(₹12 IN NORTH EAST STATES & ANDAMAN)



A hero with a hundred faces

Kamal Haasan, after nearly two decades of numerous disappointments, returns with the success of Vikram

**PAGES 11, 12, 13** 

#### **EXPRESS NETWORK**



**NIA GETS 10-DAY CUSTODY OF UDAIPUR ACCUSED** 

#### 14 days judicial custody for Zubair, FCRA violation among 3 new charges

#### **ANAND MOHAN J** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

NEWS co-founder Mohammad Zubair, arrested on the charge of hurting religious sentiments following a complaint over a 2018 tweet, was sent to judicial custody Saturday for

14 days. The prosecutor opposed his bail application, saying an in-

vestigation was underway into

donations he allegedly received from abroad including Pakistan. The Delhi Police, which produced Zubair before Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Snigdha Savaria at the end of his four-day police custody, said three new sections had been added to the FIR against him: IPC 201 (causing disappearance of evidence of offence, or giving false information to screen offender), IPC 120 (B) (punishment of criminal conspir-

Police did not seek extension of his custody and instead asked that he be sent to 14-day judicial custody. The prosecution said it may seek Zubair's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

acy) and section 35 of the Foreign

Contribution (Regulation) Act

#### **VETERINARY DOCTOR HELD FOR 'INSTIGATING' ATTACK: SEVEN ARRESTED SO FAR**

## NIA to probe Amravati killing, police say 'mastermind' among 2 new arrests

common link, say he planned killing

HOUSE SESSION TODAY

Saturday, after they returned from Goa. Amit Chakravarty

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU & DEEPTIMANTIWARY AMRAVATI, NEW DELHI, JULY 2

WITH INVESTIGATIONS pointing to similarities between the two killings in Udaipur and Amravati — like the tailor in Rajasthan, the chemist in Maharashtra is also suspected to have been targeted for his social media post supporting BJP's Nupur Sharma — the Union the alleged mastermind, was arrested on Saturday

Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Saturday handed over the Amravati case to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

As reported by The Indian CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Police identify convenor of an NGO as 4 of those held worked with NGO run by prime accused

JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU AMRAVATI, JULY 2

POLICE HAVE identified Irfan Khan, 35, who was arrested from Nagpur on Saturday, as the "mastermind" behind the killing of the chemist in Amravati last month.

According to police, Irfan is the common link between at least four of the five arrested earlier. While Irfan is the convenor of a

registered NGO that runs a helpline called "Rahebar" – its Facebook page says it works to rehabilitate the differently-abled four others who have been arrested, including the alleged killer also volunteered with the NGO.

The four have been identified as Muddassir Shaikh, 22; Abdul Taufig Taslim, 24; Shahrukh Khan, 25: and Shoaib Khan, 22. Shoaib is alleged to have stabbed CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### **EXPRESS NETWORK**

**TOLL RISES TO 29 IN** MANIPUR LANDSLIDE, 34 MISSING

#### FCRA COMPOUNDABLE OFFENCES UP FROM 7 TO 12

## Parties, judges, media can get funds from kin abroad without prosecution fear

5 per cent penalty if govt is not informed within 90 days

#### **DEEPTIMANTIWARY** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

WITH THE Ministry of Home Affairs effecting changes in the Contribution Foreign (Regulation) Act (FCRA) and its rules through two gazette notifications Friday night, political parties, legislature members, election candidates, judges,

government servants, journalists and media houses among others -- all barred from receiving foreign contribution - will no longer be prosecuted if they receive foreign contribution from relatives abroad and fail to intimate the for some

THE TWEAKS in the FCRA rules will come as a relief to those barred under Section 3 of the Act from receiving foreign contribution. The changes also give organisations more time to inform the government about opening of bank accounts for utilisation of funds received.

government within 90 days. The amended rule makes this a compoundable offence, and the recipient will be required to pay 5% of the foreign contribution received -- earlier, such an offence would entail prosecution in a court of law. The new notifications have increased the number of compoundable offences under the Act from 7 to

12 and this is one of them. The other key changes are exemption from intimation to the government for contributions less than Rs 10 lakh - the earlier limit was Rs 1 lakh -- received from relatives abroad, and **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

SAYS RULING PARTY WANTS EVERY GOVT ACTION ENDORSED, OPP ITS CAUSES

### Forces trying to run down judiciary, we are answerable only to Constitution: CJI

Speaking in US, praises its inclusivity, says need it everywhere 'including in India'

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN G** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

HITTING OUT at "forces whose only aim is to run down the only independent organ" in the country, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said Saturday that the



Chief Justice of India NV Ramana in San Francisco

iudiciary is answerable only to the Constitution.

He said the party in power expects every action of the government to be endorsed by the judiciary while the Opposition wants the judiciary to advance its positions and causes

Speaking at a felicitation cer-

emony organised by the Association of Indian Americans in San Francisco, CJI Ramana said, "As we celebrate the 75th year of Independence this year and as our Republic turned 72, I must add here, with some sense of regret, that we still haven't **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

## Nadda sets tone for meet: BJP for people, Opp for their own families

SETTING THE tone for the BIP National Executive, which is meant to finalise strategies for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections, party president J P Nadda said Saturday that while the party works to empower the poor and believes in constructive politics, Opposition leaders empower only own families and are into "destructive politics".

Sources said the party's antidynasty push was laid out by



gural session of the National

speech which provided guidance to the discussions at the is mostly family-oriented, that

Maharashtra CM Eknath Shinde and other rebel Shiv Sena MLAs at the Mumbai airport on

SUNDAY STORY

AT T-JUNCTION

Uddhav Thackeray tried one way of running the Shiv Sena.

What went wrong for the party's 'moderate' face PAGE 8

National Executive, the national president, while talking about the constructive politics under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, reflected on the destruction Opposition parties hope to thrust on the people of the country. That the Opposition the Opposition that emanates

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### Kashmiri photojournalist stopped from flying abroad

Pulitzer winner



Sana Irshad Mattoo was going to Paris for a book launch

#### **BASHAARAT MASOOD** SRINAGAR, JULY 2

KASHMIRI PHOTOJOURNALIST and Pulitzer Prize winner Sana Irshad Mattoo was stopped by immigration officials at Delhi airport and prevented from travelling to France on Saturday.

Mattoo, who was on her way to Paris to attend a book launch and photography exhibition, said she was stopped by the officials without giving any reason, and told that she could not

"I was scheduled to travel from Delhi to Paris today for a book launch and photography exhibition as one of the 10 award winners of the Serendipity Arles grant 2020. Despite procuring a French visa, I was stopped at the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## minister Smriti Irani said: "In his **LIZ MATHEW**

Nadda in his address at the inau-

## PM Narendra Modi in Hyderabad on Saturday. PTI

Briefing the media about

Nadda's opening remarks, Union

from many a corrupt practice has time and again tried to ensure that policies and programmes of the government of

### IT audit firm linked to ex-Mumbai CP didn't red-flag NSE server breach: CBI

#### MOHAMED THAVER MUMBAI, JULY 2

THE CBI, which registered a case in 2018 in the NSE co-location scam, is probing how an audit company incorporated in 2001 by Sanjay Pandey, who last week retired as Commissioner of Police, Mumbai, did not red flag that the NSE servers were compromised.



Sanjay Pandey during a farewell event in Mumbai on Thursday. Ganesh Shirsekar



When the firm iSec Services Pvt Ltd was incorporated in service. He quit the directorship in May 2006, with his mother Santosh and son Armaan becoming directors in the

### sulting in windfall profits. March 2001, Pandey was not in

## travel abroad.

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

## Inflated travel rates, few rooms: Ahead of Qatar kickoff, football fans' options limited

## PAGE 1 ANCHOR

#### **MIHIR VASAVDA** MUMBAI, JULY 2

FOOTBALL FANS have a reputation of going to extreme lengths to support their teams. But, even by their standards, planning travel for this year's World Cup in Qatar has turned out to be an unprecedented adventure.

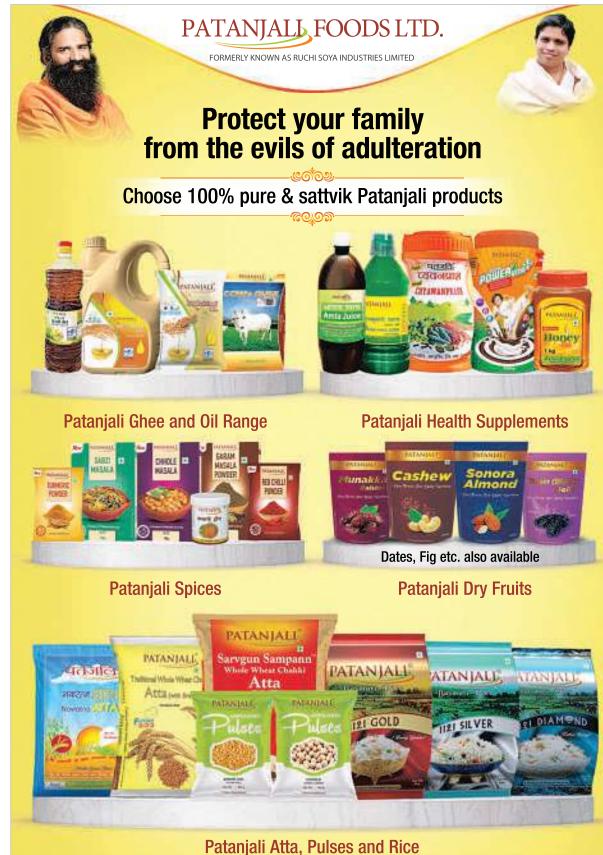
Flight rates that are two or three times more than usual, hotel rooms that can run into hun-



A stadium set to host World Cup matches in Doha. Travelling to the event is turning into a logistical nightmare for fans. Reuters

the prospect of making the UAE their base to make trips to-andfro between the two countries for matches - what has been projected as the "most accessible" World Cup is turning into a logistical nightmare for fans. Oatar's unique appeal as a host

nation - all eight stadiums are situated in and around Doha, the capital, within an hour of travel – has contributed to the sale of 1.8 million tickets as of June 29, with the final sales period commencing on July 5. And although India did not come remotely close to CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



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#### **FCRA**

increase in time limit for intimation of opening of bank accounts.

On the compoundable offences, the gazette notification said, "Offence punishable under sections 3, 11 and 35 of the Act read with rule 6 for failure to intimate about receipt of foreign contribution within the prescribed time limit" shall be compoundable with a penalty of "Five per cent of such foreign contribution received in a financial year".

Section 3 of the FCRA states: "No foreign contribution shall be accepted by any... candidate for election; correspondent, columnist, cartoonist, editor, owner, printer or publisher of a registered newspaper; Judge, Government servant or employee of any corporation or any other body controlled or owned by the Government; member of any Legislature; political party or office-bearer thereof; organisation of a political nature as may be specified under sub-section (1) of section 5 by the Central Government; association or company engaged in the production or broadcast of audio news or audio visual news or current affairs programmes through any electronic mode, or any other electronic form as defined in clause(r) of sub-section (1) of section 2 of the Information Technology Act, 2000 (21 of 2000) or any other mode of mass communication: correspondent or columnist, cartoonist, editor, owner of the association or company...' An official in the MHA said

these persons were allowed to receive contribution of up to Rs 1 lakh earlier but ran the risk of prosecution if they did not inform the government about amounts in excess of Rs 1 lakh within the stipulated time. The other key change is in Rule

6 of the Act. The words "one lakh rupees" have been replaced with "ten lakh rupees" and the words "thirty days" have been replaced by "three months".

Rule 6 deals with "Intimation of receiving foreign contribution from relatives" and the amendment will allow individuals to receive up to Rs 10 lakh from relatives abroad without intimating the government.

In case, the amount is more than Rs 10 lakh, the receiver will get three months, instead of one, to intimate the government.

The Ministry is constantly working to ease compliance burden on NGOs. These steps have been taken with the same objective. It will give them more room for compliance and even compound certain offences that were punishable earlier," an official of the MHA said.

In Rule 9, which deals with "application for obtaining 'registration' or 'prior permission' to receive foreign contribution", the government brought amendments that will now give NGOs 45 days, instead of 15 days under the earlier rule, to intimate the Union Home Secretary about one or more bank accounts opened for utilisation of foreign funds received.

The same extension of time for intimation on bank accounts has been offered to NGOs seeking prior permission for receipt of foreign funds.

In Rule 13, which deals with "declaration of receipt of foreign contribution", the government has deleted clause (b). The clause says: "A person receiving foreign contribution in a quarter of the financial year shall place details of foreign contribution received on its official website or on a website as specified by the central government within 15 days following the last day of the quarter in which it has been received clearly indicating details of donors, amount re-

ceived and date of receipt.' In Rule 17 A, which requires NGOs to intimate the Ministry within 15 days whenever there is change in an NGO's bank account, name, address, aims, objectives or key members, the deadline has

now been increased to 45 days. In Rule 20, amendments have been brought to ensure applications for revision of an order passed by the "competent authority" can be made to the Home Secretary in electronic form as well. Earlier it had to be made on plain paper. However, the Ministry will reserve the right to decide in what form the application needs to be made.

Among the offences made compoundable by the government are also those falling under Section 11 and 35 of the Act.

Section 11 bars individuals having definite cultural, economic, educational, religious and social programmes from accepting foreign contributions without registration. Section 35 stipulates a punishment of five years for anyone who helps a person, a political party or an organisation in getting foreign contribution in violation of the Act.

### FROM PAGE ONE

Both have been made compoundable with a fine of 5% of the foreign contribution received.

Offences under Section 17. Section 19 and Section 37 have been made compoundable with a fine of Rs 10,000 per bank account. Section 17 asks NGOs to open only one bank account for receipt of foreign contribution but allows them to open multiple bank accounts for utilisation. Section 19 asks NGOs to maintain an account of foreign funds received and utilised. The Act asks NGOs to intimate the government about opening of bank accounts within 45 days. Failure to do so has now been made compoundable.

Section 37 deals with punishment for FCRA violations where penalty has not been defined and stipulates it as one year of imprisonment.

Similarly, the offence of failure to intimate the government aboutchange in an NGO's bank accounts, name, address, aims, obiectives or key members within 45 days has been made compoundable with a fine of Rs 10.000.

Offences punishable under Section 19 for failure to maintain an account of foreign contribution received and utilised in a prescribed format and to be put up on a website in a prescribed time limit has also been made compoundable with a fine of Rs 10,000 for each offence.

#### Amravati killing

Express, Umesh Prahladrao Kolhe, a 54-year-old chemist, was killed in Maharashtra's Amravati district on June 21, allegedly for circulating a social media post supporting Nupur Sharma on WhatsApp.

While five persons were arrested earlier, police on Saturday confirmed the arrest of two more suspects - Irfan Khan, 35, the alleged mastermind who runs an NGO, and Yusuf Khan, 44, a veterinary doctor.

While Irfan was arrested from Nagpur on Saturday night, Yusuf was picked up from Amravati on Friday night.

Police said Irfan is the convenor of a registered NGO that runs a helpline called "Rahebar". The Facebook page of the NGO says that it works to "rehabilitate differently able(d) people from the underprivileged segment".

Confirming Irfan's arrest and identifying him as the "mastermind", Arti Singh, Police Commissioner, Amravati City, said, "We are checking his NGO's banking transactions.'

Police said at least four of the five arrested earlier were Irfan's friends, and volunteered with his NGO. Irfan is alleged to have planned the killing, assigned specific tasks to the suspects, and provided logistical support like vehicle and cash.

Yusuf, the veterinary doctor who has been arrested, is alleged to have acted as the "instigator". "He had put up a post on a WhatsApp group against Kolhe, (saying)that he(Kolhe)was circulating posts supporting Nupur Sharma. This provoked the accused against Kolhe, and they decided to kill him. So, Yusuf instigated the others," said a police officer. Yusuf has been sent to police custody till Iuly 4.

"The motive behind the murder was to seek revenge for the post made by him (Kolhe) in support of Nupur Sharma," said Deputy Commissioner of Police. Amravati, Vikram Sali.

"During investigations, we learnt that Kolhe had circulated a social media post supporting Nupur Sharma on WhatsApp. By mistake, he posted the message on a group with Muslim members who were also his customers. One of the arrested accused said this was an insult to the Prophet and hence he must die," a police source told The Indian Express on Friday.

In Delhi, sources said the NIA which is already probing the Udaipur killing will investigate if both the attacks were instigated by an outfit, and if there were any links with Pakistan.

"MHA has handed over the investigation of the case relating to the barbaric killing of Shri Umesh Kolhe in Amravati, Maharashtra, on 21st June to NIA. The conspiracy behind the killing, involvement of organisations and international linkages would be thoroughly investigated," Home Minister Amit Shah's office tweeted earlier in the day.

Kolhe was returning home on a scooter, between 10 pm and 10.30 pm, when he was killed. According to a complaint filed by his son, Sanket, 27, who was accompanying him on another scooter, "Two men on a motorcycle suddenly came in front of my father's scooter. They stopped my father's scooter and one of them stabbed him on the left side of his neck with a knife".

#### Worked in NGO

the chemist. The fifth person arrested earlier has been identified as Atib Rashid, 22.

Irfan is a resident of Kamela area, a chawl at Pathan Chowk, His neighbours said he was a welder earlier, but his business ran into

trouble during the pandemic. About seven years ago, he became "extremely religious" and took up social activities, they said. He is also reported to have supported the anti-CAA protests.

Irfan, a school dropout, lived with his mother, a younger brother, wife, two sons including one who is specially-abled, and a daughter. For the last week or so, his house has been locked. "I knew him well. He would

came to the police station with public issues... He has a petty assault case against him; he was also detained for questioning when he helped his friend to elope with a girl from another community," said a police source.

According to local sources, Muddassir Shaikh and Abdul Taufiq Taslim, two of Irfan's friends who have been arrested, were also "very religious".

#### Chief Justice

learnt to appreciate wholly the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Constitution to each of the institutions."

"The party in power believes that every governmental action is entitled to judicial endorsement. The parties in Opposition expect the judiciary to advance their political positions and causes," he said, adding "this flawed thinking of all hues flourishes in the absence of proper understanding among people about the Constitution and the functioning of democratic institutions."

"It is the vigorously promoted ignorance among the general public which is coming to the aid of such forces whose only aim is to run down the only independent organ. i.e., the judiciary. Let me make it clear. We are answerable to the Constitution and Constitution alone.'

"To enforce checks and balances envisioned in the Constitution, we need to promote a Constitutional culture in India. We need to spread awareness about the roles and responsibilities of individuals and institutions. Democracy is all about participa-

Citing the example of the US, the CJI underlined the need for honouring inclusivity "everywhere in the world including in India" and cautioned that "a non-inclusive approach is an invitation to

Complimenting the Indian community for its achievements. he said "it is the tolerance and inclusive nature of American society that is able to attract the best talents from all over the world, which in turn is contributing to its growth. Honouring qualified talents from diverse backgrounds is also essential to sustain confidence of all sections of the society

in the system. "This principle of inclusivity is universal. It needs to be honoured everywhere in the world, including in India. Inclusivity strengthens unity in society which is key to peace and progress. We need to focus on issues that unite us, not on those that divide us. In the 21st century, we cannot allow petty. narrow and divisive issues to dictate human and societal relationships. We have to rise above all divisive issues to remain focused on human development. A non-inclusive approach is an invitation

to disaster," he said. He told the gathering that "both India and the United States are known for their diversity. This diversity needs to be honoured and cherished, everywhere in the world. It is only because the United States honours and respects diversity that you were all able to reach this country and make a mark through your hard work and extraordinary skills."

The CII said "a nation that welcomes everyone with open arms, a nation that assimilates all cultures and a nation that honours every language is bound to be progressive, peaceful and vibrant. It is this character that promotes pros-

Arriving in countries like the US for work or study, he said, used to be the prerogative of a few privileged families once upon a time, but this has changed "due to the vision of some leaders and Chief Ministers who laid a solid foundation for India-centric growth al-

most two decades ago". He said "such foundations meant for long-term growth should never be disturbed. All over the world, with the change in government, policies do change. But no sensible, mature and patriotic government would alter the policies in such a manner which would slow down or halt the growth of its own territory."

He regretted that "unfortunately, we do not come across such sensibility and maturity in India too often, whenever there is

a change in government". The CJI urged the Indian com-

munity to start thinking like employers and not just employees so as to help India reap the demographic dividend.

#### Zubair custody

custody in the future. CMM Savaria later denied bail to Zubair, remanding him to judicial custody for 14 days.

A row erupted when, more than three hours before the CMM pronounced the order, DCP (Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations) KPS Malhotra announced that Zubair's bail plea had been rejected. He retracted his statement after Advocate Soutik Banerjee, representing Zubair, questioned how the police learnt of the order even before it was pronounced. Banerjee called it "scandalous". DCP Malhotra later claimed he "misheard" the investigating officer.

Additional Public Prosecutor Atul Shrivastava told the court that Zubair "accepted payments through RazorPay from Pakistan, Syria, Australia, Singapore, UAE, which all require further investi-

"If you accept something - donation, etc from a person of foreign country-thenit's a contravention. As per our CDR analysis, he has accepted through Razor gateway, from Pakistan, Syria, etc which... require further investigation,' Shrivastava said.

Advocate Vrinda Grover, who appeared for Zubair, said police had "misled the court" as they released a statement which mentioned that donations were accepted by the media company Pravda while police took Zubair's name in court as the recipient of the donations.

"Pravda is a section 8 company. Funds are going as per their update. See if there is one financial transaction of a foreign company. This power (of the police) is not given to mislead the court. Throw something in the media to say 'oh something is happening'. Say that foreign money is there. All transactions are proved. These are financial transactions. How can they make a submission (that) it has gone into my account? They are saying I am a journalist, I cannot receive FCRA. This is to the company, not to me," Grover said.

The prosecutor told the court that Zubair was the director of the company.

Grover said it was "not a crime to be a director" and that no notice was served to the company.

"A company taking funds is not a violation of FCRA. You have not issued notice to Prayda, You said the journalist took (funds) and

then said Pravda," she said. The prosecutor said the donations will be investigated and they need access to Zubair's phone to get further details on the contri-

Grover said bank account transactions can be seen instead as they contain details of every transaction.

Grover told the court that the tweet – for which Zubair was arrested — was made from an Android phone and not a laptop. She said the phone was later stolen and a report had been filed in this regard.

Shrivastava said Zubair had formatted his phone and also changed his SIM before turning up for the investigation.

#### JP Nadda

India that are dedicated to building a resilient India are met with destruction and disruption."

Irani said Nadda also lauded the PM for his government's "propoor" initiatives, while mentioning schemes such as Jan-Dhan Yojana for economic empowerment, Awas Yojana for housing, and schemes to build toilets which have helped women. The PM and government have taken a pledge to ensure that the schemes reach

the last person in society, Irani said. The Union minister also called the Opposition's claim that recent incidents were due to "the political atmosphere created by the BJP" and PM Modi - the killing of a tailor in Rajasthan over his support for remarks against the Prophet being one such incident – as reflective of the Opposition's "destructive politics". In reply to a question on the Opposition's criticism, she said: "The BIP works irrespective of propaganda based on nothing but misinformation, with the intent to create disruption. Irrespective of these shenanigans of the Opposition, people of India vehemently voted to get Narendra Modi back as Prime Minister, which is evidence that the people of this country believe in him and under his leadership are looking to build India as a strong nation."

The Udaipur tailor, Kanhaiya Lal. was mentioned in a condolence message passed at the National Executive

Irani said that in his speech, Nadda referred to the "politics of violence and political killings" in West Bengal and Kerala, and pledged the BJP's support to its

### **♦ The Indian EXPRESS** | www.indianexpress.com



workers in these states.

Irani also attacked Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, whose TRS and the BJP have been in a high-pitched battle, since the BIP made clear its expansion plans for the state. Rao, who is trying to build a national profile for himself, has gone out of his way to ignore Modi. On Saturday, he did not come to the airport to receive the PM, while according the courtesy to the Opposition's joint candidate for president, Yashwant Sinha. Irani referred to this, and added: "The Prime Minister has given a clarion call for cooperative federalism and, in the last eight years, met all leaders and deferred to them with respect, as is validated by maryada. That KCR has disrupted a constitutionally federal protocol reflects on him."

Slamming the TRS leadership for its reference to the BJP National Executive meeting as a "circus" Irani said: "For KCR and his political entity, politics may be a circus and may be affiliated to clownish behaviour and he may not take it with the seriousness that it deserves. But for us, it is a medium for social emancipation and nation-building."

One of the reasons the BJP picked Hyderabad for its National Executive was to give an impetus to its Telangana plans, and the BJP has pulled out all stops to ensure a

In discussions held Saturday, a decision was also taken by the BJP to ramp up its outreach programmes over welfare schemes initiated by party governments, and to launch 'Tiranga movement' and yatras to give a thrust to its nationalism plank.

A decision was taken at a meeting of office-bearers to explore more ways to reach out to "the 30 crore labharthis (beneficiaries)" of government schemes. The party has already reaped benefits of this loval base in elections. including in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing the media, BJP national office-bearer Vasundhara Raje said they would hold talks with the voters "scheme by scheme" and "district by district". The idea is to "find out the difficulties and the improvements we could work on" and to determine to what level the schemes can be taken, the former Rajasthan chief minister said.

Raje said nationalism would be another big focus, with plans for a Tiranga Yatra and a 'ghar-ghar Tiranga campaign'. The plan is to reach 20 crore people before the next Lok Sabha elections, she said.

Apart from this, the party will strengthen its organisation, up to the polling booth level. "Each booth will have at least 200 active party workers and WhatsApp groups will be activated." she said. A review would be done of panna pramukhs, in charge of a page each of voters' list, and the first point of contact in the party's election machinery, every 15 days.

Modi, who arrived for the National Executive Saturday, will make the concluding remarks on Sunday and address a public rally

On Sunday, Amit Shah will also move the political resolution, which will be seconded by Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai and Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma.

#### Pulitzer winner

immigration desk at Delhi airport," Mattoo tweeted while posting her cancelled boarding pass. "I was not given any reason but told I would not be able to travel internationally."

While there was no official word from either the state or Centre, sources in the J&K Police said that Mattoo was among several journalists from the Valley put on the no-fly list by the government. In September 2019, Kashmiri journalist Gowhar Geelani had been stopped by immigration officials at the Delhi airport on his way to Germany. Last year, the J&K administration had stopped journalist-turned-academician Zahid Rafiq from travelling to the US, where he was to teach

at a university.

Journalist Ruwa Shah was also prevented from travelling abroad. Another academician from South Kashmir was stopped but laterallowed to travel after some

A resident of Srinagar, the 28year-old Mattoo works as a photojournalist for the international wire agency Reuters. She won the 2022 Pulitzer Prize in feature photography along with three other Reuters photographers for their coverage of the Covid second wave in India. Supported by the Institut

Francais en Inde, a section of the French Embassy in India, the grant is open to "lens based practitioners" who are residents of Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka, as per the website of Serendipity Arles.

#### Qatar kickoff

qualifying for the November 21-December 18 tournament, the country is among the top-10 buyers of tickets.

"In 2018, Moscow had just two stadiums and still, there were nights when the entire city was sold out," says Akarsh Sharma, a business executive from Gurgaon who had travelled to Russia to watch the World Cup. "Here, we are talking about a country smaller than Delhi-NCR that will host the entire tournament.'

Sharma spent Rs 1.3 lakh on a series of tickets which will give him access to seven matches across all rounds, from the group stage to the final. But he is yet to zero down on an accommodation. And he isn't the only one.

With the skewed demandsupply ratio, combined with the fact that 80 per cent of the total accommodation inventory is being sold via a centralised system operated by the organising committee, finding a place to stay is neither easy nor affordable.

In December, AP news agency reported that the organisers secured a bulk of the rooms for the players and officials of the 32 teams, representatives from world football's governing body FIFA, the tournament's sponsors and international media. That's left the overseas fans

with very limited options. In a statement to The Indian Express, the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy – in charge of organising the World Cup - said "the host country will deliver up to 1,30,000 rooms, which equates to 3.6 million room nights, for the one million-plus fans expected to travel for the tournament", and added that "more choices will be made available in due course".

The rates per night for a hotel or an apartment start at \$80 for two people and go up to thousands of dollars, but with the country falling short of rooms, the organisers have been forced to look at creative solutions.

So, the luxury cruise liners docked at the bay have been converted into hotels, with cabins for up to \$800 per night. And tents, starting at a little over \$200 per night, have been pitched in the deserts as camping options.

All bookings made via the official platform require a minimum of two nights' stay. Rooms via popular hotel aggregators are already sold out and homestay options, via websites like Airbnb, cost approximately Rs 1.73 lakh per night on average

The other option, of staying with a relative or friend who lives in Qatar, is not hassle-free either. The person living in Qatar will have to register with the organisers and share details of their property agreements before allowing guests during the World Cup.

Fans, consequently, have had to take drastic measures. Mohit Daga, who runs an umbrella manufacturing business in Kolkata, says he and his friends plan to stay in Dubai and make six-hour road trips to Doha for matches. That, however, depends on visa and other requirements. "That is a more convenient option and also more affordable, given the sharp surge in flight rates," says the 27year-old Argentina supporter.

A cursory look online at the flight rates during the World Cup shows that a round-trip from Delhi or Kolkata to Doha will cost up to Rs 1 lakh – nearly three times more than normal rates.

The inflated hotel and airline rates are just one part of the budget. As Arnab Chatterjee, a software consultant based in Dallas, USA, experienced in Russia four years ago, the on-ground expenses, too, often leave a hole in the pocket. "The good thing is the internal travel will be minimum, given the proximity between the venues," says the 39-year-old. "However, as we experienced in Russia, from food to water, everything is slightly more expensive during events like these."

Chatterjee will first travel from Dallas to Kolkata before proceeding to Doha with his brother and 75-year-old father to watch Brazil in action. He has paid \$350 per night for their stay and, combined with air tickets and other expenses, his spending on Oatar 2022 is more than double what he spent in Russia four years ago.

"In Russia, for two people I spent Rs 4.5 lakh," he says. "This time, I think I'll end up spending close to Rs 10 lakh overall. Why am Idoingit? Because, afterwatching the World Cup in Russia, my father and I decided to go for all the editions, given that it was such a great experience. Also, we missed watching Brazil in 2018, so we wanted to see them play. I wish the logistics were made easier by giving fans more options, rather than having a centralised system."

Many fans may feel they'll be priced out of what is the biggest single-sport event. But the organisers maintain it will remain accessible to all. "Qatar 2022 will indeed be the most accessible FIFA World Cup. All the more so for residents of India. Geographically, this is the closest FIFA World Cup to India -- many cities on India's west coast and near it are within a 3-4 hour flight radius to Doha. And once the fans reach Doha, they don't have to plan any internal flights due to the compact hosting concept of the World Cup which is played in eight stadiums, the farthest two of which are 75 km apart," said the Supreme Committee for Delivery and

#### NSE

company. Based out of Oshiwara in Andheri, it was one of the IT companies tasked with conducting security audits at NSE during 2010 to 2015 when the co-location scam is believed to have taken place. The CBI has recorded the statement of one of the company

employees, a source said. The CBI's investigation over the course of the last four years long had led to the arrest of former NSE managing director Chitra Ramkrishna and its former group operating officer Subramanian.

"The security audit company should have been able to detect the breaches in the NSE system during the period when the scam took place. We are looking into the processes followed by the company to test the security of the systems," a source added, speaking of iSec Services Pvt Ltd.

