team to approach guests neutrally. "We introduce ourselves with our preferred pronouns and also request guests to share theirs to minimise the risk of mis-gendering. A gender-neutral language, starting from inviting applications to the hiring process, allows people to choose for themselves and, at the same time, express their respect for other gender identities by not assuming. This builds confidence

in queer people as they get recognised for who they are and are able to bring their whole selves to work," he says. A compassionate language policy leads to ease of access. "Besides LGBTQIA+ communities, the group has staff from various marginal intersections of society, including people with disabilities and acid-attack survivors. "This has helped the team accept each other and grow," says Suri.

Patel, however, feels not just pronouns, but spoken language as a whole has to change to respect the sensitivities of gender, marginalised communities, races, and filter down to the shop floor. "We still use words like 'baniya' and 'bhangi' to label communities and profes-

sions; still use phrases like 'able-bodied men' for a job description instead of writing 'persons who can lift weights.' Language cannot be an extension of bias any longer, it has to value competency. Companies must learn interventions and work out anti-discriminatory policies, backed by a language policy, something like the Vishaka guidelines. Self-identification must come from within," says Patel.

The sensitivity brought on by an inclusive language policy has not only changed perspectives within corporations but built ecosystems. Prachi Rastogi, D&I leader, IBM, says "It has driven a more gender-sensitive intervention at all levels. For example, we have a pol-

icy of allowing our lactating mothers to travel with another caregiver at company expense. We have extended this facility to all genders. We extend insurance for affirmative surgeries and give our staff time to heal. We have gender-neutral bathrooms and conduct workshops on both female and male menopause. We have linked promotions and increments to behaviour that encourages diversity and have zero tolerance for violations. Culture must be an upstander, not a bystander. Only then will it enter homes, change mindsets."

Of course, modifying language to reflect a spectrum of gender identities in the corporate workspace is yet to result in a massive cultural

shift. In fact, linguists across the world are debating on "woke" culture and its appropriate representation in languages. "The notion of concealment vs revelation has come to the fore but the tension must go. Language cannot be given a cursory treatment. For example, will the English language tenets work in non-Western settings or among communities who are outside LGBTQIA+? Some of our own regional languages have genderless pronouns. Should we draw on them?" asks Nair.

Parmesh Shahani, author of *Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace* (2020), is studying Indian languages to build a gender-neutral vocabulary in everyday life. "Historically, LGBTQIA+ have had a legitimate presence in our culture — the transworld has been peopled by *kinnars*, *hijras*, *jogappas* and they have influenced our languages. For example, the word 'aap' is respectful and totally gender-neutral. Bengali has a gender-neutral pronoun, 'shey'. The easiest way to bring regional languages to the fore is by incorporating them in the culture space," he says.

Adherence to a language policy may seem like a faddist corporate drill but the effects are showing. Suansh Khare, 30, an employee at a Delhi-based MNC, says, "I was hired for a mainstream position at 28. My ease at work convinced my folks that I could sail through the world." Mohul Sharma, food and beverage services associate at The Lalit, adds, "You exhale because you don't have to suppress who you are and get to show what you are worth beyond your gender identity."

Some languages are already creating new gender-neutral pronouns like the Swedish "hen". In Finnish, the third-person pronoun, 'hän' has become popular. The French dictionary *Le Robert* announced last year it had added the pronoun "iel" for its online edition after its researchers noticed its growing usage.

There could also be conscious tweaks within existing frameworks. In January 2019, Hanover became the first German city to use gender-neutral nouns in all official communication. United Airlines became the first airline to offer non-binary gender-booking options. Companies like Accenture are giving employees the option of listing preferred pronouns in their online directories and on conference name tags. New rules of engagement? Certainly. But, more importantly, it is also a way of building a culture of respect.



ARTS etc

The Pleasure Groove

Bengaluru-based musician Ricky Kej on his second Grammy win for an album that voices his environmental concerns

Veena World Honeymoon Special Tours

The Perfect Start for the Perfect Couple

Chalo, Bag Bharo, Nikal Pado!

Group Tour Dubai Abu Dhabi 95000 (6D-May 14, 27)

Group Tour Switzerland 235000 (10 Days May 29)

Group Tour England Scotland 250000 (10D-June 22)

Group Tour Iceland Jewels 325000 (10D-June 19)

Group Tour Nepal 60000 onwards (8 Days)

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DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

Scenes from a Window

The best antidote to a hospital stay is a dose of avian tonic

MANY HOSPITALS around the world now include "pet therapy" as a part of the treatment and recovery process. Well-socialised dogs (and, maybe, cats), bunnies, guinea pigs and, perhaps, even a rude parakeet or two "visit" their patient clients regularly and raise their spirits, helping them recover more quickly.

I don't know if this line of treatment is being followed by hospitals in India but I do know that all I had to do was to stare outside the enormous plate-glass window of the hospital room I was in and the birds outside did the rest. It was a widescreen window, open to the sky (mercifully, blue) and, at the canopy level of trees growing across the road, bushes and hedges below, and bordering a little sunflower garden in the heart of south Delhi. Time at your disposal, you sit at the window and watch the goings-on. Within two days, you'd begin to notice patterns emerge: like us, the birds, too, had a routine. They were all *aam-janta* birds who, like *aam-janta* city-dwellers, went about their daily affairs — but with one big difference. None of them scowled or seemed surly; they seemed to be in the blithest of spirits, which rubbed off on you no matter how much of a hypochondriac you tried to be!

Every evening squadrons of rosy starlings would streak across the sky in tight bunches intent on destroying some distant target (a fruiting peepul, perhaps). Their cousins, the common mynas, would fly in smaller more disorganised rabbles, their squat silhouettes and propeller-like wings invariably reminding you of the wonderful Spitfire fighters of World War II. The big black kites skated past at window level, banking and swooping and occasionally engaging with each other.

A cluster of *papdi* trees attracted a clientele of green pigeons, who simply dived in and vanished in the canopy. You could hear the always grinning, somewhat foolish-looking brown-headed barbet calling even through the window glass — but they, too, simply vanished once they were permitted entry into what I had begun calling the "Papdi-Hotel". Down below at the edge of the little sunflower garden, a pair of red-vented bulbuls was obviously bringing up a family in the middle of a bougainvillea



RANJIT LAL

HEALING TOUCH

Rufous treepie

creeper nearby. Every now and then, one of the parents would alight nearby, look around hastily and dive into the creeper, only to emerge a little while later and whirl off. She (and probably her partner) was least bothered by the tremendous clanging racket emerging from her neighbours, who were constructing some monstrosity out of large flashy aluminium sheets (probably, something for the air-conditioning plant) by cutting and hammering them to shape.

The parakeets as always were the most wild and wanton: they streaked across the skies at random like bullet-headed missiles, screaming their heads off as they swerved and banked, showing off the hundreds of shades of emerald in their plumage. Watch a flock of parakeets for five minutes and you cannot help but smile. But yes, there was also the furtive and sinister. On my last morning, I noticed a pair of rufous treepies systematically clambering up the branches of a fish-tail palm tree growing alongside the building, searching with all the thoroughness of the Enforcement Directorate dispatched on orders of the highest dispensation. Now, treepies are known for their appetite for baby birds and eggs, so this was not promising. Much of the tree was hidden from me, so I couldn't figure out whether they had found a nest in the end — but the thoroughness of the search gave you chills.

One advantage of this kind of confined birding is that it forces you to observe. Most birders are content on ticking off species on their list and marching on: here you are stuck with one viewpoint all day. And this is when the patterns in the lives of birds begin to manifest themselves and you begin to think, hey, you know they're not living random vagabond lives. Extrapolate that to every other living creature on earth and you will realise that it's all one enormous living system working perfectly in harmony — not so much for the survival of the system itself as for that of each genetic component of it.

Then, shortly before being discharged, I watch a fluffy white, down feather float up to the window, rocking on the air currents, like a boat on a lake. It leans against the window for a long moment before drifting away into the wild blue yonder. Back home, I am awoken at 3 am by the peacocks next door — mewling and screaming — back from some karaoke orgy. As dawn filters in, the koels yodel their egg-dumping schemes to one another, and then, the bunch of babblers living across the wall break into their clamorous cacophony. Punctually, at sunrise, your personal red-whiskered bulbul alarm on the window bougainvillea begins its mellifluous wake-up call.



PRAVEEN KHANNA

'Art doesn't always lie in great subjects'

Mumbai-based artist Atul Dodiya, 63, on finding courage to paint self-portraits, creating a shrine for actor Rajesh Khanna and his new exhibition in Delhi

Vandana Kalra

Your exhibition at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in Delhi, 'Walking with the Waves', has small-scale watercolours painted during the pandemic. Did the pandemic affect the way you work?

When I first heard about COVID-19, it was still a distant virus in China. I did not really take it seriously till the lockdown was announced in India. Gradually, I realised that it would not be possible for me to regularly visit my studio, which is only 15 minutes from home. That is when I brought home some pigments and began to work on paper. It was completely free-flowing and unlike my usual practice, where I reference books, films and art I have engaged with. In this new suite of works, I tap a less busy but more innocent space inside me. One form led to another and, starting from March 22, 2020, to July, 2021, I would mostly complete one work every day. In the course of one-and-a-half years, I have made 366 paintings. The exhibition features 135 of them.

We see a lot of nature and some faceless figures in the exhibition. Tell us about them.

Perhaps, since I was not able to go to nature, I was bringing nature into my room, in my painting. We so often seek peace and comfort in nature; we travel to places to feel close to nature. For this set of works, I was not really taking direct inspiration from any source, but the application in some places did remind me of Bengal masters such as Rabindranath

Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Benode Behari Mukherjee, who were close to nature and often painted their surroundings in Santiniketan. I have chosen to keep the figures largely anonymous, with little clothing and no faces. There is a simplicity in the manner in which I worked on them, which reminds me of my favourite pre-Renaissance masters — the simplification of the figure, the clarity of the drawn line that you see in (Italian artists) Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Giotto, who have had a profound effect on my work. Art doesn't always lie in a great subject matter.

There is a figure of an artist with a brush in several watercolours. Is that you? You have previously painted self-portraits.

The watercolours have a figure with a brush and palette, and if you feel he is a painter, and that is me, then probably it is. A large canvas has an expectation and I did not want to impose any weight of reference, history or culture in these works. Picasso once said, each painting is a self-portrait because it depicts what one is thinking, even if it is still life. I also feel that self-portraits are difficult and require courage. There has to be a reason to do one. Some of the best self-portraits are by Rembrandt — the treatment of the skin in oil paint is remarkable and the way he depicted light on the face generates an emotion which he probably felt within. You recognise the likeness of a painter, but it is not the likeness which we are admiring in a self-portrait by Rembrandt, (Vincent) van Gogh or Paul Cézanne. The works are not illustrative or formal studies, but generate more complex



COURTESY: KIRAN NADAR MUSEUM OF ART

A NEW DIRECTION
(Top) Atul Dodiya at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art; a watercolour on display at the exhibition that is on till June 30

emotional parallels. When I saw the Hindi film *Baazigar* (1993) poster, I immediately wanted to do a self-portrait. I took pictures of myself with a toy gun, with glasses that reflected images of Bhupen Khakhar and David Hockney, my first inspirations.

