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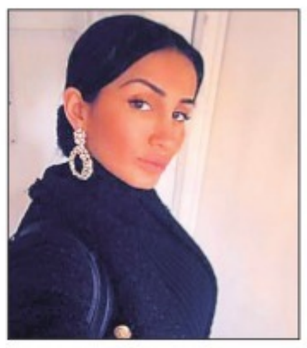
SAME SITE SHOWED SIBAL'S EVM VIDEO

Behind Opp sting video: London firm, Romanian director, and one Catherine

MANOJ C G, KAUNAIN SHERIFF M & KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26



Diana Biciin, website director, on LinkedIn profile

THE CONGRESS and other Opposition parties today released a sting video showing an alleged BJP functionary purportedly exchanging scrapped notes after demonetisation on a commission of 40 per cent. Claiming the video had been downloaded from a website, Tricolour News Network, Congress leader Kapil Sibal dismissed a query on whether he had verified the video.

"How can I verify? I am not the owner of this video. It is in the website," Sibal said. "Anybody can verify. You have seen the conversation. You have seen the person. You have seen the person talking. You have seen the exchange. You have seen the language. You have seen the notes. Now if you still doubt it, it is for you to doubt it."

This website is the same one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

HAD SLAMMED RS 6,000 MONTHLY INCOME TO POOREST 20%

EC asks Niti V-C to explain his comments on Cong's Nyay

Rajiv Kumar had attacked Cong; he is given two days to respond

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

NITI AAYOG Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar's criticism of Congress president Rahul Gandhi's announcement on minimum basic income guarantee as a poll promise has prompted the Election Commission (EC) to send him a letter Tuesday seeking an explanation for his comments.

Rajiv Kumar

Kumar had dismissed Congress's promise of a minimum income of Rs 6,000 to the poorest 20 per cent households saying the party can "say and do anything to win elections".

The proposed Nyunatam Aay Yojana (NYAY), he told news agency *ANI* on Monday, would increase fiscal deficit.

The Model Code of Conduct (MCC) forbids the use of "government transport including official aircraft, vehicles, machinery and personnel" for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

An electoral official demonstrates the functioning of an Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) and Voter-Verifiable Paper Audit Trail (VVPAT) in Daryaganj, Delhi, on Tuesday. *Abhinav Saha*

DECISION 2019

MODI BIOPIC: EC TELLS PRODUCERS TO EXPLAIN

BJP DROPS MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI

JAYA PRADA JOINS BJP, GETS TICKET

PAGES 6, 7, 8

EC's VVPAT counting passes experts' test

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE ELECTION Commission's (EC) current practice of verifying the EVM count with VVPAT slips in one polling station of each Assembly or Lok Sabha constituency is learnt to have passed the test of the three-member expert panel.

The expert committee of Abhay G Bhatt, head of ISI Centre in Delhi, Rajeeva L Karandikar, Director of Chennai Mathematical Institute, and Onkar Prosad Ghosh, Deputy Director General (Social Statistics Division), Central Statistics Office, Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation, submitted its

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

OVER 70 VACANCIES

No takers for job of independent director in IL&FS companies

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE POSITION of independent director in IL&FS and its group companies, once a prized job for retired bureaucrats and top corporate executives, has lost its shine — as many as 77 positions are vacant and there are few takers.

So dire is the sitaition that the revamped board chaired by Uday Kotak has appealed to the Mumbai bench of the National Company law Tribunal (NCLT) to exempt it from making these appointments.

Section 149 of the Companies Act 2013 mandates that each listed company must have one third of its board of directors as independent directors. Unlisted companies — having either paid-up share capital of Rs 10 crore or turnover of Rs 100 crore or outstanding loans, debentures and deposits exceeding Rs 50 crore — need at least two independent directors. As per these norms, at least 34 IL&FS Group entities are currently required to appoint 64 independent directors.

Most of these positions fell vacant after a slew of resignations by directors following the IL&FS debt default crisis in September 2018. In some cases, directors were not replaced after their term got over.

The new IL&FS board has got

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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PAK HC ORDERS PROTECTION FOR TWO HINDU GIRLS
PAGE 11

Saradha case: SC says CBI report very, very serious

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE SUPREME Court on Tuesday observed that some of the contents of the status report filed by the CBI after questioning former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar in connection with the Saradha chit fund scam case were "very, very serious".

"We have gone through it. There are some things which are very serious," said a bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, adding that it cannot "close its eyes".

The court told Attorney General K K Venugopal, who appeared for the CBI, that the agency could file an application, within 10 days, if it wanted to press its prayers made in the report submitted in a sealed cover.

The bench said Kumar could file his reply after the CBI's application, and the court would take a final call after hearing both sides.

On February 5, the court had asked Kumar to appear before the CBI in Shillong in connection with the investigation.

RELATED REPORT
PAGE 10

Wealth tax on top rich could fund Congress's plan for poor: paper

NDA's 10% EWS quota political stunt: Paris Inequality Lab

SEEMA CHISHTI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE CONGRESS'S proposal of NYAY, a monthly payout of Rs 6,000 to the poorest 20 per cent, can be best served with "more progressive taxation," which could include a wealth tax on the rich, says the Paris-based World Inequality Lab. And the BJP's 10 per cent quota for the poor in the General Catgeory is a "political stunt."

The institute has released a comparative study of the promises that the BJP and the Congress have made in 2019 to assist the poor as part of their election pitch.

While the Congress has not shared any details on the plan — its fiscal implications or its architecture — a paper by the Paris institute offers several financing options. Estimating the cost of Rs 72,000 annual income guarantee as Rs 2.9 trillion (1.3% of GDP), it says that a 2 per cent tax on total wealth on households owning more than Rs 2.5 crore of wealth (that is the top 0.1% of households) would yield Rs 2.3 trillion or 1.1% of GDP.

The paper's authors are Nitin Bharti, research fellow, and co-director Lucas Chancel. Chancel

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THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WHY CONG INCOME PLAN WON'T WORK
BY JAYATI GHOSH
PAGE 12

Parallel to FATF review, Pak under watch for terror funding

RAHUL TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

SIGNALLING MORE international pressure for Pakistan, the Asia/Pacific Group (APG) has expressed displeasure over Islamabad's lack of compliance with global anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing norms, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The APG is an inter-governmental organisation modelled on the lines of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), which decided in January to keep Pakistan on its "grey list" for having made only "limited progress" in curbing money laundering and terrorism.

Described as FATF Style Regional Bodies (FSRBs), APG covers 41 jurisdictions, including India and Pakistan. The two-day mutual evaluation process by the APG, which started Monday, is separate from an FATF review but will examine

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SOMETHING MAY HAPPEN BEFORE INDIA POLLS: IMRAN
PAGE 9

THE CITY

UPHAAR FIRE: ANSALS FACE NON-BAILABLE WARRANTS PAGE 5

EXPLAINED

Absence raises questions on governance

INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS are meant to play a key role in improving corporate credibility. They also act as a watchdog group. Their absence in so many IL&FS companies, especially at a time of crisis and rebuilding, raises questions on the current process of decision-making as the group works on ensuring accountability for irregularities.

Giriraj 'send-them-to-Pak' Singh sulks: My self-respect hurt by party state unit

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

Giriraj Singh

ONE OF the first leaders who in 2013 publicly called for Narendra Modi as the BJP's prime ministerial candidate, he went on to become one of the most vocal ministers in his government, remembered best for attacking critics with his 'send them to Pakistan' remarks.

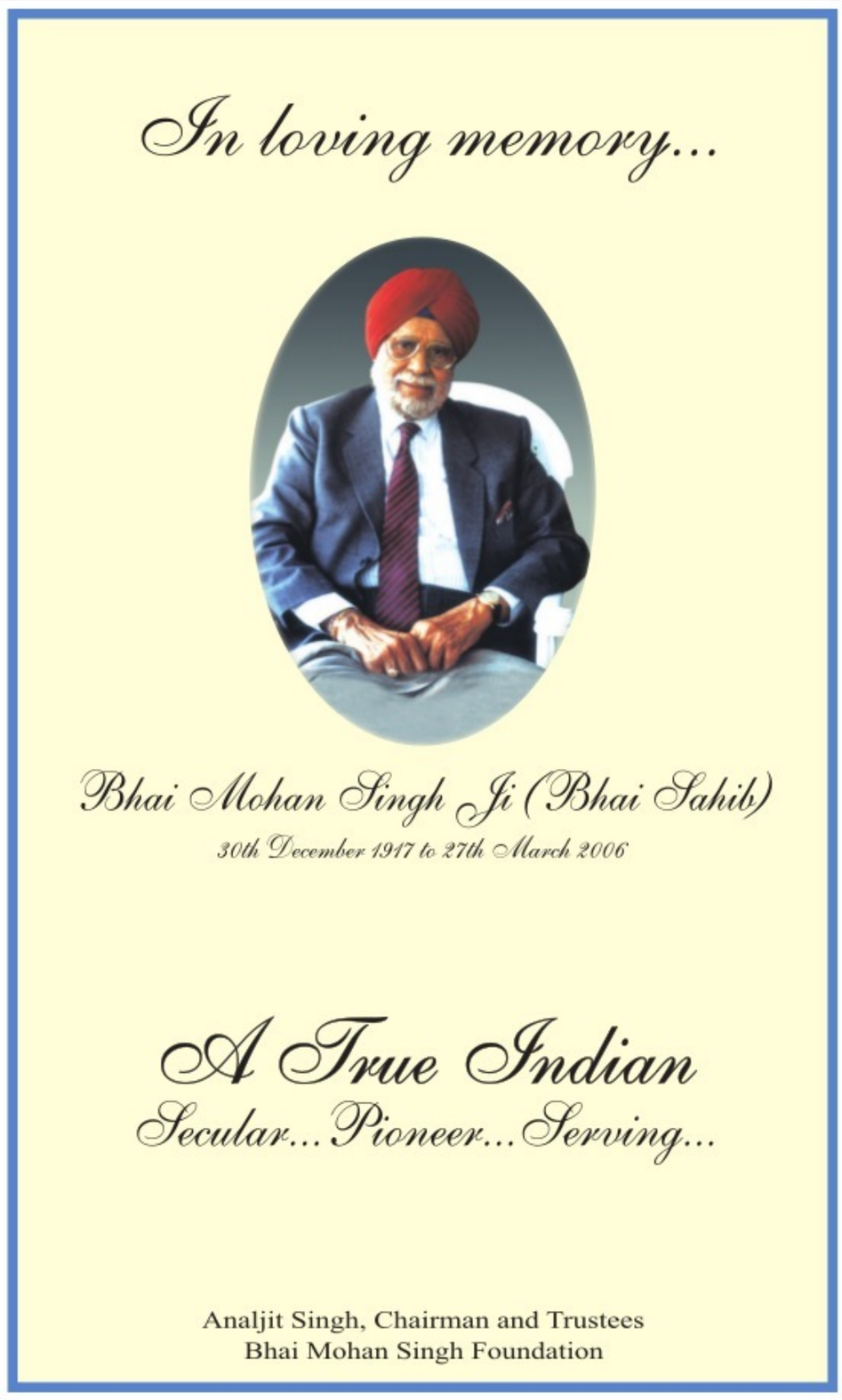
But three days after the party named him as its candidate for the Begusarai Lok Sabha seat, Giriraj Singh is still in New Delhi, miffed and still to make up his mind on contesting the seat.

He points to his "honour", disappointed and annoyed that the party did not consult him before taking away his Nawada seat and packing him off to Begusarai.

"It has come as a big jolt that

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL
BY UNNY



Nirav Modi in London prison, his art under Mumbai hammer: I-T recovers Rs 54.8 crore

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

DIPTI NAGPAUL
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

THE APPLAUSE that surged across the auction hall on Tuesday night was not much of a surprise — after all, the hammer had just gone down on a V S Gaitonde painting, an untitled work from 1973, for Rs 25.24 crore. What was more remarkable, though, was the auction itself.

The bidding was for 68 artworks owned by Nirav Modi, the 48-year-old fugitive jeweller who is lodged in a London jail after extradition proceedings were initiated against him in connection with the Rs 13,500-crore Punjab National Bank fraud case.

The auction was conducted by SaffronArt on behalf of the recovery officer of the Income Tax Department in Mumbai, which had recently sealed some of the properties owned by Nirav Modi.

In the end, the Gaitonde painting turned out to be the most expensive pick, and the fourth highest ever for one by the artist. In all, according to SaffronArt, the collection fetched Rs 60.9 crore — the tax department will receive Rs 54.84 crore after the buyers' premium is deducted.

Gaitonde to Raja Ravi Verma: auction in Mumbai Tuesday

"We were expecting to collect between Rs 30-50 crore," said Dinesh Vazirani, CEO and co-founder of SaffronArt, which was selected as the official auctioneer by I-T officials after a screening process.

Apart from the Gaitonde, the other top picks on offer during the two-hour auction were 10 paintings by F N Souza, a few by Jogen Chowdhury and an Atul Dodiya.

There were also a number of antique works, including Raja Ravi Varma's 1881 oil-on-canvas depicting the Maharaja of Travancore and his younger brother welcoming the third Duke of Buckingham, Richard Temple-Grenville, to Trivandrum (now Thiruvananthapuram) in 1880.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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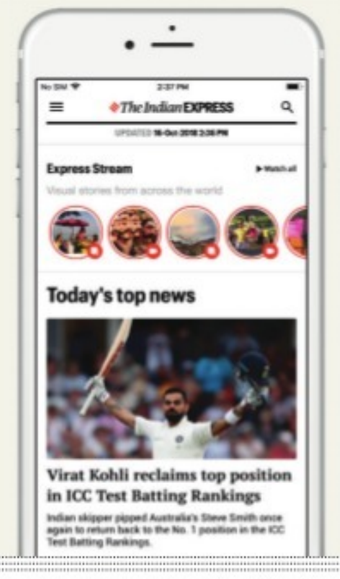

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Since the launch of Missing Voters app earlier this year, thousands of eligible voters have been added to the rolls, most of them aided by hundreds of volunteers who downloaded the app to lend their help to the project. Hyderabad-based RayLabs Technologies developed the app

VIDEO OF THE DAY

'MINIMUM INCOME GUARANTEE A BLUFF'
Union Finance Minister Arun Jaitley took a swipe at Congress

FULL COVERAGE

JAYA PRADA TO CONTEST FROM RAMPUR
Former Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Prada joined the BJP

EXPRESS AUDIO
Fall in consumption, spurt in NREGA jobs demand, Tejasvi Surya
NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY
Unpacking why India is experiencing a consumption slowdown, spurt in demand for MNREGA jobs, and why BJP chose Tejasvi to contest from Bengaluru South

FROM PAGE ONE

Sting video

that hosts the video "uninterrupted and uncut" of the press conference in London on January 21, 2019, which was attended by Sibal and where a US-based "expert" claimed the BJP had hacked EVMs to win the 2014 Lok Sabha election. The EC dismissed all allegations.

When *The Indian Express* called the number mentioned on Tricolour's Facebook page, a "Catherine" responded: "We had sent a team from Canada to carry out the (demonetisation) sting operations between January and April 2017." Asked who had carried out the sting, Catherine replied: "I feel you are acting as your Prime Minister's intelligence agency operative."

The company's address, as mentioned in publicly available records, is that of an agency, Companies Made Simple Group, which "offers business products and services to start up companies and small businesses."

Public records show that Tricolour News Network was incorporated as a company in London on November 28, 2018; the domain name (tnn.world) was registered on January 31, 2019.

The website has posted a "pre-launch promotional" video about the July 27, 2015 attack in Gurdaspur on the Dina Nagar Police station in which an SP was among six killed by alleged militants. The attack was an "operation mainly controlled by the NSA and PMO," the website said.

Besides Sibal, today's press conference was attended by Congress leaders Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mallikarjun Kharge and Ahmed Patel; Loktantrik Janata Dal's Sharad Yadav and RJD's Manoj Jha.

Tricolour News Network was incorporated with just one shareholder and director, a person named Diana Irina Biciin who is identified as a Romanian national.

There is no contact number available for Biciin in publicly available records. But there is a LinkedIn profile that calls her Director at "Tricolour News Network."

On Twitter the handle @TriColourNews was started in January this year. It has close to 2,000 tweets many of which are titled "Tsunami of stings" and today tweeted a link to the video that was released by Sibal at the press conference. The handle has 608 followers as of Tuesday night.

On Facebook, the company's page shows Biciin as a "Team Member". Biciin often posts links to news stories from Tricolour's website, almost half of which are in Hindi.

Among the pages liked by Biciin are the official page of Rahul Gandhi, page of Congress's Punjab unit, Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab unit, AAP leader and comedian Bhagwant Mann, Punjabi comedian Binnu Dhillon and the page of YouTuber Dhruv Rathee.

The only other employee of Tricolour News Network mentioned on LinkedIn is Kristin Stein. Stein's profile says she is based in London and is a TV journalist with Tricolour.

On her Instagram page, she claims to be an "Actress/ TV Journalist/ Presenter". Her Instagram account suggests she is not only associated with Tricolour, but also with Reflections Talent Agency, which is also based in London.

Stein's profile page on Reflections' website has a showreel of her work and mentions various short films, ad films, workshops and television shows she has been a part of.

Late on Tuesday evening, the main news stories on the website, most of which is in Hindi, included: slogans asking Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad at Patna airport to go back; a Congress leader's claim that during the Punjab-Rajasthan IPL match, viewers chanted Chowkidar Chor Hai slogans, and the sting video.

Responding to the press conference, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said: "After a fake BSY Diary, a fake sting. When there are no real issues, rely on 'fakery'....Was the creator of the London fiasco on the EVMs and the fake UPA sting today the same? Every election needs a few humorous breaks. After the London EVM fiasco, the UPA provided another one today."

VVPAT

report to the EC last week.

As reported by *The Indian Express* on March 24, the report recommends an absolute number of polling booths that should be sampled to test the accuracy of EVM results, instead of a fixed percentage or proportion of all polling stations in an Assembly/ Lok Sabha constituency.

"The final report has suggested two alternatives, each of which is an absolute number of polling stations. The Commission is already doing a lot more than what has been recommended by the committee," said a source, who did not reveal the exact sample number suggested by the committee.

In a presentation made in August last year to the then Chief Election Commissioner O P Rawat, Karandikar and Bhatt had suggested that mandatory counting of VVPAT slips in a sample size of 479 randomly-selected polling stations across the country should be enough for the EC to satisfy itself — with 99 per cent confidence — regarding the integrity of the elections.

However, it's not clear whether a sample size of 479 polling stations is one of the two alternatives suggested by the three-member committee last week. The EC is likely to mention the findings of the report in its affidavit that has to be filed in the Supreme Court by March 28. The apex court is currently hearing a joint petition filed by 21 Opposition parties demanding random verification of EVM count in at least 50 per cent of polling stations in every Assembly/ Lok Sabha constituency.

At the last hearing on Monday, the Supreme Court told the EC that it "would like" the poll panel "to increase" the number of random checks of VVPAT slips from one polling station per seat. It also asked the Commission whether it would face any difficulty if such an order was issued. The matter will be taken up next on April 1.

Wealth tax

is on the institute's executive committee along with French economist Thomas Piketty whose work on inequality has set off widespread debate.

Asked if the institute helped the Congress formulate the plan, Chancel said: "Not directly. We discussed the scheme and shared our results with Abhijit Banerjee (Professor at MIT and Director of the Poverty Action Lab) who has been discussing it with the Congress but we haven't been in direct contact with them."

Bharti and Chancel have found that income inequality levels in India are alarmingly high and have been on a steady way up since the 1980s.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Chancel said: "India's progressive tax rates have been falling since the 1980s and people associate high progressivity with low growth. But this is nonsense. From an international comparative perspective, nothing shows that high top tax rates lead to lower growth. Look at US again but also at Europe, the period of high top tax rates coincide with very high productivity growth periods. What is particularly striking in the case of India is the huge rise of income and wealth inequality at the top of the distribution. We believe that a top wealth tax could yield a significant amount of tax revenues to finance social spending and protect Indian democracy from the risks of too high top-end inequality."

Said Bharti: "Certainly, progressive taxation is one of the practical solutions at the moment. We do believe that the current social sector schemes are very useful and should remain intact/improved in terms of implementation to gain efficiency. Progressive taxation helps in cutting down on inequality (which has increased a lot in recent years). Further our proposal of taxing on stock of wealth can also help in curbing the strong preferences of Indian society towards real estate. Land and Building forms 90 per cent of the total wealth in India. Imposing tax will also help in people investing in more productive assets."

They regret the lack of a single identifiable indicator of income and wealth in India and in the absence of one metric, they say, a good standard, is having residential homes in rural India and incomes assessed by income tax returns in urban areas.

The authors have looked at three slabs of minimum amounts that could be made available to 20 per cent of India's poorest, as part of the variant of the Universal Basic Income proposed by the Congress. The proposal, of providing a minimum of Rs 72,000 per annum per family, is what these authors have built as 'Scenario B' in their work.

This, coincidentally, is the announcement made by Congress president Rahul Gandhi Monday.

On the NDA Government's 10 per cent quota in government jobs for the poor in the General Category, the economists red-flag the criteria set out. On the income threshold, more than 93 per cent of households are eligible and on the current agricultural land holding metric, 95 per cent are, and going by residential ownership, 80 per cent of the population is eligible. Despite having some ability to benefit a section of the economically worse off, they say, it is mostly a "political stunt" and limited in its ability to tackle income inequality.

Giriraj Singh

the state BJP leadership, which has not displaced any sitting MP in Bihar, did not even ask me (before changing his seat). My self-respect has been hurt. I have nothing against the (BJP) central leadership. The jolt to my honour and hurt to my self-respect has been inflicted by the state leadership," Singh told The Indian Express.

So, will he or will he not contest the Begusarai seat? "I don't know, not yet. Begusarai is my birthplace and karmabhoomi and it's my privilege. But when my privilege and honour come to me together, I will think about it," he said. "I want to know why they have done this to me... The state leadership has done this to me and they should know how to honour me."

Singh said he does not know why his Nawada seat — which he successfully contested in 2014 — was taken away from him. He said he had been keen on Begusarai for more than two decades, but had to give it up because Nitish Kumar, now Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, wanted it for Pandit Shyam Nandan Mishra in 1996, and in 2014 he was told to go to Nawada by Bhola Singh who went on to become Begusarai MP — Bhola Singh passed away last year.

One of Hindutva's poster boys, Giriraj Singh is more upset with his own party because ally LJP, which has been given the Nawada seat as part of the NDA seat-sharing arrangement, was ready to leave the seat for him.

"Chirag Paswan told me on phone that his party would be ready to leave the (Nawada) seat for me. The BJP state chief also said that I can fight from the seat I want. Chirag Paswan even said I wanted to give it to you, but what can I do if the NDA puts it in my lap. That's why I am hurt," he said.

Nirav Modi

Estimated to go for Rs 12-18 crore, it fetched Rs 16.1 crore.

But another much-anticipated piece, Akbar Padamsee's 'Grey Nude', an oil-and-plastic emulsion on canvas from 1960, fetched over Rs 1.72 crore — it was expected to net up to Rs 2 crore. Also part of the collection were a few pieces by Chinese artists, including a set of four by Ge Guanzhong.

The auction did throw up a few other remarkable bids: Chowdhury's untitled work of 1994, a mixed media-on-paper, started at Rs 12 lakh, and eventually went for Rs 52.9 lakh.

Souza was popular, too, with most of his work crossing the estimated price: 'Cityscape' (oil-on-canvas, 1974), 'Golly-Wog' (oil-on-board pasted on board, 1958) and an untitled self-portrait (oil-on-canvas board, 1971), fetched over Rs 1.78 crore, Rs 1.38 crore and Rs 1.03 crore, respectively.

Among the photographs, Vivan Sundaram's portrait of Amrita Sher-Gil fetched Rs 4.83 lakh, well past the estimated mark of Rs 3.5 lakh.

Six artworks breached the Rs 1-crore mark, while 13 went unsold. In London, meanwhile, Nirav Modi's legal team is expected to submit a second bail application Friday before the Westminster Magistrates Court after he was denied relief in the first hearing soon after his arrest on March 20.

Pak terror

Islamabad's compliance with 40 recommendations made by the global task force.

Sources said the APG committee visiting Pakistan comprises six members, including from the US, China, the UK, Turkey, Indonesia and the Maldives.

According to APG, this is its second mutual evaluation for Pakistan in the last ten years. The organisation will submit its report after the ongoing on-site evaluation to FATF, which is expected to take it up in October.

A non-compliance report from APG could push Pakistan further into a corner, sources said, adding that the country has failed to comply with 28 out of the 40 FATF recommendations.

Sources said that if Pakistan fails to comply with "at least 10-12" of the 40 FATF recommendations, it faces sanctions by international monetary bodies.

In that case, they said, Pakistan faces the risk of being downgraded by multilateral lenders like the IMF, World Bank, ADB, etc.

FULL REPORTS ON www.indianexpress.com

ECI asks Niti Aayog V-C to explain remarks

furthering the interest of the party in power, which is the BJP in this case. MCC, which has been in force since the announcement of Lok Sabha on March 10, ensures a level-playing field for all political parties and candidates fighting elections.

"He is a public servant and ideally should not have made such a statement which is seen as working to the BJP's advantage. His comments have been sought," said a source.

Kumar has been asked to respond in two days.

Gandhi, on Monday, said if his party is voted to power, its government would roll out a minimum income scheme guaranteeing Rs 72,000 a year to the poorest 20 per cent of households. The scheme is expected to entail an expenditure of Rs 3,60,000 crore a year given that there are roughly 25 crore households with five crore in the poorest category.

Reacting to the announcement Kumar told ANI: "It's an old pattern followed by Congress. They say and do anything to win elections. Poverty was removed in 1966, One Rank One Pension was later implemented, everyone received proper education under Right of Education! So you see then can say and do anything."

Kumar, who has been Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog since September 1, 2017, further said, "In 2008, P Chidambaram had increased the fiscal deficit from 2.5% to 6%. It's the next step in that pattern. Rahul Gandhi today made the announcement without thinking about its impact on the economy. We will take four steps back due to this scheme"

"I think the fiscal deficit may increase from 3.5% to 6%. All the credit rating agencies may bring down our ratings. We may not get loans from outside and eventually, our investments might be blocked," he added.

No takers for job of independent director in IL&FS

few takers for these positions. Caught in a bind with overall debt in excess of Rs 90,000 crore, the directors have in their petition to NCLT dated March 15, 2019, said: "Given the financial condition of IL&FS Group and the situation prevailing across the group, the newly appointed directors are unable to find independent directors to be appointed on the board of directors of its Group Companies... Under the circumstances it is just necessary, convenient and in the interests of justice that this Hon'ble Tribunal be pleased to dispense with the requirement for appointing independent directors on the board of companies where such independent directors are required."

The petition warns that "should the reliefs as prayed for, not be granted, grave harm loss and prejudice will be caused to Respondent No1 (IL&FS)."

INDEPENDENT AND WOMEN DIRECTORS REQUIRED AT IL&FS GROUP COMPANIES

Company	Independent Directors required	Women Directors required
Il&FS Financial Services Ltd	2	Nil
IL&FS Education and Technology Services	2	1
IL&FS Maritime Infra Co	2	Nil
IL&FS Engineering and Construction Company Ltd	3	1
IL&FS Energy Development Company Ltd	2	1
Others*	53	10

**29 companies for independent directors, 10 for women directors*

Among the companies that need independent directors are: IL&FS Financial Services (2 vacant); IL&FS Education and Technology Services (2); IL&FS Engineering and Construction (3); IL&FS Technologies Ltd (2); and IL&FS Infra Asset Management (2).

Over and above the 64 independent director vacancies, the group has stated that three independent directors on the board of IL&FS Transportation are due for retirement March 31 and one director on the board of IL&FS Wind Energy "may resign" thereby creating additional vacancies going forward.

Since several of these companies need to have at least one woman director, too, the board has also sought exemption from appointing women directors citing the reason stated above.

According to the list accessed by *The Indian Express*, 13 companies of IL&FS Group need a woman director each on its board and the companies include IL&FS Engineering & Construction, IL&FS Tamil Nadu Power Company, IL&FS Transportation Networks and Noida Toll Bridge Company Limited among others.

When contacted, IL&FS Group spokesperson Sharad Goel declined to comment.

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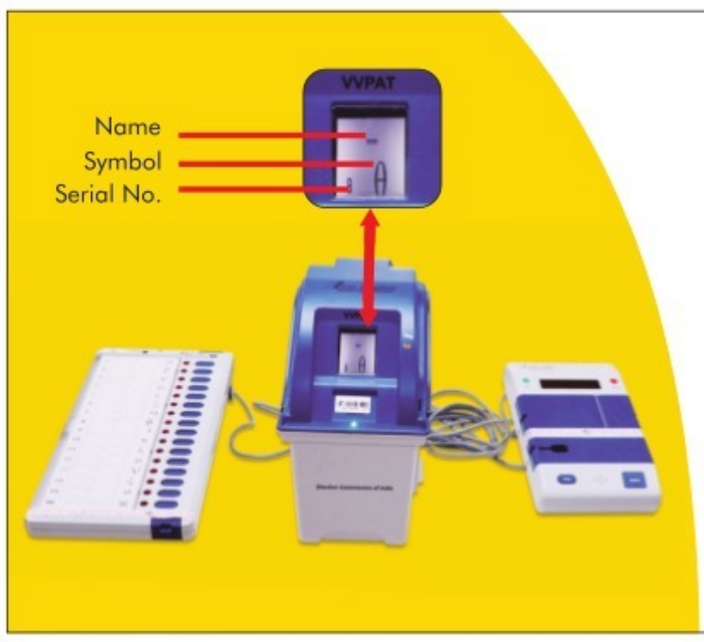

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'FIRE OPERATIONS IMPEDED BY TRAFFIC'

Two children dead in blaze at Jamia Nagar residence

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

TWO CHILDREN aged 8 and 10 died after a fire broke out inside their three-storey home in southeast Delhi's Jamia Nagar Tuesday afternoon.

The two, cousins Aisha and Zuib, were trapped in the building with four-five women and at least three other children. As locals helped the family escape the building, they got left behind.

Zuib had come to Jamia Nagar from Ghaziabad with his mother, and both children were enjoying the post-exam holidays.

Their grandfather, Yasin (60), owns the building, which was home to around 20 members of the same family. When the fire broke out, the men were at a local mosque.

Zuib's father Dilshad pointed to a burn on his hand and said: "We could not enter the building because of the flames and smoke. Firefighters didn't make it on time."

Outside the three-storey house, Tuesday. *Abhinav Saha*

The Delhi Fire Services deputed six water tenders from three fire stations, but the operation was impeded by heavy traffic and several people blocking their way. Some members of the family tried to manage the traffic while others broke open the windows and tried to enter the building wearing handkerchiefs, only to return minutes later, coughing.

"By the time we reached, the entire first floor was engulfed in flames. The fire spread through the wooden furniture; there was also a store rented out on the ground floor which posed a risk," said a fire officer from Nehru Park fire station.

DCP (southeast) Chinmoy Biswal said the fire broke out due to a short circuit. "It started from the first floor and travelled up. It was controlled on the second floor. The two children were taken to Holy Family Hospital, where they were declared dead on arrival," he said. A police officer who recovered the two bodies said they were badly charred.

With fire tenders stuck in traffic, locals tried to mount an improvised rescue operation. A *kebab* stall owner, Nasir, found a ladder and ran with it to the opposite building.

"The women and children were on the terrace, crying for help. I was bound with the help of a rope and others held down the ladder. I had to walk several feet above the ground and carry one child at a time on my back. Carrying the women was more difficult. I am glad the ladder held under the weight," Nasir told police in his statement.

HC tells restaurant owner to fund food for orphanages

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

IN AN unusual order, the Delhi High Court Tuesday directed a restaurant owner to use the Rs 20 lakh fine, imposed on his eatery for violating the trademark of French luxury fashion goods manufacturer Hermes, to provide mid-day meals and sanitary napkins to the city's orphanages and foster care homes.

Justice Najmi Waziri, who had recently called for a tree plantation drive in Delhi's South Ridge forest area by the 2G case respondents, directed the restaurant chain owner, Riyaaz Nasruddin Amlani, to provide mid-day meals at five orphanages and 10 foster care homes for the next two years, and supply sanitary napkins for one year.

Justice Waziri also directed Amlani's company to install a commercial grade water purifier at the 150-year-old orphanage, Bachhiyon ka Ghar, within two weeks.

Murder plot hatched from inside jail stopped

New Delhi: With the arrest of three persons Monday, police claimed to have busted an extortion racket being operated from within Mandoli Jail premises.

Police said they arrested Chanderbhan alias Aman Yadav, currently lodged in Mandoli Jail, in the case after intercepting calls he made to his associates—Balkishan and Mohammed Ateek—to eliminate two men for not giving him protection money.

DCP (special cell) P S Kushwaha said, "Chanderbhan tasked his associates with eliminating two persons to establish his supremacy in Ghaziabad for running an extortion racket. We arrested his henchmen before they could execute the crime. Our sources told us that some gang leaders lodged in the jail have been procuring weapons to eliminate their rivals."

Additional IG (Prisons) Raj Kumar said, "We will initiate an inquiry once we receive a report from the Special Cell." **ENS**

Five more men arrested for violence against Gurgaon family

SAKSHI DAYAL
GURGAON, MARCH 26

FIVE DAYS after a Muslim family was beaten with rods and sticks by a mob inside their home in Gurgaon's Bhoop Singh Nagar, police Tuesday arrested five more people for the crime.

Police said Anil (33), Gaurav (23), Pradeep (28), Lalit (27), and Rohit (26) were arrested from Nayagaon village, where they live. "They are being questioned. Ten people have been arrested so far. We are conducting investigations to nab the others," said Gurgaon Police PRO Subhash Boken.

Anil has two cases registered against him at Badshahpur police station, one in 2008 and the other in 2016, said police. The first is registered under IPC sections 279 (rash driving), 337 (causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others), and 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others).

The incident took place last Thursday evening at the home of Mohammad Sajid. He, his wife, his children, and some relatives who were visiting them, were in the house at the time. Two men on a motorcycle spotted the boys of the family playing cricket outside and allegedly confronted them, telling them to "go to Pakistan and play." Soon, the men and their friends barged into Sajid's home, attacked his relatives and ransacked the house.

Of the 10 arrested, two others have prior cases registered against them, with one having been jailed twice. While one accused arrested on Friday was sent to judicial custody Sunday, the other four, arrested Sunday and Monday, were produced in court Tuesday and remanded in judicial custody for 14 days.

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has granted In-Principle approval vide his Memo No.LC-3282- Asstt. (RK)-2019/8323 dated 25-03-2019 for change in Beneficial Interest by change in shareholding pattern of the company M/s Signatureglobal (India) Pvt. Ltd., for developing affordable group housing colony under License No.4 of 2017 dated 02-02-2017.Whereas there is a change in the shareholding pattern in the Company from its existing shareholders to new shareholding.

While according In Principle approval the Director Town & Country Planning, Haryana, Chandigarh has directed the Company to inform the general public about the change in shareholding pattern through a public notice in the leading newspaper and accordingly the notice is hereby issued to the public for their information and if any objection the same may be sent to the o/o Senior Town Planner, HUDA Office Complex, Sector 14, Gurugram within a period of 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The said permission granted is also being hosted on our web site www.signatureglobal.in.

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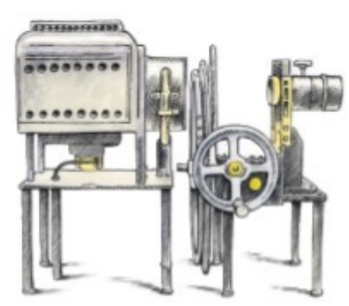
Valentine's Day card

Chocolate bar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Moderate	Poor	Moderate	Moderate
175 AQI PM: 10	230 AQI PM:10	106 AQI PM: 2.5	192 AQI PM: 2.5

0-50 Good | 51-100 Satisfactory | 101-200 Moderate | 201-300 Poor | 301-400 Very Poor | 401-500 Severe

BRIEFLY

Gautam Gambhir joined BJP last week

Gambhir on new BJP list

New Delhi: The Delhi BJP unit has prepared a fresh list of 31 probable candidates for the seven Lok Sabha seats in the capital, which now features former cricketer Gautam Gambhir, who joined the party last week. Earlier, a list of 21 candidates shortlisted by the election committee of the state BJP was turned down by the party's top leadership as many committee members had recommended their own names. Sources said Gambhir is likely to get a ticket from New Delhi constituency. "The party had discussed his candidature even before he joined the BJP," said a leader. **ENS**

PM to address workers

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi will hold a 'Main Bhi Chowkidar' programme at Talkatora Stadium Sunday, where he will address party workers and the public. "Via video-conferencing, the PM will interact with women, children, students and workers from 500 places across the country, including Delhi's seven constituencies," said Delhi BJP General Secretary Rajesh Bhatia, adding that BJP President Amit Shah will likely be in attendance from one of the constituencies.

Services at AIIMS trauma centre to resume soon

New Delhi: Emergency services at Jai Prakash Narayan Apex Trauma Centre, which are currently restricted following a fire, are expected to restart within a week, the hospital administration said Tuesday. Services were affected after a fire broke out in one of the operation theatres on the ground floor on Sunday.

Man held for duping tourist

New Delhi: A 33-year-old man from Kashmir was arrested for allegedly duping a Canadian woman by offering an over-priced tourist package for Jaipur. Police said the accused was arrested from a tourist centre in Mandir Marg. As per the woman's complaint, the accused offered a tour and travel package with a driver, who took them to a cheap hotel and drove around looking for a guide, wasting their tour time. **ENS**

BJP FILES COMPLAINT WITH DELHI POLL OFFICER

Row over Kejriwal letters with water bills, room at DJB sealed

ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

DECISION 2019

THE DELHI Chief Electoral Officer Monday sealed a room at the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) office in Narela, which had letters addressed to individual voters by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, enlisting the achievements of the AAP government and seeking their "blessings and well wishes" to be able to carry on the work.

Delhi CEO Ranbir Singh told *The Indian Express* that he received a complaint from a BJP delegation that had come to meet him on Monday. The BJP has alleged that "more than 26 lakh" letters were being distributed along with water bills. The letters in question do not carry a date.

Kejriwal, who also holds the water ministry portfolio, is chairman of the DJB.

"I had received a complaint from a delegation of the BJP which met me yesterday. The complaint was that the Chief Minister has written letters to the water connection holders by name. They had also enclosed a copy of the letter, as well as photographs of such letters lying in bulk in two DJB offices — one in Ashok Vihar and the other in Narela," said Singh.

The delegation was led by Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Vijender Gupta.

"After receiving that, I spoke to the Chief Executive Officer of DJB and told him that it is his responsibility to see that government machinery is not misused for political purposes as that will be an outright violation. If it happens in any department, the departmental head is responsible. I told him to pass the instructions down the line to ensure this kind of letter should not be distributed by anyone and that they should take hold of all the letters till the end of the elections," he added.

BJP leader Vijender Gupta criticised CM Arvind Kejriwal and said there was gross violation of government rules

Singh added that the flying squad, meant to enforce the poll code, also separately received information about the DJB letters in Narela. "They visited Narela office and found letters in bulk. They sought our instructions, so we asked them to seal the room where these letters were lying," said Singh.

A DJB spokesperson said: "The chairman's (Kejriwal's) letter was cleared to be distributed among consumers through speed post in February. But after the MCC kicked in, we stopped distributing. Recently, a minivan transporting the letters was apprehended by police and it was brought to the notice of the election office."

The letter, signed by Kejriwal, lambasts past governments. "In merely four years, we have laid water pipelines in more than 400 colonies. The work we have done with regard to water and sewage in the last four years, past governments have not been able to do in the last 20-25 years," it reads.

Earlier, similar letters, listing the government's achievements in the field of education, were sent to parents of students studying in Delhi government schools.

Criticising the CM, Gupta said, "The notable cunning is that the letter mentions neither date nor dispatch number. This is gross violation of government rules as no letter can be sent without these particulars. But Kejriwal has cunningly tried to bypass this rule to escape CEC scrutiny."

He added that the letters were "printed on the best quality paper on the CM's letterhead with his seal". "Spending so much money through public exchequer on political propaganda is a gross violation of MCC," said Gupta. The AAP did not respond to calls and messages seeking a comment.

AAP insulted and ousted its party Lokpal: Rajnath

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

UNION MINISTER Rajnath Singh Tuesday hit out at the Aam Aadmi Party government, saying it has failed to fulfill its pre-poll promises of opening new schools and providing CCTVs in cluster and DTC buses.

Addressing BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp Sabha' in Northeast Delhi parliamentary constituency, Singh said the Delhi government prepared a weak draft of the Lokpal bill and tried to get it passed in the Vidhan Sabha.

"You (AAP) had also made an internal Lokpal for the party (and) for your leaders, but that internal Lokpal, Admiral L Ramdas, was insulted and ousted from the party," he said.

In a 50-minute speech that he gave at Yamuna Vihar, Singh hit out at AAP for the first eight minutes, and dedicated the rest to larger national politics, comparing five years of the BJP government with the Congress rule and stressing that the country is safer with Narendra Modi at the helm.

Singh said that Rajiv Gandhi used to say that when he sends 100 paise, hardly 16 paise reaches Delhi, but today when the Centre sends subsidy of Rs 100 through direct benefit transfer, all the money goes into the beneficiary's account.

"In 2014, when we formed government, there were just two mobile factories, but in the last four-and-a-half years, 120 more have come up. Modi government has ensured that electricity reaches every village, which the Congress failed to do," he said.

He also compared the two governments on the internal security front, saying: "Earlier, there was a tradition of showing white flag when Pakistan would strike, but I told soldiers that there has been enough of that. I have given them a standing order that the first bullet should not be fired by India, but if there is a strike by Pakistan, Indian soldiers should not count bullets while firing."

"When they killed our 40 jawans, our Air Force entered Pakistan's territory and took revenge. The opposition asks for the number of dead terrorists. But the brave don't count bodies," he said.

He said that the BJP was a secular party which the opposition was trying to brand as communal. "Hindu, Muslim, Sikh, whoever is born from Bharat Mata is Indian and is our own and we have to take everyone together. It is our responsibility," he said, adding, "I also want to tell you that if you see Kashmiris facing a problem, it is your duty to help them, love them and give security to them."

PRESSING THE RIGHT BUTTONS

An election officer demonstrates how a VVPAT works at a school in central Delhi on Tuesday. *Abhinav Saha*

AAP Gautam Budh Nagar candidate's nomination cancelled

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, MARCH 26

THE NOMINATION of AAP's Gautam Budh Nagar candidate, Shweta Sharma, was cancelled due to "technical reasons" Tuesday, with the administration claiming that she failed to provide the requisite number of proposers, even as the party alleged a conspiracy.

The administration claimed the AAP candidate provided only one proposer in support of her nomination. "If you are a national party or a recognised state party, you require only one proposer. If you are independent or you are recognised as a state party in some other state and not in this state, you require 10 proposers. When they came to file the nomination on Monday, the name of only one proposer was on the form. This was a major mistake since it was in the category which required signatures of 10 proposers...," said Gautam Budh Nagar District Magistrate B N Singh.

