



दशकों में जो न हो पाया 4 वर्ष में कर दिखाया



कानून- व्यवस्था हुई बेहतर



- जीरो टॉलरेस नीति से अपराधों में रिकॉर्ड गिरावट
- माफिया एवं अपराधियों द्वारा अवैध रूप से अर्जित 1000 करोड़ रु. से अधिक की संपत्तियां जब्त/ध्वस्त
- उत्तर प्रदेश विधि विरुद्ध धर्म संपरिवर्तन प्रतिषेध विधेयक को मंजूरी
- सी.ए.ए. के विरोध-प्रदर्शन के दौरान सरकारी सम्पत्तियों को क्षति पहुंचाने वाले व्यक्तियों से क्षतिपूर्ति वसूली
- एण्टी रोमियो स्वचालित गठन
- सभी 1535 थानों पर महिला हेल्प डेस्क की स्थापना
- महिला एवं बाल सुरक्षा संगठन (WCSO) का गठन
- 218 नये फास्ट ट्रैक कोर्ट गठित
- उत्तर प्रदेश स्पेशल सिक्योरिटी फोर्स (UPSSF) का गठन
- पुलिस अधीक्षक कार्यालयों में भी एफ.आई.आर. काउन्टर
- 213 नये थानों एवं 16 परिक्षेत्रीय मुख्यालयों पर साइबर क्राइम पुलिस थानों की स्थापना
- 1 लाख 37 हजार पुलिसकर्मियों की भर्ती

किसान हुए खुशहाल



- मंडी शुल्क में 1% की कमी
- 45 कृषि उत्पाद मण्डी शुल्क से मुक्त
- प्रधानमंत्री फसल बीमा योजना में रु. 1910 करोड़ की क्षतिपूर्ति
- कृषि निवेशों पर देय रु. 1803 करोड़ की अनुदान राशि किसानों के खाते में हस्तांतरित
- रु. 3 लाख 58 हजार करोड़ का फसल ऋण वितरित
- रु. 36 हजार करोड़ से 86 लाख किसानों का ऋण माफ
- 20 चीनी मिलों का आधुनिकीकरण एवं विस्तारीकरण
- बाण सागर परियोजना सहित 11 सिंचाई परियोजनाएं पूर्ण कर एवं अन्य सिंचाई स्रोतों से 3.77 लाख हेक्टेयर अतिरिक्त सिंचाई क्षमता में वृद्धि
- वरासत अभियान के अंतर्गत 8,87,617 प्रकरण निस्तारित
- स्वामित्व योजना के अंतर्गत 2,09,016 घरौनी वितरित
- 5 लाख 66 हजार से अधिक गोवंश संरक्षित, गोवंश रखने पर प्रति गोवंश प्रतिमाह रु. 900 की सहायता

बुनियादी सुविधाओं का विकास



- पूर्वांचल एक्सप्रेस-वे, बुंदेलखण्ड एक्सप्रेस-वे, गंगा एक्सप्रेस-वे व गोरखपुर लिंक एक्सप्रेस-वे का तेजी से निर्माण, बलिया लिंक एक्सप्रेस-वे को मंजूरी
- ग्रेटर नोएडा में इंटरनेशनल ग्रीनफील्ड एयरपोर्ट, अयोध्या एवं कुशीनगर में अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय एयरपोर्ट
- 8 एयरपोर्ट संचालित, 13 अन्य एयरपोर्ट एवं 7 हवाईपट्टी का विकास
- प्रदेश के 10 नगरों का भारत सरकार तथा 7 नगरों का राज्य सरकार के वित्त पोषण से स्मार्ट सिटी के रूप में विकास
- प्रधानमंत्री ग्राम सड़क योजना में 56,862 किमी. सड़कों का निर्माण
- 3,32,804 किमी. सड़कों का गड्ढामुक्तिकरण
- 13,189 किमी. नई सड़कों का निर्माण
- 13,613 किमी. सड़कों का चौड़ीकरण/सुदृढीकरण
- 428 छोटे-बड़े पुलों का निर्माण
- 1.21 लाख गांवों तक निर्बाध बिजली आपूर्ति
- जिला मुख्यालयों को 24 घंटे, तहसील मुख्यालयों को 22 घंटे तथा ग्रामीण क्षेत्रों में 18-20 घंटे बिजली की आपूर्ति
- हर घर नल योजना में 30 हजार ग्राम पंचायतों को शुद्ध पेयजल

शिक्षा से खुले प्रगति के द्वार



- मुख्यमंत्री अभ्युदय योजना में प्रतियोगी परीक्षाओं के लिए निःशुल्क कोचिंग
- बालिकाओं के लिए स्नातक स्तर तक निःशुल्क शिक्षा
- 3 नए राज्य विश्वविद्यालय, 51 राजकीय महाविद्यालय, 194 राजकीय माध्यमिक विद्यालय, 28 इंजीनियरिंग कॉलेज, 26 पॉलीटेक्निक, 79 आईटीआई, 248 इंटर कॉलेज और 771 कस्तूरबा विद्यालयों की स्थापना
- कक्षा-1 से कक्षा-8 तक के सभी बच्चों को निःशुल्क ड्रेस, जूते-मोजे, स्कूल बैग एवं पाठ्य-पुस्तकों का वितरण
- श्रमिकों के बच्चों की निःशुल्क शिक्षा के लिए 18 मंडलों में अटल आवासीय विद्यालयों की स्थापना
- कोरोना कालखण्ड में विद्यार्थियों के लिए वर्चुअल क्लास की व्यवस्था

स्वास्थ्य सेवाएं हुई सुलभ



- 3 करोड़ से अधिक कोविड जांच व प्रतिदिन 1.75 लाख कोरोना जांच करने वाला देश का पहला राज्य
- 16 करोड़ लोगों की कॉन्टेक्ट ट्रेसिंग, अब तक 35 लाख से अधिक लोगों का वैक्सीनेशन
- हर रविवार सभी स्वास्थ्य केन्द्रों पर मुख्यमंत्री जन आरोग्य मेलों का आयोजन, अब तक 60 लाख से अधिक लोगों का स्वास्थ्य परीक्षण एवं इलाज
- पूर्वांचल में दिमागी बुखार पर नियंत्रण, मृत्यु दर में 95% तक की कमी
- 6920 एम्बुलेंस संचालित
- 47 जनपदों में निःशुल्क डायलिसिस सेवाएं एवं 56 जनपद चिकित्सालयों में सी.टी. स्कैन की सुविधा।
- प्रत्येक जनपद में वेंटिलेटर एवं ट्रूनेट मशीनें उपलब्ध

निवेशकों की पहली पसंद



- निवेश फ्रेण्डली 21 नीतियां लागू
- इन्वेस्टर्स समिट में रु. 4.68 लाख करोड़ निवेश के एम.ओ.यू. हस्ताक्षरित
- सिंगल विंडो पोर्टल 'निवेश मित्र' के माध्यम से 96% निवेश प्रस्तावों का निस्तारण
- रु. 3 लाख करोड़ के निवेश से परियोजनाएं शुरू
- डिफेन्स इण्डस्ट्रियल मैनुफैक्चरिंग कॉरिडोर का निर्माण, रु. 50 हजार करोड़ का निवेश
- फिल्म सिटी से निवेश और रोजगार के बढ़ते अवसर
- ओडीओपी योजनांतर्गत 25 लाख से अधिक लोगों को रोजगार, निर्यात में 38% की वृद्धि
- स्वरोजगार हेतु उद्यम सारथी एप संचालित

महिला सम्मान एवं सशक्तिकरण को प्राथमिकता



- 1 लाख से अधिक महिलाओं को सरकारी नौकरी
- 58,758 महिलाओं की बैंकिंग कॉरिस्पॉन्डेंट सखी के रूप में नियुक्ति
- मिशन शक्ति अभियान में 7.30 करोड़ लोगों को जागरूक किया गया
- प्रधानमंत्री मातृ वंदना योजना से 36.16 लाख महिलाएं लाभान्वित
- 6.94 लाख बेटियों को मुख्यमंत्री कन्या सुमंगला योजना का लाभ
- 'बेटी बचाओ-बेटी पढ़ाओ' योजना में 1 करोड़ 80 लाख बेटियां लाभान्वित
- ग्रामीण आवासीय अभिलेख (घरौनी) परिवार की महिला सदस्य के नाम होगा
- पौत्री (पुत्र की पुत्री), भतीजी (सगे भाई की पुत्री) और भांजियों (सगी बहन की पुत्री) को भी राजस्व संहिता में भौमिक अधिकार
- महिलाओं एवं बालिकाओं की सुरक्षा हेतु सेफ सिटी परियोजना

जरूरतमंदों को मिला सरकार का साथ



- मुख्यमंत्री सामूहिक विवाह योजना में 1.52 लाख निर्धन कन्याओं का विवाह
- निर्माण श्रमिकों की पुत्रियों के लिए संचालित कन्या विवाह सहायता योजना के अन्तर्गत 11,581 कन्याओं का विवाह
- 51 लाख से अधिक वृद्धजन, 28 लाख निराश्रित महिलाओं व 22 लाख विधवा महिलाओं को रु. 500 प्रतिमाह की पेंशन
- मुख्यमंत्री आवास योजना (ग्रामीण) में 72 हजार 302 आवासों का निर्माण/स्वीकृति
- वनटॉगिया/मुसहर/कोल एवं थारु समूह के 38 गांवों को राजस्व गांवों का दर्जा एवं बुनियादी सुविधाएं
- अल्पसंख्यक वर्ग, अनुसूचित जाति/जनजाति, पिछड़ी जाति व सामान्य वर्ग के कुल 1 करोड़ 78 लाख से अधिक छात्र-छात्राओं को कुल रु. 13,690 करोड़ से अधिक की पूर्वदशम एवं दशमोत्तर छात्रवृत्ति वितरित
- 40 लाख कामगारों की रिकल मैपिंग कर रोजगार उपलब्ध कराया गया
- 101 करोड़ से अधिक मानव दिवस सृजित कर 1.50 करोड़ श्रमिकों को रोजगार
- पी.एम. स्वनिधि योजना में 8 लाख 32 हजार स्ट्रीट वेण्डर्स आच्छादित

आस्था का सम्मान पर्यावरण के लिए अभियान



- प्रयागराज कुम्भ में 24 करोड़ से अधिक श्रद्धालुओं व पर्यटकों का आगमन, यूनेस्को द्वारा सराहना
- अयोध्या में दीपोत्सव, वाराणसी में देव-दीपावली, मथुरा में कृष्णोत्सव व बरसाना में रंगोत्सव का भव्य आयोजन
- काशी विश्वनाथ कॉरिडोर का विकास
- बौद्ध सर्किट के अंतर्गत श्रावस्ती, कपिलवस्तु और कुशीनगर का विकास
- रामायण सर्किट के अंतर्गत चित्रकूट और शृंगवेरपुर का विकास
- जैन तथा सूफी सर्किट के तहत आगरा एवं फतेहपुर सीकरी में पर्यटन सुविधाओं का विकास
- कैलाश मानसरोवर भवन का निर्माण, तीर्थयात्रियों की अनुदान राशि रु. 50 हजार से बढ़ाकर रु. 1 लाख प्रति यात्री की गयी
- 39.42 करोड़ पौधरोपण
- गंगा के दोनों किनारों पर 9 करोड़ पौधरोपण

प्रधानमंत्री जी का विज़न हो रहा साकार | काम दमदार, योगी सरकार

SHORT TAKES

2 directors of Ponzi firms held from UP

New Delhi: The CBI has arrested two directors of a West Bengal-based chit fund company in connection with a Ponzi scam case. Sources said the directors of Global Infra Energy Limited — Saket Banerjee and Kamaljeet Banerjee — were arrested from Lucknow by the CBI officials. “Both the absconding directors of West Bengal’s Asansol-based Global Infra Energy Limited were arrested from their hideouts in Gomti Nagar of Lucknow,” sources said. The ED had registered a case on September 15, 2017, on the orders of the Jharkhand high court and took over the investigation. An FIR was earlier registered at Jamtara’s Mihijam police station in 2014. According to the FIR registered by the CBI, the accused entered into a conspiracy with other directors of the company and coaxed people by promising unrealistically high returns on their investments. The company had also claimed that they have authorisation from the RBI and Sebi. “It was alleged that the victims, so induced, were made to part with their money by way of investing in the various deposit schemes of the company. The accused directors thereafter fled away without making payment of the maturity amount,” said the CBI.

