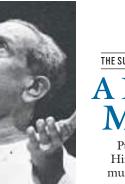
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A LIFE IN **MUSIC** Pt Bhimsen Joshi, Hindustani classical music's gold standard

**PAGES 9, 10, 11** 



The youth arrested for the alleged slogans. ANI

J&K: 13 held for 'sedition', may face PSA over slogans at Jamia Masjid

**BASHAARAT MASOOD** SRINAGAR APRIL 9

THE Jammu and Kashmir Police has arrested 13 youths on "sedition" charges over slogans raised at Srinagar's Jamia Masjid after Friday prayers, and said it was preparing a Public Safety Act (PSA) dossier against them and may book more people.

Videos that did the rounds Friday showed a group of youths raising pro-azadi and "anti-national" slogans at the Srinagar Grand Mosque. Police only recently allowed Friday prayers at the Jamia Masjid, after a long shutdown that began first with the abrogation of Article 370 in **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

> SUNDAY **STORY**

PAGE 6 Being Bommai PAK PM LOSES MIDNIGHT TRUST VOTE AFTER SC PROD

# Imran Khan goes, kicking & screaming

Motion passed with 174, 2 more than majority; before vote, Imran met Army chief

**SAJJAD HUSSAIN** ISLAMABAD, APRIL 9

PAKISTAN'S PRIME Minister Imran Khan lost power late on Saturday night, voted out by parliament in a test of strength that the Speaker had stalled all day.

The motion was taken up after Pakistan's Supreme Court prepared to step in to enforce compliance of its April 7 order directing the holding of the vote of no-confidence, and prison vans were stationed outside the National

**SANTANU CHOWDHURY** 

HE WAS called to the police sta-

tion almost every day, made to

stay there hours, pressured to

sign documents, while his mo-

bile phone remains missing

since his death. These are some

of the charges made in the FIR

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

JHALDA (WEST BENGAL),



Opposition members sing the Pakistan anthem in the National Assembly after members of the ruling PTI walk out; and Imran during his address on Friday. Screengrabs

Assembly, apparently to take away officials guilty of contempt

Niranjan Baishnab's family

members in Ihalda. Partha Paul

Speaker Asad Qaiser and Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri, both

from Imran's Pakistan Tehreek-CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### **MURDER, SUICIDE IN A PURULIA TOWN** Red flags over PLI Police called him daily, scheme, NITI plans to questioned for hours: monitor performance Family of dead witness

**SOUMYARENDRA BARIK** & AASHISH ARYAN NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

FOLLOWING RED FLAGS raised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the NITI Aayog has commenced work on evolving a set of objective criteria to track value addition by companies which avail financial rewards under NDA government's **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 



Is there bang for the buck?

WITH INCENTIVES under the PLI scheme topping Rs 2 lakh crore, stakeholders now feel the need to check if firms availing benefits are creating value.

### **India said no to China** proposal on pullback from Hot Springs

Accepting it would have resulted in deep withdrawal, says Govt official

**DEEPTIMANTIWARY** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

AROUND THE time Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi visited India last month, Beijing sent Delhi a proposal on disengagement of troops from Patrolling Point 15 in the Hot Springs area of eastern Ladakh. The proposal was rejected by India.

Government sources said China proposed that Indian troops, who have been in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation with Chinese troops at PP 15 for almost two years now, move back to the Karam Singh Post between PP 16 and PP 17. China said it would withdraw its troops just behind the Line of Actual Control (LAC) as



claimed by India in that region. Sources said this was unacceptable to India since the Chinese claim line and India's understanding of the LAC almost intersect at PP 15. If India were to accept the proposal, it would mean that while Chinese troops would move back very little. Indian troops would have to withdraw several kilometres behind.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Maya didn't respond to our offer...pressure from CBI, ED, Pegasus: Rahul

MANOJCG NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

THE CONGRESS reached out to BSP supremo Mayawati for an alliance ahead of the Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh and even offered her the Chief Minister's post, but she did not even respond, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said here Saturday, suggesting that it was because she was under pressure from investigating agencies of the Central government. "She left the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**INSIDE** 

**THIRD DOSE PRICES CUT TO Rs 225 PLUS SERVICE FEE PAGE 4** 

### Ethnic fault-lines blur as nation unites in one cry: Go Gota Go

Chance to turn page on past, says Tamil MP who said no to Stalin's offer of aid



Protesters break their Ramadan fast in Colombo. Reuters



**NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN** COLOMBO, APRIL 9

SRI LANKA'S economic distress and its ruling Rajapaksa family have achieved what many thought was impossible: bringing CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



### Kesh Kanti

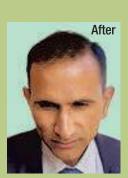
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Har Pal Aapke Saath

Kolkata



### FROM PAGE ONE

#### Go Gota Go

Sinhalese, Tamil, and Muslim together and, at least for now, uniting them in one cry: "Go

On the streets, protestors chant: "We are not divided by class, We are not divided by race." A new generation of Sri Lankans has taken the lead in the outpouring of anger against the Rajapaksa family, and they do not appear to carry the baggage of Sri Lanka's ethnic divide - described in Sri Lanka as racial divide - which the Rajapaksas did nothing to end. continuing to feed it even after the civil war ended in 2009.

The present offers an opportunity to turn the page on the past, said Tamil parliamentarian M A Sumanthiran. That is why he politely deflected Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin's offer to send food and essential supplies for the Tamils of Sri Lanka.

"We have been thankful for the assistance extended by the Indian government, and we welcome the offer of assistance from the Tamil Nadu CM. But that assistance should be for all Sri Lankans at this time, not just Tamils," Sumanthiran told *The* Sunday Express Saturday.

Sri Lanka's Tamil community has learnt the hard way when Tamil Nadu politicians take up their cause, the reactions from the majority Sinhala-Buddhist community

are negative. Sumanthiran pointed to placards held up by protestors apologising for the killings of Tamils during the war and said this was evidence of a new thinking. Stalin's offer to help the Tamils might be well-intentioned, Sumanthiran said, but was likely to be misused by elements waiting for an opportunity to defame the protests.

In Colombo, Saturday saw tens of thousands converge at Galle Face, the main ocean

"We are here to show that people are together and that this corruption cannot go on and that the President definitely cannot go on," said Charini, a lawyer holding a placard that said People's Power. "This is to ask him to go, and then the reforms can come. It is up to the parliament what comes next," she said. "First he has to go, then all the Rajapaksas must go, and then the country can breathe easy.'

The numbers swelled through the day, and into the night. Initially, the police made way for vehicles to pass through. Many honked in support of the protestors, some distributed water. Later, the road was taken over by the pro-

Among the political class, the refrain is "after Rajapaksa who?" even though there is no sign that either Gotabava or Mahinda is contemplating an exit. Neverthe-less, Opposition politicians are racing to finalise an agreement on what should replace Rajapaksa rule before Parliament meets again on

"We have the numbers to move a no-confidence motion but those who want to support it want to be sure what comes the day after the vote is carried," said a leading politician.

The government of President Rajapaksa, and his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, has lost its majority. The Opposition has spurned the President's offer to join a national government. Opposition politicians want the Rajapaksas to step down.

Hoping to placate the protestors, the President got his entire Cabinet to resign. But he has not been able to appoint a new one. One ruling party politician who was appointed as Finance Minister quit within

The main opposition party is the Samagi Jana Balawegaya, led by Sajith Premadasa, with the sure support of 48 parliamentarians. Another 42 have separated from the government and call themselves "independent". The Tamil National Alliance has 10 parlia-

A group of 20 parliamentar-

ians is said to be willing to support a no-confidence motion but will not commit itself without the assurance that it will be part of the next dispensation.

The SJB leader, the son of former President Ranasinghe Premadasa, believes this is a chance to abolish the executive presidency through a vote in parliament, so that even if Rajapaksa does not quit, he will lose his absolute powers.

The proposal would have to be put to a referendum even in the event of two-thirds parliamentary approval, but going by the mood on the streets, Opposition leaders are confident that it would receive a resounding yes. There is also the view that this should be followed by an impeachment of Gotabaya.

However, there is concern in the political class that if push comes to shove, President Rajapaksa, who does not seem to have many options, but commands much respect and lovalty from the military for empowering them to defeat the LTTE — especially his own Gajaba regiment (he used to be an Army officer) — might resort to the unthinkable: the 'Myannmar model", as it is referred to here in the Sri Lankan

Army commander General Shavendra Fernando has said the armed forces will stand by the Constitution. "That is a welcome reassurance, but given the way the armed forces have been pumped, one hopes that there won't be a temptation to fill a political vacuum," said Sunday Times editor Sinha Ratnatunga.

#### Rahul on Maya

field open. Why?" Gandhi said, adding: "The CBI, ED, Pegasus...

Speaking at a book launch event, the Congress leader said: "You must have seen that Mayawati did not fight the elections. We had sent a message to Mayawati, let's have an alliance, you be the Chief Minister. She did not even talk. Those people... like Kanshi Ramji...Î respect him a lot. They gave blood and sweat to awaken the Dalit voice in Uttar Pradesh... but today Mayawati is saying she will not fight for

Accusing the government of not allowing "implementation of the Constitution", he said Pegasus was used to control politicians. "Had I taken one rupee, I would not be standing here... So Pegasus, CBI, ED... they control the political system." The Constitution can be implemented through institutions, he said, "but they have captured all the institutions".

During the Assembly elections, Congress general secretary in-charge of UP Privanka Gandhi Vadra had repeatedly asserted that the party would fight the polls alone.

Gandhi was addressing a gathering after the launch of the book The Dalit Truth --Battles For Realising Ambedkar's Vision, edited by former bureaucrat and his close aide K

The former Congress president added that he has never sought power. "There are many politicians who are just interested in power... They wake up in the morning and think about how to secure power... India today is filled with such people," Gandhi said, adding he was different. "But I have a problem. It is strange. I was born in the midst of power... I am not interested in it... I sleep at night... trying to understand my country. I wake up in the morning... (I) love this country. Like a lover who wants to understand the person he loves... In a way, I am a beggar. Why? Because my country has without any reason showered me with love. So, it is a debt. And I wake up in the morning and think about this love and respect that this country has given me... how do I pay back?" he said

Gandhi said he had also faced setbacks, but it was all for the better. "Desh ne sirf muihe pyar nahin diya, desh be mujhe jhoote bi maare. You cannot understand, jitni zoron se, jitni hinsa se, is desh ne mujhe mara hai, peeta hai (But the country has not given me just love, it has thrown shoes at me. You cannot understand how hard, with what violence, I have been hit). I thought why is this happening. I got the answer. The country wants to teach me, the country is saying you learn and

understand," he said. Gandhi went on to recall his visit to Gujarat to meet the Dalit families that were victims of the 2016 Una flogging incident, and his conversation with the father of one of the Dalit youths assaulted. Gandhi said the father told him that several Dalit boys had attempted sui-

Gandhi said the youths told him they were driven to suicide after seeing the video of the assault. "It came to my mind that had I been in his place and decided to take my life, before dying I would have beaten up the person who assaulted my brother... that had somebody tied up my sister and beaten her like a dog... I would have at least stabbed him.'

Gandhi said he does not harbour hate for the killers of his father Rajiv Gandhi, but "I thought that had this happened to me... mein maar deta (I would have hit back)".

According to Gandhi, he mentioned the same to the Dalit youth who had tried to kill himself, that "before committing suicide I would have found out who assaulted my brother... taken a knife and stabbed him". "His face turned white. He said, 'What are you saying?... Haven't you understood, don't you know that if I strike him, I would be born again as a Dalit?".

Gandhi added: "I realised he was carrying the burden of thousands and lakhs of lives on his shoulders.'

He went on to quote a line that he attributed to a book written on V D Savarkar. "He said that the day he was the happiest was the day his friends and he beat up a Muslim boy."

#### **Hot Springs**

"While they will move back to just behind PP 15, they are asking us to relinquish even PP 16 which has never been claimed by China earlier. It's like saying I will move back 1 km and you move back 5-10 km. It's a non-starter of a proposal," a government official

In fact, even PP 15 has come into contention only now and never in the past, sources said.

The situation in the Depsang Plains in the far north is not encouraging either. While the Chinese have denied Indian troops access to their traditional patrolling points 10, 11, 11A, 12 and 13, the information available with the government is that China has stationed a temporary hot-mix plant for roadbuilding behind these patrolling points on the

Chinese side. Wang Yi's visit last month March 24-25 — had built hopes of a resolution on PP 15 through diplomatic and Corps

Commander-level talks. A joint statement released the next day said the two sides "agreed to maintain dialogue via military and diplomatic channels to reach a mutually acceptable resolution at the earliest".

#### 13 held in J&K

August 2019. It was the first time since, that such slogans were raised. Police said around 24,000 people were present in the mosque on Friday, the largest gathering in recent times.

In a release, police said they had identified the 13 youths as being part of the group and charged them under Sections 124A (sedition), and 447 and 120 B (criminal conspiracy). "It also came out during the initial investigation that the accused in furtherance of a well-planned conspiracy had received instructions from Pakistani handlers of terror outfits to disrupt Friday prayers in Jamia Masjid and create a law and order situation by provoking the attendees," police

#### On how it had zeroed in on the 13, it said: "... technical means were adopted to identify these hooligans and raids were conducted at different locations, which led to the arrest of the two

main instigators of the sloganeering, namely Basharat Nabi Bhat and Umar Manzoor Sheikh. Both were apprehended and formally arrested. Eleven more accused were subsequently arrested who were involved in the sloganeering and hooliganism inside the Jamia Masjid and at the gate.

Indicating more arrests, it said: "Many more suspected persons are being examined and will be formally arrested as soon as their role clearly comes forth."

It said it was preparing PSA dossiers of all the accused "for booking them under the PSA as well". The draconian law allows detention of a person without trial for up to a year.

Police added that the sloganeering had also resulted in an altercation between the youths and volunteers of the Intezamia (managing) Committee of the mosque, who tried to stop them.

#### PLI red flags

flagship Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme, according to sources.

Taking the lead in creating a centralised database to monitor progress in the PLI schemes across sectors, the Niti Aayog plans to rope in an external agency - state-owned IFCI Ltd or Sidbi – to design and prepare the database. This database will capture value addition, actual exports against commitments made, and job creation.

So far, the government has announced PLI schemes for 14 sectors. The PLI scheme, launched in March 2020, initially targeted three industries mobile and allied component manufacturing, electrical component manufacturing, and medical devices. The incentives, calculated on the basis of incremental sales, range from as low as 1 per cent for electronics and technology products to 20 per cent for the manufacturing of critical key starting drugs and certain drug intermediaries.

At a recent review meeting of the empowered group of secretaries set up to address bottlenecks, officials from the DPIIT raised concerns there were no common set of parameters to understand the value addition by companies under the PLI scheme. "At present, different ministries monitor the value addition of their respective PLI schemes... Also, there are various deliverables such as the number of jobs created, the rise in exports and quality improvement. There is no centralised database to gauge all these," a senior government official who attended the meeting on March 31, said.

Mails sent to the DPIIT, the IT ministry and the Niti Aayog did not elicit a response.

Departments and ministries which interact with companies operating in their sector also face certain specific issues. For instance, at times, the target for companies to qualify for incentives are too steep.

### Purulia killing

filed by the family of Niranjan Baishnab, evewitness to the murder of Congress councillor Tapan Kandu, and who allegedly took his own life on

Following the

Baishnab's death is being probed for abetment to suicide. His family, which lives in Baishnabpara area of Jhalda in Purulia district, said the 49-year-old teacher was troubled since police began questioning him and that he took his life "under pres-

This is also stated in a purported suicide note recovered near his body which was hanging from the ceiling of his oneroom house.

"Police used to call him for questioning almost every day. It would go on for hours. Police pressured him to make a false statement," alleged Baishnab's nephew Dipak, seeking a CBI probe.

On April 7, the CBI took over the probe into the killing of

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## **EXPRESS** AUDIO

### The Bucha killings, WHO on Covaxin, and

the viral namaz video

India's statement on the killing in Bucha, why the WHO has suspended the supply of Covaxin, and how a 22 year old muslim woman was targeted in Madhya Pradesh

### Imran Khan set to go, kicking & screaming

Tehreek-i-Insaf party, resigned and Ayaz Sadiq of the main opposition PML-N took charge of the proceedings.

Vinit Kohli reclaims top positie

opper paggine Assending Depar Service areas inture back to the bo. If possible as the ICE and Remission

in ICC Test Batting Bankings

#The hodes CORESS

Voting on the resolution began at 11.58 pm, but the House was adjourned for four minutes to comply with rules that do not allow a session to continue past midnight, Dawn reported. The new session began at 12.02 am (past 12.30 am in India), and the process was completed an hour past midnight. A total 174 members in the 342-strong house voted in favour of the motion, Dawn reported.

Earlier, the National Assembly was adjourned four times during the day. Amid the impasse, Army Chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa met Imran, Reuters reported, quoting two unnamed sources.

A little before midnight, Dawn reported that Islamabad High Court was preparing to take up a petition asking the court to restrain the Prime Minister from de-notifying General Bajwa as the Army Chief. Imran denied plans to sack Bajwa, PTI reported.

Meanwhile, both the Pakistan Supreme Court and Islamabad High Court were expected to become active after midnight if the top court's orders to complete the vote was not complied with.

On April 7, a Supreme Court bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial had set aside a decision by the deputy speaker to dismiss a notrust resolution against the government, as well as the subsequent dissolution of the National Assembly by the President on the advice of the Prime Minister.

The court had restored the House and directed it to reconvene by 10.30 am on Saturday to conclude the vote of no-confidence.

Kandu, following a Calcutta

High Court order. The Congress

councillor was with Baishnab

and four others when he was

shot on March 13 near his res-

Soon after, the TMC took

control of the Jhalda munici-

pality which had thrown up a

hung verdict in the February

elections. Kandu had won from

a ward there for the fourth

Police have arrested four

men in connection with

Kandu's murder: his distant

relative Naren Kandu, Naren's

son Dipak Kandu, both local

TMC leaders: Iharkhand-based

alleged contract killer Kalebar

Singh and local resident Asif

to the CBI, Purulia police

claimed the killing was the re-

sult of a "family dispute" and

had nothing to do with politics.

his brother Nepal who lodged

a complaint with police – it was

wrote that Baishnab was

"panic stricken" because of the

police questioning. "We sus-

pect the police were forcing

him to say or write something

against his wish. What is more

surprising is that his mobile

The purported suicide note

phone has gone missing."

later converted to an FIR.

In the Baishnab case, it was

In the complaint, Nepal

Before the Kandu case went

time.

bearable.

sure.

Zardari's PPP (56 lawmakers). Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi made an an-

states: "I have been under

mental stress since the day I

saw Tapan's death. The scene

of his death comes back to my

mind every moment. The men-

tal stress is aggravated by the

repeated calls from police. I had

never visited a police station in

my life. This is becoming un-

Purulia

Selvamurugan said Baishnab

was depressed due to Kandu's

death and even cited the note

or twice, that too just for the in-

quiry. That is the process. He

claimed (in the note) that he

had never visited a police sta-

tion earlier... In his suicide note.

there is no mention of police

pressure. Where has he alleged

that police pressured him?

Where is that allegation by

him? In the last line (of the

note), he has written that no

one is responsible for his

"An incident happened. He

(Baishnab) was near the spot,

so he was questioned about it.

How do you think the police

protest and observed a 'black

day' over the TMC seizing

power in the Jhalda civic body

with the help of two

The Congress, which held a

would work?" he said.

He said they had no choice.

death," Selvamurugan said.

"Police called him only once

recovered from the room.

Denying any police pres-

Late on Saturday evening, Justice Bandial instructed officials to open the court at midnight (12.30 am IST), sources said. The doors of Islamabad High Court too were being opened on the orders of the High Court Chief Justice Athar February. Minallah, the sources added.

Pakistani media reported that prisoner vans had drawn up outside the Assembly, and there was speculation that the Speaker and Deputy Speaker could be arrested if the vote was not held by midnight as ordered by the Supreme Court,

Security was tightened at airports, and an alert was issued saving no senior state functionary or government official would leave the country without a No Objection Certificate (NOC).

The joint opposition, meanwhile, lodged an official complaint with the Speaker, urging him not to further delay the vote on the no-confidence motion. They said all authorities, including him, were guilty of "gross contempt and liable to punishment in accordance with law".

Through the day, treasury members made lengthy speeches as the opposition clamoured for the vote to be taken up. The government was widely

expected to lose the vote. The opposition needs the support of 172 of the 342 lawmakers to oust Imran, and a tally posted by Dawn, the country's leading news organisation, as Parliament assembled on Saturday morning, showed 176 MNAs against

The largest block in the united opposition is from former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's PML-N(84 lawmakers), followed by Bilawal Bhuttogry speech in the House, accusing the United States of humiliating Pakistan, saying the American National Security Adviser had tried to stop Imran from travelling to Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin in

Imran met Putin in a prescheduled summit just before Russian troops invaded Ukraine.

"The National Security Adviser of the United States of America calls the National Security Adviser of Pakistan, and says 'do not go'. Categorically. Mujhe bataaiye, kaun bataaye, kahaan hota hai ki ek sovereign state ko uske bilateral visit se iss tarah roka jaaye...kahaan hota hai? Aur kaun si khudmukhtaar qaum, aur khuddar qaum, ye qabool karti hai?"

Qureshi said. "Pakistan is standing at the crossroads of history. The nation has to decide whether we will live with our heads bowed or with our heads held high," he said.

Imran opposed the US-led intervention in Afghanistan, and has developed relations with Russia since becoming Prime Minister. He has accused the United States of supporting a plot to oust him, without offering evidence of his claim, which Washington has dismissed.

In an address to the nation late on Friday evening, Imran said he would not accept "an imported government". The move to oust him was part of a foreign conspiracy, he said, and announced he was "ready for a struggle"

Speaking shortly after the ession began in the morning, PML-N leader Shehbaz Sharif, who is expected to become Prime Minister if Imran is ousted. urged Speaker Asad Qaiser to ensure the vote was carried out as a matter of priority.

The Speaker said he would implement the order of the

Supreme Court "in true letter and spirit".

Bilawal mocked Imran for not being present in the House, saying he was the "first captain who is running from the pitch with wickets because he fears that he will lose the match".

"Imran Khan is not present in the Parliament because he cannot defend himself. Conspiracies against the constitution will not succeed." Bilawal said, adding that before leaving office, Imran should "show some sportsman spirit".

In the evening, a close aide of the Prime Minister warned that "those who bought MPs" would be responsible if martial law was imposed in the country.

The remarks by Minister for Information and Broadcasting Fawad Chaudhry came after Bilawal alleged that Imran was seeking military intervention in the country's political affairs by delaying the vote and creating a constitutional crisis.

In an informal chat with journalists inside Parliament House, Chaudhry said "those who bought MPs will be responsible if martial law is imposed", Geo News reported.

Imran, who became Prime Minister with the all-powerful Army's support, is now seen to have fallen out with the military. No Pakistani Prime Minister has completed a full five-year term

Ruling party members had suggested on Friday that they would try to delay the vote for as long as possible. At a meeting with a group of his favourite journalists late on Saturday evening, Imran repeated his promise of playing "till the last ball". He claimed he was not interfering in the process of implementation of the orders of the Supreme Court to hold a no-

confidence vote PTI WITH AP, REUTERS

Independents, has accused police of fabricating the probe into Kandu's murder.

Former Congress MLA and senior leader Nepal Mahato said: "Under pressure from all sides, they made arrests. We believe those were made to cover up tracks. Now eyewitnesses are being pressured to make false statements and identify the same as the killers. This may have been the reason Baishnab took his life."

Kandu's wife Purnima, who had also won in the civic polls. from Ward 11, recently got police protection -- almost a month after the murder. Sitting before a portrait of Kandu, Purnima, 40, blamed TMC leaders and police for her husband's death.

She named Naren Kandu, his son Dipak Kandu – already arrested – and a third person. While Dipak had lost the election against Tapan Kandu from Ward 2, the wife of the third person she named had lost against her. She alleged that the trio she named, along with the Inspector in Charge (IC) of Jhalda police station, were responsible for Kandu's death.

"The IC had been pressuring my husband to join the TMC, which he refused," she alleged, adding that she was happy that the CBI would probe the matter. "I have asked them to arrest

the IC and seize his mobile

The IC was not available for comment despite repeated attempts – his mobile phone was switched off.

TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh said it was the Congress that had hatched a conspiracy with the BJP and CPM to "malign the image of the state government".

'When the CBI knocks at the door of Congress leaders, then the party says it is political vendetta. But when it acts against the Mamata Banerjee government, then it supports the Central investigation agency. The Congress should shun its double standards. If anyone is guilty, they should be punished. But that does not mean the CBI should be the one to do this as it has a very bad record." Ghosh said.

The Jhalda incident is the latest political violence case in the state, with TMC leaders named in the matter. In February, student leader Anis Khan, who had taken on the government, died under suspicious circumstances as police visited his house to arrest him. On March 13, TMC councillor Anupam Dutta was shot dead by miscreants. Both cases are being probed by SITs.

> **FULL REPORTS ON** www.indianexpress.com

## Sonam, husband's New Delhi home robbed of Rs 2.4 cr

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

**BOLLYWOOD ACTRESS Sonam** Kapoor and her husband Anand Ahuja's Delhi residence was allegedly robbed of Rs 2.4 crore, police said on Saturday. Their house is located near Amrita Shergill Marg. A com-

plaint was lodged on February 23, and no arrest has been made by the police so far.

According to police, the incident took place on February 11 and the manager of the administration of the house lodged the complaint.

Amrutha Guguloth, DCP (New Delhi), said, "We received a complaint from the family al-

leging that cash and jewellery worth Rs 2.4 crore had been stolen. They noticed it on February 11, but lodged a formal police complaint on February 23. Our staff immediately registered an FIR the same

"Teams have been formed, and an examination of the evidence is underway.'

A case under IPC section 381 (theft by clerk or servant of property in possession of master) was registered at Tughlag Road police station the same day and an investigation was started, Guguloth said.

Police said that the case was later transferred to the special staff of the New Delhi district. "We suspect the domestic

help or workers at the complainant's residence could be involved in the theft.

"There are more than 20 workers in the house and police have questioned many of them," a senior police officer

CCTV footage of the premises is also being checked, police said.

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

A 54-YEAR-OLD counsellor working at the Italian Embassy was robbed of her handbag at the Barapullah flyover in South Delhi last month. Police said two persons were arrested in

connection with the crime. DCP (South) Benita Mary

Jaiker said the counsellor, a resident of Noida, came to the Lodhi Colony police station on April 2 to report a robbery that took place on March 30.

Embassy official robbed in South Delhi, 2 held

"The incident took place around 7 pm when she was heading home in an auto from her office in Chanakyapuri. Near Soochna Bhawan, she spotted three-four men standing there.

"One of them came near the auto and robbed her handbag containing her phone, Aadhaar card, PAN card, service ID card, two debit cards, one pair of gold earrings and a gold ring," Jaiker said.

A case under IPC sections 392 (punishment for robbery) and 34 (common intention) was registered and investigation was taken up, she said.

Kolkata

# WESTBENGAL

**ASANSOL LOK SABHA BYPOLL** 

# **Ensure BJP is rooted out of Bengal: Abhishek to voters**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, APRIL 9

TMC MP and the party's national general secretary, Abhishek Banerjee, on Saturday called on the people of Asansol to root out the BJP in the April 12 Lok Sabha bypoll.

Addressing a public meeting after leading a roadshow in favour of the TMC's Asansol candidate Shatrughan Sinha on Saturday, Banerjee said, "This election is not just to elect a candidate but also to protest against divisive forces. We have ensure that the BJP is washed out of the state. If the people who walked with us today also vote for our candidate, the BJP will be rooted out of Asansol.

In a direct message to voters, the Diamond Harbour MP added, "I am grateful for the way the people of Asansol have always stood up against separatist forces and divisive politics. The one you chose with hope (twotime Asansol MP Babul Supriyo,



MP Abhishek Banerjee campaigns for TMC candidate Shatrughan Sinha in Asansol on Saturday. Twitter

who joined the TMC last year and is the party's candidate for the Ballygunge Assembly bypoll) could not work for you despite trying. The reason is that outsiders don't know how to respect the people of Bengal. Having come to this realisation, Babul Supriyo resigned (as an MP) and joined the TMC'

Lashing out at the Narendra

across the country are keenly awaiting a chance to teach the BJP a lesson. You (people of Asansol) have an opportunity. So teach the BJP a lesson. Attending a similar road-

show earlier for Supriyo in Ballygunge, Banerjee had claimed many more BJP leaders want to join the TMC. "Many more leaders want to quit the BJF and join our party. If we open our doors to these leaders, the BJP will be finished," the TMC MP

Also accusing the saffron party of using central agencies such as the CBI and ED to harass Opposition leaders, he claimed that the BIP cannot contest elections in a democratic manner. He further alleged that the CPM and the Congress had sold themselves to the BJP in Bengal.

