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We are closed today on account of **May Day**. There will be no edition of the paper on Monday, May 2.

ED seizes Rs 5,500 cr in Xiaomi assets over ‘illegal’ remittances



ED earlier questioned Xiaomi Global Vice Chief Manu Jain. *File*

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) Saturday announced it had seized more than Rs 5,500 crore in assets from the Indian subsidiary of Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi, saying it had made illegal remittances to foreign entities and shown them as royalty payments.

The agency said it had seized the sum from the bank accounts of Xiaomi Technology India Pvt. Ltd, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Xiaomi Inc., under the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), 1999.

It said the subsidiary had been making remittances to three foreign entities — one of which was a Xiaomi entity — “on the instructions” of its Chinese parent.

The ED has been probing the electronics company since February over alleged forex violations. It had also questioned Xiaomi’s Global Vice President Manu Kumar Jain on April 13, Jain

Akali post-poll panel sees calls for overhaul of party, changes at top

Party workers seek end of ‘family rule’; feel there is anger over ‘corruption’ by Badals, paid the price in Punjab polls

NAVJEEVANGOPAL
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 30

A COMMITTEE formed by the Akali Dal to analyse reasons for its rout in the recent Assembly elections has received overwhelming feedback for a complete overhaul of the organisational structure and changes in the top leadership. Sukhbir Singh Badal is currently the Akali Dal president.

The panel had formed a sub-committee of 13 members, further divided into two groups, to

SUNDAY STORY

PAGE 5



His own VOICE

The journey of Independent MLA Jignesh Mevani — from lawyer-activist to face of Dalit politics in Gujarat



Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal

expedite the process. The members told *The Indian Express* that across constituencies, cadre had sought “*badlaav* (change)” in leadership to revive the Akali Dal.

The panel, set up on March 24, is likely to submit its report within a fortnight.

The party suffered a massive

MOST UNDERTRIALS POOR, GRANT BAIL WHERE POSSIBLE: MODI

PM: Consider use of local languages in courts, will help access to justice



PM Modi and CJI Ramana at the conference of CMs and HC Chief Justices in Delhi. *Praveen Khanna*

Centre says no to CJI plan for national infra panel, jobs for retired HC judges

Agreement on state-level bodies with CMs, CJs, says Rijiju

MANOJ CGG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

TWO PROPOSALS by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana didn’t find favour with the Centre — and some BJP-ruled states — at the conference of Chief Justices and Chief Ministers Saturday: a statutory authority at the national level for infrastructure



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee and her UP counterpart Yogi Adityanath in New Delhi on Saturday. *Praveen Khanna*

Gen Manoj Pande becomes first Chief from Corps of Engineers

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

GEN MANOJ Pande, who was serving as the Vice Chief since February, took over as the new Army Chief from Gen MM Naravane on Saturday on his retirement. Gen Naravane had taken over as the Army Chief in January 2020, months before the standoff with China in eastern Ladakh began in May 2020.

Gen Pande will have a tenure of a little more than two years.

Gen Naravane handed over charge to Gen Pande on Saturday morning in Delhi. Gen Pande is the most senior Army officer in the country, and has spent the



Chief of the Army Staff General Manoj Pande with the outgoing COAS General MM Naravane. *PTI*

Pinarayi writes to Nitish on basketball player’s suicide, her coach is named in case

SANTOSH SINGH & NIHAL KOSHIE
PATNA, NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

A DAY after Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan wrote to his Bihar counterpart Nitish Kumar asking for a “comprehensive and fair” investigation into the alleged suicide of a national level basketball player, Lithara KC, in Patna, a case of abetment of suicide was registered against a coach on Friday.

Lithara, 23, from Kunumal village in Vadakara, Kozhikode, was employed by the Railways under the sports quota and was posted at the Divisional Railway

Manager’s office in Danapur, Bihar. She is reported to have died by suicide on the intervening night of April 25-26.

The coach is also a Railways’ employee. “A case of abetment of suicide (Section 306 IPC) has been filed against the coach and Railways official following the complaint by her family. There are allegations of mental and sexual harassment, and it will be probed,” said a police officer in Patna.

Raising the issue in a letter to Nitish on Thursday, Vijayan wrote: “Her relative had requested for a thorough probe into the incident of her untimely

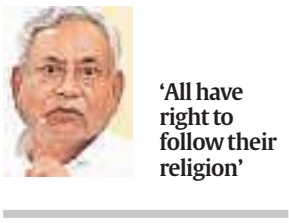
By not doing job, executive and legislature are burdening courts: CJI

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

STATING THAT “non-performance by the various wings of the executive” and “legislature not realising its full potential” are the “two major reasons” for the docket explosion in the country, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana Saturday underlined the need to increase the sanctioned strength of judges and fill existing vacancies to address the issue of pendency.

Addressing the 11th Joint Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Vigyan Bhavan in New Delhi, CJI Ramana also spoke on the need for all organs of the State to “be mindful of the Lakshman Rekha”.

Bihar CM says loudspeaker row ‘nonsense’, won’t get into religious matter



SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, APRIL 30

DISMISSING THE controversy around the use of loudspeakers at places of worship as “nonsense”, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, an ally of the BJP-led NDA, said on Saturday that his government will “not interfere in any religious practice.

He said there is no question of taking down loudspeakers from religious places. “*Yeh fizul ki baat hai. Bihar mein humlog kisi bhi dharm ke maamle mein has-takshep nahi karte hain. Sabhi ko apna dharm maanne ka poora adhikar hai* (This is nonsense. In Bihar, we do not interfere in matters of any religion. Everyone has the right to follow their religion),” he said.

Nitish was speaking to reporters in Purnea, where he launched the country’s first greenfield grain-based ethanol plant.

His statement comes amid the drive launched by the Yogi Adityanath government in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh to remove “unauthorised” loudspeakers from religious places in a bid to “curb noise pollution”.

Some Bihar BJP leaders,

15 foreign militants among 62 killed in Valley this year, up from last year: Police

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE FIRST four months of this year have seen a big jump in the number of militants killed in Kashmir as compared to the same period last year. According to data available with the Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Police, 62 militants have been killed in the Valley since the beginning of the year; 37 were killed in the first four months of 2021.

More importantly, 15 of the 62 killed this year have been identified as “foreign” militants (from Pakistan). In contrast, no foreign militant was killed in the first four months of 2021; in fact, the total number of foreign militants killed in the entire year was just 20 (total 168 militants killed in Kashmir in 2021).

Sources attributed the increase to better intelligence generation by the Intelligence Bureau, Research and Analysis Wing, and the Jammu and Kashmir Police, apart from increased operations. It is also indicative of greater push from across the border to foment trouble in the Valley, sources said.

“The recent success is a result of both good human intelligence and technical intelligence and focused operations. The conse-

MILITANT DEATHS FACT-SHEET

62 militants killed in Kashmir from Jan-April this year; 37 killed in same period last year

15 foreign militants among those killed this year; no foreign militant killed in Jan-April 2021

168 militants killed in Kashmir in 2021, including 20 foreign militants

OF 62 KILLED this year, 39 LeT, 15 JeM, 6 Hizbul Mujahideen, 2 Al Badr

Source: J&K Police data

quence is that the survival rate of terrorists is drastically reducing. Of the 62 terrorists killed this year, 32 were killed within just three months of joining militancy,” IG (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar told *The Sunday Express*.

Explaining the lower number of killings last year, a senior security establishment officer said: “This period last year saw India

After country’s hottest March ever, avg April max for NW, Central India hits 122-year high

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE AVERAGE maximum temperature over Northwest and Central India for April this year has been the highest in the past 122 years, India Meteorological Department (IMD) data until April 28 show.

The average maximum over Northwest India and in the country as a whole in March was also the highest since 1900. Northwest and Central India began to experience early heat-wave spells this year, with two such spells in March.

The average maximum temperature over Northwest India is likely to remain above normal in May as well, the IMD said in its forecast for the month issued on Saturday. Other parts of the country are, however, likely to witness normal to below normal maximum temperatures in May.

The ongoing heatwave conditions over Northwest and Central India are likely to reduce in intensity after May 1 under the influence of a western disturbance, the IMD said.

The average maximum temperature over Northwest India in April has been 35.9 degrees Celsius, 3.35 degrees above the long period average, which is considered the ‘normal’. The average high for April 2022 has been 0.5 degrees Celsius higher than the previous record of 35.4 degrees recorded in April 2010.

The average high for this April

HOTTEST APRILS	
Average max temp since 1900 (Deg C)	
NORTHWEST INDIA	
Year	Temp (Deg C)
2022	35.90
2010	35.40
1999	35.06
1980	34.50
2007	34.46
CENTRAL INDIA	
Year	Temp (Deg C)
2022	37.78
1973	37.75
2010	37.67
2016	37.62
2017	37.53

EXPLAINED

Reason: absence of rainfall

THE PRIMARY reason for the scorching weather has been the near total absence of rain since March this year. The western disturbances have been feeble, and the usual nor’westers that periodically put a lid on rising temperatures have not taken place.

over Central India has been 37.78 degrees Celsius, beating the previous record of 37.75 degrees recorded in April 1973.

French Ambassador looks at India, Raghu Rai at France, in black, white and grey

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

AAKASH JOSHI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

US RAPPER Eminem may be a little removed from Raghu Rai, one of India’s most celebrated photographers, and Emmanuel Lenain, France’s Ambassador to India. Yet his words define, in a sense, the essence of *To France/In India* — a book of photographs by Lenain and Rai.

Seizing the moment, “to try

and freeze and own it”, as Eminem said, is what the two have done.

In black-and-white photos spanning France (Rai’s photographs, taken in 2019) and India (Lenain’s artistic journey through a country hit by the pandemic yet vibrant in its plurality and chaos of ‘jugaad’).

“Black-and-white was not an easy choice to represent a country flooded with the fantastic colours,” says Lenain. But he chose to go without colour, because “it creates an obligation to divine the forms that are hidden behind the noisy effervescence



A woman at a Delhi crematorium during the second Covid wave. *Emmanuel Lenain; and (right) 'Paris 1998'.* Copyright Raghu Rai



of the streets.”

Rai, too, prefers the stark truth that emerges with the medium. “Black-and-white photos can silence the noise of colour,” he says.

Despite the lack of colour, or perhaps because of it, Lenain’s shots of India during the pandemic’s devastating second wave, his celebration of the country as a living thing, even its chaos, manage to capture the sheer scale of its diversity.

“As anybody living in India at

the time I was deeply moved by the scale of the tragedy. Some of my staff, friends, and acquaintances lost their lives,” says Lenain about what moved him to capture the tragedy as it unfolded.

“I toured the city after work. The land adjacent to crematoriums, often car parks, were requisitioned to build makeshift pyres: lined up in perfect geometry were dozens of

FROM PAGE ONE

PM

Courts,” he said.
Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, who was present at a press conference with CJI Ramana, while responding to a query from *The Sunday Express*, said: “We are very positive towards encouraging use of local languages in the judiciary. It’s a process which requires wider consultation with the judiciary. For usage of languages in the court, not only for arguments, but also for orders, judgments, we require the approval of the Chief Justice of India. That is why it needs wider consultation, and we will definitely have very positive consideration in this matter.”

While lower courts function in local languages and English, the High Courts and Supreme Court use English in their proceedings.
Speaking at the inauguration of the 11th Joint Conference of Chief Ministers and Chief Justices of High Courts, Prime Minister Modi said: “A large population finds it difficult to understand the judicial process and rulings of the court. There is a need to simplify this and make it accessible. We just encourage the use of local languages in courts. This will ensure that the common man has faith in the judiciary.”

Earlier, CJI Ramana had highlighted the need for some courts to conduct business in local languages. The Prime Minister endorsed the idea but said it will be a while before it actually happens.

“It will take a long time for that, but it will improve access to justice. Why can’t medical and technical education be done in the mother tongue? Some states are already doing it,” he said.

Stressing on the importance of access to justice, Modi said the government is working towards simplifying laws passed in Parliament for the common man to understand them. “Along with the actual legislation, if a simplified version is also passed in Parliament for the common man to understand, then he will not have to go to the court for interpretation of the law. The government is studying this issue,” he said.

Underlining that a majority of undertrial prisoners in the country are poor or from ordinary families, he appealed to states to release them on bail wherever possible.

“Human sensitivity has to be at the heart of these things (status of undertrials). There are over 3.5 lakh prisoners in jails today who are undertrials. A majority of these are poor or from ordinary families. There is a committee in every district headed by the district judge to look into this issue and wherever possible bail must be granted to them,” he said.

He asked states to identify and repeal obsolete laws to improve the ease of living of citizens.

“In 2015, over 1800 laws were identified as obsolete. The Centre has repealed over 1450 laws while states have only repealed 75 laws. Since all the Chief Ministers are present here today, I appeal to you to identify these laws and repeal them. People are stuck in outdated legal regimes and if you repeal them, it will benefit citizens,” he said.

Later at a press conference, CJI Ramana, speaking on the suggestion for use of local languages in court proceedings, said there have been demands for allowing use of regional language from states like Tamil Nadu. He said recently a senior politician had also mentioned Gujarat, but he had not received any representation.

“As of today, Hindi is the medium of language in most states... Earlier, a request came, if I remember, when I joined the Supreme Court... That was rejected by the Full Court of the Supreme Court. Thereafter, no concrete proposal came before the Supreme Court asking for allowing regional languages. Recently, this regional language issue has started. It has not reached... It has to come from various levels to the Supreme Court... It will take some time... There are lots of hurdles, bottlenecks, hiccups in the implementation of regional languages in High Courts,” he said.

“The reason is sometimes some of the judges are not familiar with the local language. The Chief

Justice will always be from outside. The most senior judge will also sometimes be from outside. Secondly, we don’t have that much technology or systems to translate the entire record to the local language or local language to English,” he said. “Definitely, I hope that in the future, technology will take care of this... In one day, suddenly we cannot implement any reform or anything... Over a period of time, I think, it will happen.”

CJI plan
development for the judiciary; and a plan to appoint retired High Court judges on an ad hoc basis to address the issue of shortage on the bench.

Instead, there was an agreement on setting up state-level bodies to address the infrastructural needs of courts. The Centre also agreed to consider the grant of a one-time additional financial assistance for infrastructure development to states after some initial reservations.

Sources said CJI Ramana had proposed that a CJI-headed National Judicial Infrastructure Development Authority of India be set up at the national level and a similar mechanism headed by High Court Chief Justices in the states. Some Opposition-ruled states like Kerala pointed out that a mechanism without encroaching into the rights of the states was acceptable.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said he had no objection to the proposal but argued that such an authority would not be needed if the Centre provides funds for infrastructure development of district courts.

Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, however, is learnt to have objected saying there was no need for such a special mechanism. He is said to have argued that the Centre was allocating funds and the executive would implement the development of infrastructure. Some BJP-ruled states took a similar position.

The differences led to lengthy discussions after which the proposal was withdrawn. But a mechanism at the state level would be set up, headed by either the Chief Minister or his representative and the Chief Justice of the High Court, to monitor spending of funds, implementation and follow-up action.

Addressing a joint press conference with CJI Ramana at the end of the day’s meeting, Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju said: “I’m happy that the Chief Ministers and Chief Justices have agreed that the body will be created at the state-level with the involvement of the honourable Chief Ministers and the Chief Justices, or their nominees... we are ready to assist the state governments for creating judicial infrastructure at state-level, especially for the district courts, lower judiciary...”

The CJI said that the meeting deliberated on the setting up of the infrastructure authority which he had suggested in his letter dated October 10, 2021.

