



## WEST BENGAL

**'WORSE THAN SRI LANKA': MAMATA TARGETS CENTRE ON FUEL PRICE HIKE P3**

## BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



## WEST BENGAL

**'Need to show rule of law exists': HC orders CBI probe into Cong councillor murder**EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, APRIL 4

THE CALCUTTA High Court on Monday ordered CBI inquiry into the murder case of Tapan Kandu, a Congress councillor from the Jhalda Municipality in West Bengal's Purulia district, who was shot dead on March 13.

The central agency was directed to submit in the trial court concerned a final report on the investigation within a month.

This comes days after the high court directed the agency to probe the Birbhumi killings in which 8 people were charred to death after the murder of a deputy pradhan of the Trinamool Congress.

According to sources, the bench of Justice Rajkumar Mantha observed, "There is the need for instilling faith of the public in any investigation on the crime. There is also the need to demonstrate that the rule of law is still there."

Though the investigation is progressing on the whole, more could have been done by now, he added. The court noted that the inspector-in-charge of the Jhalda police station, Sanjib Ghosh, who allegedly is linked to the murder, has not yet been taken into custody yet. It observed that Ghosh's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



## LANKA CRISIS DEEPENS

■ Gotabaya Rajapaksa disbands govt, drops brother Basil as finance minister

■ Opposition parties reject President's invitation to join 'unity' govt

■ Police use tear gas and water cannon to disperse crowds defying curfew orders

**Protesters take to the streets of Colombo on Monday, demanding the resignation of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa. AP/PTI**

REPORT, PAGE 12

## Kashmiri Pandit, 2 migrants shot at, CRPF man killed in Valley

BASHAARAT MASOOD  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 4

ON MONDAY evening, suspected militants fired at a Kashmiri Pandit in South Kashmir's Shopian, leaving him seriously injured. The firing on Bal Krishan, of Chotigam village, followed two other attacks during the day in the Valley, leaving a CRPF personnel dead and three people injured, including two migrant workers.

Police sources said Krishan received three bullets and is in a critical condition.

Monday's attack was the first on Kashmiri Pandits since October last year when militants had shot dead a prominent busi-



CRPF personnel at the attack site in Srinagar on Monday. PTI

nessman, M L Bindroo, at Srinagar. After the attack, the government had enhanced the security of Pandits living in the Valley.

The attack on migrant labourers was the second in two days and the fourth in a fortnight

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Gorakhnath temple attack terror, could be part of a plot: UP Police

**Accused IIT graduate, family says suffering from depression**MANISH SAHU  
LUCKNOW, APRIL 4

THE ATTACK on police personnel posted at the Gorakhnath temple in Gorakhpur by a 29-year-old man is part of a "serious conspiracy" and "could be called a terror incident", UP Police said, even as the attacker's family said he had been undergoing treatment for depression since 2017.

Around 8 pm on Sunday, the accused Ahmed Murtaza Abbasi, an IIT-Bombay graduate who



A video grab of the incident in Gorakhpur. PTI

hails from Gorakhpur, attacked PAC personnel posted at the temple with a "sharp-edged weapon" while raising religious slogans and trying to forcibly enter the premises, police said.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is the head priest of the temple but police said he was not present on the premises when the incident occurred. On Monday evening, Adityanath visited the temple and the spot where the incident took place, and met the injured personnel

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Topper and CM scholarship recipient, 22-yr-old in namaz video says not scared, did no wrong

**Father says don't want to pursue matter: 'Believe in forgiving and moving on'**IRAM SIDDIQUE  
DAMOH, APRIL 4

ON MARCH 25, it was a friend who came rushing to her with news of the "viral video" – shot only a few hours earlier, it had the 22-year-old offering namaz in an empty room at Dr Harisingh Gaur central univer-

sity in Madhya Pradesh's Sagar district. The video, shot secretly and in complete breach of her privacy, angered her but she wasn't scared. "Why should I be scared? I was confident that I hadn't done anything wrong," she says.

That day, as right-wing social media handles began working themselves up into a lather, with

the Hindu Jagran Manch giving a written complaint to the university officials demanding action against her, the university set up a six-member internal inquiry committee. The university later issued a statement saying she said she was "unaware that one should abstain from religious practice in the department building".

Now back home in Damoh, the woman, who hopes to be a teacher and is in her final semester of BSc-BED – a four-year integrated course offered by the university's Department of Education – is preparing for her final exams that are due soon. Her family and teachers say she has always been among the toppers.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Kohli said younger members of team felt intimidated by Kumble: Vinod Rai book

PAGE 1  
ANCHOREXPRESSNEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

FORMER COMPTROLLER and Auditor General (CAG) Vinod Rai, who was asked by the Supreme Court to take charge of Indian cricket five years ago in the wake of the IPL corruption controversy, has indicated that the then captain Virat Kohli and head coach Anil Kumble had major differences of opinion – and "there was no denying that the situation could have been han-



**Rift between Kohli and Kumble could have been handled better: Rai**

dled differently". In his book, *Not Just a Nightwatchman – My Innings in the BCCI*, brought out by Rupa Publications, the former IAS officer says the much-discussed captain-coach rift had hit the ad-

ministrators like a "ton of bricks". The book delves into intrigue in the women's team, too. It also details the fallout of allegations of sexual harassment levelled against the then BCCI CEO Rahul Johri.

In 2017, Rai was named head of the Committee of Administrators (CoA) that ran Indian cricket for close to three years. Revisiting the Kohli-Kumble episode, Rai suggests that the coach and captain had a far-from-healthy working relationship.

"In my conversations with the captain and team management, it was conveyed that Kumble was too much of a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**Running out of time, climate action feasible and affordable, says IPCC**AMITABH SINHA  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

STRESSING ON stronger action in the near term, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said that global greenhouse emissions needed to peak by 2025 "at the latest" if the world wanted to restrict temperature rise to within 1.5 degree Celsius from pre-industrial times.

Further, global emissions would have to be reduced by 43 per cent from current levels by the year 2030 in order to meet the 1.5 degree Celsius target, it said.

In its latest assessment report released on Monday, the IPCC has provided an assessment of actions that are being taken, and where they will take us in the fight against climate change.

Also, it has evaluated the different options available to achieve the global goals of keeping temperature rises within agreed levels.

The IPCC pointed out that many effective methods to scale up climate actions were not only available but also "feasible" and affordable, even though these varied across sectors and regions.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## EXPRESS NETWORK

**HC LETS RANA AYYUB GO ABROAD, SAYS CIRCULAR IN HASTE PAGE 4**

## TO BE 2ND LARGEST IN MARKET VALUATION

## India Inc's biggest merger: HDFC Bank & HDFC Ltd will be one

**After 45 years and 9 million home loans, a new home with our family: Parekh**GEORGE MATHEW  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

IN THE biggest merger in the history of India Inc, mortgage firm HDFC Ltd will merge with HDFC Bank, creating a banking behemoth with a market capitalisation of Rs 14 lakh crore.

After the merger, HDFC Bank will be 100 per cent owned by public shareholders, and existing shareholders of HDFC Ltd will own 41 per cent of HDFC Bank. Shareholders of HDFC Ltd will receive 42 shares of HDFC Bank (face value of Re 1 each) for 25 shares of HDFC Ltd of Rs 2 each – a ratio of 1:1.68.

Following the announcement by HDFC chairman Deepak Parekh, HDFC Bank shares shot up by 9.97 per cent to Rs 1,656.45 on the BSE Monday. HDFC Ltd shares rose by 9.30 per cent to close at 2,678.90.

The combined market capitalisation will enable HDFC Bank to overtake TCS and become No. 2 in valuation after Reliance Industries Ltd (Rs 18.01 lakh crore).

"The merger is a coming-together of equals," Parekh said. He

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



From left: Sashidhar Jagdishan, Kaizad Bharucha, Deepak Parekh, Atanu Chakraborty, V Srinivasa Rangan, Renu Sud Karnad, Keki Mistry in Mumbai on Monday. Amit Chakravarty

## Inner circle of 7 kept deal under wraps until end

SANDEEP SINGH  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

SUCH WAS the level of secrecy to keep the merger deal under wraps that even the banner with names of HDFC Bank and HDFC Ltd that was to be put up at the press conference for the merger announcement of the two entities went for printing after midnight Sunday.

Sources close to the development said only seven persons were involved in the finalisation of the merger. No one else knew about it. "The evaluation had been going on but it moved over the last couple of weeks and got

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**EXPLAINED**  
**Looking at a win-win**

A BIGGER balance sheet and broader capital base will allow the combined entities to leverage greater flow of credit and enable underwriting of larger ticket loans. Customers are likely to gain by way of mortgages being offered as a core product, with the bank likely to leverage the long-tenor mortgage relationship to offer more credit, deposit products.

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# 3 WEST BENGAL

## THE NEWSMAKER

### TMC infighting in Birbhum brings focus on Dy Speaker



Ashish Banerjee at Rampurhat in Birbhum. Partha Paul File

### TMC Birbhum unit chief has accused Ashish Banerjee of protecting accused

**ATRI MITRA**  
KOLKATA, APRIL 4

HE IS known as a gentleman politician who has always stayed below the radar amid the din of West Bengal politics. But Deputy Speaker Ashish Banerjee was thrust into the limelight last week after his colleague and Trinamool Congress (TMC) district chief Anubrata Mondal accused him of protecting a party leader arrested in connection with the murder of eight people in Birbhum's Bogtui village last month. Banerjee, who represents Rampurhat in the Assembly, is the local MLA.

The rift in the ruling party became public after the BJP's "fact-finding committee" on the Bogtui killings wrote about Mondal's alleged role in the incident. In response, the TMC strongman claimed that he had been "ready to remove" Anarul Hussain, the party's Rampurhat block chief who has been arrested, but Banerjee requested him not to.

In his defence, the deputy Speaker said that asking Hussain to stay in the party "was a collective organisational decision".

Banerjee has shared a turbulent relationship with Mondal. Two years earlier, at a party meeting, the TMC strongman had lashed out at the deputy speaker, calling him inept. A senior Trinamool leader, however, said, "Ashish Banerjee by profession was a professor of Bengali in Rampurhat College. So, he has a different dignity in the party and he never misused that. He is a veteran politician. He is respected and loved by all for

his simplicity and down-to-earth behaviour."

The 71-year-old began his political career with the Congress and was the party's face in Birbhum. He thrice contested Assembly polls from Rampurhat on a Congress ticket but lost. In 2001, he succeeded while contesting for the TMC. Since then, he has retained the seat for the ruling party.

"In 2011, he was not chosen as minister in the state Cabinet," said the senior TMC leader. "But he never complained about that to the party. He never went to Mamata Banerjee to ask her for a ministry. In 2017, he became the minister of agriculture."

CPI(M) leader Sujan Chakraborty, however, claimed that Banerjee was not the gentleman he is made out to be. "My first impression was that he is a gentleman but incapable. But, in 2006, when I saw him ransacking the Assembly, I realised he was not at all a Bengali professor. He was not only at the forefront of the entire episode, he also used abusive language. It is apparent that the TMC leadership is involved in the Bogtui incident. Now, they are blaming each other."

The violence in the Assembly Chakraborty referred to occurred after the police prevented Mamata Banerjee from visiting Singur in Hooghly district to join an anti-land acquisition protest. The CPI(M)-led Left Front was in power at the time. Taking a dig at the ruling party, BJP leader Samik Bhattacharya said, "A Bengali professor had to surrender to those in the TMC who only think about making money. This is the tragic part (of the episode)."

### Crisil hired as consultant for proposed coal trading platform

**Kolkata:** AK Jain, secretary, Union Ministry of Coal, on Monday said that analytical company Crisil has been engaged as consultant for the proposed coal trading platform announced by the government and the exchange may take shape in the next 6-9 months.

Addressing the inaugural session of the 9th International

Mining Exhibition (IME) 2022, which is being held at Eco Park in Rajarhat, Jain said, "We want to create a robust platform for private coal mining companies to sell coal on a good marketplace where buyers and sellers can meet. We are in the process of creating a platform in the next 6 to 9 months. It will have a regulatory oversight like the gas trading platform." **ENS**

**LEARNED DISTRICT CONSUMER DISPUTES REDRESSAL FORUM**

UNIT - I  
CONSUMER COMPLAINT NO. 109 OF 2019

**MADHABI GHATAK,**  
Complainant / Petitioner

vs

**FLIPKART & Ors**  
Defendant / Opposite

To,  
FLIPKART KOLKATA OFFICE, Bose Rd, Saktinagar, PO & PS Tala Kol - 37 & BAJAJ FINANCE & TRADING COMPANY PRIVATE LTD. 46, Kakrad Arcade, Mumbai - 400020, PO Churchgate PS Marine Drive. Above referred application is pending before the Ld. Forum and you are two of the parties. You are intentionally evading service of summons. It is hereby notified that the above referred consumer Application shall be taken up for hearing on 5th April 2022 before the LD. DCDRF Unit I, Kolkata. You are asked to appear on the day failing which the matter will be moved ex parte against you.

As directed by the Ld. DCDRF, Unit I, Kolkata

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## 'Worse than Lanka': Mamata on fuel price hike

Asks Centre to hold all-party meet to discuss 'economic crisis'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, APRIL 4

**CHIEF MINISTER** Mamata Banerjee on Monday slammed the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre over frequent fuel price hikes, saying that India's condition has become worse than that of neighbouring Sri Lanka.

Addressing a press conference at the state secretariat in Kolkata, Banerjee said the central government should convene an all-party meeting to discuss the economic crisis in the country instead of fusing central agencies like the CBI and Enforcement Directorate (ED) against its political opponents.

"Sri Lanka's economic condition is bad but India's is worse. The Centre has no plan to deal with the fuel price hike. The BJP is respon-

sible for this crisis. It is their return gift to the country after winning the Uttar Pradesh elections.

Every day, prices of other commodities are increasing as an impact of the fuel price hike. The situation has become really bad," said Banerjee.

Petrol and diesel prices were hiked by 40 paise a litre each on Monday. This is the 12th increase in prices after a four-and-a-half-months-long hiatus in rate revision.

**'Governor sitting on files on key appointments'**

CM Mamata Banerjee on Monday accused Governor Jagdeep Dhakhar of dilly-dallying over files related to appointments to key state government posts.

Banerjee said documents per-

taining to appointments of Lokayukta member, chairman of the Human Rights Commission and Right to Information commissioners have been lying with him for his approval for six months.

"The governor is not clearing files. Even a day before, he refused to clear the budget. I had to ring him up to remind the governor that it's his obligation... For approving the budget, too, he has queries. What is going on? Everywhere (in non-BJP ruled states), they are running a parallel government by appointing governors," the Trinamool Congress supremo told reporters at the state secretariat.

She also said the apex court sometimes directs the state government to fill up important vacancies, but with Dhankhar not clearing files, the appointments are stuck.

**WITH PTI INPUTS**



Mamata Banerjee at Nabanna on Monday. CMO

### CM says kept her word as Bogtui victims' kin get jobs

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, APRIL 4

**CHIEF MINISTER** Mamata Banerjee on Monday gave government jobs to 10 people affected by the violence in Birbhum's Rampurhat. At a news conference at the state secretariat, Nabanna, Banerjee said, "Keeping my words today, I gave Group D government jobs to 10 people (affected by the Rampurhat violence)."

Through video conferencing, Birbhum's district magistrate handed over appointment letters to family members of the victims.

"I would urge the district magistrate to ensure that they

face no issues. Try to send some officials along with them on the first day of their jobs so that they face no problem with the paperwork," Banerjee said.

She further instructed the DM to make sure they get all the benefits of the government's welfare schemes.

Eight people were killed at Bogtui village in Rampurhat last month after a mob allegedly set houses on fire following the killing of TMC leader Bhadu Sheikh.

Though the chief minister initially formed an SIT to probe the killings, the Calcutta High Court later transferred the case to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

## JOINT ANNOUNCEMENT

On behalf of all the major pesticides Associations of India, we Crop Care Federation of India (CCFI), Pesticides Manufacturers & Formulators Association of India (PMFAI), Agrochemicals Manufacturers Association of India (AMAI) and ASMECHEM would like to inform that there is a serious mis-information campaign going on in India alleging that **'more than 50% of pesticides marketed in India are spurious and fake.'**

We assert that this type of false propaganda has malafide intention and is spread by vested interests, who do not want India emerge as a leader in generic pesticides but only want to encourage the import of pesticides.

Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, gave a statement in the parliament observing that **out of 3,88,182 pesticide samples tested by Central Insecticide Laboratory only 1.17% pesticide samples did not meet the standards and there was hardly any spurious pesticides found.**

We sincerely urge the public at large and Indian farmers not to believe in such false and malafide campaigns run by the vested interest groups. We assure all concerned that pesticides manufactured in India are good or even better and safer than the imported pesticides.

Signed by



CCFI



PMFAI



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## EXPRESS Careers

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**Adv. No.- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2021/20 Dated 04.04.2022**

**Revised Counselling Programme से सम्बन्धित आवश्यक सूचना**

विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2021/18 दिनांक 03.04.2022 के क्रम में UGMAC-2021 से सम्बन्धित सभी अभ्यर्थियों / संस्थानों / सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि उक्त विज्ञापन के माध्यम से Mop-up Counselling / साक्षात्कार से सम्बन्धित मेधासूची प्रकाशन एवं अन्य सम्बन्धित कार्यक्रम की सूचना दी गयी थी, जिसे संशोधित करते हुए Revised MOP-UP Counselling Programme पर्वद के Website: [bceceboard.bihar.gov.in](http://bceceboard.bihar.gov.in) पर विज्ञापन संख्या- BCECEB(UGMAC)-2021/19 Dated 04.04.2022 द्वारा प्रकाशित किया गया है। Revised Rank Card भी पर्वद के वेबसाइट पर Upload कर दिया गया है। अभ्यर्थी अपना Revised Rank Card download कर लें एवं Revised Counselling Programme अनुसार काउन्सिलिंग में उपस्थित हों।

2. जिन अभ्यर्थियों का BDS Course में सीट आवंटन होता है उन्हें उसी दिन पर्वद कार्यालय प्रांगण में ही नामांकन लेना है। अतः सम्बन्धित अभ्यर्थी सभी तरह से नामांकन हेतु तैयार होकर आये अथवा उनका नामांकन रद्द माना जायेगा जिसके लिए अभ्यर्थी स्वयं जिम्मेदार होंगे। सम्बन्धित BDS संस्थान भी पर्वद कार्यालय प्रांगण में नामांकन हेतु सारी तैयारी के साथ काउन्सिलिंग में पहुँचेंगे।

3. पूर्व प्रकाशित विज्ञापनों की अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

**परीक्षा नियंत्रक**

**Khadki Education Society**  
**Tikaram Jagannath Arts, Commerce and Science College**  
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**APPOINTMENT : PRINCIPAL**

Applications are invited for Grant-in-aid post of full-time **PRINCIPAL** to be filled at **Khadki Education Society's Tikaram Jagannath Arts, Commerce and Science College, Khadki, Pune - 411003.**

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**NOTE:**

- Essential Qualification and Experience as per UGC, Govt. of Maharashtra and Savitribai Phule Pune University norms and amendments thereof from time to time in this behalf.
- The appointment to the said post will be for a tenure of five years from the date of appointment or up to attainment of superannuation, whichever is earlier.
- Candidate should submit their API score record as per UGC Norms.
- Pay scales and Service conditions shall be according to Govt. of Maharashtra and Savitribai Phule Pune University.
- Post is subject to the approval by Savitribai Phule Pune University, UGC and Govt. of Maharashtra.
- Only Qualified Candidates should apply. Candidates already employed should apply through proper channels.
- Appointment to this post which is submitted to Hon. Supreme Court under special permission writ petition No. 15737/20 filled subject to Judgment.
- Advertisement also published on [www.tjcollege.org](http://www.tjcollege.org)
- Applications with full Bio-data and necessary documents along with a passport-sized photograph should be sent within 15 days from the date of publication of the Advertisement to the SECRETARY, Khadki Education Society, Khadki, Pune - 411003.

**Chairman**  
**Krishnakumar Goyal**

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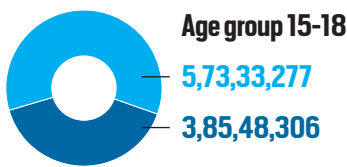
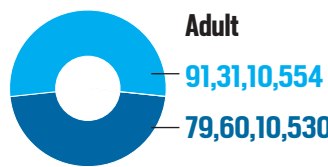
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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)

## DASHBOARD, As on April 3

**TOTAL DOSES 184,70,83,279**

■ First dose ■ Second dose

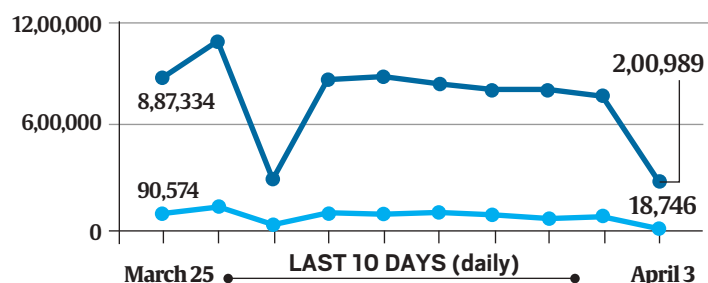


**AGE GROUP 12-14 1st dose 1,86,39,260**

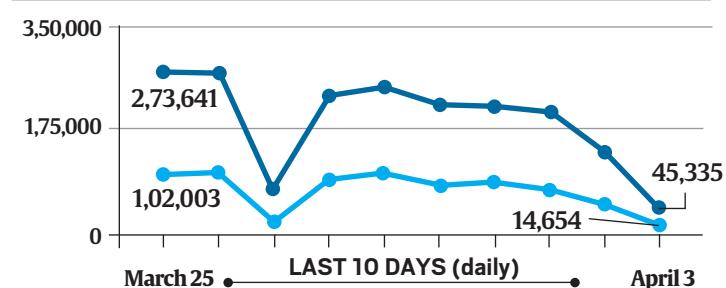
**PRECAUTIONARY doses 2,34,41,352**

**Doses On April 3 3,97,019**

### ADULTS



### AGE GROUP 15-18



## EVERYDAY EXPLAINERS

### SPORT

## WHAT IS MARCH MADNESS, THE US COLLEGE BASKETBALL TOURNEY?

FROM AROUND mid-March to the beginning of April every year, the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) Division I men's and women's college basketball tournaments are held in the US. The championship is informally known as "March Madness", with wide media coverage. While both men's and women's tournaments are held, March Madness is most commonly used in respect of the men's tournament, a single-elimination competition among 68 teams.