The TMC all-India general secretary also claimed that the former Asansol MP decided to shun the "Iai Shri Ram" politics of the BIP and embrace the "Ja Bangla politics" of the TMC.

## TMC govt creating atmosphere of fear in Bengal: Prasad

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** PURULIA, APRIL 9

BIP LEADER and former Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday slammed the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government for allegedly creating "an atmosphere of fear' in West Bengal, saying people of the state have lost their faith in the police force since every incident of crime was being investigated by the CBI.

Addressing a press conference in Asansol where he was campaigning for party candidate Agnimitra Paul for the April 12 Lok Sabha bypoll, Prasad said, "In Birbhum, two groups are fighting over tolabazi (extortion). The court had to interevene. Questions are being raised on the investigation carried out by the state police. That's why people are moving the courts knowing well that the police cannot conduct a fair probe."

He added, "What kind of a police force Mamata Banerjee government has created in Bengal? For how long will the innocent people keep dying here? It is now



lost faith in the police: BJP leader

a test for the police to hold a free and fair election in Asansol." On the demand for imposition

of Article 355 in the state, Prasad said that was the prerogative of the state government. "Now, even Congress leader Chowdhury is demanding it," he said. The ex-Union minister attributed the rising prices of petrol and diesel to the Russia-Ukraine war that led to a spike in the prices of crude oil. "There is a 50 per cent hike in the prices of petroleum products in the US, Canada, France, UK and other European countries. But in India, the increase was of 5%." he claimed.

Prasad wondered whether TMC's Asansol bypoll candidate Shatrughan Sinha will remain with his new party till the 2024 Lok Sabha election, if he wins. "He was a BJP MP for 22 years. He has changed three parties in three years," he added.

### Civic volunteer and friend shot dead in Magrahat, kin protest

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, APRIL 9

A CIVIC volunteer and his friend were shot after their throats were slit in the Magurpukur area of Magrahat in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district on Saturday, police said.

Tension prevailed in the area as the families and relatives of the victims. Varun Chakraborty (35) and Malay Makhal (31), along with local residents protested and allegedly ransacked many shops, apart from setting two cars on fire.

A large number of police personnel were deployed in the area to bring the situation under control.

The bullet-riddled bodies of the victims, both residents of Magurpukur, were recovered from the premises of Iane Alam & Company that makes various items from cattle bones and is allegedly involved in the chitfund business.

The victims' families said the two had invested in a scheme with the firm and were demanding their money back for some time.

Diamond Harbour superintendent of police (SP) Abhijit Banerjee said the victims' throats were slit after being shot to ensure they were dead. "The two were called to the factory with the promise of giving back their money. No one was present there when the bodies were recovered," another official said.

As soon as the news of their death spread, protesting residents of the area allegedly set two cars on fire.

A team from the Diamond Harbour police station rushed to the spot and brought the situation under control. "The situation is normal now," sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Mitun said.

The main accused has been identified and the police sent the bodies for autopsy.

#### **BIRBHUM VIOLENCE**

### CBI books 10 people in TMC leader's murder

**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** 

RAMPURHAT, APRIL 9 THE CBI on Saturday registered an FIR against 10 people in connection with the murder of Trinamool Congress (TMC) leader Bhadu Sheikh, which led to the killing of nine people at

Among those named in the FIR are Palash Shiekh, Sanju Shiekh, Sona Shiekh and Choto Shiekh who have been arrested, the official said.

Bogtui village in West Bengal's

Birbhum district, a senior official

The case was filed under Sections 302 (murder) and 120-B (criminal conspiracy) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Explosive Substances Act. The CBI visited Rampurhat

police station on Saturday and collected the case diary and documents linked to Sheikh's murder investigation, the official The CBI officers spoke to the police personnel there. They also

spoke to witnesses of the murder and took stock of the situation." he said. The agency officers also vis-

ited Bogtui Mor where Bhadu was killed, he added.

The CBI took over the investigation of murder from the police, following an order of the Calcutta High Court

## NCB busts illegal drug supply chain in Kolkata, 4 held

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, APRIL 9

THE NARCOTICS Control Bureau (NCB) busted an illegal drug supply chain in Kolkata and seized psychotropic substances after a three-day operation. Four persons have so far been arrested in connection with the case, the NCB said.

According to the NCB, it received a complaint regarding the retail sale of psychotropic and narcotic substances to local addicts. It was alleged that Minagur Rahaman, the owner of a premise called T.S Agency, which is used as a godown or storage space for a shop in Kolkata, was involved in the retail sale of psychotropic substances

Acting on the complaint, an NCB team raided the godown and seized large quantities of drugs and psychotropic substances in the form of tablets, injections, cough syrups and capsules.

"M Rahaman (the retailer) used to purchase drugs illegaly from Pintu (a middleman). This was done for further retailing purposes to local addicts who frequently visited his store. Pintu identified his supplier as Tapas Roy, an employee of JK Pharma, a wholesaler of NRx drugs at Burrabazar in central Kolkata. Roy used to purchase supplies An NCB team raided a godown and seized drugs and psychotropic substances in the form of tablets, injections, cough syrups and capsules

from Mahesh Parikh, the owner of JK Pharma," an officer from the NCB's Kolkata unit said.

"During a scrutiny of stock at IK Pharma NRX. Parekh was unable to provide the sale and purchase records and disclosed that he and Roy had sold the seized drug to Pintu in lieu of cash without any invoice," the officer

According to the NCB, one of the seized drugs, Buprenorphine, is used to treat addiction/dependence to opioids while another seized substance. Diazepam, is used to relieve anxiety and control agitation. Pentazocine, another drug that was also seized, is used to relieve moderate to severe

"All seized drugs are injected separately or in combination with other drugs to treat addictions. Further investigation is unadded derway," another

#### CONGRESS COUNCILLOR'S MURDER

## CBI team questions six policemen

**SANTANU CHOWDHURY** PURULIA, APRIL 9

Modi government at the Centre,

Banerjee, who also happens to be

the nephew of Chief Minister

Mamata Banerjee, said, "This

time, the BJP triggered defection

in the Opposition ranks to cross

200 (win 200-plus seats in the

Uttar Pradesh Assembly elec-

tions). However, what has it done

since? Petrol and diesel prices are

going up exponentially and so is

THE CENTRAL Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday questioned Jhalda sub-divisional police officer (SDPO) Subrata Deb and five other cops in connection with the murder of Congress councillor Tapan Kandu who was shot dead by unidentified assailants on March 13. While the SDPO was ques-

tioned for over an hour, the five, who were deployed at a check post (naka) near the scene of crime, were interrogated for over 5 hours by the CBI team led by deputy inspector general (DIG) Akhilesh Kumar Singh, it is

The central agency recorded the statements of the five policemen who were taken off duty following the murder.

"They (CBI) asked m questions to which I replied. I cannot comment further." said the SDPO after being questioned at the CBI's camp office in Jhalda.



The spot in Jhalda where Congress councillor Tapan Kandu was shot dead. Partha Paul

The CBI has also seized mobile phones of Tapan Kandu and his nephew Mithun Kandu. The devices will be sent for forensic examination.

On Friday, the CBI team had questioned Mithun Kandu and three evewitnesses — Pradeen Chaurasia, Khokon Rajak and Subhas Gorai — for hours.

The CBI has summoned Ihalda police station in-charge

Sanjib Ghosh for questioning in the case. Ghosh, however, is yet to appear before the agency which has also questioned Tapan Kandu's wife Purnima Kandu on

Kandu was shot dead on March 13 when he was out for an evening walk near his residence. The police had arrested four persons in connection with the murder. The CBI took over

(SP) S Selvamurugan against local police officers for allegedly manhandling her and other Congress workers on April 5

the investigation in the case fol-

lowing the order of the Calcutta

has lodged a complaint with

Purulia superintendent of police

Meanwhile. Purnima Kandu

High Court.

when they were protesting against the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) over forming the Jhalda civic board with the help of two Independent coun-The police stopped us from entering the municipality that

day. Being a councillor even I was stopped. The police manhandled me and others. I have sent an email to the SP narrating the incident." said Purnima.

The move came after the Jhalda police on Thursday started a suo motu case against four Congress workers, including party councillor Biplab Kayal for allegedly attacking on-duty cops and blocking roads the day Jhalda municipal board was

CHANGE OF NAME

My previous name was

Jhuma Paul, after Barasat

First Class Judicial

Magistrate as on 06.12.2021

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### **GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF FINANCE** INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE TAX RECOVERY OFFICER 3, Room No.420, 4th Floor, Main Building, 121, M.G. Road, Aayakar Bhavan, Chennai-34 TEL: 044-28338543 / Mob: 9384636708

#### **AUCTION SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY** SITUATED AT AYANAVARAM

Notice is hereby given that the office of the undersigned has proposed to conduct an auction as per the provisions laid down in the 2nd Schedule of the Income tax Act, 1961 and sale of immovable property, which belongs to M/s.Delta Projects (Partners of Shri. J. Annamalai & Smt.A.Priya Annapoorani), No.48/19,Rajamangalam Main Road, Villivakkam, Chennai - 600 049, being income tax defaulter for the purpose of recovery of income tax arrears.

**DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTIES** 

"An apartment bearing Flat No. C-156 on the Fifteenth Floor in Block 'C together car parking space in the basement of the multistoried building complex known as "SUNNNYVALE", No.351, K.H. Road, Ayanavaram Chennai, Flat measuring on extent of 1599 Sq.ft (plinth area of flat inclusive of share in common area) together with 485.99 Sq.ft undivided share of land described in the schedule D above within the registration Sub district of Anna Nagar and Registration District of Central Chennai"

Reserve price In Rupees: Rs.95,99,000/- plus poundage fee & costs E.M.D in Rupees : Rs.1,00,000/-

#### DATE AND TIME OF AUCTION 18.04.2022 @ 11.00 AM **VENUE OF AUCTION**

Tax Auditorium (Vaigai Hall) in the Tax Main Building Campus, Aayakar Bhavan, 121, M.G. Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600034.

The intending bidders are requested to deposit Rs.1,00,000/ (Rupees One Lakh Only) as Earnest Money Deposit for the above property by means of Demand Draft in favour of 'Tax Recovery Officer-3, Income tax Dept., Chennai' drawn on any schedule bank payable at Chennai before the beginning of actual auction proceedings, which is refundable to the parties except successful. The successful bidder shall pay immediately after such declaration deposit of 25 % on the amount of his purchase money to the office conducting sale, and in default of such deposit the property shall forthwith be put up again and resold. The full amount of purchase money payable should be paid by the purchaser to the undersigned or or before 15th day from the date of sale of property, exclusive of such day, or if the 15th day being a Sunday or other holiday, then on first office day after the fifteenth day. In default of payment within the period mentioned above, the property shall be resold after issue of fresh proclamation of sale.

The Property will be auctioned on "as is where is and what is there is basis"

The details of the property and the copy of the Encumbrance Certificate can be perused at the office of the undersigned on any working day prior to auction, after fixing an appointment with the undersigned during office hours.

Detailed terms and conditions of the auction sale may be obtained from the office of the undersigned during office hours The aforesaid property will not be sold below the Reserve Price of

Rs.95,99,000/-(C.D.Vejayalakshme) Date: 01.04.2022

Tax Recovery Officer-3 Place: Chennai O/o. Pr.Commissioner of Income Tax-3. Chennai.

## State logs 28 new Covid-19 cases, no death

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA. APRIL 9

WEST BENGAL recorded 28 new Covid-19 cases and no deaths in the last 24 hours, a state health department bulletin said on

tion tally has gone up to 20.17 lakh while the death toll stands at 21,200. On Saturday, 11,704 samples were tested. The state reported 37 recoveries in the last 24 hours, taking the number of people cured of the infection to 19.95 lakh, the bulletin said.

The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in West Bengal now is 98.93 percent. On Friday, the state had

logged 26 new Covid-19 cases and zero fatalities. The recovwith 40 more patients cured of

my current name is Kaya ery rate was at 98.92 per cent Paul. Now Jhuma Paul and Kaya Paul is same person as per Affidavit No. 18779.

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL - II** Jeevan Sudha Building, 7th Floor, 42/C, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Kolkata - 700 071

(Notice of Demand under section 25 and 28 of the Recovery of Debts due to Banks & Financial Institutions Act. 1993 and Rule 2 of Second Schedule to the Income Tax Act' 1961) UCO Bank.

M/s K. R. Enterprise & Others

3. Mrs. Mosammat Rowsonara Begam @ Lal Banu Bibi, Guarantor/ Mortgagor.

Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal

5. Mr. Md. Sufi, Prop. of M/s Garib Nawaz Saw Mill, Bogtui More, P.O. & P.S. Rampurhat, Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal . This is to certify that a sum of Rs.44,28,425.00 (Rupees Forty Four Lakh Twenty

the Recovery Certificate in OA No. 416 of 2017, dated 22.01.2021 issued by the Hon'ble Presiding Officer, Debts Recovery Tribunal, 2. The debt amount to the tune of Rs. 44.28.425.00 (Rupees Forty Four Lakh Twenty Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five only) and further interest thereon @ 13.50% per annum simple from 01.10.2017 on the above said amounts till the date of realization and cost Rs.52,005.00 (Rupees Fifty Two Thousand Five only) of the OA.

this notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act. 1993 and rule made there under along with interest till realization of the entire amount 3. In addition of sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:

(a) Such interest as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/ execution proceedings.

4. You are hereby directed to appear before the undersigned on 19.04.2022 at 12.00

Given under my hand and seal of this Tribunal, on this date: 13.12.2021

## **SECTION 144 IN PARTS OF RAJASTHAN** BJP MP claims 'exodus from Karauli', cops deny

JAIPUR, APRIL 9

BJP RAJYA Sabha MP Kirodi Lal Meena Saturday said there was an "exodus" of Hindus from Karauli in Rajasthan following the violence on April 2 — a claim police have termed "totally incor-

Meanwhile, with parts of the state still on edge after the violence, several districts, including Jaipur, have imposed prohibitory orders under CrPC Section 144 ahead of Ram Navami on Sunday. Ajmer, Alwar, Sawai Madhopur and Hanumangarh are also among these districts, with police taking out flag marches in some of them.

On Saturday, Meena sat on a protest at the Karauli district collectorate demanding arrests in the Karauli incident. Karauli SP Shailendra Singh Indoliya told *The Indian Express*: "Meena's claims are incorrect, we verified the claims." He said the administration had constituted a committee with police and administrative officials. "The committee submitted

Communal tension had erupted in Karauli following stone-pelting at a motorcycle rally passing through a **Muslim-dominated** area on Nav Samvatsar

in its report that no such thing has happened. We have verified it and found it to be totally incorrect."

Communal tension had erupted in Karauli following stone-pelting at a motorcycle rally passing through a Muslim-dominated area on Nav Samvatsar, the Hindu New Year, leading to arson.

In a letter to CM Ashok Gehlot,

Meena has shared a list of 195 persons who have allegedly fled the place, along with their fathers' name. The list mentions no address. In the letter, he said the exodus had taken place from "Muslim majority Dholikhar locality" and mainly constitutes Dalits such as Jatavs, Khatiks, Kahars, Dhobis and Kumhars (OBCs). Meena has claimed that

arrested while "hundreds of" innocent people are being questioned. On Saturday, the MP claimed he was arrested from outside the collectorate while protesting. The Karauli SP said the MP was "dispersed" under CrPC Section 129 (Dispersal of assembly by use of civil force) since he was flouting the curfew. Congress spokesman

Swarnim Chaturvedi said: "Nothing like what he has claimed has happened. A person may have left to earn their livelihood, but no one has left Karauli due to communal reasons."

He said: "No one pays heed to Meena in BJP. He has become irrelevant and hopes to re-establish himself by trying to gain mileage by bringing up new MLA and party BIP

spokesman Ramlal Sharma said, "It is true that there are several places where exodus of Hindus has begun. This includes Karauli. Kota, Jaipur, Chittorgarh, where people are selling their properties for very little... If the government is denying it, it is lying."

### LeT chief Hafiz Saeed's son designated terrorist

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

THE CENTRE Friday designated Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) chief Hafiz Saeed's son Talha as a terrorist under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA). "Central Government believes

that Hafiz Talha Saeed is involved in terrorism and Hafiz Talha Saeed should be notified as a terrorist under the said Act... therefore, the Central Government hereby makes the following amendment in the Fourth Schedule to the said Act, namely: In the Fourth Schedule to the said Act, after serial number 31 and the entries relating thereto, the following serial number and entries shall be inserted, namely: 32. Hafiz Talha Saeed," a notification read.

Saeed's son Talha Saeed, 47. serves as the LeT's second-incommand and controls the finances of the organisation. In 2019, he had escaped an assassination attempt when a bomb inside a refrigerator shop exploded in Lahore. According to the notification, Talha is the head of the cleric wing of LeT, which is a proscribed organisation under UAPA.

Case No. RC/09/2021 in O.A. No. 416 of 2017

Rampurhat Branch, J. L. Banerjee Road, P.O. Rampurhat, Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal

. M/s K. R. Enterprise, Prop. Mr. Nur Mohammed, Bogtui More, P.O. & P.S. Rampurhat, Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal

2. Mr. Nur Mohammed, Prop. of M/s K. R. Enterprise, Bogtui More, P.O. & P.S. Rampurhat, Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal

Bogtui More, P.O. & P.S. Rampurhat, Dist. Birbhum - 731224, West Bengal 4. M/s Garib Nawaz Saw Mill, Prop. Mr. Md. Sufi, Bogtui More, P.O. & P.S. Rampurhat

Eight Thousand Four Hundred Twenty Five only) has become due from you as per

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 (fifteen) days from receipts of

(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrant and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due

### Lease land to poor encroachers if it's not reserved: Adityanath

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** LUCKNOW. APRIL 9

LAND encroached by the poor would be given to the occupant (s) on lease if it does not come under any reserved category, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Saturday.

If the land falls in any reserved category, the occupant would be displaced from there only after arranging a safe accommodation at another place, Adityanath added.

The CM was speaking to mediapersons in Gorakhpur after casting his vote in the legislative council elections in Gorakhpur-Mahrajganj local authority constituency.

Responding to a question, Adityanath said the policy of zero tolerance against mafias would continue in the state, but the houses of the poor will not be destroyed. "Anti-land-mafia task force is taking forward a drive to remove illegal encroachments across the state. Assets worth Rs 2,500 crore have been seized from professional mafias so far," CM said.

"Clear instructions have been issued that the action of the antiland-mafia task force is only for professional mafias and criminals but not for the poor and helpless and that there should be sensitivity and sympathy for such persons (poor)," Adityanath said.



UP CM Yogi Adityanath set to vote in MLC polls in Gorakhpur on Saturday.

The CM said if a poor person has encroached any public property or has put up a shanty there, the shanty would not be removed until that person is rehabilitated. The CM added that there was already a provision in this regard and such people should be identified. The CM added that instructions were also given for systematic rehabilitation of street vendors.

Adityanath also asserted that after almost four decades, for the first time in the state the ruling party would attain a thumping majority in the Legislative Council. "As the BIP candidates have been elected unopposed already on nine seats in the MLC elections being held for 36 seats, the BIP is assured to win the majority of remaining 27 seats too," the chief minister said

#### KAUNAIN SHERIFF M NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

A DAY before the precautionary third dose of the Covid-19 vaccine is rolled out, both major manufacturers announced large cuts in the price of their vaccines.

Both Covishield, manufactured by Serum Institute of India. and Bharat Biotech's Covaxin will be available for Rs 225 per dose, down from Rs 600 and Rs 1,200 respectively. Private vaccination centres can charge up to Rs 150 per dose as service charge over and above the cost of the vaccine. Recipients will be able to see the total cost on the Co-WIN portal in advance, the government said.

"Private centres must declare the price per dose chargeable by them on Co-WIN, in accordance with the prices declared by the manufacturers," Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan said in guidelines to states on Saturday.

Everyone of age 18 years or older will be eligible for the third dose after nine months (or 39 weeks) have passed since they got their second dose of the vaccine, the government said on Friday.

This means all adults who got their second shot on July 9, 2021 or earlier can get the precautionary dose from Sunday onward. In his communication to the states on Saturday, Bhushan said the Co-WIN system would send



3rd doses from today, prices cut to Rs 225 plus service fee

A girl gets inoculated in New Delhi, Saturday. Praveen Khanna

SMS alerts to all citizens who become eligible for their third shots based on the details of earlier vaccinations available in the dig-

The precautionary doses will be given only at private establishments against payment. The priority groups of healthcare workers, frontline workers, and individuals above the age of 60 can get their third dose for free at government vaccination centres.

The Centre informed the states that recipients can either make appointments online with the private vaccination centres, or schedule their shots on the spot. Those who already registered on Co-WIN need not register again to receive the third dose.

"Eligible citizens can avail of walk-in vaccination, wherein private vaccination centres can add beneficiaries onsite to an ongoing vaccination session for precaution dose. For this the PCVC (private Covid vaccination centre) team can locate the existing vaccination record of the citizen by searching on the mobile number, beneficiary reference ID, or the details of Identity Document used at the time of earlier vaccinations," the Health Ministry has said.

The Ministry also told the states that vaccination would be "homologous", that is, recipients will get the same vaccine -Covishield or Covaxin — as the one they got on the first two oc-

Pune-based Serum Institute and Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech announced the price cuts immediately after a consultation with the central govern-"Announcing

#CovaxinPricing. We welcome the decision to make available precautionary dose for all adults.

2009 Dantewada deaths: Centre

Government, we have decided to revise the price of #COVAXIN from Rs 1200 to Rs 225 per dose, for #privatehospitals," Suchitra Ella, Joint Managing Director, Bharat Biotech, said in a tweet.

Adar Poonawalla, CEO, Serum Institute of India, tweeted: "We are pleased to announce that after discussion with the Central Government, SII has decided to revise the price of COVISHIELD vaccine for private hospitals from Rs 600 to Rs 225 per dose. We once again commend this decision from the Centre to open precautionary dose to all 18+.'

Bhushan told states that private vaccination centres must declare their vaccine stock positions on Co-WIN, and may procure doses directly from the manufacturers for the precau-

The states have also been advised that verifiers at the private vaccination centre must generate the vaccination certificate and provide it to the beneficiary.

The details of precaution dose vaccination would be reflected by the Co-WIN system in the certificate. Beneficiaries can also download the updated certificate themselves by logging in to the Co-WIN system or through Digi-locker or Arogya Setu and other existing applications." Bhushan said in his

### Gujarat reports 1st case of Covid XE variant — 67-yr-old Mumbai man

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** AHMEDABAD, VADODARA,

**GUJARAT REPORTED the first** case of the new XE Covid-19 variant in a 67-year old man, as confirmed by the state health

department Saturday. Meanwhile, the active case tally in Guiarat National Law University (GNLU), Gandhinagar, went up to 37, with three more testing Covid-19 positive on Saturday, according to a statement from the university.

Additional Chief Secretary of Health department Manoj Aggarwal Saturday confirmed that the XE variant has been detected in a Mumbai resident who was visiting Gotri, Vadodara.

The 67-year old man, who had tested positive for Covid-19 March 12, was treated in home isolation, said Aggarwal. A press note issued by the state government said that the 67-year old has comorbid conditions.

"Gujarat Biotechnology Research Centre detected the XE variant in the patient 12 days ago. The sample was sent for confirmation as per INSACOG guidelines, to a Kolkata laboratory (DBT-National Institute of Biomedical Genomics (NIBMG). Kalyani). The confirmation report of the XE variant was received Friday night," said Aggarwal.

Officials of Vadodara

Municipal Corporation (VMC) confirmed that the case had been detected from a sample collected in Vadodara on March 12.

Dr Devesh Patel, Medical Officer for Health (VMC), told The Sunday Express, "The patient was a 67-year-old male from Mumbai, who, along with his wife, was visiting Vadodara. They had checked into a hotel on arrival and the man had developed symptoms such as fever. They took a Covid-19 test and when the result came positive, they returned to Mumbai and were in strict home quarantine. He did not meet anyone in Vadodara."

Saturday, Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) traced the close contacts of the 67-year-old man. Both of his wife and domestic help have tested negative.

'He is completely healthy. He didn't have any symptoms after March 11. Both his wife and domestic help who were tested in close contact tracing have been found negative of the virus." said Dr Mangala Gomare, executive health officer, BMC.

Meanwhile, speaking to media persons about GNLU, which has emerged as a Covid-19 hotspot in the past two days Aggarwal said that samples of students who have tested positive have been sent for genome sequencing and that the health department is keeping a watch on the situation.

### Shaken conscience of court, faith in agencies: HC says, giving accused bail

ABHISHEK ANGAD RANCHI, APRIL 9

SANICHAR KOL, 45, thought all roads were closed to him when sometime last year, having exhausted all her options, his hapless wife Chinta Devi broke down in front of him at the Jamtara district prison, saying: "Aaami tomake chodaate parbo na (I will not be able to get you out)."

On April 6, the Jharkhand HC gave Kol bail, initiating quashing of proceedings against him, expressing shock at how he had been handled, and observing that Kol's trial should become a case study at the Jharkhand Judicial Academy to ensure there isn't a repeat by future judicial officers.

Kol had been in jail since July 2021 over abetment to suicide



From left: Sanichar Kol. Sanjay Kumar Mahata and Nageshwar Mandal.

following the death of a 36-yearold neighbour in Dudhani village of Iharkhand. The court observed Kol's fault only appeared to have been to help the woman's husband bring down her body from where she had apparently hanged herself. "He has been

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE

<u> Walk-In-Interview</u>

College, Haldwani (Nainital) a "Walk-In-Interview" will be held on 23th April 2022 (Saturday) for 09:30 AM onwards, in the "Office of the Principal, Government Medical College, Rampur Road, Haldwani (Nainital), Uttarakhand". The

appointment will be made on the contractual basis initially for one year, which may be further extendable annually, subject to a satisfactory appraisal report by the concerned Head of Department, for a Maximum tenure of 03 years only or till regular

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In order to strengthen the faculty position (Speciality & Super Speciality) for U.G./P.G. courses at Government Medical

RAMPUR ROAD, HALDWANI, NAINITAL, UTTARAKHAND-263139 TEL.No. 05946-255255, 255926, 282578, FAX: 05946-282578 Website: www.gmchld.org, email:principal-gmchld-uk@c

made to suffer for answering (the) call of humanity. His liberty was not only threatened, but was taken away by the State, whimsically, without there being any material against him," Justice Ananda Sen said.

The judge added: "There are some cases which really shock the conscience of the court, and this is one of such cases...(It) has also shaken faith in the investigating agency, which filed the chargesheet.'

As the case dragged on, Kol's wife struggled to sustain the family of seven, relying on the kindness of neighbours. One of them, Nageshwar Mandal, who returned home from Mumbai last year amidst the Covid curbs, approached lawyer Sanjay Kumar Mahata, who took up his case pro bono.

Assistant Professor

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### seeks to try petitioners for perjury based on testimonies recorded

**GARGIVERMA** RAIPUR, APRIL 9

THE CENTRE Thursday moved the Supreme Court to initiate perjury proceedings against activist Himanshu Kumar and 12 Chhattisgarh tribals for a PIL filed by them in 2009, saying they were trying "to provide a legal protective shield to members of Left Wing Extremist outfits".

The application by the Centre, through the Union Home Ministry, urged the Court to direct a central agency such as the CBI or NIA to carry out a comprehensive probe to identify the individuals and organisations involved in such litigation to protect extremists.

The PIL filed by Kumar was

by him in 2009 into deaths of 17 villagers in three different incidents. While these testimonies blamed security forces for the deaths, the government's claim is that they were killed by Naxals. Kumar, who ran the Vanvasi Chetna Ashram in Dantewada, claims to have been forced out of the Naxal-dominated area after his petition, and has said he is being targeted for speaking up for

Individuals and organisations are "conspiring, abetting and facilitating filing of petitions premised on false and fabricated evidence... with a motive to either deter the security agencies to act against the Left Wing (Naxal) militia... or to screen off the Left Wing (Naxal) militia from being brought to justice by creating a false narrative...", the Centre said in its petition to the apex court.

Kumar claimed to have recorded testimonies on October 11, 2009, in three villages then in Dantewada and now in Sukma districts. These accused security forces of killing two villagers in the neighbouring villages of Velpocha and Nalkathong, and nine in Gompad, on October 1, 2009, and killing six others in Gachanpalli on September 17 that year.

Kumar said family members of the deceased and other evewitnesses had seen the security forces attack the tribals with bayonets, shoot them at close range, and mutilate the bodies. One of the petitioners.