I believe you also watched a lot of world cinema during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, we watched films by Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni, Satyajit Ray. Anju and I are big film buffs. We used to be part of several film clubs and attended film

festivals. Our daughter (Biraaj) recently introduced us to new names and new type of cinema, of filmmakers such as Wong Kar-wai, Chantal Akerman, Agnès Varda, of whom I was not aware of. While watching these, at times, I would take photographs of a paused scene and study it later to see if I could use any element in my paintings.

I have also rediscovered Radio Ceylon and listen to it from 6 to 8, every morning. If I hear a new song or something I like, I write it down. I now have a list of 200-300 in my diary.

In fact, during the pandemic I also worked on something radically different for a private commission at Rajesh Khanna's old house in Bandra, Ashirwad. I created *A Shrine for Rajesh Khanna* with shutter paintings and photographs of the actor, as a homage to the superstar. I rewatched several of his films, such as *Raaz* (1967), *Andaaz* (1971), *Anand* (1971) and *Amar Prem* (1972). At the same time, I was also working on another film project based on more serious cinema, such as Mani Kaul's *Uski Roti* (1969), *Duvidha* (1973) and MS Sathyu's *Garm Hava* (1974).

The exhibition also has mythological works. Have you referred to mythology previously in your work? Are you wary of such depictions, given how there have been controversies in the past?

I have done a Mahalakshmi shutter, but this is probably the first. The works are based on stories of Krishna that I have heard. A historian, theorist or philosopher would tackle mythology differently, but, as an artist, I haven't really delved deep into the original source. At times, you lose the creative impulse if you focus on documentation. I have also done some oil paint on laminate and watercolours on the 10 avatars of Vishnu, which I haven't shown yet. There is certainly a tension that we see around religion now, so one is cautious of what one is painting. But I choose to do what I learnt from Tyeb Mehta. He painted what he wanted. So, he had Durga and Kali, but also the demon, Mahishasura.

To Ma'am, With Love

Remembering Mrs Hashmi, teacher, mentor inspiration

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

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

SABIHA HASHMI was born on November 8, 1949, into a family of Indian freedom fighters and literary figures. She was married at 20 and had two sons who were classmates to my brother and me at Modern School, Vasant Vihar, Delhi, where Mrs Hashmi taught art to middle- and senior-school students. She passed away at her home in Bengaluru on April 5 at the young age of 72.

I first met Mrs Hashmi when I joined Modern School in fourth grade, full of restless energy and shame brought on by the awareness of my gay identity. She found something in me curious enough to allow me entry into her classrooms, where she instructed students senior to me. It was as if Mrs Hashmi knew I was hurting inside, was lost in myself, to myself, and to the world. And so she, who was herself an "other" in so many ways (a divorced woman in a conservative nation, a single mom, and an artist), found an opportunity to

be there for another who was an oddity, one who needed an anchor and role model, needed a haven where internal fears could find artistic expression and needed to feel safe from the harsh treatment kids inflict on those who don't fit in.

When I became a teen, Mrs Hashmi told me about how her family's lot in life changed from a place of comfort to abject poverty when her grandfather's furniture business was ruined during Partition. She and her siblings saw very hard days and the separation of their parents who worked jobs in different cities. Mrs Hashmi also told me about her own marriage and how challenging life can become in a difficult relationship and more challenging still when there are children involved. She taught me about dealing with hardships and showed me through her own experiences the importance of making tough choices and persevering despite all odds. Time after time I saw her take on the courage of a lion though her physical frame seemed more akin to that of a much smaller animal, like a rabbit.

As I came to the 11th grade, I chose to study the sciences. It was at Mrs Hashmi's behest that I presented the school and my family with my desire to take graphic arts and screen printing as well as my science courses — something unheard of. Mrs Hashmi let me know that she would battle teachers who didn't appreciate my unique gifts as a student, and thus allow me significant absenteeism from their classes as I fitted arts and music into my day. There were weeks in those last two years of school when I wasn't seen in any place other than Mrs Hashmi's art room or the music room, and there were nights I got home way past dinnertime, having stayed to finish yet another project. My fellow students envied her love for me and would tease me endlessly about being an extension of her being, and her pet. This was certainly something I didn't always appreciate, as her love came with strict rules of engagement, tough expectations, and high standards.

Mrs Hashmi motivated me, a boy who



SUVIR SARAN

WOMAN OF SUBSTANCE
Mrs Hashmi touched many lives with her peerless grace, dignity, and kindhearted tutelage

wasn't athletic, to climb rocks by saying that if I tried, she would let me show off my cooking skills to the others. I ended up climbing the rocks and then making French fries, and my classmates were suitably impressed. She would tell me what books to borrow from the library — (Alexander) Pushkin and (Fyodor) Dostoevsky were two authors I couldn't have read at 15 had it not been for her. At her prodding, I learned to read and write Urdu and took lessons in Hindi. She took me with her to plays and gallery openings; she would read my writing and poetry and return my efforts with reviews that had me striving to do better. In my end-of-school diary, where other teachers wrote flattering and congratulatory notes, she wrote, "Go jump in a well." But the next morning she came with a most glorious recommendation letter for me to send to Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, where I was the only student from outside of Maharashtra to get into the commercial arts program in 1991. I've always maintained that everything good I have said, thought or done, I owe to her and her alone.

I heard of Mrs Hashmi's passing last week and shared the news in a WhatsApp message

with my mother. She replied, "You have lost your guru." How astute my mother is! I am the youngest of my siblings, born to creature comforts and a family that is whole. By opening my eyes to the world around me, Mrs Hashmi taught me to be the eyes of those without sight, the agitator for those who can't fight back, and the voice for those who have been marginalised generationally, and thus, have neither vocabulary nor expression to even verbalise or show their suffering. Although she was stoic and reticent, I would sometimes see a childlike grin surface — but only if what was being discussed came from a place of honesty, circumspection, and consideration of the other.

Mrs Hashmi awakened humanity and empathy in me and many of my classmates and teachers. She modelled caring and nurturing, both of the self and for the other. She was selfless and powerful, of meagre means and rich vision, short with lofty ideals, a single mother of two with thousands of kids who looked up to her as their guide and mentor. Mrs Hashmi lives in the stories of our lives and is immortal for having blessed so many with her peerless grace, dignity, and kindhearted tutelage.

APRIL 17, 2022

Amrith Lal

A NOTEBOOK in which his elder brother, KP Narayanan, had copied down Kumaran Asan's poems was renowned director KP Kumaran's first introduction, at age 10 or 12, to the poet who transformed Malayalam poetry in the last century. Asan has been with Kumaran since then. At 84, Kumaran has lost count of the number of times he's read the poet. With the passage of time, Asan has only grown taller in Kumaran's eyes, a grand renaissance figure whose life as a social activist and poet has few parallels in the history of modern Kerala.

Asan is arguably the most important Malayalam poet of the last century, and one of its greatest writers. *Gramavrikshathile Kuyil* (*The Koel On the Tree in the Village*), which was released in select theatres in Kerala last week, is Kumaran's tribute to Asan. Kumaran, who has been associated with almost every progressive cultural and political movement of his time, says the biopic is his attempt to capture the soul and spirit of a great social and cultural figure who was misunderstood and misrepresented many times during his short life. During a half-century long career, Kumaran directed films such as *Athithi* (1974), a landmark film for parallel cinema in Malayalam, *Rugmini* (1988, based on a short story by Madhavikutty), *Akasha Gopuram* (2008, inspired by Henrik Ibsen's play, *The Master Builder*, 1892), and a series of short films and documentaries. Film scholar CS Venkiteswaran says that unlike his contemporaries in parallel cinema, Kumaran uses elements of mainstream cinema, like songs, to create an engaging narrative style. *Kuyil* stands apart from his earlier films for its theme, treatment, unconventional cast (Carnatic musician Sreevalsan J Menon is brilliant as Asan), and the extensive use of poetry.

Kumaran Asan died at the age of 50 in 1924. His first major work — *Veenapoovu* (*The Fallen Flower*, 1907) — was published at age 34 and to great acclaim. Asan's life in letters as a published author was short. But in those 16 years, between the publication of *Veenapoovu* and his tragic death in a boat accident, Asan published close to a dozen masterly works — *Nalini* (1911), *Leela* (1914), *Sree Buddha Charitham*, *Prarodanam*, *Chinnavishayata Sita* (1919), *Karuna* (1923), *Chandalabhikshuki* (1922). These poems have a transcendental quality that distinguished them from the work of his contemporaries; their inner luminosity has not faded after so many years.

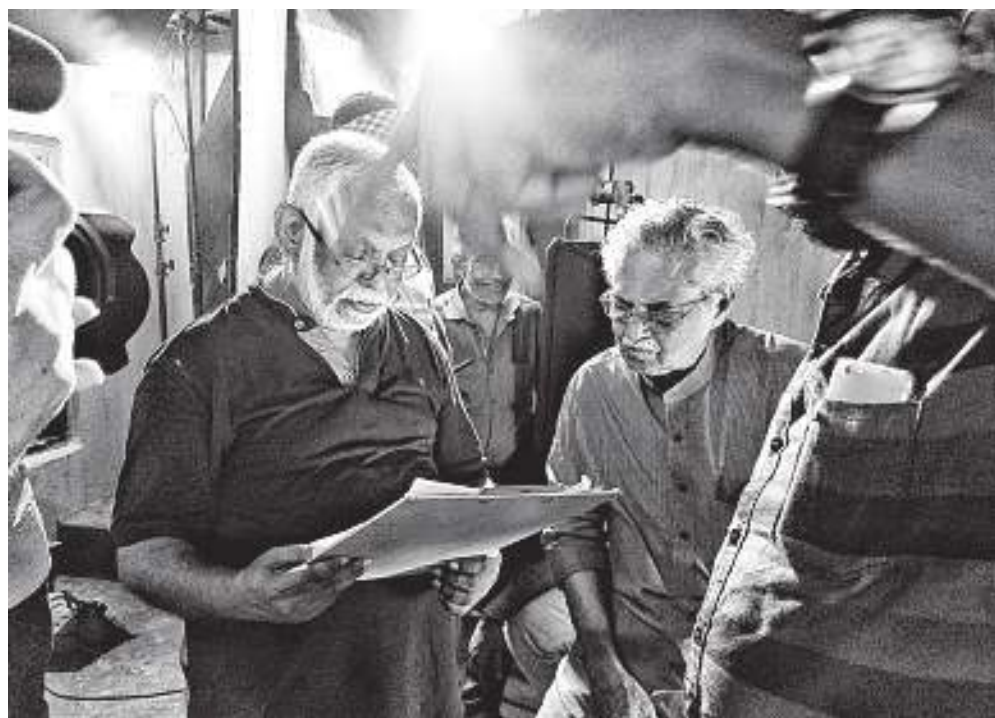
Kumaran's *Kuyil* focuses on the last seven-eight years of Asan's life — a hectic time: He was producing great poetry, had fallen in love with a much younger girl, whom he married at the age of 45, had become a father, and acquired wealth. He was now a widely respected community leader and nominated to Sri Moolam Praja Sabha, a popular assembly at the court of the Travancore king. He'd acquired a self-awareness and confidence about his poetic genius that he chose to reflect on the higher truths of life, primarily ethical questions and the tension between life and death, unlike his contemporaries who were caught in the whirlpool of here and now. Asan was deeply political, but his poetics framed politics in a broad framework of human emancipation and as an intense spiritual effort towards expanding human freedom.