He added that the meeting had passed two resolutions Friday one of which was that “National Judicial Infrastructure Authority of India along with complementary state bodies be created as special purpose vehicle that will act as chief coordinator as well as driving force for augmentation, creation of judicial infrastructure as per the proposals sent by Honourable Chief Justice of India to the Union Government”. “After discussions, there was near unanimity amongst Chief Ministers in adopting the aforesaid two Chief Justices Conference resolutions relating to such bodies to be established at state-level... However, there was suggestion to include Chief Minister or nominee in the body at the state-level. Most of the states have agreed to adopt this model...”, he said.

Another issue which came up was appointment of retired HC judges on an ad hoc basis to address the shortage of judges. The Centre objected to that proposal too after which the issue was deferred.

Sources said as many as 388 posts of High Court judges are lying vacant. In the Ahmedabad High Court there are 66 vacancies; followed by 37 in Bombay High Court; 37 in the Punjab and

Haryana High Court; 33 in the Calcutta High Court; 26 in the Patna High Court, 25 in the Delhi High Court and 24 in the Rajasthan High Court.

The Centre reportedly said it had earlier told the SC that it was not in favour of appointing ad hoc judges to fill up vacancies. That option can be looked at if the work load is high even after filling up all the vacancies.

Sources said the appointment of HC judges also came up for discussion with the judiciary pointing out that the appointment should be made within a specified time frame on the basis of the 1993 verdict in the Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association and Another vs Union of India case and a 2008 judgement.

Talking about pendency of cases, sources said West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee pointed out that a large number of politically motivated PILs are being filed against the government in the Calcutta High Court at the behest of a political party, taking away the valuable time of the Court.

Baghel said there should be better dialogue between CMs and Chief Justices. He said all issues can be resolved only through dialogue.

CMs of Punjab and Haryana Bhagwant Mann and ML Khattar referred to the need for establishing separate High Courts for the two states — in Chandigarh itself.

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan suggested setting up a body at the panchayat level to resolve issues to address the issue of pendency. Kerala Law Minister P Rajeev pointed out that the state has not received any financial support from the Finance Commission for digitalisation of High Court and subordinate courts. He demanded that the Centre grant funds to the states for such purposes.

(WITH ANANTHAKRISHNANG)

Burdening courts

“It is the harmonious and co-ordinated functioning among the three organs of the State that has preserved and strengthened the democratic foundations of this great nation over the last seven decades. While discharging our duties, we all must be mindful of the Lakshman Rekha. The judiciary would never come in the way of governance if it were in accordance with law. We share our anxiety and concern regarding the welfare of the people,” he said.

He stressed the need for creation of the National and State Judicial Infrastructure Authorities to address infrastructure deficiencies of courts.

Pointing to the distressing situation at the district level, the CJI said: “The environment of some district courts is such that even lady advocates feel apprehensive about entering court rooms, let alone female citizens.”

On the rise in workload of the courts, he said “the 140-crore strong population of the world’s largest democracy is bound to test its judiciary... no other constitutional court in the world hears such a wide range of issues in such large numbers”.

Illustrating factors that contribute to the increase in litigation, he said farmers will not go to court if the teshildar acts on their grievance regarding land or ration card, citizens won’t look to courts if a municipal authority or gram panchayat discharges its duties, and there won’t be land disputes — which account for 66 per cent of pendency — if revenue authorities follow due procedure while acquiring land.

“It is beyond my understanding as to why intra and inter departmental disputes of the government or fights between PSUs and the government end up in courts,” the CJI said, adding “it is a well acknowledged fact that government are the biggest litigants, accounting for nearly 50% of the cases”.

Contempt petitions, which happen because decisions of courts are not implemented by governments for years together, are a new category of burden on the courts, he said, adding that “deliberate inaction by governments, despite judicial pronouncements, are not good for the health of democracy”.

“The judiciary,” the CJI said, “is also confronted with the issue of

the executive willingly transferring the burden of decision-making to it” and “at times, ambiguities in legislations also add to existing legal issues”.

“Based on these examples, one can safely summarise that, often, litigation is triggered because of two major reasons. One is non-performance by the various wings of the executive. Second is the legislature not realising its full potential... these are avoidable burdens on the judicial system,” he said.

On the pendency of cases, the CJI said it is “often blamed on the judiciary”. Pointing to the “huge workload on judges,” he said “the number of cases filed and disposed of each day is unimaginable”.

Frivolous PILs, he said, are another reason for pendency. It began as a well-meaning concept but “these days, PIL has become a tool for those who want to settle political scores or corporate rivalry”.

Speaking on “Indianisation of the justice delivery system”, the CJI said this means “increasing accessibility by moulding the system to suit the needs and sensibilities of the Indian population” and this “calls for inclusivity, providing access to justice, removal of language barriers, reforms in practice and procedure, development of infrastructure, filling vacancies, augmenting the strength of the judiciary and so on”.

“I am receiving many representations for introducing local languages in proceedings before the High Courts. I think the time has come now to revisit the demand and take it to a logical conclusion,” he said.

Filling vacancies, he said, was an important factor in addressing pendency. “As of today, out of 1104 sanctioned posts of High Court Judges, there are 388 vacancies.”

“The High Courts have sent around 100 names to the Government of India. They are yet to reach us,” he said.

The CJI said that when the last such event was held in 2016, the sanctioned strength of judicial officers in the country was 20,811 as against 24,112 now — an increase of 16% in 6 years. The corresponding rise in pendency in district courts during this period was from 2.65 crore to 4.11 crore, an increase of 54.64%, he said.

“As per sanctioned strength, we have just around 20 judges per 10 lakh population, which is (an) alarming low,” he said.

Militants

and Pakistan agree to resume ceasefire in February, Pakistan at that time was also facing considerable heat from the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and so did not want to make headlines for the wrong reasons. This had an impact on infiltration. However, by mid-2021, the FATF pressure on Pakistan reduced even as Islamabad regained its geopolitical importance for the west due to developments in Afghanistan. This has given some elbow room to Pakistan. They have been pushing terrorists in the Valley since mid-2021. In fact, there is suspicion that most of the foreign terrorists being killed now infiltrated last year”.

Sources said Pakistan has also changed tactics by sending in small arms, smuggled through drones, and using underground workers to launch attacks on soft targets. “This keeps the terror pot boiling without making big headlines. It is also difficult to catch these people since they are not full-time militants; they have jobs and even return their weapons to the handler after completing a job,” said a J&K Police officer.

Gen Pande

majority of his career serving along the northern borders facing China. This is important as the two-year standoff with China remains unresolved.

Gen Pande is the first Army Chief who comes from the Corps of Engineers. He was commissioned in December 1982 in The Bombay Sappers.

He will be the 29th Army Chief, and all previous Chiefs have come from Infantry, Artillery or the Armoured Corps. In his 39-year career, Gen Pande has tenanted several sensitive positions at various levels. He commanded an Engineer brigade in the Western Theatre, as part of Strike Corps and

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an Infantry brigade along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir. He also commanded a Mountain Division in western Ladakh's high-altitude region, and a Corps along the Line of Actual Control in counter-insurgency operations area in the Eastern Command.

It was during Gen Pande's tenure as the Eastern Army Commander that 13 civilians were killed in a botched Army operation in Nagaland in early December. A Court of Inquiry was ordered by him, which has been completed but its findings have not been made public yet.

An alumus of The National Defence Academy, Gen Pande is a recipient of the Param Vishisht Seva, Ati Vishisht Seva and Vishisht Seva medals.

Xiaomi

was earlier Xiaomi's India head. A Xiaomi spokesperson said in a statement: “As a brand committed to India, all our operations are firmly compliant with local laws and regulations.”

“We have studied the order from government authorities carefully. We believe our royalty payments and statements to the bank are all legit and truthful,” the statement said.

The ED statement read: “The company started its operations in India in 2014 and started remitting the money from 2015. The company has remitted foreign currency equivalent to Rs 5,551.27 crore to three foreign based entities which include one Xiaomi group entity in the guise of royalty. Such huge amounts in the name of royalties were remitted on the instructions of their Chinese parent group entities. The amount remitted to other two US based unrelated entities was also for the ultimate benefit of the Xiaomi group entities.”

“Xiaomi India procures completely manufactured mobile sets and other products from the manufacturers in India. Xiaomi India has not availed any service from the three foreign based entities to whom such amounts have been transferred,” the agency's statement said.

Xiaomi's said: “These royalty payments that Xiaomi India made were for the in-licensed technologies and IPs used in our Indian version products. It is a legitimate commercial arrangement for Xiaomi India to make such royalty payments... we are committed to working closely with government authorities to clarify any misunderstandings.” **WITH INPUTS FROM ENSECONOMIC BUREAU**

Basketball

death. It has been brought to my attention by one of her relatives that in their opinion no circumstances existed which would have led to Miss Lithara's suicide.”

In a complaint filed at the Rajiv Nagar police station in Patna on April 27, Lithara's maternal uncle, Rajeevan, alleged that Lithara had been sexually and mentally harassed by the coach.

“Earlier, I was informed by Lithara that her basketball coach was involved in mental and sexual harassment, and he was putting pressure on her. Since he has influence in high places, she couldn't complain against him. I believe that because of the mental trauma of being harassed by the coach, Lithara committed suicide,” Rajeevan said in his complaint.

When contacted, Rajeevan said: “When she came home for

Vishu (Kerala new year, in mid-April), she seemed to be in a good frame of mind. We don't know if the coach troubled her again after she returned to Patna.”

He said Lithara's father husks coconuts for a living but has been unable to work due to a slipped disc. Her mother has been diagnosed with cancer.

Lithara started playing basketball at the Kannur Division Sports School before moving to Thrissur. She was in the Kerala team that won the 32nd Federation Cup championship after defeating Tamil Nadu 66-50 in 2018.

Nitish Kumar

including state minister Janak Ram, have backed the UP government's move. “The UP government has taken the step of removing loudspeakers to curb noise pollution. It has gone by the rules,” Janak Ram said on Friday.

JD(U) minister Ashok Choudhary promptly hit back, saying, “There is no need to bring down loudspeakers from religious places. There are other ways to curb noise pollution.”

While this was seen as yet another instance of leaders from the alliance partners snapping at each other, Deputy Chief Minister Tarkishore Prasad of BJP tried to play down the matter by saying that the NDA in Bihar is as “as strong as ever”.

Akali

the need for democracy in the party and “collective leadership”, instead of “family (read Badals) rule”. The allegations of corruption against the Badals were dragging the party down, the workers said.

A member of the sub-committee said many told them that AAP's promise to give Rs 1,000 to every woman aged 18 or above had split Akali supporters, “with women family members of staunch Akali workers voting for AAP”. While one group of the sub-committee interacted with party workers from Majha and Doaba regions, the second covered the Malwa region. Members said they covered over 90% of constituencies in the feedback exercise.

Among the issues identified by workers as reasons for the Akali loss were incidents of sacrilege of the Guru Ghar Sahib, the death of two anti-sacrilege protesters in police firing in 2015, the pardon granted to Dera Sacha Sauda Chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh by the Akal Takht (the chief of which is appointed by the Akali Dal-controlled SGPC), and the reinstatement of the controversial Smedh Singh Saini as DGP (removed following the firing on anti-sacrilege protesters). All these had hurt the Akali Dal which counts heavily on its Panthic credentials, the workers felt.

A member said there was resentment among party workers that they had to pay the price for the Badal family “monopolising the transport business”.

On whether the workers wanted changes at the top, Akali leader and chairman of the sub-committee Iqbal Singh Jhundan said: “At this stage, we cannot say that. But, people want to see Akali Dal return to its basic ideology, to represent Punjab and Panthic issues. People are ready to support the Akali Dal again if it returns to its old traditions. We will address the shortcomings and present the Akali Dal in a new avatar.”

The members of the original 12-member panel were senior

leaders like Balwinder Singh Bhunder, Charanjit Singh Atwal, Jagir Kaur, Prem Singh Chandumajra, Maheshinder Singh Grewal, Daljit Singh Cheema, Sikander Singh Maluka, Hira Singh Gabria, Gulzar Singh Ranike, Sharanjit Singh Dhillion, Janmeja Singh Sekhon and Surjit Singh Rakhra.

The 13-member sub-committee comprises, apart from head Jhundan, Ravi Kiran Singh Kahlon, Harinderpal Singh Chandumajra, Gurpartap Singh Wadala, sitting MLAs Manpreet Singh Ayali and Sukhwinder Singh Sukhi, N K Sharma, Parambans Singh Buntia Romana, Gurpreet Singh Raju Khanna, Virsa Singh Valtoha, Pawan Kumar Tinnu, Robin Brar and Tirath Singh Mahla.

Many of the members in both the committees are considered very close to Sukhbir Badal.

Heatwave

The average night temperature over Northwest India too has been above normal in April — the average minimum was 19.44 degrees Celsius, 1.75 degrees higher than the long period average.

Northwest and Central India saw “continuously scanty rainfall activity” in March and April, IMD Director General Dr Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said. Northwest India recorded rain deficit of around 89% in March and around 83% in April.

The deficit in the pre-monsoon rainfall over Northwest and Central India was because western disturbances were feeble and dry, Dr Mohapatra said. The six western disturbances recorded over North India were mostly feeble, and had moved across the higher Himalayas, according to the IMD. The last three western disturbances brought strong winds to parts of Delhi and dust storms over Rajasthan in April.

A total 146 instances of heat-wave or severe heat wave conditions were reported across the country in this April, the most since 2010, when 404 such instances were reported. Parts of the country are currently experiencing heatwave conditions in a spell that began on April 27. The average high in April for the country as a whole was 35.05 degrees Celsius, which was 1.12 degrees above normal, and the fourth highest average April high since 1900. The highest average maximum temperature in April for the country as a whole was recorded at 35.42 degrees Celsius in 2010.

Northwest India is likely to continue to experience higher than normal maximum temperatures in May as well, Dr Mohapatra said. Northwest India includes Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, and Rajasthan.

Minimum temperatures are also likely to remain above normal in May, and warm night conditions are likely, he said. Parts of Northwest India, including some parts of Gujarat, Rajasthan, Jammu and Kashmir, and Himachal Pradesh, could see below normal rainfall in May, the IMD said.

For the country as a whole, rainfall in April was near normal. This was in contrast with March, which saw a rainfall deficit of 70.7% for the country as a whole. Rainfall in May is likely to be above normal, the IMD said.

Through lens

rectangles of earth and ashes, demarcated by a simple edge of un-

cemented bricks, so close together that when cremations were at their peak, the heat made it impossible to walk. And just outside, along the pavements, logs lay piled up for hundreds of metres — preparations for the next day's battle. In Muslim cemeteries, the sections demarcated for Covid victims, created with shovels, stood slightly apart. There was the same outburst of grief everywhere.”

Lenain's portraits of people at the height of their grief, as they bury and cremate their loved ones remind us of the humanity of those who, without such records, may have just become another part of Covid statistics.

He manages to portray scale — with a wide-angle, heavily-constrained photograph of the many, constantly burning pyres at a Delhi crematorium. And then, he moves in, to the faces — often emotionally fatigued and resigned — of those lighting the pyres and digging the graves.

While in India, the diplomat turned a chronicler of crises, Rai — whose photographs have been emblematic of the biggest headlines of contemporary India — pictures an homage to France.

“Photographing France, for me, was like a pilgrimage,” he says. “It's the birthplace of the form, and Paris is one of the most photographed cities in the world. Marc Riboud, Henri Cartier-Bresson... so many photographers I admire have captured the city.”

So in From France, a girl poses for a portrait for a street artist, as Rai photographs the process, capturing a first-world millennial par-taking in an analogue joy.

Baker, a homeless person, the bodies and smiles of a Pride Parade, the pathos of old artists, Rai's France is not the pale shadow of itself that many travellers now see — a city in love with its own past, a museum gift shop of sorts.