## **Huirem first transgender** to win best actor award

JIMMY LEIVON IMPHAL, APRIL 9

IN A first in Manipur, 33-year-old Bishesh Huirem, a transgender actress, was honoured with the Best Actor Award in Manipur State Film Awards, 2022.

Huirem received the award for her sterling performance in portraying a transgender character in the film Apaiba Leichil (floating clouds), which also clinched the Special Mention Award. Two other actors, a male and a female, were also honoured with the Best Actor Awards

While third gender persons have long been associated with the Manipuri cinema when it comes to make-up and costumes, Huirem became the first to be honoured with a state film award. The award distribution cere-

mony for the 14th Manipur State Film Awards was held on Saturday at the Manipur State Film Development Society (MSFDS). Huirem received the award from Governor La Ganesan.

Huirem expressed joy over the third gender artistes being given the much-deserved recognition. She further lamented that third gender actors were often given the role of a comic character in



Governor La Ganesan honours Bishesh Huirem.

popular films. Nevertheless, she observed that the film industry had also started recognising the presence and contribution of transgenders as in Shumang Leelas (a traditional theatre play).

Huirem is a renowned figure among the transgender community with many beauty pageant awards under her belt. She had represented India at the Miss International Queen for Transgender held in Thailand in 2016. She has a degree in professional fashion designs from Garden College, Bangalore.

Bobby Wahengbam, director of Apaibi Leichil, noted that the film was among the few that tried to portray the struggles of third gender people in society.

#### **GOVERNMENT OF PUNJAB DEPARTMENT OF POWER** (Energy Branch) ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE POST OF **DIRECTOR/FINANCE IN PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED**

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for the post of Director/Finance in Punjab State Power Corporation Limited. For details, login to www.punjab.gov.in www.pserc.gov.in, www.pspcl.in and www.pstcl.org Last date of receipt of applications is 29.04.2022 till

appointment are made. The vacancy position in various department is as given below:-

Department

Microbiology (MD/DNB) (Virology Lab)

Anatomy (MD/MS/DNB)

Physiology (MD/DNB)

Biochemistry (MD/DNB)

Microbiology (MD/DNB)

Pharmacology (MD/DNB)

#### कार्यालय कृषि उपज मण्डी समिति, टोंक (राज.) **८** कमांक : कृउमस∕सी.आई.सी/पी.एण्ड.एम./2021-22/2308-30 ई-निविदा सूचना : 11-12/2021-22 कृषि उपज मण्डी समिति, टोंक के गौण मण्डी प्रांगण सोहेला में पी.एम.एफ.एम.ई. योजना के अन्तर्गत

ू कॉमन इन्क्यूबेशन सेन्टर के लियें प्लान्ट एण्ड मशीनरी की आपूर्ति, स्थापना व चालू करने हेतु ऐसे इच्छुक योग्य निर्माताओं/वितरकों/फर्मो/संस्थाओं/कम्पनीयों से ई-निविदा ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट वेबसाईट www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in के माध्यम से दिनांक 28.03.2022 से 18.04.2022 तक आमंत्रित की गई है। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत विवरण www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in पर NIB Code DAM2021A0776 (UBN No. DAM2122GLRC01191 व DAM2122GLRC01192) एवं विभागीय वेबसाईट agriculture.rajasthan.gov.in/mandi पर भी देखा जा सकता है।

कृषि उपज मण्डी समिति, टोंक (राज.) Samwad/C/344/2022-23 कृषि उपज मण्डी समिति, टोंक (राज.)

#### **PUNJAB REMOTE SENSING CENTRE** (A Government of Punjab Enterprise)

PAU Campus, Ludhiana 141004 www.prsc.gov.in (Advertisement No. 1/2022)

Applications are invited for the posts of Jr. Research Fellows and Project Fellows for various sponsored projects on contractual basis for a period of six months likely to be extended based performance review Scheme/Centre's requirements. Interested candidates may visit website www.prsc.gov.in for more details.

Director

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Supply of Grease for Girth Gear. Supply of Arm Cylinder Assembly for Tata Hitachi Zaxis 450-1 Hydraulic Excavator. Supply of OTR Tyres Tubeless 1800 x 25. Supply of Swing Circle Assy and Bolts for Tata Hitachi Zaxis 450 Hydraulic Excavator. Supply f Explosives. • Pre-monsoon preparations – Cutting and clearing of drains at plant
Monsoon protection work – Replacing of damaged sheets at Plant (2022) Sd/- MANAGING DIRECTOR

### OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL COUNCIL JAISALMER Ref MBJ/Dev/2021-22/46 Notice Inviting Bids No. 43/2021-22 NIB Code No: DLB2223A0117

Online Proposals are invited on behalf of Governor of Rajasthan by Municipal Council Jaisalmer from the reputed, experienced and technically eligible conractors for "Construction of WBM Roads 66 to 85 in Goverdhan Das Kalla Avasiya Yojna" The further detailed bid conditions can be downloaded from website http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in. UBN No. DLB2223WSOB00353

Chairman

Commissioner

Raj.Samwad/C/342/22-23 Municipal Council, Jasialmer Municipal Council, Jasialmer

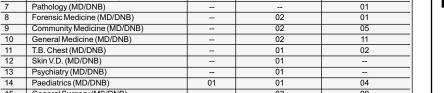
#### UP CMO, IMD'S TWITTER HANDLE HACKED

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's office's Twitter handle was hacked on Saturday morning.

The hackers had replaced Yogi's profile picture with that of a cartoon and posted several tweets.

The account has more than 40.53 lakh followers. Later in the day, the handle of India Metrological Department was also hacked.

**ENS&PTI** 



Designation

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Professor | Associate Professor

Paediatrics (MD/DNB) 15 General Surgery (MS/DNB) 16 Orthopaedics (MS/DNB) 02 02 17 Ophthalmology (MS/DNB) 01 18 E.N.T. (MS/DNB) 01 19 Gynaecology & Obstectrics (MD/MS/DNB) 20 Radiology (MD/DNB) 01 02 04 Anesthesiology (MD/DNB) 03 Radiotherapy (MD/DNB) Emergency Medicine (MD/DNB) 01 01 Neuro Surgery (M.Ch./DNB) 01 01 Urology (M.Ch./DNB) 25 01 26 Plastic Surgery (M.Ch./DNB)

S.No.

Professor Associate Professor :-Rs. 1,43,000/-p.m. fixed (Annual increment Rs. 6000/-:-Rs. 1,23,000/-p.m. fixed (Annual increment Rs. 6000/-:- Rs. 95,000/- p.m. fixed (Annual increment Rs. 3600/-)

Assistant Professor Age: As per N.M.C. norms.

27 Nephrology (DM/DNB)

Cardiology (DM/DNB)

Qualification for Faculty:- As per N.M.C. Norms.

Reservation: As per Uttarakhand State Govt. Rules.

No TA/DA will be admissible for attending the interview. The Chairman, interviews committee reserves the right to accept/reject any application without assigning any reason and also reserves the right to fill or not to fill any of the the post. Number of poste advertised may be increased or decreased as per requirement. Candidate must bring their resume along with original MBBS, MD/MS/DM/MCh/DNB degree, Medical Council/State Council Registration certificate, Experience Certificate and Undergraduate teaching certificate during MD/MS/DM/MCh/DNB course on concerned speacity / superspeacity and other relevant documents, a set of photocopies thereof. Two recent passport size color photographs are needed at the time of Interview.

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Advt No. 239/GMC/Apptt. Date: 08.04.2022

GOVERNMENT MEDICAL COLLEGE, HALDWANI

#### KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd. (A Govt. Of Kerala Undertaking) (An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company) Sankaramangalam, Chavara -691583. Kollam, Kerala, India +91-476-2651215 to 2651217, Fax: +91-0476-2680101, 2686721 Email:contact@kmml.com, URLwww.kmml.com Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal, https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com

1 | 2022\_KMML\_485154\_1 | For the supply of SS Pipe

2 | 2022\_KMML\_485653\_1 | For the supply of 16" Butterfly Control Valve-1 No. 3 | 2022\_KMML\_485642\_1 | For the supply of High Purity Magnesium Metal sd/-DGM(Mtls) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Lt 4 2022\_KMML\_485923\_1 Land Preparation for Remediation in KMML sd/-HOU(TP/TSP) For The Kerala Minerals And Metals Lt

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO 1 Dated: 09/04/2022 Tenders (Pre-qualification and or commercial offers) through e-procurement portal (http://eproc karnataka. gov.in) are invited for supply the following goods: Tender Value in Nomenclature of Items/ Services

KARNATAKA STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION

CENTRAL OFFICES, STORES AND PURCHASE DEPT, K.H. ROAD,

SHANTHINAGAR, BENGALURU-560027

Last date for submission Crores Rs. (Approx) of tender @17.00Hrs Short Term tende G-01/22-23 | Procurement of Pre-cured Tread Materials 16/04/2022 and Allied Materials on CPKM Basis

Further any addendum / corrigendum in respect of change in calendar of events, specification, scope, other tender terms and conditions etc, will be uploaded / published through e-portal only. NOTE:- Interested suppliers need to register in the e-procurement portal. For further information log into http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in. In case of further assistance, contact e-procurement cell (Phone .No.080-22230960, 080-22234115). Interested suppliers may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. Mail to eprocurementhelpdesk@ gmail.com for further information if required.

> **CONTROLLER OF STORES & PURCHASES** (Tender Inviting Authority)





www.vssut.ac.in

#### VEER SURENDRA SAI **UNIVERISTY OF**

TECHNOLOGY: BURLA P.O. Engineering College Burla (Siddhi Vihar), Dist: Sambalpur Odisha - 768018, India

E-mail: registrar@vssut.ac.in, Ph: (0663) 2430573, Fax - 2430592 Tender Notice No. VSSUT/Registrar / 211 / 2022 Dated: 08.04.2022

**TENDER CALL NOTICE** Subject: TENDER FOR PROVIDING SECURITY SERVICES AT VSSUT, BURLA

VSSUT, Burla invites sealed quotations form registered and authorized security agencies for hiring the security services (Security Guards/ Security Supervisors) for its Academic Building, Residential Campus, Halls of Residence area on Quality and cost based selection bidding method (EMD). Technical Bid and Financial Bid) duly filled in as per the instructions of the Tender Document addressed to The Registrar, VSSUT, Burla- 768018 and should reach latest by 30th April 2022 at 4 PM. The Technical bid shall be opened on 02.05.2022 at 11 AM and financial bid shall be opened on 09.05.2022 at 11 AM. The tender documents may be downloaded from our University website at

Sd/- **Registrar** 

# GOVT & POLITICS

### ED moves SC against HC bail order to Kerala CPM leader's son in money laundering case

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate has moved the Supreme Court, challenging the bail granted by the Karnataka High Court to Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of Kerala CPI(M) state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, facing charges under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act-2002.

The agency in its plea said that "averments made in the complaints, statements of the accused. the affidavit filed by the officials of the Enforcement Directorate clearly disclose that there are sufficient material to contend that the accused committed the offence of money laundering".

"Documents clearly disclose that there are shady transactions under which huge amounts were deposited, transferred and withdrawn...," the probe agency said in its appeal against the HC order dated October 28, 2021.

It said the HC had failed to appreciate that he had filed five bail applications, all of which were rejected and "there is no change of circumstances in the present case".

Bineesh was arrested on October 29, 2020, in the course of the investigation after 60 grams MDMA pills, Rs 2.2 lakh cash and other documents were recovered from one Mohammed Anoop, who is the accused number 1 in the case, by the Narcotics Control Bureau from Bengaluru.

The agency said Anoop, in his statement made under Section 50(3) of the PMLA Act, admitted that he dealt in narcotics and was "closely linked with Bineesh".

It added that Bineesh's driver Anikuttan, "deposited lakhs of rupees in Bengaluru and then withdrew the money in Kerala... The respondent herein has also not explained as to how his driver could deposit so much money in the bank account".

## Pinarayi, Stalin take on Centre: Destroying our federal system

**SHAJU PHILIP** 

KANNUR, APRIL 9

TAMIL NADU Chief Minister M K Stalin and his Kerala counterpart. Pinaravi Vijavan, on Saturdav blamed the BJP-led government at the Centre for destroying India's federal system.

Addressing a seminar on "Centre-station relations". held as part of the ongoing CPI(M) congress here, they alleged that unity in diversity is the nation's culture but Hindutva forces want to do away with that and convert India into a unitary state.

Pointing out several instances in which the Centre failed to meet Kerala's demands, Vijayan said: "What is most important is to democratise relations between the Centre and states. Instead of strengthening the federal system, the Union government is thwarting megaprojects; NITI Aayog is directly dealing with local self-governing bodies, keeping the state government in the dark."

Under the guise of developing backward districts, the Centre is directly funding projects and monitoring them,

FOREIGN SECRETARY Harsh

Vardhan Shringla will be ap-

pointed as coordinator for the

G20 summit, which will be

hosted by India in 2023, sources

30, will take charge of his new role

organising the summit, which

will include both substantive as-

pects as well as logistics.

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal

will remain the G20 sherpa.

as G20 coordinator on May 1.

Shringla, who retires on April

This is a newly created role for

**SHUBHAJIT ROY** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

said on Saturday.



Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin and his Kerala counterpart Pinarayi Vijayan at a seminar conducted as part of the 23rd CPI(M) party congress in Kannur, Kerala, Saturday. PTI

Vijayan said. "The Centre is not ready to seek the state's opinion when they are entering into deals, which would have farreaching consequences in a state," he said.

Not sparing the Congress, main opposition to the CPI(M)led LDF government in Kerala, Vijayan said, "The Congress does not help the state win fair share of projects and funds from the Centre. The Congress-led UDF has 18 MPs in Lok Sabha, (but)

Harsh

G20 members represent

more than 80 per cent of the

world's GDP, 75 per cent of inter-

national trade and 60 per cent of

dency in the past has utilised the

opportunity to shape the global

discourse on key socio-economic

"The upcoming G20 presi-

Sources said every G20 presi-

the world's population.

and contemporary issues.

Vardhan

Shringla

tervening for Kerala."

Referring to Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah's statement on Thursday that people from different states should speak in Hindi, and not English, Vijayan said an attempt to foist Hindi will not be allowed. "The Sangh Parivar feels if different languages are destroyed, the diversity of the nation can be eliminated. Our democracy involves diverse cultures and languages. The Constitution has given due importance to differ-

dency is India's chance to do the

same and to put ourselves on the

global stage and take initiatives

on issues relevant for us." the

will be the biggest-ever multi-

lateral event to be hosted in

India in recent years, "It will be

a tremendous opportunity for

India to showcase its infrastruc-

ture, rich culture and diversity

and hospitality at the global

multilateral event on this scale

before. It will entail the P5 dele-

gations being together in India

for the first time ever, as well as

"We have not hosted any

stage," the source said.

The G20 summit in 2023

source said.

ent languages. Any bid to foist Hindi would eliminate local languages and cultures," he said.

Indirectly slamming the BJPled NDA, Stalin said efforts are on to eliminate diversity in the country. Stating that unity in diversity is India's culture, the DMK chief said, "If India has to be protected, states should be first guarded. The nation can be safeguarded only if states are shielded."

Stalin said architects of the Constitution did not envisage a unitary structure of power but stood for division of powers, as reflected in features such as the state, the Centre and concurrent lists. The Panchayati Raj Act bestowed local bodies with rights. he said, and emphasised that states and the nation will witness

development only if villages grow. He said Kerala and Tamil Nadu, the CPI(M) and the DMK, have every right to speak about the Centre-state relations. "An elected Communist government in Kerala was dismissed by the Centre in 1959. In Tamil Nadu, DMK governments were dismissed twice in similar manner. first in 1976 and then in 1991, using that Constitutional provi-

Foreign Secy Shringla to be G20 coordinator

some of the world's largest

economies," the source said. "The year under our G20 Presidency will require us to organise around 190 meetings, including 1-2 Leaders' Summit and several ministerial-level meetings," the source said.

Hosting an in-person G20 Summit would involve around 37 delegations - including P-5 and seven international organisations and five special invitees, 10,000 international delegates, 5,000 international media, requirement of approximately 15,000 hotel rooms and 10,000-12,000 vehicles, and nearly 30,000 police or



Congress leader KVThomas

#### Thomas praises Kerala CM at **CPM** event: Congress's state unit seeks action

**SHAJU PHILIP** KANNUR, APRIL 9

DEFYING PARTY directive, fivetime Congress MP and former Union minister K V Thomas on Saturday attended a seminar at the venue of CPI(M) party congress here and praised Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, prompting state Congress chief K Sudhakaran to write to party president Sonia Gandhi, recommending strict and befitting dis-

ciplinary action against Thomas. Thomas, who has had a strained relation with Congress. attended a seminar on "Centrestate relations" and backed the state government's proposed semi-high-speed rail corridor, which the Congress has opposed.

Addressing Vijayan and CPI(M) state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan as "comrades", Thomas called the CM an able administrator. Stating his support for the rail corridor, he said, "Why should I oppose K-rail? If the project is beneficial for Kerala, all should stand united. Land has to be acquired for all projects. That Pinarayi Vijayan introduced the project should not be a reason for objecting to it — Vijayan is one of the best CMs and the pride of Kerala."

He kept a major part of his speech on demonstrating his purportedly changing political loyalty.

Sudhakaran told the media that Thomas had betrayed the party and action would be taken against him. "The party now regrets having given Thomas many positions over the years,

promising freebies self constitute a bribe or cor-

ECI to SC: No power

to check parties,

governments from

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

AMID A debate over financial viability of freebies and populist schemes announced by political parties vying for power, the **Election Commission of India** (ECI) has told the Supreme Court that it is not within its powers to stop this.

In an affidavit filed in the top court, the ECI ...offering/distribution of any freebies either before or after election is a policy decision of the party concerned, and whether such policies are financially viable or its adverse effect on the economic health over the state is a question that has to be considered and decided by the voters... The Election Commission of India cannot regulate state policies and decisions which may be taken by the winning party when they form the government.

"Such an action, without enabling provisions in the law, would be an overreach or powers," the poll panel submitted.

The affidavit was filed in response to a petition by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay. Among others, the plea urged the court to direct and declare that promise of irrational freebies from public fund before election unduly influences voters, disturbs the level-playing field, shakes the roots of free and fair election, and vitiates purity of election process.

The petitioner urged the top court to direct and declare that such promise or distribution is analogous to bribery and undue influence under the Indian Penal Code.

The EC's affidavit referred to the SC's 2013 ruling in the S Subramaniam Balaji vs Government of Tamil Nadu and others case, wherein it was said that a promise contained in an election manifesto cannot in itrupt practice as per Section 123 of the Representation of People's Act. 1951.

The apex court had in that case also said that the ECI can intervene only where there is no express legislation covering the subject matter and asked it to frame guidelines governing the contents of the manifesto, as it noted that there is no enactment covering this. The court also recognised that the ECI's authority to regulate such matters commences only upon the announcement of elections and the enforcement of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC).

The Commission said that it had accordingly, after consultation with recognised political parties, "issued guidelines, incorporated as Part VIII of the MCC, to be adhered to by the political parties and candidates while releasing their election manifesto..."

The ECI stated that although promises in a manifesto are not enforceable under election law, it had on December 27, 2016 advised all recognised political parties to submit a declaration along with copies of manifestos to see that the promises made therein are in consonance with Part VIII of the MCC.

On Upadhyay's prayer that ECI be directed to seize election symbol/deregister the political party which promises/distributes irrational freebies from public fund, the affidavit said the SC has in the past ordered that the Commission has no power to cancel registration of a political party, except on three grounds which does not include promise or distribution of freebies.

The ECI had taken a similar stand in January 2020 in another pending petition filed by Pentapati Pulla Rao, who was a Janasena Party candidate from Eluru in Andhra Pradesh in 2019 General Election, questioning direct cash transfer and freebies.

#### DAY AFTER RIOTING OUTSIDE SHARAD PAWAR'S HOUSE

### 109 arrested protesters sent to jail, their lawyer in police custody

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, APRIL 9

A MAGISTRATE court on Saturday sent 109 protesters, mostly striking employees of the Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC), to judicial custody till they are granted bail and their legal counsel Gunaratna Sadavarte to police custody for two days. This comes a day after they

were arrested by the Gamdevi police for rioting outside NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence Silver Oak in Mumbai.

The day also witnessed DCP (Detection) Neelotpal being given full-time charge as the DCP of Zone II, under whose jurisdiction Silver Oak falls. Neelotpal re-

**ZEESHAN SHAIKH &** 

MUMBAI, APRIL 9

**VISHWAS WAGHMODE** 

"IAM neither the head master nor

the remote controller of this (MVA)

government. In evolved democra-

cies governments can't be run

through remote controls," said

NCP chief Sharad Pawar in an in-

terview last year when asked

whether he was the power behind

ous in denying any role in the day-

While Pawar has been vocifer-

the throne in Maharashtra.



**Outside NCP chief Sharad** Pawar's home in Mumbai on Friday. Ganesh Shirsekar

placed DCP (Headquarters) Yogesh Kumar, who was in charge of Zone II when Pawar's residence was attacked. Kumar was given the charge

after Saurabh Tripathi, the earlier DCP of Zone II, was suspended when he was named as an accused in the angadia extor-

From MVA fulcrum to meeting

The police, in its remand apwant to find out who is the mastermind behind the conspiracy. He added that in the rioting, posome protesters were found in an inebriated condition.

Pawar's residence on April 12 and not allow him to leave the house.

Sadavarte's lawver Mahesh Vaswani, however, denied that his client had made any such an

### plication, sought custody of the accused. Public Prosecutor Pradeep Gharat argued that they lice personnel were injured and

The police further said it wants to find out if Sadavarte is among those behind the conspiracy. It alleged that Sadavarte, on April 7. had met protestors at Azad Maidan and told them they should protest at Baramati outside

### Rahul loyalist Raja Warring named Punjab Congress chief

New Delhi: Congress president Sonia Gandhi Saturday appointed Amrinder Singh Brar, alias Raja Warring, 44, as the party's new Punjab chief, and former Rajva Sabha member Pratap Singh Bajwa as the new legislature party leader. The appoint-

ments bear the

stamp of Rahul

Gandhi who

Raja Warring

had

named

Indian



**Raja Warring** 

Youth Congress presand ident Pratap Singh Bajwa as Punjab Congress chief a few years ago.

Sonia has also appointed former minister Bharat Bhushan Ashu as the working president of the Punjab Congress, and SC leader Raj Kumar Chabbewal as deputy CLP leader in the state Assembly.

Warring, who was the Transport minister in the Charanjit Singh Channi-led government, replaces Navjot Singh Sidhu, who had resigned on Sonia's direction last month, ENS

## As AAP gears up to make inroads in Himachal, BJP draws first blood in pre-emptive strike

**MALLICA JOSHI** NEW DELHI, MANDI, APRIL 9

BARELY TWO days after Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and the party's Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann held a "Tiranga Yatra" in Mandi in BIP-ruled Himachal Pradesh, the AAP's HP unit chief along with two other functionaries

switched to the saffron party late

on Friday night under dramatic

circumstances.

At 12.51 am Saturday, Union minister Anurag Thakur tweeted that the HP AAP's chief Anoop Kesari, general secretary Satish Thakur and Una head Iqbal Singh has joined the BJP fold in the presence of its president I P . Nadda. A BJP MP from Hamirpur, Anuragis the son of two-time HP CM Prem Kumar Dhumal. Nadda also hails from HP.

The AAP hit back at the BJP, claiming it was about to expel Kesari from the party Saturday anyways as allegations against him for "disrespecting women"



Anoop Kesari, Satish Thakur and Igbal Singh with BJP president J P Nadda and Union minister Anurag Thakur in New Delhi. Twitter/@ianuragthakur

have surfaced. Senior AAP leader and Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia charged that Anurag and Nadda had "rushed" to Shimla at midnight with the "sole purpose to induct an AAP member into their party, who was on the verge of being expelled from the party". "Such people truly belong to

the BIP. AAP will never, even for a minute, tolerate disrespect of women in its party..., Sisodia said. Sisodia also said the BJP lead-

ership's "hurried move" reflected its "great fear" of Kejriwal. Referring to this, the AAP

supremo tweeted: "They (BJP) are not scared of me but of the people. If they had worked for the people honestly, they would not have been scared, they would not change their CM, and would not have fallen at the feet of tainted people from other parties..."

After being inducted into the BIP. Kesari, however, said he and his two colleagues had taken the decision to join the BJP as, during his Mandi visit, Kejriwal "did not have the time to meet party workers".

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

technology (ICT) should be "im-

provement of access to justice".

sised the need for "teamwork"

between the executive and the

judiciary, while CJI Ramana ad-

vocated for "active effort" by

courts to "make negotiations and

mediation mandatory as part of

served, it does not matter whether

it is delivered by courts or under the

aegis of the executive through me-

"As long as justice is being

In his address, Rijiju empha-

#### Over 58% drop in Cong income in FY21; expenses also see steep fall

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

THE CONGRESS'S income dropped to Rs 285.7 crore in 2020-21, a decline of over 58 per cent from Rs 682.2 crore the previous fiscal, according to its audit report submitted to the Election Commission on March 30.

Its expenditure, too, dipped to Rs 209 crore from Rs 998.15 crore the previous fiscal.

The party's income in 2018-19 stood at Rs 918 crore and it continued to decline rapidly since then.

Major part of its income comes from "issuing coupons". according to the report. The party says it received from Rs 156.9 crore from it, while "grants and donations" contributed Rs 95.4 crore and Rs 20.7 crore came from "fees and subscriptions".

The last year's data submitted by electoral trusts to the Election Commission also revealed a dip in contribution to other political parties, while their share for the ruling BJP grew.

### NATIONAL JUDICIAL CONFERENCE ON MEDIATION AND IT

### President, CJI bat for mediation to check case pendency

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** AHMEDABAD, APRIL 9

PRESIDENT RAM Nath Kovind on Saturday said the concept of mediation is yet to find widespread acceptance, and bottlenecks such as lack of domain experts and suitable infrastructure need to be addressed on priority to help a wider population benefit from the tool of mediation. All stakeholders should display a positive attitude towards the subject in order to achieve the desired results. Kovind said.

He was speaking at the inaugural event of the two-day National Judicial Conference on Mediation and Information



President Ram Nath Kovind, Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, and CJI NV Ramana inaugurate the conference at Kevadia on Saturday. Express

Technology near the Statue of Unity at Kevadia in Gujarat's Narmada district on Saturday, in the presence of Gujarat Governor Acharya Devvrat, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju,

Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and other dignitaries.

the topmost objective of switching the justice delivery system to information and communication

diation," Rijiju said, adding that the Mediation Bill was now before the Parliament's Standing Committee

of I awand Justice for deliberations, and is taking a very good shape. The Law Minister added the government's goal was "to ensure

formal litigation to get justice. Let us explore other means to provide quick justice... I also feel that the existing system will burden us more and more unless we reform ourselves internally". CJI Ramana said lok adalats,

that people should not wait for

gram adalats and mediation centres have the "potential to transform the legal landscape of India by providing millions of people a platform to settle their grievances" and that "imbibing effective alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanisms into the judicial process can reduce pendency, and allow the litigants a degree of control over the dispute resolution process and its outcome".

Kolkata

make a beeline these days, which is a testament to the influence ex-The meeting however trig-

to-day functioning of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, the 83-year-old Maratha stalwart remains the fulcrum of this coalition government. The NCP supremo's residence. 2 Silver Oak. a two-storey bungalow located on a cul-de-sac at Bhulabhai Desai Road in South Mumbai, is the place where a slew of politicians, bureaucrats, top police officials, industry doyens, among others,

erted by Pawar on the Shiv Senaled MVA government, which includes the NCP and the Congress.

Modi, Pawar plays in all seasons

The Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister, Uddhav Thackeray, a governance neophyte, has relied heavily on the political and administrative advice of Pawar, who has played a pivotal role in shaping the ideas and direc $tions \, of \, the \, MVA \, government \, over \,$ the last two-and-a-half years.

This role of Pawar was in full display on April 6 when the former Union minister called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his Parliament Office for about 25 minutes. After the meeting, the veteran leader said that he conveved to the PM his concerns over the ED's recent action against Sena MP Sanjay Raut besides complaining to him about the delay by Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari in approving the 12 names recommended hv the Uddhav Thackeray Cabinet for nomination to the state Legislative Council.

gered speculation as to whether Pawar, who had once been publicly acknowledged by PM Modi as his "political guru", was trying to build a new relationship with the BJP. The meeting came in the backdrop of several probes launched by various central agencies against a number of MVA leaders including members of the extended Pawar clan and two senior NCP leaders Anil Deshmukh and Nawab Malik, who are now in jail.