Born in the Ezhava caste, deemed as backward in the erstwhile Travancore state and excluded from public office and employment, Asan knew all about social exclusion. He was the favourite disciple of Sree Narayana Guru, the poet-sage whose radical spiritual vision pro-



IN LETTER & SPIRIT

Director KP Kumaran's biopic on Kumaran Asan celebrates the life and work of an exceptional poet



THE LIVES THEY LIVE

(Clockwise from above) An artist's impression of Sreevalsan Menon as Asan; director KP Kumaran (right) with cinematographer KG Jayan on the set of *Gramavrikshathile Kuyil*; a still from the film

vided fuel for Kerala's transition from being a deeply casteist society in the 19th century to a relatively modern political community. Guru mentored Asan in his formative years and sent him out of Kerala to get educated. In *Kavyakala Kumaran Asaniloode*, a fine study of Asan and his poetics published in 1969, PK Balakrishnan writes that Narayana Guru was the land and sky where Asan's poetic genius flourished.

Not surprisingly, Asan wrote that the essence and eternal truth of this universe was love ("snehamanikhila saram oozhiyil"). In *Chandalabhikshuki*, the story of a Dalit woman's self-discovery and conversion to Buddhism, he offers a searing critique of the caste system: "Caste is the smoke of jealousy/ seething up in the dark covey of ignorant minds/ Filled up with lust for earthly pleasure/ And envy at the happiness of others, It changes its hue with amazing rapidity/ Like the evening cloud, as anger/ Arrogance and rotten misanthropy/ It will divide its own house and estrange/ Near relatives and antagonise classes/ And finally annihilate the whole world" (translated by PC Gangadharan). However, the long narrative poems *Chinnavishayata Sita* and *Karuna* are widely considered his finest works. *Sita* is part monologue, in which the queen of Ayodhya, in exile in Valmiki's ashram, reflects on her life. Deeply philosophical, it gives Sita agency, who questions the deep patriarchy that underlines Raghuv's lineage and Raghava's court. An exquisite piece, it reveals a poet in absolute control of his craft and content. He blends philosophy, drama, love, anger, compassion in perfect proportion to deliver a cathartic experience of the human condition.

Kuyil opens with Narayana Guru's consecration of a temple in Aruvippuram in 1888, a landmark event in Kerala history that Guru described as the consecration of Ezhava Sivan when the Brahmin orthodoxy questioned his act. The biopic is not merely an exercise in marshalling facts; it is more of another artist trying to understand the outer and inner worlds Asan journeyed through during the most creative phase of his life. So, despite Asan's persona as a social figure, he is rarely seen among the crowds in *Kuyil*. The poet is mostly seen in a contemplative mood, with his dear wife, Bhanumathi, and close friends such as Sahodaran Ayyappan.

So, why Asan now? Kumaran believes that Asan, despite the voluminous literature on the poet, has not been understood fully or holistically by Malayalis. His life and work call for a new interpretation: Ours is a time of forgetting, forgetfulness is all pervasive in culture, history, Kumaran says. Political thought and political work blend seamlessly in Asan's life. At the insistence of Guru, Asan had become the founder secretary of SNDP Yogam in 1903, a communitarian outfit of the Ezhava community, after returning from his studies in Bangalore, Madras and Calcutta. Kumaran points out that Asan's writings in *Vivekodayam*, a magazine he edited, suggest that the poet was essentially a philosopher: He has a vision of emancipation that glows despite being in the shadow of Guru. It was Asan who brought a lot of clarity to the Malayali consciousness with his reflections on love, freedom, man-woman relations, the need to reject caste and so on, Kumaran says. Also, Kumaran was drawn to the storyteller in Asan — his major poems are well-constructed narratives. The movie takes its title from a poem Asan wrote in anguish when he was targeted by his rivals in the SNDP Yogam.

Asan needs to be re-read, recognised as a seminal figure of Kerala renaissance. *Gramavrikshathile Kuyil* is a remarkable effort at situating Kumaran Asan as a renaissance figure and a deeply contemplative poet. It should help the world beyond Kerala discover Asan, whose 150th birth anniversary falls in 2023.

A Day in the Life

Bengaluru musician Ricky Kej on winning his second Grammy alongside The Police drummer Stewart Copeland and being an environmental cheerleader

Suanshu Khurana

EARLIER THIS month, when Bengaluru-based music producer Ricky Kej got on the stage at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Marquee Ballroom to accept the Grammy in the Best New Age Album category, alongside The Police drummer Stewart Copeland, it was a moment "unrecognisable and unbelievable" to Kej despite having been up there in 2015 to receive his first Grammy for *Winds of Samsara*. Kej touched Copeland's feet, as a mark of respect for the age-old *guru-shishya parampara*, and accepted the hallowed gramophone for *Divine Tides* (Lahiri Music). "To collaborate with my childhood idol, somebody I admired my whole life, then to stand on the stage and share a Grammy with him — it was special," says Kej, 40.

In March of 1980, the legendary British new-wave rock band The Police came visiting Mumbai for what would be their only performance in the country — a charity concert, put together by the Parsi women of Time and Talent club. Lead vocalist and bassist Sting, Copeland and guitarist Andy Summers took the now-defunct Rang Bhavan open theatre in south Bombay's Dhobi Talao by storm. The talk-of-the-town gig was one of the most iconic moments in the history of rock concerts in India. Kej, who was born a year later, in North Carolina, the US, would go on to hear about the concert from his father. "In the '80s, my father was fascinated by great bands and had an enviable music

collection," says Kej, who fell in love with the band's punk-rock sound the moment he heard them and found Copeland's music to be particularly striking.

At the time, Copeland was quite discernible, given his fierce intensity on the cymbals. "I found something very poetic about Stewart's drumming... It was truly the backbone of the band and gave the songs of The Police so much emotion," says Kej. And so, posters of The Police and Copeland adorned the wall in Kej's bedroom in Bengaluru, where the family moved to when he was eight.

But Kej, who for years got busy making advertisement jingles, never factored in the possibility of a collaboration with an artiste he revered, much less the thought of winning a Grammy together.

As Kej grew as a musician after his first Grammy win, he was keen on doing a follow-up to the album but concerts and travel kept him from focussing on making music. And then, the pandemic hit. "The pandemic forced us all to stay indoors and that gave me the opportunity to create a new album. The more I created, the more I kept feeling the need for a collaborator. This had to be somebody who was not just a virtuoso musician but somebody who would help in the writing process, too. The first person who came to mind was Stewart Copeland. I wanted to overreach because he's somebody who's shaped my career, by my just listening to his music," he says.

It was his British friend and mentor Ralph



EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE

(Above) Ricky Kej; after the win with collaborator Stewart Copeland at the 64th Grammy Awards in Las Vegas



Simon, a music-publishing veteran, who got Kej and Copeland introduced. To Kej's astonishment Copeland agreed after listening to some of the album's music. *Divine Tides* is also an album that was entirely created online. In fact, Kej and Copeland met in person for the first time only seven days ahead of the 64th Grammy Awards. Over a year, the two kept sending Web files to each other, phone

calls, Zoom e-meets, remote recording sessions and Kej changing his sleep cycle to work with Copeland's Los Angeles timings. The result, after almost a year, is *Divine Tides* — the nine-song album that's an ode to the natural world, the resilience of its species. It stems from Kej's deep interest in environmental activism. Not only does he prefer public transport to cars and gets his carbon footprint audited every quarter, he's worked with the government of Andhra Pradesh to promote "zero-budget natural farming", a technique that avoids the use of chemicals and pesticides. He made a song *Jai Kisaan* (2020) with the tribal farmers of Andhra, and is a supporter and ambassador for a number of UN bodies.

Kej and Copeland have woven diverse soundscapes and elaborate ambient textures by incorporating scores of musicians into the mix. The haunting *Our Home* features Sangeeta Kaur, the Vietnamese-American vocalist who's won a Grammy of her own,

too, this year. *Himalayas* is an ode to the highest mountain range on Earth, with chants, Hindustani classical vocals, sitar interludes and myriad percussion sounds. *Gandhi*, a gentle ballad appreciating frogs, one of the oldest species on the planet, dwells on the Mahatma's quote: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated". "The idea is that if you treat the voiceless well, that means that the moral compass of the country is in place," says Kej, who wanted to gently draw in people to the idea.

Kej grew up in a wooded area, amid creepy-crawlies. When his family would run away or step on them, it would bother Kej as a child. "I realised early on that there was a significance to each and every species in the ecosystem. Then there was music, which also came from nature — sounds of birds, wind, water, trees," he says.

Growing up in a Punjabi-Marwari family, glued to his father's diverse music collection that ranged from Michael Jackson, Bee Gees, Elvis Presley, Paul Simon, and a lot of African, European and Russian music, Kej decided early on to make music his life's path. But his doctor-father wasn't convinced. So, he joined the city's Oxford Dental College, in 1999, for a course in dental surgery. "I made a deal with my father that once I get the degree, my life would be my own," says Kej, who played with a couple of bands in college that led him to radio commercials. "In dental college, I began to take on jingle projects. I completed my degree a few years later but did not practise for even a day," says Kej, who made commercials for a number of brands, from foods and beverages companies to telecom, creating music for more than 3,500 commercials. "It was the best music education I could have got, working with diverse clients from all over the world," he says.

But he stopped making commercial music in 2013, having figured out that if these multinational brands used music as a powerful medium to sell products, it could very well convey messages that mattered to him. "Why not talk about subjects such as deforestation and gender inequality, which are close to my heart, through music?" he thought. Now plans to make music only to make a positive social impact, to make the world a better place "in my tiny capacity," says Kej.

18 ECONOMY

NET PROFIT AT ₹10,055.2 CR FOR FOURTH QUARTER, ₹36,961.3 CR FOR FY22

HDFC Bank Q4 net up 22.8% on better asset quality, higher interest income

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 16

HDFC BANK on Saturday posted a net profit of Rs 10,055.2 crore on a standalone basis for the quarter ended March 2022 (Q4FY22), up 22.8 per cent against Rs 8,186.51 crore in the year-ago period.