Pandey refused to talk on the

issue, while an e-mail sent by The Sunday Express to iSec company did not receive any response. An e-mail sent to the CBI seeking its response also did not get any reply. However, sources close to the company said that iSec was merely responsible for conducting audits of the devices used by the brokers who were using the co-location facility provided by the NSE, to check if they had proper Internet connection, firewall facility, among other technical aspects. A source said, "iSec did not have any access to the NSE servers, so there was no way they could detect that the system had been compromised and a co-location scam was underway.'

An expert told The Sunday Express that an IT auditor is responsible for analysing and assessing an organisation's technologi-

**EXPRESS**  AUDIO

#### Sean Duca on how to secure the metaverse

**NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY** 

Nandagopal Rajan speaks to Sean Duca, the Regional Chief Security Officer for Asia Pacific at Palo Alto Networks about how to protect data in the metaverse, the question of identity theft and authentication, and how the physical and digital worlds will blur

> cal infrastructure to find problems with efficiency, risk management and compliance. An IT auditor also identifies any IT issues that fall under the audit, specifically those related to security and risk management. The audit process can extend to networks, software, programmes, communication systems, security systems and any other services that rely on the company's technological infra-

IT audits are important for evaluating internal control and processes in an effort to keep the organisation and its data secure from external or internal threats.

"Audits are meant to examine controls on client-connected servers and networks. An audit examines current technology in the organisation and future technologies that will need to be adopted. Any step against regulation and compliance must be red flagged by IT auditors as they are the watchdogs of internal and external information flows," the expert

Some BJP leaders had accused Pandey of going after its leaders at the behest of the then MVA government, a charge denied by the officer. BJP leader Mohit Kamboj against whom an FIR was registered in connection with a bank fraud had hinted that Pandey could face action after his retirement on June 30. Soon after recording his statement with police last month, Kamboj had said: "While the 1st (June 1) belongs to the person who registered this case against me, the 30th (June 30) will belong to us."

As per iSec's financial records, the company was incorporated by Pandev and one Pankai Chandra. with 5,000 shares each. Pandey quit the directorship in May 2006, with his mother Santosh and son Armaan becoming directors in the company. Currently Santosh is the whole-time director while one Anand Naravan is the other director. As per the shareholding pattern provided by the company as on March 31, 2021, Santosh and Armaan each hold 50% each in the  $company \, and \, Sanjay \, Pandey \, is \, not \,$ a shareholder.

iSec Private Security Ltd's website says it was established in 2001 and is an ISO certified company. "We are engaged in ensuring security of information through a variety of security services, helping detect and prevent theft of information, iSec has been providing information security management services to various clients both in India as well as abroad. iSec's efforts are supported by professional information security consultants who have requisite certifications in information security."

It is, however, important to note that Sanjay Pandey had submitted his resignation in 2000 before he incorporated iSec Services in 2001. While his resignation was not accepted by the government then, it was later accepted in 2002, against which he appealed in the court.

The NSE co-location scam relates to the manipulation of the exchange by giving select players access to market information ahead of the rest of the market. Co-location facilities that were rolled out in August 2009 are dedicated spaces in the NSE exchange building, right next to the exchange servers, where generally institutional investors and brokers place their systems or programmes. Owing to the close proximity to stock exchange servers, traders in these facilities have an advantage over others as they get faster access to the price feed distributed by the stock market. The charge for these services is high, and hence only big brokers rent such a space.

The CBI is probing the charge that one of the trading members, Delhi-based OPG Securities, was provided unfair access between 2012 and 2014, that enabled it to log in first and get the data before others in the co-location facility. The broker is believed to have been assisted by certain NSE employees. The scam came to light due to a whistleblower's complaint to SEBI in 2015, laying out the modus operandi.

## WESTBENGAL

#### GROUND REPORT

## As rising inflation punctures wage Governor says followed hike, tea workers seek more land rights, better health facilities

Across tea estates in Hills, workers threaten strike for fixing minimum wages

**SWEETY KUMARI** 

DARJEELING, JULY 1

TWO WEEKS since the Labour Department of the West Bengal government notified a 15 per cent hike or Rs 30 raise in the daily wage of tea garden workers, 51year-old Sara Tamang is not very enthusiastic over the raise.

"I heard that they have revised the daily wages by Rs 30. We haven't got the revised amount yet. But I want to know what you get for 30 rupees today," Tamang asks wryly, pointing to the rising inflation – from hike in LPG cylinders to overall increase in food prices.

Tamang, who has been working in the tea gardens of North Bengal for over 15 years, is raising her two daughters – both studying in colleges -- alone after her husband died nine years ago.

"I earn about Rs 5,000 a month with a daily wage of Rs 202. My daughters attend college daily, their daily fare to college is more than my entire salary. So, they have started teaching students," she says, adding that with sky-rocketing LPG cylinder prices, refilling a cylinder every month has become difficult now.

'Now we don't cook on gas unless it is for special occasions. We have started using firewood again," says Tamang, who works in a tea garden in Lebong Valley, located just 10 km from Darjeeling town.

'I have struggled my entire life. I don't want my daughter to work in a tea garden, I wouldn't mind if they leave this place for work and lead a life like girls in cities do," Tamang says.

A hike in daily wage doesn't excite her anymore.

"I am not happy with this (wage hike). We don't have health insurance. If we fall ill and take a day's leave it is cut from our monthly payment... I want the government to give us facilities like medical care, land rights," says Tamang. The story remains the same

in almost all the tea gardens – be t Rangeet and Ging in Darieeling and Thurbo in Mirik.

At present, Darjeeling has a total of 87 tea estates, including many of the world's largest working plantations. While most of the owners make profits, the tea workers get a basic wage of just Rs 120-250 a day, which is the lowest among all other plantation industries.

Most of the tea garden workers said minimum wages, land rights, neglected tea gardens and food rations are the biggest issues being faced by them.

On July 14, the state Labour Department notified an interim hike of 15 per cent in the daily wages of tea garden workers soon after Chief Minister Mamata Baneriee made the announcement during her trip to Alipurduar in North Bengal. As per the notification, tea garden owners will have to raise the daily wage of "rated workers" by Rs 30 or 15 percent of their current pay -- from Rs 202 to Rs 232. The notification for the interim hike, however, is not likely to be implemented before January 2023.

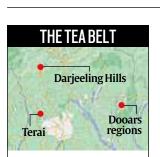
Unhappy with the revision, tea workers and unions, who have been demanding more welfare measures and rights of tea workers, want the government to fix the minimum wages instead of interim hikes.

NOTICE By this the public is being informed that my client Shri Sudeep Chakraborty S/c Late Sujoy Kumar Chakraborty resident of 36, Gouranga Mandir Road Kolkata - 700086, has lost his origina Deed of Gift on 09.03.2022, that is registered at Alipore District sub egistry office Book No. 01, Volume No 159, Page No. 239, recorded in the English era of 2007 being Deed No 0236. For that reason, my client had filed a General Diary, being No. 557 or 09.03.2022 at Patuli Police Station. anyone acquires the said deed, in tha case I will be obliged, if arrangements are made for return of the same by contacting the undersigned person. An transaction made by virtue of this said Deed of Gift will be treated null and void Γhankinα You **HIMADRI ROY** (Advocate)

High Court, Calcutta M.- 91230 83042



Women tea workers at Ging tea eastate in Darjeeling. Partha Paul



Darjeeling has a total of 87 tea estates. including many of the world's largest working

Tea plantations are spread over 97,280 hectares, employing close to 3.5 Jakh workers

"Before 2014, wages were revised through negotiations. That was the tradition. For the first time, tea workers in 2014 demanded a structured pay and 29 trade unions launched a joint campaign for it. We didn't sign the traditional agreement of pay revision that year. In 2015, the West Bengal government agreed that in six months a structured wage will be announced, A small committee called an advisory board was formed comprising union members, tea gardens owners and bureaucrats. After nearly 17 meetings, there was no agreement on minimum wage. Finally, on December 13, 2018, the advisory board submitted a report saying that minimum wage policy should be implemented from January 2019. But that didn't happen. Again, on June 2, 2020, they agreed to give a minimum wage of Rs 212. But we said that it should be fixed after evaluating the seventh pay commission. Recently, the Labour Department temporarily revised the daily wage of 15 per

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Notice in absence of which no claims

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cent hike or Rs 30 even though the interim amount proposed earlier was Rs 250," says Saman Pathak, working president of Darjeeling District Tea Kaman

Majdoor Union. "It is an industry where wages are revised on the basis of negotiations, and interim revisions are made during meetings. It is not her (referring to Chief Minister Banerjee) police, or PWD department where she can randomly decide an amount. The interim notification has basically benefitted the tea garden owners. They feel that after the recent revision, tea workers won't ask for minimum wage at least for the time being. Basically, they have tried to divert the focus," Pathak says.

On fixing the minimum wages, a consistent demand of workers, PK tea Bhattacharya, the president of Tea Association of India, says: "While the issue of minimum wages has not been resolved or no government has taken a concrete step on it, one will have to acknowledge that a code of wages has been notified by an Act of Parliament. The State rules mentions that the Central government has to declare the flow level minimum wages and no state can have minimum wages that are lower than the flow level wages. This is a big constraint. Now, no government has gone out for notification for minimum wages. Since, the process to fix minimum wages has been on, what the governments of both Assam and West Bengal have been doing is issuing administrative orders by revising wages from time to time - the last being in June 2022.'

According to Bhattacharya, the tea workers are categorised in two groups-- "daily rated worker" and "monthly rated

workers".

"The recent notification on interim wages mentions 15 per cent raise for both "daily rated worker" and "monthly rated workers". While the daily rated workers are happy with the rise, the staff and the sub-staff feel that the raise is not enough. Now, they are threatening strike... The government is convening another meeting on July 4. The government is in favour of giving interim rise. The intentions are clear. So, the process is not being delayed by the employers."

While the association claims to bring in changes, tea workers claim, nothing has changed on the ground in all these years.

Vaskar Gurung, whose mother has worked in a tea garden for 30 years, says: "Wages, medical facilities and housing are the three problems being faced by tea garden workers. Due to inflation, it is getting difficult for workers to sustain their families. Also, there is not a single big hospital in the area. If anyone falls sick, we are forced to travel for at least two hours to Siliguri for medical treatment," says Vaskar. "We do have boots but the risk of snake bites and poisonous chemicals are always there... Headaches, knee pains muscular pains, severe back pains are very common among us," says Malti Tamang, a tea worker of Thurbo Gopaldhara Tea Garden in Mirik sub-division.

As 45-year-old Lalita Gurung hurriedly wraps up her house chores to walk down 10 km from Malegawn to Ging Tea Estate in the Lebong Valley in Darjeeling, she ruefully says: "The tea gardens too will die a slow death due to non-availability of adequate labours. Who would want their children to work in a tea garden which is the most neg-

#### RBU VICE-CHANCELLOR APPOINTMENT

# govt's recommendation

Slams TMC leaders for making statements against him

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, JULY 2

GOVERNOR JAGDEEP Dhankhar on Saturday said that he appointed Mahua Mukherjee, professor in the department of dance at Rabindra Bharati University, as the RBU vice-chancellor "based on the recommendation of the state government", and therefore,

he was within his rights to do so. "Statement @AITCofficial -VC of Rabindra Bharati University appointment- reveals disconnect with Gov #MamataBanerjee. It is factually incorrect. Hence record set straight. Expect maturity & propriety from ruling party & Gov. Ever available for connect and interaction(sic),"Dhankhartweeted, slamming TMC leaders for "mak-

ing statements against him". Later, the Raj Bhavan came out with a press release, stating, "It is most unfortunate and grave impropriety that the ruling party TMC spokesperson has made a totally wrong statement as regards Governor/Chancellor making appointment of the Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University. The stance that the 'Governor did not bother to take into confidence the Education Minister and the Chief Minister before the anJagdeep Dhankhar

Governor

nouncement', betrays ignorance of the law, as according to the enactments it is the prerogative of the Governor/Chancellor to appoint Vice-Chancellors."

"However, in this case, on

24.06.2022, the Hon'ble Minister in Charge, Higher Education Department, Shri Bratya Basu, sent the following note to the Governor/Chancellor: 'Hon'ble Chancellor may kindly peruse notes per-page in connection with his advice marked as 'X' at NSP 16. Accordingly, the Search Committee has recommended 3 names as stated at NSP-21 in order of preference. Hon'ble Chancellor may kindly appoint one among them as the Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University.' The Governor/Chancellor appointed Dr Mahua Mukherjee, Professor, Dept of Dance, Rabindra Bharati University, whose name appears at Sl. No. 1," added the Raj Bhavan

Countering TMC's charge of several bills being pending with him, the Governor said, "As regards to the bills, on the subject as passed by the WB Assembly, the same are not pending with the Governor, having been returned to the Assembly on the ground of incompleteness of compliance. The Assembly Secretariat itself, while sending bills for consideration, indicated The complete official report of the debates of the West Bengal Legislative Assembly on the Bill will be forwarded as soon as it is ready.' Consideration at this end will be effected once the indicated input is received."

Meanwhile, state Education Minister Bratya Basu, later in the day, issued a press release, stating that a statement was issued to the Governor for the re-examination of the previous recommendation of the state government (on appointment to RBU VC) in view of the bill passed in the state Assembly to replace Governor with the Chief Minister as Chancellor of state universities. "Regarding the appointment

of the Vice-Chancellor of Rabindra Bharati University, a detailed statement was issued on June 30, 2022, regarding the reexamination of the matter/proposal by the state government in view of the bill passed by the

**MONEY LAUNDERING** Abhishek's 'aide' declared proclaimed

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

offender

A DELHI court has declared Vinay Mishra, an alleged associate of TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee, as a proclaimed offender for evading court proceedings in connection with a money-laundering probe into a coal mining "scam" in West Bengal, officials said on Saturday.

The declaration has been made under section 82 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC), which requires the appearance of an accused before the court, they said. Mishra. 36. is an accused in

the case where the role of Banerjee, his wife Rujira and others is being probed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). The federal agency has ques-

tioned and recorded the statement of both Banerjee and Rujira in the case. The ED has said Mishra never joined the probe. The money laundering case stems from a November 2020

FIR registered by the CBI that alleged a multi-crore-rupee coal pilferage scam related to Eastern . Coalfields Limited mines in West Bengal's Kunustoria and Kajora areas in and around Asansol. A chargesheet was filed by

the ED in the case in May last

### UG and PG admission in state-run colleges, universities to begin from July 18 & Sept 1 Graduate (Honours and General)

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, JULY 2

THE STATE government has issued the notification for admission in state-run colleges and universities for the academic session 2022-23, with the admission process for undergraduate courses beginning on July 18 and will be completed by September 15. The first semester of the UG courses will commence on September 19.

The admission process for the post-graduate students, however, commences on September 1 and will be completed by October 21. The first secommence on November 1.

The admission will take place strictly based on the merit of the students and online mode, says the notification. "The results for the West

Bengal Higher Secondary Examination 2022 have been published and the results of other equivalent examinations are expected to be announced shortly. Considering the success of the online admission process, and since the requisite infrastructure has already been put in place in the State's higher education institutions, it is hereby informed to all concerned that admissions to all Under and Postgraduate courses in the State-funded Higher Education Institutions in West Bengal for the ensuing academic session 2022-2023 will be made online in Standalone mode," reads the notification dated June 30, which has been made available on Saturday.

The government also informed that the entire admission process will be held in online mode in respective colleges and universities and no physical presence of the students will be required during the process of admission. No application fees will be taken from the students and the admission fees will be

the institutions once the entire process is over. 'Online admission process

should be done based on merit. Prospective students should not be called for counselling or verification of documents during the process of admission. No physical presence will be required at the College/University. Charges shall be taken from the students for (i) scanning/uploading of documents for online admission and (ii) providing/ making available the application form/ prospectus of admission in all UG/ PG level courses like last year," the noti-

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#### PUBLIC NOTICE amely :- 1) Sambit Sen, son of late

Anath Nath Sen on behalf of al successor of late Ganendra Nath Mitra, son of late Radhanath Mitra, 2) Nikhilesh Mitra, son of late Narendra Nath Mitra on behalf of all successor of Late Narendra Nath Mitra, son o ate Radhanath Mitra, 3) Sreemati Chhanda Mitra, wife of late Sukumar Mitra daughter in law of late Sachindra Nath Mitra on behalf of all successor of late Sachindra Nath Mitra son of late Radhanath Mitra 4 Santinath Mitra, son of late Rachindra Nath Mitra @ Rabindranath Mitra on behalf of all successor of late Rachindra Nath Mitra @ Rabindranath Mitra All above clients are residing at Vill Mitrapara, Joynagar Majilpur, P.O Joynagar, District South 24 Par anas. Pin- 743337. The above nentioned clients and successors are ntending to sale their ALL THAT piece nd parcel measuring about 2.09 acre of land situated at District South 24 Parganas under P.S. Joynagai Mouza- Joynagar, J.L. No. 17, Ľ.R Dag Nos. 995, 996, 997, 703, 704 '04/1365, 2115 under Khatian No 1226, 1649, 2886 and ALL THAT iece and parcel of land measurin bout 14 satak situated at Distric South 24 Parganas under P.S oynagar, Mouza- Ramnarayanpu L.No. 16, L.R. Dag Nos. 776 '86/1088, <sup>'</sup>786/1089, <sup>'</sup>786/ 1090 786/1091, 786/1092, 786/1093, 706 707 under Khatian No. 1383, 1393 and others hereinafter mentioned as said properties. Any person/o persons claiming any right, title and nterest over the said properties and any encumbrances of any nature whatsoever in respect of the said properties either directly or indirectly of the said property or any part thereo ncluding but not limited to by way o sale, gift, lease, transferred deed rust, security possession, easeme power of attorney howsoever ma ame their objection in respec thereof in writing at the office of the undersigned along with supporting documents within 15 (fifteen) days rom the date of publication of this notice, failing which the transfer of the said properties will be completed vithout any reference such claim and he same if any shall be considered as on existence and / or waived. KALPANA MAITRA (Advocate)

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Appendix-IV, [Rule-8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (for Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of Bank of Baroda, Behrampore Branch under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 11.03.2022, calling upon the Borrower(s) M/s

Indra Hardware at the correspondence address: 7, Gurudayal Mitra Lane Behrampore, Murshidabad - 742101, represented by the Proprietor and Guarantor(s) Mr. Indranil Ghosh at 45, Netaji Road, P.O. Khagra, Berhampore, Murshidabad 742103, to repay dues to the tune of aggregate Rs.7,10,665.16 (Rupees Seven Lakh Ten Thousand Six Hundred Sixty Five and Sixteen Paisa only) (Rs.5,94,424/- in Overdraft Account + Rs.1,16,241.16 in Term Loan BGECL) plus un applied unrealized interest and other charges thereon as on 10.03.2022 within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice towards outstanding(s) of the availed Credii

The borrower having failed to repay the amount due towards the outstanding Credi Facility within stipulated 60 days from the date of receipt of Notice dated 11.03.2022 notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned Bank of Baroda, Behrampore Branch, has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 9 of the said rules on this 30th day of June or the year 2022.

The Borrower/ Guarantors/ Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies detailed below and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda, Behrampore Branch for an amount Rs.7,10,665.16 (Rupees Seven Lakh Ten Thousand Six Hundred Sixty ive and Sixteen Paisa only) (Rs.5,94,424/- in Overdraft Account + Rs.1,16,241.16 in Term Loan BGECL) plus un applied/unrealized interest and other charges thereor and further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses til

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

#### **Description of the Immovable Property**

Equitable Mortgage of residential flat located at 1st floor of G + 4 apartment at 6, Murar Mohan Sen Road, P.O. Khagra, P.S. Berhampore, Mouza-Berhampore Kansari Bazar Plot No. 214 (RS), 327 (LR), Kh. No. 250 (RS), 100, 1302, 1609, 2746, 2747, 2748 2749, 2750, 281, 403 (LR), Dist. Murshidabad, super built up area: 580 sq. ft. in the name of Indranil Ghosh. The land is butted and bounded by on the North: Municipa Road, next house of Adi Matri Bhandar, on the South: Bari, on the East: Mahaka Pathsala new building, on the West: Bari.

Date: 30.06.2022, Place: Berhampore Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

#### 9-year-old drowns, swimming pool shut

Kolkata: A nine-year-old boy drowned in a swimming pool in Howrah's Dumurjola Sports Complex on Friday.

The class 3 student, identified as Bidipto Ghosh, had gone along with his mother to the pool to learn swimming. Soon after the incident, two trainers dived into the water to rescue the boy who was rushed to the Howrah district hospital.

He, however, was declared dead on arrival.

The police said that a case of unnatural death had been registered in this connection.

The Howrah district

administration announced to shut the swimming pool for an indefinite period. The incident occurred

nearly a month after two school-going rowers drowned in the Rabindra Sarovar in Kolkata.

**Howrah Municipal** Corporation board of administrators chairman Sujoy Chakraborty visited the pool on Saturday morning for an inspection.

"It is a very tragic incident. We will look into this to prevent such incidents in future. We will talk to the bereaved family," said Chakraborty.

**SALUTE THE SOLDIER** 

forever remain indebted to you.

CO and All Ranks 17 Para Fd Regt (8 RAJPUT)

Pandey, ParamVir Chakra (POSTHUMOUS) made the supreme

CO AND ALL RANKS, 1/11 GORKHA RIFLES

(BRAVEST OF THE BRAVE)

(BATALIK)

On 03 Jul 1999 No 9422557 Late Rfn Karna Bahadur Limbu, No

9422557 Late Rfn Karna Bahadur Limbu, No 9416967 Late Hay

Ganga Ram Rai, No 9422837 Late Rfn Kalu Ram Rai, No 9415981

Late Hav Bhim Bahadur Rai, VrC of 1/11 GR had made supreme

Colonel 11 GR & Sikkim Scouts and All Ranks

O-569 (E-Mail:- serwbpr2004@yahoo.com Tel/Fax:-0680-2404287)

No. e-tender// 2639 // RWC//BAM// Dated. 30.6.2022

2nd Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Online Tender/19-2022-23/BPR

The partial modification of bridge work (Balance work) vide above identification has bee

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER

**RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR** 

: Will be intimated later on

05.07.2022 to 19.07.2022 upto 3.00 PM inste

16.07.2022 at 2.00 PM instead of 12.07.2022 a

20.07.2022 at 11.00 AM instead of 11.07.2022 at

sacrifice during 'OP VIJAY' on this day in 1999.

Hav Ganga

Ram Rai

sacrifice during OP VIJAY (Kargil) in Jul 1999

Rfn Karna

Bahadur

Limbu

Date of availability of tender

Last Date & Time of seeking tender

Date of opening of Technical Bid.

Date of opening of Financial Bid.

5x30.63m) Balance work

01 OCT 1964 TO 03 JUL 2001

MAJ SAMIR-UL-ISLAM, SC

sacrifice in the highest traditions of the Indian

Army for the honour of the Regiment and the

Country while combating insurgents in Assam

twenty one years ago. Your heroic deed is a

source of inspiration for all of us and we will

03 JULY

CAPT MANOJ KUMAR PANDEY, PARAM

VIR CHAKRA (POSTHUMOUS)

On this momentous occasion of 'BATALIK DAY'

ve salute and rememberCAPT MANOJ KUMAR

PANDEY, ParamVir Chakra (POSTHUMOUS)

vho laid down his life while evicting Pakistani

The Nation would also remain indebted to the

supreme sacrifice of the following brave

Rfn Kalu

Ram Rai

Hav Bhim

Bahadur

Rai, VrC

intruders during the Kargil War in 1999.

Samir-UI-Islam, SC made the supreme



#### NET PRACTICE

Sports Minister Aroop Biswas and badminton coach P Gopichand during the inauguration of 'Star Badminton Academy' in South 24 Parganas district on Saturday. PTI

## 30 students injured as school bus falls into ditch, 3 critical

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, JULY 2

AT LEAST 30 students were injured, three of them critically, when a school bus fell into a ditch in the Lakkhipur area of English Bazartown in Malda district on Saturday afternoon, po-

The bus carrying 71 students of Kendriya Vidyalaya skidded of the road before falling into the ditch on the Malda-Manikchak state highway soon after it came out of the school campus and was trying to enter the main road around 2.30pm.

The bus was carrying 71 students of Kendriya Vidyalaya. No complaint filed against driver so far

The students of classes 5 to 10 were returning home.

Following the accident, local residents rushed to the spot to rescue the injured students. Later, the fire brigade and traffic police joined the rescue opera-

Out of the 30 injured, 13 students were admitted to the

Government of India, Department of Atomic Energy, Heavy Water Plant (Kota) Tender Notice No.: HWPK/PROD/DISPOSAL/2022/02

on behalf of the President of India, General Manager, HWP (Kota), Anushakti - 323 303, Via Kota Rajasthan) invites sealed tenders for "**Sale of Sodium Sulphate Powder of 92% to 98% Purity (as** 

(Hajastnan) invites sealed tenders for "Sale of Sodium Sulphate Powder of 92% to 98% Purming as where is basis) for 200 MT Quantity". Earnest Money -Rs. 10,000/-, Cost of tender document- Rs. 150 /- (personally) & Rs. 200 /- (through post), Period of sale of tender document- 01-07-2022 (11:00 hrs.) to 15-07-2022 (16:00 hrs.) [Except Sundays & Public Holidays], Last date and time for submitting tender -20-07-2022 (14:30 hrs.). Bidder shall be allowed to quote against tender enquiry for minimum 40 MT or a multiple of 10 MT but maximum up to 200 MT Sodium Sulphate Powder. Tender document can be obtained in person or by post from "Deputy Controller of Accounts, Heavy Water Plant (Kota), PO: Anushakti-323303, Via: Kota (Rajasthan)" in cash or through demand digat frawn in Savur of "Enputy Controller of Accounts Heavy Water Plant (Kota)" navable at

raft drawn in favour of "Deputy Controller of Accounts, Heavy Water Plant (Kota)" payable a

**ALIPURDUAR BRANCH** 

Srikrishna Market, Marwary Patty Alipurduar, Pin-736121, West Bengal

The undersigned being the authorised officer of the BANK OF BARODA under the

Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security

Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with

rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice

dated 04.04.2022 calling upon the borrower Shri Mr Aiit Kumar Dutta & Mrs Namita

Dutta Ward no. 20, Arabindonagar, Near Sardar School, Alipurduar

Rs.11,49,252.40 (Eleven Lacs Fourty Nine Thousand Two Hundred Fifty Two and

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower

and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the

property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under

Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules on this 29th day of June

The borrower / Guarantors / Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is

hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealings with the

property/ies will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Baroda, Alipurduar Branch

for an amount of Rs.11,49,252.40 and interest thereon at the contractual rate plus

The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of

■ Description of immovable property

All that part and parcel of the property consisting of land & building measuring 0.06

acre JL no 51,in plot no. L.R. 4942, khatian no. 4073 having holding number 172/449

ward no. 20 within Alipurduar municipality butted & bounded by (as per deed no. I

1936 dated 20.04.1995) and District Alipurduar. Bounded; On the North: House of

Parimal Biswas, On the South: House of Legal heirs of Bani Mohanta, On the East

the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

Municipal Road, On the West: House of Prabhat Adhikary

Costs. Charges and expenses till date of payment.

Fourty Paise only) within 60 days from-the date of receipt of the said notice

of the year 2022.

Malda Medical College and Hospital.

The bus driver and helper did not receive injuries, it is learnt. "The condition of the injured

students, including two with head injuries, is stable. We have started an investigation into the matter and a case will be filed.' said Malda Superintendent of Police (SP) Pradeep Kumar

Debabrata Das, a school teacher, said, "The bus belongs to the railways. Children of railway officers were aboard this bus. So far, no complaint has come against the bus driver."

-WITH PTI INPUTS

#### INCLEMENT WEATHER HITS RESCUE OPERATIONS

## Manipur landslide toll rises to 29, search on for 34 missing



Rescue operations underway at the Tupul railway construction camp in Manipur's Noney district on Saturday.  $P\Pi$ 

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA GUWAHATI, IMPHAL, JULY 2

THE TOLL in the landslide at a railway construction site in Manipur's Noney district climbed to 29 on Saturday after eight more bodies were recovered from under the debris, officials said. Out of the 29, at least eight people are from Assam, including an

Thirty-four people are still missing after a massive landslide hit the Tupul yard railway construction camp on the night of

Inclement weather is affecting the search operations, officials

Out of the eight bodies recovered during the day, five are of Territorial Army personnel and one of an employee of a construction company. The two others are yet to be identified. The defence personnel were

there to provide security to the construction site. "Eight bodies were found on Thursday and 13 yesterday," an official said. He said that altogether 34 peo-

ole, including 14 employees of two construction companies, five villagers and three of the railways, are still missing

Eighteen people were rescued om the site on Thursday.

The search started at 4 am and rescue teams have been advised to proceed with caution. Rainfall since early Saturday morning has hampered the operations, the oficials said.

Over 470 personnel, including those of the NDRF, SDRF, state police, the Assam Rifles and local

been deployed in the search operation.

Over 30 excavators are being used to clear the debris which blocked the Ijai river, forming dam-like storage and threatening the people living nearby. Earthmovers have been brought in to remove the debris, and create a channel to allow the flow of water from there, officials said.

A defence spokesperson at Guwahati said, "Through Wall Radar is being successfully used. A search and rescue dog is also being employed to assist." Such radars are used for the detection and location of static and moving targets, especially human beings behind walls.

The spokesperson said that bodies of 14 defence personnel, including a junior commissioned officer, were sent to their home-

Full military honours were given to the deceased personnel at Imphal before sending the bodies to their destinations.

Meanwhile, Assam cabinet Minister Pijush Hazarika, who reached Tupul on Saturday morning said, "It is an extremely tragic and unfortunate incident, Search and rescue operations are going on in full swing.'

"One railway engineer and 11 other construction company workers from Assam are still missing. Five persons had been rescued, out of which two are currently hospitalised," he said.

Hazarika said the bodies of the deceased civilians will be airlifted to Assam and the state government will make all necessary arrangements. "We will also arrange for transportation of the injured workers back home."

## Last rites of 14 soldiers from north Bengal held with full state honours

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA, JULY 2

THE FUNERAL rites of 14 Territorial Army (TA) soldiers from north Bengal, who were killed in a landslide in Manipur's Noney district four days before, were conducted on Saturday full full state honours after their bodies were brought to the Darjeeling Hills and surrounding areas.

The total death toll in the landslide at a railway construction camp has reached 29, while nearly 35 people are still missing

Earlier in the day, a pall of gloom descended in the Darjeeling, Karshiang, Rohini and Mirik areas after the soldiers' bodies arrived in coffins.

In the morning, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) founder Bimal Gurung visited the house of a soldier, Marcus Gurung, a resident of Singmari in Darjeeling. Marcus visited his home last in February and was learnt to have talked to his wife on mobile phone last Wednesday. He was supposed to come home in October.

Anit Thapa, president of the Bharativa Gorkha Praiatantrik Morcha (BGPM) that won the recently held Gorkha Territorial Administration (GTA) elections, has already announced to suspend the Vijay Utsav pro-

In the afternoon, a memorial service was held on the Mall in Darjeeling where BGPM leaders Roshan Giri and Keshab Raj Pokhrel and Bimal Gurung's wife Asha Gurung among others paid tributes to the jawans. A minute's silence is observed and candles were lit.

Roshan Giri and Keshab Raj okhrel said, "It is a very painful incident. I wish them peace."

Punam Chhetri, wife of another victim Shankar Chhetri, who hailed from Nagrakata in the Dooars in Jalpaiguri district, said she last spoke to her husband around 9pm on Wednesday.