Pawar has a network across political parties and has extended help to leaders from all political parties, says Sanjay Raut. "During his more than a five-decade long career in politics, there are people who have opposed Pawar to the extreme level but their opposition could never match his deeds and thoughts. He has never allowed politics to interfere with his social and development works. He has extended help to leaders of all parties. He has a knack of helping people in times of trouble and no one can match it," Raut told *The Indian* 

The President also said that

case management".

# SUNDAY STORY

OR AN UNLIKELY Chief Minister, Basavaraj Bommai, 61, got off to a good start. In the second month of his tenure, on September 2, 2021, he got a leg-up when Union Home Minister Amit Shah — on his first visit to Karnataka after Bommai took over -- endorsed him as the man to lead the BJP into the 2023 Assembly elections in Karnataka, "Bommai has focused on small things. He has not embraced the VVIP culture... In Delhi, those who observe Karnataka closely are of the view that the BJP has strengthened itself after making Basavaraj Bommai the Chief Minister," Shah had said.

But that honeymoon period barely lasted six months with a gradual piling up of woes against Bommai – within the party, the central leadership, the state government and public at large. There have been complaints of a lack of will in tackling corruption and large-scale indecisiveness on pending and new projects.

The biggest criticism, however, is that Bommai and his leadership have given a free pass to the Hindutva right-wing to execute its agenda — from a string of comments that have kept the hijab row simmering, to the issue of banning Muslims from temple festivals to the halal meat controversy.

While Bommai, eager to earn his stripes in the BJP given that he was in the JD(S) as late as 2008, was expected to be soft on Hindutva radicals, no one expected the CM - given his socialist background - to roll over and play dead.

Bommai's roots in the socialist and secular politics of the Janata Dal can be traced to his lineage - his father and former CM S R Bommai was an ardent follower of the radical humanist movement of Leftist leader MNRoy.

Though Bommai made his foray into politics in 1996-97, when he was appointed political secretary to then CMJHPatel of the Janata Dal, it wasn't until 2008, after his father's death in 2007, that he contested elections. This was because the senior Bommai didn't want to use his credentials to promote his son.

It's a discipline that has continued in his family, with neither of his two children - son Bharath, an industrialist and businessman, and daughter Aditi, an architecture student - displaying any political inclinations. His wife Chenamma is a homemaker.

"Basavaraj wanted to serve people but had to wait for his time," says J H Patel's son Mahima Patel, the JD(U) Karnataka president.

Following his father's death in October 2007, with Bommai's political career at the crossroads, he was invited to join the BJP by the party's biggest face then and Lingayat leader B S Yediyurappa. Bommai adopted Shiggaon, a constituency bordering the Dharwad region, which did not have a BJP leader, and won the seat in 2008, and in 2013 and 2018 as well.

One of the hallmarks of Bommai's time in the BIP, including two tenures as minister, was his ability to stay away from controversies while also emerging as a leader with knack for governance. He was the water resources minister between 2008-2013 and was most recently (2019-2021) minister for home, law and parliamentary affairs for Yediyurappa. "He is hardworking and has the passion to become a big political leader," says Bommai's former JD(U) colleague MP Nadagouda

Despite tracing his roots to Hubli — where he grew up before graduating with an engiering degree from RV Rhoomaraddi college and his father representing the region for

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

# Ministering Bommai

He came to the CM chair with little baggage, as the socialist who was expected to find his way around the BJP's ideological priorities. Yet, six months later, with right-wing groups enjoying a seemingly long rope under his watch, and a government in paralysis, Bommai remains an outsider seeking a way in. BY JOHNSON TA



Illustration: Shyam Kumar

When Bommai became the fourth BJP chief visive agenda of the Hindutva fringe, he is also minister of Karnataka in July 2021, he was exbeing questioned in matters of governance. pected to have a tough time balancing the di-'As home minister of Karnataka, Bommai had done well during the pandemic years. verse political interests at play in the state. There were the pulls and pressures of being The positivity that reflected in his initial loyal to both his benefactor Yediyurappa months as CM seems to have disappeared, who had by then fallen out of favour in the BJP a government official said.

A senior BJP legislator spoke of a governance paralysis. "Dozens of files pertaining to There was also going to be that inherent tussle projects in the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike have not been cleared by the CMO. There has been no decision because of inter-ministe-Bommai was expected to do well as CM. His rial disputes, vested interests.'

Bommai's indecision is also being blamed on the fact that he leans on the national leadership before taking a call on crucial issues.

A senior official at a key educational insti-

tution in the state recently narrated their experience in getting the government to allot additional land for an expansion project. "We have been running behind them for months. An official told us that a decision will be taken if there is any kind of recommendation from top officials in Delhi," the official says.

According to sources, Bommai has in recent weeks stopped acceding to requests from Yediyurappa as well. "Even when he meets the former CM, he does not commit to anything," says the aide of a senior minister.

Bommai has also been making frequent trips to New Delhi for clearances. His visit to Delhi on April 6 and 7 for talks on Cabinet changes did not get a favourable response from the BJP leadership. Besides, Bommai was not able to meet Shah, ostensibly because the latter was caught up with Parliament.

A few hours after Bommai left Delhi, BJP leader Shettar — a Lingayat leader like Bommai and considered to be a possible challenger to the CM — posted a picture on social media of his meeting with Shah.

As CM, a leader points out, Bommai spends a lot of his time on private events. He attended many events around the wedding of his friend and Union minister Pralhad Joshi's daughter in September 2021 in Karnataka and New Delhi. His critics also point to his habit of spending evenings with a few Cabinet colleagues at a five-star hotel in Bengaluru. Bommai's inner circle mostly has new entrants to the BJP like himself – K Sudhakar, Byrathi Basavaraj and ST Somashekhar, among others.

Many point to the Bitcoin controversy of October 2021 as the period when his confidence began wavering. "He became somewhat passive then," a government official says.

The Bitcoin scam pertains to the arrest of an alleged international hacker, Srikrishna Ramesh alias Sriki, in November 2020 by the Bengaluru Police. The Opposition has alleged that many police and government officials received kickbacks in the form of Bitcoins from the hacker gang after the arrest. Bommai was home minister when the arrest occurred.

In November 2021, Bommai met the Prime Minister. Though Bommai said the PM made light of the Bitcoin issue, his visit came amid speculation that the BJP was considering a change of guard in Karnataka following the Opposition's demands for an investigation.

In December 2021, on a visit to his constituency, Bommai turned tearful as he lamented the temporary nature of all positions of power — then interpreted as a sign that he may have to make way for a new CM. "...This life is not permanent, we do not know how long we will live. In such a situation all posts of power are also not permanent," Bommai said.

Yet, what has defined Bommai's eight months as CM is his failure to speak out against

right-wing Hindutva groups in the state. Over the last few months, police officers, including K Ramarajan, a young IPS officer who dared to stand up to right-wing groups, have found themselves transferred. BJP leaders too have been at the receiving end of right-wing groups. On April 6, Sanjeev Matandoor, party MLA from Puttur region, was heckled by Bajrang Dal activists for failing to obtain release

of men held for moral policing in Uppinangady. Recently, speaking in the wake of the halal meat controversy, Bommai said, "Where it is required, we will respond. We won't (respond) when it is not required."

It seemed like a rare moment of assertion. et, as he has so often done in recent month: Bommai had only dodged the issue – for now.

### **=TAKE5**= STRANGER THINGS

**SMITA SHRIKANT** DHONGADE, 37, RESIDENT, LADBOLI VILLAGE,



Dhongade at the site where the 'burning object' fell. Express

#### 'Felt like an earthquake. Stars fall from sky, but it was round...'

On April 2, "burning objects" were seen falling from the sky in several parts of Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, including a metal ring of 8-10 ft diametre that was spotted by residents of Ladboli village in Chandrapur district. While some on social media said it was a meteor, astronomy experts believed it to be part of a satellite that got destroyed once it got into the Earth's atmosphere with its parts falling across different regions

**VALLABHOZARKAR** 

What did you see exactly on April 2?

That night, I was cooking outside my house for Gudi Padwa (the Marathi new year) along with other members of the self-help group that I am a part of. It was the foundation day of our group as well. Around 8.15 pm, we heard a noise and saw a burning object in the sky. It fell a few metres from us. It was red and white smoke was emanating from it.

### What was your initial reaction?

I thought they were firecrackers... But then there was a noise. We were terrified. When it fell on the ground, there was a lot of vibration. We thought it's some kind of explosive and rushed inside our homes. When nothing happened, we stepped out and saw a red ring. Some people touched it and said it was very hot. The whole village was awake that night.

### **3** Was any property damaged?

Fortunately, it fell in an open space. There was some damage to the house near which it landed. I think we escaped a major tragedy. But the impact of the fall was a lot, it shook our house and felt like an earthquake.

### 4 What do you think the ring was?

I only know that sometimes stars fall from the sky; I thought it may be something like that. But when I looked at the object, I realised it wasn't a star because it was round in shape. Some even said it was a part of an airplane. I really have no idea what it was. This has never happened before.

#### What is the situation in 5 What is the situation the village now?

The authorities have taken our statements, and a lot of people are visiting our village now. We are all very scared, we keep looking at the sky because we have heard that more such objects have been found in the area.

=india 75= NUMBER PLATE **97.32 MILLION HECTARES** 

Area under food grains in India during 1950-51. which increased to 127.59 million hectares in 2019-20, as per Agricultural Statistics at a Glance

many years in the Assembly, Bommai has

stayed away from the politics of the region

since it is controlled by Union minister Pralhad

Joshi and former CM Jagadish Shettar, with the

Bommai as a "shrewd, tactful politician" who

line on issues like the National Register of

Citizens and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

"He is a good listener on matters that are of in-

terest to the BJP. If high command wants some-

thing, he is unlikely to say no," says Bommai's

friend and ex-Congress MPVS Ugrappa.

is aware of his limitations within the BJP.

A former Hubli journalist describes

As home minister, Bommai toed the Centre's

RSS also being an important force.

## 50.82 million

tonnes

The total production of food grains in the country during 1950-51, which increased to 296.65 million tonnes during 2019-20.

### 522 kg

The yield of food grains in the country in 1950-51, which increased to 2,325 kg in

### 18.10%

The proportion of area under irrigation in the country during 1950-51, which increased to 52.16 per cent in 2016-17

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA** 

## 'Clearly these are different times. How long do we protest?'

- and the dominant BJP central leadership

between his socialist moorings and the right-

sharp and resilient political mind was expected

However that is coming under test as be-

to carry the day for him until the 2023 polls.

sides his inability or reluctance to stop the di-

Despite the tough outlook for his tenure,

wing ideology of the BJP and RSS.

After a food cart was vandalised for allegedly selling non-veg dishes during Navratri — which coincides with Ramzan this year apprehensive vendors in this Western UP town have abandoned biryani for dal-roti, even if it means loss of business

#### **AMIL BHATNAGAR**

TASNEEM AHMAD'S non-vegetarian food outlet near the bus stand on Meerut Road in Uttar Pradesh's Sardhana had been doing brisk business for many years, serving nihari, korma and  $\emph{biryani}$  , among other special ties. However, since April 2, the day the Navratri festival began, the 43-year-old has been selling only dalroti to "prevent being targeted".

"Things have changed so rapidly. Earlier there would be oral instructions to not sell non-vegetarian dishes, but it wasn't set in stone. We would still have non-vegitems. But now they are going around beating up people. It is scary and that's why I am selling vegetarian food. Most of us are doing the same since the politician's aides can come for anyone," he says.

Ahmad is referring to the Sangeet Som Sena, the outfit formed by the supporters of former BJP MLA Sangeet Som, who had earlier called for a ban on the sale of meat and non-vegetarian food in Sardhana during the Navratri festival that began on Saturday. Later, the Sardhana police had booked the outfit's UP chief Sachin Khatik, and six others for trying to disturb communal peace after they allegedly vandalised a food cart, claiming that its vendor was selling mutton biryani.

But despite the police action, fear prevails among restaurant owners such as Ahmad. While the area around the 43-year-old's eatery is lined with about 40 food stalls, most











One of the food carts. "Sale of meat will hurt sentiments," says Som Sena. Amil Bhatnagar

of them are either shut or are not selling meat dishes, hitting their businesses hard.

Most food stall owners in Sardhana complain about "severe losses" in the past two years because of the Covid waves, "and now this unofficial meat ban is costing us further". Ahmad, who made between Rs 4.000-

 $5,\!000\,from\,sales\,earlier, says\,he\,now\,earns\,"far$ less" selling dal-roti. During Ramzan, which started on the same day as Navratri this time, many of the stalls would deliver food parcels to homes, but that service has stopped this year.

Some locals claim that even butchers are now refusing to supply meat to their homes. "This is perhaps the first time in my life that I am keeping roza without eating non-veg

food. Everyone is afraid to sell meat," says Shahid Anzar, 70, a resident. On a Wednesday afternoon, many cus-

tomers were seen flanking biryani stalls in the area to get food packed for iftari, but were told that non-veg items would be available

"It is a crucial time for us, we would get bulk orders during Ramzan. Now, I have to show customers my vessel to convince them that I only have vegetarian items... It is to ensure that we are not approached by a certain group of people. We hope this is resolved

The vendors say they don't want their food carts to be attacked like the Saturday incident. Despite the action by the police, they say,

to the town's police booth.

soon," says a biryani-seller whose stall is next

members of the Som Sena continue to carry out vigils in the area to check if non-vegetarian food is being sold. "We are ready to compromise for the sake

of peace. These things have never taken this form but clearly these are different times. There is only so much we can protest," says Altaf, a biryani-seller, turning away a customer.

While there is no written order banning the sale of meat and non-vegetarian dishes, Laxman Verma, SHO Sardhana Police Station had confirmed that there was an "oral communication that meat should not be sold during Navratri". "For general information purposes, the message was communicated through oral instructions," he had said.

The Som Sena's Khatik says "we will continue to raise the issue". "Sale of meat in the area will hurt sentiments. We have communicated this to the police and it is up to them

now to ensure peace in the area." Meanwhile, Hindu residents of the town have remained largely indifferent to the controversy, with some insisting that "we do not want peace in the area to be disturbed". "It is an unsaid rule that meat should not be sold during this period and an issue around it should not be created. It is a matter of a few days and if it is complied with, there will be no problems," says Satish Singh, a resident.

#### Across **THE AISLE**



**PCHIDAMBARAM** 

Twitter@Pchidambaram\_IN

The Home Minister verbally

assured the Rajya Sabha that the techniques prohibited in *Selvi* will not be employed, but refused to incorporate the assurance in the Bill... The government resorted to the usual binary arguments: If prisoners have human rights, so do victims. The Bill is not about victims but about arrestees, detenus and

prisoners

## Dagger in the heart of liberty

IN SELVI vs State of Karnataka (a judgement of three judges on May 5, 2010), the Supreme Court considered the Constitutional validity of three tests conducted against the will of a person: Narcoanalysis, polygraph test and Brain Electrical Activation Profile (BEAP).

The Court came to the following con-

1. "Hence our conclusion is that the results obtained through the involuntary administration of either of the impugned tests come within the scope of 'testimonial compulsion', thereby attracting the protective shield of Article 20(3)."

2. "Therefore, it is our considered opinion that subjecting a person to the impugned techniques in an involuntary manner violates the prescribed bounds of

privacy.' 3. "In light of these conclusions, we hold that no individual should be subjected to any of the techniques in question, whether in the context of investigation in criminal cases or otherwise."

In KS Puttaswamy vs Union of India (a judgement of a 9-judge Bench), the

Supreme Court held: "An invasion of life or personal liberty must meet the threefold requirement of (i)legality, which postulates the existence of law; (ii) need, defined in terms of a legitimate State aim; and (iii) proportionality, which ensures a rational nexus between the objects and the means adopted to

LIBERTY & PRIVACY

In delivering the historic judge-

Sharad Pawar indicated last week that

ments, the Court was performing its paramount duty of being the 'sentinel

The judgements in Selvi and KS Puttaswamy are still good law. Not, it appears, for the present government of India. If it had realised that the judgements were binding on the government, based on non-derogable constitutional rights (Articles 20 and 21), the government would not have introduced and passed the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, 2022. The Bill is a brazen attempt to overreach the Supreme Court and to deny the fundamental rights to liberty and privacy, two of the most precious rights in a democracy.

The purpose of the Bill was to expand the ambit of persons covered under the law; use of modern techniques for taking body 'measurements'; and provide legal sanction thereto. The purpose is unexceptionable, the mischief lies in the provisions. There are many legal infirmities in the Bill, but let me focus on four sections which violate the two precious rights of liberty and privacy.

#### FOUR QUESTIONABLE SECTIONS

S.2: There is a definition of 'measurements'. It includes biological samples and their analysis, behavioural attributes or such other examination/tests (referred to in Ss. 53, 53A and 54 of the Code of Criminal Procedure). There are no exclusions.

Question: Does 'measurements' include narcoanalysis, polygraph test, BEAP and psychiatric examination?

**S.3:** Measurements can be taken from 'any person' that includes a person convicted of an offence punishable under any law, a person ordered to give security for keeping the peace, a person arrested under any law and a person detained under any preventive detention law. It is shocking that every law is covered and it is more shocking that an arrestee and detenu are clubbed with a convicted person. The section undoubtedly includes any protester who may attempt to cross a police barrier where S. 144, CrPC has been promulgated! Questions: Is there any MP, MLA, political worker, trade unionist, student leader, social activist or progressive writer or poet who has never been arrested and who can claim that he will never be arrested? (On the day I joined the Youth Congress I was arrested, along with others, for demonstrating near the statue of Minto in Chennai!).

**S.4:** The measurements will be stored, preserved for 75 years and can be shared with any 'law enforcement agency'. Mark the words, it is not an agency investigating a crime. An authority such as a panchayat or municipal officer, a health inspector, a traffic constable, a tax collector and numerous others enforce some law or other - and they will be entitled to demand and be given the measurements. Question: In the absence of a definition, who are the law enforcement agencies mentioned in the section?

S.5 read with S.2: A person is obliged to give his measurements. A magistrate can direct a person to give his measurements and the person shall obey the order. If he refused, a police officer (definition: head constable and above) is empowered to take the measurements and, if the person resisted, he will be punished under S. 186, Indian Penal Code. Question: Will measurements be taken against will and without the consent of the person concerned?

#### Non-derogable RIGHT

The Home Minister verbally assured the Raiya Sabha that the techniques prohibited in Selvi will not be employed, but refused to incorporate the assurance in the Bill. The other three questions remained unanswered. The government resorted to the usual binary arguments: If prisoners have human rights, so do victims. The Bill is not about victims but about arrestees, detenus and prisoners. The other argument was, look at our low conviction rates. Of course, look at them, but the low rate is because of negligent investigating officers, poor quality prosecutors, shoddy record-keeping and overburdened judges. These constraints will not go away by violating the human rights of arrestees, detenus and prisoners.

Liberty is a non-derogable human right. Erosion of a human right is the starting point of its extinguishment. The Bill is a dagger plunged into the heart of



### **Fanatics** become fashionable

FANATICS BORE me. I have never met one I could describe as remarkable, intelligent, or attractive. So, it has begun to worry me that in 'new' India throngs of fanatics seem to be popping up everywhere. Last week alone we had more sightings of fanatics than can be listed here, but let me give you a short list. One fanatic in Delhi decided that meat shops must remain closed during Navratri out of respect for Hindu religious sentiments. The man who said this was a municipal official, and he was able to shut down meat shops in his limited jurisdiction. This caused huge disruption and loss of business but instead of being reprimanded firmly by his BJP bosses, he was applauded by an MP from his party who said that meat shops should close across India during Navratri.

My second fanatic sighting happened in a video that appeared on social media of a Mahant in Sitapur declaring that he planned to go into Muslim homes and bring out their women so he could personally rape them in public. This monstrous creature made his announcement outside a mosque and was immediately surrounded by a mob that cheered him with cries of 'Jai Shri Ram'. There were policemen present. They made no effort to arrest this Hindu priest.

My third fanatic sighting was in a video that came from Gujarat of an event organised by the Antarrashtriya Hindu Parishad where the aide of an illustrious member of the Sangh Parivar used very coarse language to describe Muslim men. He then proceeded to declare that Muslim women were now in search of Hindu men so that they could produce sons like Luv and Kush. My distaste for fanatics increases when extreme religiosity robs them of their boringness and turns them into raving and ranting lunatics.

There was a time in India when fanatics and crazy religiosity were rare. I remember returning to the motherland from reporting trips to Pakistan and feeling an overwhelming sense of relief. In the Islamist Republic next door, religiosity and fanaticism are things you notice from the moment you land at the airport. Bottles of liquor, in long ago days when I could bring them for friends, often got seized at the airport when they were revealed by the x-ray machines.

It was hard to interview almost anyone without encountering religiosity. Sometimes I encountered it from total strangers. I remember being told by women walking by me in a Lahore street to dress more appropriately. I wore salwarkameez but had forgotten that long sleeves were religiously ordained. On another occasion I remember having words with a mullah who ordered me to cover my head. You do not need to be an alcoholic or heavy drinker to observe the absence of bars in Pakistan, which was a complete contrast to the old India. But, in the 'new' India, the Chief Minister of Bihar recently declared that people who drank liquor should not be called Indians.

Fanaticism and religiosity go together, so it is difficult to say whether it has been the extreme religiosity of the past few years that has created this deluge of fanatics, or something else. Perhaps, they always existed in dark corners somewhere and have been emboldened to come out of the shadows because fanaticism has become fashionable in the 'new' India? Whatever the reason, it is time for sane Indians to speak out against fanaticism and religiosity, because if there is something that is truly against India's 'national interest', it is these two things. Incidentally, it is also against the fundamental principles of the Sanatan Dharma.

The thing that always made Indic religions superior to the Semitic religions was that none of our religions include such fanatical ideas as apostasy and blasphemy. Is it possible, though, for us to still say proudly that our religions are superior to the Semitic ones? As a Sikh I have been horrified by those incidents of people being beaten to death in gurdwaras on charges of sacrilege. Guru Nanak would have been appalled. Legend has it that he went to Mecca and fell asleep with his feet pointed in the direction of the Kaaba. When he was told off by a mullah, he is believed to have asked in which direction did God not exist so he could point his feet that way.

These are the fundamental traditions and ideas on which India's religions have been founded. Of course, we had our share of fanatics but usually these were people we treated with contempt and usually they remained hidden away in their own gloomy corners. They did not show up at public events to declare their intentions to defile women. They were never in a position to hand out certificates of good conduct to vegetarians and teetotalers. And it was because of this that religiosity and fanaticism were never India's defining traits. It is deeply disturbing that these traits have come to loom so large because of political

patronage of fanaticism. What is as worrying is that those who have become more fanatical in recent times iustify their idiocy on the grounds that it is a valid and appropriate reaction to secularism. The secularism as practised by the Congress party was flawed, but the answer cannot be extreme religiosity. All that this idea of religion does is to breed fanatics, and fanaticism turns the best people into bores.



#### VIRTUAL MEETS

THE BJP'S highest decision-making body is the parliamentary board, responsible for broad policy in Parliament and state legislatures. Surprisingly, in the elite 11-member panel there are four vacancies. No appointments were made to fill vacancies due to deaths of Arun Jaitley and Sushma Swaraj, elevation of Venkaiah Naidu as vicepresident and retirement of Thaawarchand Gehlot as leader of the Rajya Sabha. The seven remaining members are Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, JP Nadda, Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Shivraj Singh Chouhan and B L Santhosh. In fact, after Covid, formal physical meetings are rare. Instead, the general practice is for an exchange of ideas only among the big three, Modi, Shah and Nadda. And the decision is communicated over the phone to other members. Although most members get little say in the running of the party, nevertheless a position on the board is much coveted. Followers of Yogi Adityanath have long speculated that he will soon join the prestigious body, but the UP CM, despite his spectacular victory, is

#### FLAGGING CONCERN

The rules of the Archeological Survey of India are very rigid. No structure is permitted within 100 metres of the outer boundaries of its monuments. So when the entrance roundabout at Nizamuddin East was dug up to erect a 115-feet-high flagpole next to the 16th century Khan-i-Khanan tomb, the PWD was sent a notice to desist. They, however, refused to fall in line, even after a complaint was filed with the police. Apart from obstructing the view of the historic monument, the disproportionate flag post is an eyesore in the residential colony, particularly as it towers over a striking art installation by Anjolie Ela Menon. The ungainly flagpole is, however, unlikely to be removed since the Delhi CM wants to compete with the BJP in a wasteful xenophobic campaign. The Capital has budgeted Rs 104 crore for its deshbhakti programme which calls for putting up 500 flagpoles to counter the BJP's rastravaadi campaign.

LOSING ENTHUSIASM

#### he did not want to head any Opposition front, and added that no anti-BJP alliance was possible without the Congress. Actually, it was not Pawar who floated his name but Saamana editor Sanjay Raut, who these days appears closer to the NCP than the Shiv Sena. (In fact, Pawar even met Modi to protest his harassment by Enforcement Directorate authorities). Similarly, it was pollster Prashant Kishor who first floated the idea that Pawar would be an ideal choice for president. However, with the BJP's decisive Assembly victories, the enthusiasm of all those promoting a political alternative to

the BJP, including Mamata Banerjee, is miss-

ing. Incidentally, this parliamentary session

the Congress avoided hosting Opposition

floor strategy meetings, as it did in the past.

### TACTICAL MOVES

At the recent CWC meeting, many were taken aback when Rahul Gandhi remarked that the party's prospects in Gujarat were bright. While the BJP's position has weakened in Modi's home state, the Congress is hardly well-placed to take it on, even if it is successful in wooing Naresh Patel, head of the Shree Khodaldham Trust. The Congress's internal wrangling is less of a handicap than AAP's growing popularity its slogan to give it one chance is gaining traction. The BJP, meanwhile, has a timetested formula up its sleeve. In September it got rid of CM Vijay Rupani and his Cabinet for non-performance and now most sitting MLAs may be axed for the same reason.

#### LOYALTY UNREWARDED

The Congress made it a matter of principle that it would field no defectors during the recent Goa Assembly elections. In the last Assembly, the party had been decimated by defections, with its strength eventually coming down from 17 to 2 MLAs. (Of the two MLAs, Pratapsingh Rane also turned turtle by refusing to stand for re-election and permitting his daughter-in-law to contest on a BIP ticket from his seat. There is now talk of him being appointed a governor.) But the last man standing in the Congress was not rewarded for his unwavering loyalty by being chosen as leader of the opposition in the Assembly. Michael Lobo, a BJP defector who helped the Congress secure four seats in Bardez taluka, including that of his wife Delilah, was appointed. Digambar Kamat was not even made Goa party chief to replace Girish Chodankar. His only reward was to be made a permanent invitee to the CWC. Recent events have shown that the committee's role is largely of a cheer squad



IN HIS ruminations on India's engagement with the world, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar states, "India must reach out in as many directions as possible and maximise its gains. This is not just about greater ambition; it is also about not living in yesterday." (p.42, The India Way). Today, as he advises PM Modi in crafting policy to protect India's interests in the wake of Russia's invasion of Ukraine, Jaishankar would feel himself surrounded by the echoes of the past six-and-a-half decades. Indian positions and statements on Russia's predecessor state, the Soviet Union, and its armed interventions-euphemisms for invasions-inHungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968), Afghanistan (1979) are largely similar to its current, albeit evolving, stand on Russia's  $action, On the other hand, India \hbox{'s responses}\\$ to the Israeli-British-French invasion of Egypt (1956), the long years of the US's armed involvement in Vietnam and its Iraq war (2003) followed a different trajectory.

The unfolding of India's stand on the Russian invasion of Ukraine is best illustrated by its statements at the UNSC. While it has refrained from any direct criticism of Russia and abstained from voting in any resolutions against it, India has dropped any reference to security concerns of states. It now focuses on the need to abide by the UN Charter, respect sovereignty and territorial integrity of states and to resolve issues through dialogue and negotiations.

Russia is happy with India's abstentions, for that is important for perceptions, but it would have noted the shift in India's position. Jaishankar said in Parliament on April 6: "If India has chosen a side, it is the side of peace and it is for an immediate end to violence." This is of course 'motherhood and apple pie', but Jaishankar would be aware that it was Jawaharlal Nehru who was called shantidoot, the messenger of peace. The past creeps in, if subconsciously!

India's 1956 predicament lay inter alia in deciding its approaches to two separate crises. One sprang from the British and French reaction to Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser's decision in July 1956 to nationalise the Suez Canal. Till then, the canal was controlled by an Anglo-French company. After a period of desultory talks, both countries, along with Israel, decided to launch a war against Egypt in October. India was outraged by this action of the colonial powers. Nehru condemned the ac-





Foreign Ministers Sergey Lavrov and S Jaishankar during Lavrov's India visit. File

tion and remained in contact with the US. which insisted that its allies - Britain, France and Israel - withdraw their forces. They did so but not before the UN General Assembly too sought the same and the US threatened Britain with destabilising its currency.