Net interest income (NII), the difference between interest earned and interest expended, rose 10.2 per cent to Rs 18,872.7 crore in Q4 as against Rs 17,120.2 crore a year ago, with credit growth of nearly 21 per cent and 16.8 per cent rise in deposits on-year.

"Core net interest margin was at 4 per cent on total assets, and 4.2 per cent based on interest-earning assets," the bank said.

Advances rose 20.8 per cent to Rs 13.69 lakh crore in Q4FY22. Retail loans grew 15.2 per cent, commercial & rural banking loans by 30.4 per cent, and corporate & other wholesale loans by 17.4 per cent. Asset quality improved with non-performing assets (NPAs) at 1.17 per cent of advances as against 1.32 per cent a year ago.

"We continued to add new liability relationships at a robust pace of 2.4 million during the quarter," the lender said. It

NII RISES 10.2%

■ Net interest income (NII) rose 10.2% to ₹18,872.7 crore in Q4 as against ₹17,120.2 crore a year ago

recorded a 16.8 per cent growth in deposits at Rs 15.59 lakh crore as of March 2022, with CASA deposits rising 22 per cent and time deposits increasing 12.3 per cent.

Provisions and contingencies for the quarter ended March 31, 2022 were Rs 3,312.4 crore (con-

sisting of specific loan loss provisions of Rs 1,778.2 crore and general and other provisions of Rs 1,534.2 crore) as against total provisions of Rs 4,693.7 crore for the same quarter a year ago. Total provisions for the current quarter included contingent provisions of approximately Rs 1,000 crore.

The bank held floating provisions of Rs 1,451 crore and contingent provisions of Rs 9,685 crore as of March 2022. Total provisions (comprising specific, floating, contingent and general provisions) were 182 per cent of the gross non-performing loans. Net revenues (net interest income plus

other income) in Q4 grew 7.3 per cent to Rs 26,509.8 crore against Rs 24,714.1 crore a year ago.

For the full fiscal FY22, the bank posted a profit of Rs 36,961.3 crore, a growth of 18.8 per cent over the previous year, and net interest income at Rs 72,009.6 crore, up 11 per cent over a year ago. The bank's shares fell 1.90 per cent on the BSE to Rs 1,464.85 Thursday.

Meanwhile, as per a PTI report, HDFC Bank said it will raise up to Rs 50,000 crore in the next one year by issuing bonds. Further, its board has approved to re-appoint Renu Karnad as non-executive director on the board for five years.

INTERVIEW: VICE PRESIDENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR, INDIA, META

'Meta has not cracked all of metaverse; want to help others build compelling use-cases'



"I don't think we're a media company. I think we partner with other media companies, and hopefully they've seen value in leveraging our platforms"

AJIT MOHAN

Given that political ads comprise a small proportion of your revenue and the heat that they bring through allegations of the platform being biased, how does the cost-benefit work out?

I don't have a point of view on this, really. This is, globally, one of the calls that we took a while back. In the context of the role that we can play — just as businesses connect to consumers, we have discovered that our platforms are used to drive causes. We saw that one of the roles we played in the pandemic was to bring attention to the public health agenda. The code of the platform is that you can build communities and get a message across, and therefore I can imagine the utility from a campaign point of view as well. When you look at political ads as a percentage of total (revenues) both in India and globally, it becomes pretty apparent that the driver for us is not revenue.

Companies across the world have stepped up their metaverse investments. How does the future of advertising on internet change on Web 3.0 and the metaverse?

In a very short period of time, from when we articulated the idea of metaverse and the change of identity to Meta, there has been massive excitement from across industry and business leaders across the spectrum, and I've seen this excitement in India as well.

Leaders instinctively get the power of a more immersive internet, and what it means to move from 2D to 3D, not just from a consumer point of view — with use cases such as fitness and gaming — but also from enterprise perspective, if they can engage with these users in a more immersive manner. We have been pretty open in saying that we do not know all the answers at the moment.

Going back to the acquisition of Oculus in 2014, the company has been making hefty investments in AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) for a while now. We have no illusion that we are building the metaverse. We know that we are going to contribute to what will become metaverse and that different companies will create different spaces. It should be interoperable, a lot more than what mobile internet was. At the same time, we do not have any illusion that we have cracked all of it, either in terms of technology or how interoperability will work, or even what the different revenue streams will be. What we do know is that there is going to be a lot of work on access side on devices that enable more immersive version of the internet.

Governments and regulators are debating on formulating policies for cryptocurrencies and NFTs, and the metaverse? How important is it for these policies to be laid down as early as possible?

On the last version of the internet, a lot of these laws and policies had to be developed post facto. We saw this explosive growth and innovation which had a huge impact on global economy as well as the impact on the ability of people to connect in a seamless manner. But we also discovered that there were a lot of bad actors who could do great harm. Even in some of our own works — we have had a lot of fundamental product work

and policy changes over the last few years on the back of recognising that. We have the opportunity to learn from that as we think about how to design the different building blocks that will form the metaverse over the next 5-10 years. For example, we have been baking in privacy as a core design principle in to every product feature and it will translate quite well. We have to proactively work with stakeholders, including regulators around the world to make sure that we build these frameworks in a way that allows innovation but also absorbs the learnings of the last 20 years.

Would Meta be interested in buying rights to broadcast IPL?

One, I don't think we're a media company. I think we partner with other media companies, and hopefully they've seen value in leveraging our platforms. We ourselves don't see us as a media company. I don't think we will build particular use cases. We are thinking more along the lines that we can build frameworks and help with foundational tools on both the software and hardware side that will enable other developers to build compelling use cases for the metaverse.

The role that Meta has is fundamentally around building the toolkits, enabling other partners and developers, and therefore in this context, we don't have the intention to bid for IPL rights that are opening up in the next few weeks. It is the context of the role we see ourselves in, of building the metaverse, and not because we think IPL is not a fantastic property. I have seen the power of IPL in building (Disney+) Hotstar.

In terms of the Apple privacy changes, globally, there's a \$10-billion impact that Meta said it will see as a result of the new policy. For India, could you provide any qualitative or quantitative insights into what impact is being seen by Meta?

There are no numbers to share. What we've publicly announced over the last few weeks, and what's to come, we've clearly worked to make sure that some of the underreporting on web conversions that have come on the back of the Apple changes are addressed. That will continue. The only other thing to call out is that Apple or iOS is a very small share of the total devices in India.

Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

SECTOR WATCH
CONSUMER INTERNET COS

Ban after complaints: Amid pushback by restaurants, Zomato defers quality policy

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

AFTER IT drew the ire of hoteliers over a proposed policy to ban restaurants based on customer complaints about food quality, Zomato is learnt to have decided to defer the plan until next month and has informed restaurants that it will seek feedback from them on how it can strengthen the policy before implementing it.

Zomato, in an email sent late Friday night to its restaurant partners, is learnt to have pushed the implementation of the policy from April 18 to May 3. Under the policy, called "Severe Food Quality" rules, Zomato proposed it would temporarily ban restaurants if consumers complained about their food quality. The platform had listed the presence of hazardous objects in food, serving non-vegetarian food instead of vegetarian, delivering the wrong type of meat, and rotten food as examples of severe food quality issues.

Zomato said it would get feedback from stakeholders on the policy. "We seek feedback from all our restaurant partners and would like to understand from you how this framework can be strengthened so it can be in the best interest of all stakeholders involved," Zomato is learnt to have said in the email.

"The disablement will be in consultation with the restaurant management and will only be applicable till necessary remedial actions are undertaken and verified through an Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)-approved hygiene and safety auditor," the email said.

On its part, the FSSAI welcomed Zomato's policy, say-



File

ing it would ensure customers receive good quality food.

FSSAI CEO Arun Singh told *The Indian Express*, "We are encouraging all stakeholders to offer quality food and Zomato's penalty against multiple offenders could make sure that customers get food of the highest quality."

The FSSAI had earlier launched a hygiene rating for restaurants, cafes, dhabas etc, to make sure customers get good quality food at such outlets. The ratings, voluntary in nature, include several parameters and an inspection by local authorities or a third-party audit of a restaurant's premises and food offerings.

The National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI), which had criticised Zomato saying that the firm was overstepping with the policy, said it was set to have a conversation with the firm to resolve its issues with the policy. "While the intent of the policy is understandable, the implementation leaves a lot of grey areas and scope for misuse. Further the action of delisting is draconian. We have initiated dialogue with the Zomato Team and conveyed our views. They will be meeting with us next week to resolve this in a better, more inclusive way, keeping all stakeholders in mind," an NRAI spokesperson said. Zomato did not reply to a request for comment. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

'Debt recovery via insolvency cases at 31%; 47% cases liquidated'

Nearly half of 3,247 insolvency cases have been resolved via liquidation, and various resolution processes yielded debt recovery of 31%, an IcrA report said



Over 10,000

applications are still pending for admission or rejection

Report details: The data from the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) covers all cases since implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) five years ago till December 2021

Become supply hub, set ₹10L cr target: Goyal to plastics industry

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 16

COMMERCE MINISTER Piyush Goyal on Saturday asked the country's plastics sector to set a target to become a Rs 10 lakh crore industry in the near future by expanding the domestic and export markets as well as by following import substitution.

Felicitating exporters at Exports Excellence Awards organised here by PLEXCONCIL, India's apex trade body of plastics exporters, Goyal said, "India's plastics industry's economic activity is worth Rs 3 lakh crore annually, out of which one-third is exported. There is a significant growth potential for the Indian

plastics industry to become the world's premium supply hub."

"It can target to take its economic activity to a Rs 10-lakh crore industry. This could be achieved through more exports and import substitution, which in turn will create immense job opportunities," he added.

Goyal praised the plastics sector for its performance on the exports front, as the industry achieved exports of \$13 billion in FY22 with a growth of 30 per cent and lauded the export target of \$25 billion it has set for 2025. "The plastics industry has done well on the exports and domestic fronts and contributed significantly during the pandemic, particularly in supporting the healthcare supplies to the country."

₹7.52 lakh cr

claims made by creditors on their borrowers; lenders could realise only Rs 2.5 lakh crore

Liquidation means lenders or financial firms face the maximum brunt of losses on their books

Various NCLTs admitted 4,946 bankruptcy cases till December 2021 — 3,247 applications so far closed, while 1,699 are still ongoing

Source: IcrA Ratings/PTI

Catching fire over e-scooters, Okinawa recalls 3,215 units

ENSE ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

TWO-WHEELER maker Okinawa Autotech said it was recalling 3,215 units of its Praise Pro scooter to fix any issues related to batteries, in what is the first instance of a voluntary recall by an electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer in India.

"The batteries will be checked for loose connectors or any damage and be repaired free of charge at any of the Okinawa authorised dealerships pan India," Okinawa said in a statement.

"The electric 2W maker is

working closely with the dealer partners to ensure that the repair experience is as per the convenience of its customers, for which the vehicle owners will be contacted individually," it added.

