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EXPRESS NETWORK

TN HOUSE PASSES RESOLUTION, ASKS CENTRE TO WITHDRAW CUET**ED QUESTIONS KHARGE IN NATIONAL HERALD CASE**
PAGE 10

LEADERS HOLD VIRTUAL MEET AHEAD OF INDIA-US 2+2 TALKS

Let's talk how to manage destabilising effects of Russia's war: Biden to Modi



PM Narendra Modi and US President Joe Biden meet virtually on Monday. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, US Secy of State Antony Blinken and Secy of Defense Lloyd Austin are also seen. AP

PM calls Bucha killings 'very worrying', says he told Putin and Zelenskyy to hold direct talks between themselves

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

WELCOMING India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine and calling the Russian invasion a "horrific assault", US President Joe Biden Monday said the US and India are going to continue "close consultation on how to manage the destabilizing effects of this Russian war".

In his virtual meeting with

Biden ahead of the 2+2 talks between their Defence and Foreign Ministers, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who did not name Russia, called the "killings of innocent civilians" in Ukraine's Bucha city "very worrying", and said India immediately condemned the killings and called for an independent probe.

This is the first time the Prime Minister has spoken on the Bucha killings — External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and

T S Tirumurti, India's envoy at the UN, have condemned it unequivocally in recent days.

Modi said he had held conversations with Russian President Vladimir Putin and Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, and suggested that they hold "direct talks" between themselves.

After their meeting, the White House said, "They emphasized their shared commitment, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



New Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with niece Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Islamabad on Monday. ANI

New Pak PM Shehbaz raises Kashmir, turns to Modi who hopes region is terror-free

Nawaz's younger brother tells Pak House he wants good ties with India

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

HOURS AFTER Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif asked him to come forward and address "the Kashmir issue" so that the two countries could concentrate on tackling poverty and unemployment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated him on his election and said India desired peace and stability in a region free of terrorism.

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

On Monday, the Pakistan parliament elected Shehbaz Sharif as the 23rd Prime Minister of the country.

A PTI report from Islamabad said Shehbaz, 70, was the only candidate left in the race after former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi announced that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party would boycott the voting and staged a walkout.

Sharif was sworn-in by Senate chairman Sadiq Sanjrani after President Arif Alvi went on "sick leave".

"Sharif has secured 174 votes and has been declared as prime minister of Islamic Republic of Pakistan," according to the formal CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MORE REPORTS
PAGE 12

During rescue operations in Deoghar, Jharkhand, on Monday. PTI

2 dead as ropeway stalls, 15 still stranded

ABHISHEK ANGAD & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
DEOGHAR (JHARKHAND), NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE CHILLING sight of a man falling to his death from a helicopter on Monday during a rescue operation captured the trauma of a tense 30 hours in Jharkhand's Deoghar, where at least two people were killed in separate incidents triggered by

the malfunctioning of a ropeway the previous evening.

By Monday evening, 43 people had been rescued from 24 cable cars on the 770-m ropeway to the Trikuta hills, which is a popular tourist spot. Eleven of them were rescued on Sunday evening, including a woman who succumbed later to injuries sustained inside a cable car that "swung wildly" during the mishap, officials and eyewitnesses said.

At least 15 people, including an IAF Garud commando, were still stuck on the ropeway with some without food and water inside cable cars that could not be accessed by rescuers. "We are hoping that the rescue operation will be over by tomorrow. We will be starting early in the morning," National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) D-G Atul Karwal said.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that a probe has also be-

gun on how the man fell from the rescue helicopter when he appeared to lose his grip after having been hauled up from a cable car. The two victims have not been officially identified yet, rescue officers said.

Jharkhand Tourism Department director Rahul Sinha said the ropeway's axle got dislodged between 4 pm and 4.30 pm on Sunday, resulting in the ropeway stopping midway. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

After communal clash, bulldozers raze homes and shops in MP town

IRAM SIDDIQUE
KHARGONE (MP), APRIL 11

A DAY after communal clashes erupted during a Ram Navami procession in Khargone in Madhya Pradesh, the district administration on Monday carried out a demolition drive, razing 16 houses and 29 shops in five localities of the town.

In Bhopal, while Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan said a claims tribunal would be formed and action taken against rioters, Home Minister Narottam



During the demolition drive in Khargone on Monday. Express

Mishra issued a warning, saying, "Jis gh ghar ko hi patharon kaa dher banaenge (We will turn the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Retail, MSMEs push credit growth rate to near double-digits

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

CREDIT GROWTH in the banking sector is set to hit the double digits with offtake by borrowers rising by 9.6 per cent as on March 25, 2022, signalling the economy could be showing signs of a comeback on the back of a big capital expenditure push by the government. With Covid pandemic hitting the economy, credit growth had dipped to 5.6 per cent in the same period last year, according to the latest CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED **E** The good news in credit

WHILE THE pick up in credit can be attributed largely to the collateral-free loans to MSMEs, what imparts confidence to the economy is the jump in retail loans since these reflect improved consumer spending, which had taken a hit due to the pandemic.

Sri Lanka's former PM has a message for President: Quit or explain why you won't

**NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN**
COLOMBO, APRIL 11

AS SRI Lanka's political vacuum extended into its tenth day, and protesters demanding the resignation of the Rajapaksa family pitched tents near the presidential office on the main seafont, the country's former prime minister Ranil Wickremesinghe



Protesters on the streets of Colombo on Monday. PAGE 12

summed up the way forward in one line: President Gotabaya Rajapaksa must resign or explain to the people why he won't.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Wickremesinghe also said that to tide over the current food shortage, Sri Lanka must tap its friends in South Asia — India, Pakistan and Bangladesh — to "borrow" foodgrains that could be returned after two or three years.

He also suggested that a consortium of India, Japan, China, South Korea and the EU could help Sri Lanka until negotiations with the IMF are concluded and CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

A HISTORY OF SRI LANKAN REFUGEES IN INDIA

Sri Lanka's dire economic situation has sparked fears of a new wave of refugees migrating to Tamil Nadu. India already hosts over 100,000 Sri Lankan Tamils who are stuck in a state of limbo, existing neither as citizens nor refugees in the eyes of the law.

TECH

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ENTERTAINMENT

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Talks about his views on religion, son's career plans

EXPRESS AUDIO

UN Climate Report 2022: 'It's now or never'

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Prof Navroz K Dubash one of the coordinating lead authors of the IPCC report discusses the panel's assessment and talks about the warnings, where we stand currently, and a lot more.

FROM PAGE ONE

Mamata

Malaviya at an event in Kolkata, the chief minister claimed that the girl was having an affair with the accused, and alleged that the Opposition parties and media were giving a “political twist” to the incident.

“...ja ghotechhe, taa khubi kharab. Ami ninda korchhi. Kintu, aami to shunechhi, obhijukto ebong meyetir modhye bhalobhasha chhilo. Parar lokera jane, baarir lok-erajane. Okhane sobai jane. (What happened is bad. I condemn it. But I have heard that the accused and girl were having a love affair. People in their neighbourhood knew. Their families knew. Everyone knew)... So even before the investigation why are you giving conclusions,” Banerjee asked.

The chief minister, who was speaking at the inauguration of the revamped Milan Mela ground in the city, also questioned why the girl's family did not file a police complaint immediately after her death.

“The incident took place on April 5 and the FIR was filed on April 10. Now, the question is why they did not lodge complaint just after the incident... From where will the police get evidence now? Whether she was raped or pregnant?”, Banerjee said as she looked towards the DGP who was seated behind the dais and asked, “Am I right or wrong?”

The main accused, 21-year-old Brajgopal Goala, is the son of TMC gram panchayat member. Goals, who has been booked for gangrape, murder and under the POCSO Act, was on Monday sent to 14-day police custody.

The girl's family has alleged that Goala invited her and his friends to his birthday party on April 4. He along with others gang-raped her after they made her drink alcohol, they claimed. The 14-year-old died the next morning due to excessive bleeding, the family said.

The family also accused Goala and his friends of pressuring them to cremate the body and threatening them against informing the police.

In the 2012 Park Street rape case, Banerjee had termed the incident “shajano ghotana” (fabricated case), triggering a controversy.

The chief minister, meanwhile, rejected the Opposition's charge that her government was trying to shield the accused as his father is a local TMC leader.

“Everybody in this state is now TMC. What can I do about this? But, here if anyone commits a crime, police take action against them. This is not Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh or any other state. Here, nobody sees the colour before taking action against criminals,” the chief minister said and added that she has ordered the State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (SCPCR) to investigate the matter as the victim was a minor.

Hitting out at the media for reporting the incident, the chief minister advised industrialists not to give advertisements to the news channels and urged people to watch entertainment channels instead of news channels. “Why do you people give advertisements to these news channels? Do you think that the sale of your products is dependent on advertisements in such news channels,” she asked.

SL's former PM

the implementation of a bailout begins. He flagged that Indian credit lines for fuel and food would run out by May, and Sri Lanka had to take steps right now to prevent the crisis from overtaking the country.

“He (Gotabaya) has been elected by the people. Even the Parliament can't force him to resign. So it's up to him to decide. And he has told me he's not resigning. In which case, I told him, you have to explain to the people

what you're willing to do and why you are not resigning,” Wickremesinghe, who was prime minister of Sri Lanka from 2015 to 2019, said.

“Either he has to step down or win back the confidence of the people,” he said, describing the protests as Sri Lanka's “Arab Spring” moment, with the country's youth becoming the symbol of discontent among a cross-section of people from farmers in rural areas to the elite in Colombo.

Responding to the fact that the Arab Spring did not end well in many of the countries that were swept by it, he said: “I do not think the military will come out here against the people, because they are affected by the same issues as the people. But we have to avoid an Arab Spring ending.”

At the moment, there is a political vacuum in Sri Lanka's government. President Gotabaya has been attempting to stabilise his government since last week, when all his ministers handed in their resignations to give him a free hand to form a new Cabinet. Gotabaya had hoped that this would placate the protesters. Three times last week, there were rumours that a new Cabinet would be sworn in. But it did not happen. It appears that few in the Rajapaksa camp want to be visible and tasked with resolving a difficult crisis. And the street seems to be in no mood to accept cosmetic changes. As one protest placard put it: “Resign, not reassign.”

Ali Sabri, who was appointed Finance Minister the day after he resigned as Justice Minister on April 4, put in his papers again, but the President did not accept the resignation. He remains the Finance Minister.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, who has a waiver thin majority in Parliament, issued a desperate appeal for the protesters to return home in an address to the nation on Monday. But while there has been talk of a no-confidence motion, the many parties and a set of MPs who have broken away, have not taken any concrete steps towards finalising their next steps.

Wickremesinghe denied rumours that he had been offered the prime ministership by the Rajapaksas. Among Colombo's political elite, there is nostalgia for the promise held out by the 2015-2019 United National Front for Good Governance — a coalition between Wickremesinghe and then President Maithripala Sirisena — but that remained unfulfilled. “I've not been asked, and even if I were, I would stay out, because what can I do? I am a party of one (as the only member of his party UNP in Parliament). How can you run the administration? Parliament means you must have support, and numbers. Only the party with the largest numbers forms the government,” he said, adding, however, that he had advised the government on how to mitigate the food crisis.

He said he made three proposals at a recent all-party conference in Parliament.

“We are running out of time, we are running out of fuel, we are running out of food. So while you wait for discussions to start with IMF, speak to the World Bank and ADB, and see what short-term assistance you can get. Secondly, until the IMF talks are over, and implementation is done, we won't get our orders. So have a consortium, India, Japan, China, South Korea, EU, to see how they can help us. And thirdly, to address the food shortage, have arrangements with the South Asian countries — India, Pakistan, Bangladesh — to borrow food, and then repay them in two or three years,” he said. Wickremesinghe said India had been generous with its assistance. “India has done more than enough. They've given us \$1.5 billion. They have never given that kind of assistance to any other country in the neighbourhood. So

‘Let’s talk how to manage effects of Russia’s war’

as leaders of the world's largest democracies, to respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. The two leaders also discussed the destabilizing impacts of Russia's war against Ukraine, with a particular focus on global food supply.”

The video conference saw four ministers with Biden in the White House — Jaishankar, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin. Also in the room were US NSA Jake Sullivan and Taranjit Singh Sandhu, India's ambassador to the US.

Biden said he was looking forward to meeting Modi in Japan around May 24 for the Quad leaders' summit. The four leaders last met in March via video conference.

The meeting Monday was at the initiative of the US President who, speaking first, flagged “shared values”: “At the root of our partnership is a deep connection between our peoples, ties of family, of friendship and of shared values. On that note, I want to welcome India's humanitarian support for the people of Ukraine who are suffering a horrific assault, including a tragic shelling on a train station last week that killed dozens of innocent children and women and civilians attempting to flee the violence.”

“The United States and India are going to continue our close consultation on how to manage the destabilizing effects of this Russian war,” Biden told Modi.

The Prime Minister too spoke on the situation in Ukraine. “Our today's talks are taking place at a time when the

situation in Ukraine remains very worrisome. Till a few weeks back, more than 20,000 Indians were stranded in Ukraine. And most of them were young students. After putting in a lot of effort, we managed to get them out of there safely, although one student lost his life,” he said.

“Throughout this development, I spoke to the Presidents of both Ukraine and Russia over the phone several times. I not only appealed for peace, but also suggested President Putin to have direct talks with the President of Ukraine,” he said.

Stressing that India had extensive discussions on Ukraine in its Parliament as well, he said, “The news of the recent killings of innocent civilians in Bucha city was very worrying. We condemned it immediately and have also demanded an independent probe. We hope that the ongoing dialogue between Russia and Ukraine will pave the way for peace.”

“We have also laid emphasis on the security of the civilians in Ukraine and the uninterrupted supply of humanitarian aid to them, which you mentioned at the outset. We have sent medicines and other relief materials to Ukraine and its neighbouring countries. And on the demand of Ukraine, soon we are sending another consignment of medicines,” Modi said.

Biden said, “As two vibrant democracies, we have the same concerns about the global challenges we face from Covid-19, advancing health, security and tracking the climate crisis. And we share a strong and growing major defence partnership.”

“Our continued consulta-

tion and dialogue are key to ensuring the US-India relationship continues to grow deeper and stronger, delivering our people and our global good that we all are seeking to manage, particularly in your part of the world,” he said.

Modi, who thanked the US President for the initiative on the virtual meeting before the 2+2 meeting, said, “Our meeting before that (the 2+2 meeting) is very important as it will provide direction for their discussions. When I was in Washington last year in September, and you, in fact, mentioned that you had said at the time that the India-America partnership can contribute to solving a lot of global problems. I totally agree with you. As two democracies that are the world's largest and oldest, we are natural partners. And the progress that has taken place in our relations in the last few years, the new momentum that has been created, would have been hard to even imagine a few decades ago.”

Modi told Biden, “You gave a very important slogan at the very beginning of your term — Democracies can Deliver. The success of the partnership between India and the US is the best way to realize this slogan.”

“This year, India is celebrating the 75th anniversary of its independence. And we are also celebrating the 75th anniversary of our diplomatic ties. I am confident that friendship with the United States will remain an integral part of India's development journey over the next 25 years,” he said.

After the meeting, a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs said the two

leaders had extensive exchange of views on several regional and global issues, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, global economic recovery, climate action, recent developments in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific region, and the situation in Ukraine.

“They also took stock of the significant progress made in bilateral relations in recent years. Both leaders agreed that further strengthening of the India-US Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership would be of tremendous benefit to the two countries, and would also contribute to global peace, prosperity and stability,” the MEA said.

After the 2+2 meetings, the two sides are likely to sign pacts on cooperation in the education and space sectors.

While Jaishankar met Blinken, Singh met Austin separately in bilateral meetings. “Began the day with a breakfast meeting with @SecBlinken. Wide ranging exchange of views on the global situation, regional hotspots and bilateral co-operation. Took place with the comfort and openness of true strategic partners,” Jaishankar tweeted.

Rajnath Singh, in a Twitter post, said: “Had a wonderful meeting with the US @SecDef, Mr Lloyd Austin at the Pentagon today. We reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral defence co-operation and the regional security situation.”

Jaishankar is also likely to meet Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and US Trade Representative Katherine Tai, while Singh will travel to Hawaii, headquarters of US Indo-Pacific Command, after his visit to Washington DC.

“Efforts were made to provide relief to those still stuck in the cable cars by running a parallel line and throwing food and water across 10-15 feet. But there were some cable cars with doors on the other side. Passengers stuck there couldn't receive any help,” a senior official involved in the rescue operation said.

Officials identified the Garud commando as a member of a rescue team who stayed back in a cable car with one other occupant who could not be rescued before the light faded and rescue operations, which were conducted through two Mi-17 V-5 IAF helicopters, were called off for the day.

“The Garud commando got stuck as there was still one passenger in that cable car who had not been rescued. It was felt that it would be wise if the commando stayed there to ensure the passenger didn't panic through the night,” another official said.

The NDRF has deployed two teams, with a DIG and a Commandant leading the operation, while the ITBP has sent separate teams from Ranchi for the rescue operation. Deoghar Deputy Commissioner Manjunath Bhajantri said requests were also made to the Army and IAF for the “challenging” task.

“The terrain is very difficult as the cable cars are suspended at an angle and the Air Force personnel had to take care that the choppers did not touch them. The harnessing and airlifting of people were done in a coordinated manner. Unfortunately, one person slipped during the rescue and fell down on a field, resulting in his death,” Bhajantri said.

He added that food packets and water were supplied through maintenance cars to those still stranded.

Tourism director Sinha said the ropeway was being operated by Damodar Ropeways and Infra Ltd, which had the contract from 2014 to 2019. “Due to Covid, the contract was not renewed but they were operating it,” he said. Officials of the Kolkata-based company were not available for comment.

“An inquiry will be initiated after which we will come to know the exact cause of the incident. The engineers of the company reached the spot but repair work would not be possible as long as people are still inside the cable cars,” said Amitabh Kaushal, Principal Secretary, Bharkhand Disaster Management Department.

One of the local guides, Praful Singh, told The Indian Express that he was at the base when the ropeway stalled. “Within seconds, the cable cars were swinging wildly in the air. One of the staff, Panna Lal, climbed on the rope-way carrying ropes and rescued some people before the administration arrived. One of the women was injured and bleeding,” he said.

“On Monday, I went up in the morning to give a signal to the Air Force people to show where they could start the rescue work. Later, help was taken from a local drone operator who accompanied the rescue team in the maintenance car to provide water and food to people who could not be reached on Sunday,” Singh said.

“Those who were stuck were panicking and some were crying out loud. All of them were asking for water. They were shouting, ‘Hua kya hai, kya hum log kabhi nikal payenge (What has happened? Will we be able to escape?)’

Bulldozers rake

houses from where the stones were pelted to a heap of rubble.” At least 10 houses were set ablaze and more than two dozen people, including Khargone Superintendent of Police Siddharth Choudhary, were injured in Sunday's violence.

On Monday, the demolitions

started in the morning from Chhote Mohan Talkies area, where four ‘illegal’ structures were demolished, after which demolitions were carried out in Aurangpura, Khaskhaswadi, Ganesh Mandir and Talab chowk areas. Talab chowk was from where the Ram Navami procession set off on Sunday, before violence began barely 500 metres away.

Of the 45 demolitions on Monday, the highest number was in Khaskhaswadi, where 12 homes and 10 shops were demolished. Bhawar mohalla, located behind Khaskhaswadi, was among the areas that reported heavy stone pelting on Sunday.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Sub Divisional Magistrate Milind Dhoke said, “All the shops and houses that have been demolished so far were illegal structures constructed on encroached land. There were reports of stone pelting from these areas after which action was taken.”

Speaking to the media, Dr Pawan Kumar Sharma, Commissioner, Indore Range, said, “So far, 84 people have been arrested and their illegal properties and encroachments are being demolished... Fifty places have been identified so far and action will continue.”

Khargone District Collector P Anugraha said the demolished buildings were illegal constructions and that the drive wasn't targeted at any particular community. “The buildings demolished were illegal structures set up on encroached land belonging to people from both communities,” she told *The Indian Express*.

Of the 12 shops demolished in the Talab chowk area, eight were run by Muslims and the remaining four by Hindus. All the 12 shops were part of the Khargone Jama Masjid complex and owned by the masjid committee.

At Talab chowk, Rafeek Mohammad, 50, stood outside his demolished scrap shop in the fading evening light, trying to salvage whatever little he could. “I do not support the rioters and I want them to be arrested but why was my shop demolished today? How will I sustain my family of 17 now? Will the CM explain?”

Narendra Sureshchand Gupta, whose kirana shop in the area was among those razed, said, “I had taken the shop on rent from the masjid committee authority, and no notice was given to us. Had the committee got the notice, they would have told us. We learnt about the demolition an hour before they brought in the bulldozers. Since I live nearby, I rushed in and, with help from others, managed to take out whatever I could.”

DIG Tilak Singh said 11 FIRs have been registered in the case of Sunday's violence and 84 people have been arrested.

Earlier in the day, calling the Khargone incident “unfortunate”, Chief Minister Chouhan said in a tweet, “There is no place for rioters on the soil of Madhya Pradesh. These rioters have been identified, they will not be released. Strictest action will be taken against them.” Chouhan further said that a claims tribunal would be formed under the state's Prevention of Damage to Public and Private Property and Recovery of Damages Act. “All rioters will be punished and all damages after assessment will be recovered from them,” he added.

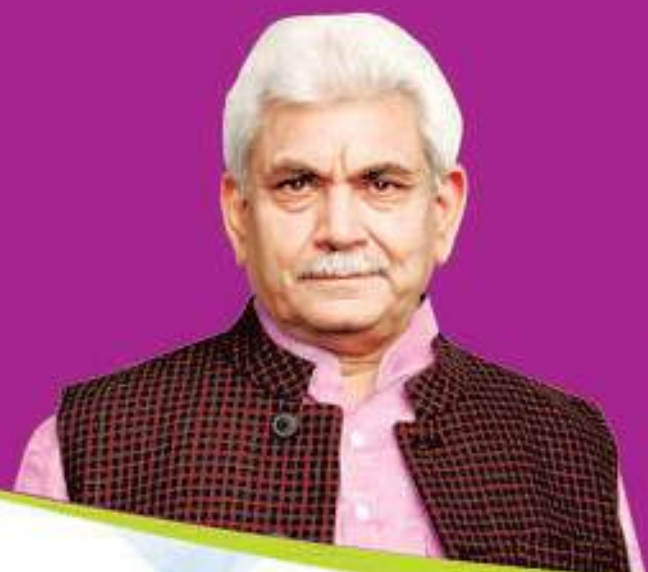
Speaking to reporters in Bhopal, Home Minister Mishra said, “Presently, there is peace in Khargone. There is sufficient police force but curfew is still in place. All rioters are being identified.” Sharma, the Indore Range Commissioner, said three contractual employees of the government have been removed for “spreading rumours” while another employee has been suspended.