Sharma claimed she was being discriminated against. "There was a technical error in the form. We were not allowed to correct it during scrutiny, under Section 33 (4) of the Representation of People Act, 1951. It was clear that I was fighting against corruption in education, and standing for respect of women. The opposition was scared of a lady, and that had a role to play," she claimed.

A professor and MPhil graduate, Sharma was to contest against sitting BJP MP Mahesh Sharma. In 2014, AAP's candidate Kishan Pal Singh stood fourth in the polls from Gautam Budh Nagar, with around 32,000 votes.

"We had the quorum of proposers and a lot of people had gathered. We stood for many hours at the nomination centre. Even today, I was there since morning. They called me in last. This is a testament to their respect for women," she claimed. Sharma has written an application to the EC seeking a rectification.

Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari at the Vijay Sankalp Sabha Tuesday. *Prem Nath Pandey*

CBSE officials, its schools exempt from election duty

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

ALL OFFICIALS of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE), principals, teachers and exam-related staff of affiliated schools which are involved in board examination duty have been exempted from Lok Sabha election duty.

This exemption was granted by the Election Commission following a letter from CBSE chairperson Anita Karwal requesting the same.

The CBSE board examinations, which began on February 15, will continue till April 4. Following this, the evaluation and processing of results will take place, which will continue till early June.

"This year, about 33 lakh students from 21,000 affiliated schools from India and 28 other countries are appearing in the board examinations being conducted for classes X and XII... CBSE is a small organisation... and requires the presence of all its personnel during the process," the letter from CBSE stated.

It goes on to state that around 5,000 schools are functioning as examination and evaluation centres, and that principals, teachers and staff of these schools are involved in conducting examinations and evaluating answer books. It also states that PGT and TGT teachers, physical education and vocational subject teachers are also board evaluators.

"In view of the above, it is requested that officials of CBSE... and principals and teachers, and other exam-related staff of affiliated schools... that are involved either in the conduct of exams or evaluation may not be given election duty in the forthcoming Parliament Election. It is also informed that all these officials have never been assigned any election duty during the board exams in the past i.e. since the establishment of CBSE," the letter stated.

Statehood irrelevant in LS polls, nothing much can be done: Sheila

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

EVEN AS the Aam Aadmi Party made full statehood its main election plank, Delhi Congress chief Sheila Dikshit Tuesday said the issue holds no relevance in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Speaking at a press conference that many assumed would be to address the alliance issue, Dikshit instead stressed on Congress president Rahul Gandhi's announcement of providing minimum Rs 6,000 per month to 20% of India's poorest.

Asked about the AAP's statehood push, she said: "At present, we are fighting the national elections and the issue of statehood is not relevant for now. As the Constitution of India does not give much power to Delhi due to the special position it holds, nothing much can be done. The Constitution will have to be changed if full statehood is to be granted to Delhi."

Dikshit also stressed on Congress's announcement to provide Rs 6,000 per month to 20% of India's poorest. *Tashi Tobgyal*

The three-time chief minister said the Congress, too, had taken up the issue of statehood during its regime. "During our tenure, we had picked it up three-four times; AAP is not the only party to raise it. If you are in power, then work it out with the Centre and fulfill the requirements of people of Delhi," she said.

Addressing a rally at Patparganj on Monday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had promised to build infrastructure equalling "ten Singapores" if full statehood is granted to Delhi.

AAP leader Gopal Rai, too, said: "The issue is gaining traction among people. We are driving home the point that we could have done a lot more, in fact still can, if statehood is granted to Delhi. Our entire campaign is geared towards making this one simple point."

With no word on the alliance, senior Congress leaders meanwhile claimed Rahul is "expected to announce a decision soon".

Meanwhile, the Congress state unit, as a part of its campaign, will start *aay pe charcha* (discussion on income) meetings from April 1.

Referring to Rahul's announcement from a day earlier, Dikshit said: "This is an extraordinary step which will benefit people below the poverty line. It is the first time that such a step has been taken in the world. We will come back with a bang."

'Sheila not a serious CM, had no tussle with Centre'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

AMID SPECULATION on a possible AAP-Congress tie up, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal lashed out at his predecessor Sheila Dikshit, questioning her government's performance.

Addressing a meeting in Rohini, Kejriwal suggested that Dikshit, who was Delhi CM from 1998 to 2013, had no real tussle with the Centre as she was not a serious administrator.

"Sheila Dikshit was the CM for 15 consecutive years. But she never clashed with the Centre. Was she really running the government? If she was really running a government, then why did people choose AAP? If she was running a government then there was no need for us to form AAP," he said.

The AAP chief contrasted this with his embattled tenure as Delhi CM, marked by a running feud with the Centre, which he said was an outcome of his constant efforts to reform education, health and power in the capital.

WILL CONDUCT SURPRISE INSPECTIONS

AAP's 'crack team' to keep an eye on its candidates

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

FOURTEEN AAP workers, part of an "emergency crack team", will keep tabs on campaigning of the party's Lok Sabha candidates in Delhi, having been tasked with conducting "surprise inspections" of war rooms and tracking scheduled rallies and public interactions.

Sharing the blueprint of the poll campaign, AAP Delhi convenor Gopal Rai said there will be one war room for party strategists and social media teams in every constituency, while the central one is being set up at the party's headquarters on Rouse Avenue near central Delhi's ITO.

Taking a leaf out of BJP's 'panna pramukh' strategy, the AAP has come up with an ambitious plan to deploy around 1.48 lakh 'vijay pramukhs' in Delhi alone, who will be expected to provide a last-minute push to ensure voters come out on polling day. AAP had launched its campaign on March 23, making it clear that it cannot afford to lose any more time waiting for a word from the Congress on an electoral tie-up.

AAP launched its poll campaign on March 23

Rai Tuesday reiterated that AAP will focus on its campaign and will not speak on coalition unless the Congress comes up with a formal proposal.

The party has announced candidates to all seven Lok Sabha seats in the capital.

"The emergency feedback team will have 14 members, with two persons in charge of each constituency. They will go for surprise inspections of the war rooms as well as keep tabs on public interactions of candidates. It is being done to ensure that our strategy is smoothly executed. Recently, there was an instance when a candidate was scheduled to hold 14 small meetings, but could manage only seven. That did not go down well with people waiting to hear their leader. We want to avoid such situations," Rai said.

An AAP leader said that in the first phase, the party plans to appoint around 69,000 'vijay pramukhs' and eventually take the number to 1.48 lakh by May 8. Delhi votes on May 12.

UPHAAR FIRE

Non-bailable warrants against Ansal brothers

The fire at Uphaar cinema hall had claimed 59 lives; (below) Sushil Ansal

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

NON-BAILABLE warrants (NBWs) were issued against brothers Sushil Ansal and Gopal Ansal by a Delhi court Tuesday for their non-appearance in a case related to alleged tampering of documents during the 1997 Uphaar fire tragedy trial.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Deepak Sherawat issued the NBWs against the real estate barons for March 28.

Hours after the warrants were issued, the duo moved the court for cancellation of the same and sought that their applications in this regard be heard.

The case, which is at the stage of recording of evidence of prosecution witnesses, was listed for hearing in pursuance of the High Court's direction to be heard thrice a week. The court's direction came after Neelam Krishnamoorthy, who lost her two children in the fire, sought directions for a speedy trial.

On December 6 last year, the HC had directed the lower court to make an endeavour to pronounce its verdict in the matter by July 15, 2019, and to fix at least three dates for hearing per week. It had also asked the Delhi government and other parties in the case to cooperate in the trial to expedite disposal of the matter.

The case is related to alleged tampering with a judicial file, over a letter written by Ansal Properties Industries Ltd vice-president V K Nagpal to the Delhi Fire Services. An FIR was registered in this regard against the accused persons.

A trial court in May 2014 had ordered framing of charges against the seven accused, including the Ansal brothers, on charges of abetment of offence, causing disappearance of evidence, criminal breach of trust by a public servant and criminal conspiracy.

The charges were upheld by the High Court as well. Two of the seven accused died during the course of trial. All the accused have denied the allegations against them.

The Ansal brothers were also convicted for the fire at the cinema hall that claimed 59 lives.

Andhra wants share of happiness, will adapt Delhi school curriculum

SUKRITA BARUAH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

WITH THE Andhra Pradesh government looking to adapt it by June, the Delhi government's flagship Happiness Curriculum is going places. While Ladakh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Jharkhand have expressed interest and even visited Delhi schools, the Andhra Pradesh government will be the first to adapt the flagship project and launch a state-specific Happiness Curriculum.

The curriculum had been launched in Delhi government schools in 2018. Teaching handbooks were created for teachers, laying out concepts and activities, including stories to be discussed in class.

A Satyanarayana from SCERT Andhra Pradesh, the state's curriculum coordinator, said these handbooks have already been translated to Telugu to help teachers understand the objectives of the programme.

The Andhra Pradesh government will be the first to adapt the flagship project. *Archive*

"We have a core team of 35, comprising teachers, lecturers from DIET (District Institute of Education and Training) centres, education advisors and state officials, who are working on content creation. We are planning to retain 30% of the content from Delhi's curriculum and develop the rest according to our cultural context, needs and capabilities. We have completed content for the first 12 weeks of teaching," Satyanarayana told *The Indian Express*.

Andhra Pradesh representatives have visited Delhi government schools twice, and the first official meeting on the matter between representatives of both governments was held last September. Following that, representatives from Delhi visited Andhra Pradesh as consultants for a meeting.

Dr Shyam Sundar, senior lecturer at DIET Darya Ganj, who went to Andhra Pradesh for the last meeting, said a "perception building" workshop will soon be conducted by SCERT Delhi for the core team of AP teachers for clarity on the course's philosophy and objectives.

Satyanarayana said: "Our CM has a vision for Andhra Pradesh having an increased happiness index, and our school education department is also working towards developing that. We looked at Delhi's model towards developing the course. We also invited a team from Bhutan and had a meeting with them."

However, he noted that there are several challenges to implementing the curriculum: "We have around 45,000 schools in the state (Delhi has a little over 1,000). We have far fewer teachers, many of whom are teaching multiple classes. We also need to make it work in both rural and urban settings. That is why we cannot implement the same model. We will not be approaching it class-wise but level-wise, with classes I-VIII being divided into three levels," he said.

EXPLAINED

Aim of the course

'HAPPINESS CLASSES' are conducted during the first 45 minutes of every school day from nursery to class VIII. With the aim of developing self-awareness, critical thinking and expression, the classes involve "mindfulness" sessions, storytelling and teacher-student interactions. As Andhra Pradesh does not have pre-primary classes in its government schools, the curriculum will begin at class I.

Woman throws kids off terrace, police in dark

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

A DAY after a 34-year-old woman jumped off the terrace of her house, minutes after she threw her eight-year-old daughter and three-year-old son off the building, police have registered a case of murder and attempt to suicide against her.

Police, however, said they have not been able to ascertain the reason for the woman taking the extreme step, as she is still unconscious.

According to police, the woman's husband told them that they argued frequently. "The husband was at home when the incident took place," Deputy Commissioner of Police (east) Jasmeet Singh clarified.

Despite repeated attempts, the woman's husband did not respond to calls or texts by *The Indian Express*.

On Monday night, the woman's neighbour heard the girl fall. Another man, Sukant Singh Rajput, who called police on Monday, said: "I peeked out of my window and saw a man holding the girl in his arms. He was crying and asking whose girl it was."

Rajput then ran towards the adjacent terrace where the woman landed minutes later. "She was conscious at the time. Her boy was bleeding and she kept telling us that she could not feel her legs."

The woman's neighbour and lawyer with the Delhi High Court, Zaffar Abbas, said: "I was speaking to my father when we heard the woman and her children fall."

The lawyer's wife Fiza Fatima said, "I saw her husband at the hospital. He kept telling police that he did not know why she jumped."

After HC intervention, Delhi set to get first narco test facility

ANAND MOHAN J & PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

TWO MONTHS after the Delhi High Court expressed displeasure over Delhi not having a single facility to conduct narco analysis tests despite being the capital of the country, the Delhi government Tuesday told the court that they have procured a brain mapping machine.

A bench headed by Justice Hima Kohli was informed by Delhi government's standing counsel (Criminal) Rahul Mehra that the "brain fingerprint system was received by FSL (Rohini) in the first week of March from the USA".

Mehra, however, expressed his doubt over its installation at the FSL building because of renovation, and sought that PWD be directed to make necessary arrangements.

Following which, the bench gave 45 days to the PWD to make space and install the system.

The need for a brain mapping system was realised during the investigation in the case of a four-year-old boy, who had gone missing on August 4, 2018. Police suspected a juvenile, who had allegedly told police that the boy's body could be recovered from the Yamuna. However, the boy could not be found, the court documents stated.

While hearing a status report seeking the consent of the juvenile's mother and sister for a narco test, the HC was informed that the aforesaid people would have to travel to Gandhi Nagar, Gujarat, due to lack of the required facility with the FSL. "We are surprised to hear the submission. Delhi, being the capital of the country, we would have expected that at least one such facility would be available with FSL, Rohini," the bench had said on January 1, 2019.

FSL Director Deepa Verma told *The Indian Express*: "The technology would help visualise the suspect's brain response, which will further be analysed by a team of psychologists. We have already introduced the Layered Voice Analysis Technology to modernise the truth detection facility with the Forensic Psychology division".

Woman dies after being hit by car, dragged under it

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

A 47-YEAR-OLD woman died after being hit by a four-wheeler and dragged for several metres in southwest Delhi's Kapashera, police said.

The woman, identified as Nina, was riding pillion on the motorcycle being driven by her son, when the accused allegedly hit their vehicle and tried to flee the spot.

In the attempt, he allegedly dragged the woman, who had fallen off the bike, several metres before bringing the vehicle to a halt, said police.

The woman was taken to a local hospital where she succumbed to her injuries, said police.

The errant driver, Jeetu, has been arrested, added police.

According to police, Hitesh was heading home with his mother to collect some documents.

In a rush, he tried to take a sharp turn and a car coming from behind hit the bike, said police.

Have forgiven students, says JNU V-C

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU University (JNU) Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar Tuesday said he did not intend to press charges against the students who "forcibly" entered his residence the day before and allegedly "confined" his wife, as he "forgave" them.

"While last night's violent behaviour by students in front my JNU residence is condemnable, neither me nor my wife will file a police complaint against the students. We have forgiven them. Wish them the best and hope they will reform and not repeat such acts in future," Kumar tweeted.

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) and Delhi Police denied they had entered the V-C's residence or confined his wife.

A senior police officer told *The Indian Express*, "It was a planned march from the spot of the hunger strike to the V-C's house. They gheraoed it, but did not break in."

"We haven't got a written complaint from JNU V-C yet," said Madhur Verma, Delhi Police PRO.

DU faces flak for 'favouritism'

New Delhi: Delhi University has received flak for sending a communication to the heads of various departments, asking them to set up a committee to revise the undergraduate syllabus. For this, the university has asked that "three best teachers" from the department be made part of the panel, which many allege will open the doors for bias and favouritism.

The communication says that the committee should include the HoD, department convenor and "three best teachers of the course" who are to be "identified by the HoD/Convenor". EC member A K Bhagi said, "This is unacceptable. The revision of CBCS syllabus can only be done through statutory provisions." DU V-C Yogesh Tyagi and Registrar Tarun Kumar Das did not respond to calls and texts. **ENS**

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- Highest h-index citation amongst New Central Universities
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IMPORTANT DATES

Opening of online application form	13 March,2019	Exam Date	25 & 26 May, 2019
Closing of online application form	13 April, 2019	Result Declaration	21 June, 2019
Issue of Admit Cards	10 May, 2019		

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Like 2014, BJP deals Joshi a surprise; he makes it known was told to stay out

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

IN JANUARY this year, Satyadev Pachauri — a minister in the Uttar Pradesh government — with other BJP workers released a booklet in Kanpur as a report card on the infrastructure works done in the industrial city with the MP Local Area Development Funds of Murli Manohar Joshi, as well as other works done in the city on his initiative in the past five years.

Two months later, Joshi, a former BJP president, issued a letter to voters in Kanpur saying, "Shri Ramlal General Secretary (Org.) Bharatiya Janata Party conveyed to me today that I should not contest the ensuing parliamentary election from Kanpur and elsewhere." Hours after his letter became viral on social media, the BJP named Pachauri as the party candidate from Kanpur, replacing Joshi.

By then, BJP workers, apparently clueless about the impending sequence of events, had already distributed hundreds of booklets highlighting works done by Joshi.

To the 85-year-old BJP leader, the development must seem a repeat of what happened in Varanasi five years back when he was shifted from the constituency to make way for the party's prime ministerial candidate, Narendra Modi. What followed was a poster war between supporters of Modi and Joshi in Varanasi. Joshi had already set up his election office in the constituency and had gone on to release a booklet on the works done in Varanasi during his 2009-2014 tenure, which was widely distributed.

After L K Advani, Joshi is the second 'Margdarshak Mandal' member who won't be fielded this time. *File*

After a BJP rally in Lucknow saw slogans seeking Joshi's "*tyaag* (sacrifice)" and Modi's "*raaj* (rule)", Joshi's supporters had gone through Varanasi putting up hoardings and raising slogans against terrorism such as "*Atankwad par lage lagaam, Dr Joshi ka paigam*", and supporting Joshi, including "*Bole Kashi Vishwanath, Dr Joshi ka denge saath*".

The decision to replace Joshi in Kanpur this time followed the allotment of BJP founding member L K Advani's seat Gandhinagar in Gujarat to party president Amit Shah. Both Joshi and Advani are part of the BJP's largely defunct 'Margdarshak Mandal', which was carved out for them after Modi's win in 2014.

Other BJP veterans like Shanta Kumar, B S Koshyari, B C Khanduri and Kalraj Mishra haven't got tickets either.

A post-graduate in physics who was a professor at Allahabad University, Joshi has had a long association with the Sangh Parivar, having held positions in the ABVP and Bharatiya Jana Sangh from 1954 to 1977. He was elected to the Lok Sabha the first time in 1977 as a Bharatiya Lok Dal nominee from Almora.

Made the BJP president for a two-year tenure in 1991, Joshi led the party through the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and Babri Masjid demolition. At the time, BJP slogans always had his name along with party stalwarts Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Advani: "Atal-Advani-Joshi, *zindabad-zindabad*".

As BJP president, he also undertook the 'Ekta Yatra' from Kanyakumari to Srinagar, to highlight Pakistan's role in Kashmir situation. As part of this, he hoisted the Tricolour at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on Republic Day, 1992.

Joshi was re-elected to Parliament in 1996, 1998, 1999, on a BJP ticket from Allahabad. In the 2004 elections, however, he lost. When he won in 2009 from Varanasi, it was by a narrow margin of 17,211 votes against the BSP's Mukhtar Ansari.

After he was reluctantly shifted to Kanpur in 2014, Joshi defeated senior Congress leader and former Union minister Sriprakash Jaiswal by a margin of 2.22 lakh votes amidst a Modi wave.

Joshi has also been a Rajya Sabha member for two terms.

THE QUESTIONS THAT MATTER
THE BHOPAL BATTLE

Digvijaya enters the race reluctantly, but BJP's gallop halted

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, MARCH 26

BY FIELDING former chief minister Digvijaya Singh from Bhopal, the Congress has forced the BJP to go back to the drawing board to revise its strategy for a seat that it considers one of its safest in Madhya Pradesh.

The Congress's last victory from Bhopal parliamentary seat came way back in 1984. After that, its efforts to wrest the seat from the BJP have failed, including in 1991, when it fielded Mansoor Ali Khan Pataudi and his wife Sharmila Tagore campaigned for him.

Singh was not keen on contesting from Bhopal, the state capital where he spent 10 years as CM between 1993 and 2003, but reconciled to the idea after the AICC released his name officially, hours after Chief Minister Kamal Nath had made it public.

While the BJP has publicly boasted that it would be easy to defeat Singh, things have changed since the last Assembly elections when the Congress won three out of eight Assembly segments that make the parliamentary seat. Two of the three Congress legislators are Muslims, a community that has a sizeable presence in Bhopal.

Currently a member of the Rajya Sabha from the state, Singh last contested a direct election in 2003. After the Congress was routed in that election, Singh had announced he would not contest any election for 10 years, a vow he kept. Singh's term in the Upper House ends in 2020 but he had indicated that he was keen on contesting from Rajgarh, his home turf. He has won Rajgarh twice and the Raghogarh Assembly segment, which is part of the Rajgarh parliamentary seat, thrice. When he won Raghogarh for the third time in 2003, he had defeated Shivraj Singh Chouhan.

After Singh's wish became public, Nath told reporters that he had requested the senior leader to choose one of the 'tough seats' such as Bhopal, Indore or Jabalpur. The party chose Bhopal for him and he has not refused to contest.

Singh had undertaken the 3,300-km Narmada Parikrama, when he circumambulated the river between late 2017 and early 2018. Some had seen the arduous walk as his attempt to shed the anti-Hindu image thrust on him by the BJP while some read in it his intention to return to active politics in his home state.

In the 2008 and 2013 Assembly elections, the Congress had deliberately kept him away from MP because the BJP campaign had harped on the shortcomings during his 10-year rule. Not surprisingly, Chouhan reacted to Singh's candidature by saying, "Mr *Bantadhar* returns". *Bantadhar*, which loosely translates as ruiner, is a pejorative the BJP uses regularly for Singh.

"Whether Digvijaya Singh contests from Bhopal or anywhere else he will pose no challenge for the BJP," tweeted Chouhan after Singh's candidature became public. Interestingly, the BJP is mulling the option of fielding Chouhan against Singh, though Chouhan has often made it clear that he is not keen on contesting the general election. If the party does field Chouhan, this will be a battle to watch out for: two senior leaders contesting against their wishes.

Kamal Nath urged Digvijaya to pick up a 'tough' seat. *From Digvijaya's Facebook*

MADHYA PRADESH
29 seats
Voting on April 29, May 6, May 12, May 19

2014 LOK SABHA

BJP	27 seats, *54.76%
Congress	2 seats, *35.35%

*vote shares

EXPLAINED

Given Singh's views on the RSS and Hindtuva politics, the election is likely to be fought on polarising issues.

"Even if Shivraj contests, we will win Bhopal," asserted Nath on Sunday, apparently banking on rural areas, the constituency's Muslim population and the government's farm loan waiver.

Sadhvi Pragya Singh, who was once accused of involvement in several acts of terror, including the Malegaon blasts, has volunteered to contest against Singh, whom she calls "anti-religion" and "anti-national".

Before Singh's name was announced, the BJP was looking at Bhopal as a seat where it would field an outsider in search of a safe seat. The name of Union minister Narendra Tomar had done the rounds till the BJP announced his candidature from Morena.

Bhopal has a significant population of government employees who had turned against Digvijaya Singh during his second tenure, when he guaranteed reservation in promotion. Incidentally, Chouhan's comments in 2016 in favour of reservation in government jobs were said to have cost the BJP dearly in the recent elections.

NEXT
#42 The wrinkles in DMK, ADMK TN alliances

THE CHATTER

"Looking at how the BJP has treated... Advani Sb, Joshi Sb & Sinha Sb... so called family run parties treat their senior leaders with far more respect."

OMAR ABDULLAH, EX-J&K CM @OMARABDULLAH; 3.06 M followers

"Aap kare toh 'raasleela', baki kare toh 'character dheela'!

SHATRUGHAN SINHA, BJP REBEL MP @SHATRUGANSINHA, 5,14,000 followers (ATTACKING BJP, BACKING CONGRESS'S MINIMUM INCOME GUARANTEE PROPOSAL)

Dharavi still bleeding from note ban, may hurt Shiv Sena

KAVITHA IYER
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

AT A nationalised bank's Customer Service Provider counters in Dharavi, there would be long queues of migrant labourers waiting to send money home. The CSP counters, run by small businesses in the 600-acre sprawl of Asia's largest slum, are still functional, but the number of such workers has shrunk measurably since demonetisation in 2016.

One of these counters is located right across Sabir Warsi's office-store called Karat, from where he supplies sheets of tanned leather sourced from Kanpur. His business is down 80 per cent since 2016 after the twin blows of demonetisation and the imposition of GST, a period that he calls recessionary for all of Dharavi's businesses, estimated to number around 7,000, not including the thousands of sweatshops that offer services ranging from completed garments, button-making, dyeing, cutting, hand-embroidery and packaging to every other industry associated with leather goods and garments manufacturing.

In his 40s, Warsi came to Dharavi two decades ago, leaving behind joblessness in UP's Najibabad. He worked for years in Dharavi's Chamda Bazar (leather market) area to build a business supplying raw hide. "The beef ban brought business to a crawl, and then demonetisation was the final blow," he says. After demonetisation, he started afresh, this time supplying tanned leather sourced from Kanpur. But as leather goods manufacturers in Dharavi reassessed business models after GST — leather goods attract an 18 per cent levy — he is yet to see a profitable month, he says.

"I have inventory worth about Rs 7 lakh to Rs 8 lakh, and large sums due to me from previous sales. Things are looking bleaker than ever," says the father of four school-going kids.

Those in Dharavi's leather goods sector say retrenchments have hit a high in the last two months as bulk orders for corporate gifts dried up ahead of election's wait-and-watch season.

The slowdown across sectors means labour, already inexpensive in Dharavi, is further under-valued. "I had employed four men," says Farman Ansari, who recently shut down his tailoring unit. "I managed to find them work elsewhere, but where the payment per shirt was Rs 13, it's now Rs 10; if some other item was Rs 6 per unit then now it's Rs 4."

Ansari's father, a hawker who sold Dharavi-manufactured shirts outside the Chembur railway station, is now at home, having sacked two boys who helped at his stall.

A recycling unit in Dharavi. Slowdown means labour is further undervalued. *File*

Shirts and T-shirts, and especially dazzling white shirts, were until recently almost ubiquitous at hawkers' stalls outside all major railway stations in Mumbai. "That business has almost shut. Manufacturing has stopped, labourers have had to work for less, boys employed by hawkers are jobless," says Ansari.

At Mudeeb Leather, a retailer of handbags and nattily designed jackets, proprietor Musheer Ahmed Shaikh says business never turned around from the losses that began with demonetisation, and he's still witnessing 50 per cent of volumes he had before November 2016. Where he had eight units of three to eight employees, he's down to four units.

Industry in Dharavi has had an exalted status for years, the clanking and whirring of its sewing machines and recycling units the background score for many films set in this overcrowded, dank home of hundreds of success stories. "That seems to be changing fast," says Raju Korde, who set up the Dharavi Bachao Samiti nearly two decades ago to contest a government-designed makeover for the slum, involving tearing down the 60,000 shanties to make way for multi-storey towers. "Labourers from southern states appeared to have something for them back home after demonetisation, but the poorest of the poor who run Dharavi's industries have stayed back because there's nothing to do at home in UP."

Korde, a trained lawyer who also writes leave and licence agreements for scores of Dharavi's units, says unit owners haven't been able to raise rentals since the end of 2016, a first.

In 2014, riding the Modi wave, Shiv Sena candidate Rahul Shewale had won a lead from Dharavi too, one of the six Assembly segments of the Mumbai South-Central Lok Sabha seat. He had beaten two-term Congress MP Eknath Gaikwad from Mumbai South-Central by well over 1 lakh votes. Gaikwad is contesting again.

Warsi says Shewale is unlikely to repeat his performance from Dharavi. "Businesses and labourers here feel work will get back on track if the Congress comes to power," he says.

Shewale, a former municipal corporator who enjoys support in the Chembur area, could suffer on account of Dalit anger in Chembur, Dharavi and Anushakti Nagar too. In addition, the large Muslim population of Dharavi and the non-Maharashtrian Hindus who supported the Sena candidate in 2014 will reconsider their choices now, says Korde.

Shewale, who has earlier raised the grievances of Dharavi's leather industry in Lok Sabha, said the Dharavi Redevelopment Project would delineate space for small industries. "In the immediate term, we're setting up a platform called Made In Dharavi to address the problems of all industries," he said, while acknowledging that there's resentment among the people of Dharavi.

While Dharavi's poor face an unprecedented job and business crisis, the somewhat prosperous unit owners are not faring better. Gulzar Khan, a jeans trader, is owed Rs 1.2 lakh for goods he supplied. "I have only managed to get Rs 8,000 in payments," he says as Warsi adds that actually makes him a "lucky man".

Others are simply extending credit, as Dharavi's downturn drags on.

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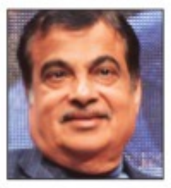


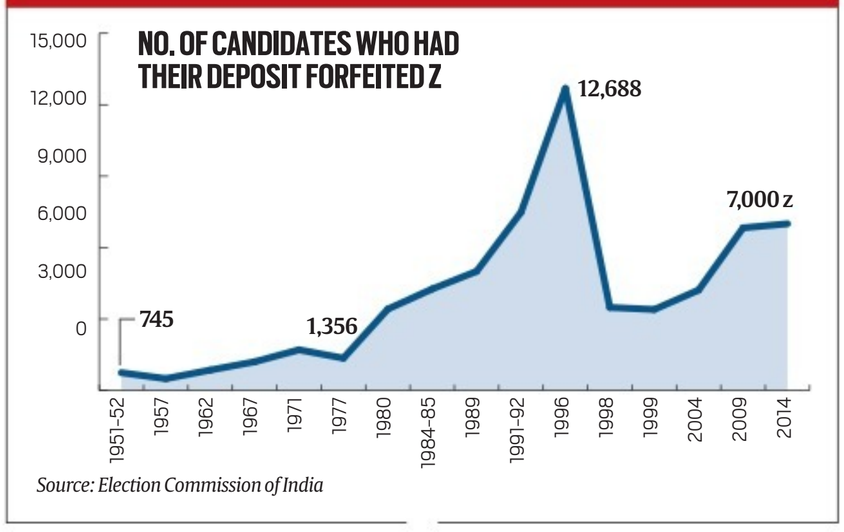
NITIN GADKARI
Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Shipping and Water Resources, River Development & Ganga Rejuvenation; BJP candidate, Nagpur

TOTAL ASSETS
Rs 25.12 crore

Immovable assets* Rs 22.83 crore
Movable assets* Rs 2.27 crore
Total annual income (2017-18) Rs 6.40 lakh
Total annual income (2013-14) Rs Rs 2.66 lakh
Land ownership* 29 acres of agricultural land in Dhapewada in Nagpur
Investments Rs 3.55 lakh
Bank balance* Rs 20.06 lakh
He has liabilities worth Rs 1.57 crore by way of bank loans

**All figures including wife and under Hindu Undivided Family*

POLL MATHS



Source: Election Commission of India

PROFILE RAJU BISTA

Rift in GJM over its Darjeeling man, BJP says 'Don't know if Gorkha... par Pahari hai'

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE BJP's announcement of political greenhorn Raju Bista as its candidate for the Darjeeling Lok Sabha constituency in West Bengal has led to fissures in the Bimal Gurung faction of the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM). On Monday, senior GJM leader Swaraj Thapa resigned from the party in protest, saying the BJP was "foisting a candidate for the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat who is a rank outsider". He has now filed his nomination as an Independent.

Bista's nomination came as a surprise to many. But BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya says it is Bista's "extensive background in social work" that prompted the party to choose him. "I don't know if he is a Gorkha, *par woh Pahari hai* (but he belongs to the hills). He was born in Manipur so there is a Northeast connection there. He is the MD of a very big company, Surya Roshni Limited, that has a strong CSR wing and runs a big NGO (Surya Foundation) in which he mans 1,500 volunteers, so he has organisational skills," the BJP leader said.

What perhaps also helps is that Bista, who lives in Delhi, is considered close to the RSS and in particular to BJP national general secretary Ram Lal.

Headed by industrialist J P Agarwal, Surya Roshni Limited began with a steel plant in Bahadurgarh in 1973, later diversifying into steel pipe manufacturing, oil, gas and agriculture. According to industry insiders, the company, that has an annual turnover of Rs 5,000 crore, did exceptionally well in the last two years following the slump in steel pipe production in China. Bista is considered J P Agarwal's adopted son.

Thapa has questioned what Bista's business abilities have to do with him getting a seat from a region that he has no connection with. In his resignation letter to GJM president Bimal Gurung, he wrote, "I am doing so in strong protest against the idea of foisting a candidate for the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat who is a rank outsider, has little political background and absolutely no knowledge or interest about the issues regarding Darjeeling, including its core issue of Gorkhaland... Indeed, it is a sad day that we have allowed ourselves to become puppets in the hands of political forces in Delhi or Kolkata."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Thapa said, "For the last two terms now, the people of Darjeeling have been supporting BJP candidates. First it was Jaswant Singh and then S S Aluwalia. But what have we received in return? The national parties, whether it's the BJP or Congress, see Darjeeling as a captive vote bank and believe they can simply manipulate the Gorkha leadership, foist any candidate of their choice, and they will get the votes... When 11 people died in a Darjeeling agitation, S S Ahluwalia did not visit Darjeeling nor did he meet the families and pay his respects."

Raju Bista (left) with GNLF spokesperson Neeraj Zimba. *Express*

Among those who have supported Bista's candidature is Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF). Spokesperson Neeraj Zimba said, "It is the symbol (of the BJP) that is important to us and not the candidate... This nomination was made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah and it is acceptable to us."

The GNLF had earlier objected to the Darjeeling ticket being given to Ahluwalia, saying the public sentiment against the Darjeeling MP was strong. The GNLF decided to support the BJP only after the CPM-Congress alliance, as part of which the GNLF would have fielded a Darjeeling candidate, crumbled in Bengal.

The breaking down of the alliance means a number of other smaller Gorkha parties will also be fielding own candidates now. The Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists is fielding former Lok Sabha MP R B Rai, while the CPM's candidate Saman Pathak is another well-known Gorka leader.

The vice-president of the rival Binoy Tamang-Anit Thapa faction of the GJM, Anit Thapa, claimed the BJP choice of candidate would work in favour of the TMC. The Tamang faction recently fielded Darjeeling MLA Amar Rai as its candidate from Darjeeling. With the election symbol of the GJM demanded by both factions, Rai will be contesting on a TMC ticket.

"Having supported the BJP for the past decade, people have no reason to vote for it... We believe the BJP has been misguided by the Gurung gang and GNLF," Anit Thapa said.

BALLOTIN

'Sambit Patra used Lord Jagannath during campaign'

Bhubaneswar: BJP spokesman and party nominee for Puri Lok Sabha seat Sambit Patra carried an idol of Lord Jagannath in a vehicle during a rally and it has not gone down well with a section of the temple servitors and the Congress. The Congress lodged a complaint with the state chief electoral officer (CEO) on Tuesday, saying Patra used Lord Jagannath for political benefit and it is violation of the model code of conduct. Senior servitor Ramachandra Dasmohapatra said it is against the culture of Odisha. The BJP leader, however, denied the charges saying someone gifted him the idol during the rally and he only paid his respect to it. **PTI**

CPI complains of 'surrogate ads' through Khadi India

New Delhi: The CPI wrote to the Election Commission on Tuesday alleging that the government is indulging in "surrogate advertising" through institutions like Khadi India. Modi replaced Mahatma Gandhi as the face of Khadi India in 2017. The CPI also alleged that the brand selling khadi jackets as 'Modi jackets' amounted to promotion of the prime minister. "This is to bring to your attention that government is indulging in surrogate advertising through various government institutions like Khadi India," CPI General Secretary S Sudhakar Reddy said in the letter. **PTI**

Digvijaya posters on tankers, case filed

Indore: A convener of an organisation has been booked for allegedly violating the model code of conduct by putting up posters of Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath and Congress leader Digvijaya Singh on water tankers used to spray colours during 'Rangpanchami' festival here, police said Tuesday. The case was registered against a convener of social organisation 'Srijan', after it came to notice that posters of the two leaders were put up on the tankers during the traditional Holi procession. **PTI**

Rahul: Income scheme is Cong surgical strike on poverty

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, MARCH 26

CONGRESS PRESIDENT Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said that the party's promised NYAY (Nyuntam Aay Yojana) scheme to guarantee minimum income is a "surgical strike" against poverty.

Addressing a rally in Ganganagar, Rahul said, "For the last five years, Narendra Modiji has been trying to make two Indias. One of the rich, of private airplanes, of people like Anil Ambani, and second of farmers, small traders and the unemployed. In Modi's Hindustan, only the rich can dream."

He said that the UPA government's MGNREGA, Right to Food and farm debt waiver brought 14 crore people out of poverty but in the last five years, the Modi government has enacted policies such as demonetisation, though which people brought out of poverty by the Congress have been pushed back again.

"For months, we had been discussing what to do about it. We had been planning and wanted to find a way to pull people out of poverty. And it is shameful for the entire country that 25 crore people are still in poverty in the 21st century. So, we had been working for six months on how to wage a war on poverty and remove poverty from India. So we decided that if Narendra Modiji gives money to the rich, then the Congress party will give money to the poor," he said.

He reiterated that once the Congress assumes power at the Centre, the "minimum income line" would be Rs 12,000 per month. "Whoever is below this line will be given the money to bring his minimum wage to Rs 12,000," he said.

"The poorest 20 per cent — *achhi tarah suniye, dhamaka hai ye, bam phatega* (listen to it carefully, it's a blast, the bomb will blast) — of Hindustan will get Rs 72,000 in their account by the Congress government annually. Meaning, Congress's surgical strike on poverty. We will eradicate poverty from Hindustan. They worked towards eradicating the poor, while we will work to eradicate poverty," Rahul said, adding that this would translate into Rs 3.60 lakh for a family over five years. No nation has taken such a step in history, he said.

At the second rally in Bundi, he likened NYAY to White Revolution and Green Revolution. He said that the Congress has in the past launched schemes like MGNREGA, which helped the Indian economy "but PM Modi only made fun of it in Parliament". Explaining the rationale, he said that MGNREGA put money in the pockets of the poor, which then led to a rise in demand, and thus gave rise to employment.

In Ganganagar, he also said that the 2019 elections are an ideological fight, with division and hatred on one side and brotherhood and love on the other.

Attacking Modi, he said, "He says he is a chowkidar, but didn't tell you whose chowkidar. Does a farmer have a chowkidar? Have you ever seen a chowkidar at a farmer's home? Or at an unemployed person's house? Now, have you seen a chowkidar at Anil Ambani's home? How many chowkidars does he have at his home?.... Narendra Modi did not tell you that he is not your chowkidar, but of people such as Anil Ambani and Nirav Modi."

In Bundi, he said that there have been wars with Pakistan before but all Prime Ministers have given credit to the Army while "Narendra Modi ji says that he did it".

Rahul addressed the last rally of the day in Jaipur, where 12 independent MLAs joined the Congress party.

Rahul said that Modi made "hollow" promises such as giving Rs 15 lakh in each bank account. "We said that the idea to credit money in bank accounts is right, but he lied about Rs 15 lakh... It took six months, we consulted all top economists without telling anyone or giving speeches... take the list of top economists in the world, we spoke with all of them, Raghuram Rajan, one by one we spoke with all and told them we liked the idea and want to fulfill it. We came to know that we will have to make a minimum income line, and after calculation we got the minimum income line number: Rs 12,000 per month."

Rahul Gandhi welcomes former BJP leader Ghanshyam Tiwari to the Congress fold, at a booth workers' meeting in Jaipur on Tuesday. *Rohit Jain Paras*

12 Independent MLAs, ex-BJP leader join Cong

Jaipur: In a major boost for Congress party in Rajasthan ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, as many as 12 Independent MLAs joined the Congress party along with seven others, such as former BJP heavyweight Ghanshyam Tiwari and Jaipur Mayor Vishnu Lata, who had also been with the BJP until recently.

They joined the party at the booth workers meeting here on Tuesday evening in the presence of party chief Rahul Gandhi.

Six-time MLA and former minister in Rajasthan government under BJP, Ghanshyam Tiwari, had been associated with the RSS for over 65 years in various capacities. He resigned from the BJP last year over differences with then chief minister Vasundhara Raje. He then floated his own party which could not win a single seat in last year's election.

Another minister in the Raje government, Surendra Goyal, also joined the Congress.

The 12 Independent MLAs who joined the Congress are Raj Kumar Gaur (Ganganagar), Khushveer Singh (Marwar Junction), Suresh Tak (Kishangarh), Babulal Nagar (Dudu), Laxman Meena (Bassi), Mahadeo Singh (Khandela), Sanyam Lodha (Sirohi), Ramkesh (Gangapur), Alok Beniwal (Shahpura), Ramila Khadiya (Kushalgarh), Kanti Prasad Meena (Thanagazi) and Baljeet Yadav (Behror). **ENS**

Not jumla, we deliver on promises: Supriya Sule on income scheme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, MARCH 26

WELCOMING THE Congress's promise of implementing a universal basic income scheme if voted to power, NCP MP Supriya Sule on Tuesday said while the BJP had only offered 'jumlas' (non-serious remarks), the Congress and the NCP had always believed in delivering on their promises.

Speaking during an Idea Exchange at the *The Indian Express* office in Pune, Sule, who is the NCP candidate for the Lok Sabha elections from Baramati, said the biggest challenges for the country right now were agrarian crisis and unemployment, and on both these issues, the government had "failed utterly".

Sule said the Congress promise of universal basic income had the consent of the NCP and other allies.

"Of course, we are on board, and we have been consulted... We don't do jumlas. So far, we have only seen jumlas from this government. But we only bite what we can chew. We have always delivered what we have promised to the people," she said.

Congress president Rahul Gandhi had on Monday said his party would provide Rs 72,000 every year to 20 per cent of the poorest families in India, as universal basic income, if voted to power. Sule on Tuesday said the scheme would be an important part of the common minimum programme of the Congress alliance, whenever it is formed.

The details of how the Congress intends to fund or implement the programme is not yet clear. The party has also not specified whether the universal basic income will be in addition to the existing subsidies under various central government schemes, or would subsume these schemes. Sule admitted she too did not have the details, but said that some "restructuring" of existing schemes was also possible.

"There are many ways of doing this. Please understand, Mr P Chidambaram has been a finance minister of this country. Let us have faith in the people who have delivered superior results for this country in the past... Eventually, we will ask them to give us a clear roadmap to everyone on how this programme will be implemented," she said.

Sule claimed that, in contrast, the Rs 6,000 amount announced by the Narendra Modi government to small farmers in this year's interim budget was yet to reach the public.

"We were told in Parliament that the government had planned for this in December. But the first instalment of this amount (Rs 2,000) is still to reach the people. The money has not come, at least not in my constituency. You can ask the people... or the banks where it would first arrive. It hasn't come," she said.

NCP MP Supriya Sule during the Idea Exchange in Pune. *Arul Horizon*

Leaders of Nishad Party, Janwadi Party (Socialist) and Rashtriya Samanta Dal with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Lucknow. *Vishal Srivastav*

BJP president Amit Shah at a rally in Moradabad on Tuesday. *PTI*

Modi only PM to give befitting reply to Pak: Shah

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MORADABAD (UP), MARCH 26

BJP PRESIDENT Amit Shah on Tuesday said Narendra Modi was the "only" prime minister who had responded strongly to terror activities in Pakistan, likening the Centre's response to the US action against terrorism.

"We attacked on Pakistan without any delay after the Pulwama attack, while the Opposition leaders were insisting for negotiation," Shah said at a 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Uttar Pradesh's Moradabad district.

The BJP chief alleged that the Opposition was insulting the soldiers who died in the Pulwama attack by asking questions on the number of casualties in the Balakot airstrike.

Shah said Modi was the only Indian Prime Minister who has responded to a terror strike as the US and Israel have done.