Lenain's portraits of India's youth, in contrast, show joy, dignity and despair in equal measure. “His sensibilities, especially for someone who isn't a professional, are remarkable,” says Rai of Lenain.

The idea for the book (published by the Raghu Rai foundation and selected photographs from it are being exhibited at Alliance française, Delhi till May 26), came about at a dinner at the French Embassy in Delhi in Rai's honour after he was honoured as the first Laureate Photographer of Magnum Photos. “The ambassador asked if I would see his photos and I could see immediately that he was very passionate... He floated the idea for this book and over the next few months and years, I worked with him and the book is the result,” says Rai.

Many of the diplomat's photographs are around themes that can be interpreted politically — a discarded statue of Hanuman on a river bed, crematoriums and graveyards during Covid, the “Kafkaesque” nature of how the country functions. Lenain, though, insists his chronicle isn't political: “There are two different worlds in my life: the world of politics, that can be from time to time harsh and cruel... and the world of art — infinite, where one tries to infuse a little dose of beauty. I enjoy tremendously the freedom that photography provides.”

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Centre directs full availability of power to Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE NTPC and DVC (Damodar Valley Corporation), power producers which function under the Ministry of Power, have been directed by Union Power Minister R K Singh to ensure “full availability” of power to Delhi as per the requirement of the discoms. The distribution

companies are to get power as per their demand. GAIL India Limited is also making gas available from all sources to gas-based power plants in Delhi.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal yet again raised the issue of coal shortage on Saturday. “The electricity supply in Delhi is being managed by us (Delhi government). This problem is faced by

the whole country due to coal shortage,” Kejriwal told reporters at the sidelines of an event.

Delhi Power Minister Satyendra Jain had also raised the alarm about depleting coal stocks at power plants that supply electricity to Delhi. Singh reviewed the coal stocks at thermal plants on Saturday.

According to data from the Power System Operation

Corporation, the peak power demand in Delhi increased to 6,096 MW on Friday, a little higher than the nearly 6,000 MW recorded the previous day.

A statement from the Delhi government on Thursday had flagged the disruption of power from the plants at Dadri and Unchahar. The coal-based plants that supply power to Delhi are the ones at Dadri,

which supplies 728 MW; Rihand (358 MW); Jhajjar (693 MW); Singrauli (150 MW); Unchahar (100 MW); and Kahalgaon (180 MW), which operate under the NTPC. The DVC supplies 400 MW to Delhi from the plants at Chandrapura and Mejia. The plants have sufficient coal stock reserves, and stocks are being replenished daily from domestic sources and im-

ported ones, according to a communication from the power ministry.

The communication added that there has been no shortage of electricity supply to Delhi.

In addition to power from the thermal power plants, Delhi gets electricity from the three gas turbine power stations in the city.

(with PTI inputs)

Her family at home, elderly woman tied up, robbed in Delhi: Police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

FOUR MEN broke into a 68-year-old woman's house in South Delhi's Anand Lok, robbed her jewellery worth Rs 3-4 crore at knife point, and tied her legs before fleeing. No arrest has been made so far.

The incident took place around 3.30 am on Saturday. DCP

(South) Benita Mary Jaiker said, “We received a PCR call in the morning from a house in Anand Lok, Defence Colony. The complainant, Ritika (68), said she and her five-year-old granddaughter were sleeping on the ground floor while her children and other family members were on the first floor. Around 3.30 am, she found four people in her room. They were looking for her almirah.



During a spell of rain in Kolkata on Saturday evening. Partha Paul

Relief from heat wave as rain lashes south Bengal

Temperatures drop by 4-5 degrees Celsius from nearly 40 degrees

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

PEOPLE IN south Bengal got some relief from an intense heat-wave with first rain and thunderstorm of the season lashing Kolkata and surrounding areas on Saturday evening.

Temperatures dropped by 4-5 degrees Celsius from nearly 40 degrees, the meteorological department said.

Western districts like Purulia and Bankura also saw thunderstorm and rain.

The Alipore meteorological office said that there will be no heatwave in the next four to five days. Temperature in the western districts will remain below 40 degrees, the weather officials said.

There was possibility of winds with a speed of 50-60 kmph in Kolkata, South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hooghly, East Midnapore and other places in

Nadia district, they added. Moderate rain with thunderstorms were likely in these areas too.

The meteorological department had earlier said that favourable rainfall conditions have been created in South Bengal. However, the Alipore weather office on Friday had forecast rain from Sunday. It has forecast thunderstorms in Kolkata and its suburbs on Monday and Tuesday also.

Trinamool MLA's PA, 2 aides held for duping people of Rs 16 cr: Cops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

TRINAMOL CONGRESS (TMC) MLA Tapas Saha's personal assistant and two of his accomplices were arrested for allegedly duping people of Rs 16 crore by promising them jobs, police said.

Saha, who is MLA from the Tehtatta constituency in Nadia district, denied having any association with the arrested suspect,

identified as Prabir Kayal.

"This is nothing but a conspiracy against me. I will resign as MLA if any allegations against me are proved," the MLA claimed. Kayal, his accomplices Shyamal Kayal and Sunil Mandal were arrested by the state anti-corruption branch from Raidighi area of South 24 Parganas district in a raid on Friday night.

Earlier, several alleged victims had written to TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee in this re-

gard, it is learnt. The complainants are from Palashipara, Tehatta and Karimpur assembly constituencies. They wanted their money back since they got no job.

A few days ago, Kayal was accused of defrauding a person of lakhs of rupees by promising him the job of primary school teacher in Malda district. According to the complaints, Kayal took money from unsuspecting people from 2016 to 2021 with the promise of giving them jobs.

Amit Shah on 3-day Bengal visit from May 4

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah will be on a three-day visit to West Bengal from May 4 in a bid to rejuvenate the BJP cadres and stop infighting in the party's state unit ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. This will be Shah's first visit to the state since the 2021 Assembly polls.

According to the schedule, the senior BJP leader will arrive in Kolkata on May 4 evening and will go to Hingalganj in the North 24 Parganas district to attend a

Border Security Force (BSF) function the next day.

Then he will go to Siliguri in north Bengal's Darjeeling district and address a public rally at the Railway Institute Ground. Later, he is likely to hold a meeting with representatives of different political and non-political organisations in Darjeeling on May 5.

The next day, he will go to the Cooch Behar district and attend a government programme at Tinbigha. He will return to Kolkata on May 6 afternoon and is expected to hold meetings with top BJP leaders of the state and then return to Delhi the



Union Home Minister Amit Shah

same day. Sources said the Union Home Minister's visit is aimed at strengthening the party organisation in the state.

Since winning 77 seats in the Assembly polls last year and becoming the main Opposition in the state, the BJP has failed to win a single election in Bengal.

Party MP Soumitra Khan, na-

tional vice president Dilip Ghosh and national secretary Anupam Hazra recently took jibes against the new state leadership under Sukanta Majumdar and criticised him for being "inexperienced". Besides, the party lost the Asansol Lok Sabha seat to the Trinamool Congress in the recent bypoll.

Dilip Ghosh, also a party MP, said "Though the main purpose of Shah's visit is to attend official programmes in the state, he will take stock of the law and order situation in the state. He will also hold meetings with party leaders from the state. He may pre-

pare our roadmap for the upcoming elections."

The TMC said Shah's visit will have no impact in Bengal politics. Party state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said, "The BJP is struggling to maintain a balance between the party old-timers and newcomers. Shah is aware of his party's internal fighting and its defeat in Asansol by a margin of over 3 lakh votes. In Ballygunge, their candidate lost her deposit. Now, there is a competition among the state BJP leaders over who will meet him. Therefore, his visit will have no impact."

JUTE PRICE CAPPING

BJP MP Arjun Singh called to Delhi day after his letter to CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

A DAY after he wrote a letter to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, seeking her intervention in the raw jute price capping issue, BJP MP Arjun Singh was on Saturday called to Delhi.

The development comes in the backdrop of Singh relentlessly "targeting" the Centre for allegedly neglecting the jute industry's interest in West Bengal.

Worried over Singh's receiving support from a section of Trinamool Congress leaders and growing proximity with his former party, the BJP central leadership in an effort to control the damage called Singh to the national capital to hold a meeting with Union textiles minister Piyush Goyal.

Before leaving for Delhi on Saturday, Singh told reporters, "I received a call from the Union textiles minister (for the meeting). I don't know whether this has been arranged by the central party leadership, but my aim is to save the jute industry in West Bengal. It is a big industry here. If the industry suffers and people hold the Centre

responsible for it, then why they would support us in the future? Why will they vote for me if I cannot save the industry?" Asked whether he would join TMC, Singh said, "I don't want to say anything on this. I have raised a pertinent issue concerning the people of my constituency. I have only raised an issue that concerns my state."

Singh in a letter to Banerjee on Friday urged her to intervene in the raw jute price capping issue, which is "affecting" the sector while terming the Centre's jute capping policy a "flawed" one. "I have written to the chief ministers of five states — West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam and Tripura — requesting them to flag the issue of capping raw jute prices. The entire jute industry is suffering because of it," Singh had said.

TMC state general secretary Kunal Ghosh said, "This shows the BJP and the Centre do not give importance to Bengal or issues concerning the state. He has been called (to Delhi) after he wrote a letter to the Chief Minister. The Centre came out of its slumber after he reached out to Mamata Banerjee. It's clear that they don't want to lose another MP, and thus, this development took place."

Oppn slams CM, Kolkata Police over 'fabrication of court order'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

LEADER OF Opposition in the state Assembly Suwendu Adhikari on Saturday slammed Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and the police administration following the reports that the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed an FIR against the Kolkata Police, accusing it of forgery and fabrication of a court order.



Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari

"The state government is using police to fabricate a court order. The police are misleading the ED by changing a court order. This is being done to put pressure on the ED, which is probing several cases in the state. Several police officers are involved in this. The police and the administration are compromising the judicial system. The central investigation agencies should now take action."

If needed we will move the Calcutta High Court, demanding its intervention in the matter," said BJP MLA Adhikari lashing out at the police for their alleged act at a press conference at Debra in West Midnapore district.

ED officials, in their FIR registered on April 20 with the Delhi Police, have claimed that a court order was tampered with in a bid to make its Joint Director Kapil Raj provide a voice sample without his consent.

The Kolkata Police are yet to comment on the allegation.

In 2021, an audio clip purportedly of ED officials discussing a coal smuggling case against

Trinamool Congress MP Abhishek Banerjee had surfaced, following which Mamata Banerjee's nephew had filed an FIR against the agency. The matter was taken up by a magistrate's court in Kolkata. However, the court asked for voice samples of the ED officers reportedly heard in the contentious clip. The Kolkata Police then sent the court order to the ED but allegedly with certain editing.

Although the court had asked for the voice sample, it also mentioned an important aspect — "with his consent". Kolkata's Alipore court asked ED officials, especially Joint Director Kapil Raj, to appear before the Kolkata Police and provide voice samples with their consent. Kapil Raj is also supervising the investigations in the coal and cattle smuggling cases in which Abhishek Banerjee is under the scanner.

TMC student wing protests fuel price hike

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

OVER 700 activists of TMC's student wing assembled at the city's Rajabazar area on Saturday and staged a protest against the rise in the prices of fuel and cooking gas, before taking out a rally to

Shyambazar, holding cutouts of LPG cylinders in hand.

Trinankur Bhattacharya, the state president of Trinamool Chhatra Parishad (TMCP), said protests against "anti-people policies" of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre would continue in the state till the hike was rolled back.

"How will the 'aam aadmi' (common people) survive? The anti-people Modi government is hiking the prices of the cylinder, on one hand, making it costlier than gold, and fanning religious sentiments on the other. We will launch stronger movements if the hike is not rolled back," said Bhattacharya.

Diamond Harbour a model district in policing, says Abhishek

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 30

TRINAMOL CONGRESS (TMC) national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday said that Diamond Harbour was a model police district and other districts followed it in terms of police administration.

Inaugurating Diamond Harbour Superintendent of Police (SP) office, the TMC leader said, "I can proudly say that what Diamond Harbour thinks today, rest of Bengal thinks tomorrow. In Diamond Harbour police district, area under a total of 13 police stations and even more outposts were monitored through CCTV cameras. Now, other police districts may have started using CCTV cameras."

"In some states, the administration swings into action only after the Supreme Court's intervention. Unlike those places, justice is delivered promptly in Bengal. I urge media persons to share with the police any tip-off about a crime," he said.

55 new Covid-19 cases reported in state

Kolkata: The state on Saturday reported 55 new Covid-19 cases, which raised the tally to 20,18,260, a bulletin issued by the health department said. The toll remained unchanged with no fresh fatality due to the disease reported from any part of the state. As many as 24 recuperated from the infection since Friday, pushing the total recoveries to 19,96,693. PTI

NOTICE
IN THE COURT OF CIVIL JUDGE (JR. DIVN.) 2ND COURT CHANDANNAGORE
MISC. CASE 11/21 (T.E.N. 27/17) Maya Rani Chakraborty and others - VS - Kamata Maji and others
This is to inform to the concern persons inter - alia Op. no. 2 Smt. Polty Maji and Op. no. 4 Smt. Nayanka Maji, wife and daughter of Dilip Kumar Maji, both of Narua Panchanantala, P.O. & P.S. - Chandernagore, Dist - Hooghly, PIN- 712136. That the above Misc. case arising out of the T.E.N. No. 27/17 has been fixed for appearance of the Op. No.2 and 4 praying for Police help in getting the delivery of possession of the suit property of the eviction suit, being T.S. No.- 43/2000 decreed on 23.03.2010 The interested persons if desire to contest the said petition Should appear personally or through Ld. advocate with in 30 days from the date of this publication, otherwise the said petition will be heard ex parte and necessary order will be passed accordingly.

Nilima Chatterjee
Sureshadas
Bhaswati Reeves
Advocate
Civil Judge (Junior Division), 2nd Court, Chandernagore

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Details may be downloaded from the University website- www.nduat.org. Applications on prescribed performa must reach to the office of the undersigned before 5.00 PM of 30 May, 2022 through Registered/Speed post only.

Director
Administration & Monitoring

पत्रक: 97/सीईए-विज्ञापन/2022 दिनांक: 30.04.2022

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NOTICE
My client, SRI SAMBHU NATH BISWAS, son of Late Kail Charan Biswas, of 304, K.G.T. Road, P.O. Bhadrakali, P.S. Uttarpara, District Hooghly, PIN-712232, West Bengal, is interested to Sale All that the piece and parcel of Bastu land property lying and situated in the District of Hooghly, under A.D.S.R. Office and P.S. Uttarpara under the local limits of Ward No.05 of Uttarpara Kotrung Municipality, Municipal Holding No.304, K. G.T. Road, Mouza Kotrung, J.L. No.08, appertaining to R.S. Khatun No.1325, corresponding to L.R. Khatun No.3543/1, at C.S. and R.S. Dag No.3524 corresponding to L.R. Dag Nos.6503, comprising of little more or less 07 Cotah 14 Chittacks and/or 12.6 Decimals of land together with cemented floorings commercial pucca structure measuring more or less 492 Sq.ft. for Shop Rooms, cemented floorings residential pucca structure measuring more or less 272 Sq.ft. and cemented floorings R.T. shed measuring more or less 312 Sq.ft., and cemented floorings Tin shed structure measuring more or less 10/08 Sq.ft. for Godown and more or less 1830 Sq.ft. for commercial Garage, TOGETHER WITH all fittings and fixtures and all necessary easement rights, to the purchaser M/s. D. J. JEWELS PRIVATE LIMITED, having its Registered Office at 127/1A, B. B. Ganguly Street, P.O. Bowbazar, P.S. Muchipara, District Kolkata, PIN-700012, represented by its Director, SRI UDIPTO CHANDRA, son of Sri Uday Kumar Chandra, of P-24, C.I.T. Road, Scheme 52, P.O. and P.S. Eniali, District Kolkata, PIN-700014, and have entered into a registered Agreement For Sale being No. 01120 for the year 2022 of A.D.S.R. Uttarpara, Hooghly, which my client's father said Kail Charan Biswas had got by virtue of a Deed being No. 1965 for the year 1942, recorded in Book No.1, Volume No.30, at pages from 248 to 250, of the Sub-Registration Office at Serampore, Hooghly, and my client have got the same through in heritance and subsequent deeds and Court's order.
The said Deed No.1965/1942 have lost from my client's custody on 06.03.2022 and my client has made a complaint with Uttarpara P.S. being G.D.E No.374 dated 07.03.2022.
Any person having bonafide interest in the aforesaid property and/or any objection to the transaction of such sale-purchase may intimate the undersigned within 7 (Seven) days from publication of this notice, in default no subsequent claims shall be entertained.
Yours truly
SANJEEB KARMAKAR,
ADVOCATE,
Mob:9830327724
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Boat capsizes in Bhagirathi, woman, daughter missing

Local TMC leader held for 'evidence tampering'

Haemodynamically stable means the blood pressure and heart rate of the patient are not fluctuating.