Saradha scam: ED notice to TMC pick

Kolkata: The ED, probing the money laundering aspect of the multi-crore Saradha scam, on Thursday summoned Vivek Gupta, the Trinamul Congress candidate from Jorasanko Assembly constituency. Sources said that Mr Gupta has been asked to depose before ED officials on Monday. Meanwhile, businessman Swapan Sadhan Bose, who was asked to appear on Thursday in connection with the Saradha scam, is yet to turn up at the CGO complex, sources said. Former TMC minister Madan Mitra has been asked to appear before the directorate in connection with the same scam on Friday, according to sources. Mr Gupta had earlier been summoned by the economic offences wing of CBI in relation to financial transactions which had allegedly taken place between him and the Saradha group. — PTI

Assam: BJP expels 15 leaders for 6 yrs

Guwahati: The Assam BJP on Thursday expelled 15 leaders, including former deputy speaker Dilip Kumar Paul, from the party for six years for joining the Assembly poll fray as independents after being denied tickets. BJP state general secretary Rajdeep Roy said the party’s Assam chief Ranjeet Kumar Dass has approved the disciplinary action with immediate effect. The list of 15 members include Paul, who resigned from the BJP after he was denied a ticket and is contesting as an Independent from Silchar constituency. Out of 126 seats in Assam Assembly, BJP is contesting in 92 and has left the remaining to its allies Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the United People’s Party Liberal (UPPL). — PTI

PM blames Cong for making Assam one of most disconnected states in nation

Cong indulging in corruption: Modi

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, MARCH 18

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on Thursday, blamed the Congress for making Assam one of the most disconnected states in the country.

Addressing a massive public rally in Karimganj in poll-bound Assam, Mr Modi accused the Congress of indulging in “corruption and vote-bank-based governance” which has caused immense damage to the state.

Asserting that the NDA government has overcome the injustice made to the state, he said, “Decades ago, this entire region was one that had better connectivity. Rail connectivity was very poor in Barak Valley, and people have continuously demanded for it. Quality of roads, too, was poor. People had to travel long distances to reach different parts of Assam.”

Pointing out as to how connectivity of the region has improved manifolds during the NDA regime, the PM, while addressing his first election rally after the EC announced poll schedule for the state, said, “During its rule, the Congress divided Assam in all possible ways. But the BJP government has been connecting it on all fronts. We are not just connecting the state just physically, but also culturally.”

Launching a frontal attack on the Congress that ruled the state for 15 years at a stretch before the BJP came to power in 2016, the PM said that the situation within the Congress is such that it can do anything for votes.

“The Congress has no leader, no policy and no ideology. If the party itself is so unstable, how can they provide a stable government that can ensure all round development of Assam,” he said while referring to ideological contradictions of the party which is contesting polls in alliance with the Left in West Bengal but opposing them in Kerala.

“Congress governments and their policies damaged Assam socially, culturally, geographically and politically as well,” Mr Modi said.



BJP workers and supporters during a rally in support of party candidate from East Guwahati constituency Siddhartha Bhattacharya in Guwahati on Thursday, ahead of the state Assembly election. — PTI

Kerala Rahul’s key focus amid slight edge to LDF

Congress leader has been visiting state quite frequently

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who skipped the joint rally with the Left following the “controversial” alliance with the ISF, is focussing more on Kerala. For Mr Gandhi, the Kerala Assembly polls has become a “prestige” issue as reports coming in show a slight edge to the ruling LDF.

He is also a Lok Sabha MP from Wayanad in Kerala. The Congress were currently engaged in a public disagreement among themselves over the Bengal Congress’ decision to form a triangular alliance with the Left and the ISF, a new political outfit launched by Furfura Sharif’s pirzada Abbas Siddiqui.

Attaching priority to Kerala, Mr Gandhi has been visiting the state quite frequently. In fact, he launched the campaigning for the state polls even before any of the three top BJP leaders

SETBACK TO CONG, LEADER SAYS HE WON’T RUN AGAINST VIJAYAN

Kannur (Kerala), March 18: In a setback to the Congress in Kerala, senior party leader K. Sudhakaran on Thursday said he would not contest against chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan in Dharmadam constituency in northern Kannur district.

He said he did not get enough time to make any fundamental preparation at the constituency, which was inevitable ahead of contesting and

so he did not want to be a contender at the segment during the April 6 Assembly polls.

Requesting the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) to exclude him from the list, Mr Sudhakaran, also a member of Parliament, said even the district Congress committee was not in favour of him contesting from the segment. — PTI

— PM Narendra Modi, Amit Shah and party president J.P. Nadda — did. The Congress had done exceedingly well in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, bagging 15 of the 20 Lok Sabha seats.

In the states going to polls this year, Kerala seems to be the brightest option for the Congress.

Historically, the state has a cyclic tradition but this time the LDF may break this rule. If the Left succeeds in breaking the jinx and winning the ensuing elections, it would be an embarrassment for the Congress in general and Mr Gandhi in particular because he is an MP from the state.

BJP slams Cong’s debt relief claim

Farm loan waiver certificates with Kamal Nath’s signatures found in junkyard

RABINDRA NATH
CHOWDHURY
BHOUPAL, MARCH 18

Thousands of farm loan waiver certificates, bearing photographs and signatures of former chief minister Kamal Nath, were found in a junk dealer’s shop in Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh, landing the Opposition Congress in an embarrassment.

An Indore-based cooperative bank has sold the certificates printed in ACP sheets to a junk dealer of Badanagar in Ujjain as waste papers. Thou-



▶ THE CROP debt relief certificates were supposed to be distributed among the beneficiaries during the 15-month-old Nath govt that collapsed in March 2020

▶ The Opp. Cong, however, blamed the bureaucracy for the failure to implement the loan waiver scheme

sands of certificates, named Kissan Samman Patra, certifying waiver of farm loans of beneficiaries during the Kamal Nath government were seen piled up in the junkyard of the dealer.

The crop debt relief certificates were supposed to be distributed among the

beneficiaries during the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government that collapsed in March 2020 after 22 Congress MLAs resigned from the Assembly as well as the party.

The development has provided a handle to the ruling BJP to pull up the Congress for having

failed to write off loans of farmers as promised by the Congress before the 2018 MP Assembly polls.

State home minister Narottam Mishra said the Congress had backtracked on its promise to write off farm loans up to ₹2 lakh of each farmer when the party returned to power in the state in 2018.

The Opposition Congress, however, blamed the bureaucracy for the failure to implement the crop loan waiver scheme during the Kamal Nath government.

BJP announced name without my consent: Somen Mitra’s wife

Kolkata, March 18: Shortly after her she was nominated as the BJP candidate from the Chowringhee Assembly seat in the city, Sikha Mitra, wife of late Congress leader Somen Mitra, on Thursday said her name was announced without consent and she will not enter the poll fray.

Ms Mitra also downplayed speculations of her joining the BJP, which were doing the rounds following her

meeting with party leader and family friend Suwendu Adhikari.

“No, I am not contesting from anywhere. My name has been announced without my consent. Also, I am not joining the BJP,” she said.

The BJP on Thursday announced the names of 148 candidates for the upcoming Bengal Assembly polls in West Bengal, including Sikha Mitra. — PTI

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY



General public is here by informed that one boy **Namely:** Marshal, S/o: Ramrash Paswan, R/o H.No. F-332, J.J. Colony Bawana, Delhi, **Age:** 10 years, **Height:** 4', **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Build:** Thin, **Wearing:** White Colour Shirt & Blue Pant and Hawai Chappal in Feet, has been

missing since 20.02.2021 at 02:00 PM from his house. In this regard a vide FIR No. 77/2021, dated 20.02.2021 U/s 363 has been lodged at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this boy but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this boy kindly inform to the following.

E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Delhi
Fax: 011-24368639 Ph. 011-27787592, 27787593
Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/848/ON/2021

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING, SECTOR-6, NOIDA, G.B. NAGAR (U.P.)
Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from eligible contractors/firm for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened / downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority’s official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

Re-Tender Work

A) The above tenders can be uploaded by dated 25.03.2021 upto 5.00 PM. shall be opened/downloaded on dated 26.03.2021 at 11.00 AM.

| S. No. | Job No. | Name of Work | Tender Amount (Rs. Lacs) |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1 | 128/CGM/ Sr.M/E/M-II/ 2020-21/ET | Renovation of Fountain at Jhundpura road, Sector-11 for 2 years Operation & Maintenance, Noida. | 10.39 |
| 2 | 132/CGM/ Sr.M/E/M-II/ 2020-21/ET | Renovation of Fountain at Q Block Park in Sector-12 for 2 years Operation & Maintenance, Noida. | 16.25 |

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER
NOIDA

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

HOLI SPECIAL TRAINS - 2021

CORRIGENDUM

In continuation to the Notice “Holi Special Trains-2021” which was published in the various Newspapers on 18.03.2021. Following amendments are being issued:-

| Train No. / Name | Earlier Published Days of Run | Revised Days of Run |
|--|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 04031/Varanasi-Anand Vihar (T) Superfast Express Special Train | 21.03.2021 to 01.04.2021 | 21.03.2021 to 30.03.2021 |

Note: All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Note: For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table & Stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or may visit Indian Railways website: <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

RailMadad Helpline No. **139** Visit RailMadad website: www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad App

Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY** Your Convenience - Our Concern Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of passengers that Railways have decided to extend the periodicity of Train No. 02549/02550 Kamakhya-Anand Vihar T- Kamakhya Express Special and revise the composition of Train No. 02191/02192 Haridwar-Jabalpur-Haridwar Special as per following detail :-

EXTENSION OF PERIODICITY OF SPECIAL TRAINS

| Train No. | From | To | Frequency | Period | Composition |
|-----------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------|--------------------------|---|
| 02549 | Kamakhya | Anand Vihar (T) | Daily | 01.04.2021 to 30.06.2021 | AC 2 Tier, AC 3 Tier, Sleeper & Reserved Second Seating |
| 02550 | Anand Vihar (T) | Kamakhya | Daily | 03.04.2021 to 02.07.2021 | |

REVISED COMPOSITION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

| Train No. & Train Name | Trips | Existing Composition | Revised Composition | Effective From (from Originating Station) |
|--|-------|--|--|---|
| 02191 Jabalpur-Haridwar Weekly Special Train | 13 | AC 2 Tier-1, AC 3 Tier-2, Sleeper-7 & Second Seating (Reserved) Divyang Friendly-2 | AC 2 Tier-1, AC 3 Tier-5, Sleeper-9 & Second Seating (Reserved) Divyang Friendly-2 | 07.04.2021 to 30.06.2021 Ex. Jabalpur |
| 02192 Haridwar-Jabalpur Weekly Special Train | 13 | Total = 12 Coaches | Total = 17 Coaches | 08.04.2021 to 01.07.2021 Ex. Haridwar |

For any kind of information such as detailed Time-Table of stations enroute etc., passengers are requested to contact RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., must be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

RailMadad Helpline No. **139** Visit RailMadad Website : www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Please join us on **NORTHERN RAILWAY** Your Convenience - Our Concern Visit us at : www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE

The Deputy Chief Engineer/Const./ Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under Single-Packet system for the following work:-