"When the country was celebrating after air strikes at terrorist camp, the Opposition here was grieving like Pakistan," he said in an apparent reference to the Balakot airstrike.

He asserted that the BJP-led NDA would win 74 of the state's 80 Lok Sabha seats. It had won 73 in 2014.

Pointing out that Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav and Bahujan Samaj Party supremo Mayawati were "enemies" earlier, Shah said they had come together now due to "fear" of Modi. He predicted that the SP-BSP-RLD alliance would fail because "our government is very much popular due to our positive works".

Shah hit out at Yadav, alleging that all miscreants were there in the former chief minister's government and crime was on the rise. But during the present BJP government, he claimed, all miscreants were either in jail or fled the state.

Jaya Prada gets Rampur ticket hrs after joining BJP, party drops 6 sitting MPs

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

HOURS AFTER actor-turned-lawmaker and former Samajwadi Party MP Jaya Prada joined the BJP on Tuesday, the ruling party declared her as its candidate for Rampur Lok Sabha seat, where her bitter rival, senior SP leader and Uttar Pradesh MLA Azam Khan, is the opposition alliance candidate and expected to be her biggest challenger.

The BJP denied ticket to the party's sitting MP from Rampur, Nepal Singh.

The Congress on Tuesday declared party secretary Sanjay Kapoor as its candidate from Rampur.

In its list of 29 candidates for Uttar Pradesh released on Tuesday, the BJP denied candidature to six sitting MPs.

The party switched seats of Union minister and Pilibhit MP Maneka Gandhi with her MP-son Varun's constituency — Sultanpur. Pilibhit is seen as a relatively safe seat for the family. Varun had contested, and won, from Pilibhit in 2009 Lok Sabha polls.

Jaya Prada, then with the SP, had won from Rampur in 2004 and 2009 elections. She, along with her political mentor Amar Singh, then an influential leader in the SP, had subsequently left the party. Jaya Prada contested 2014 elections unsuccessfully from Bijnor as an RLD candidate.

The BJP denied ticket to sitting Etawah MP (reserved for Scheduled Castes) Ashok Kumar Doharey and fielded Agra MP Ramashankar Katheria from the seat. In another reserved constituency, Barabanki, sitting MP Priyanka Singh Rawat has been dropped in favour of Upendra Rawat.

Kanpur MP and former BJP president Murli Manohar Joshi was also dropped. Satyadev Pachauri, a UP minister, will be the party candidate from the seat.

Jaya Prada with BJP general secretary Bhupendra Yadav in Delhi. *Tashi Tobgyal*

BJP's Allahabad MP Shyama Charan Gupta, who was recently declared the SP nominee for Banda, has been replaced by Rita Bahuguna Joshi, another minister in the Adityanath government. Joshi had unsuccessfully contested against senior BJP leader Rajnath Singh from Lucknow in the last General Election.

In SP bastion Kannauj, the BJP repeated its 2014 candidate Subrat Pathak, who had lost to SP's Dimple Yadav, who will contest again.

With Bahraich MP Savitri Bai Phoole joining the Congress earlier this month, party loyalist Akshaywarlal Gaud was declared the BJP candidate from the constituency. Gaud will take on Phoole, and SP's Shabbir Balmiki from Bahraich.

The BJP denied ticket to Kushi Nagar MP Rajesh Pandey, replacing him with Vijay Dubey, and Ballia MP Bharat Singh, naming Virendra Singh Mast, the sitting MP from Bhadohi, instead. The BJP's list names the party's UP unit chief Mahendra Nath Pandey from Chandauli — he is the sitting MP. Other sitting MPs who have been repeated are in Dhaurahra, Faizabad, Farrukhabad, Akbarpur, Jalaun, Hamirpur, Fatehpur, Kaushambi, Kaiserganj, Shrawasti, Gonda, Domariyaganj, Basti, Maharajganj, Bansgaon, Salempur and Ghazipur.

The party also declared 10 candidates for West Bengal.

MAIN ISSUES FOR BJP ARE OPPN AND CHOWKIDAR: AKHILESH

Three more parties to back SP-BSP alliance in UP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 26

SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav on Tuesday announced that the Nishad Party, Janwadi Party (Socialist) and Rashtriya Samanta Dal (RSD) would be part of the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in Uttar Pradesh for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Talking to mediapersons in Lucknow, Akhilesh said the three parties would support the SP-BSP-RLD alliance in Uttar Pradesh. He, however, did not clarify how many seats the parties would contest on, or what their role would be.

"You will get to know when we announce it formally," he said.

Targeting the BJP, Akhilesh alleged, "The main issues for BJP in the polls are opposition and 'chowkidar' and government agencies and media are campaigning for the BJP."

Asked about the Congress's announcement on Monday — a poll promise of a minimum income guarantee scheme — Akhilesh claimed that it was SP workers who "set an example by distributing food during drought in Bundelkhand region when we were in power".

"We will do some research and come up with a package for the poor that will ensure they live a decent life," he said.

Asked about the SP giving up seats in the alliance for other parties such as RLD and Nishad Party, while the BSP has not given up any seats, Akhilesh said, "Does the media have a problem with that?"

When contacted later, Nishad Party chief Sanjay Nishad claimed that his party would contest two seats in the state. "Our candidates will contest from Gorakhpur and Maharajganj. In Maharajganj, I will contest and in Gorakhpur, the sitting MP and my son Praveen Nishad will contest. In Gorakhpur, we will contest on the SP's symbol and on our symbol in Maharajganj," Sanjay said.

In the bypoll to the Gorakhpur seat in 2018, Praveen Nishad had won on the SP's symbol defeating BJP's Upendra Dutt Shukla. The seat was vacated after Gorakhpur MP Yogi Adityanath took over as Chief Minister after the BJP won the 2017 Assembly polls.

Prasad shown black flags at Patna airport, 2 beaten up

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PATNA, MARCH 26

SUPPORTERS OF Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Tuesday assaulted two people who showed black flags to the the BJP leader upon his arrival at Patna airport.

The two were reportedly supporters of BJP's Rajya Sabha Member R K Sinha.

Prasad was recently announced as the BJP's candidate for the Patna Sahib Lok Sabha constituency, replacing party rebel and sitting MP Shatrugan Sinha. R K Sinha, who heads SIS, one of the biggest private security agencies in the country, was reportedly also in contention for the seat.

The incident took place when BJP supporters reached the Patna airport to receive Prasad, who was travelling to the city for the first time after the announcement of his candidature. The minister was shown black flags upon his arrival, following which BJP supporters assaulted two people who waved the flags. The matter was quickly brought under control after police intervention.

Prasad, who did not react to the incident, exuded confidence about his victory and said that the BJP is a national party that has delivered on "all fronts of development".

Bihar BJP spokesperson Nikhil Anand said, "We condemn any such incident to create chaos... by some hooligans. These people had no past or present relation with BJP and it seems that some vested political interest group belonging to the rival camp may have tried to disrupt the gathering... We are now cautious..."

A close aide of R K Sinha said, "They were not from BJP. Since Sinha is associated with several organisations, they could be sympathisers of Sinha."

Sinha, Prasad and Shatrughan Sinha are from the Kayastha community. An office-bearer of the Akhil Bharatiya Kayastha Mahasabha had recently said the community would not vote for Prasad.

RJD SET TO KEEP DARBHANGA, MADHUBANI; SHATRUGHAN LIKELY CONG CANDIDATE

RJD agrees to give Cong Patna Sahib

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, MARCH 26

WHILE THE Congress, which had been demanding either Darbhanga or Madhubani seat for its kitty of nine out of Bihar's 40 Lok Sabha seats as part of the opposition alliance, may not get either, it is set to get Patna Sahib constituency, where it is likely to field rebel BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha.

Sinha, a two-term MP from Patna Sahib, is set to join the Congress on March 28, days after the BJP dropped him and fielded Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad from the seat.

On Tuesday, state Congress's campaign committee chief Akhilesh Prasad Singh said, "Shatrughan Sinha will join the Congress in New Delhi on March 28 at 11.30 am.... He will be our candidate from Patna Sahib."

Sinha, who has been critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP president Amit Shah, on Tuesday praised Rahul Gandhi. In a tweet, he called Rahul the "master of situation", and his proposed minimum income guarantee scheme a "masterstroke".

The Congress and its senior alliance partner in Bihar, Lalu Prasad's RJD, are meanwhile close to finalising six remaining seats for the Congress. RJD sources said these could be Sasaram, Samastipur, Supaul, Patna Sahib, Munger and Valmiki Nagar or West Champaran.

A Congress leader said, "We have given the choice for one seat from among Darbhanga, Madhubani or Valmiki Nagar. The RJD wants to keep both Madhubani and Darbhanga."

The RJD is said to be keen on fielding its Muslim leaders, Abdul Bari Siddiqui and M A A Fatmi, from these two seats. **FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com**

Keen contest on the cards

EXPLAINED

WITH SHATRUGHAN Sinha set to join the Congress, and likely to be fielded from Patna Sahib, the constituency will see an absorbing contest between the sitting MP and senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad. Even though Patna Sahib has traditionally voted for the BJP, two-time MP Sinha is likely to offer a tough fight.

The constituency's rural areas of Fatuha and Bakhtiyarpur have sizeable RJD and Congress support, and Sinha, who otherwise is not rated highly for his performance as MP, still has clout and threatens to divide his fellow upper caste Kayastha votes.

DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

STAR POWER

ACTOR-TURNED-POLITICIAN Shatrughan Sinha is all set to join the Congress this week, days after he was denied a ticket from Patna Sahib seat by the BJP. But he is not the lone Bollywood star the Congress is planning to bring in. The party is in talks with Urmila Matondkar and is learnt to have offered a seat to her in Mumbai. Sources said she could join the party and contest from Mumbai North.

THE REPLACEMENT

UTTAR PRADESH Cabinet minister Satyadev Pachauri, who was on Tuesday declared the BJP's candidate for Kanpur Lok Sabha constituency in place of Murli Manohar Joshi, was the chief guest at an event organised two months ago to release a booklet of infrastructure development works done in the constituency at the initiative of Joshi over the past five years. Sources said Joshi himself had planned that event and he was supposed to be present there but he had to cancel his programme following an engagement in Delhi. Joshi had assigned Pachauri to attend the event and release the booklet. In 2004, Pachauri, who is the MLA from Govindnagar in Kanpur, had lost the Lok Sabha election against Congress's Sriprakash Jaiswal.

SEAT PRESSURE

THE BJP has not yet declared a candidate for Phulpur, where the party faced defeat in a recent by-election. The delay, party sources said, is because of pressure to allot the seat to the son of Keshav Prasad Maurya, Deputy Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, who won the seat in the 2014 Lok Sabha polls. The Maurya camp has been upbeat after the BJP gave ticket to another Uttar Pradesh minister Swami Prasad Maurya's daughter Sangh Mitra Maurya from Badaun. Not just that both leaders belong to one community, Keshav Prasad's claim could be stronger as Swami Prasad joined the BJP just ahead of the 2017 state polls.

UP CM TAKES A JIBE AT CONGRESS

A family starts visiting temples when polls are near: Adityanath

DECISION 2019

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, MARCH 26

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, while addressing rallies in Gorakhpur and Varanasi on Tuesday, targeted Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra over her temple visit. Without naming her, he said there is a family that sees temples as "communal" for five years but as elections come near "*unhe Ram naam ki yaad aane lagti hai*". (They remember the name of Lord Ram)

Terming the Congress's poll promise of Rs 72,000 annually to the poor as a "mere gimmick", Adityanath alleged that Congress president Rahul Gandhi did not think of welfare of the poor from 2004 to 2014 when his mother was acting as "super PM".

Adityanth claimed that the Congress, SP and BSP were the biggest hurdles in the construction of Ram Temple.

"As election nears, one family starts visiting temples just to create an illusion," said Adityanath adding, "*panch varshon tak mandir unhe sampradayik nazar aane lagenge lekin chunao ate hi unhe Ram naam ki yaad aane lagti hai, unhe Bhagwan Vishwanath yaad ane lagte hai* (For five years, they see temples as communal and as soon as elections approach, they start remembering Lord Ram, they remember Lord Vishwanath)." He was referring to the recent visit of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra to Kashi Vishwanath Temple and her proposed visit to Ayodhya on March 29.

The CM said, "Savdhan hone ki avashyakta hai..Yaad kariye Ram mandir ke mudde pe badha kaun hai... sabse badi badha, yeh jo SP-BSP-Congress ka bemel gadhbandhan hai...Yeh maha milawat sabse bada baadhak hai (The need is to be alert. Remember, who is the biggest hurdle in the issue of Ram Temple, it is the disunited 'alliance' of SP-BSP and Congress)."

Later in the day, addressing a public meeting in Varanasi, Adityanath said, "I want to ask Rahul ji that a Congress-led government was in power from 2004 to 2014," adding, "*Iss sarkar mein* "Super PM" *ke taur par aapki mataji karya karti thi...*" and asked why the UPA government did not come up with the schemes for welfare of the poor.

He claimed that while Prime Minister Narendra Modi was "*samvedansheel* (sensitive) towards issues faced by farmers, the Congress was "*samvedanheen*" (insensitive).

IN AHMEDABAD: Yogi Adityanath at an election rally in Ghatlodia area on Tuesday mentioned surgical strikes and promised voters that the BJP government under PM Narendra Modi's leadership will have zero tolerance towards terrorism, Naxalism and secessionism. *Javed Raja*

Katiyar hits out at Congress for asking proof of airstrikes

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, MARCH 26

SENIOR BJP leader andformer party state president Vinay Katiyar on Tuesday hit out against the Congress for asking proof of the airstrike carried out by the Indian Air Force on Pakistan's terror camp and asked if it was possible to give proof of AICC president Rahul Gandhi being the son of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi.

Addressing a public gathering in Basti, where he was the chief guest at the BJP's 'Chunavi Vijay Sankalp Shankhnaad Sabha', Katiyar said, "*Pulwama ki ghatna ho gayi, 45 sainik shaheed ho gaye. Aaj Congress saboot maang rahi hai. Mai puchhna chahta hu, kis cheej ka saboot aap maang rahe ho? Rahul Gandhi jab paida hue to Sonia Gandhi ne hi to unko bataya hoga ke Rajiv Gandhi tumhare pita hain. Lekin agar uska saboot maanga jaaye to bata paoge kya* (The Pulwama incident happened and 45 jawans were martyred. What proof are you asking for? When Rahul Gandhi was born, Sonia Gandhi would have told him 'Rajiv Gandhi is your father'. But if you ask proof for the same, what would you say)."

WEST BENGAL

Retd officer who attended RSS NGO event in uniform to be central observer

SANTANU CHOWDHURY & RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, MARCH 26

THE ELECTION Commission of India has appointed retired BSF Director General K K Sharma as special central police observer for West Bengal and Jharkhand for Lok Sabha polls.

The decision is bound to set off a political slugfest between the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) in West Bengal and the BJP, as Sharma had courted controversy last year after attending in uniform an event organised in Kolkata by an outfit said to be backed by the RSS.

Late on Tuesday, the Press Information Bureau stated in a release, "Election Commission of India has appointed K K Sharma (IPS 1982 Retd DG Border Security Force) as Special Central Police Observer for the States of West Bengal and Jharkhand. These observers would oversee the deployment and other security related issues in the said states."

Following violence during last year's panchayat polls, the BJP had called for deployment of a special police observer for West Bengal to monitor movement of central paramilitary force during the General Election. The TMC criticised the BJP for sending what it alleged was a false report on law and order situation in the state to Election Commission of India (ECI). The TMC alleged that the BJP move was meant to stretch the Lok Sabha polls in the state.

Following Sharma's appointment, TMC spokesperson Derek O'Brien told The Indian Express on Tuesday that the party will bring the issue to public domain. On Sharma attending the RSS-backed NGO's event, O'Brien said, "I remember the incident; I had tweeted about it. We will bring this to the notice of the Home Ministry once again."

BJP leaders did not comment on the issue.

In February last year, Sharma had attended a conference on border issues organised in Kolkata by Seemanta Chetana Mancha, an organisation backed by the RSS. He was present on the last day of the two-day conference that saw 300 delegates from Assam, Tripura and West Bengal.

The incident had sparked off protests by the TMC, which had threatened to take up the issue with the Union Home Minister. "What is the serving BSF DG, KK Sharma, doing in uniform at the 'RSS-backed NGO's function in Kolkata'? Will take the issue to the Home Minister," TMC's Rajya Sabha MP O'Brien had tweeted.

EC seeks response from producers of Modi biopic on Cong complaint

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE ELECTION Commission (EC) has sought an explanation from the producers of the film *PM Narendra Modi* regarding the complaint filed by the Congress this week asking the poll watchdog to delay the release of the biopic.

The four film producers have been asked to respond to the Congress allegations in two days and a copy of the letter has also been marked to the BJP secretary for information, *The Indian Express* has learnt. "The complainants want a speaking order on the matter. So it was imperative that we seek comments from everyone in writing," said a source. The Commission is also examining a recent order of the Supreme Court on the release of a satirical film in West Bengal to see whether the verdict has any bearing on the Prime Minister's biopic.

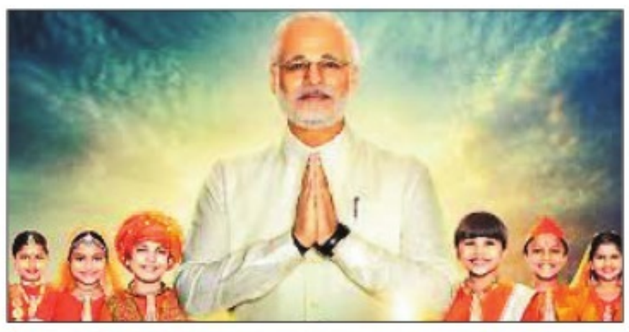
The apex court, this week, took exception to the West Bengal police objecting to the public screening of *Bhobishyoter Bhoot* even though it had been cleared by the Censor Board. The court said that the above action of the state "directly impinge upon the fundamental right to the freedom of speech and expression guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India".

The state government was specifically directed to ensure that "no obstruction or restraint ... is imposed on the viewing of the film..."

The Congress and Left parties had approached the poll panel on Monday demanding that the release of the biopic be deferred, arguing that it was in violation of provisions of the Representation of the People Act and Cable Television Networks Act.

The Congress wanted the release of the movie to be deferred till the final phase voting in the Lok Sabha polls. It argued that the movie, to be released on April 5, is aimed at influencing voters. Congress leader Kapil Sibal alleged the purpose of the movie was political and that it was produced by people who are part of the BJP.

The Congress delegation comprising senior leaders Kapil Sibal, Abhishek Singhvi, Randeep Surjewala, R P N Singh and AICC secretary Pranav Jha met the EC. Separately, Left leaders D Raja and Nilotpal Basu also met the EC.



Promotional poster of the film *PM Narendra Modi*

111 TN FARMERS TO CONTEST AGAINST MODI

BJP leaders promise to add their demands in manifesto

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, MARCH 26

AFTER 111 Tamil Nadu farmers announced that they will contest against Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Varanasi, senior BJP leaders requested them to cancel their plan, promising that their demands will be added in BJP's poll manifesto.

Talking to *The Indian Express*, farmers' leader P Ayyakannu said Union minister Pon Radhakrishnan from Kanyakumari constituency were among the senior leaders who approached them.

The farmers' plan is to submit nominations and campaign against Modi in the attire of Aghoris sadhus.

"Still, our plan is the same. We will go there as Aghoris, hundreds of local aghoris will join us. We will campaign for the justice of farmers naked," Ayyakannu said, adding that they are still waiting for a final word from BJP leadership.

Ayyakannu said if their demands including waiver of all farmer loans, profitable price for their agricultural products and a Rs 5,000 pension for farmers per month are accepted and added in the BJP manifesto, they will rethink about their protest in Varanasi. "Radhakrishnan and many other BJP leaders are holding talks with us. We are not against Modi or any politician, we have nothing personal against anyone. Our demands are for farmers, our problem is with the government policies. We are now told that BJP president Amit Shah will meet us in Delhi and add all our demands in their election manifesto. If that happens, we will agree to withdraw the plan of 111 candidatures in Varanasi," he said.

MAYA, AKHILESH HAD SCOFFED AT NO-CONTEST FROM 7 SEATS IDEA

Cong leaves Ajit, Jayant seats to alliance, awaits call to canvass

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

DAYS AFTER BSP chief Mayawati and her Samajwadi Party counterpart Akhilesh Yadav had dismissed the Congress's announcement that it will not field candidates for seven Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, where top leaders of the BSP-SP-RLD coalition will contest, the grand old party has taken the first step by not putting up any nominee against the two top Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) leaders.

RLD president Ajit Singh is contesting from Muzaffarnagar, and his son and party deputy Jayant Chaudhary from Baghpat.

Both seats go to the polls in the first phase of elections, nominations for which were closed on Monday. The Congress did not field candidates on either seat, making way for a bipolar contest between the RLD and the BJP.

The party has fielded Mahesh Pathak from the third seat in the state the RLD is contesting: Mathura.

The BJP has renominated sitting MPs from both seats: Satyapal Singh in Baghpat, and Sanjeev Balyan in Muzaffarnagar.

Ajit Singh had lost to Satyapal from Baghpat in 2014. Jayant had lost to BJP's Hema Malini from Mathura.

While the Congress did not field candidates against Ajit and Jayant, the party has left it to the local units whether to campaign for the father-son duo. Stating that not fielding candidates and not canvassing should not be mixed up, UP Congress spokesperson Surendra Rajpoot said, "The SP-BSP-RLD alliance did not field candidates against the Congress in Amethi and Rae Bareli (where party president Rahul Gandhi and ex-chief Sonia Gandhi are set to contest) but they are not campaigning for the Congress there. They respect our top leaders, and the Congress is reciprocating that respect (by not fielding candidates from these seats). Now it is up to the local Congress units to decide their move (on canvassing for the alliance candidates)."

Congress's Baghpat district president Chaudhary Ram Kumar told *The Indian Express*, "We will campaign for Jayant to defeat the BJP. Loal RLD leaders today called me to seek (Congress's) support and join the campaign. They had also invited me for Jayant's nomination filing, but I skipped the event since I did not receive any written instruction from the Congress headquarters. We are waiting for instructions from our top leaders."

The party's Muzaffarnagar district president, Naimullah, said, "If the RLD invites us, we will campaign for its candidate. If we are not invited, we will (instead) campaign for other Congress candidates". UP Congress president Raj Babbar had said that the Congress would not field candidates in seven Lok Sabha seats in UP, including constituencies where Mayawati, Akhilesh, Mulayam , RLD's Ajit Singh and Jayant will contest from. Both Mayawati and Akhilesh had scoffed at the Congress's announcement, stating that the SP-BSP-RLD alliance is capable of taking on the BJP.

SC declines Dhinakaran's claim for 'pressure cooker' as election symbol

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE SUPREME Court Tuesday declined to accept former AIADMK leader T T V Dhinakaran's request for 'pressure cooker' symbol to contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu and Puducherry, but directed the Election Commission to allot the group led by him a common symbol "to ensure a level playing field" among the contesting parties.

"The claim of the appellant to the symbol of 'pressure cooker' in an exclusive manner cannot be acknowledged in view of the provisions of Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India thereunder, which the appellant or his group has concededly not followed. We are, therefore, not inclined to grant any recognition to the appellant or his group to the symbol of 'pressure cooker'," a bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjeev Khanna ordered.

Section 29A deals with the registration of political parties. The court noted that Dhinakaran's Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (ANMK) had not registered itself as a political party.

Dhinakaran had floated the ANMK after the Delhi High Court recently upheld an Election Commission decision recognising the AIADMK faction led by Tamil Nadu Chief Minister E K Palaniswami and former CM O Panneerselvam as the "real" AIADMK party and had allotted it the "two leaves" election symbol, originally held by the AIADMK under the late J Jayalalithaa.

The ANMK is contesting all 39 Lok Sabha seats in Tamil Nadu and the lone seat in Puducherry, and will also contest from 19 Assembly seats from the state and union territory.

The SC directed the EC that "to ensure a level playing field to the contesting parties....", these contesting candidates "be allotted any one particular free symbol".

BANGALORE SOUTH: ANANTH KUMAR'S WIDOW DENIED TICKET

BJP fields youth who called polls patriotism test

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, MARCH 26

A SOCIAL media warrior of Karnataka BJP who was booked in Dakshina Kannada district in 2017 for making a speech with intent to incite people" following the murder of an RSS worker has been picked by the party to contest from Bangalore South Lok Sabha constituency over the wife of late Union minister H N Ananth Kumar, a six-time MP from the constituency.

Tejasvi Surya, 28, an advocate by profession and leader of the BJP's youth wing, filed his nomination on Tuesday.

His name was announced even as Tejaswini Ananth Kumar had been preparing for over a fortnight to contest the polls as the BJP candidate.

On Tuesday, as Surya arrived to seek her blessings, Tejaswini put up a stoic front and said, even as her supporters protested the decision, "The party is opposed to dynastic politics. Ananth Kumar was also opposed to dynastic politics. I support the party's decision and will work in the interest of the nation."

A nephew of Ravi Subramanya, BJP MLA from Basavangudi in Bangalore South Lok Sabha constituency, Surya was seen in a recent social media video in which he purportedly said that the Lok Sabha election is a test of the common Indian's patriotism". "If you are with (PM Narendra) Modi, you are with India; if you are not with Modi, you are anti-India. That's it," he was heard saying.

His name emerged as a possible candidate only last week. The decision to pick Surya over Tejaswini Ananth Kumar is reported to that of the party's top leadership in Delhi - the state BJP, headed by B S Yeddyurappa, had not proposed his candidature.

BJP candidate from Bangalore South Tejasvi Surya after filing his nomination at Jayanagar in Bengaluru on Tuesday. *PTI*

Asked on Tuesday how he was chosen out of the blue, Surya said, "This is not a question I can answer. This question should be addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party president Amit Shah."

Sources in BJP said the party and the RSS were keen to introduce Surya into electoral politics to prevent a culture of family politics from seeping into the BJP.

The 28-year-old has a reputation in political circles for making "rabid" speeches, and although active on social media and in party events, he hit the spotlight in July 2017, shortly after the murder of an RSS worker in Dakshina Kannada region, when he called the then Congress government in Karnataka ₹₹eunuchs" in a video that was widely shared on social media.

The case against Surya was quashed by Karnataka High Court in April last year on the grounds that the police failed to inform a local magistrate before taking it up.

Surya also played a key role in a 2017 BJP campaign, accusing the Congress government of facilitating the murder of 24 BJP and RSS workers during its tenure - some of the instances were reportedly false.

Surya will have to rely heavily on BJP and RSS local network in a constituency that has been with the BJP since 1996, when Ananth Kumar won it for the first time as a 27-year-old. Over the years, Ananth Kumar built a network among leaders of all parties to ensure that he remained undefeated despite the Congress putting up candidates such as Krishna Byregowda (2009) and Nandan Nilekani (2014).

For the April 18 polls, Surya will battle the Congress's Rajya Sabha MP B K Hariprasad, 64, who had contested, and lost, the Bangalore South seat in 1999 to Ananth Kumar.

The BJP currently has six MLAs in the eight Assembly segments of Bangalore South, while the Congress has two in the form of the father-daughter duo of Ramalinga Reddy and Soumya Reddy.

Cure defects or petitions will be dismissed: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

IN AN apparent bid to tackle backlog of cases, the Supreme Court on Tuesday gave a last chance to parties in over 700 matters pending before it to cure defects in their petitions in two weeks, failing which, the court warned, they will be dismissed.

The matters were listed before a bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna on Tuesday.

The CJI said that these cases are pending since 2010, 2011 and 2012 due to defects, and those who filed them had not cared to cure the defects till date. Allowing two weeks, CJI Gogoi remarked that this was "only the first instalment" and that the SC's registry will issue with similar lists again.

Since his elevation as CJI in October 3018, Justice Gogoi has embarked on measures to smoothen listing of cases so that fresh cases can come up without delay and pending cases cleared.

Will lift ban on Jamaat if voted to power: Mehbooba

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, MARCH 26

PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC Party (PDP) president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday said that if her party is voted to power, they will lift the ban imposed on the Jamaat-e-Islami (J&K).

"Recently it was ordered to shut down the Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI) schools, orphanages and offices. They didn't dare to come out themselves at that time (to protest). They were in a difficulty and no one talked about it. Only PDP came forward. We didn't allow their schools, their orphanages to close down. When time will come and we will have power, we will end this ban," Mufti said at a public rally in Baramulla on Tuesday.

The former chief minister also said that turning the state into a prison will not solve the Kashmir problem. "The Kashmir issue is an ideology; it can only be resolved through an ideology, and not by prison," said Mufti.

On February 28, the MHA declared Jamaat-e-Islami Jammu and Kashmir as an "unlawful" association, banning it under Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA).

Mufti told reporters that the NIA came to Kashmir during the Congress and National Conference government in 2009. She said her party didn't field candidates from Udhampur and Jammu parliamentary constituency so that there is no division of secular votes.

Mehbooba Mufti in Baramulla. *Shuaib Masoodi*

While welcoming reports about Pakistan looking to open a pilgrim corridor to Sharda Peeth (in PoK), Mehbooba said it is a welcome step and is good for J&K and Kashmiri Pandits.

At the rally, Senior PDP leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig also offered legal assistance to JeI and Jammu & Kashmir Liberation Front(JKLF) to challenge the ban. On January 31, Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference (NC) vice-president Omar Abdullah had said that if elected to power with a majority, his government would revoke the J&K Public Safety Act.

Something may happen before India polls, says Imran

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

IN A significant admission, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has acknowledged that his country can no longer allow terror groups to organise with impunity on its soil. Khan also said that he fears further military hostilities with India in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections.

In an interview to Financial Times, Khan said, "We cannot take the stance any more where you have these armed groups in our country... We can't afford being blamed for any terrorist activity, like Pulwama, like what happened."

Khan insisted that there was no place for terrorists in his "new Pakistan", claiming that he was conducting the most serious crackdown on terrorist groups in the country's history. "We're already cracking down on them, we're already dismantling the whole set-up," he said. "What is happening right now has never happened before in Pakistan," he told FT.

'Can't have armed groups in Pakistan'

Khan also claimed that he is "still apprehensive" that "something could happen" before the general elections in India. Describing India as gripped with "war hysteria", Khan told FT in the interview: "I'm still apprehensive before the elections, I feel that something could happen."

While Pakistan has claimed to have taken action against terrorist groups, including taking control of Jaish-e-Mohammad's facilities, India has described the action as "cosmetic". New Delhi has asked for "verifiable, credible, visible and sustained" action against terrorists, terrorist groups, their proxies and the terrorist infrastructure.

On February 26, 12 days after the terror attack in Pulwama claimed by Jaish, India conducted air strikes on the outfit's camp in Pakistan's Balakot. "When Pulwama (the suicide attack in Kashmir) happened I felt that Mr (Narendra) Modi's government used that to build this war hysteria," said Khan.

"The Indian public should realise that this is all for winning the elections, it's nothing to do with the real issues of the subcontinent," he claimed, while blaming the Pulwama attack on what he called Modi's "anti-Muslim" government and its policies in Kashmir.

Khan also rejected claims that Pakistan had links to Jaish. "There's Jaish-e-Mohammad in India, the boy who blew himself up, the 19-year-old boy, was a Kashmiri-Indian boy... His parents said how he was radicalised by some abuse by the security force, so it was an Indian boy, Indian operation, Indian car, Indian explosive. Why was Pakistan blamed?" Khan said.

India has given a dossier to Pakistan on Jaish's involvement in the Pulwama attack, but there has been no official response so far. It has also shared key excerpts of the dossier with all UN members, including the Security Council. The US and France — among other countries — have asked Pakistan to take action against the perpetrators of the attack.

China destroys nearly 30,000 maps for showing Arunachal as part of India

SOWMIYA ASHOK
BEIJING, MARCH 26

CHINA HAS destroyed nearly 30,000 world maps printed in the country for not showing Arunachal Pradesh and Taiwan as part of Chinese territory, according to a report in the state-run *Global Times* on Tuesday.

According to the report, the maps, printed by a company in Anhui province in eastern China for export, "failed to show the correct territory of China" and "omitted South Tibet and the island of Taiwan".

In other words, the maps showed Arunachal Pradesh as part of India. Beijing claims Arunachal Pradesh as part of South Tibet, and the northeastern state is depicted as part of South Tibet Autonomous Region in China's official maps.

A notice issued by China's General Administration of Customs on March 22 said that the Qingdao Customs officials found 28,908 maps to be "seriously problematic" when they were examined.

According to reports, 803 boxes containing the "problematic maps" were seized and destroyed. A news website, Dazhongwang Qingdao, reported that the move was ordered by the city's Natural Resources and Planning Bureau after the maps were found by Customs officials. The maps were taken to an undisclosed location and shredded.

"The crackdown was aimed at enhancing public awareness on national sovereignty and raising people's ability to distinguish such problematic maps," the *Global Times* said, quoting a report from a Qingdao newspaper. "Until now, related authorities have examined the domestic map market more than 100 times, and discovered over 10,000 incorrect maps, thus preventing them from being circulated inside the country and overseas," it said.

"What China did in the map market was absolutely legitimate and necessary, because sovereignty and territorial integrity are the most important things to a country. Both Taiwan and South Tibet are part of China's territory, which is sacred and inviolable based on the international law," Liu Wenzong, professor, Department of International Law of China Foreign Affairs University, was quoted as saying. "If the wrong maps were circulated inside the country and abroad, it would have caused great harm to China's territorial integrity in the long run," he said.

Sushma questions Pakistan's response to Balakot airstrike: 'On behalf of Jaish?'

AMIL BHATNAGAR
GHAZIABAD, MARCH 26

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister Sushma Swaraj on Tuesday questioned Pakistan's response to the Balakot airstrike, asking whether its air force had attempted a retaliatory strike in Jammu and Kashmir "on behalf of Jaish", referring to terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad.

"Our Army did not harm their civilians, they did not attack their armymen, then why did Pakistan attack the following day? On behalf of terrorists? On behalf of Jaish?" she said.

Swaraj was speaking in Ghaziabad during the BJP's 'Sankalp Sabha'. She was campaigning for Minister of State for External Affairs Gen (retd) V K Singh, who is the sitting MP from Ghaziabad and the BJP's candidate for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Sushma Swaraj in Ghaziabad on Tuesday. *Gajendra Yadav*

"Looking at the international support, Pakistan was afraid that we will wage war. They went and made calls at various places...We said we are a responsible nation and a peace-loving nation. We will not heat up the situation. But if Pakistan does it again we will not be quiet because we cannot take Pulwama as our destiny..." she said.

Slamming the previous UPA government over terror attacks, Swaraj said, "In 2008, the biggest terror attack happened (in Mumbai). It was such a time when they could have taken support of the international community and could have isolated Pakistan. But I am sad to say that they lost the opportunity..."

She also credited Prime Minister Narendra Modi for India's success in the diplomatic community. Citing the recent meeting of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), Swaraj said, "50 years ago, India was humiliated when OIC conducted its meeting without India since Pakistan refused to participate if India did...We took revenge in 2019. Pakistan wrote to UAE, where it was being held, saying India shouldn't be allowed to participate. OIC told them (Pakistan) if they didn't come, it would be their choice. Pakistan's seat was empty and we were there..."

4 Maoists killed in encounter with security forces at Sukma

DIPANKAR GHOSE
RAIPUR, MARCH 26

FOUR ALLEGED Maoists were killed in an encounter with a joint team of the CRPF's Commando battalion for Resolute Action(CoBRA) and the Chhattisgarh Police in Sukma district Tuesday.

Police officers said that all four bodies recovered were in "black uniform", which indicated that these were fighters of the Maoist military battalion.

Forces received information about the presence of armed Maoists in Karkanguda area, said P Sundar Raj, DIG (Anti-Naxal Operations). Based on the information, a joint operation was planned and the team left for the spot on March 25.

Two of the Maoists have been identified as Doodhi Hidma, and Ayte, both members of the PLGA-1, Maoist military battalion, and carrying a reward of Rs 8 lakh against them.

Good achieved during NC tenure suffered setback under PDP-BJP: Omar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, MARCH 26

NATIONAL CONFERENCE vice-president Omar Abdullah on Tuesday said that the good that was achieved in Jammu and Kashmir during his tenure as chief minister had suffered a setback during the reign of the PDP-BJP coalition government, which had led the state "into an abyss".

Campaigning for his party's Lok Sabha candidate Muhammad Akbar Lone in Baramulla, Abdullah said during his tenure as CM, there had been a marked difference in the security scenario of the state. "However the good that was accomplished in the state suffered a setback during the reign of former BJP-PDP government."

Commenting on the security situation in the state, Abdullah said, "Today we see forces thickly guarding every unit area of our highways. Private transport is not allowed to ply near the Army vehicular fleet; other vehicles aren't allowed to drive within 50 meters of the convoy. This is what BJP-PDP has done to our sense of security, our highways. Today it takes two hours to reach Baramulla from Srinagar, such is the situation."

He also criticised PDP president and former CM Mehbooba Mufti for her assertion that she will protect the special status of the state. "How can PDP and its president save the special status of state? Look at her five years of stint in power. The GST Bill we have been resisting was implanted by her only. How can PDP protect our special status? It was PDP that destroyed the financial autonomy of our state."

Speaking of the attacks on Kashmiris outside the state in the aftermath of the Pulwama attack in February, Abdullah said, "Our kids were being attacked upon and intimidated in Uttarakhand, Punjab and other places. We unfortunately didn't see any action or word of condemnation coming from the Prime Minister for 10 days." He added that if people wish for these circumstances to change, then they have to make sure that the BJP and PDP are given a "befitting reply" in the Lok Sabha polls.

Abdullah also visited the family of 11-year-old Atif Mir at Hajin in Bandipora, who was killed after militants took him hostage.

"There can be nothing worse for a father than to lend shoulder to his young child's coffin & nothing worse for a mother than to grieve at her young child's grave. Kashmir has seen too much of this suffering heaped on parents," he tweeted after the visit.

Gujarat govt opposes Hardik Patel plea seeking stay on his conviction

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 26

THE GUJARAT government Tuesday opposed Congress leader Hardik Patel's petition seeking suspension of his conviction, arguing that the evidence presented in the sessions court was sufficient to sustain his conviction.

The state government filed an affidavit to press its argument. Hardik has sought a stay on his conviction to enable him to contest the Lok Sabha elections.

Public prosecutor Mitesh Amin said, "The contention of the affidavit today is that the evidence which has been recorded in the sessions court, including proof of the petitioner being present in the mob and his identification by witnesses, is sufficient for sustaining conviction."

Hardik can't contest the 2019 polls without stay

The affidavit was signed by Mukeshkumar Vyas, Deputy Police Superintendent of Visnagar division, Mehsana.

Hardik was convicted in July 2018 by the Visnagar sessions court. He was sentenced to two years in prison for rioting and arson during the 2015 Patidar agitation.

Without a stay on his conviction, Hardik cannot contest the 2019 elections.

Youth summit called off as J&K students protest Army presence

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, MARCH 26

A YOUTH summit at the Bandipore Degree College was called off on Tuesday as students, angered by the Army's presence on campus, took to the streets.

The Army was scheduled to conduct the summit along with the civil administration. However, their presence on campus angered the students, who took to the streets raising pro-Pakistan and anti-Army slogans.

A student of the college told *The Indian Express*, "On Tuesday morning when the students assembled on the campus, they saw Army vehicles entering the college premises. When the students came to know that the programme was sponsored by the Army, they started protesting."

As the protests continued for nearly an hour, the Army left the campus, sensing that the situation could turn violent, forcing the administration to cancel the event.

VVIP chopper case: 'Middleman' held, sent to 4-day ED custody

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has arrested another alleged middleman in connection with the Rs 3,600 crore AgustaWestland chopper deal case. Alleged defence dealer Sushen Mohan Gupta was arrested by the agency on Tuesday and produced before a special court, which remanded him in ED custody for four days.

According to the ED, Gupta's name cropped up in the disclosures made by accused Rajeev Saxena, who has turned an approver in the case. Saxena told ED that Gupta was a close associate of Gautam Khaitan and allegedly helped him launder kickbacks by floating shell companies.

"Gupta has been acting as a defence sector middleman for several years. We suspect his role in other defence deals as well. He would be questioned about them along with his role in the AgustaWestland deal," a senior ED official said.

Sushen Mohan Gupta in New Delhi Tuesday. *PTI*

Gupta has been booked under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) and was produced before Special judge Arvind Kumar before being remanded to ED custody.

The agency had sought 14 days of custodial interrogation. "It is suspected that Gupta has in his possession some payment details in the purchase of AgustaWestland VVIP choppers and the link is to be unearthed," the ED submitted in court.

The agency said the investigation conducted so far has revealed that Gupta, during the period when kickbacks from AgustaWestland were received in the accounts of Interstellar Technologies through IDS Tunisia, had direct dealings with M/S Interstellar Technologies. The agency alleged that kickbacks were transferred to several entities/persons having direct links with him.

"Gupta's custodial interrogation is required to unearth how kickbacks were routed and laundered, the companies involved in facilitating the money laundering, the places where the said tainted money was placed, layered and integrated into the system," the counsel for ED contended.

The agency alleged that Rajiv Saxena stated that Interstellar Technologies, a company which received the kickbacks, was controlled by Khaitan and Gupta.

However, Gupta's counsel opposed the remand application and said that his client has joined the investigation as and when sought by the agency, so custodial interrogation is not required.

Form No. INC-26
[Pursuant to rule 30 the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014]
Advertisement to be published in the newspaper for change of registered office of the company from one state to another
Before the Central Government Regional Director Northern Region

In the matter of sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Companies Act, 2013 and clause (a) of sub-rule (5) of rule 30 of the Companies (Incorporation) Rules, 2014

AND

In the matter of MIKI TRAVEL INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED (the Company) having its registered office at B-376, 3rd Floor, Nirman Vihar, New Delhi, 110092 India,

[Petitioner/ Applicant Company]

Notice is hereby given to the General Public that the Company proposes to make an application to the Central Government under section 13 of the Companies Act, 2013 seeking confirmation of alteration of the Memorandum of Association of the Company in terms of the special resolution passed at the Extra Ordinary General Meeting held on **26th March 2019** to enable the Company to change its Registered Office from the National Capital Territory of Delhi (NCT, Delhi) to the State of Haryana.