The reports of the tests, con-

Nabadwip: A woman and her 18-month daughter were missing after a country boat carrying about 10 people capsized in the midstream of the Bhagirathi

the boat, which along with another was taking invitees to a wedding ceremony from Nabadwip to Mayapur, it said. There was a marriage cere-

The TMC member was picked on Friday along with one of his friends, who aided him, said police

ment when taken to hospital," the CBI official said. He destroyed evidence connected to the crime, the official told PTI. "The accused also threatened the victim's family of dire consequences if they approached the police. He forced them to cremate the girl hastily," the agency official added.

A minor girl was allegedly gangraped during a birthday party at the house of the local leader's son on April 4. She bled to death later that night, according to her parents who lodged a police complaint on April 9.

At least six persons, including the father-son duo, have been arrested in connection with the case.

Political parties play blame game over reports of Maoist resurgence

AMID REPORTS that Maoists were trying to regroup in the Janglemahal area of West Bengal, their former stronghold, with posters having resurfaced in some pockets, political parties in the state have taken to the blame game, maintaining that fears were being unnecessary fuelled by rival camps for individual gains.

The Centre had warned of Maoist activities in Bengal earlier in the week, with the state police having tightened its vigil in Junglemahal – comprising parts of East and West Midnapore, Jhargram, Bankura and Purulia districts.

"Security forces have been put on high alert. We are keeping a close watch on the situation," said a senior police officer.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, however, alleged earlier in the week that the posters were put up by BJP workers, and that a few television channels were creating "an atmosphere of fear" by giving the matter "unnecessary" coverage.

In the same breath, she also said that at least five Maoists had entered the state from neighbouring Jharkhand in the recent past. Echoing her, TMC West Midnapore district president and MLA Ajit Maity said it was a ploy by opposition parties to create a "fear psychosis".

"The situation in Junglemaha is no longer conducive for Maoist activities as underdevelopment, which was the real issue of concern, has been resolved," he said.

Maoist activities ebbed in the state after 'Operation Green Hunt' was launched in 2009 with central and state forces jointly mounting attacks on the Left-wing rebels.

Kishenji, a CPI (Maoist) politburo member leading the rebel activities, was killed during a gun-fire exchange with security personnel on November 24, 2011. Rebuffing his allegation, BJP's West Midnapore district president Tapas Mishra said it was a hoax generated on purpose to stop the opposition from carrying out work there.

He also said that there was no such concrete information that pointed toward the resurgence of ultra-wing extremism in the area. "We think this entire episode is a hoax to stop the opposition from carrying out their activities in the area. This could also be the fallout of infighting in the local TMO camp," he said.

CPI(M) West Midnapore district secretary Sushanta Ghosh who had been at the forefront of tackling ultra-left terror in Junglemahal from 2008-to 2011 too, dismissed the speculation as a "cleverly crafted" tactic to stop democratic activities in the area.

"IMPORTANT"

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Government of Karnataka
(Department of Infrastructure Development,
Ports & Inland Water Transport)

Port Office, Karwar-581302 Ph: 08382-221342 Fax: 08382-221528
E-mail: kwrpport2016@gmail.com

No.PAS/CR- 129/2017-18 Date: 29-04-2022


EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Rates quotations in sealed cover are invited by the undersigned from Suppliers/ Manufacturers/ Contractors/ any interested parties who are having similar nature of work / supply experience for the items for “**Providing consultancy service for installation of Firefighting Equipments on line with OISD 156 requirements/ PESO standards for handling class A and B petroleum products at Karwar Port.**” For the vessels of 50,000 DWT & above.

For any other information and further details of specification contact the undersigned office. (1) Port Office, Bathkoll Karwar-581302 (2) E-mail: kwrpport2016@gmail.com (3) Phone & Fax No: 08382 -221342 / 221528

Conditions: (1) The quotation shall be sealed and super scribed as “**Supply of pumps and accessories for installation of Firefighting Equipments on line with OISD 156 requirements/ PESO standards for handling class A and B petroleum products at Karwar Port**” with reference to the enquiry and should reach this office on or before **06-05-2022 at 16.00 hours.** (2) The bare rates and applicable GST is to be quoted separately. (3) Rate offered for estimation and tender evaluation purpose only and not for awarding work. (4) The sealed quotations will be opened on **06-05-2022 at 1700 hours.** The interested offered persons may present at the time of opening. (5) The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations without giving any reason.

Sd/- Port Officer, Karwar



बैंक ऑफ बड़ोदा

Bank of Baroda

ZOSARB, Kolkata

21A, Sadananda Road, 2nd Floor, Kolkata - 700 026

Email: armcal@bankofbaroda.com

E-AUCTION

SALE NOTICE

ANNEXURE-E

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE/ MOVABLE PROPERTIES : “APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 8 (6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable/ movable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & 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 / movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Bank of Baroda, Secured Creditor, will be sold on “As is where is”, “As is what is”, and “Whatever there is” for recovery of below mentioned account/s. The details of Borrower/s/Guarantor/s/Secured Asset/s/Dues/Reserve Price/-Auction date & Time, EMD and Bid Increase Amount are mentioned below--

Sr/ Lot No.	Name & address of Borrower/s/Guarantor/ s/ Mortgagor (s)	Detailed description of the movable property with known encumbrances, if any	Total Dues	Date & Time of E-auction	Reserve Price, EMD amount, Bid Increase Amount.	Status of Possession (Symbolic Physical)	Property Inspection date & Time
1	M/s Rajlakshmi Guinea Museum Jewellers Pvt. Ltd. Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. Prakash Agarwal Mobile: 7980531671 Phone. No. 033-24196434	Gold, Silver, Platinum, Stones, Other Costume Jewellery at ZOSARB, Kolkata, 21A, Sadananda Road, Kolkata-700026. Particulars are as under: Gold Items: 1665.225 gms 22 Carat Gold. 26.405 gms 18 Carat Gold; Silver Items: 22304.85 gms, Silver Coin - 270 pcs.:1323 gms; Platinum: 585.648 gms, Precious Stones, Other costume Jewellery and other scrap Items.	Rs.314035454/- with further interest and cost plus other expenses till date of payment. (minus amount realized through sale of assets earlier)	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.92,30,000/- plus applicable GST Rs.9,23,000/- Rs. 10,000/-	Physical	23.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
2	M/s Rishi Infosys Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. Samir Prasad Phone. No. 033 24196434 Mob: 9712954192	1. Equitable Mortgage of Residential Flat no. Flat No. A/19, at 883 Jessore Road, Kolkata-55 standing in the name of Arindam Ghosh. 2. Equitable mortgage of Residential flat No. B/20 at 883 Jessore Road, Kolkata-55 standing in the name of Dipikha Ghosh.	Rs.39089782.02 with further interest and cost plus other expenses till date of payment.	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.34,72,000/- Rs.3,47,200/- Rs. 10,000/-	* Symbolic	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
3	M/s. Bangamata Rice Mill Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. Prakash Agarwal Mobile: 7980531671 Phone. No. 033-24196434	Property no. 1: Equitable Mortgage of Factory Shed land & Building including Plant and Machineries kept in below mentioned property.- Property Details: (a) L.R. Kh. No.1128 L.R. Plot No.-1422, J.L. No.63 measuring an area of 36 Decimals. (b) L.R. Kh. No.1128, L.R. Plot No.-1429, J.L. No.63 measuring an area of 10.40 Decimals. Total area of the land is 46.40 Decimals in the name of Banga Mata Rice Mill, situated at Mouza Saloon, P.S. Khandagosh, Burdwan. Property no. 2: L.R.Kh.No.-1191, R.S. and L.R Plot NO.-3880, Class Rice Mill, Area -71 Decimal situated at P.S. Bhatar, Mouza Mohanpur within Bonpas village Panchayat in the name of Jatrick Agro Product Pvt. Ltd.	Rs.294.89 Lacs with further interest and cost plus other expenses till date of payment	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Property No. 1 Rs.72,12,600/- (It includes Value of plant & machinery Rs.14,27,400/-) + applicable GST for plant & machinery Rs.7,21,260/- Rs. 10,000/- Property No. 2 Rs.7,66,800/- Rs.76,680/- Rs.10,000/-	Physical	24.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
4	M/s Life Style Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. Samir Prasad Phone. No. 033 24196434 Mob: 9712954192	ALL THAT piece and parcel of one shop room measuring about 570 Square Feet super built up area on the First Floor AND another shop room measuring about 570 Square Feet super built up area on the third Floor both together with undivided proportionate share of land of the building having its holding No.54/A/1, Jessore Road (North), Police Station - Barasat, Kolkata - 700124, within constructed on the land lying and situated at Mouza - Barasat, Parganas Anawarpur, J.L. No.79, Touzi No.146, R.S. No.261, Khatian no.585, appertaining to Dag No.124 District 24 Parganas (North), Kolkata-700124, within Barasat Municipality Ward No.9, registered in the office of the Additional District Sub-Registrar at Barasat, in the District of North 24 Parganas together with the proportionate and undivided share of the land whereupon the building stands and also with the easement of common users reservoir over the stair case measuring 14'10" length and 7' wide at the Eastside of the Building including the tank, pump machine and toilet. Building which is butted and bounded by North: 76 feet Jessore Road, South: Property belong to Jayapta Day; East: 14' Municipal Road; West: Frankross Pharmacy	Rs.1,02,85,685/- together with further interest from 01/04/2018 thereon at the contractual rates together with interest, charges, until payment or realisation.	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.55,00,000/- Rs.5,50,000/- Rs.10,000/-	* Symbolic	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
5	M/s Ind Expo Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. B N Bose Phone. No. 033 24196434 Mob: 9073377661	Office Space unit No. -3A & 3B in 3rd Floor in G + IV storied building named :Krishna Plaza" situated at premises no. 268A, B. B. Ganguly Street, Kolkata- 700 012.	Rs.13,85,29,291/- and interest, incidental expenses and other charges thereon.	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs. 64,28,000/- Rs. 6,42,800/- Rs. 10,000/-	* Symbolic	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
6	Saundarya Fashion Traders Pvt Ltd. Authorised Officer: Name: Mr. Prakash Agarwal Mobile: 7980531671 Phone. No. 033-24196434	All that piece and parcel of Commercial spaces on the 1st Floor of the multi storied building comprised of 02 unit, space being no A& B, admeasuring super built up area 2189 Sq. Ft and 1516 Sq Ft respectively, within the local limits of Chandan Nagar Municipal Corporation under Mouza-Chandannager, sheet no. 2, J.L No 1 R S Khatian No 297, L R Khatian No 1924, under R S Dag No 529 corresponding LR Dag No 674 measuring an area of 11 Chittaks and 28 Sqt under R S Dag no 530 corresponding to L R Dag No 673 measuring an area of 6 Cottahs, 12 Chittaks, 3 Sqt totaling an area of 07 cottahs 7 Chittaks and 31 Sqt under PS Chandannager, in the name of M/s Saundarya Fashion Traders Private Ltd.	Rs.4,82,67,121.00 with further interest and cost plus other expenses till date of payment.	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.68,00,000/- Rs.6,80,000/- Rs. 10,000/-	Physical	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
7	M/s Maa Durga Aqua Probiotic Centre Proprietor and Mortgagor : Mr. Srimanta Jana Authorised Officer : Mr. Alok Thakur Phone No. 033 24196434	All that piece and parcel of plot of land measuring area about 45 decimal of land along with residential and commercial structure which is lying and situated at Mouza Osmanpur, JL No. 44, RS Khatian No. 171/1, 170/1, 348, 129, 178, Dag No. 650, 649, 651, PS - Chandipur, Dist - Purba Medinipur within Jurisdiction of Kandapasara Brindabanpur Gram Panchayat. Said property is butted and bounded by: By North: Other Plot of Land, By South: Other Plot of Land, By East: National Highway, By West: Other Plot of Land	Rs.2,96,34,418.00 Plus unapplied interest and incidental expenses and other charges	31.05.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.3,55,50,000/- Rs.35,55,000/- Rs.10,000/-	* Physical	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m
8	Borrower - M/s Rani Sati Pulses Pvt Ltd Director: 1. Mr. Praveen Shankar Gupta 2. Mr. Jay Shankar Gupta Mortgagor cum Guarantor 1. Mr. Praveen Shankar Gupta 2. Mr. Jay Shankar Gupta 3. Smt. Mohini Gupta 4. Smt. Beby Gupta Authorised Officer : Mr. Alok Thakur Phone No. 033 24196434	All that piece and parcel of land and building (three storied) measuring 3 cottah 7 chittaks and 12 sq. Ft. more or less, consisting of 6 rooms 2 kitchens and 2 toilets in each floor together with staircase having total built up area of 4746 sq. ft. approx. situated at premises no. 18B, Gorapada Sarkar Lane, P.S. Ultadanga, Kolkata 67, Touzi No. 2833, Holding No. 37D, within Mouza Ultadanga, Ward No. 13 within KMC, A.D.S.R.O at Sealdah.	Rs 4,16,74,643.00 Plus unapplied interest and incidental expenses and other charges	09.06.2022 from 2 p.m to 6 p.m (With unlimited extension of 10 minutes)	Rs.1,27,50,000/- Rs.12,75,000/- Rs.10,000/-	* Symbolic	20.05.2022 from 11.00 AM to 2.00 p.m


For detailed terms and conditions of sale, please refer to the link provided in <https://www.bankofbaroda.in/e-auction.htm> and <https://ibapi.in>. Also, prospective bidders may contact the authorized officer on above noted contact nos.

*Prospective Buyer has to provide Undertaking in the Bank's Format for possession

Date: 01.05.2022, Place :- Kolkata

Authorised Officer , Bank of Baroda.

The image shows the header of a notice from the Asansol Municipal Corporation. On the left is a logo featuring a triangle with a stylized 'A' inside. To the right of the logo, the text 'ASANSOL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION' is written in a large, bold, sans-serif font. Below this, the word 'ASANSOL' is written in a slightly smaller, bold, sans-serif font. The entire header section has a black background with white text and logo.



JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Indra Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur- 302004

No: JDA/EE&T AtoDir.Engg.-I/2022/D-153 Dated: 29.04.2022

NOTICE INVITING BID

NIB No. : EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-I / 3 / 2022-23

Bids are invited for works given below in various zones as per details given :

S. No.	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	A & F	Nature of Work	Last Date
1	JDA2223WLOB00035	1026.00		EE-Housing-I, Concessionaire for Repair/ Retrofit, Develop, Operate & Transfer (RDOT) by converting exiting Government funded vacant houses into Affordable Rental Housing Complexes (ARHCs) for period of 25 years 588 flats at Swapan Lok at Sikar Road, Jaipur.	08.06.2022

Details are available at Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in

Raj. Samwad/C/1233/2022-23 **Executive Engineer & TA to Dir. Engg.-I**

		<h2 style="text-align: center;">CONTAI BRANCH</h2> <p style="text-align: center;">Hatabari, P.O. Contai, Dist. Purba Medinipur, Contai, West Bengal, Pin - 721401 / E-mail: contai@bankofbaroda.co.in</p>	
		<p style="text-align: center;">[Rule-8(1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property only)</p>	
<p>Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice together with further interest, cost etc. thereon within 60 days from the date of the said notice.</p> <p>The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below to exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the date mentioned below.</p> <p>The Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda, Contai Branch, District- Purba Medinipur for the amount and interest thereon.</p> <p>The Borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.</p>			
Sl. No.	Name of Borrower & Guarantor	1) Date of Demand Notice 2) Date of Possession 3) Outstanding Amount	Description of Immovable Properties
1.	Borrower: Mr. Debashis Pradhan and Mrs. Kalpana Pradhan	1) 24.12.2021 2) 26.04.2022 3) Rs.99,704.99 (Rupees Nine Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Seven Hundred Four and Paise Ninety Nine only) and interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.	1. Equitable mortgage of land and building situated at Mouza- Athilagori, JL No. 370, LR Dag No. 1485 & b 1486, LR Khaitan No. 3881, Area- 2.25 decimal in the name of Mrs. Kalpana Pradhan. The property is butted and bounded On the North by: House of Chittaranjan Pradhan, On the South by: House of Durgapati Nandi, On the East by: House of Bimal Maity, On the West by: 6 feet wide municipal road.
2.	Borrower: Mr. Sankar Chakraborty Guarantor: Mrs. Shipra Chakraborty	1) 09.02.2022 2) 26.04.2022 3) Rs. 17, 67, 322.84 (Rupees Seventeen Lakh Sixty Seven Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Two and Paise Eighty Four only) and interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges and expenses till date of payment.	1. Equitable mortgage of all that undivided proportionate share of land LR Plot No. 18, total area of land 4.667 decimal, nature of land is Bastu as per ROR. Situated at Mouza- Karkuli, JL No. 263, KH No. 4191, 440/1, 1390, P.S. Contai, Dist. Purba Medinipur. The property is butted and bounded On the North by: Property of Mr. Sukumar Chakraborty, On the South by: Property of Mr. Bhubati Bhusan Pahari, On the East by: Property of Amalendu Sharma, On the West by: RS Plot No. 09 & 04.

GOVERNMENT OF RAJASTHAN

SUPERINTENDENT, MATHURADAS MATHUR HOSPITAL, JODHPUR

(Attached with Dr. S.N. Medical College Jodhpur)

Tel No.:- 0291-2438655, e-mail:- supdt.mdmh.ju@gmail.com

GSTIN No. 08JDMH03999C1D0 (Superintendent, MDMH)

GSTIN No. 08JDMH06758D1D3 (RMRS, MDMH)

No. :- Acc./MDMH/2022-23/6503

Date: 13.04.2022

Short Term E-Tender No. 13 (2022-23)

Online Bids are invited from eligible bidders i.e. Authorized Service Providers to provide various Services at Mathuradas Mathur Hospital Jodhpur attached to Dr. S. N. Medical College Jodhpur as per tender condition. Tenders are to be submitted duly digitally signed in electronic format only on website <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>. The tender documents are to be downloaded from above mentioned website. Bidders who wish to participate in online bidding will have to procure digital signature certificate as per IT Act 2000 to sign their electronic bid. Bids which are not digitally signed will not be considered.

क्र. सं.	कार्य का विवरण	अनुमानित लागत राशि (रु. लाखों में)	बोली प्रिनटिबिलिटी राशि (EMD का DD/B.C. (रु. में)	बोली शुल्क (अप्रिविड) (रु. में)	प्रोपोजिट फॉर (रु. में)	बोली दस्तावेज डाउनलोड करने एवं जमा करवाने का प्रावण दिनांक व समय	प्री विड मिटिंग हेतु निर्धारित दिनांक व समय	बोली दस्तावेज डाउनलोड एवं जमा करने की समाप्ति दिनांक व समय	बोली शुल्क, प्रोपोजिट फॉर एवं बोली प्रिनटिबिलिटी राशि कागजातों में भेजने का समय एवं समाप्ति की दिनांक एवं समय	नकली बोली खोलने की दिनांक एवं समय
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	
1.	To provide cleaning and sanitary services at MDM Hospital Jodhpur for One years	378.00	756000.00	400/-	1000/-	13.04.2022 5.00 PM	22.04.2022 5.00 PM	05.05.2022 1.00 PM	05.06.2022 4.00 PM	06.05.2022 5.00 PM

Terms & Conditions:-

1. DD/BC of Bid fee, Processing fee & Bid Security (EMD) of each item must be submitted in the office of the Superintendent, Mathuradas Mathur Hospital, Jodhpur on date and time as mentioned above. In absence of which Technical Bid will not be Considerable.
2. Technical Bids will be opened on prescribe date at Mathuradas Mathur Hospital, Jodhpur of those Bidder who has submitted DD/BC of Bid Fee, Processing Fee and Bid Security (EMD) in time.
3. Bid Notice and Bid Documents are also available at <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in> or <https://eprocarajasthan.gov.in>

Sd/-

Superintendent,
Mathura Das Mathur Hospital
Jodhpur

5 SUNDAY STORY

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

His own voice

A vocal critic of the BJP, Jignesh Mevani, Gujarat’s only Independent MLA, is out on bail after 10 days in custody over a tweet on the PM.
LEENA MISRA & PARIMAL DABHI on the man and his journey so far — from his lawyer-activist days to being the face of the state’s Dalit politics



Illustration: Shyam Kumar

TO NATWARBHAI Parmar, 69, son Jignesh Mevani always seemed a touch too idealistic. “He would talk about bringing about a revolution and I would say such revolution happened only before 1947. He would then say, ‘I am ready to go to jail’. In a sense, he prepared us for the worst,” says Parmar, talking about the case that landed Mevani in the custody of the Assam Police.

“If they can take him to Assam for such a small matter, I can’t imagine what they will do next. We are very scared of the BJP,” adds Parmar, who retired as a clerk from the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation in 1987.

But many say Mevani’s arrest on April 20 over a purported tweet against the Prime Minister and subsequent re-arrest on charges of assaulting a woman police constable have only served to highlight the ruling BJP’s insecurities around the Dalit leader in an election year.

On Friday, while granting bail to Mevani, 42, Gujarat’s only Independent MLA, a district court in Assam pulled up the state police for lodging a “false FIR” and “abusing the process of the court and the law”.

Part of a youth triumvirate that was defined by its strident anti-BJP politics, Mevani, along with former JNU student leader Kanhaiya Kumar and Patidar leader Hardik Patel, had briefly raised the hopes of the anti-BJP camp. While Kanhaiya and Hardik joined the Congress, Mevani couldn’t on technical grounds — as that would have meant losing his MLA seat from Vadgam. Though the BJP’s storming back to power in the 2019 general elections, combined with the Congress’s internal politics, ensured that the fightback has since dampened, Mevani’s Independent status has meant that he has more manoeuvre room for his politics than the other two.

A source close to Mevani said, “Mevani follows Leftist ideologies to the core. He had no intention of joining the Congress, and it was tough persuading him, but agreed to align with the party only after Kanhaiya joined in Bihar.”

Hardik, who was instrumental in bringing Mevani into the Congress fold, however, says, “The idea was to strengthen the party. As an Independent legislator, he cannot do as much as he can with the backing of a party... he can become the Congress’s national Dalit face”.

Born in 1980 as Jignesh Parmar in Ahmedabad, to where his father had moved from Meu in the mid-seventies, he later changed his surname to ‘Mevani’ (derived from Meu village) to keep alive his link with his roots.

After his schooling in the Asarwa area of Ahmedabad, Mevani enrolled in H K Arts College, Ahmedabad, to graduate in English Literature, where he was deeply influenced by educationist-activist Professor Sanjay Bhawe and poet and theatre personality Saumya Joshi.

After a diploma in journalism, Mevani worked as a journalist in the Gujarati magazine *Abhiyaan* in Mumbai for two years. It was around this time that he studied the Gujarati poet Mareez, born Abdul Ali Vasi, who is often called ‘the Ghalib of Gujarat’. He spent much of his time researching the poet’s life and times, even visiting places in Mumbai associated with him — the research is likely fodder for a book in the works.

Back from Mumbai, Mevani joined Jan Sangharsh Manch, the civil rights organisation founded by the late trade unionist and lawyer-activist Mukul Sinha, who took up cases for the 2002 riot victims. At Sinha’s persuasion,

Mevani studied law at Ahmedabad’s DT Law College and practised in the Gujarat High Court. As lawyer, Mevani moved the court seeking surplus government land for Dalits under the Gujarat Agriculture Land Ceiling Act.

Besides Sinha, Mevani had had as mentors constitutional expert the late Girish Patel and the late Gandhian Chunibhai Vaidya — personalities who strengthened his Leftist ideology.

“Some of his campaigns would scare us, as he would venture into areas where he would have to confront headstrong people,” says Mevani’s mother Chandraben, 68.

The activism took a decisive turn on July 11, 2016, when four members of a Dalit family from Mota Samadhiyala village of then Una

taluka in Gir Somnath district, were flogged by cow vigilantes. Mevani, until then a low-key activist-lawyer, launched a march to Una from Ahmedabad and unfurled the tricolour on Independence day. His slogan, “you can keep the cow’s tail but give us back our land”, was the first open challenge to the BJP in the state.

Gujarat High Court lawyer and former IPS officer Rahul Sharma, who has known Mevani since 2015-16 and who was associated with the Una agitation, recalls how the events then pitchforked him on to the national scene.

“We first held a meeting at Acher in Ahmedabad on July 31, where everyone condemned the (Una) incident. I put forth the idea that we should march to Una. We decided not

to call any big leader as that would overshadow Jignesh who is a very good speaker and communicator, and was emerging as a leader”.

Sharma says the timing to launch Mevani as a Dalit leader was “just right” considering “several political leaders had come to Una only to give lip service.” Besides, only a year ago, the young Hardik Patel had emerged as a leader from the Patidar quota movement, indicating there was space for new leaders.

Soon after the Una incident, Mevani launched the Rashtriya Dalit Adhikar Manch, a platform bringing together Dalit youth to fight for all marginalised communities. He also briefly joined the AAP but quit.

On September 28, 2021, coinciding with

the birth anniversary of Bhagat Singh, Mevani pledged support to the Congress, along with Kanhaiya Kumar, who joined as a member.

Many said it would be a decision that would mark the end of Mevani’s fledgling political career, pointing to the wilderness that Hardik Patel and Kanhaiya find themselves in after joining the Congress.

Jayantilal Parmar, a member of the BJP’s media team, while distancing himself from the case against Mevani in Assam, says, “As long as Mevani was independent, he was an effective Dalit leader. The minute you join the Congress, you compromise your ideology.”

Parmar recalls how, when Mevani addressed a gathering in Chandkheda area of Ahmedabad after the Una flogging incident, “even Dalit BJP leaders went to the meet, but they abandoned him after he joined Congress”.

A senior Gujarat BJP leader had earlier told *The Indian Express* that the party is not particularly concerned about Mevani. “I don’t think there is a specific ploy to tackle him. There are certain persons with whom our party does not bother negotiating at all and Mevani is one of them.” One of the reasons the BJP may not be particularly interested in Mevani, as this leader said, could be because Dalits form only about 7 per cent of the state’s population.

Another leader argued that Mevani holds little more than “nuisance value” for the BJP. “Politically he looked finished before these cases were registered against him. The cases have provided him oxygen. In Gujarat, he holds only nuisance value, but his voice holds importance in places with a strong presence of Dalits, Muslims and tribals outside the state.”

Ramjibhai Bhikhabhai Parmar, 76, from Vagda village in Vadgam taluka, who has been a traditional Congress voter but voted for Mevani in 2017, says, “The Mukteshwar dam issue was one that dated back to the days before Independence, but Mevani managed to get Rs 19 crore cleared from the government and ensured water from the Narmada reached the dam. It’s a feat that no BJP, Janata Party or Congress MLA could achieve.”

Dismissing the allegations against Mevani, Ramjibhai says, “Jigneshbhai refuses to dine at homes where the women are behind a veil... that’s how progressive he is. And you think he would assault a woman constable?.”

Through much of Mevani’s political journey, his family has been a constant by his side. His entire family had joined him in the Una march. His father Parmar has participated in most of Mevani’s rallies and also campaigned for him in Vadgam in 2017, taking charge of 20 villages. Parmar was also part of all the recent demonstrations seeking his son’s release.

“We worry for him, but what can we do if this is the path he has chosen,” says mother Chandraben, recalling how Mevani once rebuked her for telling journalists that he had “no intention of marrying”. “Mummy, don’t say that, I can marry, even at 50!,” he had told her.

Talking of the police raid on their home on April 21, his father Parmar says, “The team searched the house, especially Jignesh’s room, but found nothing. They had already seized his CPU from the MLA quarters in Gandhinagar and taken the mobile phones of two of his associates... We have gone only once to see his MLA quarter. His quarter was open to everyone — from students taking competitive exams to couples whose marriages were not endorsed by their parents. There was hardly any space for us.”

== TAKE 5 == RISE IN LEMON PRICES



W KUMAR, 25
LEMONADE SELLER IN DELHI

‘I keep lemons in thermocol box with ice so they don’t go stale’

A lemonade seller was beaten to death in Ghaziabad allegedly for using stale lemons to make the drink. Lemon prices have seen an unprecedented surge, with a single lemon retailing between Rs 10-15 in markets

AMIL BHATNAGAR

1 How has the rise in lemon prices affected business?
I have been running the stall for 10 years. The prices have never been this high. I used to purchase lemons at a wholesale price of Rs 100-150 per kg. It’s now Rs 300 kg. So, I purchase less and sell fewer glasses.

2 With rising heat, is it tough to keep the lemons fresh?
I purchase lemons in small quantities. Several stall owners use stale lemons and add sugar to mask the taste. When I have extra lemons, I keep them in ice since I don’t have a refrigerator.

3 Has price of ice increased?
I get my ice from a wholesale supplier. I keep it in a thermocol box but it is too hot these days and the ice melts fast. I have to purchase 4-5 kg of ice in a day. Earlier, it would cost me Rs 50-60, but now I pay Rs 100 for a day.

4 How have the sales been?
With Covid-19 cases increasing, the footfall has reduced again. Once the lockdown was lifted, I had decent sales. When it gets hot, more people want to have lemonade.

5 Have you increased the price of your drink?
No. I sell a small glass of lemon soda for Rs 30. Despite the rise in lemon prices, I haven’t increased the cost. This is how I retain my loyal customers. I don’t make much profit but I can sustain the business.

india 75
NUMBER PLATE

9.75 million hectares
Area under wheat in India during 1950-51, which has increased to 31.45 million hectares in 2019-20, as per Agricultural Statistics at a Glance, 2020

6.46 million tonnes
The total production of wheat in the country during 1950-51, which has increased to 107.59 million tonnes during 2019-20

663kg
The yield of wheat in the country in 1950-51, which increased to 3,421 kg in 2019-20
HARIKISHAN SHARMA

EAT. PRAY. STUDY. REPEAT.