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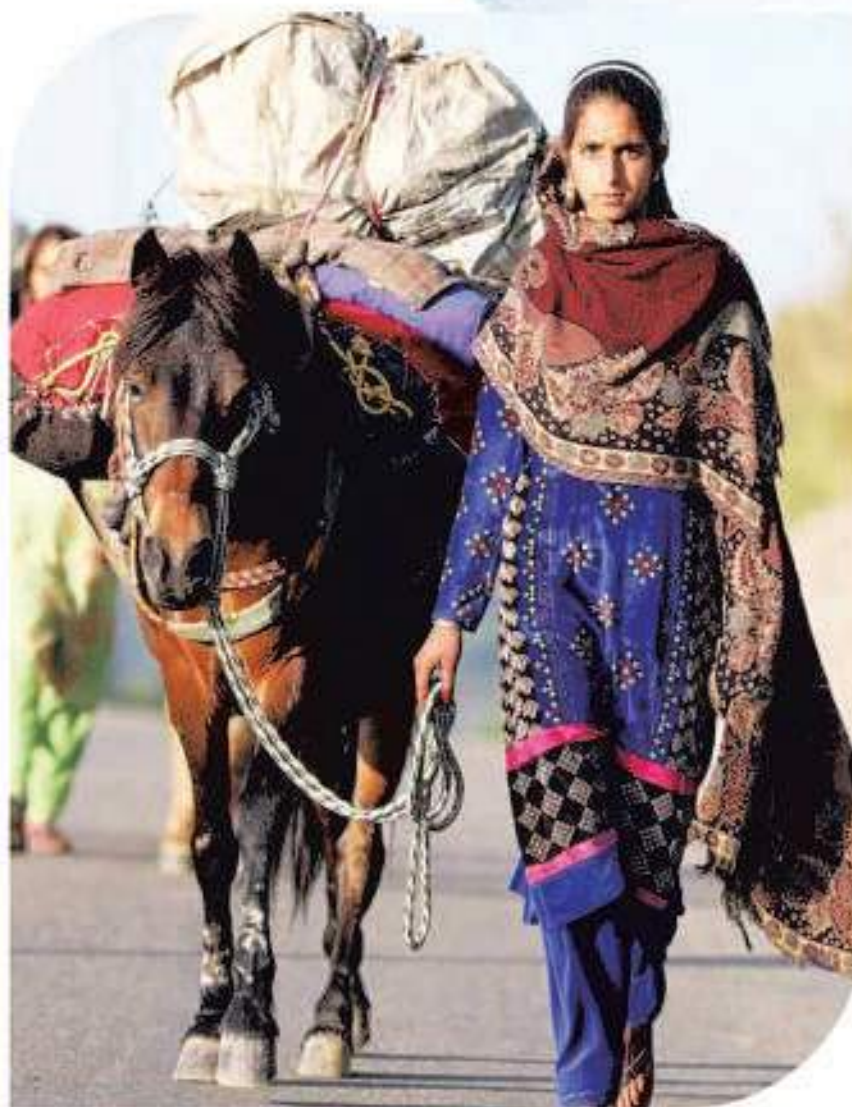


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4 West Bengal

HC sets aside Speaker's order dismissing plea on Mukul disqualification

ENS & PTI
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

THE CALCUTTA High Court on Monday set aside West Bengal Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee's order dismissing a petition by Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari which sought disqualification of TMC lawmaker Mukul Roy as a member of the House on the ground of defection and restored the matter for fresh consideration.

A division bench of Chief Justice Prakash Srivastava and Rajarshi Bhargava issued the order on Monday. The petitioner contended that the decision of Speaker Biman Banerjee to retain the post of MLA of Mukul, who had joined the Trinamool Congress after being elected on a BJP ticket, was practically rejected by the High Court on Monday.

Petitioner's lawyer Bilwadal Bhattacharya said a two-judge bench had asked the Speaker to take a decision on the press conference held on June 11 last year by BJP MLA Mukul Trinamool



Mukul Roy joined the TMC after being elected on a BJP ticket

as "evidence".

The division bench said that in view of the speaker's failure to take into account and consider the certificate of evidence in support of his claim under Section 65-B of the Evidence Act and consequently held the electronic evidence as inadmissible, has rendered Banerjee's order "perverse".

Setting aside the speaker's order of February 22 which had dismissed the petition filed by Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari seeking disqualification of Roy as a member of the House on the ground of defection, the court said that the certificate filed before the speaker under Section 65-B needs to be considered in accordance with law and the electronic evidence needs to be re-appreciated.

'He should be in jail instead': TMC leader targets minister

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

DURING A court hearing, TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh on Monday alleged that his own party minister was "roaming freely" instead of being in jail.

According to sources, Ghosh made the remarks when he appeared in a court in connection with his attempt to suicide case. Ghosh had allegedly tried to kill himself in 2014 when he was in jail for his alleged involvement in the Saradha chit fund scam. At the time, Ghosh was a Rajya Sabha member of the TMC.

According to sources, Ghosh referred to a person – a present MLA and minister – who he claimed had "links to the ICORE



TMC spokesperson Kunal Ghosh

chit fund case." "He called me crazy. He is roaming freely now. He should be put in jail," Ghosh said, the sources added.

Ghosh recently has been at loggerheads with some TMC leaders.

Another minister, Firhad Hakim, was then asked on Friday if the "riff" within the party had been made public. In response, Hakim said, "Kunal Ghosh is not a member of the Cabinet. All our responsibilities are shared. I am a member of that Cabinet."



Polling officials with EVMs leave for their respective stations, in Kolkata on Monday. Express

BY POLL RESULTS ON APRIL 16

Litmus test for TMC & BJP as Asansol, Ballygunge vote today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

A FIERCE political battle is all set to unfold on Tuesday, when by-polls to Asansol Lok Sabha and Ballygunge Assembly constituencies will be held. For the BJP, it would be a challenge to retain the Asansol seat and spring a surprise in Ballygunge constituency, a TMC stronghold. For the ruling TMC, it is a litmus test to win the Asansol constituency for the first time and retain the Ballygunge seat.

The Asansol seat fell vacant after former Union minister Babul Supriyo resigned as the BJP Member of Parliament from the seat from where he won the election in 2014 and the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. He has been made the TMC candidate from the Ballygunge Assembly constituency in Kolkata, which fell vacant after the demise of former state minister and veteran party leader Subrata Mukherjee in November last year.

In Asansol, TMC fielded former BJP MP Shatrughan Sinha, who is from Bihar and has represented the Patna Sahib constituency in the Lok Sabha in the past. He is contesting against BJP MLA turned party candidate Agnimitra Paul.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Supriyo had defeated TMC candidate Moon Moon Sen by a massive margin 1,97,637 votes and also secured 51.56 per cent of the total votes polled. In 2014, Supriyo's victory margin was 70,480 votes.

Sinha is confident that this will be a historic election with a hysterical reaction from the voters. "This is a great opportunity for the people to strengthen the hands of Mamata Banerjee and her Trinamool Congress. I am confident that people will give us a huge mandate," said Sinha.

Paul on the other hand is banking on her "daughter of the soil" image to defeat "bohiringoto" (outsider) Shatrughan Sinha. "I am from Asansol and people here know me. I have worked for them as an MLA for last one year. I am sure they will support me in this bypoll," said Paul.

CPM candidate Partha Mukherjee is also on the fray but the party's chances look bleak against the two heavyweight candidates from TMC and BJP.

For the Ballygunge Assembly constituency in Kolkata, the challenge before the TMC is to maintain a lead margin of 76,359 votes by which the former state panchayat minister, Subrata Mukherjee defeated the BJP candidate, Loknath Chatterjee in the 2021 West Bengal Assembly polls. Mukherjee had secured 70,500 per cent.

With Babul Supriyo finding it difficult to get the support of minority voters in the constituency due to his previous party links, CPM candidate Saira Shah Halim, niece of actor Naseeruddin Shah, is in a better position to get their support.

"If you have seen the response

from people belonging to minority communities then you would not have asked this question. I am getting a positive response from them," said Supriyo.

Halim too appeared confident that people of Ballygunge will vote for the Left this time. "I have reached out to all the people. We don't divide people as minority or majority," said Halim.

BJP candidate Keya Ghosh is optimistic that the saffron camp will put up a good show in TMC-dominated constituency.

"We believe in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's mantra of 'Sabka Sath, Sabka Vikas aur Sabka Biswas'. I don't know whether Babul Supriyo is a heavyweight candidate but he surely is not a challenge before our party," said Ghosh.

The bypolls will be held tomorrow under tight security. Webcasting to be conducted in 100 per cent booths in Ballygunge and 51 per cent booths in Asansol.

While Ballygunge Assembly constituency has a total 300 booths, the same in Asansol is 2,102. A total of 23 booths in Ballygunge have been declared sensitive. The number of identified sensitive booths in Asansol is 680.

While Ballygunge has 40 micro-observers, the number is Asansol is 442. A total of 133 companies of the central armed forces have been deployed for the bypolls, out of which 116 companies have been allotted for Asansol and the remaining 17 companies for Ballygunge. Results for the bypolls will be declared on April 16.

NADIA GANGRAPE-MURDER CASE

Police get custody of TMC leader's son

Say two-three more may be involved; petition in High Court seeks CBI probe

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

A TRINAMOL Congress leader's son, who is the prime accused in the alleged gangrape and murder of a 14-year-old girl in Nadia district, was arrested on Monday.

Brajgopal Goala (21), son of Samar Goala, a member of the local gram panchayat, was detained earlier. His arrest was made after detailed interrogation, police sources said.

The accused was produced in a local court and remanded in police custody for 14 days.

According to the police, names of two to three more persons have cropped up in the primary investigation. "Primarily, two-three persons are involved in the crime. Everyone named will be called and interrogated. An investigation is underway," said a police officer.

Police sources said Brajgopal, the prime accused in the case, has been booked under IPC sections of 376(2)(G) (gangrape), 302 (murder), 204 (tampering with evidence) and relevant sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

The girl's family has alleged that Brajgopal invited her and his friends to his birthday party on April 4. He along with others gangraped her after they made her drink alcohol, they claimed. The 14-year-old died the next morning due to excessive bleeding, the family said.

Meanwhile, a public interest litigation was filed in the Calcutta High Court on Monday, demanding a CBI probe into the case. It is likely to be heard on Tuesday, sources said.

Woman 'gangraped', accused tried to set her on fire: Police

In another incident, a 29-year-old woman was allegedly gangraped in Namkhana, South 24 Parganas district. It is alleged that the accused persons also tried to set her on fire. The main accused has been detained, the police said. According to police sources, the other accused are at large. On Monday, the victim registered a police complaint in the presence of doctors at a hospital where she is undergoing treatment. According to police sources, the incident took place around three days ago.

GOVERNOR SEEKS REPORT FROM CHIEF SECRETARY

Kolkata: Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar Monday sought an "urgent report" from the chief secretary on the alleged gangrape and death of a girl in Nadia district. "Urgent response of Chief Secretary be sought on alleged gangrape death of 14-year-old girl in Nadia..." the Governor tweeted.

He also sought a report on "atrocities on Ram Bhakts on Ram Navami". "Both these issues were raised to-day by Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari," Dhankhar said.

The BJP has alleged that there was a scuffle during a Ram Navami procession in Howrah on Sunday. Dhankhar said "both the incidents high-light worrisome state of crime scenario". **ENS**



Jagdeep Dhankhar

Oppn calls Mamata remarks 'shocking': 'Bengal has turned into another Hathras'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

THE OPPOSITION on Monday slammed Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee for casting doubt over the rape and murder of a 14-year-old girl in Nadia, saying she was backing the perpetrators of the crime through her "shocking" statement.

Urging women of Bengal to condemn the CM's remark, state Congress unit chief Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "Bengal has turned into Hathras. I don't know how many incidents like these are taking place in the state. We have no idea how many bodies are being burnt like this. Does this victim not fall under TMC's Maa, Mati, Manush (mother, land, people) governance? Why is the chief minister playing the role of devil's ad-



Members of Socialist Unity Centre of India (Communist) protest against the Nadia incident, in Kolkata on Monday. Express

vocate? Why is she defending those who are committing these crimes?"

Chowdhury was referring to the rape of a Dalit woman in Hathras in Uttar Pradesh last year.

Senior CPM leader Sujana Chakraborty also hit out at the CM. "It is very unfortunate the

way Mamata Banerjee has described the incident. Is it a deliberate attempt to shield the culprits?... Banerjee's remarks are highly unfortunate. The focus should not be on whether the minor was pregnant or was having an affair. The focus should be on the crime... Why did the incident come to light after four-five days? Was this time taken to hide the real incident and TMC connection," Chakraborty asked.

Leader of Opposition in the Assembly and BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari urged people who voted TMC to power to do some soul-searching. "Look at the way she is speaking and in what language? Whenever something happens, Mamata Banerjee says it is a small matter... There is no rule of law here," said Adhikari, who met Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar later in the evening.

13 new Covid cases, no death

Kolkata: West Bengal on Friday logged 13 new Covid-19 cases and no deaths, said a state health department bulletin. The state also recorded 33 recoveries, while 6,324 samples were collected in the past 24 hours. The virus has claimed 21,200 lives in the state. **ENS**

THE ANDHRA PRADESH STATE SEEDS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED
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No. SSDD/MT/G.P/G. Manure/12/06/e-Tender/2022-23, Dt: 11.04.2022

e- TENDER NOTIFICATION

The APSSDC Ltd., Vijayawada invites e-tenders for supply of freshly harvested Greenmanure (Dhaincha, Sunhemp & Piliipesara) T/L Seed during the year 2022-23. Last date for submission of e-tender is **19.04.2022 (2.00 PM)**. For other details please visit: www.apseeds.ap.gov.in and www.tender.apecprocurement.gov.in Sd/- V.C. & MANAGING DIRECTOR

कार्यालय निदेशक, पुरातत्व एवं संग्रहालय विभाग, राजस्थान, जयपुर
(दूरभाष : पु.सं./स्टोर/पार्किंग/2022/3734 दिनांक :- 5/4/2022)

ई-बिड सूचना

मावदा दक्षिण ओमर महल तथा नाहरगढ़ दुर्ग, के परिसर में पार्किंग स्थल के लिए दो वर्ष हेतु पार्किंग टेका कार्य हेतु अनुभवी फर्मों से ऑनलाईन बिड दो अलग-अलग प्रस्तावों में (तकनीकी एवं वित्तीय प्रस्ताव के रूप में) आमंत्रित की जाती है।

क्र.सं.	पार्किंग स्थल	बिड प्रपत्र डाउनलोड करने की अवधि	बिड प्रपत्र ऑनलाइन अलॉड करने की अवधि	ऑनलाईन तकनीकी बिड खोलने की दिनांक	Pre Bid Meeting Date & Time
1.	नाहरगढ़ दुर्ग,	दिनांक 05.04.2022	दिनांक 05.04.2022	26.04.2022	18.04.2022
2.	मावदा दक्षिण, ओमर महल	प्रातः 10 बजे से दिनांक 25.04.2022 को सांय 5.00 बजे तक	प्रातः 10 बजे से दिनांक 25.04.2022 को सांय 5.00 बजे तक	दोपहर 2.00 बजे	On 11.00 AM

Bid UBN NO. (1) AMD2223SLOB00003 (2) AMD2223SLOB00004

Detailed bid document can be viewed or/and download from websites <http://museumsrajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. Sd/- Director

DIPR/c/4908/2022

Bank of Baroda **KHARDAHA BRANCH** Appendix IV, Rule 8(1) **POSSESSION NOTICE** (for Immovable Property)

147/HNIA CO. OPERATIVE COLONY, PO RAHARA, Jmat Ali and Road/ Pin No. B - 700 118

Whereas The undersigned being the authorized Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13(12) read with the rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 10.09.2021 calling upon the borrower Mr. Sanjay Ghosh of Flat No. G-2, Durga Pratima Apartment Bandipur Ananda Pally Near Milan Sangha Kharda Ward No. 4 North 24 Parganas Kolkata 700 118 to repay the amount as mentioned in the notice being Rs.10,22,931.80 (Rupees Ten Lacs Twenty Two Thousand Nine Hundred Thirty One and Eighty Paise only) as on 06.09.2021 plus interest within 60 days(s) from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantor and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13(4) of the said Act, read with rule 8 of the said Rules on this 06th day of April of the Year 2022.

The Borrower / Guarantor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Baroda, Khardaha Branch, for an amount of Rs.9,92,064.96 (Rupees Nine Lacs Ninety Two Thousand Sixty Four and Ninety Six Paise only) as on 04.04.2022 and further interest, incidental expenses, costs & charges etc. thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Mortgage Immovable Property

Equitable mortgage of residential flat, Flat No. G-2, having super built up area of 650 Sq. Ft. more or less, Two bedroom, One Dining room, One verandah / Balcony, One Kitchen, One Toilet, at South East Side Ground Floor situated at multi storied building known as "Durga Pratima Apartment", Holding No. 70/19 and 112/22, Saibon Road, Mouza-Bandipur, J.L. No. 17, RS and LR. Dag No.952, 953 and 954 under R.S. Khatian No. 276.586 and 587, LR. Khatian No.468, present LR. Khatian No. 3742.3741, Ward No. 4, P.O.- Rahara, P.S.- Khardaha, Dist. North 24 Parganas, Kolkata West Bengal, Pin 700 118, under Khardah Municipality, Near Milan Sangha Club, Bandipur, Which is fluted and bounded by: On the North: By Property of Narayan Prakash, Jmat Ali and Road/ By Flat No. G-3, On the South: By House of Sipra Bank and Pranab Dey/ By Open to Sky, On the East: By 12 Feet Wide Road/ By Open to Sky, On the West: By House of Ashok Das and Biswanath Das/ By Flat No. G-1

Authorised Officer
Bank of Baroda

Place: Khardaha, Date : 06.04.2022

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਬੈਂਕ **pnb** **punjab national bank**
(Bank of India Undertaking)

Circle Sastra Centre, Durgapur, Nachan Road, Benachity, Durgapur, Paschim Bardhaman, W.B. / e-mail: cs8222@pnb.co.in

Rule 8(1) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Punjab National Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice calling upon the borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost and charges etc. till the date of repayment within 60 days from the date of notice / date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on the date mentioned below.

The borrowers in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for an amount plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost and charges etc. till the date of repayment.

The borrower's / guarantor's/mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower / Guarantor	Description of the property mortgaged	a) Date of Demand Notice b) Date of Possession Notice affixed c) Amount Outstanding as on the date of Demand Notice
1.	Mr. Prasanta Kumar Ghosh S/o Sanat Kumar Ghosh Guarantor: Aruna Ghosh W/o-Prasanta Kumar Ghosh both at Ward No-14, Holding No-288 Bhiringi School Para, Durgapur-713213	All the piece and parcel of the land and building situated at mouza Bhiringi, J.L. No-68, now-119, Plot No.86, J.L. No. 37, RS Khatian No.498. LR Khatian No.2268, RS Plot No.397 and renumbered as LR Plot No1165, under Durgapur Municipal Corporation measuring 3 cottah or 5 decimal more or less having registered sale deed no. 6136 for the year 1987 in the name of Prasanta Kumar Ghosh.	a) 15.09.2021 b) 07.04.2022 c) Rs.3,49,088.86 (Rupees Three Lakh Forty Nine Thousand Eighty Eight and Paise Eighty Six only) as on 14.09.2021 plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost & charges etc. (from 15.09.2021 till the date of repayment).
2.	M/s Bengal Ceramics & Monolithic Industries , Plot No.146, J.L. No.65, Gopalpur, Sarenga Road, PO- Gopalpur, Durgapur-12 Mr.Goutam Das S/o-Late Santi Ranjan Das, R-II/224, Bidhan Nagar Housing Colony, Durgapur-713206 Mr.Goutam Das , Flat No. G.60, 7th Floor Priyayee Housing complex G-Block, Vill+ PO-Bamanura, Durgapur-713212	1.All the piece and parcel of the land and building situated at Mouza- Gopulpur, J.L. No.65, LR Plot No.146, LR Khatian No.4716,Vill- Gopalpur, PO- Durgapur, PS- Kanksa under Gopulpur Gram Panchayet Dist-Paschim Bardhaman In the name of Sri Goutam Das S/o-Late Santi Ranjan Das being DEED NO.03201 of the year 2013.Boundary:North: vacant land of Dag No.139, South: 30 ft wide road, East: Plot No.146, West: Plot No. 147 2. Entire plant and Machineries situated at layout plot no. 24 at Nasser Avenue Durgapur (Durgapur Industrial Land) Mouza- Gopinathpur	a) 21.01.2022 b) 07.04.2022 c) Rs.47,85,681.22 (Rupees Forty Seven Lakh Eighty Five Thousand Six Hundred Eighty One and Paise Twenty Two Only)as on 31.12.2021 plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost & charges etc. (from 01.01.2022 till the date of repayment).
3.	M/s Gupta Enterprise, Prop. Goutam Gupta, RGS Road, Usha Gram, Dist-Paschim Bardhaman, Pin-713303 Guarantor: Mina Gupta W/o-Late Tarapada Gupta Ram Gulam Singh bye lane Ushagram, Asansol Dist-Paschim Bardhaman Pin-713303	All the piece and parcel of the land and situated at, Mouza- Mohishila, Parganas-Shergarh, Ward No.86, J.L. No. 37, RS Khatian No.660, Dag No.110,111/3179, measuring of area 6satak, Holding No.32/30, ADSR Asansol, PS- Asansol, Dist Paschim Bardhaman, Pin-713303 registered in the name of Mina Gupta W/o-Late Tarapada Gupta being Sale Deed No.5377 of 1971. Boundary: North: house of Dhabijam Nunia, South: Peach Road, East:3 Ft road, West:3 Ft road	a) 20.01.2022 b) 08.04.2022 c) Rs.11,60,311.67 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Sixty Thousand Three Hundred Eleven and Paise Sixty Seven Only) as on 31.12.2021plus accrued interest, incidental expenses, cost & charges etc. (from 01.01.2022 till the date of repayment).

Sh. Sadhan Chandra Mondal
Chief Manager & Authorised Officer
Punjab National Bank

Date : 07.04.2022 and 08.04.2022
Place : Durgapur

SUPPLYCO

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RAJIV GANDHI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAW, PUNJAB
[Established under the Punjab Act No. 12 of 2006]
Adv. No. RGNUL/16/2022 dt. 11.04.2022 **RGNUL PATIALA**

ENTRANCE TEST FOR ADMISSION TO Ph.D. PROGRAMME 2022

Application are invited for Ph.D. in Law, Social Sciences, Humanities, Criminology, and English Language through an Entrance Test to be held tentatively on May 29, 2022 from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM at RGNUL, New Campus (Offline Mode). The interested candidates may visit RGNUL website www.rgnul.ac.in in regarding the details of eligibility, syllabi of the entrance test, reservation of seats, applications form, etc.