The South Carolina Gamecocks defeated the UConn Huskies to win the 2022 women's championship on Sunday night. The men's championship game was scheduled for Monday night between the North Carolina Tar Heels and the Kansas Jayhawks.

**TOURNAMENT:** According to the NCAA website, the first NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament was held in 1939, and then every year, except 2020 because of the pandemic. The inaugural tournament had eight teams; the field was raised to 16 in 1951, 64 in 1985, and 68 since 2011. Thirty-seven teams have won the championship so far, led by UCLA, which has won 11 times.

**ORIGIN OF TERM:** The term March Madness was first used to refer to basketball by an Illinois high school official, Henry V Porter, in 1939. The expression found its way to the NCAA tournament when CBS broadcaster Brent Musburger, who used to be a sports writer in Chicago, employed it during coverage of the 1982 tournament. The term has been synonymous with the NCAA Division I men's basketball tournament ever since, according to the NCAA.

**GENDER INEQUITY:** The NCAA has been long accused of discriminating between the men's and women's tournaments. A review prepared by civil rights litigator Roberta A Kaplan and her law firm and published in August 2021 said NCAA's financial dependence on the men's tournament has fuelled gender inequity in college sports, *The New York Times* reported.

Last year, a star woman player, Sedona Prince of Oregon, posted a TikTok video that showed the difference in weight rooms at the men's and women's tournaments. "If you're not upset about this problem, then you're a part of it," she said in the video.

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## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

# WHO's move on Covaxin

The WHO has suspended the Covid-19 vaccine's supply through UN agencies, after an inspection flagged issues relating to manufacturing. What are these issues, and how is Bharat Biotech addressing them?

**KAUNAIN SHERIFF M**  
HYDERABAD, MARCH 4

ON SATURDAY, the World Health Organization (WHO) confirmed that it has suspended the supply of Covaxin through UN procurement agencies and recommended to countries that received the vaccine to take actions as "appropriate".

A look at what the new directive means for this Covid-19 vaccine, developed by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech:

### Why has the WHO taken this step now?

Covaxin, India's first indigenous vaccine for Covid-19, had got emergency use listing (EUL) from the WHO in November last year. This meant it met the standards set by the WHO for protection against the coronavirus disease. The WHO's EUL is also a prerequisite for a vaccine to be part of supply under COVAX initiative; the licence thus paved the way for Bharat Biotech to supply Covaxin to UN agencies including through COVAX.

At the time the EUL for Covaxin was granted, however, the WHO had not done an inspection. The inspection of the Bharat Biotech facility was done between March 14 and 22, based on which the WHO has announced that suspension of supply of Covaxin through UN procurement agencies and recommending to countries that received the vaccine "to take actions as appropriate".

### What did the WHO inspection find?

The WHO has said that the data available to it indicate that Covaxin is effective and there is no safety concern. It has, however, asked the company to address deficiencies in good manufacturing practice (GMP). In other words, the WHO has asked Bharat Biotech to upgrade and make specific changes in its manufacturing facilities for Covaxin.

### What are these upgrades?

The facilities used to manufacture Covaxin were not specifically designed for a Covid-19 vaccine. When the company received emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator, it repurposed its existing facilities, some of which were used for



Covaxin stored at District General Hospital in Aundh, Pune. Express Archive

producing a polio virus vaccine, some for a vaccine rabies and some for a Japanese encephalitis vaccine.

Sources said the WHO has asked the company to upgrade facilities specifically for manufacturing a Covid-19 vaccine, in this case Covaxin.

### Why did the company not upgrade its facility specifically for Covaxin earlier?

Company sources said that when a facility needs to be upgraded for a specific vaccine, it has to be completely shut down. As such, when the company is engaged in active production, it cannot undertake extensive maintenance and upgrade.

Second, the sources said, during the peak of the pandemic, procurement and supply of new equipment required for an upgrade would have taken 15-18 months. "These are not something you can buy off the shelf," one source said.

Manufacture of a batch of Covaxin takes 120 days from start to finish. Shutdown and upgrade of the facility could have resulted in the loss of almost 6 months. The company could not have shut down its facility only for upgrade because of the urgency to vaccinate the population, the sources said. Therefore,

the company, after weighing the risks, chose to start manufacturing Covaxin in a repurposed facility in a manner where the vaccine is safe, they said.

### Can the company shut down and upgrade the facilities now?

Yes, that is what it will do. On Friday, the company announced a temporary slowing down of production of Covaxin across its manufacturing facilities, having completed its supply obligations to procurement agencies and foreseeing a decrease in demand. The decision was taken because the procurement of Covid-19 vaccines has come down.

S sources said the company has started shutting down the two facilities at Ankleshwar; one facility at the Indian Immunologicals Limited has been closed down; and, except one, all facilities at Hyderabad have been closed down.

The company will now begin maintenance and upgrade activities.

### How will the upgrade take place?

Sources said undertaking an upgrade is a complex process. "Some of the equipment has to be sourced from domestic suppliers and some of it has to be imported. Once you

make a change to the facility, it is not as simple as just buying the equipment, installing and starting using it," a source said.

Once the upgrade is complete, the company has to receive fresh regulatory approval for commercial use of the facility.

Sources said the company is waiting for a detailed report from the WHO, after which the company will start the process of corrective and preventive action (CAPA). These are a set of actions or regulations required in manufacturing, documentation, procedures, or systems to rectify non-conformance. A report on CAPA has to be submitted to both the Indian regulator and the WHO.

"Audits and approvals are part of the regulatory mechanism. Companies do improvement and go back, and undertake and implement CAPA," a source said.

### How does the order impact the supply of Covaxin?

It does not impact the supply of Covaxin. In the first place, the company has not received any orders from UN agencies, including the GAVI-COVAX facility, to supply Covaxin.

Second, in some 25 countries, Covaxin has been given emergency use authorisation (EUA). In these countries, the company has already fulfilled its supply commitments. Sources said it has not received any fresh orders from these countries.

Again, the company has also stockpiled vaccines required for India's inoculation drive. Based on that alone, the company in February took a call to slow down production of Covaxin. Sources said, however, that while the company has announced a temporary slowing down of Covaxin production, it has already built an antigen bank. "If the country needs vaccines, we can convert them into vials in a 30-40 day timeline and supply the product," a source said.

### Has the WHO inspected other companies manufacturing Covid-19 vaccines?

Yes, WHO teams have inspected the manufacturing facilities of several companies that have received an EUL. Sources said that in some cases, an inspection was conducted even before the EUL was granted. For some manufacturers, inspections have been conducted on multiple occasions.

# Emergency in Sri Lanka: history and contours

**NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN**  
CHENNAI, APRIL 4

SRI LANKA'S President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared an Emergency on April 1 as thousands of people came out on the streets to protest the crippling power cuts and shortages of essential commodities caused by the country's economic meltdown. This is the second time within a year that Rajapaksa has resorted to this measure — he declared an Emergency on August 30 last year to deal with hoarding of essential commodities when the economic crisis had begun to manifest itself in all its severity, but lifted it within a few weeks.

### A long history

Before Rajapaksa, President Maithripala Sirisena had declared an Emergency in March 2018 to contain anti-Muslim violence in some parts of the country that led to the deaths of two people, acts of arson, and damage to property. And before that, Sri Lanka was under a near continuous state of Emergency for 27 years — from the anti-Tamil riots of July 1983 to August 2011 — with brief respites in 1989 and 2001.

Emergency was first imposed in 1958 after Sri Lanka embraced the Sinhala Only language policy, and off and on from 1971 onward, when the left-wing Janatha Vimukthi

Peramuna mounted its first insurrection.

### The process

The power to declare a state of Emergency is vested in the President, who is the head of government, under Article 155 of the Constitution. The 1947 Public Security Ordinance (PSO) provides the legal framework for the proclamation of Emergency.

Under the ordinance, a state of Emergency can be proclaimed "where, in view of the existence or imminence of a state of public Emergency, the President is of opinion that it is expedient so to do in the interests of public security and the preservation of public order or for the maintenance of supplies and services essential to the life of the community."

The PSO empowers the President to frame Emergency regulations — for detention, taking possession of property or undertaking; authorisation to enter and search any premises; for amending any law, suspending the operation of any law, and for applying any law with or without modification, without reference to Parliament. The regulations can override all existing laws.

The Emergency (Miscellaneous Provisions and Powers) Regulations (EMPPR), give special powers of search, arrest, and detention to the national security forces and law enforcement agencies. In 2005, after the assassination of then

Foreign Minister Lakshman Kadirgamar, more such regulations were framed to define new offences under "terrorism".

There is also the draconian Prevention of Terrorism (Temporary Provisions) Act of 1979, which has remained on the books even after the civil war has ended. In response to international criticism, the government recently amended this Act, but not enough to satisfy domestic or international critics.

### Role of Parliament

Emergency regulations are valid for a month, but the President must seek ratification for the proclamation or extension beyond a month, every 14 days. The Emergency lapses if it is not brought before Parliament.

UN Special Rapporteur Radhika Coomaraswamy and Charmaine de los Reyes noted that although the 1978 Constitution limits its parliamentary debate on a proclamation's validity and does not enable it to debate the actual emergency regulations, the PSO does have a provision under which Parliament may revoke, alter, or amend a regulation through a resolution.

But, they say, no reports have been found where Parliament has exercised this power on any emergency regulation. ('Rule by Emergency: Sri Lanka's Postcolonial Constitutional Experience', *International*

*Journal of Constitutional Law*, 2004)

### Scope of restrictions

In a background paper for the Colombo think tank Centre for Policy Alternatives, legal expert Asanga Welikala writes that as freedom of thought and conscience, the prohibition of torture, and the right to be heard at a fair trial by a competent court (but excluding pre-trial detention which can be imposed by Emergency Regulations) are not subject to any restriction and are thereby to be considered absolute, these therefore may never be restricted by Emergency Regulations.

According to him, the fundamental rights that may be restricted in the interests of national security and public order are the presumption of innocence, the burden of proof, and retroactive penal sanctions; equality before the law and non-discrimination; the ordinary procedure for arrests and judicial sanction for detention; and the fundamental rights to freedom of expression, assembly, association, movement, occupation, religion, culture and language.

As the Constitution says nothing about the extent to which these rights might be restricted, Welikala notes that this usually depends on the "the goodwill of the executive to act responsibly and/or the courts' willingness to enforce the rule of law and fundamental rights".

# How Union ministers are allotted bungalows, or made to vacate them

**ANISHADUTTA**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

OVER THE last one week, the Directorate of Estates (DoE) under the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has been getting a number of former Union ministers to vacate the bungalows allotted to them during their tenures. It has evicted MP Chirag Paswan from a bungalow allotted to his late father Ram Vilas Paswan, BJP MP Ram Shankar Katheria from 7 Moti Lal Nehru Marg, former Union minister PC Sarangi from 10 Pandit Pant Marg, and, on Monday, former Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank from his 27 Safdarjung Road bungalow, now allotted to Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia.

### The housing pool

The DoE is mandated to administer and manage the Estates of the Government of India that include government residential accommodations and other properties across the country. The allotment of central govern-

ment bungalows is done through the General Pool Residential Accommodation (GPRA) Act. GPRA covers central government residential accommodations under the administrative control of the DoE in Delhi and at 39 locations outside Delhi. All central government employees are eligible to apply for accommodation under the GPRA pool, and allotments are made according to the pay scale, office or position of the applicant.

For serving Union ministers, accommodation is allotted by the DoE, while house committees of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats also go through the process of allotment to MPs. According to DoE rules, Type VIII bungalows, which have seven rooms with quarters for domestic help, are allotted to serving ministers, and sometimes to Rajya Sabha MPs when the house panel clears it.

### Eviction process

Eviction of occupants is governed by the Public Premises (Eviction of Unauthorised Occupants) Act. Failure to vacate accommodation within the prescribed period results



Various items lie outside the Delhi bungalow of late Ram Vilas Paswan, after the government on Friday completed the eviction process of his son Chirag. PTI

in cancellation of allotment with penal consequences such as charging of damages and eviction proceedings. Usually, occupants are asked to vacate their premises within 30 days of getting a showcause notice.

When subletting is suspected, a showcause notice is issued, and a hearing is fixed. The case is heard by the Deputy Director of

Estates (Enquiry). The allottee can appeal the decision within 30 days of the date of the cancellation order. If the appellate authority rejects the appeal, the case is forwarded to the litigation section for initiating the eviction process.

"Usually, the Directorate of Estates sends ample showcause notices to the occupant and

wait for their response. In cases where the occupants are unwilling to move even without any court intervention, we send our teams on ground to begin the eviction process," an official explained.

### Evictions over the years

**PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA:** In 2020, the Congress general secretary was sent a notice to vacate accommodation allocated to her at 35, Lodhi Estate house within a month on the ground that she was ineligible as she no longer enjoyed the cover of the Special Protection Group (SPG). She had been allotted the bungalow on February 21, 1997, as an SPG protectee.

**ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY:** In 2016, the Congress MP was evicted from his bungalow at 14, New Moti Bagh. He wrote to then Lok Sabha Speaker Sumitra Mahajan that he was "subjected to harassment and humiliation" and sought her permission to move a privilege motion, and moved the Delhi High Court alleging political vendetta. His plea was rejected and he was asked to move to a house

allotted on Humayun Road.

**AMBIKASONI & KUMARISELJA:** In 2015, Delhi High Court ordered the two Rajya Sabha MPs of the Congress to vacate their ministerial Type VIII bungalows, which they were occupying even after demitting office as ministers. The Rajya Sabha secretariat told the court they were now allotted Type VII bungalows. They were penalised Rs 25,000 each.

**SHARAD YADAV:** Last week, the Supreme Court directed the former Union minister to vacate the Delhi bungalow allotted to him as an MP until May 31, 2022. Yadav, disqualified from Rajya Sabha membership in December 2017, had approached the court seeking to retain his bungalow, challenging a Delhi High Court order on March 15 asking him to vacate it in 15 days.

Notices for eviction have been sent earlier to former Union ministers Prakash Javadekar and Harsh Vardhan who are both no longer eligible for Type VIII bungalows. On Friday, the DoE sent a notice to the All India Congress Committee asking it to vacate accommodation allotted to it at Chanakyaपुरi.





The Indian EXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA  
BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## SLIDING IN LANKA

As economic crisis spirals, administration should desist from extending emergency powers, restricting civil liberties

THE ECONOMIC DISTRESS in Sri Lanka is spiraling into a political crisis. On Sunday, the Mahinda Rajapaksa ministry resigned en masse to allow the prime minister to reconstitute the cabinet. The governor of the central bank has also put in his papers after taking the blame for economic mismanagement. The situation had taken a turn for the worse on Thursday after protestors encircled the presidential palace demanding that Gotabaya Rajapaksa should resign. With the slogan “Gota Go Home” reverberating in the streets of Colombo, the administration has invoked emergency laws and declared curfew in the city. The anger on the street has singled out the Rajapaksa clan for the mess — the four brothers, Gotabaya, Mahinda, Chamal and Basil, are in government — which, perhaps, is why the president has pleaded with the Opposition to join a national government. However, the latter has rejected the proposal, apparently unwilling to share the responsibility for the crisis with the Rajapaksas, in office since 2019.

Multiple factors have contributed to the current crisis in Colombo. Besides short-sighted and reckless borrowing to build infrastructure projects that have since turned into white elephants and restrictions on fertiliser imports, unexpected events such as the 2019 Easter bombings and the pandemic have contributed to the collapse of the economy. There is a grave shortage of food, fuel and electricity. The credit line and supply of essential goods from India should help to ease the situation, but a drastic restructuring of the economy could become necessary. Meanwhile, the government needs to address the public unrest over high inflation and shortages carefully and sensitively. The administration should be careful not to extend emergency powers or restrict civil liberties. Sri Lanka has been down that path before, with disastrous consequences. The refusal to decentralise and share political power had ended in the civil war that lasted nearly three decades. Similarly, the state’s violent crack-down on the ultra-left Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna’s insurrections left the southern districts bruised. The long years of emergency during the war caused the militarisation of the society and curtailment of civil rights. Mahinda Rajapaksa, who had started out as a grass roots politician and trade unionist, and his brothers, have a record of ignoring civic freedoms while in office in the war years. However, the halo of winning the war against Tamil Tigers allowed them to escape censure then.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa won a decisive mandate in 2019 with the promise to heal the scars of the Easter bombings. That popularity has dissipated with the economic crisis. He needs help from across the political spectrum to restore and repair. The appeal to the Opposition to join his government is a promising beginning, but he may need to do more to convince his detractors of his intent. India, meanwhile, should deliver on the promised aid, for its commitment is to the people of a neighbouring and friendly nation.

## YATI & SABKA SAATH

BJP can’t underline the latter and not call out the former.  
Fear corrodes democracy

YATI NARSINGHANAND, HEAD priest of Ghaziabad’s Dasna Devi temple, out on bail after being booked for hate speech at the Dharam Sansad in Haridwar last year, spewed communal hate and venom again at a “Hindu Mahapanchayat” in Burari on Sunday. The organisers of Sunday’s event had been arrested earlier in connection with inflammatory anti-Muslim speeches made at a similar assembly at Jantar Mantar last year. That is, a line runs through Jantar Mantar, August 2021, Dharam Sansad at Haridwar, December 2021, and Burari, April 2022. The themes on Sunday — “ghuspaith niyantran (controlling intruders)”, “dharmantran niyantran (control of religious conversion)” and “devsthan mandirukti (freeing Hindu temples)”, communal dog whistles all — are part of a larger and continuing pattern that remains unbroken, or is interrupted only perfunctorily by the kicking in of the law. In all likelihood, going by the indications so far, Yati Narsinghanand wears his arrest for hate speech as a badge of honour, and would not have a problem should he be arrested for it again. This dismal and recurring sequence frames a political failure and abdication.

Unfortunately, the emboldening of hate speech against minorities is becoming the other side of a spreading phenomenon of majoritarian assertion and both are seen to draw political sanction from the ruling establishment. It is true that Yati Narsinghanand and Co are not part of the mainstream, or not yet. But at the same time, they can no longer be described or dismissed as the fringe. The peddling of a Hindu sense of siege, and purveying of spectres of marauding Others, occurs too frequently and resonates too widely for it to be seen anymore as a mere sideshow. The BJP-RSS establishment needs to confront this reality, and address it. Or else, the BJP-led government at the Centre risks presiding over an increasingly corrosive climate of fear and insecurity that will only hold back a diverse democracy from stepping up to the challenges of complex transitions in changing times.

The BJP attributes its string of electoral successes to governance that, in the distribution of its benefits, is blind to differences of caste and community. Narsinghanand says just the opposite. An unambiguous message needs to be sent out that there are political — not just legal — penalties for promoting hate as he does. A red line needs to be drawn and enforced by the BJP’s top political leadership that it will not stand for the demonisation of the minority. It must do this because that is its responsibility and mandate — that’s what “sabka saath” means. And because the costs of not doing so are simply too high to pay.

## I LOVE CORN

Adults-only subtitles for children’s content are a problem. But it’s a miracle that such communication no-nos don’t happen more

ADD THIS ONE to the expanding online archive of speech-to-text fails. It seems that children’s content on YouTube has a no-no word problem. The closed captions for several videos, which are provided by popular automatic speech recognition systems like Google Speech-To-Text and Amazon Transcribe, have been making R-rated replacements for innocuous words. So “corn” becomes “porn”, “beach” becomes “bitch” and “combo” becomes “condom”. This is not a problem if you’re a kid with an avid curiosity about the adult world, but it can be a meltdown-generating issue if you’re the parent of said curious child.

While the Luddite’s instinct would probably be to go pitchforking after the machine, it would be in order to remember that even the so-called superior intelligence of human beings has not been immune to similar errors. Internet users of a certain vintage will recall the early YouTuber known as Buffalax, infamous for slapping misheard English lyrics on non-English songs, such as the Tamil song “Kalluri Vaanil” which became “Benny Lava”. Or take the case of famously-misheard lyrics, such as, “In a Gadda da vida” by Iron Butterfly, which was originally “In the Garden of Eden”, but people continued to sing the nonsensical version.

If anything, YouTube’s inappropriate subtitles highlight the astonishing phenomenon that is human communication. As Steven Pinker pointed out in *The Language Instinct*, the space separating one word from another in a spoken sentence is really only the listener’s “hallucination”. To then understand the meaning of those words — if separated as the speaker intended — comes down entirely to the listener’s knowledge of the language and the context in which the sentence is spoken. Listen to a sentence in an unfamiliar language and try to discern individual words to appreciate what an underrated miracle human speech is. A poor machine’s substitution of “I love corn” with adults-only words can then be laughed off.



C RAJA MOHAN

WITH HIS ENORMOUS strength, the Biblical character Samson destroyed the temple of Dagon in Gaza killing his Philistine captors and himself. Prime Minister Imran Khan, much like Samson, appears determined to bring down the house of Pakistan, dominated until now by the army. Imran is refusing to follow his many civilian predecessors, who quietly left when shown the door by the army. In Pakistan, civilian leaders who have defied the army found themselves in prison, executed or exiled. Imran has made bold to take on the army, test the boundaries of the national ideology that Rawalpindi claims to protect, and challenge the deep state by mobilising the street.