- Name of work and location**
Construction of Retaining Wall/Boundary wall, Providing and fixing MS Fencing, Extension of Minor Bridge, Earth Work, supplying & spreading of blanketing in formation, Road work, Linking of new BG railway Track, Dismantling and linking of Points & xings, Supplying and putting of 65mm machine crushed stone ballast and other allied work, Electrification work 25 KV, 50 HZ, single phase, AC, OHE and Electrification General work with other allied works in c/w provision of 4th Line between Chhipiyana Buzurg(NR) -Dadri Railway station at Chhipiyana Buzurg Yard of Northern Railway.
- Completion period of the work**
12 (Twelve) months
- Approx. Cost of work**
CIVIL = 610.99 lakhs
Electrical/TRD = 212.87 Lakhs
Electrical/General = 10.05 Lakhs
Total = 833.91 Lakhs
- Earnest Money to be deposited**
NIL (However Bid Security Declaration is Mandatory as per Annexure-T)
- Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender**
Tenders may be uploaded upto 11:30 hrs on 09.04.2021 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in. The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11:30 hrs. on 09.04.2021.
- Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document**
Tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in from 19.03.2021 to 09.04.2021 Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 26.03.2021 to 09.04.2021. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

No. 486-Acs-Chhipiyana-4th line CPYZ-DER-CSB Dated 18.03.2021 625/2021

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society (CREST) Paryavaran Bhawan, 1st Floor, Madhya Marg, Sector- 19-B, Chandigarh-160019.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Applications are invited to fill up the following post(s) purely on contract basis initially for one year on consolidated contractual amount mentioned against the post in the Solar City Cell of the Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society (CREST) U.T., Chandigarh having following educational qualification & experience

| Sr. No | Name & Nature of the post | No. of Post | Age (in years) | Educational Qualifications | Experience | Consolidated Contractual amount per month (₹) |
|--------|---------------------------|-------------|----------------|---|--|---|
| 1. | Project Manager | Two | 18-37 | B.E./B. Tech. in Electrical / Electronic / Renewable Energy Engineering | Minimum One (1) Year Experience in Solar PV Technology with Installation of 200kWp Solar Power Plant | 48,180/- |

How to Apply:- Interested Candidates possessing aforesaid qualification & experience may submit their application duly filled in the prescribed format along-with Two Photographs, self attested photocopies of all Educational Qualifications along-with Detailed Mark Sheets, Degrees & Experience Certificates. Format can be download from the website of CREST www.solarchandigarh.com on News / Updates Section or can be obtained from the office on any working day. Applications should reach in the office of Chandigarh Renewable Energy and Science & Technology Promotion Society (CREST), Paryavaran Bhawan, 1st Floor, Madhya Marg, Sector-19-B, Chandigarh upto 07.04.2021. The incomplete applications, applications received through email, and applications received after the due date will not be entertained & summarily rejected.

For the post of Project Manager, only Eligible Candidates will be called for Interview. The venue, date & time of Interview will be intimated to the eligible candidates later on.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer,
CREST, Chandigarh

SHORT TAKES

SC to hear plea for detained Rohingyas

New Delhi: The Supreme Court, on Thursday, agreed to hear on March 25 a plea by a Rohingya refugee for the immediate release of Rohingya refugees detained in Jammu and to restrain the Centre from deporting them to Myanmar. Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, heading a bench also comprising Justice A. S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, agreed to hear the plea as lawyer Prashant Bhushan pointed out that the detained refugees may be soon deported to Myanmar where the Army has taken over and violence is taking place and police men too are fleeing to India. The application for the release of Rohingya refugees and to prevent their deportation has been filed by a fellow refugee Mohammad Salimullah. The plea has sought to protect the rights of Rohingya refugees guaranteed under Article 14 and Article 21, read with Article 51(c), of the Constitution against their deportation as they had taken refuge in India after escaping widespread violence and discrimination against.

HC allows release of Mumbai Saga

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Thursday permitted the release of the Hindi film "Mumbai Saga" on March 19, after refusing to allow a plea seeking a stay to the release. The HC refused to grant any relief to gangster D.K. Rao, alias Ravi Bohra, and the family of underworld don Amar Naik and his brother Ashwin Naik, who had approached the court. The families sought stay on the release on the grounds that the release, publication and telecast of the film would lead to violation of right to privacy, fair trial and liberty of the two. One of the major reasons for seeking a stay on the release of the film was that the trial against Bohra and Naik was likely to begin soon and the film, if released, would cause a prejudice to their case.

Chhattisgarh records lowest malaria cases

Raipur: In Chhattisgarh, the average number of people suffering from malaria is decreasing rapidly. The state's API (Annual Parasite Incidence) has recorded the highest decline of 4.04 points in the last five years (from 2015 to 2020). According to the API report released by the Government of India, in the year 2015, an average of 5.21 persons per 1000 population used to suffer from malaria. It has reduced to just 1.17 in the last five years. In the year 2005, the average annual number of malaria patients per thousand population in the state was eight. The figure reached 6.14 in 2010, 5.21 in 2015, and has now come down to only 1.17.

Didi asks Modi: When Amphan hit state, where were you, BJP?

■ **Continued from Page 1** lies. They make the flow of cash, as water flows in a hose pipe, for horse trading. Whose money is it? It is yours and my money after all. All the hotels in Bengal are booked. A hundred flights have been taken on rent. Innumerable helicopters are there also. Thousands of leaders from outside are roaming around here. They are dreaming of looting votes."

The two-time CM also tore into the BJP government at the Centre over the hikes in fuel and LPG prices. She also narrated her pain from her leg injuries to stoke public sentiments.

Ms Banerjee said: "I was in Kolkata the day before. Dressing and plaster had to be done again. I found a blood clot there. It is difficult to move my leg. Still, I have rushed here to tell you that if you find a tiger or a snake hiding at your doorstep for entry, do not allow it. When I fight, I do it like a bagher bachcha (tiger cub). But I never bow down my head to a party like the BJP which does not think about the masses."

The TMC chief's attack on the BJP during the intense campaign in the Jangalmahal districts, which are going to the polls on March 27, the first of eight phases, assumes significance as the saffron party has made significant inroads there since the last Lok Sabha polls in 2019.

SC to govt: Consider lawyers' request for priority Covid jab

Journalists can work without coming in contact of people, unlike lawyers'

Mumbai mayor indicates night curfew inevitable

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, MARCH 18

With Covid cases on a rise across the city, Mayor Kishori Pednekar has said that imposing a night curfew has become necessary in Mumbai. However, no formal decision has been taken yet.

"I think imposing a night curfew is necessary right now. We are also considering shifting the crowded markets to new sites. All Mumbaikars

need to work together to prevent the imposition of a lockdown," Ms Pednekar said on Thursday. The mayor has been visiting the city markets and malls to create awareness about wearing masks, maintaining physical distancing and regular washing/sanitising of hands. She had also travelled in local trains last month appealing people to follow the Covid norms when they step out. The city has been brought under

strong surveillance with BMC also stepping up containment measures.

Owing to the rise in coronavirus cases, the civic body has decided to temporarily shift Dadar's popular vegetable and flower market in Central Mumbai to an alternative location. The decision was taken during a meeting between the mayor and civic officials. A final call will be taken after Ms Pednekar meeting the members of the market association.

ness but what we do know is that journalists' work can be done even without coming in contact with people unlike lawyers.

The bench said that it understands the apprehension expressed by some classes of people but it also appreciates the fact that India is leading in the vaccination drive. It posted the matter for further hearing next week. — *PTI*

SC tells women to speak up, quashes MP rape case order

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

The Supreme Court, on Thursday, set aside a Madhya Pradesh high court order directing an accused in a rape case to tie Rakhi to the victim as a condition for bail as the top court urged the victim women not to suffer and break their silence.

Noting that the actual number of cases of offences against women is much higher than that actually reported, the court called upon the women not to suffer in silence but break it and speak up.

"This silence needs to be broken. In doing so, men, perhaps more than women, have a duty and role to play in averting and combating violence against women," said Justice S. Ravindra Bhat, who authored the judgment.

Having set aside the high court order that had created an uproar, a bench comprising Justice A. M. Khanwilkar and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat said, "The role of all courts is to make sure that the survivor can rely on their impartiality and neutrality, at every stage in a criminal proceeding, where she is the survivor and an aggrieved party."

Saying that the judgment was not as much on the merits of the conditions of bail under challenge, Justice Bhat, speaking for the bench, said that a "wider canvas of (what appears to be) entrenched paternalistic and misogynistic attitudes that are regrettably reflected at times in judicial orders and judgments."

Issuing a slew of directions to be followed by the subordinate judiciary while dealing with the cases involving offences

■ Earlier this week, P.B. Mehta resigned as a professor

Arvind Subramanian quits Ashoka varsity

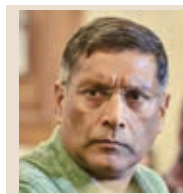
New Delhi, March 18: Two days after political commentator Pratap Bhanu Mehta resigned as a professor from the Ashoka University, his colleague, economist Arvind Subramanian, put in his papers on Thursday and faculty members wrote to the vice-chancellor expressing their deep anguish.

The liberal arts university in Sonapat, much sought after for the courses it offers, has found itself at the centre of a controversy due to the recent developments.

Mr Subramanian, the former chief economic advisor, had joined the Ashoka University as a professor in the department of economics in July 2020.

"Dr Subramanian has resigned," a senior faculty member of the university said. A query sent to the university regarding the resignation remained unanswered till the filing of the story.

Mr Subramanian was appointed the chief economic advisor on October 16, 2014 for a period of three years and was given an extension in 2017. However, he quit the job



A. Subramanian

■ **ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN** was appointed the chief economic advisor on October 16, 2014 for a period of three years and was given an extension in 2017

■ **HOWEVER, HE** quit the job with close to a year of his tenure remaining and returned to the US.

with close to a year of his tenure remaining and returned to the US. Mr Subramanian's official contract was till May 2019. Meanwhile, the faculty members at the university have written to the vice-chancellor and board members, expressing anguish over Mr Mehta's resignation.

The alumni council of the university has also released a separate statement expressing solidarity with Mr Mehta, who stepped down as the V-C two years ago and resigned as a professor earlier this week.

The faculty members have noted that Mr Mehta's exit has set a "chilling precedent for future removals of faculty" and is a "matter of great anguish".

"In light of media reports that circulated before the official

announcement of Professor Mehta's departure from the university, it seems quite plausible that his resignation was a direct consequence of his role as a public intellectual and critic of the government. We are greatly troubled by this scenario," a statement issued by the faculty members said.

"Mr Mehta's resignation is not just an occasion for sorrow over the departure of a deeply respected and admired colleague. It also raises urgent questions about the university's commitment to academic freedom as well as its internal processes. Even more troubling is the possibility that our university may have acceded to pressure to remove Professor Mehta or to request, and accept, his resignation," it added.

— *PTI*

India, Kuwait announce joint commission to boost ties

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

India and the oil-rich tiny Gulf nation of Kuwait decided to strengthen bilateral ties on Thursday, with the establishment of a "joint ministerial commission at the level of foreign ministers to steer the relationship".

The decision was announced after talks between visiting Kuwaiti foreign minister Ahmed Nasser Al-Mohammad Al-Sabah and external affairs minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar during which they "reviewed" all aspects of bilateral ties and discussed regional developments. During the talks in the context of the Covid, EAM Jaishankar "hoped that the Indian community will be able to

resume travel to Kuwait in larger numbers soon".

He also "invited more investments from Kuwait into India in diverse sectors including energy, infrastructure, food security, healthcare and education".

The Kuwaiti foreign minister also handed over a letter from Kuwait's Prime Minister H.E. Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad. Al-Sabah addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The meetings of the joint commission called joint commission meeting (JCM) "will be held regularly to review all bilateral matters" and the JCM between the two nations "will act as an umbrella for all bilateral institutional engagements."