The Hungarian crisis came to a boil at the same time as Egypt was being invaded. A strong section of the Hungarian political class supported by students and others sought to break away from Soviet domination. It wanted to chart its own socialist path and withdrew from the Warsaw pact. The situation was confused in what became a general uprising. Ultimately, the Soviet Union invaded Hungary and the anti-Soviet forces were brutally suppressed. Unlike his position on Egypt, Nehru initially did not openly speak against the Soviets. The Indian representative abstained in a UNGA motion which was critical of Soviets. Public opinion in India was unhappy with Soviet action and criticised Nehru, who belatedly and publicly acknowledged Hungary's desire for autonomy despite Soviet threats of diluting their support on the I&K issue which then was an active matter in the UNSC.

Twelve years later, beginning January 1968, Czechoslovakia witnessed a period of socialist liberalisation under a reformist leader. The Soviet Union with other Warsaw Pact nations finally decided that they could not allow this deviation from the accepted Soviet model. Hence, in August 1968, their armies invaded Czechoslovakia. Resistance was limited and the country's political elite came to heel. The Soviet-led action was criticised in India, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi was sympathetic to the plight of Czechs but refused to be swayed by emotion. India abstained from voting on a resolution at the UNSC seeking to condemn the Soviet Union.

In 1979, Soviets invaded Afghanistan. Gandhi returned to power a few days after that. India supported the Soviets at the UNGA. It blamed outside powers for interfering in Afghan affairs, accepted that Soviet forces had entered at Afghan request and India had been assured that they would leave whenever Afghans wanted them to. The Soviet occupation went on for a decade. Through this period, India was unhappy with the Soviet presence but it never really publicly embarrassed it, though privately it advised them to leave Afghanistan. The Vietnam war was one of the defin-

ing struggles of Cold War, which India viewed in anti-colonial and ideological terms. Its sympathies lay with the North, especially after US combat troops arrived in the South in 1965. US armed action, often brutal, using weapons such as napalm bombs, outraged public opinion in India and the government did not restrain it, nor did it cushion its antipathy towards US actions.

The 2003 US invasion of Iraq was based on false premises. The government expressed anguish and Parliament deplored it. India also refused a US request to send peace-keeping forces to the country. These were wise decisions and did not impact the growth of India-US ties.

Despite this government's full antipathy for Nehru and only a little less for his daughter, in responding to the current Ukraine situation, it is following the matrix set by them.

The writer is a former diplomat



#### SANDIPROY

GAUTAM NAVLAKHA, the veteran human rights activist accused in the Elgaar Parishad case, had requested a copy of The World of Jeeves and Wooster. It was initially denied as a "security risk" by Taloja Jail authorities, a

decision the Bombay HC termed "comical". What's truly comical is that it's Wodehouse. Even Indian fairy tales like Thakurmar Ihuli pack more subversion in them than the fading world of unflappable British valets, battle-axe aunts, and prize pigs. Even more ironic is that Wodehouse liked to claim he was apolitical. He was interned in a prison camp because he hap-

## Wodehouse runs into Heavy Weather

pened to be living in France when Germans invaded. When the Nazis released him, they asked him to broadcast some amusing stories about prison life. Wodehouse thought that was a plum idea and was baffled why

for the Gandhis.

the English were not amused. Wodehouse remains a jolly good fellow even if the world he depicted feels archaic. Some might be surprised that Navlakha even wanted to read him in 2022. But as writer Evelyn Waugh presciently told the BBC in 1961, Wodehouse's "idyllic world can never stale" because he continues to "release future generations from captivity that may be more irksome than our own". Little did Waugh realise, in Navlakha's case that captivity would be literal not metaphorical.

His enduring appeal to Indians can feel like a mysterious colonial hangover. Shashi Tharoor, who founded the PG Wodehouse Society at St. Stephen's College and has read all 95 of his books, has written about how shocked he was when at a panel in England, the young moderator asked: "So how do you pronounce it - Woad-house or Woodhouse?" But in India he has never gone out of fashion. However it's not just nostalgia for the times of sahibs and memsahibs. Wodehouse's appeal is that he appears untainted by colonial condescension, nor affected by post-colonial guilt. He is a guiltless pleasure. His books still serve as a masterclass in wordplay, effortless marrying the hifalutin with the silly as he tells us someone looks careworn "like a Borgia who suddenly remembered that he has forgotten to shove cyanide in the consommé, and the dinner gong is due any moment".

That soufflé silliness that permeates Wodehouse has prevented him from being taken seriously by scholars. Inadvertently, the Maharashtra jail authorities might have

given him a gravitas that eluded him in life. But it's also true that the mischievous wit of Wodehouse feels out-of-sync in a country where stand-up comics can be picked up by the police for jokes they might crack. As comedian Anuvab Pal once said, in India, "the first question in a comedy panel is 'what will you get in trouble for?"". So it's hardly surprising that a book by a humorist raised red flags with prison authorities.

Yet this flap about Wodehouse should not distract us from the real issue at hand. Navlakha, a man in his seventies, was also denied his spectacles and a chair for a bad back. Father Stan Swamy, a Parkinson's patient, had to fight for a straw and sipper because he could not hold a glass. Lawyer Sudha Bharadwaj had to get a special NIA court order to be allowed five books a month. All of them, guilty or innocent, are entitled to their day in court. Until then, the larger issue is their treatment under incarceration and that, unlike Wodehouse, is no laughing matter.

În 1921, Gandhi's follower Madeleine Slade aka Mira Behn was incarcerated in Bombay's Arthur Road Jail. As recounted by Ramachandra Guha in Rebels Against the Raj, she wrote that the sum total of treatment of women prisoners in British jails is "obvi-

ously designed to try and crush our spirit". In light of that, this exchange between Wooster and Jeeves is more grim than droll.

'Good evening, Jeeves.'

'Good morning, sir.' This surprised me, 'Is it morning?'

'Yes, sir.' 'Are you sure? It seems very dark

The writer is a novelist and the author of Don't Let Him Know



THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, APRIL 10, 2022

# ECONOMY

#### Market Watch

#### OIL SEES SECOND WEEKLY FALL

Houston: Oil prices notched their second straight weekly decline after countries announced plans to release crude from their strategic stocks. For the week, Brent dropped 1.5% to \$102.78 a barrel, while US WTI slid 1% to \$98.26. **REUTERS** 

**RBI: Households** 

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU** 

INFLATION EXPECTATIONS of

households across various cities

for three months and one year

ahead have crossed the 10-per

cent level, showed a survey by

the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

tinued on its recovery path, wit-

nessed since mid-2021, though

the assessment compared to a

year ago remained in negative

tion perceptions for the current

period remained unchanged at

9.7 per cent in the latest survey

round, while the expectations

for both three months and one

year ahead rose by 10 basis

points each to 10.7 per cent and

10.8 per cent, respectively, as

compared to January 2022

round," the central bank's

Inflation Expectations Survey of

ducted during March 2-11, 2022

in 19 major cities and the results

are based on responses from

6,033 urban households, the sur-

the bi-monthly monetary policy,

the Reserve Bank said it has

hiked its inflation forecast from

4.5 per cent projected earlier to

5.7 per cent — below the upper

band of 6 per cent of the RBI's

 $target-in\,2022\text{--}23\,and\,slashed$ 

the growth rate from 7.8 per cent

for a majority of population and

age groups, uncertainty in infla-

tion expectations increased for

both three months and one year

horizons, as compared to the

tations for overall prices and in-

flation were generally aligned to

those for food and non-food

products, while one year ahead

expectations were more aligned

to those for non-food products

and services, the RBI survey said.

bank's Consumer Confidence

Survey (CCS), consumer confi-

dence for the current period con-

The current situation indi

(CSI) improved further in March

2022, on the back of improved

sentiments on general economic

situation, employment and

tinued on its recovery path.

According to the central

Three months ahead expec-

previous survey round.

According to the RBI survey,

On Friday, while unveiling

The inflation survey was con-

Households said.

vey further said.

to 7.2 per cent.

"Households' median infla-

zone, another RBI survey said.

However, consumer confidence for the current period con-

MUMBAI, APRIL 9

expect inflation to cross 10%; consumer

# Car In, Cube Out

The Maruti Suzuki-Toyota Tsusho Group's new MSTI plant in Noida is a step in the direction of a government-led initiative to institute a circular economy in auto sector. While the economics of the process is still evolving, tax incentives are a draw

**PRANAV MUKUL** & ANILSASI

NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

THE OPERATOR of the baler, a hydraulic press that crushes and shapes the body frame of a car into a metallic cube, says a small prayer as he switches on the machine. In less than a minute, the baler crushes the frame and converts the body shell into a crumpled metal cube - marking the final stage in the process of dismantling end-of-life vehicles (ELVs) at Maruti Suzuki and Toyota Tsusho Group's new MSTI plant in Noida, on the outskirts of Delhi.

The crushed frame is then sent to steel mills, which process it in a smelter to eventually extract the steel and turn it into billets for use as construction inputs. But steel is not the only material that comes out of a scrapped car. Other major components include aluminium and copper, in addition to parts such as batteries and electronic systems that the company sells to recyclers as is.

The plant is a step in the direction of a government-led initiative to institute a circular economy in the auto sector, primarily with the aim of moving the end-of-life disposal of cars from a largely unorganised set-up to the organised side to ensure environmentfriendly dismantling of these ELVs.

The Noida-Greater Noida belt is emerging as a hub, with the 10,993-sq m Maruti Suzuki-Toyota Tsusho facility that has a capacity to scrap and recycle over 24,000 ELVs annually falling within 10 km of MMRPL, a joint venture between Mahindra and state-owned MSTC Limited. which set up one of India's first auto shredded plant operating out of Greater Noida in a campus spread across five acres.

Under the government policy, automated testing stations and scrapping facilities such as the MSTI and MMRPL are to be set up in phases, with plans to set up 50-70 facilities for scrapping vehicles in the next 4-5 years. The policy proposes a number of incentives for vehicle scrappage including a 5 per cent rebate on new vehicle purchase, an up to 25 per cent discount on road tax and a waiver of vehicle registration fee.

Effective April 1 the government has notified the concession on motor vehicle tax for the vehicle registered against submission of "certificate of deposit".



Bodyframes of two Maruti Suzuki cars (right) after being stripped off their parts and components sitting adjacent to the hydraulic baler. On the left, three metallic cubes of car frames after being compressed in the baler. Pranav Mukul

While the remaining incentives are yet to be announced, they are expected to be among the key drivers initially leading owners of ELVs to organised scrappage units instead of simply discarding the cars by parking them on the streets of a city or taking them to unorganised vehicle scrappers who typically have better economics on the process than their formalised counterparts

From a sentimental point of view, a car being torn down and then crushed into a cube of metal is generally perceived as a painful visual experience for owners But the first car that rolled into

the MSTI facility — a red WagonR - was driven in by Atul Jain, a Noida-based legal professional, quite enthusiastically, replete with dhol players to add to the atmospherics. Stories of both Jain and the MSTI baler operator are proofs that Indians attach an emotional value to their vehicles, particularly those they owned for more than

The incentives in the form of tax waivers is a big draw, but some of this still is in the process of being worked out in practical terms.

### THE PROCESS

Parts such as tyres,

Scrap metal is processed

ELV shell is compressed

Steel bales are sold to

steel mills and smelters.

moval of battery, engine oil, trans-

mission oil, brake oil, coolant are

drained with zero waste; freon AC

gas is recovered from the vehicle

without any discharge to the at-

mosphere. That's where the

scrapping facilities in the organ-

ised sector are markedly different

shockers, seats,

windows, etc are

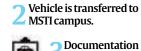
and segregated.

into a bale.

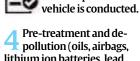
dismantled.



End-of-life vehicle is procured from dealerships and individuals.



& inspection of



pollution (oils, airbags, lithium ion batteries, lead acid batteries) ensuring zero discharge.

There are four main processes: Vehicle collection: These end-of-life vehicles are either colected from the customer's house and brought to the scrapping fa-

cility in Noida, like Jain's WagonR, or sourced through dealers. **Depollution:** After the refrom the ones operating in the unorganised sector, where much of these oils and gases are largely released into the open.

Dismantling: All parts except body shell are progressively removed: the engine, transmission, and all body parts, panels, plastic components, glasses suspension parts, muffler etc. The chassis number is cut and preserved as per government guidelines.

Extraction of recycled materials: Materials are segregated into ferrous, non-ferrous, plastic and disposed to authorised recyclers. The body frame, once crushed by the baler, is then dispatched to steel mills.

The economics of the process is still evolving, and would need policy support to bridge the pricing advantage that the unorganised segment enjoys. While the price varies between Rs 25,000 to Rs 80,000 per vehicle that MSTI pays to owners, the unorganised sector tends to pay more. But the catch is the incentive on the new vehicle, which, according to MSTI managing director Masaru Akaishi, is a bigger draw for customers. Apart from owners getting scrap value equivalent of around 3-5 per cent of ex-showroom price of new vehicles, there is the provision of zero registration fee for new vehicle purchase.

Hurdles remain

AMONG THE biggest chal-

lenges that formalised ve-

hicle scrappage units face

is the competition from

their informal counter-

parts, who derive better

economics by deploying a

less meticulous process.

For formal units to be sus-

tainable in the long-run,

MSTI officials said, a mini-

mum scale of operation

will be necessary. And for

more people to bring their

vehicles to these units,

several different stake-

holders — including the

Centre, state governments

and auto manufacturers -

agreement over the incen-

will have to come to an

tives being provided.

Recycling of end-of-life

vehicles also promises a

greater contribution to the

circular economy, and po-

tential recycling of high

value goods like semicon-

ductors raw materials in

the future.

Hurdles

States are also being persuaded to give up to 25 per cent and 15 per cent rebate on road tax for personal and commercial vehicles, respectively, but a lot of these proposals are still on the table. There's a push to manufacturers to give up to 5 per cent discount for buying new vehicles, which is tricky for carmakers at a time when input pricing pressure is straining margins.

According to the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, India has an estimated two crore vehicles that are older than 20 years, with the most in Karnataka, followed by Delhi, Uttar Pradesh. Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Punjab. Most of the organised scrapping hubs are coming up around auto hubs, like Noida-Greater Noida and the Gujarat automotive belt.

According to the Union Government, there are nine vehicle scrapping centres functional in the formal sector — eight in the Delhi area and one in Chennai,

### confidence moves up **SURVEY RESULTS**

■ As per the March 2-11 round of the Reserve Bank of India's Inflation **Expectations Survey of** Households, median expectations for both three months and one year ahead rose by 10 basis points each to 10.7% and 10.8%, respectively, as compared to January 2022 round. It was based on responses from 6,033

■ As per the central bank's Consumer Confidence Survey, conducted among 5,984 households, consumer confidence for the March 2022 period continued on its recovery path

urban households

household income, from 64.4 to 71.7, the survey said.

One year ahead outlook, as measured by the future expectations index (FEI), also continued on its recovery path which was interrupted by a dip in the January 2022 round at the peak of Omicron variant impact of Covid-19. The future index also rose from 103.3 from 115.2, the

RBI survey said. Households' opinion about current and future spending remained in positive territory and was bolstered by a rise in both essential and discretionary spending, it said. The CCS was conducted among 5,984 households across 19 cities.

Real gross domestic product GDP) growth projection for 2021-22 has been revised down by 40 basis points (bps) from the last survey round to 8.8 per cent. the RBI's Survey of Professional Forecasters on Macroeconomic Indicators said. It is expected to grow by 7.5 per cent in 2022-23.

Panellists have placed GDP growth forecasts in the range of 8.4-9.8 per cent for 2021-22 and the range for 2022-23 is wider at 5.4-8.2 per cent. Forecasters have assigned highest probability to real GDP growth lying between -8.9 ner cent in 202 2022-23, highest probability has been assigned to two neighbouring ranges: 7.0-7.4 per cent and

### BRIEFLY —

### Agriexports

New Delhi: Agricultural exports rose about 20% in FY22 to \$50.21 billion despite logistical challenges posed by Covid-19, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said. Exports of rice were the top forex earner at \$9.65 billion among agri commodities in 2021-22, growing 9.35% from the previous year. PTI

### Russia, BRICS

Moscow: Russia, hit by Western sanctions, has called on the BRICS group of emerging economies to extend the use of national currencies and integrate payment systems, the Finance Ministry said on Saturday. On Friday, Finance Minister Anton Siluanov told a ministerial meeting with BRICS the global economic situation had worsened substantially due to the sanctions.

#### VW disclosures

Berlin: Volkswagen has rejected a shareholder proposal for it to explain how its lobbying activities align with its climate goals - something two of the carmaker's leading competitors have already promised to do, one of the investors said.

#### Nio output

Shanghai: Chinese electric vehicle maker Nio said it has suspended production after China's measures to contain the recent surge of Covid-19 cases disrupted operations at its suppliers. **REUTERS** 

### **SPREAD OVER 27 DISTRICTS IN FIVE STATES**

## City gas licences: 21 bids received for 5 areas

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 9

SEVEN COMPANIES have submitted 21 bids for licence to retail supply of CNG for automobiles and piped cooking gas for households in five areas in states including Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, the Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) said. As part of the 11A city gas dis-

tribution (CGD) bid round, the oil regulator had offered five geographical areas (GAs) spread over 27 districts in five states.

Bids for the five GAs were received on April 6, PNGRB said in

#### **BIDDERS NOT NAMED**

■ Bids for the five GAs were received on April 6, the **Petroleum and Natural Gas** Regulatory Board (PNGRB) said in a statement. However, it did not name the bidders

a statement. However, it did not name the bidders. "21 bids have been received from 7 bidders with no single bid in any GA."

Puducherry has been added to the bid round and bids for this area are due on May 10, it added.

A sixth GA of Yanam in

In Uttar Pradesh, the five GAs of Lakhimpur Kheri, Sitapur, Siddharth Nagar and Maharajganj districts have been rolled into one GA for the 11A bid round.

■ As part of the 11A city gas

distribution (CGD) bid

had offered five

five states

round, the oil regulator

geographical areas (GAs)

spread over 27 districts in

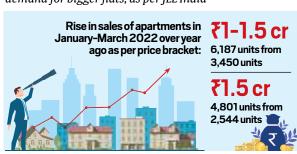
Banka in Bihar, and Dumka, Godda and Sahibganj districts of Iharkhand have been combined

into another GA. In West Bengal, Birbhum, Murishdabad, Malda and Dakshin Dinajpur districts form third of the five GAs.

From Chhattisgarh, Koriya, Surajpur, Balrampur and Surguja districts have been clubbed into one GA, while Kondagaon, Bastar, Sukma, Narayanpur, Bijapur and Dantewada districts form part of the final GA. "Upon finalization of bids under this bidding round, approximately 88 per cent of the country's area would be authorized for development of CGD Network to provide access to natural gas to approximately 98 per cent of the country's population," the PN-GRB said. WITH PTI

### 'Sales of apartments priced above ₹1 crore up 83% in 7 cities'

Sales of apartments priced at Rs 1 crore and above rose 83% to 10,988 units during January-March on rising demand for bigger flats, as per JLL India



Amazon seeks to overturn NY union win

Sales volume in this price category during January-March 2021 stood at 5,994 units

Total sales of apartments across

the seven cities went up to 51.849 units from 28,352 units a year ago

Sales for the period under review also surpassed the average quarterly sales during the pre-Covid 2018-19 period by a significant 148%

■ Bengaluru ■ Chennai ■Pune ■ Mumbai ■ Kolkata ■ Delhi-NCR Hyderabadl

Source: ILL India/PTI

Survey details: The Residential Market Update - Q1 2022 by JLL India includes quarterly data only on apartments. Rowhouses, villas, and plotted developments are excluded from the analysis

## WarnerMedia, Discovery merge to be Warner Bros Discovery

### **REUTERS**

BENGALURU, APRIL 9

AT&T INC'S WarnerMedia unit and Discovery Inc have completed their merger, the companies said on Friday. The combined company, Warner Bros Discovery Inc, will start trading on the Nasdaq on Monday under the ticker symbol "WBD".

In May last year, the companies set out to merge and become a standalone media business. with AT&T aiming to focus more on its wireless ambitions and Discovery looking to beef up its content library. "With the close of this transaction, we expect to invest at record levels in our growth areas of 5G and fiber, where we have strong momentum," AT&T

Last May, the companies set out to become a standalone media business, with AT&T aiming to focus more on its wireless ambitions and Discovery looking to beef up its content library

chief executive officer John Stankey said in a statement.

Warner Bros Discovery's portfolio includes Discovery Channel, Warner Bros. Entertainment. CNN. HBO. Cartoon Network: streaming services Discovery+ and HBO Max; and franchises like

"Batman" and "Harry Potter". A top priority for David Zaslav, the long-time Discovery veteran leading the combined entity, is to make streaming video as profitable as the old TV business, an-

Discovery On Thursday announced the executive team to lead the new Warner Bros Discovery (WBD), leaning heavily on a trusted group of lieutenants, many of whom have worked with its chief executive since his days at NBC.

Nine high-level Warner Media executives, including chief executive Jason Kilar and Studios and Network chief Ann Sarnoff, announced their exits ahead of the formation of the combined company earlier this week

### **HALELUYA HADERO**

NEW YORK, APRIL 9 AMAZON IS seeking to overturn the historic union victory at one of its New York City warehouses, arguing in a legal filing Friday that union organizers and the National Labor Relations Board

The e-commerce giant listed 25 objections in the filing obtained by The Associated Press, accusing organizers with the nascent Amazon Labor Union of other legal filing. "Amazon is choosing to igintimidating workers to vote for

Amazon's JFK8 distribution centre in Staten Island, New York, US. Reuters file

SAYS 'ELECTION RESULT TAINTED', LISTS 25 OBJECTIONS

ees have spoken," Eric Milner, the

attorney, said Thursday after Amazon's initial planned objections were made public in an-

nore that, and instead engage in stalling tactics to avoid the inevitable - coming to the bargain-

ing table and negotiating for a contract" on behalf of the workers, he said. Warehouse workers in Staten Island cast 2,654 votes, or about 55 per cent, in favor of a union, giving the fledgling group enough support to pull off a win last Friday

In one objection, Amazon said organizers "intentionally created

hostile confrontations in front of eligible voters," by interrupting the mandatory meetings the company held to persuade its employees to reject the union drive. In a filing released earlier this month, the company disclosed it spent about \$4.2 million last year on labor consultants.

In another objection, Amazon targeted organizers' distribution of cannabis to workers, saying the

such a practice as a legitimate method of obtaining support for a labor organization.' New York legalized the recre-

labor board "cannot condone

ational use of marijuana last year for those over 21.

Milner said Amazon is grasping at straws. Distributing cannabis "is no different than distributing free t-shirts and it certainly did not act to interfere with the election," he said.

Amazon also accused organizers of improperly polling workers. It had first signalled it planned to challenge the election results because of a lawsuit the NLRB filed in March, in which the board sought to force Amazon to reinstate a fired employee who was involved in the union drive. AP

Kolkata





the union, a claim an attorney

representing the union called

acted in a way that tainted the re-

sults. It now wants to redo the

election.











## THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW

Why We Like What We Like

The work of architect-theorist Christopher Alexander, who passed on last month, has been a touchstone for design thinking, in both India and abroad



BOOKS

Review of Saeed Naqvi's The Muslim Vanishes Review of Makarand R Paranjape's JNU: Nationalism & India's Uncivil War Review of Muzaffarnagar Diaries



# A LIFE IN MUSIC

From a boy who ran away from home to become Hindustani classical music's gold standard, Pt Bhimsen Joshi, who would have turned 100 this year, had an extraordinary journey

Suanshu Khurana

OMETIME IN the early '60s, at a musical baithak in Calcutta's Dixon Lane, in Pandit Jnan Prakash Ghosh's living room, a bright and upcoming musician, Bhimsen Joshi, then in his early 40s, took his audience by surprise with his breath control during taans, immaculate hold over ragas, and near-breathless iterations of phrases. All this while his grip remained strong on the distinct imprint of the Kirana gharana, known for its impassioned renditions in the higher octaves. And yet, his was a different style, with shades from other gharanas infused as well. It was brilliant and yet unheard of until then.

Sitting among his audience, engrossed in Joshi's music and giving his daad (appreciation) in chaste Urdu at regular intervals, was the ageing Bengali actor-singer Pahari Sanyal.

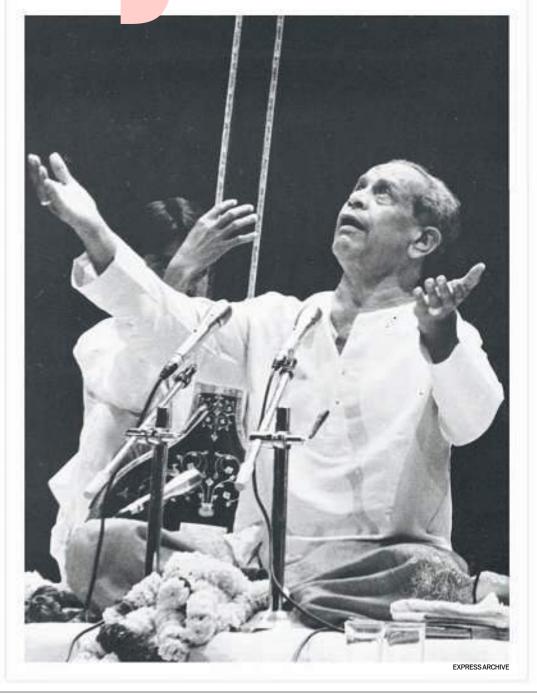
Sanyal was taken aback when, at the end of the performance, Joshi touched his feet, and, with a toothy smile, said: "I don't think you've recognised me, saheb. I'm Joshi. I used to work in your house.'

A stunned Sanyal was immediately

transported 30 years ago, to his house on Raja Basant Roy Road, when he was at the peak of his career. A 12-year-old boy from Gadag in Karnataka's Dharwad, whom he called "Joshi", had been employed as a domestic worker at his home. Eager to learn music, he would sit in at Sanyal's song reearsals in the evenings.

Later that day, after the baithak, once Joshi left, Sanyal turned to his friend Kumar Prasad Mukherji, commercial director of Coal India Limited and son of the well-known sociologist and economist DP Mukerji, and said, "Good lord!' I can't believe it is the same boy... He had a voice like a buffalo calf with a cold. I told him he had no future as a singer but I might be able to find him a petty job in the New Theatres Studio... he suddenly disappeared one day. Good heavens! How can this man be the same Bhimsen?" wrote Mukherji in his book *The Lost World of Hindustani Music* Penguin, 2006).

'Since I had no earning, I'd ask around for food to eat or work as domestic help. Pahari Sanyal needed a servant... when he came to hear me at a music conference, I reminded him that I am the same 'Joshi' who worked in his house," Joshi recalls in filmmaker-lyricist Gulzar's documentary Pandit Bhimsen Joshi (1992), produced by Films Division.



It's often said in Indian classical music circles that 'if God ever decided to sing, he'd choose Pt Bhimsen Joshi's voice'

It's often said in Indian classical music circles that "if God ever decided to sing, he'd choose Pt Bhimsen Joshi's voice". Joshi, who would have turned 100 in February this year, remains, perhaps, the only musician to have the cultural high ground in his heyday as well as his later years. With his ability to mine spiritual profundity from the seven notes of sargam, there was also the high voltage, large and resonant voice tied in with a formidable technique.

Prabha Atre, 89, the seniormost torchbearer of the Kirana gharana, who knew Joshi closely for years, believes that a singer's ingenuity relies heavily on his voice. "It does not suffice to have music in the head," she says. "It must be projected successfully through the voice... Bhimsenji had been fortunate in this regard. His voice, even at an advanced age, engulfed the listener like a flood of bright light pervading the whole environment... Kirana (gharana) artistes have voices that are thin, sharp and high-pitched. But Bhimsenji's voice was quite the opposite - broad, dense, wide-ranging, capable of prolonged spans. And yet it could lay claim to sweetness and melodiousness," she adds.

Bengaluru-based vocalist Nagaraj Rao Havaldar, who learnt music from Joshi's seniormost disciple Pandit Madhav Gudi, says, Joshi became the gold standard. "Panditji's music reached the common man, music lovers, scholars and musicians. It was a voice that belonged to everybody," says Havaldar, who wrote Bharata Ratna Pt Bhimsen Joshi: The Voice of the People (2016).

» CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE

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Kerala (6D) 34000-37000

Andaman (7D/8D) 61000 - 65000

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England Scotland (10D) Jun 22 - 250000

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Sikkim Gangtok (6D) 53000 - 55000 Coorg Mysore Bengaluru (7D) 42K - 45K Munnar Periyar Kumarakom (7D) 3BK - 40K YOLO Adventures (for 18-35 year olds)

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Pahalgam Gulmarg Sonmarg Srinagar(100)May 13-69K Meghalaya Shillong Cherrapunjee (8D) May 28 - 70K

#### Short Trips

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## DOWNIN **JUNGLELAND**



Ranjit Lal Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

## The Terror of Their Giggles

Sometimes, when they are not exceptionally quiet, their bark is worse than their bite

OW FAR do the sounds animals make — their calls, growls, screams, shrieks - reflect their characters and personalities? Here we'll take wide-spectrum sampling of animals and see if their vocalisations match; happy listening!

**Lions:** "King" of the beasts and rightly so — their roars can roll across the grasslands for up to 8 km; it can make anyone's tummy rumble. However, many roaring lions sound extremely hoarse and some (along with their cousins) end the roar with a sound like wood being sawed. Automobile and motorcycle manufacturers have long tried imitating the low, rumbling growl and snarl of an angry carnivore (lion, leopard, tiger) in their vehicles'

Wild Dogs: For all their merciless reputation, they have almost friendly sounding whistles and clicks, which they emit while chasing prey, as a team, to keep in touch and coordinate the chase

**Hyenas:** Their terrifying liquid giggles and squeals indicate that they have it in for their victims. They match perfectly with their cringing, wheedling side-on approach. Heads down, shoulders drooping, they dart and slither, ingratiatingly enjoying the fate of the prey they have trapped. Theirs is one giggle that horrifies and is not infectious.

Bears: Angry, berserk bears emit raucous, crazed roars. However, they are not intelligent enough to be taught how to do a ballet in a tutu.

Wild Hog/Pigs: Perfectly matched in shape and size for their environment, they grunt and snort deliciously as they root about in the muck, snuffling up tubers with zero table manners. But can squeal like a soprano having her throat slit in slow motion when in the grip of any of

**Elephants:** For all their bulk and dignified presence, elephants sound awfully petulant when they throw a tantrum and trumpet in frustration or anger. But dignity is restored by their deep-bass belly rumbles which can make your own tummy rumble uneasily, and which



**SOUND ENERGY** 

Pied Starlings (mynas) deep in conversation

transmit through the ground and travel over grassland and forest to be picked up by the feet and ears of other herds, miles away.

**Buffaloes:** Will snort and bellow belligerently when confronted by predators, but once brought down, they emit pathetic and desperate moans for help — which are often heeded and followed by the impressive thunder of hooves of the back-up cavalry.

**Deer (most species)**: Being prey, it makes more sense for them to keep silent — and listen for predators on the prowl. But when they do pick up a threat, they will emit a bark (the sambar goes, dhonk!) or sharp cry of warning and stomp their feet hard before fleeing. While in the rut, macho stags emit demented roars/bellows unbecoming of their lordly profiles.

Horses: Their whinnying hysterical neighs are perfect for animals that are so borderline close to having panic attacks and bolting every second of the day, but don't quite square up with their noble profiles.

Donkeys: Their long-drawn lugubrious bray can make you want to laugh and cry at the same time, besides startling you considerably until you home in to the source of the sound and laugh some more.

**Eagles:** These lords of the sky — and other raptors have extraordinarily inappropriate high-pitched squealing calls. I once mistook the call of a Pallas's Fish-Eagle for a puppy having its bottom smacked!

Crows: Their hoarse caws go perfectly with their raucous mob mentality.

Mynas: They can sound and look as civilised as any sophisticated gathering of genteel intellectuals debating a delicate point on fine art on the BBC, or equally sound and look as rowdy as a bunch of politicians in full flow in an unruly democracy.

Jungle Babblers: Their disheveled khaki get-up matches perfectly with the cacophony they so love to produce while searching your premises — and that can still make you laugh.

Parakeets: Loquacious and colourful as a collection of fisherwomen with a joie de vivre, their squawking can be ear-piercing and goes well with their earnest, bulging eyes and domed foreheads. They will maintain strict ra-

dio silence while raiding a mango or guava orchard. **Sperm Whales:** The loudest animals in the world, the recordings of their clicking, I've heard, sound like an old rusty clock being wound up but, apparently, is powerful enough (at 236 decibels) to blow your eardrums off. » FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

HEN THERE was the morning of August 15, 1988, when India watched the first visuals of an amber sun, sea and the splatter of a waterfall segueing into a sombre Joshi singing Mile sur mera tumhara. The raga was the majestic Bhairavi, whose infectious melody swirled out of television sets and into our hearts.

Born in a Brahmin family, to a Sanskritteacher father and a homemaker mother in Gadag, Joshi was one of 16 children. He was 11 when an HMV LP featuring a bandish by Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, founding father of the Kirana gharana, would change his life. The record was being advertised and would constantly be played on the streets. As Khan sang a three-minute Piya bin naahi aaot chain in raag Basant, he'd plumb the depths of the spring raga; and in turn a young Joshi's soul. He wondered, "what does one have to do to sing like this?," he says, in the Films Division documentary.

The answer was going to Gwalior, the only place that he'd heard was synonymous with classical music. So, empty-handed, with only the clothes on his back, armed with music he'd learned by listening to his mother's abhangs and a few stray records, Joshi got on a train from Gadag, without any ticket, and began his quest. His family, for a long time, thought that he left because his mother refused him a spoonful of ghee.

It took the young boy more than two months to reach Gwalior, where he landed at the doorstep of sarod maestro Ustad Hafiz Ali Khan, Ustad Amjad Ali Khan's father. There, the state provided a free meal to those who learned music. A young Bhimsen would eat lunch in the day and learn from Hafiz Ali in the evening. He gave him two ragas - the contemplative Marwa and the intense raga of dusk, Puriya Dhanashree. However, a wellknown musician, Hafiz Ali's travels kept him away from his students. A restive Joshi then

After his stint at Pahari Sanyal's place as a domestic worker, Joshi visited Delhi briefly before he left for Jalandhar for the famed Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan, the oldest music conference in the country. There, he met Gwalior gharana vocalist Pandit Vinayakrao Patwardhan, who told him to head back to Maharashtra where Sawai Gandharva, the disciple of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, lived.

Once again, life came full circle. It was Karim's music that had prompted Joshi to make the journey in the first place. For the next four years, Joshi lived in Kundgol after Gandharva accepted him as a student, where he washed his guru's clothes, filled water from the well, and cleaned the house. It was only after a year of testing his resolve to learn that Gandharva began to teach Joshi. His first live performance was at the age of 19. An album of his abhangs and bhajans was released by HMV the next year in 1942. A year later, Joshi moved

Shrinivas Joshi, his youngest son, says, "As a musician, his life is a miracle. He was born in an area with Kannada as his mother tongue. There, no one knew of classical music. He heard that one record and gambled his entire life for this pursuit. The miracle is that he came up victorious and sits among the giants. He was born for this."

Once Joshi began to make a little money,

A LIFE IN MUSIC







his mother arranged a match for him with Sunanda Katti, the daughter of her brother. They married in 1944 and had four children - Raghavendra, Usha, Sumangala and Anand. In 1951, he married Vatsala Mudholkar, his co-actor in a Kannada play. The marriage happened before the Hindu Marriage Act was codified. But bigamous marriages were prohibited in Bombay Presidency, so Joshi moved to Nagpur where this was permitted. He never divorced his first wife, who passed away in 1992. He had three children with Mudholkar - Jayant, Shubhada and Shrinivas.

In the beginning, both the families lived together, but a few years later his first wife moved out with her children and began to live separately. Joshi continued to provide for them and visit them. Katti and Joshi's son Anand was born in 1962, 11 years after Bhimsen married Mudholkar. According to Anand, the money was limited and the family lived modestly, away from Joshi's glamorous world. "I would go every month to take money to the other house and sometimes hear him do his riyaaz. I would think that here is this great artiste, a musical genius, who is also my father. My mother (Sunanda) would always ask us to learn from his great

CIRCLE OF LIFE

(Clockwise from above left) Bhimsen Joshi with Ustad Zakir Hussain (left) and Ustad Amjad Ali Khan; with second wife Vatsala Mudholkar in 1951; with first wife Sunanda Katti at his eldest son Raghavendra Joshi's

thread ceremony;

with Ustad

Bismillah Khan



art," says Anand, who is also a vocalist. While Jayant is a photographer and painter, Shrinivas, a classical vocalist, is currently president, Arya Sangeet Prasarak Mandal, Pune, which organises the annual

Sawai Gandharva Festival. Did his relationship with the first family divide the two families? Shrinivas says, "We are the first family. We did not have any relationship with them...Whatever problems my father faced, he didn't expose me to it." The matter of Joshi's will remains in the Bombay High Court, where the two families continue to contend over his property.

Joshi also had a long tryst with alcohol, which he overcame in his later years. According to his son Raghavendra's book, Bhimsen Joshi, My Father (Oxford University Press, 2016), he would sometimes be inebriated on stage, too.

Nana Mule, 84, who accompanied Joshi on the tabla during the '70s and '80s, savs "He was an orthodox Brahmin who had never seen alcohol. Some jealous people at the time got him into it. One time, we met actor Dharmendra at Hyderabad airport. He was a great fan of Panditji. Since the flight was delayed the two decided to go for a drink. And I saw Panditji finish a full bottle of rum. It was a problem but

he overcame it some years later."

While Joshi's personal life was going through turmoil, his professional career was buzzing with high praise and honour. His approach to music was intuitive, reflective and exploratory. It was the presentation of his favourite raga, the poignant Todi, at the first Sawai Gandharva music festival after his *guru*'s death in 1952, that turned him into a legend. It was Gandharva's training in the performance but the soul was all his own.

Gandharva was an exacting guru and extremely strict, imparting different bandishes to different students and not allowing them to discuss among themselves. He didn't want them to be replicas of each other. Legendary vocalist Gangubai Hangal was also learning from Gandharva then. Since Hangal took the 9 pm train back to Hubli every day, Joshi would offer to drop her at the railway station. "On the way, he'd ask her about the bandish she had learnt and share with her what he'd learnt,"

"Ek achhe kalakar ko ek achha chor hona chahiye (a good artiste should also be a good thief)," Joshi would say often to his students. Tabla player Bharat Kamat, who accompanied Joshi on the tabla from 1989 till the musician's last days, says, "Once he messed up a piece in front of Kesarbai Kerkar to prompt her to sing it and give him her knowledge of the subject.

In a documentary on Joshi, made by Jamia Millia Islamia Center and James Beveridge Associates Ltd Canada in 1971, is a presentation of the rain raga, Miyan Malhar. In the film, he's accompanied by tabla player and Kamat's father Pt Chandrakant Kamat. It garnered much attention with its near-perfect animated rendition of the raga, and even today, the recording is considered a masterpiece. Kamat says that this music is now the stuff of lore. In his trance, Joshi would forget that he'd opened the buttons to his kurta and was singing looking a tad dishevelled. "He had what we call *swar siddhi* — the embodied spirit of the raga — in his being," he says.

This was a time when musicians such as Ustad Bismillah Khan, Pandit Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan were at the height of their careers. While Mallikarjun Mansur, 10 years Bhimsen's senior, was also another name to reckon with among the rasikas, Joshi acquired popularity in every part of the country. "Because he spoke Kannada, the Carnatic element in his Hindustani music helped,"

He sang in Hindi films too, including Ketaki gulab juhi in Basant Bahar (1956) and the famed bhajans, Raghuvar tumko meri laaj and Thumak thumak pag in Amol Palekar's Ankahee (1985). He received a National Award for the latter. He was awarded the Padma Vibhushan in 1999 and Bharat Ratna in 2008. "So many musicians are worldly minded, stay in touch with the right people to get certain honours. Not only did he not care, but the beauty is also that he got it all still. He would have been the same person, had he not received anything," says Shrinivas.

No conversation about Joshi is complete without discussing his humility. People speak of the simple man, who needed only music and food to survive. The only luxury he cherished in his later life was his fondness for cars; he could also repair them.

Over the years, his music mellowed and became less robust as age and illness — brain tumour and tail-bone issues caught up — in the '80s and '90s, but his voice never lost its sheen. Joshi passed away on January 24, 2011, leaving behind a legacy that almost seems like a fable if one had not heard him live or seen

Alexander spent seven months in India build-

ing a village school in Bavra, Gujarat, involv-

ing villagers in the construction. He writes

about his experience with the village folk: "I

felt I must be useful and discussing with the

## In Pursuit of Truth and Beauty

British-American architect-theorist Christopher Alexander, who passed away recently, left a lifetime of work which has been a touchstone for design thinking, globally and in India

Narendra Dengle

CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER, architect-writer. mathematician, and scientist, who passed away on March 17, at the age of 85, at his Sussex home, symbolised a life of conviction that architecture was not obsessive, indulgent form-making but could bring wholeness of life, full of beauty, through its act.

Today, many architects across the world are disillusioned with the institutional training and glamorous practices and have been searching for alternative ways of practising this beautiful and ancient discipline. Ancient societies, too, had devised diagrams and theories for their architecture to connect the phe-

nomenal world with cosmology, using empirical knowledge of the forces of nature. The scientist in Alexander was serious in his pursuit to resolve this tough riddle of how to make architecture a living structure that echoes the deeper principles of the universe itself.

studied Alexander mathematics Cambridge, cognition at Harvard, the US trans-

portation theory at MIT, and taught at Berkeley for about 40 years. His first book Notes on the Synthesis of Form (Harvard University Press; 1964) made a huge impact in academia all over the world. In the preface to the paperback edition in 1971, however, he says, "...I have been held as one of the leading exponents of the so-called design methods. I am sorry that this has happened, and want to state, publicly, that I reject the whole idea of design methods as a subject of study since I think it is absurd to separate the study of designing from the practice of design."

Alexander's writings continued to fascinate and inspire generations of architects, sociologists, anthropologists, musicians and software designers. His books are a testimony to his deep sense of observation and passion to unfold the truth of timeless beauty in architecture. Some of his important books include The Timeless Way of Building (Oxford University Press, 1979), The Pattern Language (Oxford, 1979), and the magnum opus of four volumes of The Nature of Order (The Center for Environmental Structure, 1980).

This was a result of years of studying life in ordinary events and the interconnectedness between individuals, communities, and na-

ture. He believed that with a deeper understanding of space, the relation between architecture and physical sciences would alter, and with it, the former would "play a revolutionary role in the way we see the world". The post-Industrial Revolution architecture had significantly deviated from the much-valued trio of ethics. philosophy, and technique,

and had become mechanistic. He called it "theoretically bankrupt". Alexander's views prompted heated debates and he had to face harsh opposition in practice as well as academia. His theories were considered "prescriptive", which Alexander patiently denied.

If the scientist in Alexander was deeply concerned about the state of this planet, the artist in him wanted to make the world beautiful for living. He found beauty in the simple but knowledgeable way in which tradi-



tional communities built their habitat. He

noticed that their deep design sense perme-

ated through all forms of art and craft, from

clothing, pottery, weaving carpets, orna-

ments, carpentry, and elegant construction

processes, to conceiving public spaces. These

he analysed as much as to understand the

geometric principles that were embedded

in them as to follow why they evoked a

deeper feeling as experienced in organisms

Alexander became a builder. He built his proj-

ects in different parts of the world. After ob-

taining his PhD from Harvard in 1961,

To test and connect the theory to practice,

and ecological systems.

**HEALING** 

(Left) Christopher Alexander; his shelter for the homeless, Julian Street Inn, California

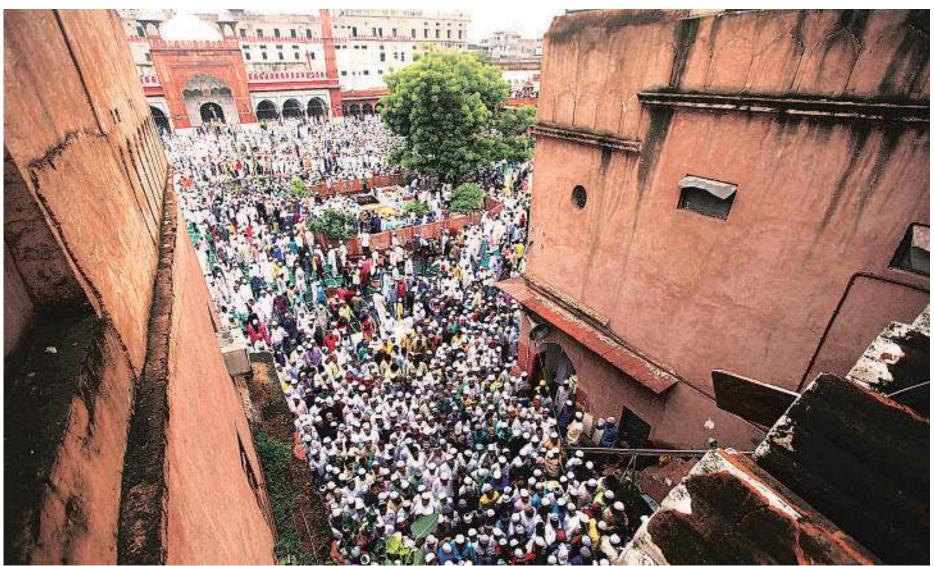
**SPACES** 

villagers, we decided that a school would help the most." This was the "start in his architecture" and the "first building I ever made and the first time I invented anything in construction. I had Rs 5,000 to build the school." He worked closely with the village potter who was used to making the conical guna roof tile. This experience of the benefit of community participation stayed with him forever. . Alexander's learning from India are evident in his writings. In a chapter in "Living Room of Society" (The Nature of Order, Book Three) he narrates how he was inspired by what happens in traditional societies, and in contrast to urban societies, "the space that existed between buildings was like the living room of society... where people did things, got together, felt comfortable." He witnessed the sense of belonging to one's place brought "dignity and joy" to one's living.

His close inspection of the phenomenon of nature made him think of resonating it in architecture. He would ask his students "Have you given your soul to the work?" And. devised a brilliant test which he called "The Mirror of the Self". He observed, "When a place is lifeless, or unreal, there is almost always a mastermind behind it. It is so filled with the will of its maker that there is no room for its own nature". He knew that there was a common language that appeared in the patterns which people followed repeatedly that shaped the character of a place.

His close associates have started a teaching programme called "Building Beauty" in 2017, based on Alexander's theories, in Sorrento, Italy, opening it up to architects and non-architects, from all over the world, to engage in conceiving and building their habitat with wholeness and beauty.

The writer is a Pune-based architect and educator. He is the Chair of Asian Advisory Board of Building Beauty



# And Then There Were None

Saeed Naqvi's dystopic play imagines India without its Muslim population and heritage while making a case for empathy

Shah Alam Khan

MAGINE WHAT will happen if one fine morning India wakes up to its 200 million Muslims having vanished. Not only Muslim people, but their sculptures, their literature, their culture, their language — all gone — poof, into thin air! Saeed Naqvi's new play, *The Muslim* Vanishes, explores just that.

Fiction is the most beautiful and yet the cruellest form of reality. Dystopian fiction is even crueller. I still remember my first read of Ray Bradbury's 1953 dystopian novel Fahrenheit 451. Imagining a world where all books are burnt was like imagining a sky without the sun and the moon. Guy Montag, the protagonist of the book, gave me a weird hollow but hopeful feeling. That's what good dystopian novels do to us — they are akin to a surgical procedure where controlled violence cures a disease.

Drama, as dystopia, is a rare breed but always makes for an interesting read. The Irish playwright Samuel Beckett was once asked by a friend why he couldn't write something happy. In response, Beckett wrote Happy Days (1961), one of the best dystopic dramas one can read. The Vanishing Muslim is the dystopian metaphor we never want to live. But Naqvi's play is not a classical drama. Even though it is written as a play, it lacks the technical essentialities of one. But that doesn't make it less enjoyable. It is an interesting con-

cept in a country struggling to take off its secular outfit and sneak into a theological apparel, a country where the narrative of identity is carved out of the blood of the minorities.

I presume you can take a journalist out of the world of news but you cannot take the world of news out of a journalist. Naqvi is a veteran journalist, little wonder then that the play begins in a television newsroom where hyperventilating anchors are breaking the news that the country's 200 million Muslims have disappeared. The two protagonists of the book - Brajesh and Anand - are characters with interesting shades of grey. Their conversations are punctuated with threads of everyday biases of the Indian society.

Reading the play one concludes that Naqvi

is a reductionist. The sudden disappearance of Muslims from India is in itself a very complicated idea but Naqvi simplifies it. He magnifies a very tiny aspect of the "post-Muslim" India in the book. His premise is political. He postulates the emergence of new electoral equations following the disappearance of Muslims in the country. He concludes that such a scenario will embolden those who are at the lowest rung of the caste system in society. In the book, following the disappearance of the Muslims, Dalits begin to occupy their abandoned properties. The election commission, the political class, the media and common people are worried by this "revolution" of the Dalits. Interestingly, the contempt for Muslims depicted in the book can only be HALF A WORLD Muslims offering

namaz at the Fatehpuri mosque in Chandni Chowk, Old Delhi

Naqvi's invented world is interesting but scary. It is as simple as it is convoluted. The convolutions of Naqvi's play are knotted at many levels of the Indian society. It very subtly ensnares in its pages patriarchy, individual and collective communalism, morality, caste, judiciary, police and gender biases. The pages of *The Muslim Vanishes* have scattered remnants of the now-ridiculed Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb, a tradition to which Naqvi belongs. Like dry autumn leaves, they induce a wave of nostalgia in readers for a time that no longer exists.

surpassed by the contempt for Dalits. In India,

the competition for abhorring identities is in-

deed very tough!

But like all good dystopian novels, The Muslim Vanishes also induces hope. The most interesting part of the book is when a special jury is set up by the Supreme Court to look into the sudden disappearance of the Muslims. This 11-member jury has stalwarts of India's composite culture. It's celestial in the true sense of the word. Its convenor is the Urdu poet Hasrat Mohani and includes others such as Amir Khusrau Dehlavi, Mahatma Phule and the likes. The court exchanges between these members and the right-wing representative are simple. Without much literary eloquence, Naqvi tries to draw our attention to the now-dying syncretic culture of the country. These

are the pages which induce hope and joy. The book ironically reminded me of a joke which made the rounds just before the start of Gulf War II in 2003. The joke went that since there was severe criticism of then US president George W Bush's plans to invade Iraq, he held a closed-door, one-to-one meeting with the then British PM Tony Blair. The meeting went on for hours till the President's attaché decided to intervene and went inside the meeting room. On seeing him, Bush said, "We are done. We have decided to kill one million Muslims and a goldfish." The confused attaché asked, "But why the goldfish, sir?" Bush turned to Blair and said, "Look, I told you Tony, no one will ask about the Muslims."

I am not sure if anyone will even ask about the vanished Muslims if Naqvi's fable comes true. In New India, the silence of the unsaid is better than the chaos of the said words. As for a solution to the problem Naqvi poses, I have nothing better to conclude with than these couplets by Mohani, the convenor of Naqvi's all-important imaginary celestial jury:

Gandhi ki tarah baith ke kaatenge kyun charkh, Lenin ki tarah denge duniya ko hila hum (Why should we sit and spin yarn like Gandhi,

Rather, like Lenin, we will shake the world)

Dr Shah Alam Khan is professor, department of orthopaedics, All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi

## Rebuilding Lives

Showing the way to responsive rehabilitation for riot victims

Lakshmi Krishnaswamy

UZAFFARNAGAR DIARIES outlines its aim to foreground ways in which responsive rehabilitation could be served, with .Muzaffarnagar as a template. In 2013, a riot in the area displaced several individuals and they were struck with a choice to return to their devastated homes with memories of violence or resettle elsewhere.

The comprehensive resettlement process began in the district of Shamli, as a multi-institutional effort. It has been a partnership between communities and institutions like Hunnarshala, through an owner-driven process.

The physical reconstruction of new homes is based on local constructional, artisanal, architectural sensibilities, which is possible when architects establish partnerships with displaced communities. The Joint Citizens' Initiative (JCI) group, created after the riot, included the Vanangana and Sadhbhavana Trusts, responsible for much of the community-based work on the ground. The rehabilitation project was generously supported by Misereor, Germany. Hunnarshala Foundation (Bhuj) was invited to lead the design and construction effort of shelters for the Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs). Hunnarshala specialises in post-disaster, owner-driven housing, combining local design and engineering practices with its expertise in eco-friendly design and construction that seeks to "uplift and empower" society.

The first part of the book documents the design of the home as it existed with a glossary of terms corresponding to living spaces, with vivid descriptions of their use and the underlying cultural and climatic origins. The writing captures the multivalent use of spaces, objects



MUZAFFARNAGAR DIARIES: POST-RIOT RESETTLEMENT STORY **BY SANDEEP** VIRMANI AND TANVI **CHOUDHARI** Hunnarshala Foundation for Building Technology and

Innovations

159 pages; ₹900

schemes, proportions, elemental parts of the built form and decorative motifs. The high-plinths mitigated heavy flooding as the gallery came alive as a gathering point, connecting interior to exterior. The ceilings were high and enabled rooms to remain cool despite shared walls. It captures the lifestyle of the community, as it visually documents facets of design sensibilities evidenced in the built form. The book has a keen oral and dialogical quality as it often recounts words casually spoken by the stakeholders. In a deep hearing by the community workers, these words or what may seem as lay everyday statements, valiantly informed design directions.

and furniture. The documentation recorded the colour

The second part documents the collaborative design spirit that engaged the community, developing a common understanding. The first draft of plans was reviewed by them and suggestions were in-

corporated on the location of the toilets such that it does not compromise the privacy of the women. Community members were encouraged to buy plots close together. The book documents seven distinct plans that emerged based on the unique requirements of the users. Their previous lifestyle was invoked and understood, with many of the gestures remaining intact in the new scheme. The architects took care to leave room for incremental growth and were mindful of the community's vision for their mohalla; the street-focused neighbourhoods they were used to living in. Some homes demarcated a sizeable proportion of the plot for domesticated animals like buffaloes, building ramps for their ease of access. The design process culminated in an agreement, Sahamati Patra, between the beneficiary and the JCI, with every single owner's participatory plan attached, detailing the kind of engagement expected from stakeholders, including the state government.

The women of the community took on leadership roles while also forming the majority of the staff. The Sadbhavana and Vanangana Trusts were led by women, so was the housing team's coordinator; she was an engineer supported by women site-engineers and architects. The region is notorious for the abject condition of the sanitation infrastructure. However, the community sought ways to access clean water and waste disposal. The community found strength in each other and at times in the local bodies to re-integrate into a semblance of the life they were used to, only with renewed ties with each other. On August 12, 2016, the homes were inaugurated and a Lucknowi artist performed gawwali, with faith slowly being restored in the rights of citizenship. This book is of value to universities, students, social organisations and academicians involved in rehabilitation and in articulating a rehabilitation project that is humane.

The author is an academic in the field of architecture and design

THE MUSLIM **VANISHES** Vintage Books 256 pages

BY SAEED NAQVI

### SHELF LIFE

## **Bringing Up Baby**

DISCLAIMERS FIRST: Like many south Delhi parents, I shored up at Dr Saroja Balan's chamber 10 days after giving birth, bleary-eyed from lack of sleep and panicky at the rapid weight loss that my nearly-4-kg-at-birth baby seemed to be undergoing. The clutter of information on the internet and from older parents were adding to our bewilderment — a little bit of weight loss was par for the course it seemed, but how much was just enough and not too much? And, more worryingly, was a "big" baby actually a sign of neonatal diabetes, as some had pointed out?

An examination later, the neonatolo-

gist and paediatrician turned to us with a prognosis that would come to mean a lot to frayed parental nerves in the years since: "Nothing! Your baby is doing just fine!" Apparently, the developmental milestones were on course, the weight loss, though considerable, was within the parameters and all we needed to do was keep calm and carry on.

Reading It's Your Baby, her crisp and concise parenting guide, is quite like having Dr Balan on speed dial. Self-assured and full of practical advice, this is a book that has answers to a range of questions that bewildered new parents might have



IT'S YOUR BABY: THE INDIAN PARENT'S GUIDE TO THE FIRST **TWOYEARS** BY DR SAROJA **BALAN** Harper Collins428 pages; ₹499

about their child's early years, in particular, though not limited to, the first disconcerting year after birth. In quite the same way that she handholds her patients' parents towards a more relaxed parenting experience, It's Your Baby breaks down the milestones and red flags of the first two years with lucidity.