In brazenly refusing to let the National Assembly vote upon the no-confidence vote brought against him and getting the president to dissolve the assembly, Imran is not only looking the army in the eye, but also the constitution and the Supreme Court. His defiance will certainly be put down for now but he has promised the establishment that he will pose a bigger threat when he is out of power. Khan is prepared to take his chances, much like Samson, and play to his many strengths. He remains a national hero having won the cricket World Cup in 1992. He enjoys considerable political following and has an ego larger than life.

Khan has qualities that his predecessors lacked, except Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, whose charisma moved the Pakistani masses in the early 1970s. He is deeply aware of Bhutto’s defiance which ended with execution in 1979. He now invokes Bhutto’s name and the dangers he faces from the system that he has challenged.

Imran’s narrative that he is a self-made man is only partly true and does not square with the fact that he was “selected” by the army as prime minister in the 2018 elections. The army wantonly undermined the two civilian governments that came to power with popular mandates after General Pervez Musharraf’s reign ended in 2008 — one led by Asif Ali Zardari of the Pakistan People’s Party and the other by Nawaz Sharif of the Pakistan Muslim League. The army was wary of both Zardari and Nawaz who wanted to break from the army’s policy of supporting militant jihadi groups as well as improve trade and political ties with India. The army hoped that Khan would provide a “handsome and modern” face for the army rule, and help destroy older political formations. But

Like the Biblical figure, Imran Khan seems willing to bring the house down to confront his opponents

Khan had his own ideas for Pakistan’s future and generated a new set of problems for the army.

In the past, the army chiefs were the ones who “betrayed” the civilian PMs who appointed them. Ziaul Haq turned against Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Musharraf ousted Nawaz Sharif. This time, it is Imran Khan who is betraying the army that ensured that his opponents were defeated in the 2018 elections and stitched a majority in his favour in the National Assembly. Khan can claim credit for being the first PM to boldly subvert the constitution; until now that was a privilege of the army. He also surprised the army leadership by playing politics with the appointment of the ISI chief last October. When army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa sought to move Lt Gen Faiz Hameed from the ISI last year, Khan resisted the transfer and made it an issue. Although he had to concede eventually, it became quite apparent that the PM and army chief were no longer on the same page. To make matters worse, Khan has been incompetent in governing Pakistan, has deepened Pakistan’s economic crisis, sharpened internal conflicts, and worsened its international relations.

Khan stepped into Islamic politics, traditionally controlled by the army. He took a tolerant view of militant Islamic groups like the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan and pandered to their extreme demands such as the expulsion of the French ambassador over questions of blasphemy. The mobilisation of Islamic sentiments has become an important part of Imran Khan’s political toolkit to strengthen his political position at home.

Beyond domestic politics, he also waded boldly into the disputes within the Islamic world. His attempt to align with Turkey and set up a new Islamic bloc angered Pakistan’s traditional friends in the Gulf — Saudi Arabia and the UAE. The army ensured that he step back.

Khan also blocked the opportunities that opened up for easing tensions with India. In February 2021, the army negotiated a ceasefire with India and Bajwa opened the door for a modest agenda of confidence-building with India, including on trade. But Khan overruled the move by citing India’s 2019 constitutional changes in Kashmir. Until now, the civilian leaders sought to improve ties with India and the army vetoed those plans. Now, it is a civilian leader who takes a more hawkish line on

Kashmir and relations with India.

Although he has often viciously attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the RSS, Khan has also praised India’s “independent foreign policy”. It is less a compliment to Delhi than an attack on the Pakistan army that has long nurtured a close strategic partnership with the US and the West. Well before he became the PM, Khan often criticised Rawalpindi’s alliance with Washington and its decision to “fight American wars” in the region at great cost to Pakistan. As US-China relations deteriorated, he moved closer to Beijing and apparently under Chinese pressure travelled to Moscow as Vladimir Putin ordered his troops to march into Ukraine.

Last week, Bajwa publicly distanced himself from Khan and criticised the Russian invasion of Afghanistan and underlined the traditionally close ties to the US and Europe. In the past, the army used to carefully modulate the deep anti-Western resentments in Pakistan to bargain with the US and Europe. Khan has now gone full tilt with his anti-Americanism by charging that the opposition’s call for a vote of “no confidence” is a US conspiracy to oust his government. Hostile foreign interference was the main political argument that was used to dismiss the resolution and dissolve the National Assembly.

Imran Khan has embarked on a path no civilian leader has done — to confront the army’s hegemony on a broad range of issues. In the run-up to the elections (assuming they are held soon), Khan is likely to double down on religious mobilisation and anti-Americanism. That could add to potential fissures within the army on the appropriate means to deal with Pakistan’s intensifying crises.

Based on form, Khan does not have much of a chance against the army but the pitch is uneven, the ball has been tampered with, and the weather is heavily overcast — it is not easy to bet on the outcomes. One thing though is certain: This major intra-elite conflict triggered by Imran’s Samson-like defiance is bound to have far-reaching consequences for Pakistan’s political trajectory at home and abroad.

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

## A CAMPUS FOR ALL

NALSAR’s new gender-neutral space should nudge others in the same direction



AQSA SHAIKH AND RAGHAV SHUKLA

IN 2008, when I (Aqsa) had to pick my medical specialisation, I chose a subject that could be pursued without staying in a hostel. As a transgender woman, only a men’s hostel was on offer to me, which was not acceptable. I was fortunate that I could complete my post-graduation but not everyone is. A decade later, Nivedhiya Anand, a tribal, intersex, and transgender student from Kerala dropped out of school, where she was put up in a boy’s hostel, due to mental harassment.

The recent announcement by NALSAR University, Hyderabad, on the creation of a gender-neutral space in its hostel has generated a buzz for the right reasons. This, along with gender-neutral washrooms and a proposed policy on inclusive education for gender and sexual minorities, is the outcome of honest conversations with the students.

Two recent cases need focus when talking about accommodation for transgender students in hostels at universities. Yashika, an MA student at Panjab University, frustrated with the university for not being able to provide her hostel accommodation, had to approach the Punjab and Haryana High Court, which issued a notice to the university. In another PIL, filed before the Karnataka High Court, Trinetra Haldar Gummaraju, a medical student from Manipal University, has filed a case against the state government after being denied accommodation in the girls’ hostel even when she had changed her sex legally to female on her

ID card. The university insisted that she get a sex reassignment surgery done before she is allowed in the girl’s hostel, denying her the right to self-determination, as provided by the 2014 NALSA judgment of the Supreme Court.

Even as inclusive spaces are created, we should be mindful of the intersectionality within queer communities. One, the presence of such facilities should not curtail the legal right of transgender men and women to get accommodation in men’s or women’s hostels, just like the presence of gender-neutral toilets should not be used to stop transgender men and women from using men’s or women’s washrooms. Secondly, such spaces should be accessible to persons with disabilities. Additionally, while such facilities give much-needed visibility to queer people and their issues, it can also expose the community to queerphobic attacks. University administration must pay special attention to the security of queer students on campus.

While infrastructure is essential for creating safe and inclusive places, we cannot underplay the importance of changing mindsets. There is a need for the sensitisation of students, teachers, and staff in all educational institutions, from primary schools to universities, on understanding and accepting queer and transgender folks. India has taken a step in the right direction by enacting the Transgender Persons Act.

## APRIL 5, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

### FALKLAND IN STRIFE

ARGENTINE PRESIDENT LEOPOLDO Galtieri declared his nation would go to war to defend the Falkland Islands it seized from Britain. He spoke as a powerful British fleet prepared to sail for the disputed South Atlantic archipelago. According to the official Argentine news agency Telam, General Galtieri told journalists, “If the Argentine people are attacked by military forces, be they land, naval or air forces, the Argentine nation in arms will present battle with all the means at its disposal”. Commenting on the British UN Security Council resolution calling on Argentina to withdraw its forces from the island, Galtieri said Britain was in no position

to condemn the use of force by Argentina because the United Kingdom used force to seize the islands from Argentina in 1833.

### INDIANS IN PAK JAIL

TEN INDIAN NATIONALS, including a woman, have spent the last eight years in a Pakistani jail without trial according to news reports from Pakistan. The 10 have submitted an application to the Sindh provincial government through their lawyer and Amnesty International for their release and repatriation to India on humanitarian grounds, it said. Pakistani daily Aman reported that Abdullah Tahir Ansari vice-president of the

association for the protection of human rights has offered them free legal aid.

### SUSPECT US DOCTOR

AN AMERICAN PUBLIC health expert whose activities near the Indian Air Force base at Halwara were stopped by the Home Ministry in 1974 managed to continue his association with some government agencies and participate in top-level meetings till about three months ago. Indian medical experts think that Carl Taylor is an “excellent scientist”. But intelligence bodies took serious note of his visit to Delhi during which he attended a Indian Council of Medical Research meeting.



# An image problem

Merging National Film Archives with National Film Development Corporation of India will compromise the functioning of an institution that has become the storehouse of culture



ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN

THE MERGING OF semi-autonomous bodies like the Films Division, Children's Film Society, International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Directorate of Film Festivals, and National Film Archive of India (NFAI) with the National Film Development Corporation of India (NFDC) is nothing short of a gross blunder.

I have had opportunities to engage with each of these institutions and I believe that makes me eminently eligible to comment on the merger move.

Each of these institutions has been performing with a certain degree of freedom under the supervision of advisory bodies comprising experts in the respective fields. Over the years, they have come to gather a certain amount of expertise and special experience. If some of them have not performed to the best of expectations, the reasons are simple. Either the heads of these institutions have been chosen arbitrarily or not appointed at all or they have not been funded adequately.

The solution does not lie in their abolition. Examples are there before us. When Jaya Bachchan was heading the Children's Film Society, it made reasonably good films. The film festivals she organised were memorable for their quality and impact. Likewise, under V S Kundu, the Films Division regained its past glory. When Shankar Mohan was its head, the IFFI was reckoned among the reputed festivals in the world.

Confusion is bound to rise when these institutions of distinctly different character and functions are brought under a monolithic structure that cannot claim to have special knowledge or experience in any of these areas. The sole aim, one suspects, is to do away with them all.

Even while blindly conceding that a moribund body organised on corporate lines could look after the designated functions of each of them with event managers, the NFAI needs to be mercifully exempted from such a body. Bringing the film archive under the aegis of the NFDC is an unwise, impractical and illegal decision.

The NFAI's primary function is to treasure and preserve our film heritage. It is one of the largest reserves of cinema films (optical) in the world. Both old and new films are collected and kept in specially designed vaults where temperature and humidity are controlled as per international specifications.

The NFAI is a proud member of the international federation of film archives that shares, exchanges, and standardises modern methods of archiving and restoration. Its management requires special know-how and can be handled only by experts and committed and involved personnel. To compromise its functioning will be suicidal.

The remarkable collection of films in our film archive comprises both old as well as contemporary classics that have contributed to the growth of our film culture. It has virtually become the storehouse of Indian culture and heritage in a unique manner. Negatives and prints of so many films in various languages from all over India have been taken over by



CR Sasikumar

the archive on the condition that they would be preserved in the best possible manner. Passing over the film archive to a corporate body will be in violation of the government's irrevocable commitment to the producers. It is the government's duty to preserve and nurture our cultural heritage and not leave it to the vagaries of corporations.

No corporation would want to keep an archive that is not a business proposition. But as a museum and a storehouse, the upkeep of a film archive is an enormously expensive affair. The power bills alone will amount to several lakh rupees per month.

A sizeable budget has, reportedly, been allotted for the digitisation of films in the archive. A corporate body, not necessarily composed of experts and specialists in the field, may, in all likelihood, take the digitisation of films as an alternative to optical film preservation and decide to end it. The corporation, not being in the public domain, will be immune to public opinion however authentic and scientific it is.

A corporation like the NFDC may not even be aware that there is a strong movement under the leadership of the well-known

The remarkable collection of films in our film archive comprises both old as well as contemporary classics that have contributed to the growth of our film culture. It has virtually become the storehouse of Indian culture and heritage in a unique manner. Negatives and prints of so many films in various languages from all over India have been taken over by the archive on the condition that they would be preserved in the best possible manner.

Hollywood filmmaker Christopher Nolan to preserve cinema in its optical film format for long-time preservation. Film archives around the world are toeing this line.

No one knows how long the digital format will last and how secure it is for preservation. The optical film has lasted for 127 years and it is a known fact that its longevity is assured if preserved properly. The Royal Film Archive of Belgium, while acquiring a film of mine, wrote to me that the print would first be screened before an audience of 90 people in their auditorium and then moved to the vaults for preservation for the next 400 years. I thought this would preserve it for close to eternity.

It has been reported that the first move in the amalgamation has been made – to remove the head of the archive along with its film officers. Thus the functioning of the NFAI has come to a standstill. The anxious question on everyone's lips is what would happen to their precious film materials that were passed on to the NFAI for safe keeping.

May I appeal to the good offices of the government to intervene and salvage the archive?

The writer is a filmmaker

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The Supreme Court (of Pakistan) will hopefully provide an adequate remedy for the wrong that has been done and remind all parties that there is only one path to holding any legitimate power, and it will always lie through the Constitution.”  
— DAWN, PAKISTAN

# No accountability Bill

Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill empowers police and governments to conduct intrusive investigations with few checks and guidelines



ADITYA SHARMA AND CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT

ON MARCH 28, the government introduced the Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill in the Lok Sabha, seeking to replace the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920 which regulates how the police can gather data from convicted or suspected criminals. The Bill exemplifies the current trend to pass laws that are filled with ambiguity and lack safeguards. It also reflects a desire to expand the power of the government to interfere in the lives of citizens.

If the Bill were passed, the type of data collected by the police would shift dramatically, from basic fingerprint and footprint impressions to a range of other samples, including iris and retina scans, behavioural attributes, and “biological samples”. The National Crime Records Bureau would hold the collected data for 75 years. Rule-making power in this arena, currently vested only in state governments, would be extended to the central government. More importantly, the Bill would entirely reshape the remit of law-enforcement officers to gather personal data. While the present law's provisions apply only to convicts, those who are out on bail or those arrested for serious crimes, the Bill extends this wanton collection of data not only to all convicts, but also to anyone who is arrested or detained, and even people who are merely “suspected” of committing a crime or are deemed “likely” to do so.

It is common enough for law-enforcement agencies the world over to collect personal data from people they arrest and convict. But two issues particular to the Indian context make this Bill disturbing. First, the Government of India has repeatedly demonstrated a crippling fear of dissent and a willingness to wage open warfare against its opponents – presented, lately, as enemies more than adversaries. If the Bill were enacted, nothing would stop the police from, say, detaining protestors and collecting their personal data to use against them at a later date. Considering the way law enforcement has used such methods in the past, notably against crowds who were peacefully protesting the Citizenship Amendment Act in Delhi and Uttar Pradesh in 2019-20, such a law would encourage this kind of behaviour, and further erode the already scant safeguards that exist against the government's intrusion into citizens' lives. The chilling effect of such a law would be severe. The Bill's widening of the present law's scope, giving the police a free hand to gather personal data from more or less anyone they choose, proves that this fear may not be unfounded.

Second, India's privacy rules are threadbare. The Gov's casual approach was most recently exemplified by the controversy surrounding the paucity of safeguards built into Aadhaar, as well as the numerous failures of the Aarogya Setu contact-tracing app. Although the Supreme Court's Puttaswamy

decision in 2017 established privacy as a fundamental constitutional right, the process to draft and introduce national data protection legislation has dragged on for years.

Following the Supreme Court's 2017 verdict, the state formed a committee chaired by Justice BN Srikrishna to deliberate on a law to protect privacy. In July 2018, the Justice Srikrishna Commission published its report and prepared the first Personal Data Protection Bill (PDPB). However, the version that was subsequently drafted by an ad hoc Joint Parliamentary Committee was so disrespectful of the Commission's work that Justice Srikrishna declared, in December last year, that it “enhanced” the danger to the fundamental right of privacy and even had “Orwellian” dimensions. Indeed, the new name of the Bill now includes “national security” as one of its objectives – and this is one of the reasons why privacy has been so diluted.

Justice Srikrishna pointed out that the Bill allows the Centre to exempt any of its agencies from the provisions supposed to protect privacy – in the name of security. He also argues that the “Data Protection Authority” is “entirely captive to the government and cannot be said to be an independent regulator”. The Bill shows that the government has no serious intention of passing comprehensive privacy rules, let alone adhering to them – another cause for worry when assessing the possible ramifications of the new Criminal Procedure Bill.

The Bill has met severe criticism from several quarters. The Opposition has slammed the proposal, calling it “draconian” and arguing that it violates clauses of the Constitution that protect life and personal liberty and guard against self-incrimination. The Internet Freedom Foundation noted its “extreme concern” and urged Parliament to refer the Bill to a standing committee. Defending itself, the government has asserted that the present prisoner identification law is a century old and perhaps not appropriately rigorous for the present day, considering the array of technological and scientific advancements that have transformed crime and law enforcement since 1920. There is some merit in this argument. But some progress has already been made. The Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and System project, for example, set up by P Chidambaram in 2009 under the UPA government, played a significant role in modernising Indian policing. Much more can be done and perhaps the legal framework behind this process does need updating to bring it into line with modern international standards.

But this sweeping and accountability-free Bill ends up making the cure far worse than the symptom. The government's tendency to target protestors and political opponents using surveillance techniques means that the danger this Bill poses is simply too great. Empowering police and governments to conduct such intrusive investigations and in such an arbitrary manner, targeting whomsoever they choose with little accountability and few legal guidelines, will not make Indians safer.

Sharma studies Indian political thought at Cambridge University and Jaffrelot is senior research fellow at CERI-Sciences Po/CNRS, Paris, professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at King's India Institute, London

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### PAKISTAN'S TURMOIL

THIS REFERS TO the editorial ‘Dodgy declaration’ (IE, April 4). Imran Khan, in a desperate bid, has dissolved the Pakistan National Assembly, calling for fresh elections instead of facing the no-confidence motion, which would have almost certainly seen his ouster. However, his move may not be legally tenable and the Supreme Court of the country will decide on the matter. Irrespective of the latter's decision, it's a given that Pakistan is heading for a period of significant political turmoil. Having said this, it is the Pakistan army that has always provided “behind the scenes” stability to the beleaguered nation, albeit at a cost. And the same holds true now.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Dodgy declaration’ (IE, April 4). Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's fears of external forces being involved in the toppling of his government may well be justified. This is especially so with a purported letter from Washington, according to a report in the Dawn newspaper, warning of consequences if he is not removed from office. The United States is notorious for interfering in the internal affairs of several countries. Given that the National Assembly has now been dissolved, the trial of strength is best tested through the electoral process instead of having the Imran Khan government being toppled. If Khan loses the election then he will bow down to a fresh and popular verdict.

SS Paul, Nadia

### IN SELF-INTEREST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Counting the rubles’ (IE, April 4). The rupee-ruble payment mechanism between India and Russia need not be seen in a poor light, as in the western narrative about the Ukraine crisis. Every nation places national interest first when it comes to foreign policy and India is no exception. Being an oil-poor nation, India has done well to procure oil at a discount from Russia when such an opportunity was available. We should not let other global powers dictate our decisions. New Delhi's stand of independence even in the face of threats of sanctions is laudable and can help boost India's stature in the geopolitical arena.

Anjali Bhavana, Thiruvananthapuram

### POWER BILL

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Ramping up renewables’ (IE, April 4). Though the single-part tariff is applicable to renewables, for the technologies with a fuel-cost component (e.g. biomass) this single part tariff is divided into fixed and fuel cost components. The fuel cost in the case of wind and solar cannot be taken into account for obvious reasons. Further, the two-part tariff consists of a fixed and a variable component. The former one can be related to the load size/max demand and later is directly related to units consumed. Thus, variable cost components of renewables would generally be higher owing to the “must run” status.

Aerika Singh, Chandigarh



AMIT BHANDARI

# Fuel for the future

Green hydrogen can help solve critical energy security problems

THE ONGOING TENSIONS between Russia and Ukraine have led to the prices of crude oil shooting to \$130/barrel, the highest the world has witnessed in over a decade. The rise in prices of oil, natural gas and fertilisers highlights India's vulnerability to geopolitical sanctions. Green hydrogen is an emerging option that will help reduce India's vulnerability to such price shocks. This was reiterated by Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari when he drove to Parliament in a hydrogen-powered car.

Renewable energy (RE) technologies have four key deficiencies. First, RE can only be generated intermittently. Battery technology cannot store electricity at a grid scale. In the last months of 2021, Europe was forced to buy natural gas at record high prices as renewable generation fell.

Second, there are question marks on the financial viability of green power. In India, renewable electricity is a replacement for coal-based power, the cheapest form of energy. That's a big constraint on its viability. Moreover, the customers of this power – the state distribution companies – are collectively insolvent. A business cannot prosper if its primary customers are not financially viable.

Third, EV (electric vehicle) technologies have limitations. While electric cars and two-wheelers get a lot of visibility, much of India's oil is burnt in heavy trucks. Lithium batteries are not viable for trucks.

Fourth, is the availability of critical minerals. Electric vehicles require large quantities of

lithium and cobalt that India lacks. These minerals also have very concentrated supply chains that are vulnerable to disruptions. Large-scale investments in electric vehicles may create unsustainable dependencies for the country.

Intermittent hydrogen in the energy mix can help circumvent some of these problems. Hydrogen is an important industrial gas and is used on a large scale in petroleum refining, steel, and fertiliser production. India has a large and growing capacity base in all these industries. As of now, the hydrogen used in these industries is grey hydrogen, produced from natural gas.

Green hydrogen produced using renewable energy can be blended with grey hydrogen. This will allow the creation of a substantial green hydrogen production capacity, without the risk that it may become a stranded asset. This blending can start with petroleum refining, which is financially the strongest of the three industries, and then move on to steel and urea fertiliser. The high price of urea due to the Russia-Ukraine conflict and its consequent impact on food security should also be factored in. Creating this hydrogen capacity will provide experience in handling the gas at a large scale and the challenges involved.