The moves come weeks after an Okinawa electric scooter burst into flames, claiming the lives of a man and his 13-year-old daughter. At the time, the company had claimed the fire in its electric two-wheeler was an "evident case of short circuit due to negligence in charging the vehicle". The company said it was waiting for the complete investigation to unfold. Earlier this week, NITI Aayog

SIMILAR INCIDENTS AMONG OTHER EV MAKERS

■ The moves comes weeks after an Okinawa electric scooter burst into flames, claiming the lives of a man and his 13-year-old daughter. At the time, it had claimed the fire was an "evident case of short circuit due to negligence in charging the vehicle"

■ Over the past few weeks, more than a dozen electric scooters have caught fire, including those manufactured by Ola Electric, Pure EV and Jitendra EV, aside from Okinawa. The companies have launched respective probes into the incidents

CEO Amitabh Kant had, during a media interview, urged manufacturers to voluntarily recall EV

batches involved in fire incidents. Okinawa — established in 2016 out of a manufacturing facil-

ity in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan — sold over 46,000 electric scooters in FY22, according to data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA). The company had a market share of 0.39 per cent. In March this year, the company sold over 8,000 e-scooters.

Over the past few weeks, more than a dozen electric scooters have caught fire, including those manufactured by Ola Electric, Pure EV and Jitendra EV, aside from Okinawa. The companies have launched respective investigations into the instances to ascertain the reasons behind the fires. The Ministry of Road

Transport and Highways, meanwhile, too has ordered a probe into the incidents and roped in the Centre for Fire Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), to constitute an independent team and carry out an investigation into the incidents.

While conclusive reasons behind these incidents are yet to be made clear, industry experts said the rising temperatures in the country and manufacturing defects — both in hardware and software — could be possible causes behind the fires.

BRIEFLY

M&M stake sale

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) has agreed to sell over 34.75 lakh shares, constituting 22.81% of the paid-up capital, in Mahindra Sanyo Special Steel Pvt Ltd, to Japan's Sanyo Special Steel Co Ltd in a ₹212 crore deal.

Vedanta on PSU

New Delhi: Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal called for further liberalisation of defence sector and corporatisation of defence PSUs. PTI

Activision probe

Bengaluru: Activision Blizzard is cooperating with federal investigations into trading by friends of its CEO shortly before the gaming company disclosed its sale to Microsoft Corp, it said in a filing on Friday. REUTERS

'Poison pill': Twitter plan to fight Musk's takeover bid

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A DAY after Tesla chief Elon Musk made a \$43-billion offer to buy Twitter, the microblogging platform's board has armed itself against a possible hostile takeover by taking recourse to what is called a "limited-duration shareholder rights plan", also referred to as a "poison pill".

Poison pill — nuclear option against a hostile takeover

This rights plan essentially allows existing shareholders to purchase freshly issued shares in a company at a discount to the trading price, effectively making any possible buyout plan extremely costly and prohibitive for the party planning a hostile takeover. In this case, the move will prevent anyone from having more than a 15 per cent stake in Twitter by allowing existing shareholders to buy additional shares at a discount.

The Twitter board detailed its defence plan to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and put out a statement saying it was needed because of Mr Musk's "unsolicited, non-binding proposal to acquire Twitter".

In fact, Musk, who offered to buy Twitter for \$43 billion for \$54.20/share in cash for a 9.2 per cent stake in Twitter, seems to have been displaced as the largest shareholder in the platform.

US registered investment advisor Vanguard Group, on April 8, disclosed that it now owns 82.4 million shares of Twitter, which means 10.3 per cent of the company, according to the most recent publicly available filings with the SEC. As per the filing, the asset manager increased its stake in the company at some point during the first quarter.

Another high-profile Twitter



Tesla CEO Elon Musk's \$43-bn offer for Twitter has been called "hostile". Reuters file

investor, Al Waleed bin Talal Al Saud — a Saudi royal — has said that Musk's offer to buy the microblogging platform is too low. Al Saud, in a tweet on April 15, rejected Musk's offer.

"I don't believe that the proposed offer by Elon Musk (\$42.0) comes close to the intrinsic value of Twitter given its growth prospects," the Saudi prince tweeted. "Being one of the largest

and long-term shareholders of Twitter, @Kingdom_KHC and I reject this offer."

A takeover bid is deemed as hostile when a company attempts to acquire another against the wishes of that company's management. In the Twitter case, the management is represented by the platform's executive board. The board has indicated it is viewing the Musk offer as "hostile".

Musk's plan

Musk has gone back and forth on this. His latest plan, according to him, is to buy Twitter outright and then taking it private "to restore its commitment" to what he calls "free speech." But his offer, which seemed to have gotten a clear thumbs down from investors, raises multiple questions, including whether he's serious in the first place and does he have the funds to do this.

His objective for this move to take over Twitter is also fuzzy, including his promise of ensuring

that it lives up to its potential as a "platform for free speech." Musk insisted last Thursday that his plan was triggered by the realisation that "having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."

What stands in Musk's way

Since Musk does not have any presence in the social media space, his proposal to buy Twitter is unlikely to raise any antitrust flags. However, there are still question marks over how he would fund the \$43 billion purchase.

Bloomberg columnist Matt Levine wrote in an opinion piece that funding the 9.2 per cent buy in Twitter would have been much easier given that Musk only just diluted Tesla stock worth nearly \$16 billion. However, to finance his purchase of the rest of Twitter's shares would mean tapping into his remaining \$55 billion worth of Tesla shares. Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Goldman, JPMorgan to be Twitter advisers

REUTERS
NEW YORK, APRIL 16

GOLDMAN SACHS Group Inc has been advising the board of Twitter Inc on its deliberations, following Tesla CEO Elon Musk's \$43-billion offer to buy the social media platform.

On Friday, Bloomberg News reported that the Twitter board had tapped JPMorgan Chase Co Inc as a second financial adviser.

Twitter had, meanwhile, on Friday adopted a 'poison pill' to limit Musk's ability to raise his stake in the social media platform, as technology-focused private equity firm Thoma Bravo emerged to challenge his \$43 billion bid.

It is not clear how much Thoma Bravo would be prepared to offer and there is no certainty that such a bid will materialise,

Industry sources said it remains possible that a private equity firm will boost Elon Musk's bid for Twitter by partnering with him

sources said. Industry sources said it remains possible that a private equity firm will boost Musk's bid by partnering with him.

Silver Lake, a PE firm with over \$90 billion in assets under management, would be a natural partner for Musk as it offered financing for his \$72-billion bid for Tesla four years ago, which Musk subsequently abandoned. Silver Lake co-chief executive Egon Durban also sits on Twitter's board.

Liverpool hang on for 3-2 FA Cup semifinal win over City

REUTERS
LONDON, APRIL 16

LIVERPOOL HUNG ON to beat Manchester City 3-2 at Wembley Stadium on Saturday to reach the final of the FA Cup and end Pep Guardiola's hopes of a treble. Jurgen Klopp's side will meet the winners of Sunday's other semi-final between Chelsea and Crystal Palace in the May 14th final. Guardiola opted to rest several of City's starters, including goalkeeper Ederson, and the weakened side were outplayed by Jurgen Klopp's team in the first half, going in 3-0 down at the interval.

Ibrahima Konate headed Liverpool ahead from an Andy Robertson corner in the ninth minute before a dreadful error from City's American back-up goalkeeper Zack Steffen gifted the Reds a second.

Steffen took too long when receiving a back pass from John Stones and Sadio Mane slid in to tackle the keeper and the ball flew into the net. Mane then added another, on the stroke of halftime, in more conventional fashion, driving a volley past Steffen after being set up by Thiago Alcantara.

Guardiola made no changes at the break, even though he had options such as Kevin De Bruyne and Riyad Mahrez to call on, but his side did spark into life. Jack Grealish pulled a goal back 70 seconds after the resumption after Gabriel Jesus did well to beat Fabinho and set up the England midfielder who drilled home. Liverpool keeper Alisson Becker was alert to get out quickly and foil Gabriel Jesus as the Brazilian burst goalwards but while City were improved they still were far from their usual levels of chance creation.

It was puzzling that Guardiola only made one of his possible five changes in the second half, bringing Mahrez on seven minutes from the end although the introduction of the Algerian did make a big impact.

Mahrez cut in from the right and dribbled along the byline before a low ball went through Alisson then Bernardo Silva made it 3-2 in stoppage time. That prompted a frantic final few minutes with Ferandinho and Mahrez both seeing shots deflected out for corners while Raheem Sterling's weak shot was easily saved by Alisson. At the other end Steffen did well to stop Roberto Firmino as Liverpool looked to finish off the contest but the final whistle confirmed their place in their 15th FA Cup final but their first in ten years.

For City it was the third straight season in which they have lost in the last four of the FA Cup. Liverpool remain in contention for four trophies having won the League Cup, reached the semi-finals of the Champions League and still being in the race for the Premier League title where they sit a point behind leaders City.

SPORTLINE: Long jumper Jeswin Aldrin, 20, made heads turn with a series of 8-metre-plus jumps this season and a gold medal at the Federation Cup. The Indian Express travels to Mudalur, the village of the rising star in athletics, to get a taste of the famous Muscoth halwa created by Aldrin's great grandfather and to trace the journey of the shy and reticent jumper destined to break records and bag major medals

Blood, sweet and gold

ANDREW AMSAN
THOOTHUKUDI, APRIL 16

MUDALUR, A quiet village in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, is known for its churches, Muscoth halwa and now for the country's latest long jump sensation Jeswin Aldrin.

The 20-year-old with multiple entries in the 8 metre-club and a gold medal at the Federation Cup has strong links to faith and the delicacy. The Singhalese-inspired sweet was first made by Aldrin's great grandfather Joseph Abraham. Aldrin's family is Pentecostal. In Mudalur there are seven churches. The village is believed to be one of the first Christian settlements in the region. Hence the name Mudalur — first village.

Aldrin is deeply rooted in his faith. The first line in his Twitter bio says, "Believe in God". At the main door of his house, there is a banner with a world map and a verse from the Bible printed on it. The hall has framed bible verses on the walls.

As Aldrin and his family gathered for their first meal after he returned home with the gold medal, his father Johnson quipped: "You've been to what three countries now? Our halwa to 12."

The family runs two bakeries — one is owned by Abraham's sons. The halwa, which is exported, is made in a kitchen behind their shop. Halwa, long jump and medals are conversation topics during the fish curry and rice meal, Johnson jokes that Aldrin has immense growth potential just like the family's halwa business. He is spot on.

Since his first 8 metre-plus jump at the Indian Grand Prix in March, Aldrin has crossed the coveted distance five times — in one evening in Kozhikode during the Federation Cup earlier this month. One of those efforts was wind-assisted 8.37 metres. His next-best matched the previous national record of 8.26m and earned him a spot in the Indian team for the World Championships in Oregon and surpassed the qualifying standard for the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games.