Any person whose interest is likely to be affected by the proposed change of the registered office of the Company may deliver either on the MCA-21 portal (www.mca.gov.in) by filing investor complaint form or cause to be delivered or send by registered post of his/her objections supported by an affidavit stating the nature of his/her interest and grounds of opposition to the Regional Director at the address B-2 Wing, 2nd Floor, Paryavaran Bhawan, CGO Complex, New Delhi – 110003 within fourteen days of the date of publication of this notice with a copy to the Company at its registered office at the address mentioned below:

B-376, 3rd Floor, Nirman Vihar, New Delhi, 110092 India

For and on behalf of the Applicant
MIKI TRAVEL INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED
Sd/-
Olivier Andre Moeschler
Director
DIN: 08214419

Date : 26th March 2019
Place : Delhi

ADDENDUM/CORRIGENDUM

Due to some technical reasons, the below mentioned notice was not published along with advertisement of Secondary Education Department Haryana, Sector-5, Panchkula on Page No. 6 & 7 (The Indian Express Chandigarh Edition) & Page No. 4 & 5 (The Indian Express Delhi Edition) published on dated 26.03.2019 under the heading **"District wise List of Un-authorised School"**. So please Read below mentioned notice along with District wise List of Un-authorised School published on dated 26.03.2019

कार्यालय महानिदेशक सैकेंडरी शिक्षा हरियाणा, पंचकूला
कारण बताओ नोटिस

आदेश क्रमांक: 7/21-2017 पी.एस.(1) दिनांक: 22.03.2019

जैसे कि श्री रंजन लखनपाल एवं स्वास्थ्य शिक्षा सहयोग संगठन द्वारा क्रमांक सी.डब्लयू.पी. (जनहित याचिकाएं) नं. 4449/2017 एवं 23119/2017 माननीय उच्च न्यायालय में दायर की गई है, जिनमें उन्होंने हरियाणा राज्य में हरियाणा विद्यालय शिक्षा नियमावली 2003 के प्रावधानों के विपरीत चल रहे निजी विद्यालयों को बंद किए जाने का अनुरोध है।

हरियाणा विद्यालय शिक्षा नियमावली 2003 एवं संशोधित नियमावली 2007 व 2009 के नियम 3 (1) में प्रावधान है कि राज्य में कोई भी विद्यालय निदेशक के पूर्व अनुमोदन एवं अनुज्ञा के बिना संचालित नहीं किया जा सकता।

"सोसाईटी रजिस्ट्रीकरण अधिनियम, 1860 (1860 का 21) के अधीन पंजीकृत कोई व्यक्ति या व्यक्तियों का संगम या फर्म या सोसाईटी या भारतीय न्यास अधिनियम, 1882 (1860 का 2) के अधीन सृजित कोई न्यास या कंपनी अधिनियम, 1956 (1956 का 1) के अधीन पंजीकृत कंपनी जो हरियाणा राज्य में विद्यालय स्थापित करने, या स्तरोन्नत करने, या पहले से चल रहे विद्यालय को आगे चलाने की इच्छा रखते है तो वे निदेशक के पूर्व अनुमोदन तथा अनुज्ञा से ऐसा करेंगे। विद्यालय प्राधिकारी इन नियमों में विर्निदष्ट मानकों का अनुसरन करेंगे।"

विभाग द्वारा इस बारे प्रदेश के जिला शिक्षा अधिकारियों एवं जिला मौलिक शिक्षा अधिकारियों से सूचना प्राप्त की गई थी। उनके द्वारा उपलब्ध करवाई गई सूचना के आधार पर 1083 निजी विद्यालय नियमों के प्रावधानों के विपरीत चल रहे हैं, जिनके नाम निम्नलिखित हैं :-

स्कूलों की सूची

उपरोक्त तथ्यों के दृष्टिगत, उपरलिखित विद्यालयों के प्रबंधकों को एतद्द्वारा यह कारण बताओ नोटिस जारी करते हुए 7 दिनों के अंदर-अंदर अपनी स्थिति स्पष्ट करने एवं कोई दस्तावेज प्रस्तुत करने का अवसर प्रदान किया जाता है। निर्धारित अवधि में उत्तर की निष्फलता में नियमानुसार एकतरफा कार्यवाही कर ली जाएगी तथा इन सभी विद्यालयों को तुरंत प्रभाव में बंद करने की कारवाई अमल में लाई जाए।

हस्ता./- निदेशक, मौलिक शिक्षा हरियाणा, पंचकूला

हस्ता./- महानिदेशक, सैकेंडरी शिक्षा हरियाणा, पंचकूला

75998/HRY.

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RECOVERY DEPARTMENT, ZONAL OFFICE : DELHI
4th Floor, Rajendra Bhawan, Rajendra Place, New Delhi-110125 Phone: 011-25716386, E-mail: fgmdelrd@pnb.co.in

CORRIGENDUM **E-Auction Notice**

This is in reference to the advertisement published in this newspaper on 27.02.2019 for e Auction Sale Notice in which the property "Residential Property H.No.262 A, Basement and Ground Floor, R.E.M. Co-operative House Building Society Ltd, Shivalik, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi measuring 192 sq yards in the name of Sh. Neeraj Chaudhary." in A/c of **Sh. Neeraj Chaudhary (Sr. No.22) of Fountain Gurugram Branch** was put for e-auction to be held on 08.04.2019. The Status of Property : **Physical Possession** instead of Symbolic Possession. All other accounts/details/terms & Conditions will remain unchanged.

Date : 25-03-2019, Place : Gurugram (HR.) **Authorized Officer, Punjab National Bank**

Resource Support Agency
TEXTILES COMMITTEE
(Ministry of Textiles, Govt. of India)
Recruitement of Consultant (Skill Research) on Contract basis

Textiles Committee is inviting applications from candidates having M.phil in Economis/Statistics and /or MBA in International Business with at least two years experience in Economic Research for the post of Consultant (Skill Research) on short term contract basis for a monthly remuneration of up to Rs. 60,000/-.

The prescribed format and detailed requirements of qualification and experience is available in Textiles Committee website **www.textilescommittee.nic.in** or Facebook: **fb.com/textilescommittee** or Twitter: **@TexComIndia**. The candidates may also request for details by sending email at **tc.unctad@gmail.com**

The completed applications should reach The Secretary, Textiles Committee, P Balu Road, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025 on or before 15th April 2019.

davp 41104/11/0008/1819

PUBLIC NOTICE
GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA
EXCISE & TAXATION DEPARTMENT
NOTICE FOR INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR THE ALLOTMENT OF WHOLESALE LICENSE OF IMFL (L-1) AND COUNTRY LIQUOR (L-13) FOR THE YEAR 2019-2020 IN 21 DISTRICTS OF GURUGRAM OF THE STATE.

The Applications are invited for Grant of Wholesale License of IMFL in the Form of L-1 and Wholesale License of Country Liquor in Form of L-13 for 21 Districts of the State. Both the Wholesale License of IMFL, L-1 and Country Liquor L-13, shall be Granted to Retail Licensees of the District in order of the revenue contributed by them as on **26th March, 2019**. The revenue contribution to be considered for L-1 and L-13 shall be the parts of total revenue contribution made by the Licensee in a District. The parts of revenue to be attributed to IMFL and CL shall be computed by dividing Total Bid Amount in proportion for IMFL and CL. The proportion shall be derived by multiplying quota of IMFL allotted to him with district incidence for the year 2016-17 and quota of CL multiplied by the district incidence of CL for the year 2016-17. It is also displayed on the official website of the department **www.haryanatax.gov.in**.

The Number of Wholesale Licenses of IMFL L-1 and Country Liquor L-13, in a District for which the applications are being invited is mentioned in the Table given below:

Sr. No.	District	No. of L-1 to be given on the basis of Revenue contributed upto 26.03.2019	No. of L-13 to be given on the basis of Revenue contributed upto 26.03.2019
1.	Ambala	3	3
2.	Bhiwani	3	4
3.	Fatehabad	1	1
4.	Gurugram (East)	1	1
5.	Gurugram (West)	1	1
6.	Hisar	3	5
7.	Jagadhri	3	3
8.	Jhajjar	3	3
9.	Jind	2	4
10.	Kaithal	2	3
11.	Karnal	1	1
12.	Kurukshetra	2	2
13.	Mewat	2	2
14.	Narnaul	2	3
15.	Palwal	1	1
16.	Panchkula	3	2
17.	Panipat	1	1
18.	Rewari	1	1
19.	Rohtak	3	3
20.	Sirsa	1	1
21.	Sonepat	4	5
	Total	**43**	**50**

The Licenses for Wholesale Outlets of IMFL (L-1) and Country Liquor (L-13) shall be Granted in accordance with the provisions of Punjab Excise Act, 1914 as Applicable to the State of Haryana Rules framed under the Excise Policy for the Year 2019-20. The Excise Policy for the Year 2019-20 is available on the official website of the Department **www.haryanatax.gov.in**.

The Application shall be submitted in the Office of the DETC (Excise) concerned on or before **28th March, 2019**. The applications shall be forwarded by DETC (Excise) along with his comprehensive report and recommendation to the Excise and Taxation Commissioner immediately.

The License for Wholesale of IMFL, (L-1) and Country Liquor, (L-13), shall be granted subject to the Provisions of Punjab Excise Act, 1914, Rules framed thereunder and the Excise Policy 2019-20.

Excise & Taxation Commissioner, Haryana.

76005/HRY

CBI to court: NSA, Asthana's phones not tapped under Verma

PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

THE CBI on Tuesday informed the Delhi High Court that at no point of time during the tenure of its former director Alok Verma were telephone calls of National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval and the agency's former special director, Rakesh Asthana, "intercepted" by its Special Unit.

"It is also submitted that the CBI never put any telephone number under surveillance illegally. The veiled reference of the petitioner to illegal interception of phone numbers of the then Law Secretary and other IAS offices is vehemently denied," the agency stated in its affidavit filed before a bench headed by Delhi HC Chief Justice Rajendra Menon.

The affidavit, filed through special public prosecutor Rajdipa Behura, was in reply to a public interest litigation (PIL) by Sarthak Chaturvedi, an advocate, who has sought a probe by a special investigation team into alleged phone tapping of NSA Doval. The petitioner has also sought an investigation into charges of abuse of power by some CBI officials by illegally tapping phone calls.

Chaturvedi has petitioned the court to direct the Central government to frame comprehensive guidelines regarding tracing, tapping and surveillance of phone calls.

In reply, the agency submitted that "interception of phone calls and technical surveillance are undertaken in CBI after following established procedure as per law".

Hence, the affidavit stated, allegations of abuse of power is denied as being "false, incorrect and baseless".

Apprising the court that the Centre already has guidelines in place, the affidavit stated that technical surveillance by the CBI has been carried out in a "proper manner", and that competent authorities from where authorisation is obtained is informed regularly about the outcome of such technical surveillance.

Seeking dismissal of the PIL, the CBI maintained that phones of accused persons, against whom the agency had registered corruption cases in October 2018, were "lawfully put under surveillance as per authorisation obtained from competent authority" under the law.

The affidavit pointed out that that the Indian Telegraph Act clearly defines cases in which interception of phone calls is permitted by the Central government, and thus an individual's fundamental rights are not infringed.

The Union Home Ministry has already submitted before the court that telephone interceptions by law enforcement agencies are carried out in the "interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India".

ANDREAS SCHLEICHER, DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, OECD

'Retention of students does not lead to improvement in learning outcomes'

ANDREAS SCHLEICHER, director for the Directorate of Education and Skills at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), spoke with **RITIKA CHOPRA** about India ending its decade-long boycott of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), which tests learning levels of 15-year-olds in reading, mathematics and science. India stayed away from PISA in 2012 and 2015 on account of its dismal performance in 2009, when it was placed 72nd among 74 participating countries. Edited excerpts:

Tashi Tobgyal

What message do we give children if the shopping centre is the most beautiful building and the neighbourhood school is falling apart?

How will you explain the reluctance on part of SAARC nations to participate regularly in PISA, and why do you think they should?

There have been some long-standing participants (from this region). Countries like Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore have been with us for many years. However, PISA also provides a challenge for countries in this region. If you think about India, much of the instruction is still geared towards having students reproduce subject matter content, and PISA doesn't place a lot of emphasis on this.

To be successful in PISA you have to be able to creatively use your knowledge and address novel tasks.

What are the most vivid examples of how countries have benefitted by participating in PISA?

The most significant aspect (of participating in PISA) is to be part of a global network of expertise that develop assessments. Many countries have joined the assessment simply to take part in the thinking about the future of education and what it means for teaching practice and assessment.

PISA is also a mirror in which countries can see themselves in the light of what other countries are achieving. For example, before PISA, small nations such as Singapore or Finland were not very much on the radar of education policy, but it has turned them into a kind of reference point.

Looking back, why do you think India pulled out of PISA? What is OECD doing to address those concerns in the 2021 test cycle?

In 2009, India joined the assessment at a very rapid speed; that also meant the results were not productive and meaningful. Probably sufficient attention was not paid to adapting the instrument to the Indian context at the time. A lot has happened in India and in PISA since then. PISA is generally paying greater attention to make sure the instruments reflect the cultural and linguistic context of countries closely. India, too, is preparing carefully and we are trying to ensure the (test) instruments are translated into an Indian context.

What are your views on the Indian schooling system? What do you think are the positives and deficiencies?

I have limited experience (on this). It's almost difficult to speak of an Indian school system because of the diversity of approaches and outcomes. There are some world-class schools, but many are also struggling with the foundation. I think one of the biggest assets in India is the value that society, especially the poor, places on education. You wouldn't find this in the Middle East, South America or even in Europe.

The challenge in India is around social backgrounds. You can see significant social gaps in Indian school systems that are bigger, for example, than what we see in countries like China or Vietnam. I think PISA is a good instrument to illuminate those challenges in a comparative context.

India recently scrapped its no-detention policy under the Right to Education Act. Is there any direct relation between detaining a child and improvement in academic performance?

Many people think that retention is a way to help students to catch up, but PISA shows very clearly that this is not a good approach. We have seen that students, even in the second year, often have similar results. So retention doesn't lead to improvement in learning outcomes. What those students need is individualised support to help them where they fail.

PISA also shows that retention is very expensive, because such students enter the labour market one year later, and the government loses taxes. Retention also leads to stigmatisation of those students and makes it too convenient for teachers, who can pass a student on to someone else.... Of course, retention does not mean automatic promotion. The idea is that instead of retention, you provide additional support for students and redouble your effort to make sure that every student succeeds. If no-retention policy is just automatic promotion, I agree that's not a very good approach.

Have you followed the changes adopted by the Delhi government in schools education?

I can only follow it through what I read; I have not really seen it myself. But I think these are very important changes. If infrastructure is not there, learning outcomes will not be present — and so often infrastructure is not only physically necessary, but (is) also a symbol. What message do we give children if the shopping centre is the most beautiful building and the neighbourhood school is falling apart? What I also like in Delhi is the increasing emphasis on what we call social and emotional skills. And I think that's a very important paradigm shift in the education of tomorrow.

The academic community has expressed concerns over the impact of rankings such as PISA. Academics say this has contributed to an obsession with standardised testing and shifting focus from long-term solutions to stop-gap measures.

I think standardised tests have an important place in the world of education. Without standardised tests, we often see that disadvantaged students just fall off the radar — standardised tests put everybody on a level playing field. I agree it shouldn't be everything, and assessment should always have multiple perspectives. There should be a formative assessment in school. Teachers should have a strong relationship with the student.

But standardised testing is basically the guarantor of fairness and equity. And it's no surprise that actually countries which have a strong history of standardized testing — think about China, Vietnam, Singapore — are also some of the most equitable and fairest education systems.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

SARADHA SCAM PROBE

Got limited CDRs from Bengal police, says CBI

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

CBI DIRECTOR Rishi Kumar Shukla on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that the West Bengal police had provided its team probing the Saradha scam and other ponzi scam cases only "limited" Call Data Records (CDRs) of two key accused, and their "comparison and analysis" with data obtained from service providers had revealed certain discrepancies.

In an affidavit filed in the court, Shukla said the agency had sought the CDRs for the years 2012 and 2013 of five mobile phone numbers "purportedly used by" accused Sudipta Sen and Debjani Mukherjee — the main promoters/directors of the Saradha Group of companies — but did not get the full details. Following this, the agency obtained the complete CDRs from the service providers and "compared and analysed" it with the "limited CDRs" provided by West Bengal police.

"The said comparison and analysis was done by the Technical and Forensic Science Unit (TAFSU), CBI, Kolkata. It was found that for the same period, there were differences/discrepancies with respect of frequency and number of calls with regards to a number which is in the name of Debjani Mukherjee," Shukla said.

He said the CBI had requested the CDRs of the five numbers from the state police first on April 4, 2017. This was not provided, following which the CBI team again wrote to the state DGP on September 17, 2017.

The affidavit said that on January 19, 2018, a CD was provided by the state police, purportedly containing CDRs of four of these numbers, but "when the said CD was run on computer by CBI, the same was found blank". The state police "finally" on August 28, 2018 provided CDRs of these numbers, but "only for a period of August-September 2012 and around 15 days of April 2013".

The affidavit said the probe agency again wrote to the state police that "only very limited and incomplete CDRs had been furnished" and sought to know if only these were collected during investigation and to provide the rest of the data if collected.

The state police wrote back on July 12, 2018, "stating that concerned nodal agencies and the investigating officers were requested for providing the CDR data collected by them" and "assured" that further communication will be made when the reports are received.

However, "till date the CBI has not received any further communication or further CDRs in this regard though eight months have passed by", Shukla said.

The Supreme Court is hearing a contempt plea filed by the CBI which took over the investigation in the chit fund scam cases in May 2014 following an order of the Supreme Court transferring the probe to it.

The CBI has alleged that former Kolkata Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar destroyed and tampered with material evidence in the form of CDRs of the prime accused and potential accused.

On the last date of hearing, the court had asked the director "to disclose...full details which would throw light on the alleged acts on the part of the Commissioner..."

Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited Vidyut Nagar: P. O.- DLW, Varanasi- 221004 **E-Tender Notice** E-tender are invited for the following material. The tenderer will be accepted up to at 15.00 hrs. Please visit website **www.etender.up.nic.in** for details/ download and for any other corrections/ amendments/ modifications/ extensions till the date of submission of bids. **Sl. No.** 1. **Tender Specification No.** EAV-186/18-19 **Name of Material** Fresh Transformer Oil **Qty.** 2500 KL **Earnest Money (Rs.)** 14,75,000.00 Tender Fee (Rs.) 10,000.00 + GST @ 5% **Last date & Time for online submission of tender document** 29.04.2019 15:00 Hrs. **Date & Time for online opening of tender part-I** 30.04.2019 15:00 Hrs. Sd/- **SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (MM-I)** "Save Electricity in the interest of Nation" पत्रांक: 702/ पू.वि.वि.नि.लि. (वा)/सा.प्र./अअ-I/विज्ञापन दिनांक: 26.03.2019

Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Limited (PuVVNL) (A subsidiary of UP Power Corporation limited) Purvanchal Vidyut Bhavan, Vidyut Nagar, P.O.- D.L.W., Varanasi-221004, Website: http://www.etender.up.nic.in The tender invited for through e-tender no. EAV-145/18-19 & EAV-146/18-19 the date of bid opening is hereby further extended and details for the same have been mentioned below. **Sl. No.** 1. **Tender Specification number** EAV-145/18-19 **Material Name** 11 KV TVM (Type-C) **Last Date & time for submission of tender documents** Date: 11.04.2019 Time: 15:00 PM **Tender opening date & time** Date: 12.04.2019 Time: 15:00 PM **Sl. No.** 2. **Tender Specification number** EAV-146/18-19 **Material Name** LT TVM (Type-A) **Last Date & time for submission of tender documents** Date: 11.04.2019 Time: 15:00 PM **Tender opening date & time** Date: 12.04.2019 Time: 15:00 PM Other terms and conditions shall remain same. Sd/- **(S.K. Bharati Superintending Engineer (MM-I)** *"SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION"* पत्रांक : 701/ पू.वि.वि.नि.लि. (वा.)/सा.प्र./ अअ-I/ विज्ञापन दिनांक: 26.03.2019

ANCILLARY WORKS IN BETWEEN STATION MATHABHANGA AND NEW COOCHBEHAR

Tender No.CE/CON/N-J/MIS/2019-07. Open tender through e-Tendering system is invited from experienced and reputed contractor(s)/firm(s) for the following works : **SN N.1. Name of Work:** Execution of all works in between Km 72/0 to Km 88/5 in between station Mathabhanga- New Coochbehar such as repairing of Cess, turfing, trolley refuge, toe protection with sausage crate, Bamboo piling, slope protection of major/minor bridge approaches, Boulder Pitching of Major/ Minor bridges, construction of Cross drain, fixing Hectometer posts etc., Construction Toe retaining wall, fixing of different type of boards and all other required ancillary works in connection with New Coochbehar-New Changrabandha New BG line project of Alipurduar division of N.F. Railway. **Approx Value:** ₹ 7,33,48,876/-; **Earnest Money:** ₹ 5,16,800/-. **Tender can be submitted** from 09-04-2019 to upto 14.30 hrs. of 23-04-2019 **and tender will be opened** at 15.30 hrs. of 23-04-2019. For details visit: **www.ireps.gov.in.**

Chief Engineer/Con, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
(Construction Organisation)
"Serving Customers with a smile"

Pak man held by BSF for crossing border

Ahmedabad: For the second time this month, the BSF in Gujarat apprehended a Pakistani man who crossed the "unfenced" section of the international border, official sources said Tuesday. An official said the man appeared to be mentally disturbed. **ENS**

उ.प्र. पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन लि. ई-निविदा तिथि विस्तार सूचना इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित ई-निविदा सूचना सं. ETD/MT/T-19/18-19 एवं ETD/MT/T-20/18-19 जो कि 25.03.2019 को खुलनी प्रस्तावित थी, के सम्बन्ध में सूचित करना है कि पर्याप्त निविदा उद्धरण प्राप्त न होने के फलस्वरूप उक्त निविदाओं को दिनांक 30.03.3019 तक विस्तारित किया जाता है। कृपया www.etender.up.nic.in पर विस्तार से सभी सूचना, विवरण/डाउनलोड तथा अन्य किसी भी प्रकार के संशोधन/विस्तार हेतु निविदा खुलने की तिथि तक लॉग ऑन कर सकते हैं। शेष अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी। **अधिशासी अभियन्ता विद्युत पारेषण खण्ड ''पारेषण भवन'', 130-डी. विक्टोरिया पार्क फोन नं.:- 0121-2647227** पत्रांक 1027/वि.पा.ख.मे./निविदा सूचना दिनांक 25.03.2019

Plea in SC seeks quick CBI probe in coal case under then minister Naveen, BJD says 'no role'

SAMPAD PATNAIK
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 26

ODISHA CHIEF Minister Naveen Patnaik's name has surfaced in an intervention application (IA) filed in Supreme Court on Monday regarding a CBI probe into allocation of captive coalfields by the Central government from 1993 to 2010.

The applicant, Vaibhav Verma, requested to be included as a third party in the matter and stated that CBI is not probing the case "expeditiously".

BJD MP and Supreme Court lawyer Pinaki Mishra said, "It relates to a time (1998) when Naveen Patnaik held additional charge of Coal Ministry for about a couple of months. He had no role to play in allocation of coal blocks."

The case relates to 1998, when Naveen Patnaik held additional charge of the Coal Ministry.

Verma cited a case related to coal allocation for Nagpur-based Central Collieries Ltd in 1998 and stated that the company was allocated Maharashtra's Tekli Jena Belloras coal block that year, even though it was registered only in 1999. Citing a media report, the applicant claims a case was registered in the matter in 2014.

According to Verma, while CBI interrogated Patnaik in 2017, as he held the Coal portfolio in 1998, the agency is yet to complete the probe. His application urges the court to issue an "appropriate" time-frame to CBI to conclude its investigation, as "witnesses can be won over and evidence tampered with" often with passage of time in "high-profile financial offences".

Maintaining that the Centre has "repeatedly" attempted to rope in Patnaik in the case, Mishra said, "About six months ago, a similar application for impleadment was thrown out by Justice Madan Lokur of Supreme Court. The judge has retired and a fresh attempt is being made at bench hunting. It will be met robustly (in court)."

Verma's counsel S S Hooda told *The Indian Express*, "In the initial IA, we had sought Patnaik to be interrogated. The court said it was seized of the matter and did not need guidance on who should be interrogated. So we withdrew the IA. Thereafter, Patnaik was interrogated (by CBI). So our IA was vindicated."

He added, "This IA has a different focus. After interrogation, why is CBI not completing its probe?"

Union minister and senior BJP leader Dharmendra Pradhan questioned why Mishra was jumping the gun before facts emerge. Odisha Congress chief Niranjan Patnaik has also questioned the delay in completing the probe.

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. TKD/07/2019, Date: 20.03.2019

Sr. Divisional Electric Engineer/ TRS/ Electric Loco Shed, Tughlakabad, New Delhi-44, acting for and on behalf of The President of India, invites E-Tenders against the following Tenders, with the closing date 03/05/2019 at 15.00. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. **(1) Tender No.:** TKD/07/2019 **Name of Work and Station:** Provision of EPDM Modular based cable protection system. **Station:** Electric Loco Shed-Tughlakabad **QTY:** 10 Locos **Estimated Cost (in ₹):** ₹ 18,05,730/- **Cost of Tender Form:** ₹ 2,000/- (Non Refundable) **Earnest Money:** ₹ 36,100/- **Completion Period:** 12 Months **Last Date of Submission of Tender:** 03.05.2019 at 15.00 Hrs. **Tender Opening Date:** 03.05.2019 at 15.30 Hrs. Complete details are available in the tender posted on Railway website: **www.ireps.gov.in** & also available in this office.

Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (TRS), Electric Loco Shed, WCR, Tughlakabad, New Delhi-110044

During Rail Journey, Dial 138 for general complaints & Dial 182 for security complaints

NORTHERN RAILWAY

CORRIGENDUM TO OPEN EXPRESSION OF INTEREST NOTICE

No. 197-S/App. Vendor-List-II/C&W/NR/18/MC-IV Dtd. : 25.03.2019

In continuation to this office EOI notice No. 197-S/App. Vendor-List-II/C&W/NR/18/MC-IV Dt.: 02.03.2019 & 18.03.2019. Following changes are made :-
i) In the note of cover page of page no. 1 of 8

S. No.	Description	Previous	Modified
1	"Note" of cover page on page no. 1 of 8	For registration in the approved list, the firm shall furnish a non-refundable fee of Rs. 10,000/- + 1800/- (Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred only). The tender documents must be submitted duly completed in all respects in a sealed cover super scribed as tender form for the work "as on top sheet". The same should be deposited in the tender box lying in the Mechanical Branch (Administrative Block), D.R.M.'s Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi up to 15.00 hrs. on stipulated date of tender opening. The tender will be opened at stipulated time and terms and conditions read out in the presence of such tenderer/s as is/are present. Tenders, which are received after the time and date, specified above may not be considered. In case the intended dates for opening of tenders is declared a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at the same time.	For registration in the approved list, the firm shall furnish a non-refundable fee of Rs. 10,000/- + 1800/- (Eleven Thousand Eight Hundred only). In case of down loaded form, cost of the tender form shall be submitted along with the offer and that may be in the form of money receipt deposited in the Railway station earning/Pay order/Demand draft in favour of Sr. DFM/Northern Railway, New Delhi. No tender will be considered if not accompanied by requisite cost of tender document as specified. The tender documents must be submitted duly completed in all respects in a sealed cover super scribed as tender form for the work "as on top sheet". The same should be deposited in the tender box lying in the Mechanical Branch (Administrative Block), D.R.M.'s Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi up to 15.00 hrs. on stipulated date of tender opening. The tender will be opened at stipulated time and terms and conditions read out in the presence of such tenderer/s as is/are present. Tenders, which are received after the time and date, specified above may not be considered. In case the intended dates for opening of tenders is declared a holiday, the tenders will be opened on the next working day at the same time.

Note :- The revised Expression of interest document has been uploaded on the following website and additional relevant information may be checked on the web site no. **www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in.** 925/2019

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Vanzara, Amin ask court to drop Ishrat case against them

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 26

Retired police officials D G Vanzara and N K Amin filed an application on Tuesday in the special CBI court requesting that all proceedings against them be dropped in the Ishrat Jahan fake encounter case. The application comes in view of the Gujarat government on March 12 declining to sanction CBI prosecution against the accused.

Ishrat Jehan was shot dead by police in June 2004, with Javed Ghulam Sheikh, Amjad Ali Rana and Zeeshan Johar. Police claimed they were operatives of terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba and that they had been planning to assassinate then Gujarat chief minister Narendra Modi.

Ishrat's mother Shamima Kauser on Tuesday challenged the decision to not prosecute the two and filed an application through her advocate, seeking a copy of the government order.

The court also allowed the CBI to file a reply. Advocate RC Kodekar, representing the CBI, sought timefor the higher authorities to respond to this application. A reply will be sent by the CBI head office in Mumbai by April 3.

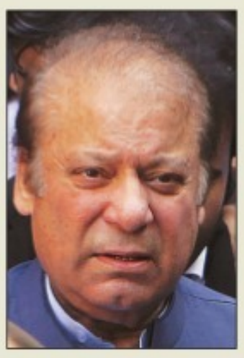
The application by Vanzara and Amin, accessed by *The Indian Express*, stated: "...in absence of the sanction as required under section 197 of the (CrPC) code, it is now clear that no cognizance should be taken against the accused. Therefore it (the Court) needs to drop proceedings against the accused..."

The application also sought that "the accused be set free immediately from this case, and further proceeding against the accused needs to be dropped without waiting for any further comment or reply from the CBI."

Kauser's counsel said, "Murder cannot be part of any official duty of any police officer. Sanction is required for a public servant only if the offence is committed in the course of official duty. In this case the CBI has already said that the encounter was fake, so the refusal to sanction prosecution is misplaced..."

Meanwhile, Vanzara said, "Once a competent authority (government) has declined sanction (to CBI for prosecution), a technical application needs to be filed to drop all proceedings.This becomes nearly an automatic process but now the court has directed the CBI to seek direction from CBI higher-ups, which I can only say is a procedural delay."

TOP OF THE WORLD



Sharif has been in jail since December 2018

PAKISTAN

SC grants bail to Sharif for treatment

Islamabad: In a relief to Nawaz Sharif, Pakistan's Supreme Court Tuesday granted bail to the former prime minister, jailed in a corruption case, for six weeks on medical grounds. But the court ruled he cannot go out of the country during this period. Sharif filed an appeal earlier this month against a judgment by the Islamabad High Court, which on February 25 rejected his bail on medical grounds in the same case.

FRANCE

China, EU 'advancing together': Xi

Paris: Chinese President Xi Jinping Tuesday stressed the growing convergence between Beijing and the European Union on global issues from climate change to trade, urging the two sides to overcome their "suspicions". At a meeting in Paris between Xi, French President Emmanuel Macron, German Chancellor Angela Merkel and European Commission chief Jean-Claude Juncker, the leaders declared their desire to work together. "Of course there are differences and competition, but it's positive competition," Xi said.

MYANMAR

Supreme Court hears appeal of jailed journalists

Naypyitaw: Lawyers for two Reuters journalists sentenced to seven years in prison for their reporting on Myanmar's brutal crackdown on Rohingya Muslims have appealed their conviction to the country's Supreme Court. Reporters Wa Lone and Kyaw Soe Oo remained in Insein Prison while their lawyers attended the court's first hearing on their final appeal on Tuesday in the capital, Naypyitaw. The prisoners' wives also came to the court hearing, bringing their young children.

VATICAN

Female reporters quit over call for 'obedience'

Vatican City: The all-female editorial team behind the Vatican's women's magazine has resigned over what they describe as attempts to stifle their reporting and bring in more "obedient" journalists, its founder said Tuesday. "We are throwing in the towel because we feel surrounded by a climate of distrust and progressive de-legitimisation," *Woman Church World* founder Lucetta Scaraffia wrote in an editorial published by Italian religious news blog *Il Sismografo*. The magazine has not shied away from tackling hard-hitting issues such as sexual abuse of nuns by priests.

Pak court orders protection for two Hindu girls after 'forced conversion'

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, MARCH 26

A PAKISTANI high court on Tuesday ordered official protection for two Hindu girls due to concerns about their safety as authorities widened a probe to ascertain if the teenage sisters were abducted, forcibly converted and married.

The two girls, Raveena (13) and Reena (15), were allegedly kidnapped by a group of "influential" men from their home in Ghotki district in Sindh on the eve of Holi. Soon after the kidnapping, a video went viral in which a cleric was purportedly shown solemnising the nikah (marriage) of the two girls, triggering nationwide outrage.

The Islamabad High Court issued the order Tuesday after the petition was filed by the girls and their husbands to seek protection from adverse action. Chief Justice Athar Minallah heard the case.

Activists at a protest in Hyderabad, Pakistan, Tuesday. *AP*

The judge, after hearing their petition, handed over their custody to Deputy Commissioner Islamabad and Director General Human Rights. He ordered that a woman Superintendent of Police should be deputed with the two girls to ensure their safety.

The court directed authorities to present a report on the case before it by April 2, after which it will issue further directions.

The court also noted that Prime Minister Imran Khan ordered a probe into the matter.

On March 20, the girls' family lodged an FIR against their alleged forced conversion to Islam.

A war of words broke out between India's External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj and Pakistan's Information Minister Fawad Chaudhry over the matter. **PTI**

Another underage Hindu girl abducted in Sindh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KARACHI, MARCH 26

A FRESH case of an underage Hindu girl being abducted in Pakistan's Sindh province has come to the fore, even as uproar continued over the alleged kidnapping, forcible conversion and marriages of two teenage girls from the minority community.

According to a handout issued by the Sindh Information Department, Minorities Affairs Minister Hari Ram Kishori Lal took note of reports that went viral on social media regarding the abduction of a 16-year-old Hindu girl from Badin district.

The victim's father has approached SSP Badin, Sardar Hassan Niazi, to register a case against suspects. It was, however, not clear when the girl was abducted.

Lal has directed authorities to register an FIR of the abduction and provide protection to the girl's family.

He said the marriage of underage girls is banned in Sindh under the Sindh Child Marriages Restraint Act 2013, adding it was a criminal act to marry a girl below the age of 18.

Lal said that the Act is being strictly implemented in Sindh.

The minister said that his government was doing everything to protect underage Hindu girls. He said the Sindh government is working to establish the Sindh Minorities Protection Commission and its draft has been approved by the chief minister two days ago.

AMID MASS PROTESTS

Algeria's army chief asks for president to be declared unfit for office

HAMID OULD AHMED
ALGIERS, MARCH 26

ALGERIA'S ARMY chief of staff on Tuesday called for a constitutional procedure that would see President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika declared unfit for office, arguing this would meet the demands of protesters seeking an end to his 20-year rule.

Lieutenant General Ahmed Gaed Salah, addressing army officers in a speech broadcast on two private Algerian TV stations, called for a unified stand to resolve the crisis, which has seen weeks of mass anti-government protests.

Salah said the solution would be based on Article 102 of the constitution and achieve a consensus of "all visions and parties". That article applies under certain conditions, such as deteriorating health. Bouteflika, 82, has rarely appeared in public since suffering a stroke in 2013.

The next formal step is for the constitutional council to formally to declare Bouteflika unfit for office, a decision that members of parliament's lower and upper house need to ratify by a two-thirds majority.

Based on Article 102, the chairman of parliament's upper house, Abdelkader Bensalah, would serve as caretaker president for at least 45 days.

(Left) Algeria's President Abdel Aziz Bouteflika; army chief Ahmed Gaed Salah

El Bilad television said the constitutional council had convened in special session after Salah's move. Algeria's powerful military had avoided direct intervention until now, patiently monitoring the unrest from the sidelines, although warning it would not tolerate chaos in the vast North African state, a major oil and natural gas exporter.

Bouteflika had earlier bowed to protesters by reversing a decision to seek another term and putting off elections that had been set for April.

But his gesture failed to defuse growing anger in the streets, for he stopped short of quitting as head of state and said he would stay on until a new constitution is adopted, effectively extending his current term. **REUTERS**

Theresa May under fire as British MPs seize control of Brexit

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, MARCH 26

British Prime Minister Theresa May was reeling on Tuesday from yet another Parliament defeat when MPs backed an amendment to seize control of Brexit by 329 to 302 votes.

In a House of Commons vote on Monday night, many of her own party MPs, including three ministers, backed the motion which called for a series of "indicative votes" to be held to find alternatives to May's controversial European Union (EU) divorce bill, which has been rejected twice before by Parliament.

May said she remains "sceptical" about the process as it was not guaranteed to produce a majority for any one course of action and refused to commit the government to abiding by any particular result at the end of Wednesday's votes. "The votes could lead to an outcome that is un-negotiable with the EU," she told MPs.

As part of the latest Commons high-drama, MPs voted in favour of Conservative backbencher Oliver Letwin's cross-party amendment to allow them to put forward motions relating to Brexit.

It will give them a chance to weigh up a number of options on Wednesday — likely to include a so-called softer Brexit with closer alignment with the EU, a Customs Union with the EU, a second referendum on the decision leave the economic bloc and possibly even an option to revoke Article 50 and reverse Brexit altogether.

Three ministers — foreign affairs minister Alistair Burt, health minister Steve Brine, and business minister Richard Harrington — who went against the Cabinet's collective responsibility principle to vote for the amendment, resigned from government. **PTI**

Siblings outside their destroyed house in Gaza City on Tuesday. *Reuters*

Lull in Gaza fighting, but tensions high as Israel moves tanks, troops to border

NIDAL AL-MUGHRABI AND ARI RABINOVITCH
GAZA/JERUSALEM, MARCH 26

CROSS-BORDER fighting between Israel and Hamas abated on Tuesday after a day of Palestinian rocket attacks and Israeli air strikes but Israel said it reserved the right to strike again and kept its troops and tanks massed at the Gaza frontier.

The biggest Israeli-Palestinian escalation in months, which began on Monday with the longest-range Palestinian rocket attack to cause casualties in Israel for five years, appeared to have been curbed overnight by Egyptian mediation.

But even if brought to an end, the crisis could have an impact on an Israeli election in two weeks in which right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu says he must stay in power to keep Israelis safe.

Israel responded to Monday's rocket attack with a wave of strikes on targets belonging to the Hamas militant group that controls the Palestinian enclave of Gaza.

Seven Israelis were injured in the initial rocket attack and five Palestinians were wounded by the retaliatory Israeli strikes.

Netanyahu, who cut short a visit to the United States to fly home and deal with the crisis, said Israel may take further action in Gaza.

"We are prepared to do a lot more. We will do what is necessary to defend our people and to defend our state," he said in a satellite address delivered from Tel Aviv to the pro-Israel U.S. lobby group AIPAC in Washington.

The border fell quiet on Tuesday morning after Hamas and the Islamic Jihad militant group, which also took part in the fighting, said Egypt had brokered a truce. **REUTERS**

EXPLAINED

Fears over rise in violence as key event draws closer

MARCH 30 will mark one year of the 'Great March of Return' weekly protests organised by Palestinians along the Gaza-Egypt border, protesting the blockade of the Gaza Strip and calling for the right to return to their ancestral homes on the Israeli side. Reports said more than 250 Palestinians were killed by Israeli forces during such protests. With tens of thousands expected to participate in the upcoming protest, there are concerns that this could lead to a surge in the confrontation between Gaza and Israel as well as the use of force against such protesters.

Trump, Republicans seek to turn the tables after Mueller probe

PETER BAKER AND NICHOLAS FANDOS
WASHINGTON, MARCH 26

PRESIDENT TRUMP and his Republican allies went on the offensive on Monday, vowing to pursue and even punish those responsible for the Russia investigation now that the special counsel has wrapped up without implicating him or his campaign in a criminal conspiracy to influence the 2016 election.

Trump, grim faced and simmering with anger, denounced adversaries who have pounded him for two years over Russian election interference, calling them "treasonous" people who are guilty of "evil" deeds and should be investigated themselves. "Those people will certainly be looked at," he said.

On Capitol Hill, the Republican chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee announced he would do just that while also calling for a new special counsel to look at the origins of the last one. White House officials and Republican lawmakers demanded the resignation of a Democratic committee chairman investigating the Russia matter, and Trump's re-election campaign lobbied television networks to blackball Democrats who advanced the collusion theory.

The assertive posture indicated that despite initial calls by Republican leaders to move on after the investigation by the special counsel, Robert S Mueller III, the president and his supporters were intent on turning the tables on his foes. While Democrats saw the actions as revenge, Trump's defenders said they wanted accountability for a "witch hunt" that has consumed half of his term.

The US president denounced his adversaries on the issue, calling them 'treasonous' people. *File*

"There are a lot of people out there that have done some very, very evil things, very bad things, I would say some treasonous things against our country," Trump told reporters at the White House. "I've been looking at them for a long time," he added, "and I'm saying why haven't they been looked at? They lied to Congress, many of them, you know who they are. They've done so many evil things."

The approach, if it lasts, contrasts with those of other presidents who survived major scandals. After the Iran-contra affair, President Ronald Reagan happily dropped the subject and focused on arms control talks with the Soviet Union and other issues. After being acquitted at his Senate impeachment trial, President Bill Clinton was just as eager to move on to Social Security and other initiatives. **NYT**

'THE MISSION BECOMES MORE IMPORTANT THAN A COOL MILESTONE'

NASA cancels first all-female spacewalk over spacesuit sizes

JACEY FORTIN AND KAREN ZRAICK
MARCH 26

IT HAD not been planned as a historic mission, yet it would have represented a moment of sorts: the first all-female spacewalk.

But that moment will have to wait, NASA said Monday, because of a somewhat basic issue - spacesuit sizes.

The two astronauts who were scheduled to walk together in space Friday, Anne C. McClain and Christina H Koch, would both need to wear a medium-size torso component. But only one is readily available at the International Space Station.

The mission itself is unchanged. On Friday, two astronauts will venture outside the space station on a six-hour mission to install massive lithium-ion batteries that will help power the research laboratory. Koch is still scheduled to participate, along with fellow astronaut Nick Hague; McClain did her first spacewalk last week.

Christina Koch is scheduled to do her first spacewalk on Friday, but not with another female astronaut as had been planned. *Credit: NASA*

But the first women-only venture outside of the confines of the space station will have to happen on another day. "After consulting with McClain and Hague following the first spacewalk, mission managers decided to adjust the assignments, due in part to spacesuit availability on the station," NASA said in a statement.

Stephanie Schierholz, a spokeswoman for NASA, said in an interview Monday that there were already two medium-size hard upper torsos - "essentially the shirt of the spacesuit," according to NASA — at the space station.

But there were a couple of issues. One was that McClain had thought she would be able to work in a large-size torso, but after her spacewalk last Friday, she wore a medium-size torso and learned that it fit her better. Koch also uses the same size.

And of the two medium-size torsos available, one has yet to be properly configured for a spacewalk. It would take hours of crew labor — not to mention some additional risk — to fix that in time for Friday. Instead of doing that, NASA decided to simply switch out the astronauts.

In the end, both women will have done a spacewalk - just not together. "When you have the option of just switching the people, the mission becomes more important than a cool milestone," Schierholz said.

On Friday, Koch and Hague will be supported by a team on the ground that includes a number of women in key positions, including the spacewalk's flight director, Mary Lawrence, and its lead officer, Jackie Kagey.

In a briefing at NASA's Johnson Space Center in Houston this month, Lawrence, Kagey and Kenneth Todd, the station's operations integration manager, said officials had not immediately recognized the significance of the original lineup for Friday's "extravehicular activity," or EVA.

It was only as they discussed the schedule during a meeting that they realized it was the first time they had scheduled an all-female spacewalk.

After the rescheduling Monday, Schierholz said that while there were no concrete plans for an all-female spacewalk, one is increasingly likely because NASA astronauts have been diversifying in terms of gender.

"We're sort of getting to the point of inevitability," Schierholz said of an all-female EVA.

McClain and Koch were part of the 2013 astronaut class, and of the eight people in that class - chosen from more than 6,000 applicants - half were women, a first for NASA.