To widen the use of green hydrogen, it can be blended with compressed natural gas (CNG), widely used as a fuel for vehicles in Delhi, Mumbai and some other cities. This will partly offset the need for imported natural gas

and also help flag off the challenges of creating and distributing hydrogen at a national level.

One challenge of using new transport fuels, whether CNG or electric vehicles, is the creation of large-scale refuelling networks. Bringing hydrogen vehicles on the road too soon will require the creation of yet another set of infrastructure. Building fleets of hydrogen-fueled vehicles for gated infrastructure can be a good starting point. Airports, ports and warehouses, for instance, use a large number of vehicles such as forklifts, cranes, trucks, tractors and passenger vehicles. Many, if not all, can run on hydrogen fuel cells. Each such application can use hundreds of vehicles, creating demand that will allow manufacturers to bring vehicles that can use hydrogen fuel cells into the market.

By bringing down the price of green hydrogen sufficiently, India can help unlock some stranded assets. The country has close to 25,000 megawatts of gas-fired power generation capacity that operates at a very low-capacity utilisation level. The high price of natural gas reduces the viability of such electricity. These plants could use hydrogen blended with natural gas. Hydrogen should, however, be used to generate electricity after it has served its utility in other avenues.

To catalyse a hydrogen economy, India needs some specialist players to execute projects as well as finance them. In the past, ONGC, IOC, and GAIL were set up for executing mega projects. They then became corporations. The

CNG networks in Mumbai and Delhi were created by MGL and IGL, and Petronet LNG was set up for creating India's first LNG terminal. Establishing specialised companies with a clear focus has helped projects get off the ground. This approach can be repeated for green hydrogen. However, government participation in such a company must be capped at 50 per cent.

Apart from government-backed players, the hydrogen economy will need private sector participation. India's start-up sector, with over 75 unicorns, is perhaps the most vibrant part of the country's economy currently. This ecosystem has been enabled by a mix of factors, including the presence of entrepreneurs with ideas and investors who are willing to back up these ideas. Many start-ups have been able to find support from angel investors, venture capital and private equity backers. Involving this ecosystem in the hydrogen economy can be a powerful driver for this sector. Venture funds and private equity funds specifically focused on green hydrogen could make it easier for new entrepreneurs with ideas to get funding and achieve scale.

The government's Green Hydrogen Policy sends the right signals about its intent. It now needs to ensure that investment can freely come into this space.

The writer is Senior Fellow for Energy, Investment and Connectivity at Gateway House



INF/19/22-23	CHAIRMAN
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Sd/-  
Director of Mines, Odisha  
OIPR-30004/11/0002/2223

TAMIL NADU WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD				
INVITATION OF BIDS – TWO COVER – ITEMWAR TENDER SYSTEM				
IFB No.	F.WSIS to Thenkari T.P./SDO / CW 2022 / IX / 30.03.2022			
Fund	NAGARD Loan Assistance under RIDF XCV (2019-20)/State Share(MNP)/Capital Grant Fund and O & M Gap Filling fund.			
Eligibility	Registered Class I Bidders			
Tender Invoice	The Chief Executive, TWAD Board, No.11, Sambakulam, Ganesar Nagesh, Matthuthavani, Madurai - 625 007			
Place of Bid & Sale of Bid	07.04.2022 to 04.05.2022 up to 5.45 p.m. At the Executive Engineer, TWAD Board, RWS Division, Thenni, Tamilnadu by cash or by Demand Draft for Rs. 1000/- GST in favour of Executive Engineer, TWAD Board, RWS Division, Thenni, payable at Thenni.			
Download website	(Free of cost) at <a href="http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in">www.tenders.tn.gov.in</a> and <a href="http://www.twadboard.tn.gov.in">www.twadboard.tn.gov.in</a> .			
Bid/Pre meeting	20.04.2022 at 11.00 a.m. at the office of the Tender Invoicee			
Bid Submission	06.05.2022 before 3.00 p.m. at the office of the Tender Invoicee in person or through post. This office will not be held responsible for postal delay, if any.			
Bid opening	06.05.2022 at 3.30 p.m. at the office of the Tender Invoicee			
Sl. No.	Name of work		Approximate value of work (Rs in Core including GST)	Bid security (Rs in lakhs)
1.	Providing WSIS to Thenkari Town Panchayat in Thenni District with Suthaparam Dham Canal including maintenance for a period of 12 months (Period of completion - 12 months)		9.02	6.77

DIPR/1635/Tender/2022

**Chief Executive, TWAD Board, Madurai**

Interested firms who may like to visit the site may request the Director of Mines, Head of Department Building, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar - 751001, 2-part Bid for the above-mentioned work should be submitted to the Director of Mines, Odisha on or before **16:00 Hours of Dt. 19.04.2022**. The Technical Bid should consist of Conceptual Proposal, Credentials of the firm, Turnover, PAN, GST Registration Number and all other documents as mentioned in the bid document, Cost of Bid Document amounting to Rs. 3600/- (Rupees Three Thousand Six Hundred) only including GST @ 18%, Non- Refundable and EMD/ Bid Security amounting to Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh) only in shape of Demand Drafts issued by any Nationalized Bank in favour of "The Director of Mines, Odisha" and payable at Bhubaneswar to be sent by registered post/courier services or in person only.

The Financial bid is to be kept in a separate sealed envelope. Both bids are to be sealed in a single outer envelope and addressed to "The Director of Mines, Odisha", clearly written on top as Bid Document for "Undertaking complete assignment on turnkey basis to prepare Environmental Clearance proposal including Environmental Impact Assessment Study and all related activities thereof leading to Environmental Clearances from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Govt. of India and other statutory clearances from State Pollution Control Board, Odisha in respect of Unchabali Iron & Manganses Block, comprised in four villages (Baida, Jagannathpur, Kundaposhi & Unchabali) under Barbil Tehsil of Keonjhar District, Odisha" REF No. -----dated ----- of the Directorate of Mines, Govt. of Odisha with name and address of the firm on the same envelope.

The **Technical Bid will be opened on Dt. 22.04.2022 at 3:30 Hours** at Directorate of Mines, Head of Department Building, Unit-V, Bhubaneswar 751001 in presence of the bidder or their authorized representative who choose to be present. After evaluation of the Technical Bids, the date of opening of the Financial Bid will be intimated to the agencies through Registered post-mail in due course.

The Director of Mines, Odisha has the right to accept or reject any or all the RFP without assigning any reasons therefor.

(Director of Mines, Odisha)  
OIPR-30004/11/0004/2223

**MADHYAMGRAM  
MUNICIPALITY  
TENDER NOTICE**

Sealed Quotation are invited from the bonafied and resourceful agencies by the Executive Officer, Madhyamgram Municipality through the following N.I.Q bearing no. MM/E/0.3/24/2022-23, dt. 04/04/2022. Details of Quotation will be available from the Municipal Office notice board & website [www.madhyamgrammunicipality.org](http://www.madhyamgrammunicipality.org). Municipal Authority has every right to accept or reject any Quotation without assigning any reason.

**Sd/- Executive Officer  
Madhyamgram Municipality**

**DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, SILIGURI**  
Address: 2nd Floor, PCM Tower, 2nd Mile  
Sevoke Road, Siliguri - 734001, West Bengal  
Summons under Sub-section (4) of Section 19 of Recovery of Debts due to Banks  
And Financial Institutions Act, 1993 Read with Sub-Rule (2A) of Rule 5 of the  
Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993  
**SUMMONS / NOTICE**  
**O.A. No. 114 of 2021**  
**BANK OF BARODA.....Applicant**  
Vs  
**\_\_\_\_\_**

MS HILL KING DAIRY PVT. LTD. and Others... Defendants(s)  
To  
1. **M/s Hill King Dairy Pvt. Ltd.**, a Private Limited Company, having its registered office at Taralari, Balasinguri, Shiv Mangir, Post Office, New Rangia, Police Station-Matigara, District- Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal. Pin-734013.  
2. **Mr. Sunil Sagar**, Son of Mr. D. Sagar, residing at Saltari Hut, Patharghata Road, Opposite Mount View Apartment, Post Office- New Champia, Police Station-Matigara, District- Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal. Pin-734009.  
3. **Mrs. Kalpana Sagar**, Wife of Sri Sunil Sagar residing at Saltari Hut, Patharghata Road, Opposite Mount View Apartment, Post Office- New Champia, Police Station-Matigara, District- Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal. Pin-734009.  
4. **Mr. Rudra Bahadur Gurung**, Son of Mrs. D. B. Gurung, residing at 192, School Road, Pokhria Boro, Post Office and Police Station- Sukhia Pokhri, District- Darjeeling in the State of West Bengal. Pin-734221.  
Whereas O.A. No. 114 of 2021 was listed before Hon'ble Presiding Officer on 22.09.2021.

Whereas, this Hon'ble Tribunal is pleased to issue summons/ notice on the said Applicant under Section 19(4) of the Act (OA) filed against you for recovery of Debts of **Rs.67,73,04,452.77 (Rupees Six Crores Seventy Three Lakh Four Thousand Four Hundred Fifty Two and Paise Seventy Seven)** only (application along with copies of documents etc. annexed).

In accordance with sub-section (4) of Section 19 of the Act, you, the defendants are directed as under:

(i) to show cause within thirty days of the service of summons/ notice as to why relief prayed for, in the OA, should not be granted;

(ii) to disclose particulars of properties or assets other than properties and assets mentioned by the applicant in para- 3- A of the original application;

(iii) you are restrained from dealing with or disposing of secured assets or such other assets and properties disclosed in Para-3-A of the original application, and also not to alienate, dispose or transfer the said property to third party, pending hearing and disposal of the application for attachment of properties;

(iv) you shall not transfer by the way of sale, lease or otherwise, except in the ordinary course of his business any of the assets over which security interest is created and/ or other assets and properties specified or disclosed in Para- 3-A of the original application without the prior approval of the Tribunal.


You are hereby liable to account for the sale proceeds realized by sale of secured assets and/ or other assets and properties in the ordinary course of business and deposits such sale proceeds in the account maintained with the bank or financial institutions holding security interest over such assets.

You are also directed to file the written statement with a copy thereof furnished to the applicant and to appear before the Registrar on **22.04.2022 at 10.30 A.M.** failing which the application shall be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under this my hand and the seal of the Tribunal on the 31st day of March, 2022.

Registrar

Debts Recovery Tribunal, Siliguri



## GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA

### OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

#### KALAHANDI RWS&S DIVISION, BHAWANIPATNA.

#### INVITATION OF BID THROUGH e- TENDERING

**Bid Identification No. 01/SE/RWSS/2022-23 / Bpt Dated. 02.04.2022**

**01. Name of the work:- As per ANNEXURE - A**

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender online for bidding on office hour only.		Date of opening (Technical Bid)
		From	To	
1	2	3	4	5
Superintending Engineer, Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna	01/SE/RWSS/2022-23 /Bpt Dated- 02.04.2022	16.04.2022 10.00 AM	06.05.2022 05.30 PM	07.05.2022 10.00 AM onwards

Cost of tender paper to be made online payment system.  
 Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tenderodisha.gov.in>  
 The original documents should be scanned and uploaded.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer,  
 Kalahandi RWS&S Division, Bhawanipatna  
 OIPR-25005/11/0001/2223


**Directorate of Mines**  
**Steel & Mines Department**  
**Government of Odisha**  
 Email: [directormines1@orissaminerals.gov.in](mailto:directormines1@orissaminerals.gov.in)

REP NO. 01 UNCHABALIEC/FDC/DM Date: 04.04.2022

NOTICE OF REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL TO PREPARE FOREST  
DIVERSION PROPOSAL INCLUDING ALL RELATED ACTIVITIES  
THEREOF LEADING TO IN PRINCIPLE (STAGE-1) APPROVAL  
OF FOREST CLEARANCE UNDER SECTION-2 OF FOREST  
(CONSERVATION) ACT, 1980.

### Directorate of Mines, Govt. of Odisha invites sealed Proposals

assignment on turnkey basis to prepare the Forest Diversion

Proposal including all related activities thereof leading to Forest Clearance & to facilitate obtaining in principle (Stage-I) approval of Forest land measuring 78.829 Ha. involved within total 80.553 ha of Unchabali Iron & Manganese Block, comprised in four villages of Balda, Jagannathpur, Kundaposhi & Unchabali under Barbil Tehsil of Keonjhar District, Odisha from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Govt. of India, under Section-2 of Forest (Conservation) Act-1980 through registered post/ courier service or in person,

The specialized Consultants/Agencies having experience in similar works and having capability for providing such services need only to apply for the above services. The consultant/ agencies whose EMD has been forfeited for failure to complete the assignment in time or some other reasons, shall not apply

The tender document including addendum/corrigendum, if any, comprising of eligibility criteria, Instruction to Bidders, Scope of the Work etc. will be available at website **[www.orissaminerals.gov.in](http://www.orissaminerals.gov.in)**

Bidders may download the tender document from the website and the cost of tender document may be submitted along with the technical bid documents.

Interested firms who may like to visit the site may request the Director of Mines, Head of Department Building, Unit - V, Bhubaneswar - 751001

2-part Bid for the above-mentioned work should be submitted to the Director of Mines, Odisha on or before 16:00 Hours of Day 19.04.2022. The Technical Bid should consist of Conceptual Proposal, Credentials of the firm, Turnover, PAN, GST Registration Number and all other documents as mentioned in the bid document, Cost of Bid Document amounting to Rs. 3600/- (Rupees Three Thousand Six Hundred) only including GST @ 18%, Non-Refundable and EMD/ Bid Security amounting to Rs. 1,00,000/- (Rupees One Lakh) only in shape of Demand Drafts issued by any Nationalized Bank in favour of "The Director of Mines, Odisha" and payable at Bhubaneswar to be sent by registered post/courier services or in person only.

The Financial bid is to be kept in a separate sealed envelope. Both bids are to be sealed in a single outer envelope and addressed to "The Director of Mines, Odisha," clearly written on top. The Bid Document for "Undertaking complete assignment on turnkey basis to prepare the Forest Diversion Proposal including all related activities thereof leading to Forest Clearance & to facilitate obtaining in principle (Stage-I) approval of Forest land measuring 78.829 Ha. involved within total 80.553 ha of Unchabali Iron & Manganese Block, comprised in four villages (Balda, Gangannathpur, Kundaposhi & Unchabali) under Barbil Tehsil of Keonjhar District, Odisha from Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEF & CC), Govt. of India under Section-2 of Forest (Conservation) Act-1980" REP No. ---, dated --- of the Directorate of Mines, Govt. of Odisha with name and address of the firm on the same envelope.

The Technical Bid will be opened on Dt. 22.04.2022 at 3:30 P.M. at Directorate of Mines, Head of Department Building, Unit-1, Bhubaneswar 751001 in presence of the bidder or their authorized representative who choose to be present. After the evaluation of the Technical Bids, the date of opening of the Financial Bid will be intimated to the agencies through Registered post/e-mail in due course.

The Director of Mines, Odisha has the right to accept or reject any or all the RFP without assigning any reasons thereof.

Sd/  
**Director of Mines, Odisha**  
OIPR-30004/11/0005/2223

**DEBITS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, SILIGURI**  
Address: 2nd Floor, PCM Tower, 2nd Mile  
Sevoke Road, Siliguri-734001, (WAB)  
Summers under Sub-section (4) of Section 19 Recovery of Debts due to Banks  
and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 read with Sub-Rule (1) of Rule 5 of the  
Debt Recovery Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1993

**SUMMONS / NOTICE**  
**T.O.A. No. 408 of 2017**  
(Arising out of O.A. No. 353 of 2016)  
**BANK OF BARODA**  
(ERSTWHILE DENA BANK).....Applicant  
Vs  
**SUNIL SAGAR & ANOTHER**  
A/C M/S HILL KING DAIRY.....Defendant(s)

To

1. **Sunil Sagar**, Sole Proprietor of M/s Hill King Dairy, having its office at Pokhriabong Busty, Block-4, Sukhia Pk, Daringje.

2. **Rejina Gurung**, Wife of Rudra Gurung, New Chanta, P.O. Matgara, Pin - 734010, Dist. Daringje.

**WHEREAS** the instant application bearing **O.A. No. 353 of 2016** between the parties above named was registered under Debts Recovery Tribunal - 2, Kolkata under Section 19 of the Recovery of Debts & Bankruptcy Act, 1993.

**AND WHEREAS** the said O.A. No. 353 of 2016 has been transferred and renumbered in this Tribunal as **T.O.A. No. 408 of 2017** due to change in jurisdiction from DRT-2, Kolkata to DRT, Siliguri.

**AND WHEREAS** the Applicant Bank filed one I.A. No. 61 of 2020 to amend the cause title and the Ld. Tribunal allowed the said I.A. vide order dated **20.02.2020**.

You are hereby directed to appear in person or through duly empowered legal practitioner or through duly authorised officer for further proceedings/ hearing of the case on **20.04.2022 at 10.30 o'clock** or immediately thereafter, before the **Registrar**.

**TAKE NOTICE** that in default of your appearance on the date aforementioned, the application will be heard and decided in your absence.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, the 23rd day of February, 2022

Asst. Registrar  
Debts Recovery Tribunal, Siliguri

## "IMPORTANT"

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# 9 IN PARLIAMENT

BUDGET SESSION

## FROM THE GALLERY

### FROM THE CHAIR

#### LOKSABHA

“Members, do not indulge in argument amongst you.”

**OM BIRLA**, Speaker, to both ruling and opposition MPs who were exchanging heated words over the length of a question raised by BJP MP Parvesh Sahib Singh.

### QUOTE OF THE DAY

“The Speaker sir has spoken, there is no need for you... now let me finish.”

**MAHUA MOITRA**, TMC member, to BJP members

### 5 QUESTIONS



**KULDEEP RAI SHARMA**, CONG MP, HAS DEMANDED THE OIL PALM PROJECT IN ANDAMAN

AND NICOBAR ISLANDS BE REVIVED. HE SPEAKS TO **HARIKISHAN SHARMA**

**What is the issue you raised in the House?**

The government has approved a package to increase the production of palm oil with an aim to reduce its import, for which a financial outlay of Rs 11,040 crore has been made. The scheme proposed to cover an additional area of 6.5 lakh hectare for oil palm. In view of this, I have demanded that oil palm plantation in Andaman, which was stopped because of closure of the Andaman & Nicobar Islands Forest and Plantation Development Corporation Limited (ANIFPDC), a central government undertaking, be revived. This plantation was also providing jobs to the local people.

**Why was the project closed?**

The PSU was started in 1977 but was shut down in 2017 because it had suffered heavy losses. The palm trees were old and the yield was almost nil. There was a plan to plant new trees but for that a lot of money was required. That's what I requested the government for today... since you want to bring 6.5 lakh ha additional area under oil palm cultivation, that industry may be revived.

**Have you raised this issue with the Andaman administration?**

No. It is a subject of the central government. A huge amount of funds is required for this project. Therefore, the only option I had was to raise it in Parliament. We are completely dependent on the central government. The annual budget of Andaman and Nicobar Islands is about Rs 5,000 crore. We don't have extra funds by which the plantation can be revived.

**Do you think the Centre will revive the project?**

Since the government allocated Rs 11,040 crore, I have requested some part of it be utilised to restart the oil palm plantation. I hope the government takes up this project under the National Mission on Edible Oils – Oil Palm (NMEOP).

**How do you plan to go forward?**

I will write to the Prime Minister and meet him if required. The scheme is already there and the government wants to do something. So it will be a win-win situation for both. It will also boost employment in Andaman and Nicobar Islands... the project is expected to provide jobs to 700-1,000 people.

# LS passes criminal procedure Bill, Shah says it will defend rights of crime victims

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

THERE IS no intention to misuse the provisions of Criminal Procedure (Identification) Bill, which is meant to ensure that police and investigators are two steps ahead of criminals, Home Minister Amit Shah told Lok Sabha, which passed the draft legislation on Monday.

Replying to a debate on the Bill, which the Opposition had demanded be sent to the Standing Committee for further scrutiny, Shah said it is about safeguarding “human rights of the victims of crimes, and not just criminals.”

“We have no intention of misusing the provisions of the Bill,” Shah said. “It is meant to keep our police ahead of criminals. Next-generation crimes cannot be tackled with old techniques; we have to try to take criminal justice system to next era.”

Seeking to allay apprehensions voiced by the Opposition about possible misuse of the draft legislation, Shah said rules and procedure of the provisions would be framed later for states. “Best technology will be used for safeguarding the data and there will be training of manpower,” he said.

Earlier, taking part in the debate on the Bill, Opposition MPs called its provisions “draconian” and demanded that it be referred to



Home Minister Amit Shah arrives at the Parliament House on Monday. *Anil Sharma*

a Parliamentary standing committee.

Several Opposition members raised concern over the broad provisions in the Bill that empowers head constable of a police station or head warden of a jail to take “measurements” of convicts and those in preventive detention.

Calling it “draconian and against civil liberties”, Congress’s Manish Tewari said it is against the spirit of Articles 14, 19 and 21 of the Constitution, dealing with human rights and civil liberties. “It is also against the widely

accepted dictum that everyone should be treated innocent unless proven guilty. The provisions of the Bill are very wide and ambiguous, and can be misused by the state and the police,” he said.

The Bill will pave the way for India to become a surveillance state, Tewari said.

Responding to a concern raised by Congress, Shah said there is no intention to do brain-mapping narco analysis through the provisions of the Bill that talks of collecting biometric data of criminals.

## EXPLAINED What the Bill says

THE BILL provides for taking measurements of convicts and other persons for identification and investigation in criminal matters, and to preserve records.

Dayanadhi Maran of DMK accused the government of trying to establish a surveillance state. He said, “It is open-ended and infringes on the privacy of individuals.”

TMC’s Mahua Moitra said the Bill seeks to replace the Identification of Prisoners Act, 1920, but the proposed law has fewer safeguards than the law enacted by the British.