Connectivity projects must follow intl norms: MEA

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

In a strong veiled reference to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), which passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), without naming it, the MEA's secretary (East) Riva Ganguly Das on Thursday said "connectivity initiatives that straddle national boundaries must be pursued in a manner that respects sovereignty and territorial integrity of nations" and that "they should promote trade, not tension". India has steadfastly refused to join the BRI, which is also known as the One Belt One Road (OBOR). The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that passes through PoK is a flagship project of the BRI.

In another veiled reference to connectivity projects, which have been alleged to have pushed small nations both in south Asia and elsewhere into deep debt, without naming Beijing, the secretary (East) said that "connectivity efforts in the region must be based on principles of economic viability and financial responsibility" and "all connectivity initiatives must follow universally recognised international norms, rule of law".

Didi terms Bill on power to Delhi L-G 'surgical strike'

New Delhi, March 18: Terming a Bill brought by the Centre to give overarching powers to Lieutenant Governor a "surgical strike" on India's federal structure, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has written to her Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal extending her support in opposing it.

In her letter to Kejriwal on Wednesday, Banerjee, who is also the Trinamool Congress chief, said she will write to all non-BJP chief ministers and political parties opposing the saffron party to seek their support for him over the

issue.

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was introduced in Lok Sabha by Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy on Monday.

According to the Bill, the "government" in the city would mean the "Lieutenant Governor" in the context of any law made by the legislative assembly. The Bill also makes it mandatory for the Delhi government to take the opinion of the L-G before any executive action. Ms Banerjee said she was in full solidarity



Mamata Banerjee

with Kejriwal and his principled opposition to the Centre's "devious, anti-democratic and anti-Constitution move to disempower the Delhi Government and reduce the status of Delhi's chief minister to a subordinate to the lieutenant-governor".

"I strongly believe that the time has come for a united and effective fight against the BJP's attacks on democracy and the Constitution, especially with regard to its plans to dilute the powers of state governments and downgrade them to mere municipalities."

"The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which the BJP government at the Centre has introduced in the Lok Sabha, is a surgical strike on the federal structure of the Indian Republic as enshrined in the

Constitution," Banerjee said.

She added that but for her commitments in the ongoing campaign for the Assembly elections in Bengal, she would have personally come to Delhi to express her support and solidarity with Kejriwal.

"I wish you success in your struggle. Your struggle is my struggle," she said. Ms Banerjee alleged that the Bill makes a "mockery" of the letter and spirit of democracy by disempowering the Delhi government, which is elected by the people of the national capital. — *PTI*

NIA seizes 2nd Mercedes in Ambani terror threat case

■ **Continued from Page 1** Cruiser Prado. The NIA on Thursday called two policemen, including an aide of Mr Waze and a senior police inspector, for questioning, sources said. On Thursday, Mr Waze through his lawyer approached the special NIA court seeking permission to speak to his lawyer privately. The judge heard arguments from Mr Waze's lawyer Sunny Punamiya and Special public prosecutor Sunil Gonsalves for a short period and posted the plea for hearing again on Friday.

The NIA arrested Mr Waze on Saturday night in connection with the security scare outside the south Mumbai residence of Mr Ambani.

Mr Waze has also been facing heat in the murder case of Thane-based businessman Mansukh Hiran, who was in possession of that SUV. Hiran was found dead in a creek in Thane district on March 5.

Mukul Roy, his son on BJP list of 148

■ **Continued from Page 1** before he confirmed that he had never joined the BJP. Of the candidates whose names were announced on Thursday, Mukul Roy will contest from Krishnanagar Uttar seat, and his son Shubhranshu will contest from Bijpur constituency. Actor Rudranil Ghosh was fielded from the CM's former seat Bhahaniapur. Mr Tiwari has been fielded from Pandebeshwar while Sabyasachi Dutta has been fielded from Bidhannagar. Jagannath Sarkar will contest from Santipur, and actor Parno Mitra from the Baranagar seat.

After the list was announced at the BJP headquarters, one of the candidates, Shikha Mitra, released a video alleging: "Under no circumstances am I going to fight the polls for the BJP. It is a fake news on my name which has been spread in the media. It is unbelievable. It's a blatant lie."

Ms Mitra, in an explosive outburst later, claimed: "Why would I fight for the

BJP? I have been made a candidate though I had clearly spoken earlier about my reservations about fighting the polls. I do not know why this happened with me. It is enough for me to talk about those who have done it. This has created a lot of misunderstanding in my family. I was not consulted even. It is a big injustice to me." Mr Saha, who has been fielded from Cossipore-Belgachhia seat in North Kolkata, said he had never joined the BJP and that he has full faith in the TMC, for which he had campaigned just an hour back. Meanwhile, sources said the BJP has reached out to Behala East MLA and former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee, who recently quit the saffron party along with his close friend Baishakhi Banerjee after Bengal actor Payel Sarkar was fielded as the party's candidate in his Assembly constituency, against his wish to contest the polls opposite his estranged wife Ratna Chatterjee of the TMC.

Delhi's school edu board registered

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, MARCH 18

Delhi's own school education board DBSE has been registered and an official notification detailing its modalities is expected soon, according to officials at the Directorate of Education (DoE).

The Delhi Board of School Education (DBSE), which was approved by the Cabinet on March 6, was registered on Tuesday.

The board was officially registered on Tuesday and is expected to bring a most-awaited reform in the school assessment system.

To start with, 20 to 25 Delhi government schools will be affiliated to DBSE from the 2021-22 academic session. Consultations are on with principals, teachers and parents concerned to decide upon which schools will be affiliated with the board in the first phase, a senior DoE official said.

According to the official, the modalities are being worked out and a notification detailing everything is expected soon.

The board will have a governing body chaired by the education minister. It will also have an executive body for day-to-day functions and will be headed by a CEO. Both bodies will have experts from industries, the education sector, principals of government and private schools, and bureaucrats, the official added.

At present, there are about 1,000 government and 1,700 private schools in Delhi, nearly all of which are affiliated with the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

In July last year, the Delhi government had constituted two committees to prepare the scheme and framework for the formation of the state education board and for curriculum reforms.

THE ASIAN AGE

19 MARCH 2021

Rural surge scary, act now to stop second Covid wave

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has warned of a second peak of pandemic Covid-19 unless quick and decisive action was taken. In his meeting with chief ministers on Wednesday, Mr Modi listed out the points that need early action. On top of the to-do list is the time-tested “test-track-treat” formula with a focus on tracking the contacts of every person who contracted the virus. The Prime Minister also reminded the chief ministers of the need to conduct genome tests to track the variants of the virus. The share of RT-PCR tests should remain high and the states should guard themselves against vaccine wastage, he told them.

Mr Modi has flagged the issues that plague India’s Covid fight at a time when the country finds itself in the throes of a second wave. The daily caseload has gone up for a seventh consecutive day on Wednesday, which reported 28,903 cases — the highest reported this year. India’s active case load has reached 2.34 lakh on Wednesday against 1.84 lakh a week ago; test positivity rate has gone up from 2.3 per cent to 4.98 per cent in the same period.

According to Niti Aayog, while the first phase was in the metros and big cities of the country, the recent surge is reported from rural areas, too. As per the health ministry estimates, 70 districts in 15 states recorded 150 per cent rise in the number of cases in the last 15 days. The virus spread in the rural areas where the health infrastructure is weak and less attended will make the fight tougher.

The government should not wait anymore to take tougher decisions. It must immediately take a relook at the Covid controls which were in place last year and advise states to see which could be used the best to contain the virus spread. The Prime Minister has also warned against wastage of vaccines. Some states have reported a wastage figure higher than the national average of 6.5 per cent. There are nations that have little or no access to vaccines and India, having built its capacities in scientific research and pharmaceutical manufacturing over the decades, should not take its advantages for granted. The Union government must use technology to the optimum to ensure that wastage is brought to a minimum. Several states have reported about vaccine hesitancy. The Prime Minister led the inoculation campaign by taking the jab himself, sending the right message. Perhaps, he should have done the exercise sooner? Also, credible local faces, including religious leaders at the community level, should be roped in to break the “hesitancy barrier” and press the idea home.

This newspaper has been highlighting the point that public health is as much an issue of the public as it is of the government. It’s next to impossible for governments alone to make a difference. There must be an aggressive campaign to promote Covid-appropriate behaviour and violators should be sternly dealt with. Reports say that passengers were deplaned on Wednesday and Thursday for their refusal to follow the protocol. Such defiance is unacceptable. The governments at the Centre and the states and the people must brace themselves for decisive and quick action to stop a second wave of the pandemic.

Guns, racism & crime in US

A series of shootings in Atlanta in which six Asian Americans were among seven women in eight fatalities in three different massage parlours have shaken up America. The investigation is yet to establish if the 21-year-old white youth’s actions were racially motivated but the signs seem clear enough as the profiles of a majority of the victims reveal.

As an epidemic, hate crime is on the rise in the USA, its graph exploding exponentially since the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic. By calling it a “China flu” in his typically bigoted rhetoric, the former President Donald Trump may have ignited a wave of anti-Asian hate crimes. The attacker, on interrogation, had tried to rationalise his action as a way of eliminating an avenue to his own sex addiction. But, as a legislator said pertinently, such racially motivated crimes cannot be “rebranded as economic anxiety or sexual addiction”.

A diverse, multiracial society like America must own up that it has a huge racial problem in which visibly successful migrants are increasingly the victims of racial abuse, harassment and violent hate crimes, which have numbered close to 4,000 since the advent of the pandemic. The Black Lives Matter movement had highlighted shades of an even older form of racism rampant in the US but Covid-19 has enabled racism to spread so much as to create national insecurity, fear of foreigners and xenophobia in the US.

There is no such a thing as a perfectly equal society but one that turns on itself like this so easily and frequently must fear over where it is headed even as complexities arise in the modern age. Endemic violence is not so much an Asian American problem as an American problem, a major part of which can be traced to the Second Amendment and loose gun control. The perpetrator was able to buy a 9 mm handgun on the same day that he used it to exhibit his malefic intentions. Do we blame the trigger finger or unfettered access to deadly weapons in a country now notorious for mass killings?

THE ASIAN AGE

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Subhani



Of Rahul, Indira and the ‘mistake’ of Emergency



Karan Thapar

As I See It

One of the best tests of a politician’s skill and talent is his ability to handle awkward and embarrassing moments. Amongst the worst is when you’re asked to accept and admit your own mistake, that of your party or your family. It seems this is not Rahul Gandhi’s forte. Actually, the truth is his family is rather poor at it. His grandmother was no better.

Earlier this month, when Kaushik Basu of Cornell University questioned Rahul about the Emergency, he claimed Indira Gandhi had called it a “mistake” and added: “The Congress at no point attempted to capture India’s institutional framework.” He was utterly wrong on both counts.

The one that’s a flagrant violation of the truth is the latter. Under the Emergency Indira Gandhi arrested at least 100,000 people, including most Opposition leaders. The press was censored. The judiciary and civil service tampered with. Elections postponed. The Constitution brutally amended. All of this should be known to Mr Gandhi, even if he was five at the time.

A less obvious error — actually it’s an untruth — is the claim his grandmother Indira Gandhi considered the Emergency a “mistake”. Indira Gandhi accepted responsibility for the Emergency and the election defeat that followed. Of that there’s no doubt. But that’s very different to calling it a mistake. In fact, she found artful ways of responding to the errors and lapses of the Emergency, while exculpating the Emergency itself. When she spoke of it, she justified it.

Her first tactic was to accept excesses may have been committed. In an interview to Mary Carass, in July 1978, she said

“muzzling the press was too strong a step”. In other words, a less stringent form of control would have been preferable. But controlling the press was not a mistake.