Aldrin's growth as a top athlete began when as a sporty kid he took a liking for the outdoors. He was spotted at the school ground more often than in the classroom. He was part of the school's kho-kho and volleyball team and was a decent runner as well. When it came to track and field, he tried his hand at high jump first.

"We got a jump pit stitched at a local furniture store just for Aldrin. We used fixed poles to put the bar on. It was tough to procure a jumping pit for just one student so we managed with what we could. I think that is one of the reasons Aldrin moved to long



Jeswin Aldrin at the family-owned bakery, which is famous for the Muscoth halwa. (L) With his parents Esther and Johnson. After winning the Fed Cup gold.



He used to come and practice for hours at the school ground. On weekends he used to go to Anna Stadium, more than an hour away, to practice at the synthetic track. Most kids in our school don't even know what a synthetic track is yet."

BENSON,
VOLLEYBALL COACH AT ALDRIN'S SCHOOL

jump," Anita Irene, one of the physical education teachers at the Daniel Thomas Matriculation Higher Secondary School, said.

High jump's loss was long jump's gain. Johnson believes long jump was always Aldrin's true calling. He recalls Aldrin making a dash to the long jump pit to watch as soon as he had finished the high jump competition at junior meets. Aldrin didn't take much time to pick up the long jump technique and soon started accumulating gold medals in almost every meet.

Benson, a volleyball coach at Aldrin's school, feels no one but the youngster deserves credit for becoming one of the finest athletes in the country. "He used to come and practice for hours at the school ground. On weekends he used to go to Anna Stadium, more than an hour away, to practice at the synthetic track. Most kids in our school don't even know what a synthetic track is yet," Benson said.

A major turning point in Aldrin's career occurred during the 2019 junior nationals in Ranchi. French coach Antony Yaich, the former head of track-and-field at JSW's Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), saw potential in a young Aldrin.



Aldrin's elasticity stood out for the Frenchman. Yaich made a major change though. He asked Aldrin to adopt a more efficient method of hitch-hike technique — where the jumper completes a cyclic-kick motion while airborne — instead of the hang technique.

"I think Antony deserves a lot of credit. Aldrin is here because of his strict training. Initially, we were hesitant about sending Aldrin to Bellary to train at IIS but Antony is good at convincing. He just asked us to visit once. When we saw the facilities we couldn't say no," Aldrin's uncle Simon Issac said. The uncle saw the potential in Aldrin years before coach Yaich did.

When Aldrin was finishing high school,

his parents wanted him to focus on academics and secure admission at a top college. "I had to do a lot of convincing. I explained to them that Aldrin would get into the best institutions and also secure a good job all because of sports," Issac said.

Aldrin is reserved and likes to keep his replies brief, mostly monosyllables. When at home, he wears his headphones and plays games on his mobile phone. He also likes to stay away from the limelight. When he was called to studios by Tamil news channels after his Federation Cup gold, he hesitantly agreed. "Do we really have to do it now? Can you tell them I will give interviews after winning an Olympic medal," Issac recalled.

Those who know Aldrin say he opens up and is a warm person once he gets to know someone well. "He gets attached. He loves his friends and was always up to some mischief with them. He loves talking with his friends," Irene said.

Aldrin has just recently started training with two-time World Championship medalist from Cuba, Yoandri Betanzos and the results are already showing. All his 8 plus jumps have been registered post the Cuban coach's arrival. Aldrin's recent spike in performance means he and national record holder Sreeshankar Murali will be pushing each other to excel. Just like they did during the Federation Cup.

The two jumpers going head-to-head had made for great viewing in what was the best long jump competition ever on Indian soil. The challenge for Aldrin will be to consistently produce the big jumps at the major competitions. An 8.37m jump, without wind assistance, could land him an international medal. "Things are working well with Yoandri. There are a lot of areas that he has found that I need to work on. I will be training hard and giving it my best," Aldrin said.

As Aldrin prepares for a busy year, the family will be praying that the wind doesn't play spoilsport again. "I did a lot of research about the wind assistance and rules post the Fed Cup. I think I have become an expert myself," father Johnson, who not only follows his son's progress but keeps tabs on jumpers around the world, said.

Esther, Aldrin's mother, is also clued in about her son's career. "I stream all my son's competitions and follow his events religiously," she said. "Tell me which event you followed?" Aldrin asked in jest.

"I know your latest effort would have placed you second in last year's top-10 list," she replied. Aldrin thinks and nods. The boy from Mudalur, with his feet firmly on the ground, at times needs a reminder of the giant strides he has made. The eldest son in the family is becoming a household name, just like the halwa his great grandfather created.

BRIDGE

Dealer: East Vulnerable: East/West

NORTH	SOUTH	WEST	NORTH EAST SOUTH
♠ KJ3	♠ A82	Pass	TNT
♥ Q10987	♥ AK542	Pass	2D Pass 3H
♦ Q92	♦ A4	Pass	4H
♣ 83	♣ 962		

The opening lead by West in the ace of clubs, followed by the king of clubs. East plays the queen of clubs and then discards the seven of diamonds. West then plays the jack of clubs and you must take stock of a potentially dangerous situation. If you ruff West's club in dummy with the seven of hearts, East might overruff with the jack of hearts. The odds of East having the jack of hearts are 50/50. If you ruff with the queen of hearts in dummy, East won't be able to overruff but there will be three outstanding hearts to the jack. The odds of the hearts splitting 3-0 are only 22%. So, ruff with your queen since that is your best chance for success. You have lost two club tricks and can see a potential loser in each of diamonds and spades. Oh-oh, the contract appears to be in some danger. How do you proceed?

The West Hand: S-5 4 H-3 3 D-8 6 C-A K J 10 7 5 4

The East Hand: S-Q 10 9 7 6 H-6 D-K J 10 7 5 3 C-Q

You see no reason to delay removing trump and do so with West playing the three and the jack. So far, so good. East discards the seven of spades on the second trump play. It appears, from his discards that he has something good in diamonds and possibly spades as well. Here is one approach for continuing the play.

Play the four of diamonds from your hand with the hope that West has the king. If West has the king and plays low, your queen is good and you do not lose a diamond trick. If West plays the king of diamonds, you can use the queen of diamonds to discard your potential spade loser. If East has the king of diamonds, you can still make your contract with a successful spade finesse. What do you think of this approach? Have you counted the points that you know West has shown so far? He has shown the AKJ of clubs and the jack of hearts. If he also had the king of diamonds, he would have started with 12 HCP. Did he have a very nice club suit? He sure did. It was seven cards long and topped by the AKJ10. Many would overcall two clubs over your opening 1NT bid if they had the king of diamonds along with all the wonderful clubs found in the West hand. So, West probably doesn't have the king of diamonds. So much for the approach discussed previously. How about the missing queen of spades? If West had the queen of spades, he would have 11 HCP. It is possible that he would also overcall with that nice club suit. If he had the queen of spades, and East indicated he liked diamonds and spades when he discarded. Did you notice? Looks bad doesn't it? However, making the contract is a cinch if East has both the queen of spades and the king of diamonds as it appears he does. I'll give you a hint. Think endplay. Think endplay! Play the ace and king of spades (the queen didn't drop and West followed to both your spade leads) and then exit with the king of spades. Play the ace and king of spades (the queen didn't drop and West followed to both your spade leads) and then exit with the jack of spades. Your line of play was based on a logical assumption that East held the missing honors. This isn't always going to work but reaching for a thread of hope is better than nothing.

NORTH	EAST	WEST	NORTH EAST SOUTH
♠ J876	♠ A1095	1H	
♥ QJ6	♥ 105	Pass	TNT Pass 2H
♦ KQJ10	♦ A652	Pass	3H Pass 4H
♣ Q109	♣	Pass	3H Pass

West leads the king of spades. You signal with the ten and West continues the suit. South ruffs the second round and draws two rounds of trumps with the ace from his hand and the queen from dummy. West shows up with two hearts so you know that South started with six of them, not seven. Next North leads the king of diamonds. It is dangerous to play low on this since South might have a singleton. So you take it. West signalling with the eight. This looks like a highish diamond so it is likely that West is showing a doubleton. If South has just one diamond, he is about to discard a lot of clubs on dummy's diamond winners. What card should East return?

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2369

QUICK CLUES

ACROSS

- Caustic, harsh (9)
- Fundamental (5)
- A sheer fabric (7)
- Line touching curve (7)
- A whip for chastising persons (7)
- Canadian policeman (7)
- The Indian flag for example (9)
- Opera singer (5)
- Writing tables (5)
- Without peer (9)
- Senior executive (7)
- Rout (7)
- Sudden shrill cry (7)
- Lacking any purpose (7)
- Pulls or tugs sharply (5)
- Medical prediction (9)

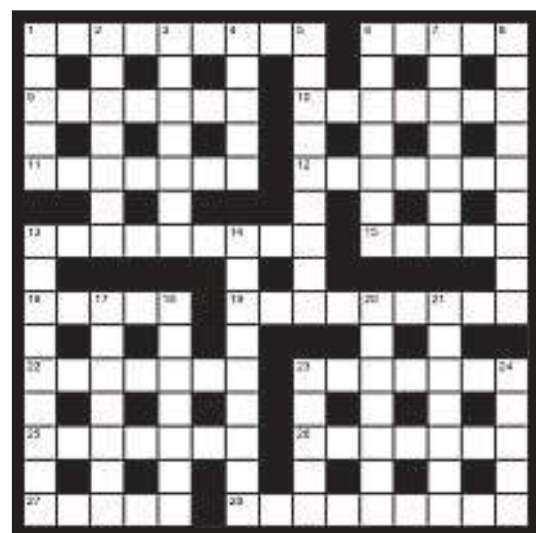
DOWN

- Bad habits? (5)
- City in North Africa? (7)
- Horrific fire (7)
- Drive a weapon violently in some direction (5)
- Twin-hulled boat (9)
- Repeat, feast (7)
- Add sugar to? (7)
- Principal church (9)
- In a dull and boring manner (9)
- Possession (9)
- An orange colour; crocus with purple flowers (7)
- Triumph (7)
- White of egg (7)
- Shuns (7)
- Constellation: The dragon (5)
- Mitigates or reduces in intensity (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS

- Partnerships but not companies are boundless (9)
- Joiner's instrument gives angles that aren't right (5)
- Stubs in the ashtayr, for example (3-4)
- Reg and Paul having become entangled with this sound stopper (3-4)
- Finds traces among a hundred tested (7)
- Having a boy in spring is sweet! (7)
- US infantryman swallows a licentious Italian rebel (9)
- Study an attempt in Africa (5)
- We've nothing on for the time being (5)
- Had been a forger, one didn't let oneself forget (4,1,4)



- Sunstroke was still, but remains alive (7)
- Possibly dialect for "keep" (7)
- A proton, perhaps, takes no charges? (3,1,3)
- Clare would need a little tea to be like this (3,4)
- Quick - turn a drip around! (5)
- Global system copes with unusual occurrence here? (3-6)

Solutions to 2368

- QUICK CLUES ACROSS:** 1 Aspirin, 5 Fibbing, 9 Getting on, 10 Cello, 11 Lookout, 12 Sell-out, 13 Rare stamp, 15 Copied, 17 Doing, 19 Lingering, 22 Pleading, 25 Tripoli, 26 Total, 27 Bandicoot, 28 Seedless, 29 Emerson.
- DOWN:** 1 Angular, 2 Potpourri, 3 Ruminous, 4 Nightfall, 5 Finds, 6 Bucolic, 7 Igloo, 8 Gloried, 14 Penitence, 16 Poisonous, 17 Deputies, 18 Grilled, 20 Edifice, 21 Glisten, 23 Attic, 24 Gibes.
- CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS:** 1 Rule out, 5 Poplars, 9 Bust ticket, 10 Rouse, 11 Tsarina, 12 Truckee, 13 Samarkand, 15 Began, 17 East's, 19 Dust cover, 22 Bargain, 25 Unloved, 26 Opted, 27 Detective, 28 Leg-pull, 29 Dyness.
- DOWN:** 1 Rebates, 2 Las palmas, 3 Olivier, 4 Take a hand, 5 Petit, 6 Perturb, 7 Amuck, 8 Sienna, 14 Disgusted, 16 Gamevics, 17 Embroid, 18 Spandau, 20 Colicky, 21 Reddenns, 23 Retag, 24 Nadiel.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday April 17

Important improvements at work and at home are signified by serious planetary alignments. The celestial spheres are presenting you with the chance to lay yourself on the line over the next year.