Referring to concerns of the Opposition, Shah said such provisions exist in countries such as the UK, South Africa and others, where the rate of prosecution of criminals was much higher than in India. “Don’t be scared of database...the whole world is using database,” he said.

The database has been in use for two-and-a-half years to solve crimes, including automobile thefts, he said.

# BSP MP seeks special probe into UP exam paper leak

## HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

BAHUJAN SAMAJ Party MP Kunwar Danish Ali on Monday raised the Uttar Pradesh Board Exam paper leak issue in Lok Sabha and demanded a special investigation into the matter.

Last week, the English exam of the UP Board’s Class XII exam was cancelled in 24 districts after one of the two sets of question papers got leaked in Ballia district. The exam will now be held on April 13. On Thursday, police arrested 22 people in Ballia in connection with the paper leak case and said that at least 10 of them are teachers of government and private schools or tuition centres.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Ali, who represents Amroha Parliamentary Constituency, said: “In the last 5 years, there have been 18 paper leaks in Uttar Pradesh but no action has been taken. Through you, I demand that a special investigation should be conducted in this matter.”

The BSP member alleged that the “paper leak mafia” enjoy “political protection” in Uttar Pradesh, while action is being taken against whistleblowers.

In the recent paper leak cases, the police have taken action against two journalists in the district of Ballia but no action has been taken against the “nakal mafia” (cheating mafia), Ali said, citing example of harassment of whistle-

blowers. He further alleged that journalists are being harassed across the country.

Meanwhile, Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) member Harsimrat Kaur Badal raised the issue of “Sikh prisoners” (Bandi Sikhon) languishing behind bars for 25-30 years despite completing their sentence.

She demanded release of Balwant Singh Rajoana, convicted for the assassination of former Punjab Chief Minister Beant Singh and Davinder Pal Singh Bhullar, a death convict in the 1993 Delhi bomb blasts case.

In jail since 1994, Bhullar’s request for permanent release has been pending with the AAP-run Delhi government.

“*Kejriwal ki Aam Aadmi Party ki Sarkar Punjab me wade karti hai, lekin yahan unhen kaid me rakhti hai, unhe free nahin karti hai. Unke mantri ise rok kar rakhte hain.* (Kejriwal’s Aam Aadmi Party government makes promises in Punjab but they keep him [Bhullar] in prison; they don’t release him. Kejriwal’s ministers keep it pending.),” the SAD member said.

Navneet Rana, an Independent from Amravati constituency in Maharashtra, raised the issue of pension for the physically-disabled, widows and senior citizen. She demanded that the pension be increased to Rs 3,000 per month from Rs 1,000 per month.

BJP member CP Joshi raised the issue of stone-pelting on a religious procession in Karauli city of Rajasthan on Saturday.



## NEW INNINGS

Newly sworn-in Rajya Sabha MPs from Kerala P Santosh Kumar, A A Rahim and Jebi Mather at the Parliament House on Monday. *Anil Sharma*

# RS adjourned as Opp keeps up protests over price rise

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

THE RAJYA Sabha could not transact any business on Monday after a united Opposition disrupted proceedings repeatedly, demanding suspension of all business to hold a discussion on the rise in prices of petrol, diesel and fertiliser.

Several Opposition members — including Congress’s K C Venugopal, DMK’s Tiruchi Siva, CPI’s Binoy Viswam and TMC’s Abir Ranjan Biswas — had given notices seeking a discussion on repeated fuel price hike.

Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu rejected the notices, and said, “You had enough opportunity in the Finance Bill and the Appropriation Bill to discuss all these issues.... Rule 267 is

not the appropriate rule. So there is no question of accepting (the demand).”

The members insisted on a discussion and trooped to the Well, prompting the Chair to adjourn the House twice during the morning.

Congress MP Deepender Hooda had given a notice seeking a discussion on the resolution passed by the Punjab Assembly, reiterating the state’s claim on Chandigarh, the capital it shares jointly with Haryana.

Similar scenes were witnessed when the House reassembled at 2 pm, leading to adjournment of the House for the day.

The Chair tried to bring order in the House and called Labour Minister Bhupender Yadav to reply to a discussion on the working of the Labour and Employment Ministry. But the Opposition kept protesting and some MPs trooped into the Well.



Opposition MPs protest in Rajya Sabha over hike in fuel prices, on Monday. *PTI*

The Trinamool Congress had given a notice seeking tabling of the Women’s Reservation Bill in Rajya Sabha.

Raising the issue, TMC floor leader Derek O’Brien said, “Ours is under Rule 138. We want the Women’s Reservation Bill to be tabled in Rajya Sabha. The motion is there on Rule 138.”

He said, “This issue is a matter which is not primarily concerning the Government of India. This motion on the Women’s Reservation Bill should be voted on. Let the government do it — they don’t want a discussion on price rise; they don’t want a discussion on fuel. At least have this motion.”

Amid the din, Patra allowed former Prime Minister H D Deve Gowda to speak. But he could not speak amid the loud shouting and sloganeering by Opposition MPs.

# ‘India, Australia have accepted shared Indo-Pacific role’

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

AUSTRALIA AND India have accepted a shared responsibility to ensure a peaceful and inclusive Indo-Pacific where the rights of all states are respected regardless of their size, Australian High Commissioner Barry O’Farrell said on Monday.

Speaking at an event organised by the Australia India Institute on the topic ‘The rise and fall of Australia-India relations’, O’Farrell also said the Russian invasion of Ukraine will have implications for regional security.

“Current events in Europe serve to remind us of the profound strategic challenges and the disruption the world is facing. The order that has supported peace and prosperity over decades is being challenged,” he said. “And there’s no doubt the implications of the invasion of Ukraine will reverberate in our region for some time,” he added.

O’Farrell said there have been mounting global concerns over China’s growing military muscle-flexing in the Indo-Pacific re-



Australian High Commissioner to India, Barry O’Farrell.

gion, especially against its coercive approach toward Pacific island nations.

Referring to maritime cooperation, he said India and Australia share the Indian Ocean and “we are — by our very design — stewards of one of the world’s greatest maritime resources.”

“Our geography places us squarely in the middle of the world’s strategic center of gravity. And as the international system becomes more multi-polar, the region’s resilience will be tested,” he said.

“For me, the biggest indicator of how far the Australia-India relationship has come is

simply how frank, frequent and trusting our interactions are with our counterparts. To put it starkly: the kinds of discussions we’re now able to have on sensitive issues were unheard of even five years ago. If and when any issue arises, we speak directly to each other like good friends,” he added.

The Asutralian envoy also said India and Australia remain committed to working towards a full comprehensive economic cooperation agreement.

The trade agreement signed on Saturday, he said, is only a “first stage deal” and it gives both sides an opportunity to properly harness the complementary nature of their economies in areas such as critical minerals, education and tourism.

“I am confident that the deal will start, at a commercial level, building the confidence needed that will open up even more opportunities for both of our countries,” he said.

In an indirect indication that both sides have issues over Agriculture, the envoy said the sector is “sensitive in every country in the world, it’s sensitive in Australia, it’s sensitive in India”.

“Once we start cooperating in areas across our diverse economic sectors, once people understand that Australian wines are not going to crush Indian wines, that our products are going to be at different price points, then we will see greater and greater economic cooperation,” he said.

O’Farrell said one of the reasons Australia, India, Japan and the US came closer during the Covid-19 pandemic was that it did accentuate some of the negative trends that existed in the world.

“India has faced border tensions, Australia has faced economic (problems), we are facing a new challenge in the Pacific, those issues are not going to disappear overnight,” he said.

“What’s happening in Europe is going to have implications for us in the future, that is going to drive closer and closer cooperation between Indian and Australian defence forces,” he added. “The future is limitless, it needs good stewards, open to ideas... prepared to inject some risks, challenge us to go an extra step and be prepared for India and Australia to say no sometimes,” he said.

# Gadkari launches 5 national highway projects in Haryana

## EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

GURGAON, APRIL 4

INAUGURATING FIVE new national highway projects in Sonapat on Monday, Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari said the distance from Delhi to Amritsar will be covered in four hours and it would take two hours to commute from Delhi to Chandigarh.

“With the completion of these projects and other projects in the pipeline, I promise that the distance from Delhi to Amritsar will be covered in four hours; Delhi to Katra will be covered in six hours and Delhi to Srinagar will be done in eight hours. People will be able to commute from Delhi to Chandigarh in two hours, Delhi to Dehradun in two hours, Delhi to Haridwar in two hours and from Delhi to Mumbai in 12 hours. No one will consider taking a flight to go to Chandigarh or Dehradun as our road network will expand so fast,” said



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in Parliament on Monday. *Anil Sharma*

# FDI, not FII, the right measure of India’s economy: Sitharaman

## LIZ MATHEW

NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

FOREIGN DIRECT Investment (FDI) staying in the country and creating jobs and prospects, and not the outflow of Foreign Institute Investors (FIIs) and Foreign Portfolio Investors (FPIs), should be assessed to measure robustness of the Indian economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday.

“It is that (FDI) which indicates that money coming in (is) staying in this country, thereby creating jobs and prospects for us, not by FPIs and FIIs,” Sitharaman said during the Question Hour in Lok Sabha.

She FIIs and FPIs “may come and go” but Indian retail investors have proven that they are ready for any shock that may come in, given the “shock-absorbing capacity the Indian retailer has brought into the Indian market”.

Sitharaman said one needs to look at the FDI inflow “with fairness and objectivity”, and added, “India is the highest receiver of FDI since before Covid-19; it (the inflow) continued during Covid significantly, and subsequently also.”

Sitharaman was responding to a question raised by Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who expressed concern over the steady withdrawal of overseas investors from the Indian market. Tharoor said overseas investors have pulled out a net Rs 1.14 lakh crore from the Indian market so far this year and foreign portfolio investors have taken back equities worth Rs 48,268 crore. “This is the sixth straight month that FII investors have withdrawn from the Indian market, and the trend might be exacerbated by the US interest rate hikes and the commodity price hike, particularly of crude oil,” he said, calling it a “worrying trend”.

The Question Hour also saw protests by Opposition members. Congress MPs protested over BJP member from Delhi, Parvesh Sahib Singh, being allowed to ask a lengthy question in which he alleged that the Arvind Kejriwal government is doing nothing but offering lip service to solve the Capital’s pollution problem. Singh criticised the AAP government for what he called its lackadaisical attitude towards solving Delhi’s pollution problem and sought a penalty on the Delhi government on this.

As Singh took a few minutes in asking the question, Congress leader of the House, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, and his party colleague Gaurav Gogoi protested, saying that the Chair gave him more time than usual to ask a supplementary question.

In a sharp reaction, Union Environment Minister Bhupendra Yadav, who asked why Chowdhury was getting agitated since the BJP member was asking about the Delhi government, as he is an MP from Delhi.

Yadav also dismissed Gogoi’s contention that the Health Ministry was not ready to link pollution with health issues in the country. Gogoi wanted a probe to see whether there is a link.

Speaker Om Birla remained silent amid all this war of words. When the House met, DMK MPs protested demanding withdrawal of Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi, alleging that he is stalling Bills passed by the Assembly. TRS members, meanwhile, protested against Union minister Piyush Goyal for having purportedly “misled” the House on paddy procurement. The TRS MPs said they will move a privilege motion against Goyal.



Transport minister stresses on need to invest in newer technologies

Gadkari, inaugurating the five national highway projects worth Rs 287.18 crore.

Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and Haryana deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala were also present on the occasion.

Gadkari said there was a need to invest in newer technologies. “Cars will now run on water... by producing green hydrogen... there will be no need of petrol and diesel in future,” he said, adding, “I tell farmers to not sell their lands... let the road be built and then develop the land and become crorepatis.”





OH, SOCIAL MEDIA WOE

A FACEBOOK post congratulating his son for his MBBS degree has put Minister of State for Law and Justice S P Baghel in a spot. Two days ago, Baghel posted on social media that son Parth had graduated from medical college. According to Baghel, he posted it after Parth taunted him for posting “all kinds of silly things” on his social media pages but not his son’s achievement. But the indulgence made his daughter, who has both MBBS and MS degrees, complain that he never expressed similar excitement on her achievements. Baghel’s conclusion was that social media has brought troubles for him in the family.

ENOUGH SAID

ON MONDAY, during the Question Hour in Lok Sabha, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman almost lost her cool at what she termed was persistent “temptation” of some Opposition MPs to interrupt her. When Sitharaman rose to answer a question raised by Congress member Shashi Tharoor, TMC’s Saugata Roy made some remarks that made the Finance Minister complain to the Speaker that it has become a routine affair. “Why is it that whenever I stand up to answer there is always this temptation to (give) running commentary? Learned members like Saugata Roy never ever forget that he will have to obstruct the minister,” she said, appealing through the Speaker to let her answer questions without interruption. Sitharaman firmly said that the MP should wait for her to complete the answer to seek clarification, if any, “rather than having the satisfaction of interrupting” her. Roy was seen smiling at the minister’s reaction.

DRUMBEAT ON RETREAT

The entry of retired IPS officer Bhaskar Rao and former Congress leader Ashok Tanwar to the party drew hordes of AAP workers and supporters to the party’s Delhi headquarters on Monday. Around 4.30 pm, Tanwar entered the party office amid much sloganeering. His supporters wanted to mark the moment of his formal joining in front of the media with drum beats as well. But there was one little problem: the dhol player was nowhere to be seen. This led to a frantic search in and around the AAP office on Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, which also houses the BJP’s national headquarters. The reason behind the drummer’s disappearing act was not immediately clear.

Will welcome tribals displaced during Salwa Judum: Baghel

GARGI VERMA RAIPUR, APRIL 4

CHHATTISGARH CHIEF Minister Bhupesh Baghel Monday announced that the state would create a conducive environment for the rehabilitation of families who had taken refuge in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh during Salwa Judum — when armed tribals were appointed as special police officers to combat Maoists — between 2005 and 2009. Baghel on Monday met a delegation of over 150 people from among the affected families who expressed their intent to return to the state. According to official estimates, around 55,000 tribal families were displaced and some had escaped to Andhra Pradesh, parts of which are now in Telangana. In March this year, over 200 families under the banner of



Bhupesh Baghel

Walsa Adivasulu Samakhya (displaced tribals’ group) had written to Chhattisgarh Tribal Development Minister Kawasi Lakhma, requesting rehabilitation while laying down jobs, land ownership and other benefits as the preconditions. “Due to the political violence in Chhattisgarh, we had to flee to Andhra Pradesh. Now, when the governments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are taking over the forestland that we had started cultivating

Cabinet nod: Rs 2,000 to Rs 5,000 fine for first drinking offence in Bihar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PATNA, APRIL 4

THE FIRST drinking offence in Bihar will entail a fine between Rs 2,000 and Rs 5,000, but in case of non-payment of the penalty, the offender will have to spend a month in jail. There is, however, no relief for the second such offence as the only provision for that is jail term that can go up to one year, if charges are proved. Bihar Cabinet on Monday gave nod to these proposals under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise (Amendment) Act, 2022, effective from April 1, 2022. Additional chief secretary, Cabinet Department, Sanjay Kumar, said: “Two proposals were approved. A vehicle seized with liquor can be released

against payment of fine and a house where liquor is found can be sealed against payment of fine. Minimum fine for a first-time offender will be Rs 2,000 and maximum will be Rs 5,000.” Even though a set of amendments were brought into force in the recent Budget session, the Cabinet gave its nod to the amount of fine on Monday. The state government, which had been under pressure to de-congest courts because of high pendency of liquor law-related bails, since the Supreme Court took note of the issue, brought a set of amendments. As most of those in jail are often first-time offenders, the new provision will declog jails. Bihar jails have capacity to house about 46,000 inmates but there are 76,000 prisoners lodged in the 59 prisons in the state.

LIMITING TEMPERATURE RISE WITHIN 1.5-DEGREE CELSIUS

Check emissions fast or nothing will help after 2030: IPCC report

ESHA ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

NO AMOUNT of climate action after 2030 will be good enough to limit the rise in global temperatures within 1.5 degrees Celsius, if the emissions’ pathway is not altered significantly in the next few years, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has said in its latest report.

Even the 2-degree Celsius target, in that case, would rely on “rapid acceleration” of climate actions after 2030, it said.

The 2015 Paris Agreement aims to hold the global rise in temperatures to within 2 degrees Celsius from pre-industrial times, while striving to keep it below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

Navroz Dubash, one of the lead authors of the report, said enhanced climate action in the near term was the key. “The report clearly indicates that we are not on the path to keeping the 1.5 target. It is not about 2050, but what we do in the coming decade that is crucial,” Dubash, a professor at the Delhi-based Centre for Policy Research, said. “This is the first time that an

Modi, Israel PM talk global events

New Delhi: PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi spoke to his Israeli counterpart Naftali Bennett, whose visit to India was postponed after he contracted Covid-19, to enquire about his health and also discussed recent global events.

Modi tweeted that he looked forward to welcoming Bennett to India for his first visit to the country. “Was happy to speak with PM @naftalibennett and to know that he is recovering well. We discussed recent global events, and also reviewed India-Israel cooperation in various areas. I look forward to welcoming him in India very soon,” he said.

EXPLAINED

Message in medium: short-term is key

THE LATEST IPCC report reinforces a message that is common to all such reports in the last few years — early action is key to minimising impacts of climate change. Long-term, or mid-century, targets are no longer viable because once the temperature rise crosses a threshold, it would become extremely difficult, if not impossible, to pull it back within a short period of time. Already, most projections show that even with the best of efforts, the temperature rise would most likely overshoot 1.5 degrees or 2 degrees Celsius targets before they can be brought back by the end of the century.

IPCC report has looked at sustainable development in detail. What kind of urbanisation, for example, will allow you to have a better living standard, but at the same time reduce emissions. These are not exclusive of each other,” he said. Emphasising that it was urgent to scale up measures for mitigating emissions in order to achieve the 1.5 target, Dr Jayashree Roy, a professor of economics at Jadavpur University and a coordinating lead author, said the report showed that enhanced climate action was possible. She said since a large chunk of India’s infrastructure was still being built, there was an opportunity for India to take the lead. “We have detailed as many as 60 different options and pathways, concrete measures, that can lead to 40-70 per cent reduction in global emissions. These options don’t just cover governmental strategies and policies but also what can be done at an individual level. For instance food waste reduction is an effective mitigation tool. Likewise, nutrition and dietary choices



Ex-Bengaluru top cop Bhaskar Rao with Dehi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia. Prem Nath Pandey

Haryana Cong ex-chief, former Karnataka ADGP join AAP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

FORMER HARYANA Congress chief Ashok Tanwar and ex-Bengaluru top cop Bhaskar Rao joined the AAP Monday, giving a boost to the party’s expansion plans in Haryana and Karnataka where it has already appointed poll in-charges for the next Assembly polls.

Both Tanwar and Rao joined the AAP in Delhi in the presence of party supremo and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. Describing the AAP as “not just a party but a symbol of revolution”, Kejriwal said these inductions will help the AAP “drive change at the national level”. Once a close aide of top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, Tanwar, a Dalit leader, had quit the grand old party in 2019 after he was removed as the Haryana party chief just ahead of the then state Assembly polls.

Tanwar recently had a brief stint with the Trinamool Congress (TMC). He joined the TMC in November last year in the presence of TMC chief and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee



Haryana Congress ex-chief Ashok Tanwar with AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal. Express

when the latter was visiting the national capital in a bid to put her party’s growth plans beyond her state on a fast track.

After joining the AAP, Tanwar described the party as “ummeed ki kiran” (ray of hope), telling reporters that “Congress has no hope, its leaders are busy fighting among themselves”.

On the occasion, Kejriwal said, “My roots go back to Haryana, so I am delighted to see our Haryana unit get strengthened like this.” The AAP national convener was

born in Haryana’s Bhiwani district.

In a statement, Kejriwal also claimed that the AAP would “form government in Haryana in the coming days”. “I am certain with the vision of Ashok ji, we will drive change in Haryana too. He hasn’t only worked at the state level but at the national level too, I firmly believe his experience will aid us not only in Haryana but throughout the country now,” he said.

The former IPS officer of Karnataka cadre and a native of Bengaluru, Rao, who was serving as the state ADGP (Railways), demitted office last Friday.

Formally handing over the AAP’s cap to him at a press conference in Delhi, senior AAP leader and Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia expressed happiness that the ripples of the AAP’s triumph in Punjab in recent Assembly polls was being “felt” in the southern parts of the country as well.

Rao said, “I was highly impressed with the transformation in the education and health sector of Delhi under AAP. It has changed the landscape of Indian politics by stressing on clean governance and efficient administration.”

Kwatra, envoy to Nepal, named as next Foreign Secy

SHUBHAJIT ROY NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

THE GOVERNMENT on Monday named Vinay Mohan Kwatra, India’s ambassador to Nepal, as the next Foreign Secretary.

He will take charge on May 1, after incumbent Harsh Vardhan Shringla retires on April 30.

By choosing Kwatra, the government has once again not gone by the seniority principle and has bypassed at least five diplomats: India’s high commissioner to the UK Gaitri Issar Kumar; ambassador to Bhutan Ruchira Kamboj; ambassador to Israel Jaideep Sarkar; ambassador to Canada Ajay Bisaria; and ambassador to Switzerland Sanjay Bhattacharya.

While the others will retire by the time Kwatra’s two-year term as Foreign Secretary gets over in May 2024, Kamboj will be in service until May next year. Kwatra is a member of the Indian Foreign Service (IFS) with an experience of nearly 32 years in a range of assignments. He worked in the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) from 2015 to 2017, before he went to France as India’s ambassador.

When Narendra Modi became the Prime Minister in May 2014, Kwatra stepped into the role of interpreter in the PM’s bilateral meetings, starting from his first day in office when he had met visiting SAARC leaders who had come to India for the swearing-in ceremony. He continued as interpreter for the PM in the following months, including for bilateral meetings with world leaders such as US President Barack Obama when he visited India.