A second tactic was to claim other people made mistakes but she was willing to take responsibility for them. Indian Express on January 24, 1978 reported her speech at Yavatmal: “Mrs Gandhi said even if others, who were responsible for the mistakes and excesses, were not willing to own up, she would own the responsibility for those mistakes.”

A third tactic was to actually minimise whatever errors or mistakes she was willing to acknowledge. To Mary Carass, she said: “Except for the detention of political persons and press censorship there was not much that was abnormal”. Of the killings at Turkman Gate, she had the effrontery to say: “There was no violence... just one or two isolated cases”.

Even on the critical issue of sterilisation, which, perhaps, traumatised North India, Indira Gandhi refused to accept the extent of what had happened. This is what she told Paul R. Brass on March 26, 1978: “The basic thing which defeated us was the false propaganda. It’s not that we didn’t make mistakes or any of those things, but they were blown out of all proportion. Even with regard to family planning, the way they spread things... frankly, I don’t think it was sterilisation at all. It was a propaganda... no such thing took place on that scale. There were some cases, but most of the cases we followed up did not turn out to be true.”

In each of these instances Indira Gandhi was only referring to specific things that happened under the Emergency — censorship, arrests, Turkman Gate, sterilisa-

tion — but not the Emergency itself. She was trying to distinguish between the Emergency and mistakes that happened. You don’t need forensic expertise to realise she had no problem with the actual declaration of the Emergency.

Indian Express reported on January 24, 1978, that, after accepting responsibility for other people’s mistakes and excesses, Indira Gandhi justified the Emergency. “She, however, asked the audience to recall the situation in the country when the Emergency was declared, and said things were in a chaotic condition all around. If things were allowed to continue, the situation that developed in Bangladesh would have been repeated in India”. The paper adds Mrs Gandhi said “the situation just before the imposition of Emergency was very grave, and the very survival of the nation was threatened”. She described the Emergency “as a dose of medicine to cure the disease”.

When Paul Brass asked: “Would you have done anything differently in relation to the Emergency?” Her answer began with the word “No”. It couldn’t have been more pointed. Thereafter she said her mistake was not to have “personally” looked into the suffering the Emergency caused. Her exact words were: “My mistake was not to have looked into these matters personally and discussed”.

So let’s be clear, Indira Gandhi didn’t think the Emergency was a mistake and she certainly didn’t apologise for it. No doubt she accepted responsibility for the 1977 election defeat and accepted the biggest cause was the Emergency, but she never

said it was wrong. Sagarika Ghose, her most recent biographer, who helped immeasurably with my research, concurs. I’ve found no record of Indira Gandhi accepting and admitting the Emergency was a mistake.

Rahul Gandhi also alleged while the RSS today is stuffing institutions with its own people, the Congress’ behaviour during the Emergency was “fundamentally different”. Again, he’s wrong. Its behaviour was almost identical — from the Supreme Court, where a junior judge was made Chief Justice, forcing H.R. Khanna to resign, to the civil service, where his grandmother publicly called for “committed” officers and Nirmal Mukherjee was removed as home secretary. The commitment required was to her and her family.

Now I can understand why Rahul Gandhi flubbed. First, he wanted to distinguish the Emergency from the situation prevailing today, and make the former seem nowhere near as bad. Hence his claim “the Congress at no point attempted to capture India’s institutional framework”. Second, by asserting his grandmother called the Emergency a “mistake”, he wanted to ensure no further embarrassing questions would be asked. It was a way of conceding a point in the hope of ending the conversation.

But his answers have created a new controversy. There are now questions about his knowledge, his judgment, his truthfulness and, of course, his ability to handle awkward moments. On all these, he acquitted himself pretty miserably. If this was a googy, Mr Gandhi got bowled. If it was a test, he didn’t pass. If the intention was to impress his audience, he didn’t succeed. So if he’s going to be our Prime Minister one day, he needs to learn how to handle awkward situations, in particular those connected to his family’s past.

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

GREENER PASTURES

Come election time, there is always debate about outsiders. Take the case of MNM party chief Kamal Haasan, who has chosen to contest in Coimbatore (South) instead of Mylapore, Chennai, where he has lived for decades. Having cleverly decided not to contest in Mylapore, where his chances are slim, he now claims that he belongs to all 234 seats of the state. It is high time the Election Commission amends its rules to outlaw a candidate from contesting from a place which he has not been a resident of for six to 10 years. Stardom is no guarantee of victory and one cannot become an MGR or Jayalalithaa overnight.

N. Mahadevan
Chennai

SELF-SERVING BILL

THIS REFERS to the editorial, “Why does Centre want a ‘viceroy’ to run Delhi?” (March 17). With this proposed law, the Centre will be arrogating all power to itself, which will undermine Delhi’s elected government and sends out the message that it will support greater autonomy for Delhi government only if a BJP government rules Delhi.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

WILL BJP LOSE?

THE BUZZ around the BJP campaign in West Bengal seems to be dissipating even though the exodus from the ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC) to BJP continues. The big guns are also not getting the same traction as earlier and the nervousness in the BJP is apparent. The manner in which the old cadre is protesting against tickets given to newly inducted ex-TMC members is not something one usually sees in the BJP. A setback in Bengal would be a bitter pill for the BJP to swallow and prove a turning point in the electoral fortunes of the party.

Anthony Henriques
Chennai

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.



Mahir Ali

Joe’s ‘moonshot’: Afghan window for ‘dignified’ US exit closing fast

In recent years, as the negotiations phase in the 21st-century variant of the Great Game has gathered pace, every cliché in the diplomatic playbook has been trotted out to illustrate its sporadic progress.

There have been multiple windows of opportunity, open doors, seats at the table, options on the table — and inevitably some dealings under the table. ‘Between the devil and the deep blue sea’ doesn’t figure all that frequently in official statements, but it pretty much sums up the choices Afghanistan has faced for the past 40 years.

Among the latest options is a draft ‘peace’ agreement secretly proposed by the Biden administration, but much commented on since it was leaked last week. Some officials in Kabul have poured scorn on the US wish list — which is hardly surprising, given it effectively consigns the Ashraf Ghani administration to oblivion. The Taliban have been more reticent in their response so far, saying they are studying the document.

The entity that the US and its allies

dislodged from power nearly 20 years ago is being offered substantial representation in every tier of an interim government. A constituent assembly is envisaged, with elections to be held once it has completed its task. There are motherhood statements about education, intellectual freedom and women’s rights.

As golden-throated philosopher Freddie Mercury once wondered: “Is this the real life? Is this just fantasy?” For many years now, the biggest fear among some Afghans has revolved around their nation’s prospects once the foreign military forces exited. That apprehension highlights the crux of Afghanistan’s abiding tragedy: since the late 1970s, its fortunes have largely been determined by outsiders. Of course, more broadly, that has been the case for centuries.

The tyranny of geography is an immutable fact, but what’s particularly remarkable is the extent to which Afghanistan has resisted being swallowed up by neighbouring empires. Only time will tell whether that rugged exceptionalism serves it

well in this century.

When the US invaded in collaboration with the Northern Alliance in 2001, in the wake of the 9/11, the Taliban chose to melt away, reinforcing the impression of a Western-led cakewalk into Kabul. Once the botched effort to track down Osama bin Laden failed, the Bush-Cheney-Rumsfeld administration saw little reason to expend too much energy or too many resources on Afghanistan. Its attention shifted to Iraq.

Perhaps the Taliban realised even back then that they had time on their side — apart from sanctuaries in Pakistan, where bin Laden also found refuge. Over the years they steadily re-established their clout across the countryside. The US and its allies poured in tens of thousands of troops, and tens of thousands of people — mainly Afghans — have been killed since then. Both sides have committed innumerable war crimes that will likely go uninvestigated and unpunished.

And where are we today? The debate is over the exit of the remain-

ing 2,500 US troops in Afghanistan by May 1. Actually, the figure is closer to 3,500, according to the *New York Times* (which notes that the Pentagon routinely understates troop numbers). Then there are the 8,000 or so ‘contractors’ — unofficial military personnel, in effect — plus smaller contingents from the usual Western allies, which wouldn’t stay behind once the Americans pack up. Joe Biden is under considerable pressure to postpone the pullout. Should he do so, as seems likely, the Taliban would have an excuse to renege on their part of the Doha bargain — whereby they have resisted the temptation to attack foreign forces. Beyond that, the violence has not significantly diminished in the past year. Apart from other atrocities, targeted killings of women in particular occur with brutal regularity. The Taliban deny responsibility, but no one else claims it.

It’s reasonable to assume that the security situation would deteriorate in the immediate aftermath of a Western troop withdrawal, with

uncertain consequences. The alternative, however, is also fairly dire. What could a continued foreign presence achieve that has not already been attempted in the past two decades, with all too few worthy results?

Will a planned flurry of diplomatic activity — including talks in Turkey between Kabul representatives and the Taliban, and UN-sponsored conference of foreign ministers from Russia, China, the US, Iran, India and Pakistan tentatively scheduled for next week — achieve very much? Some commitments may be made, but what will they be worth?

The latest US plan is informally being referred to as a moonshot. But the original moonshot was backed by science. This one is riding on unsubstantiated hope. The Americans will only be postponing the inevitable if they linger. A ‘dignified departure’ won’t be an option down the track, just as ‘peace with honour’ proved elusive in Vietnam.

By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

TANZANIA PREZ JOHN MAGUFULI PASSES AWAY

Nakuru (Kenya), March 18: President John Magufuli of Tanzania, a prominent Covid-19 skeptic in Africa whose populist rule often cast his East African country in a harsh international spotlight, has died. He was 61 years old.

Magufuli's death was announced on Wednesday by Vice President Samia Suluhu, who said the president died of heart failure. "Our beloved president passed on at 6 p.m. this evening," said Suluhu on national television.

"All flags will be flown at half-mast for 14 days. It is sad news. The president has had this illness for the past 10 years."

COPTER CRASH KILLS NINE AFGHAN TROOPS

Kabul, March 18: A helicopter crash overnight has taken the lives of at least nine Afghan military personnel in a central province, the defence ministry said Thursday. In a statement, it said that four crew members of the MI-17 helicopter along with five security personnel were killed in the crash, in the Behsud district of Maidan Wradak province. It gave no further detail except to say that investigations were ongoing.

Separately Thursday, a bombing killed four state employees commuting in a minibus in the capital Kabul, police said. Ferdaws Faramarz, spokesman for the Kabul police chief, said a woman was among the dead and nine other people were wounded in the attack in the city's north. No one immediately claimed responsibility.

PARAGUAY'S PREZ SURVIVES IMPEACHMENT

Asuncion, March 18: President Mario Abdo Benítez survived an opposition attempt to impeach him Wednesday over his handling of the coronavirus pandemic, while hundreds protested outside the legislature demanding his resignation.

The Chamber of Deputies, which is dominated by his governing Colorado Party, voted 42 to 36 to reject impeachment. Outside, hundreds of protesters threw stones at police who responded with water cannons and rubber bullets.

Some protesters smashed store windows and car windshields, while shouting anti-Abdo slogans.

Several people were arrested. Recent days have seen a series of protests against Abdo's government.

RUTTE WINNING MOST SEATS IN DUTCH VOTE

The Hague, March 18: Dutch voters pushed PM Mark Rutte toward a fourth term in office in Wednesday's general election that bolstered his conservative party's position as the biggest in parliament and boosted a key ally into second place, an exit poll suggested.

With Rutte's bloc and other mainstream parties thriving, the far-right failed again to make a major breakthrough despite its hopes of appealing to populist sentiments and capitalising on the severe economic downturn and pandemic that has killed 16,000 people in the Netherlands.

Rutte, 54, has now won four elections in a row. He has been in power for more than a decade at the head of three different coalitions.