"A neighbour told me about the tragedy. I repeatedly called up his immediate boss. They confirmed on Friday afternoon that he was no more." Punam said. Shankar was recently transferred to Manipur from

#### "IMPORTANT"

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(K.P SHARMA)

POSSESSION NOTICE

#### Pet dog helps south Kolkata family catch thief Kolkata: A pet dog helped a fam-A thief entered the house ily catch a thief in their house in south Kolkata's Kalighat area, and recover the stolen goods, police said on Saturday.

The incident took place at ladu Bhattacharya Lane near Kalighat Fire Station, a stone's throw away from Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence, they said.

SI Name of the Branch

www.pnbindia.in.

Date 03.07.2022, Malda

Name of the Borrower/Guaranto

BO Old Malda Borrower: Partha Pratim Jha S/o Mohit Land & building situated at Mouza Mongalbari Samundai, JL No 105,

around 4 am on Friday, breaking the latch of the main door, and after stealing a few items, he was having food from the refrigerator, police said. Noticing someone was there, the woman of the house woke up and raised an alarm. Hearing her screams, the others woke up too.

Circle Sastra Centre, Malda, Nazrul Sarani , B.S. Road, Malda, West Bengal 732101

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

LAST DATE & TIME OF SUBMISSION OF EMD (EARNEST MONEY) AND DOCUMENTS: 0.08.2022 up to 4:00 PM

Sale of immovable property mortgaged to Bank under Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act, 2002

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, PHYSICAL possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS", and "WHATEVER THERE IS" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

DESCRIPTION of IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

(The said properties are under Physical Possession of secured creditor)

| Image: Properties are under Physical Possession of the Immovable | A) Dt. of Demand Notice | A) Reserve Price (Rs. in | Date/ Time | Details of the

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions

1. The properties are being sold on 'AS IS WHERE IS BASIS and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS"

1. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorized Officer, buthe Authorized Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation.

3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website <a href="https://www.mstcecommerce.com">https://www.mstcecommerce.com</a> or <a href="https://www.mstcecommerce

on date and time mentioned in above table.

For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <a href="www.ibapi.in">www.mstcecommerce.com</a>, <a href="https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app">https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app</a>

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002

I/c CE (P), DGVCL, Surat.

पंजाब मेक्स्वल बैंक 🐚 punjab nodanal bank

Description of the Immovable Properties Mortgaged/ Owner's Name(mortgagers of property(ies)

Kr Jha
Co Borrower: Siddarth Jha S/o Mohlt
Kr Jha
Chairman No RS 308, LR 24, Present LR
Co Borrower: Siddarth Jha S/o Mohlt
Kr Jha
Chairman No RS 308, LR 24, Present LR
Co Borrower: Siddarth Jha S/o Mohlt
Kr Jha
Chairman No RS 308, LR 24, Present LR
Co Borrower: Siddarth Jha S/o Mohlt
Kr Jha
Co Borrower: Siddarth Jha
Co Borrower: Sid

deed no -7048 dated 27.11.2008.

As Prasenjit Chakraborty, a young member of the family tried to catch the thief, he was attacked with a knife, police said. Soon, their dog Rocky pounced upon the thief. The dog bit him and kept holding on to his leguntil the five-member family overpowered him. They then called police who arrested the thief, an officer said. PTI

A) Reserve Price (Rs. In Date/ Time Details of the encumbrance
B) EMD (last date of deposit of EMD)
C) Bid Increase Amount

(A) Rs.49.00 Lakh (B) 09.08.2022 Not known to Rs. 5.00 Lakh(C)Rs.0.10 From Rank

E-AUCTION

SALE NOTICE

#### Date: 29.06.2022, Place: Alipurduar Bank of Baroda **DELHI JAL BOARD : GOVT. OF DELHI** OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER (SDW) NW **KESHOPUR STP, NEW DELHI 110018**

PRESS N.I.T. 13 EE(SDW)VIII/(2022-23) Date of release of Last date/time of receip Name of Work Estimate cost E/Money in in Rs. of tender through 1. SITC of Online Monitoring System 36619876/-7,34,000/-1500/-22.07.2022 Tender ID:various locations(11nos) of 2022 DJB 225426 · Date.01.07.2022 maintenance for a period of 5 years

**Authorised Officer** 

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in Advt. No. J.S.V. 221 (2022-23) EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (SDW) VIII "STOP CORONA: Wear Mask, Follow Physical Distancing, Maintain Hand Hygier

रांजाक नेम्हलस बैंक 🕒 punjobnotional bank rcle Sastra Centre, Circle Office, Nazrul Sarani, B.S. Road, Dist-Malda, 732101 (WB), E-Mail: cs8275@pnb.co. nereas, Punjab National Bank/ the Authorised Officer(s) of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction o inancial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 read with the ecurity Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notice/s on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the

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

he borrower's /guarantor's /mortgagor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property(ies) and any dealing with the

operty(ies) will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for the amounts and interest thereor Description of the property mortgaged Built Area 964 Sq ft, situated at 4th Floor, Flat No 17, under Ward No 8, Holding further charges and interest

Dakshin Gujarat Vij Company Ltd. CIN U40102GJ2003SGC042909 Regd. & Corp. Office: 'Urja Sadan', Nana Varachha R Kapodara Char Rasta, Surat 395 006 GUJARAT **DGVCL Toll Free No. 19123 (**or 1800 233 3003) **Tender Notice** Details for the tenders mentioned hereunder are available on www. dgvcl.com (for view and download tender documents) and www.dgvcl. nprocure.com (for view, download and online tender submission). Tender No. DGVCL/SP/2261/22KV Transformer

DGVCL/SP/2263/22KV CTPT Unit

Note: Bidders may visit our website/s for regular updates till

Mob No 9911022218 TITAGARH MUNICIPALITY E-TENDER NOTICE Sealed e-tenders are invited by Titagarh Municipality for House Service Water Connection to 4039 nos, of premises at different Wards within Titagarh Municipality under AMRUT 2.0 in terms of e-Tende Reference No.WBMAD/ULB/e Tender/TM/NIeT-3(e)/AMRUT 2.0 2022-23. Last date of submission of bid is 29.07.2022. For details visit

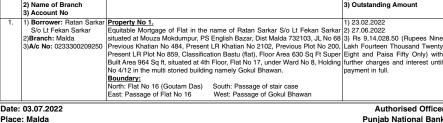
Circle Sastra Head, Chief Ma

& our Notice Board. Sd/- Chairman, Titagarh Municipality Date: 02.07.2022

vebsite: https://wbtenders.gov.in

#### (Exclusive of GST) (in Rs) (Exclusive of GST) (in Rs) Replaced) "A" Clas A" Class Bridge over river Dhanei 3,80,73,000/ 3,35,17,000/ at 1.500 km on Sunarijhola to Bolasara Special Class road in the District of Ganjam under BSY (Span 20x25.35m) Balance work Construction of Bridge over Ghodahada on B" Class o " A" Class Rs. 3,12,30,000/-Rs. 2,05,93,000/-Special' Boripadar to Pentha road in the District of Ganian under BSY. (Spar 4x30.63m) Balance work 4x30.63m) Balance ..... 3 Construction of H.L. Bridge Rs. Chadehada on 2,83,04,000/-"B" Class o Ghodahada on lara to Palaspur road 1,97,14,000/ in the District of Ganjam

Sd/- Chief Construction Engine R.W.Circle, Berhampu OIPR- 25071/11/0036/2223







# Celebrating World's 1st Biryani Day



## Celebrate World 1st Biryani Day with Pioneer of Fresh Dum Handi Biryani

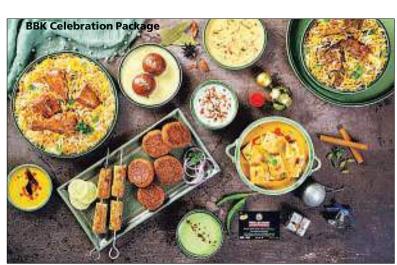
iryani by Kilo (BBK), Biggest & most loved Biryani & Kebab Chain in India, Known for its Fresh Dum Cooked Handi Biryani is delivering across India with their 90+ Outlets in Delhi NCR, Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Rajasthan, UP, Punjab, MP, Jharkhand, Patna, Mangalore, Mysore, Goa & many more.

The USP of Biryani by Kilo is to make Fresh Dum Handi Biryani for every individual order and deliver the same Handi to customers in which the Biryani is Dum cooked. BBK is the pioneer of Fresh Handi Biryani concept which many food brands have tried to imitate.

BBK uses premium high-quality ingredients like 2 years of naturally aged premium basmati rice, Superior spices handpicked from Kerala, and most stringently selected meats & vegetables for all the Biryanis, Kebabs and Kormas.

Biryani by Kilo has served more than 25 Lacs happy customers since 2015, and is India's most loved & Biggest Biryani & Kebab

Biryani by Kilo is also taking extra safety and precautionary measures, and ensuring a safe dining & delivery experience. Like sanitizing their kitchen every hour, contactless ordering & digital payment. All the meals are cooked at more than 250 degrees Celsius, ensuring the food is safe. The well-being and health of the patrons is the prime priority of Biryani by Kilo. BBK entire team is 100% vacinated.



#### **CELEBRATING THE JOY OF BIRYANI ON WORLD'S 1ST BIRYANI DAY**

Now, all you Biryani lovers can rejoice! BBK in collaboration with Daawat brings you World's first ever World Biryani Day. A day dedicated to gorging on the sumptuous flavors of Dum Biryani delivered in Khushiyon ki Handi for you. So, get ready, as we bring you the biggest Biryani celebration on 3rd July to celebrate the joy of sharing to enjoy the recipe crafted with love and warmth for all you biryani lovers.

Biryani by Kilo serves 3 styles of Biryani - Hyderabadi, Lucknowi & Kolkata. The menu also features dishes like Chicken Ghee Roast; Chicken & Paneer 65, Veg & Mutton Galoutis, Dum Nihari Gosht, Chicken Korma, and Delicious desserts like Phirni. For vegetarians, there are Kathal & Paneer Biryanis; Paneer 65, Dal Makhani, Paneer Nawabi, and Burani Raita, all of which are from Nizami tradition & utterly delicious. BBK also has premium melt in mouth - Veg & Non-veg Kebab Platters.

BBK has recently launched new products like Fish Biryani & Prawn 65 Biryani which is getting a lot of raving reviews from

customers & food connois-

Biryani By Kilo also has Royal Dine outlets in many cities where you can enhance your fresh biryani and kebab experience.

For exciting offers & orders: www.biryanibykilo.com or download BBK App or Call/whatsApp 9555-212-212

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OUR FOOD IS COOKED AT MORE THAN 250°C **OUR TEAM IS 100% VACCINATED** 

## 6 GOVT & POLITICS

# Maharashtra Speaker election today, new CM faces first test

& VALLABH OZARKAR MUMBAI, JULY 2

WITH THE Speaker's election slated for Sunday after Shiv Sena announced the candidature of its MLA Rajan Salvi for the post against BJP's Rahul Narwekar, the stage is set for the first test for the newly sworn-in Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his group of Sena rebels, and for BIP and the Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis.

Shinde and Fadnavis were sworn in on Thursday and the Governor has called for a special session of the assembly on Sunday and Monday for the Speaker's election followed by a floor test. The election will mark the first battle in the House between Uddhav Thackeray-led Sena which has 16 MLAs, and Shnde-led group with 39 MLAs.

On Saturday, Shiv Sena chief whip Sunil Prabhu issued a whip, asking all the MLAs to be present in the assembly and cast their votes in favour of Salvi.

Replying to the whip issued by Prabhu, Chief Minister Shinde asserted that it does not apply to his group as they have more than two-thirds of the total 55 Sena MLAs. He said, "We will face the



Security raised at state Assembly, on Saturday. Deepak Joshi

floor test and we will win".

Sources said a separate whip is likely to be issued by the Shinde faction for the election and the floor test.

Ajay Chaudhari, Shiv Sena legislative party leader said, "We have a strategy in place but I can't disclose it now." Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant said, "We will fight the Speaker's election and we believe in the Constitution. I have heard that the Shinde faction spokesperson Deepak Kesarkar said that Uddhav Thackeray is their leader. These MLAs now must obey the whip

and vote for Rajan Salvi." Shiv Sena parliamentary party leader Vinavak Raut said. "We have issued a whip that the rebel MLAs should vote for Rajan Salvi. If they don't, it will be an added material in our case in Supreme Court for disqualifying them."

A three-time MLA. Salvi was accompanied by Shiv Sena MP Arvind Sawant, Sena legislature party leader Ajay Chaudhari, state NCP chief Jayant Patil, and Congress legislative party leader Balasaheb Thorat while filing his

Meanwhile, late Friday night, Thackeray sacked Shinde from the post of Shiv Sena leader in party organisation for indulging in "anti party activities' '.

"Dear Shri Shinde, You have been indulging in anti-party activities and have also voluntarily given up your membership of Shiv Sena. Therefore, in exercise of the powers vested in me as the Shiv Sena Paksha Pramukha, I remove you from the post of Shiv Sena leader in the party organisation," the letter issued by Thackeray read.

The move came after Shinde and Devendra Fadnavis took oath as CM and deputy CM respectively on Thursday. Sources in Shinde camp said that they will challenge the letter legally.

As the floor test is also scheduled on Monday, Shiv Sena president and former CM Uddhav Thackeray held meetings with party leaders to carve out a strategy. Congress MLC Bhai Jagtap and Congress working president Charan Singh Sapra also met Thackeray at Matorshree Saturday and all MVA leaders held a meeting in the evening.

The NCP legislature party will hold a meeting on Sunday morning to decide their strategy.

#### Amid Sena crisis, MNS fields Rai son in Konkan outreach tour

Mumbai: Amid the turmoil within the Shiv Sena, the MNS has launched a 'Mahasampark Abhivan' to be led by Amit Thackeray, the 29-year-old son of party chief Raj Thackeray. The president of Maharashtra Navnirman Vidyarthi Sena will go on a Konkan tour from July 5 to 11. Sources say the programme is an attempt to carve

out a cadre base from the region. Amit's cousin, Aaditya Thackeray, who also leads the Yuva Sena, has been also holding rallies in Mumbai to keep the party cadre intact.

### **BJP NATIONAL EXECUTIVE**

## At meeting, party appreciates govt's steps to create jobs

**LIZ MATHEW** 

HYDERABAD, JULY 2

THE AGNIPATH scheme for defence recruitment, which had triggered protests in many states and has faced criticism from the Opposition, was "appreciated", along with other "job creating initiatives "of the Narendra Modi government, at the BJP national executive meeting on Saturday, Union Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said.

Briefing the media on the resolution passed on the government's "gareeb kalyan programmes and the economy", Pradhan said welfare initiatives for the poor is the most significant outcome of the eight years of governance by the Modi administration. It has become a "global model", he added.

The resolution, moved by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and seconded by Union minister Piyush Goyal and Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, rejected the Opposition's charges on inflation and job crisis in the country.

In the meeting, attended by more than 300 BJP leaders from across the country, the government was appreciated for steps it has taken to create jobs. "In the coming years, we will create 10 lakh jobs in the government sector." Pradhan said. "Agnipath has

been appreciated, job creation efforts have been appreciated. Implementation of the Gati Shakti will also help create jobs.'

"Exports are also going up in the global services sector and in the mineral and metal sector export," he added.

The government's recent announcement of Agnipath scheme – under which youths between 17-and-a-half and 21 years would be inducted into the armed forces for a four year tenure, and 25 per cent of them will be taken in regular service had led to protests, at times violent, in several states.

Pradhan reasoned that the unprecedented crisis in the economy is not limited to India. The pandemic, global crude oil prices and the war in Ukraine have left the prices skyrocketing, he said. But the government, he stressed, has managed the situation well.

Pointing out that the Budget has made the highest allocation for public spending, Pradhan said capital spending during the pandemic was the highest ever. "All these are linked to job creation," he noted. "If there was an acute crisis (in the job sector), social harmony would have been disrupted. The government has created jobs and is taking care of the poor."

The minister also said the 'legacy" this government inherited from the UPA dispensation should not be forgotten.

**SIDELIGHTS** 

left any chance to flaunt its pres-

ident and Chief Minister K

#### In condolence resolution: Udaipur tailor, Moosewala

Hyderabad: In its condolence resolution meant to pay tribute to its leaders, the BJP on Saturday mentioned Udaipur tailor Kanhaiya Lal and Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, who were killed recently, sources said.

While the BJP mentioned Lal, who was hacked to death by two assailants who put out a video of the crime online, the party refused to make any comment on the Udaipur incident.

Asked whether the party would discuss Lal's killing, BJP national vice-president and former Rajasthan chief minister Vasundhara Raie said that the conclave would discuss "every important political development in the country"

The condolence message, read by BJP general secretary Dilip Saikia, also mentioned several dignitaries and BJP leaders and Army personnel who died in a landslide in Manipur.

Days before his killing, Lal had sought protection from local police, saying that he had received threats over a social media post shared from his account, purportedly "supporting" suspended BJP leader Nupur Sharma's remarks on the Prophet.

Shubhdeep Singh Sidhu, also known as Sidhu Moosewala, was shot dead in Puniab's Mansa district on May 29, a day after the AAP government in Punjab pruned the security cover of the singer and 423 people temporarily.

LIZMATHEW

sified the battle between the TRS and the BJP, with the former having already grabbed the spots along the medians for its banners before the saffron party could approach the local authorities for permission.

BJP leaders said the Hyderabad civic body has levied heavy penalties on the state party unit for placing the banners in different parts of the city. According to a BJP leader, the party has already paid Rs 55 lakh as penalties in this regard. ENS

#### Gujarat court sends Setalvad, Sreekumar to judicial custody

**SOHINI GHOSH** AHMEDABAD, JULY 2

MUMBAI-BASED ACTIVIST Teesta Setalvad and retired DGP RB Sreekumar were sent to judicial custody at Sabarmati Central jail by an Ahmedabad magistrate court upon completion of their police remand on Saturday. Setalvad and Sreekumar were held on charges of criminal conspiracy, forgery and other Sections of the IPC on the basis of an FIR lodged at Ahmedabad Detection of Crime Branch (DCB). Also named in the nine-page FIR is former IPS officer Sanjiv Bhatt.

The Ahmedabad DCB had arrested Setalvad and Sreekumar on June 25, a day after the Supreme Court upheld the clean chit by the SIT to then CM Narendra Modi in the 2002 Gujarat riots. The Special Investigation Team, formed to investigate the FIR, did not seek further police remand of the two. Their judicial custody will continue until bail is granted. No bail application has been moved as of now.

DCP Crime Deepan Bhadran, who is heading the SIT, refused to reveal details of the investigation done so far as "it is an ongoing investigation and it is too early to give those details", but added, Some statements of witnesses are being taken, documents are being collected, digital evidence is being taken." While both Setalvad and Sreekumar informed the additional magistrate MV Chauhan of there being no ill treatment while they were in police custody, Setalvad, through her advocate SM Vatsa, submitted an application seeking "appropriate security in accordance with law" within jail during the period of her judicial custody.

It was submitted that she and her NGO (Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP)) had worked for justice for the victims of 2002 Gujarat riots and with several convicted in these cases, many of them imprisoned at the Sabarmati Central Jail, including women convicts, she apprehended threat to her life. Prosecutors Mitesh Amin and Amit Patel opposed the application submitting that she is "not an extraordinary prisoner", and added that "every accused will now ask for security".

## Shinde, Fadnavis address joint session of BJP, Sena faction

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, JULY 2

CHIEF MINISTER Eknath Shinde and Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Saturdav addressed a joint meeting of the BJP and rebel Sena faction legislators ahead of the crucial Speaker's elections on Sunday. While BIP has fielded Rahul Narwekar as its candidate for the election, Shiv Sena has fielded Addressing the legislators,

Shinde asserted that the whip of state legislative leader Bharat

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN** 

AT A time Droupadi Murmu,

who comes from the tribal com-

munity, is leading the race to be-

come the next President of India. the long-standing demand to

recognise "Sarna" as a separate

religion of indigenous commu-

to RSS's ideological framework

and pushback against its agenda

of subsuming Adivasis within

and parties, including Jharkhand

Mukti Morcha (JMM), have been advocating the need for a sepa-

rate code for the Sarna faith dur-

not believe in idol worship and

instead revere the forces of na-

ture, be it forests, hills, rivers, or

land. In the absence of a Sarna

code, the followers enlist them-

selves in the "Other Religions

and Persuasion (ORP)" category

campaign, and the anniversary

of the Santhal Rebellion, the is-

sue has returned to the dis-

course, with former BJP MP

Salkhan Murmu holding a

protest in Jantar Mantar on June

30 under the banner of "Adivasi

Sengel Abhiyan". The organisa-

tion headed by the MP aims to

"empower" indigenous commu-

and 2004, Salkhan Murmu rep-

Incidentally, between 1998

nities across India.

Timed with the Presidential

during the Census exercise.

The followers of the faith do

Tribal community leaders

nities is gaining traction. This is perceived as a counter

the larger Hindu identity.

ing the next Census.

NEW DELHI, JULY 2

Murmu nomination

has got tribal issues

leading 'Sarna' push

Adivasis, parties including JMM seek

code for Sarna faith in next Census

spotlight: ex-MP

Gogawale, who is a part of his group, will be applicable to members of his faction, and not that of Shiv Sena's which has been reduced to a minority.

The CM said, "We have 170+ members." He said that Sena MLAS had faced injustice [during MVA tenure] and NCP MLAs got the maximum funds and that this won't happen anymore.

Fadnavis assured the legislators, "The new alliance between BJP and Shinde will work for the welfare of Maharashtra." He termed Shinde's group as real sainiks who have upheld the

was elected an MLA in Odisha

Assembly in 2000 from the con-

stituency of Rairangpur, which

comes under Mayurbhanj Lok

Murmu's candidature and pos-

sible elevation to the post of the

President is merely symbolic.

But I sincerely feel the debate

and dialogue set off by her nom-

ination has helped bring tribal is-

Salkhan Murmu told The Indian

Express on Friday. "Going ahead,

it is going to be beneficial for the

community. He is also deter-

mined to raise the demand with

the next President. "We tried to

meet President Ram Nath

Kovind as well, but reaching him

is too difficult. So we handed

over the memorandum to

[Rashtrapati Bhavan] security

tion, around 1,000 people gath-

ered at Jantar Mantar over the

anxieties over losing identity,

culture, and the traditional way

of life in the absence of a formal

recognition, leaving the vast ma-

jority of Adivasis vulnerable to

attempts of conversion to

demand amid a downpour.

At Thursday's demonstra-

The demand stems from

personnel," he said.

sues under the spotlight,"

"Many are saying Droupadi

Sabha seat.

The meeting was attended by 106 BJP MLAs, and 50 from the Shinde faction comprising 39 Sena rebels and 11 from small parties and Independents. Both BIP and Shinde faction issued whip to their respective members.

Meanwhile, Shinde himself went all the way to Goa to bring rebel 50 MLAs back on Saturday.

The MLAs travelled in a special chartered flight. Later, they were ferried to Taj President at Colaba in a luxury bus amid heavy police presence. Despite threats issued by Shiv Sainiks last week, the Shinde faction faced no challenge on Saturday.

**SAFFRON AND PINK FLAGS** Hyderabad city is awash with saffron flags and flex boards featuring the pictures of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP national president J P Nadda and Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar. On the route to the National Executive venue, the cutout of BIP chief ministers are put up along the roadside. There are big banners and flex boards carrying Home Minister Amit Shah's pictures too.

The ruling TRS has also not

#### Chandrasekhar Rao's clout in the city. The party's pink flags have

been squeezed into every corner of the city that compete with the BJP's riot of saffron colour flags. **BANNER BATTLE** The TRS has also placed huge banners welcoming Yashwant Sinha, the Opposition parties'

Presidential candidate, who arrived in Hyderabad Saturday as part of his campaign. This inten-

## At Sinha's meet, KCR attacks PM, says he is killing democracy

**SREENIVAS JANYALA** HYDERABAD. JULY 2

TELANGANA CHIEF Minister K Chandrashekar Rao lashed out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi and BJP at the Opposition parties' presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha's meet-and-greet programme with Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) leaders.

Extending the TRS' support to Sinha, KCR asked the MPs and MLAs to vote with their heart and soul so that a deserving candidate wins. "Weigh the two candidates and vote after thinking. It will bring a qualitative change," he said.

The CM said the actions of the Modi government and BJP functionaries had destroyed India's image in the international community. KCR asked the PM to reply to allegations that it was due to his pressure on the Sri Lankan government that a power project contract was given to an Indian industrialist and if he does



Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao with Opposition Presidential candidate Yashwant Sinha on Saturday. PTI

not reply, the allegations stand true. "Modi is the 15th PM and never has India's image been affected during the rule of the previous 14 PMs." he said.

KCR accused the Centre of killing democracy and using constitutional bodies to harass anyone who disagreed.

Accusing Modi of fooling 1.5 billion people, KCR said: "Have you fulfilled even one promise that you have made?'

Addressing the TRS representatives, Yashwant Sinha said the presidential election was being held at an extraordinary time. "We all know what is happening in the country. Intellectuals are describing that the nation is collapsing, and that it is why this election is so important," he said.

### Mamata batting for Murmu betrays fear of BJP inroads her candidature. A senior party

**ATRI MITRA** KOLKATA, JULY 2

THE RULING BJP-led NDA's move to field the tribal leader and ex-Jharkhand governor Droupadi Murmu as its candidate in the July 18 Presidential election has put the West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo

PITSTOP IN TN

Hinduism and Christianity. Mamata Banerjee in a spot. Despite playing a key role in "Also, in many cases, Census enumerators trick tribals into getting the former Union minisidentifying themselves as ter and party leader Yashwant Hindus," the former MP said. "If Sinha nominated as the 12 crore Adivasis of the country Opposition camp's Presidential can be recognised under Article nominee, Banerjee created a stir 342 of the Constitution as by telling reporters in Kolkata Scheduled Tribes, their faith also Friday that Murmu could have deserves recognition under been a "consensus candidate" Article 25. This is our fundamenhad the BJP consulted her nomination with the Opposition par-



NDA Presidential candidate Droupadi Murmu with AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami

Palaniswami and O Panneerselvam, Tamil Maanila Congress president G K Vasan, and Pattali

in Chennai on Saturday. Murmu called on BJP allies in Tamil Nadu to seek their support for

her campagin. During her near three-hour stopover in Chennai, Murmu met AIADMK's

Makkal Katchi president Dr Anbumani Ramadoss, who all extended their support. PTI

Bengal CM Mamata Baneriee

the Presidential election following the Maharashtra political developments, she said, "Had we known they (NDA) were planning to field a tribal woman or a member of a minority community, we could have thought about it (consensus). We have great respect for people from the tribal communities and for women." Noting that Sinha has already filed his nomination papers, she also added that she will however go by the Opposition

has a better chance of winning

In the July 2012 Presidential when election, Pranab Mukherjee was the then ruling Congress-led UPA's nominee, Banerjee had changed her stance and decided to back Mukherjee at the last moment.

The TMC chief's startling remarks, that came a day after "Hul Diwas" marking the 1855 Santhal uprising, might have betrayed her realisation that by opposing Murmu in the Presidential poll her party's tribal vote bank. which she regained from the BIP in the 2021 state Assembly elections, might be dented.

On the occasion of "Hul Diwas", Banerjee's arch BJP rival and Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari participated in several events across the state's Junglemahal region, which has a significant tribal population, projecting his party's bid to select a tribal woman as its Presidential face. With Murmu set to become the first tribal to become the President of India, Adhikari also said that "while Narendra Modi's candidate is Murmu, Mamata Baneriee's candidate is Yashwant Sinha" and that following her victory he will request President Murmu to visit Junglemahal.

Tribal voters account for 7-8% of the total voters in Bengal. In four parliamentary constituencies in the Junglemahal region comprising Bankura, Purulia, Jhargram and West Midnapore districts - and eight constituencies spread across North Bengal districts, the tribal voter percentage rises up nearly 25%.

Santhals make up over 80 per cent of Bengal's tribal population. Murmu also belongs to the Santhali community.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, when the BJP won 18 seats as against the TMC's 22 seats, the saffron party bagged all seats of Junglemahal and six seats of North Bengal. In the 2021 Assembly polls, however, which the TMC won by a landslide, the TMC got the better of the BJP in Junglemahal districts.

Taking the initiative to select the joint Opposition's Presidential candidate. Baneriee had invited 22 Opposition leaders and CMs to attend a meeting in Delhi on June 15, which finally led to the nomination of Sinha, who then resigned from the TMC to become the Opposition's nominee.

The TMC camp said Banerjee's bid to calibrate her stance favourably towards Murmu would not lead to her supporting

marks the CM has just sought to "reach out to the state's tribals" while signalling that she was not against Murmu's candidature. The TMC chief drew flak from the Opposition Congress and

leader said by making these re-

CPI(M). State Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said, "This is nothing new for Mamata Banerjee. Earlier also, she has changed her mind before the Presidential election.' Bengal CPI(M) leader Sujan

Chakraborty said: "Banerjee has always maintained double standards. To prove her leadership, she quickly called meeting of Opposition parties to decide the Presidential candidate... She is now assuring BJP that she is with them so that it does not pose any

Kolkata

## resented Mayurbhanj, the place

Droupadi Murmu hails from. She

#### Nupur skips summons, Kolkata cops issue lookout notice for her

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** KOLKATA. JULY 2

THE KOLKATA Police on Saturday issued a lookout notice for suspended BJP spokesperson Nupur Sharma after she failed to appear before its officers for the fourth time in a row over her controversial remarks on the Prophet that triggered widespread violence in

According to a senior police officer, Sharma skipped summons issued by officers of Amherst Street and Narkeldanga police stations. "A lookout notice has been issued on Saturday after she failed to appear before our officers despite being summoned several times. She was summoned by each of the two police stations twice," said the officer.

Amherst Street and Narkeldanga police stations had separately summoned Nupur Sharma after FIRs were lodged against her last month.

She had cited apprehensions of a possible assault on her if she visited Kolkata and sought four weeks to appear before the police

#### Monsoon covers nation six days ahead of schedule

*Pune:* The Southwest monsoon has covered the entire country on July 2, the India Meteorological Department(IMD)saidSaturday.

The advance this year took place six days ahead of normal date which is July 8. "The monsoon's east-west advance during the past few days has been smooth and rapid," said Medha Kolhe, Scientist F at IMD, Pune.

So far, the Bay of Bengal part of the monsoon has been relatively stronger than the Arabian Sea. Except east and northeast India, all other regions recorded deficit rain. At present, the monsoon is active and favourable conditions will prevail for a week. Central India and west coast will receive widespread rain in the next five days, the IMD has forecast. **ENS** 

## NIA gets 10-day custody of four suspects Kerala leader

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** JAIPUR, JULY 2

A JAIPUR court on Saturday sent the four people accused in the murder of Udaipur tailor Kanhaiyalal Teli to 10-day cus-National tody of the Investigation Agency (NIA).

Teli was hacked to death, allegedly by Mohammad Riyaz and Ghouse Mohammad, on June 28 for purportedly sharing on social media former BIP spokesperson Nupur Sharma's remarks on the Prophet.

Riyaz and Ghouse were arrested the same day. Two others accused in the case - Asif Hussain and Mohsin Khan were arrested subsequently.

The four were produced before a Jaipur court on Saturday afternoon — of them, Riyaz and Ghouse were brought with their faces covered. The CBI court number 1, which deals with NIA cases, sent them to 10-day NIA custody. With the NIA taking over the probe, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of Raiasthan Police has handed over all documents related to the case to the central agency.