Completed application form must be accompanied with proof of payment through Online SBI Collect i.e. Rs. (2500+450) (Rs. 1500+270) for SC/ST/SAP Categories) including 18% GST Extra. The last date to receive complete applications is May 20, 2022 through Speed/Registered Post addressed to Registrar, RGNUL, Punjab, Patiala.

Registrar
SIDHULAL CAMPUS, BHADSON ROAD, PATIALA-147006 TEL.: 0175-2391200, 0175-2391600 Website: www.rgnul.ac.in, Email: phd@rgnul.ac.in

TENDER NOTICE (E-Tendering Mode Only)

Online e-bids are invited for Design, Supply, Installation and commissioning of frozen/chiller chamber of 440MT at ICD Dadr, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh through single packet e-tendering mode.

Bid Reference.	CON/A-1/DER/FROZEN/CHILLER/440MT/2022
Tendered Quantity	As per Tender requirement
Estimated Cost	Rs. 90.86 Lakhs
EMD	Rs.1,81,720/- through online payment gateway to CONCOR
Cost of Document*	Rs.1,000/- through online payment gateway to CONCOR
Tender Processing Fee	Rs. 4,720/- (Inclusive of all taxes) through online payment.
Period of Tender Sale (On Line)	From 12.04.2022 at 15:00 Hrs. To 03.05.2022 (upto 17:00 Hrs.)
Date & Time of submission of Bid	On 04.05.2022 upto 17:00 hrs.
Date & Time of Opening	On 05.05.2022 at 11:00 hrs.

Through e-Payment

For eligibility criteria and other details please log onto www.concorindia.com or eprocure.gov.in or www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL. Bidders are requested to visit the websites regularly. CONCOR reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. For complete details logon to www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL.

Executive Director/Area-I

Government of West Bengal

Referral Advertisement in Condensed Form:
2(Two) E-Tenders are hereby invited through (i) e-NIT No. SSM/PBD/E-NIT-01/22-23 for each SI. no. separately & (ii) e-NIT No. SSM/PBD/E-NIT - 02/22-23 for each Zone separately from reputed, bonafide & responsible agencies/contractors/registered Cooperative Societies formed by unregistered Engineers & Labour Cooperatives having credential of Similar type of work for Registering of 17 nos. Schools of Patna, Bardhaman under SSA. Date of Publishing of e-NIT is: 12.04.2022 from 05.00 pm. Closing Date of Bid Submission is: 29.04.2022 upto 18.00 pm. Detail will be had from the official Website www.bardhaman.gov.in and <http://www.bardhaman.gov.in>

District Project Officer, Sarva Shiksha Mission, Purba Bardhaman.

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Muslim vote under SP belt, Akhilesh gets reality check from Azam camp

LALMANI VERMA
LUCKNOW, APRIL 11

ALTHOUGH HE emerged as the Opposition's face in Uttar Pradesh in the wake of the recent Assembly elections, Samajwadi Party (SP) president Akhilesh Yadav recently drew criticism from a party section over his alleged silence on Muslim issues.

Significantly, the dissenting voice has emerged from the camp of the SP's prominent Muslim leader Azam Khan, who has been in jail for over two years. Azam won the Rampur seat in the Assembly polls by 65,300 votes, while his son Abdullah clinched the neighbouring Suar constituency with a margin of 61,100 votes.

In the newly constituted 18th UP Assembly, the number of Muslim MLAs is more than the previous figure, a majority of whom are from the SP. The polls also saw the SP gamering a majority of the Muslim community votes, which damaged the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)'s prospects.

Firing salvos at Akhilesh at an SP meeting in Rampur Sunday, Azam's media in-charge Fasahat Ali Khan alias Shanu said, while the party has won 111 seats in the polls, thanks to the Muslim



Azam Khan

vote, the party chief "keeps mum when under the Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government FIRs are lodged against Muslims, their properties are attached and recoveries are carried out from them".

Sharpening his attack on Akhilesh, Khan even told the meeting, sarcastically, that "Hamare kapdon se badbu aati hai hamare rashtriya adhyaksh ji ko (our party president feels our clothes stink)". He said Akhilesh and his father (Mulayam Singh Yadav) become CMs with the help of the Muslim votes, but Azam was not considered for the post of the Leader of the Opposition in the current Assembly.

Alleging that the SP did not get votes of Akhilesh's own caste (Yadav community), Khan said, "Aapne hamari dushmani kara di BJP se. Saja sirf humko milegi, maje

sirf aap lenge. (You made us fall out with BJP. Only we will be punished, but you will always relish power)."

Hitting out at the party president, Azam's media in-charge also alleged: "He (Akhilesh) gave a speech in the Assembly but did not mention the name of Azam saheb even once... Akhilesh has met Azam in jail only once so far. Should we accept what chief minister Yogi Adityanath had alleged that Akhilesh Yadav himself does not want Azam Khan out (of jail)."

Khan also said he would suggest to Azam to take a "decision". Elaborating on his point, he later told *The Indian Express* that he would advise Azam to quit the SP. "Azam saheb had resigned from Lok Sabha so that he can raise the voice of people in the UP Vidhan Sabha. But the party did not make him Leader of Opposition," Khan said.

Former minister Azam Khan has been lodged in the Sitapur district jail in connection with a number of cases.

Khan's attack on Akhilesh came a day after the party's Sambhal MP Shafiqur Rahman Barq reportedly lashed out at the party for allegedly not "working for Muslims".

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Roll back amendments to Juvenile Justice Act, Bengal child rights panel urges Centre

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 11

THE WEST Bengal Commission for Protection of Child Rights, along with the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights (DCPCR), Rajasthan Commission for Protection of Child Rights (RCPCR), Punjab Commission for Protection of Child Rights (PCPCR) & Chandigarh Commission for Protection of Child Rights (CCPCR)

have raised serious objections on the recent amendments to the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act-2015 and demanded that the Centre should roll these back.

"The government should roll back the amendments for the best interest of children. A majority of crimes are committed against children staying in vulnerable situations. The amendments will impact children who cannot afford lawyers, given their social and

economic disadvantage, this amounts to gross injustice towards marginal children who need the protection of justice the most," read the release.

Several sections have been amended and made non-cognizable. This, in effect, means that there will be no FIR in these cases.

Section 75 - Cruelty to child by the CCI staff, Section 76 - Employment of child for begging, Section 77 - Giving intoxicating liquor or narcotic drug of psy-

chotropic substance to a child, Section 78 - Using a child for vending, peddling, carrying, supplying or smuggling any intoxicating liquor, narcotic drug of psychotropic substance, Section 79 - Exploitation of a child employee, Section 81 - Sale and procurement of children for any purpose, Section 83 - Use of children by militant groups or other adults for legal or illegal purposes.

The WBPCPCR stated that the Amendment Act's provi-

sion of reclassifying the cognizability of serious offences runs contrary to India's international obligations.

"India is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), as well as the Optional Protocols thereto on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the optional protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict," said an official.

TATA CONSULTANCY SERVICES LIMITED				
Registered Office: 9th Floor, Nirmal Building, Nariman Point, Mumbai 400 021. Tel: +91 22 6778 9595 Fax: +91 22 6778 9660 e-mail: investor.relations@tcs.com website: www.tcs.com CIN: L22210MH1995PLC084781				
Extract of the audited consolidated financial results for the year ended March 31, 2022				(₹ crore)
	Three month period ended March 31, 2022	Year ended March 31, 2022	Three month period ended March 31, 2021	
Revenue from operations	50,591	1,91,754	43,705	
Profit before tax (before exceptional item)	13,364	51,687	12,527	
Profit before tax (after exceptional item)	13,364	51,687	12,527	
Profit after tax	9,959	38,449	9,282	
Total comprehensive income for the period	10,085	38,354	8,670	
Paid up equity share capital (Face value: ₹1 per share)	366	366	370	
Total reserves (including non-controlling interests)*	89,480	89,480	86,738	
Earnings per equity share:- Basic and diluted (₹)	26.85	103.62	24.97	
*Balances for three month period ended March 31, 2022 represent balances as per the audited consolidated balance sheet for the year ended March 31, 2022 and balances for three month period ended March 31, 2021 represent balances as per the audited consolidated balance sheet for the year ended March 31, 2021 as required by Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015.				
Extract of the audited standalone financial results for the year ended March 31, 2022				(₹ crore)
	Three month period ended March 31, 2022	Year ended March 31, 2022	Three month period ended March 31, 2021	
Revenue from operations	42,459	1,60,341	36,017	
Profit before tax (before exceptional item)	12,626	49,723	10,917	
Profit before tax (after exceptional item)	12,626	49,723	10,917	
Profit after tax	9,795	38,187	8,174	
Total comprehensive income for the period	9,611	37,937	7,902	
Notes: 1. The audited consolidated financial results and audited standalone financial results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at its meeting held on April 11, 2022. The statutory auditors have expressed an unmodified audit opinion on these results. 2. The Board of Directors at its meeting held on April 11, 2022, has proposed a final dividend of ₹22.00 per equity share. 3. The Board of Directors at its meeting held on January 12, 2022, approved a proposal to buy-back upto 4,00,00,000 equity shares of the Company for an aggregate amount not exceeding ₹18,000 crore, being 1.08% of the total paid up equity share capital at ₹4,500 per equity share. The shareholders approved the same on February 12, 2022, by way of a special resolution through postal ballot. A Letter of Offer was made to all eligible shareholders. The Company bought back 4,00,00,000 equity shares out of the shares that were tendered by eligible shareholders and extinguished the equity shares on March 29, 2022. Capital redemption reserve was created to the extent of share capital extinguished (₹4 crore). The excess cost of buy-back of ₹18,049 crore (including ₹49 crore towards transaction cost of buy-back over par value of shares and corresponding tax on buy-back of ₹4,192 crore were offset from retained earnings. 4. The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format for three month and year ended March 31, 2022, are available on the BSE Limited website (URL: www.bseindia.com), the National Stock Exchange of India Limited website (URL: www.nseindia.com) and on the Company's website (URL: www.tcs.com/investors).				
Mumbai April 11, 2022				For and on behalf of the Board of Directors Rajesh Gopinathan CEO and Managing Director

CORRUPTION CASE

CBI custody of Deshmukh, Waze extended till April 16

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

A SPECIAL CBI court on Monday sent former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh, dismissed cop Sachin Waze and Deshmukh's staffers Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde to further custody of the CBI till April 16 in connection with a corruption case.

"Considering the progress of the investigation so far and taking into consideration the nature of the allegations in the FIR, this court is satisfied that the grounds for further extension of CBI custody are satisfactory and hence, the accused persons are required to be remanded in CBI custody for further investigation as prayed," special judge D

P Shingade said in his order passed at 8.30pm after reserving it for nearly four hours.

The CBI had arrested the four last week after which they were sent to the central agency's custody till April 11. The CBI arrested Deshmukh on allegations that he had played a role in transfers and postings in the police force for illegal gratification and that bribes were collected from orchestra bars and restaurants on his instructions by Waze. On Monday, special public prosecutor Ratandeep Singh, representing CBI, sought further custody of the four men for five days. Singh submitted that their custody is required to confront them with each other "based on evidence that has come to the fore during probe".



NOTICE

We wish to inform our dear consumers that the Consumer Rights Statement is available at our billing centers free of cost for a copy and the same is also available on the Tata Power Website : www.tatapower.com in downloadable format (Regulations >> License Area Mumbai >> Consumer Rights Statement). This notice is issued in compliance with the MERC's directive.

The Tata Power Company Limited



Contact Centre Operations Deptt. (Corporate Centre), Centre-1, World Trade Centre, 10th Floor, Cuffee Parade, Mumbai-400005

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

RFP No. SBI:CCOD-OB-01/2022-23 DATED: 12.04.2022
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from the eligible bidders for setting up and providing manpower for operating outbound contact centre services. Bidders, who are interested to submit bids, visit Procurement news at <https://www.sbi.co.in> and e-Procurement agency portal <https://sbilabprocure.com>. For bid participation, please visit <https://etender.sbi/SBI>.
Commencement of download of RFP: 08.04.2022 at 10:00 hrs
Last date and time for submission of bids: 29.04.2022 up to 16:00 hrs
Contact Centre Operations Department

EXPRESS Careers

JANGIPUR MUNICIPALITY
P.O. - Raghunathganj, Dist Murshidabad
Recruitment Notice
Application are invited for the post of HHWs under Jangipur Municipality only for female candidates should be married/ Divorced / Widow in age group of 30-40 as on 01.01.2021 and age limit may be relaxed 22 years of SC/ST/OBC (A/B) minimum qualification Madhyamik Pass. Candidates must be a voter under Jangipur Municipality. Last date of application received within 04.05.2022. Further detailed information contact with Jangipur Municipality Office and our Municipal Website <http://jangipurmunicipality.org>.

Sd/- Chairman
Jangipur Municipality

Banks Board Bureau
An Autonomous Body of Government of India
Extends the last date of submission of application for the positions of
Deputy Managing Director (Lending and Project Finance), Deputy Managing Director (Chief Financial Officer) & Deputy Managing Director (Chief Risk Officer)
of
National Bank for Financing Infrastructure and Development
With reference to Bureau's earlier advertisement dated March 22, 2022, inviting applications for the aforementioned three positions of DMD in NaBFID, it is informed that the Bureau extends the last date of submission of applications up to **5.00 pm on 22-Apr-2022**. Further, it is clarified that, the **Cost Accountants** are also eligible to apply for the said positions. Other eligibility criteria, terms and conditions as per our earlier advertisements will remain the same.
For detailed eligibility terms and conditions for each of the DMD position, please see the advertisement on <https://banksboardbureau.org.in/> under the "Vacancies and Recommendations" tab or on <https://www.sidbi.in/en>

Advertisement No. 53/2022
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
Chairman and Managing Director
in
Cotton Corporation of India Limited (CCI)
Last date of receipt of applications in
PESB is by 1500 hours on
09th June, 2022
For details login to web site
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

Advertisement No. 55/2022
Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
Director (Personnel)
in
Central Warehousing Corporation
Last date of receipt of applications in PESB is by 15.00 hours on **14th June, 2022**.

For details login to website
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

SBI
State Bank of India
Central Recruitment & Promotion Department
Corporate Centre, Mumbai
Phone: 022-22820427; Fax: 022-22820411
Recruitment of Specialist Cadre Officers on Regular / Contractual Basis
Applications are invited from Indian citizens for the following posts.

Sr. No.	Post	Contractual / Regular Grade/ Scale	Vacancy	Advertisement No.
1	Senior Executive (Economist)	Contractual Equivalent MMGS-II	02	CRPD/SCO/ 2022-23/01
2	Advisor (Fraud Risk)	Contractual Equivalent TEGS-VII (General Manager)	04	CRPD/SCO/ 2022-23/02
3	Manager (Performance Planning & Review)	Regular MMGS-III	02	CRPD/SCO/ 2022-23/03

For eligibility criteria (age, experience, job profile etc.), requisite fees and other details, log on to Bank's website <https://bank.sbi/web/careers> with a link for online submission of application as well as online payment of application fee. Refer detailed advertisement to ensure eligibility and other details before applying and remitting fees.

• DATE FOR FILING ONLINE APPLICATION & PAYMENT OF FEES: FROM 08.04.2022 TO 28.04.2022.

For any query, please write to us through link "CONTACT US" → "Post Your Query" which is available on Bank's website

Place: Mumbai
Date: 08.04.2022
General Manager

HDFC
HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE CORPORATION LTD.
Branch Address : Brooke House, 2nd Floor, 9 Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata 700 071 .
Tel : 033 - 22801980; 22815491 - 94; 23018300; Fax : 033 - 22806295; Web : www.hdfc.com
DEMAND NOTICE
Under Section 13 (2) of the Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Housing Development Finance Corporation Ltd. (HDFC Limited) under Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement Of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued Demand Notices under Section 13 (2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) listed hereunder, to pay the amounts mentioned in the respective Demand Notice/s, within 60 days from the date of the respective Notice/s, as per details given below. The undersigned have, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known respective addresses of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s). Copies of the said Notices are available with the undersigned, and the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s), may, if they so desire, collect the respective copy from the undersigned on any working day during normal office hours.
In connection with the above, Notice is hereby given, once again, to the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) to pay to HDFC Limited, within 60 days from the date of publication of this Notice, the amounts indicated hereinbelow in their respective names, together with further interest @ 18% p.a. as detailed in the said Demand Notices from the respective dates mentioned below in column (c) till the date of payment and / or realisation, read with the loan agreement and other documents/writings, if any, executed by the said Borrower(s). As security for due repayment of the loan, the following Secured Asset(s) have been mortgaged to HDFC Limited by the said Borrower (s) respectively.

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Legal Heir(s)/Legal Representative(s)	Total Outstanding	Date of Demand Notice	Description of Secured Asset(s) /Immovable Property(ies)
(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)
1.	Borrower: Mr. Withun Lodh	Rs. 36,94,433/- as on 31.01.2022	21.02.2022	The property being the southern side flat admeasuring 978 sq. ft (90.89 sq. mtrs) approx., on the second floor of the building constructed upon land admeasuring 03 cottahs 10 chittaks more or less, situated at Mouza: Raipur, JL No.: 33, SP No.: 53, CS Plot No.: 520 (P), within the limits of Kolkata Municipal Corporation Ward No.: 99, Assessee No.: 21-099-04-1296-0, KMC Premises No.: 64/8/2/230, Raipur Road, postal address: 2/136M, Sree Colony, P.S.: Jadavpur, Kolkata: 700092, alongwith the undivided proportionate share of the land and the construction thereon present and in future (the said property). The premises is buttred and bounded as follows: On the North : Colony Road, On the South : EP No.: 399, On the East : EP No.: 401, On the West : Colony Road.
2	Borrower : Mr. Panikaj Das Co-Borrower : Mrs. Mousumi Mandal	Rs. 9,29,703/- as on 31.01.2022	21.02.2022	The property being Flat No.: 4/21, admeasuring 466 sq. ft (43.31 sq. mtrs) approx. (s.b.u.), on the fourth floor of Block: A, in the housing project known as "Amrita Abasan Phase- II", constructed upon land admeasuring 3.6 bighas more or less, situated at Mouza: Natagachi, JL No.: 97, Re. Survey No.: 1495, Touzi No.: 109, LR Khatian No.: 253, RS. & LR Dag Nos.: 49(P), 47(P), 52(P), within the limits of Kalikapur Gram Panchayat I, P.S.: Sonarpur, Dist.: South 24 Parganas, Pin: 743613, alongwith the undivided proportionate share of the land and the construction thereon present and in future (the said property). The premises is buttred and bounded as follows: On the North : Dag No.: 46(P), On the South : Dag No.: 53, On the East : Dag No.: 47 & Amrita Abasan, On the West : 40 feet wide Cannal Road.
3	Borrower : Mrs. Mousumi Gupta	Rs. 15,92,681/- as on 31.01.2022	21.02.2022	The property being Flat No.: 2C, admeasuring 600 sq. ft (55.76 sq. mtrs) approx., on the North West side of the Second floor of the building known as "Uttarayan", constructed upon land admeasuring 07 cottahs 34 sq. ft more or less, situated at Premises No.: 132, Vivekananda Park, Kamdahari, Garla, postal address: V24, Vivekananda Sarani, Kamdahari, Garla, within the limits of Kolkata Municipal Corporation Ward No.: 111, P.S.: Regent Park, Kolkata: 700084, alongwith the undivided proportionate share of the land and the construction thereon present and in future (the said property). The premises is buttred and bounded as follows: On the North : 14 feet wide KMC Road, On the South : Other premises, On the East : 4 feet wide common passage, On the West : Property of Mr. C. R. Banerjee.

* with further interest @ 18% p.a. as applicable, incidental expenses, costs, charges etc incurred till the date of payment and / or realization, if the said Borrowers shall fail to make payment to HDFC Limited as aforesaid, then HDFC Limited shall proceed against the above Secured Asset(s) / Immovable Property (ies) under Section 13 (4) of the said Act and the applicable Rules entirely at the risk of the said Borrower(s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) as to the costs and consequences.
The said Borrower (s) / Legal Heir(s) / Legal Representative(s) are prohibited under the said Act to transfer the aforesaid Secured Asset (s) / Immovable Property (ies), whether by way of sale, lease or otherwise without the prior written consent of HDFC Limited. Any person who contravenes or abets contravention of the provisions of the Act or Rules made thereunder shall be liable for imprisonment and/or penalty as provided under the Act.

For Housing Development Finance Corporation Limited
Sd/- ANUBHAB MAITRA
Authorised Officer
Regd. Office : Ramon House, H T Parekh Marg, 169 Backbay Reclamation, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020.
Corporate Identity Number : L70100MH1977PLC019916.



The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE THIRD SHOT

Extension of precautionary vaccination drive is welcome.
Government should follow science, tweak strategy when needed

FROM APRIL 10, all adults who received the second dose of the Covid vaccine nine months ago have become eligible for a “precautionary” third shot. This is a step in the right direction. Though the SARS-CoV-2 virus is at its lowest ebb in the country, a number of states have relaxed safety measures and economic activity in most sectors is back to pre-Covid levels, the urgency to shield people more securely against the pathogen is far from over. A substantial body of literature and evidence from several countries attest to the efficacy of the third dose in preventing serious infection among those with a compromised immunity. While the jury is out on whether a booster dose confers lifelong protection against emerging variants, there is little doubt that such doses constitute a significant public health response. The trajectory of the country’s precautionary vaccination drive is, therefore, backed by sound science.

Both government hospitals and private healthcare facilities were involved when the government launched the precautionary vaccination drive in January, for frontline workers, healthcare professionals and people above 60. But those eligible for the shots after the government’s latest announcement will have to pay to get the jabs from a private hospital. This is a reasonable approach given the current evidence on the need for the booster doses. However, the government needs to monitor the Covid situation carefully and recalibrate the policy on boosters when needed. Since the private sector has a limited presence in the healthcare system in large parts of rural India, the shots are likely to be out of reach for a substantial section of the population. If the virus shows signs of flaring up, therefore, the government should be prepared to roll out free shots in healthcare centres. Because of the nine-month gap between the second and third shots, the number of people eligible for the boosters is, currently, low. The primary vaccination programme had picked up pace last year around the second half of June. In the coming months, therefore, there is likely to be an appreciable increase in the number of people eligible for the third shot. The vaccination programme must be prepared to cater to the increase in demand.

At least five homegrown or indigenously manufactured vaccines for adults have received the country’s drug regulator’s approval. Second generation vaccines such as Corbevax and Covovax have shown promise in clinical trials. However, they have not become part of the vaccination project largely because the mix-and-match approach — favoured by experts in several parts of the world — has not received much traction amongst the country’s policymakers. With the precautionary dose project still in its infancy, there should be more and wider conversations on the best way forward. The country’s vaccine bouquet makes it well-placed to take the heterologous approach.