The current roster of six astronauts at the space station - three Americans, one Canadian and two Russians - allows the team to carry out a number of important projects, with an eye toward making sure each crew member accumulates significant experience, Todd said. NASA officials hope the relatively young American astronauts will continue to travel to space in the coming years and assist new recruits in the future.

The batteries being installed on this mission store solar power that the station needs when it is not in direct sunlight. Work on the battery systems will continue for the next few years as international teams bring more lithium-ion batteries to the station, which is more than 200 miles from Earth.

The missions require meticulous planning, and robots do as much of the work as possible before astronauts take the risk of venturing into space. In the busy days before a spacewalk, the crew help to prepare and fit their colleagues' spacesuits, which function as mini-spacecraft once they step outside. **NYT**

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

WORDLY WISE

DEALING WITH GLOBAL WARMING MEANS WE HAVE TO STOP WASTE.

— DAVID ATTENBOROUGH

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

NOT SO BASIC

Inequality deepens faultlines, but a handout, framed as rich versus poor, is hardly the answer

FIRST, IT WAS the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana targeted at small and marginal farmers by the outgoing NDA government just two months before Lok Sabha elections, with a commitment to pay Rs 6,000 annually. Now it is the Congress that has announced a minimum income guarantee scheme — the Nyuntam Aay Yojana, which promises to provide Rs 6,000 a month or Rs 72,000 annually to 20 per cent of the poorest households in the country. Apart from these, some states, too, have already unveiled similar schemes. There are two features in the schemes announced by the two parties, one of which is that both are clearly driven by electoral opportunism. The other notable fact is that both are silent on what they plan to do with existing welfare schemes. There is no doubt and, as many economists have acknowledged, that cash transfer, especially when it is unconditional, is the way forward. It is seen as less patronising, in step with the market economy and providing the poor a choice. But what is unfortunate is the manner in which Rahul Gandhi frames what he calls a "ground breaking idea." He says if Narendra Modi can give money to the richest, the Congress can give it to the poorest. In juxtaposing the two, he reinforces the demonisation of capital and fails to acknowledge what industry does best — create wealth, jobs and growth for the economy.

The issue is not really about finding additional resources — estimated to be Rs 3.6 lakh crore — for such a scheme. What presents a real political economy challenge is eliminating or phasing out some of the welfare schemes, including inefficient subsidies such as that on urea. Instead, governments find it politically expedient to raise fresh revenues by taxing the rich, which only serves to disincentivise the job creators, rising entrepreneurs and innovators. Economic reforms in India have been slow and it's only over the last two decades that the 7-7.5 per cent growth rate has become the new norm. Poverty levels have been falling but because of poor skills, agrarian distress and glaring gaps in the health-education ecosystem, millions of young men and women are in despair when it comes to earning enough to meet their rising aspirations. This explains why there is a felt need to address the problem of endemic poverty through a Basic Income scheme with experiments underway in many countries to counter the backlash arising from rising inequality.

In a country with a large number of poor, the only antidote to poverty is sustained double-digit growth over the next 20-30 years. This alone will create jobs, helping India reap its demographic dividend, and, in the process, lift millions out of poverty. This will require governments to simultaneously create an enabling environment for the young and for reviving the animal spirits of entrepreneurs and businessmen and women. A handout may be good politics but it's a leg-up that's both good politics and economics.

LIKE COPENHAGEN

The city's journey to becoming carbon neutral could offer lessons to civic authorities around the world

LAST YEAR, IN the run-up to the UNFCCC's summit at Katowice, 18 climate scientists released a report targeted at urban policymakers. The 30-page document was a follow-up to the IPCC's seminal report, which had stressed on the urgency of keeping global warming to less than 1.5ºC above pre-industrial levels. Cities, noted the scientists, hold the key — nearly 75 per cent of the global carbon footprint is due to urban activities. Mayors of several cities promised to act on the report's recommendations. And on Monday, Copenhagen became the first city to present a plan to cancel out its carbon footprint by 2025.

The Danish capital has already reduced its GHG emissions by more than 40 per cent compared to 2005. Nearly 45 per cent of people who live in and around Copenhagen use bicycles to commute. The city also has specially-designated roads for cyclists and uses waste to generate electricity. For every unit of fossil fuel it consumes, Copenhagen plans to sell commensurate amounts of renewable energy. By the end of this year, everyone living in the Danish capital will be half-a-mile from a subway station. "Cities can change the way we behave, the way we are living, and go more green. Mayors, more than national politicians, feel the pressure to take action. We are directly responsible for our cities and our citizens, and they expect us to act," Copenhagen's mayor Frank Jensen has said.

Well-connected and pedestrian-friendly cities have a relatively low carbon footprint. The report of the climate scientists, released before the Katowice summit, recommends the use of "information and communication technologies to optimise public transportation efficiency, and enable vehicle sharing". It also advocates the use of "energy-efficient buildings and infrastructure that have low or near zero-emissions". The scientists surmise that all this will require cooperation between local, provincial and national governments. That remains the Achilles heel for cities in most parts of the world. Delhi's never-ending pollution crisis, for example, has produced unsavoury bouts of bickering between the Centre, the city's government, its municipality and other environmental agencies. And Copenhagen's mayor has failed to persuade Denmark's government to impose restrictions on diesel-guzzling vehicles in the city. But it is also becoming increasingly clear that mayors, town planners and other local authorities hold the key to the success of national commitments to mitigate global warming. The Danish capital's experience could hold lessons for civic authorities around the world.

AYA RAM, SUKH RAM

Former telecom minister returns to Congress. His journey is remarkable and telling

IT WAS PAST midnight when the tellers called in by the CBI to count the cash stacked in bags and suitcases in Sukh Ram's palatial bunglow in Mandi completed their task. Rs 3.66 crore, they pencilled in the amount. The CBI claimed that Sukh Ram, a Cabinet minister in the P V Narasimha Rao government, had been paid off for a telecom contract. That day in August 1996, for many, corruption ceased to be an abstract idea, acquired a new face. However, it appears that the taint has not taken the sheen off Sukh Ram, who continues to be courted by the BJP and the Congress. On Monday, the 91-year-old politician rejoined the Congress, his grandson in tow.

Evidently, the weight of corruption allegations didn't sink Sukh Ram's political career. Soon after the CBI raid, the Congress, which Sukh Ram represented as MLA and MP many times since winning his first election from Mandi in 1962, expelled him. Unfazed, he formed the Himachal Vikas Congress and won the Mandi assembly seat in the 1998 assembly election. The HVC, with five MLAs, supported the BJP government. Ahead of the 2004 general election, Sukh Ram wrapped up his outfit and rejoined the Congress. Two years ago, he left the Congress to join the BJP; his son, Anil Sharma, is currently a minister in the Jairam Thakur ministry.

The world of telecom has changed beyond recognition since Sukh Ram left the ministry. So, too, has the idea of public corruption. A successor of Sukh Ram in the ministry, Andimuthu Raja, was accused of presiding over a scam estimated at Rs 1.76 lakh crore. The 2G cost the UPA the 2014 election, but Raja's name has since been cleared. While Sukh Ram eyes another battle in Himachal, Raja has hit the campaign trial in the Nilgiri hills. Meanwhile, corruption has taken the name of an aircraft and become a slogan on T-shirts.

If you want to help the poor

There is a way to deliver a minimum income guarantee to India's citizens — but Congress hasn't found it

JAYATI GHOSH

THE CONGRESS PARTY'S recent declaration that, if voted to power, it will seek to ensure a minimum income to 20 per cent of the poorest households in the country, is laudable in intent. It also brings back policy attention to the penury and insecurity that continue to plague much of India's population, and particularly the most destitute. But, as presented, it is completely unworkable — and if the Congress is really serious about the goal of eliminating poverty, it will have to think of a different way of reaching it.

Consider the broad outlines of the scheme that was announced. The proposed minimum income has been set at Rs 12,000 per month. This is a remarkably high level, given that minimum wages in most states are well below this and even the remuneration by the central government to anganwadi workers and ASHAs is less than one-third this amount. The bottom 20 per cent of households are to be provided a cash transfer directly into their bank accounts, of a maximum of Rs 6,000 per month (or Rs 72,000 per year) which presumably will bring them up to this level. Around 50 million households are expected to benefit from this.

The fiscal costs of this are not as much as might be imagined. At Rs 3,60,000 crore, the maximum anticipated expenditure amounts to just under 2 per cent of GDP. This is only one-third of the amount that is regularly given away as tax concessions to corporates and rich individuals, and there are many ways of raising such an amount that are available to a committed government. Of course, if this is to replace any other government spending then the matter becomes more problematic, because other welfare schemes (like maternity benefits, scholarships, etc) have different and very specific purposes. That is why the statement of a Congress spokesperson that other schemes will be "rationalised", raises major concerns.

The criticisms of this scheme are not about cost. Rather, they are about its workability and the possibility of other and better ways of using fiscal resources. The identification of households is just the first problem. Contrary to what is being claimed, the Socio-Economic and Caste Census conducted in 2011-12 did not even attempt to measure the incomes of households. Instead, it used a variety of other metrics to estimate multidimensional poverty, which, in turn, became the basis for identifying possible beneficiaries of schemes intended for the poor.

> The criticisms of this scheme are not about cost. Rather, they are about its workability and the possibility of other and better ways of using fiscal resources. The identification of households is just the first problem. Contrary to what is being claimed, the Socio-Economic and Caste Census conducted in 2011-12 did not even attempt to measure the incomes of households. Instead, it used a variety of other metrics to estimate multidimensional poverty, which, in turn, became the basis for identifying possible beneficiaries of schemes intended for the poor.

Incomes are notoriously hard to measure or estimate: The few surveys (such as the India Human Development Surveys) that have tried to measure income have done so for a much smaller sample (not a full census of all households) and on the basis of a long, time-consuming questionnaire that requires additional estimations by investigators. In any case, incomes change over time. Those who were classified as poor in 2011-12 may not be so today, while others may have become poor in the meantime.

Trying to measure incomes today would obviously face the problem of respondents wanting to game the system by reporting incomes lower than those they actually receive. With self-employed workers — currently around half of the workforce — such measurement becomes even more difficult if not impossible. Even regular and casual paid workers in informal work often have incomes that vary by week and month. To establish the bottom 20 per cent would require estimating the incomes of everyone — a logistical nightmare, and an administratively expensive and oppressive process.

Then the process of delivery of these cash incomes to the identified poor would pose another set of massive problems. The poorest and most destitute people in the country tend to live in far flung and more backward regions, with poor access to basic banking and other infrastructure. Those fondly believing that the JAM trinity — Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and mobile telephony — would somehow provide a technological fix to this problem, have clearly refused to look at and learn from the massive exclusions and other problems created by Aadhaar in other public service delivery, including cash transfers.

Instead of embarking on a massive administrative exercise with uncertain benefits, it is possible to think of another combination of public interventions that would actually ensure minimum income to a much larger proportion of the population.

This is another trinity, and arguably, a more desirable one: Universal basic services, universal employment guarantee and universal pensions. In other words, provide good quality public services, including in health and education, for all, including through a significant expansion of regular public employment in these services; provide 100 days of work at the minimum wage to all adults (not per household, but to every adult man or woman) in both urban and rural areas and include some skilled work and training elements in such employment; and provide universal non-contributory pension at half the minimum wage to the elderly and those who cannot work because of disability.

This combination would actually be much more effective in ensuring a minimum income guarantee to all adults — and therefore to households as well. It would be more democratic because it would be universal in scope, with self-selection in work driving the employment in public works programmes. It would enable more extensive and better quality delivery of public services, which in turn would generate a better quality of life for the entire population, and create a healthier and more educated population. It would be less unequal in scope and not create divisions between people and disaffection because of unwarranted inclusion or unjustified exclusion of some in an income transfer scheme. It would ensure social security and dignity to those who cannot work any more because of old age or disability.

All this would create significant multiplier effects that would lead to major secondary increases in economic activity. So there would be a major positive impact on employment, both directly and indirectly, and this would encompass skilled work as well. So job creation — such a major concern in today's economy — would also be galvanised.

The total costs of such a combination are only about three times the proposed income guarantee scheme for the poorest, but it would affect the bulk of the population, ensure better health and education access and create the grounds for a more equal society. Because of multiplier effects on income, the government would get more tax revenues that would make the net costs much lower.

If the Congress — or indeed, any party — is serious about eliminating poverty, then this combination is more feasible, more effective, and a more just solution.

The writer is professor of economics, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi

AN ACT OF REALISM

Why Modi government was right to boycott Pakistan Day celebration in Delhi

K P NAYAR

THE PAKISTAN National Day reception at their High Commission in New Delhi had been an irritant in bilateral relations for so long that it is best the Narendra Modi government finally drew the curtains on Indian participation in the celebration last week. For decades, so much thought has been wasted within the Indian government on this one event and successive ministers, foreign secretaries, joint secretaries in the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and personnel of intelligence agencies have lost sleep over how to handle this reception year after year.

Twenty-four years ago, while working for this newspaper, I became a collateral casualty of the diplomatic attrition between India and Pakistan at the national day reception hosted by then High Commissioner Riaz Khokhar, who was a notoriously effective India-baiter. A week before the reception, after much thought, the Pakistan division of MEA proposed the name of R L Bhatia, then Minister of State for External Affairs, as the chief guest for the event. Bhatia was actually chosen as an insult to the Pakistanis. In those days, unlike now, the Vice President used to grace the national day receptions of most major countries, certainly of friendly neighbours like Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Bhatia was only a minister of state. Despite his stellar record in winning successive Lok Sabha elections from Amritsar, it was widely known that he was a non-entity in the P V Narasimha Rao government. By sending Bhatia as the chief guest, Rao's intention was to convey to Pakistan that his government would not waste any of its better talent to rub shoulders with Pakistanis.

> Pakistan's national day receptions held in a hostile environment have not promoted bilateral relations with India. The Modi government has shown realism in calling this spade a spade.

The previous year, then foreign secretary, J N Dixit, had got Rao's approval to send A K Antony, the cabinet minister for civil supplies, consumer affairs and public distribution, as the chief guest. The arguments in favour of Antony were somewhat similar to those that favoured Bhatia in 1995. Antony was not yet a heavyweight in the Union Cabinet. Besides, he did not speak Hindi or Punjabi, his conversational English was then not very strong. Most of all, in his trademark Kerala *mundu* and white khadi slack shirt, he would stick out like a sore thumb among the sherwanis and other customary attire that Pakistanis wear to ceremonial functions. The message that Antony's presence was meant to convey was that "we are different from you".

By the time Bhatia arrived at the High Commission, Khokhar had seated a group of Hurriyat Conference leaders in the space reserved for the chief guest from the Indian government. The Indian minister was made to stand on the lawns. Bhatia kept his dignity and left soon after the national anthems of both countries had been played. New Delhi's English media had then been heavily influenced by senior journalists who were born on the other side before Partition. Some of them were also regulars at the Wagah border carrying candles on August 14 every year.

This episode was underplayed by most of the national media. But this newspaper carried my story about the insult to the Indian chief guest by his Pakistani host. After Parliament was in tumult over the incident, Salman Haidar, who had not even completed a month as foreign secretary, was forced to summon Khokhar to MEA for an explanation.

The catch was that I was not present when Bhatia was treated shabbily. Khokhar knew it because he had sent a wreath to the cremation of my mother who died two days earlier. So, instead of being pulled up by the foreign secretary, it was Khokhar who gave Haidar a dressing down. This journalist who wrote a "sensational" story did not even come for my reception, the high commissioner told Haidar. Such stories are being leaked to the media by your officers, Khokhar alleged. Officers in MEA are out of control and you — the foreign secretary — cannot discipline them, he thundered. How do I know this? The note-taker wrote a factual account of the meeting, which I got to see.

Were such contretemps worth the time, energy and resources of the government? Pakistan's national day receptions held in a hostile environment have not promoted bilateral relations with India. The Modi government has shown realism in calling this spade a spade.

The writer is a former diplomatic editor of The Indian Express

MARCH 27, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIAN EXPRESS

Egypt and Israel sign treaty to end 30 years of war

IDI FIGHTS TANZANIA

THE UGANDAN PRESIDENT, Idi Amin, said he was surrounded by Tanzanian tanks but was prepared to fight his way out, using only 20 loyal men against 20,000 enemy troops. "I'm looking forward to having breakfast with the enemy," said Amin through a presidential aide who telephoned reporters in Nairobi. The Uganda radio, monitored in Nairobi, carried a similar report after Amin personally telephoned the newsroom. According to Amin, he could see 12 Tanzanian tanks from the window of his official residence. Amin said the armour had arrived during the night and had cut off his residence in Entebbe from Kampala, the capital 32 km away. The report, if true, would signify a major blow to Amin's military supply routes. Most of the weapons and soldiers reportedly supplied by Libya this month were flown into Entebbe.

ISRAEL-EGYPT PEACE

PRESIDENT ANWAR SADAT OF Egypt and Prime Minister Menachem Begin of Israel today signed a peace treaty at the White House at a moving ceremony presided over by President Carter. In the next few months Israel will quit all occupied Egyptian territory under arrangements worked out at Camp David, and initiate a process which could lead to Palestinian autonomy and later independence or result in more war.

ARAB VS ISRAEL-EGYPT

ARAB FOES OF the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty protested the pact with bombs, demonstrations, strikes and raging threats on Monday. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat vowed to "chop off the hands" of US president Jimmy Carter, Egypt leader Anwar Sadat and Israel PM Menachem Begin, a threat that sent excited guerillas into Beirut's streets firing their weapons into the air. Caution over the start of an uncertain peace dampened any prepeace euphoria in Egypt and Israel. Arab governments prepared to mount economic sanctions against Egypt. In Teheran, protesters took over the Egyptian embassy.

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Catering to US interests will hurt the EU."

—GLOBAL TIMES CHINA

C R Sasikumar

Tolerating the corrupt

Definition of corruption is constantly being overtaken as new ways of being corrupt are invented. The need of the hour is great men and women

FALI NARIMAN

HAS THE CAMPAIGN against corruption succeeded? I am not at all sure it has. Let me tell you why.

When talking of corruption, we always make a common mistake — to use the number of laws enacted or convictions obtained as an index of the fight against corruption. Wrong.

The only real index is the visible degree of tolerance of corruption amongst people who individually abhor it — or at least say that they abhor it.

Over the years, it seems to me we have come to tolerate it more and more — not less and less. For instance, in the forthcoming general elections I don't think any political party in the country, major or minor, national or regional, has raised the issue of corruption in public life in a big way.

In our part of the world, people's expectations were and unfortunately still are:

Whatever be the form of government, be sure that corruption will ultimately corrode it.

An Australian author has criticised a proposal made last year by the then Australian government in establishing what was then called the Commonwealth Integrity Group and he quotes one appellate judge in Australia saying: "This kind of integrity commission is one you would have when you don't want to have an integrity commission. it creates a wall behind which corrupt public officials can hide. (it was and is). like a colander — it would be really good to make rice in it, it's got so many holes."

The same goes for our vigilance commissions, the CBI and the lot. They are all like colanders (with too many holes in them). Recent events, too close, too embarrassing to recall, have proved it.

I have a book in my library — a fat book of about 800 pages and it is called 'Bribes: The intellectual history of a moral idea', by John T Noonan Jr. Noonan believes that the fight against corruption will succeed ultimately because, as he puts it: "The nature of bribes is antithetical to the nature of human power in its full development". And the author ventures a prediction. It reads as follows: "Just as slavery was once a way of life and now has become obsolete and incomprehensible, so the practice of bribery in the form of exchange of payment for official action will become obsolete."

But then, let me be the Devil's Advocate and tell you that "slavery" did "become obsolete" in the USA by the passing of the 13th Amendment (to the US Constitution) — but it was by Abraham Lincoln buying over a couple of Congressman to make up the two-thirds majority required for passing the 13th Amendment to the US Constitution!

The anti-corruption laws that have been brought on the statute book in India have so far exhibited a marked tendency to grind slowly: Too slowly for the likes of that great one-time doer: Central Vigilance Commissioner N Vittal (1998-2002). Which of us can forget him?

When in office, he had publicly "named" 94 civil servants who were under investigation (that is, who were accused of corruption on the basis of documentary evidence, but not yet charged in any court of law). It was on his instructions that their names were posted on the Internet.

"Sue me if you dare", Vittal appeared to say, but no one sued him. His bravado had struck a sympathetic chord amongst many people — myself included! Vittal retired from government service decades ago and has been succeeded by CVCs who have not been half as effective as he was. They say that corruption in politics is as old as the hills. But never forget that in India it is older!

In the Arthashastra (4th century BC), it is written: Just as it is impossible not to taste honey or the poison that one may find at the tip of one's tongue, so it is impossible for one dealing with government funds not to taste a little bit of the king's revenue. Just as it is impossible to know whether a fish moving in the water is drinking it, so it is impossible to find out when government servants employed in government work are taking money for themselves. Beautiful imagery!

The anti-corruption laws that have been brought on the statute book in India have so far exhibited a marked tendency to grind slowly: Too slowly for the likes of that great one-time doer: Central Vigilance Commissioner N Vittal (1998-2002). Which of us can forget him? When in office, he had publicly 'named' 94 civil servants who were under investigation (that is, who were accused of corruption on the basis of documentary evidence, but not yet charged in any court of law). It was on his instructions that their names were posted on the Internet.

"Corruption" is also one of the most elastic of words in the English language. To every individual, it is something of which he or she disapproves.

Some years ago, at a seminar of the International Bar Association held in Berlin, Jeremy Pope (of Transparency International) gave what then struck me as the most comprehensive, and yet the most concise definition. He said: "Corruption is the misuse of public power for private profit." But subsequent events have shown that his definition was not all-embracing, because there are simply no limits to where, when or how corruption rears its ugly head.

Cricketers, footballers, cyclists do not hold any public office, and yet they exercise moral power — the power to instil idealism among millions of sport-loving fans. Such fans feel cheated when a player, due to corrupt motives, plays badly or does not play well. Pope's definition needs restructuring.

The definition of corruption keeps on requiring restructuring as time passes, as more ways to be corrupt are invented, but meanwhile I have a suggestion.

There are two types of people in this world — those who want to be somebody and those who want to do something. As the great book says: "Whatsoever a great man doeth, that other men also do; the standard he setteth up, by that the people go."

The need of the hour, then, is great men (and women). And quite frankly they are, as yet, in extremely short supply.

The writer is a constitutional jurist and a senior Supreme Court advocate

Forecasters of fantasy

RSS must rein in such people in their midst

SUDHEENDRA KULKARNI

RASHTRIYA SWAYAMSEVAK SANGH (RSS), the ideological mother of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and other Sangh Parivar organisations, has two conceptual and psychological fixities when it comes to the past and future of India. One, it believes that India is a Hindu Rashtra *de facto*, and should become so *de jure*. Two, India was Akhand Bharat yesterday, is not so today because of Partition in 1947, but should become one again tomorrow.

Many great Indians in the pre-1947 era who were opposed to the RSS ideology, were also against India's Partition. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, passionately wanted India to remain united. There was, however, a fundamental difference between the Gandhian and RSS approach to unity which remains even today. Gandhi wanted India to remain one not as a Hindu Rashtra but on the basis of the lofty principle of Hindu-Muslim unity. His "weapon" for achieving this goal was mutual love, fraternity and respect for democratic aspirations. In contrast, the RSS believes in Hindu supremacy and the power of military superiority.

In recent years, the RSS does not advocate "Akhand Bharat" as openly and frequently as it used to do in the past. Because, curiously, a growing section of the support base of the BJP-RSS has come to believe that Partition was actually good for India because it got rid of a large population of Muslims, who, had they remained in united India, would have reduced the Hindus' numerical majority. The creation of Pakistan and Bangladesh as separate nations, they reckon, has made it easier for the post-1947 truncated India to pursue the goal of "Hindu Rashtra". However, even as the Sangh wrestles with its own fixity about Akhand Bharat, some of its leaders, often, become such over-enthusiastic warriors for their cause that they throw all rationality to the wind.

One of them is Indresh Kumar, a senior RSS leader who was deputed by the organisation to establish the Muslim Rashtriya Manch (MRM) in 2002. Consider, for example, a report in this newspaper 'Pakistan to be part of India after 2025: RSS leader Indresh Kumar" (IE, March 17). Speaking at a function in Mumbai, he outlandishly prophesied: "You can take it down that five-seven years later, you will get a chance to buy a house or do business somewhere in Karachi, Lahore, Rawalpindi and Sialkot." The basis of his *bhavishya vani* (forecast)? "A Bharatiya Union of Akhand Bharat on the lines of European Union can take shape." And why does he think this can happen? "The Indian government has taken a tough line on the Kashmir issue for the first time. This is because the Army acts on political willpower, and now, the political willpower has changed."

Some people in the Sangh seem to have been so carried away by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "muscular" response to Pulwama that their extrapolation of the future political consequences of IAF's attack on Balakot has reached extreme limits. Kumar's utterances lend themselves to only two interpretations, both of which are irrational. One, Modi, after he returns to power (this unstated part of the forecast is, presumably, not open to question), will show such heightened political willpower that the Indian Armed Forces will strike Pakistan relentlessly for the next five-six years until our western neighbour meekly surrenders, and becomes a part of the Bharatiya Union. Alternatively, Pakistan will be so overjoyed with Modi's return to power that they will immediately offer talks with him on becoming a part of said Bharatiya Union.

Would Bangladesh also willingly come forward to join the Bharatiya Union? Kumar has no doubts because: "We have ensured a government in Dhaka of our liking." He, of course, believes that patriotic Bangladeshis have no reason to be livid at this admission of Indian interference in the elections in their country. Now, look at Kumar's further extrapolation about the military conquest of China. "We will not be needing permission from China to go to Mansarovar." Why? Because even China is now scared of India. "We removed China from Doklam. We defeated it."

After Doklam and Balakot, India does not have to worry about Pakistan, Bangladesh or even mighty China. According to Kumar, India's real "enemies" are inside. Now, how are they to be dealt with? His prescription: India needs new "laws against "traitors" so that there is no Naseeruddin Shah, Hamid Ansari or Navjot Sidhu.

Kumar has created a bit of problem here by including former vice president Hamid Ansari in the list of "traitors". He has tarred the reputation of a fellow luminary of the Sangh Parivar, finance minister Arun Jaitley, with the brush of dishonesty. Recall how Jaitley came to the rescue of PM Modi when the latter had egregiously alleged, in a public meeting before the 2017 assembly elections in Gujarat, that both Ansari and Manmohan Singh had held a secret meeting with Pakistanis at Mani Shankar Aiyar's residence in New Delhi. To end the uproar in Parliament, Jaitley had to say in Parliament: "Any such perception [that PM Modi's speech questioned Ansari's and Singh's commitment to India] is erroneous. We hold these leaders in high esteem, as well as their commitment to India." The inference is obvious. Since both Kumar and Jaitley cannot be right about Ansari, the latter has been adjudged as untruthful by the RSS leader.

Albert Einstein was right: "Only two things are infinite, the universe and human stupidity, and I'm not sure about the former." But, in this case, stupidity can also be scary. One hopes the saner elements in the RSS will rein in such forecasters of fantasy in its midst. As for the rest of us, we must fearlessly continue to strive to build a Bharat — and also achieve Bharat-Pakistan-Bangladesh-China co-existence — based on the Gandhian tenets of love, non-violence, equality and friendly cooperation.

The writer was an aide to India's former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee

Dead end on the left

Political parties must understand why people are turning towards RSS, BJP

MANMOHAN VAIDYA

A YOUNG GIRL I met at the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) this year mentioned that the Left influence was quite evident in the selection of topics as well as speakers. She also narrated a conversation she had with her team leader, a self-proclaimed left activist. The team leader told her that the well-known lyricist, Prasoon Joshi, was not invited to JLF because "he had become a right-winger" as was evident from his lyrics in *Manikarnika*. Literature for the Left is a tool to invoke revolution, to take a stand against State oppression.

Now, it is the prerogative of the organisers to decide whom to invite. Two years ago, the festival organisers decided not to retract invitations sent out to Dattatreya Hosabale and me despite opposition to us speaking at JLF. This year they invited Ramesh Patange, which I consider a positive step. In fact, this year they also invited Prasoon Joshi but he could not make it due to ill-health. The observation made by the young girl about the "left activist" was in the same context.

It is worth highlighting the hypocrisy of the Left. On the one hand, they are self-proclaimed warriors of free speech, considering even genuine criticism as an assault on their freedom of expression, and, on the other, they do not shy away from forcefully suppressing any viewpoint that is not to their liking. Hence, it was not at all surprising that two years ago, when the organisers of the JLF invited RSS speakers for the first time ever, the Left was incensed. Senior communists leaders like Sitaram Yechury boycotted the festival. The RSS is a grass roots organisation which exists despite serious opposition from the establishment, only because it enjoys the support of the people of India. Thanks to the common people of Bharat, standing solidly behind the Sangh, its strength and influence has only increased over time. The Left, on the other hand, has consistently lost popular support. Today, the Left's political dominance is restricted to one state in the south.

Filmmaker and author Vivek Agnihotri shares his experiences with this illiberal Left in his book, *Urban Naxals*. He narrates how he and his team were physically manhandled at Jadavpur University by women student activists in 2016. The activists wanted to stop Agnihotri from screening his film, *Buddha in a Traffic Jam*. Agnihotri simply suggested to the protesters that he was only screening a film, and they were free to not watch it. To which they replied, "You cannot show any movie here."

Coming back to the team leader's opposition to Joshi's lyrics in *Manikarnika*, the team leader's main problem was with the song "Main rahoon ya na rahoon, Bharat rehna chahiye" (I may or may not live, but Bharat must live on). One cannot help but wonder what possible objection anyone could have to lyrics as benign and as moving as this. Not unlike the Semitic religions, the Left, too, insists on only one version of the truth. No other narrative can be allowed to exist. If one chooses to differ, she loses the right to freedom of expression, rather even the right to live. Leftist ideology has been responsible for some of the worst political crimes in the history of the world. In Bharat too, the left bastions (Kerala and West Bengal) have a reputation of carrying out political murders. Such intolerance is against the spirit of Bharat and of Hindu dharma. Spiritual uplift forms the cornerstone of Bharatiya society and hence inclusiveness, freedom of thought and expression are inherent in the Hindu thought. It is this nature of the Hindu dharma that has allowed people of various social, religious and political strands to coexist peacefully in Bharat since time immemorial.

I am reminded of this story of Swami Vivekananda. Having introduced the rich cultural heritage of Bharat and Hindu dharma to the West, Swami Vivekananda was getting ready to depart from London for Bharat. The year was 1897. One of his British friends asked him, "Swamiji, how do you like your motherland now after four years' experience of the luxurious, glorious, powerful West?" Swamiji replied: "India I loved before I came away. Now the very dust of Bharat has become holy to me, the very air is now to me holy; it is now the holy land, the place of pilgrimage, the tirtha."

As his ship approached the shores of Bharat, Swamiji was overcome with emotion. He stood there with hands folded and eyes moist, gazing at the shoreline as if Bharat Mata had literally appeared before him. As soon as the ship pulled up in the harbour, Swami Vivekananda got off the deck and kneeled on the ground, and said, "All my worries have dissolved in the lap of my mother".

How have we come to this point where those born on this land, nurtured by its food, water and air, and, educated by the money of its tax payers, are somehow okay with Bharat tere tukde honge (India, you will be broken into pieces)? Political parties who nurture this mindset for their narrow vested interests or outsource their intellectual outreach to leftist groups, need to introspect about the fraudulence of their ideological premise. If not, the patriotic citizens of this country will be forced to act.

The writer is joint general secretary of the RSS

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

EXERCISE CAUTION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The fall of IS' (IE, March 26). After the military defeat of the ISIS in Syria, there is reason to be relieved, but no reason for complacency. Because the ISIS has just been militarily defeated and not ideologically. Now, it may not assert its existence in a consolidated way as it used to, yet it remains spread across the globe in a few pockets like the IS of Khorasan in Afghanistan. The danger of online mentoring, radicalising the youth and asserting identities individually and violently, looms over the world still.

Nirmal D Kapadia, *Gandhinagar*

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The fall of IS' (IE, March 26). The ISIS' control over territory in Syria has ended but jihadist fighters are still active in the region. Like the al-Qaeda, IS' tentacles extend far and wide. They are highly radicalised and battle-hardened and can even be expected to introduce new complexities to the Kashmir militancy. India must be on guard in this regard.

S S Paul, *Nadia*

LOTUS IN BENGAL

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Among the believers in Bengal' (IE, March 26). Not only a Bengali, even if one hails from Bengal in general, people say, "you must be a communist". The piece rightly says there is cultural and religious osmosis which is reflected in a changing Bengali culture. However, in a globalised world, this is inevitable. The current political problem in Bengal is the two extremes: Muslim vote-bank of Mamata Banerjee and the right-wing Hindutva of the BJP. The Bengali Muslims are among the most backward sections of Muslim population in the country. They need substantive governmental support and empowerment, which have to go beyond symbolic electoral sops The alternative to TMC's Muslim appeasement should not be the BJP's Hindutva. There is a need to traverse a middle path, that is, religion-neutral development for all.

H Upadhyay, *via email*

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

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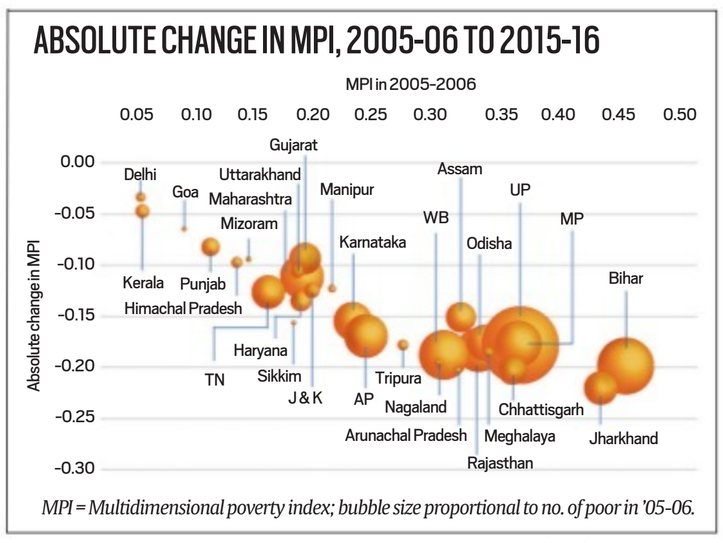
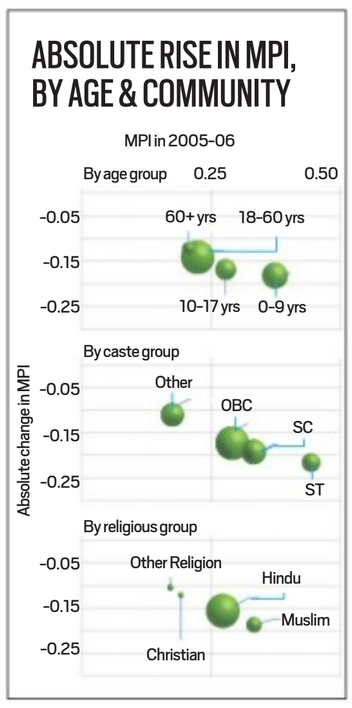
TELLING NUMBERS

27 cr Indians move out of poverty in 10 years, yet country still has highest number of poor: report



MPI = Multidimensional poverty index; bubble size proportional to no. of poor in '05-06.

Global MPI 2018 Report



INDIA HAS reduced its poverty rate drastically from 55% to 28% in 10 years, with 271 million people moving out of poverty between 2005-06 and 2015-16, according to the Global MPI 2018 Report prepared by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative. The report, covering 105 countries, dedicates a chapter to India because of this remarkable progress. However, India still had 364 million poor in 2015-16, the largest for any country, although it is down from 635 million in 2005-06.

The report measures MPI, or multidimensional poverty index, which it says can be broken down to show "who is poor" and "how they are poor". This factors in two measures, poverty rate as a percentage of the population, and intensity as the average share of deprivations that poor people experience. The product of these two is MPI. If someone is deprived in a third or more of 10 weighted indicators, the global index identifies them as "MPI poor".

In India, poverty reduction among children, the poorest states, Scheduled Tribes, and Muslims was fastest, the report says. Of the 364 million people who were MPI poor in 2015-16, 156 million (34.6%) were children. In 2005-06 there were 292 million poor children in India, so the latest figures represent a 47% decrease or 136 million fewer children growing up in multidimensional poverty.

Although Muslims and STs reduced poverty the most over the 10 years, these two groups still had the highest rates of poverty. While 80% of ST members had been poor in 2005-06, 50% of them were still poor in 2015-16. And while 60% of Muslims had been poor in 2005-06, 31% of them were still poor in 2015-16.

Bihar was the poorest state in 2015-16, with more than half its population in poverty. The four poorest states — Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh — were still home to 196 million MPI poor people, which was over half of all the MPI poor people in India. Jharkhand had the greatest improvement, followed by Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Nagaland. At the other end, Kerala, one of the least poor regions in 2006, reduced its MPI by around 92%.

Global findings

Worldwide, the report found, 1.3 billion people live in multidimensional poverty in the 105 developing countries it covered. This represents 23%, or nearly a quarter, of the population of these countries. These people are deprived in at least one-third of overlapping indicators in health, education, and living standards, it says.

While the study found multidimensional poverty in all developing regions of the world, it was seen to be particularly acute in Sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia. These two regions account together for 83% (more than 1.1 billion) of all multidimensionally poor people in the world.

Additionally, two-thirds of all multidimensionally poor people live in middle-income countries, with 889 million people in these countries experiencing deprivations in nutrition, schooling, and sanitation, just like those in low-income countries.

The report describes the level of global child poverty as staggering, with children accounting for virtually half (49.9%) of the world's poor. Worldwide, over 665 million children live in multidimensional poverty. In 35 countries, at least half of all children are MPI poor. In South Sudan and Niger, some 93% of all children are MPI poor.

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SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Mueller report: between the lines

Special Counsel has submitted report after probing alleged Russian interference in US presidential poll. What were these allegations, what else emerged, what does the report mean to Trump, his aides, rivals?

ON SUNDAY, US Attorney General William Barr wrote to lawmakers stating that an investigation conducted by Special Counsel Robert Mueller, who had submitted his investigation report Friday, has not found that President Donald Trump's campaign had conspired with Russia to influence the 2016 presidential election. A look at the events leading to the investigation, how much of its findings are now known and what they mean, and what could happen from here:

With the White House in the background, Special Counsel Robert Mueller walks to church on Sunday, the day a summary of his findings was released. *AP*

How is Russia supposed to have influenced a US presidential election?

Ahead of the election in 2016, reports emerged that Russian military intelligence officers, working for an agency known as GRU, hacked into the Democratic National Committee (DNC) and the Gmail account of John Podesta, Hillary Clinton's campaign manager. Later, WikiLeaks released thousands of emails that Russian operatives had allegedly hacked from the DNC. This led to intelligence agencies probing Russian interference.

According to an indictment cited by *The New York Times*, operatives at Russian private firm Internet Research Agency, which allegedly has Kremlin ties, posed as Americans on Facebook and Twitter to mock Clinton and promote Trump. US intelligence agencies concluded that Russian President Vladimir Putin had ordered these influence campaigns even before Trump announced his run. Putin is seen as anti-Clinton, and is said to have been later drawn to Trump's Russia-friendly stances.

Why were President Trump's stances seen as Russia-friendly?

Trump has repeatedly praised Putin, feeding into speculation about his relationship with Russia.

In July 2016, the FBI opened a probe into connections between Trump associates and Russia. It probed one of Trump's campaign advisers, George Papadopoulos — who, the FBI later said, knew in advance about Russia's plans — as well as Trump associates Paul Manafort, Michael Flynn and Carter Page.

Flynn became national security adviser in January 2017. After Trump's victory, Flynn discussed with the Russian ambassador the sanctions that President Barack Obama had imposed on Russia over its alleged election interference, according to *The NYT*, which added that Flynn lied about the conversations to White House officials as well as federal investigators. He was eventually dismissed and criminal charges were pressed.

In March 2017, FBI director James B Comey testified before a House committee that the FBI was probing possible links between the Trump campaign and the alleged Russian effort. In May, agitated with the FBI's decision to go ahead with the probe, Trump fired Comey.

Days later, the the Justice Department appointed Mueller as Special Counsel.

What aspects did Mueller probe?

Mueller's appointment followed demands by Democratic lawmakers after Trump had dismissed Comey. Mueller's brief included investigating the extent of Russian interference, including possible involvement of Trump's associates and Trump himself, and whether Trump had obstructed justice by firing Comey.

Trump was frequently dismissive of the investigation, at times describing it as a "witch hunt". A month after Mueller's appointment, *The NYT* reported that Trump told his White House counsel, Don McGahn, to fire Mueller, but McGahn refused. In a later report, *The NYT* said that McGahn had talked extensively to Mueller's team. Later that year, McGahn stepped down.

How did the investigation progress?

Mueller's investigation indicted many in Trump's inner circle. Manafort and another senior campaign official, Rick Gates, were indicted on charges of financial crimes related to their work as consultants for a pro-Russian leader of Ukraine. *The NYT*, citing court papers, reported that Papadopoulos had pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his contacts with Russian intermediaries during the campaign. Later, Flynn also pleaded guilty to lying about his contacts with the Russians and agreed to cooperate with prosecutors.

Referring to court papers in 2018, *The NYT* said Mueller charged 13 Russians and three Russian companies with mounting the fraudulent social media campaign. A second indictment named the Russian military intelligence officers who had hacked and leaked Democratic emails during the campaign.

Did the probe not lead on to issues beyond the alleged Russian interference?

Yes, Mueller's team unearthed possible corruption relating to Trump in other matters. In Manhattan, prosecutors raided the residences and office of Trump's longtime lawyer, Michael Cohen, in connection with a probe into potential violations of campaign finance laws. This eventually threw the spotling on Trump's alleged sexual encounters. In August 2018, Cohen pleaded guilty to paying off two women in 2016 to silence them about such encounters with Trump. While the President himself has denied the affairs, Cohen testified that Trump had directed him to arrange the payments.

On matters relating to Russia, Cohen pleaded guilty to the charge that he had lied to Congress about how long Trump had pursued a real-estate project in Russia during 2016. According to Cohen, Trump had continued to negotiate, deep into the presidential campaign in 2016, over a proposed Trump Tower Moscow.

In February 2019, appearing before a House committee, Cohen made various other allegations against Trump. Displaying a cheque signed by Trump, Cohen said it was to reimburse him for hush money payments. In another allegation, he said Trump had tweaked the value of his assets to get loans or reduce taxes. He also claimed Trump had hinted that he should lie to Congress.

So, what's in the Mueller report?

According to a count by *The NYT*, Mueller charged 34 people with 199 counts leading to the submission of his report. With full details about its contents not made public, the news website Vox assessed what to make of the summary written by Attorney General Barr.

Mueller's report did conclude that the Ruusians tried to interfere in the campaign. However, it said (as quoted by Barr): "The investigation did not establish that members of the Trump Campaign conspired or coordinated with the Russian government in its election interference activities." That means Mueller at least could not prove Russian government officials worked with the Trump campaign, Vox explained.

On the charge of obstruction of justice, the report was quoted as saying: "While this report does not conclude that the President committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him." Vox notes how Barr and Deputy Attorney General R J Rosenstein interpreted this: "In cataloguing the President's actions, much of which took place in public view, the report identifies no actions that, in our judgment, constitute obstructive conduct, had a nexus to a pending or contemplated proceeding, and were done with corrupt intent."