Every weekend, Puja Sharma turns up at Patna’s Kali Ghat by the Ganga to appear for free mock tests that she hopes will help her take a shot at a government job. The schedule is punishing, but like hundreds of other students, Puja knows a sarkari job is “all I want”

ANKITA DWIVEDI JOHRI

FOR AS long as she can remember, Puja Sharma has had a “craze” for a government job. And a spot in the Railways is her “*ekdum* dream job (just my dream job)”.

A year ago, that “craze” is what brought her to Patna from her hometown Jamshedpur, where her father works as a carpenter. “The pandemic has shown the difference between private and government jobs. Government jobs are stable, they get you respect. I want that. The study environment in Patna is more serious and I am hoping I can focus more here,” says the 25-year-old, who has appeared for the exams thrice.

The eldest of three siblings, she is among hundreds of aspirants who have been gathering at the Kali Ghat by the Ganga every weekend to firm up their preparation for the competitive exam.

The mock tests at the ghats were started over two months ago by S K Jha, a mechanical engineer-turned-coaching teacher. Since his coaching classes for Railways and SSB aspirants, which he started in 2014, could only accommodate a little over a 1,000 students a batch, Jha started the 90-minute mock test sessions on the ghats. Anywhere between 5,000-10,000 students take the test every Saturday and Sunday morning.

Recently, as images from the ghats went viral — of several students sitting on the steps, their heads buried into their test papers — they told an India story, or more specifically, a Bihar one: of the struggles and despair that youngsters go through in their search for that elusive *sarkari* job.



Puja began preparing for the Railways exams soon after she graduated with a Bachelor’s in Commerce from Jamshedpur Women’s College. She had been taking home tuitions until then to support her family, earning Rs 5,000 a month. “I had cracked the state polytechnic exam and was being offered architecture. Through the college placement cell, I also got an offer for a call centre job. But none of it excited me. My maternal grandfather had a Group C Railways job and my uncle had a Group D job. They really inspired me,” says Sharma.

She is glad she didn’t take up the private job offers because her friends who did are busy with “*grihasti* (family and children)” now, with no careers.

Her own journey since then, however, hasn’t been smooth either. She has made three attempts at the Railways exam, but missed narrowly each time. “At the RPF Constable Recruitment test, I exceeded the running timing by 20 seconds and for my second attempt, I practised so much that I sprained my ankle a day before the test. Then, at the Railway Recruitment Boards Non-Technical Popular Categories Exam, I missed



the cut-off by three marks,” she says.

With little money to spare for coaching, Puja had been preparing for the tests on her own in Jamshedpur, mostly through online tutorials. But after three unsuccessful attempts, she was sure she needed some help. “I had heard about free coaching for girls at Jha sir’s institute in Patna but my parents were very apprehensive. No girl in my family had gone out of Jamshedpur... I spoke to some of my male cousins and they convinced my family,” she recounts.

So last year, as the second wave of the pandemic subsided, she landed in Patna with her father and found a paying guest accom-

modation for Rs 3,500 a month — a big investment for the family. “But I have no other interests. Unlike other people my age, I don’t watch movies or serials or go out... This is all I want, to be the first woman in the family to have a government job.”

Most of the aspirants who take these mock tests on the ghats are from underprivileged backgrounds, and Jha believes that the “lack of opportunities in the private sector” is the reason why residents of Bihar are fixated on government employment. “There are no jobs in Bihar. Nothing. And there is no skills-based education either. So what option do people have,” says Jha,



Every weekend, hundreds of students take the mock test for Group D Railways examination at the ghats; (above) after four hours of coaching, Puja revises her lessons before going to bed. PTI/Express

adding that his idea to start free coaching classes for girls led to an increase in their numbers in his classroom. “There are about 350 girls now.”

To ensure that her parents’ investment in her future does not go waste, Puja follows a “very strict” daily schedule: waking up at 5 am, praying to “*surya devta* (the Sun God)” and going for a run, taking mock tests with her study group, cooking all three meals between 9 and 11 am, and then rushing to a public library to study between 11-4 pm. This is followed by another four hours of classes at Jha’s coaching centre, where she does questions on Reasoning, Math, General

Knowledge and Science. At 8 pm, when she reaches home, she revises all her lessons, has dinner and then goes to bed. “Then repeat the next day,” she laughs.

Puja also has to keep a close watch on her diet to stay fit for the physical tests. “I eat a lot of green vegetables, chicken and fish. But I don’t make them in onion gravy, only mustard. It is healthier,” she says, adding that at her home, too, being the eldest, she did most of the cooking.

When she can afford a break, Puja goes up to the terrace of her PG accommodation and takes in the view of the city, at times using this time to talk to her younger sister and mother. “Patna has a lot of garbage. I miss Jamshedpur, it is very clean. Also, people here speak very *shuddh* (traditional) Hindi, we speak a mix of Hindi and English. *Yahan log bahut rengha rengha ke bolte hain* (People here speak very slowly),” she says.

By her own admission, she doesn’t have many hobbies, “but I want to improve my skills”. “I like to listen to English songs and learn their lyrics. I recently picked up the lyrics of (Justin Bieber’s) *Let me love you*. I am also learning astrology and numerology through YouTube videos,” she says.

While in Jamshedpur, the 25-year-old had set up a YouTube channel, where she mostly reposted funny shorts, that has over 5,000 subscribers and worked as a local tourist guide too.

However, with the RRB-NTPC exam slated for July, all that has taken a backseat. “I got very good marks and rank without any coaching... Now I am working very hard. My own life, my struggles, keep me motivated. I will crack the exam. I am sure,” she signs off.

ED attaches actor’s assets worth Rs 7 cr

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has provisionally attached assets amounting to Rs 7.27 crore belonging to Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez in connection with its money laundering probe into activities of conman Sukesh Chandrasekhar.

The attached assets include fixed deposits worth Rs 7.12 crore belonging to the actress.

"During investigation, it was revealed that Chandrasekhar had given various gifts worth Rs 5.71 crore to Fernandez from the proceeds of crime generated by criminal activities, including extortion. Chandrasekhar had put Pinky Irani, his long-time associate and co-accused in this case, to deliver the said gifts to her. In addition to these gifts, Chandrasekhar had also given funds to the tune of USD 1,72,913 and AUD 26,740 to the close family members of Fernandez out of the proceeds of crime through co-accused Avatar Singh Kochhar, an established and well known international hawala operator," an ED statement said.

"Chandrasekhar had also delivered cash to the tune of Rs 15 lakh to a scriptwriter on behalf of Fernandez as advance for writing a script of her web series project. This cash amount has also been attached," it added.

According to ED, it revealed that Chandrasekhar was contacting people spoofing calls to dupe them as the numbers reflecting on their phone were from government officers and he claimed to be a government officer offering to help people for a price.



Jacqueline Fernandez

Adopting this modus operandi, Chandrasekhar "contacted Aditi Singh, wife of Shivinder Mohan Singh (formerly associated with Ranbaxy and Fortis Healthcare), by impersonating as Union Home Secretary, Union Law Secretary, officer from Prime Minister Office and junior officials and extorted more than Rs 200 crore from her over a period of one year on the pretext of contribution to party funds," an ED statement said.

ED investigations revealed that Chandrasekhar was running his illegal extortion business from Central Jail, Delhi, in connivance with jail officials.

"During investigation, searches were conducted under PMLA at various premises all over India and properties seized viz bungalow in Chennai, 26 cars, Indian currency, valuables, etc. valued at Rs 45 crore," the ED said.

The ED had earlier arrested Chandrasekhar and eight others, including his wife Leena Maria Paul, and even filed prosecution complaints.

"Investigation with regards to tracing the remaining proceeds of crime is in progress," the ED added.



RAY’S WORLD

Visitors at an exhibition of photographs on Satyajit Ray's works and artifact on his birth centenary at the ongoing 27th Kolkata International Film festival at Nandan Complex in Kolkata on Saturday. Partha Paul

2nd phase of gold hallmarking from June 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

THE SECOND phase of the mandatory hallmarked of gold jewellery and gold artefacts will come into force from June 1, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said on Saturday.

In a statement, the Ministry

said: "The second phase of the mandatory hallmarked will cover additional three caratages of gold jewellery/artefacts viz. 20, 23 and 24 carats... and 32 new districts under the mandatory hallmarked regime wherein an AHC has been set up post implementation of the first phase of the order."

AHC stands for Assaying and Hallmarking Centres where a

consumer can get the purity of their unhallmarked gold jewellery tested.

"The AHC shall undertake the testing of gold jewellery from common consumers on priority and provide a test report, which will assure the consumer about the purity of their jewellery. Four gold articles can be tested for Rs 200 and Rs 45 per article thereafter," the Ministry added.

Anurag Thakur questions Punjab CM's capability to handle situation

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GURUGRAM, NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

HITTING OUT at the AAP over the Friday's violence in Patiala, Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur wondered who was in-charge of law and order in the Punjab as Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann "spent more time outside the state".

"There is a breakdown of law and order in Punjab. The chief minister is spending more time outside the state. We do not know who is looking after the law and order in the state," Thakur told reporters in New Delhi.

"Even before elections, questions were raised about the intentions and capabilities of AAP. Their links with certain people were questioned too" Thakur said, adding that such questions about the ruling party in Punjab was a matter of concern as it was a "border state".

Tej Pratap launches May Day yatra without RJD support

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, APRIL 30

TEJ PRATAP Yadav, the elder son of Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Lalu Prasad, is launching a 'yatra' on Sunday to connect with farmers and labourers, a move being seen by many as "a step closer to parting ways with the party".

The publicity material of his programme though carries photographs of all top RJD leaders, including father Lalu

Prasad, mother Rabri Devi and brother Tejashwi Yadav, but the event has no backing of the party and is being organised by Janshakti Parishad, a voluntary group formed by Tej Pratap himself.

The RJD refused to react to Tej Pratap's Janshakti Yatra. A party spokesperson said: "We have been asked not to speak anything about him as it is often misreported and over-interpreted."

As per the plan, Tej Pratap will visit Karaai village of Bihta block of Patna to honour some farmers and labourers on the International Labour Day.

GORAKHPUR TEMPLE ATTACK Cops: Accused had links with IS sympathisers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, APRIL 30

THE UTTAR Pradesh Police claimed that Gorakhpur Temple Attack accused Ahmed Murtaza Abbasi was in touch with ISIS sympathisers and fighters and was preparing to carry out a "big incident" after snatching weapons from security personnel on April 3.

An IIT-Bombay graduate, Murtaza (29) allegedly attacked police and Provincial Armed Constabulary (PAC) personnel deployed at the temple with a sharp-edged weapon while trying to forcibly enter the shrine, whose head priest is Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

Three security personnel were injured in the attack. Murtaza's father Muneer Ahmed had maintained that his son was under depression.

"In a typical ISIS manner, the accused in lone wolf attack style attacked the security personnel at the Shri Gorakhnath temple. His main intention behind this attack was to execute some bigger incident using the snatched weapon," said Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar in a press release.

On the state government's order, the state police's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) is investigating the case. The agency had invoked different sections of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against Murtaza. The police claimed to have

recovered several electronic devices at the instance of Murtaza. They scrutinized his social media accounts besides checking his bank accounts, e-wallets and financial transactions.

"With the evidences collected so far, it has come to light that Murtaza was in touch with ISIS sympathizers and fighters. He was also in touch with ISIS propaganda activist Mehdi Masroor Biswas through social media," said Prashant Kumar.

Mehdi Masroor, an electrical engineer from West Bengal, was arrested in December 2014 in Bangalore. The police claimed that Murtaza was under the influence of radical preachers of various terrorist organisations and was also impressed with Jihad literature and ideology that support ISIS.

"It has also come to light during investigation that accused took a vow of terrorist organization Ansar-ul-Tawhid on a social media platform in 2013. The terrorist organisation in 2014 merged with the ISIS. The accused again took vow of ISIS in 2020," added Kumar.

Murtaza had sent money to the ISIS to help them carry out their activities, the police said.

"During scrutiny of his bank accounts, it emerged that he sent Rs 8.5 lakh to to ISIS supporters in different countries of Europe and America. To execute terror activities, he used to read online articles and watch videos on the internet related to weapons like AK-47 rifle, M4 carbine and missile technology," Kumar said.

Kerala ex-MLA seeks boycott of Muslim eateries, booked

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, APRIL 30

A DAY after he alleged that drinks sold at Muslim-run restaurants in the state are laced with medicine that causes impotence, among other controversial comments, a case was lodged on Saturday against senior Kerala politician and former leader of Kerala Congress (M), PC George, of making hate speech.

George said Muslims are starting businesses in non-Muslim areas to pocket money from people of other communities and called for boycott of such businesses. A six-term MLA and a former chief whip in the then UPA government, George made the remarks while addressing Ananthapuri Hindu Maha Sammelan, an event held under the aegis of Sangh Parivar, on Friday.



PC George

Restaurants run by Muslims should be avoided because they used a certain "drop that causes impotence," he claimed. "Bystere-tilising men and women, they hope to seize the country," he said. George also repeated his earlier allegation that Muslims spit on food three times. "Why should we eat their spit? Their scholars say spit is perfume," he alleged. "Hindu and Christian women were reluctant to give birth to more babies. Muslim women are doing that very sincerely. I should congratulate them. They are moving towards the aim of seizing this Hindu rashtra," he said.

India's 1st greenfield grain-based ethanol plant opened in Bihar

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, APRIL 30

BIHAR CHIEF Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday opened the country's first greenfield grain-based ethanol plant in Purnea and said ethanol production will help reduce cost of petrol and generate employment.

The Rs 105-crore plant by Eastern India Biofuels Pvt Ltd is the first one developed since the Centre gave a go-ahead to Bihar's ethanol production and promotion policy-2021.

Nitish said on the occasion: "We have made a start. We had been trying this since 2007. We had requested the then UPA government to give us the go-ahead when

we received proposals for setting up ethanol units... Now, 20 per cent ethanol can be mixed with petrol and diesel. The country will benefit immensely from ethanol production policy." State Industry minister Syed Shah Nawaz Hussain added: "Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have signed an agreement with 17 units with the approved capacity of 1080 kilolitre per day.

DHFL-Yes Bank case: CBI searches premises of Mumbai realtors, Pune businessman

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 30

THE CBI on Saturday conducted searches on premises linked to Mumbai-based realtors Shahid Balwa and Vinod Goenka of DB Realty and Pune-based businessman Avinash Bhosale in connection with its case against DHFL and Yes Bank.

Sources said the central agency searched eight premises, including the residence and office of Balwa, Goenka and Bhosale.

On April 28, the agency had arrested Sanjay Chhabria of

Radius Group of developers for an alleged role in the default of loan repayment to DHFL. The Radius Group owes Rs 3,000 crore to DHFL.

The former co-founder of Yes Bank, Rana Kapoor and the promoters of DHFL-- Dheeraj Wadhawan and Kapil Wadhawan are currently under arrest.

The CBI has found that after Yes Bank under Kapoor invested Rs 2,700 crore in DHFL in June 2018, DHFL sanctioned a loan of Rs 1,100 crore and Rs 900 crore to two companies owned by Chhabria without carrying out any due diligence.

NAVJEEVANGOPAL
PATIALA, APRIL 30

THE PUNJAB government Saturday shunted out the top brass of Patiala police, including an Inspector General, even as the district limped back to normalcy with security personnel keeping a tight vigil a day after clashes between two groups over an anti-Khalistan march left four people injured.

The police booked 25 accused by name so far in six FIRs registered in connection with Friday's incident and apprehended two more taking the total arrests to three. Mobile internet and SMS services were suspended from 9.30 am till 4 pm in the district. The AAP government transferred Inspector General of Police (Patiala Range) Rakesh Agrawal, Patiala Senior Superintendent of Police Nanak Singh and the Patiala superintendent of police with immediate effect.