DIVERSITY IN UNITY

Union Home Minister's Hindi push is unwise and unnecessary.
India is one nation, with many languages

UNION HOME MINISTER Amit Shah’s suggestion, made at a meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee on Thursday, that people of different states should communicate with each other in Hindi, not English, threatens to stoke an old fault line. The debate over India’s official language has an acrimonious history, it triggered violent protests in the 1960s. The language war was finally settled in favour of accommodation of different languages as against the dominance of Hindi. There is no good reason to disturb the settlement that was arrived at after a tortuous process, one that has proved to be successful in a country that speaks in many tongues. Several states in the country’s south are especially sensitive to the language debate because they were founded on the bedrock of linguistic subnationalism after intense and prolonged campaigns. Over the years, many have made significant strides towards making the local language the medium of official communication and governance. While some in these states understand Hindi — Bollywood has played a key role in popularising the language across the country — it is also true that it remains a not-so-familiar tongue, arguably even more than English, for large sections of the population. English is the preferred language of communication of these states with the Centre and with Hindi-speaking states, while the local administration conducts its business in the regional language. In his speech, Shah pointed to the seriousness with which the Centre may be pushing the case for Hindi: Nearly 70 per cent of the Cabinet agenda is now prepared in Hindi; 22,000 Hindi teachers have been recruited in the eight states of the Northeast, which have agreed to make Hindi compulsory up to Class X; nine tribal communities of the Northeast have adopted Devanagari script for their dialects.

Shah has been testing this ground for some time now. In 2019, he had spoken about “one nation, one language”. This slogan and approach is part of a vision of India that favours the imposition of a single language over the country’s diverse linguistic cultures. The Constitution envisages a Union of states working within a federal framework. Many of the states are home to subnationalisms imagined around a regional language, a fact the All India Congress Committee leading the freedom movement recognised at its Nagpur session in 1920. Most of these languages are older than Hindi and carry memories of protest. The Home Minister should let sleeping fault lines lie.

WRITING THE IMAGE

Shivkumar Subramaniam made an impact as actor. His greater contribution was as a writer of films

IT IS LIKELY that most viewers of Hindi-language entertainment will best remember Shivkumar Subramaniam, who died on Sunday, for the small but impactful roles he played on the big and small screen: As the stern father of the bride Shiv Swaminathan in *2 States* (2014); the crooked cop Lobo in *Kaminey* (2009), the dementia-afflicted old man in *Tu Hai Mera Sunday* (2016) and the egotistic tycoon IM Virani in the TV show, *Mukti Bandhan*. However, among industry colleagues and cinema devotees, Subramaniam was loved and respected as much — if not more — for his work as the writer of some of recent Hindi cinema’s finest films.

The first of these was the 1989 sleeper hit *Parinda*, a gritty crime drama set in Mumbai’s underworld. The film was meant to be director Vidhu Vinod Chopra’s shot at mainstream success: It ended up also winning plaudits for the realism and emotional heft of the writing, becoming the template that subsequent classics of the genre, such as Ram Gopal Verma’s *Satya*, followed, and winning Subramaniam a Filmfare Award for Best Screenplay. He revisited the textures and tones of the criminal underworld — once again to much critical acclaim — in the 1996 thriller *Is Raat Ki Subah Nah*i, directed by Sudhir Mishra. Subramaniam’s second Filmfare Award — this time for Best Story — came for the 2005 film *Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi*, which was widely recognised as one of the best-crafted political dramas in recent Hindi cinema.

That these seminal works form part of a short list of writing credits — including for story, screenplay and dialogue — says much about the finesse with which he wielded his pen. Subramaniam was a gifted actor, deploying his deep voice and authoritative screen presence to great effect even in the briefest of roles. But his most indelible contributions are the cinematic gems that he helped write and bring to life.



HIMANSHU

EARLIER THIS MONTH, two different estimates of poverty and inequality were published by authors affiliated to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank (WB). They added to the existing pool of private estimates of poverty and inequality since 2011-12. Private, because the government, which used to conduct consumption expenditure surveys (CES) and update poverty lines, has abdicated its responsibility.

The last consumption survey of 2017-18 was junked for no reason. Based on the leaked estimates of consumption expenditure from that survey, S Subramanian reported an increase in poverty from 31 per cent in 2011-12 to 35 per cent in 2017-18 with the number of poor increasing by 52 million. Santosh Mehrotra and Jajati Parida reported an increase in headcount poverty from 22 per cent in 2011-12 to 26 per cent in 2019-20 using the consumption aggregates from the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) with the number of poor increasing by 78 million. As against these estimates, which used different consumption aggregates from the NSO surveys, estimates from the IMF and WB have reported a significant decline in poverty after 2011-12 although they differ from each other on the level of poverty as well as the magnitude of poverty reduction since 2011-12.

The IMF working paper is authored by Surjit Bhalla, Arvind Virmani and Karan Bhasin. This paper is similar to Bhalla’s earlier work on poverty in terms of methodology with not very different conclusions. Bhalla has argued for long that CES surveys do not capture the estimates of consumption expenditure correctly and are unfit for poverty measurement. He maintains that position here as well and in fact justifies the withholding of the 2017-18 CES survey by the government. He prefers using the Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) estimates from the national accounts. The difference between survey estimates of consumption expenditure and national accounts (NA) are not unique to India.

But the PFCE estimates do not give the distribution of consumption across households which is a prerequisite for estimating poverty. These are derived aggregates and are available for the country as a whole with no separate estimate for rural/urban or states. Bhalla or any-

Addressing poverty

Estimates remain shots in the dark. This needs to change for more sensitive policies, programmes



The expansion of the PDS during the pandemic has certainly contributed to reducing the misery of the poor who suffered through a sharp slowdown of the economy and the subsequent disruption in economic activity during the pandemic. This calls for strengthening the social safety nets and expenditure on food and livelihood schemes given the challenge of economic recovery coupled with rising inflation.

one else is left with no choice but to use the same CES surveys they dismiss as faulty for getting consumption estimates. One implication of this is that while the consumption expenditure estimates obtained from the surveys are deemed faulty and biased, the ranking of households from the same consumption surveys is seen as free from error. While they find the 2011-12 survey to be right, they see the 2017-18 survey as faulty even though both have been done using the same sampling strategy and concepts and by the same institution.

There is nothing new in this method of updating the NSS survey estimates using estimates from the PFCE. But it has been rejected multiple times by official expert committees after careful examination of the differences between the two estimates. All committees concluded that these are essentially non-comparable because of differences in concepts, design and aggregation methodology. All committees have unanimously rejected the practice of adjusting survey estimates based on NAS estimates of PFCE. This is not the practice in India, or anywhere in the world.

Based on this flawed methodology, Bhalla concludes that India has eradicated extreme poverty even before the pandemic with the percentage of population below the \$1.9 poverty line of the World Bank at only 1.4 per cent. While the levels may vary, his conclusions on the trend in poverty reduction are not very different from a completely different exercise by the World Bank. Both conclude that poverty reduction has slowed down in the last seven years of the present NDA government compared to the 10-year period of 2004-2014 of the UPA. While Bhalla reports 26 million people moving out of poverty every year during the UPA regime, this number is one third at 8.6 million for the NDA government. In terms of percentage point per annum (ppa) reduction in poverty, it is 2.5 ppa for the UPA declining to one fourth at 0.7 ppa for the current NDA.

The World Bank estimates also come to a similar conclusion with the rate of poverty reduction between 2004-11 at 2.5 ppa which declines to almost half at 1.3 ppa for 2011-18. They arrive at their figures by using estimates from the Consumer Pyramid Survey of Households (CPSH), a privately conducted survey by the

Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). They do this by reweighing the household and population weights of the CPSH given the problems with the survey. While their methodology is also questionable, they try and adjust for the anomalies of the CPSH surveys to arrive at estimates as close as possible to the NSS surveys. Notably, they also dismiss the Bhalla methodology as one of the options.

While the broad conclusion of a sharp slowdown in poverty reduction during the present NDA government compared to the UPA period may be valid, there are differences in the level and extent of poverty reduction claimed, with some studies showing a rise in poverty. But the real issue is not just what happened to poverty and inequality but also what factors contributed to poverty reduction.

There appears to be a consensus that many of the initiatives during the UPA era, including the rural employment guarantee programme and the Food Security Act have contributed to improvement in the lives of the poor, pulling them out of poverty. Bhalla also agrees and documents the stellar role of the in-kind transfers through the subsidised food scheme under the Public Distribution System. The expansion of the PDS during the pandemic has certainly contributed to reducing the misery of the poor who suffered through a sharp slowdown of the economy and the subsequent disruption in economic activity during the pandemic. This calls for strengthening the social safety nets and expenditure on food and livelihood schemes given the challenge of economic recovery coupled with rising inflation.

But an important message is also to strengthen the statistical system and make it independent of state interference. Poverty, inequality and a deeper understanding of what works for poverty reduction is not just an academic exercise but is crucial for designing policies and programmes that work. The responsibility of anchoring policies and programmes to clearly defined goals of poverty reduction rests with the government. Given the controversy over poverty estimates, it is all the more important that the government conducts the CES at the earliest and decides the yardstick of measuring poverty which is the poverty line.

The writer teaches at JNU



MADHAV PAI, JAYA DHINDAW AND REJEET MATHEWS

CLIMATE IN THE CITY

Make cities climate-resilient for greater returns on infrastructure investment

THE IPCC’S LATEST report shows how smart urban planning can mitigate the effects of climate change. The Union budget 2022 had announced the formation of a high-level committee of planners, economists and institutions to make recommendations on urban sector policies. The finance minister said that by the time India turns 100, nearly half the population will be living in urban areas, making it imperative to not only nurture India’s mega cities but also facilitate tier-2 and tier-3 cities to gear up for the future.

India is witnessing one of the largest urban growth spurts in history. However, three-quarters of the infrastructure that will exist in cities by 2050 is yet to be built. This presents Indian cities with an unprecedented opportunity to look at urban planning and development through a long-term strategic lens to enable economic, environment and social impact.

Urban infrastructure development results in high economic value-add but often leads to unequal and inequitable growth. As a developing economy, negative externalities such as air and water pollution, climate change, flooding, and extreme heat events also impinge on the economic value of urban infrastructure. Research has shown if cities are developed as compact and climate-resilient centres, then infrastructure investments can produce more economic gain over time with minimal climate impact whilst ensuring equitable growth.

Town and country planning acts in India have largely remained unchanged over the



Master plans face prolonged delays in preparation, sanctioning and implementation. They lack the mandate for integration with other sectoral infrastructure plans which largely remain as wishlists. Inter-agency negotiations remain out of the scope of the master planning process.

past 50 years, relying on techniques set up by the British. Cities still create land use and regulatory control-based master plans which, on their own, are ineffective in planning and managing cities. Despite the many changes brought about by modernisation, the focus of planning continues to be the strict division of the city into various homogeneous zones such as residential, commercial and industrial. This is done to prevent mixing of incompatible uses and to avoid economic and social integration — a relic of the industrial age when manufacturing and trade were the primary economic activities in cities.

India’s hierarchical system of cities — from mega cities which are the drivers of innovation and economic growth to smaller towns which support local and regional economies and ensure linkages to the rural hinterlands — requires targeted economic development planning and positive climate action.

Master plans face prolonged delays in preparation, sanctioning and implementation. They lack the mandate for integration with other sectoral infrastructure plans which largely remain as wishlists. Inter-agency negotiations remain out of the scope of the master planning process. They tend to take a static, broad-brush approach to cities that have dynamic fine-grained structures and local specificities. In most cases, they end up having a low implementation rate. Globally, cities are moving to the practice of developing strategic plans and projects along with local area plans.

A set of strategic projects that have the potential to trigger growth in the region, to achieve the vision, are identified through a negotiated process. The projects are designed and developed in the context of land that can be made available and capital resources that can be raised. Indian cities should transition to using master plans for developing a shared vision and stating desired long-term outcomes as a regulatory control tool. Strategic plans should be developed every five years to increase a city’s competitiveness and help it achieve its strategic goals with respect to sustainability and economic development by identifying key projects to be implemented.

Finally, local area plans should be developed to ensure the health, safety and welfare of citizens through public participation, contextualising local challenges, needs and ambitions, while supporting the overall objectives of the master plan. Cities should also aim to mainstream the use of spatialised social, economic and environmental data to create robust links across the urban-rural continuum.

Plans are about people and not just physical spaces. Building consensus around future growth and development, with a focus on climate action, economic and social integration, is crucial. Such a participatory process is what will help build a vibrant, inclusive and liveable urban India.

The writers are with World Resources Institute (WRI) India Ross Centre. Views are personal

APRIL 12, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

INSAT IN ORBIT

INDIAN SPACE SCIENTISTS overcame a major hurdle by successfully firing the first apogee motor in their second attempt to put India’s multipurpose and unique domestic satellite Insat-1A into intermediate orbit. The major manoeuvre was considered very significant as it was done despite the persistent problem in the O band antenna, the failure of which resulted in the postponement of the firing of the apogee thruster two days ago. The motor was fired for about half an hour according to the master control facility at Hasan. The spacecraft will enhance the meteorological, communication and televi-

sion relay and radio broadcasting capabilities of the country. The satellite’s health is now normal and all activities will be carried out as planned, ISRO has said.

ARGENTINA RELENTS

THE ARGENTINE NAVY has withdrawn all its warships and is avoiding confrontation with the British navy. The British had threatened to sink any Argentine ship within the 200-mile limit of the Falkland Islands. This is a threat experts believe that the British navy is fully capable of carrying out against the less sophisticated Argentine navy. However, Argentina will send soldiers to Falklands by

air. Meanwhile in Buenos Aires, the US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, said that “there is no agreement” between Argentina and Britain on resolving the Falkland Islands dispute”.

JNANPITH AWARD

PUNJABI POET, AMRITA Pritam has been given the Jnanpith Award for 1981. She is the first Punjabi author and the second woman recipient of the award after Bengali writer Ashapurna Devi. This year, the money for the highest literary award in the country has been raised from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1, 50,000.

7 THE IDEAS PAGE

The larger battle for Pakistan

Political crisis unfolding in Islamabad is not just an internal power struggle. Pakistan's battles are tied to external geopolitical equations and rivalries



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

AS PAKISTAN GOES through a major political convulsion, India must resist the temptation to see the changes across our western frontiers through the narrow prism of bilateral relations. Delhi must focus instead on the potential shifts in Pakistan's strategic orientation triggered by the current crisis. An India that gets an accurate sense of Pakistan's changing geopolitics will be able to better deal with Islamabad.

The unfolding battle for Pakistan is not just another internal power struggle next door. Pakistan is an important regional piece in the power play between the US, China and Russia. Given its location at the crossroads of the Subcontinent, Middle East, Eurasia, and China, Pakistan has always been a vital piece of real estate that was actively sought by contending geopolitical blocs. The internal and external have always been tightly linked in Pakistan. Today, Pakistan's internal battles are tied to external geopolitical rivalry.

Engaging India is unlikely to be a high priority for the new government in Islamabad. Today, Pakistan has many other things to worry about — reviving its flagging economic fortunes, stabilising the Durand Line with Afghanistan, and rebalancing its ties with the major actors in the Middle East, including Iran, UAE, Saudi Arabia and Turkey.

Every one of these tasks is a challenging one for Islamabad. Even more daunting is the need to reset Pakistan's relations with the US and China at a time when Washington and Beijing are at each other's throat. The sharpening geopolitical contest between the US and Europe on the one hand and China and Russia on the other will severely test the new rulers of Pakistan. India's difficulties in navigating between the US and Russia in the Ukraine crisis might look rather tame in comparison.

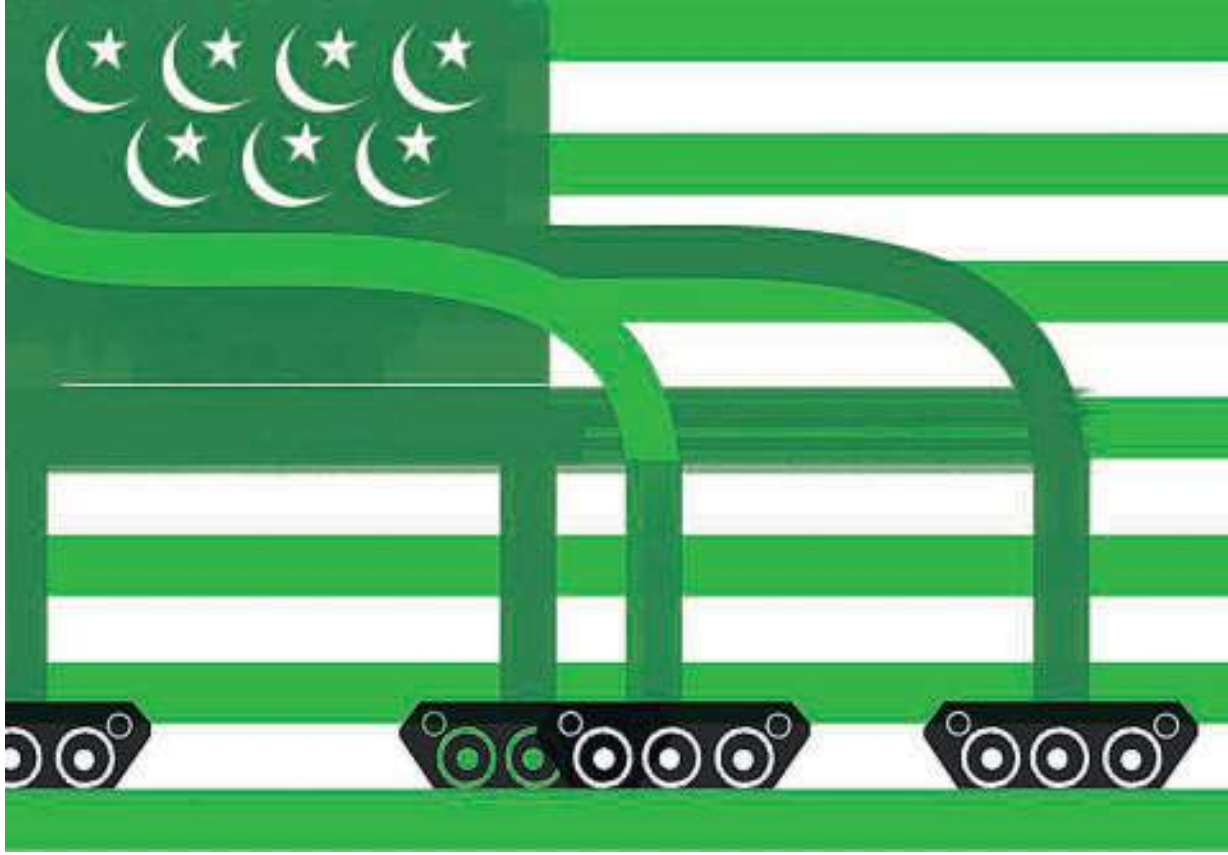
Any Indian strategy in dealing with the new government in Islamabad would depend on an assessment of Pakistan's post-Imran political trajectory. Two important factors stand out.

First is the changing nature of civil military relations in Pakistan. For many Indian observers of Pakistan, Imran's ouster is a repeat of the familiar story of the army stepping in to throw out a prime minister who had become a problem. The fall of Imran Khan, however, must be seen as something more. It is part of a serious intra-elite struggle that transcends the well-known military dominance over Pakistan's polity.

Imran Khan has certainly failed to build the "new Pakistan" that he had promised. The current episode suggests that it might not be easy to simply return to the "old Pakistan" where the army sets the ground rules and punishes those who choose to violate those rules.

One of the more interesting questions to come out of the current episode is whether the army's famed internal coherence and unity of command might endure the crisis. The trouble between Imran Khan and the army chief, Qamar Javed Bajwa, came out in the open when the former refused to let go the ISI chief, Lt General Faiz Hameed, as part of the routine army transfers.

Although General Bajwa eventually prevailed, there was much speculation about the deepening relationship between Imran Khan



C R Sasikumar

and General Hameed and the apparent interest of the former in appointing the latter as the next army chief. Making any assessment more complicated are reports that Khan tried, unsuccessfully, to sack General Bajwa very late in the crisis.

That a large section of retired army officers were publicly backing Imran Khan through the crisis is not a secret. Equally true is the genuine empathy for him among the ranks of the Pakistan army. This mirrors the expansive following that Khan enjoys in the broader population. That was visible in Sunday's massive protests against his ouster.

It is not clear if Imran Khan has the political skill and the organisational capability to turn his cult-like following into a force that can continue to challenge the establishment. But there is no doubt that he has thrown down the gauntlet. It remains to be seen if the army can handle Imran Khan's challenge effectively and decisively in the coming days.

Second is the growing fragility of Pakistan's polity triggered by the deepening economic crisis and sharpening social contradictions. This is not easily overcome by a celebration of constitutionalism that has prevailed last week against Imran Khan's attempt to hold onto power. An important precondition for democratic stability in a developing society is the need for an elite consensus on the rules of political contestation and the distribution of economic benefits.

Imran Khan has broken that consensus within Pakistan's political class on deference to the Pakistan army and has demonised his political opponents. There is no sign that Khan is about to change his ways and behave like the leader of a responsible opposition. And as the new government backed by the army seeks to stabilise the economy by turning to the IMF, the society will have to endure much pain in the near term. That in turn would open continuous political opportunities for Khan to attack the next government.

There is no guarantee that the army's ties with new civilian rulers will be smooth nor can we assume that the civilian coalition against Imran Khan will survive the many challenges ahead as it confronts difficult policy challenges on multiple fronts.

While the army and the new government are eager to restore ties with the US, Imran Khan has made it hard for them, by calling the new rulers 'foreign imports'. By tapping into the deep reservoir of anti-American and anti-Western resentments in Pakistan, Khan has positioned himself as a true nationalist while painting the army as an American collaborator.

These internal challenges are feeding into Pakistan's geopolitics. The intra-elite confrontation in Pakistan is taking place amidst a global contest between the US and Europe on the one hand and Russia and China on the other. Pakistan, which traditionally enjoyed good relations with the West as well as China, is finding it hard to maintain a balance in its great power relations.

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Imran Khan's repeated praise for India's independent foreign policy was in essence a critique of the Pakistan army that has long steered Islamabad's international relations. Even in opposition, he might serve a useful purpose for China and Russia who want to prevent Pakistan from getting too close to the US.

In the past, China rarely objected to Pakistan's relations with the US. Compare Beijing's current anti-Quad rants with its deafening silence on Pakistan's status as a "major non-NATO ally". As it now locks horns with Washington, Beijing has high stakes in preventing renewed strategic warmth between the US and Pakistan. So does Russia. The potential geopolitical equations emerging out of the crisis in Pakistan are likely to be very different from the patterns so familiar to us.

The good news from Pakistan is that India is not part of the argument between the political classes or between Imran Khan and the "deep state" represented by the army. The bad news, however, is that India can't simply stand by as the major powers seek to define the future of Pakistan. Can Delhi influence that contestation in its own favour? This is a very different question than the usual one on "how to improve ties" with Pakistan.