Monday April 18

Say the right thing and you'll keep important people on board. Emotional pressures could cause your financial judgment to slip in the next few months.

Tuesday April 19

One last burst of enthusiasm helps you push forward with new plans. However, there's still a lot of indecision around and you might have to cope with distractions when other people change their minds.

Wednesday April 20

You should take worldly, professional and business matters seriously if you are to make the most of opportunities.

Thursday April 21

Aspirations are going to keep coming back all year. A feature of the year will be your tendency to examine relationships to get a fix on why you're attracted to certain types of people.

Friday April 22

The pace begins to pick up today, especially if you have choices to make. This may not be the best moment to make final decisions, unless you're prepared to change them next week.

Saturday April 23

Life is packed with potential. Even the tiny events today will be multiplied and magnified over the coming months.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You may encourage those who are sincere and devoted by using unconventional methods and tactics, or by agreeing to discuss your real intentions. Such tendencies are supported by the fact that your romantic charms and social skills will be at their most effective.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Now that Mars and Venus are dominating both your emotional state and your domestic affairs, you must proceed as fast as you can to put all family and other close relationships on a proper footing. Aside from more serious issues, this is an ideal time for a spot of lavish entertaining.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Mercury, the planet responsible for your brilliant ideas, is still on your side, and you can be as certain as you ever will be that decisions and choices you make now will be the right ones. As a matter of importance, you should also pay very close attention to financial developments and expenditure.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Events in your personal life will begin to move faster and faster, although there will be periods when you come to a sudden full stop. It does not matter now whether your immediate interest is emotional, romantic, domestic, professional or financial: what is important is that you make a fresh start.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Passions will be running high and if you feel that your approaches are ignored or belittled, or that you have been slighted or taken for granted, you may blow up. The last thing you want to do now is ruin your chances of a massive boost in a major ambition.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

Has somebody been going behind your back? Or have you not been entirely straight with someone? The best to be hoped for is either that you will gain recognition for your discreet and selfless activities, or that your worldly success will now shed new light on your emotional and spiritual place in the world.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

You just cannot decide whether you want everything to remain as it is, or to make a complete break. Initially, turn your attention to professional issues and make a quick decision. A personal dilemma deserves longer-term consideration, so don't rush it.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

The week's developments at work will be dominated by personal relationships and, if you fall out with colleagues, you will damage your own prospects. The answer is simple, don't try to foist your ideas on people who don't need them. Try listening instead.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

As a matter of principle, you should repay some of the generosity which has come your way. On a more mundane note, financial concerns are due to intensify. If this is the month for holidays, you have planned well. By a happy coincidence, Mars and Venus are revealing an excellent prospect for romantic adventures abroad.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

Nothing takes place in isolation, and slight upsets will be opening the window on a remarkable series of emotional opportunities later in the year. It may be necessary to be firm now, and insist that you get what you need out of a relationship, or at least that the issues are aired.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Stick to your preconceived notions of what people should do and when, and you will miss out and run the risk of confrontations over minor issues. Although you may not have received all the guarantees you need over money, what takes place now is bound to fire your imagination.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

Conditions at work will be dominated by your feelings towards partners and colleagues, and a romantic association may come home to roost. This is a time for you to stretch yourself. Extend your leisure activities into new and untrod areas.

JUMBLE WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

In the field of observation, chance favours only the ____ - Louis Pasteur (8,4)

SVAEE	EIRDDN
AFIRR	MOOMPP

ANSWER: In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind
SOLUTION: FAYES, FRAR, RIDDEN, POMPOM

SUDOKU 4807

Difficulty Level 3s

Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4806



BRIEFLY

India win jr Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying

New Delhi: India made history by winning the Junior Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying event with a 2-1 victory over Japan at the RK Khanna Stadium here on Saturday. Down 0-1 after Bhushan Haobam's 3-6 6-3 2-6 loss to Naoya Honda, seventh seed India bounced back to win the remaining single and doubles rubbers and claim the event. Rushil Khosla brought India level with a 6-3 3-6 6-0 win over Yuta Tomida and in the deciding doubles rubber the Indian duo outplayed their rivals 6-3 6-4. **PTI**

Tsitsipas sets up semis clash with Zverev

Monte Carlo: Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas came out on top from a thrilling quarter-final clash with Diego Schwartzman, prevailing 6-2 6-7(3) 6-4 on Friday to set up a meeting with Alexander Zverev at the Monte Carlo Masters. The Greek third seed was 5-2 up in the second set but inexplicably lost the plot and trailed 4-0 in the decider before rediscovering his touch. He will take on Alexander Zverev for a place in Sunday's final after the German world number three claimed an epic 5-7 6-3 7-6(5) victory against Italian Jannik Sinner. Earlier, Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina reached his first Masters semi-final by beating American Taylor Fritz 2-6 6-4 6-3 and will take on Bulgarian Grigor Dimitrov. **REUTERS**

BAI trials: Sai continues winning streak

New Delhi: World No. 19B Sai Praneeth continued his unbeaten run as he defeated Sourabh Verma in the stage 2 A men's singles group at BAI's selection trials for the upcoming major international team events here on Saturday. Praneeth, 2017 Singapore Open champion, saw off national champion Verma 21-14 15-21 21-13 in a thrilling match at the K. D. Jadhav Hall inside Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex. The Hyderabad shuttler will next take on Kiran George and Ansal Yadav, who also crossed the preliminary round and are clubbed in stage 2 A group, out of which the topper will play for rank 1 to 4 in a round-robin format. **PTI**

IWL: Kerala bag 12-0 win vs Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Gokulam Kerala FC began their title defence in the top-tier Indian Women's League on a ruthless note, slamming a dozen goals past a hapless Odisha Police here on Saturday. Indian attacking midfielder Manisha Kalyan wreaked havoc in opposition's defence with five goals (17th, 26th, 33rd, 48th, 73rd minutes) as the Aditi Chauhan-led side struck six goals in each half. Substitute Elshaddai (61st, 86th) struck a double, while the other goalscorers for the Malabarians were Win Theingi Tun (25th), Dangmei Grace (37th), Ranjana Chanu (70th) and Karishma Shirvolkar (77th). **PTI**

Giants, Rahul give Mumbai no respite

LSG captain KL Rahul's unbeaten hundred sets the tone for 18 run win over laggards MI who remain winless so far this season

SYNOPSIS: Rahul's classy ton sets up Super Giants' win, as MI go deeper in the mire

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY
APRIL 16

SURYAKUMAR Yadav's dismissal off a Ravi Bishnoi long-hop typified Mumbai Indians' season so far. But as long as Kieron Pollard was there, there was life in MI. The big man tried his best, but gradually the asking rate climbed to 20-plus. Twenty-six runs were required off the final over and MI lost by 18 runs, chasing 200 for victory. Lucknow Super Giants won not only because KL Rahul led from the front and scored a mighty fine century, but collectively they played better cricket than their opponents to thoroughly deserve their victory. Super Giants went to eight points from six games, while after six straight defeats, MI's fall from the perch has been spectacular.

Rahul's classy ton

In the 16th over during Super Giants' innings, as Jasprit Bumrah came back for his final spell, the Brabourne Stadium DJ belted out: 'Boom, Boom Bumrah'. MI looked flat on the field and their fans were subdued.

In the MI dug-out, Sachin Tendulkar and Zaheer Khan were having a conversation. Of course, it's not known if the conversation between the two former India stalwarts, now part of the MI support staff, was about Rohit Sharma's use of Bumrah in this game. By then, Rahul was bossing and the MI skipper probably missed a trick by not using his best bowler against the Super Giants' skipper right at the beginning. Rahul's unbeaten century in his 100th IPL appearance was a result of keeping things simple and steadily growing into the game. In top fettle, his batting is very easy on the eye and 66 runs in boundaries and overboundaries, out of 103 not out off 60 balls, attested a fine conversion rate in terms of putting away loose deliveries. But MI barely attacked him upfront, when like most batsmen he was vulnerable.

Twice in this tournament, Rahul has got out to golden ducks and one of those was against Rajasthan Royals in the previous game. Sunil Gavaskar on air was imploring Rohit to start the proceedings with Bumrah: "Confront the man who got out twice in the first ball in this tournament with your best bowler." The MI skipper started off with the part-time off-spin of Tilak Varma instead. Rahul was very keen to get off the mark. He got a short delivery from the offie and pummeled a pull for a four. When Bumrah was eventually brought into the attack in the fourth over, both Rahul and Quinton de Kock had played themselves in.

The hallmark of Rahul's batting was the way he converted the hittable balls to optimum effect. MI bowlers, bar Bumrah, were generous enough to bowl an overdose of loose deliveries. Tymal Mills was the culprit-in-chief; offering width, bowling in the slot and not bowling to his field. His final over, 19th of the innings, was particularly poor. He bowled length outside off, bowled an ill-disguised slower delivery to Deepak Hooda to concede a six, missed his line completely to bowl a big wide and served a half-volley outside off to Rahul to give away another four. The last four took Rahul to his century. That 22-run-over ensured that MI would have to chase 200. Mills went for 54 runs without a wicket in his three overs. Used to Trent Boult's quality, this has been a serious let-down for the five-time champions.

Rahul was always looking to bat long and once he got into the groove, there was no stopping him. He took his singles and doubles well, allowing fours and sixes to take care of them-



KL Rahul's unbeaten century in his 100th IPL appearance was a result of keeping things simple and steadily growing into the game.