Outside the court complex, police had a tough time dealing with lawyers and local residents, who shouted slogans against the accused, including seeking their death sentence. As police personnel tried to put the accused back into the police van, they had to jostle with the large crowd, some of whom also allegedly managed to attack the accused.

#### SHO, two circle officers suspended

Two circle officers and an SHO have been suspended in addition to the Udaipur additional superintendent of police for negligence on their part in handling the circumstances leading to the murder of tailor Kanhaiyalal.

"Circle Officer, East, Jarnail Singh, Circle Officer, West, Jitendra Anchaliya and SHO Suraj Pole Leeladhar Malviya were suspended on Friday night for negligence," sources in the police department said.

Additional SP, Udaipur, Ashok Meena had also been suspended



A crowd assaults one of the accused persons in the Udaipur killing, outside the NIA court in Jaipur on Saturday. Rohit Jain Paras

### Cong links accused with BJP, party denies claim Says not in my hands who clicks photograph

and if the law considers my pic-

"As far as going to BJP's minor-

ity cell programmes is concerned,

a photo clicked, it does not mean

that person has our party's mem-

bership. Gulab-ji (Kataria) is our

universally respected leader and

if someone wants to get a photo

(clicked) with him, he can't be told

no." Khan also said that with the

availability of internet services

and mobile phones, "people want

to get photos with big leaders and

Rajendra Singh Yadav claimed

that Riyaz had been Kataria's

In Jaipur, state MoS (Home)

make them go viral."

objection," Kataria said.

the events) before."

JAIPUR, JULY 2

WITH THE Congress on Saturday alleging that one of the main accused in the killing of a tailor in Udaipur is a "BJP member", and asking whether the Centre had moved quickly to transfer the case to NIA due to this reason, senior BJP leader and former Rajasthan minister Gulab Chand Kataria said it is not in the hands of political leaders to select who clicks a picture with them at a public event.

Pictures of accused Mohammad Riyaz have surfaced on social media with some state BJP workers, including Kataria, the Leader of Opposition in Assembly.

In New Delhi, Congress media and publicity department chairman Pawan Khera cited the social media posts to allege that Riyaz is a BJP worker. Among others, Khera cited a November 2019 post by BIP member Mohammad Tahir, who referred to Riyaz as a "BJP worker". "It is being said that there is a photo of one of the Udaipur criminals with me. I have been working with BIP since 1974 and have been an MLA and a minister, too," Kataria said, indicating the need for his presence at differ-

În Jaipur, state president of BJP's minority cell, M Sadiq Khan, and the cell's national vice-president Husain Khan told the media that no person accused in the Udaipur killing has "any association with any BJP worker". Kataria said BJP has an "autho-

rised" minority cell, and the image that has surfaced shows Riyaz with Irshad Chainwala, who has been a party minority cell worker. "I have been in (their) programmes as well, and my presence at a minority cell programme is not a crime," Kataria said. "I would have certainly gone to the programme and who stands with me in a photo is not in my hands, or in anyone else's (hands)."

In the image concerned, Kataria is seen flanked by Chainwala and Riyaz.

#### MAN 'VERY CLOSE' TO "Even after that, if someone **BJP: TMC'S ABHISHEK** feels that a crime has been com-

Kolkata: TMC general secremitted, then I want a criminal case to be lodged against me as well. tary Abhishek Banerjee said Saturday that the BJP is diture with him a crime, then take rectly linked to the Udaipur action against me. I will have no killing. Sharing two pictures of one of the two accused with some BJP leaders on Twitter, he said the man was it is my responsibility as a BJP "very close" to the party. They worker, and it is necessary that I (BJP) don't want unity, harcontinue to go and have gone (to mony or democracy. The only thing they want is to divide Arguing on similar lines, BJP's the country, he claimed. ENS Sadiq Khan said, "If someone gets

> "polling agent". Addressing the media in Delhi, Khera alleged that Riyaz Attari, one of the accused in the case, was an active member of

He claimed Atari had attended many events of Kataria. Khera said the Congress has found past Facebook posts of Chainwala and Mohammad Tahir, "associated with BIP's minority cell", mention-

WITH ENS, DELHI

# held, gets bail

**SHAJU PHILIP** THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 2

SENIOR POLITICIAN and seventime former legislator, PCGeorge, was arrested on Saturday, purportedly on the basis of a complaint of sexual assault filed by a woman, who is also an accused in the 2013 solar panel scandal in the state.

Later, a magistrate court here granted him bail.

Saturday's arrest, which comes two months after George, 70, was held and released on bail for a purported hate speech, came while the senior politician was being questioned by police in another case, lodged against him by former minister KT Jaleel.

George told the media that his arrest is part of a conspiracy of CM Pinarayi Vijayan. "He (Vijayan) has a grudge because I did not give any statement against former chief minister Oommen Chandy in the solar scandal. He (Vijayan) is not going to escape," George alleged.

After the court granted him bail, he said: "Central agencies should probe into Vijayan's frequent visits to the US. The financial resources of Vijayan's daughter Veena's IT firm, Exalogic, should be probed. All financial dealings related to Vijayan have been routed through his daughter's firm. I will not back down from this fight against corruption."

While the woman had earlier made allegations of sexual harassment against several politicians in the state, which are under investigation, George's name did not figure in those complaints.

Last month, former state minister Jaleel had alleged that George had conspired with gold smuggling scandal accused Swapna Suresh in her latest allegations against Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the LDF government in the state, and the complainant (Jaleel) himself.

On Saturday, Crime Branch police had summoned George for questioning in their probe into the case registered on the basis of Jaleel's complaint, when



PCGeorge, 7-time ex-MLA

police informed the former legislator about the alleged sexual harassment complaint.

The woman had registered her complaint against George around noon, when police were questioning the senior politician in connection with the case registered on the basis of Jaleel's complaint. Thiruvananthapuram city police subsequently arrested George under IPC Sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 354-A (offence of sexual harassment).

According to the FIR. lodged on the basis of the woman's complaint, George had summoned her to the government guest house in Thiruvananthapuram on February 10 under the pretext of discussing the gold smuggling scandal and outraged her modesty.

Calling the allegations baseless, George's son, Shone George, a member of district panchayat in Kottayam, said the veteran leader was arrested because the state "government wanted to divert attention from the latest allegations related to the gold smuggling scandal". Shone said, "The government also wants to divert media attention from the explosive attack on CPI(M) state headquarters. We will fight this legally."

The woman had earlier been made a witness in the conspiracy case by police and had given a statement before court under Section 164 CrPC. She had earlier made similar allegations against several Congress leaders, including former CM Chandy, AICC general secretary KCVenugopal, Lok Sabha MP Hibi Eden, Kerala Congress (M) leader Jose K Mani and some others. They have denied the allegations.

## 'The biggest problem is our dependence on imported energy, which is 4% of our GDP'

Neelkanth Mishra, Co-head of Asia Pacific Strategy, India Equity Strategist with Credit Suisse and part-time member of the PM's Economic Advisory Council, unpacks the inflation basket. This explained. Live session was moderated by Anil Sasi, National Business Editor



Associate Partner



#### On ongoing inflation

As economies have opened up, supply is responding but demand had gone up well in advance. That created inflation exacerbated by what we call supply chain bullwhips. When there is a slight amount of shortage, everyone moves from "just in time" to "just in case." Instead of having enough inventory, you start saying, "I don't want to lose production, so let me order some more." The apparent demand starts to move up much faster than real demand. Everyone is building an inventory. In the US in particular, this became really bad because it didn't have the manufacturing capacity to meet the additional demand, but it had triggered that demand by handing over cash to people through a stimulus. The demand went over to China, Japan, India, Bangladesh and when the goods started hitting the US ports, they realised these didn't have the capacity. This triggered a wage-price spiral in the US, which is the most dangerous form of inflation where people start demanding wage hikes and prices go up.

In February 2022, when the Russia-Ukraine conflict started, the global oil supply went down, exacerbating inflation. Dense energy is critical for economic growth and if there is a shortage of gas and oil, the global GDP has to shrink by that much. Now for that to happen, demand has to fall, and for demand to fall, prices have to go up. I think this is a very serious problem. Fiscal and monetary interventions are being undertaken by most countries which can afford to subsidise oil prices. Everyone, from Australia to the US and China, is giving incentives. They have cut down excise duties so that the retail price of oil doesn't change. But the suppliers benefitting from this are unwill $ing \ to \ invest \ in \ increasing \ capacity \ because \ they're$ unsure how long this will last. Then there is what I would call forced saving. If the global oil market was \$ 2.5 trillion at \$ 70 a barrel, it is now closer to \$ 4 trillion, so \$ 1.5 trillion is moving from consumers to suppliers. The consumers are buying less and the suppliers are saving the surplus. This



#### **AUDIENCE** QUESTIONS

#### On whether inflation could dent Indian economy's recovery

Sustained inflation of above five to six per cent destabilises economies. But as of now the risk and the challenge for us is that we are dependent on imported energy. You cannot grow without dense forms of energy and that has become expensive. I don't think by itself this inflation is going to slow us down. The underlying drivers of growth are quite robust.

is a forced saving which is very bad for growth and leads to stagflation. I don't think this is going away

#### On CPI inflation converging

towards wholesale inflation Whether rate hikes are the right solution is debatable. We tend to look at inflation on a yearon-year basis. We need to look at how inflation impulses have been coming through month-onmonth changes, if they are below or above seasonal. The CPI inflation went up from 4.3 per cent in September last year to 7.8 per cent in April, because of the seasonal moves in the index. The October-November moves were almost 100 per cent in vegetables as prices went up sharply. While there was correction in onion prices,

#### On the government's FDI relaxation in If the economy had to maintain a 12 to

13 per cent nominal GDP growth, would India's credit or financial system be able to manage that level? This is why the privatisation of PSU banks came to be considered quite seriously and was mentioned in the Budget. The expansion of financial system capacity is very much on the radar. The rest would be as and when necessary.

tomatoes and potatoes became costlier.

The March-April inflation was global because of higher prices of crude oil. Cereal inflation went up mostly because of global wheat and our free grain scheme, the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Ann Yojana, caused rice and wheat prices to fall. So, there are several one-offs in that local component. When you raise rates, you are slowing the economy down to match demand and supply. That is debatable.

#### On the variation in Central bank interventions

The biggest problem for India is our significant dependence on imported energy, which is four per cent of our GDP. So, if prices go up by 50 to 60 per cent, you see a natural outflow of nearly



(Left) Neelkanth Mishra (Above) Anil Sasi

two per cent of GDP. It's simplistic, but say everything remains the same and prices go up by 2.5 per cent, is it necessary to raise rates to control that price? Our challenge is the need to curtail demand and our biggest problem is our balance of payments. We were running a reasonably comfortable balance of payment surplus of about \$15 to 20 billion on an annual level. If your imported energy bill goes up by \$90 billion and there are commensurate increases in coal, gas, fertiliser and edible oil, because all of them at some level are linked, your balance of payments is suddenly in a \$70 billion deficit.

Now you can keep paying for it by increasing capital flows but you need to reduce your imports. Before the Russia-Ukraine war, my view was we

would report a GDP growth of 3 to 4  $\,$ per cent in FY23. That number has to be brought down because there's almost a 2.5 per cent extra burden of energy cost. We need to frame monetary policy based on our needs, not follow the US Fed.

#### On the RBI's role

There are multiple aspects here. In my view the most reliable unemployment indicator is the NREGA job

demand. If two crore people are wanting to work at Rs 200 a day, that's an important indicator of the slack in the economy. That number is now only about 20 lakh higher than the average in April 2019, which I think is an important indicator of normalisation.

But the question is which tool do you use? There is a reporate, the rate at which banks borrow from the Reserve Bank, and there is a reverse repo rate, so that banks can deposit surplus funds to the Central bank. When there is significant overnight liquidity, too much money in the system and banks are unable to lend it, they deposit funds with the Central bank. When you have this kind of surplus, the effective rate is the reverse reporate, not the reporate, and it has gone up. For the fortnight ending September 2021, the cost of absorption, the effective reverse reporate, was 3.37 per cent, and in February it became 3.87 per cent because the RBI started to absorb liquidity through what they call the VRRR, variable rate reverse repo auctions.

The wage-price spiral in the US is not visible here. Most vegetable prices are local and till the time we see local wage rates go up significantly, there is a lesser need to tighten because of the risk of entrenched inflation expectations. This is something we need to watch.

I think the inflation expectations are more anchored to the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The Wholesale Price Index (WPI) is what companies see and it's much more influenced by crude and commodities. If inflation expectations start getting entrenched, then we need to worry more.

#### On the signals from RBI

**SCANTHE CODE TO** 

**WATCH VIDEO** 

I think the off-cycle hike was to a large extent influenced by the Fed's increase, because when we think about capital flows, we tend to think of it as portfolio investors, as foreign direct investment, venture capital, private equity and external commercial borrowing. A very reasonable part of our dollar inflows is actually trade financing. What happens is that if the Fed hikes and you don't –and these are all very short-term

loans – it makes much more sense on a currency arbitrage basis because the US rates are always lower than ours.

There is a risk of the rupee depreciating, which is why those rates are stabilising at a certain gap now. If that gap widens, it makes sense for the new borrower to repay the dollar debt and borrow in rupees. That increases the demand for dollars. If you raise rates, you get more

dollar inflows but that is not really true in India. If you see our capital inflows, most are related to growth. So, for indirect investment, venture capital, private equity, portfolio investment in equities, we don't have rate-linked flows.

In any case, there was some normalisation that was necessary given that the economy is reviving, so some rate hikes will happen and should happen. We need to check if the Fed keeps hiking on the very short-term flows. If we are not careful, we could see a much sharper dollar outflow than we have seen so far, which can then pressure the currency.



## SUNDAY STORY

#### THE SUNDAY PROFILE

## At T-junction

Uddhav Thackeray tried one way of running Sena and failed. As the loss drives him more into the arms of his family, what went wrong for Sena's 'moderate' face and what lies ahead as Uddhav faces rebels and a pumped-up BJP

#### ZEESHAN SHAIKH & VALLABH OZARKAR

TUNG BY the revolt of Chhagan Bhujbal with 17 other MLAs, and ibes from within over turning his party into his fief, Shiv Sena chief Balasaheb Thackeray on July 18, 1992, wrote a signed article in Saamana, and announced that he was quitting the party.

Two days later, on June 20, a sea of Shiv Sainiks landed up outside the Sena office, pleading with Thackeray to reconsider. Senior Shiv Sena leaders were heckled and manhandled for not being loyal enough and many of Thackeray's potential detractors were cut to size. Thackeray then "magnanimously" acceded to the Sainiks' requests to reconsider his decision, with the episode stamping his authority on the party forever.

Almost exactly 30 years later, the above is the best-case scenario for son Uddhav Thackeray. However, on June 29, as he resigned as the Chief Minister and MLC after a 15-minute-long staid speech, it was with an appeal for peace, which seemed unnecessary. Barring a few incidents of vandalism, the transfer of power from his Sena faction to the one represented by Eknath Shinde in Maharashtra was smooth, with the Sainiks more puzzled than angry at Uddhav for "throwing in the towel" without a fight.

Uddhav seemed determined to maintain the detente though, congratulating Shinde promptly after he was sworn in as CM. Even rabble-rouser Sanjay Raut appealed to the Sainiks to not make a fuss when he appeared before the Enforcement Directorate.

But then again, a day later, Uddhav seemed to flex his muscles by talking about

the BJP's "betrayal", and by "expelling" Shinde. For Sena ranks, this dilly-dallying repre-

sents all that is wrong with the party. A decade after stepping into Bal Thackeray's big shoes, Uddhav appears uncertain about where he wants to take the party. Should he stick to the new, 'moderate' mould that is seen as better suited to his own personality of a laidback politician? Or under heat from the rebels, over particularly Uddhav's Hindutva credentials, should he fall back on the in-your-face tactics that have paid off for the Sena over the years?

#### The numbers

With 39 of 55 MLAs rebelling, any politician would find a fightback difficult. Uddhav must contend with that plus a BJP snapping at his heels. The rebels will have the Sangh's support and the money and muscle power that comes with being in government.

Many Sena watchers doubt Uddhav has the stomach for it, especially given how the recent crisis played out. Still in the initial stages, Uddhav inexplicably vacated his official residence, making a show of it; then let a good farewell moment pass; only to hang on as numbers dwindled; and lastly quit without using the Assembly floor to make a grand exit.

'He should have presented his case on the floor of the House. He could have put forth his views and explain why he chose the Congress and NCP. That would have been in the records of the House for posterity. Instead he chose Facebook Live," says leader Prithviraj Chavan, not hiding his dismay.

The loss of 39 MLAs to Shinde won't be felt only in the Assembly. The Sena has in the process lost its second-rung leadership across Maharashtra, Shinde himself was No. 2, next only to the Thackerays. Of the six MLAs from North Maharashtra and five in Western, none remain with Uddhav. The same is the case with Vidarbha, where three of the four Sena MLAs have gone with Shinde. In Marathwada, eight of the 12 MLAs, and in Konkan, 12 of the 15, are now with Shinde.

The only place where Uddhav has retained some support is Mumbai, where eight of the 15 MLAs are still with his faction. One of the first tests of how strong that base is will be the approaching BMC polls. The BJP is determined to wrest the cash-rich body, and within hours of the Shinde-Fadnavis swearing-in, the volley against the Sena-controlled corporation started. Says a former BJP corporator tasked with handling the BMC polls: "It is time for change. This year the BJP will get control of the city as well."

The Sena's track record in the BMC polls under Uddhav doesn't inspire much confidence. In the 2002 elections, when he played an important role, while Bal Thackeray was around, the Sena won 97 of the 227 seats. It has been downhill since: 84 seats in 2007 and 75 in 2012 (Thackeray Sr died that year), with the BJP as an ally. In 2017, when the Sena and BJP fought separately, the Sena got 84.

Even in the Assembly elections, the Sena has been on the decline. It came to power in 1995 winning 73 of the 288 seats. After Uddhav started playing an active role, it got 62 in 2004, 45 in 2009, 63 in 2014 and 56 in 2019. In 2014, the Sena, BJP fought separately.

#### Series of splits

Since Uddhav took over the party in 2003, this is the third split in the Sena. Many Sena rebels note that while Uddhav does not have the aura of his father, he expects to be treated

with the same deference, with no questions raised about his methods. His "aloofness" adds to the problem, with Uddhav operating through a coterie, including his family.

"Those in his inner circle became gatekeepers and many old leaders were disappointed that they had to go through them to approach Uddhav. The trust deficit only grew," says Sanjay Patil of the University of Mumbai who has traced the Sena between 1985 and 2022 for his doctoral work.

Partymen say that not only did he rely on a select few, Uddhav was unable to monitor what they were up to. NCP chief Sharad Pawar minced no words in private about the Sena being clueless on the brewing rebellion.

After the transfer of power on Thursday, Pawar told reporters: "Uddhav Thackeray's working style is such that if he has faith in someone, he gives him complete autonomy. We saw this with Eknath Shinde. I do no know if this is behind what transpired.'

Even in the days following the revolt, Uddhav seemed to have left the talking to the others, particularly Raut and son Aaditya. Many Sena leaders feel that the aggressive

stance of the two pushed the rebels away. For now, Uddhav has the support of the Congress and NCP. But this will be tested when the three parties, with their separate agendas, fight an election. Even Pawar has peen guarded over poll commitments.

#### New Uddhav, or old family man?

Nearly everyone is unanimous that Uddhav needs to readjust. "He needs to face the uncomfortable reality that his hold over the second- and third-rung leadership of the Sena has been wiped out. Him doing some hard thinking to reach out to the Sena cadre, which still has a significant presence on the ground, is essential," a Congress MLA says.

Whatever he does going forward, Uddhav might find himself even more dependent on the advice of wife Rashmi, Aaditya and NCP chief Pawar. Just like Balasaheb, who after the 1992 rebellion by Bhujbal started inducting his family in the party, Uddhav too might draw an even tighter circle of family around him.

Aaditya's growing clout, another cause of heartburn for the rebels, is already more visible. The Yuva Sena, which he has headed for 12 years since its formation, is leading the rallies to lobby support across the state. The core committee members, who are mostly Mumbai-based, have been instructed to focus on districts.

Samajwadi Party MLA Rais Shaikh says that for all of Aaditya's enthusiasm, he represents a new face of the Sena that the rebels have mutinied against. "With Aaditya, you can talk about nice things like what is happening in Davos. But if you tell him that there is garbage strewn around a chawl... he gets uncomfortable. I had a conversation with him where I told him that these issues will not get votes. He told me somebody should think beyond only votes. I told him that this is not the time. But then he starts ignoring

Illustration: Suvaiit Dev

you and stops talking to you," Shaikh says. Rashmi is also seen as key to Uddhav's political career, having played an important role in pushing him to take on the CM's role. And, more importantly, to making the difficult decision of breaking with the BJP.

On June 22 night, as Uddhav travelled the short distance from his official residence Varsha to his private home Matoshree, it was the dynasty at the forefront. Uddhav, Rashmi and their two sons, hailed and cheered by supporters, appearing repeatedly from their vehicles to acknowledge the support.

That evening showed there could be a new day for Uddhav. But the clock is ticking.





#### **TORA AGARWALA**

EVERY RESIDENT of Silchar has a story of the "bejaan jol", or the big flood, that hit the south Assam town on June 20.

"Till my waist," says the taxi-driver, driving us from the airport to the town. "It came up to my neck," says the manager at our hotel. The project officer at the Cachar district disaster management, our third stop, holds up his left arm: "This high, for seven days."

Nine days after the deluge hit, the main road that cuts through the heart of Silchar the second-most populous town in Assam —is choked with traffic, its sidewalks teeming with pedestrians, its restaurants open.

That an unprecedented flood, which most describe as "worst in their memory", had submerged the road a few days back, is hard to imagine at first glance. But the signs are everywhere: in the big trucks with banners that read 'on flood relief duty', in the marks the water has left on boundary walls, in the shop fronts that have furniture stacked on top of each other, in the white-canopied medical camps. And in the conversations.

Officials admit that in the beginning, there was a complete sense of "helplessness". "The scale of the disaster was too big. There

were not enough boats, not enough manpower," says a district disaster management official.

At Fatak Bazaar, the wholesale market that is the commercial nerve centre of three Barak Valley districts, a man recounts to bystanders his close shave with a "gang of thieves", who tried to rob his home during the flood. At Maya Hotel, one of the town's oldest restaurants, famous for its Svlheti-style

fish curry, the cashier can't help recalling, as he accepts payment from customers: "Ki bejaan jol!... What big waters!"

The water gushed in on the afternoon of June 20, following a suspected breach at the Bethukandi embankment along the Barak river the previous day. In a matter of hours, the river came rushing in.

Calling it "a scene from a horror movie", A Sinha, 41, says water entered first her lane,

## Down a town, on a boat with a body

Nine days after Silchar saw its worst flood, water lies stagnant, power supply is still out at some places, officials are struggling with rescue, and people have questions over if things will ever change



then her porch, then the house, swallowed the floor, then her furniture. Soon, she could see only the tops of cars on the roads.

In another part of town, head teacher Dilip Roy reached his government lower primary

school after the waters re-

books, OMR sheets, a brand

new order of school uni-

Officials admit that ceded somewhat to find in the beginning, there was complete "helplessness". "The scale of the disaster was too big. There were not enough boats, not enough

manpower"

forms floating. Roy and the school watchman are busy laying out the same on the rusted tin roof of the school to dry. "We are trying to save what we can," says Roy. At the Cachar Cancer Hospital and Research Centre, the staff fashioned a raft to ferry patients,

through knee-deep water. A temporary OPD was set up under the trees on drier ground. "While the serious patients were ferried to the hospital, what could be done outside, we did it there," says oncologist and director of the hospital, Dr Ravi Kannan.

In low-lying localities, the water, stagnant for more than 10 days, has started to smell. At Chencoori road, which now resembles

a canal with wooden boats and floating shops, a father who left home to fetch



(Top) At the Durga Shankar Pathshala, a lower primary school in Silchar, a caretaker lays out school uniforms to dry on the roof; a temporary raft used to ferry patients to the Cachar Cancer Hospital. The approach to the hospital has waist-deep water, even 10 days after the flood hit. Tora Agarwala

Complan for his four-year-old daughter is haggling with a boatman. A retired schoolteacher wades through the waters to a spot with electricity, holding high a polythene bag of mobile phones, given to him by neighbours, to charge. ("By July 1, 99% power had

been restored in Silchar, save for one locality that is still waterlogged," an official from the Assam Power Distribution Company Ltd told The Sunday Express). A vegetable vendor now sells his wares from a make-shift raft, with his customers correspondingly adjusting.

The stoic resignation hits you, but there are also spurts of anger. "What is the use of taking photos and videos? Not like our problems go away," says a man. Another shouts from his rooftop: "They spent so much on Namami Barak (a government festival to celebrate the Barak river), they could have dredged the river instead."

Many say "the only good thing" the floods brought was a "sense of community". "Without anything to do in the evenings, no phones, electricity, we would sit on our rooftops and talk," says a resident of Das Colony. "I don't think we did that before." In localities that had network, WhatsApp

groups became channels for information. "People were looking out for each other," says Suraj Singha, a 32-year-old IT professional, adding that a group called 'Silchar Flood' with 400 participants became his saviour. "From 'I have a lifeboat but please return on the same day' to 'What is the water level at Link road?', it tackled various questions," he says.

However, others have more scarring memories, like Mahitosh Pal, 66. His brother suffered a brain stroke the same day as the floods hit, and died two days later in hospital. The shocked family then realised the town's crematorium, too, was under water.

Pal was able to cremate his brother only two days later in Udharbond, 15 km away. He hired a country boat for Rs 12,000. "We floated with the body in waters that were 15 feet high... through a town that was in absolute devastation... Some people shouted at us asking us to get food and water, but fell quiet when they saw I had a body with me."

While floods in Assam arrive every year like clockwork, the geographical spread of the current wave has been unprecedented, with Silchar among those unexpectedly hit.

Many blame the breach at the Bethukandi embankment, about 5 km from the town. The embankment lies adjacent to a wetland, Mahisha Beel. On May 22, a portion of it was allegedly cut by "miscreants", as Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma put it. On Friday, Sarma announced a CID probe, adding that six persons have been identified.

But the locals who live around the wetland say they did it to "save themselves", tired of the waters. "For more than two decades, we have petitioned different governments, but our concerns have fallen on deaf ears, says a local, who did not wish to be named.

Four years ago, a sluice gate was constructed, but it was never completed. In May, after the first wave of floods receded, the water did not decrease at the beel. So locals allegedly cut a canal, to let the water out. They claim they told the authorities about it.

Three weeks later, it was through this now-widened gap that the water came in. On Friday, workers from different departments are busy reinforcing the dyke.

An irrigation department official says that while the breach was a contributory cause, it was not the only reason behind the floods. "Apart from the breach year, the incessant rains led the waters to top embankments at several places, not just Bethukandi," he says, adding that the Barak basin had "fragmented over the years owing to developmental activities".

At its peak last week, the Barak's water level had risen to 21.59 m, against the danger level of 19.83 m. In the last few days, it fell at an excruciatingly slow pace. Finally on July 1, 12 days after the flood, it hit 19.83, just below the danger level.



Aerial view of flooded Assam

#### ASSAM FLOODS **AS OF JULY 1**

Human lives lost

173 (155 flood,18 landslide)

**30** Districts affected

29,70,405 Population affected

3,03,384 Population displaced

Cachar district flood data

(including Silchar) as of July 1 **Human lives lost** 

Population affected 14,04,748 Population displaced 2,35,661

**POWER STATUS AS OF JULY 2** 

■ 2,210 transformers affected ■ 1,.697 restored

#### **OTHERNESTATES MEGHALAYA**

Lives lost to floods and landslides

ARUNACHAL PRADESH

Lives lost to landslides

**MANIPUR** 

Lives lost to landslides

**27** 

**SIKKIM** Lives lost to landslides



**PCHIDAMBARAM** 

Website:pchidambaram.in Twitter@Pchidambaram\_IN

Thankfully, the Supreme
Court of India has located the
right to abortion in the right
to privacy as well as in the
right to life and personal
liberty. In India, the law
allows medical termination of
pregnancy up to 24 weeks of
gestational age and thereafter
on the opinion of two medical
practitioners after
satisfaction of conditions
such as injury to the woman's

physical or mental health

## Two divided democracies

America have lived with the right to abortion.
On June 24, 2022, in *Dobbs vs Jackson Women's Health Organization*, by a majority (including all three Trump and

Women's Health Organization, by a majority (including all three Trump appointees) of 5:3, the Supreme Court held that the "Constitution does not confer a right to abortion". Calling the reasoning in Roe vs Wade "egregiously wrong", the Court said that "the authority to regulate abortion is returned to the people and their elected representatives".

At first blush, it appears that returning the authority to the "people" is the right thing to do. But "people" here does not mean all the people — or all the adults or all the voters — of the United States voting in a referendum. If it did, the people of the US would overwhelmingly vote in favour of *Roe* and *Casey*. "People" here means people divided by states, and "their elected representatives" means legislators elected by electorates of different sizes and from constituencies that had been carved out to suit partisan political interests — in short, 'gerrymandered'.

#### MANY RIGHTS THREATENED

America is divided as never before since at least the Civil War. One-half of the 50 states are expected to make or reaffirm laws that will practically outlaw abortion; the other half will allow abortions until the second trimester. Millions

of American women will be denied the right to abort an unplanned or unwanted child; a rapist's child; a child whose seed was sowed by incest; a child that the mother cannot afford to bring into this world or feed; or a child that will not get any love or care.

The US Supreme Court's judgment is terribly flawed because the judgment, to the great shock of legal scholars, rests on the argument that "the Constitution makes no reference to abortion". The Court also held that the right to abortion was not "deeply rooted in the Nation's history and tradition". If these were the tests of constitutionality, many rights that Americans take for granted in the 21st century would be obliterated. For example, the right to privacy is not mentioned in the US Constitution. Racism and race discrimination are deeply rooted in America's history and tradition. Contraception will not be allowed. Sexual relations between two people of the same sex will be a criminal offence.

The examples can be multiplied.

In my reading of *Dobbs*, I am of the view that returning the authority to regulate abortion to the people does not mean that a State can, by law, compel a pregnant woman to carry the child until its birth. The State's law will apply only to residents within the *territory* of the State. The law will have no extra-territorial operation. The pregnant woman can go to a pro-abortion State and get the foetus aborted. The Federal Executive or a

charity can fund the travel of a woman who desires or needs an abortion. The error in *Dobbs* is that it placed the *right* of the State above the *right* of the individual in a matter of intimate concern to the individual but of little concern to the society or the State.

#### DIVIDED NATIONS

Thankfully, the Supreme Court of India has located the right to abortion in the right to privacy as well as in the right to life and personal liberty. In India, the law allows medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) up to 24 weeks of gestational age and thereafter on the opinion of two medical practitioners after satisfaction of one of many conditions, including the condition that the continuation of the pregnancy would result in grave injury to the woman's physical or mental health.

After abortion was made legal, numerous surveys have found that the ability of women to study or work had increased significantly. *Dobbs* has revived the fault lines in America. America stands divided. So does India for other reasons. An India already divided by caste, religion, language and gender inequality is being further divided by the BJP's majoritarian and centralizing policies, but that requires a separate essay.

Did you ever imagine there will be a day when the two largest federal democracies would be divided nations?



## Islamism has no place in India

THE SORDID shenanigans in Maharashtra ended last week with the toppling of the government, but the drama of this political saga made us almost forget the barbaric, jihadi killing in Udaipur. This is unfortunate. In my view, the beheading of Kanhaiya Lal and the way in which a video of it was posted on the Internet is more significant than politics because it seems to mark a new phase in the spread of radical Islam in India. The killers were clearly inspired by similar killings in the Islamic Republic next door and by the savagery that we routinely saw when ISIS still had control of its truly repugnant Caliphate.