The writer is a Senior Fellow at the Asia Society Policy Institute, Delhi and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Russia's retreat from Kyiv marks a change in the dynamics and the military balance, but the conflict is far from over." — THE GUARDIAN

Shifting to neutral

RBI has decided to prioritise inflation. But trade-off between managing prices and government's borrowing programme presents a challenge



RADHIKA PANDEY

THE FIRST BI-MONTHLY meeting of the Reserve Bank of India's Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) for the current financial year reaffirmed its focus on inflation management. While the MPC voted to keep the policy rate unchanged at 4 per cent and retained its accommodative stance, the wording was changed to "remain accommodative while focusing on withdrawal of accommodation to ensure that inflation remains within the target going forward, while supporting growth." This statement sets the stage for a shift to a neutral stance in the next meeting and policy rate hikes in subsequent meetings. RBI has announced the withdrawal of some of the steps taken during the pandemic to support the economy. These will foster the normalisation of monetary policy.

The central bank has acknowledged that the disruptions caused by the Russia-Ukraine crisis have upended their growth and inflation outlook. It has steeply revised its inflation projection from 4.5 per cent earlier to 5.7 per cent now for the current financial year. The projection is based on an average global crude oil price of \$100 per barrel. While oil prices could swing either way, elevated non-fuel prices pose a substantial upside risk to inflation. The Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO's) Food Price Index, a gauge of global food prices, posted a record growth of 12.6 per cent from February. The surge in the index was broad-based, driven by a rise in prices of vegetable oils, cereals, meat, sugar and dairy products. Input cost pressures emerging from a broad-based surge in prices of industrial raw materials and supply chain disruptions are also likely to pose a sustained upward pressure on inflation.

During the last monetary policy announcement, there were concerns that the RBI was falling behind the curve in managing inflation at a time when globally many central banks including the US Federal Reserve, and the Bank of England have started raising rates and signalling aggressive rate hikes and are reducing their balance-sheet to normalise monetary policy and tame inflation.

While the RBI has been managing liquidity infused into the system during the pandemic through the Variable Rate Reverse Repo Auctions (VRRR) to withdraw liquidity and Variable Rate Repo auctions to inject liquidity, it has now formalised the Liquidity Adjustment Framework (LAF). The LAF is a framework to absorb and inject liquidity into the banking system.

The RBI has introduced the Standing Deposit Facility (SDF) as the lower bound of the LAF corridor to absorb liquidity. The idea of the SDF was first mooted by the Urjit Patel Committee report on the monetary policy

framework. The RBI Act was amended through the Finance Act of 2018 to allow RBI to use this instrument.

The SDF will be a facility available to banks to park their funds. The SDF will serve as the standing liquidity absorption facility at the lower end of the LAF corridor. At the upper end of the corridor is the Marginal Standing Facility (MSF) to inject liquidity. With the introduction of the SDF, the fixed rate reverse repo rate seems to be defunct. Through the SDF, the RBI can absorb liquidity without placing government securities as collateral, hence it will give greater flexibility to the central bank.

The LAF is now a symmetric corridor with a width of 50 basis points. The policy repo rate is at the centre of the corridor, with the MSF 25 basis points above the policy rate and the SDF 25 basis points below the policy rate.

The change also marks a shift away from reverse repo being the effective policy rate. During the pandemic, the reverse repo rate was reduced to incentivise banks to park lesser funds with the RBI and lend more. This led to the breakdown of the symmetric LAF corridor. With the introduction of the SDF, the RBI has reverted to a symmetric liquidity management corridor.

While on the face of it, there are no rate hikes, the shift from the reverse repo rate to the SDF signals a tightening of monetary policy. There is a 40 basis points increase in the floor rate. It may be argued that the RBI has been absorbing liquidity through variable reverse repo auctions where the cut-off rates are closer to 4 per cent. In the medium run, the call money rate would move towards the new LAF corridor, thus bringing orderly conditions in the money market.

During most of February and March, yields on government bonds were range-bound as a number of auctions were cancelled. But since the announcement of the half-yearly borrowing programme, yields have been inching up. The government is expected to borrow Rs 8.45 trillion in the first half of the current financial year. While there were no explicit announcements to cool the yields, through measures like G-SAP, Operation Twist and Open Market Operations (OMOs), the RBI raised the limit under the held-to maturity category for banks from 22 per cent to 23 per cent. This move will insulate banks to a certain extent from mark-to-market losses as yields inch up. It will likely ensure demand for government bonds by banks.

As RBI begins to normalise liquidity in a calibrated manner, its ability to manage bond yields will likely be limited. Yields on bonds are likely to inch up and remain above the 7 per cent mark. Going forward, the trade-off between managing inflation and the borrowing programme of the government will become challenging. For now the RBI has rightly decided to place top priority on inflation management. This will help in maintaining the credibility of the inflation targeting framework.

The writer is Senior Fellow, NIPFP. Views are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BOND POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Bond identity' (IE, April 11). When then finance minister Arun Jaitley brought this election bond scheme, the intention was to bring transparency in our political funding arena. But if the ruling party can come to know the identity of a donor then it defies the whole purpose and leaves people who donated to the opposition to face a backlash from the ruling party. The Supreme court must look into this case to ask the government to make necessary changes in the whole process so that either identity is known to all parties or none. No one should have undue advantage.

Bal Govind, Noida

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Bond identity' (IE, April 11). The scheme has legal and transparent safeguards. The bonds can be bought only by cheque or a digital transfer. Ignoring this amounts to an attempt to malign the scheme.

Ravi Mathur, Noida

NEW LEADERSHIP

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Change next door' (IE, April 11). While the inevitable has happened with Imran Khan being unseated from power, the situation in Pakistan is still quite muddled. Although Shehbaz Sharif, head of the Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz, is slated to be the new PM, heading a coalition government with other ambitious faces like Bilawal Bhutto will not be a cakewalk. Moreover, the new regime's equation with the all-power-

ful Pakistan army will also have a bearing on the change of guard. On its part, India needs to keep a close watch on the political developments knowing well that mischief from across the border can never be ruled out.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Change next door' (IE, April 11). Considering an unpredictable Afghanistan, a debt-ridden Sri Lanka, and military-ruled Myanmar, efforts to bolster relations with the new regime in Islamabad should be made in full swing to ensure stability next door. An evolving Russia-China-Pakistan axis, especially when Moscow is war-exhausted, will not serve India well.

Anjali Bhavana, Thiruvananthapuram

UNCERTAIN TIMES

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Without a coup' (IE, April 11). It was because of the alertness of its Supreme Court and the restraint exercised by its army that Pakistan was able to effect a change of government through the parliamentary process. The SC not only took suo moto notice of the unconstitutional way Imran Khan tried to postpone his ouster, but decided the matter speedily and kept working right up to the midnight till the parliament completed the process. While India will heave a sigh of relief at the bloodless transfer of power, the new government's behaviour towards India and China's influence on it are in the realm of uncertainty.

YG Chouksey, Pune



M A KALAM

Truth about vegetarianism

Identity politics has obscured the fact that humans are historically meat-eaters

HISTORICALLY, THERE WAS no way Homo sapiens could have survived without meat. Not that they were aware of the need for proteins or the presence of these in meat, but apart from meat there was hardly anything available for sustenance. If at all they depended on any vegetation and/or fruits and berries that was available, then it was only as a supplement to the meat which dominated their diet.

Domestication of animals occurred very early in human history and nomadism, which was the norm then, was in no way a constraint in "carrying" animals wherever people went. Domestication of plants, which gradually led to cultivation and a "settled" form of life, happened relatively late. In cultivation, there was no guarantee that a particular crop will last till harvest time and yield the required food. There might be drought, floods, or pests that could render the entire task of cultivation a futile exercise (Even today there is no assured return from a crop in all places and in all contexts). Given that early humans did not depend on any organic or chemical fertilisers, cultivation was a highly uncertain indulgence; and after 90 to 120 days or more, the returns could, at best, be meagre or nothing at all. On the other hand, animal food was available in plenty and the person-hours spent in hunting, unlike in

cultivation, were negligible considering how much meat could be obtained.

So, why would an individual or group of people spend long hours in cultivation and give up an easier way of life that provided plenty of food in the form of meat? Besides, with cultivation, humans became dependent on the whims of Mother Nature, which invariably made the vagaries of the weather descend on them. It is also significant that, universally, cave and rock paintings were made between 40,000 and 14,000 years ago, during the Upper Palaeolithic period. The domestication of plants happened only around 12,000 years ago. This suggests that before humans became cultivators, they had ample time on their hands to indulge in art, which is a leisure time activity, and remains so in the contemporary contexts too.

However, humans did go in for cultivation and settled life, and one of the necessary but not sufficient reasons could be the depletion of animal food. Yet, all through history, irrespective of the yield from cultivation, animal food has never been given up. When enough non-meat food was available, a few people either gave up meat or ate it sporadically, leading to the emergence of the term "vegetarian", although there remained a h-mongous section that ate what by then had

evolved as normalised food, that is, meat. For no apparent or logical reason, the vegetarians eventually bestowed the epithet "non-vegetarian", with all its negative connotations, on the majority which had simply continued to do what it had been doing throughout human history: Eat meat.

Take any part of the world and it is evident that the population of vegetarians has always been in a minority, if not minuscule in scale. In spite of the widespread belief that Indians are primarily vegetarian (and hence "non-violent", as is often argued by some sections), the truth is the reverse. A majority is, in fact, predominantly meat-eating: As per the 4th National Family Health Survey, 70 per cent of women and 78 per cent of men in India consume some form of meat. That, in plain terms, means that a majority of Hindus are not vegetarians.

Given the above, why have there been frequent squabbles and skirmishes revolving around and involving meat in India, particularly since 2014? Most recently, a section of students allegedly attempted to stop the serving of meat at the Jawaharlal Nehru University's Kaveri hostel mess. As per reports, the police has registered an FIR against "several unidentified students affiliated with the Akhila Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) a

day after multiple students were injured after violence broke out on the JNU campus".

Is it the meat per se which generates such anger? Not by any stretch, as much of the ire that is directed against meat-eating seems to be aimed mostly against Muslims, although Dalits, Christians, and almost all the tribal communities, along with a host of other communities consume meat in India. In the politics of meat, the Muslim identity is reduced to a singular facet, that of meat-eating.

These disturbing happenings (including lynchings) have consistently had a highly negative impact on the very fabric of multiculturalism and secularism in the country. They are obstacles on the path of pluralism which should be the goal of any democratic and progressive country.

Incidentally, almost nowhere else in the world do people ask you if you are a "non-vegetarian". The usual question is whether one is a vegetarian or — the fast-growing sobriquet — vegan. This is because everywhere those who have given up eating meat are called vegetarians, while the rest are just eating normal food.

The writer, a social anthropologist, is Visiting Professor, Centre for Economic and Social Studies, Hyderabad. Views are personal



CHHATTISGARH
Woman dies after being raped, brutalised; 1 held

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JANJGIR-CHAMPA, APRIL 11

A MAN was arrested in Chhattisgarh's Janjgir-Champa district for allegedly raping a 56-year-old mentally unwell woman and inserting a rod into her private parts, leading to her death, a police official said on Monday.

The incident took place in the intervening night of April 5 and 6, when the victim was sleeping on a bench in front of a grocery shop under Dabhara police station limits, the official said.

"Accused Kishan Yadav (31) was arrested on Thursday. The post-mortem report confirmed that the woman was brutally assaulted and raped. On the night of April 5, Yadav dragged her into a nearby plot, raped her, hit her head with a stone and inserted an iron rod into her private parts," he said.

Yadav fled after abandoning the woman, who died, and he then threw his blood-stained clothes and the iron rod in the thicket near a culvert, the official said. The clothes and the iron rod have been recovered, he added.

Mining in Karnataka: SC seeks Centre's response on pleas over export

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE SUPREME Court on Monday sought the stand of the Steel Ministry on requests to lift the 2011 ban on export of iron ore extracted from mines in Karnataka.

A bench headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana also asked the parties to apprise it about the likely impact if it allows all the unsold ore to flood the market. The bench, also comprising Justices Krishna Murari and Hima Kohli, was hearing a batch of applications seeking removal of the ban.

RAM NAVAMI VIOLENCE: POLICE PROBE DEATH OF MAN NOT PART OF PROCESSION

Day after clashes, uneasy calm in Gujarat towns

VAIBHAV JHA
KHAMBHAT, ANAND, APRIL 11

A DAY after clashes were reported from Khambhat town in Anand and Himmatnagar in Sabarkantha, Gujarat, leading to the death of one person and injuries to several others, an uneasy calm prevailed in the localities on Monday amid police vigilance.

In Khambhat, residents took out the funeral procession of Kanhaiyya Lal Rana, 57, a resident of Chatari Bazaar in the town, who was found dead amid a clash between communities in Shakarpur village. Rana was on his way home from Ramji temple in the village on Sunday afternoon when he was caught in a clash between communities.

Minutes later, police found him lying injured and unconscious — he was declared dead at hospital.

"My father had left on foot to attend the puja at Ramji temple, which is 3 km away from our home. He was returning home with prasad..." Bhavesh Rana, who works a daily wage labourer, said.

Both police and villagers of Shakarpur confirmed that Rana was not part of the Ram Navami procession.

According to police, a rally of around 4,000 people under police security left Ramji temple in Shakarpur for a "Shobha Yatra" on Sunday. Hardly 500 metres from the temple, a clash began between two communities near a police pocket.

Heavy stone-pelting followed, after which police re-

sorted to teargas shelling to disperse the mob.

On Monday, *The Indian Express* visited the spot — stones and bricks lay on the road leading to Shakarpur village, while heavy police presence ensured law and order situation was under control.

The Indian Express tried to reach out to families living in the area regarding Sunday's incidents but most of them refused to be identified.

Police have lodged two FIRs in the matter. In the first case, 61 people were named accused and 100 unknown persons from Shakarpur village were booked under IPC Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 332 (assaulting public servant), and sections of rioting and 338 for grievous hurt. The complainant is Dinesh Patel, sarpanch of Shakarpur village, who claimed that a mob of around 200 threw stones at the rally.

In a second FIR, police booked four named and 1,000 unknown persons who were part of the yatra. The complainant is Razzak Malek, a Shakarpur resident, and the accused have been booked under similar sections.

V Chandrashekhar, Inspector General (IG) Ahmedabad range, told the media in Khambhat on Monday evening: "Based on complaints, we have lodged two FIRs in the clash which took place on Sunday. In the first case, nine persons have been detained. The exact cause of death of Kanhaiyya Lal will be ascertained after forensic reports. Police are investigating all angles. Law and order situation is completely under control."



Policemen stationed at Shakarpur village in Khambhat, Gujarat, on Monday, a day after violence broke out during Ram Navami procession. *Nirmal Harindran*

Vehicles damaged after violence in Mumbai suburb; 7 arrested

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

NEARLY 25 vehicles were damaged following clashes between people from two communities in Mankhurd, an eastern Mumbai suburb, late Sunday night and an FIR was registered at Malwani, in western suburbs Malad, after a procession was carried out without police permission, police said on Monday.

Seven persons have been arrested in the Mankhurd case, po-

lice added.

In Mankhurd, an officer said, eight people on four motorbikes passed through the area around 10.30 pm after visiting a religious gathering in nearby Chembur: "As they were passing by a religious site, they started chanting religious slogans. A few people outside asked them not to raise slogans, as prayers were underway inside," Inspector R Surve said. This led to an argument between the two sides, leading to a fight, police said.

One Sonu Choudhary, who

was on the bike, was allegedly roughed up by the crowd, police said. The bike-borne men left, but returned soon with more men, carrying rods and sticks, police said. "Since they could not find the crowd with whom they had a fight, they started destroying bikes, cars and autorickshaws... The vehicles belonged to local residents, belonging to both communities," the officer said.

Mankhurd police registered two FIRs on complaints by Choudhary and a local resident named Abdullah Shaikh.

End divisive politics, BSY urges Karnataka CM Bommai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, APRIL 11

AMID THE recent flare-up in communal issues in Karnataka, former BJP chief minister BS Yediyurappa on Monday advised Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai to

"put an end to all this (divisive politics) and focus on the job at hand".

Stating that "all people are equal", Bommai, who is on a tour of the Udipi region, warned that his government would "not tolerate violence". Karnataka Law Minister J C Madhuswamy has also warned of action "if pro-

Hindu organisations cross their limits".

"Hindus and Muslims are brothers born to the same mother and they have a bond. If there are efforts to break this bond, the Chief Minister has said that action as per the law will be taken. He has also said that efforts must be

made to prevent deterioration of law and order and to allow people to live in peace," Yediyurappa told reporters in Bengaluru.

"The Chief Minister has stated that law and order will be protected. I will advise him (Bommai) to put an end to all this (divisive politics) and focus on the job at hand. All communities should live in peace and dignity," he said. He said while Hindus and Muslims wanted to coexist in peace, some miscreants were trying to create divisions.

Stating that the Opposition must cooperate with the government to bring about development, Yediyurappa said Congress leaders like Siddaramaiah and D K Shivakumar must not create confusion over small issues.

A series of communal issues have rocked the state in the past few months — from the hijab row, to calls to ban Muslim traders from Hindu religious fairs, and then a campaign to boycott halal meat and shut down loudspeakers at mosques. The central BJP leadership has told Bommai that while such issues could win some votes, his government must focus on development and governance.

On Monday, Bommai warned of action against those who disrupt the peace. "We are of the view that law and order should be protected, that all people are equal. There is no problem if people express their opinions, but when law is taken into their hands, or when there is violence, the government will not tolerate it, and we have made this

message clear," he said. "My action will speak for itself. Our actions should speak, not our words. We know what should be spoken and when, and we know what action should be taken," he said. "Ours is a peaceful and law-abiding state. It is a progressive state. We know how to protect the state, and we are doing it," he said. Madhuswamy conveyed a similar message in Belagavi on Sunday. "The government is not backing any of these activities. It will take action if pro-Hindu organisations cross their limits. There are no two ways about this. This country belongs to everybody. All those who remained in India after Partition are Indians. There is no point in creating a controversy over this. The government will not give this

too much scope," he said.

"Under the Constitution, everyone has a right to livelihood, to trade, to worship in private. Irrespective of religion and caste, nobody has the right to denigrate a religion," he said. "For the administration, all are citizens and children of this country. Giving anyone trouble, disrupting the livelihood of people, or disrupting the peace in society does not bring honour... When incidents occur spontaneously, it is different; but when incidents are deliberate, nobody will accept it... I cannot accept it either," he said.

"Whatever it is, we have to be tolerant and live together. Everyone has the privilege to live.

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RAJASTHAN RAJYA VIDYUT PRASARAN NIGAM LIMITED
Notice Inviting Bid
Bids for Construction of 132/33KV, 1x20/25 MVA GSS at Sagarpada (Dholpur) including supply of all Equipments/Materials, Erection (including civil works), Testing and Commissioning on turnkey basis (GN-9019002201 & UBN/VPN2223WLOB00058) are invited from interested bidders upto 06.00 PM on 11.05.2022.
Other particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state; and (<http://energy.rajjasthan.gov.in/rvpnl> departmental website.
RRVNP/ITR-5413/2022
Raj.Samwadi/C22/445
Superintending Engineer (Contracts-II)

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
Regd Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, (Patiala)
CIN: U40109PB2010SGC033813, Website: www.pspcl.in
(Contact Number: 96461-07205)
Tender Enquiry No. 373/P-2/EMP-W-11940 Dated: 11.04.2022
Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Procurement Cell-2) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2022_POWER_84048, 1 for Maintenance Switchyard And Transformer Yard Areas (22 Acres Approximately) At 220 KV Substation 66 KV Substation GGSSTP 2x850 KVA Microhydel Project and Transformer Yard Areas of 4 X 5110 MW Units GGSSTP Roopnagar
For detailed NIT & Tender specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 11.04.2022 from 05.00 PM, onward.
NOTE: Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at <https://pspcil.in>.
RTP-26/22 13437/Pb

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER PHED NCR CIRCLE ALWAR
Manu Marg ALWAR (RAJ.)
E-Mail- sencr.alw.phed@rajasthan.gov.in
No- 95-108 Date- 05/04/2022
NOTICE INVITING BID (NIT No. 22-51/ 2022-23)
Bids for Work of Construction of Source, PLJ of Rising main & Distribution Pipe Line with FHTC, Reservoir for Various Villages under P.S. Tijara are invited from interested bidders upto 05:00 PM on Date 05.05.2022. Other particulars of the Bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajjasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppp.raj.nic.in>) of the state and <https://phedwater.rajjasthan.gov.in> departmental website.
UBN:
PHE2223WSOB00192, PHE2223WSOB00193, PHE2223WSOB00195,
PHE2223WSOB00196, PHE2223WSOB00197, PHE2223WSOB00198,
PHE2223WSOB00199, PHE2223WSOB00200, PHE2223WSOB00201,
PHE2223WSOB00203, PHE2223WSOB00205, PHE2223WSOB00206,
PHE2223WSOB00209, PHE2223WSOB00211, PHE2223WSOB00212,
PHE2223WSOB00214, PHE2223WSOB00215, PHE2223WSOB00217,
PHE2223WSOB00218, PHE2223WSOB00219, PHE2223WSOB00220,
PHE2223WSOB00221, PHE2223WSOB00222, PHE2223WSOB00223,
PHE2223WSOB00224, PHE2223WSOB00225, PHE2223WSOB00226,
PHE2223WSOB00227, PHE2223WSOB00228, PHE2223WSOB00229
Sd/-
L. P. Bairowa
Superintending Engineer
DIPRC/4897/2022

Government of Karnataka
Department of Fisheries
Directorate of Fisheries, 3rd Floor, Podium Block, V.V. Tower, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar Veedi, Bengaluru-560 001, Phone: 080-2286 4681/4604, Fax: 080-2286 4619 E-mail: dfkarnataka@rediffmail.com
Letter No: DOF-TECHOBRS/18/2021-E-495610 Date :07.04.2022
NOTICE INVITING EOI For Empaneling Of Boat Building Yards for The Construction of Deep Sea, Fishing Vessels in Karnataka
Directorate of Fisheries notification no: DOF-TECHOBRS/18/2021-E-495610 dated: 25.03.2022, the Department of Fisheries, Government of Karnataka had invited for expression of interest by interested organizations engaged in boat construction to include their establishments in the empanelled list of boat building yards for construction of deep sea fishing boats in Karnataka with the last date on 13.04.2022 However, due to some administrative reasons, the last date for submission of application has been extended till 28.04.2022 5:00 PM.
Sd/-
DIPRC/PC/124/SHIRDI SAI/2022-23 Director of Fisheries
STAY PROTECTED FROM COVID-19, NO CARELESSNESS UNTIL THERE IS A CURE.