Sportspics for IPL

IPL TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR
GT	5	4	1	8	0.450
LSG	6	4	2	8	0.296
RCB	6	4	2	8	0.142
RR	5	3	2	6	0.389
PBKS	5	3	2	6	0.239
KKR	6	3	3	6	0.223
SRH	5	3	2	6	-0.196
DC	5	2	3	4	0.219
CSK	5	1	4	2	-0.745
MI	6	0	6	0	-1.048

elves. He also thrived on partnership batting – 52 runs (33 balls) with de Kock to start with followed by a 72-run (47 balls) association with Manish Pandey and a 43-run (21 balls) partnership with Hooda at the death. MI's ground fielding was average. Misfields came thick and fast. Super Giants' fielding, on the contrary, was excellent.

Deeper in the mire

In the end, after another batting failure from Rohit and one more disappointing knock from Ishan Kishan, it had become Surya-or-bust for MI. Rohit showed intent, when he regally clipped Avesh Khan over mid-wicket. But he got out a couple of balls later, trying to run one down to third man and getting a thin edge to wicketkeeper. Dewald Brevis came and readily took the attack to the opposition. Dushmantha Chameera bowled a peach to beat the youngster. Brevis' response was a stunning six over long-on. Back-to-back fours ensued before Brevis turned his attention to Avesh with consecutive boundaries. It was incredible hitting, but inexperience came to the fore. Brevis made room but mis-hit an Avesh full-toss straight to Hooda at extra-cover. The teenager got ahead of himself. Kishan seems to be bogged down by his Rs 15.25 crore price tag. It has made his batting cagey. After a laborious 17-ball 13, the southpaw dragged a Marcus Stoinis off-cutter on to the stumps. At 57/3, MI looked to Surya to get out of the woods. Over-reliance on individuals cost the team dear.

Brief scores: LSG 199 for 4 (Rahul 103*, Pandey 38, Unadkat 2-32) beat MI (Suryakumar 37, Brevis 31, Avesh 3-30) by 18 runs

Blazing Karthik goes boom-boom, spells doom for Delhi Capitals

SYNOPSIS: Dinesh Karthik's 66 off 34 revived RCB from 92 for 5 to 189, which was enough to quell Delhi Capitals by 16 runs

ABHISHEK PUROHIT

APRIL 16

DINESH KARTHIK produced another turnaround for Royal Challengers Bangalore, and a chase of 190 was beyond Delhi Capitals despite David Warner's fifty as Josh Hazlewood came up with a three-wicket burst.

Maxwell v Kuldeep

This was DC's first game of the season at Wankhede Stadium. On the larger square outfield at the Brabourne, DY Patil and Maharashtra Cricket Association stadiums, Kuldeep Yadav had had more leeway to toss the ball up and slow it down. He'd collected 10 wickets in four games at an average of 12.4 and an economy-rate of 7.75. But the smaller Wankhede turf was going to be a bigger challenge.

When Kuldeep was brought on in the ninth over, Maxwell had worked himself into some rhythm. And DC captain Rishabh Pant had taken the risk of giving Kuldeep the end from which Maxwell could eye the shorter boundary with the slog. And right away, Maxwell looted 23 runs off the over; two sixes and a four were swung to deep midwicket. Kuldeep tried to make Maxwell hit to the longer side, bowling full and wide, and Maxwell obliged with a driven four to deep extra cover.

Before Kuldeep came on, RCB were struggling on 47 for 3 after eight overs. Maxwell's assault seemed to have switched the momentum in his side's favour. Wiser after the storm, Kuldeep now changed ends. And the first ball, which was floated up full, Maxwell tamely chipped to long-on, instead of going full-blooded for another maximum. He had been kept to 55 off 34, and Kuldeep had had his revenge.

DK v DC

There are few sides that will be able to more



Dinesh Karthik's unbeaten 66 for RCB comprised five fours and as many sixes.

Sportspics for IPL

than double their score after losing half the side for 92 by the 12th over. But RCB have already been rescued time and again by Dinesh Karthik this season, and the veteran keeper-batsman answered his side's call for help once more.

Khaleel Ahmed, the DC left-arm seamer, hadn't been hit for a single six going into Saturday night's game. He was hit for two, both coming off Karthik's bat. For the second one, a slower length ball, he actually bent his knee as if he was facing a spinner and slog-swept cleanly. Heading into his last over, Mustafizur Rahman had given away just 20 runs. Batsmen had been unable to get underneath his full deliveries and had to be content with singles. But Karthik launched him wherever he pleased. There was a fine reverse-hit clear of short third man, and an authoritative swat that flew in the gap between mid-off and extra cover. Mustafizur went fuller to squeeze Karthik's swinging space but that only made him hit

straighter and farther, in an over that would end with a damage of 28 runs.

Shahbaz Ahmed has been an ideal partner to Karthik in his revival missions, and he contributed a vital 32 off 21, but the standout was undoubtedly Karthik with 66 off 34, his strike-rate close to 200. Kuldeep had another over left, and Pant used him for the last instead of turning to the available part-timer seamers Mitchell Marsh or Rovman Powell. The RCB duo finished on a high with 17 more in the 20th.

Warner, Pant exits decisive

David Warner was in the mood alright. He slogged Maxwell for six off the first ball he faced and picked up Josh Hazlewood's first delivery for six more over deep backward square. A powerful straight smack off Mohammed Siraj disappeared so quickly to the rope that to call it dismissive was an understatement.

But DC were still behind the asking-rate going past the halfway mark. In at No 3 for his first game of the season, Mitchell Marsh drew out the momentum Warner injected at the other end, in a flail-and-miss 14 off 24 balls. Had he not been run out at the non-striker's end as Wanindu Hasaranga got his fingers on a Pant hit, he may have hurt DC further. Or he may have scripted some astonishing turnaround. We'll never know.

One of the decisive blows had been delivered in Hasaranga's previous over, when Warner had missed an attempted reverse-slog and was found leg-before on RCB's review. It made Virat Kohli jolt into one of his wild screaming celebrations, not far from the departing Warner. As Pant began to nail his falling scoops over short fine, it was Kohli who'd land the knockout punch. As Pant scythed Siraj in the air, Kohli timed his jump perfectly at extra cover, his outstretched right hand plucking the ball and sending the crowd wild this time. With Pant's exit for 34 off 17 in the 17th over, DC were to fall well short.

Brief scores: Royal Challengers Bangalore 189 for 5 (Karthik 66*, Maxwell 55, Thaluru 1-27) beat Delhi Capitals 173 for 7 (Warner 66, Pant 34, Hazlewood 3-28, Siraj 2-31) by 16 runs



Kohli has a look at his own celebration

David Warner's wicket was the game-turning moment alright and just in case anyone missed the significance, Virat Kohli reminded them with his celebrations. Warner had been trapped lbw after he failed to connect with a reverse-slog and RCB had taken the decision upstairs for the review. The bowler Wanindu Hasaranga and Dinesh Karthik were so sure but on first replay the point of impact seemed a bit iffy and slowly the Bangalore players started to disperse from the huddle. They stopped again to check the mat-lines replay on the big screen and were joyous to

see the verdict fall in their offer. No one more than Kohli, of course. After an initial cry of fist pump and roar - just a warm up for him - he ran a detour, cut across the path of Warner, screaming his joy which as ever seemed tinged with anger, before he joined his team-mates. Warner, who was having a chat with the umpire about the replay, had a look at Kohli, turned to finish his conversation with the umpire and walked off. At the end of the over, as Kohli was crossing over, he had a look at himself on the big screen, roaring away.

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Wobbling Warner

Not quite David Warner the fielder's evening thus far. Two mis-fields yielded two fours as he kept diving over the ball. The first off an off drive from Faf du Plessis was admittedly not easy with Warner running to his left at mid-off but couldn't get his lunge-stop right. Next one was pretty straightforward one. He had just talked to the bowler Khaleel Ahmed and moved to mid-off when Virat Kohli drove not too far to his right. He got there in time but tumbled over it and had a wry smile. Apart from the misfields, he has been his usual busy stuff, with frequent chats to the bowlers and pressing the captain to place him at second slip for the new batsman Glenn Maxwell. Every now and then, he keeps counting the fielders too for some reason, and has the most chats with the bowlers more than anyone else on the field. He also asks the ball to be thrown to him as early as possible so that he can shine and pass on to the bowler. Once, when Prithvi Shaw was taking his time to pass the ball on, Warner raised his arm first, then shouted out, before taking a couple of steps forward towards Shaw.

Lalit at ease



When Lalit Yadav joined Delhi Capitals couple of years ago, he got a text from Ricky Ponting. "Hi Lalit, Ponting this side!" Yadav couldn't believe that he was the recipient of a message from a legend. "But after that, it never felt that I am talking to a legend or sharing a dressing room with him. It felt like he's a companion, a friend. At times, he has been harsh too, but he stays very cool," he told Wisden India. "I've received a lot of nice inputs from him - last year, he told me four, five different things that have been helping me." Was one of the things how to fire a direct hit? He did a Ponting to take out Virat Kohli, who hadn't gone too far down the track before changing his mind to return to the crease. But by then Yadav had rushed to his right at backward point, swooped low, and fired a sideways throw ala Ponting to leave Kohli stranded.



DK does what DK does

A slog sweep on a bent knee to a pacer was just the start before Dinesh Karthik decided to turn more innovative in the 17th over. He tried a reverse lap off Khaleel Ahmed two balls later but it dribbled off the toe end of the bat. Next over, first ball off Mustafizur Rahman, he shuffled outside off and tried to lap it to fine-leg but it flew off the edge to third man boundary instead. Rahman slipped in a slower cutter next ball and wined as DK reverse-slapped it over short third man for a one-bounce four. Next ball was smashed through extra cover and chants of DK DK began to echo around the arena. He obliged by lifting two sixes, one of which landed on the first tier over long-off. And when Shardul rebounded after a pulled six with an outside-off yorker. Pant, who gathered that ball, gestured to his bowler to stay calm, stay cool (he touched his head) & even mouthed 'cool cool'. DK was the real cool one, there though.

Covid caution: No handshakes, no hugs

Mumbai: No Delhi Capitals players will shake hands with any player from Royal Challengers Bangalore after the night game at the Wankhede on April 16. Not because there is any problem between the two teams but it's a BCCI mandate to the Delhi team after their physiotherapist Patrick Farhat and another support staff tested Covid positive on Friday. It is understood that the support staff tested positive is the masseur. The paper understands that the BCCI has issued a circular to the Delhi team requesting them to not shake hands & hug players from RCB after the game. The players from teams usually congregate for a chat after games before they disperse. The Delhi players have been advised to maintain social distancing during chats & use of masks have been recommended. The non-playing team members who will watch the game from the stands too have been requested to wear their face masks throughout the game, except eating or drinking. This is the second positive case during this season of IPL which is played in two cities of Maharashtra-Mumbai & Pune. Delhi players have tested negative & have been cleared to take part in the game on Saturday evening. **DEVENDRA PANDEY**