Police personnel at the site of the previous day's clashes, in Patiala on Saturday. Harmeet Sodhi

The government transferred Inspector General (Patiala Range) Rakesh Agrawal, Senior Superintendent of Police Nanak Singh and Superintendent of Police (City) Harpal Singh. They were respectively replaced by IG MS Chhina, SSP Deepak Parikh and SP Wazir Singh. The transfers came amid reports that Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann

Friday evening gave a dressing down to Director General of Police (DGP) Viresh Bhawra for not being able to tackle the situation, "despite a buildup and intelligence inputs".

Things normalised Saturday following a curfew the night before and suspension of Internet services during the day. There was build-up after Shiv Sena (Bal

Thackerey's) working president for Punjab Harish Singla — the outfit expelled him after the violence — announced Khalistan 'Murdabad March' to protest against a call given by the outlawed Sikhs for Justice to hoist pro-Khalistani flags outside government offices in Haryana and Himachal Pradesh on April 29. A few Sikh outfits declared to oppose the Sena's march.

The Sunday Express accessed correspondences, which suggest that the confrontation was in the making for a week. Specifically for Patiala, but marked to other police officers across the state as well, a correspondence by Assistant Inspector of Police (AIG) Intelligence-2 Harcharan Singh Bhullar, on behalf of Special DGP (Intelligence) Prabodh Kumar, read that on Friday "70/80 workers of Shiv Sena Bal Thackerey led by Harish Singla has decided to take out a 'Khalistan Murdabad' march to counter the "khalistan Declaration Day".

DMFT fund audit in Jharkhand's six districts flags 'gross misuse'

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, APRIL 30

THE FINDINGS of the first ever audit of District Mineral Foundation Trust (DMFT) fund, collected under the provision of Mines Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act, point to "gross misuse" and "presumptive fraud".


The audit was conducted by the Jharkhand's Principal Auditor General (PAG) in six districts,

where a sum of about Rs 3,000 crore was collected as DMFT fund between 2015 and 2021. The audit was conducted between December 2020 and April 2022.

Mines Minerals (Development and Regulation) Act provides for the establishment of District Mineral Foundation Trust that will work as a non-profit body for the benefit of people affected by mining and related operations, using a part of the royalty collected from

the mining companies and contractors.

The PAG submitted its report to the Chief Secretary on April 22, auditing use of DMFT fund in Ranchi, Chatra, Lohardaga, Dhanbad, Bokaro and Hazaribagh districts. The audit team in its report expressed dissatisfaction, saying the "Mines Department restricted its access to crucial and primary records" for audit and it "was a red flag to presumptive fraud and misappropriation".



ROURKELA SMART CITY LIMITED, Rourkela
C-191
Udit Nagar, Rourkela-769012,
Email: rourkelascl@gmail.com
Letter No. RSCL/937/2022 Date. 29.04.2022

To,
Mr. Sudhansu Sekhar Mohapatra
M/s. Brahmani Engicon Pvt. Ltd.
14/30 (2nd Floor)
Civil Township
Rourkela- 769004
Dist- Sundergarh, Odisha
Mob No.: 9437116311, 8249769071
E-mail: brahmaniengicon@gmail.com

You were informed vide RSCL Notice No. 873 dated 22.04.2022 to attend the Final Measurement of the project "Redevelopment of road from Panposh Chowk to Ambedkar Chowk including Streetscape, beautification, Landscaping, Intersection redesign, utility ducting and underground cabling in Rourkela" on dated. 29.04.2022 failing which ex parte measurement will be taken for closure of the project. Notice was also send to you through your E-mail id: brahmaniengicon@gmail.com and a copy of the notice was also posted in your office door. However till date you have not yet responded to the Notice. You are hereby given a last chance to attend the final measurement on dt. 06.05.2022 positively for the above work "Smart Road Phase-I" Agreement No. 13/RSCL/2019-20, failing which ex parte measurement will be definitely taken which will be binding on you.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Rourkela Smart City Limited
OIPR-13080/11/0004/2223



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA.
At : Ichhapur, Post : Shree Baladevjeu,
Email: eerwsskendrapara@gmail.com
Identification No.RWS/109/2021-2022
Letter No. 3242 / Dated, 28/04/2022

3rd Corrigendum

This corrigendum has been made for the 1st-109 invited online vide this office letter No. 1767 / Dated. 10.03.2022 with date for selling, closing, clarification and opening which was on dt. 29.04.2022 (selling date), 17.05.2022 (closing date), 02.05.2022 (clarification date) 18.05.2022 (opening date) as per 2nd corrigendum has been amended and to be read as 17.05.2022, 01.06.2022, 19.05.2022 and 02.06.2022 respectively as follows.

Sl No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Approx.) Rs. in Lakhs.	Cost of Tender Paper	Period of completion	Class of bidder
1.	Execution of New 70 LPDC RPAWS Scheme to Delgaon, Ratapanga and Gulda on clubbed up mode under Mahakalapada Block in the District of Kendrapara. (JJM Funds)	304.62	10000	360 days	"A" and "Specials"
2.	Execution of New 70 LPDC RPAWS Scheme to Kalunga, Kantila of Mahakalapada Block and Mundio of Denabish Block on clubbed up mode in the District of Kendrapara. (JJM Funds)	316.04	10000	360 days	"A" and "Specials"

Sd/- (E: B K Nayak)
Executive Engineer,
RWS&S Division, Kendrapara
OIPR - 25004/14/0024/2223



GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"-PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
B-109 E-mail- ceworldbankprojects@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P. (O)- 05/2022-23

1. The Chief Engineer (World Bank Project), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below:

2. Nature of work : Road works

3. No. of work : 03 Nos.

4. Tender cost : Rs. 10,000.00 (on-line)

5. Class of Contractor : Special / Super Class Contractor

6. Available of bid document in the website : From 10.00 A.M. of 30.04.2022 to 5.00 PM of 18.05.2022

7. Date of opening of Bid : Dt. 19.05.2022 at 11.30 AM

8. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Sd/-
Chief Engineer
World Bank Project, Odisha
OIPR-34003/11/0007/2223

Website: pchidambaram.in
Twitter @Pchidambaram IN

Twitter@Surajyengde



Twitter@tavleen_singh



8 ECONOMY

POLITICAL PARTIES ENCASHED BONDS WORTH ₹9,836 CRORE SINCE 2018

No polls, no problem for donors: Parties get ₹648.48 cr of electoral bonds in Apr

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, APRIL 30

POLITICAL PARTIES continue to get funds from benevolent donors even during the non-election period, as they received electoral bonds worth Rs 648.48 crore from donors this April, as per data from State Bank of India (SBI). With this, political parties encashed bonds worth a total of Rs 9,836 crore from various donors in 20 phases since 2018 when the electoral bond scheme was introduced.

As much as Rs 640 crore of bonds were with face value of Rs 1 crore each and Rs 7.90 crore of bonds were with face value of Rs 10 lakh each, SBI — the only bank authorised to sell these bonds — said in reply to the RTI application filed by Commodore Lokesh K Batra (Retd). In the 20th phase, issued between April 1 and 10, SBI

sold a total of 811 bonds, of which 640 bonds were of the value of Rs 1 crore each. These bonds were all encashed by political parties.

As per the provisions of the EB Scheme, only political parties registered under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (43 of 1951) and have secured not less than one per cent of the votes polled in the last general election to the House of the People or the Legislative Assembly, as the case may be, are eligible to receive electoral bonds.

SBI data shows that as much as Rs 420.98 crore worth of bonds were encashed at SBI's Hyderabad main branch, Rs 106.50 crore at New Delhi main branch, Rs 100 crore at Chennai main branch and Rs 18 crore at the Kolkata main branch of the state-run bank.

Two non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in India — Common Cause and Association

DATA FROM STATE BANK OF INDIA

■ As much as ₹640 crore of bonds were with face value of ₹1 crore each and ₹7.90 crore of bonds were with face value of ₹10 lakh each, State Bank of India — the only bank authorised to sell them — said in an RTI reply

for Democratic Reforms (ADR) — have legally challenged the scheme that was started in 2018.

They, along with several other critics, have been alleging that the introduction of electoral bonds is “distorting democracy” in India. The Supreme Court has agreed to take up for hearing a pending plea

challenging the scheme. Only 23 political parties are eligible for redemption of electoral bonds.

According to ADR, in the case of continuance of the scheme, the principle of anonymity of the bond donor enshrined in the Electoral Bond Scheme, 2018 must be done away with. “All political parties which receive donations through Electoral Bonds should declare in their Contributions Reports the total amount of such donations received in the given financial year, along with the detailed particulars of the donors as against each Bond; the amount of each such bond and the full particulars of the credit received against each bond,” ADR said in a report.

Donors gave Rs 1,056.73 crore in 2018, Rs 5,071.99 crore in 2019, Rs 363.96 crore in 2020, Rs 1,502.29 crore in 2021, and Rs 1,862 crore in 2022, SBI had said.

SECTOR WATCH ONLINE AGGREGATORS

Swiggy drone tests in Delhi, Bengaluru: In phase 1, common delivery point focus

PRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

BENGALURU-BASED LOGISTICS and delivery platform Swiggy said it is commencing deployment of drones on a trial basis to make deliveries from its grocery service Instamart. For these trials, which will be conducted in two phases, the company has roped in four ‘drone-as-a-service’ operators.

Garuda Aerospace will conduct the tests in Bengaluru and Skyair Mobility in Delhi-NCR

ders from the common point and deliver them to the customer's doorstep.

What are the regulations

pertaining to drone deliveries?

The most important factor of drone deliveries — beyond visual line of sight (BVLOS) operations — has not been allowed by the government yet. But last year, the Ministry of Civil Aviation granted conditional exemption to 20 entities, including Swiggy, the ANRA consortium and Marut Dronetech to conduct BVLOS experimental flights.

Are there other delivery companies involved in drone operations?

In India, several drone operators have partnered with state governments and other authorities to conduct trials of vaccines and healthcare supplies deliveries through drones. Logistics services company Delhivery last December announced acquisition of California-based Transition Robotics, which develops drone platforms. Globally, internet giant Alphabet's drone delivery unit Wing recently delivered its first consignment in a major US metropolitan area by supplying boxes of medicines from Walgreens in Dallas, Texas.

Where is Swiggy conducting drone trials and which operators would do this pilot?

In a blogpost on Friday, the company said it will start the pilot for drone deliveries in Delhi-NCR and Bengaluru with immediate effect. This will be the first tranche of the pilot study that will be conducted by Garuda Aerospace Pvt Ltd in Bengaluru and Skyair Mobility Pvt Ltd in Delhi-NCR. It will be followed by the second tranche of the trials that will be conducted by a consortium of ANRA and TechEagle, and Marut Dronetech Pvt Ltd. The second tranche will start after “collating the learnings from the first tranche”.

Will drones be carrying people's Instamart deliveries to their doorsteps?

Not yet. Swiggy is conducting the pilot to evaluate the feasibility of drones for the ‘middle mile’ use case. This means that the drones will be used to replenish stocks between seller-run dark stores, and from a store to a common customer point. A delivery partner will then pick up or

‘Over 50% people buying used cars first-time buyers’

As much as 55% of the buyers on its platform during the March quarter were first-time car-buyers, used car retailer Spinny has noted in a report

26% were women among the total number of buyers on the platform

MOST PREFERRED BRANDS were Maruti, Hyundai and Honda, with used car segment nearly mirroring sales data for new cars

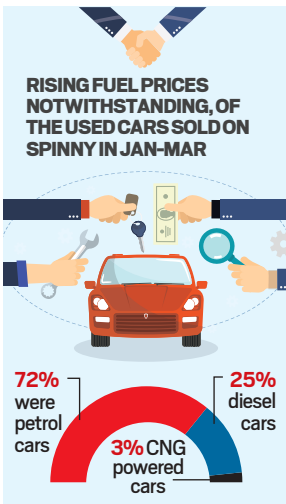
WITH 31 YEARS of average age, most used car buyers are in the age bracket of 25-40 years

IN TERMS OF TRANSMISSION:

80% people buying used cars preferred manual geared vehicles

20% opted for automatic transmission

Entry-level buyers are getting squeezed out due to increasing new car prices Source: Spinny; Compiled by ENS Economic Bureau



FEL: Total outstanding borrowings at ₹4,543 cr

Mumbai: Future Enterprises (FEL), another Future group company, on Saturday said it has total outstanding borrowings of Rs 4,542.96 crore as of March 31.

This takes the total outstanding borrowings disclosed by Kishore Biyani-led Future Group companies to Rs 11,017.94 crore. Earlier on Friday, three Future Group companies — Future Retail (FRL), Future Lifestyle Fashions (FLFL) and Future Supply Chain Solutions (FSCS) — had stated their total outstanding borrowings stood at Rs 6,474.98 crore.

As of March 31, FRL had a total outstanding of Rs 4,876.88 crore, while that of FLFL was at Rs 1,181.98 crore and FSCS at Rs 416.12 crore, the companies had said in separate stock exchange updates.

Under regulations, the firms said that they were not classified as “large corporates”. Further details of the borrowings were not immediately disclosed. **FE**

Compare realisations with liquidation: RBI Deputy Guv on IBC

Mumbai/Ahmedabad: Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao on Saturday said comparing the outstanding loan amounts with the value realised may not be a ‘reasonable indicator’ to assess the bankruptcy law’s effectiveness.

Admitting that there have been concerns, Rao said one needs to understand that the value of the asset may have already deteriorated by the time it comes up at the courts, and added that one should compare the realisations with liquidation, which is the best possible alternative for lenders.

“We miss the fact that in a public auction-based resolution model, the extent of haircut represents a discount the market demands in continuing to invest in an insolvent borrower. Since significant value deterioration may have happened to the assets of the insolvent borrower, comparison with the outstanding amount may not be a reasonable indicator to evaluate the effectiveness of the

Mandatory testing: DoT exempts handsets, smart watches

New Delhi: The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has exempted certain products including mobile user equipment, mobile handsets, and smart watches from the ambit of its mandatory testing ‘MTCTE regime’, removing a regulatory overlap that existed, an official release said on Saturday.

The exemptions will reduce the compliance burden and will enable the industry to roll out their products faster, it said. The Ministry of Electronics and IT carries out Compulsory Registration of specified goods — such as laptops, wireless keyboards, PoS machines and other electronic equipment — under the Electronics and Information Technology (Requirement for Compulsory Registration) Order, 2012. **PTI**

‘Need framework to study impact’

New Delhi: Corporate Affairs Secretary Rajesh Verma, at a two-day conference on IBC on Saturday, pitched for having a framework to study the impact of the legislation. **PTI**

resolution,” Rao said, at an international research conference on the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) organised by Indian Institute of Management Ahmedabad (IIM-A) in collaboration with Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI).

At the same event, Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh said evolving with changing scenarios will be crucial for IBC as it could become the most potent instrument in driving proactive responsible behaviour among lenders and prove to be a boon for the economy. **PTI**

MARKET WATCH

OIL BENCHMARKS SEE WEEKLY GAIN

New York: Crude benchmarks Brent and US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) rose for the week and posted their fifth straight monthly gain. Brent ended the month up 1.3%, while WTI ended up 4.4%. On Friday, Brent closed at \$109.34 and US WTI at \$104.69. **REUTERS**

INTERVIEW: MINISTER OF ELECTRONICS & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

‘Semiconductor scheme a 20-plus year plan; global cos including India as core focus’

STIPULATING THAT only four months have passed since the programme to invite semiconductor manufacturers to set up base in India was launched, Minister of Electronics & Information Technology ASHWINI VAISHNAW told SOUMYARENDRA BARIK in an interview that a decision as complex as setting up semiconductor manufacturing has a time-frame of 2-3 years and as India's ambitious scheme progresses, more global names are expected to come in. He also spoke about how the government plans to encourage domestic manufacturers to build capacity in this space. Edited excerpts:



Union Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw File

Certain big names from the semiconductor space are still missing from the programme, they are yet to apply. Is there a push to make the scheme more attractive for majors?