STORMS LEAVE DAMAGE TRAIL IN DEEP SOUTH

Birmingham (Alabama), March 18: Storms that left splintered homes and broken trees across Alabama and Mississippi moved into Georgia and Florida on Thursday, rousing residents with early morning warnings as forecasters said the threat of dangerous weather would move up the south Atlantic seaboard.

About 20,000 homes and businesses were without power and the weather service said at least two people were hurt when an apparent tornado struck southwest Alabama, destroying a house, but the region appeared to escape the kind of horrific toll many feared after ominous predictions of monster twisters and huge hail. Forecasters issued a string of tornado warnings.

Man held with gun outside US VP home

Kamala Harris currently doesn't live there

Washington, March 18: A 31-year-old man has been arrested outside United States' Vice President Kamala Harris' official residence in Washington, D.C. on weapons and ammunition charges, according to media reports.

The arrest comes as the district is in a state of heightened security following the Jan. 6 insurrection attempt at the United States Capitol. Harris and her husband, Doug Emhoff, do not currently live at the Naval Observatory, as the official residence of the United States' Vice President is undergoing renovation.

The couple is living at Blair House, near the White House.

The Texas man was detained by United States Secret Service on Wednesday following an intelligence bulletin, a spokesperson for Washington's Metropolitan Police was quoted as saying by CNN.

Police said the officers arrested and charged Paul Murray, of San Antonio, and that a rifle and ammunition were recovered from his vehicle, it said.

A police report shows

31 year-old man has been arrested outside US Vice President Kamala Harris' official residence in Washington, D.C. on weapons and ammunition charges, according to media reports.

05 30 round magazines, AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, 113 rounds of unregistered ammunition were in possession of Paul Murray of San Antonio and that was recovered from his vehicle.

officers allege Murray was in possession of an "AR-15 semi-automatic rifle, 113 rounds of unregistered ammunition, and five 30 round magazines."

According to police, he's

been charged with several counts: Carrying a dangerous weapon, carrying a rifle or shotgun outside of a business, possession of unregistered ammunition and possession of a large capacity ammunition feeding device.

The United States Secret Service told CNN in a statement that Uniformed Division officers detained the man before Metropolitan Police arrived on the scene.

A Secret Service official said none of the agency's protectees were at the residence at the time of the incident.

Violent pro-Trump supporters, fuelled by the belief that President Biden and Harris had stolen the election from Donald Trump, stormed the Capitol on Jan. 6, threatening lawmakers and law enforcement officers.

Five people, including a police officer, were killed in the violence. Since the violent incidents, security and intelligence officials have often warned about the dangers of home-grown extremism in America.

— PTI

Protest against euthanasia in Spain



Anti-euthanasia protesters stand outside the Spanish Parliament in Madrid on Thursday. Spain has become the seventh country in the world and fourth in Europe to allow physician-assisted suicide and euthanasia for patients suffering long from incurable diseases or unbearable permanent conditions. The parliament's lower house on Thursday gave the final go-ahead to the euthanasia bill in a 202-140 vote with two abstentions. Banner in Spanish reads: Government of Death.

— AP

Biden remark reflects US own past, says Putin

RUSSIAN FM LAVROV TO VISIT CHINA

Moscow, March 18: Russian President Vladimir Putin said Thursday that US President Joe Biden's remarks about him reflect US own past and current problems. Biden was asked in an interview whether he thought Russian President Vladimir Putin is a killer and said "I do."

Russia on Wednesday announced it's recalling its ambassador in Washington for consultations.

Asked about Biden's remarks during a video call with residents of Crimea marking the anniversary of its 2014 annexation from Ukraine, Putin charged that they reflect the United States' own troubled past.

The Russian leader

pointed at America's past history of slaughtering Native Americans and slavery, arguing that the painful legacy has weighed on the United States. "Otherwise where would the Black Lives Matter movement come from," he said.

He added that Russia would still cooperate with the United States where it answers Moscow's interests.

ties to counter the Biden administration's plan to pursue a tough policy towards Beijing and Moscow on a host of issues including human rights violations.

— PTI

ts. Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov deplored what he called "very bad remarks by the US president" that made it clear that "he doesn't want to normalise relations."

"We will proceed accordingly," Peskov said in a conference call with reporters, noting that "there was nothing like that in history."

— AP

N. KOREA'S NO TO U.S. OFFER FOR TALKS

Seoul, March 18: North Korea said Thursday it will ignore a United States offer for talks unless it withdraws its hostile policy on the North, days after Washington said it reached out to Pyongyang through various channels.

The statement by Choe Son Hui, the first foreign minister, came hours before the top diplomats and defense chiefs of the United States and South Korea meet in Seoul in their first joint talks in five years to discuss North Korea's nuclear programme.

We don't think there is need to respond to the US delaying-time trick again, Choe said in a statement carried by state media. We have already declared our stand that no (North Korea)-US contact and dialogue of any kind can be possible unless the US rolls back its hostile policy toward (North Korea). Therefore, we will disregard such an attempt of the US in the future, too.

— AP

US-China ties face new test in Alaska

Washington, March 18: The United States and China will face a new test in their increasingly troubled relations when top officials from both countries meet in Alaska. Ties between the world's two largest economies have been torn for years and the Biden administration has yet to signal it's ready or willing to back down on the hard-line stances taken under President Donald Trump.

Nor has China signaled it's prepared to ease the pressure it has brought to bear. Thus, the stage is set for a contentious first face-to-face meeting Thursday. Secretary of State Antony Blinken and national security adviser Jake Sullivan will meet China's top two diplomats, State Councilor Wang Yi and Chinese Communist Party foreign affairs chief Yang Jiechi in Anchorage, Alaska.

Difficult discussions are anticipated over trade, human rights in Tibet, Hong Kong, China's western Xinjiang region, Taiwan, Chinese assertiveness in the South China

Sea, and the coronavirus pandemic. No agreements are expected.

"This really is a one-off meeting," said a senior administration official. "This is not the resumption of a particular dialogue mechanism or the beginning of a dialogue process." The official briefed reporters ahead of the meeting on the condition of anonymity. Blinken will attend the meeting having just come from Japan and South Korea, where he and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin were promoting the Biden administration's commitment to its treaty allies in Asia. Just a day before the meeting, Blinken announced new sanctions on officials over China's crackdown on pro-democracy advocates in Hong Kong.

In response, the Chinese stepped up their rhetoric opposing US interference in domestic affairs. China, not unexpectedly, slammed the US criticism of the move to give a pro-Beijing committee power to appoint more of Hong Kong's lawmakers.

— AP

TALK INDIA ON RUSSIAN S-400, AUSTIN TOLD

Washington, March 18: An top American Senator has urged US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin to take up with the Indian leaders the issue of India's plan to purchase Russian S-400 missile defence system and concerns on human rights issues during his visit to New Delhi this week. Austin, the first-ever US defence secretary to include India on his maiden foreign trip, is scheduled to meet his counterpart Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit K. Doval, during his New Delhi visit from March 19 to 21.

Getting the US-India partnership right is critical to addressing 21st-century challenges, and that includes urging the Indian government to uphold democratic values and human rights, Senator Robert Menendez, Chairman of the powerful Senate Foreign Relations Committee, wrote in a letter to Austin. In meetings with Indian counterparts during your upcoming visit, I strongly encourage you to make clear that in all areas, including security cooperation, the US-India partnership must rest on adherence to democratic values, Menendez said in his letter, a copy of which was released to the press on Wednesday. In his capacity as Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Menendez plays a key role in influencing the country's foreign policy and national security.

— PTI

NEPAL'S RULING PARTY FORMS PARL BOARD

Kathmandu, March 18: The parliamentary party meeting of Nepal's ruling CPN-UML, led by Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, formed a 24-member parliamentary board and three-member statute amendment task force on Thursday even as leaders of the rival faction boycotted the meet, according to media reports.

Over 100 lawmakers close to Oli, who is also the party's Chairperson, took part in the meeting held at the Prime Minister's official residence in Baluwatar.

The 27-member parliamentary board, which will be headed by Prime Minister Oli, includes leaders of the party's rival faction Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhala Nath Khanal, *myRepublica* newspaper reported.

The board will be full-fledged after three more members are added to it. Padam Giri, a lawmaker, said it was also decided to form a three-member task force to amend the party's statute.

— PTI

PIO CHARGED FOR CYBERSTALKING A WOMAN IN U.S.

Washington, March 18: A 31-year-old Indian-origin computer security consultant has been charged in the US for allegedly engaging in cyberstalking campaign against a woman and threatening multiple people, including a deputy prosecutor and a police officer investigating him.

Sumit Garg from Seattle was indicted on Wednesday by a federal grand jury for conspiracy to engage in cyberstalking, three counts of cyberstalking in violation of criminal order, and two counts of cyberstalking, acting US attorney Tessa M. Gorman announced.

Garg was transferred to federal custody last week and was ordered detained at the Federal Detention Centre at SeaTac on March 15, 2021, the US department of justice said. He will be arraigned on the indictment on March 25. Using her personal information, Garg threatened and tormented the former roommate in violation of court order.

— PTI

Mars rover sends back driving sounds

Cape Canaveral (US), March 18: NASA's newest Mars rover has sent back the first-ever sounds of driving on the red planet — a grinding, clanking, banging affair that by Earth standards would be pretty worrisome.

The noises made by Perseverance's six metal wheels and suspension on the first test drive two weeks ago are part of a 16-minute raw audio feed released Wednesday by Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California.

"If I heard these sounds driving my car, I'd pull over and call for a tow," Dave Gruel, an engineer

on the rover team, said in a written NASA statement.

"But if you take a minute to consider what you're hearing and where it was recorded, it makes perfect sense." Perseverance — the biggest, most advanced rover ever sent to Mars — landed near an ancient river delta on February 18 to search for signs of past life.

Samples will be taken from the most promising rocks for eventual return to Earth. The rover carries two microphones.

One already has captured the sounds of wind and rock-zapping lasers, the other was meant to

record the descent and landing. This second mike didn't pick up any sounds of the rover's arrival at Mars, but managed to record the first test drive March 4.

The driving audio contains an unexpected high-pitched scratching noise, according to NASA. Engineers are trying to figure it out. Before it starts drilling into rocks for core samples, Perseverance will drop off an experimental tag-along helicopter, named Ingenuity. The helicopter will attempt the first powered, controlled flight on another planet sometime next month.

— AP

TECH | SAWY

100,000 women held rallies against misogyny, dangerous workplace cultures

Oz police boss for app to prove sexual consent

Canberra, March 18: A senior Australian policeman suggested on Thursday a phone app be developed to document sexual consent in a bid to improve conviction rates in sex crime cases. New South Wales state Police Commissioner Mick Muller said dating apps have brought couples together and the same technology could also provide clarity on the question of consent.

"Technology doesn't fix everything, but ... it plays such a big role in people meeting at the moment. I'm just suggesting; is it part of the solution?" he said. He said the number

of sexual assaults reported in Australia's most populous state was increasing while a prosecution success rate of only 2 per cent stemming from those reports showed the system was failing.

"Consent can't be implied," he wrote in News Corp. newspapers. "Consent must be active and ongoing throughout a sexual encounter." Responses to the consent app suggestion have been largely negative or skeptical. State Premier Gladys Berejiklik congratulated him on "taking a leadership position on having the conversation" about the sexual

assault problem, but declined to share her opinion on the app. Lesley-Anne Ey, a University of South Australia expert on harmful sexual behaviour involving children, said she didn't think

the app would work. "I don't think they're going to interrupt the romance to put details into an app," Ey told Australian Broadcasting Corp. Catharine Lumby, a Sydney University specialist in ethics and accountability, described the app as a quick-fix that misunderstood the circumstances of sexual assaults. "Fundamentally what we are now having a reckoning with is the fact that there is a very small minority of men in this society who are opportunists, who make the decision to sexually assault women," Lumby said.