After joining the IFS in 1988, Kwatra served as Third Secretary, and then Second Secretary, in the Permanent Mission of India in



Vinay Mohan Kwatra. Twitter@AmbvMKwatra

Geneva until 1993, where apart from learning French he handled work relating to the UN specialised agencies, as also the Human Rights Commission. During this period, he also obtained a diploma in International Relations from Graduate School of International Studies in Geneva.

Between 1993 and 2003, he served as desk officer at Headquarters dealing with the UN, and subsequently in the diplomatic missions in South Africa and Uzbekistan. Between 2003 and 2006, he served as counsellor and later as the deputy chief of mission in the Indian Embassy in Beijing. From 2006 to 2010, he represented India at the SAARC Secretariat in Nepal as head of Trade, Economy and Finance Bureau.

From May 2010 until July 2013, he served as Minister (Commerce) in Indian Embassy, Washington. Between July 2013 and October 2015, Kwatra headed the Policy Planning & Research Division of the Ministry of External Affairs and later served as the head of Americas Division in the ministry, where he dealt with India’s relations with the US and Canada.

From October 2015 until August 2017, he served as Joint Secretary in the PMO. From August 2017 till February 2020, he served as ambassador to France.

TO COUNTER PUNJAB ON CHANDIGARH

Haryana set to rake up SYL issue, transfer of Hindi-speaking areas

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE CHANDIGARH, APRIL 4

THE ROW over Chandigarh is set to escalate with Haryana, which has called a special Vidhan Sabha session Tuesday to counter Punjab’s claim over the UT, also likely to take up and move resolutions on other contentious issues between the two states including implementation of Supreme Court’s verdict on SYL Canal and transfer of Hindi speaking areas.

The Punjab Vidhan Sabha, during a special one day session on Friday passed a resolution reiterating its claim on Chandigarh and demanding that it be transferred immediately to the Aam Aadmi Party-governed state.

Chandigarh is the common capital of Punjab and Haryana.

The political parties in Haryana had earlier rejected the Punjab resolution. Later the BJP-JJP alliance government summoned a special session of the Assembly on Tuesday primarily



Haryana CM ML Khattar (left) and Opposition Leader Bhupinder Hooda are on the same page against Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann.

to condemn the Bhagwant Mann-led dispensation in Punjab for bringing the resolution seeking the transfer of Chandigarh. On Sunday, Haryana Transport Minister Mool Chand Sharma had said that “several issues will be taken up in the special session”.

On Monday, Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja said the issues of Chandigarh, the Sutlej-Yamuna Link canal and the transfer of the Hindi-speaking villages from Punjab to Haryana are “inter-linked”.

SC stays HC order on Arya Samaj marriages

New Delhi: THE SUPREME Court on Monday stayed a Madhya Pradesh High Court order that directed the Arya Samaj to solemnise marriages in accordance with provisions of the Special Marriage Act, 1954.

Hearing a plea filed by the Madhya Bharat Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, the nodal body of the sect’s temples in Madhya Pradesh, a bench of Justices KM Joseph and Hrishikesh Roy also issued a notice to the state.

The Sabha’s SC petition has challenged a division bench order of the Madhya Pradesh HC, which had, on December 17, 2021, upheld a single-judge verdict directing the sect to amend its 2016 guidelines and incorporate the provisions of the Special Marriage Act. The HC had also ruled that marriage certificates could be issued only by a competent authority under the Special Marriage Act.



# ECONOMY

**SENSEX:** 60,611.74 ▲ 1,335.05 (2.25%) **NIFTY:** 18,053.40 ▲ 382.95 (2.17%) **NIKKEI:** 27,736.47 ▲ 70.49 **HANG SENG:** 22,502.31 ▲ 462.76 **FTSE:** 7,543.37 ▲ 5.47 **DAX:** 14,451.89 ▲ 5.41

International market data till 1900 IST

## SECTOR WATCH VIRTUAL CURRENCY

### Crypto-drug trade connect: Govt turns to tech for a leg up

**PRANAV MUKUL**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

IN AN attempt to take a lead on preventing use of cryptocurrencies for drug trafficking and arms smuggling, the government is taking several steps, including hiring of technical experts to assist in intelligence collection and investigation, setting up of e-surveillance and monitoring systems, training field officers on cyber and forensic technologies and coordination with foreign drug law enforcement agencies.

The information was provided by Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Choudhary in Lok Sabha in a written reply to a question.

Choudhary also informed Parliament that so far, the Narcotics Control Bureau and Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs have unearthed the payment of approximately Rs 2.2 crore through cryptocurrencies in 11 cases linked to drug trafficking.

The Reserve Bank of

India has flagged its concerns regarding private cryptocurrencies like bitcoin, ether, etc to the government, saying legitimising these currencies could impact the financial stability of the country, in addition to being used for illegal activities such as money-laundering, terror financing, etc.

Separately, in response to a different question Choudhary noted: "The technologies related to Metaverse/Web 3.0 are still evolving. The Government is cognizant of emergence of new technologies and rapid proliferation of emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, Drone, Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality, Metaverse, Web 3.0 etc. The Information Technology Act, 2000 covers the technology space. The Government of India has worked out national strategy on the emerging areas especially National Strategy on Artificial Intelligence and National Strategy on Blockchain".

## 'REGULATORY CHANGES OVER PAST 3 YEARS HAVE REDUCED MERGER BARRIERS'

# Harmonisation of bank-NBFC rules enabled merger: Parekh

**KHUSHBOONARAYAN & GEORGE MATHEW**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

HDFC CHAIRMAN Deepak Parekh on Monday said various regulations for banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) have been harmonised over the last few years, thereby enabling the potential merger of HDFC Ltd with HDFC Bank.

"Regulatory changes over the past three years have reduced barriers for merger," Parekh said. "NPA classification is same for NBFCs and banks. The upper layer of NBFCs will be equivalent to banks. The regulatory arbitrage has reduced," he said.

"The merger makes the mortgage offering of the combined entity even more competitive," Parekh said. "The funding challenge will be minimised with the merger of the two entities."

Parekh said that the merger of mortgage firm HDFC with HDFC Bank will not only strengthen the entity against its competitors but also make its offerings more competitive. Speaking at a press conference following the announcement, he said that post the merger, HDFC Bank will no longer have any promoters and that all the shares



**DEEPAK PAREKH**  
Chairman, HDFC

File

will be with the public. Parekh said the move will also benefit the lower cost of funds to be available to the mortgage business.

"Larger balance sheet and capital base will enable larger ticket loans, including infrastructure loans, that is the urgent requirement of the country," Parekh added. He said the HDFC-HDFC Bank merger will mitigate single product risk, enhance the diversity of assets of the combined entity. The combined entity will be in a position to offer mortgage products seamlessly vs current assignment route.

He said the process will take 12-18 months because of numerous approvals.

Ruling out his presence on the

board of the combined entity, Parekh said, "The RBI doesn't allow over 75-year-old officials to be on the board. I have crossed that age. Keki Mistry (HDFC Ltd Vice Chairman and CEO) will have a year or year-and-a-half, so he has time and he can be a director on board. Keki Mistry does not wish to be a full time executive but can be on the board."

Sashi Jagdishan, CEO & MD, HDFC Bank, said, "I acknowledge that 6-7 years ago we did not see the value on a combined basis. The fastest-growing engine for the bank is micro-segment which qualifies for the priority sector. The interest rate regime has come down and there is no more a drag on reserve requirements."

On the rationale behind the merger, he said the interest regime has come down dramatically from a range of 6-7 per cent to 3-4 per cent. As such, the drag on the SLR and CRR is no more a drag. The government security yields are around 6 per cent and the cost of funds is 3-4 per cent, so it is still a positive drag. According to Atanu Chakraborty, chairman of HDFC Bank, the combined entity, which will now have loans across mortgages, retail, large corporates and small businesses, will be able to withstand economic cycles.

## What lies ahead for shareholders

**GEORGE MATHEW & SANDEEP SINGH**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

THE MERGER of HDFC and HDFC Bank is expected to shake up the banking segment. The combined entity with a market capitalisation of Rs 14 lakh crore is likely to benefit both the shareholders and customers at a time when the Covid-hit economy is making a recovery.

**EXPLAINED**

### Why the merger now?

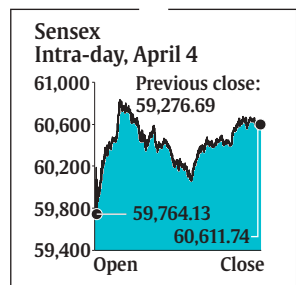
While the rumours of merger of HDFC and HDFC Bank have been going for years, people close to the development say that there were three key factors that made it an opportune time to go ahead with the merger. If prevailing low interest rate environment was supportive, a decline in CRR and SLR requirement from 27 per cent to 22 per cent and high liquidity in the system also made sense to go

ahead with it. A source said one additional factor that pushed everyone at HDFC to go for the merger was the succession issue as key leadership at HDFC was closing 70 now, and they thought that merger with HDFC Bank will bring out the best of synergy benefits for HDFC Ltd.

### What does it mean for shareholders?

As part of the merger, 42 shares of HDFC Bank would be given for every 25 shares of HDFC. "The shareholders of both entities stand to benefit substantially as already reflected by the sharp up-moves in their stock. For shareholders, this is far better than a buyback at higher prices. This mega-merger will correct the recent underperformance of the HDFC twins. The stock prices are likely to remain firm even after this morning's sharp spike," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services. *Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)*

## HDFC merger pushes Sensex above 60K



**Mumbai:** Domestic stock markets on Monday rallied by 2.25 per cent as the mega merger of HDFC Ltd and HDFC Bank buoyed sentiment. The Sensex crossed 60,000 and shot up 1,335 points to close at 60,611.74 and the Nifty 50 jumped 383 points to 18,053.4.

HDFC Bank shares jumped by 9.97 per cent at Rs 1,656.465. HDFC Ltd vaulted by 9.30 per cent to Rs 2,678.90 on the BSE. The HDFC-HDFC Bank merger announcement boosted the investor sentiment with investors stepping up purchases, said an analyst.

The Sensex first closed above the 60,000 level on September 24, 2021. The rupee on Monday gained 19 paise at 75.55 against the US dollar. "The upcoming focus of the market will be on earnings reports and the RBI meeting," said Vinod Nair, head-research, Geojit Financial Services.

Oil jumped about 2 per cent as mounting civilian deaths in Ukraine increased pressure on European nations to impose sanctions on Russia's energy sector. Brent was up \$1.94, or 1.9 per cent, to \$106.33 by 1:10 pm ET. **ENS**

## USTR: Goyal strong advocate for Indian trade policy

**New Delhi:** United States Trade Representative Katherine Tai has referred to Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal as "a charismatic and strong advocate for India's trade policies" in a US Senate hearing on Washington's trade policy.

"...Minister Goyal, who is a very, very charismatic... and also a very strong advocate for his country's policies, some of which I think we will be able to strategically align with and some of which will and have proven to continue to be challenging for us," Tai said in response to a question by US senator Steve Daines (Republican, Montana) on engagement between India and the US to allow greater market access for American agricultural goods including pulses. Daines also said that the US should consider entering formal trade negotiations with India, noting that "it's clear that in the coming years India's going to play an even larger role in the region." **ENS**

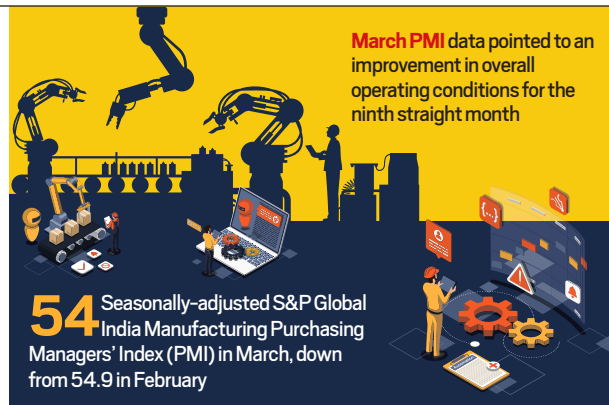
## 'Manufacturing PMI falls in Mar on lower orders'

*Manufacturing activities eased in March on softer rise in new orders and output, as per S&P Global India survey*

**Weakest rate** of growth in terms of production and sales since September 2021

Source: S&P Global India/PTI

**A print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction in PMI parlance**



## CCI orders probe into Swiggy, Zomato over 'platform neutrality'

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

ZOMATO AND Swiggy are set to face an investigation by the antitrust regulator over platform neutrality concerns raised by the National Restaurant Association of India (NRAI).

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has noted that downstream commercial interest of Swiggy and Zomato through private labels and cloud kitchens may affect platform neutrality and required detailed examination.

### The CCI's observations

That the issue raised a conflict of interest. "...the Commission is of the view that prima facie a conflict of interest situation has arisen in the present case, both with regard to Swiggy as well as Zomato, because of the presence of commercial



**Delivery executives in Mumbai.** File

cial interest in the downstream market, which may come in the way of them acting as neutral platforms," the CCI said, directing its investigative arm to submit an investigation report in 60 days. Zomato declined to comment on the order while Bundl Technologies, which operates Swiggy, did not respond to emailed requests for comment at the time of publishing.

The NRAI had alleged that Zomato had used consumer data

to build cloud kitchens and offered facilities to certain brands for additional fees or rental commissions, often guaranteeing minimum revenues to such brands.

### Payments and commissions

However in a setback to the NRAI, the CCI said that allegations of delayed payments and high commissions charged by platforms to restaurant partners prima facie "do not seem to have an effect on competition in the facts and circumstances of the present case."

The Commission also said that complainants had not been able to make out a case that bundling of restaurant listing and food delivery services had an appreciable adverse effect on competition.

The CCI had released a market study on e-commerce in 2020 which also analysed competition dynamics in the online food delivery space.

## Musk holds 9.2% stake in Twitter

### Becomes largest shareholder

**REUTERS**  
BENGALURU, APRIL 4

TESLA CHIEF Executive Elon Musk revealed a 9.2 per cent stake in Twitter, worth nearly \$3 billion, making him the micro-blogging site's largest shareholder and triggering



**Tesla CEO Elon Musk.** Reuters file

gering a more than 25 per cent rise in the company's shares. Musk's move comes close on

the heels of his tweet that he was giving a "serious thought" to building a new social media platform, while questioning Twitter's commitment to free speech.

Of late, he has been critical of the social media platform and its policies, and recently ran a Twitter poll asking users if they believed the platform adheres to the principle of free speech, to which over 70 per cent voted "no". A regulatory filing on Monday

showed that Musk owns 73.5 million Twitter shares, which are held by the Elon Musk Revocable Trust, of which he is the sole trustee.

Twitter was the target of activist investor Elliott Management Corp in 2020, when the hedge fund argued its then-boss and co-founder, Jack Dorsey, was paying too little attention to Twitter while also running Square. Dorsey, who owns a more than 2 per cent stake in Twitter, stepped down last year.

## Insurers raise premium: Group health, cyber cover now 40% to 100% costlier

**GEORGE MATHEW**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

THE NEW financial year of 2022-23 has seen a sharp rise in renewals of insurance premiums across categories with group health policy costs rising by up to 40 per cent and cyber coverage seeing an 80-100 per cent jump.

Reinsurers led by GIC Re and general insurers led by New India Assurance (NIA) have hiked their premiums by up to 20-30 per cent in certain segments — other than health and cyber — depending on the group and customers.

The recent developments in the Indian insurance industry, which is expected to reach Rs 2.25 trillion in 2021-22, indicate there have been large premium hikes in aviation, marine, group health and liability business including cyber cover, insurers said.

"We are putting our pricing ap-



**Civil hospital, Asarwa. Group health policy costs have risen by up to 40%.** File

proach on a more sound technical basis and have tried pricing correction wherever we feel it is warranted," said Divesh Srivastava, CMD, GIC Re. According to Supriya Rath, Wholetime Director, Anand Rath Insurance Brokers, the reinsurance premium for cyber has gone up by 80 per cent to 100 per cent and the fast-rising demand for cyber insurance is met with the broker's vast network of reinsurers in Asia and across the globe.

While the property line of business has seen some amount of stability in terms of pricing, the advantages have been largely neutralised by a cut-throat competition among the re-insurers to grab the huge SME business. "We have seen a price increase of 40 per cent in our group health portfolio due to higher claims because of Covid-19 pandemic," said Vinay Sohani, CEO & MD, Gallagher Insurance Brokers, Indian subsidiary of US-based Arthur J. Gallagher & Co.

GIC Re has the first right of refusal and commands over 60 per cent of the market share in the Indian reinsurance market which had a size of over Rs 44,000 crore in 2020-21. The market has evolved to become far more segmented and sub-segmented and any broad-brush impact is increasingly difficult to see, said an official.

The aviation class is presently facing uncertainty due to major claims on leased aircraft and this

will certainly impact the aviation class. However, market-wide impact is not expected to be significant, Srivastava said.

Globally, there is a churn following record level catastrophe losses during the last three-four years and the situation was exacerbated by the pandemic. It is expected that the premium hardening witnessed during the last couple of years will sustain for at least for some time, Srivastava said.

The April market continued to signal a hardening stance in general across property engineering and motor third party for the markets by reinsurers, said a senior official of a foreign reinsurance branch. "However, capacity is generally available and absence of substantial losses in India point to a flat to a moderately higher renewal in non-proportional on average with significant variance between accounts," the official said. *Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)*

## BRIEFLY

### FEL dirs resign

**New Delhi:** Future Enterprises (FEL) said independent directors Anand Chandrasekaran and Malini Chopra have resigned from its board. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court asked Future and Amazon to urge Delhi HC to hear Amazon's petitions.

### Fuel prices rise

**New Delhi:** Petrol, diesel prices rose by 40p a litre. **PTI**

### GST, states

**New Delhi:** Cesses on a few demerit and high-value goods meant for raising proceeds to compensate states for GST revenue shortfall will have to stay till FY26, the Centre told Parliament. **FE**

## GREEN HYDROGEN

### IOC, ReNew, L&T to form JV

**New Delhi:** Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Larsen & Toubro (L&T), and ReNew Power (ReNew) have signed a binding term sheet for the formation of a joint venture (JV) to develop the green hydrogen sector in India.

The JV will aim to supply green hydrogen at an "industrial scale". Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said India can become a hub for green hydrogen as the country has an inherent advantage in the form

of abundant renewable energy. "The Indian Oil-L&T-ReNew JV will focus on developing Green Hydrogen projects in a time-bound manner to supply Green Hydrogen at an industrial scale," said S N Subrahmanyam, CEO and MD, L&T, adding the infrastructure expertise of L&T, the R&D capacity of IOC, and the renewable energy expertise of ReNew would make the partnership "a significant step" in output of green hydrogen. **ENS**

## DRIVEN BY RECORD RISE IN IMPORTS IN FY22

### Trade deficit at new high

**New Delhi:** The country's imports rose to a record high of \$610.2 billion in FY22, driven by a sharp rise in the value of crude oil, coal, gold and electronics imports, according to data released by the Commerce and Industry Ministry on Monday.

High imports led to India posting a record-high trade deficit of \$192.4 billion, despite achieving record high exports of \$417.8 billion in the fiscal. March also saw

India export merchandise worth over \$40 billion for the first time. Merchandise exports grew by 43.2 per cent compared to the year ago period but imports rose by 54.7 per cent year-on-year.

Imports of crude oil hit \$160.7 billion in the fiscal, rising 94.3 per cent compared to the year ago period, due to significantly higher crude oil prices. Coal imports saw a similar jump of 93.7 per cent due to higher coal prices. **ENS**

## Sebi forms panel to strengthen governance of stock exchanges

**New Delhi:** Sebi on Monday constituted a committee for reviewing and making recommendations for further strengthening of governance norms at stock exchange and other market infrastructure institutions (MIs).

The development comes in the backdrop of alleged corporate governance lapses at NSE. The panel will be chaired by G Mahalingam, former whole-time member of Sebi, said a statement.