TAMILNADU CEMENTS CORPORATION LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU UNDERTAKING)
5th Floor, Avin Illam, No.3A, Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Salai, 7th Cross, Nandanam, Chennai-600 035.
Short e-TENDER NOTICE
e-Tender Ref.No:03/2022-23, Transportation of Clinker through open trucks from Ariyalur Cement Works, Ariyalur Dist. to Alangulam Cement Works, Virudhunagar Dist. T.N. Est. value: Rs.12.20 Crore, EMD: Rs.2,00,000/-
Submission of Tender: Up to 3.00 PM, on 18.04.2022.
Important Note: A pre-bid meeting will be held on 13.04.2022 at 3.00 pm at TANCEM, Corporate Office, 5th Floor, Avin Illam, No.3A, Pasumpon Muthuramalingam Salai, Nandanam, Chennai – 600 035. The Tender document can be downloaded from www.tntenders.gov.in Corrigendum /Addendum to this publication, if any would appear only on the above said website.
03/18/2022/ENB0022
General Manager (Marketing)
சென்னை கி.பி.பி. கட்டிடக் கட்டுமானப் பொதுத் திட்டத் திட்டப்பகுதி

DELHI JAL BOARD (Govt. of N.C.T. of Delhi)
OFFICE OF THE ACE (DR.) PROJECT-III
THROUGH DY. SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (C) DR.VIII
Yamuna Vihar Sewage Treatment Plant
Adjoining Dr. Ambedkar College) Delhi-110094
Phone: 011-22813593, e-mail: eecd8@gmail.com
PRESS NIT NO. 01 (2022-23)/DY.SE(C)DR-VIII /Re-invited.

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV) Amount put to tender (Rs.)	Earnest Money(EMD) (Rs.)	Tender processing Fee Non Refundable (Rs.)	Date of Release of Tender/ Tender ID	Last date/time of receipt of tender
1.	Replacement / Providing and Laying 1000 mm dia. Rising Main from Ghonda SPSS-II to STP Yamuna Vihar, Delhi.	11,14,27,95/-	21,14,300/-	1500/-	2022_DJB_220353_1 Dated 08.04.2022	28.04.2022 upto 3.00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>.
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 25 (2022-23)
STOP CORONA - "Wash Your Hand, Wear Mask & Maintain Social Distance"

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (W) PR-I
THROUGH EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (PROJ) W-VII
ANNEXE JAL SADAN: LAJPAT NAGAR: NEW DELHI-110024
OFFICE TELEPHONE NO. 011-29818410
E-MAIL ID : executivewater7@gmail.com
PRESS NIT NO. 02 (2022-23) Re-Invited

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (In Rs)	Earnest Money (EMD) (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement and tender ID	Last Date/ time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Replacement of 900 mm dia PSC water main from District park Hauz Khas to Aurbindo marg under EE[Proj]W-VII	4,14,91,942/-	8,29,850/-	08.04.2022 2022_DJB_220388_1	02.05.2022 up to 3.00 PM
2.	Replacement of 900/750/600 mm dia CI water main from D-IIA flats, South Moti Bagh to Vivekananda park by open cut and trenchless technology under EE[Proj]W-VII.	5,90,87,438/-	11,82,000/-	08.04.2022 2022_DJB_220388_2	02.05.2022 up to 3.00 PM
3.	Replacement of 1000mm dia PSC water main by 1000mm dia MS pipeline from Deer park UGR/BPS to IIT gate trenchless technology under EE[Proj]W-VII.	13,68,50,350/-	23,69,000/-	08.04.2022 2022_DJB_220388_3	02.05.2022 up to 3.00 PM

The details of the tender can be seen on web-site <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Advt. No. J.S.V. 26 (2022-23)
Sd/-
(ANIL KUMAR)
EE (Project) W-VII
STOP CORONA:-"WEAR MASK, FOLLOW PHYSICAL DISTANCING, MAINTAIN HAND HYGIENE"

NOTICE INVITING BID
Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMCL)
CAO-129 In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III, Bhubaneswar -751 007
Tel.: (0674) 2380950, Website: www.osmcl.nic.in, Email: drugs-osmcl@gov.in
Big Ref. No.: OSMCL/2022-23/DRUGS-DHS-ACO-RE-TENDER/06 Date: 12/04/2022
Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tenders.odisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply of Anti Cancer Items (Re-Tender) as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sr. No.	Particulars	Date and time
1	Date & time of release of bid	12/04/2022, 3 PM
2	Date & time for submission of queries by E-Mail of drugs-osmcl@gov.in	16/04/2022, up to 5:00 PM
3	Date & time of Online bid submission	Start Date & Time: 19/04/2022, 3 PM End Date & Time: 10/05/2022, 4:00 PM
4	Date & time for submission of Tender Documents, Tender Document Fee of tender document	Start Date & Time: 11/05/2022, 10 AM End Date & Time: 18/05/2022, 11:00 AM
5	Date & time of online Technical bid opening	18/05/2022, 11:30 AM
6	Date of opening of Price Bid	To be informed to the qualified bidders

The bid document with all information relating to the bidding process including cost of bid document, Pre-qualification criteria and terms & conditions are available in the websites www.osmcl.nic.in and <https://tenders.odisha.gov.in>. The Authority reserves the right to accept / reject any part thereof or all the bids without assigning any reason therefor.
Sd/-
Managing Director
OSMC Ltd., Odisha
OIPR-10112/11/0002/2223

Writer-actor who enacted a diverse range of roles dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 11

WRITER-ACTOR Shiv Kumar Subramaniam, known for his superb portrayal of a diverse range of supporting characters in Hindi cinema for over three decades, passed away on Sunday night. Described as "a gentle soul" by many of his industry colleagues and acquaintances, Subramaniam is survived by his wife, actor Divya Jagdale. He was 62.

Subramaniam, whose last major screen appearance was as the grandfather of Sanya Malhotra in the Netflix family drama *Meenakshi Sundareswar* (2021), was cremated on Monday at Mokshdham Hindu Shamsanbhoomi in Andheri West. Many actors including Naseeruddin Shah, Nana Patekar, and Makarand Deshpande attended his funeral. In February this year, Subramaniam and Jagdale had lost their 15-year-old son Jahaan.

The news of his passing away shocked not only those who knew him personally but many who admired his work in the field of cinema, television, and theatre over the years. Filmmaker Anurag Kashyap called Subramaniam "the most generous, beautiful man" he had known. Recounting his meeting with him in 1994, Kashyap shared how the writer-actor allowed him to look at the script of



Shiv Subramaniam was 62

Auto Narayan (1996), which was initially written by Subramaniam. Later, Subramaniam asked director Shivam Nair to give Kashyap writer's credit too. "That's how I got my first screenwriting credit... owe so much of what I am to Shiva Dada," wrote the writer-director.

Subramaniam made his mark in the world of Hindi cinema with *Parinda* (1989), a moving crime drama set in Mumbai. Apart from playing Francis, the henchman of gangster Anna, he also wrote the screenplay of *Parinda* and worked as an assistant director for it. Over the years, he essayed a host of interesting characters in several much talked about movies such as *Prahaar* (1994), *1942: A Love Story* (1994), *Droh Kaal* (1995), *Kaminey* (2009), *Teen Patti* (2010), *Stanley Ka Dabba* (2011) and others.

In recent years, Subramaniam was seen as a

football-loving elderly Appa in *Tu Hai Mera Sunday* (2016), the strict father of Alia Bhatt in *2 States* (2014), apart from appearing as a principal in *Hichki* (2018) and Dr Nandi in *Nail Polish* (2021). The actor, who was a student of St Xavier's College, Mumbai, was also a popular television and theatre actor. He was part of television shows such as *Kismat* (2011), *Mukti Bandhan* (2011), *Pradhanmantri* (2013-14) and *24* (2013). A versatile talent, Subramaniam was a co-writer of several movies such as *1942 A Love Story* (1994), *Hazaaroon Khwaishain Aisi* (2005), and *Teen Patti* (2010). He was also the voice of Rafiki in the Hindi version of Jon Favreau-directed *The Lion King* (2019).

Describing his passing away as a "colossal loss to the theatre", Pondicherry-based Adishakti Theatre recalled that Subramaniam was part of their very first play, *Oedipus*. He also played Guildenstern in their next production, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern*, a play by Tom Stoppard. Calling him "a mentor, an older brother, a dear friend", actor-writer Vibaan Shah remembered him as "a great artist and a beautiful human being". Many from the entertainment industry including Hansal Mehta, Manoj Bajpayee, Anil Kapoor, and Amol Gupte expressed their shock over his sudden demise.

Consider Ukraine returnees for admission: AICTE

New Delhi: The All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) has written to the heads of all technical institutions across the country to consider admitting students who had to discontinue their studies

and return from war-torn Ukraine. In a circular to the V-Cs of all technical universities and directors of AICTE-approved institutions, the council has pointed out that the matter concerning the uncertainty

around the academic future of around 20,000 students was raised even in Parliament. "All these students are in deep desperation..." the AICTE circular, dated April 7, states.

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SIMPLY PUT

Sri Lanka: fall in rice output and the economy

Production is down 14% in 2021-22, but the crisis Sri Lanka faces has more to do with the macro-economy than the organic-only policy, now revoked

HARISH DAMODARAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

SRI LANKA'S RICE production has fallen 13.9% in 2021-22 (April-March) and average yield per hectare by 14.4%, even as imports have soared to a five-year-high.

To what extent is this crisis an outcome of the Gotabaya Rajapaksa government's banning import of inorganic fertilisers and agrochemicals on May 6, 2021, before its revocation over six months later on November 24?

Table 1 shows that Sri Lanka's rice output dropped significantly to 2.92 million tonnes (mt) in 2021-22, from the previous year's 3.39 mt. The US Department of Agriculture further estimated the island nation's imports at 0.65 mt as a result of lower domestic production.

What's interesting, though, is that the estimated production for 2021-22 is still higher than the 2-2.5 levels of 2016-17 and 2017-18, which were drought years. Sri Lanka's rice imports in 2016-17, at 0.75 mt, were even higher than that estimated for the just ended year.

Manmade vs natural

So, have the effects of the recent "manmade disaster" — a forced overnight complete switching to organic farming and blanket ban on imports of chemical agricultural inputs —

been not all that serious? Or, at least not as much as the natural disasters of 2016-17 and 2017-18, which also led to a massive shrinkage of the area planted under rice?

But it isn't just rice, Sri Lanka's largest cultivated crop. A similar conclusion may be drawn in respect of its No. 1 agricultural export item: Tea production in 2021 (at 299.34 million kg) was actually higher than in 2020 (278.49 million kg). Exports, too, grew 7.7% (see table 2). Even in value terms, the country's tea exports in 2021, at \$1,324.37 million, were more than the previous year's \$1,240.9 million.

In short, it might seem that the Rajapaksa government's organic-only policy through executive fiat hasn't produced an agriculture disaster of the sort projected by commentators. Sri Lanka's crisis today has more to do with the macro-economy than the farm sector *per se*.

How the ban worked

R Ramakumar, professor of economics at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, does not agree with this analysis. Sri Lanka, he points out, has two rice crops in a year. The first one — the 'Yala', equivalent to India's kharif crop — is planted in May-June and harvested in November-December. The second — 'Maha' or rabi season paddy — is planted in November-December and harvested in March-April.

According to Ramakumar, the ban on im-

RICE AREA, YIELD, OUTPUT AND IMPORTS IN SRI LANKA

	Area (mn hectares)	Yield (tonnes/hectare)	Production (mn tonnes)	Imports (thousand tonnes)
2014-15	0.93	4.32	2.74	286
2015-16	1.23	3.95	3.29	30
2016-17	0.69	4.36	2.03	748
2017-18	0.77	4.30	2.25	249
2018-19	0.97	4.73	3.13	24
2019-20	0.97	4.85	3.21	16
2020-21	1.09	4.57	3.39	147
2021-22	1.10	3.91	2.92	650

Source: US Department of Agriculture.

port of synthetic fertilisers and crop protection chemicals, including insecticides and herbicides, took effect when plantings of the 'Yala' paddy had just started. Much of the imports of these chemical inputs for the season would already have taken place by then.

"The May 6, 2021 directive wouldn't really have impacted the Yala paddy. The lack of chemical inputs has mainly hit the Maha season crop, whose yields have registered a 40-45% decline. The rescinding of the ban happened towards end-November, which was too

late for Maha plantings," he says. Roughly 60% of Sri Lanka's annual rice production comes from the 'Maha' crop.

The same goes for tea, where the almost 21 million kg increase in production compared to 2020 took place largely during the first five months of 2021. "The last three months (October-December 2021 over October-December 2020), in fact, recorded 12 million kg lower, due to which the country's couldn't achieve its target for 320 million kg for the year," adds Ramakumar. The trend of lower

TEA PRODUCTION AND EXPORTS

	Production (tonnes)	Exports (tonnes)
2017	307,080	288,984
2018	303,843	282,363
2019	300,134	292,657
2020	278,489	265,569
2021	299,338	286,016
Jan-Feb 21	45,700	43,990
Jan-Feb 22	40,981	40,527

Source: Tea Exporters Association Sri Lanka.

production as well as exports has continued even in the first two months of the new calendar year.

The pre-ban setting

That being said, it is also a fact that Sri Lanka's current economic crisis predates the "manmade" agriculture disaster unleashed by the May 6, 2021 edit.

The country's foreign currency reserves (including gold and money held with the International Monetary Fund) touched a high

of \$8,864.98 million on June 30, 2019. Even as of February 28, 2020 — before Covid-19 struck — the reserves were at \$7,941.52 million.

But as earnings from tourism (from \$3,606.9 million in 2019 to \$506.9 million in 2021) and workers' remittances (\$6,717.2 million to \$5,491.5 million) plummeted, the reserves, too, started depleting. They fell to \$4,055.16 million in end-March 2021, \$2,704.19 million in end-September and \$1,588.37 million by end-November 2021. The latest end-February 2022 data from the Central Bank of Sri Lanka's website shows the total official forex reserves at \$2,311.25 million, which suffices for just over 13 months of imports.

It's quite possible that the decision to ban imports of chemical agricultural inputs may have been as much a response to depleting reserves as the ruling regime's commitment to organic agriculture. Fertiliser imports alone were valued at \$258.94 million in 2020. Given the rising international prices, the import bill in the normal course would have gone up to \$300-400 million in 2021. Banning/restricting imports may have been viewed as a means for conserving scarce foreign exchange.

It is another thing that the same knee-jerk policy has ended up hurting Sri Lanka's tea exports and its having to import rice at a greater cost than fertilisers and crop protection chemicals.

TELLING NUMBERS

The languages India speaks

Hindi is the mother tongue of 44% of Indians in Census 2011; the rest speak 120 other languages

KABIR FIRAQUE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

LAST WEEK, Home Minister Amit Shah suggested that states should communicate with each other in Hindi rather than English, while stressing that Hindi should not be an alternative to local languages. "When citizens of states who speak other languages communicate with each other, it should be in the language of India," Shah was quoted by the Home Ministry as having said at the meeting of the Parliamentary Official Language Committee.

Opposition parties have criticised this as "Hindi imposition". In the Northeast, organisations such as the Asam Sahitya Sabha and the North East Students' Organisation have protested against Shah's statement that the states of the region would make Hindi compulsory up to class 10 in schools.

How widely is Hindi spoken in India?

The 2011 linguistic census accounts for 121 mother tongues, including 22 languages listed in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution. Hindi is the most widely spoken, with 52.8 crore individuals, or 43.6% of the population, declaring it as their mother tongue. The next highest is Bengali, mother tongue for 97 lakh (8%) — less than one-fifth of Hindi's count (Chart 2).

In terms of the number of people who know Hindi, the count crosses more than half the country. Nearly 13.9 crore (over 11%) reported Hindi as their second language, which makes it either the mother tongue or second language for nearly 55% of the population.

Has it always been this widespread?

Hindi has been India's predominant mother tongue over the decades, its share in the population rising in every succeeding census. In 1971, 37% Indians had reported Hindi as their mother tongue, a share that has grown over the next four censuses to 38.7%, 39.2%, 41% and 43.6% at last count (Chart 1).

This begs the question as to which mother tongues have declined as Hindi's share has risen. A number of mother tongues other than Hindi have faced a decline in terms of share, although the dip has been marginal in many cases. For example, Bengali's share in the population declined by just 0.14 percentage points from 1971 (8.17%) to 2011 (8.03%). In comparison, Malayalam (1.12 percentage points) and Urdu (1.03 points) had higher declines among

A giant among 121 languages

CHART 1

GROWTH OF HINDI AS MOTHER TONGUE (% OF POPULATION)

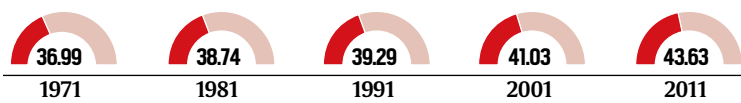


CHART 2

MOTHER TONGUES BY SPEAKERS, 2011

Minimum 1 cr

Figures on the right are % of population

Hindi	52.83,47,193	43.63%
Bengali	9,72,37,669	8.03%
Marathi	8,30,26,680	6.86%
Telugu	8,11,27,740	6.70%
Tamil	6,90,26,881	5.70%
Gujarati	5,54,92,554	4.58%
Urdu	5,07,72,631	4.19%
Kannada	4,37,06,512	3.61%
Odia	3,75,21,324	3.10%
Malayalam	3,48,38,819	2.88%
Punjabi	3,31,24,726	2.74%
Assamese	1,53,11,351	1.26%
Maithili	1,35,83,464	1.12%

Source: Graphs based on Census of India data

CHART 3

GROWTH OF HINDI vs OTHER MOTHER TONGUES, 1971-2011

% growth in number of speakers

Hindi	160.56%
Punjabi	134.79%
Maithili	121.59%
Bengali	117.09%
Gujarati	114.54%
Kannada	101.31%
Marathi	98.79%
Odia	88.90%
Tamil	83.14%
Telugu	81.26%
Urdu	77.40%
Assamese	70.89%
Malayalam	58.80%

What explains Hindi's high numbers?

One obvious explanation is that Hindi is the predominant language in some of India's most populous states, including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar. Another reason is that a number of languages are bracketed under Hindi by census enumerators, according to Dr Ganesh Devy, chairman of the People's Linguistic Survey of India, a ongoing project to map the languages of the country.

"In 2011, there were 1,383 mother tongues reported by people, and hundreds were knocked out. These mother tongues were then grouped into languages. You will find that under Hindi, they have listed nearly 65 mother tongues. Among them is Bhojpuri, and 5 crore

people have reported Bhojpuri as their mother tongue, but the census has decided that Bhojpuri is Hindi," he said.

Citing other examples, he said, "If one were to knock out the other languages merged with Hindi, the total figure goes down to 38 crore."

And how widely is English spoken?

Although English, alongside Hindi, is one of the two official languages of the central government, it is not among the 22 languages in the 8th Schedule; it is one of the 99 non-scheduled languages. In terms of mother tongue, India had just 2.6 lakh English speakers in 2011 — a tiny fraction of the 121 crore people counted in that census.

That does not reflect the extent to which English is spoken. It was the second language of 8.3 crore respondents in 2011, second only to Hindi's 13.9 crore. If third language is added, then English was spoken — as mother tongue, second language or third language — by over 10% of the population in 2011, behind only Hindi's 57%. Bengali was third at about 9%.

Dr Devy felt the count should be higher. "Can you believe that in India, only 2.6 lakh speak English as their primary language? You take a very rapid census of Delhi or Kolkata or Chennai, for families who have moved in for white-collar jobs. You'll notice that English is their language for day-to-day affairs. Yet it is still seen in the eyes of the government as a foreign language. It is still not a scheduled language in India, when it should be," he said.

Where is English most prevalent?

As mother tongue, Maharashtra accounted for over 1 lakh of the 2.6 lakh English speakers. As second language, English is preferred over Hindi in parts of the Northeast. Among the 17.6 lakh with Manipuri (an 8th Schedule language) as their mother tongue in 2011, 4.8 lakh declared their second language as English, compared to 1.8 lakh for Hindi.

Among the non-scheduled languages spoken in the Northeast, Khasi, predominant in Meghalaya, was the mother tongue of 14.3 lakh, of whom 2.4 lakh declared their second language as English, and 54,000 as Hindi. The trends were similar for Mizo, and for various languages spoken in Nagaland, including Ao, Angami and Rengma. Beyond the Northeastern languages, among 68 lakh with Kashmiri as their mother tongue, 2.8 lakh declared their second language as English, compared to 2.2 lakh who declared Hindi.

How ancient megalithic jars connect Assam with Laos and Indonesia

TORA AGARWALA
GUWAHATI, APRIL 11

THE DISCOVERY of a number of megalithic stone jars in Assam's Dima Hasao district has brought to focus possible links between India's Northeast and Southeast Asia, dating back to the second millennium BC. According to a study in *Asian Archaeology*, the jars are a "unique archaeological phenomenon". It calls for more research to understand the "likely cultural relationship" between Assam and Laos and Indonesia, the only two other sites where similar jars have been found.

The history

The jars of Assam were first sighted in

1929 by British civil servants James Philip Mills and John Henry Hutton, who recorded their presence in six sites in Dima Hasao: Derebore (now Hojai Dobongling), Kobak, Kartong, Molongpa (now Melangpeuram), Ndunglo and Bolasan (now Nuchubunglo).

These discoveries were followed up only in 2014, when a collaborative effort by researchers from the North-Eastern Hill University (NEHU) and Nagaland University under the Archaeological Survey of India (Guwahati circle) was undertaken.

"Two sites were discovered in 2016. In 2020, we followed that up and discovered four more sites," said Dr Tilok Thakuria of the History and Archaeology Department at NEHU in Meghalaya.

The paper, 'An archaeological survey of



The jars have been found in six sites in Assam. Photo provided by the researchers

the Assam stone jar sites', has been authored by Thakuria, along with Uttam Bathari of Gauhati University and Nicholas Skopal of

the Australian National University. They documented three distinct jar shapes (bulbous top with conical end; biconical; cylindrical) on spurs, hill slopes and ridge lines. At one site, Nuchubunglo, as many as 546 jars were found. "This is arguably the largest such site in the world," said Thakuria, adding that most jars they found were in "poor condition" because of factors such as "weather condition, forest growth and burning owing to shifting cultivation and road cutting".

The significance

While the jars are yet to be scientifically dated, the researchers said links could be drawn with the stone jars found in Laos and Indonesia. "There are typological and morphological similarities between the jars found

at all three sites," said Bathari.

Added Thakuria: "There is no reported parallel anywhere else in India, apart from the northeast — this points to the fact that once upon a time a group of people having similar kind of cultural practice occupied the same geography between Laos and Northeast India."

Dating done at the Laos site suggests that jars were positioned at the sites as early as the late second millennium BC.