"They don't care where,

how or why they do it. They will take the opportunity and I'm sure they are more than capable of manipulating technology," Lumby said. More than 100,000 women protested in rallies across Australia on Monday demanding justice while calling out misogyny and dangerous workplace cultures.

The public anger erupted after the Australian attorney general denied an allegation that he raped a 16-year-old girl 33 years ago, and a former government staffer alleged she was raped two years ago by a colleague in a minister's Parliament House office.

He said his suggestion could gain popularity in time. "To be honest with you, the app idea could be the worst idea I have in 2021, but the reality is in five years, perhaps it won't be," he said.

"If you think about dating 10 years ago, this concept of single people swiping left and right was a term that we didn't even know." A consent app similar to his proposal was launched in Denmark last month. But the app hasn't been widely adopted, with fewer than 5,000 downloads, according to mobile intelligence site Sensor Tower.

— AP

quick BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|------------|-------|
| Sensex | 49216.52 | -1.17 |
| Nifty 50 | 14557.90 | -1.11 |
| S&P 500* | 3,961.23 | -0.32 |
| Dollar (₹) | 72.51 | 0.05 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 101.24 | -0.40 |
| Euro (₹) | 86.62 | -0.26 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 44,509*105 | 0.23 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 65.25 | -4.04 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.202 | 0.00 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 1.735 | 0.094 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Jio, Airtel, Voda Idea pay upfront for spectrum

Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea have made upfront payments to the telecom department for the spectrum they acquired in the recent auctions, sources said. The dept. had issued demand notes to them on March 8, and the deadline for making the upfront payment was Thursday. Sources said Reliance Jio has paid about Rs 15,019 crore, Bharti Airtel around Rs 6,323 crore and Vodafone Idea about Rs 574 crore.

India home prices lowest among 56 key markets



Roiled by the pandemic, home prices in India fell 3.6 per cent in the December quarter 2020, pushing down its global ranking to the lowest 56th as compared to 43rd in the year-ago period. According to Knight Frank, India was the weakest-performing housing market in Oct.-Dec. Turkey led the global consultancy's annual rankings with prices up by 30.3 per cent year-on-year, followed by New Zealand at 18.6 per cent.

Cost accountant qualification equal to PG degree

The Institute of Cost Accountants of India said cost management accountant qualification will be considered equivalent to a post graduate degree for appearing in UGC-NET examination. It said the Cost Management Accountant (CMA) qualification has so been recognised by the UGC. The National Eligibility Test (NET) is conducted for deciding the eligibility for assistant professorship, junior research fellowship or both.

Over 26,100 Indian websites hacked in 2020

Over 26,100 Indian websites were hacked during 2020 as per data by CERT-In. A total of 110, 54 and 59 websites of central ministries, departments and state governments were hacked during the years 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively, minister of state for electronics and IT Sanjay Dhotre said in the Rajya Sabha. A total of 17,560, 24,768 and 26,121 websites were hacked during 2018, 2019 and 2020, respectively.

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■ Delhi HC upholds S'pore order against deal

Setback for Future in Reliance deal

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 18

In a major victory for e-commerce biggie Amazon, the Delhi High Court upheld the order of Singapore's Emergency Arbitrator, which had restrained Future Group from going ahead with the Rs 24,713 crore deal with Reliance Retail. The court also questioned why the Future Group promoters should not be detained for violating the arbitrator's order and asked them to be present in the court on April 28. Justice J. R. Midha found that Future Group willfully violated the arbitrator's order by going ahead with the Reliance deal and asked it not to take any further action. The Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) in October last year had passed an interim order against the Future-Reliance deal on the plea filed by Amazon. "The respondents are directed not to take any further action in violation of the interim order dated 25th October, 2020. The respondents are further directed to approach all the competent authorities for recall of the orders passed on their applications in violation of the interim order dated 25th October, 2020 within two weeks. The respondents are directed to file an affidavit to place on record the actions taken by them after 25th October, 2020 and the present status of all those actions at least three days before the next



date of hearing," the court said. The high court issued a show-cause notice to Future Group founder Kishore Biyani and the company's other promoters asking why they should not be detained for three months in civil prison for violating the arbitrator's order. The court also imposed a cost of Rs 20 lakh, which has to be deposited in Prime Minister's Relief Fund for providing Covid-19 vaccines to senior citizens of below poverty line (BPL) category. The Delhi High Court was hearing the plea filed by Amazon for the enforcement of the arbitrator's order. Future Group has received the approval of the stock exchanges and the Competition Commission of India for the deal with Reliance Group. However, the Supreme Court has halted approval by the National Company Law Tribunal for the deal till further orders. "The verdict passed by Justice Midha is probably one of the most poignant

one and will have empirical impact on ease of doing business ranking for India and ensuring corporate governance standards. This verdict will strengthen faith in our judicial system and let businesses know that contracts matter for a reason," said K. Narasimhan, advocate, Madras High Court. Future Group did not comment on the development. Meanwhile, both organised and unorganised retailers have asked the Centre for a level-playing field with regard to FDI in the e-commerce sector. In its discussion with the DPIIT, the Retailers Association of India said it wanted the FDI rules applicable to retail to be the same across channels and formats of retail to facilitate consumer experience and market balance. The Confederation of All-India Traders, representing small traders, also had sought a level-playing field. It wanted the government to ensure that the current e-commerce norms provide a level-playing field for all stakeholders.

Kalyan IPO sails through despite adverse market

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 18

Kalyan Jewellers' initial public offering was fully subscribed on the final day on Thursday despite the bearish sentiments in the secondary market. The public issue got subscribed 2.64 times, as per the last update from the merchant bankers handling the issue. The public issue of Rs 1,175 crore worth of equity shares in the price band of Rs 86-Rs 87 per share of Rs 10 face value were subscribed evenly by all categories of investors, though adverse market conditions seemed to have marred the sentiments in the primary market, too. The qualified institutional investors quota of shares were subscribed 2.79 times, non-institutional or HNI category was subscribed 1.93 times and retail individual bidders portion was subscribed 2.85 times.



Made-in-India Skoda Kushaq SUV unveiled



MICHAEL GONSALVES MUMBAI, MARCH 18

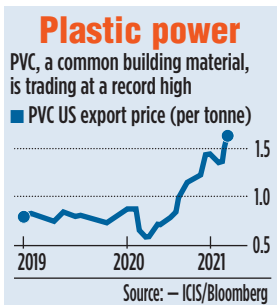
Skoda, the Czech car brand, on Thursday globally unveiled its first made-in-India SUV, the Kushaq, from Mumbai. The SUV that boasts of 95 per cent localisation will be exported once the local demands are met. The bookings will commence in June, when the price would be announced and the deliveries will begin in July. Auto analysts expect a price range of between Rs 9 lakh and Rs 17 lakh for the sports utility vehicle. The Kushaq will rival the popular Hyundai Creta and Kia Seltos in the compact-SUV segment in the country. The Kushaq will be powered by the two turbo-petrol engine options: a 115 PS 1.0-litre and a 150 PS 1.5-litre unit. It will not have a diesel engine. A 6-speed manual gearbox will be standard.

Features will include a sunroof, a 10-inch infotainment, connected car tech, ventilated seats, ambient lighting, front and rear parking sensors, and up to six airbags. "The unveiling of the brand new Skoda Kushaq marks the beginning of a new chapter for Skoda Auto, the 20-year-old brand in India," Gurpratap Boparai, MD at Skoda Auto Volks-wagen India told *Financial Chronicle*. He said the new SUV would take a lead to sell 30,000 cars in the Indian market this year along with the Skoda Rapid, Octavia and Kodiaq models. "Next year, our target is to more than double it to over 60,000 units and achieve a combined (Skoda and Volkswagen) market share of 5 per cent in the fiercely competitive Indian market," he said. Boparai said the company plans to launch three more cars over the next 12-15 months.

Plastic prices hit record high

KEVIN CROWLEY MARCH 18

For anyone looking for examples of inflation these days, raw materials are a good place to start. Copper, steel – even lumber – are either near or at record highs. And so too are plastics, which often are overlooked but are on a tear right now. Although they're the building blocks of thousands of everyday products, plastics and their chemical ingredients don't trade on major commodity exchanges, and large price moves are largely invisible to the wider world. Yet polyvinyl chloride, or PVC, is in the midst of a dramatic rally, driven by a combination of rebounding global consumer demand and production outages from last month's Texas freeze. The supply shortfalls will have knock-on effects both domestically and



around the world. Honda Motor Co and Toyota Motor Corp are reducing production of vehicles across North America due in part to the shortage of petrochemicals in their supply chains, the Japanese car giants said this week. Production lines and potentially entire plants are expected to be temporarily halted for several days in Kentucky, West Virginia and Mexico, Toyota spokeswoman Shiori Hashimoto said on Wednesday. Petrochemicals account for more than a third of the raw material costs in the average vehicle, according to ICIS. —Bloomberg

25% road tax rebate on scrapped vehicles likely

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 18

The government proposes to provide incentives to those who buy new vehicles after discarding their older ones under the scrappage policy. The state governments will be advised to offer a road tax rebate of up to 25 per cent for personal vehicles and up to 15 per cent for commercial vehicles for buying new ones after discarding the older ones, Union minister Nitin Gadkari said in a statement in Parliament. While the registration fees has been proposed to be waived, the government has also advised automobile manufacturers to offer 5 per cent discount for new vehicles against the scrapping certificate. The "scrap value for the old vehicle given by

TOLL PLAZAS TO GO, GPS-BASED COLLECTION IN A YEAR

FC BUREAU CHENNAI, MARCH 18

The government will implement complete GPS-based toll collection within a year and do away with toll booths, road transport and highways minister Nitin Gadkari said in the Lok Sabha. "I want to assure the House that within one year all physical toll booths in the country will

be removed. It means that toll collection will happen via GPS. The money will be collected based on GPS imaging (on vehicles)," Gadkari said. This will ensure seamless movement of vehicles through highways and cut travel time. According to him, 93 per cent of the vehicles pay toll using FASTag, but the remaining 7 per cent are paying a double

toll. From February 16, vehicles without FASTag have been paying double toll fee at toll plazas. According to Worldline India, FASTags are also being used for contactless and interoperable parking in major cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru. GMR Hyderabad International Airport has launched contactless car parking facility with FASTag.

the scrapping centre will be around 4-6 per cent of the ex-showroom price of a new vehicle. The vehicle scrappage policy will double the automobile industry turnover to Rs 10 lakh crore from Rs 4.5 lakh

crore now, he said. As per the policy, commercial vehicles will have to undergo a fitness test after 15 years and personal vehicles after 20 years. If they fail the test, they will have to be discarded as scrap. The rules for fitness

tests and scrapping centres are likely to be applicable from October 1, 2021. The Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations said the incentives will motivate the customer to scrap the old vehicles.

Vaccine reactions covered in health policies

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, MARCH 18

Insurance regulator Irdai on Thursday clarified that in the unlikely event of hospitalisation following adverse reaction to Covid-19 vaccination, the treatment cost of the vaccine recipient will be covered under the health insurance policies. This means that if a person develops adverse reactions/medical complications after being administered with the Covid-19 vaccines and undergoes hospitalisation, then his treatment will be treated like any other ailment and the



services offered by his insurer will remain the same. Similarly, the pre-existing diseases, exclusions and all terms and conditions will also remain constant. The claim procedure will also remain the same. "There have been press reports raising doubts whether any adverse

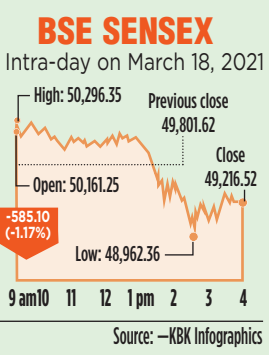
reactions to Covid-19 vaccination that require hospitalization will be covered by the health insurance policies. It is clarified that in the unlikely event of hospitalisation following adverse reaction to covid 19 vaccination, hospitalisation is covered under the health insurance policies subject to the specific terms and conditions of the policy" said the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai). In another release, the Irdai has directed health insurance providers not to make any changes to existing health policies

that could lead to a rise in premium for policyholders. The directions are also applicable for personal accident and travel insurance cover. In a circular this week, the Irdai said general and standalone health insurers are not allowed to modify existing benefits and add new benefits in the existing products, which leads to imposing an increase in premium. However they are permitted to effect minor modifications in accordance with "Consolidated Guidelines on Product filing in Health Insurance Business" issued in July last year.