The other members are — MD and CEOs of stock exchanges NSE and BSE, and depositories — NSDL and CDSL; J N Gupta, MD of Stakeholders Empowerment Services; Aarti Nihalani, partner, Oliver Wyman; Sandip Bhagat, partner, S&R Associates; and Uttam Bagri, former chairman, BSE Brokers Forum. **PTI**

DELHI JAL BOARD: GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI					
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (SDW) NW					
CORONATION PILLAR DELHI - 110009					
E-mail ID:- <a href="mailto:nstp.djb@gmail.com">nstp.djb@gmail.com</a> , Phone No 011-27602302					
SHORT PRESS NOTICE INVITING TENDER NO: 26 (2021-22)					
S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Date of release of tender in E-procurement solution	Last date/time for receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Providing & Laying of 450 mm dia MS rising main in parallel of existing 600 mm dia from DD 6 lift pump house to inlet of STP Narela (R&I-inlet)	3877315/-	77600/-	02.04.2022 Tender ID No. is 2022_DJB_220072_1	08.04.2022 at 1.30 PM
NIT along with all terms & conditions is available on web site <a href="https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in">https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in</a>					
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 11(2022-23)					Sd/- (Er. Ram Manohar) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW) VII
"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"					

DELHI JAL BOARD					
OFFICE OF THE ADDL. CE (M)-08					
OHT BERIWALA BAGH, SUBHASH NAGAR					
NEW DELHI- 110064					
PRESS NOTICE TENDER NO. 68/ EE (T)-M-8/(2021-22)					
S. No.	Name of Work	Amount Put to Tender	T/ Fee	E/Money	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1	Providing house service sewer connection from nearest DJB manhole to individual house in Bakkarwala RSC (Loknagay Puram) in Vikas Puri AC-31 Under EE (M)317. Tender ID: 2022_DJB_220013_1	Rs. 2,62,29,875/-	Rs. 1500/-	Rs. 5,25,000/-	20.04.2022 up to 3.00 PM
Can view this particular statement in detail <a href="https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in">https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in</a>					
ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V. 09(2022-23)					Sd/- (PRADEEP GARG) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (T) M-8
"STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygiene"					



## TOP OF THE WORLD



Carrie Lam will complete her term on June 30. AP file

## CHINA

## Hong Kong leader Lam won't seek new term

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam said on Monday she wouldn't seek a second term after a rocky five years marked by huge protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed dissent and most recently a Covid-19 wave that overwhelmed the health system. Her successor will be picked in May, with the city's hard-line security chief during the 2019 protests seen as a likely choice. "I will complete my five-year term as chief executive on the 30th of June this year, and I will also call an end to my 42 years of public service," Lam said at a news conference. The 64-year-old career civil servant said she plans to spend more time with her family, which is her "sole consideration." **AP**

## US

## Street in NY named after Hindu temple

**New York:** In a significant moment for the Hindu community in the US, a street outside a renowned and prominent temple has been named the 'Ganesh Temple Street'. Established in 1977, The Hindu Temple Society of North America Sri Maha Vallabha Ganapati Devasthanam, popularly known as the Ganesh Temple, is regarded as the first and oldest Hindu Temple in North America. The temple is situated in Flushing, Queens County. **PTI**

## INDONESIA

## Teacher gets death penalty for raping 13 girls

**Jakarta:** An Indonesian court handed down a death sentence on Monday to a teacher for raping 13 girls at an Islamic school, upholding an appeal by prosecutors for the death penalty after he had initially received a sentence of life in prison. After he was sentenced to life in jail by a court in the city of Bandung in February, prosecutors who had called for the death penalty filed an appeal. The case of teacher Herry Wirawan has shocked Indonesia and shone a spotlight on the need to protect children from sexual violence in the country's religious boarding schools. **REUTERS**

## 410 CIVILIAN BODIES FOUND

in towns around Kyiv, says Ukraine

## ZELENSKY VISITS BUCHA,

calls killings war crimes, genocide

## BIDEN SLAMS PUTIN,

calls him to face war crime trial

## Global outcry over civilian bodies in streets of Bucha



Vasily, 55, walks past the body of a relative, who according to him was killed by Russian Army soldiers, in Bucha, in Kyiv region, Ukraine, on April 2. Reuters

## AP &amp; NYT

BUCHA, APRIL 4

MOSCOW FACED global revulsion and accusations of war crimes Monday after the Russian pullout from the outskirts of Kyiv revealed streets strewn with corpses of what appeared to be civilians, some of whom had seemingly been killed at close range.

The grisly images of battered bodies out in the open or in hastily dug graves led to calls for tougher sanctions against the Kremlin, namely a cutoff of fuel imports from Russia. Germany reacted by expelling 40 Russian diplomats, and Lithuania threw out its Russian ambassador.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy left the capital, Kyiv, for his first reported trip since the war began nearly six weeks ago to see for himself what he called the "genocide" and "war crimes" in the town of Bucha. "Dead people have been

## Ukraine denied NATO seat

**Brussels:** On the 14th anniversary of the 2008 NATO summit in Bucharest, Romania, where, after a major internal debate, NATO promised membership in the alliance to Georgia and Ukraine but without specifying when. In a late-night compromise, all NATO member states agreed that the two countries should not be offered a membership action plan, but were promised membership at some point in the future. **NYT**

found in barrels, basements, strangled, tortured," said Zelenskyy, who again called on Russia to move quickly to negotiate an end to the war. European leaders and the UN

human rights chief condemned the bloodshed, some of them also branding it genocide, and US President Joe Biden said Russian President Vladimir Putin should face a war crimes trial. "This guy is brutal, and what's happening in Bucha is outrageous," said Biden.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov dismissed the scenes outside Kyiv as a "stage-managed anti-Russian provocation." Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said the images contained "signs of video forgery and various fakes."

Ukrainian officials said the bodies of 410 civilians were found in towns around Kyiv that were recaptured from Russian forces in recent days.

French President Emmanuel Macron said there is "clear evidence of war crimes" in Bucha. France's foreign ministry said it would expel several Russian diplomats stationed in France, saying that their "activities are contrary to our security interests."

## PROTESTS OUTSIDE MAHINDA RAJAPAKSA'S HOME

## Gotabaya drops brother as FM, Opp rejects 'unity govt' call

## AGENCIES

COLOMBO, APRIL 4

SRI LANKAN President Gotabaya Rajapaksa dropped his brother Basil Rajapaksa as finance minister on Monday after disbanding the government and calling for a unity administration, as protests over the country's economic crisis focused on the role of the ruling family.

All 26 Cabinet ministers handed in their resignations Sunday night after thousands of people defied a countrywide state of emergency and curfew and joined street protests denouncing the government.



Protesters shouted slogans against Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and demanded he step down. Reuters

The President and his older brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, however, continued

to retain power. Two other brothers, Finance Minister Basil Rajapaksa and Irrigation

## Mass grave found: Many shot in head, their hands tied

## THE NEW YORK TIMES

BUCHA, APRIL 4

ON SUNDAY, Ukrainians in the town of Bucha, Ukraine, were still finding bodies in yards and on the roads amid mounting evidence of executions and indiscriminate killings of civilians by Russian forces before they retreated.

Serhiy Kaplishny is a coroner in Bucha who worked there from Feb. 24, the day of the invasion, until March 10, and then returned on Saturday.

After he left, the mass grave filled up with about 40 bodies, he said, of people who died during the Russian occupation.

## MEANWHILE

## 'HOTEL RWANDA' HERO'S 25-YR SENTENCE UPHELD



A Rwandan appeals court on Monday upheld a 25-year jail sentence for Paul Rusesabagina, who was portrayed in the movie "Hotel Rwanda" sheltering hundreds of people during the 1994 genocide, rejecting a bid to extend it to life in prison. Rusesabagina, 67, was convicted in September on eight terrorism charges related to the activities of an organisation opposed to President Paul Kagame's rule, and is being held in a Rwandan prison.

## NO-TRUST VOTE

## Pak SC to resume hearing today on Imran's move to block ouster

## SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 4

PAKISTAN'S SUPREME Court on Monday adjourned the hearing by a day but promised to give a "reasonable order" in the high-profile case about the rejection of a no-confidence motion by the deputy speaker of the National Assembly and the subsequent dissolution of Parliament.

A larger bench of the apex court - comprising Chief Justice Umar Ata Bandial, Justice Ijazul Ahsan, Justice Mazhar Alam Khan Miankhal, Justice Munib Akhtar and Justice Jamal Khan Mandokhail - took up the matter after Deputy Speaker Qasim Suri rejected the move to dislodge the Prime Minister by declaring the no-trust motion unworkable due to its link with a so-called foreign conspiracy.

Minutes later, President Arif Alvi dissolved the National Assembly on advice of Prime Minister Khan. President Alvi, the Supreme Court Bar Association and all political parties have been made respondents in the case.

Lawyers from the government and opposition presented their argument regarding the ruling by the deputy speaker.

During the arguments, the Chief Justice Bandial said that even if the speaker of the National Assembly cites Article 5 of the Constitution, the no-confidence motion cannot be rejected, *Geo News* reported.

If Khan gets a favourable ruling, elections will take place within 90 days. If the court rules against the deputy speaker, the Parliament will reconvene and hold the no-confidence vote against Khan, experts said.

During the proceedings, Justice Ahsan noted that there



Imran Khan lost his majority last week

## Pak's NSA resigns amid political crisis

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's National Security Advisor Moeed Yusuf resigned on Monday amid the ongoing political crisis. "Today, I leave satisfied and content, most of all because I know that the NSA's office and the NSD are vibrant institutions with an exceptional team that will continue to make Pakistan proud," he tweeted. **PTI**

## Ex-chief justice is new caretaker PM

**Islamabad:** Pakistan's former chief justice Gulzar Ahmed was on Monday nominated for the office of the caretaker Prime Minister by incumbent Imran Khan. Former information minister Fawad Chaudhry and senior PTI member said the premier made the decision after approval from the party's core committee. **PTI**

were violations in the proceedings of the no-trust resolution, Dawn reported.

Justice Bandial observed that a debate before voting on the no-confidence motion had been clearly mentioned in the law but didn't take place. "We can't pass a decision in the air," Justice Bandial said, adjourning the hearing till 12pm on Tuesday. He also rejected the opposition's plea for a full bench. **PTI**

## WIN FOR PRO-PUTIN LEADERS

## Hungary's Orban, Serbia's Vucic win crucial re-elections

## JUSTIN SPIKE &amp; JOVANA GEC

BUDAPEST, APRIL 4



Hungarian PM Viktor Orban and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic (right)

AFTER TWO nationalist European strongmen won overwhelming victories in elections on Sunday, one of the first foreign leaders to congratulate both was not from a neighbouring country or a regional ally. It was Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The parliamentary elections in Hungary and Serbia both brought landslide wins for the two countries' longtime, pro-Putin leaders — Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban and Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic.

Their victories on Sunday highlighted an underlying discord in attitudes among European nations toward the autocracies of Russia and China. As those powers seek to exert greater influence on the continent and beyond, Orban and

Vucic have aimed to emulate the autocratic touch through their own style of governance in the heart of Europe.

Orban's right-wing Fidesz party won more than 53% of the vote. In Serbia, Vucic cruised into an outright victory with the nearest opposition candidate trailing by some 40%. It was the first time that a presidential candidate won a second mandate without a runoff vote. "I managed something no one else has done before me," Vucic said in a victory speech. "It wasn't even close." **AP**

## US Senate panel moves toward vote on Jackson top court nomination

## ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON, APRIL 4

THE SENATE Judiciary Committee debated Ketanji Brown Jackson's nomination for Supreme Court justice on Monday with Democrats aiming to confirm her by the end of the week as the first Black woman on the high court.

The panel recessed at midday after one of the Democrats, California Sen. Alex Padilla, was delayed on a flight. The committee was expected to vote later in the day and deadlock on the nomination, 11-11. All of the Republicans on the panel are opposing Jackson, and the full Senate



Ketanji Brown Jackson

is evenly split 50-50.

If the committee deadlocks, Democrats are expected to immediately move to the Senate floor to "discharge" Jackson's nomination. While that won't delay the

President Joe Biden urged senators to support her in a tweet as the committee meeting began. "Judge Jackson will bring extraordinary qualifications, deep experience and intellect, and a rigorous judicial record to the Supreme Court," Biden tweeted.

## IN SECOND WEEK OF LOCKDOWN, SHANGHAI CONDUCTS MASS TESTING

## China sends in military to help with Shanghai Covid outbreak

## KEN MORITSUGU

BEIJING, APRIL 4

CHINA HAS sent more than 10,000 health workers from around the country to Shanghai, including 2,000 from the military, as it struggles to stamp out a rapidly spreading outbreak in its largest city under its zero-Covid strategy.

Shanghai was conducting a mass testing of its 25 million residents Monday as what was announced as a two-phase lockdown entered its second week. Most of eastern Shanghai, which was supposed to reopen last Friday, remained locked down along with western half of the city.

While many factories and financial companies have been al-

lowed to keep operating if they isolate their employees, concern was growing about the potential economic impact of an extended lockdown in China's financial capital, a major shipping and manufacturing center.

The highly contagious Omicron BA.2 form of the virus is testing China's ability to maintain its zero-Covid approach, which aims to stop outbreaks from spreading by isolating everyone who tests positive, whether they have symptoms or not. Shanghai has converted an exhibition hall and other facilities into massive isolation centers where people with mild or no symptoms are housed in a sea of beds separated by temporary partitions.

China on Monday reported



Medical workers conducted mass testing in Jingan district of western Shanghai on Monday. AP

more than 13,000 new cases nationwide in the previous 24 hours, of which nearly 12,000

were asymptomatic. About 9,000 of the cases were in Shanghai. The other large out-

break is in northeastern China's Jilin province, where new cases topped 3,500.

## EXPLAINED Public frustration

THE SURGE in state support for Shanghai comes as the city is straining under the demands of the country's "dynamic clearance" strategy, with some residents complaining of crowded and unsanitary central quarantine centres, as well as difficulties in securing food and medical help.

The Shanghai lockdown has sparked numerous complaints, from food shortages to limited staff and facilities at hastily constructed isolation sites. Some people who tested positive have remained at home for extended periods because of a shortage of isolation beds or transportation to take them to a center, the business news publication Caixin said.

Asked about the anxiety of parents separated from their children, Shanghai health commission official Wu Qianyu said Monday that they are required to be kept apart if the child tests positive and the parent tests negative, according to the *Paper*, an online news outlet. If both test positive, the parent is allowed to stay with the child at an isolation site, Wu was quoted as saying. **AP**



# A mother returns to fast lane

Jilna VM, the silver medalist in the 100 metres, has an 18-month-old daughter

ANDREW AMSAN  
CALICUT, APRIL 4

IN THE last eight months, sprinter Jilna VM who finished second behind India's fastest runner Dutee Chand in 100m at the Fed Cup on Sunday, has met her one and a half-year-old daughter Ishanvi just once. The 24-year-old Kerala athlete has been training in Kollam, about seven hours by road from her in-law's house in Palakkad where her child and husband stay. Despite it being just an overnight journey, Jilna stops herself from visiting home as it would disrupt her training.

"Since I am away for so long that during one of our calls she called me *chechi* (elder sister) instead of mother. It hurt. It feels terrible that I can't be with my own baby but if I go for even one day, my training pattern will derail. I have worked really hard to get back in shape after childbirth. I am doing sports for my passion and family so this is a cross I will have to bear," says Jilna, who is competing in her first competition post her daughter's birth.

At the 100m event, she finished behind national record holder Dutee Chand (11.49 seconds) with a personal best timing of 11.63s to take home the silver medal. She will be competing in the 200m heats today in the same group as star runner Priya Mohan.

Starting athletics in middle school, her long-standing dream of making it to the national camp was fulfilled in 2019. "I was in excellent shape and was ready to progress to the next level," she said. But little did she know that her life would change. During a regular medical checkup, Jilna and her husband Moorthy found out that she was expecting.

"We didn't know I was pregnant and it wasn't planned. I was so confused and worried because I wasn't prepared to have a child at this stage of my career. I discussed it with my husband and we decided to become parents," recalled the Kerala athlete.

During pregnancy and childbirth, Jilna lost eight kilograms and became extremely frail. "I was like a stick," she says. The break from sports also weakened her core muscles. The Seema Suraksha Bal (SSB) constable knew that regaining form would be an uphill task.

"After a few months post-child-birth, I returned to the ground for a light drill at my SSB centre. I could not even lift my knees to do basic marching. It was testing times for me," she says.

But during her trials, her husband Moorthy, a former footballer, stood by her like a rock. Jilna and Moorthy met when they were in high school and got married just two years back. Moorthy now works as a lecturer at a Polytechnic College in



Jilna clocked 11.63s in 100m, her first national level meet after becoming a mother.



Palakkad. "Without my husband, my return to sport would never have been possible. He has backed me to the hilt. My mother is no more but my mother-in-law treats me like her own child. Both my husband and his mother are the biggest pillars in my life," she says.

Since this was a comeback competition, Jilna is just testing the waters. But in the upcoming Inter-State Meet, she will target the qualifying standards set by AFI for the Asian and Commonwealth Games. Jilna will have to vastly improve her time as the qualifying standard set by the Athletics Federation of India for the Commonwealth Games is 11.31 seconds and for the Asian Games it is 11.36s.

## Jyoti unlucky again

JYOTHI YARRAJI, clocked a faster time than the 16-year-old meet record during the 100m hurdles heats. Her 13.09s was way faster than the two-decade-old national mark of 13.38m. But since her run was wind-assisted it won't be ratified. This is the second time the Andhra Pradesh runner has clocked timings better than the national record. In January 2020, she clocked 13.03s in the All India University Games but the timings were not ratified because the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) wasn't at the event. "I don't know how to take it. I will just try again," said the dejected hurdler after the competition.

-ENS

"I have found my rhythm now. I ran my personal best yesterday but there is still a lot to improve," she says. After the Fed Cup Jilna can afford a short break where she will visit her daughter briefly before heading back to Kollam to train for the next meet. "Whenever someone asks my daughter where I am, she points to a photo of mine which is a wallpaper on my husband's phone. I can't wait to go home and see her," she says.

# Why wind matters in athletics and how it cost jumper Aldrin the record

NIHAL KOSHIE  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 4

IN A span of two days, two athletes bettered national records at the Federation Cup but their names won't be in the record books. The wind played along and played spoilsport in turn. Long jumper Jeswin Aldrin's 8.37 metres and hurdler Jyothi Yarraji's 13.09 seconds were wind-assisted. However, both athletes were eligible for the gold medal. What constitutes a wind-assisted performance and why is wind speed taken into consideration in just six events?

Which are the events in which the wind gauge is used?

Wind velocity in athletics is measured in metres per second using a wind gauge or an anemometer. Events in which wind speed is recorded are the 100 metres, the 200 metres, the 110 metre hurdles, 100 metre hurdles, long jump and triple jump. Tailwind of up to 2 metres per second is deemed legal during these events. A mark set when the wind speed is over 2 metres per second is called wind-assisted like Aldrin's and Yarraji's. When Aldrin jumped 8.37 metres the wind speed was +4.1 m/s and when Yarraji sprinted over the hurdles it was +2.1 m/s.

What are the types of winds?

Headwind is denoted with a minus sign followed by the value (for example -3m/s) and a tailwind with a plus sign (example: +4.1 m/s). A headwind - running into it, though not helpful for athletes, is also calculated by the wind gauge but there is no limit on it. Tailwinds help athletes in the six events. Also the readings are rounded off. "Rounding off happens like this. If it is +1.51m/s it will be rounded off to +1.6m/s. But if it is +1.49ms it will become +1.5m/s," CK Valson, competition director of the Asian Athletics Association, said.

Why are only six events covered?

In the sprints, hurdles and the horizontal jumps athletes move in one single direction and hence tailwind can propel them to jump further or run faster. Wind speed does not matter in the 400 metres, which is held on an oval track. "In the 400 metres an athlete will come across wind from all directions as they are running on an oval track. If a runner gets assistance at one point in the 400 metres, at another point the athlete will face wind resistance," Valson said. For events from 400 metres and upwards, the wind speed is not a factor.

What about throws?

Wind speed is not considered as a factor in any of the throw events. "In the shot put wind speed has no impact as it is a shorter distance



A wind gauge at the ongoing Federation Cup in Calicut.

and it does not affect the hammer (throw)," Valson said. Both the shot put and the hammer are heavy and weigh 4 kilograms in women's competition and 7.26 kg for men. The discus and the javelin are thrown at an angle and distances can be adversely affected by both strong tailwinds and headwinds unlike the track events or the jumps where a tailwind helps an athlete. However too many variables and wind speeds operating at a height, make them unviable to consider.

What about combined events like heptathlon and decathlon?

Decathlon for men comprises 10 events of which the three 100 metres, 400 metres and 110 metre hurdles are held using a wind gauge. The heptathlon is seven events for women of which the 100 metre hurdles and the 200 metres need wind measurement. Wind speed is allowed upto +4m/s in an event but the average for the three events in decathlon and the two events in heptathlon should not be more than +2m/s. "In combined events they take the average. They add and divide. It should not exceed the 2 metres per second limit," Valson said.

Where is the wind gauge placed?

In the 100m, 200m, and both the hurdles it is placed 50 metres away from the finish line, not more than 2 metres away from the track and at the height of 1.22 metres. In the long jump and triple jump it is placed 20 metres before the take-off line. In the 100m and the hurdles, the wind velocity is measured when the starter's gun goes off. For 100 metres the wind gauge measures velocity for 10 seconds and for the hurdles for 13 seconds. In the 200 metres, the wind velocity is measured for 10 seconds once the first athlete enters the straight.

In the jumps, Valson said the measurements are taken for 5 seconds from the time

an athlete reaches the 40-metre mark on the runway. If an athlete's run-up is less than 40 metres, the wind gauge immediately starts measuring.

What level of assistance would Aldrin have possibly got because of wind speed?

It is difficult to give an accurate number but Valson, who was a member of World Athletics' international panel of officials, said in the long jump it could make a difference of 10 to 15 centimetres. Aldrin won gold with 8.37 metres but as it was wind-assisted it wasn't a national record. His second best jump was 8.26 metres, which equalled the previous national record. However, Murali Sreeshankar, the record holder, broke the mark with a legal (within permissible wind limits) 8.36 metres. Aldrin won the gold but Sreeshankar rewrote the national record and finished second.

Have wind gauges malfunctioned?

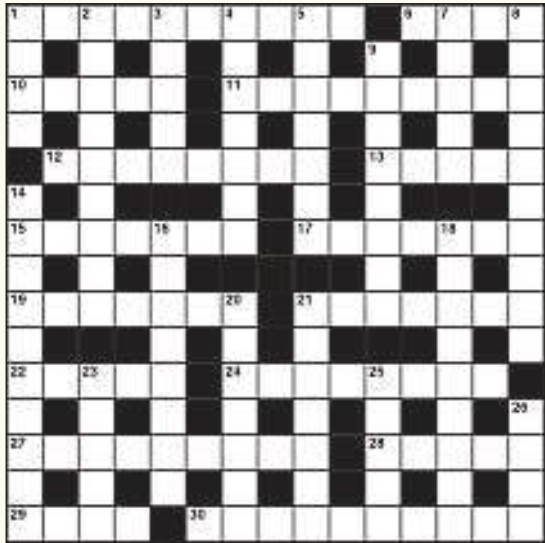
One of the most famous and controversial records has remained in the books till date

though a malfunction in the wind gauge came to light later. **FLORENCE GRIFFITH JOYNER'S** world record of 10.49 seconds in the women's 100 metres, set during the Quarterfinal 1 of the 1988 US Olympic trials,

had a wind speed of zero. However, an IAAF (now World Athletics) study in 1995 found that the wind gauge had malfunctioned. Based on analysis of wind speeds during heats and qualifiers (tailwinds of at least 2.7 m/s and as high as five metres per second were recorded), the study concluded that when Quarterfinal 1 was being held the wind speed was actually +5.0m/s and not zero. The IAAF didn't strike Griffith Joyner's time off and till date it remains unbroken. The next best is Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah's legal 10.54 seconds set last year.