From birthing to breast feeding to potty training and disciplining, the book explains the parenting journey with the same thoroughness and alacrity that is Dr Balan's hallmark. The chapter, Common Childhood Disorders and Diseases, lists out possible illnesses, their causes and how best to meet the challenges they pose. The compositions of frequently used medications are explained and why blind chapter comes with a list of references and tackles frequently asked questions. From compulsory vaccination and their utility to the optional ones available and how and when they become essential; from how to read a child's growth chart to interpreting a child's sleep cycle; from tackling acid reflux to how best to make your newborn burp, the book touches upon all important aspects of the nascent years and should be essential reading for every new parent in quite the same way as Dr Spock or What to Expect When You Are Expecting

were for generations of parents earlier.

anguish when he writes

"Everything is political. Or politi-

cised. Anti-government activists

thriving at the government's ex-

pense. This was what JNU social-

ism seemed to boil down to." I

was aghast to read that a profes-

sor of his calibre equates "anti-

government-ism" with "anti-

National-ism". He writes, "...I

challenged the overwhelmingly

anti-government, one might also

say anti-national, stance of the

phrase like "tukde tukde", I am

sure he has his reason but I was

rather surprised when he relates

Gandhi with violence. While lec-

turing students after the

When a professor borrows a

JNU student union."

reliance on antibiotics might not always

be the best course of treatment. Each

**PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI** 

## Seat of Learning

In his book as in his time there, professor Makarand R Paranjape fails to understand the essential irreverence and democratic principles that characterise JNU

Ashutosh

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU University is an idea which is dreamy and irreverent, challenges the stereotypes, breaks traditional moorings, is Leninist in its thought process but Gandhian in ethos and that makes it mystical and intriguing, and, in certain ways, spiritual. For an outsider, JNU is intimidating but for someone who has lived on the campus as a student, not as a teacher, JNU is endearing. I know this because I spent eight glorious years on campus as a student and I was not a communist. And, of course, neither was I an anti-national.

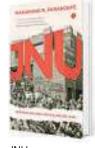
I joined JNU in 1986, when communism was fading the world over and I exited JNU when the Soviet Union was no more. So, while reading this book written by professor of English, Makarand R Paranjape, I was not surprised that he failed to understand INU. He seems intimidated by the idea called JNU despite being a professor for more than two decades in the campus.

I dare not say that he wrote this book out of hate, rather, while writing, he believed that like the Communist Manifesto, his book would trigger a "revolution" and INU would be wiped clean of the "malaise" that makes

it the best university in the country. Before I joined JNU, I studied at Allahabad University, which then was called the Cambridge of the East, but it was INU which transformed non-entities, many like me, from small town, lower middle-class boys into men ready to fight for universal values. Of course, JNU even then was

a citadel for communist ideas but it was an intellectualism of a very high order, refreshed by democratic values and egalitarianism, which abhorred any kind of sectarianism, communalism and casteism, and was not intimidated by the all-powerful establishment. That is why it invited the wrath of Mrs Indira Gandhi. So, if the Narendra Modi administration is angry with JNU, I am

not surprised. I would have been surprised if it had surrendered to the hegemonic rightwing ideology. I can understand professor Paranjape's



NATIONALISM AND INDIA'S UNCIVIL WAR BY MAKARAND R PARANJAPE Rupa Publications 304 pages

Kanhaiya Kumar episode, he says, "Gandhi was forced to settle for the violence of the state in maintaining law and order. That to him, was preferable to indiscriminate mass violence." Non-violence was the basic essence of Gandhi, the reason

for his existence, and to even tangentially read otherwise will be a wrong reading of Gandhi. It was this reason that he was iconised by Albert Einstein, Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King.

If there is one university which imbibed the basic essence of Gandhi, it is JNU where disputes were/are not sorted out by the use of violence but by constitutionally mandated means. I am not denying that there were, and are, no exceptions but to deride students for peaceful protests and paint a different picture smacks of an ideologica bias and personal prejudice. I am glad he did not hide his liking for PM Modi. He writes, "At his best, Modi can be inspiring and visionary ... A master political strategist, he is also determined, driven, even, a visionary leader..." To praise Modi, he coins a new phrase for nationalism. He writes, "NaMo nationalism, this is the chant of the mantra of unity, not division.'

I will definitely not call this book a rant of a professor seeking endorsement from the left liberal and, in its absence, finds them "degenerate" and his friends wonder, "how

the dominant, left liberal, Congress-sponsored narrative about India is so durable." I can understand his pain when he writes, "I realised that even after teaching diligently, faithfully, and one might even say inspiringly for over twenty years, I found no recognition, let alone affirmation in INU .. here being the most published professor did not count for anything at all." He very honestly poured his heart out. His angst is justified but then that is what JNU is. Even recognition to academic stalwarts like Romila Thapar, Bipan Chandra, Namyar Singh, Kedarnath Singh did not come easy. That is JNU.

There is no doubt that at times his language is lucid, turn of phrases are beautiful, throws some thought-provoking ideas too but he limits his scholarship to only one kind of narrative that makes the book attractive to his right-wing friends and ugly to left-liberals. That is ironical. But such is the time when objectivity is insane and subjectivity is a virtue.

The writer is editor, SatyaHindi.com, and author of Hindu Rashtra



Go to India if you

Maryam to Imran

like it so much:

country if he likes it so much.

The remarks of Pakistan

Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N)

vice-president Maryam, who is

the daughter of deposed prime

minister Nawaz Sharif, came af-

ter Khan called India a "nation

with a great sense of honour".

the nation on Friday night ahead

of the no-trust motion where he

has little chances of surviving

unless some miracle takes place,

said that he was not against India

and had a lot of following in the neighbouring country.

India to do anything against its

interests. They (India) are buy-

ing oil from Russia despite sanc-

tions. Nobody can dictate India.

What the EU ambassadors said

here, could they say that to India

also?" he asked and added that

they could not because India is a

sovereign nation. Responding to

his remarks, Maryam said that

Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-

Zardari said in the National

Assembly on Saturday Khan is

the "first captain who is running

from the pitch with wickets be-

cause he fears that he will lose

the match, and asked the the PM

to "show some sportsman

spirit," "Imran Khan is not pres-

ent in the Parliament because he

cannot defend himself.

Conspiracies against the consti-

tution will not succeed," he said.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Peoples

Khan has "gone mad".

"No superpower can force

PM Khan, in an address to

A powerful earthquake hit eastern Turkey on Saturday but no casualties or serious damage were immediately reported, the country's disaster service said. The 5.2 magnitude quake struck the town of Puturge in Malatya province at 5:02 pm local time, Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate said. The tremor was recorded at a depth of 6.7 kilometres.

## TOPOFTHE WORLD



accepts the decision.

#### Will Smith gets 10-year Oscars ban over slap

Los Angeles: The motion picture academy on Friday banned Will Smith from attending the Oscars or any other academy event for 10 years following his slap of Chris Rock at the Academy Awards. The move comes after a meeting of the academy's Board of Governors to discuss a response to Smith's actions. "The 94th Oscars were meant to be a celebration of the many individuals in our community who did incredible work this past year; however, those moments were overshadowed by the unacceptable and harmful behavior we saw Smith exhibit on stage," the academy said. "I accept and respect the Academy's decision," Smith said in response. AP

#### **IRAN**

#### Sanctions on 24 US officials as nuclear talks stall

Dubai: Iran said on Saturday that it had imposed sanctions on 24 more US officials, including former Army Chief of Staff George Casey and former President Donald Trump's attorney Rudy Giuliani, as months of talks to revive a 2015 nuclear deal have stalled. In a statement carried by local media, the Iranian foreign ministry accused the US officials of supporting "terrorist groups and acts" against Iran, and Israel's "repressive acts" in the region and against the people **REUTERS** 

### **CHINA**

#### Shanghai to start easing lockdown

Beijing: China's largest city of Shanghai will begin lifting lockdown in communities that report no positive cases within 14 days after another round of Covid-19 testing, authorities said Saturday. The fresh round of testing comes as the city reported about 23,000 cases on Saturday, most of them asymptomatic. Saturday, Shanghai vicemayor Zong Ming said the lockdown could soon be lifted or eased in communities that report no positive cases within 14 days, after another round of citywide Covid testing. AP

### SHOW OF SOLIDARITY, SAYS UK PM, PROMISES MORE AID

# Johnson meets Zelenskyy in Kyiv as more civilians flee east Ukraine

**AGENCIES** 

KYIV, APRIL 9

UK PRIME Minister Boris Johnson has travelled to Ukraine to meet with President Volodymyr Zelenskyy in show of solidarity.

The two leaders meeting Saturday will discuss the UK's long-term support to Ukraine, including a new package of financial and military aid, the Prime Minister's office said. The visit comes a day after Johnson pledged another 100 million pounds (\$130 million) in high grade military equipment to Ukraine, saying Britain wants to help Ukraine defend itself from continuing Russian assaults.

"Ukraine has defied the odds and pushed back Russian forces from the gates of Kyiv, achieving the greatest feat of arms of the 21st century," said Johnson.

Britain will provide 120 armored vehicles as well as new anti-ship missile systems to the Ukrainian military, Downing Street said in a statement. It has also sent Next Generation Light Anti-Tank Weapons, which have proved useful for mobile Ukrainian fighters to use against Russia's armored vehicle.

Meanwhle, civilian evacuations moved forward in patches of battle-scarred eastern Ukraine a day after a missile strike killed at least 52 people at a train station where thousands were waiting to leave the increasingly vulnerable region before an expected Russian onslaught.

More people need to evacuate from the Luhansk region in eastern Ukraine as shelling has increased in recent days and more Russian forces have been arriving, Luhansk Governor Serhiy Gaidai said on Saturday. He said that some 30% of residents still remain in cities and villages across the region and have been asked to evacuate.

Zelenskyy demanded a tough global response to Friday's train station attack in Kramatorsk, calling it the latest sign of war crimes by Russian forces and hoping to prod Western backers to step up their response to help his country



Volodymyr Zelenskyy with Boris Johnson during a meeting in Kyiv on Saturday. AP

## Russia taps General with Syria experience to lead campaign

THE NEW YORK TIMES

RUSSIA HAS reorganised the command of its flagging operations in Ukraine, selecting a general with extensive combat experience in Syria to lead the mission as the war enters a crucial new phase, a senior US official said on Saturday.

Moscow has assigned Gen. Aleksandr V. Dvornikov, the commander of its southern military district, to oversee its overall operations in Ukraine, the official said. The change was reported earlier by the BBC.

Russia had been running its military campaign against Ukraine out of Moscow, with no central war commander on the ground to call the shots, American officials said. That approach went a long way to ex-



Gen. Dvornikov, right, with President Putin of Russia.

plain why the Russian war effort has struggled in the face of stiffer-than-expected Ukrainian resistance, the officials said.

The lack of a unifying military leader in Ukraine has meant that

Russian air, ground and sea units are not in sync. Their disjointed battlefield campaigns have been plagued by poor logistics, flagging morale and 7,000 to 15,000 military deaths, senior US officials and independent analysts say.

It has also contributed to the deaths of at least seven Russian generals as high-ranking officers are pushed to the front lines to untangle tactical problems that Western militaries would leave to more junior officers or senior enlisted personnel.

Assigning General Dvornikov as the top battlefield commander aims to enhance coordination between various Russian units that previously were organised and commanded separately. It comes at a time when Russia has withdrawn thousands of forces from northern parts of Ukraine and is focusing on the country's east and south, according to US officials.

### EU: Moscow's actions look like war crimes

Medykya: European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said on Saturday that Russian forces appeared to have committed war crimes by targeting civilians in Ukraine, but she said lawyers must investigate the incidents. "My instinct says: If this is not a war crime, what is a war crime, but I am a medical doctor by training and lawvers have to investigate carefully,"Von Der Leyen told reporters on Saturday.

Meanwhile, the perpetrators of civilian killings in the Bucha were guilty of war crimes and must be held accountable, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said on Saturday. "This is something we cannot forget," Scholz said, referring to the deaths of civilians in the town to the northwest of Kviv."We cannot overlook that this is a crime. These are war crimes we will not accept... those who did this must be held accountable." REUTERS

### Indian-origin man jailed for rape dies in UK prison

London: An Indian-origin man who ran a secretive extremist Maoist 'cult' in London and was sentenced to 23 years in jail by a UK court for a string of sexual as-

saults six years ago has died in jail. Aravindan Balakrishnan, known to his followers as Comrade Bala, was sentenced for six counts of indecent assault, four counts of rape and two counts of actual bodily harm back in 2016. The 81-year-old found guilty of "brutal" violence died in custody at HMP Dartmoor prison in south-west England on Friday,

the UK Prison Service said. Balakrishnan had been convicted following a jury trial in December 2015, where it emerged that he had kept his daughter in captivity for over 30 years of her life. The daughter described her situation in court as "horrible and dehumanising". PTI

#### 'Foreign role': **PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** Former Pak Army ISLAMABAD, APRIL 9 officer refuses to PAKISTAN'S OPPOSITION leader Maryam Nawaz on Saturday head probe panel lashed out at PM Imran Khan for Islamabad: A former senior lavishing praise on India, saying he should go to the neighbouring

Pakistan Army officer has refused to head a commission formed by the federal Cabinet to probe the alleged "foreign conspiracy plot" to overthrow the Imran Khan-led government and dig out the facts about the so-called "threat letter" sent from the US, according to media reports. According to reports in Express Tribune and Geo News on Friday, Lt-Gen (retd) Khan has refused to head the commission and has conveyed his decision to the government. The reports, however, did not mention any reason for his recusal.

#### Pak successfully conducts test flight of ballistic missile Shaheen-III

Islamabad: Pakistan's Army on Saturday conducted a successful flight test of the surface-to-surface medium-range ballistic missile Shaheen-III which can strike targets up to 2,750 kilometres, bringing a number of Indian cities under its range. "The test flight was aimed at revalidating various design and technical parameters of the weapon system," the military's media wing Inter Services Public Relations said. Shaheen-III is a surface-to-surface ballistic missile with a range of 2,750 km, which makes it capable of reaching the farthest point in India's northeast and Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Dawn said. PTI



Islamabad on Saturday. Reuters

### Akshata Murthy says will pay all taxes in UK to avoid 'distraction'

**ADITIKHANNA** LONDON, APRIL 9

AKSHATA MURTHY, the daughter of Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy, has announced that she will pay UK taxes on all her income, including from India, to avoid the issue being a "distraction" for her husband – Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

Murthy owns around 0.9 per cent of Infosys stake and therefore receives millions in dividends from the Indian software services major. "My decision to pay UK tax on all my worldwide income will not change the fact that India remains the country

of my birth, citizenship, parents' home and place of domicile. But I love the UK too," Murthy said in

a Twitter statement on Saturday. "In my time here I have invested in British businesses and supported British causes. My daughters are British. They are growing up in the UK. I am so proud to be here," she said.

In her lengthy message posted on Twitter, Murthy noted that she had tried to keep her professional life and that of her husband's political career entirely separate and that her "long-standing shareholding" in Infosys is not just a financial investment but also testament to her father's work, "of which I am incredibly proud". PTI

### Lanka to seek \$3 billion to stave off crisis, says new finance minister have raged across the island for

DEVJYOT GHOSHAL& UDITHA JAYASINGHE

COLOMBO, APRIL 9

SRI LANKA will need about \$3 billion in external assistance in the next six months to help restore supplies of essential items including fuel and medicine, its finance minister told Reuters on Saturday. "It's a Herculean task."

Finance Minister Ali Sabry said in his first interview since taking office this week, referring to finding \$3 billion in bridge financing as the country readies for negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) this month.

The country will look to restructure international sovereign bonds and seek a moratorium on payments, and is confident it can negotiate with bondholders over



At the brink of bankruptcy

the brink of bankruptcy, saddled with \$25 billion foreign debt over the next five years — nearly \$7 bn of which is due this year. Talks with IMF are expected later this month. and the government had turned to China and India for emergency loans to buy food and fuel.

THE ISLAND nation is on

a \$1 billion payment due in July. "The entire effort is not to go for a hard default," Sabry said. "We understand the conse-



Finance Minister Ali Sabry

quences of a hard default." JP Morgan analysts estimated this week that Sri Lanka's gross debt servicing would amount to \$7 billion this year, with a current account deficit of around \$3 billion.

The country has \$12.55 billion in outstanding international sovereign bonds, central bank data showed. "The first priority is to see that we get back to the normal supply channel in terms of fuel, gas, drugs... and thereby electricity so that the people's upris-

ing can be addressed," Sabry said. Anti-government protests

days, with at least one turning violent in the commercial capital of Colombo, in a threat to the country's lucrative tourism industry. "We respect your right to

protest, but no violence, because it is counterproductive," Sabry said. "Our tourism, which was coming back in February with ourists coming in, has been affected since the demonstrations." Sabry said he will lead a dele-

gation of Lankan officials to Washington to start talks with IMF on April 18 and that financial and legal advisers would be selected within 21 days to help the government restructure its foreign debt. "Once we go to them. first thing is there is a sense of confidence in the entire international monetary community that we are serious," he added. REUTERS

### As Per Latest Polls, Macron, A Centrist, Holds A Slight Lead Over Le Pen, A Far-Right Nationalist

## In France, a nail-biting election as Macron's contender Le Pen surges

**AP& REUTERS** POISSY, APRIL 9

FROM THE market stall outside Paris that she's run for 40 years, Yvette Robert can see first-hand how soaring prices are weighing on France's presidential election and turning the first round of voting on Sunday into a nailbiter for incumbent President Emmanuel Macron.

Shoppers, increasingly worried about how to make ends meet, are buying ever-smaller quantities of Robert's neatly stacked fruits and vegetables, she says. And some of her clients no longer come at all to the market for its baguettes, cheeses and other tasty offerings. Robert suspects that with fuel prices so high, some can no longer afford to take their vehicles to shop.

"People are scared — with everything that's going up, with prices for fuel going up," she said Friday as campaigning concluded for act one of the twopart French election drama, held against the backdrop of Russia's war in Ukraine

Macron, a political centrist, for months looked like a shoo-in to become France's first president in 20 years to win a second term. But that scenario blurred in the campaign's closing stages. The pain of inflation and of pump,

food and energy prices that are hitting low-income households particularly hard subsequently roared back as dominant election themes. They could drive many voters Sunday into the arms of far-right leader Marine Le Pen, Macron's political nemesis.

In his last scheduled interview before Sunday's vote, Macron on Friday appealed to younger, progressive-leaning voters, "When it comes to correcting social inequalities at their root, we have begun the work, but we are very far from having succeeded,", pledging also to do more to fight climate change.

Macron, now 44, trounced Le Pen by a landslide to become



Electoral posters displaying the Presidential candidates is put up in Aubers, northern France. AF

France's youngest president in 2017. The win for the former banker who, unlike Le Pen, is a fer-

vent proponent of European collaboration was seen as a victory against populist, nationalist poli-

Trump's election to the White House and Britain's vote to leave the European Union, both in 2016.

In courting voters, Macron has economic successes to point to: The French economy is rebounding faster than expected from the battering of Covid-19, with a 2021 growth rate of 7%, the highest since 1969. Unemployment is down to levels not seen since the 2008 financial crisis. When Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, sparking Europe's worst security crisis since World War II, Macron also got a polling bump, with people rallying around the wartime leader.

But the 53-year-old Le Pen is a now a more polished, formidable and savvy political foe as she makes her third attempt to become France's first woman president. And she has campaigned particularly hard and for months on cost of living concerns, capitalizing on the issue that pollsters say is foremost on voters' minds.

Secondly, and also stunning: Le Pen has adroitly sidestepped any significant blowback for her previous perceived closeness with Russian President Vladimir Putin. She went to the Kremlin to meet him during her last presidential campaign in 2017. But in the wake of the war in Ukraine, that potential embarrassment

Pen's supporters against her. She has called the invasion "absolutely indefensible" and said Putin's behaviour cannot be excused "in any way." Market-goer Marie-Helene

doesn't appear to have turned Le

Hirel, a 64-year-old retired tax collector, voted Macron in 2017 but said she's too angry with him to do so again. Struggling on her pension with rising prices, Hirel said she is thinking of switching her vote to Le Pen, who has promised fuel and energy tax cuts that Macron says would be ruinous. "Now I'm also part of the 'all against Macron camp," she said. "He is making fools of us all."

Kolkata

#### **ABHISHEK PUROHIT** MUMBAI, APRIL 9

AHEAD of the ongoing Indian Premier League, Shubman Gill had a query for his national captain Rohit Sharma. "I asked Rohit bhai a tactical question about the pull shot, about how he reads the bowler's mind when he hits the ball in the air."

Gill likes to play the pull, and people like to see him play the pull; it is a shot he's practised since he was a kid. Formative years of facing short balls on cement wickets have made the pull and the upper-cut part of his nature. But that has also meant he pulls as a reflex response to the short ball, which is partly why a lot of his pulls are off the lower part of the bat than a bit further up the blade, go straighter rather than squarer, and are hit more into the ground instead of in the air.

It is something he wants to tweak for the shortest format, along with cutting down on the dot balls. Having showcased his potential in the longest format - most notably with the 91 in the historic Brisbane chase of 2021 – one of India's most exciting young batting talents now seeks to take his T20 game to the

'I react mostly (to the short ball). I do not anticipate that much personally. But T20 is a game in which you have to anticipate a bit," the Gujarat Titans opener told The Indian Express days before IPL 2022 started. "I was working on a couple of things at the NCA (National Cricket Academy) and once the IPL starts, hopefully you will get to see them."

There are few better than the India skipper to seek advice from on anticipating when looking to pull aerially. Getting on top of the ball and keeping it down while pulling is one thing, but Rohit is able to ride the bounce and send the ball soaring with plenty of distance, as the bat-swing comes from slightly underneath the trajectory of the delivery. That probably requires at least some amount of anticipation, in addition to

the ability to pick the length early. It has helped Rohit hit a six every 17.5 deliveries over a long career in T20s; until the start of this IPL, Gill had managed one six every

During his 84 against Delhi Capitals in Pune, he sent four over the boundary in 46 balls, of which only six were dots. "That was the plan," Gill said after that knock. "To keep rotating the strike and take the singles whenever pos-

After the 96 against Punjab Kings, his highest T20 score yet, his dot-ball percentage this season stands at 18.5. The last time the IPL was played entirely in India, in 2019, it was 32. In 2021, across India and the UAE, it had climbed to 38.

Gill spent four IPL seasons at Kolkata Knight Riders, where an average of 31.48 and a strike-rate of 123 indicated a solid player not quite able to break the shackles. It was **Sportline:** Having showcased his potential in the longest format, India's most exciting young batsman seeks to take his T20 game to the next level.

## Inside Shubman's beautiful mind





Facing short balls on cement wickets in his early years has made the pull and the upper-cut a natural shot for Gill.

somewhat confounding too, in that Gill, according to Cricviz, has maintained an uncommonly high control percentage over his

This perception does not

affect me much as I know

should know how to play

in every situation. If the

target is 200 and I go in

knowing we need 10 an

confident to deliver for

my team. It is the same if

the target is 150 or if we

are chasing 120-130 on a

over, I should be

difficult wicket."

that as a batsman. I

strokes in a fickle format. But then, little is achieved if the most silken of shots finds the fielder in the ring during the powerplay. There has been a percep $tion\,that\,Gill, not\,unlike\,the$ older version of Shikhar Dhawan, is good for chases in the range of 140-150, but can be a bit of a liability for larger pursuits.

"This perception does not affect me much as I know that as a batsman, I should know how to play in every situation," Gill said. "If the target is 200 and I go in knowing we

need ten an over, I should be confident enough to deliver for my team. It is the same if the target is 150 or if we are chasing 120-130 on a difficult wicket."

#### 'Has all the answers'

For someone still only 22, Gill is a rare new-age cricketer about whom there have never been any doubts, be it over his talent or

his temperament on the field or his attitude off it. After Gill had spent a couple of seasons in the KKR set-up, assistant coach Abhishek Nayar had told this correspondent that he'd never seen someone so sorted at such a ten-

After the Brisbane Test win, India batting coach Vikram Rathour had remarked how clear Gill had been in his approach against the Australian attack. "The clarity of his plans surprised me. 'If somebody bowls the short ball at this line and height, this is what I am going to do. If they bowl it from the end where the boundary was shorter, I will pull it for a boundary," Rathour had said on R Ashwin's Youtube channel. "He had all the answers, he knew what he was going to do. I had nothing to say to him. I said, 'boss, just carry on, you are sorted."

Ashwin had responded with more praise for the youngster. "I was blown away thinking somebody was able to pick length, height, line and then also have plans covered for it. That was unreal."

Gill elaborated on his thought process while facing the short ball during the Brisbane chase. "They were bowling short at the body from both ends. The boundary was very long on one side, around 90-95 metres, and the other side was around 80 metres. So as a batsman obviously you think I will have

to time it really well on the longer side for it to get to the boundary," Gill told this paper. "But from the other side, you knew that

even if you didn't time it all that well, it still had a chance to go to the boundary as they were bowling at a very good pace. So my mindset was that whenever I get a short ball and the shorter boundary is in play, I'll try to go for it. But from the other end, I thought that I should leave the bouncers.'

Almost every kid who took guard against the leather ball for the first time would have felt the question popping up in his mind, what if I get hit?' Gill was no different; he'd stag-

ger outside leg stump and swing hard. The fear was overcome with time, and some inevitable blows to the body, but the habit of staying inside the line of the ball remained. Fearlessness allied with the backfoot technique honed on cement has, over the years, aided in sculpting that signature short-arm pull.

"Whenever a batsman faces fast bowling,

especially express bowlers who bowl 140-150kph, he has that extra fraction of a second – even if he is not that good a player – if

> he is not afraid of the short Gill explains. "Otherwise, it starts playing on your mind, which goes 'he'll bowl short, he'll bowl short.' And those who have that extra fraction of a second are able to play better.

"When I was around 5, I was afraid of fast bowling. I would back away and play my shots. Then when I was 7 or 8 and began to play with the leather ball, I had the fear of getting hit. But when I got hit once or twice, I thought it was okay. I realised it was actu-

ally not as painful as what I had made up in my mind it would be. Once that fear goes away, your game changes a lot. You start playing much better than earlier."

#### To shuffle or not

Going back to the Brisbane 91, Gill had made an initial back-and-across shuffle that helped him get in a better position against the extra bounce in Australia, especially to the left-arm angle of Mitchell Starc. When he returned to the side after a shin injury for the New Zealand home Tests last November, Gill went back to more or less staying still and inside the line in his stance. He is aware that can leave him vulnerable; Kyle Jamieson bowled him with incoming deliveries in both innings in the Kanpur Test.

As a predominantly back-foot player, Gill can be a reluctant shifter onto the front foot; the stride is still in motion at times when the ball reaches him.

The front foot and the bat also come down at a steeper angle as they start from further inside the line in the absence of a size-

While Gill has shown he is flexible to adopt the conventional shuffle when he feels conditions demand it, he backs his minimalist approach that also allows him to play those on-the-rise slaps in front of point.

"I don't make any big change to my technique without talking to my father... In cricket, there is no technique that can be termed 'out-proof'. Any batsman can get out with any technique. There are one or two important elements.

"Like your shoulder should be aligned towards the ball, you should be a little side-on while playing, you should be in a good position even if your feet are not moving that well. If you are positioned well in relation to the ball, you will manage. As a player you should know what things you need to work on, and where the opposition is looking to get you out. If you know that, it becomes easier to tackle.

'When we play in India, there isn't that much bounce. Most deliveries stay low. That (reducing the shuffle) was one adjustment I made after talking to our batting coach. I felt I should restrict my initial movement a bit. The ball doesn't swing much in India either, so the lesser the movement in your body, the better it will be for you."

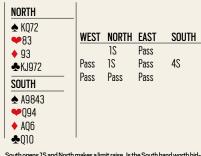
Gill has been rated so highly since his junior days that he made his senior Punjab deut when he was only 17.

A year later, he was Player of the Tournament in the Under-19 World Cup, and two months after that triumph, he made his T20 debut right away in the IPL for KKR. At 19, he'd already debuted for the senior national side and at 21, he was opening the batting for his country in the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. Many consider him the torchbearer for the next generation in Indian cricket. Do all the expectations drive him or are they a drag?

"It doesn't put pressure nor does it push me more. That is all external talk. Until I perform consistently for a few years at the international level and in the IPL, that perception won't be justified. So it doesn't bother me, what is important is to give my 100 per cent in whatever opportunity I get for my country and my IPL team. When a batsman goes out to bat, I don't think he thinks about things such as added responsibility. He thinks about what match situation he has to bat in and what he needs to do.'

As Rathour had said after Brisbane, Shubman Gill does sound sorted for sure.