There have been hundreds of jihadi killings in India, especially in Kashmir, but this beheading in Udaipur indicates that the fanaticism that defines radical Islam has gone up a few notches. In the horrific video that the killers posted, they can be seen smiling proudly and flaunting their machetes, because in their sick, twisted minds they were convinced that by killing an innocent man for the sake of their Prophet, they would be on a fast track to Islamic paradise. The mullahs and madrasas that put these ludicrous ideas into their heads are as responsible for the

beheading of Kanhaiya Lal as his killers. Arif Mohammad Khan, whom I am proud to call an old friend, has become the voice of sanity in an insane time. It made absolute sense to me when he said last week that it was useless to react to 'symptoms' and do nothing about destroying the roots of the problem. Will someone in Delhi please listen? Jihadist Islam is a sickness that is crammed into the heads of small children in the mosque schools they attend, usually because their parents are too poor to afford proper schools. So far nobody has made a serious effort to inspect the curriculum in these schools, but it is time that this happened. It is from dodgy 'religious' books taught by semiliterate mullahs that Islamism comes. It is for Islamic scholars and seminaries to bring more enlightened ideas into madrasas, but if they are not prepared to do it, then it must be done by the State.

It cannot be said loudly enough that India is (mercifully) not an Islamic country, so there is no room for schools that teach children to think in terms of infidels and believers. This is another idea perpetuated by madrasas that must go. If there are Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist schools that spread ideas like this, then they also need to be ordered to reform their curriculums.

There are Muslims who believe that Hindutva is a mirror image of Islamism. It is not. We have recently seen far too many fanatical Hindu priests preaching genocide at religious gatherings and they deserve to be locked up. But because the distinction between believers and infidels does not exist in Indic religions, there is less reason for fanatical Hindus to go

around beheading people. Having said this, I admit it would be stupid to pretend that much poison and hatred has not been spread in recent years by Hindus who believe that Hindutva is a better idea than traditional Hinduism. These people seem not to have noticed that the real harm done by spreading hatred is to India, and not to our Muslim communities. When mobs wearing saffron scarves lynch some random Muslim cattle trader, they make India look bad. When they demand that Muslim shops be boycotted, they do the same. When BIP spokesmen vomit bile against Islam and Muslims, they cause incalculable harm as the Supreme Court pointed out when Nupur Sharma appealed last week for the cases against her to be transferred to Delhi.

Using unusually strong language, the judges hearing her plea upbraided her for  $\hbox{`igniting\,emotions'} \ with her comments\, on$ the Prophet. "This lady is single-handedly responsible for what is happening in the country. She and her loose tongue have set the country on fire." She has been suspended by the BIP and spokesmen for the government of India have dismissed her as representing a 'fringe element'. If only this were true. As someone who is attacked constantly by those who speak for Hindutva, I can say with certainty that she represents the mainstream and not the fringe. There has been a campaign on social media in support of her and prominent

BJP voices have spoken up in her defence.
Fanaticism exists in every religion. But it is only the violent ideology spawned by Islam that makes ordinary Muslims go off and kill people in ways that are primitive, barbaric, and utterly unacceptable. Radical Islam has become a problem even in Islamic countries, but in India it has no place at all. This needs to be made clear to madrasas that teach small children to think of beheading infidels as a noble act

and not a horrific crime.

The beheading of Kanhaiya Lal has caused so much outrage in India that there are demands that his killers be summarily executed in a public place. This cannot happen in a country that believes in the rule of law. But, if their trial and punishment is conducted at the usual, languid pace of our justice system, the anger and hatred that exists between Hindus and Muslims will intensify. This is something that we cannot afford at a time when tensions are already at boiling point.

## inside TRACK COOMIKAPOOR

#### SHAH'S STRATEGY

THE SURPRISE anointment of Eknath Shinde as Chief Minister, and Devendra Fadnavis's acceptance of the junior position, had Amit Shah's imprint. Fadnavis played a secondary role in the Sena rebellion. He kept Shah in the loop over Maharashtra developments from the beginning. The latter cautioned the over-ambitious Fadnavis against revealing his hand too soon. Operation topple was so secret that when Fadnavis flew to Vadodara to meet Amit Shah and Shinde on June 25 night, he first caught the plane to Indore to put Thackeray's men off the scent. The BJP worked on Shinde for over six months. The Sena leader was particularly rattled when the premises of a close associate were raided by Income Tax authorities Shah and Fadnavis have long patched up their differences, but Shah saw Shinde's elevation and Fadnavis's humiliation as part of a long-term strategy to bring the powerful Maratha caste into the BJP fold and weaken the Sena, Fadnavis was, himself, kept in the dark about his own future role till the very end. Hence his initial reluctance to accept the deputy CM's post.

#### POLITICALLY UNSOUND

While the BIP's manoeuvring is half the story, Uddhav Thackeray has also to share the blame for the disenchantment of his MLAs. The mild-mannered Uddhav is temperamentally unsuited for politics, especially heading a party teeming with toughtalking street fighters. He was never keen to be CM, but his wife Rashmi and son Aaditya were ambitious on his behalf. Rashmi placed relatives in key positions in the government and she and Uddhav's close aide Milind Narvekar blocked all access to Uddhay. The Hindutya-minded Sena MLAs felt closer to the BIP representatives whom they had known for years. In contrast, they were suspicious of their NCP allies, their long-time adversaries in Maratha-dominated constituencies. Incidentally, besides Shinde, there is a BIF mole in both the NCP and Congress camps. Both were willing to assist the BIP in its defection plans, but unlike Shinde they could not promise a defectionby two-thirds of the MLAs. And the BJP wanted to ensure that a fresh election was avoided.

#### RAHUL CALLS EPS

A SURVEY conducted by Pew Research

Centre between March 7 and March 13,

2022, found that a 61 per cent majority of

US adults said abortion should be legal

in all or most cases; 37 per cent were op-

posed. The divide is political too:

Democrats and Democratic-leaning in-

dependents support abortion (80 per

cent), and Republicans and Republican-

leaning independents oppose abortion

(38 per cent). The gap has increased since

What matters is 'what do the justices of

the US Supreme Court hold that the

Constitution says'. The longest-serving

Chief Justice of the US, John Marshall, had

said: "It is emphatically the province and

duty of the Judicial Department (mean-

ing the US Supreme Court) to say what the

law is", and that dictum is sacred in the

In 1973, in Roe vs Wade, the US

Supreme Court held that the right to

abortion is part of the 'liberty' protected

by several provisions of the Constitution

including the 'due process' clause in the

Fourteenth Amendment. Twenty years

later, in Planned Parenthood of

Southeastern Pa. vs Casey, the Supreme

Court affirmed the conclusion in Roe vs

Wade. Three generations of women in

THE ORIGINALIST

INTERPRETATION

All this, however, is beside the point.

2016 from 33 points to 42 points.

After the BIP announced the name of Droupadi Murmu as its presidential candidate, Rahul Gandhi telephoned AIADMK leader Edappadi K Palaniswami (EPS), seeking backing for the Opposition candidate Yashwant Sinha. The DMK was understandably concerned over an overture to its rival. But Rahul has been suspicious of the DMK's intentions since its chief and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin's representatives in the Opposition discussions searching for a presidential candidate stopped short of categorical support to a joint candidate before the BJP announced Murmu's name. Though Murmu's profile, which sends a social justice message, suited the DMK better than the upper-caste Sinha, it eventually fell in line. The go-between for the Congress talks with the AIADMK was Sunil Kanugolu, a pollster who worked for the AIADMK and is now with the Congress. Rahul reportedly wants to keep his options open in Tamil Nadu for 2024, in view of the DMK's lukewarm support on certain issues, including the National Herald case against him, Sonia Gandhi and other Congress leaders.

#### BORDERLINE TALES

In his latest book, Scars of 1947: Real Partition Stories, the affable Congress politician, journalist and cricket administrator, Rajiv Shukla, has laced his reminiscences with some intriguing tales from Pakistani high society, with whom Shukla has been rubbing shoulders for over three decades. For instance, he recounts the mysterious circumstances under which the bruised body of Mohammad Ali Jinnah's sister Fatima was discovered in 1967. Fatima lived alone. A day earlier she had attended a wedding and was in fine spirits. There was a demand that the corpse be exhumed, but the then government of Ayub Khan refused. Shukla also recounts that singers Noor Jehan and Lata Mangeshkar were close friends. Lata, though she had numerous fans in Pakistan, refused to visit the country. So the two singers met at the BSF guest house at the Wagah border, both of them carrying culinary delicacies from their homes. Writing about Sharmila Tagore's late husband, Nawab of Pataudi Mansoor Ali Khan, Shulka notes that he and his father were both captains of the Indian cricket team. But Pataudi senior. Iftikhar Ali Khan, was appointed captain because the initial choice, Bhausaheb Babasaheb Nimbalkar, an outstanding cricketer, came from an ordinary family and members of royal houses in the team refused to be led by a commoner.

## life& WORK MANOJTIWARI mt7tiwari@gmail.com

### Corrupt okay as MPs, not Bhojpuri actors. It's elitism

IT WAS the year 2009 and I was shooting for Bhojpuri movie *Gangotri* in Mumbai. Amitabh Bachchanji was also in the film. One day, the late Samajwadi Party leader Amar Singh, who was very close to Amitji, came on the sets and while talking to me proposed that I should contest elections. It was dazzling, sitting on chartered planes and helicopters, meeting big politicians. I contested Lok Sabha elections from Gorakhpur on a Samajwadi Party ticket against Yogi Adityanathji, and lost. This all happened in the course of three months.

Another incident happened in 2010. I was close to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumarji. Our (Bhojpuri) fraternity mostly supported him because of the change he was bringing in Bihar. In 2010, he cancelled a dinner for BJP leaders he was to host, reportedly as he was angry over an advertisement put up by the party featuring him with Narendra Modiji (Nitish was at the time vociferous in his opposition to Modi on account of the 2002 riots). This made me and others in the fraternity very sad.

In July 2012, Modiji addressed a Bihar Shatabdi Mahotsav in Surat, which I attended. He was all praise for Biharis at the meeting and had a vision for Bihar. I was highly impressed. It was then that I started gathering support for him. Even while in college at BHI I was in the ABVP

The Bhojpuri film industry, already moved by nationalism, was also impressed with Modiji. We were convinced that he should take the lead and become the PM. Social media was then not as it is today, so wherever we went for shows or functions, we would try to convince people that the country now needed Modiii

country now needed Modiji. Then came 2014. I was in the BJP by now, and given ticket from North East Delhi. The same year, Ravi Kishan, who was in the Congress, contested from Jaunpur in Uttar Pradesh. The reel life rivalry from the Bhojpuri film industry now became political rivalry. Newspapers had regular columns on who got which movie, who replaced whom etc. I won and he lost. By now I had mostly given up working in the movies. One day, while we were both on a TV debate on Star News, I told Kishan that, after the show, he should join my party. What I meant was a feast at my home. He thought I am talking about the BJP, and true to his witty self, said, "Sachchi (truly)".

Thereafter, I would often tell him that



Bhojpuri actor-MPs Dinesh Lal Yadav 'Nirahua', Manoj Tiwari, Ravi Kishan

you are the right man in the wrong party, and he eventually made up his mind to move. I put the proposal before our then party president Amitji, and his joining the BJP was finalised.

He campaigned for us in MCD and other polls, but was restless. He would tell me, 'Yaar kuchch karwao (Do something for me)'. Then came the 2019 polls, and I got to know that we are searching for a candidate from Gorakhpur as Yogiji had become the CM and the seat had become vacant. I told our president, 'Sir, could Ravi be an option?'. I could see a spark in his eye, and his candidature was soon announced.

Life is strange. I lost Gorakhpur, and after 10 years, the ticket was given to someone I recommended, and he won. Thanks to Modiji and Yogiji who gave him a chance.

The case of Nirahua (Dinesh Lal Yadav) is different. He even as an actor was ideologically with the BJP. I heard him support most things the party stood for. He joined in 2019, his coming very natural.

After Nirahua's win (from Azamgarh, a seat held by Akhilesh Yadav as MP), I see many people sharing memes, making fun of our Bhojpuri identity, and putting up our posters and movie scenes with an intent to make fun of us. After all these years, I have understood all this comes from an elitist mindset. These are the people who would accept English-speaking persons as MPs, even if they are corrupt, but they will mock Bhojpuri actors.

And this is what we are here to change. The roles we do is because our characters are ordinary people, our viewers are ordinary, poor people; and because we understand their psyche, issues, we are here to make changes in their life. We are here to challenge this elitist mindset, where you make fun of a *chaiwalla* becoming the Prime Minister.

Now when Bhojpuri artistes meet me, they talk to me more of politics than cinema. They think I am the gateway into the party. In coming times, you will see more artistes in the party. Bhojpuri industry is dominated with people with nationalist ideology.

Isaw it as my duty to help people during the migrant crisis (after the Covid lockdown). I have fought for the Chhath festival in Delhi, cleaning of the Yamuna that has been ignored by the AAP government, and ensured that no one can beat a migrant and get away. Once Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal was reported to have said that '500 ka ticket le ke aa jatae hain (Migrants buy a Rs 500 ticket and come)', we strongly opposed it. No one in Delhi's politics can now dare say such things. So when you empower a person from the community, you also empower the community.

The writer is MP, North-East Delhi, and former Delhi BJP president

As told to Abhinav Rajput

# history HEADLINE CHAKSHUROY chakshu@prsindia.org

THE FOUNDATION of free and fair elections is the secrecy of the ballot. The Rajya Sabha elections are unique in that respect, where voting is not secret. The MLAs elect their state Rajya Sabha MPs, and as the process stands now, have to show the votes to their party's representative.

However, the open ballot voting system is a 2003 addition to our Rajya Sabha electoral system.

Until 1998, Rajya Sabha elections were the bastion of party discipline, their outcome a foregone conclusion. Candidates nominated by parties would win uncontested. Voting only took place when there were more contestants than vacant seats in the state. Electoral contest was usually among Independent candidates.

The June 1998 Rajya Sabha elections in Maharashtra changed this position.

## How RS polls came to be open ballot

Seven contenders were in the fray for six seats. The Congress had fielded two candidates — Najma Heptullah, who had served three terms in the Upper House, and Ram Pradhan, a former Maharashtracadre IAS officer and ex-Union home secretary. The Shiv Sena's candidates were its sitting MP Satish Pradhan and media personality Pritish Nandy. Pramod Mahajan, who had lost the Lok Sabha elections earlier that year, was contesting for the BJP.

There were two Independent candidates: media baron Vijay Darda, whom the Congress supported, and former railway minister Suresh Kalmadi, whom the Shiv Sena supported. Kalmadi had rebelled against the Congress.

The Congress had enough votes to ensure the victory of both its candidates. But in a surprising turn of events, Congress candidate Ram Pradhan, a close aide of Sonia Gandhi, lost. An Independent candidate sailed through.

The votes cast by MLAs were secret, and Congress MLAs defied their party's voting instructions, causing Pradhan's defeat. Reports suggest that legislators from other parties also cross-voted.

Pradhan's loss reverberated in all political circles to a point that parties started thinking about steps to rein in their MLAs.

The solution appropriate the started than the

The solution eventually came from the Ethics Committee of the Rajya Sabha, which was set up in 1997 and was headed by Rajya Sabha MP and former Maharashtra Chief Minister S B Chavan.

In its first report in December 1998, the committee observed that money and muscle power played an increasing role in Rajya Sabha elections, suggesting: "In order not to allow big money and other considerations to play mischief... the Committee is of the view that instead of a secret ballot, the question of holding the elections to the Rajya Sabha and the Legislative Councils in states by open bal-

lot may be examined."

The Atal Bihari Vajpayee government in 2001 acted on the suggestion.

Arun Jaitley, the law minister at the time, introduced a Bill in Parliament to amend the law relating to the Rajya Sabha elections with an open voting system and the removal of domiciliary requirements for contesting the polls.

Kuldeep Nayar, a veteran journalist who was a nominated Rajya Sabha MP, challenged its constitutional validity in the Supreme Court, arguing that the "concept of open ballot would defeat the attainment of free and fair elections".

The Court overruled this contention and held the law to be constitutional. It reasoned that "the secrecy of the ballot is a vital principle for ensuring free and fair elections. The higher principle, however, is free and fair elections and purity of elections. If secrecy becomes a source for corruption, then sunlight and transparency

have the capacity to remove it".

But an open ballot has not helped bring purity to the Rajya Sabha elections or stopped party candidates from losing. A common response of the parties, as evident in the recent Rajya Sabha elections, has been to herd their MLAs to hotels and resorts to prevent poaching.

As Niloptal Basu, a CPM Rajya Sabha MP, said during the debate on the open ballot law: "We should, as political parties, seriously introspect as to how the principles on which political parties function can be rectified; as to how we can recapture certain healthy practices in politics...The problem of indiscipline and the problem of dissidents can never be stopped in this manner unless we improve our system of internal democracy, unless we have healthy practices".

The writer is head of outreach PRS Legislative Research

## THE WORLD



#### **MEANWHILE**

#### MUSK Breaks 9-Day Silence On Twitter

Elon Musk on Friday night broke his nine-day silence on Twitter, the social media platform he is trying to buy for \$44 billion, posting a picture of him meeting Pope Francis on Thursday. He tweeted a picture where he can be seen standing next to the Pope, captioning it: "Honored to meet @pontifex yesterday."



A vessel sinking after it snapped in two. Reuters

#### **HONG KONG**

#### Over 24 crew missing as storm Chaba hits

Hong Kong: More than two dozen crew on an engineering vessel with 30 people on board were missing after it snapped in two in waters off Hong Kong as tropical storm Chaba passed through, authorities said. Three crew members were rescued, and search and rescue operations were continuing for others about 300 km southwest of the city, the Hong Kong Government Flying Service said. Some of the crew had abandoned the vessel and harsh weather conditions were hampering rescue efforts, they said. The weather forecaster lowered the storm warning to signal No 3 on Saturday afternoon as Chaba was set to make landfall near Zhanjiang in China's Guangdong REUTERS province.

#### Strong quake kills 5, injures 44

Tehran: Five people were killed and 44 others injured in a magnitude 6.3 earthquake in southern Iran on Saturday, state television reported. Rescue teams were deployed near the epicenter, Sayeh Khosh village, which is home to around 300 people in Hormozgan province, some 1,000 km south of the capital, Tehran, the report said.

#### **AFGHANISTAN**

#### Meet ends with

calls for recognition Kabul: A Taliban-run male religious and ethnic leaders ended on

Saturday by asking foreign governments to recognise their administration, but made no signals of changes on international demands, such as the opening of girls' high schools. **REUTERS** 

#### **ISRAEL** Hezbollah drones shot down

Jeruslaem: Israel shot down three unarmed "hostile drones" coming Lebanon on Saturday that were approaching gas rigs in Israel's maritime economic zone, an Israeli security source said. The source said the drones had been launched by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah **REUTERS** group.

#### STAY IN SHELTERS: MYKOLAIV MAYOR TO RESIDENTS

## As Russia steps up attack, Belarus says intercepted 'missile strikes' by Ukraine

Don't want war, but will fight if territory invaded: Lukashenko Ukraine: Russia dropped white

**REUTERS** 

KYIV, SERHIIVKA, JULY 2

EXPLOSIONS ROCKED the southern Ukrainian city of Mykolaiv on Saturday, the mayor said, at the end of a week in which Russian missiles have slammed into an apartment block and a shopping mall in other cities, killing dozens of people. Air raid sirens sounded in the Mykolaiv region, which borders the Black Sea port of Odesa.

"There are powerful explosions in the city! Stay in shelters!" Mykolaiv mayor Oleksandr Senkevych wrote on the Telegram. The cause of the blasts was not immediately clear, although Russia said on Saturday it had hit army command posts in the area.

Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Saturday said Ukraine had tried to strike military facilities on Belarusian territory three days ago, but all its missiles had been intercepted, the state-run Belta news agency reported.

Lukashenko, who did not pro-

Google to delete

location history

abortion clinics

that a digital trail could inform

law enforcement if an individual

terminates a pregnancy illegally.

of visits to

**REUTERS** 

Firefighters work at damaged residential building in the town of Serhiivka, southwest of Odesa, Ukraine. AP

vide evidence for the claim, said Belarus did not want war with Ukraine, but would fight if its own territory was invaded. The Ukrainian military did not comment. "They are provoking us. I have to tell you, three days ago, maybe more, an attempt to strike military facilities on Belarusian territory was made from the territory of Ukraine," Belta quoted Lukashenko as saying.

"But, thank God, the Pantsir anti-aircraft systems managed to intercept all the missiles launched by Ukrainian armed forces."

Kyiv says Moscow has intensified missile attacks on targets far from the frontline and that it has deliberately hit civilian sites while Russian forces have been grinding out gains on the battlefield in the east. Russia says it has been aiming at military sites and denies taking aim at civilians. Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov said "Russian Armed Forces do not work with civilian targets".

## phosphorous on Snake Island

THE NEW YORK TIMES

UKRAINE'S ARMY has accused Russia of dropping incendiary white phosphorus on Snake Island on Friday, the day after Moscow's forces retreated from the strategic rocky outcrop on the southwestern part of the Black Sea that is key to the Kremlin's war aims.

Andriy Zagorodnyuk, a former Ukrainian defence minister who leads the Center for Defence Strategies, a think tank in Kyiv, on Saturday described the strikes as "weird," because according to a video released by the Ukrainian military, he said, it appeared that "most of the shots were missed."

He also said the use of white phosphorous seemed strange given that Ukrainian personnel were not believed to be on Snake Island at the time of the attack. He said he believed that Russia had

struck the island "to complicate any Ukrainian presence there."

White phosphorous, which produces a thick white smoke and has a garlic-like odour, can melt deep into flesh when the phosphorous lands on skin and cause severe burns. While controversial, it is not considered a chemical weapon, because it causes harm by burning at a high temperature rather than through toxic properties.

On Saturday morning, Ukraine's top military official, Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, said that two sorties of Russian Su-30 fighter jets flying from the Crimean Peninsula the previous day had dropped phosphorus bombs over the island, known in Ukrainian as Zmiiny. "The leadership of the armed forces of the Russian Federation does not even adhere to its own statements, which declare a 'gesture of good will," General Zaluzhnyi wrote on the Telegram.

## Senior journalist in Pak calls Army Generals property dealers, assaulted

**MZULQERNAIN** LAHORE, JULY 2

A SENIOR Pakistani journalist and political analyst has been assaulted by unidentified masked men, who also tore his clothes, as he left his office in the Punjab province, a day after he termed Pakistan's powerful Army

Generals "property dealers".

Ayaz Amir, 73, was returning home late Friday after recording his television show for Dunya News TV channel, where he works as a senior analyst, when unknown people stopped his car. The attackers then manhandled him and also tortured his driver

before fleeing from the scene. With bruises on his face, Amir said the masked men not only "hit him and tore his clothes, they also took away his cellphone and wallet. They left when people started gathering on the busy road". In a tweet later, Amir said those who attacked him did not care about his age. "I have no personal enmity with anyone and I had no quarrel

me didn't even care about my age," he said. "The only fault was that I speak the truth and I will continue to speak, God willing,' he said in another tweet.

On Thursday, during a speech at a seminar in Islamabad on the 'Regime Change and its Fallout on Pakistan', Amir targeted the powerful military establishment for its role in Pakistan's politics. The seminar was also attended by former prime minister Imran Khan.

He referred to the Army Generals as "property dealers' and even suggested removing the portraits of Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the country's national poet Allama Iqbal and replacing them with the "property dealers".

In an indirect reference to Army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa, Amir said he was into his sixth year of tenure and looking for another extension.

Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz has sought a report from police over the assault and ordered that the culprits be arrested at the earliest.

China's top diplomat

visits Myanmar amid

**Opposition protest** 

## **Texas Supreme Court blocks** order that resumed abortions

THE NEW YORK TIMES

a series of legal battles across the

country following the Supreme

Court's decision on June 24 to

THE TEXAS Supreme Court allowed a 1925 law banning abor-ALPHABET INC'S Google will tion to take effect late on Friday delete location data showing night, overturning a lower court ruling that had temporarily when users visit an abortion clinic, the online search giant blocked it. said on Friday, following concern The decision was the latest in

Google on Friday said it will overturn Roe v. Wade. continue to push back against im-In Texas, that meant a 1925 proper broad demands for data by law written before Roe that had banned abortions and punished the government, without reference to abortion. The company those who performed them said the location history of a with possible imprisonment au-Google account is off by default. tomatically went into effect, said Effective in the coming weeks, Ken Paxton, the state's attorney for those who do use location hisgeneral. Though the law was not

tory, entries showing sensitive enforced after Roe was decided places including fertility centers. in 1973, it had nevertheless reabortion clinics will be deleted mained on the books. soon after a visit. A Google That ban was temporarily spokesperson did not answer how blocked by a Harris County judge the company would identify such after abortion clinics sued for a stay, arguing that it had effecvisits or whether all related data would be wiped from its servers. tively been repealed after the



Thousands of Australians joined protests across the country on Saturday against the US overturning of abortion rights. Reuters

landmark Roe ruling.

On Saturday morning, Paxton called the reversal of the stay a "pro-life victory!" on Twitter. "Our state's pre-Roe statutes banning abortion in Texas are 100% good law," he wrote. "Litigation continues, but I'll keep winning for Texas's unborn babies."

The State Supreme Court's decision on Friday partially over-

ruled the decision of the lower district court. Both sides will continue to argue their case involving the old law on July 12 in front of that district court. The lifting of the freeze did not allow ban, the American Civil Liberties Union said in a news release. The group is representing abortion clinics in the legal fight.

#### Lawmakers debate legislation to consider new firearms regulations. AP NY overhauls

### handgun rules to preserve some limits

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** ALBANY JULY 2

NEW YORK lawmakers approved a sweeping overhaul Friday of the state's handgun licensing rules, seeking to preserve some limits on firearms after the Supreme Court ruled that most people have a right to carry a handgun for personal protection.

The measure, signed by Gov. Kathy Hochul after passing both chambers by wide margins, is almost sure to draw more legal challenges from gun rights advocates who say the state is still putting too many restrictions on who can get guns.

Hochul, a Democrat, called Democrat-controlled Legislature back to Albany to work on the law after last week's high-court ruling overturning the state's longstanding licensing restrictions. Backers said the law, which takes effect Sept. 1, strikes the right balance between complying with the SC's ruling and keeping weapons out of the hands of people.

But some Republican lawmakers, opposed to tighter restrictions, argued the law violated the constitutional right to bear arms. They predicted it too would end up being overturned.

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** BANGKOK, JULY 2 CHINA'S TOP diplomat on

#### Saturday arrived on his first visit to Myanmar since the military seized power last year to attend a regional meeting that the government said was a recognition of its legitimacy and opponents protested as a violation of peace efforts. Chinese Foreign Minister

Wang Yi will join counterparts from Myanmar, Laos, Thailand, Cambodia and Vietnam in a meeting of the Lancang-Mekong Cooperation group in the central city of Bagan, a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The grouping is a Chinese-led initiative that includes the countries of the Mekong Delta, a potential source of regional tensions due to an increasing number of hydroelectric projects that are altering the flow and raising concerns of ecological damage. China has built 10 dams along the upper stretch of the Mekong.

government Military spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun told a news conference in the capital Naypyitaw on Friday that the attendance of the forCHINA IS Myanmar's biggest trading partner and an old ally. Beijing has

China biggest

invested billions of dollars in Myanmar's mines, oil and gas pipelines and other infrastructure and is its major arms supplier, together like Russia.

eign ministers at the meeting was a recognition of Myanmar's sovereignty and its government. He said the ministers will sign

memorandums of understanding and contracts. He did not elaborate. It's unclear whether Wang would meet Senior Gen. Min Aung Hlaing.

The foreign minister of Myanmar's shadow government, which opposes the ruling military council, protested the Bagan meeting, saying any such efforts in partnership with Myanmar's military violate the will of the people and undermine community building.

#### **AL JAZEERA JOURNALIST KILLING**

#### Palestinians to hand bullet that killed journalist to US: Official

**REUTERS** 

JERUSALEM, JULY 2

THE PALESTINIAN Authority will hand the bullet that killed Palestinianprominent American Al Jazeera journalist Shireen Abu Akleh to US author-

ities for forensic examination, a Palestinian official said on Saturday. "We agreed to transfer the bullet to the Americans for examination," Akram al-Khatib, general prosecutor for the Palestinian Authority, told Reuters without providing further details.

## Searching for gold, miners in Canada discover frozen baby mammoth preserved for 30,000 yrs

**CHRISTINE CHUNG** 

ABOUT A half-hour before his lunch break one June morning, Travis Mudry was operating an excavator and digging through permafrost in the Klondike gold fields of the Yukon in Canada. He was scratching at a frozen

wall of earth. Suddenly, a big chunk popped out. Along with it was a body of a baby woolly mammoth, frozen and preserved with its hair and hide. "I thought it was a baby buf-

falo in the beginning," said Mudry,



The baby mammoth's body from the base of its tail to the base of its trunk, about the size of a deer. NYT



was about 140 centimeters

31, of Alberta. "And then I got out, and I was inspecting it, and it had a trunk, so I had no words." The mammoth was dark and

shiny. Mudry said, with short legs and deep, pronounced eye sockets. It had a skinny, wrinkled trunk and a nub of a tail. He quickly waved over a co-worker and called his boss, Brian McCaughan, the co-founder of a family-owned gold mining company called Treadstone Equipment.

"It's in front of us glistening in the sun looking like it just died," McCaughan, 57, said of the

discovery, made on June 21. He compared its size to that of a white-tailed deer. McCaughan said unearthing bones, even from mammoths, was commonplace during mining, but that this discovery was something incomparable. "It's like we got rewarded by Mother Earth when you pull something like this out of the ground," he said.

Experts estimate the mammoth was just over a month old when it perished in mud. It was then captured in time, encased in the frozen layer of ground known as permafrost, during the ice age more than 30,000 years ago, said Grant Zazula, a paleontologist for the Yukon Government. NYT

#### COUNTRY HAS NEVER MANDATED MASKS OR VACCINATIONS

## Japan's secret to taming Covid-19: Peer pressure, fear of public shaming

**MOTOKORICH& BEN DOOLEY** TOKYO, JULY 2

TO UNDERSTAND how Japan has fared better than most of the world in containing the dire consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, consider Mika Yanagihara, who went shopping for flowers this past week in central Tokyo. Even when walking outside in temperatures in the mid-90s, shekept her face fully covered.

'People will stare at you," Yanagihara, 33, said, explaining why she didn't dare take off her mask. "There is that pressure." Japan's Covid death rate, just

one-twelfth of that in the US, is the lowest among the world's wealthiest nations. With the world's third largest economy and 11th largest populace, Japan also tops global rankings in vaccination and has consistently had one of the globe's lowest infection rates

Although no government authority has ever mandated masks or vaccinations or instituted lockdowns or mass surveillance, Japan's residents have largely evaded the worst ravages of the virus. Instead, in many ways, Japan let peer pressure do a lot of the work.