Does that mean the matter is closed?

As Barr noted, Mueller has "referred several matters to other offices for further action". Among these, Vox said, are an investigation into Manafort's lobbying associates, while National Public Radio cited matters such as the potential financial fraud as testified by Cohen, besides the alleged tinkering of the value of Trump's assets.

With members of Congress from both camps demanding the full report, and with Barr indicating he would release more details, further revelations could emerge in connection with the alleged Russian effort, including the troll campaign and the hacking.

Bloomberg said "there is likely to be an epic political fight over whether anything from the inquiry directly or indirectly implicates... Trump in wrongdoing that may merit his impeachment, as some Democrats say, or whether it clears him".

What next in Nirav Modi extradition effort

RAHUL TRIPATHI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

ON FRIDAY, arrested jeweller Nirav Modi will appear in court in London. His counsel is likely to seek his release on bail, while the UK authorities will present India's case against him and the Interpol warrant based on which he was arrested, as a key accused in the Rs 13,500 crore PNB scam case.

The arrest by Scotland Yard officially sets the stage for the beginning of extradition proceedings, although it remains to be seen when and how fast New Delhi will be able to bring him back, if at all.

Appearing in court Friday. *PTI/file*

India, UK & extradition

India and the UK have an Extradition Treaty, signed in 1992 and in force since November 1993. To get Nirav Modi sent back to the country, Indian agencies will have to send an extradition request through diplomatic channels, besides sending a team of probe officials to assist the Crown Prosecution.

Interpol had issued a red corner notice on the request of Enforcement Directorate. Recently, British journalist Mick Brown of *The Daily Telegraph* tracked him on the streets of London. The arrest followed days later.

Extradition treaties are bilateral in character. Most of them, however, appear to follow a traditional set of principles, going by many judicial pronouncements. First, extradition applies only with respect to offences clearly stipulated as such in the treaty, and the accused is proceeded against only in connection with the offence for which his extradition was requested. Second, the offence for which extradition is sought should be an offence under the national laws of the requesting country as well as of the requested country. In the current context, Article 2 of the India-UK Extradition Treaty states that an extradition offence is one which, under the laws of each contracting state, is punishable by imprisonment for at least one year. Among the charges pressed in India against Nirav Modi, the CBI FIR includes IPC section 409 for criminal breach of trust, under which the maximum punishment is life imprisonment.

Previous extradition requests

India has not yet managed to secure any extradition from the UK under the treaty. The most recent request is for extradition of Vijay Mallya. Eight other requests are pending. These are for Rajesh Kapoor (2011) for forgery and fraud; Tiger Hanif (2004) for alleged involvement in terrorism; Atul Singh (2012) in connection with sex crimes; Raj Kumar Patel (2009) for forgery, Jatinder Kumar Angurala and Asha Rani Angurala (2014) for bank fraud and cheating; Sanjeev Kumar Chawla (2004) for cricket betting; and Shaik Sadiq (2004) for conspiracy and theft.

In addition, the UK has rejected extradition requests for Raymond Varley, Ravi Shankaran, Velu Boopalan, Ajay Prasad Khaitan, Virendra Kumar Rastogi and Anand Kumar Jain. Varley, wanted for sex crimes, claimed that he was suffering from dementia and he was not the man wanted in India. The UK court rejected India's request on the basis of his claim of dementia. The request for extradition of Shankaran, accused in the Navy war room leak, was rejected by the British court for lack of evidence. The requests for extradition of Boopalan, Khaitan, Rastogi and Jain, too, were rejected by the UK court on grounds of insufficient evidence.

On the other hand, Bangladeshi national Mohammad Abdul Shakur, wanted in the UK on murder charges, was extradited from India recently under the treaty.

A list of 60 fugitives who are wanted by India, and are reportedly hiding in Britain, has been shared between the two countries. The UK, for its part, has provided a list of 17 people whose custody it has sought under the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty.

How researchers used science to show Bengal famine was man-made

RITU SHARMA
AHMEDABAD, MARCH 26

RESEARCHERS HAVE used old weather data and modern simulation methods to reach a conclusion long acknowledged by historians — the Bengal famine of 1943-44 was not caused by an agricultural drought but was man-made. The new study, led by Prof Vimal Mishra of IIT Gandhinagar's civil engineering department, has been published in *Geophysical Research Letters*.

Soil moisture & famine

Using observations from weather stations and simulations with a hydrological model that estimated soil moisture content, the research reconstructed agricultural droughts and established a link between famines and agricultural droughts in India in the half-century between 1870-2016.

While precipitation data from 1901 onwards was available from the India Meteorology Department, the scientists developed a compatible product for 1870-1900, using observations from 1,690 stations spread across India. They estimated a measure called soil moisture percentile, or SMP. When the SMP was less than 20, it was categorised as drought.

Odd one out

The simulations showed that a majority of famines were caused by large-scale and severe soil moisture droughts that hampered food production. Out of six major famines during the period (1873-74, 1876, 1877, 1896-97, 1899, 1943), the researchers concluded that the first five were linked to soil moisture. The Bengal famine was completely due to the failure of policy during the British era, Prof Mishra said, describing the research as "part history and part science".

A family in Calcutta during the Bengal famine of 1943. *Wikipedia/public domain*

All but two of the famines were found consistent with the drought periods identified by the analysis. The exceptions were 1873-1874 and 1943-1944. The paper says there could be two reasons why the analysis did not identify these as drought periods — they were too localised, or the famine was caused by factors other than soil moisture deficits. For the 1873-1874 famine, which was localised to Bihar and Bengal, the paper concludes that it was the first of these two reasons. "Since the soil moisture drought in 1873 was centered on a relatively small domain, it was not identified by the... analysis," it says.

On the other hand, Mishra said: "The 1943 Bengal famine was not caused by drought but rather was a result of a complete policy failure during the British era."

Known & reinforced

Between 2 and 3 million are estimated to have died in the Bengal famine of 1943. Previous historical research and literature, as well as Satyajit Ray's *Ashani Sanket* (1973), have described how the Bengal famine was a result of British policy. During World War II, market supplies and transport systems were disrupted. This is attributed to British policies, and prioritisation of distribution of supplies to the military and other select groups.

The new study identified 1937-1945 as a "period under drought based on severity, area, and duration". "We find the drought was most widespread during August and December 1941 — prior to the famine. This was the only famine that does not appear to be linked directly to soil moisture drought and crop failures," Mishra said.

He cited British policies: "We find that the Bengal famine was likely caused by other factors related at least in part to the ongoing Asian threat of World War II including malaria, starvation, and malnutrition. In early 1943, military and political events adversely affected Bengal's economy, which was exacerbated by refugees from Burma. Additionally, wartime grain import restrictions imposed by the British government played a major role in the famine."

GOLD	RUPEE	OIL	SILVER
₹33,170	₹68.86	$66.52	₹39,100

*Indian basket as on March 25, 2019

SENSEX: 38,233.41 ▲ 424.50 **NIFTY:** 11,483.25 ▲ 29.00 **NIKKEI:** 21,428.39 ▲ 451.28 **HANG SENG:** 28,566.91 ▲ 43.56 **FTSE:** 7,191.11 ▲ 13.53 **DAX:** 11,369.60 ▼ 22.95

*International market data till 1900 IST

GLOBAL MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY INDEX DEVELOPED BY UNDP & OXFORD POVERTY AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

'Poverty down from 55% to 28% in a decade till 2015-16'

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

INDIA REDUCED its poverty rate sharply from 55 per cent to 28 per cent in ten years between 2005-06 and 2015-16, according to a new version of the global Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) developed by the United Nations development Programme (UNDP) and the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI). In India, a total of 271 million (27.10 crore) people moved out of poverty during these ten years, it said.

"The poorest groups in India — Muslims and Scheduled Tribes — reduced poverty the most over the ten years from 2005-06 to 2015-16," the report said. The multidimensional poverty index is based on a powerful list of 10 deprivations for poor. The dimensions of poverty range from deprivations of health facilities, education and living standards.

The MPI measures acute poverty and people experiencing multiple deprivations, for example, those who are both undernourished and do not have safe drinking water, adequate sanitation and clean fuel. These indicators are set to minimum international agreed standards in basic functioning. "While progress has been remarkable, the country still has the largest number of people living in multidimensional poverty in the world (364 million people). If one considers the 364 million people who are MPI poor in 2015-16, 156 million (34.5 per cent) are children. In fact, of all the poor people in India, just over one in four-27.1 per cent-has not yet celebrated their tenth birthday," it said.

Lower castes, Muslims, children still the poorest, but have seen the most dramatic cuts

But multidimensional poverty among children under 10 has fallen the fastest. In 2005-06 there were 292 million poor children in India, so the latest figures represent a 47 per cent decrease or a 136 million fewer children growing up in multidimensional poverty. "When considering the durable and lifetime consequences of childhood deprivation, particularly in nutrition and schooling, this is a tremendously good sign for India's future," it said.

The global MPI covers 105 countries in total, which are home to 77 per cent of the world's population, or 5.7 billion people. Of this proportion, 23 per cent of people (1.3 billion) are identified as multidimensionally poor.

The report said that across the 640 districts in India, the poorest district is Alirajpur in Madhya Pradesh, where 76.5 per cent of people are MPI poor,

Among states, Jharkhand had the greatest improvement, with Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and Nagaland only slightly behind. However, Bihar is still the poorest state in 2015-16, with more than half of its population in poverty. In 2015-16, the four poorest states — Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh — were still home to 196 million MPI poor people — over half of all the MPI poor people. A total of 113 million people — 8.6 per cent of India's people — live in severe poverty, the report, which also contains a case study in India.

According to the report, while traditional disadvantaged subgroups such as rural dwellers, lower castes and tribes, Muslims and young children are still the poorest in 2015-16, the landscape has improved dramatically, during the decade. These groups had the biggest reductions between 2005-06 and 2015-16, showing that they have been "catching up". Significantly, this trend marks a reversal from that observed from 1998-99 to 2005-06. During 1998-99 to 2005-06, these groups had the slowest progress and were left behind.

That being the case, even in 2015-16, half of the Scheduled Tribes are MPI poor, whereas only 15 per cent of the higher castes are. Every third Muslim is multidimensionally poor, compared to every sixth Christian. Two in five children under 10 years of age are poor (41 per cent), but less than one quarter of people aged 18 to 60 (24 per cent) are poor.

The sharp reduction happened in the UPA years (Congress-led UPA was in power from 2004-05 till 2013-14).

The average GDP growth rate during the UPA period was about 7.6 per cent.

'PANEL TO EVALUATE ALL ASPECTS OF THE UNSOLICITED OFFER'

Mindtree sets up panel to look at L&T open offer, drops buyback plan

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

MINDTREE ON Tuesday formed a committee of independent directors (IDC) to look into "unsolicited open offer" by Larsen & Toubro to give its recommendations and decided not to go ahead with its share buyback plan.

"All the independent directors will be members of the IDC, and the IDC has elected Apurva Purohit, Lead Independent Director, as the Chairperson of the IDC and spokesperson. The IDC will consider and evaluate all aspects of the unsolicited offer, taking into account all relevant facts, circumstances, data related to the company and industry and the interests of all stakeholders involved," Mindtree said in a stock exchange filing.

"After detailed deliberation and discussion, the board in its meeting, decided to immediately constitute the committee in the interest of all stakeholders to provide their reasoned recommendation in respect of the unsolicited offer by L&T for the consideration of the shareholders. This committee will discharge the legal obligations placed on the independent directors under the prevailing regulations with respect to providing reasoned recommendations on the unsolicited offer by L&T," the company said. This committee will be supported by independent legal and financial advisors to help it with its deliberations, it said.

Significantly, indicating the dilution of tough stance taken by Mindtree promoters against the L&T takeover offer, the company has decided not to go ahead with the buyback plan. A share buyback will bring down the public stake in the company while promoters stake will go up if they don't participate in the offer.

On March 18, L&T said that it has entered into an agreement with VG Siddhartha and his related entities — Coffee Day Trading Limited and Coffee Day Enterprises Limited — to acquire 20.32 per cent stake in the technology firm at Rs 980 per share aggregating to approximately Rs 3,269 crore. The takeover, involving market purchases and open offer, is expected to cost L&T over Rs 10,000 crore. L&T is aiming for 66.32 per cent stake in Mindtree.

According to the promoters, a hostile takeover by L&T, unprecedented in the IT industry, "could undo all of the progress we've made and immensely set our organisation back." "We don't see any strategic advantage in the transaction and strongly believe that the transaction will be value destructive for all shareholders," they said. The promoters of Mindtree are: Krishnakumar Natarajan (executive chairman), Subroto Bagchi (co-founder), Rostow Ravanan (CEO) and Parthasarathy NS (executive vice chairman and COO).

EXPLAINED

Dropping buyback plan a dilution of the tough stance

THE DECISION by the Mindtree board to not go ahead with the buyback plan indicates a dilution of the tough stance taken by the promoters of the Bangalore-based IT company against the L&T takeover offer.

A share buyback will bring down the public stake in the company while promoters stake will go up, if they don't participate in the offer. L&T made an open offer on Tuesday to acquire a 31 per cent stake in IT services firm Mindtree Ltd for Rs 5,030 crore.

Public sector banks dip into employees' pockets for capital

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

BANKS EMPLOYEES are willy-nilly contributing to the bailout of public sector banks hit by huge bad loans and losses. PSU banks have raised or are in the process of raising around Rs 5,000 crore from employees through the employee stock purchase scheme (ESPS) amid allegations of coercion by bank managements for forceful subscription of shares.

Some of the banks are arranging loans to their employees through other banks for subscribing to their shares. While some banks were offering discounts on the shares, employees of banks complained of coercive methods and branch-wise targets to raise the money. "Through ESPS, employees of PSU banks are forced to buy shares without analysing the buying capacity. Two banks have signed up with another bank to provide personal loan to their employees that too by violating the norms," said a bank employee who didn't wish to be named.

PSU banks which have availed of or planned the ESPS scheme to raise funds from employees include Allahabad Bank (Rs 315 crore), Union Bank (Rs 470 crore), Punjab National Bank (Rs 500 crore), United Bank of India, Syndicate Bank (Rs 538 crore), Bank of India (Rs 660 crore), Central Bank of India (Rs 270 crore), Oriental Bank of Commerce, Indian Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Canara Bank (around Rs 1,000 crore). "Branch-level bankers are being harassed over their unwillingness to buy banks shares. The management is forcing to take loan and buy shares under the ESPS scheme," said another employee of a PSU bank who preferred anonymity. "Regulations do not allow banks to offer loans to their own employees for purchasing shares under ESPS. Two banks have informally told their employees that they may take loans from Canara Bank should they want to purchase shares," complained the staffer of a nationalised bank.

Staff alleges forceful subscription of shares under stock purchase scheme

Most of the PSU banks have either raised funds or are in the process of raising funds through ESPS issues. "The object of the issue, apart from raising of long-term resources is to enable the bank to attract, retain and reward employees for our bank by sharing the value created by them and to motivate them to contribute to the growth and profitability of the company," Bank of Baroda said in an exchange filing. "Besides, the fund mop-up aims to shore up the capital adequacy and to fund the general business needs of the bank," BoB said.

Unions have come out against the share issues to employees. "They talk of sense of commitment to the bank. As employees, we do owe a sense of commitment to our duties and responsibilities but we do not believe that by purchasing some shares of the bank, we will be more committed to the Bank. We are always loyal and committed to the banks, even without owning some shares of the bank. Holding some shares of the bank will not add to our sense of commitment to our bank," said CH Venkatachalam, General Secretary, All India Bank Employees Association (AIBEA).

A section of employees feel that PSU banks and the government are using employees to recapitalise the banks which recklessly gave loans to shady promoters who in turn defaulted on the loans and some even fled the country. "They talk of selling the shares for profit when the share price goes up. Some managements are even tempting the employees that they can make profit by selling the shares when the prices go up. If the shares are to be sold when prices go up, then what will happen to the theory of sense of ownership? They want employees to become greedy and run after money," Venkatachalam said. Ramnath Pradeep, former Chairman and MD of Corporation Bank, said, "This scheme is supposed to be voluntary, and not mandatory. As there's a lock-in period of one year, employees may not be very enthusiastic. If there's no discount, why would somebody go for the share. You can always buy from the stock market."

A Bank of India official said, "The ESPS offer to employees was completely voluntary. It was offered at a discount of nearly 25 per cent. Around 2,600 employees did not subscribe to the offer." Refuting reports of coercion, a senior Syndicate Bank official said the issue which was offered at 25 per cent discount was a success with the bank raising around Rs 538 crore. "Employees were not forced to subscribe to the bank's employee stock purchase scheme. The subscription was purely voluntary," he said. PNB, Allahabad Bank, Union Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce did not respond to the mail sent by *The Indian Express*.

Jet to bring back 40 planes by April end

New Delhi: A day after the lenders put together a revival plan for Jet Airways the airline assured the government of bringing back into service 40 grounded aircraft by the end of April.

The cash-strapped airline is currently flying only 35 aircraft out of its total fleet strength of 119 due to non-payment to lessors.

Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola on Tuesday said that no more aircraft would be grounded by Jet Airways' lessors. **FE**

'ONLINE FOOD ORDERING MARKET GROWTH MAY TOUCH $17.02 BN BY 2023'

16% annual growth: India's online food ordering market is slated to grow at a CAGR (compound annual growth rate) of 16.2% to touch $17.02 billion by 2023, the study claims

95% respondents surveyed said they ordered food online owing to promotional offers and discounts

The growth in online food ordering market is due to rising number of women in working population in most metro cities, as per a study by Market Research Future

78% individuals surveyed said they order food as it is convenient

MARKET SHARE OF OTHER PLACES:

Bengaluru	20%
Mumbai	18%
Pune	17%
Delhi	15%
Hyderabad	12%
Other cities	18%

FE CFO AWARDS

High time banks got back to lending: Deepak Parekh

THE WINNERS

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT
Koushik Chatterjee, Executive Director & CFO, Tata Steel

CFO OF THE YEAR
Srinivas Phatak, Executive Director, Finance & IT, and Chief Financial Officer, Hindustan Unilever Limited

NEWSMAKER OF THE YEAR
Sashidhar Jagdishan, Chief Financial Officer, HDFC Bank

MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY

SMALL ENTERPRISES
Valiant Organics Limited ■ **Arvind Kanji Chheda,** Director & CFO
Jenburkt Pharma Limited ■ **Dilip Bhuta,** Whole Time Director & CFO
Multibase India Limited ■ **Satya Nagesh Ventrapragada**

MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
Eris Lifesciences Limited ■ **Sachin Shah,** CFO
Caplin Point Laboratories Limited ■ **D Muralidharan,** CFO
Balaji Amines Limited ■ **G Hemanth Reddy,** DIRECTOR & CFO
NOCIL Limited ■ **P Srinivasan,** PRESIDENT (FINANCE) & CFO

LARGE ENTERPRISES
Natco Pharma Limited ■ **Appa Rao SVVN,** CFO
P&G Hygiene Health Care Limited ■ **Prashant Bhatnagar,** CFO
GSK Consumer Healthcare Limited ■ **Vivek Anand,** CFO
Hindustan Unilever Limited ■ **Srinivas Phatak,** Executive Director, Finance & IT, and Chief Financial Officer

SERVICE INDUSTRY

SMALL ENTERPRISES
Alphageo (India) Limited ■ **Venkatesa Perumallu Pasumarthy,** CFO
Nesco Limited ■ **Dipesh R Singhania,** CFO
Shemaroo Entertainment Limited ■ **Hiren Gada,** CFO
Deep Industries Limited ■ **Rohan Shah,** CFO

MEDIUM ENTERPRISES
Kovai Medical Center & Hospitals Limited ■ **MK Ravindra Kumar,** CFO
TCI Express Limited ■ **Mukti Lal,** AVP & CFO
Newgen Software Limited ■ **Arun Kumar Gupta,** CFO
Shreyas Shipping Limited ■ **Rajesh Desai,** CFO

LARGE ENTERPRISES
Oracle Financial Services Limited ■ **Makarand Padalkar,** CFO
Crisil Limited **Sanjay Chakravarti,** CFO
L&T Technology Services Limited ■ **P Ramakrishnan,** CFO
Tata Elxsi Limited ■ **HV Muralidharan**

FE CFO awards

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

PUNISHMENT CAN'T be meted out for "bonafide financial transactions" that have gone wrong, HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh said on Tuesday, calling on risk-averse banks to get back to the business of lending at a time when certain sectors, such as real estate, are gasping for liquidity to survive.

Speaking at the FE CFO Awards function in Mumbai, Parekh said leverage and liquidity are the two Ls that a smart CFO has to be the guardian of. Leverage is a "double-edged sword" and while it helps scale up businesses and enhances returns, it is the very tool that has caused the downfall of many a business, he said. Liquidity or the lack of it is the other "bugbear". "Bankers have to get back to the business of lending. Companies have to get back to expanding and building India with financial discipline. Unviable institutions must be allowed to wind up and new bankruptcy system has to be strengthened to prevent long overdue and long legal battles," he said.

At a time when private capex has remained elusive for a long time, partly due to the fact that companies created huge capacities following indiscriminate lending by banks earlier, Parekh said businesses have erroneously believed that "ships can transform themselves into submarines and continue doing business despite being under water". "So as the CFO, it's your job to raise the red flag at the right time. Don't be a silent CFO, assuming things will sort out themselves; neither be a CFO who says I have sounded a warning which nobody followed. You have to show spine; you have to speak up ...."

With the advent of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), bankers have an excellent tool at their disposal to tackle the bad loan menace and the fear of losing their companies has prompted many promoters to settle cases after lenders have filed for insolvency proceedings at the NCLT, Parekh said.

"In easy liquidity conditions, lot of borrowing took place in the past. The merriment of the party continued as long as there was surplus liquidity and confidence in the system. But when the confidence is shaken, you all see the domino effect of that."

Although gross non-performing asset ratio in the banking system is expected to ease for the first time in almost a decade, it would still be as high as 10.3 per cent by the end of 2018-19 under the baseline scenario (from as much as 11.2 per cent a year before), according to the latest RBI projection.

"The amount of request (for liquidity) that I have been seeing in the past few months, I have never seen in the last 40 years," said the HDFC chairman.

Speaking at the event, Anant Goenka, executive director, the Indian Express Group, highlighted the evolving impression of CFOs towards marketing. Asserting that successful brands are much more important than their products, Goenka touched upon the changing focus of the world of advertising and marketing. In the 1950s, he said, brands were associated with products; by the 1990s, they were associated with customers and in the early 2000s, brands started to be associated with emotions. While some of the established brands such as Apple and Google have long resisted bait from fans to speak up against the Trump administration's policies, Goenka feels brands must also speak up, especially in polarising times like these, to display their human side.

Highlighting the crucial role of CFOs, FE's managing editor Sunil Jain said these samaritans work behind the scene, away from the limelight, to set things right in trying conditions. Earlier in a panel discussion on whether over-leverage has killed India Inc, moderated by FE's deputy managing editor Shobhana Subramanian, some of the panelists said a sustained uptick in private capex cycle is still 12-16 months away. Koushik Chatterjee, executive director and CFO at Tata Steel who also won FE's life-time achievement award, said the IBC has brought about a positive change in the credit culture. Seasonality doesn't matter much in capex decisions when companies are optimistic about the long-term growth story, he added.

The panelists included Ajay Srinivasan, chief executive officer, Aditya Birla Capital; Vishakha Mulye, executive director, ICICI Bank; Pradip Shah, founder, IndAsia Fund Advisors; and Amit Tandon, founder and MD, Institutional Investor Advisory Services India.

The winners of the FE CFO Awards along with chief guest HDFC Chairman Deepak Parekh and Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group in Mumbai on Tuesday. *Nirmal Harindran*

Associate Partners
Hiranandani | NEW INDIA ASSURANCE | MIDC | SAP Concur
Auto Partner: Volkswagen
Knowledge Partner: Deloitte.
Television Partner: BTVI
Outdoor Partner: BRIGHT

Targeted transfers at the poor is part of safety net, says Rajan

To a query on his criticism of RSS, Rajan said it is the "aims of majoritarian organisations" like that he is worried about

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

FORMER GOVERNOR of the Reserve Bank of India Raghuram G Rajan said targeted income transfers at the very poor have become staple of capitalism even as he criticised farm loan waivers as a tool to alleviate farm distress. He said the top priority for India should be of creating jobs.

"Targeted transfers at the very poor have become a staple of capitalism, that is part of the safety net. Doing it effectively and properly, I think, is something what we see in this country is a number of political parties are saying that we have become wealthy enough to be able to do it. But I still think it has to be done carefully and not layering one thing upon the other," he said Tuesday at the launch of his book — 'The Third Pillar - How Markets and the State leave the Community Behind'.

Rajan's comments come in the backdrop of the Congress party announcing a minimum income guarantee of Rs 6,000 per month to 20 per cent of India's poorest household if voted to power. The present government has already announced an annual income support of Rs 6,000 to farmers with land holding below two hectares.

He said India needs to focus on alleviating farm distress rather than loan waivers which are known to disrupt credit culture.

"First we need to worry about why people are so distressed and angry. There is a lot of agriculture distress. I personally believe that farm loan waivers are not the answers. But there are other answers," he said when asked about what should be the focus for the upcoming elections.

The other focus area should be creation of jobs which the people want. "I would say that one is start creating those jobs people want. Take care of the distress, but whatever measures you put, put them as a pathway for people to get those jobs rather than standing in the way of getting those jobs ... We can talk about the economic reforms that are needed, but jobs are task one," Rajan said.

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan at the release of his book 'The Third Pillar' in New Delhi. *PTI*

"I know one minister (in the Narendra Modi government) has said (that) how can we be growing at 7% and not have jobs. Well, one possibility is that we are not growing at 7%"

RAGHURAM RAJAN,
FORMER GOVERNOR, RBI

To a query on his criticism of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) in the book, he said: "I have no doubt there are lot of good people in the RSS and it has produced people like Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who I have great respect for. So it's not an indictment of every person there ... but the aims of majoritarian organisations like that (is what) I am worried about and its one example and there are many examples of majoritarian organisations. My worry is that for a very diverse country like India ... we simply cannot say that he belongs and she doesn't. I think we have to be integrated as a country and that's the country of civic nationalism," he said

When asked whether he would like to return to India in public service or even a political role, he said, "I am very happy where I am. But if there is an opportunity to be of use I will always be there."

Rajan is currently the Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago's Booth School of Business in the US.

Earlier in the day, Rajan expressed doubts over Indian economy growing at 7 per cent when not enough jobs were being created and said the current cloud over the GDP numbers must be cleared by appointing an impartial body to look at the data.

Rajan, who has also served as Chief Economist at the International Monetary Fund (IMF), said he had no idea what statistics are pointing at currently and "a revamp" was needed "to really figure out what India's true growth rate is".

"I know one minister (in the Narendra Modi government) has said (that) how can we be growing at 7 per cent and not have jobs. Well, one possibility is that we are not growing at 7 per cent," he told CNBC TV18, as per a PTI report. He did not name the minister. On doubts being raised by some over economic data after revision in growth rate, he said a clean-up act is needed and an impartial body appointed to look at the numbers.

"I just think that we need now to essentially clean up, find out what in fact is the source of confusion with the new GDP numbers, with the revisions etc. I would say setting up an impartial body to look at it is an important step to resorting confidence," he said. Rajan said the impartial body may throwback the same numbers, but "we absolutely need better confidence in our GDP numbers now given the back and forth we have had".

30-SHARE INDEX ENDS ABOVE 38K-MARK; NIFTY UP 129 POINTS

Sensex jumps 425 points

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

THE BENCHMARK Sensex on Tuesday rallied by 425 points to end above the 38,000-mark amid foreign fund inflows and positive global cues.

The 30-share Sensex which hit the day's high of 38,297.70 as buying pace gathered momentum towards the fag-end finally ended at 38,233.41, up 424.50 points, or 1.12 per cent. The Sensex had lost over 575 points in the previous two sessions, tracking a sell-off across global markets. The broader NSE Nifty climbed 129 points, or 1.14 per cent, to close at 11,483.25 Intra-day, it shuttled between 11,495.90 and 11,352.45.

Globally, Asian and European stocks bounced back, reversing part of their recent losses, as US Treasury yields edged higher, easing concerns about a recession in the world's largest economy. "After a subdued opening, market bounced back sharply and covered yesterday's losses due to positive global peers. Global growth outlook still remains a concern while rise in US 10-yr bond yield after two days of fall gave some respite to investor sentiment. The rebound was broad based except IT index due to strengthening rupee. Gradual fall in FII inflows added some caution among investors which may end up with some consolidation in the near term, after a sharp rally in the short term," said Vinod Nair, head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Reliance Industries emerged as a prominent gainer in the Sensex pack, spurting over 3 per cent. NTPC topped the gainers' chart in the Sensex pack, rallying 3.28 per cent, followed by SBI at 3.23 per cent. Other winners were Vedanta 3.18 per cent, ICICI Bank 2.75 per cent, Bajaj Finance 2.72 per cent, Yes Bank 2.71 per cent and Kotak Bank 2.60 per cent. Shares of Jet Airways soared for the second day, zooming nearly 7 per cent following the exit of founder and Chairman Naresh Goyal and his wife Anita from the board of the ailing airline.

Among sectoral indices, the bankex gained 2.19 per cent, power 1.70 per cent, PSU 1.31 per cent, metal 1.11 per cent, consumer durables 1.08 per cent, infrastructure 0.99 per cent, oil and gas 0.97 per cent, realty 0.73 per cent, healthcare 0.61 per cent, FMCG 0.13 per cent and capital goods 0.15 per cent. IT and teck indices, however, shed up to 0.58 per cent. The broader markets too were in a better shape in tandem with the overall trend, with the BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices gaining 1.09 per cent and 0.66 per cent.

In Asia, Japan's Nikkei surged 2.15 per cent, while Hong Kong's Hang Seng inched up 0.15 per cent, Singapore's Straits Times rose 0.55 per cent, Taiwan index gained 0.76 per cent and Korea's KOSPI advanced 0.18 per cent. However, Shanghai Composite Index fell 1.51 per cent. Among European markets, Paris CAC 40 rose 0.36 per cent but Frankfurt's DAX shed 0.10 per cent in their morning deals.

Jayant Manglik, president -retail distribution, Religare Broking, said, "the Indian markets staged a smart comeback post Monday's correction led by supportive global cues. The Nifty Index ended at near high point of the day to close with strong gains of 1.1 per cent. The broader markets exhibited mixed trend. While BSE mid-cap performed in line with the benchmark, the smallcap index unperformed."

ASIAN, EUROPEAN STOCKS BOUNCE BACK

- **The 30-share Sensex had recorded a loss of more than 575 points in the previous two sessions, tracking a sell-off across global markets**
- **Asian & European stocks bounced back, reversing part of their recent losses, as US Treasury yields edged higher, easing concerns about a recession in US**

RBI buys $5 bn in forex swap auction

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

The central bank bought the targeted $5 billion as part of the long term dollar/ rupee swap auction with a three-year tenor, the Reserve Bank said in a statement

THE RESERVE Bank of India on Tuesday successfully executed a $5 billion forex swap auction in order to facilitate faster transmission of interest rates and improve liquidity in the banking system.

The central bank bought the targeted $5 billion as part of the long term dollar/ rupee swap auction with a three-year tenor, the RBI said in a statement. In turn, the RBI infused Rs 34,561 crore into the banking system.

The RBI received $16.31 billion in bids for the auction and accepted 89 offers. The cut-off for the auction was set at 776 paise which was roughly 35 paise below the prevailing forward rate in the market.

The amount of dollars get mopped up via these operations will reflect in the RBI's foreign exchange reserves for the tenor of the swap while also reflecting in the RBI's forward liabilities.

Meanwhile, the system gets rupee equivalent liquidity for the same amount and for the same duration, improving the liquidity.

"From a more medium term perspective, this may also imply that the RBI is stepping up efforts for transmission ... " said Suyash Choudhary, head – fixed income, IDFC AMC.

While the primary objective of using auction based foreign exchange swap is to infuse the rupee liquidity through an alternate channel, there could be other collateral benefits at the same time. The decline in forward premia (especially at the longer tenor) will lower dollar hedging cost for importers. "This also juxtaposes well with the recent relaxation in ECB limits, especially for state owned oil companies, which have unhedged dollar exposures, and can now consider prudential hedging operations," said Shubhada Rao, Chief Economist, YES Bank.

Meanwhile, the rupee appreciated by 10 paise to end at 68.86 against the US dollar following a robust response to the RBI's rupee-dollar swap auction. The rupee opened strong at 68.88 against the greenback but surrendered the gains to slip to a low of 68.98. However, it clawed back lost ground and finally ended at 68.86, up 10 paise against its previous close of 68.96 per dollar. "The success of India's $ 5 billion swap auction will decide whether it will become a popular instrument in the central bank's liquidity tool box," said V K Sharma, head PCG and Capital Markets Strategy, HDFC Securities.

BRIEFLY

Mor quits as India director of BMGF

New Delhi: Nachiket Mor has quit as director of the India Country office of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). Announcing his resignation, BMGF said that while Mor worked three years with the foundation, he has quit to pursue study of the health sector and to return to his prior work as a donor and investor in India's development sector. BMGF said May 24 will be Mor's last working day and it is working out the leadership transition. **ENS**

'Banks dealing with govt biz to work this Sun'

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India Tuesday directed banks to keep open their branches dealing with government business on the last day of the financial year (March 31), which happens to be Sunday.

NCLT admits new Jyoti Structures bid

Mumbai: The Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) Tuesday accepted the amended resolution plan for Jyoti Structures, following an order to his effect by the appellate tribunal, a move opposed by DBS Bank saying it will move the Supreme Court.

NCLAT stays DoT's notices to RCom

New Delhi: National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) Tuesday stayed two notices issued by Department of Telecom (DoT) to debt-hit Reliance Communications for cancellation of its spectrum licence for payment delay.

Unitech power transmission business sold

New Delhi: Crisis-hit realty firm Unitech Ltd Tuesday said the company has sold its power transmission business to Sterling and Wilson for Rs 100 crore.

ITC sells John Players to Reliance Retail

New Delhi: ITC Tuesday said it sold its menswear brand John Players to Reliance Retail for an undisclosed amount.

RBI slaps ₹2 crore penalty on PNB

New Delhi: RBI has slapped a penalty of Rs 2 crore on Punjab National Bank for non-compliance of regulatory directions with regard to SWIFT operations. **PTI**

Lakshmi Mittal helps brother settle STC dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

LAKSHMI N Mittal has helped his cash-strapped younger brother Pramod clear dues he owed to State Trading Corporation, helping avoid legal troubles.

Last week, Mukesh Ambani helped younger brother Anil avoid a jail term by paying of dues he owed to Swedish telecom equipment supplier Ericsson. Pramod Kumar Mittal, 57, owner of Global Steel Holdings, thanked his elder brother's generosity in helping him clear a significant portion of Rs 2,210 crore dues.

"I am very grateful to my brother Lakshmi Mittal for helping settle the liabilities to State Trading Corporation of India. This generosity ensured compliance with the order from the Supreme Court," he said.

Mittal brothers had split the business in 1994 with elder brother going on to head the world's largest steel manufacturing company ArcelorMittal.

Pramod Mittal's firms Global Steel Holdings Ltd (GSHI) and Global Steel Philippines Inc had defaulted on payments to STC, following which the state-owned company filed various cases against them. The two firms in a statement last Wednesday said they have settled Rs 2,210 crore dues to STC.

Uber buys mid-East rival Careem in $3.1 bn deal

REUTERS
SAN FRANCISCO/DUBAI, MAR 26

GLOBAL RIDE-HAILING company Uber Technologies Inc will spend $3.1 billion to acquire Middle East rival Careem, buying dominance in a competitive region ahead of a hotly anticipated initial public offering.

Uber said late on Monday night it would pay $1.4 billion in cash and $1.7 billion in convertible notes in a deal that gives it full ownership of Careem.

The long-expected agreement ends more than nine months of start-and-stop negotiations between the two companies and hands Uber a much-needed victory after a series of overseas divestments.

The notes will be convertible into Uber shares at a price equal to $55 apiece, Uber said, marking a nearly 13 per cent increase over Uber's share price in its last financing round, led by SoftBank Group Corp more than a year ago.

The acquisition makes Careem a wholly owned subsidiary of Uber and will keep the Careem brand and app intact, at least initially.

Former MD among 11 top PNB officials summoned by court

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

A DELHI court has summoned the former managing director of Punjab National Bank (PNB) and 10 other senior officials of the bank in connection with the Rs 14,000 crore fraud at the bank. The bank's former MD was charged by the CBI for the Nirav Modi fraud case during her tenure at PNB between August 2015 to May 2017.

Metropolitan Magistrate Dharmender Singh issued the summons against the accused persons, seeking their appearance on May 24 for alleged violations of Section 46 of the Banking Regulation Act.

The summons order were issued in a complaint by the Reserve Bank of India against the backdrop of the multi-crore PNB scam that broke in January 2018.

"In view of the facts stated in the complaint and documents filed on record on behalf of complaint, case is made out for summoning of all the proposed accused persons in respect of offences u/s 46 of Banking Regulation Act, 1949, so, they be summoned on filing of PF/RC for NDOH i.e. 24.05.2019.", the order, passed on March 11 read.

The RBI has contended that all the accused persons deliberately furnished false and misleading statements to it, which was done with common intention and in connivance with each other. The conduct, the RBI claims, is in violation of Section 46 of Banking Regulation Act and Section 120B of the Indian Penal Code, 1860.

The Reserve Bank, which controls the issuance and supply of the Indian rupee, informed the trial court that on August 3, 2016, the accused had issued a "confidential circular" to all scheduled commercial banks advising them to strengthen the controls around the operating environment for fund transfers through SWIFT or similar interfaces

It said in its complaint that the banks were then advised to minimise the practice of direct creation of payment messages in the SWIFT environment with routing the same through Core Banking System (CBS).

Court refuses to stay DRT order to sell shares held by UBHL

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

UBHL had last week approached the special court against an order of the Debts Recovery Tribunal

A SPECIAL court in Mumbai late on Tuesday refused to grant a stay on an order by the Debts Recovery Tribunal (DRT) pertaining to the sale of shares of Vijay Mallya-linked United Breweries (Holdings) Limited. The court said that it did not have the power to grant a stay on an order passed by any other authority.

UBHL had last week approached the court against an order of the DRT, according to which, on Wednesday, 74,04,392 shares of UBHL will be sold in the open market. The court, however, said that if the shares are part of an attachment order passed in 2016, they cannot be the subject matter of a transfer by sale.

"If the subject shares are part of attachment of the order dated November 10, 2016, in that eventuality, there is clog over those shares and legally cannot be subject matter of transfer by virtue of sale," the special court said. It said that the order of the recovery officer of the DRT, can be challenged before the DRT and is not maintainable before the special court.

Earlier in the day, senior counsel, Amit Desai, representing UBHL had said that there was no urgency to sell the shares and that they should not be sold in a piecemeal manner so that it can be beneficial for all creditors. It was submitted that the 3 per cent of the shares-amounting to approximately Rs 1500 crore- were to be sold in the market on March 27.

Desai argued that there was no need for a 'distress sale'. He sought a stay on the DRT order. The court, however, said that provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code or the Prevention of Money-Laundering Act, that it is designated under, it cannot stay the order of any other authority.

Desai said that a decision on whether to appeal against the order was being taken at the time of going to press.

Ethiopian crash report likely to be out this week

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ADDIS ABABA/SEATTLE, MAR 26

A PRELIMINARY report on an Ethiopian Airlines crash will very likely be released this week, the country's transport ministry said Tuesday, as Boeing readies to brief more airlines on software and training updates on the 737 MAX.

The aviation industry and grieving families of victims of the March 10 crash are anxiously awaiting details from the Ethiopia-led investigation.

Boeing has come under intense scrutiny since the crash, the second in five months involving its new 737 MAX 8 model.

The MAX software is among the leading areas of focus for investigations into the two crashes, in Ethiopia this month and in Indonesia last year, in which 346 lives were lost.

Boeing is this week briefing airlines on software and training updates for the MAX in Renton, Washington.

In test of Boeing jet, pilots had only 40 seconds to fix error

JACK NICAS, JAMES GLANZ & DAVID GELLES
WASHINGTON, MARCH 26

DURING FLIGHT simulations recreating the problems with the doomed Lion Air plane, pilots discovered that they had less than 40 seconds to override an automated system on Boeing's new jets and avert disaster.

The pilots tested a crisis situation similar to what investigators suspect went wrong in the Lion Air crash in Indonesia last fall. In the tests, a single sensor failed, triggering software designed to help prevent a stall.

Once that happened, the pilots had just moments to disengage the system and avoid an unrecoverable nose dive of the Boeing 737 Max, according to two people involved in the testing in recent days.

Although the investigations are continuing, the automated system, known as MCAS, is a focus of authorities trying to determine what went wrong in the Lion Air disaster in October and the Ethiopian Airlines crash of the same Boeing model this month.

The software, as originally designed and explained, left little room for error. Those involved in the testing hadn't fully understood just how powerful the system was until they flew the plane on a 737 Max simulator, according to the two people.

Compounding the flaws, pilots received limited training about the system before the first crash. During the final minutes, the captain of the Lion Air flight flipped through a technical manual trying to figure out what was happening.

In a tacit acknowledgment of the system's problems, Boeing is expected to propose a software update that would give pilots more control over the system and make it less likely to trigger erroneously, according to three people, who spoke on the condition of anonymity to describe the private meetings.

There are common procedures in place to counteract MCAS, as currently designed. If the system starts pushing the plane's nose down, pilots can reverse the movement via a switch at their thumb, a typical reaction in that situation. In doing so, they can potentially extend the 40-second window, giving them more time to avoid a crash.

To fully neutralize the system, pilots would need to flip two more switches. That would shut off the electricity to a motor that allows the system to push the plane toward the ground. Then the pilots would need to crank a wheel to correct whatever problems had emerged.

The pilots, in the simulations, followed such procedures to successfully shut off the system and land safely. But they did so with a far better understanding of how it worked and prior knowledge that it would be triggered — benefits that the pilots of the fatal 737 Max crashes did not have. **NYT**

CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF PUNJAB
City Campus, Mansa Road, Bathinda-151001

TENDER NOTICE
Advt. No. CUPB/18-19/024 Dated: 26.03.2019

Central University of Punjab, Bathinda invites tender for **construction of a compound wall around Girls' Hostel** at main campus of CUPB at Village Ghudda, District Bathinda. The tender is available on Government of India Central Public Procurement Portal (eProcurement System) ***www.eprocure.gov.in.***
Tender ID on the portal : 2019_CUP_458672_1
For more details please visit University website www.cup.edu.in
REGISTRAR
Email: ue.cupb@gmail.com, registrar@cup.ac.in; Tele: +91-164-2864110
विज्ञापन का हिंदी रूपान्तर विश्वविद्यालय की वेबसाइट पर उपलब्ध है।

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Karnataka, India. Ph: +91 824 2452748 Fax: 0824-2452749

Extension of Tender Dates
26.03.2019

Name of Work	Extended Bid Issue date	Extended Proposal due date
Design, Construction, Supply, Erection, Testing, Trial run, Commissioning and Operation of 3.0 MLD capacity Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP) at MSEZ, Mangalore on EPC basis and modification to existing CETP-Contract Package No: MSEZL/CETP-2/2019	11.04.2019	15:00 hrs on 12.04.2019

All other terms and conditions of the tender remain unchanged.
Please refer website **www.tenderwizard.com/MSEZ** and **www.mangaloresez.com** for further details.
Sd/-, Chief Operating Officer
Mangalore SEZ Ltd, Mangaluru

VISAKHAPATNAM INDUSTRIAL WATER SUPPLY COMPANY
VIZAG ...ahead

'e' Procurement Tender Notice No.08/2018-19/DIRECTOR(T)/SGM/GM Dt:25-03-2019
Name of the Work : Request for proposal for conducting 3rd party quality control for the financial year 2019-20 of all Engineering works in VIWSCO for the period of 1 year.