Rising bond yields, Covid cases bring bears back to stock market

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, MARCH 18

The domestic equity market was in a bear grip for the fifth season in a row, as Sensex and Nifty-50 fell over 1 per cent on rising US bond yields and climbing Covid cases in India. Fresh Covid infections in the country surged to 35,871 cases in a day, the highest since early December. Besides a steep rise in Maharashtra from the second wave of infections, states like Kerala, Karnataka, Punjab and Tamil Nadu also reported higher number of cases. The Sensex closed well below the 50,000-mark at 49,216.52, down by 585.10 points, or 1.17 per cent, as it had a wild swing from a high of 50,296 in early



morning trade to 48,962 before the market closed. The Nifty dipped below the 14,500-mark and hit a low of 14,478 but closed at 14,557.85, down 163.45 points, or 1.11 per cent. The market could face further selling pressure on Friday as the 10-year US

bond yield surged above 1.75 per cent at the time of going to the press compared to Wednesday's close at 1.64 per cent. India's 10-year government bond yield closed at 6.20, rising 0.27 per cent. Though the US Fed kept policy rates on hold in Wednesday's FOMC meeting, the growth projections were revised higher. "It won't be surprising if the 10-year yields reach 2-2.2 per cent in mid-2021. The future direction of US 10-year bond yields will depend on the inflation trajectory, improvement in labour market and efficiency of any measures that Fed undertakes to cool off the bond market. Subhankar Sanyal, economist, Centrum Economic Research said.

BUDGET POINTS TO DEMAND-SIDE STIMULUS: UNCTAD

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, MARCH 18

India's pandemic relief measures were centred on easing supply-side constraints and providing liquidity support rather than aggregate demand support. Hence India's growth performance in 2020 fell below Unctad's mid-2020 expectations. India's actual fiscal stim-

ulus fell short of initial announcements that suggested a large increase of public spending for pandemic relief, said Unctad's trade development report. However, India's budget for the fiscal year from April 2021 to March 2022 points to a shift towards demand-side stimulus, with an uptick in public investment, particularly in transport infrastructure,

for the coming fiscal year. An anticipated recovery in global demand will also help buoy the export sector through 2021. The global economy is set to grow by 4.7 per cent this year, thanks in part to a stronger recovery in the US, where progress in distributing vaccines and a fresh stimulus of \$1.9 trillion are expected to boost consumer spending.

WFH trend may fade away in India: Survey

FC BUREAU HYDERABAD, MARCH 18

While several major technology companies have announced shifting a major chunk of their employees to remote work, the concept of work-from-home that gained currency during the pandemic might fade away once the threat of virus recedes, according to a survey. A survey by Indeed India said Indian companies appear less willing than their global counterparts to support remote work post-pandemic. "Fifty-nine per cent of employers are not in



favour of remote working in the new normal. Seventy per cent say they will not continue it once a solution to the pandemic is in place, even though three in every four employers highlight no decline in employee productivity due to remote working," the survey said. The survey was conducted by ValueVox during December-January among 1,200 employees and 600 employers. After the end of the pandemic, 67 per cent of large companies and 70 per cent of mid-sized Indian firms, as opposed to 60 per cent of large global counterparts and 34 per cent of mid-size global companies, are not in favour of a remote working setup. Even digitally agile start-ups preferred an in-office model after the pandemic, with 90 per cent of survey participants saying that they would not like to continue remote working once a solution for the pan-

demographic was in place. The survey also claims that 50 per cent of employees were willing to shift back to the metro from their native place if the job demands it. Of this, 29 per cent of employees said their decision would be guided by the availability of the work-from-home option, while 24 per cent said it would depend on whether the pandemic was brought under control. Nine per cent of them, however, said they will not return to metro cities for work. In fact, 32 per cent employees are willing to take a pay cut if they could work in their native place.

The survey also claims that 50 per cent of employees were willing to shift back to the metro from their native place if the job demands it. Of this, 29 per cent of employees said their decision would be guided by the availability of the work-from-home option, while 24 per cent said it would depend on whether the pandemic was brought under control. Nine per cent of them, however, said they will not return to metro cities for work. In fact, 32 per cent employees are willing to take a pay cut if they could work in their native place.

SHORT TAKES

Tokyo ticket for safe bet Sharath

Doha: The seasoned Achanta Sharath Kamal on Thursday became the first Indian paddler to qualify for the Tokyo Olympic Games after a dominant win over Pakistan's Muhammad Rameez at the Asian Olympic Qualification tournament in Doha.

The veteran Indian thrashed Rameez 11-4, 11-1, 11-5, 11-4 in little over 22 minutes in the second men's singles round-robin match in the South Asia group.

Kamal had lost his opening match 9-11, 13-15, 11-5, 11-7, 12-10, 9-11, 8-11 to compatriot Gansekaran Sathiyam.

The win over Rameez ensured at least a second-place finish for Kamal and it was enough to secure a spot in the delayed Games, scheduled to begin in July.

One quota is awarded to the highest-ranked second-placed player in the event. Sharath being the top-ranked player in the group, secured the berth under the Asian quota. It will be his fourth appearance at the Olympic Games.

Oly official quits after sexist mock

Tokyo: The creative director for Tokyo's Olympic ceremonies resigned on Thursday for suggesting a female comedian appear as a pig, just weeks after the Games' chief stepped down over insulting remarks about women.

Hiroshi Sasaki announced his decision after a report on Wednesday revealed his proposal that Naomi Watanabe, a popular celebrity and plus-size model, appear as an "Olympic" wearing pig ears at the opening ceremony.

In a statement released early Thursday, Sasaki apologised to Watanabe and said he understood his suggestion was inappropriate.

"My idea would be a huge insult to Ms. Naomi Watanabe. This can't be taken back," he said. "I regret this from the bottom of my heart, and I deeply apologise to her and everyone who felt discomfort over this," he added. Watanabe, in a statement issued through her agency, said she was "surprised" by the remarks. — *AFP*

Mary's Dream project for boxers

New Delhi: Dream Sports Foundation (DSF) on Thursday announced partnership with the Mary Kom Regional Boxing Foundation (MKRBF) to support six talented female pugilists from Imphal.

Through this partnership, DSF will facilitate training and provide educational and financial assistance to promising boxers for the next one year.

The support to the boxers through this partnership will include year-round technical training, provision of apparel and equipment, accommodation, tournament exposure, diet and nutrition, education and tuition and other extracurricular activities, a release said.

"We are grateful for Dream Sports Foundation to partner with us and help these young athletes during one of the most important stages in their lives," Mary Kom said. — *PTI*

Ex-NBA star hit by a car, paralysed

Los Angeles: Former NBA star Shawn Bradley has been paralysed after being struck from behind by a car while riding a bicycle near his home in January, he revealed Wednesday. Bradley, who stood 7-foot-6, was the second overall pick behind Chris Webber in the 1993 NBA Draft by the Philadelphia 76ers and played 12 NBA seasons, the last eight for the Dallas Mavericks.

While pedaling a block from his home in St. George, Utah, on January 20, Bradley was struck from behind by an automobile, causing a traumatic spinal cord injury that has left him paralysed. — *AFP*

Live on TV

BADMINTON

All England Open: Quarterfinal matches from 3.30 pm on Star Sports 2 HD, Star Sports 3

FOOTBALL

Italian League: Parma vs Genoa from 1.15 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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SURYA SCORCHES

Slams maiden T20 fifty as India force series decider

Ahmedabad, March 18: A determined India beat England by eight runs in the fourth T20 International to level the five-match series 2-2 here on Thursday.

Invited to bat first, India scored 185 for eight in the stipulated 20 overs, with Suryakumar Yadav (57) and Shreyas Iyer (37) doing the bulk of scoring at the Narendra Modi Stadium.

Suryakumar's 31-ball effort was his maiden half-century in international cricket and Iyer made his runs in just 18 balls, hitting five fours and a six, as India managed to put up a challenging total.

Suryakumar smashed three sixes and six fours during his stay in the middle.

In reply, England were stopped at 177 for eight in their full quota of overs.

All-rounder Ben Stokes top-scored for England with 46 off 23 balls while Jason Roy smashed a 27-ball 40 at the top of the order.

Suryakumar, who replaced an injured Ishan Kishan, struck six fours and three sixes in his 31-ball 57 to top score for India after being asked to bat. He debuted in the second T20I but did not bat in that match. He did not play in the third game.

India did not have a big partnership but quickfire knocks from Shreyas Iyer (37 off 18 balls) and Rishabh Pant (30 off 23) took the hosts to their highest total of the series.

England again opened the attack with leg-spinner Adil Rashid but Rohit Sharma (12) clobbered him for a six in the first ball of the match and then followed it up with a four.

But Rohit's promising innings was cut short in the fourth over as he was caught and bowled by Jofra Archer, who took career-best figures of 4/33.



India's Suryakumar Yadav plays a shot against England during their fourth Twenty20 match at the Narendra Modi Stadium in Ahmedabad on Thursday. — *AP*

Suryakumar hit Archer for a six in the first ball he faced in international cricket, picked up the gaps and found the boundaries to keep the scoreboard moving, though the England bowlers were by no means wayward.

India's 45 for 1 after the powerplay was not a top-notch effort but Suryakumar smacked Rashid for a six and a four

in the seventh over to overtake opener KL Rahul (14). The home side suffered a double blow in the form of Rahul and Virat Kohli as they were pegged back to 70 for 3 in the ninth over. Rahul continued his struggle as he offered a simple catch to Archer at mid-off off the bowling of Ben Stokes while Kohli was stumped out as he danced down the

track to smash Rashid in an uncharacteristic show of aggression early in his innings. India were 75 for 3 at halfway mark with Suryakumar going great guns. He reached his maiden international fifty from just 28 deliveries, with a four off Rashid in the 12th over.

Pant joined the party as he hit two fours off Stokes in the 13th over, taking

SCORECARD

India: Rohit Sharma c & b Jofra Archer 12, K. L. Rahul c Jofra Archer b Ben Stokes 14, Suryakumar Yadav c Dawid Malan b Sam Curran 57, Virat Kohli st Jos Buttler b Adil Rashid 1, Rishabh Pant b Jofra Archer 30, Shreyas Iyer c Dawid Malan b Jofra Archer 37, Hardik Pandya c Ben Stokes b Mark Wood 11, Shardul Thakur not out 10, Washington Sundar c Adil Rashid b Jofra Archer 4, Bhuvneshwar Kumar not out 0. Extras (W-4, LB-5) 9. **Total (for 8 wickets in 20 overs) 185.**

England: Jason Roy c Suryakumar Yadav b Hardik Pandya 40, Jos Buttler c KL Rahul b Bhuvneshwar Kumar 9, Dawid Malan b Rahul Chahar 14, Bairstow c Washington Sundar b Rahul Chahar 25, Ben Stokes c Suryakumar Yadav b Shardul Thakur 46, Eoin Morgan c Washington Sundar b Shardul Thakur 4, Sam Curran b Hardik Pandya 3, Chris Jordan c Hardik Pandya b Shardul Thakur 12, Jofra Archer not out 18, A. Rashid not out 0. Extras (W-4, LB-2) 6. **Total (for 8 wickets in 20 overs) 177.**

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