Even now, as average daily cases have fallen to just 12 per 100,000 residents – about a government survey in May found that close to 80 per cent of people working in offices or enrolled in school wear masks and about 90 per cent do so when using public transit. Movie theatres, sports stadiums and shopping malls continue to request that visitors wear masks, and for the most part, people comply. The term "face pants" has become a buzzword, implying that

third of the average in the US - a

Many factors have undoubtedly contributed to Japan's coronavirus outcomes. But social conformity - and a fear of pub-

underwear in public.

dropping a mask would be as

embarrassing as taking off one's



A government survey in May found that about 90% of people wore masks when using public transit. NYT

lic shaming that is instilled from the youngest ages — has been a key ingredient in Japan's relative

success in Covid prevention, experts say. Unlike in many other countries, Japanese law does not

permit the government to order lockdowns or vaccinations. The majority of the population followed each other in heeding guidance from scientific experts who encouraged people to wear masks and avoid situations where they would be in enclosed, unventilated areas with large crowds.

After a slow start, once Japan ramped up the distribution of vaccines, most people followed advisories to get them. In Japan, "if you tell people to look right, they will all look right," said Kazunari Onishi, an associate professor of public health at St. Luke's International University in Tokyo. Japanese culture also depends on an ethic of public self-restraint that can be marshaled into group action. When Emperor Hirohito was dying in 1988, pop singers postponed weddings and schools cancelled festivals. After the 2011 nuclear disaster in Fukushima led to serious power shortages, the public cut back on electricity use voluntarily.

With few legal options for enforcing the guidance, authorities hoped the population would voluntarily comply with pleas to stay home. The public embraced the guidelines, and the overall death rate actually fell below that of the year immediately preceding the coronavirus outbreak Those who tried to buck the

guidance were subjected to pubc condemnation. Toshio Date, who operates a venue in Osaka devoted to the board games Go and shogi, initially tried to stay open when the city requested that restaurants, bars and other entertainment businesses shut down. When local television stations started asking to film the club as an outlier, Date, 58, got the message and quickly closed.

Even after infections settled down in Osaka, which recorded the highest death rate in Japan, and businesses reopened, he said strangers scolded him for hosting too many customers.







Arun Janardhanan

AMAL HAASAN has been known to make films that pulse and enact roles that peel the skin of pretence and reveal to us our innermost desires. For over six decades, he has been unfailing in his commitment to cinema, making it his very life breath.

His latest action-thriller Vikram has the coffers ringing with an estimated collection of over Rs 172 crore in Tamil Nadu alone, while the global collection has crossed Rs 400 crore since its release a month ago. With Vikram, Kamal makes a comeback in the Tamil film industry. Those in his close circles

say it's also possible that the actor's huge debt accumulated over the years, due to several disappointments in his film projects and venture into politics, may have been managed. Taking off from his 1986 eponymous film, Vikram has 67-year-old Kamal in the lead and tells the story of black ops who rally to eliminate a gang of masked murderers. It's bolstered with power-packed performances by Fahadh Faasil and Vijay Sethupathi.

Kamal always had a movie to work for, and most of them have kept the coffers full. However, over the last two decades, he's had an erratic run at the box office. Though his films were celebrated for content and startling experiments, his peers, Rajinikanth, Vijay and other superstars, won the popular vote in the Tamil film in-

dustry. Vikram, therefore, emerges undeniably as Kamal's biggest hit in six decades, following previous films such as Nayakan (1987), Indian (1996), Dasavatharam (2008) and Vishwaroopam I (2013).

Ramesh Aravind, actor, director and screenwriter from the Kannada film industry, says, "Failure and success are not new to him. As far as the audience is concerned, his last few years have not been smooth, so this massive success of Vikram couldn't have come at a better time.

One who began his acting career at the age of five, Kamal has appeared in over 250 films across languages, including Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Bengali and Hindi. It's the late Malayalam director KS Sethumahim in Kanyakumari (1974).

'Kamal sir is truly a man of many talents," says actor R Madhavan. "He has excelled in every field be it singing, dancing, fighting, directing, or writing. He can do a Sagara Sangamam (1983) and Nayakan at the same time. He will do a Vikram and also Hey Ram (2000). He can do Michael Madana Kama Rajan (1990), a spoofy comedy, and also films like Sadma (1983) or Monodram Pirai (1982). His range and ability to convincingly play every character are incredible. I don't think any other actor in the world has that ability, that makes me a devout fan of Kamal Haasan," he says, a day before the release of his directorial debut, Rocketry: The Nambi Effect. Bengaluru-based film historian

STheodore Bhaskaran says, "Forget about his big movies and experiments, his first role as a child actor was in Kalathur Kannamma (1960). Even today, I watch it because he was so natural in it; he acted as natural as the children in Satyajit Ray's Pather Panchali (1955)."

It's his willingness to try new things that sets him apart from other actors in the industry. Be it his 10 roles in Dasavatharam, a dancer in Sagara Sangamam, the triple role in Apoorva Sagodharargal (1989), including that of the dwarf character Appu, a don in Nayakan, a mentally-disturbed man in Guna (1991) or wearing a bun and a bindi as the nanny in the Tamil Avvai Shanmugi (1996) or its Hindi remake, Chachi 420 (1997).

Many of Kamal's friends and colleagues, across generations, speak of his unwavering commitment that has kept him focused on the industry. One of south India's best-known actors, Khushbu calls Kamal an encyclopaedia of cinema. "We didn't believe him when he said that television would be the next big thing. Everyone thought the prosthetic makeup he planned for Indian would be a waste of money, but he was right on every prediction. Unlike the rest of us, he didn't make any investments outside of the film industry. I don't think anyone else is deserving of this level of success right now," she says.

Kamal was the first to do a digital film in Tamil with *Mumbai Xpress* (2005). His *Mahanadhi* (1994) was the first Indian film edited in Avid Editing software, with its numerous in-built special effects. He was successful in persuading several theatres in Chennai to convert into Auro 3D sound technology, touted as one to bring in the 3D sound experience, which made headlines during the release of Vishwaroopam.

He was also the first Tamil superstar to lead in Bollywood with Ek Duuje Ke Liye (1981), a path that many others such as Rajinikanth and others followed later.



Kamal Haasan, known for his numerous experiments with form and character in films, after nearly two decades of numerous disappointments, returns with the roaring success of action-thriller Vikram







**HUNGRY FOR MORE** 

(Clockwise from top) Stills from Vikram (2022); Chachi 420 (1997); Ek Duuje Ke Liye (1981); Sadma (1983)

Bhaskaran sees Kamal as someone who has a critical understanding of cinema, its possibilities, its strengths, and what cinema is. "In the 1970s, there was a United States Information Service centre in Madras. They used to show American classics. He was a young man then, and would be there at all the screenings. He was raised on those classics. He is sensitive to the art of film. He knows the possibilities of cinema, is well-informed and well-read. I don't agree with the ideology, but the way he made Hey Ram and its period setting was very good. So was his role as a middle-class father in Papanasam (2015), another example of his innate talent," he says.

Kamal brings this level of commitment to his personal relationships as well. "He used to be my mentor, teacher and philosopher. He would flatten my long, curly hair, make dosa for me, carry stones and chase away boys who teased me," says senior Tamil-Malayalam ac-

tor Suhasini Maniratnam, his niece. She recalls the days when they would drive to Madurai from their village near Paramakudi, about 60 km away, just to whistle and clap for movies in which he had brief appearances as a dancer. "After the song, we would leave the theatre and do the same thing the next day," she says. She lived with Kamal and her grandmother in Chennai from the age of 12 to 27, when she married director-producer Mani Ratnam.

Suhasini has seen Kamal grow as a child artiste, a dance assistant, a budding actor to



a villain and a superhero. "I have been there with him all along, his entire life, through his success and failures, through his marriages, and everything," she says.

Kamal married Vani Ganapathy in 1978. After their separation, he married Sarika in 1988, a relationship that ended in 2002. He then lived-in with Gautami, a partnership that lasted 13 years. His two daughters, Shruti and Akshara, have also found a career in cinema.

Cinema is not the only thing that makes Kamal a super star. His talent for ventriloquism makes it to his films, as well. He knows morse code and can recall yappu ilakkanam, a separate grammar for poetry in Tamil, similar to mathematics.

Sanu John Varughese, who shot Kamal's Vishwaroopam, says Kamal is the most educated school dropout he has ever met. "What happens to a computer with the installation of a new operating system is what happened to me after working with him, I was able to see things in a new light," he says.

Chennai-based producer-writer Sujatha Narayanan, who's worked in a few of Kamal's projects, including Anbe Sivam (2003), says he's one of those disciplined scriptwriters, "like one who goes to the gym to burn calories on a daily basis. He writes at least one page a day and churns out at least one poem a week. He is one of the best screenwriters and dialogue writers we have."

She adds that during shoot days, Kamal is diligent about maintaining a routine for himself and as a director, he doesn't hold back. "To work with Kamal, one has to have a genuine love for cinema or an inborn talent. As for surprising him with any new film or technical trivia, it's impossible, he's always ahead of us, be it watching films or in the latest technology," she says. Kamal is a film school for

Mahesh Narayanan, the Malayalam director and film editor of Vishwaroopam. He believes that Kamal is more than just an actor or director; he is also an efficient technician. "Almost 90 per cent of Vishwaroopam's Afghanistan scenes were shot in Chennai. We had no idea how to shoot those scenes here, like the chop-

per scene in an airstrike, for instance. Kamal ning effects, that brought the chopper and the ground together in the correct number of frames," he says.

Melancholy has been a common theme in Kamal's many works, but he is also a hero with a dark side. In his silent film Pushpaka Vimana (1987) or Aalavandhan (2001), he played out one of the most favourite themes, of good vs evil. In Kuruthipunal (1995), he explored the deep layers and psychology of terrorism, while stills of his dream project Marudhanayagam (announced in 2015) show a half-naked Kamal riding a buffalo.

Outsiders regard Tamil Nadu as a unique case study where people vote for any film star who enters politics. The fact remains that the state has only favoured those with strong ideologies over the years, not celebrities.

So, when Kamal formed a political party in early 2018, the question was whether he would follow in the footsteps of MG Ramachandran, Tamil super star and the former chief minister, or ven a Captain Vijayakanth, who sustained for about a decade in electoral politics and power. However, after nearly five years of his Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) party formation, it is clear that he is neither.

"Perhaps because he lacked the streetsmart talent of a politician? But what made him a dictator in the party then? Could it be the need to mobilise resources? All we could manage were a few events, which was easy because people wanted to see the actor. Then why didn't they vote for his party?" asked a leader, who left Kamal's team shortly after the 2021 assembly elections. "In terms of contributions to cinema, he is far ahead of MGR and Rajinikanth. In politics, I do not question his motives, but I believe he was unable to take that political leap in style for a variety of reasons, including a lack of understanding of people and politics itself," he adds. Many party leaders were either unhappy

or refused to discuss Kamal as a political leader. His political endeavours were seen as sluggish, his ideas without logic, and his causes appeared half-baked.

But when it comes to his films, nobody can fault him his passion. "Like Clint Eastwood, I see him as an artiste with no expiration date. He's got more than 50 broken bones due to his passion for acting. Even before he begins filming, he has a finished movie in his head. If cinema is a bug, he is someone who has taken the most bites," says Mahesh, who will direct Thevar Magan II, for which Kamal has written the screenplay.

## POINT OF VIEW

## **DOWN IN**JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

## The Other Cousin

Grey hornbills of Delhi are nowhere as glamorous as the Great Indian Hornbill, but they can work that pickaxe beak

FEW DAYS ago, for the second time, a baby grey hornbill perched on my towel hung out in the balcony and caught my eye, reminding me that at least they were doing well — having been born and brought up in Delhi's Nicholson Cemetery next door. He or she only gave me time enough to snap a couple of pictures before flying off, but the message was clear: it's time you wrote about us, dude!

I first met grey hornbills decades ago in lush verdant Borivali National Park, now known as Sanjay Gandhi National Park, Mumbai. It was early morning and overcast and we were stumbling over huge slabs of cracked cement and tarmac, part of an abandoned and ill-conceived highway project right in the middle of the forest. Foliage sprouted between the cracks and crouched over us because the monsoon had begun. It was all too easy to imagine you were back in time millions of years ago. And then, we heard this high-pitched squealing call, coming from high overhead, in the ivory-white sky, there they were: a small flock of flying lizard-like creatures, flapgliding in tandem, as they made their way across the sky. Their downward curving pickaxe-like bills, crowned with that strange casque on top made it seem as if all it took now was a Brontosaurus to come stomping up. Alas, none did, but the birds were enchanting enough.

Here, in Delhi, I was able to renew my acquaintance with them at a more personal level. Every spring (March and April) the hornbills residing in the cemetery next door would begin squealing and one often caught sight of them flying between trees or perching high up on some bough, dangling their long tails, nonchalantly. They are a little larger than the black kite and dressed in shabby grey, have lovely long eyelashes and their down-curved profile makes them look somewhat bemused: as if they're wondering what the heck they are doing in the modern world and what happened to all the dinosaurs!



TO THE DILL

They hold a neem berry deftly in their beak, toss it up and gulp it down like we'd toss a peanut into our mouth

Grey hornbills are largely frugivorous, subsisting on figs and berries, delicately picking them, like someone using a giant pair of chopsticks. That down-curved bill of theirs can be a formidable weapon (while hunting small rodents, lizards and nestlings), but is also used for gentler purposes. In spring, grey hornbills get romantically inclined and now the gentleman would perch by his lady, and begin to woo her.

It's astonishing how deft they are with that huge pickaxe of a bill. They can hold a neem berry right at the tip of their bills, toss it up and gulp it down rather like a teenager would toss up a peanut and catch it in the mouth.

Once, a pair of hornbills was on a neem tree just across the cemetery wall, and here the gentleman leaned over and with infinite delicacy picked up a single green *neem*berry as if selecting the rarest emerald from Columbia. He diffidently hopped close to his lady and gently offered it to her. Now which lady could resist such a gem: she took it from him and gulped it down. Hugely excited he cast about for more — and there were plenty. In his excitement, he almost toppled over backwards to pick an especially large one and I knew, now they were an "item".

Sure enough, they found a hollow in another *neem* tree nearby and set up home here. The lady ensconced herself in the hollow, and laid probably two-three dull white eggs. To ensure *scoorty* (security), she blocked the entrance to the hollow using her own excreta (not hygienic, perhaps, but effective) and mud pellets while her caring husband did the same from the outside using mud. (What would happen if he discovered reinforced concrete?) A narrow slit was left through which he would, all through her three-week period of incubation and when the chicks were very young, feed his beloved with a stash of berries (and maybe a lizard or two) which he would regurgitate one by one and she would gulp

Grey hornbills have done well in Delhi, but they are nowhere as glamorous as their forest dwelling cousins, the huge Great Indian Hornbill or the Malabar hornbill, magnificent black and white birds with enormous yellow bills and casques. The ordinary Malabar hornbill is a little wimpier-looking though and resembles the grey hornbill. I first encountered the Great Indian Hornbill in Corbett — we heard this strange rasping sound coming from the sky and there they were; a small flock of about five or six birds flying in tandem across the sky. Unforgettable.

## Conversations in Solitude

An artist on his lock-up works and how inmates turned collaborators

Vandana Kalra

HEN ARTIST Chintan Upadhyay left Thane Central Prison on bail in September 2021, after spending nearly six years there for the alleged murder of his estranged wife and artist Hema Upadhyay and her lawyer Haresh Bhambhani, he had hundreds of artworks that needed to be transported. "It is not a cohesive body of works but my recordings, which includes sketches that could propel future works. If it wasn't for art, I do not know what I would have done," says Upadhyay, 49, from his Navi Mumbai home-cum-studio.

He distinctly recalls the events of December 11,2015, when the bodies of Hema and Bhambhani were found in Mumbai's Kandivali. Chintan was in Delhi at the time. He had moved to the Capital in 2011, when the divorce proceedings were on. Preparations were under way for his exhibition that was to be held in February 2016 in Vadodara, where he would have unveiled two years of work with the series titled *Gandi Baat*, comprising caricatures of men, women and children, and addressing subjects of aggressive male gaze, abusive gestures and moral policing, among others.

With him being arrested days after the murder, the exhibition was cancelled, and a leading contemporary artist at the time found himself in the Thane prison. "For the initial months, I was in a cell with over 400 people. It is certainly painful and difficult being there, away from friends and family. It is a

tense atmosphere and there is constant fear," he says.

It took some prodding from the then prison superintendent for the artist to pick up the paintbrush again, when he was requested to make preparatory drawings for a mural that depicted prison life - the scene included inmates cooking, cleaning, working in karkhanas, playing board games, volleyball and so on. Few months later, he made his first acrylic on paper in prison - a deformed elephant with elongated legs,

hatching from four eggs. "I don't remember how the painting began but perhaps the eggs were suggestive of the name of my cell, Anda. The elephant is struggling to find its feet and move ahead with its brittle legs that are erupting from hatched eggs. It is trying to gather strength. The work also depicts what I felt at the time," he says. Exhibited as part of "Art from Behind Bars" initiative (of the NGO Dagar



Welfare Fund". Soon, he managed to create his own work space in the prison's confines. He also began

chased by filmmaker Kiran Rao for Rs 4.5 lakh.

He donated the proceeds to the "Prisoners'

taking workshops, and regular art classes from 2019, where he'd impart lessons to 25-30 students at a time. "I'd encourage them to imagine and analyse their situation and surroundings through art. In order to build their confidence, I even let them make small interventions in my larger works," says the artist. Several of his students and other undertrial prisoners also became the protagonists of his charcoal portraits on newspa-

pers that he sketched during

the pandemic. "These por-

traits are the stories of these

men and reflect their varied

backgrounds and ideologies," he adds. In the coming months, he hopes to bring almost 500 of these portraits together in a single installation — sharing common space, akin to how they lived in prison.

Hailing from Jaipur, the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda alumnus drew attention early on with his provocative works. His trademark babies were born in 2003 with the exhibition "Designer Babies". Over the years, he



IMAGES COURTESY CHINTAN UPADHYAY

PRISON DIARY (Clockwsie from top) Chintan Upadhyay; They Are US, a

collaborative installation with the prison community; A Dream for Better Life (Dreamopia), 2017-18, acrylic on paper

modified them to adapt different sizes, mediums and hybrid forms, painting them with varied motifs — miniatures to abstract patterns — and using them to address a range of issues, such as manipulative society, female infanticide, censorship, and social commodification.

Recognition came with opportunities, fame and commercial success. In 2007, he set a record when his installation *New Indians* was auctioned for \$529,000 at Sotheby's.

Each artwork, made in the last five years, reminds him of his moments in prison. He reckons it would suffice for multiple exhibi-

tions but he doesn't have the bandwidth to put it together. "I'm still struggling to get into the rhythm to concentrate and work," he says.

Created over a long duration, the subjects are far-ranging: from a project Mutatis Mutandis based on Sanjeev Khandekar's poems that delve into mutation, to the black-andwhite stripes of the prison uniform that merge with red on 8x10 ft canvases. Daily news also became fodder for his work as he continued to respond to socio-political developments. When debates on nationalism was raging in the country, Upadhyay was reading Rabindranath Tagore's lectures titled Nationalism. "I was interested in exploring how nationalism was viewed before we attained independence. I'd read fragments from Tagore's lectures and requested a friend to arrange for the book," he says. The ensuing drawings focus on keywords from Tagore's lecturers, such as India, Nation and Political, and he hopes to scan and bring them together in a composite print that would be painted over.

As he adjusts to life outside prison, former inmates want him to continue with the lessons. "Several are now out and have been reaching out to me with a desire to learn art. Some of them are now my studio assistants," says Upadhyay. Meanwhile, his visits to art galleries are still numbered. "I do want to see art and what everyone is making, but am still not in a frame of mind to socialise or move out a lot. It was wonderful to see art and friends in-person at the India Art Fair in Delhi last month but I was also a little lost. A lot has changed," he says.

## Second Chance

Beating COVID, again, by connecting to the environ, to India — rich and mystical, vexing yet comforting

## SLICEOFLIFE



Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

MY LIFE as a chef and consultant takes me to places that I could never have imagined when I first began cheffing in my early 20s. I've cooked for royalty, heads of state, business tycoons, popular celebrities, fashion icons, revered artists, and everyday people. Each has left an indelible imprint on my psyche. Many a time I have felt that I am the one educated in the exchange, with tutelage schools can't impart and money can't buy. It is human interaction, its myriad emotional connections or the lack thereof, that I find to be the most valuable pieces of the puzzle that is my professional life. To communicate and be able to affect change, to help plant seeds of movements that make life richer and more sustainable, to mentor a life and help it come of age, one must speak, act, teach and share with authenticity, touching minds and hearts, and leaving the other person questioning, reflecting, thinking, debating, getting riled up or finding affirmation.

Recently, a second bout of COVID left me in quarantine, only this time it was in Mumbai,

in the residence of two luxury hotels. During my enforced stay, I found myself understanding afresh the many gifts that life has bestowed upon me and the lucky perch from which I live.

Miles away from the comforts of my own bed and missing my bloodhound, Clouseau, I wasn't concerned about the 104 degrees Fahrenheit fever and painful chills, incessant sweating and debilitating cough racking my body. COVID had taken from me the joys of touching lives at the pop-up planned by luxury-brand consultant Anandita De and superstar restauranteur Suren Joshi. Instead of worrying about the headache, which was worse than any migraine, and body aches that felt like I'd been hit by a truck and left to die on the road, I was sad that the chefs in the kitchen of Joshi House in Bandra, Mumbai, weren't giving me lessons or getting hands-on cookery lessons from me. I was lamenting not being able to sit in a pre-service meeting and observe how the manager of the restaurant inspired his team or hear how they questioned the format with which my mentee Vardaan Marwah and I were presenting our progressive Indian cuisine. I mourned my inability to interact with the team members, as I'd wished to enrich my mind with their voices, questions, reactions, unique perceptions. Of course, I'd also wished to leave them with a little bit of my own quirk and self.

When I first got COVID in the US last year, days before my left-shoulder surgery, I found myself in a deep, dark abyss. A glum, gloomy, sepulchral space of tenebrously lugubrious thinking and dire hopelessness. A disconsolate, wretched malaise had overtaken my usual sunny disposition. My chipper mind had been chipped away by the virus and the fraying social fabric that is 21st century America. My hotel stay in Westchester, New York, seemed like an incarceration worse than life imprisonment. Even with family visiting me at a safe distance, I couldn't shake away my angst. NYC, my soul city and home for 30 years, felt cold, incapable of healing me. Even before my body felt pain, my mind and heart were being shattered beyond repair. I saw death at close quarters, and it took everything I had to fight the terror my mind was wreaking on my psyche. That I came out alive, had surgery, and lived to tell the tale



SUVIRSAR

MOMENT OF

TRUTH
The fluidity with which India breathes, moves forward, connects with the past, and looks ahead to tomorrow and the tomorrows beyond kept me from breaking, made me see hope where a year

ago I found none

is a miracle I couldn't foresee in that hotel.

The fever was much higher the second time around, the body aches worse still, and oxygen saturation just a hair better. I also suffered a horrible migraine-like headache that connected me to that dark period after my stroke when I returned to India to possibly die. Yet what amazes me the most — I felt no fear, didn't feel alone, and I certainly didn't see death or envision any scare of hospitalisation or worse. In quarantine, without any immediate family close by, a physician who knew my medical history or could be a comforting figure - in Mumbai, I felt comfortable, hopeful, cheery, and in command of myself and my senses, assured of my future and making it safely to a negative status.

Anandita De, my new bestie, is a friend I was destined to have so that my second COVID battle would have a Mumbai native caring with heartfelt concern for me. Her many calls daily, rich with conversation, would last for hours and keep me engaged and challenging myself. These hours of human connectedness, the sights of salt-of-the-earth living on the streets I saw from my hotel window, the sounds and smells of Mumbai, the knowledge that I was co-existing with people far richer or staggeringly poorer than I who were also battling COVID, kept me true to myself, unafraid of the outcomes that the virus could have inflicted.

India's heart and soul, its unmatched beauty, its deeply vexing poverty, its citizenry's peerless generosity and elastic hearts and ruggedly brute stamina to deal with every re-

barbative vicissitude of life... The fluidity with which India breathes, moves forward, connects with the past, and looks ahead to tomorrow and the tomorrows beyond... The incessant honking on the streets, the cacophony of sounds that are deafening and also comforting... The tireless energy of the birds in song and flight, despite the scary and superlatively high pollution levels... The majesty of the gnarled old trees, the rich vibrant flowers, and the lush and plush verdant greens of the grass and leaves in places you expect them, and those places where one wouldn't think of such a blessing... It is this that kept me from breaking, even when on the verge of being broken beyond repair — this magical truth of India, this foundation from which the Indian man, woman and child springs forth — this made me see hope where a year ago I found none.

Quarantined for more days than I wish to count, I found myself happily resigned to my fate. I made my peace with the virus. In finding space for it in my mind, I found room to accept and embrace my reality and to tackle the pain and life's loneliness with COVID. The chef, teacher, mentor, public speaker, consultant, and author — these professional hats were relegated to some faraway closet in the deep square footage of my mindscape. In connecting to my environment, as rich and mystical as India, as rip-roaring as the world's largest democracy, I found my salve, comfort, hope, the healing and faith that gave me the courage to keep going, living, believing, loving, being at peace with the self and rhythms of the world.

## The Weakest Link

A fine revelation of a known adversary, tuberculosis, and how its spread has much to do with inaccessibility of drugs, human folly and prejudices



NEQUAL SCENES/JOHNNY MILLER PHOTOGRAPH

THE GREAT DIVIDE Mumbai is India's tuberculosis hotspot, and while the victims do cut across social classes, the poor bear the brunt of the pestilence

PHANTOM PLAGUE

PHANTOM

BY VIDYA

KRISHNAN

320 pages

Penguin, Viking

PLAGUE: HOW

TUBERCULOSIS

SHAPED HISTORY

Kaushik Das Gupta

N 2020, as the coronavirus ravaged the world, another microbe took a toll of about 1.5 million lives. In that year, more people died from TB, with far fewer people being diagnosed and treated or provided with TB preventive treatment compared with 2019, and overall spending on essential TB services falling," the World Health Organization noted. Unlike the novel coronavirus, the tuberculosis bacterium is a known adversary. Humankind's battle against it goes back several centuries. That the pathogen remains intractable in large parts of the world has much to do with a lethal combination of ignorance, inequality, and policy deficits. Vidya Krishnan's Phantom Plague: How Tuberculosis Shaped History is a searing account of humankind's failure to eliminate its oldest scourge.

India, Krishnan tells us, is critical to the fight against tuberculosis. "Every year, 10.4 million (1.04 crore) new cases of tuberculosis are reported globally... Nearly 2.8 million of the afflicted – more than anywhere else in the world — live in India," she writes. India accounted for more than 30 per cent TB deaths in 2019. The tragedy is that much of it is preventable. The victims do cut across social classes but the poor and the marginalised bear the brunt of the pestilence, a vulnerability that has much to do with their living conditions as well as the failure of the country's medical system to provide timely diagnosis and care.

In one of the most telling chapters in Phantom Plague, Krishnan takes us to Building Number 10 in Natvar Parekh Compound in Mumbai's East Ward. Ostensibly a slum development project, the housing complex is a 'visual reminder of many of Mumbai's greatest challenges: The desperate shortage of real estate, a growing population crisis and brewing public health nightmare that lurks in poorly-designed urban housing". Krishnan quotes medical researchers to reveal a horrific factoid: At least one member in the matchbox-shaped single-room dwelling unit has drug-resistant tuberculosis. The unwelcoming and claustrophobic tenements, such as Building No. 10, are petri dishes for tuberculosis. Maharashtra is India's tuberculosis hotspot. About a sixth of India's drug-resistant TB patients live in the state, nearly half of them in Mumbai. Two hundred of the more than 1,200 extra drug-resistant TB — an extremely lethal form of the disease — patients live in the Maximum City. As in several infectious diseases, the spread of tuberculosis has much to do with human folly and prejudices. A large number of doctors, Krishnan's study shows, are ignorant of the protocols to treat drug-resistant TB.

What makes Phantom Plague a riveting read is Krishnan's ability to join the dots: Between the prejudices that hobbled the efforts of the early innovators and the ignorance that still holds sway in sections of the medical establishments; between the power of big pharma, patent regimes and policy deficits in several countries, including India, that combine to lock a large number of poor out of affordable healthcare; between ill-planned housing projects and the spread of infection; between HIV and the spread of TB.

Phantom Plague is simultaneously a work of medical history, anthropology, and epidemiology. We are introduced to doctors and scientists who pioneered the battle against microbes. There is a moving account of the maverick Hungarian doctor Ignaz Semmelweis whose insistence that doctors helping women deliver babies must wash their hands with lime before conducting their procedure earned him the displeasure of his colleagues, leading to his ostracisation and death in an asylum. Posthumously, however, Semmelweis would be feted as the "saviour of mothers". By washing hands before assisting women deliver babies, doctors would obviate chances of infection leading to a drastic fall in the death of women from childbed infection. Other well-known trailblazers, such as Joseph Lister, Robert Koch and Louis Pasteur, also find a place in Krishnan's account.

In a little more than 250 pages, *Phantom* Plague lays out the changing character of the war against the disease. The medical advances in the last 150 years have made TB a curable disease. But the knowledge boom seems to elude not just patients, but also policymakers and doctors. Most patients in Building No. 10, for instance, were prescribed common antibiotics as the first line of treatment which made

their condition even worse.

In chapters on two patients, Piya and Shreya, Krishnan brings alive the trauma of those suffering the lethal form of the disease. The contrasting fortunes of the two — Shreya succumbed to the disease - also frame the lack of choices that make the battle of the poor against the disease a near-impossible one. The book shows how the patent system prevents access to life-saving drugs, making patients from poor households depend on the generosity of pharma majors. That's why Krishnan's book is an important addition to the recent debate on patents on life-saving therapies and preventives, occasioned by the COVID-19 pandemic.

At the same time, Phantom Plague is a wake-up call to governments, including in India, to apply correctives to policies — rationing system for extra drug-resistance TB medicines, for instance, that was partially corrected after a Delhi High Court directive - that keep healthcare out of the reach of large sections of people, recent initiatives like Ayushman Bharat notwithstanding.

As Krishnan points out, "Much like those who suffered from HIV/AIDS in the early years of the disease, Indian TB patients must grapple with a horrible reality: Available drugs do not work for them, and newer medication is

Her work is a must-read for students of medical policy, epidemiologists, medical journalists, and all those who yearn for a more humane society.

## Making Sense of the World

In her latest, Margaret Atwood is both provocateur and an optimist

Biswadeep Ghosh

ARGARET ATWOOD is one of the greatest writers of our times. The 82-year-old Canadian writer is astonishingly prolific, having produced over 50 works of fiction, poetry and critical essays in her long career. Burning Questions is the outcome of Atwood's reflections on a variety of subjects from 2004 to 2021. The chronologically arranged collection includes talks, autobiographical sketches, tributes and political commentary.

Burning Questions will mainly appeal to those who are passionate about literature and deeply concerned about globally relevant subjects such as politics, gender inequality, human rights and climate change. Atwood is a nonpareil communicator who writes sentences of impeccable beauty. She has a subtle sense of humour, which she uses sparingly. The essays and occasional pieces are often short, but each showcases her ability to share her thoughts with grace and conviction.

The collection doesn't have thematic consistency and not every inclusion asks a burning question either. However, it is an engrossing read because of Atwood's felicitous expressions, analytical depth and also because of the choice of topics.

The author asks a series of questions in the introduction itself. "Is the world itself truly burning up? Is it we who've been setting fire to it?" "What about the highly unequal distribution of wealth, not only in North America but virtually everywhere?" "What do we mean by 'democracy' anyway? Has it ever existed, in the sense of equal rights for all citizens?" Is the social media revolution "...good or bad, or just an extension of old-fashioned crowds in motion?" Living in a flawed world, Atwood

knows these questions don't have easy answers.