### **BRIDGE**



sure of his choice. West leads the jack of hearts to East's king. Do you like your The West Hand: S-J1065H-J106D-J52C-A43

The East Hand: S-H-AK752D-K10874C-865
You should be indifferent to your chances. If East leads a diamond back you have to finesse, but if he does not, you can draw trump and set up the clubs. What should you play at trick one? Play the nine of hearts. You know East has the ace and your nine may look to him like vou have the doubleton 09 of hearts. Just a little fishing here tha

might get a bite. If East does cash the ace, you do not have to worry about the diamond finesse anymore. But East is clever. He switches to a diamond at trick two. You finesse because the finesse has to be onside for you to make 4S. It wins. What now? Play the ace of spades. This is one of the basic safety plays that you need to

earn. If East has four spades to the J1065, you must lose a spade trick. If West has them you can negate them by leading the ace. You will see the bad break and can play in a way to draw them without losing a trick. When East shows out you lead a spade to the ten and queen. Start setting up the clubs. This will let you get back to your hand to take the spade finesse again. Dealer: East Vulnerable: East/West NORTH SOUTH

**♠** A82



★ KJ3

The opening lead by West is the ace of clubs, followed by the king of clubs East plays the queen of clubs and then discards the seven of diamonds. West then plays the jack of clubs and you must take stock of a potentially dangerous situation. If you ruff West's club in dummy with the seven of hearts East might overruff with the jack of hearts. The odds of East having the jack of hearts are 50/50. If you ruff with the queen of hearts in dummy, East won't be able to overruff but there will be three outstanding hearts to the jack. The odds of the hearts splitting 3-0 are only 22%. So, ruff with your queen since that is your best chance for success. You have lost two club tricks and can see a potential loser in each of diamonds and spades. Oh-oh, the contract appears to be in some danger. How do you proceed?

### **SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2368**

#### OUICK CLUES

1. Common analgesic (7) 5. Telling trivial lies (7) 9. Advancing or making progress? (7,2)
10. Bass instrument like very large

11. Place from which to view the 12. Betrayal or treachery (4,3)

13. What a philatelist may even pay a fortune for? (4,5) 15. Dealt successfully (5) 17. Performing (5) 19. Hanging around (9)

22. Categorising, classifying or assorting(7) 25. City in North Africa? (7) 26. Aggregate (5)

27 Marsupial (9) 28. Withdraws from a confederacy (7) 29. Ralph Waldo\_ U.S.essayist and poet?(7)

DOWN 1. Sharp-cornered (7)  $2.\,Mixture\,of\,dried\,flower\,petals\,(9)$ 3. Calamitous, catastrophic or

disastrous (7) 4. Dusk (9)

5. Discovers (5) 6. Pastoral; of rustic life? (7) 7. Eskimo's hut (5)

8. Crowed (7) 14. Contrition (9) 16 Venomous (9) 17. Delegates task to a person? (7)

18. Questioned thoroughly (7) 20. Building; structure (7) 21. Twinkle, shine or glimmer (7) 23. Topmost room (5)

CRYPTIC CLUES ACROSS

 $24. Scoffs \, or \, jeers \, (5)$ 

1. Exclude a possible cause of faulty measurement(4,3)5. Timber producers of very high standing(7)

9. Bill of fare (3,6) 10. Game bird beheaded in stir (5) 11. Female Russian artisan in trouble (7) 12. He conveys rubbish with little

13. Uzbek city may be just a spot in the desert (9) 15. Were the first, for instance, to outlaw caging (5)

 $17.\,S quandered\,asset\,which\,belong\,to$ the Orient (5) 19. Confusion over front for book-jacket

22. Lawyers profit from a cheap price

25 Not within Cupid's range 2(7) 26. Chose to destroy the depot (5) 27. He finds criminals working for the

28. Practical joke in cricket side draw 29. Does the drought evaporate the loch

DOWN 1. Deductions concerning murderer in

Hitchcock film (7) 2. Nunn completes more circuits than Gore coming around Canary Island

seaport (3,6) 3. One in Dickens role is Sir Laurence (7) 4. Join in the drive to boost employment? (4,1,4) 5. Small and neat, like a Frenchman?

6. Some skyscraper turbulence can upset (7) 7. In a frenzy creating a mess (5)

8. Wild sire ran from Nevada mountain range(7) 14. Enormously upset because south wind went round (9) 16. Spoke, or enabled to speak (4,5) 17. Get involved with the Frenchman

when Rob wanders in (7)

 $18.\,Pop\,stars'\,ballet\,for\,prison\,(7)$ 20. Shy about defeat whilst suffering inner pain (7) 21. As a woman does if you ask her if

she uses henna?(7) 23. Great instability's needed to change 24. Tennis star arising from a land (5)

#### Solutions to 2367

QUICK CLUES Across: 1Gastric, 5 Assault, 8 Ocean, 9 Dramatist, 11 Bismillah khan, 13 Ennead, 16 Disrupts, 18 Hierarch, 19 Cymbal, 24 Machiavellian, 26 Honeymoon, 27 NAAFI, 28 Disobey, 29 Shindia, Down: 1 Goodbye, 2 Stetson, 3 Ranji, 4 Cuddle, 5 Arachnid, 6 Union, 7 Totem, 10 Ash-tray, 12 Atta, 14 Nail, 15 Anarchy, 17 Acrimony, 20 Brigand, 21 Longing, 22 Events, 23 Ached, 24 Mends 25 Lanai. CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 1 Tacitus. 5 Cape Cod, 8 Colin, 9 Limburge 11 To be continued, 13 Yields, 16 Demented, 18 Talkshow, 19 Peeler, 24 Sitting target, 26 Antipasti, 27 Drunk, 28 Kingpin, 29 Meddler. **Down:** 1 Tacitly, 2 Calibre, 3 Tunic, 4 So long, 5 Combined, 6 Caged, 7 Derry, 10 Ukulele, 12 Fete, 14 Ida's, 15 Desktop, 17 Robinson, 20 Leg-pull, 21 Retaker, 22 Ageism, 23 Quack, 24 Sit-in, 25 Aided.

8

6

5

3 2 5

### If it's your Birthday

#### Sunday April 10 You'll be happiest when you're active and

busy, and even if you're taking time off you'll want to pursue worthwhile activities, the sort which add to your reputation and experience.

When I was around 5, I

bowling. I would back

away and play my shots.

Then when I was 7 or 8

and began to play with

the leather ball, I had the

fear of getting hit. But

when I got hit once or

twice, I thought it was

okay. Once that fear goes

away, your game changes

was afraid of fast

#### **Monday April 11**

You should be in your element today, happy that the world is on your side, and that your sensitivity and intuition are qualities to be admired.

## Tuesday April 12

Your current planetary movements are imaginative, inspired and confident on the one hand, down-to-earth and practical on the other. That's a good combination.

#### Wednesday April 13

Your stars are still sociable but over the next month several changes take place which lead me to think that you will be cutting down on commitments, and changing their nature.

#### Thursday April 14

In matters of the heart you need a little variety and interest. There is every reason to hope that you will do well in competitive activities.

#### Friday April 15 Skilful organisation is the answer if there

are conflicting calls on your time. Today's events will encourage changes.

#### Saturday April 16

Options will begin to appear, and you will have to decide which path to take. There is no right or wrong answer so you can weigh up the evidence and still listen to your gut instincts.

2 5 4 9 7 1 6 3 8

3 4 2

series of deep changes in the most intimate and secret realms of your life. By the of the month you will be on a dramatic new emotional course. And when partners realise what's going on, they'll see you in an entirely new light.

must realise that

The confidence bred by success will encourage you to expect more of other people socially, no longer settling for

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

you on emotional levels. You know now that an unsatisfactory situation can know in your heart that once you have made a decision the

#### CANCER (June 22 - July 23) A powerful

to play it safe and tuck yourself away in your shell for a while. What this means is that you must choose very carefully how and when you act, particularly if other people are involved. Remember that the whole

#### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)



people who don't know you well. Why they make such unjustified assumptions about your plans and intentions is not clear, but may be due to your typical Leonine refusal to explain yourself.



and proper for any wise and thoughtful person, which have brought in their train a degree of self-criticism and selfdoubt. Now is the time for a boost in your confidence.

### YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) This may be a profoundly restless week, one which lays the ground for a

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) In spite of what close companions may believe, you

business considerations are relevant to your romantic life.

#### You must make a choice affecting a person who touches

carry on no longer and that it is up to you to call a halt. You also storm clouds will disappear.

### consortium of

planets is urging you world is bound to move your way.

### trouble will be



decisions, as is right

#### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) Those who have planned holidays or time off are well

placed. Those who have not, will be champing at the bit, eager for a spot of adventure. On a more dow to-earth note, you should seize this opportunity to resolve any questions with legal overtones.

#### And don't bend the rules. SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22) As the days pass you will begin to feel happier about the state of play in your associations with both friends

and lovers. Venus' passionate

#### relationship with Pluto brings matters to a head one way or the other, and you will decide to stick with your current situation.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22) If you learn how to handle opposition from partners and rivalry from colleagues, you will gain in

experience to the point where you'll be in an ideal position to handle the next phase of growth. In the meantime, all you can really do is offer suggestions, provide advice and assistance and generally play second fiddle.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

for sure whether the outcome

will be favourable or not,

underground for a while.

personal concerns

You will be called to

account for your

financial goals. It is

not possible to say

#### although I would guess that it will be. What is certain is that there will be a flurry of activity which will drive other, more



overcome any difficulties following on from the influence of belligerent Mars in your house of relationships. If partners give in to the demands of unreason and anger, you can do no worse

#### than present them with the facts. PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)



finally fading out at the end of July. This period will be ideal for reaching agreements where property transactions are underway, or if the matters bothering you are intensely personal.

#### **JUMBLED WORDS**

4H

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to  $the \, respective \, squares \, below. \, Select \, the \, letters \, in \, the \, shaded \, squares \, and \, jumble \, them \, to \, get$ Man is a creative\_ of nature upon itself - Schlegel (13)

**FREER IIWNTT HIYCPS** 

> Pnswer: Man is a creative **retrospection** of nature upon itself - Schlegel SOLUTION: REFER, IGLOO, NITWIT, PHYSIC

Difficulty Level 3s Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle. every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns. in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium: 4s = Hard: 5s = Very Hard; 6s =

9 6 8 1 6

9

3

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 4799** 9 8 7 3 2 6 5 1 4 8 5 4 6 2 9 3 8 5 5 9 1 6 8 7 3 2 8 4 1 5 9 7 6 6 3 9 1 4 2 7 8 5 8 1 5 7 6 9 4 2 3 7 4 2 5 3 8 1 6 9

#### **Dipika** enters women's, mixed doubles final

New Delhi: Indian squash ace Dipika Pallikal Karthik progressed to the finals of both the women's and mixed doubles at the WSF World doubles championships in Glasgow. In mixed doubles, Dipika and Saurav Ghosal beat Wales' Joel Makin and Tesni Evans in an entertaining bout, taking the first game 11-9 before finishing the match with an impressive 11-5 win on Friday. Dipika also paired up with Joshna Chinappa to reach the summit clash in women's doubles after New Zealand pairing of Joelle King and Amanda Landers Murphy withdrew from the semifinal due to an injury."For us women, our bodies go through a lot, day in and day out, and I think it's important to believe in ourselves," Dipika, who give birth to twins last October, was quoted as saying by worldsquash.org. PTI

#### Leclerc on pole, Verstappen second

Melbourne: Ferrari driver Charles Leclerc claimed his second pole position of the year with a blistering final lap in qualifying for the Australian Grand Prix on Saturday. Leclerc, who won the season-opening race in Bahrain in March, posted a time of 1 minute, 17.868 seconds to edge Red Bull driver and defending series champion Max Verstappen by .286 seconds. Red Bull driver Sergio Perez qualified in third position, while Lando Norris will start from the second row in his McLaren after qualifying fourth. Lewis Hamilton, who had claimed pole position in the six previous Grand Prix races held in Melbourne, finished .957 seconds behind Leclerc in fifth. The brilliant drive from Leclerc gave Ferrari its first pole position in Melbourne since Kimi Raikkonen in 2007. **AP** 

#### Woods nine behind leader Scheffler

Augusta: Tiger Woods fought back from a poor start in the second round at the Masters on Friday, earning a mini victory of sorts by making the halfway cut at his first tournament since a career-threatening car crash. Though a distant nine strokes behind leader Scottie Scheffler, Woods goes into the weekend equal 19th at oneover-par 145 at Augusta National. It would not be a bad spot for any 46year-old, much less someone whose career seemed in jeopardy when he was badly injured in single-car rollover last February. "I'm proud of the fact that my whole (support) team got me into this position," he said. AP

#### Pugilists Sahani, Chopde win gold

New Delhi: Indian boxer Govind Sahani (48kg) and Ananta Pralhad Chopde (54kg)struck gold at the Thailand Open in Phuket, notching up comprehensive wins in their respective bouts on Saturday. Both Sahani and Ananta dominated their bouts from start to finish and won with identical 5-0 margin against local pugilists Natthaphon Thuamcharoen and Ritthiamon Sae respectively, However, Amit Panghal (52kg) and Monika (48kg) could not go the distance and ended their campaigns with a silver each. PTI

# Well-oiled machine vs goal-scoring machine

India's in-form junior women's hockey team will have to find a way to stop the productivity of The Netherlands in World Cup semis

**MIHIR VASAVDA** APRIL 9

THE MOVE began with a steal.

A few yards inside Malaysia's half, Beauty Dungdung snatched the ball, passed it to her teammate Baljeet Kaur and embarked on a sprint down the left flank. Baljeet calmly played a through ball in the direction of Sharmila Devi, who was unmarked near the 25-yard line in the centre of the pitch. Without really looking up, Sharmila moved the ball to the left, confident that by then, Beauty would have already brushed aside the Malaysian defenders and be available to receive the pass. Beauty controlled Sharmila's pass on the run and – once again, without looking up - crossed the ball firsttime towards the far post, where Mumtaz Khan dived forward and deflected the ball past the goalkeeper.

That passage of play during their final group-stage match of the Junior World Cup, which lasted less than 20 seconds perhaps, summed up everything about this under-21 side: trained so well that the players know each other's positions via intuition, the ability to move the ball around with precision and pace, the sublime ball control and the speed at which they attack.

But more than anything, their willingness - quite simply – to have fun every time they step on the turf.

For a bunch that's been together for five years, endured life in bio-bubbles and shared the disappointment of having their World Cup postponed, that's the only way they've known to play, and practice.

On social media, Bichu Kharibam and Suman Thoudam routinely slay it with their slick reels; at training camps, they aren't shy to play a prank on their teammates; dance choreography has become an essential part of their routine, which perhaps explains the well-coordinated moves they've displayed during their march to Sunday's semifinals, where they'll take on the Netherlands, who are now the top contenders for the title after Argentina suffered a shock defeat at the hands of Germany.

"We have quite a bond in the junior team. We enjoy a lot together," vice-captain Ishika Chaudhary said.

"If we win, we have fun. If we lose, we still find ways to enjoy and back each other. That's



The Indian junior women's team have beaten Wales (5-1), Germany (2-1), Malaysia (4-0) and Korea (3-0).

know what everyone likes, and what we can use to tease each other with."

The shift in the body language of the players is remarkable, given that the women's teams of the past were often criticised for being timid and scared, which resulted in them playing a cagey, defensive style of hockey. Not this bunch, though. The team, coached by Eric Wonink and captained by Salima Tete, plays with freedom and exuberance that's usually associated with youth. And a lot of confidence as well, taking inspiration from the path-breaking results achieved by the senior team that finished fourth at the Tokyo

#### **Colour-coded sessions**

It isn't always fun. Ahead of the quarterfinals against South Korea, which India won 3-0 on Friday, Ishika gave a peek into how grueling their training can get. "Our training hard sessions (red), moderate (orange) and green, which take place after hard sessions for recovery," she said.

The concept isn't novel. Dutchman Sjoerd Marijne, who managed the dugout at the Olympics, introduced the colour-coded sessions in the women's team and Wonink, Marijne's former assistant, brought forward the idea to the junior side.

A few weeks ago, senior India captain Savita Punia had explained the significance of these colour-coded sessions: the green sessions, she had said, had relatively light workouts where they practice penalty corner and shoot-out drills along with some gym work; the orange session is a little more elaborate but low on intensity compared to the red session, which can drain every ounce of energy from the body.

During a red session, there are 3v3, 5v5, 8v8, and, at times, even 11v11 drills. The pitch is divided into three stations; when a player completes her drill at one station, she immediately has to move to the next without tak-

Every week, there are three to four red sessions, two orange and two or three green

The junior team has been training along with the seniors and has more or less followed a similar schedule. The sharing of ideas between the senior and junior players has improved the under-21 side individually and as a unit, Tete said.

"We managed to make a few more combinations, which was handy. Players like Beauty (Dung Dung) didn't know how to play in some defined structures, so we could practice that and prepare," Tete said.

The seniors, who have drastically improved over the last couple of years, shared tips on the art of pressing, moving the ball and holding possession. "It also improved

#### **NUMBER PLATE**

Number of goals the Number of goals the Netherlands have scored in the four matches in the four matches they've played so far, the most among all teams. In fact, they've scored nearly one-third of the total goals scored in the Junior World

Number of times India have reached the semifinals of the women's Junior Hockey World Cup. The only other time they reached the last-four stage was in 2013, where they lost, incidentally, to the Netherlands 3-0.

#### **Rampaging Dutch**

Each of these aspects will prove decisive against the Netherlands on Saturday. In 2013, the only other time India reached the semifinals of the Junior World Cup when they eventually won bronze, they were beaten by the Netherlands 3-0 in the last-four stage.

The Dutch went on to become champions back then, and are the favourites even now. They have been the most dominant side of the Junior World Cup so far, scoring an average of more than 10 goals per match without conceding even once. Astonishingly, they've scored almost one-third of the total goals scored in the competition - 43 out of 137 – and the tournament's top-two goalgetters are both Dutch – Jip Dicke (12) and una Fokke (10).

It'll undoubtedly be the toughest test for India so far but it'll also be a challenge for the Netherlands, who have until now only played the minnows of international hockey the USA, Zimbabwe, Canada and South Africa. Yet, this will be a stern test for the Indian defence to withstand pressure from the rampaging Dutch forwards and a challenge for the Indian attackers to score past a defence that's not conceded a goal so far.

Whatever the outcome, one thing looks certain: when they step on the turf, these players will carry no baggage, just a bunch of youngsters out there having fun.

LIVE ON: Jr World Cup semifinals: India vs The Netherlands, 5pm, Watch Hockey and

## Se Young proves to be too speedy for Sindhu

**SHIVANI NAIK** 

 $AN\,SE\,Young\,is\,crowding, cramping, rushing$ and stifling PV Sindhu all at the same time with her speedy game that resulted in a 21-14. 21-17 loss for the Indian - her fourth in as many meetings. What's ironical is Sindhu can hardly be faulted for moving slow or not being agile or strong, or not having fuel in the tank. The 26-year-old Indian is perhaps as prepared as she can be to take on the ASY challenge physically. It is purely in badminton choices, the strokes she chooses, the moments she deems fit to attack or defend. in her sheer decision-making on court, that

The Korea Open semis is only the latest of setbacks. But it is evident that Sindhu will need an extra gear against the likes of Carolina Marin, Tai Tzu Ying, Pornpawee Chochuwong and now An Se Young. Their game-styles annoy the Indian owing to their speed - how quickly they get under the shuttle, and how fast the hand-speed smacks it back. Even Sayaka Takahashi used pace to tangle Sindhu at All England.

Like the Marin blitz, plus or minus the deceptions of Tai Tzu and Chochuwong, An Se Young makes an extremely fit Sindhu, appear slower to react in comparison. It's akin to the relative speed of two trains headed in same direction, except the Indian is not on the express-track. So, the Korean's short serve pounces on Sindhu, the flat tosses stifle her shaping up for the aerial attack, ASY's streaking net play cuts that extra second that can help her decide whether to go for the lift or dribble. The young Korean is simultaneously sprinting and hopping around like a rabbit picking every shuttle in sight and denying Sindhu oxygen and confidence on her attack that peters off.

Sindhu was so traumatized at being kept away from the lead by 11-7 in the opener, that she rammed wildly at the shuttle nearing the end of the set, helping ASY close out. In the second, the defense wilted, though she was eking out points combatively. Saturday's second set might have been the closest one between the two yet, with the Indian staying in the hunt till 9-all and gamely stealing three points against the nervous Korean to get to 17-18, before ASY pulled away.

What ASY has successfully managed is not give Sindhu the length to carve her attack. There are hardly any floaters that linger at the mid-court, and very limited birds that can be smash winners. Starved of the hittable lifts, Sindhu is stifled in unleashing her favourite point-hoarders. The intra-rally pace is so high that mere defense only prolongs the inevitable. And the youngster who flexes both arms in celebration when she's thrilled with a point, doesn't quite tire often.

This is also the longest that Sindhu has gone without pulling one back against any of the top opponents. (See Box). And it's why An Se Young assumes the clear contours of a nemesis. This is the second important loss after the one Sindhu suffered at the World Tour Finals final. And while the Indian has gone for long stretches without beating certain opponents whose game style troubles her (Tai Tzu Ying, 6 consecutive times between November 2016 & December 2018 and most recently 5 times since October 2019), ASY seems to have a stranglehold over the Indian that Sindhu just can't shake off.

Sindhu has never permitted one opponent to build demons of their invincibility in her head, always finding answers to every poser sooner than later. ASY though seems like one right Korean puzzle, that'll keep showing up at tournaments big and small braking Sindhu's progress.

#### Christie too good for Srikanth

Jonatan Christie did it yet again. After denying HS Prannoy a title at Basel, the Indonesian was back to hassle another Indian, Kidambi Srikanth and score another spot in a tournament final. Srikanth was taken apart 21-19, 21-16 by the Asian Games champ in 49 minutes of the semifinal at Suncheon Christie possesses the mind maps and lithe limbs that tease out winners from under the nose of opponents.

A fluid, no-skid mover on the court who anticipates early and constructs points using every inch of the court, Christie refused to be deceived or dazzled by Srikanth's fairly regular cross net drops on the follow up.



#### **NUMBER OF LOSSES BEFORE SINDHU'S 1ST WIN**

vs Carolina Marin, Chen Yufei, Pornpawee Chochuwong,

vs Li Xue Rui, Saina Nehwal, Sayaka Takahashi, Akane Yamaguchi

3. Vs Intanon Ratchanok

4\* vs An Se Young

(\* - still to be broken losing streak)

## Rawat stars for RCB; MI yet to open account

**SYNOPSIS:** Harshal changes the game and MI are in trouble

#### **SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY**

MUMBAI INDIANS lost again, four on the spin now. Once they suffered a middle-overs collapse, their chances evaporated, a fine unbeaten half-century from Suryakumar Yadav notwithstanding. Once they laboured to a below par 151/6, this was Royal Challengers Bangalore's game to lose. RCB romped to a seven-wicket victory with nine balls to spare.

Anui Rawat turned out to be the unlikely enforcer for RCB, scoring 66 off 47 balls. First Faf Du Plessis and then Virat Kohli guided him. The latter played some fabulous shots on his way to a 36-ball 48, and an 80-run second wicket partnership with Rawat.

### Harshal changes the game

Harshal Patel returned with 2/23 and Rohit Sharma's scalp was game-changing. The MI skipper was looking to be in top fettle and his team was running away with the game. But Harshal intervened with a slower delivery, an off-cutter that took the leading edge back to the bowler. Even Harshal looked surprised. He restricted his celebration to a

When Rohit got out, MI were 50/1 in the



Anuj Rawat top scored with 66 off 47 balls for RCB. Sportzpics/IPL

seventh over. They soon slid to 62/5 in the 11th over and then 79/6 three overs later, Harshal dismissing Ramandeep Singh in his second spell. The medium pacer was unlucky not to have Surya out leg-before as well. A dipping full-toss struck on the batsman's chest and it looked pretty adjacent. But the on-field decision was not out and the umpire's call saved Surya.

Du Plessis' captaincy was excellent. He brought on Wanindu Hasaranga inside the Powerplay and removed him quickly after a 13-run over. The RCB captain brought back the leg-spinner when the young Dewald Brevis was at the crease. The Saffer, not used to quality spin, failed to read a googly and was out LBW. Another googly accounted for Kieron Pollard and in between, the very im-

pressive Akash Deep dismissed Ishan Kishan while a brilliant piece of fielding from Maxwell, a direct hit, accounted for Tilak Varma. MI partially recovered, via a 72-run seventh wicket partnership between Surya and Jaydev Unadkat.

#### MI in trouble

Irrespective of the number of titles, four consecutive defeats would shake the self-belief of any team and towards the end, anger simmered. Rohit looked a little agitated, as he spoke to Bumrah. The bowler went down on his knees after an overthrow. Frustration writ large.

Surya's form is the only positive takeaway for the five-time champions at the moment. Returning from injury, he has scored backto-back half-centuries. Today, his lone ranger -68 not out off 37 balls - gave the MI bowlers something to bowl with. Kishan's Rs 15.25 crore price tag notwithstanding, this MI batting line-up is heavily dependent on Rohit and Surya's quality.

Pollard, a pale shadow of former self, isn't contributing much. MI are missing the Pandya brothers, Hardik and Krunal. Without Trent Boult, their bowling is crying out for a top-class left-arm pacer.

BRIEF SCORES: MI 151 for 6 in 20 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 68 not out; Harshal Patel 2/23, Wanindu Hasaranga 2/28) lost to **RCB** 152 for 3 in 18.3 overs (Anuj Rawat 66; Jaydev Unadkat 1/30).

#### **SYNOPSIS:** Plucky Abhishek grabs his chance, Tripathi sparkles, after Natarajan took out the conditions out

of equation.

#### **SRIRAM VEERA**

CHENNAI SUPER Kings dawdled with the bat to 154 and their bowling lacked smarts on a slow pitch and unsurprisingly slipped to their fourth successive loss. Though CSK and MI have zero points, the former is at the bottom of the table because of an inferior net runrate. Powered by their youngsters Abhishek Sharma, Rahul Tripathi, and T Natarajan, Sunrisers Hyderabad won their first game of the season.

#### Plucky Abhishek

To understand how good a knock this was from Abhishek Sharma, let's zoom into the 15th over from the left-arm seamer Mukesh Choudhary, who had taken out Kane Williamson with a slower one. It was a back of length delivery, perfect for it to potentially hold on the sluggish pitch, slow up, and mess the timing of the batsman. Instead, Abhishek waited that fraction, stood upright, and somehow punched the ball up and over the bowler's head to the straight boundary for

an outstanding six. The camera zoomed to MS Dhoni, who was wearing a three-day grey stubble and some helplessness too.

Sharma, Tripathi outclass winless CSK

When Tom Moody was interviewed midway through the first innings, the commentator Murali Kartik asked him why they were opening with Abhishek Sharma. Wouldn't Rahul Tripathi be a better option? Moody explained that they wanted a left-right combination and Abhishek is a talented youngster who just needs some chances. "Abhishek is more comfortable at top of the order and we have been shuffling him across up and down the order in the previous years. All he needs is a consistent run".

It was a sluggish pitch where the ball wasn't coming on but he didn't try to force the pace. He waited and tapped it around and chose the right deliveries to go for his big hits: the full ones from the spinners and the short ones from the pacers. And he ran very well with Kane Williamson, taking quick singles. He allowed Williamson to settle in without worrying too much about runs at the start and of course, the New Zealander started to make up the run-rate.

#### Natarajan takes out pitch

On a pitch where all the talk was about how to change up the pace and lengths to use the slowness to optimum, T Natarajan had other ideas. He was the only bowler in the game who produced some great swing - a classic in swinger went through the defences of Ruturaj Gaikwad, who was looking good Then in the middle overs, he kept plugging in yorkers for fun to choke up runs. Later, in the end, he took out Shivam Dube with a short ball. Only Ravindra Jadeja managed a six and a four in 19th over off him, but by then Natarajan had done his job. Wicket taker at the start, the run-stopper in the middle, and momentum-changer in the end. "We were 20-25 runs short in the end," Ravindra Jadeja would say later. That's certainly true but their bowling too needs improvement.

#### Tripathi sparkles

Rahul Tripathi was another momentumchanger for Hyderabad; no one timed the ball as well as him. He came in with the equation reading 66 from 47 balls and one wondered how he would cope on this pitch. Would he manage to read the pace well? He certainly did, more than anyone else, getting great timing on his shots. Chennai didn't bowl particularly well, not using the cutters as often as it was needed, and Tripathi, one of the natural timers of the ball, just kept creaming them with shots around the park. He cut, pulled, drove, lofted and that says as much about his talent as it does about the listless Chennai bowlers

**BRIEF SCORES: CSK** 154 for 7 in 20 overs (Moeen Ali 48, Ambati Rayudu 27, Washington Sundar 2/21, T Natarajan 2/30). lost to **SRH:** 155 for 2 in 17.4 overs (Abhishek Sharma 75, Rahul Tripathi 39 not out)

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