01. Down loading Starting Date : 25-03-2019 @ 02.00 PM
02. Down loading Ending Date : 09-04-2019 @ 03.00 PM
03. Bid submission closing date : 09-04-2019 @ 04.00 PM
04. Technical Bid opening date : 09-04-2019 @ 05.00 PM
05. Price bid opening date : 10-04-2019 @ 02.00 PM

Note: For any other details required in respect of above tender notice, please contact GM(VIWSCO) before applying for tender schedules and visit vsp @ www.apeprocurement.gov.in
Sd/-xxxx
Director (T)
స్వచ్ఛ భారత్ మిషన్ లక్ష్యం - స్వచ్ఛ ఆంధ్ర మిషన్ గమ్యం

SHRI MATA VAISHNO DEVI SHRINE BOARD, KATRA
Date Extension Notice
The last date for submission of Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) for **"Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning and 10 years of Comprehensive maintenance for Waste Disposer Machine based on Heat Technology"** in reference to this office NIT No. CO/SW/82/1641 dated: 11.03.2019 is hereby extended upto **02.04.2019 upto 3.00 PM IST.**
Other terms and conditions of ibid NIT shall remain the same.
Sd/-
Vinay Khajuria
ACF SMVDSB, Katra
No.: CO/SW/82/1687
Date: 25.03.2019

WOMEN AND ECONOMICS

Market power

Economics is uncovering its gender problem

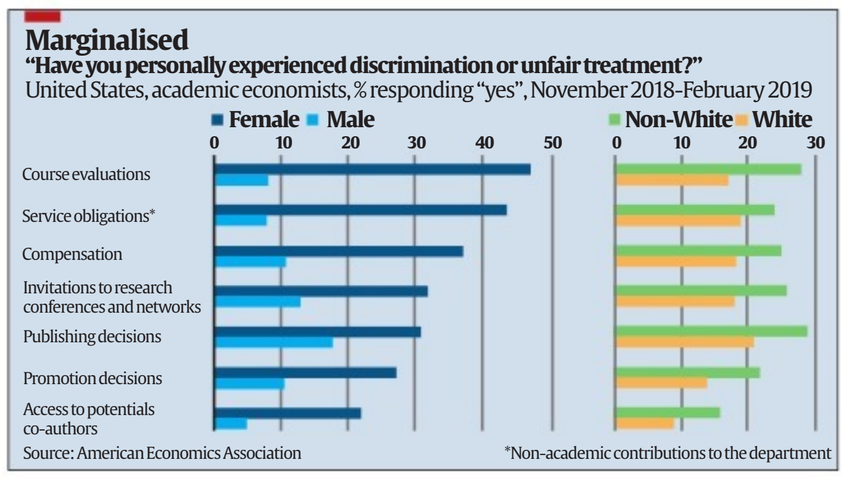
The line-up at the International Monetary Fund and World Bank's 2014 Annual Spring Meetings. *Reuters*

AT THE heart of economics is a belief in the virtues of open competition as a way of using the resources you have in the most efficient way you can. Thanks to the power of that insight, economists routinely tell politicians how to run public policy and business people how to run their firms. Yet when it comes to its own house, academic economics could do more to observe the standards it applies to the rest of the world. In particular, it recruits too few women. Also, many of those who do work in the profession say they are treated unfairly and that their talents are not fully realised. As a result, economics has fewer good ideas than it should and suffers from a skewed viewpoint. It is time for the dismal science to improve its dismal record on gender.

For decades relatively few women have participated in stemsubjects: science, technology, engineering and maths. Economics belongs in this list. In the United States women make up only one in seven full professors and one in three doctoral candidates. There has been too little improvement in the past 20 years. And a survey by the American Economics Association (AEA) this week shows that many women who do become academic economists are treated badly.

Only 20% of women who answered the AEA poll said that they are satisfied with the professional climate, compared with 40% of men. Some 48% of females said they have faced discrimination at work because of their sex, compared with 3% of male respondents. Writing about the survey results, Janet Yellen and Ben Bernanke, both former chairs of the Federal Reserve, and Olivier Blanchard, a former chief economist of the IMF, said that "many members of the profession have suffered harassment and discrimination during their careers, including both overt acts of abuse and more subtle forms of marginalisation."

To deal with its gender shortfall, economics needs two tools that it often uses to analyse and solve problems elsewhere: its ability to crunch data and its capacity to experiment. Take data first. The AEA study is commendable, but only a fifth of its 45,000 present and past members replied to its poll. More work is needed to establish why women are discouraged from becoming economists, or drop out, or are denied promotion. More benchmarking is needed against other professions where women thrive. Better data are needed to capture how work by female economists is discriminated against. There is some evidence, for example, that they are held to higher standards than men in peer reviews and that they are given less credit for their co-writing than men. And economics needs to study how a lack of women skews its scholarly priorities, creating an intellectual opportunity cost. For instance, do economists obsess more about labour-market conditions for men than for women? The more comprehensive the picture that emerges, the sooner and more easily action can be taken to change recruitment and to reform professional life.



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The other priority is for economists to experiment with new ideas, as the AEA is recommending. For a discipline that values dynamism, academic economics is often conservative, sticking with teaching methods, hiring procedures and social conventions that have been around for decades. The AEA survey reveals myriad subtle ways in which those who responded feel uncomfortable. For example 46% of women have not asked a question or presented an idea at conferences for fear of being treated unfairly, compared with 18% of men. Innovation is overdue. Seminars could be organised to ensure that all speakers get a fair chance. Job interviews need not typically happen in hotel rooms, a practice that men regard as harmless but which makes some women uncomfortable. The way that authors' names are presented on papers could ensure that it is clear who has done the intellectual heavy lifting.

Instead of moving cautiously, the economics profession should do what it is best at: recognise there is a problem, measure it objectively and find solutions. If the result is more women in economics who are treated better, there will be more competition for ideas and a more efficient use of a scarce resource. What economist could possibly object to that?

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BANYAN

A distorted mirror

The Christchurch massacre has challenged New Zealanders' self-image

"THIS ISN'T New Zealand" has become a national refrain. After a white supremacist's attack on mosques in Christchurch, a shocked country is mourning the 50 worshippers he killed. Condolences are scrawled in chalk on pavements. White New Zealanders pull Muslim immigrants aside to apologise and Maoris dance hakas for the dead. Thousands have gathered for vigils. Florists have run out of stock. As for the prime minister, Jacinda Ardern, she has displayed leadership and compassion. Wearing a Muslim headscarf, she stresses that the whole country is on the side of the victims (many immigrants, some refugees) and their families. "They," she says, "are us." The perpetrator of the violence most assuredly is not.

For under attack too was New Zealand's own image as a uniquely open and tolerant place. To many Kiwis it came as a relief that the alleged assailant grew up in that raw-edged place across the Tasman Sea, Australia. Ms Ardern has suggested that New Zealand was a target precisely because of its inclusiveness.

This image matters hugely to New Zealanders, and many newcomers quickly adopt it. One of the survivors in Christchurch was Yasif Hussein, who immigrated from Fiji four years ago. He describes lying on the ground, looking straight up into the assailant's face and thinking his end had come. Yet, having somehow survived, Mr Hussein says New Zealand has always "felt like my own country".

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Like all national narratives, New Zealand's liberal one has a founding myth: the Treaty of Waitangi. Signed in 1840 with over 500 Maori chiefs, it established British sovereignty over New Zealand. Crucially, Britain acknowledged the landholdings of New Zealand's original, Polynesian settlers and guaranteed them rights as British subjects. Since the 1970s a tribunal has served to provide compensation for the many subsequent breaches of the treaty.

The treatment of Maoris stands in contrast to Australia's towards Aboriginals, who were once hunted like vermin. As recently as the 1970s children deemed to be mixed-race were forcibly removed into care. The first official apology to Australia's indigenous peoples came only in 2008. There has yet to be much compensation for historic wrongs beyond the return of some traditional Aboriginal land.

The treatment of Maoris, some say, gives a leg-up to other minorities too. Yet since the massacre, New Zealand's self-image has come in for scrutiny. There are plenty of blemishes. After all, racial ideology long served as the basis of immigration policy, keeping non-whites out. As for the Maoris, ravaged by discrimination and imported disease, the task of the white settlers was, as one of them put it, to "smooth the pillow of the dying race".

These days you only have to visit run-down neighbourhoods inhabited by Maoris and other Pacific islanders to know that race relations are far from perfect. They are hotspots of unemployment, alcoholism and domestic violence. Many white New Zealanders blithely pass their lives in a parallel world.

Taika Waititi, a filmmaker and comedian, claimed last year that New Zealand remains "racist as fuck". Resentment over sharp increases in immigration, and even of Maori progress where it has taken place, has caused some among the white majority to think of themselves as victims. Not long ago Christchurch was notorious for its race-baiting skinheads. Today the radio waves are full of American-style shock jocks stoking resentment. Ms Ardern herself campaigned on curbing the immigration that was widely believed to be fuelling sharp rises in property prices. Michael Grimshaw of the University of Canterbury worries that if Brenton Tarrant, the man accused of the massacre, gets to air his grievances in court, "that is how you get your 'Uncle Barry' listening." And Uncle Barry may not agree with all of his complaints, but he might agree with some of them.

A police officer places flowers at the entrance of Al Noor mosque in Christchurch, New Zealand on March 17. *Reuters*

No country is all sweetness and light. What matters is the direction of travel. In America demagogues portray any trifling curb on gun ownership as a plot against whites. In New Zealand Ms Ardern has swung even the political right behind tighter gun control. In Australia a hard-right senator implied that the Christchurch massacre was the fault of Muslims, who should not have migrated to New Zealand in the first place. In New Zealand's political discourse, such a comment is nearly inconceivable. If the massacre has put New Zealanders at a crossroads, they still look to be walking towards their image of themselves.

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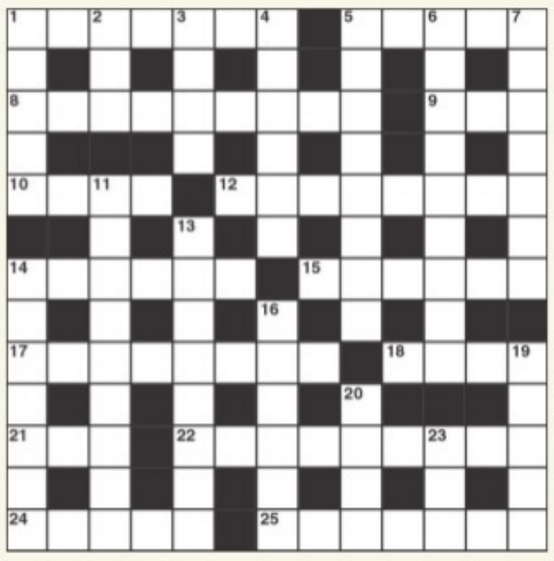
CROSSWORD 3765



ACROSS

1 A number keeping secret get a telling off (7)
5 Risk having a dog at home (5)
8 Deals exclusively with signs of spring (6,3)
9 Catch in possession of cannabis (3)
10 Blow on the foot for warmth (4)
12 Complete cancellation of a golf match? (5,3)
14 The Danes hold a number, and so do we (6)
15 Damsel distributes awards (6)
17 Missing physical exercise (8)
18 Staunch supporter (4)
21 Inclined to make a point briefly (3)
22 Out in rain perhaps - a real downfall (9)
24 Red-faced because of a mild expletive? (5)
25 Much-married seaman? (7)

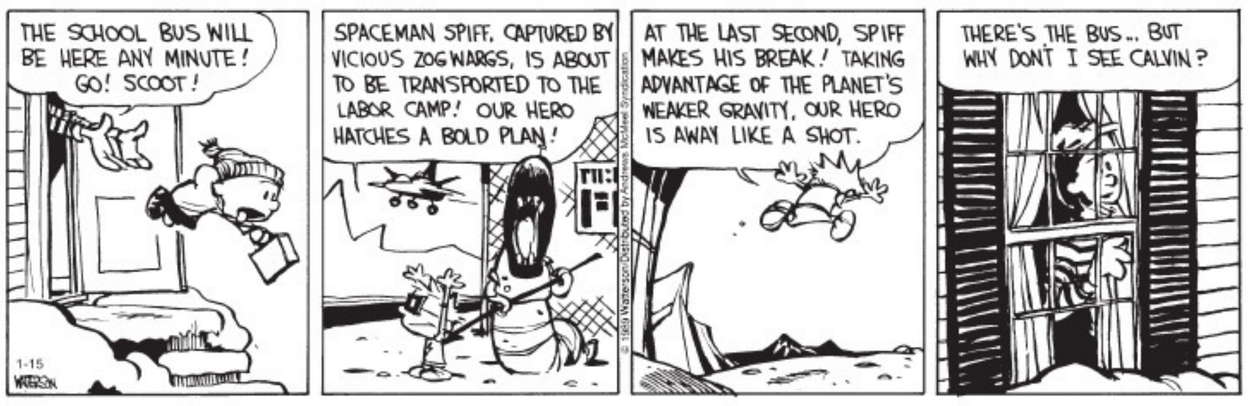
DOWN

1 Shouts out names (5)
2 Girl who could have a lead in opera (3)
3 One to be crossed with a goat (4)
4 It stands still and marks time (6)
5 Fiance was set upon (8)
6 Harmonious character? (9)
7 Checks about polishes (7)
11 The sort of men who serve behind bars (9)
13 Lay assembly? (3,5)
14 A spider possibly saved Bruce from it (7)
16 Not well employed? (6)
19 Artist getting up two hours before noon (5)
20 Quick way to lose weight (4)
23 I will be briefly unwell (3)

Solutions Crossword 3764: Across: 1 Director, 5 Scar, 9 Bravo, 10 Trifles, 11 Firefighters, 13 Notice, 14 Chaise, 17 Reverberated, 20 Prefers, 21 Tiara, 22 Disc, 23 Wardress. **Down:** 1 Debt, 2 Realist, 3 Chosen career, 4 Obtain, 6 Calve, 7 Resisted, 8 Light-hearted, 12 Intrepid, 15 Iterate, 16 Persia, 18 Views, 19 Rags.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
Now that the Sun has taken up a fresh position, both your personal life and career are undergoing a series of changes, and it will be necessary for you to have a clear idea of the whole picture if you are to plan ahead effectively. Cash pressures begin to ease, giving you a chance to catch up.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
As a Taurean you have the knack of juggling finances, but if the going is still tough, you must now open up various questions for discussion with friends and associates. Within a few days you'll be offered some useful advice. But you have to distinguish hard facts from well-meaning fantasies.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
You must refuse to be drawn over matters which concern you and you alone. Not until Venus adjusts its position later in the week will friends and partners be prepared to believe your theories and follow your ideas. But when the time comes I think you'll be surprised.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You will realise that you can no longer rely on the old certainties; the spotlight is on you. The good news is that you're in a strong position, so you should be able to set the pace and lead by example. The costs will have to be paid, but not yet.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
For the next few weeks the pattern of events may be far from clear and, in the absence of serious information, it's probable that an intuitive approach will serve you best. If you agree to help people who come to you with strange requests, you'll soon be drawn into a new and wonderful world.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)
Even you must realise that other people are essential to your well-being and to your chances of attaining your chosen goals. This is no time to make a spectacular bid for an independence which will prove spurious. Much of what happens over the next few days will seem real at the time, but not next week.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)
The current Venus alignment signifies a turning point as far as personal and family affairs are concerned and may cause you to re-evaluate some aspects of your life which you have hitherto regarded as central to your security. Spare some time for simple, honest fun.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)
You have a reputation for moody behaviour when you fail to get your own way. But your changing and increasing self-confidence makes you better able to speak your mind and less inclined to bottle up your feelings. A friend will provide you with assistance and smooth your path.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 23)
A little personal tension is a good thing and helps you to get up and deal with your day. There's nothing that anyone or anything can do to thwart you as long as you are on the right path. The only problem — and it's a big one this week — is working out just which path is the right one.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
You can use the current period to get into shape at work and patch up your home. Always bear in mind that prevention is better than cure and take the necessary steps to maintain your status and well-being. Faith in the future lifts your morale and that benefits your body.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
A burst of enthusiasm and optimism will herald a number of changes in your work, most of them for the better. The worries which are left over from a recent trauma will gradually disappear. By this time next week friends will be coming to you, seeking your sympathy.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
Little by little emotional stress will ease and other people's demands and moody behaviour will be less of a burden. Your intuition and commonsense are telling you to persist with your present ambitions regardless of the opposition and obstacles set in your path.

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

To err is____, but to really foul things up requires a____. (5,..,7)

PAEOR
MISCUE
IPNTU
IISHMP

Answer: To err is **human**, but to really foul things up requires a **computer**.
SOLUTION: OPERA, INPUT, CESIUM, IMPISH

SUDOKU 3799

Difficulty Level 2s
Instructions
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

	4	3		7	5		8	
2		9						
			8					
9				1		7		8
	3	5	6		7	4	2	
8		7		9				3
					4			
						6		5
	7		3	6		1	9	

SOLUTION SUDOKU 3798

4	2	9	5	6	3	1	8	7
7	5	1	2	8	9	6	3	4
8	3	6	7	4	1	2	5	9
9	7	3	4	1	8	5	6	2
5	6	4	9	3	2	8	7	1
1	8	2	6	7	5	9	4	3
3	9	8	1	5	7	4	2	6
6	1	5	3	2	4	7	9	8
2	4	7	8	9	6	3	1	5

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PUNE
An Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune - 411 008 | Website: www.iiserpune.ac.in
IISER PUNE

CORRIGENDUM / EXTENSION OF LAST DATE FOR SUBMISSION OF TENDER

In reference to IISER Pune, NOTICE INVITING TENDER IISER/S&P /19/2018 dated 28/02/2019; it is notified that the last date for submission of tender for **Procurement of HPC Cluster** is extended up to 08/04/2019, 3.00 PM.
For detailed information please visit https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app and www.iiserpune.ac.in/ links/tender-notices-and-eoi.
Advt.No:IISER/S&P/23/2019 dated 26/02/2019 Director

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice

S. No. 1 Name of work with its location : 13/SrDEE/G/MB/2018 (IInd Call) :- Hiring of Multi Utility Vehicle (Pick Up Van) in the section of SSE/Elect. and including major / minor cost of lubricant, driver and fuel in C/W day to day maintenance at Moradabad (For one year) **App. Cost of the work (In Rs.) :** 4,31,399.16 **Cost of Tender Form (In Rs.)** 1,000/- **Earnest Money to be deposited (In Rs.) :** 8,600/- **Completion period of the work :** 12 (Twelve Months) **S. No. 2 Name of work with its location :** 03/SrDEE/G/MB/2019 (IInd Call) :- Improvement to facade of station building and circulating area at Haridwar station. **App. Cost of the work (In Rs.) :** 65,34,001.77 **Cost of Tender Form (In Rs.)** 5,000/- **Earnest Money to be deposited (In Rs.) :** 1,30,700/- **Completion period of the work :** 03 (Three Months) **Address of the office from where the tender form has been issued :** Electrical Branch, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad **Date & Time for submission of tender & opening of tender :** Tender will be received upto 15/00 hrs shall be opened at 15/30 hrs on 18-04-2019 **Website particulars & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.:** Website **www.ireps.gov.in** Notice board is located in the Electrical Branch, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Northern Railway, Moradabad.
TENDER NOTICE NO. 04/2019 Dated :- 25.03.2019 **922/2019**
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH PUNE
An Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of HRD, Govt. of India
Dr. Homi Bhabha Road, Pune - 411 008 I Website : www.iiserpune.ac.in
IISER PUNE

Notice Inviting e-Tender (e-Procurement Mode)

Institute invites Expression of Interest (Part I) from the reputed construction contractors / agencies eligible as per the minimum eligibility requirements specified at clause No. 2 & 3 in EOI document for prequalification of bidders in open bid system for "Construction of Smt. Indrani Balan Science Activity Centre at IISER Pune".
The Expression of Interest (Part I) document can be downloaded from Central Public Procurement (CPP) Portal http://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app or www.iiserpune.ac.in. Pre-bid Meeting will be held on 01.04.2019 at 11.00 hrs. at IISER Pune. Documents and tender fees to be submitted online on or before 15.04.2019 by 15.00 hrs. Bids shall be opened on 18.04.2019 at 15.30 hrs.
NIT No : 7/IISER/Pune/2018-19/27.03.2019 **Registrar**

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T. No. : 128-W-260-TN-85-18-19-W-2. 1. Name of Work with its location : Replacement of 118 sets of the existing 60/52kg Points & Crossings with 60kg Thick web switches/ curved switches and WCMS crossing under SE/P.Way/MTC & MOZ and replacement of turnout fittings in MTC Subdivision under ADEN/MUT and replacement laid on wooden/ST/PRC sleepers with PRC fan shaped turnouts in the section ADEN/MUT under Sr.DEN-II/DLI. **2. Approx. Cost of work :** Rs. 22451047.52. **3. Earnest Money :** Rs. 262300/- (it should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway Only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on as per Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-I/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016). **4. Completion Period :** 06 Months. **5. Cost of tender on Cash/by post :** Rs. 11800/- (It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. Note:- FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-I/CT/5/1 dated 31.08.2016). **6. Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender :** 09.04.2019 to 23.04.2019 upto 15:00 hrs Opening of tender 23.04.2019 at 15:00 hrs. on. **7. Similar Nature of Work :** CTR/TRR/TFR/TTR including raising of track, deeping screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine, TRT/PQRS/ ballast, screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28. **8. Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.** Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in. No. 128-W-260-TN-85-18-19-W-2 Dated : 25.03.2019.** **919/2019**
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SEARCH FOR MISSING

Mukesh

General public is here by informed that this person (depicted in the photo) namely: **Mukesh** S/o **Vishvnath Mehto** R/o **Village Godna Mod, Distt. Chhapra (Bihar)** has been missing/ kidnapped since **22.02.2019.** In this regard DD No. **94A,** Dated **22.02.2019** has been registered at **PS Kalyanpuri, Delhi.** Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far.
His physical description is as under:-
Sex: Male, **Age:** 24 years, **Height :** 5' ft., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** Brown Colour Jacket & Light Blue Colour Pant.
Any person is having information or clue about this missing/ kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following:-
Website:http://cbi.nic.in
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Tel. No.: 011-24368638/24368641
Fax No.: 011-24368639
SHO
P.S. Kalyanpuri, Delhi
PH.: 011-22772251
Mob. No.: 8750870629
DP/6694/ED/19

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

NEETU

General public is here by informed that this girl namely Neetu D/o Deshraj R/o H.No. F-68, Gazipur Village, Delhi **Age :** 19 years, **Height :** 5'3", **Complexion :** Fair, **Face :** Round, **Build :** Medium, wearing white colour Suit & Salwar, has been missing since 25.02.2019 from the area of PS Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 64-A dated 27.02.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi.
Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following:-
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641
SHO : P.S. Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi
Tel. No. : 011-22146491
DP/6706/ED/19

Appeal for Identification

Ramsakhi

General Public is hereby informed that a female namely **Ramsakhi W/o Sh. Ramjivan, R/o** Unknown was abandoned found from Swami Narayan Mandir footover Bridge, Civil Lines, Delhi from the jurisdiction of PS Civil Lines, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 46A** dated **08.09.2018** has been lodged at PS, Civil Lines, Delhi.
The description of the found Lady are as follows:-
Name: Ramsakhi, **Husband's Name :** Sh. Ramjivan, **Age :** 20 (Aprox) Years, **Sex :** Female **Height** : 4'11", **Face** : Long, **Complexion :** Dark, **Built :** Thin, **Wearing** : Sare.
If anyone having any clue/information, kindly inform the undersigned at following phone numbers.
Website : http://cbi.nic.in
e-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax : 011-24368639
Ph. : 011-24368638, 24368641
SHO
P.S., Civil Lines, Delhi
Ph. : 011-23815444
DP/9230/N/18

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
(See Section 82 Cr. P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that **Shanu @ Furkan S/o Irfan** R/o Laxmi Garden Indrapuri, Loni, Ghaziabad, U.P. has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 43/19 u/s 336/34 IPC PS Khajuri Khas, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Shanu @ Furkan** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Shanu @ Furkan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shanu @ Furkan** of **FIR No. 43/19 u/s 336/34 IPC PS Khajuri Khas, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 29.04.2019.
By Order
Sh. Anu Aggarwal
ACMM, Room No.66, 4th Floor,
Karkardooma Courts, New Delhi
DP/6953/NE/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one unknown dead body of male, Age about 50/55 years, Height 5'6", Complexion Sallow, Round Face, Normal Build, Wearing White & blue colour strip shirt and White & black colour pant was found dead at Opposite Rajdhani Collage, Back Side Homegaurd Ground, New Delhi on 19.03.19. In this regard a DD No. 13-A dated 19.03.19 has been lodged at PS Rajouri Garden, New Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for Identification at Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, Hari Nagar mortuary for 72 hours.
Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may be kindly inform to the undersigned.
SHO
PS: Rajouri Garden, New Delhi
Ph.: 25453990, 25448885
DP/8174/WD/19

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person **Named:** Raju, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 30-32 years, **Sex:** Male, **Height:** 5 feet 2 inch., **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Long, **Wearing:** Green check Shirt & Blue Pant, has been found dead in GTK Road Adhar Shila park, P.S. Model Town, Delhi on dated 21.03.2019 at 18:15:46.
In this regard a FIR/DD No. 77-A, dated 21.03.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Model Town, Delhi.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.
Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.
SHO
P.S. Model Town, Delhi
DP/8798/NW/19 **Ph.: 011-27459202, 8750870232**

SUPPLYCO
THE KERALA STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED
MAVELI BHAVAN, PB.NO.2030, GANDHINAGAR, KOCHI-682020 • Ph.No.PABX- 0484-2206775, 2206795
Purchase Section: Ph No: 0484 2207924, 2206786, 2206782. FAX: 0484-2206782, 0484 2206799
E mail: agmp@supplycomail.com ▪ Website: www.supplycokerala.com
No.P.10/9700/2019 Date:25.03.2019
TENDER NOTICE
(ONLY THROUGH ELECTRONIC TENDERING SYSTEM)
The Kerala State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd intends to purchase Pulses, Spices, Rice and Sugar through e-tender, which will be accepted up to **12.00 Noon on 05-04-2019** and will be opened thereafter. Tender Form and Terms & Conditions may be downloaded from our website **www.supplycokerala.com** or **www.tenderwizard.com/KSCSC.** For additional details please contact at the above address. Only suppliers possessing digital signatures will be permitted to participate in the e-tender. Sd/-, Manager (Purchase)

UJVN Limited
H.O.: "UJJWAL', Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun
(Telephones: 0135-2763508, 2763808 & Fax- 0135- 2763507)
C.I.N. No. 40101UR2001SGC025866
"e" Tender Time Extension Notice-1
Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of submission and opening of NIT no 06/EE (Test)/MB-II/18-19:Supply Installation Testing and Commissioning of Electronics and Pneumatic Test Benches at Dharasu Power House invited by the office of Executive Engineer (Test), Dharasu Power House, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) is hereby extended as below:
Last Date/Time for receipt of bid in the portal: 16.04.2019 up to 16:00 Hr
Last Date /Time for receipt of offline documents: 20.04.2019 at 11:00 Hr
Date of opening of bid on the website: 22.04.2019 at 11:00 Hrs.
Name & Address of the officer inviting the bid: EE(Test), MB-II, Dharasu Power House, Dharasu, Uttarkashi(U.K.)
Further details, subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be seen at e-procurement portal http://uktenders.gov.in.
Executive Engineer (Test)
Dharasu Power House, MB-II
Ro. No. 206, Dated 26/03/2019
" Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation "

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
Invitation of tender through E-tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T. No.: 128-W-260-TN-86-18-19-W-2 **S.No.:** 1. **Name of Work with its location:** A T Welding of rail joints of 60 KG/52KG new/SH/Single Rail/Rail Panel on cess, in situ at Km 12/0 to 21/20 in between SBB-GZB under ADEN/GZB. **2. Approx. Cost of work:** Rs. 73,04,310.80/-. **3. Earnest Money:** Rs. 1,46,100/- (it should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. **Note:** FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on as per Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-I/CT/5/1 Dated: 31.08.2016). **4. Completion Period:** 06 Months. **5. Cost of tender on Cash/by post:** Rs. 5,900/- (It should be in the form of net banking or payment gateway only. **Note:** FDR will not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS Railway Boards letter No. 2015/CE-I/CT/5/1 dated: 31.08.2016). **6. Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender:** 09.04.2019 to 23.04.2019 upto 15.00 hrs. Opening of tender 23.04.2019 at 15.00 hrs. on. **7. Similar Nature of work:** AT (Alumino Thermic) Welding having RDSO approval. **8. Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.:** Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in **No.: 128-W-260-TN-86-18-19-W-2**
Dated: 25.03.2019 **920/2019**
Serving Customers with a Smile

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD
(POWER WING)
Corrigendum-III NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER
NIT NO.: 534/P&D(TS)/SS&P-356 **Dated: 25.01.2019**
Name of Office: Chief Engineer/Transmission System, P&D (TS) Directorate, BBMB, SLDC Complex, Industrial Area, Ph-I, Chandigarh-160002
Scope of Work: Design, Manufacture, Testing before despatch, Supply, Delivery, testing & Commissioning at site of Five (5) nos. 220 KV Duplex type Control & Relay Panels, Two (2) no. 132 kV Duplex type Control & Relay Panels and Two (2) no. 66 KV Simplex type Control & Relay Panels with Numerical protection relays (IEC 61850-complaint) at 220 kV Substations BBMB Jagadhri, Kurukshetra and Delhi.
The due dates against above NIT are as per the following schedule

Last date & time for receipt of Tender document fee along with PQ documents	29.03.2019 upto 17:00 Hrs.
Last date & time of online Bid Submission	15.04.2019 upto 11:00 Hrs.
Due date & time of online Bid Opening	15.04.2019 from 15:00 hrs. onwards

For detailed NIT, Earnest Money deposit & Pre-qualifying criteria, please visit BBMB Website **https://bbmbeproc.abcprocure.com** and **www.bbmb.gov.in.**
1035-PR-TS-4 **For your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today**

BRUSH OF REALITY

After being questioned by art historian Walter Feilchenfeldt in 1990 and kept out of display since, the still-life painting *Vase With Poppies* has been verified by the Van Gogh Museum in Amsterdam. The Dutch artist had painted it in 1886 after moving to Paris.

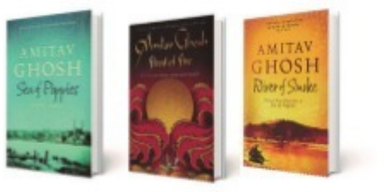
SNAP SHOTS

Call to Cannes

COME MAY, at the 72nd Cannes Film Festival, Kolkata-based cinematographer Modhura Palit (*pictured*), 28, will receive the Angénieux Special Encouragement at the Pierre Angénieux ExcelLens in Cinematography ceremony. She becomes the first Indian to do so. The award, which pays tribute to a prominent international director of photography (Edward Lachman in 2018), introduced a new category last year to award young DOPs. China's Cecile Zhang won it last year. The award, given by a Cannes' official partner and lens manufacturer Angénieux, will loan Palit an Angénieux lens for a future movie, besides the opportunity to hobnob with the who's-who at the Cannes red carpet.

"They found my work on the Indian Women Cinematographer Collective website," says Palit, who shot her first experimental indie, Amitabha Chatterjee's *Ami O Manohar* (*Manohar and I*), on A7sii and iPhone cameras, after she passed out of Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute, Kolkata, in 2017. The film won the FFSI KR Mohanan Award for Best Film at the 2018 International Film Festival of Kerala.

"I want to do work in different genres," says Palit, who shot Anindya Pulak Banerjee's *German Expressionist Watchmaker* (2018), Argha Deep Chatterjee's commercial thriller *Rhododendron* (in post-production), short film *Sampurak* (shown at IFFI's Indian Panorama in 2018), besides TV series, ad films, music videos and a collaborative film for Asian Film Academy (screened at Busan International Film Festival). For inspiration, Palit, currently working on the Bengali thriller web series *Britto*, looks up to cinematographers Subrata Mitra (*Apu Trilogy*), Christopher Doyle (*Chungking Express*) and Santosh Sivan (*Roja* and *Raavan*). **EFS**



On the Screen

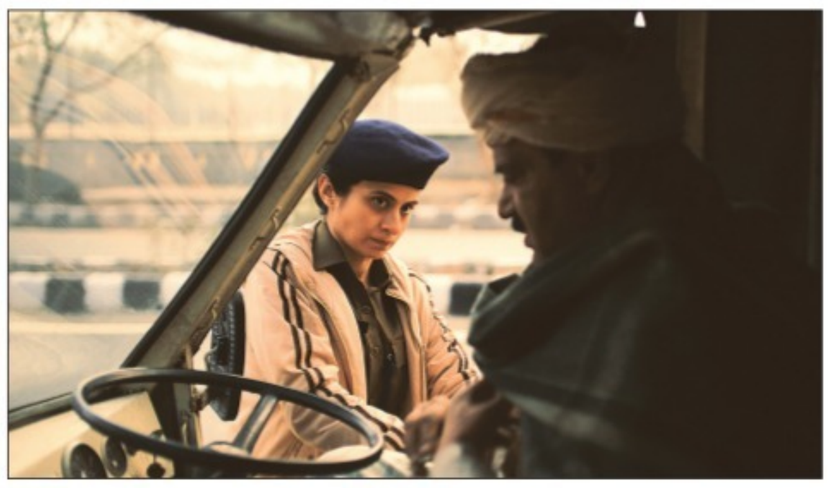
AUTHOR AMITAV GHOSH' Ibis Trilogy detailing the opium war between Britain, India and China in the mid-19th century is soon to be turned into a series by filmmaker Shekhar Kapur (*pictured*). The series, based on the trilogy comprising *Sea of Poppies* (2008), *River of Smoke* (2011) and *Flood of Fire* (2015), will "interweave the lives of vividly drawn characters against the backdrop of the opium wars between Britain, India and China". With the cast yet to be finalised, British historian Justin Pollard, best known for his work for the *Pirates of the Caribbean* franchise, has been roped in as the show's historical consultant and story editor. Kapur in a statement announced, "Amitav Ghosh' books brilliantly bring out the vast epic and emotional tale of opium, from its beginnings in India where it is grown and onto China where it is pushed by drug lords. The story also follows the journeys of indentured labour from India to colonies around the world and tells the intriguing tales of people from India, America and China at a time when modern history was being formed."

Making their Presence Felt

THE EXHIBITION "Black Models: From Gericault to Matisse" at the Musee d'Orsay in Paris is renaming noted French art masterpieces after its black subjects. The show depicts black and mixed-race people in French art 1848 onwards, after the country abolished slavery, until the '50s. The painting of Edouard Manet's *Olympia* (*pictured*), where a black maid is seen bringing flowers to a nude prostitute posing on a bed, has been renamed as *Laure* after the servant. The exhibition is displaying the works of Spanish painter Pablo Picasso, Romantic artist Eugène Delacroix and French painters Pierre Bonnard and Paul Gauguin, to reveal the role black subjects played in the germination of modern art.

Indian Tunes

OSCAR-WINNING composer AR Rahman (*pictured*) has joined hands with Marvel India to create the anthem for *Avengers: Endgame* in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu for its Indian audience. The song will be released on April 1, ahead of the film's release on April 26. Rahman in a statement said, "Being surrounded by Marvel fans in my own family, there was too much pressure to come with something really satisfying and apt for *Avengers: Endgame*. I hope Marvel aficionados and music lovers enjoy the track."



Scenes from the web series *Delhi Crime*; (below) Richie Mehta

'In the darkness of the moment, people did the right thing'

Director Richie Mehta on making a web series based on the 2012 Delhi gangrape case, and working behind the scenes with Delhi Police

EKTAA MALIK

IN 2013, when all of it was very recent, I thought it wasn't appropriate to make a film on the Nirbhaya case. The verdict had just come out, and I happened to be in India when the incident took place in December 2012," says Richie Mehta, 40, director of the recent web show *Delhi Crime*. The seven-episode series, which started streaming on Netflix over the weekend, is a fictionalised dramatisation of the 2012 Delhi gangrape case. The story unfolds through the investigation initiated by Delhi Police to nab the perpetrators.

Mehta, who divides time between India and Canada, and is not related to fellow Indo-Canadian filmmaker Deepa Mehta (as his Wikipedia page states). He grew up watching David Lean films, and always wished to be a storyteller. *Delhi Crime* is his first venture in the digital space. His earlier works include feature films *Amal*, *Siddharth* and *I'll Follow You Down*. Excerpts from an interview:

Why did you choose a subject like the 2012 gangrape case?

Six years ago, I was on another project here in Delhi, and met with the former Commissioner of Delhi Police (Neeraj Kumar), who happens to be a family friend. He had seen my work and suggested I make a film on the case. It didn't feel right at that point. He then said, 'Just read the verdict so you get a sense of the whole story. And later, I can introduce you to the officers involved.' I read the verdict and was shocked with the details. I talked to other Delhi Police officers, and those from the Special Task Force (STF), and asked them things like, if they talked to the suspect when they brought him back from Rajasthan. Those nuggets just caught on to me, and the way Delhi Police functions, not just as cops, but as human beings.

> **The case shattered all precedents. As a man, I couldn't perhaps relate to it, but thought if a loved one is subjected to this, what would you do?**
>
> **RICHIE MEHTA**
> DIRECTOR, *DELHI CRIME*

You have earlier made films for the big screen. Why the switch to a web series, the long-form narrative?

We could have attempted a film, but with the sheer volume of characters and detailing, we needed more time for the narrative to unfold. It was not a documentary, but a fictionalised dramatisation of these real events. This was like doing four films at the same time.

How much of the real story did you fictionalise and tweak?

Three characters in the real story become one in the show. And tiny details like how information on the scene of the crime — the bus — was gathered. Otherwise, the basis of the story, the verdict, is all in the public domain.

The case marked a shift in the way women's safety was discussed in India.

We tend to become jaded when we hear of such incidents often. But Nirbhaya case shattered all precedents. As a man, I couldn't perhaps relate to it, but thought if a loved one is subjected to this, what would you do? And if you witness it as a stranger, do you intervene, and at what cost? That became my internal conflict, until I met these people who solved this crime. And I really believe the crime was solved only because of DCP South's response to it as a woman, as a person.

You have taken extra effort and care to humanise the Delhi Police.

To me, they are like psychologists. They gather vast data and information on a daily basis. They are talking to criminals and suspects, are stuck in traffic with them. The lives they lead, that narrative was important to me. Like the lady cop on whom we based Vimla's character, she was very concerned about her daughter going abroad and not coming back, which I then used for Vartika's story. She is a sub-inspector, super tough, but the Nirbhaya incident worried her. Rajesh Tailang's character was based on this officer of the STF. I asked him what was he doing earlier that day, and he said, 'Trying to find a match for my daughter, but when they found out I was Delhi Police, they called it off, as I was not an IPS.' I had to incorporate all these details.

We hear several old Bollywood songs in an otherwise serious story.

Most of the officers I met had been in service for about 20 years, and have not had the time to update themselves on the contemporary pop culture. Old Bollywood songs are the only musical references they have.

While the country was outraged at the incident, what was the mood like of the cops like? The police force was severely criticised when the incident happened.

There is a certain aspect of chivalry to these cops, and I am not glorifying it. But in the context of this particular case, it's important that in the darkness of the moment, there were more people who were trying to do the right thing. It was this drive that led to a breakthrough in the case.

What's next for you?

The second season of *Delhi Crime* — a different crime, but same characters.

The Sound of Music

Brimming with energy, precision and heart, Germany-based Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra presented a concert in Delhi with plenty to admire

SUANSHU KHURANA

WHEN BERLIN-BASED composer, poet and researcher Sandeep Bhagwati lost his friend and eminent musicologist Dr Ashok Ranade in 2011, he wrote a series of melodies inspired by the "spontaneous outburst" and called it *Alaap for Ashok*. A set of poignant melodic patterns, where the strings swelled and musical structures were simple yet inventive, he added more elaborations to it and the piece premiered in India, as Germany's Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra took to stage at Delhi's Stein Auditorium last week.

The solemn sadness of the piece that Bhagwati has titled *Vistaar* (elaboration) was haunting and meditative — a difficult balance to strike in the world of music. It was striking how he spotlighted different sections of the orchestra — the violins, the violas, the cellos — beautifully in the piece. A tender opening led us into more complex string structures with glorious high notes, fascinating bass patterns and superb clarity in resonance and delivery. Ranade would have been extremely proud, and more than that, plain overwhelmed by what his friend has managed to achieve.

When *Vistaar* ended, those present sat in pin-drop silence, with no applause, no sound; just awe and silence — the kind of applause every musician aspires for. Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra and Bhagwati could not have asked for a better response to the premiere of their piece in India. As for the audience, besides this one incident, their responses often were bizarre, especially during the presentation of Bach's two concertos — *Cocerto for Two Violins in D minor* and *Brandenburg Concerto No 3*, perhaps the musician's most well-known works.

During the concert in Delhi

The pauses between the movements were strangely marked by applause. The musicians consider these pauses sacrosanct. Audiences were appreciating, but in the wrong moment.

It seems as if the western music concert etiquette has not really seeped into the Indian consciousness just yet, despite a plethora of western music schools here at this point. But the interest is there. It showed when we saw a long and serpentine queue to listen to 70-year-old and 18-member Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra, one of the finest chamber orchestras in the world, an hour before the concert.

The orchestra began with Brahms' Symphony for *Strings No 2* in G Major, one of the most significant pieces by the composer. With clean harmonies, this one had the violins and the violas in conversation with each other. The delicate labyrinth passages of this "farewell to a friend" piece was never created to be melancholic. In fact it is bursting with life. The orchestra matched upto the work of a master and created an intense piece with the core intact. This was followed by Bach's three-movement *Cocerto for Two Violins in D minor* composed in 1720. The violin solos, the hallmark of this concerto, came through beautifully.

But what had the audience stand up and cheer was a breezy Bollywood number from the '90s — Jatin Lalit's title song from *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai*. To the orchestra's credit, it nailed the string-based, straight-notationed tune with much gusto. They even got the interlude right as if they play it next to Brahms symphonies on a regular basis. It was populist, of course, and got them a standing ovation. But a concert by the brilliant orchestra like Stuttgart, even in India, needs to be remembered for bringing alive some of the finest music created centuries ago with much precision and panache.