The other takeaway is the link to mortuary practices. The paper stated that in Laos, researchers had said there was a "strong association" between the stone jars and mortuary practices, with human skeletal remains found inside and buried around the jars. In Indonesia, the function of the jars remains

unconfirmed, although some scholars suggest a similar mortuary role.

Mills and Hutton, too, had suggested that the jars were associated with mortuary rituals. They referred to the "practices of ancestral bone repository of tribes like Mikir, Sakchips, Hangkals, Kuki, Khasi and Synteng and evidence of cremated bone fragments placed in one of the jars", stated the paper. In the 1930s, anthropologist Ursula Graham Bower described these as "funerary urns".

Thakuria said the next phase would involve systematic excavation of material remains as well as scientific dating. The researchers suggested additional surveys are required across Assam, as well as in Meghalaya and Manipur, "to understand the extent of this culture".



10 Govt & Politics



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



GETTING POLL-READY

WITH ELECTION preparations beginning in Karnataka BJP, the party's central leadership seems to be cautious about equations and groups in the state unit while giving responsibilities. Three teams have been set up for public contact programmes at the organisational level. While Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai heads one, state BJP chief Nalin Kateel and national general secretary in charge of the state, Arun Singh, are leading the other two. People close to senior leaders have been included in all three teams. Each team, comprising MLAs, ministers and senior leaders, will crisscross the state until April 22 to review and re-energise organisational activities. Sources said these visits will also assess the acceptability and popularity of each party leader in their respective areas.

AIMING EAST

AFTER ITS emphatic victory in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party has put its national expansion plans on fast track. However, despite having a state unit with a party in-charge, AAP has largely refrained from making any aggressive moves in West Bengal. There are indications now that the party might try to strengthen its organisational presence in the eastern state. It recently sent office-bearers of its national legal team to the state to hold meetings with local leaders and volunteers. Leaders of state AAP unit has also started criticising Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who shared fairly warm ties with her Delhi counterpart, Arvind Kejriwal, until their ambitions to go national started colliding.

BUSY NOW

WITH MORE than five months left for his retirement, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana's views on his post-retirement life has raised some speculation. Speaking at a webinar hosted by Georgetown University along with former US Supreme Court Justice Stephen Breyer, the CJI said retirement from the judiciary does not mean he will retire from public life. He was quick to add that he is currently too busy to think about retirement.

AAP, BJP spar over govt schools in Delhi, Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, RAJKOT, APRIL 11

AHEAD OF Gujarat Assembly elections in December this year, AAP and BJP on Monday drew political battle lines on social media when leaders of both parties visited schools in Gujarat and Delhi. AAP leader and Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia visited government schools in Gujarat Education Minister Jitu Vaghani's constituency Bhavnagar on Monday, while BJP leaders made similar visits to government schools in Delhi. Sisodia visited primary school number 62 run by the Bhavnagar Municipal Corporation (BMC) and Sidar Primary School number 1 run by the district panchayat, both in Vaghani's constituency, as part

of his "inspection visit" and attacked the BJP government for their alleged failure to improve the state's education system. The BJP is in power at the BMC. "I am saddened to see the government schools in such bad shape. How will India progress if each child doesn't get quality education (sic)," tweeted Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. Soon after Sisodia's visit, two BJP Members of Parliament (MP) from Delhi, visited two government schools in Delhi and claimed they are "exposing" the "world class" education system of the Kejriwal government on social media. BJP MP Parvesh Singh Sahib, who represents West Delhi, visited Delhi government school in Pandwala Khurd, while BJP MP from South Delhi Ramesh Bidhuri visited another government school in his constituency.

SC says won't interfere in defamation probe against Vyapam whistleblower

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE SUPREME Court on Monday declined to interfere in the probe against Anand Rai, the whistleblower in the Vyapam scam, over an alleged defamatory Facebook post.

Rai had moved the apex court on April 8, a day after he was arrested in Delhi by the Madhya Pradesh (MP) Police and taken to MP. Rai was arrested after a complaint by Laxman Singh Markam, the OSD to MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who accused him of dragging his

Tamil Nadu House resolution asks Centre to scrap CUET

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHENNAI, APRIL 11

THE TAMIL Nadu Assembly on Monday passed a resolution asking the Centre to withdraw the proposal on conducting a Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for admission to undergraduate programmes at central universities, saying it would "sideline the diverse school education systems across the country".

The Centre had announced earlier that admission to central universities funded by the University Grants Commission (UGC) would be made only through CUET, conducted by the National Testing Agency (NTA), from 2022-23 academic year. It said admissions would be based on the CUET scores instead of the Class 12 board results.

The state assembly feels that any entrance examination that is

based on the National Council for Education Research and Training (NCERT) syllabus will not provide an equal opportunity to all students who have studied in varied state board syllabi across the country, said the resolution moved by Chief Minister MK Stalin.

"In most states, the state board syllabus constitutes more than 80 per cent of the total student population, and these students invariably hail from the marginalised sections. Hence an NCERT syllabus based entrance examination would place this deserving majority in a disadvantageous position in securing admission in central universities," it said.

Barring the BJP, the resolution was supported by all other parties.

"The Assembly feels that in Tamil Nadu's context, this is likely to drastically reduce the number of students from our state in various central universities and affiliated colleges," said the resolution.

NRC: SC notice to Centre, Assam on Aadhaar biometrics plea

TORA AGARWALA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE SUPREME Court on Monday sought a response from both the Centre and the Assam government on a petition seeking Aadhaar cards for people whose biometrics remain locked despite their names being cleared for the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Assam.

Hearing a plea filed by TMC leader Sushmita Dev, a three-judge bench of Justices U U Lalit, S Ravindra Bhat, and P S Narasimha also issued a notice to the Registrar General of India (RGI) and the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI). It has asked for the responses by May 17.

Dev's petition says around 21 lakh people in Assam have been deprived of Aadhaar-linked benefits ever since their biometrics were locked due to the NRC exercise. The lack of Aadhaar cards is affecting their ability to obtain basic needs, it added.

"Both the final list and the supplementary list (of NRC) have been released and are available in public domain. However, the same is yet to be notified by the Registrar General of India, due to which 21 lakh people... are left in the lurch as their biometrics have been frozen," the TMC leader's petition said. Her petition has also argued that Aadhaar was not proof of citizenship and "any person who has been a resident of the country for 182 days in the preceding 6 months is eligible for its enrollment..." The matter is now listed for May 17.

Sources said Kharge has been called for questioning as he is an office-bearer of Young India, a Congress organisation that runs the newspaper through a company named Associated Journals Ltd (AJL).

Sources said the new case was registered six months ago based on a trial court order that allowed the Income Tax Department to probe the affairs of National Herald and even make a tax assessment of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party leader Rahul Gandhi.

The ED case has been filed without any predicate offence (a name in the leak of the MP Teachers' Eligibility Test (TET) held on March 25. Noting that Rai had already been granted bail (on August 9), a bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and Surya Kant said it will give him the liberty to move the High Court in case a charge sheet is filed.

Cong disciplinary committee sends notice to Jakhar, Thomas

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE DISCIPLINARY action committee of the Congress on Monday issued show-cause notices to former Punjab Congress president Sunil Jakhar and former Union minister KV Thomas for their comments and actions that were not in tune with the party line. Both have been asked to reply to the notices within a week.

The A K Antony-headed panel's move against Thomas comes after the party leadership in Kerala sought action against him after the former MP attended a seminar organised by the CPM on the sidelines of the party's national conclave in Kannur.

Thomas has been upset with the leadership for some time. While announcing his decision to attend the seminar, he had argued he had not got an appointment with party leader Rahul Gandhi since 2018. At the semi-

CUET, like NEET, will sideline the diverse school education systems across the country and grossly undermines the relevance of overall development-oriented long-form learning in schools, making students rely on coaching centres to improve their entrance examination scores, it said.

"The people of Tamil Nadu feel it will only favour further mushrooming of coaching centres. It is also felt that enforcing such an entrance examination along with regular schooling will lead to mental stress among the student community," said the resolution.

When contacted, UGC chairperson M Jagadeesh Kumar reiterated that it is mandatory for all central universities to implement CUET. A senior official of the Ministry of Education said while the NCERT syllabus "will form the base", the NTA has separately prepared the syllabus for the 27 domain subjects.

EXPLAINED
On blackboard: hurdles by State

AFTER ANTI-NEET protests and legislative Bills seeking exemption for Tamil Nadu, the resolution against CUET is one specific move against the Centre's emerging policies in the education sector. Questioning CUET, which makes Class XII state Board marks insignificant by putting students through an NCERT-based entrance test, is also a beginning of the strong resistance from Tamil Nadu, which has already constituted an expert panel to formulate a state policy to bypass the NEP.



Sunil Jakhar and KV Thomas. File

nar, he addressed Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan and CPI(M) state secretary Kodyeri Balakrishnan as "comrades". He also called Vijayan an able administrator. In his letter to Sonia, Sudhakaran said Thomas's participation at the CPI(M) event had hurt the sentiments of the families of the 80 Congressmen who were killed by the Communists in Kannur over the years.

Jakhar has been accused of using "objectionable language" against Dalits. While he did not name anyone, his comments in a television interview were seen to be aimed at former Punjab CM

Charanjit Singh Channi. Referring to reports that some senior Congress leaders had, at a Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting, argued that the state leadership did not support Channi, "an asset Rahul Gandhi created for Punjab and India", he tweeted on March 14: "An asset - r u joking? Thank God he wasn't declared a 'National Treasure' at CWC by the 'Pbi' lady who proposed him as CM in first place. Maybe an asset for her but for the party he has been only a liability..."

The Punjabi lady he referred to is Ambika Soni, who is also a member of the disciplinary panel.

ED questions Kharge in fresh case against National Herald

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) is questioning Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge in connection with a fresh case of money laundering linked to the running of the National Herald newspaper, which is owned and run by the Congress.

Sources said Kharge has been called for questioning as he is an office-bearer of Young India, a Congress organisation that runs the newspaper through a company named Associated Journals Ltd (AJL).

Sources said the new case was registered six months ago based on a trial court order that allowed the Income Tax Department to probe the affairs of National Herald and even make a tax assessment of Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party leader Rahul Gandhi.

The ED case has been filed without any predicate offence (a



Mallikarjun Kharge at the ED office in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

criminal case) being registered by any other agency. Under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, ED is not authorised to register a case of money laundering until another agency or state police have registered an FIR. The idea being that there cannot be any money laundering until a crime has been committed.

"In this case, the ED Enforcement Case Information

Report has been registered based on the court order following BJP leader Subramanian Swamy's complaint. ED is authorised to register a case if there is a court order specifying a crime has been committed," an ED official said.

The I-T probe against the Congress leaders arose from the investigation into a private criminal complaint filed by Swamy before a trial court in Delhi in 2013.

INDIA-USA 2+2 MINISTERIAL DIALOGUE



Rajnath Singh with US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin during an arrival ceremony at the Pentagon on Monday. AP

Rajnath reviews scope of defence ties with US

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

INDIA AND the US on Monday discussed Military-to-Military engagements, information sharing, enhanced logistics cooperation, and ability of the Armed forces to cooperate closely. The matters were discussed during the visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to the US.

Singh is on four-day visit to the US with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar to participate in the 4th India-USA 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue beginning Monday.

According to Defence Ministry, Singh on Monday held a meeting with US Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin. While Singh was accompanied by Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar and a high-level delegation, Austin was accompanied by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials in Pentagon.

"The two ministers reviewed a gamut of bilateral defence cooperation and regional security situation. Both acknowledged the salience of India-US defence partnership for peace, stability and prosperity in the Indo-Pacific and broader Indian Ocean Region," a defence ministry statement said.

The statement added that both sides discussed ways to deepen Major Defence Partnership and to work together to advance quality and scope in bilateral defence cooperation.

"They reviewed Military-to-Military engagements, information sharing, enhanced logistics cooperation, and ability of the Armed forces to cooperate closely under compatible communication arrangements. In this context, closer cooperation of Special Operation Forces came up prominently," the statement said, adding that the two ministers discussed ways for closer collaboration between defence industries.



Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao with BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait at a sit-in in New Delhi, Monday. Praveen Khanna

KCR gives Centre 24 hrs to decide on paddy procurement

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

TELANGANA CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Monday brought to the national capital his fight against the BJP government over paddy procurement. He, along with his cabinet colleagues, sat on a symbolic dharna and launched a scathing attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government, saying "they are running a government of conspiracy".

Farmer leader Rakesh Tikait, too, joined Rao at the protest site, Telangana Bhawan in Lutyens' Delhi. The dharna ended with the KCR speech in Hindi and he returned to Hyderabad.

"With folded hands, I request PM Narendra Modi to buy paddy from Telangana like you are procuring from other states. I will wait for 24 hours... we will

take a decision if there is no direction from you. We know what to do," he said.

Rao said he will come again to Delhi and meet leaders of other parties to discuss the forthcoming presidential elections. Rao's signal was clear he is no more a fence sitter. He wants to align himself with the regional forces and fight against the BJP - which he now sees as a challenger to his party (TRS) in Telangana - and to some extent the Congress. Rao was scathing against Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal, whom he called "Piyush Golmaal", saying: "When our Agricultural Minister Niranjan Reddy... came to Delhi with the demands of the farmers... the behaviour of Goyal was insulting. We grow top quality rice in Telangana but he asked us to consume broken rice. I don't know what he thinks of himself... where do they get this kind of arrogance from," Rao said.

Demand for parboiled rice low, can't waste money, says Centre

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

ON A day when Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, along with his entire cabinet, party MPs and MLAs, staged a symbolic dharna in support of an integrated national policy for paddy procurement, the Centre said it had told the state last year that the Food Corporation of India (FCI) will not procure parboiled rice in future.

The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said, "It was decided in the meeting held on August 17, 2021, that no parboiled rice will be

accepted in the Central pool for kharif marketing season (KMS) 2021-22 from any state due to high stock level. However, states can procure parboiled rice for their own consumption."

The ministry said that as a "special case" in KMS 2020-21, Telangana was permitted to procure 44.75 LMT of parboiled rice, and the state government had submitted through a letter dated October 4, 2021, that "no parboiled rice to be delivered by the Telangana government to the FCI in future".

It was only after the letter that Union Food Minister Piyush Goyal reportedly wrote to Telangana chief minister, informing him that

no parboiled rice will be procured by the FCI in future.

The Centre also highlighted the demand for the parboiled rice was much lower than the supply.

Sharing the details of the parboiled rice stock with the FCI, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said "40 LMT is the current stock of (parboiled rice), which is sufficient for two years, and its shelf life is one-and-a-half years". "The annual consumption of parboiled rice is 20-lakh metric tonnes, what will we do by procuring more than that. Public money will be wasted," said Pandey, responding to a query at a press conference.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com



Kolkata

ECONOMY

SENSEX: 58,964.57 ▼ 482.61 (0.81%) NIFTY: 17,674.95 ▼ 109.40 (0.62%) NIKKEI: 26,821.52 ▼ 164.28 HANG SENG: 21,208.30 ▼ 663.71 FTSE: 7,626.59 ▼ 42.97 DAX: 14,189.24 ▼ 94.43

International market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH POWER

Demand soaring: ‘Tolling’ on the table as imported coal prices heat up

KARUNJIT SINGH
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE CENTRE may soon ask states to use tolling to allow other thermal power plants to utilise their coal linkages and transmit power to reduce the need to transport coal, as per a senior government official.

In a repeat of the post-monsoon shortage seen last October, high global prices have led to greater demand of domestic coal for power supply from thermal stations. Rising demand for power due to the onset of the summer season as well as the post-Covid economic recovery is also putting pressure on thermal plants. This has led to supply concerns. States, including Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Punjab and Bihar, have already faced blackouts as a result of the crunch. On Friday, 150 plants that utilise domestic coal had 22.7 million tonnes of coal, or 37 per cent of normative stock levels, with 72 plants classified as having critical levels of coal inventory.

On April 7, electricity shortage rose to 80.1 million units, with the country being short of 6,124 MW of generation capacity during peak demand.

Union Power Secretary Alok Kumar told *The Indian Express* that the Centre may soon advise states to opt for “tolling”, under which states “can give coal to some other plant through competitive bidding” where power can be generated and transmitted to the state with the original coal

WHAT IS TOLLING?



Nabha Thermal Plant, in Patiala district. *File*

■ Under tolling, states can give coal to some other plant via competitive bidding where power can be generated and transmitted to the state with the original linkage.

linkage. Kumar added there was no shortage of domestic coal but that logistics for coal delivery were designed for “a certain amount of imported coal”. He added the ministry was working with Railways to maximise coal dispatches.

NTPC and DVC have started importing coal to supplement domestic coal requirements through blending in line with a circular issued by the Centre.

Kumar said the Centre was also in talks with imported coal-based power plants and discoms relying on power from such plants to restart operations. He said about 10,000 MW of the 17,000 MW of imported coal-based power generation was operational. A key concern for such plants has been the ability to pass through the higher cost of imported coal to discoms under Power Purchase Agreements.

PROPOSES EASING SOME MINIMUM ROLL OUT OBLIGATIONS FOR NEW PLAYERS

Cut 5G spectrum base prices by 35-40%, suggests Trai

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE TELECOM Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on Monday recommended slashing the base price between 35 and 40 per cent for auction of major 5G spectrum airwaves, while also suggesting that all available spectrum in the existing bands of 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2300 MHz, 2500 MHz as well as the newer frequency bands of 600 MHz, 3300-3670 MHz, and 24.25-28.5 GHz also be put up for auction.

“For the long-term growth and sustainability of the telecom sector, infusing liquidity and encouraging investment, the telecom service providers should be allowed easy payment options including part payment with flexibility of moratorium,” Trai said.

In its recommendations for the

RESERVE PRICES



File

■ The reserve prices will be for 20 years. For 30 years, base price should be 1.5 times the price recommended for the 20 year period, Trai suggested

auction of 5G spectrum, the telecom regulatory body suggested that the base price for prime 5G band of 3300-3670 MHz be kept at Rs 317 crore per MHz, which is 35 per cent lower than the base price of Rs 492 crore per MHz announced in 2018. Similarly, for the 700 MHz, the price recommended by Trai comes out to Rs 3,297 crore,

which is almost 40 per cent lower than prices recommended by the regulatory in 2018.

The reserve prices, however, will be for a period of 20 years. In case the spectrum is allocated for a period of 30 years, the base price to be considered should be 1.5 times the price recommended for the 20 year period, Trai suggested.

In its reforms package announced for the telecommunications sector in September 2021, the Department of Telecommunications said in all future auctions, tenure for which spectrum can be held would be extended to 30 years from 20 years.

In its recommendations, Trai has also suggested easing some of the minimum roll out (MRO) obligations for deployment of 5G by the new entrants in the telecom sector. For example, in the 700 MHz, 800 MHz, 900 MHz, and 1800 MHz bands, Trai has suggested that the time period for

MRO should be extended to 2 years from 1 year currently.

Over these two years, the MRO obligation should be 40 per cent of the coverage for the first year, and 90 per cent for the second year.

In line with the policy change announced by the DoT in September 2021, the Trai has also suggested that telecom service providers should be allowed to surrender spectrum easily by paying a spectrum surrender fee of Rs 1 lakh per spectrum band per Licensed Service Area (LSA).

To boost ease of doing business, the DoT in September suggested this measure as a way of allowing telcos to return the spectrum they were no longer using. Enterprises that want to create a private network for their captive use may request telecom service providers “establish an independent isolated private network in enterprise’s premises using the firm’s spectrum”, it recommended.

Supervisory action against Paytm Payments Bank ‘not yet complete’: RBI

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

THE SUPERVISORY action by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) against Paytm Payments Bank, which led to the banking regulator suspending the payments bank from onboarding any new customers, is “not yet complete”, the RBI said in response to a Right to Information (RTI) application filed by *The Indian Express*.

The banking sector regulator, in an order dated March 11, had directed the Vijay Shekhar Sharma-led payments bank to stop adding new customers with immediate effect while also asking it to appoint an IT audit firm to conduct a comprehensive audit of the IT system of the payments bank.

At the time, the central bank had said that onboarding of new customers by Paytm Payments Bank will be subject to “specific permission to be granted by RBI after reviewing a report of the IT auditors”. On April 4, the Finance Ministry told the Parliament that it was informed by the RBI that Paytm Payments Bank had not appointed an audit firm for the audit of its IT systems.

“It is informed that the supervisory process/action in the (Paytm Payments Bank) matter is not yet complete”, the central bank said in the RTI response to a question on the reasons behind RBI’s order. Following the RBI’s order on March 11, news reports claimed

YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

that the suspension was on account of Paytm Payments Bank sharing information with Chinese entities that indirectly own a stake in the payments bank. The payments bank is a joint-venture between Paytm and its founder Vijay Shekhar Sharma. Paytm, parent company of which One 97 Communications Ltd is a listed entity, has shareholding by China’s Alibaba Group and its affiliates.

Paytm Payments Bank had denied these reports and said that it was “fully compliant with RBI’s directions on data localisation”. “All of the Bank’s data resides within India,” it added.

Separately, on RBI suspending onboarding of new users on the payments bank, it had said that it was “taking immediate steps to comply with RBI directions, including appointment of a reputed external auditor to conduct a comprehensive system audit of IT systems”. “Any new users coming to the Paytm app can create Paytm UPI handles, and link them to their existing PPBL account or to other bank accounts. However, new users cannot, until further notice, sign up for new PPBL wallets or PPBL savings or current account,” it had said.

DoT invites ministries, industry tie-up to build 5G use-case ecosystems

New Delhi: The DoT has invited expression of interest (Eoi) from various stakeholders for partnerships to build 5G use-case ecosystems focused on users and industry needs.

An inter-ministerial committee—chaired by Member (Technology), Digital Communications Commission and with representatives from the Ministry of Electronics and IT, Department of Science and Technology, and other ministries—has also been formed. The panel will function under the guidance of the Telecom Secretary, a release from the

Department of Telecommunications (DoT) said.

The new partnership programme will be called “5G Vertical Engagement and Partnership Program (VEPP)”, it added. To expedite the development of use cases for the industry, the DoT said it would, in partnership with other ministries, state governments and startup hubs, “facilitate necessary approvals, regulatory clearances to enable use case prototyping, pilots, demos, trials at the user or vertical industry premises”. **ENS**
Full report on www.indianexpress.com

Godrej floats finserv arm

Mumbai: Godrej Industries on Monday announced the launch of its financial services subsidiary Godrej Capital, which will be the holding company for mortgage lender Godrej Housing Finance and non-banking financial company (NBFC) Godrej Finance. Godrej Capital intends to grow its balance sheet to Rs 30,000 crore in 2026 from Rs 1,800 crore at present.

Godrej Group is the newest conglomerate to enter the financial services space. While Godrej Housing Finance was launched in November 2020, the group is only now going for an NBFC launch using a licence, held since 1998. **FE**

and his 13-year-old daughter.