BURNING QUESTIONS BY MARGARET ATWOOD Penguin Random 496 pages; ₹999

Some selections are unusual. There is, for instance, a piece that talks about time spent with her partner, writer Graeme Gibson, whose protagonist from his novel Perpetual Motion is a man named Robert Fraser who wants to invent a perpetual motion machine. It is eminently readable because it is so much more than just another portrait of a person she had known for more than four decades until his death. The memorable concluding sentence says it all: "Robert Fraser is not completely Graeme, of course; but, as I'd said when I'd first met him, his creative life and his real life were one."

On another occasion, the narrator, an alien from a planet whose name is unpronounceable, questions the earthling's emphasis on human rights. "You need these "human rights" items spelled out, for the simple reason that a lot of you haven't got them." The alien's take on politics is a stinger: "Some of us have made a study of politics, which we initially confused with cat videos." It is a perceptive comment dressed up in humour that will make the reader smile and think at the same time.

Elsewhere, she asks a question on beauty in the context of how she and others her age felt when they were young. "So what if beauty was only skin-deep? We little girls did not therefore despise it. No: we wanted beautiful exteriors ourselves, so that other little girls might envy us...." She adds later, "Skin-deep or not, curse or blessing...beauty retains its magic power — at least in our imagination. And that's why we continue to buy those countless little tubes of lip gloss: we still believe in fairies." Atwood's point of view will polarise readers. Some will disagree, while others will insist it is a fact

The essays and other pieces in *Burning Questions* came into being when the pandemic made everybody shudder in fear and the #MeToo movement, in which survivors shared their experiences of sexual abuse and harassment, made an emphatic emergence. Calling the #MeToo movement a "symptom of a broken legal system," she says that "women and other sexual-abuse complainants" used the internet because they frequently could not "get a fair hearing through institutions...."Pandemics have come and gone. That awareness makes her optimistic that the ongoing pandemic won't be a permanent fixture in our lives. "And take heart! Humanity's been through it before. There will be an Other Side, eventually.

Margaret Atwood fans will love Burning Questions. So will those who wish to have a better view of the world in

Biswadeep Ghosh is a freelance journalist and author

#### SHELF LIFE

### **Poems Await a Narrative**

BUREAUCRAT-AUTHOR Mukul Kumar's Catharsis masquerades as a poetry collection that sneaks in 50-odd stories in its 50-odd poems.

He is a storyteller, a fiction writer, as is apparent from his earlier works As Boys Become Men and Seduction by Truth, as well as the narrative thread that lingers along all the poems in this collection.

Kumar, an Indian Railway Traffic Service officer based in Delhi, draws inspiration from his own personal life. Many poems are autobiographical, such as A Bureaucrat Searches For The Poet and I Have Created, while a poem like

Confessions of an Artist is inspired from the writing process itself.

Kumar also delves into politics, with 26/11, Kashmir and Kargil, focusing on the gravitas of emotion surrounding the politics, rather than the right or wrong of it. His verse is generally free, with a dip into rhyme every now and then. There is liberal use of imagery, sometimes tired, sometimes bold.

Kumar, however, is great with character-building. The first poem in the collection, Mr. Das, compresses an officeman's dull, drab and distastefully monotonous day into two pages worth of delicious description that ultimately



**SELECTED** BY MUKUL **KUMAR** Authorspress 72 pages; ₹295 screams one thing: his life sucks. The poem stunningly examines how the middle/upper-class of urban India can be victimised by their own mental hells to bother with those less fortunate.

One such instance: Transfixed, Mr. Das will not be fazed by/The accidental fall of a man who/Will be no more or the lacerations of/A female by the lascivious eyes and/Twitching hands; these unwelcome/Tremors might spill over to/Disturb the sequence and harmony of/A replicated existence.

But therein lies a shortcoming. Its poetry yearns to be a story. Rhythm is mostly absent from the collection, with anastrophe (subject-verb-object inversion) often awkwardly employed to force a rhyme. Kumar's free verse some-

times feels like sentences disjointedly broken into stanzas, which might have worked better as prose. While some descriptions are too clichéd, sometimes the subject matter is melodramatic.

Kumar's poems work best when concise. In A Dahlia of Forty-Five and When I Was My Mother's Son, his quick delivery of a series of concrete images are far more effective than the rest of the collection because they don't fall prev to repeated deployment of tired metaphors. His talent for character- and world-building, essential for fiction, glimmers in these poems but is never allowed to shine given the form he

**UDBHAV SETH** 

## For Worse, Never Better

An exceptional study reviews the multiple markers of oppression and victimhood that women face in rural north India

Tista Das

READING REENA Kukreja's book, one is reminded of reading Karl Marx in a different setting. The book forms the link between the vast body of work on the workings of caste, kinship and marriage networks in India and the specific context of liberalisation and its impact on rural north India. Kukreja writes, "In India, the accumulative process got a fillip from the early 1990s when it wholeheartedly embraced the neoliberal project through the adoption of structural adjustment programs. This resulted in the alienation of producers from means of production and the creation of a reserve army of dispossessed and landless people who could provide cheap, flexible, and disposable labor for the accumulative process..." "The distinctiveness of this phase,"



ON THE MOVE Migration is not without its burden for women

she further writes, also "lies in the destruction of social relations through commoditization. It commoditizes everything, not even sparing

The long shadows of the alienation of producers from their products and of commodity fetishism are clearly discernible. Kukreja studies a form of non-customary marriages among both Hindus and Muslims in rural north India, especially in parts of Haryana, and places the phenomenon of rising marriage migration against the backdrop of the liberalisation of the 1990s. She begins by asking specific questions, the most important being whether these marriages could be considered as trafficking or whether they could be termed as carefully considered migration strategies.

However, there are no clear answers here. What the reader rather notes is that Kukreja considers the lens of victimhood restrictive to a broader understanding of the process of migration. She, therefore, looks at how this migration strategy worked for these women in their everyday lives.

This becomes all the more significant when one considers the neoliberal moment as one of dispossession which works through the expansion of capital. Kukreja challenges the notion of overarching changes that the expansion of capital was supposed to bring about and looks at how the preexisting discriminations not only remain but are also reinforced with the movement of capital. She enters the intimate domain of marriage-making to come to a broader understanding of intersectional identities and uses gendered matrimonial dispossession as the framework of discussion.

The methodology that Kukreja employs is significant. Recognising multiple markers in the notion of oppression and victimhood that women face, she uses a variety of tools in stitching together her narrative. She uses surveys, one-on-one interactions, interviews involving focus groups and so on. It goes with-

prey to further marginalisation through the



WHY WOULD I BE MARRIED HERE: MARRIAGE, MIGRATION AND DISPOSSESSION IN NEOLIBERAL BY REENA KUKREJA

Cornell University 284 pages; ₹2,750

out saying that marginalised communities fall

women's work. As rural India became more

unequal distribution of resources which become legitimised through state practices and the proliferation of markets. It is further reinforced as the neoliberal state working in conjunction with corporate organisations to promote land grabs and privatisation. The boom in real estate transforms agricultural lands into in-

dustrial or residential properties. The workings of marriage networks are understood through the lens of a disproportionate accumulation of capital. The Green Revolution has led to the use of family labour, especially the labour of women, in farms like never before and marriage migration can, therefore, be studied as the transference of the bride's labour, as a gendered labour migration. With mechanisation, the labour-intensive processes constituted the new regime of

closely integrated with market economy, agriculture became almost unsustainable for the marginal farmers. It would become impossible for the men of these families to find a bride from the locality. They would choose brides from places as far as Uttar Pradesh or Bihar, even bypassing caste norms.

In the ultimate analysis, therefore, the book questions the fundamental notion of development. Fertile agricultural land bore the brunt of the development of mining, the building of SEZs, of dams industries and model townships, which led to progressive marginalisation. India's new aspirational middle class found its foothold on the cusp of this transformation. The strategies of spatial purification that they employed, in conjunction with the state, helped in buttressing a new civic culture.

Kukreja does not simply talk of the impact of the neoliberal context in passing. She sets this out as the backdrop against which the gendered regime of dispossession, agrarian distress and marriage networks are discussed. The everyday negotiations which labouring brides go through, even when scripted through patriarchal strategies, do construct a bargaining counter, fragile as it might be, within the household.

> Tista Das is assistant professor of history, Bankura University, West Bengal

## ECONOMY

#### Market Watch

#### MIXED WEEK FOR OIL BENCHMARKS

New York: Brent crude fell 1.3 per cent for the week to end at \$111.63 a barrel, while US West Texas Intermediate crude rose 0.8 per cent to settle at \$108.43 a barrel, on Friday. For June, both benchmarks ended the month lower for the first time since November. REUTERS

#### SECTOR WATCH **A**VIATION

## Smoke in cabin forces turnback of SpiceJet flight, 5th incident in 2 mths

**PRANAV MUKUL** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

IN WHAT is at least the fifth air safety incident involving a SpiceJet aircraft in the last two months, a Jabalpurbound flight operated by the low-cost carrier on a Bombardier Q400 Dash 8 plane made an emergency landing in Delhi Saturday morning after smoke was noticed in the aircraft cabin.

#### **MAY DAY call**

The aircraft took off from early Saturday, and while climbing past 5,000 feet, the crew noticed

EXPLAINE

smoke in the cabin along with the lavatory smoke alarm sound going off, a top official at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) said, "Cabin crew informed cockpit crew of mild smoke in the cabin, but on visual check, no sign of smoke or damage was observed in lavatory," the official added.

Later, when passing 14,000 feet, increased smoke was seen in the cabin and the same was conveyed to the pilots, who levelled the aircraft at 15,000 feet and initiated a turn back to Delhi, the official said, adding that a "MAY DAY" call was declared to the air traffic control.

The aircraft landed safely in Delhi few minutes after 7am and all passengers were evacuated on the taxiway.

In a statement, a SpiceJet spokesperson said: "On July 2, 2022, SpiceJet Q400 aircraft was operating SG-2962 (Delhi-Jabalpur). While passing 5000 ft, the crew noticed smoke in the cabin. The pilots decided to return back to Delhi. Aircraft landed safely at Delhi and passengers were safely disembarked."

Safety incidents

This is at least the fifth air safety incident faced by the airline in the last two months. On June 19, two

#### **EMERGENCY** LANDING IN DELHI

■ A Jabalpur-bound flight operated on a Bombardier Q400 Dash 8 plane made an emergency landing in Delhi early Saturday after smoke was seen in the aircraft cabin

> Spicelet incidents were reported – one involving a bird hit on a Boeing 737operated Patna-Delhi flight, in

which the pilots landed back safely at Patna after an engine shut down, and the other also involving a Bombardier Q400 Dash 8 plane from Delhi to Jabalpur that had to make an emergency landing in Delhi after cabin pressure did not build up in line with the altitude

Prior to this, on May 4, a SpiceJet-operated Boeing 737 MAX plane from Chennai to Durgapur made an air turn back after one of its engines had to be shut down mid-air as a result of an oil filter warning.

gain of the plane.

Just days before this, a SpiceJet Boeing 737 aircraft from Mumbai to Durgapur flew into severe turbulence shortly before landing, which led to several passengers being severely injured.

This is in addition to the DGCA intervening with SpiceJet's simulator training program for the Boeing 737 MAX plane, where it was found that the airline continued to train its pilots on a simulator with known equipment faults.

Following the Mumbai-Durgapur incident, where the damaged aircraft that had witnessed severe turbulence, was allowed to takeoff from Durgapur, the DGCA had ordered a check of all SpiceJet planes.

## '5 green verdicts cost govt ₹8K-cr revenue'

NEW DELHI, JULY 2

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK

THE GOVERNMENT lost revenue worth Rs 8,000 crore from mid-2018 to mid-2021, and at least 75,000 people were adversely impacted with around 16.000 workers losing their jobs, due to five major environment-related judgements passed by the Supreme Court and National Green Tribunal (NGT), a report commissioned by the NITI Aayog has estimated

The verdicts assessed in the report include three judgements by the apex court - stopping iron ore mining in Goa, shutting down Sterlite Copper's Tuticorin plant in Tamil Nadu, and halting consultation of Mopa Airport in Goa — and two from the NGT the sand mining ban case, and halt on construction activities in Delhi-NCR.

According to a person aware of the deliberations about the report, these five cases were chosen due to their prominence when the report was being commissioned.

According to the report titled Economic Impact of Select Decisions of the Supreme Court

India'. in the aftermath of the five verdicts, the industry lost close to Rs 15.000 crore in revenues. and workers lost around Rs 500 crore of income. The estimated revenue loss of Rs 8,000 crore to the government could have resulted in an economic impact of more than Rs. 20.000 crore if invested as capital expenditure, it said. The report was first commissioned in 2019 and has been finalised with financial support from the NITI Aayog. It was prepared by Jaipur-based policy research and advocacy group CUTS International, which submitted the report to the government think-tank this June.

the SC had cancelled Vedanta Ltd's lease to mine iron ore. which the then Goa government had renewed in 2014. The order also directed mining companies to stop all mining operations until they obtained new environmental clearances and leases. Due to this ban, the report said, "State public debt increased at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 10.06 per cent from 2007 through 2021, while the market loans taken by the state increased at a CAGR of 19.93 per

In an order passed in 2018,

#### JUDGEMENTS ASSESSED

NITI AAYOG-COMMISSIONED REPORT WHICH STUDIED 3 ORDERS BY SUPREME COURT, 2 BY NGT



**THE VERDICTS** assessed in the report include three judgements by the Supreme Court — stopping iron ore mining in Goa, shutting down Sterlite Copper's Tuticorin plant,

cent, consequently due to mining suspension."

As a result of the ban on mining in the coastal state, the total revenue earned by the Goa government between financial years 2015-16 and 2017-18 was Rs 1,128.38 crore, which declined by 79.51 per cent to Rs. 231.23 crore in between 2018 and 2021, a difference of Rs. 897.15 crore, the report said.

"As a consequence of the mining ban in Goa, the central and state revenues cumulatively suffered an estimated deficit of



and halting consultation of Mopa Airport in Goa — and two from the National Green Tribunal - the sand mining ban case, and halt on construction activities in Delhi-NCR

Rs 668.39 crore in taxes paid by the mining companies, whereas the state revenues exclusively suffered an estimated deficit of Rs 1,821.32 crore," it added.

"While quashing 88 mining leases, the SC could have directed the government of Goa to restart mining operations within a stipulated time under the court's supervision and facilitated by a committee of subject experts including economists, environmentalists, etc" the report recommended.

It added, "Such an approach

impact analysis of the mining suspension, initiated and supervised by the SC itself. The analysis could have also explored the best possible environmental protection measures to keep the damage to the minimum."

In 2019, the apex court suspended an economic clearance (EC) obtained by the Goa government towards the development of a second international airport in Mopa.

Due to discrete judicial restraints on the construction of the airport, remobilisation of resources, and Covid-19 pandemic delays, the report said that the cost of the first phase of the airport increased from Rs 1,900 crore to Rs 2,615 crore, a 38 per

cent cost over run. In April an expert committee laid out additional environmental safeguards and conditions for the construction of the airport, which was accepted by the apex court on January 16, 2020, withdrawing the suspension from EC. The airport is slated to be operationalised in August this year.

The Sterlite Copper Plant in Tuticorin, Tamil Nadu, which was shutdown in 2018 by the state's pollution control board

ing to grant relief to Sterlite, impacted the incomes of the people who lost their jobs, reducing their monthly incomes by at least 50 per cent while rendering many jobless, the report said.

The judiciary needs to be equipped well to balance economic and ecological interests of the country, the report recommended. For instance, in response to the ban on construction in Delhi-NCR, which was put in place by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in November 2021 and lifted a month later, the report suggested that "the ineffectiveness of procedures adopted by the judiciary and the executive in curbing pollution highlights the existence of loopholes in set procedures and system owing to various reasons such as capacity and expertise constraints, paucity of resources, etc."

It also said that courts should undertake economic impact analyses facilitated by a group of experts including economists, environmentalists, sociologists, among others, to address and adjudicate public interest cases involving economic sensitive

#### Power consumption up 17.2% to 134.13 bn units in June

Power consumption grew by 17.2% on-year to 134.13 billion units (BU) in June, amid severe heat and spurt in economic activity, as per Power Ministry data



**POWER CONSUMPTION IN** JUNE OVER LAST 2 YEARS June 2021 June 2020 114.48 BU 105.08 BU

In pre-pandemic June 2019, power

In pre-pandering consumption was at 117.98BU Peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during this June remained at

giga watt (GW), on June 8 **Power consumption and** demand, according to experts, rose mainly due to severe heat and

an all-time high of 209.80

The third Covid wave hit the country in January, forcing states to impose local restrictions such as night and weekend curfews, which restrictions were eased gradually Source: Power Ministry/PTI

### **India-EU FTA talks: Next round** at Brussels in Sept, says ComMin The first round of talks, which tion and GIs were held, it added.

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JULY 2

THE COMMERCE Ministry on Saturday said that India and the European Union (EU) concluded the first round of talks for their proposed free trade agreement (FTA) on Friday and the next round of talks is scheduled at Brussels in September.

India and the 27-nation bloc resumed negotiations on June 17, after a gap of over eight years, on the proposed agreements on investments and Geographical Indications (GI). began on June 27, ended July 1. India's FTA negotiations were

led by Chief Negotiator Nidhi Mani Tripathi, Joint Secretary in the Department of Commerce and the EU was represented by its Chief Negotiator Christophe Kiener, the ministry said in a statement. The week-long negotiations were held in a hybrid fashion – with some of the teams meeting in Delhi and the majority of officials joining virtually.

During the first round, 52 technical sessions covering 18 policy areas of FTA and seven sessions on investment protec-

India's bilateral trade with the EU amounted to \$116.36 billion in 2021-22. At present, the EU is India's second largest trading partner after the US, and the second largest destination for Indian exports. "The trade agreement with the EU would help India further expand and diversify its exports of goods and services, including securing the value chains. Both sides are aiming for the trade negotiations to be broad-based, balanced, and comprehensive, based on the principles of fairness and reciprocity," it added. WITHPTI

## MoS IT meets UK PM; discusses collaboration in innovation, tech

**PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** NEW DELHI, JULY 2

MINISTER OF State for IT Raieev Chandrasekhar met UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday and discussed future collaborations and partnerships between India and the United Kingdom in innovation and technology sec-

tors, as per an official release. Briefing reporters later, Chandrasekhar said both India and the UK want to dramatically expand the innovation economy. the release said.

"Union Minister of State for **Electronics and Information** Technology Chandrasekhar on Friday met UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson

along with a delegation of Indian startups, unicorns and innovators," it said adding that they both discussed future collaborations and partnerships between the two sides on innovation and the technology sector.

Chandrasekhar also met Paul Scully, British MP in this regard. "We want to take the digital economy to be 25 per cent of the total economy. The UK government also wants to expand the slice of that pie too," Chandrasekhar told reporters.

He also held ministeria roundtable discussions with Priti Patel, Home Secretary UK, Anne-Marie Trevelyan, Secretary of State for International Trade and President of the Board of Trade-Government of UK and Chris

Philip, Minister for Technology and Digital Economy UK at the

pid strides taken by India in the field of technology, and informed that the country is designing 5G gear and manufacturing devices that go into making of 5G products.

Chandrasekhar also attended

a session on the Future of Digital at the IGF, UK where he spoke on the rapid digitalisation and the Chandrasekhar outlined the need for safeguarding ₹Digital Nagriks' against user harm

> He called for collaboration among counties, especially like minded democracies, to ensure safety and trust for the users in the boundaryless domain of cyberspace.

#### BRIEFLY —

#### Indian Bankpact

Chennai: Indian Bank said it has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Haryana government towards distribution of mobile phones to consumers through e-unified payment interface system.

#### D-Mart revenue

New Delhi: Avenue Supermarts Ltd, which owns and rusn retail chain D-Mart, posted a near two-fold rise in standalone revenue from operations to ₹9,806.9 crore for the June quarter. PTI

#### SAS, pilots talks

Stockholm: Scandinavian airline SAS and its pilots have agreed to extend their wage talks until Monday in the hope of averting a strike, a company executive told reporters on Saturday. Close to 1,000 pilots in Denmark, Sweden and Norway plan to strike if talks break down, according to the unions, which SAS had said could leave some 30,000 passengers stranded each day. **REUTERS** 

#### Canara Bankloan

New Delhi: Canara Bank surpassed the Rs 1-lakh-crore mark under Gold Loan outstanding as on June 30. For the current fiscal, the public sector bank grew 26.19% under Gold Loan as compared to previous year, amid contribution from 435 Gold Loan Plaza Branches. **ENS** 

#### **E-FILING PORTAL**

### Infy taking measures to deal with traffic: I-T

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, JULY 2

AS TAXPAYERS are facing issues in accessing the e-filing portal, the Income Tax department on Saturday said that the software services company Infosys is taking "proactive measures" to deal with the 'irregular traffic' on the portal.

"It has been noticed that taxpayers are facing issues in accessing ITD e-filing portal. As informed by @Infosys, they have observed some irregular traffic on the portal for which proactive measures are being taken," the I-T Department tweeted.

The new e-filing portal www.incometax.gov.in – which was launched on June 7, 2021 had a bumpy start with taxpayers and professionals reporting glitches and difficulties in its functioning. Infosys was given the contract in 2019 to develop the portal.

More recently, the portal faced snags on the first anniversary of its launch and many users complained that they were unable to log in into the portal, while some complained malfunctioning of the search functionality.

The Central government has paid Rs 164.5 crore to Infosys to build the new income tax e-fil-

### **Berkshire Hathaway** buys 9.9 mn more

**REUTERS** NEW YORK, JULY 2

> WARREN BUFFETT'S Berkshire Hathaway Inc said it has bought another 9.9 million shares of Occidental Petroleum Corp, giving it a 17.4 per cent stake in the oil company. Berkshire paid about \$582 million for the shares, which it

> > night filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) Buffett's company is Occidental's largest shareholder, now owning 163.4 million

bought between Wednesday

and Friday, according to a Friday

shares worth about \$9.9 billion. Its stake is about 60 per cent larger than that of Vanguard, the next largest shareholder, according to Refinitiv data.

Berkshire also owns warrants to buy another 83.9 million Occidental shares for \$5 billion.

Occidental's share price has more than doubled this year, benefiting from Berkshire's purchases as well as rising oil prices following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

The Berkshire investment has prompted market speculation that Buffett's Omaha, Nebraska-based conglomerate might eventually buy all of Occidental.

In a June 23 research report, Truist Securities analyst Neal Dingmann saw a "good chance" of a Berkshire takeover once



**Berkshire Hathaway** chairman Warren Buffett. The company now owns 17.4% stake in Occidental **Petroleum Corp.** Reuters file

Occidental became an investment-grade credit, saying a purchase would help diversify Berkshire's energy portfolio.

Occidental has been reduc-

ing debt, which swelled when it

bought Anadarko Petroleum Corp for \$35.7 billion in 2019. Berkshire bought \$10 billion of Occidental preferred stock to help finance that purchase, and obtained the warrants at that time. It also had a \$25.9 billion

Corp at the end of March. Berkshire's share price has fallen 8 per cent this year, compared with a 20 per cent decline in the Standard & Poor's 500.

stake in oil company Chevron

Buffett's company owns dozens of businesses, including the BNSF railroad, Geico car insurer and its namesake energy business, as well as stocks including Apple Inc and Bank of

### Tesla sales fall, hurt by China's **Covid curbs**

**REUTERS** BENGALURU, JULY 2

TESLA INC delivered 17.9% fewer electric vehicles in the second quarter from the previous quarter, as China's COVID 19-related shutdown disrupted its production and supply chain.

The world's biggest electric car maker said on Saturday that it delivered 254,695 vehicles in the April to June period, compared with 310.048 vehicles in the preceding quarter, ending a nearly two-year-long run of record quarterly deliveries.

A resurgence in COVID-19 cases in China had forced Tesla to temporarily suspend production at its Shanghai factory and also affected suppliers' facilities in the country. Tesla is ramping up production at the Shanghai factory with the easing of the Covid-19 lockdown, which will help boost deliveries in the second half. Early in June, CEO Elon Musk told executives that he had a "super bad feeling" about the economy and needed to cut about 10 per cent of staff at the electric car maker.

Musk has said demand for Tesla vehicles remains strong, but supply-chain challenges still remain. In June, Tesla again hiked prices for some of its models in the United States and China after Musk had warned of significant inflationary pressure in raw materials and logistics.

## CONFIDENT OF DIWALI TIMEFRAME TO READY DRAFT

## Financial services exciting aspect of India FTA: Sunak

**ADITI KHANNA** LONDON, JULY 2

THE FINANCIAL services sector holds out an "exciting" prospect of closer exchange between India and the UK with a free trade agreement (FTA) being negotiated between the two countries, according to British

Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

In an interaction with reporters ahead of India Global Forum's UK-India Awards celebrating Indian diaspora success within the UK-India corridor on Friday, the senior British Indian Cabinet minister said he sees enormous opportunity for both countries in areas such as fintech and welcomed the opening up of the Indian insurance market.

The minister also expressed his confidence over the Diwali timeframe for an FTA draft to be ready. "There's good progress being made and I think one of the exciting things for me in my role is financial services," he told PTI. "Financial service is an area

where there's an enormous opportunity for both of our countries. India's goal is to spread insurance across the entire economy because insurance is a great thing for enabling protection for individuals and growth. We can help with that in the UK because we have a fantastic insurance industry. And bit by bit we've been able to provide more



UK Chancellor of the Exchequer Rishi Sunak at the UK-India Awards 2022, in Windsor, near London, Friday. PTI

of those products, services and expertise to Indian firms and citizens and companies," he said. He also referred to India's

plans for a Sovereign Green Bond

and the UK having gone through that journey would want to help India raise that capital. "It builds on a tradition of us helping provide capital to India from across the world because one of the defining movements of capital of our time will be the flow of capital from the west into fast growing India. That's an incredibly exciting and significant event. And the UK can really help be the place which allows India the access to the biggest pool of capital on the best possible

In the interaction with the Indian Journalists' Association (IJA), the senior Cabinet minister

terms to drive its growth."

said he is "very supportive of India playing an increasingly influential role in the region, and indeed, in the world" as a massive economy and the world's largest democracy and an FTA would prove a greater champion of that cause.

Sunak also highlighted the important role to be played by the Indian diaspora in strengthening a "partnership of equals' between the two countries.

'The UK doesn't have a monopoly on opportunity. There's an enormous amount of opportunity in India, we also want to make sure that if this living bridge is going to be a real thing, we have got to make it easier for people in the UK to go to India, to study at world-class institutions to go work in all these amazing start-ups," he said. PTI



## Two shuttlers suspended for age fraud

**NITIN SHARMA** CHANDIGARH. JULY 2

A DAY after the Badminton Association of India (BAI) postponed the All India Sub-Junior Ranking Tournament in Mohali for a day after parents' made allegations of overage players in the fray, the governing body for the sport suspended two players from

While the matches got under way on Saturday at Mohali, the two players were suspended after the protesting parents met Sanjay Mishra, the BAI secretary early on Saturday morning. Mishra assured the parents of strict action. The All India Sub-Junior Ranking tournament (Under-13) is being organised by Punjab Badminton

"After the complaint by the parents, Badminton Association of India has suspended two players from Rajasthan and their Badminton Association of India ID's too have been deactivated. The issue has been forwarded to the age fraud committee and further action will be taken by BAI. Regarding the complaints regarding more players having fake birth certificates, the BAI will take action based on evidence," BAI observer Bamang Tago said.

Earlier this week, more than 60 parents had written to Sanjay Mishra, secretary, BAI, about some players submitting fake birth certificates. While the parents had submitted a written complaint on Wednesday, some of them protested during the main draw matches of the tourna-After a two-hour discussion between

Tago and the protesting parents, the organizing committee of PBA decided to postpone the matches to Saturday

There were also reports of overaged players participating in the All India Sub-Junior under-13 ranking tournament in Hyderabad too.

"BAI only took the matter seriously when we protested and stopped the matches. We had submitted the complaints earlier too at the ranking tournament at Hyderabad. We are glad that two players from Rajasthan have been suspended. We have also asked BAI to lodge a FIR in this case of age fraud so that it creates a deterrent for other players to do so. We also hope that complaints regarding other players, against whom many parents have submitted proof, are investigated," Ravi Vyas, one of the parents of a player participating in the tournament, said.

KK Sharma, chairman of BAI's age fraud committee, was not available for com-

#### **SPORTLINE**

Ahead of the FIH women's World Cup, Janneke Schopman's Indian team has used football-training technology to help players scan the field faster, make fewer touches on the ball, improve decision making and craft quick passes

## Split-second hockey

**MIHIR VASAVDA** 

MUMBAI, JULY 2

ITWASN'T the finish, a close-range tap-in, that pleased Janneke Schopman as much as the

The move began with a seemingly-harmless pass from Sharmila Devi to Jyoti Gulia on India's right flank. Jyoti, surrounded by three American defenders, took just one touch to control the ball and with the second, returned it to Sharmila, who had continued her parallel run inside.

Scanning the options in front of her while liding towards the US 'D', the Indian attacker drew two defenders to her, and with her third touch, threaded a through ball towards Vandana Katariya inside the goal-scoring area. Vandana took a couple of steps goal-wards and on cue, Navneet Kaur arrived at the penalty spot to receive the ball and take the move to its intended conclusion.

As the ball thudded into the backboard, Schopman gave all her players in the dugout a high-five. "That's what I want them to do," the India coach says. "...see their teammate, decide what they need to do and where to give the ball. I don't want them to just throw the ball because someone's asking,'

For months, she'd been trying to instill this kind of telepathic understanding among the players. And after numerous 'red sessions' that involve high-intensity training, importing a training technology commonly used in football and countless hours of trying, they nailed it in their penultimate game before the World Cup, where India's campaign gets underway against England in Amstelveen on Sunday.

This isn't the sort of the one missing element in the team or something that will magically turn them into a force overnight. It's, in essence, another building block for a team that's been punching above its weight and aspires to do that until the giant-killers become giants themselves.

What made India's fourth-place finish at the Tokyo Olympics more remarkable is that the team was very much a work in progress back then. Nothing leading up to the Games remotely suggested they would battle their way into the semifinals.

In the year since, they've shown glimpses of what they are capable of, a case in point being the twin wins over the US, but there've been occasions when the team has been handed a reality check as well, like the 5-0 de-



feat to Belgium a couple of weeks ago. India now stand at a very critical juncture.

A deep run into the World Cup and the Commonwealth Games will go a long way in enhancing their reputation and giving further thrust to women's hockey in the country.

India have speed in the form of Salima Tete, the skills of Lalremsiami and the combination of Monika, Neha Goval and Navneet Kaur, who find each other easily and play in triangles to unlock opposition defences. The previous coach Sjoerd Marijne made these attackers play give-and-go hockey, wherein a player passes the ball to a teammate and continues her forward run to receive a return Schopman, who was the analytical coach

on Marijne's staff before succeeding him as the chief coach, wants to take the concept forward but has demanded more fluency, higher speed and better accuracy. She is mindful of the fact that against top teams, the players can't afford to depend on the coach to bark out instructions or delay a pass even by a second. "Good players are able to make decisions in a split-second by themselves," she says. "So, we have been training specifically to create

That meant getting the players to look at each other more often, pre-scan the pitch, play with fewer touches - a maximum of three and look up all the time to be able to craft a good pass. These may sound very rudimentary aspects but lest one forgets, it wasn't until five years ago that the women's team started operating in a professional environment.