Stills from the film *The Disguise*

Same Difference

Short film *The Disguise* is about two women in London, with very different identities, but facing similar issues

PARTH KHATAU

AS ADRIANA GRIGORIEV got ready for her shot in one of London's most busy streets, something shocking happened. A man driving into a parking lot next-door, rolled down his windows and hurled racial abuses her way for wearing a burqa. A stunned Grigoriev burst into tears, running to her crew, standing a few hundred metres away.

"This was the first-time Adriana was dressed in a burqa in London and after reading the script initially, had argued with me that Muslim women aren't racially abused there," says Mumbai-based Sandeep Varma, director of *The Disguise*, a short film that premiered in Kolkata on March 26.

"We often make claims about our society being clean. However, only those who face racism and discrimination know the reality," adds the 49-year-old, who has also written and directed *Kahanibaaz*, a short film starring Ashish Vidyarthi, while his other works include *Manjunath*, a film on an IIM-Lucknow student who was killed for standing up against corruption.

Grigoriev from Moldova is one of the two protagonists (the other one being Naomi Willow from the UK) in the film, which is about two women in London — one who is conservative and holds on to her customs, while the other one is liberal and has assimilated into the Western world. One day, a hate crime pushes matters to a head, and forces them to rethink their identity. Willow plays a Muslim woman who has embraced the British culture and lives her life like any other Londoner. However, her perception of racism faced in Britain changes after an incident at a bus stop.

Riya Mukherjee, writer and producer of the 18-minute film, says, "I wrote it in early 2018 and felt the story was very timely, with the kind of mess the world finds itself in. I did not want to go through the process of pitching it to producers as that would've been time consuming and so, I decided to produce it myself." The 44-year-old founded Riya Mukherjee Word Pictures, with *The Disguise* being their maiden production.

On choosing London as the backdrop, she says, "I know London very well as a city; it is full of people from different cultures and ethnicities and racism unfortunately persists there, making me want to pick it as a place to shoot."

SLC RELEASE MALINGA

Changing its stance, Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) on Tuesday released Lasith Malinga for IPL, saying the fast bowler will get to bowl against better batsmen in the Twenty20 league. Malinga was supposed to participate in Sri Lanka's Super Provincial One-Day domestic tournament.

The Buttler did it or was it Ashwin?

Ashwin's Mankading of Buttler quickly became a talking point across the cricketing world but it is a debate that has raged on since the original incident in 1947

SRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, MARCH 26

12.2, 12.3 & 12.5 (from top left): On three occasions in the 13th over Jos Buttler was out of his crease. Before the last delivery of the over, Ashwin Mankaded Buttler to trigger a debate about rules versus spirit of the game. *Screengrabs*

IT SAYS something about the act of mankading that people who claim bounced-balls as catches, men who ran out a player walking to congratulate his partner on hitting a hundred, batsmen who don't walk after edging, those who tamper with the ball, some who have taken drugs, and those who mouth ugly personal abuses have united in the moral war against mankading – and yet, it's not only in rules but also in its latest iteration, it clearly says the onus is on batsman not to leave the crease until the ball is delivered.

Why then this furore? Perhaps, because unlike other dismissals, Mankading preempts everything else: a ball hasn't been bowled, the batsmen haven't gotten into the act, and some feel "cheated" by the non-consummation of the cricketing act. We look at some of the outrage, from present and the past, to understand the issue.

■ ■ ■

"Criticism? I am saying it needs to be applauded." — R Ashwin on Mankading in 2016

In February 2016, asked on twitter whether he has ever considered Mankading as a strategy while running in to (bowl), Ashwin replied: "Every single day. I can't push the front line, why should a batsman gain yards." A follow-up question came about why he doesn't give warning to the batsman and Ashwin replied: "batsmen can warn the bowler about hitting him for a 6?" and when another suggested that warning might save him from criticism, Ashwin replied: "criticism? I am saying it needs to be applauded. Popular opinions aren't always right."

■ ■ ■

"So disappointed in @ashwinravi99 as a captain & as a person. All captains sign the #IPL wall & agree to play in the spirit of the game. RA had no intention of delivering the ball – so it should have been called a dead ball. Over to u BCCI – this is not a good look for the #IPL — Shane Warne

In a flurry of hyperventilating tweets that has ranged from questioning Ashwin's integrity and class to alleging bias on anyone who didn't conform to his view, Warne probably made the one tweet (above) that best captures the views of people who sit on 'morally-not-right side' of the Mankading fence and also question whether Ashwin was right even by the newly amended Law.

That intention to deliver the ball is the most valid criticism thus far. Under the previous rule, bowlers could attempt a run out only before entering their delivery stride. Now, under the new change in 2017, bowlers will be able to run-out up to the instant at which they "would be expected to deliver the ball".

More evidence has emerged that shows that Buttler was standing outside the crease thrice in the same over – before Ashwin had delivered the ball – before Ashwin decided to mankad off the last ball.

Now, as Warne says, Ashwin might well seem as if he has no intention of delivering the ball – and that's where even the amended rules leave it vague. Should he not have stopped and waited but done the run out in his delivery stride as Kapil Dev famously did in 1992 to Peter Kirsten? What is the point at which he is expected to deliver the ball? Ashwin can well turn around and say that he was still in control and could have delivered the ball. The vagueness even in the new rule can lead to more subjectivism – It should be made clearer, taking out the intentions of delivering the ball and letting the batsmen know that they can't just leave the crease until the bowler releases the ball or umpire calls it dead ball. But the outrage would probably have been the same even if he had attempted to get into his bowling action stride as it would still be deemed be unfair by the moral police.

As things stand, the main idea of the rule change was to put the onus of moral and spirit of the game on the batsmen. By saying that "the onus on the non-striker to remain in their ground" and "the message to non-striker is very clear -if you don't want to risk being run out, stay within your ground until the bowler has released the ball", MCC, the body that drafted the change, has made it clear that the batsman would be cheating if he steps out before the ball is released and can be run out.

■ ■ ■

"I am sure based on reactions from the U-19 WC, I as the bowler should allow this to happen. Madness." — West Indies' captain Jason Holder

In 2016, when Keemo Paul, now in IPL then with West Indies U-19 team, mankaded Zimbabwe's last batsman to win the game, similar furore had erupted. Paul had run in with the sole intention to Mankad – he ran right through the crease and took out the bails after the batsman had stepped out of the crease. A while later, West Indies senior team's captain Jason Holder tweeted the above comment on a photo from an international match that had Kagiso Rabada entering the bowling crease when Moeen Ali, the non-striker, could already be seen well outside the crease.

Never to let an opportunity go begging, Ashwin dived in with a reply: "Unfortunate ways of living with popular opinions."

■ ■ ■

"Any inch gained, deliberately or not, in a tight run chase is an inch lost to the fielding side and therefore he is fair game. Mankading cannot happen if a batsman is in his ground … Anything that can be invoked as contrary to the game's spirit, when a player is abiding by the laws, must be nonsense. Play to the laws, and you will be playing in the right spirit" – Mike Atherton in 2014

> **That intention to deliver the ball is the most valid criticism thus far. Under the previous rule, bowlers could attempt a run out only before entering their delivery stride. Now, under the new change in 2017, bowlers will be able to run-out up to the instant at which they "would be expected to deliver the ball".**

When Buttler was mankaded by Sri Lanka's Sachitra Senanayake in 2014, England cricketers from Michael Vaughan, Alastair Cook, and Graeme Swann had criticised the bowler but Atherton chose to differ. His comments point out that it doesn't matter if the batsman was deliberately trying to gain an advantage; he shouldn't venture out. Some have commented about giving Butler a warning but how many warnings does a batsman need, especially the one who has been mankaded out before?

As a postscript on the Senanayake issue, Swann had managed to infuse some hilarity even in his criticism. "I think the Mankad is just wrong even though it's not illegal. Like cuddling your sister while watching a film," Swann said then.

■ ■ ■

"Absolutely disgraceful" — Stephen Fleming on Keemo Paul mankading in U-19 tournament

When Keemo Paul mankaded the Zimbabwean, one of the harshest critics was Stephen Fleming, who had called it "absolutely disgraceful". In 2006, when Muttiah Muralitharan walked down the pitch to congratulate Kumar Sangakkara on reaching a hundred and was run out by Brendon McCullum, Fleming had said, "The game doesn't stop when a player gets hundred". Muralitharan wasn't trying to get an extra run, he had touched the bat at his end and immediately turned just to congratulate but he was, rightly, ran out as according to laws he shouldn't have wandered. But if ever there was any moral spirit-of-game angle to be considered it was then.

■ ■ ■

"I would say to all India ex players/pundits who are supportive of what R Ashwin did if Kohli was batting, would you be so supportive?" — Michael Vaughan

The obvious answer came from a former India player Murali Kartik, who has mankaded batsmen before in his career. Replying to Vaughan, he tweeted: "I support every bowler who does it. Whether that bowler is English or from the Artic." He then tweeted again: "Rather than telling the batsmen that they are cheating, they call the ones who do it as cheats. Pot calling the kettle back. And then hide behind this façade called spirit of cricket. Laughable."

■ ■ ■

"The non-striker is very obviously gaining an unfair advantage" — Don Bradman in 1947

The original episode of Mankading occured when Vinoo Mankad ran out Bill Brown in 1947. Despite being Mankaded by Vinoo in a tour game for backing up too far, Brown attempted it again in the second Test and was promptly run out by Mankad who found support from Bradman. "If not, why is the provision there which enables the bowler to run him out? By backing up too far or too early the non-striker is very obviously gaining an unfair advantage … there was absolutely no feeling in the matter as far as we were concerned, for we considered it quite a legitimate part of the game."

As things would play out, Brown would once again be run out by Mankad later in the series, this time in a conventional manner, when he was on 99. The next time Brown fished out his bat from the bag, he saw his teammate Lindsay Hassett's message on it: "Please keep me in the crease until the ball is bowled."

■ ■ ■

"You show no confidence in yourself or your bowlers to get the job done so you resort to that? #greatcaptaincy" — Joffra Archer

Soon after that tweet from Archer, Tino Best, former West Indies fast bowler, told him to delete. "Don't get caught up in that boss the rules are the rules and until they are changed guys will exploit them, do your job and be cool don't get caught up with tweeting boss, next year u could be playing for Punjab don't get in anyone's bad book for nothing chief".

Archer deleted his tweet immediately.

MCC: DISMISSAL WAS LEGAL

In relation to the incident, the wording of the Law needs to be examined to understand it further. This Law is essential. Without it, non-strikers could back up at liberty, several yards down the pitch and a Law is needed to prevent such action.

THE LAW:

LAW 41.16 Non-striker leaving his/her ground early

■ If the non-striker is out of his/her ground from the moment the ball comes into play to the instant when the bowler would normally have been expected to release the ball, the bowler is permitted to attempt to run him/her out. Whether the attempt is successful or not, the ball shall not count as one in the over.

If the bowler fails in an attempt to run out the non-striker, the umpire shall call and signal Dead ball as soon as possible.

NO WARNING NEEDED

To clarify, it has never been in the Laws that a warning should be given to the non-striker and nor is it against the Spirit of Cricket to run out a non-striker who is seeking to gain an advantage by leaving his/her ground early. Furthermore, with batsmen now being deemed in or out by millimetres by TV replays on quick singles, it is right that they should remain in their ground at the non-striker's end until it is fair for them to leave.

RELEASE OF THE BALL ISSUE

Yesterday's incident could have been ruled out or not out, depending on how "the instant when the bowler would normally have been expected to release the ball" is interpreted. Some feel that Ashwin delayed his action to allow Buttler the chance to leave his ground and that Buttler was in his ground when he expected the ball to be released. If it was a deliberate delay, that would be unfair and against the Spirit of Cricket. Ashwin claims this not to be the case.

TV UMPIRE'S ANGLE

The TV umpire had to make a decision and, under the Law (and indeed ICC's interpretation of them, which clarifies the expected moment of release as when the arm reaches its highest point), it was understandable how he opted to give Buttler out.

DELHI CAPITALS VS CSK

After Mumbai high, Delhi hit a low at home

SYNOPSIS: Delhi Capital's batsmen falter, while their bowlers are taken to the cleaners by Chennai

VISHAL MENON
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

Delhi batsmen falter

A LOT was expected from the Delhi Capitals' star-studded batting line-up following their blitzkrieg in the season-opener against the Mumbai Indians at the Wankhede Stadium. On the big night at their home turf, they found the going tough against Chennai's disciplined and well-rounded bowling attack, ably marshalled by MS Dhoni. They posted a below par score of 147 for 6 and went down by four wickets.

Sensing the two-paced nature of the pitch, the Chennai captain MS Dhoni made a couple of smart moves at the outset. Firstly, he introduced Harbhajan Singh, his experienced and in-form off-spinner in the third over of the innings. Secondly, he finished off the full quota from his pace bowler Deepak Chahar upfront.

This, in turn, helped him preserve his other two spinners — Ravindra Jadeja and Imran Tahir — and the wily medium-pacer Dwayne Bravo to apply the choke in the middle overs. To be fair to Delhi, they didn't start off too badly, with their openers Prithwi Shaw and Shikhar Dhawan beginning their pursuits in contrasting styles.

Shaw tore into Chahar, unfurling the horizontal bat shots to good effect. Dhawan, on the other hand, was sedate and biding his time out in the middle. The issue with Delhi's batting was that no one from the top-order really stood up to assert themselves against the Chennai bowlers.

They did get off to assured starts; but just when one got the sense that they had settled down, they would find ways to inexplicably get out.

Shaw looked promising on 24, before Chahar nailed him with a short-pitched delivery. Captain Shreyas Iyer, who walked in at No.3, was trapped in front by Imran Tahir's quicker delivery for 20-ball 18.

In the midst of all this, Dhawan looked fairly subdued at the other end, with the Chennai's spin trio exerting their stranglehold on the proceedings.

It was Rishabh Pant's entry that brought a semblance of life into the Delhi innings. Fresh from his onslaught against Mumbai, the young wicket-keeper kept the scoreboard ticking with a brace of boundaries and a six.

However, like Shaw and Iyer, Pant's stay at the crease, too, was short-lived — with Bravo orchestrating the dismissal with a clever slower delivery. Pant's departure could not have come at a more opportune moment for Chennai, because till he was around, they had harboured hopes of getting a score in excess of 180.

His departure in the 16th over, stalled Delhi's pursuit. Colin Ingram, Keemo Paul and Dhawan all departed in the space of subsequent 11 deliveries, to give Chennai the ascendancy. Just to put things into perspective, Delhi had notched up 82 runs in the last five overs against Mumbai on Sunday night. Tonight, they could muster only 29 runs. Credit must go to the Chennai bowlers, especially Bravo's spell at the fag end of the innings.

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He didn't do anything spectacular. In fact, he conceded 17 runs in his first over. That did not deter the 35-year-old. He mixed his pace cleverly and hit those yorkers with pin-point precision, to finish with figures of 3/33. Bravo's spell was the definitive factor that tilted the tide in Chennai's favour.

Bowlers taken to the cleaners

At the half-way mark, all eyes at the Feroz Shah Kotla was on the 22-yard strip. Doubts lingered about its propensity to aid Chennai's bevy of stroke-makers. All this dissipated at the sheer violence with which Shane Watson and Ambati Rayudu began their chase, creaming four boundaries between them in the first fourteen balls.

Their belligerence notwithstanding, the start was fraught with danger as Rayudu was dropped in the first slip off Dhawan in the opening over.

For a fleeting moment, Delhi sensed an opening after Sharma extracted his revenge, by dismissing Rayudu, who failed to fend off the Delhi pacer's brute short-pitched delivery. But Suresh Raina, who joined Watson, continued with the onslaught, and looked under no strife. Chennai's No.3 looked in vintage form, clearing his front leg and orchestrating his trademark clash over the point region.

Delhi, on the other hand, missed a trick by not unleashing Kagiso Rabada at the start of the chase. Iyer decided to play the waiting game and introduced the Protea pacer only in the fifth over, after the exit of Rayudu. This move did not have any effect on the outcome of the game though as Watson used Rabada's pace proficiently to earn 10 runs from his opening over. Delhi bowlers gave away 58 runs in the Powerplay.

Chennai's chase also exposed a vital chink in Delhi's armour — their lack of a potent spin bowler. The incumbents — left-arm spinner Axar Patel and leg-spinners Amit Mishra and Rahul Tewatia inspires little confidence in toppling opposition teams.

Not surprisingly, the trio could do little to stifle the flow of runs. Even though Mishra had prised out the scalps of Watson and Raina, he was taken to the cleaners. It was only fitting that Dhoni's humongous wallop against Mishra's final delivery of his spell, and the penultimate over of the match, that sealed the deal for Chennai.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi Capitals 147/6 (S Dhawan 51 (47b, 7x4), R Pant 25 (13b, 2x4, 1x6); DJ Bravo 3/33) lost to Chennai Super Kings 150/4 in 19.4 overs (S Watson 44 (26b, 4x4, 3x6), MS Dhoni 32 (35b, 2x4, 1x6), S Raina 30 (16b, 4x4, 1x6); A Mishra 2/35) by six wickets.

Delhi Capitals opener Shikhar Dhawan top-scored in the match with 51 but the effort was in vain on Tuesday. *Amit Mehra*

HI proposes ex-Australia coach Reid for India job

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

HOCKEY INDIA has identified Netherlands' assistant coach Graham Reid as the new chief coach of the men's team, thus ending a two-month hunt to fill the position.

The federation officials, along with Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra, met Sports Authority of India (SAI) director general Neelam Kapur and executive director (teams division) Radhika Sreeman here on Tuesday and proposed the 54-year-old Australian's name as Harendra Singh's successor. Reid's name has subsequently been forwarded to the sports ministry for a formal approval, which is expected in a couple of days.

While the terms of Reid's contract are not yet known, a source said he is likely to be offered a long-term contract, till the 2022 World Cup. That, however, will depend on the team's performance at next year's Tokyo Olympics, for which the team is yet to qualify. It is learnt that Reid's compatriot Jay Stacy's name was also discussed during Tuesday's meeting.

Hockey India, however, has not yet divulged the names of other candidates who applied for the role and the selection process that was followed. India have been without a coach since January after the governing body sacked Harendra citing the team's inability to defend Asian Games gold medal in Jakarta, which was followed by an average World Cup outing. He was the second coach to be sacked within a year following the team's dismal run in 2018.

A two-time Olympian who has made 130 appearances for the Kookaburras, Reid did his coaching apprenticeship under legendary Australian Ric Charlesworth. He was Charlesworth's assistant in the Australian set-up for five years before taking over as the chief coach in 2014. Reid was Australia's coach at the Rio Olympics but stepped down after the team could not manage a podium finish.

He then took up the dual responsibility in Netherlands -- as the national team assistant coach and the chief coach of Amsterdam. Last week, however, he was fired as Amsterdam's coach after the team lost 8-2 to HGC in a league match. Amsterdam said the disappointing result coupled with interest from 'outside Amsterdam' were the reasons they parted ways with Reid.

Azlan Shah Cup: India beat hosts Malaysia 4-2

Ipoh: India struck four times after a goalless first quarter to tame hosts Malaysia 4-2, climbing to the second spot in the Sultan Azlan Shah Cup hockey tournament, here Tuesday. Sumit Kumar (17th min), Sumit Kumar junior (27th min), drag flicker Varun Kumar and Mandeep Singh (58th min) found the net for India. Razie Rahim (27th min) and Firhan Ashari (57th min) scored for the hosts. With two wins and a draw, India moved up to the second position in the table with seven points behind Korea (7).

India had beaten Japan 2-0 in the first match before playing a 1-1 draw against Korea. Birendra Lakra was named the man-of-the-match for his efforts in helping India defend their lead. India will next take on Canada on Wednesday.

On doubles day, a single bright spot

Ashwini Ponnappa and Sikki Reddy stun higher-ranked Chinese duo as other Indian pairs bow out in the first round

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

HARD WORK and good performances can sustain a partnership for only so long. After a while, one needs results to provide evidence of progress being made.

Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy have been playing together for quite some time now, but it seemed the pair was unable to take the next big step.

Winning a match or two at big tournaments and then going down to fancied opponents after a close fight can leave one deflated. It's in this context that Tuesday's 22-20 21-19 victory over the higher-ranked Chinese combination of Li Wenmei and Zheng Yu at the Yonex-Sunrise India Open should be seen.

Ashwini and her former doubles partner Jwala Gutta enjoyed considerable success – including a world championship bronze in 2011 and Commonwealth Games gold a year earlier – but her combination with Sikki wasn't delivering the desired results. "We used to get chances against higher-ranked opponents, but couldn't convert. We used to get to quarters and semis, and not take the next step," Ashwini said after their win against the Chinese pair ranked five places above them at No. 18.

The Indians trailed in both games, but never let their opponents get out of sight. They were even down a game point in the first game, but won three straight points to take the opener. The second game went on similar lines.

The teams kept exchanging leads but the Indians had another finishing kick in them to seal a spot in the second round after a riveting 47-minute encounter. "This win is all the more satisfying as there were no easy points. We were behind 7-11 at the mid-game break in the opener, but recovered well thereafter."

The presence of Indonesian coach Flandy Limpele in their corner also contributed in the turnaround. The Badminton Association of India had recently roped in Limpele's services along with Indonesia's Namrih Suroto, who joined the camp following the exit of Malaysian Tan Kim Her.

"We were making easy mistakes at the start. The coach told us to be patient and consistent, and target the Chinese's slight weakness at the net," Sikki chipped in. "He told us to shorten our swing, open our bodies and keep the elbows high. We took charge of the net and put them under pressure."

The duo is working on specific aspects of their game, which they believe can take them higher up the rankings. "Serve and returns are two areas where we needed to improve. In crunch situations, they have let us down. Also, we need to start games better. Training under the new coach has been very intense, and we have to carry on till our arms ache. We have worked a lot to address our lack of consistency. We have not focused a lot on women's doubles in the last few months as we were playing mixed doubles as well, but have started working hard on it," Ashwini said.

Qualifying for the Olympics is a medium-term goal for all shuttlers in the coming months and tournaments, but the Bangalore girl wants something else too. "It's our goal to win a big tournament. We've not played many smaller events. It's always the big competitions where we face the toughest players."

Other locals disappoint

All but two of the 20 qualifying spots available in the main draw of the five disciplines were taken by Indian players – including all eight in the singles. Out of the 16 shuttlers in the men's singles qualifiers, 13 were from India. But otherwise, there was not much to cheer the local contingent on the first day of main draw competition.

Only doubles matches were played in the main draw on Tuesday, and apart from the exploits of Ashwini and Sikki, the other Indians came a cropper. The local players who did advance in the draw did so at the expense of their compatriots.

Ashwini Ponnappa (L) and Sikki Reddy entered the second round after beating China's Li Wenmei and Zheng Yu in a 47-minute encounter on Tuesday.

Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy have been playing together for quite some time now, but it seemed the pair was unable to take the next big step. Winning a match or two at big tournaments and then going down to fancied opponents after a close fight can leave one deflated. It's in this context that Tuesday's victory should be seen.

Second seeds knocked out

The biggest upset of the day came in men's doubles where the second seeds from Malaysia, Goh V Shem and Tan Wee Kiong, were shown the door by the Indonesian pairing of Ricky Karandasuwardi and Angga Pratama in a tight contest 17-21 23-21 21-19 in 49 minutes.

Top seeds Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen had a facile victory, but the ouster of the No.2 seeds can open up the draw for the several Indian combinations in the fray.

Singles action begins on Wednesday with the likes of PV Sindhu, Kidambi Srikanth, B Sai Praneeth and Sameer Verma representing the Indian interest. Former champions Viktor Axelsen and Ratchanok Intanon as well as Chinese contender He Bingjao will also take the court.

Pair from Egypt faces an uphill task

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, MARCH 26

PLAYING IN a headscarf and full-length track pants may present an incongruous sight on a badminton court but ask Doha Hany and Hadia Hosny and they will tell you that it doesn't hamper their performance at all. "In our country, the attire is totally dependent on personal choice. Usually, girls play in skirts. Headscarves and track pants don't hinder movement at all," Hadia said, as her partner nodded.

The Egyptian girls are an odd pair – at 30, Hadia is nine years older than her partner, as they practise a game that has yet to capture their country's imagination. The north African country is more known as the home of the 'Pharoahs', record seven-time continental football champions, and for providing a seemingly unending streak of champion squash players, both men and women. Hadia herself was a squash exponent in her younger days, and even practised gymnastics before an injury prompted her to take up badminton.

On Tuesday, they defeated the American sisters of Thai origin, Sydney and Ariel Lee, 21-9, 21-15 in just 20 minutes. "This is our third season together and aim to qualify for the Tokyo Olympics," Hadia, who teaches at the British University in Egypt, said. Before one thinks that the goal seems unrealistic, Hadia is already a veteran of two Olympics -Beijing and London – before narrowly missing out on Rio 2016.

"Coming from Africa, we needed to be inside the top 50 in world rankings at the end of the qualification period, but me and my previous mixed doubles partner were 51," she said in a matter-of-fact manner. That "previous mixed doubles partner" for Hadia happens to be Doha's present fiancé, who has not only coached the 21-year-old in her sporting endeavours and also arranged for the funds for her to travel the world for competition.

Doha Hany (L) and Hadia Hosny during the first round of the India Open.

"Badminton in Egypt is not like it's in Asia. There people mostly play it for fun. Playing competitively is not very common," Hadia said. That's why they have had to travel to tournaments at their own expense. "Maybe, once the Olympic qualification cycle starts, our trips abroad will be financed. But we're spending our own money now to keep our ranking sufficiently high."

Doha started playing badminton at five and represented her country at the 2014 Youth Olympics in Nanjing. Badminton players are often paired together after a lot of analysis and deliberation, but Doha and Hadia can attribute their combination to necessity and a lack of alternatives. "The next best player in Egypt was 15 years old, so we hardly had any option," the older player said. But playing together doesn't mean they train together. "We live in the same city but an hour apart. Hence, we can only train perhaps once a week," Hadia informed.

She plans to hang her racquet after, hopefully, playing at the Olympics next year, and has already started working on grooming budding Egyptian shuttlers.

The Hadia Hosny Badminton Academy is providing guidance towards that endeavour. "There is a lack of qualified coaches in Egypt. We have nobody travelling with us. Sometimes coaches with other teams provide us tips and tell us what we're doing wrong. We were not expecting to win today. I'd only taken two days' leave from my job. Now I'll have to ask for more," she said.

[SPORTS BAR]

Kvitova's attacker gets 8-year sentence

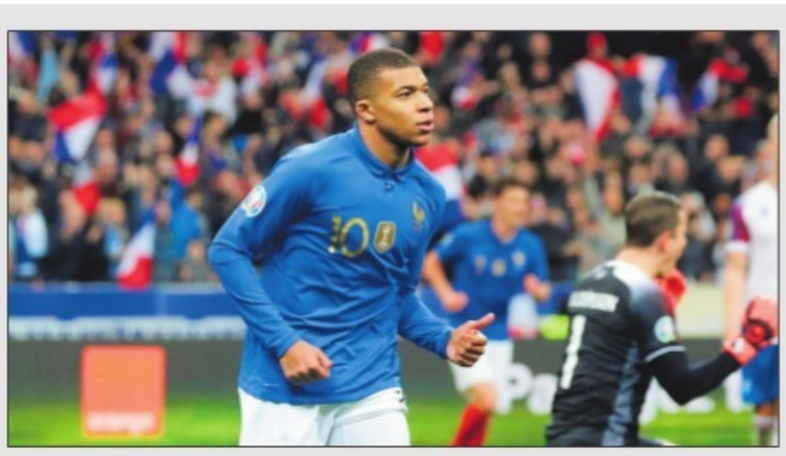
An attacker who stabbed two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova in her home was sentenced on Tuesday to eight years in prison by a Czech regional court, a court spokeswoman said. Kvitova suffered severe wounds to her left playing hand as she struggled with the intruder, identified by the court as Radim Zondra, in her flat during the attack in December 2016. When Kvitova testifed in February, she spoke of "blood everywhere" and she said that she recognized the attacker in police photographs immediately by his eyes. Neither of the sides appealed the court's ruling immediately, but they both can do so later, Brno regional court spokeswoman Eva Angyalossy said. Kvitova, currently the world's number two in WTA rankings, returned to professional tennis in May 2017, crowning her comeback 18 months later with her first final appearance at 2019 Australian Open.

Froome crashes in second stage

Four-times Tour de France champion Chris Froome crashed on the second stage of the Tour of Catalunya on Tuesday, destroying his chances of winning the race. The Briton, his right side bruised, finished in a group of late riders and lost over 13 minutes on the 179.6-kilometre ride from Mataro to Sant Feliu de Guixols. Australia's Michael Matthews won the uphill sprint to the finish, while Belgium's Thomas De Gendt extended his overall lead in the race. Froome was taking part in the week-long race in support of his 22-year-old Team Sky team mate Egan Bernal, the recent Paris-Nice winner. It was unclear whether Froome had suffered any more serious injuries in the crash.

City to play pre-season games in China

Manchester City will play pre-season matches in the Chinese cities of Nanjing and Shanghai in July as part of the Premier League Asia Trophy, the English champions said on Tuesday. City are part of a four-strong contingent at the tournament, along with Newcastle United, West Ham United and Wolverhampton Wanderers. City's first match is a semi-final at Nanjing's Olympic Sports Centre on July 17, which will determine whether they take part in the third-place playoff or final at Shanghai's Hongkou Stadium on July 20.



Mbappe has scored 12 goals and delivered seven assists in 30 games for France.

Mbappe continues rise in Iceland rout

Kylian Mbappe answered his critics with a sterling performance as France thrashed Iceland 4-0 in a Euro 2020 qualifier on Monday, showing no signs of irritation this time to continue his meteoric rise. The striker, whose nerves had been pointed out in the 4-1 win against Moldova last Friday, kept his cool throughout to find the back of the net after the break and set up Samuel Umtiti and Antoine Griezmann for the first and fourth goals. In Chisinau, the Paris St Germain forward often sought individual solutions and was booked for diving, appearing less threatening than usual. Coach Didier Deschamps, however, was never worried by a player who has now scored 12 and delivered seven assists in 30 games for France. "There's no problem with Kylian. He's in the game like all the others. If you had been a football player you would understand," Deschamps said at the Stade de France. The 20-year-old's goal in Paris on Monday meant he became the youngest player to score 12 international goals since Denmark's Harald Nielsen, then 18, in 1960.

Sri Lanka's Malinga cleared to play IPL

Sri Lanka's limited-overs captain Lasith Malinga has been cleared to play the remainder of the Indian Premier League (IPL)season after his country's cricket board granted the paceman permission to skip the domestic 50-overs tournament on Tuesday. Selectors had earlier made it mandatory for Sri Lanka players to participate in the Super Provincial One-Day Tournament if they want to be considered for the May 30-July 14 Cricket World Cup in England and Wales. However, Sri Lanka Cricket said they have decided to release the 35-year-old fast bowler as he would benefit from opportunity to play with "much stronger opposition in the IPL tournament, which consist of international players."

Doing things differently for Indian Open: Kapur

Indian golfer Shiv Kapur will be banking on his experience of playing at the DLF Golf and Country Club here to come up with a good show at the Hero Indian Open, commencing on Thursday. "I missed the cut the last two years, so I will obviously be doing things differently. This year the greens are playing quite different so my focus this time around is to try and focus more on the greens. The more you play this course you just learn where to miss it. Visually it's a very intimidating golf course but the actual landing area is quite generous," said the 27-year-old.

Blazers edge Nets, lose Nurkic to injury

They had just clinched a playoff spot, though there were no cheers or celebrations from the Portland Trail Blazers. Instead, just silence and prayers for Jusuf Nurkic. The gruesome injury suffered by their center overshadowed everything else Monday night. "Devastating," Blazers coach Terry Stotts said. Nurkic had 32 points and 16 rebounds before suffering his left leg injury in the second overtime, and the Blazers outlasted the Brooklyn Nets 148-144. "It made me sick to my stomach," Blazers guard Damian Lillard said of Nurkic's injury. "As I was walking over there, I saw everyone else turn around real quick and walk away, and then I look and I saw his leg." Nurkic was hurt when his leg bent awkwardly as he battled for an offensive rebound. His leg was immobilized and he was removed on a stretcher while surrounded by members of both teams. Nurkic was then transferred to a local hospital.

McGregor pulls out retirement card

MMA star says he is calling it quits to focus on business but experts feel bigger comeback is in the pipeline

REUTERS/AFP
MARCH 26

CONOR MCGREGOR'S announcement that he is to retire from mixed martial arts (MMA) sent shockwaves around the sporting world on Tuesday, but in a sport that seldom plays by normal rules it could mean his comeback is closer than ever.

As recently as Monday on an American TV chat show, the 30-year-old former two-weight Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) title-holder said he was in negotiations to fight in July.

Only a few hours after that broadcast, the Irishman took to social media to announce he was walking away from the sport that has made him famous and earned him hundreds of millions of dollars.

"Hey guys quick announcement, I've decided to retire from the sport formally known as 'Mixed Martial Art' today," McGregor posted on his verified Twitter account "I wish all my old colleagues well going forward in competition."

It was the second time that McGregor had announced on Twitter that he was leaving the sport. A month after losing to Nate Diaz in March 2016 he said he had decided to "retire young".

That retirement lasted a matter of days and he subsequently signed an agreement to fight Diaz later in the same year, winning a five-round war of attrition on points.

McGregor's management did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday, but UFC President Dana White said he understood McGregor's decision given his wealth and the commercial success of his whiskey brand.

"He has the money to retire and his whiskey is killing it. It totally makes sense," White said in a statement. "If I was him I would retire too.

"He has accomplished incredible things in this sport. I am so happy for him and I look forward to seeing him be as successful outside of the Octagon as he was in it."

With his fame and popularity allowing him to wield the kind of negotiating power never seen before in MMA, McGregor and White, who played a major role in transforming UFC into a global brand, have clashed before.

According to media reports in the United States, the latest dispute is over McGregor's ability to headline a card with no title on the line.

McGregor has not fought since a fourth-round lightweight title fight loss to Khabib Nurmagomedov in October 2018 that sparked an ugly post-fight brawl and led to a fine and a six-month ban.

Earlier this month, McGregor was arrested again in Miami Beach for stealing the phone of someone trying to take his photo, authorities said. McGregor was charged with robbery and criminal mischief, but his attorney described the altercation as minor.

Dagestani champ Nurmagomedov was banned for nine months and is not expected to defend the belt until November or December.

Given their past dealings, McGregor's tweet and White's statement could well be tactical moves in a high-stakes game in which the winner gets to decide what happens next.

Outclassed in that bout, McGregor has distanced himself from his coach, John Kavanagh, and needs a fight or two to re-establish himself as a title contender.

A win in a trilogy fight against Diaz would both burnish his reputation and prove a popular pay-per-view draw with fans. Renowned for his trash-talking, McGregor has never been far from controversy inside and outside the cage, and he was recently arrested in Florida after smashing a fan's phone.

He has made no secret of his desire to make as much money as he can, telling Reuters in 2017 that he made $140 million from his boxing bout with Floyd Mayweather and that he aimed to eclipse the earnings of soccer player Cristiano Ronaldo.

Whether he fights again or not, the final chapter in the story of Conor McGregor is still likely to be a long way off.

"There's a lot of politics going on," McGregor told chat show host Jimmy Fallon in Monday's TV broadcast.

"The fight game is a mad game, but like I said, to my fans, I am in shape and I am ready. There are a lot of opponents (out there) ..."

If it sticks, McGregor's retirement ends a remarkable rise for the former plumber from Dublin who became the biggest star in MMA with his heavy fists and self-promotional acumen. He won 15 consecutive fights during his rise, including a spectacular 13-second knockout of Jose Aldo to win the featherweight title in December 2015.

McGregor, who has a record of 21 wins and four defeats, hasn't fought since a lightweight title loss to Khabib Nurmagomedov in October 2018 . -*USA TODAY Sports*

Conor's gambit a sign of UFC megastar's falling leverage

EXPLAINED

CONOR MCGREGOR'S 'retirement' announcement is a transparent negotiation tactic, one the UFC megastar first used two years ago. After falling out with the company over promotional work in April 2016, McGregor tweeted: "I have decided to retire young. Thanks for the cheese." He was dropped from the lucrative UFC 200 card, but later got the fight, and the deal, he wanted. The Irishman faced rival Nate Diaz in a rematch at UFC 202 later that year, setting the record for the highest-selling UFC pay-per-view (PPV) at the time with 1.6 million (He bettered the record against Khabib Nurmagomedov last October). But McGregor's leverage, and his slices of cheese, took a major hit earlier this month when UFC signed a PPV contract with ESPN. According to the deal, fans in the US can no longer buy UFC PPV events through their cable or satellite TV provider. Instead, they would have to first sign up for the ESPN+ subscription service for $49.99 per year (or $4.99 per month) and then order PPV events costing $59.99 through the platform.

ESPN+, which has aggressively cornered major sporting properties such as Major League Soccer, Grand Slam tennis, PGA Tour golf, college sports, international rugby, cricket as well as Bob Arum's Top Rank boxing (which has Indians Vijender Singh and Vikas Krishan on the roster), has now become the only consumer service offering access to the biggest MMA fights. The big winner in the deal is the UFC, which receives a generous 75 per cent of the take in the form of a guaranteed flat fee from ESPN+ till 2025. The company thus has an insurance policy against declines in PPV numbers in the future, and the need to create new major draws and superstars is not their headache either.

Which brings us to McGregor, who earlier got the slice of the pie in the form of PPV revenue shares. The 30-year-old has been responsible for five of UFC's top six PPVs, and the second overall (against Mayweather in 2017.) But with traditional PPV's essentially a thing of the past, and UFC's revenue guaranteed, the company doesn't have to deal with the notorious athlete's antics. Also, while his popularity facilitated the $4bn sale of the company in 2016, the current owners (sports PR and management giants Endeavor) are tough negotiators. McGregor, the belle of the ball, has hinted at fights with at least six different opponents recently, but UFC has been in no hurry to make the matches. As a result, McGregor had to roll the dice on Tuesday.

> **Hey guys quick announcement, I've decided to retire from the sport formally known as 'Mixed Martial Art' today. I wish all my old colleagues well going forward in competition."**
>
> **CONOR MCGREGOR**
> MMA LEGEND

Kyrgios at it again, goes for underarm serve

REUTERS
MARCH 26

HAVING ANNOYED Rafa Nadal with an underarm serve at Acapulco, Nick Kyrgios doubled down with the tactic to win two points against hapless Serb Dusan Lajovic at the Miami Open and fire up a timeworn debate between modern fans and purists.

The mercurial Australian has been sanctioned for a litany of tennis offences, accused of tanking matches and slapped with a heavy fine for a crude remark about a player's girlfriend. But in dinking the ball over the net with a sneaky under-arm swing, Kyrgios was operating completely within the laws of the game, if not quite the "spirit", as Nadal and others might have complained.

For a self-described lazy trainer, the 23-year-old has clearly put some time into honing the tactic since his effort against former world number one Nadal floated well beyond the service box.

The first attempt at 3-1 in the first set against unseeded Lajovic might have been regarded as text-book execution, if there existed such a consensus.

With the Serb standing well behind the baseline, Kyrgios leant over the ball, bounced it a few times and without looking up, flicked it just over the net.

It landed with enough slice to bounce twice for an ace and seal the game, leaving a flat-footed Lajovic no chance to reply.

More casually struck, Kyrgios's second effort lacked something in execution, allowing Lajovic to swoop in and easily make the retrieve. But the Australian was ready for the Serb's drop-shot return, and flicked it past him to close out the first set.

British tennis luminary Judy Murray thrilled in the tactic.

"The whole point of tennis competition is to disrupt (yo)ur opponents game by applying pressure through changing the speed, spin, direction, depth or height of the ball," the former Fed Cup captain and mother of Andy Murray tweeted.

"And that includes the serve. Kyrgios is a genius. I'm surprised more players don't do it."

Sporting taboos

Belgian professional Kirsten Flipkens was among the social media users backing Murray's stance, but there were plenty of detractors denouncing under-arm serving as questionable sportsmanship.

The debate between the laws and "the spirit" of the game is not unique to tennis, with a number of other sports having their own taboos.

Cricket was in uproar on Tuesday after Indian bowler Ravichandran Ashwin ran out English batsman Jos Buttler with the rarely used but entirely permissible "Mankad" dismissal in the Indian Premier League match on the previous evening.

As an Australian, Kyrgios will be well aware that a ball delivered underarm in a cricket match in 1981 triggered one of the biggest sporting scandals in the country's history.

Australia's Trevor Chappell rolled the ball along the pitch to prevent New Zealand batsman Brian McKechnie from scoring enough runs to win a match. It was perfectly legal at the time, but universally condemned.

In tennis, the frowning of opponents and conservative fans has likely made most players think twice about taking up under-arm serving as a tactic.

Five-times Grand Slam champion Martina Hingis was jeered vociferously by the crowd during the 1999 French Open final when she tried it against Steffi Graf on the way to defeat.

Ronaldo expects to return in a week or two

REUTERS
LISBON, MARCH 26

CRISTIANO RONALDO does not think the injury which forced him out of Portugal's match against Serbia on Monday is overly serious and he told reporters he expects to return to action in one or two weeks.

Ronaldo went off in the first half of the Euro 2020 qualifier with an apparent hamstring injury. "I'll know more in 24 or 48 hours," he told reporters.

"It happens, it's football. If you go out in the rain you get wet... I'm calm, I'll be back in one or two weeks."

His club Juventus later said in a statement that the 34-year-old had undergone exams in Portugal which showed "an apparent minor injury to his right thigh flexors." "His condition will be monitored and will be subjected to new investigations to define the resumption of competitive activity," it said. A long absence would be a blow to Juve, who signed Ronaldo last year to boost their chances of winning the Champions League.

Racist chants cloud England's Euro qualifier

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, MARCH 26

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL'S governing body charged Montenegro over the racist abuse of England players by its fans during a European Championship qualifier.

England players Callum Hudson-Odoi and Danny Rose reported hearing monkey chants during their team's 5-1 victory in Podgorica which was attended by UEFA's anti-discrimination monitors on Monday because there was judged to be a "high risk" of racism. UEFA announced the disciplinary case against Montenegro's soccer association on Tuesday and said the case would be heard on May 16 by its disciplinary body. Montenegro was also charged over crowd disturbances, the setting off of fireworks, objects being thrown, and stairways being blocked.

In a separate investigation of alleged abuse aimed at Hudson-Odoi, UEFA said it appointed an inspector to assess a complaint by Chelsea following a Europa League game two weeks ago. Chelsea believes the 18-year-old winger was targeted with racist insults by Dynamo Kiev fans during the English side's 5-0 win in Ukraine.

In the Montenegro case, the Fare network which monitors discrimination at games will provide evidence which could lead to a partial or full stadium closure for the team's next Euro 2020 qualifier in June against Kosovo.

"We had an observer present who picked up evidence of racial abuse," Fare said in a statement on Tuesday. "Our monitoring team have been compiling the evidence we have before presenting it to UEFA.

"We commend the reaction of the England players involved, no human being should have to face abuse and vilification for their race or identity, something that many Montenegrins will understand from the divisive and bloody recent history of the Balkans."

England winger Raheem Sterling cupped his ears after scoring England's fifth goal and Montenegro fans responded with jeers before an object, reportedly a lighter , was thrown onto the field. It was picked up by Hudson-Odoi.

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