Prompted by these, the Road Transport Ministry had ordered a probe into the incidents and roped in the Centre for Fire Explosive and Environment Safety, a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation, to constitute and independent team and carry out an investigation into the incidents. While conclusive reasons behind these incidents are yet to be clear, experts have said rising temperatures and manufacturing defects could be possible causes behind the fires.

Nashik firm’s 20 electric scooters catch fire: ‘Biggest such incident’ yet

SOUAMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

IN WHAT is potentially the country’s biggest incident of electric scooters catching fire so far, a batch of 20 electric two-wheelers made by Jitendra EV erupted in flames while being transported from the company’s factory in Nashik.

The company confirmed the incident and said that it was investigating the cause behind it.

“An unfortunate incident took place on 9th April near our factory

gate in a scooter. The situation was immediately brought under control by timely intervention from our team. Safety being of prime importance, we are investigating the root cause and we will soon come out with findings,” a spokesperson for Jitendra EV said.

The Road Transport Ministry, it is learnt, has taken cognisance of the incident and is in the process of summoning representatives of the company to present a report on its findings about the incident.

According to data published by Federation of Automobile Dealers

Associations (FADA), Jitendra EV sold 3,788 two-wheeler units in 2021-22 (April-March), compared with 619 units sold in the year ago period. A total of 231 lakh electric two-wheelers were sold during 2021-22. This is at least the fifth such incident of electric scooters abruptly erupting into flames in the last few weeks. Last month, an Ola S1 pro electric scooter caught fire in Pune while parked on the roadside of a busy commercial area. In a more tragic event, an EV made by Okinawa erupted into flames claiming the lives of a man

against the year-ago period

Profit margins in FY23 will be a further 1 pp shrinkage

Source: Crisil Ratings/PTI

Export-linked and industrial commodities sectors are likely to have seen margins erode by 4 percentage points (pps)



‘Corporate profitability set to fall in Q4’

Companies are likely to see compression in Q4 profit margins, a Crisil Ratings report said

For fiscal FY22, EBITDA or operating profits are likely to shrink by up to 0.40% to 21-23%

Revenue jump of 22% is set to be reported by companies in FY22, which will slow down to 14%

Q4 FY22 will be only the second quarter in the last three years when profit margins have narrowed

INCLUDES FULL TIME EMPLOYEES AND THIRD-PARTY POSITIONS HIRED ON SIX-MONTH CONTRACTS

Meesho lays off 150 staff amid superstore arm restructuring

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 11

SOCIAL COMMERCE firm Meesho has laid off 150 employees and third-party hires from its grocery arm “Meesho Superstore”, days after integrat-

ing that part of its business into its core platform, saying that the downsizing was “aimed at bringing in efficiencies”.

In a statement to *The Indian Express*, a Meesho spokesperson said, “About 150 full time employees will be impacted by the restructuring of Meesho

Superstore which is aimed at bringing in efficiencies. The company is offering severance packages and outplacement assistance to help those impacted secure new opportunities outside the company”.

In a blog post, the company—backed by Softbank and

Facebook—said the people impacted in the retrenchment exercise included full time employees and third-party positions on six-month contracts at Meesho Superstore. These people’s roles “were reassessed to remove redundancies with the core business”, it added.

RECORD INCREMENTAL REVENUE IN FY22 TCS Q4 net up 7.35%

Mumbai: Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Monday posted a 7.35 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 9,926 crore for the quarter ended March 2022, against Rs 9,246 crore in the year-ago period.

Revenue for the fourth quarter increased by 16.8 per cent to Rs 50,591 crore from Rs 43,705 crore last year. While operating margin was 25 per cent, net margin was at 19.6 per cent.

TCS has recommended a final dividend of Rs 22 per share. According to India’s largest software company, growth among markets was led by North America which grew (18.7 per cent). UK grew (13 per cent). Continental Europe grew (10.1 per cent). Among emerging markets, Latin America grew (20.6 per cent), Middle East & Africa grew (7.3 per cent), India grew (7 per cent), and Asia Pacific grew (5.5 per cent). Rajesh Gopinathan, MD &



TCS MD-CEO Rajesh Gopinathan at the Q4 results announcement, Mumbai. *PTI*

CEO, TCS, said, “We are closing FY22 on a strong note, with mid-term growth and adding the maximum incremental revenue ever. Increasing participation in our customers’ growth and transformation journeys, and an all-time high order book provide a strong and sustainable foundation for continued growth ahead.” **ENS**
Full report on www.indianexpress.com

BRIEFLY

Oil below \$100

New York: Oil fell about 4% Monday on plans to release record volumes of crude from strategic stocks and on China Covid curbs. Brent fell 3.7% to \$98.96. US WTI fell 3.6% to \$94.76 by 1544 GMT. Meanwhile, fuel demand in India hit a 3-year high in March as total petroleum consumption rose to 19.41 million tonnes. **AGENCIES**

iPhone 13 output

New Delhi/Brussels: Apple Inc is making iPhone 13 in India, produced by Foxconn at its Sriperumbudur plant. Meanwhile, in the EU, Apple faces an additional antitrust charge in a probe triggered by a Spotify complaint.

Musk, Twitter

Bengaluru: Elon Musk rejected Twitter’s offer to join its board, a week after he became its biggest shareholder, as Twitter warned of “distractions ahead”. **REUTERS**

pinBox funding

New Delhi: Digital micro-pension platform pinBox, that provides customised savings and insurance solutions to informal sector workers, raised an undisclosed sum in seed funding from ADB Ventures, Venture Catalysts and 9 Unicorns. **ENS**

NBFC principles

New Delhi: The RBI introduced certain principles, standards & procedures for mid & large non-banking financial companies, i.e. entities in NBFC-UL & NBFC-ML.

Deal activity

New Delhi: India Inc’s deal activity rose to \$13.3 billion on-year in Q3 FY22 from 608 deals, a Grant Thornton report said. Mergers & acquisitions rose to a 4-year high of \$30.3 billion in the same period, according to a Refinitiv report. **PTI**

RETAIL ELECTRIC vehicle (EV) sales rose more than three times in FY22 to 4.29 lakh against 1.34 lakh a year ago, showed data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

Which kind of EVs are selling the most? As per FADA data, electric two-wheelers are being sold the most. In FY22, 2.31 lakh electric two-wheelers were sold, against 41,046 last year. It does not include figures from Andhra Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Lakshadweep and Telangana.

Are people buying electric four-wheelers too?

EXPLAINED

Tata Motors eyes EV output boost

New Delhi: Tata Motors is looking to ramp up the production of EVs, said Shailesh Chandra, MD—passenger vehicle & electric vehicles. **PTI**

Yes. Electric passenger vehicle (PV) sales rose from 4,984 a year before to 17,802 units.

Why have EV sales picked up?

A concerted push by the government and expanding footprint EV charging infrastructure led to the growth in EV sales in the year that saw a sustained rise in petrol and diesel prices. **Full report on** www.indianexpress.com

SBI
Digital & Transaction Banking Department
Corporate Centre, 2nd floor, Mafatol Centre, Nariman Point, Mumbai - 400 021
E-mail - dgmpjects.dtb@sbi.co.in
Website: <https://bank.sbi/>, <https://www.sbi.co.in>

NOTICE INVITING TENDER
RFP No. SBI/ EV/ RFP/2022-23/001 DATED: 12.04.2022
Bids are invited by State Bank of India from eligible bidders for Engagement of Consultant to Explore the Business Potential for Bank in Electric Vehicle Charging Space. For details, please visit procurement news at <https://bank.sbi/>, <https://www.sbi.co.in>, <https://etender.sbi/>
Commencement of download of RFP: From 12.04.2022 at 15:00 hrs
Last date and time for submission of bids: 10.05.2022 upto 15:00 hrs
Place: Mumbai Deputy General Manager (Projects)
Date: 12.04.2022 Digital & Transaction Banking Department

Bengal Chemicals & Pharmaceuticals Ltd.
(A Government of India Enterprise)
6, Ganesh Chunder Avenue,
Kolkata - 700 113
Phone No.: 03322371525/22363148

BCPL invites Expression of Interest (Eoi) from the reputed Manufacturers for empanelment of Loan Licensing Manufacturers for Pharmaceutical Products vide Eoi No. BCPL/LL/01/2022-23 Dated 12/04/2022. Details available on BCPL official website www.bengalchemicals.co.in
Please refer to the above website only for further amendment(s), if any,

DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF DELHI
OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER (SDW) NW
KESHOPUR STP, NEW DELHI 110018
PRESS N.I.T. No. 01 EE(SDW)/VIII (2022-23)

S. No.	Name of work	Estimate cost in Rs.	E/ Money in Rs.	Tender Fee in Rs.	Date of release of tender in procurement solution	Last date / time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	SITC of Online Monitoring System at various locations (11 nos) of Najafgarh drain and supplementary drain with comprehensive maintenance for a period of 5 years	36619876/-	734000/-	1500/-	Tender ID:- 2022_DJB_220395_1 Date. 09.04.2022	10.05.2022 03:00 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at (<https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>)
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER)
Adv. No. J.S.V. 24 (2022-23)

Sd/- (J.C Garg)
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW) VIII
“STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene”

TOP OF THE WORLD



NSO is seeking to have the entire case dismissed. *Reuters*

ISRAEL

WhatsApp suit: NSO turns to US SC for immunity

Jerusalem: The Israeli spyware maker NSO Group is turning to the US Supreme Court as it seeks to head off a lawsuit filed by WhatsApp. In a filing to the SC, NSO said it should be recognised as a foreign government agent and, therefore, be entitled to immunity under US law limiting lawsuits against foreign countries. The request appeals a pair of earlier federal court rulings that rejected similar arguments by the Israeli company. WhatsApp parent Facebook, now called Meta Platforms Inc., sued NSO in 2019 for allegedly targeting some 1,400 users of its encrypted messaging service with highly sophisticated spyware. Granting sovereign immunity to NSO would greatly hinder WhatsApp's case. **AP**

UNITED KINGDOM

Tax row: Sunak says ready for review

London: UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak has written to Boris Johnson, to be referred to one of the British Prime Minister's independent advisers to review all his ministerial declarations of interest amid a row around his family's tax affairs. Sunak tweeted on Sunday that he is confident the review by House of Lords peer Christopher Geidt will provide "further clarity". PM Johnson formally accepted the request on Monday and has asked Lord Geidt to open an inquiry. **PTI**

CHINA

Shanghai sees 25k new cases, eases lockdown

Shanghai: China's financial centre of Shanghai started easing its lockdown in some areas on Monday despite reporting a record of more than 25,000 new Covid-19 infections, as authorities sought to get the city moving again after more than two weeks. City officials announced on Monday that they were grouping residential units into three risk categories as a step towards allowing "appropriate activity" by those in neighbourhoods with no positive cases during a two-week stretch, adding that district authorities would publish further details. **REUTERS**

HEAVY SHELLING IN KHARKIV KILLS CHILD, SAYS MAYOR

Ahead of east push, Russia hits Ukraine's air defences

AP & REUTERS

KYIV, APRIL 11

RUSSIA SAID on Monday that it destroyed air defence systems in Ukraine over the weekend, in what appeared to be a renewed push to gain air superiority and take out weapons Kyiv has described as crucial ahead of a broad new offensive in the east. Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said the military used cruise missiles to destroy four S-300 air defence missile launchers on the southern outskirts of the central city of Dnipro. He said about 25 Ukrainian troops were also hit by Sunday's strike. Ukraine's eastern city of Kharkiv came under heavy shelling on Monday, causing multiple casualties including one dead child, Mayor Ihor Terekhov said in a televised interview. When asked about the risk of a new Russian assault on the city, mayor said forces were focused and ready to defend the city. "There is no panic in the city," Terekhov said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy is meanwhile pleading for more Western aid, saying his forces need heavier firepower to resist the coming onslaught and push Russian forces back. Speaking in a video address to South Korean lawmakers, Zelenskyy said his country needed more help, including weapons, if it is to survive the war. "You have something that can be indispensable for us ... armoured vehicles, anti-aircraft, anti-tank, anti-ship weapons," he said. The mayor of Mariupol said Monday that over 10,000 civilians have died in the Russian siege of his city, and that the toll could surpass 20,000, with corpses that were "carpeted through the streets." Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov said the Kremlin would not halt its operation for any new round of peace talks. "A decision was made that during the next rounds of talks, there would be no pause (in military action) so long as a final agreement is not reached," Lavrov said.

Firefighters work to extinguish a fire at a house after a Russian attack in Kharkiv, on Monday. *AP*

Austrian leader has 'open, tough' talks with Putin

Vienna: Austrian Chancellor Karl Nehammer held "very direct, open and tough" talks with Russian President Vladimir Putin near Moscow on Monday, in Putin's first meeting with a EU leader since the invasion. "This is not a friendly visit," Nehammer was quoted as saying after the meeting at Putin's official Novo-Ogaryovo residence. A Nehammer spokesman said the meeting lasted 75 minutes. "The conversation with President Putin was direct, open and tough," Nehammer said, adding that he felt meeting him was his duty so as to "leave no stone unturned" in seeking an end to the conflict. **REUTERS**

Chechen chief Kadyrov says Russian forces will take Kyiv

REUTERS

RAMZAN KADYROV, the powerful head of Russia's republic of Chechnya, said early on Monday that there will be an offensive by Russian forces not only on the besieged port of Mariupol, but also on Kyiv and other Ukrainian cities. "There will be an offensive ... not only on Mariupol, but also on other places, cities and villages," Kadyrov said in a video posted on his Telegram channel. "Luhansk and Donetsk — we will fully liberate in the first place ... and then take Kyiv and all other cities."

Kadyrov, who has often de-

Ramzan Kadyrov is the powerful head of Russia's republic of Chechnya. *Reuters*

scribed himself as Russian President Vladimir Putin's "foot soldier," said there should be no doubt about Kyiv.

Experts see little hope in Ukraine-Russia talks

KRISHN KAUSHIK

BERLIN, APRIL 11

IT HAS been more than 45 days since Russia's invasion of Ukraine. While Russia has diverted its forces from around Kyiv, which is the capital, and other regions in the north towards east and south, focusing on the Donbas region, negotiations between the two countries have not resulted in anything concrete yet.

Whether Russia is negotiating in good faith; which countries will offer security guarantees to Ukraine against Russia as part of its deal; will it agree to a deal without Russian troops leaving its territories in Donbas; can Ukraine convince its own people for a deal without achieving "victory"; and how will any deal be approved with martial law in place in Ukraine — these are some of the main stumbling blocks that are likely to prevent a concrete deal

Road workers load a destroyed Russian tank onto a platform in the village of Andriyivka close to Kyiv on Monday. *AP*

being reached between the two nations at war, according to several German, Polish and American experts, officials and analysts *The Indian Express* interacted with in Germany over the past week. Discussing the issue off-

record, these experts said that there are several problems with the ongoing negotiations from both Russian and Ukrainian sides. Ukraine has proposed to Russia that it will be willing to let go off its aspirations to join the

EXPLAINED **A frozen conflict** OFFICIALS AND experts feel that the war will now become a frozen conflict, which can continue for years. Many also feel that Russia is likely to keep pushing as much as it can for another month, till early May. Putin, they feel, will need to show something for victory of his objectives by May 9, which is when Russia celebrates the Victory Day;.

NATO and opt for neutrality in lieu of security guarantees from other countries. But many experts believe that this is not going to work out. Russia, America and the UK

NIGERIA

VICE-PRESIDENT TO RUN FOR PRESIDENT

Nigeria's vice-president Yemi Osinbajo said he will run for President in next year's election. Osinbajo, 65, formally declared his intention to succeed President Muhammadu Buhari, who will be stepping down after serving two terms. In a video broadcast, Osinbajo promised to "complete" what he and Buhari started when they both were elected in 2015, including "radically transforming" Nigeria's security and intelligence operations.



Shehbaz Sharif, considered a realist, able administrator

MZULQERNAIN

LAHORE/ISLAMABAD, APRIL 11

SHEHBAZ SHARIF, who became Pakistan's new Prime Minister after the unceremonious ouster of Imran Khan, is a hard-core realist and over the years has earned the reputation of a matter-of-fact person and a good administrator.

Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz, the 70-year-old younger brother of former three-time Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, has served as chief minister of the most populous and politically crucial Punjab province thrice.

Born in September 1951 in Punjabi-speaking Kashmiri family in Lahore, Shehbaz entered politics along with his elder brother Nawaz in mid 1980s. He first got elected as a member of Punjab Assembly in 1988 when Nawaz became chief minister of Punjab. Shehbaz first became CM of Punjab in 1997 when his brother was PM at the Centre.

Following General Pervez Musharraf's coup in 1999 toppling the Nawaz Sharif government, Shehbaz along with the family spent eight years in exile in Saudi Arabia before returning to Pakistan in 2007.

He wore the hat of Punjab chief minister for the second term in 2008 and he grabbed the same slot for third time in 2013.

Shehbaz has claimed that Gen Musharraf had offered him prime ministership provided he abandons his elder brother Nawaz, which he said he had refused straight away.

After PM Nawaz Sharif was disqualified from holding office in 2017 in the Panama Papers case, the PML-N appointed Shehbaz as the party president. Subsequently,

Shehbaz Sharif at National Assembly, in Islamabad on Monday. *Reuters*

Nawaz Sharif to return to Pak after Eid: PML-N leader

Islamabad: Deposed Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is expected to return from London next month after Eid, a senior PML-N leader has said. Mian Javed Latif said a decision on PML-N supremo and the three-time PM Sharif's anticipated return will be discussed with the coalition partners. All decisions would be first brought up with constituent parties of the coalition, *The Express Tribune* quoted him as saying. **PTI**

after 2018 elections he became the Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly.

Nawaz's daughter and PML-N vice-president Maryam Nawaz, who is Shehbaz's niece, has said that her uncle is a man who has served the nation selflessly and tirelessly. Although it is said that Nawaz Sharif wants his daughter Maryam to become PM, she is convicted in the Avenfield corruption case. So the elder Sharif had no choice but to nominate the younger Sharif for the top executive post from his party. **PTI**

SRI LANKA CRISIS

PM Rajapaksa: Will end economic crisis like we ended LTTE

PRESSTrust OF INDIA

COLOMBO, APRIL 11



Sri Lanka PM Mahinda Rajapaksa

SRI LANKA'S Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Monday said that his government was confident of overcoming the unprecedented economic crisis in the same way it crushed the LTTE over a decade ago.

In a televised address to the nation, Mahinda, who is under growing pressure to quit due to the worst economic crisis, said that he understands the people's sufferings.

"We have to strengthen the economy. We will take the responsibility to resolve the economic issue in the same way we ended the 30-year war," the PM said, referring to his military victory over the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) in 2009.

The LTTE, which led a separatist war for a separate Tamil homeland, was crushed by the Lankan military in 2009 with the death of its supreme Velupillai Prabhakaran. Mahinda, the elder brother of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa,

said the government is working round-the-clock to overcome the economic crisis.

In his first public appearance since countrywide protests began demanding the resignation President Gotabaya and the entire Rakapaksa family, he appealed to the protesters to end their agitation and said every minute spent on streets deprives the country of dollar inflow.

"The government is spending every second of the day to resolve this problem. My family is being slandered, we can tolerate it," Mahinda said.

In a bid to blame the Opposition Janatha Vikramuthi Peramuna (JVP) party for the protests, Mahinda recalled the JVP rebellions in the 70s and 80s. He said that his government had built roads, ports and infrastructure not to keep the people on the streets protesting.

BY LATE MARCH THIS YEAR, PAK SAW 52 ATTACKS BY MILITANTS, COMPARED WITH 35 IN SAME PERIOD LAST YEAR, FIND DATA

Taliban tout success, but Islamic State morphs, grows in Pak, Afghanistan

KATHY GANNON

ALALABAD, APRIL 11

BASHEER WAS a young Taliban fighter barely out of his teens when the Islamic State group took over his village in eastern Afghanistan, nearly eight years ago. The militants rounded up villagers identified as Taliban and killed them, often beheading them, forcing their families to watch.

Basheer escaped and lived in hiding during the following years when IS controlled several districts in Nangarhar province. Over time, he rose in the Taliban ranks. Now known as Engineer

Basheer, he is the Taliban intelligence chief in eastern Afghanistan, with a leading role in the campaign to crush IS. He hasn't forgotten the atrocities he saw in his home district of Kot.

"I can't explain their cruelty in words, whatever comes into your mind, they have done more than that," he told *AP* in a recent interview at his headquarters in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar.

Since coming to power in Afghanistan eight months ago, the Taliban have touted their success in repressing the Islamic State group, but the militants have expanded into neighbouring Pakistan, stepping up attacks there. Analysts say IS has mor-

phed into a borderless terrorist group, one of the deadliest in a region that has spawned many violent, radical organizations.

In northwest Pakistan, the impact is brutally clear. The remains of an IS suicide bomber are still visible on the once ornate walls of a mosque, weeks after he blew himself up, killing more than 60 worshippers as they prayed. IS identified the bomber as an Afghan from Kabul.

The March 4 bombing at the Kusha Kisaldar Shiite mosque in the old city of Peshawar stunned Pakistanis, deepening their fear of the resurgence of terror attacks in their country, after a steady decline in the past decade.

Kusha Kisaldar Shiite Mosque, the site of March 4 suicide bombing in Peshawar. *AP*

The rise in attacks began last year and is accelerating, said Amir Rana, executive director of

the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, an independent think tank that monitors militant ac-

tivity in Pakistan.

By late March this year, Pakistan had seen 52 attacks by militants, compared with 35 in the same period last year, according to the institute's data. The attacks have also gotten deadlier. So far this year in Pakistan, 155 people have been killed in such attacks, compared to 68 last year.

The worst have been claimed by a ruthless Islamic State affiliate, known as Islamic State in Khorasan Province or IS-K.

Meanwhile, IS attacks appear to have declined in Afghanistan.

IS-K first emerged in 2014 in eastern Afghanistan. By 2019, it held significant territory in Nangarhar province and had

pushed into neighbouring Kunar province. The US military waged a massive air campaign against it, including targeting a suspected IS hideout with America's largest conventional bomb, known as the "mother of all bombs."

But IS survived, and it presented the greatest security challenge to the Taliban when they seized power in Afghanistan last August. IS-K is a longtime enemy of the Taliban. The Taliban espouse a harsh interpretation of Islamic law and often used suicide attacks in their nearly 20-year insurgency against the United States and its Afghan allies. But they often blend tribal traditions with religious edicts

and have reached out to Shiites. IS, meanwhile, opposes any group that does not accept its more radical, deeply anti-Shiite ideology and is notorious for atrocities meant to spread fear. IS, unlike the Taliban, see their battle as one to establish a unified Muslim world under a caliphate.

The Taliban responded with their characteristic heavy hand, sweeping through suspected IS strongholds. In October and November, residents reported bodies hanging from trees. They were told they were IS militants. Basheer says the Taliban have succeeded in reining in the group. "We got control of all those areas..." he said. **AP**

Scheffler gets Masters green jacket to go with No. 1 ranking