## CROSSWORD 4706



### ACROSS

- 1 Its author must love to write it (6,4)
- 6 Mark shows unending alarm (4)
- 10 It's hard hit when ironworkers strike (5)
- 11 Nasty moment for a poor loser (3,6)
- 12 A dark girl's true bent perhaps (8)
- 13 Film actress in the dress circle (5)
- 15 Sign of mourning perhaps in supply company (7)
- 17 Is least disposed to leave the shore (3,4)
- 19 Needs to set points out (7)
- 21 Erring men stay for forgiveness (7)
- 22 Stay from December 1st to spring (5)
- 24 Getting capital support he trades in a new way (8)
- 27 First man to take up a craft (4,5)
- 28 Don't take time off (5)
- 29 Sediment of port possibly (4)
- 30 Traces idea that is wrong and roots it out (10)

### DOWN

- 1 Smile that shows support (4)
- 2 Stable chaps but apparently irritable ones (9)
- 3 A somewhat well-endowed lady (5)
- 4 Indeed it's 12½ cents charged to one's account (7)
- 5 Slip out of gear (7)
- 7 Love to be surrounded by unusually rich voices (5)
- 8 Dramatic broadcasts (5,5)
- 9 One who lays about the boat crew in build up (8)
- 14 Potential MPs outspoken over unsettled seat (10)
- 16 Bet a long striding gait is natural to it (8)
- 18 Help a worker find a mate? (9)
- 20 Pupil starts singing choral composition (7)
- 21 Made work play perhaps (7)
- 23 One means of support for an artist (5)
- 25 Memorial of old priest outwardly Roman Catholic (5)
- 26 Seven of them are oceans (4)

Solutions Crossword 4705: Across: 1 Flipper, 5 Packs, 8 Appliance, 9 Nee, 10 Site, 12 Measured, 14 Static, 15 Drover, 17 Activist, 18 Edge, 21 Ode, 22 Roughness, 24 Mused, 25 England. Down: 1 Flaps, 2 Imp, 3 Pain, 4 Render, 5 Pleasure, 6 Contrived, 7 Slender, 11 Traitress, 13 Silvered, 14 Sea room, 16 Assume, 19 Eased, 20 Thug, 23 Ena.

## JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.

Try to keep your soul \_\_\_\_ and quivering right up to \_\_\_\_ - George Sand (5,...,3,3)

GMAEO



BLODUY



LONER



LUGGER

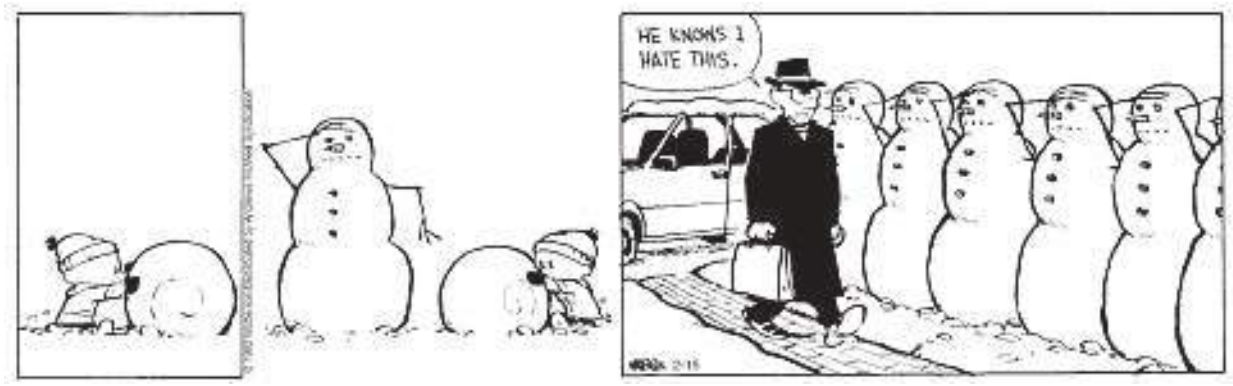


Answers: 1. Soul, 2. Quiver, 3. Right, 4. Up, 5. To, 6. George, 7. Sand, 8. 5, 9. 3, 10. 3.

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## SUDOKU 4795

Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius



## SOLUTION SUDOKU 4794



## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

Because today's conditions are so changeable, it is difficult to see whether your domestic and family affairs will reach a successful conclusion, or if they will require further effort. It's best, I'd say, to forget the big picture and press ahead with small details.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

One purpose of astrology is to anticipate, and so avoid approaching problems. When, over the next few days, arguments erupt over a failure to complete the most routine of chores, there is one simple solution: co-operate and compromise at every turn.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Rather than talk yet again about your complicated economic situation, it would be far better to focus on your deep-seated attitudes towards money. Why, you must ask, have you stuck so rigidly to old priorities? This is the question you have to answer before you can press ahead at home.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

That magical planet Mercury decrees that it's time to do some hard thinking, and, perhaps, to start to face up to some awkward decisions. It is perfectly acceptable to follow your intuition but you must also pay close attention to the facts; perhaps not the easiest of jobs.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

The balance is now tipping irrevocably towards secrecy in your emotional affairs. Rather than just going along with such impulses, why not ask yourself why you are so reluctant to communicate your feelings to others? The end result, as a matter of fact, could be to save some extra cash.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

You may have to wait until the end of the week before hearing the outcome of family arrangements. It is not because anyone is being tardy, but because it takes the Moon a long time to enter the appropriate sector of your chart.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

The Moon's intriguing relationships should keep you on your guard against unfair accusations or allegations. But please don't concern yourself unduly with anything said in the heat of the moment. Partners are just likely to be over-critical without any apparent reason.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

Only another Scorpio will understand just how much you have been through this year. Yet, you must realise that the planets are often tough in order to be kind, and the personal challenges you have encountered have made you a wiser, warmer person.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

You may still feel a little unnerved or unsettled, although I would honestly doubt whether you have anything substantial to worry about. Now is the moment to get your affairs back on an even keel. Or, at least, to start the process. Waste no time.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

There are two types of planetary aspects affecting all Capricorns at the moment; long-term formations which are difficult to pin down to a specific time, and short-term fluctuations which produce sudden changes of mood or plan. It is the latter which predominate today.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Whatever else happens, you can be sure that you are in a generally favourable period: the upsetting impact of Mars in personal relationships is countered by the confidence-boosting alignments of Mercury and Jupiter. The best advice comes from younger friends: chill out.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

By now you are thinking along totally new and original lines, and you should feel absolutely certain that things work out to your advantage. You must make sure that partners and colleagues understand your plans perfectly, otherwise you could miss out on their support.



BRIEFLY

India open account at Shotgun World Cup

Lima: India opened their account at the ISSF World Cup for shotgun as the trio of Kynan Chenai, Manavaditya Singh Rathore and Shapath Bharadwaj won the bronze medal in men's trap team event after beating Brazil via a shoot-off here. In the bronze-medal match, both teams were tied at 5-5 after five series of five shots each, before India clinched third place in the first shoot-off shot which Brazil missed.

Boxing: Monika stuns twice worlds medallist

New Delhi: Boxer Monika (48kg) upstaged two-time World Championship medallist Josie Gabuco of the Philippines to enter the semifinals along with two other Indians at the Thailand Open here on Monday. Ashish Kumar (81kg) and Manisha (57kg) are the two other Indian pugilists who also made their way into the last four with contrasting wins against their respective Thai opponents. The 26-year-old Monika, who hails from Rohtak, prevailed 4-1 over experienced campaigner Gabuco, who won gold and bronze medals at the World Championships in 2012 and 2008 respectively. She will now face Vietnam's Trinh Thi Diem Kieu, who received bye in the last round.

ITF reschedules India's Davis Cup tie

New Delhi: India will be able to field its 'A' team at both Davis Cup and the Asian Games with the ITF preponing the team tournament and ATF pushing back the tennis events at the regional multi-sport showpiece by eight days to avoid a clash in dates. The Indian Davis Cup team was recently drawn to meet Norway in an away contest, which was to be held either on September 16-17 or 17-18. The tennis events at the Asian Games were scheduled to be held from September 10-14, which meant that India could play only one event with its 'A' team since reaching Hangzhou in China from Davis Cup venue Norway was not practically possible.

Sindhu, Sen to lead Indian challenge

Suncheon: India's latest badminton sensation Lakshya Sen and double Olympic medallist PV Sindhu will lead the Indian campaign at the Korea Open Super 500 tournament starting here on Tuesday. With back-to-back finals at German Open and All England Championships, Sen is in the form of his life and will look to be third time lucky as he opens his campaign against world number 25 Lu Guang Zu of China.

Lahiri finishes 13th at Texas Open

San Antonio: Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri shot 2-under 70 in the final round to end with overall 8-under 280 and finish Tied-13th at the Valero Texas Open here. Lahiri hit 14 of 18 greens in regulation during his final round. His 13th place finish here comes after a memorable second place at The Players Championship last month. JJ Spaun won his maiden title and a passage to the Masters at 13 under.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

‘Mithali said that she was kept in the dark’

In his book ‘Not Just a Nightwatchman - My Innings in the BCCI’, former CoA head Vinod Rai writes about the intrigue surrounding the national women’s team and how they dealt with the Hardik Pandya-KL Rahul talk show controversy. Here are the extracts:

THE TWO players — Mithali (Raj) and Harmanpreet (Kaur) — had separate meetings with Rahul Johri (BCCI CEO) and Saba Karim (GM, cricket operations). (Ramesh) Powar, the coach, also met with these officials. Mithali and Powar were advised to report to the CoA with written statements... Mithali and Powar both submitted their version of the incidents that took place in the West Indies (T20 World Cup semifinal).

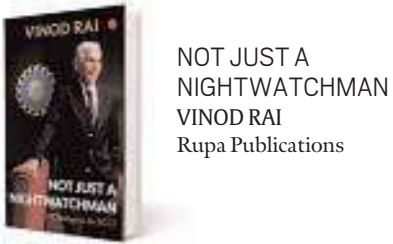
Mithali had expressed her deep anguish at how she had been treated by the coach. She felt that more than her being benched in the semi-final game, it was the way in which she was being treated by the coach that distressed her...

She (Mithali), however, made it clear that she had nothing against Harmanpreet, the T20 captain. Powar, on the other hand, wrote a long report, the bulk of which was devoted to the difficulty he was facing in handling Mithali. He maintained that it was due to her poor strike rate that the team management had decided to drop her for the semi-final game and retain the winning combination of the last match.

On 30 November, I was advised by Saba that the girls were keen to put the controversies to rest and close the issue. I admire Harmanpreet for reaching out to Saba and expressing a desire to have a frank talk with 'Mithali di' to ensure that no hard feelings remain, and all issues are ironed out. I was asked to sit with them. It was with a certain



Ramesh Powar had written a long report, the bulk of which was devoted to the difficulty in handling Mithali Raj, Vinod Rai has claimed in his book.



degree of trepidation that I agreed. The meeting was arranged in Delhi at a day's notice. The sincerity of both the players was evident from the fact that Harman drove six hours on a Sunday morning from her home in Moga to reach Delhi. Mithali, who was play-



ing a league match in Guntur, flew in that morning. We met and chatted for over three hours.

Harmanpreet, as the team captain, was clear that the decision had been collectively taken to play the winning combination. In this decision, the team selector and coach had been involved. She, of course, was not aware of when this news was conveyed to Mithali. On the other hand, Mithali felt that besides her exclusion not being justified, the manner in which it was conveyed to her had been most humiliating. She said that she had been kept in the dark about the decision and it was just before the two captains went for the toss that the coach had informed her.

Giants rise, prevent Sunrise

Lucknow bounce back after poor start as dodgy batting lets Hyderabad down

**SYNOPSIS:** Fifties from Deepak Hooda and KL Rahul revive LSG from 27 for 3, before their bowlers led by Avesh Khan suffocated Sunrisers in the chase.

ABHISHEK PUROHIT  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

LUCKNOW SUPER Giants held off Sunrisers Hyderabad by 12 runs to make it successive wins for the defending side in a night match in Mumbai after six unsuccessful attempts.

Washington bosses Powerplay

Sunrisers leaked 0 for 58 in the Powerplay to Rajasthan Royals in their first game in Pune. They used five overs of pace, and brought on Washington Sundar only in the fifth over, in which the off-spinner was taken for 18. It was to get worse for Washington; he conceded 47 in three overs as Sanju Samson punished him later whenever he erred a bit in length.

On Monday night, Kane Williamson brought on Washington in the second over itself, and gave him three on the trot in the Powerplay. Washington returned figures of 3-0-11-2; it helped that he had to bowl to two left-handers in Quinton de Kock and Evin Lewis, both of whom he dismissed in the space of four deliveries.

LSG managed just 32 for 3 during the field restrictions. However, the threat the right-handers still posed was evident in Washington's last over, the 17th, in which KL Rahul and Ayush Badoni slogged and swept him for 17 runs.

Hooda and Rahul revive LSG

Deepak Hooda scored 55 off 41 in LSG's debut game against Gujarat Titans. On a bigger outfield at the DY Patil Stadium, he revived his side again with 51 off 33 from a position of 48 for 3 after nine overs, in a partnership of 87 in 10.2 overs with his skipper KL Rahul.



Avesh Khan (2nd right) celebrates after dismissing Kane Williamson. PTI

The counter began in the 10th over, bowled by Umran Malik. The Jammu & Kashmir pacer had averaged 145kph in his first over for just three runs. When he switched ends, the LSG duo tweaked their approach too. Instead of trying to hit straighter and get pegged back by the express pace, they started using Umran's speed to go squarer. When he went shorter, they ramped him fine. Williamson realised that and moved third man close to the sightscreen, but Hooda's ramp was parried over by the fielder.

The square boundary at DY Patil is sizeable, but Hooda was timing it so well off Umran that he sent it a few rows back. He set up base just outside off-stump in an open stance, just like Hardik Pandya often uses. Umran tried to cramp him by angling it in but Hooda sprang into a narrower base, let the ball arrive and sent it soaring over deep backward square-leg. Thirty-six came off Umran's latter two overs.

Tripathi keeps Sunrisers afloat

With deft touches behind the wicket and his collection of pulls and sweeps, Rahul

Tripathi kept the chase going with 44 off 30. Williamson chose the wrong delivery - a slower one - from Avesh Khan to scoop and could not clear short fine leg. Without the guiding hand of Williamson, Sunrisers were prone to not even getting close in such pursuits.

But Tripathi was threatening to run away with it when Krunal Pandya, who usually fires it in, floated one up at 80kph; Tripathi couldn't get any distance on the slog-sweep and picked out deep midwicket.

Avesh, Tye close it out for LSG

Andrew Tye and Avesh combined to give only 25 in three overs, leaving Washington and Romario Shephered an improbable 16 to get off what proved to be an excellent last over from Jason Holder. Avesh got rid of Nicholas Pooran and Abdul Samad off successive deliveries in the 18th, finishing with 4-0-24-4. **BRIEF SCORES:** LSG 169 for 7 in 20 overs (KL Rahul 68 off 50 balls, Deepak Hooda 51 off 33 balls; Washington Sundar 2/28, Romario Shephard 2/42) bt SRH 157/9 (Rahul Tripathi 44 off 30 balls, Avesh Khan Khan 4/24; Jason Holder 3/34) by 12 runs

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER



Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Don't take at pace value

Every fast bowler worth his salt can vouch for one truism - you cannot teach pace. There have been many bowlers over the years who have turned into steady line-and-length seamers as they lost speed in search of consistency and accuracy.

Umran Malik has natural speed on his side, but the 22-year-old from Jammu and Kashmir will learn fast that pace doesn't always bring success, especially in the T20 format. After a decent first over which kept KL Rahul and Deepak Hooda honest, the youngster found that speed can also work against him. Malik tried to follow Hooda with a yorker when he made room, but the delivery turned into a full toss that found the off-side boundary. Then, Rahul showed his class when he ramped a back-of-length delivery, clocking over 150 kmph over where a slip would be.

Next ball was a length offering, hit over cover, before Hooda closed the over with a six over third man which, on an-



other day, could have resulted in a wicket. Another ramp just didn't stick in the hands of a leaping Bhuvneshwar Kumar on the rope.

Malik would be justified in scratching his head as he went for 20 despite not bowling a terrible over, kickstarting a Lucknow Super Giants innings that was going nowhere.

Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper Kane Williamson had to take his speedster out of the firing line, but the evening didn't improve for him when he returned in the 14th over, Hooda helping himself to two fours and a six, despite Malik not bowling too badly yet again.

Gabbed, gulped, then grabbed

Washington Sundar's appeal was animated. His frustration took him down on his knees. The off-spinner bowled a flatter one to Evin Lewis, which slid on with the angle. The batsman went for a sweep and once the ball missed the bottom edge or the gloves, it was a pretty close call for an LBW. On-field umpire Navdeep Singh negated the appeal, but Washington's conviction convinced his captain Kane Williamson to ask for a review.



It looked pretty straight and ball-tracking showed it would have clipped the bails. Lewis survived on the umpire's call on height. Washington couldn't believe it, he was on his knees again. Williamson cheered him up with a couple of hyperbolic claps. As it turned out, Washington trapped Lewis leg-before in his next over, this time the umpire's call going his way. Things get evened out in this sport.

Junior WC: Bichu shows promise as future custodian of India's hopes

MIHIR VASAVDA  
MUMBAI, APRIL 4

WHEN ROMEN Singh Kharibam heard about his youngest daughter's heroics during India's Under-21 World Cup match on Sunday, he had a rush of emotions unlike anything he had experienced before.

"I was in tears," Kharibam says. "Ek aankh mein khushi ka tha, ek dukh ka (in one eye, there were tears of joy; in the other, of sorrow)."

'Khushi', he says, because 'Binchu' - as they call her at home, but known as Bichu in the hockey world - had shown why she is seen as the next big prospect in Indian hockey. 'Dukh', because he wasn't able to watch her coming-of-age performance. "No one in the family has seen her play, actually. It's not affordable for the family to travel to watch her play even in India. And we are not that tech-savvy to watch the games on phone," Romen, 52, says.

Had he watched her play, Kharibam would have understood the buzz around the 21-year-old goalkeeper, and why she has been fast-tracked into the senior set-up.

Against Germany - a team ranked higher than India in the seniors and considered to be superior technically - Bichu's acrobatics between the posts, her ability to stay in the right position to cover goal-scoring angles, and the fearlessness to get her body behind Germany's fierce, cannonball-like shots ensured a 2-1 win for India and with that, a place in the quarterfinals.

It's tempting to label India's performance as a one-woman show but in truth, that wasn't how it played out. One of the traits of the senior Indian women's side, over the last year or so, has been that multiple players contribute to a win rather than just one stand-out performer, as it sometimes happened in the past. The juniors seem to be following in their footsteps.

The backbone - comprising vice-captain Ishika Chaudhary, Baljeet Kaur, Lalramghaki Marina and Akshata Dhekale - did its job by soaking in Germany's relentless pressure while skipper Salima Tete and senior India star Lalremisiami used their pace to provide thrust to India's attacks.

Yet, there were times on Sunday when it appeared to be one-versus-11, especially in



Bichu Devi pulled off nine saves during India's win over Germany on Sunday. HI

the closing stages of the match when Germany, in desperation to reduce a two-goal deficit, took their goalkeeper off for an extra outfield player.

Bichu made nine saves, each one seemingly better than the other. She, with the help

of the defenders, blunted eight German penalty corners and midway through the second quarter, displayed incredible agility to dive to her right, from a stationary position, and flung her stick to keep the ball out from a penalty stroke.

This ability of hers - to move swiftly - was one of the reasons she was made a goalkeeper a decade ago, just when she had joined the Sports Authority of India's centre as a trainee, Romen says.

Accidental star

Hockey wasn't Bichu's first choice. No one in her family played the sport - her father is a small-time farmer and elder twin brothers work as drivers. Her village, Charangpat in Manipur's Thoubal district, Romen adds, is full of farmers like him while most others aspire to join the security forces. There are some who play hockey but no one had progressed even to the state level.

Bichu, who made her senior India debut earlier this year, got noticed for her athletic abilities during the Yaoshang festival, the week-long affair celebrated along with Holi. "For five-six days during that week, multiple

sports events are held and Binchu always took part in distance races, which she often won," Romen says.

The secretary of a local community club suggested that Bichu, who was in Class 7 at the time, join the SAI Centre, where she could put her ability to better use. Having seen how sport has been a tool to lift people out of poverty, Romen took to the idea instantly. But still, hockey wasn't anywhere on their radar.

"We initially thought about boxing," Romen says, adding that the community club officials, too, were convinced that it would be a logical sport for her to pursue. A straightforward choice, it might look like, given the popularity of the sport in Manipur, the accessibility and the agility Bichu had shown. But Romen says it had nothing to do with these factors.

"I wanted her to take up an individual sport, where her fate did not depend on anyone else," Romen says. "In team sports, even if you play a perfect game, there's a chance you might still pay the price of a mistake someone else can make."

The technical staff at SAI felt otherwise.

Bichu, her father says, got selected on the basis of her endurance ("she outlasted other prospective trainees when they were asked to run during their selection trials") and the coaches felt her agility and explosiveness would come in handy as a goalkeeper in hockey.

Romen let the coaches do their thing, not interfering once with sporting decisions. His role, he was aware, was to create a support system that wouldn't hinder Bichu's progress. So, he started doing odd jobs to supplement his meagre income from farming.

"There were times when I even had to borrow money to courier documents after she moved to an academy in Chandigarh," Romen says. "It takes a lot to raise an athlete. Not just financial commitment but also patience, especially when you have very little income and have to take care of four children."

Romen doesn't quite know how the family pulled it off. "But it's all worthwhile. She is the only reason we are living our life with dignity," Romen says. "I only wish I could watch her play."