For India, who are routinely able to get a result against teams ranked closer to, or below, them, this is paramount to challenge the top guns - the Netherlands, Germanys and Argentinas of world hockey. In the split second between a player looking down to control the ball and lifting her gaze up to spot a teammate and pass the ball, these teams are capable not just of closing down the passing lines but also stealing possession and launching a

Most of the attacking drills post-Tokyo have centred around making the players operate while looking up and making the right deci-

In the weeks leading up to the World Cup, the team management even imported a technology, named SmartGoals, to enhance the players' game intelligence, reaction speed and vision. It's an interactive system in which light signals, the shape and size of a training cone, are placed as makeshift goalposts. When a player runs, dribbles, or shoots a ball through them, the light in that smart goal goes off and will jump to another goal.

'So basically, we have to look up all the time to see which goal is lit up and play accordingly," forward Sangita Kumari says. "We play using four such goals in two teams of four and have to keep the ball moving while trying to spot



SmartGoals is a training system that helps to improve players' game intelligence, reaction speed and vision and has been used by the Indian Women's team ahead of the WC.

Hockey India, felixdenayer/Instagram

which goal is open and attack accordingly." This is a commonly-used training system in football and the manufacturer's website lists Dutch clubs Ajax and PSV Eindhoven, Turkish giants Fenerbahce, Bundesliga side Schalke and the Dutch football association, among others, as their clients

It's one of the many crossovers between football and hockey, which are perhaps the closest any two sports can get tactically, but Schopman's purpose of using this tool is clear: To improve their decision-making and awareness. You'll hear me saying those two words a

Sangita, a junior team star who has seamlessly transitioned to the senior level, says the technology has helped them build stamina given the quick switching of the goals, improved reaction speed, and understand how to play while constantly looking up, pre-scan their passing options and enhance their decision-making.

India are in Pool B of the 16-team World Cup, alongside England, New Zealand and

Led by goalkeeper Savita Punia, India will open their campaign against England just like at the 2018 World Cup, when the unfancied Indians held the hosts to a hard-fought 1-1 draw in front of 15,000 fans in London.

China. "It's the group of death. Four good

teams..." Schopman says.

That result began India's surge but when

the two teams met each other at the Tokyo Olympics twice, including the bronze-medal playoff - England played as Great Britain but a majority of the players remained the same -India lost on both occasions.

England are one of the most dangerous teams while transitioning to attack, which they often do through the middle while committing a lot of numbers forward and using their speed well.

If England play through the centre, New Zealand, Schopman says, like to stretch the field. "For us, it'll be important to be willing to commit our numbers and not drop with them because if we keep walking backward, we'll invite these teams to come up. I really want us to be brave and stay higher and put pressure," she explains. "These two countries are just very good, great attacking transitions, they love big spaces, love to run at teams... that's something we'll have to manage.

It'll put the spotlight on the defence, which has often looked shaky and rescued by Savita, a proper big-match player.

India have gained an upper hand over China in recent years but to arrest their decline, China pulled off a coup by bringing together two of the sharpest minds in international hockey. They recently appointed Australian great Alyson Annan, who succeeded Marijne as the Dutch women's team coach and guided them to a stunning Tokyo Olympics gold

After getting Annan on board, China then appointed the legendary Ric Charlesworth as her assistant. And the duo, within no time, has turned China into a team that is extremely tough to crack, as Belgium and the Netherlands experienced in the FIH Pro League last month.

Four years ago, it would have been hard to imagine that India would escape unscathed from such a group. "But we have grown in the last four-five years. Not many took us seriously until then (2017-18)," Savita says. "But now, we are a team that no one would want to play."

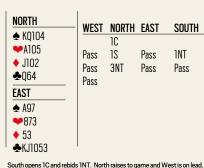
#### IN A NUTSHELL

India's schedule (Pool B, all matches in Àmsterdam)

July 3: vs England (8pm) July5: China (8pm) July 7: vs New Zealand (11pm)

#### **BRIDGE**

ealer: South Vulnerable: North/South



The West Hand: S-652H-K42 D-98764C-A9 The South Hand: S-J83H-QJ96D-AKQC-872

South is marked with the three top diamonds. West would not lead the nine of diamonds from a holding like 19864. You should credit South with nine points in diamonds. South is marked with the three top diamonds. West would not lead the nine of diamonds from a holding like 19864. You should credit South with nine points in diamonds. How many tricks does declarer have

oes is lead a low spade from the dummy. What does East know and what East knows a lot about the South hand. He has nine points in diamonds (AKQ) and we think he has three points in hearts (QJ). His play in spades is a sure clue that he has the jack of spades. That gives him thirteen points that

The ace of clubs? Since South opened 1C and rebid 1NT, he should have 12-14 points and he has shown up with thirteen. He should not have the ace of clubs unless he is a sloppy counter, which is not common. If South had the ace of clubs he would have opened 1NT, a bid that players seem to e

to lead to you. He does and the result is a nice down two.

EAST

**♦** J965

**♥**K0J

NORTH

♠ AQ4

Pass

**9** 6542

**♦** K87 ♦ A10932 **♣**QJ10 **♣**2 NORTH EAST 10 1H Pass 1NT Pass 3NT Pass

South gets to 3NT and West leads the ten of hearts, dummy's suit. You pla the jack and it wins. You continue with the king and South takes the acc

### **SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2380**

- ACROSS
  9. Golf course (5) 10. Face or confront boldly; dare
- 11. Toy dog breed (7)
- 15. Purse or a satchel (3)
- 16. Policeman(3) 17. Obese(3) 19. Progress (7)
- 20. Sweet potato(3) \_\_\_ Kapital : Karl Marx's magnum opus(3)
- 24. Happiness (3)
- 25. Capital of Japan (5)
- 29. Type of radio show (5-2)
- 33. Sneaked or crawled (5)
- A stone fruit (4) Director of "Brokeback Mountain"
- Land in the water (4)
- Labourer of yore (4)
- Root of the taro (4)
- Disease producing fits (8)
- Boundary (6) 13. Clumsy fellow (3)
- Cricket trophy (5) 15. Winegrowing region of France (10)
- 16. Vault beneath church used as a burial place (5) 18. Quality of neatness and orderliness
- 21. Lowing sound (3) 22. Strictness (6)26. Caused to turn over or fall down (6)
- 28. A speed (4)
- 29. Domestic hogs (4) 30. A killer whale (4)
- 31. Fame or renown (4)
- CRYPTIC CLUES
- ACROSS 9. One getting presented with an aloe-like amaryllid (5)
- 10. Too self-important to hit back to us ? Nothing in it (9)
- 11. Songs that fishermen bring home?
- 12. She may be sent round to sell tea
- 13. Lofty operator responsible for Blair being without one-to-one (3,2)
- 16. Sleeping part of the small house?
- 15. What a blow backwards and forwards this can deliver! (3)

- 19. Going out, one aunt takes the back seat of a car(7)
  - 20. Leaders of the north and west abandon the snows with a call for

The bird is black and back (3)

- 23. For this one became out of one's
- mind, perhaps (3)

  24. There's no holding a key man given
- some authority (3) 25. Mineral well cut we hear (5)
- 27. How golfers start to find drama cancelled! (4,3)
- 29. He uses magical powers in a
- struggle to get a grip (7)

  32. Note how different title colour shown (9)
- 33. Fellow's nasty look and mocking laugh(5)

- A layman or the French in charge ? Early pressman (6) Put your money on the hot tip, lady
- Winger one is putting in book (4)
- Topless figure to repeat so-called Italian writer (7,3)
- Spell out of order aims at being environmentally unfavourable (8)
- Mutual admiration ceremonies? You may see one or two in Hollywood(6) 13. Silently we return to the bench (3)

14. Choral composition somehow to

have been encountered going

3 1 6

- 15. Instrument noted for precision
- 16. Reported fish in lock (5) 18. Opinionated setter, perhaps, starts to moan about themes in
- 21. Is up over 10? Considerably less!
- 22. Assail the devil with a faulty gun
- 26. Overcharged and got the bird? (6) 28. Rubbish rots anyway (4)
  29. Off the mark with an extra run (4)
- 30. Split, if in the right? (4) 31. Church of Scotland (4)

### Solutions to 2379

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Ursa, 3 Idly, 6 Babel 0 Performer, 11 Girls, 12 Psychic, 13 Spiders 4 Lugs, 16 Famine, 18 Doe, 21 Rio, 22 Buying, 23 Trot, 25 Opacify, 27 Estonia, 29 Lying, 30 Approving, 31 Steps, 32 Spry, 33 Eyed. Down:1 Unpopular, 2 Sorry, 4 Democracy, 5 Yarns, 6 Beguiled, 7 Bartender, 8 Lists, 9 Goths, 15 Globalize, 17 Innkeeper, 19 Estranged, 20 Abridges, 24 Ethos, 25 Ogles, 26 Yeats, 28 Noisy. CRYPTICCLUES Across:1 Buth 3, Knaw 6, Pann 10 Across:1 Ruth,3 Knew,6 Pepup,10 Cabanossi, 11 Ounce, 12 Padrone, 13 Thinned

Capanoss, IT Unice, IZ Padrone, 13 Inlinea, IZ Padrone, 13 Inlinea, IA RSVP, 16 Rabbie, 18 Vip, 21 Hag, 22 Pounce, 23 USSR, 25 Intones, 27 Beatles, 29 Tabby, 30 Arch-enemy, 31 Spend, 32 Sing, 33 Tyre, Down: 1 Rock-perch, 2 Tubed, 4 Nosferatu, 5 Wist, 6 Provided, 7 Perknives, 8 Plead, 9 Snook, 15 Vegetable, 17 Back bacor 19 Peristyle, 20 Open-eyed, 24 Males, 25 lotas, 26 Seals, 28 Leery.

9

5

3

### If it's your Birthday

#### Sunday July 3

l prospects are looking up. Sure, there might be a little confusion, even if the results can often be quite amusing. Do try not to misread other people's intentions, though.

#### Monday July 4

If you have a special strength, it's your ability to work hard to improve, no matter what the odds. The condition is that you have faith in yourself.

#### Tuesday July 5

This is one of those moments when even without trying you set events in train which lead to remarkable recognition and respect. Great times lie ahead if you lay your reputation on the line.

#### Wednesday July 6

If you've got any time to day-dream then so much the better. You may soon be knocked off-course by intense emotions, but only briefly, and you will quickly regain your composure.

#### Thursday July 7

It's a dynamic time, full of potential for positive experiences. You can either give in and go under, or you can meet challenges head on. You know which course to choose, you are determined.

#### Friday July 8

What you need to do is follow your heart and keep at least half an eye on long-term commitments.

#### Saturday July 9

A recent romantic or social commitment may change now that you're seeing it through fresh eyes.

1 7 6 8 2 9 4 5 3

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

devoted to work. Not just work, we should say, but your broader professional ambitions, your desire to fulfil your Arien destiny to be the first and foremost in all

human activities. It looks very

commitments and romantic

much as if you will place family

#### hopes in second place. TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Some of you are now pretty tired of a close partner's inconsiderate ways. But what should you do? Should you

follow the normal Taurean practice and put up with irritations until they go away? Well, with so many planets in your favour you may take a different approach, tackling such people head-on.

#### GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Neptune, that most mysterious of planets, is

of its passage through a special region of your chart, one which rules not just your money, but all joint finances. The only forecast we can make is that your business situation is bound to be more complicated.

approaching the end

#### CANCER (June 22 - July 23) Get into gear now and you'll be ready to make the most of your

astrological cycle. You're bound to domestic activities and aspirations at first but, by the end of the week, you'll be focusing on work, where it looks as if conditions will be more

#### complicated than usual. LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Even though some of

your affairs seem to have been thrown into reverse, you should remember: in no circumstances should you take a back seat now, or allow anyone to push you into second place. There are challenges to be met,

#### who come through on top. VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) You are beginning to

but also a great many glittering

prizes to be the reward of those



share a number of characteristics with Pisces, your opposite

sign. This is strange, because sensitive Pisceans are often so different from sober Virgoans. yet with an enormous build-up of planets pointing at your house it is time for you to liberate your imagination.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

going away sometime soon? We can forecast firmly that you will enjoy yourself. meet new people and feel more energetic than if you stay a home. Please double-check all instructions before setting off. There's a discovery waiting for

#### you, but where and what only time will tell.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22) This is a classic moment. You're at your most secretive

perhaps you yourself aren't even sure what you're up to! Yet you're very public about your feelings, and you may even be making a drama out of a relationship. You must take as many short trips as you can, visiting as many different

#### environments as possible. SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22) You should be on top form,



home for the phone to ring, hoping that other people will contact you. You must seize the initiative and arrange social activities and meetings.

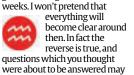
#### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)



you'll be changing your mind on

important matters, cancelling

major engagements and meeting delays in all your plans. AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19) You're building up to the next great lunar alignment in two



grow more obscure. Life, you might guess, is about to become even more weird than before. PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

great hang-up, in spite of the fact that you are also the friendliest person. You probably don't need an astrologer to tell you that, but it may help to know

Shyness can be your

that you can do something about it and be increasingly outgoing more of the time. Mature Pisceans have already found a way to boost their social skills.

Kolkata

#### **JUMBLED WORDS**

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to  $the \, respective \, squares \, below. \, Select \, the \, letters \, in \, the \, shaded \, squares \, and \, jumble \, them \, to \, get$ It is wonderful how quickly you get used to things, even the most \_\_\_\_- - Edith Nesbitt (11)

**EOWNNT ACTUGH** Answer: It is wonderful how quickly you get used to things, even the most **astonishing** -

SOLUTION: AVOID, OASIS, NEWTON, CAUGHT

S

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

Difficulty Level 3s

To solve a Sudoku puzzle.

Instructions

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

6 5 5 9 1 7 8 5 2 1 5 8

6

8

SOLUTION SUDOKU 488

5 2 8 6 3 4 1 9 7 9 4 3 1 5 7 6 2 8 6 1 7 4 8 2 5 3 9 3 9 4 5 7 1 2 8 6 2 8 5 3 9 6 7 4 1 4 6 9 2 1 3 8 7 5 8 3 1 7 4 5 9 6 2 7 5 2 9 6 8 3 1 4

**ENGLAND VS INDIA** 

3pm, Live on Sony Sports Network

3.30pm onwards, Live on Star Sports Network **WOMEN'S HOCKEY WORLD CUP** 

India vs England, 8pm, Live on Star Sports Network

## Bumrah — Right arm pure theatre

First, there was a small matter of looting runs with the bat; then he squeezed in the pressure with the ball to leave English gasping

**SANDIP G** JULY 2

JASPRIT BUMRAH: Right Arm Fast. The categorisation is oversimplifying Bumrah. He is many in one—a versatile new-ball merchant; an old-ball virtuoso, a seam artiste; supreme length-manipulator, an all-format freak of nature, a talisman and a matchwinner, an icon and an entertainer. On Saturday, he was all, more than all, and pure theatre too.

There are many reasons spectators flock to watch him in flesh or turn on the television when he is winding up that unique action of his. Apart from the sense of achievement that will grow with the years in just having been there the day that Bumrah did that, a desperation almost to be part of him in some tiny way, Bumrah brings something for everyone. For the masses, he gifts the visceral thrill of a supersonic fast bowler splaying stumps and blasting pads; for purists the joys of his fine subtleties; for the scientists the mechanics of his action; for the students of the game, a light of enlightenment; and for the spectators watching from the stands, a song for their tune, a rhythm for their beat.

If Bumrah does not make you fall in love with cricket, perhaps nothing this decade in

He began the Super Saturday, exceeding his own powers to entertain. His 16-ball 31 was both pantomime and cult. He consigned Stuart Broad, he of the retro headband and 550 Test wickets, to another slice of cricketing ignominy—35 runs in an over, 31 runs from his bat. No one ever has scored as many runs in a single over in Tests as Bumrah hadnot Rishabh Pant or Virender Sehwag; not Brian Lara or Viv Richards

Using the word "score" to denote those 31 runs hardly does justice, or captures the essence, of those 31 runs. You could call it fluke, freak, or even farce, but it all embellished the entertainment package that Bumrah is. It would be one of the most chaotic overs ever in cricket—a top-edge four that just eluded the long-leg fielder, five wides, a top-edged six off a no ball, a French-cut four, a heave that ended him crashing onto the surface (ala Pant), a onelegged pulled six (ala Gordon Greenidge) and a comic single.

In the middle, Bumrah was rolling in laughter with partner Mohammed Siraj. So were his teammates in the dressing room. But to gauge the impact of his knock, however fortuitous it was, one just had to zoom into the face of Broad and his captain Ben Stokes. Broad looked as pale as someone trapped with a ghost in a Gothic castle; Stokes, for the first time since becoming captain, looked dazed, leaving to fate the passing of the storm.

Those 35 runs not only took India to 416. a target that seemed impossible when they were 100/5 at one stage, but also plausibly destroyed them psychologically. The last three had added 93, and the last pair 41 runs. It was not the first time that he had hurt England with the bat—the 34 not out at Lord's and 24 at Oval were useful runs. Don't yet call him an all-rounder though. Stokes blew his cheeks in relief when the partnership eventually ended, with James Anderson consum-

ing Siraj for his 32nd five-wicket haul in Tests. Then kicked in the real storm. Bumrah with the new ball. His transformation from a goofball to an executioner. From Robin Williams to Al Pacino. He has bowled 6052 balls in Test cricket, before he steamed in from the Birmingham City End. Every stride, every movement, every quirk, every cell of his bowling body might have been dissected, yet he continues to be unmastered. There are batsmen who have played him well, but not mastered him. Joe Root has found success against India in the Bumrah-era, but Bumrah has nabbed him six times. He is a lesson that great bowlers could be decoded but not reined over.



#### BOOM! A WORLD RECORD

Captain Jasprit Bumrah pulls Stuart Broad for a boundary during the first innings of India's Test match against England at Birmingham on Saturday. Reuters

■ Jasprit Bumrah smashed Stuart Broad for 35 runs in one over, making it the most expensive in Test history, Bumrah scored 29 while six runs came from extras.

They find their ways, they plot their plot,

Just like Bumrah did Alex Lees. After soft-

sometimes resorting to the routine.

■ He hit Broad, who claimed his 550th Test wicket earlier in the match, for four fours and two sixes in his over, which included a no-ball and a wide

■Bumrah bettered the previous mark held by Brian Lara by one run. Lara had hit SA's Robin Peterson for 28 runs in 2003-04. which included four fours and two sixes.

■ Broad had also been hit for six sixes in an over by Yuvraj Singh in the inaugural World T20 in 2007, Bumrah, meanwhile, remained unbeaten on 31.

## Bumrah's pull in record over evokes

ening him with away goers from over the stumps, he came around the stumps and slid one onto his stumps. Zak Crawley and Ollie Pope were ejected in the same fashion, nicked behind off flashing drives away from the body. He found more zip and nip than most English bowlers: suffocated and smothered them with pace, bounce and movement off the surface. So the sight, rather an illusion, of a loose ball lit up their eyes. England reeled to 44/3 before Root and Bairstow did the recovery acts before Siraj removed Joe Root.

But it was yet another day Bumrah ran the show, unpacking one role after the other. Bumrah: Right Arm Fast. All. More than all. Pure theatre.

#### **SCOREBOARD** India 1st Innings (Overnight: 338/7)

Ravindra Jadeja b Anderson Mohammed Shami c Leach b Broad Jasprit Bumrah not out 31 Mohammed Siraj c Broad b Anderson **Extras:** (B 4 LB 17, W 5, NB 14) Total: (10 wkts, 84.5 Overs) **FoW:** 8/371, 9/375, 10/416 Bowling: James Anderson 21.5-4-60-5, Stuart Broad 18-3-89-1, Matthew Potts 20-1-105-2, Jack Leach 9-0-71-0, Ben Stokes 13-0-47-1, Joe Root 3-0-23-1 **England 1st Innings** Alex Lees b Bumrah Zak Crawley c Gill b Bumrah Ollie Pope c Iyer b Bumrah Joe Root c Pant b Siraj Jonny Bairstow not out Jack Leach c Pant b Shami Ben Stokes batting Extras: 10 (B4, LB2, NB4) 10 **Total:** (5 wkts, 27 Overs) **FoW:** 1/16, 2/27, 3/44, 4/78, 5/83 Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 11-1-35-3,

## memories of Kapil's Nataraja shot

#### **SRIRAM VEERA**

THE MOST breathtaking shot from Jasprit Bumrah in the over of mayhem, in which he looted 29 of the 35 runs against Stuart Broad to break the world record for most runs in a single over in a Test, was a marvellous pull. The front leg swivelled up in the air, and it brought memories of three glorious pulls, somewhat similar. The soul of the shots was the flamboyant upward thrust of the front leg and the individual-

#### Kapil's Nataraja shot

The takeaway from Kapil's signature shot wasn't a sense of brutality but of something wildly beautiful. There wasn't violence in it, like most pull shots can often have.

ity comes through in what transpires next.

No wonder The Hindu's R tively sensed something classical in it and christened the shot 'Nataraja', from Lord Shiva's cosmic dance of creation, sustenance, and dissolution of the universe. Shiva's bhujangatr asita karana dance pose is a thing of grace-and perfectly befits a cricketing shot that also brims with grace just after the destruction of a ball. When he saw Kapil's pull, Mohan's mind immediately went to the Nataraja statues. "At home we would have so many of those figurines of Nataraja. See the pose and Kapil's pull shot was similar, his left foot in the air," Mohan told this newspaper.

No Kapil mix-tape could escape that shot. An exhilarating kick of the left leg would allow him to balance his weight on the back, and the arms would waft across to absolutely wallop the ball. The crucial difference from Bumrah's version was that Kapil would cross kick his front

The crucial difference from Bumrah's version was that Kapil would cross kick his front leg across the body but the shots were quite similar in their essence.

leg across the body but the shots were quite similar in their essence. At times, Rohit Sharma would settle into a Kapil-like Nataraja lift (Kapil even called it the best Nataraja version he has seen after himself), but Rohit's wasn't as often and as wildly adventurous as Kapil's.

#### Greenidge's unleashed version

The first instinct when Bumrah finished his ivelling pull over fine-leg was to think about Gordon Greenidge's version. No batsman has cut the ball harder than the West Indian opener, by all accounts. But he also had a very mean pull. Just after Greendige would press his back leg across, to quote the late Martin Crowe, who was in awe of that shot even decades later, "all sorts of things would happen."

"Firstly, the knee would come up right up into the stomach. And this would give him the balance and the power to unleash hell on the short ball," Crowe once told ESPNcricinfo. "Boooof! I have never seen the ball hit so hard." And Crowe would go on to say that next time he saw that shot was when Brian Lara effected his version of it. "I think Lara copied him."

#### Lara's whiplash version

Once Crowe presented its lineage from Greenidge to Lara, it's difficult to unsee it. But

the main difference lay in how Lara absolutely whiplashed that small round thing. The press back, the lift of the leg, and then the dance began. No one has used the bat as fluidly as if it was a weightless thing as Lara at his pomp. From that position, with his front leg high and across his hip, he would whiplash his bat at the shortish ball - like a crack of doom. A balletic movement of the feet and the upper body, before he sealed it with a wondrous fluid swing of the wood.

#### Tendulkar's pull

It was no Nataraja, but Tendulkar wasn't ever going to allow himself such self-abandoned flamboyance, was he?

Tendulkar's pull shot was a thing of purist beauty. The compactness is startling. He almost controlled and tamed a shot known for its inherent violence in thought and in sight. The bat levers back straight, it comes back down almost straight, and the elbows line-up perfectly to help finish the shot in one tight arc of arm movement. No energy is frittered away. The body doesn't lurch sideways too much, the head doesn't bob away. There is no unnecessary movement.

If only it wasn't for Fanie de Villiers and his captain Hansie Cronje plotting a downfall at short midwicket, and to a lesser extent Chaminda Vaas and Arjuna Ranatunga, one wonders whether Tendulkar would have allowed himself a greater run with that shot. For a brief while, he had almost become obsessive with that shot and when his obsession turned into a tool of his entrapment, he abandoned it mercilessly. It was at that moment that Tendulkar, whose batting was a mix of Gavaskar and Richards, began to leave the Richards persona behind and went the way of Gayaskar.

#### **BRIEFLY** –

#### Ronaldo wants to leave Man United

Manchester: Manchester United risk losing talisman Cristiano Ronaldo this season as the 37-year-old forward has asked to leave the club should the Red Devils receive a satisfactory offer in the transfer window, according to the Times. The Portuguese superstar's decision is said to be driven by a desire to play in the Champions League for the remainder of his career. Ronaldo believes that he has 'three or four years' at the highest level to win major trophies, according to the report.

#### Kalaivani storms into final of Elorda Cup

New Delhi: Indian boxer Kalaivani Srinivasan stormed into the final with a dominating victory while Kuldeep Kumar progressed to the semi-finals of the Elorda Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan on Saturday. Kalaivani demonstrated excellent skills against Uzbekistan's Farzona Fozilova in the women's 48kg semifinal. The Chennai-born boxer's powerful blows and persistent attack didn't allow her opponent any opportunity to settle down as she comfortably won by unanimous decision in the end. Meanwhile, another boxer in the men's section. Yashpal lost to Kazakhstan's Aslanbek Shymbergenov by 0-5 margin in the 71kg quarter-final. The finals will be played on Monday.

#### Sainz takes pole position for British GP

Silverstone: Carlos Sainz was fastest in the rain at the British Grand Prix to earn his first career pole position in his 150th start in Saturday qualifying. Sainz set the fastest time of 1 minute 40.983 seconds late in the third qualifying session to edge reigning Formula One champion Max Verstappen by just .072 seconds. It was the seventh pole in 10 races for Ferrari this season, though it was Sainz teammate Charles Leclerc on pole prior to Sainz's surprise run. Leclerc will start third, ahead of Sergio Pérez in the second Red Bull. Seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton qualified fifth for his home race as Mercedes seemed to have made progress with its problems of bouncing at high speed. His teammate George Russell was eighth.

#### Souray Kothari wins All-India snooker title

Mumbai: Oozing with confidence, PSPB's Sourav Kothari raced to a 7-2 best-of-13-frame finals of the NSCI All India Snooker Open 'Baulkline 2022 here on Saturday. Kothari, who recently had won both the snooker and billiards titles in the Pacific International Championship in Melbourne, recorded a comfortable 95-17, 37-75, 64-05, 70-77, 116-01, 124-05, 70-23, 91-50 71-39 win. The 37-year-old Kolkata-based Kothari compiled breaks of 65 (1st frame), 58 (4th), 83 (5th) and 107 in the sixth, while Laxman managed a solitary break of 63 in winning the fourth. Kothari was presented the champions' trophy and the winners' cheque of Rs two lakh.

## Play on a Middle Sunday, commemorative NFT, potential NextGen rivalry

#### **NAMIT KUMAR**

FOR AN event deeply steeped in tradition, Wimbledon has embraced change more rapidly than other tournaments recently. It broke its longstanding stance on staying clear of politics by banning Russian and Belarusian players, a decision that has not been repeated by a single tournament.

Other significantly smaller changes follow suit. The grass court Grand Slam is celebrating the 100th anniversary of Centre Court – with a commemorative N.F.T (Non-Fungible Token) no less – that is accompanied by changes to the showpiece court including a new WWE-style entrance for the players from the clubhouse through a set of automatic green doors to the sound of a roaring audience.

On the court, the biggest change seems to be the end of the 'Middle Sunday.' The break between the two weeks of action has been preserved for long, barring a delay caused by rain. But with the advent of technology and retractable roofs on the showpiece courts, it is abolished to give the singles Round of 16s a bit of a breather, ending another preserved tradition of the 'Manic Monday.'

The changes at SW19 show the All England Club's attempts to take the sport's

oldest tournament into a new era. And perhaps fittingly, play on the first Middle Sunday at Wimbledon will be highlighted by the start of a rivalry that could take men's tennis into a new era - the fourth-round clash between fifth seed Carlos Alcaraz and tenth seed Jannik Sinner.

Mohammed Shami 13-3-33-1, Mohammed

#### New rivalry

Sirai 3-2-5-1

Sinner, two years his opponent's senior, was meant to be tennis' next big thing after he made his breakthrough in the COVID-derailed 2020 season. However, physical issues - including a left foot injury which forced him to retire from the fourth round of the French Open – have halted his progress.

He has only played 10 tournaments this year out of which he withdrew from three due to injury and is without a title in 2022 so far. Over the past two years, he has been in and out of the top 10.

Meanwhile, Alcaraz has emerged this year as the most exciting teenager in men's tennis since Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic. The Spaniard has won four titles this year - two Masters 1000s and two ATP 500s, and has raced into the top 10.

Alcaraz's meteoric rise has been a series of 'one-ups' on his next opponent. Sinner won the ATP NextGen title in 2019, and Alcaraz won it in 2021. Sinner won his first





Carlos Alcaraz will take on Jannik Sinner in the fourth round on Sunday. Reuters

career title at the age of 19, Alcaraz won his a few months after his 18th birthday. Sinner made his big ATP breakthrough by reaching the Miami Masters final in 2021. Alcaraz won the event the following year. Sinner reached the quarterfinal at Roland Garros in 2020, Alcaraz not only matched the result but actually entered the main draw as one of the favourites for the title.

The duo have made their mark as the most exciting and talented players on tour recently, but are yet to get a rivalry going. They faced off at the Paris Masters last year, where Alcaraz emerged victorious in straight sets, but have not faced each other in bestof-five sets, where Sinner has the edge. Such is the Italian's consistency at Grand Slams that he has now reached at least the fourth round at all of the Majors, something an established top 10 player like Stefanos Tsitsipas is yet to achieve.

The hype around the Spaniard, as his results suggest, far outweighs that around Sinner, who has meandered on tour recently. But a win for Sinner has narrative-changing potential, both for this rivalry and his own status as one of the big future stars of the

#### **SWIATEK'S 37-MATCH WIN STREAK ENDS**

London: Top-ranked Iga Swiatek's 37-match winning streak has ended with a straight-set loss to Alize Cornet in the third round at Wimbledon. Swiatek was coming off a title at the French Open but her play was filled with mistakes in the 6-4, 6-2 defeat against the 37th-ranked Cornet. Swiatek had been unbeaten since February and won her preceding six

tournaments in a row. ASSOCIATED PRESS

#### Contrasting styles

Both players are relatively unknown on grass, making their encounter unpredictable. Sinner's game, built around a big backhand, redirection of pace, and baseline aggression. has never suited the surface: he had never won a tour-level match on grass prior to the start of the Championships this year.

However, he has looked in inspired form this week. The Italian has navigated a tricky

draw with maturity and high-quality tennis. He took out Stan Wawrinka in four sets in the first round, and withstood the challenge from big-serving John Isner, fresh off the triumph over home favourite Andy Murray, in the third round. The Italian converted two of his four break points against Isner and was laserfocused on his own serve, not conceding a single break point.

Alcaraz brings something different to the game though. He boasts of a punishingly powerful forehand, and an underrated serve that has been in his corner all week, also during a five-set thriller in the first round. His footspeed has already created plenty of highlight-reel moments at the grass Major.

However, it is the dynamism of his all-out attacking style that has built up his stock as one to watch in London this time. For all his evident talent, it is the well-disguised drop shot – a shot of audacity and daring – that has become one of his biggest weapons, perhaps telling of his commitment to variation and attack.

Wimbledon is embracing change, and tennis needs it too. Even though the age-old Nadal-Diokovic rivalry continues to dominate headlines and tournament main draws, the first Middle Sunday at SW19 could be the start of the rivalry of a new generation - one where politics will play a role in sports, and so might N.F.Ts.

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