Almost all global majors have now included India as a core focus of their business plans. For any such complex and big investment decision, globally, the experience has been that the time-frame for them has been two to three years. These majors are evaluating, they have visited, they have met, they have understood what we are doing, and they have appreciated our plans. As it progresses, we should have more names coming in. It's just four months since the programme was launched, so there's huge progress.

Apart from the global majors, are you exploring to encourage more companies from within the country?

Our programme had space for

both large and mid-sized companies, along with creating talent in the space. The larger ones have completed the application process, medium companies, including many Indian ones, are submitting their applications, many of them are in the advanced stage; it's an open process. Design companies have shown a fabulous response — we have excellent responses from innovators, youngsters, and startups, in line with the expectations.

Apart from the financial incentives you have offered in the semiconductor scheme, could there be, in the future once things are up and running, other benefits?

Prime Minister Narendra Modi very clearly said that this is a 20-plus year plan. This is something which will be the foundation of the economy. For this generation, this is as essential as we considered electricity 20 years

Our programme had space for both large and mid-sized companies, along with creating talent in the space. The larger ones have completed the application process, medium companies, including many Indian ones, are submitting their applications...

Could there also be some restrictions on importing certain kinds of raw materials or end products for that?

There is already a policy of giving preference to make in India. So as and when we start the production, we will tweak that policy accordingly.

There have been reports that a new Data Protection Bill would be formulated. Do you have any comments on that?

The entire process has gone through a very detailed process. The data protection principles are very clearly set out in the world. Starting from GDPR (General Data Protection Regulation) as the first journey, there are so many countries (that have worked on it). So can we make new principles?

Operational norms for FPIs, depository participants tweaked

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 30

CAPITAL MARKETS regulator Sebi tweaked the operational guidelines for depository participants and foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pertaining to registration certificates of such foreign investors and change in their name. The new guidelines will be applicable from May 9, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said in a circular on Friday.

According to the regulator, the framework has been modified pertaining to certificate of registration for FPIs and change in their name. With regard to registration certificate for FPIs, the regulator said the designated depository participant (DDP) will grant the certificate of registration, bearing the registration number generated by Sebi.

In case an FPI has undergone a change in name, Sebi said the designated depository participant will effect the name change in the certificate after receiving such request.

“The DDP shall issue a letter and fresh registration certificate to such applicant acknowledging to such applicant acknowledging the change in name. Respective depositories shall make necessary arrangements for DDPs to provide fresh registration certificate as an acknowledgement from its database including a statement that the name change has been

FPI REGISTRATION CERTIFICATE



File

■ With regard to registration certificate for FPIs, Sebi said the designated depository participant (DDP) will grant the certificate of registration, bearing the registration number generated by Sebi

granted without prejudice to any tax liability/implication in India,” Sebi said.

This comes after Sebi notified rules in January this year for generation of FPI registration number by the capital markets regulator.

Subsequently, the Ministry of Finance in March amended the Common Application Form (CAF), wherein both the depositories — NSDL and CDSL — have been allowed to host the CAF for FPI registration.

In order to operationalise the same, Sebi has decided to modify the operational guidelines.

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 30

AIMED AT fulfilling the need for urgent funds, a digital lending platform is being created to provide access to collateral-free capital up to Rs 25 lakh to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).

The platform is being set up by the Federation of Indian Micro and Small & Medium Enterprises (FISME) and Equo Surety Pvt Ltd, a provider of financial guarantees.

A memorandum of understanding in this regard was signed by Prashant Patel, president of FISME, and Vikash Khandelwal, CEO of Equo, in Delhi recently.

“Lending has traditionally been collateral based. This unique, first time in India initiative will help MSMEs get easier access to credit backed by a surety guarantee without the need to put up collaterals,” Khandelwal said.

According to Patel, it is like an overdraft facility, initially pegged at Rs 25 lakh, which could be tapped anytime from anywhere should an MSME need funds.

Former Secretary, Department of Financial Services, DK Mittal termed the initiative “path-breaking”, adding, “Lack of collateral is the single biggest bottleneck that small entrepreneurs face in accessing institutional funds and obviating the need for asset-based collateral by sureties can revolutionise MSME lending.”

Russia makes last-minute bond payment to avoid default

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NEW YORK, APRIL 30

RUSSIA HAS staved off a default on its debt by making a last-minute payment using its precious dollar reserves sitting outside the country, US Treasury officials said.

The amount of the payment was not disclosed, but earlier this month Russia's finance ministry said it tried to make a \$649 million payment due April 6 toward two bonds to an unnamed US bank — previously reported as JPMorgan Chase.

At that time, tightened sanc-

tions imposed for Russia's invasion of Ukraine prevented the payment from being accepted, so Moscow attempted to make the debt payment in rubles.

The Kremlin, which repeatedly said it was financially able and willing to continue to pay on its debts, had argued that extraordinary events gave them the legal footing to pay in rubles, instead of dollars or euros.

Investors and rating agencies, however, disagreed and did not expect Russia to be able to convert the rubles into dollars before a 30-day grace period expired next week, leading to speculation that Moscow was heading to-

ward an historic default on its debt.

Russia has not defaulted on its foreign debts since the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917, when the collapse of the Russian Empire led to the creation of the Soviet Union.

The governing body over credit default swaps — insurance contracts designed to protect against default — had ruled already that Russia was in default.

Treasury officials, who declined to be named because they weren't authorised to speak on the record, said Russia tapped into its foreign currency reserves currently sitting outside the country to make Friday's payment.

BRIEFLY

Banks' Q4

New Delhi: The Q4FY22 net profit of IDFC First Bank was Rs 343 crore and that of Yes Bank was Rs 367 crore.

CBDT chief

New Delhi: CBDT Chairman JB Mohapatra retired Saturday even as a government order for appointment of a regular head is awaited.

'Vedanta chip'

New Delhi: Vedanta is in talks with banks to raise up to \$3 billion in debt for chip and display manufacturing plans, sources said. **PTI**

QUARTERLY OPERATING PROFIT LITTLE CHANGED FROM A YEAR EARLIER

Berkshire buys over \$51-bn of stock in Q1

JONATHAN STEMPER
OMAHA (NEBRASKA), APRIL 30

WARREN BUFFETT'S Berkshire Hathaway Inc dove into equity markets in the first quarter, spending more than \$51 billion on stocks including a much larger stake in Chevron Corp.

Berkshire, which Buffett has run since 1965, also said on Saturday quarterly operating profit was little changed from a year earlier, with some businesses able to fend off supply chain disruptions. Geico, the car insurer, posted an underwriting loss.



Berkshire Hathaway chairman Warren Buffett (left) and vice chairman Charlie Munger. Reuters file

The Omaha, Nebraska-based company also said it repurchased \$3.2 billion of its own stock in the quarter, but none in the first three weeks of April.

Berkshire's disclosures suggest that Buffett has finally found large new uses to dispose of Berkshire's cash pile, which shrank more than \$40 billion to about \$106 billion.

The Chevron stake grew to \$25.9 billion as of March 31 from just \$4.5 billion three months earlier, as oil prices surged higher following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

That came on the heels of Berkshire's purchase of well over

\$6 billion of stock in Occidental Petroleum Corp, where it already had a \$10 billion preferred stock stake.

Buffett has also committed \$11.6 billion to buy insurance company Alleghany Corp, and bought \$4.2 billion of HP Inc stock.

Berkshire ended March with \$391 billion of stocks, more than half of the company's \$712 billion overall market value.

Other businesses include the BNSF railroad, Berkshire Hathaway Energy, and a variety of manufacturing and retail operations including See's Candies and Dairy Queen ice cream. **REUTERS**



Kolkata

Together They Stand

The Badami caves are an ensemble of shared thought and skill

Rinku Ghosh

THE SOARING volcanic rocks of Badami get their name because they look like giant almonds piled haphazardly — terrifying, fiery, burning like embers, breaking through the earth's crust. It is in these caves that the Chalukyan kings gave full play to the theory that size does matter with their sculpted figures breathing down our puny human lives. Look at any of the faces here long enough and one would feel they would nod at any moment, probably frozen now by a spell of some sort.

Badami saw an efflorescence of the Indic way of life and by the time the Chalukyas made it their capital (mid 6th century), it had not only become a commercial hub but also a centre of learning, finding a place in Ptolemy's *Guide to Geography* of the mid-second century.

Be it art, sculpture, literature, performance arts and intelligent discourses, their military might was overwritten by a certain excellence of the mind. The liberalism of the Chalukyas made Badami the greatest exhibition of public art, an assemblage of shared thought, community life, exchange of ideas, celebration of talent and skill. There's a harmony like no other. Shaivite, Vaishnavite and Jain sculptures find their place in cavernous halls, tiered above one another. Shiva appears as a dancer in the form of Natya Shiva, documenting all the postures that make up



ROCK ON

Shaivite, Vaishnavite and Jain sculptures stand in harmony

our *Natyashastra*. With nine arms on the left and nine on the right, you would find all the 81 postures of Bharatanatyam as we know it. We see Ganesha dancing, here he is quite fit and doesn't have a potbelly.

The two fusion forms of Shiva are significant harmony symbols, one as Harihara, half himself and half Vishnu, signifying the coming together of two religious sects, and the other of Ardhanarishwara, a surgical union of the male and female halves. The perfect union results in a new, harmonised generation represented by playful children all around, sleeping, crawling, tossing and turning.

There's Varaha (an *avatar* of Vishnu), holding Bhudevi (Mother Earth) aloft in one hand, his feet stomping the netherworld, the fury so apparent that it would appear the mural would crack from side to side. Equally striking is Narasimha, who abandons his destructive anger for a more indulgent half-smile, resting his hand on a royal sceptre. The beautiful *yakshis* are perched like birds in brackets, ready to step out and resume a conversation they had stopped aeons ago.

Meanwhile, Mahavira sits silent, unmoved, drawing from the gust of fresh air from the surrounding Agastya lake. Time has peeled off the pilaster, the wind has weathered the rocks, the sun has bleached rocks into differing shades of red, the striated layers run into each other, creating their own mosaic. Yet in the end, Mahavira stands tall. Unperturbed and sentient. More than words, the Chalukyan kings still speak to us.

Tea, Tibet and Treasure

In Kangra, where spirituality and culture converge, the scent of tea wafts in the air and the Dhauladhar mountain range awaits seekers

Madhulika Liddle

ON A sunny day in June 2019, we — my husband, our daughter and I — visit Kangra Fort. We have forgotten how hot even Himachal can get in peak summer, but a bottle of water from a shop outside the fort tides us over. Kangra Fort, the largest fort in the Himalayas (and the eighth largest in India) is a behemoth, not lightly approached.

The story goes that the Kangra Fort was built shortly after the battle of the Mahabharata, by a *maharaja* of the Katoch dynasty (the erstwhile ruling family, still connected to the fort). Over the following centuries, it accumulated vast amounts of wealth donated to the highly venerated Ambika Devi Temple in the fort.

Of course, that treasure couldn't be hidden for long, and word spread. Over the years, one invader after another attacked Kangra Fort with an eye on its wealth. Alexander, some believe, was one of those; Mahmud of Ghazni definitely was (and he took many camel-loads of treasure back to Ghazni). Mohammad bin Tughlaq attacked, and then, Jahangir; so did Ranjit Singh, who — like Jahangir before him, and the British after — succeeded in capturing the fort.

On a hot afternoon, over a century after a cataclysmic earthquake destroyed much of the fort (in 1905), there's no sign of the wealth. The fort's walls march up the mountainside, past a 300-year-old peepal tree, to the ruins of the royal apartments, at the pinnacle. Intricately carved panels stand tall beyond the huge circular bases of vanished pillars.

And all around loom the mountains of Kangra. The most populous district of Himachal Pradesh, this is a land not just of cedars and snow, but much more. Tea, for one, which grows in green carpets blanketing the hills. Palampur, where we stay at the Taragarh Palace — once owned by the royal family of Kashmir, now a heritage hotel — is where the tea is at its most visible. Tea estates spread over the hills, the bushes abutting the road. Reetha trees, shady and laden with soap nuts, spread overhead, and red-billed blue magpies, bright-eyed and long-tailed, hop about.

In the grounds of the Taragarh Palace, more natural beauty awaits. Potted plants abound, but there's more: a blurring of garden and wilderness — pink orchids hang, jewel-like, from a chinara tree; purple sunbirds flit, and babblers hop about in the shell ginger beside the swimming pool.

The coolness and the serenity envelop us even at the tea factory and gardens of the Wah Tea Estate. A cheesy name for a tea, I think (what? Wah, Wah? Instead of Wah, Taj?). But our guide, provided by the estate, explains. The estate is named for the (now Pakistani) town of Wah, hometown of Sikandar Ali Khan, who established this tea estate in 1857. The estate, sprawling across 500 acres, still flourishes, though no longer owned by the Khan family. The brewed tea, of which we are given several samples to taste, is imbued with the sunlight, the piney fragrance, the spirit of Kangra.

Tea is also grown in the district headquarters at Dharamshala (and its adjoining McLeod Ganj). But that seems to me more like tea for tourists than for the tea industry; the gardens here are compact, selfie-friendly ones beside the highway. Five minutes out of your car is all you need to get some great



PHOTOS COURTESY: MADHULIKA LIDDLE

shots among the serried ranks of tea bushes.

Dharamshala, with its Tibetan connection (it has been the home of the Dalai Lama, and embodied in him the Central Tibetan Administration, since 1960), is cosmopolitan, touristy. Cafés line the narrow hill roads opposite souvenir-packed stalls. The Dalai Lama Temple is hectic with hordes of Indian tourists, chattering, photographing the huge gold-painted Buddha statue, and spinning the many prayer wheels that line the periphery of the prayer hall.

The Norbulingka Institute, which nur-

MYRIAD HUES

(Clockwise from top) Temples within the Kangra Fort; view of the snow-capped Himalayas; the Norbulingka Institute; tea gardens; prayer wheels at the Dalai Lama temple

tures the arts and crafts of Tibet, is somewhat more refinedly touristy, perhaps because you need a sensitivity to appreciate the effort that goes into keeping alive a tradition in danger of annihilation. We wander about, admiring the work of the artisans and their apprentices: the metallurgy, the painting, the wood-carving, all exquisite.

We spend just 10 days in Kangra on this trip. Too little for more than a tantalising taste of the area. The Buddhist monasteries, the apple orchards, the tea gardens, the views of the snow-capped Himalayas: we have only just

touched the surface. But, at each of the religious sites we visit — the Ambika Devi Temple at Kangra Fort, the Dalai Lama Temple and the Gyuto Tantric Monastery in Dharamshala, the atmospheric Church of St John in the Woods at Dharamshala — I offer up a prayer, not just for the usual peace, good health and blessings, but that the powers that be may allow us to return to Kangra. Again and again.

Madhulika Liddle is an author based in the NCR. Apart from historical fiction and short stories, she also writes on food, cinema and travel

A Touch of the Vintage, A Taste of the Modern



MEMORIES IN SEPIA

The charming Pinewood Hotel

» FROM THE PREVIOUS PAGE

THE CHERRY blossoms here bloom in November, unlike the sakura of Japan which ushers in spring. They are now the backdrop to cherry blossom festivals of music and literature. The trees are a newer addition and, unlike many new touristy additions, they are actually pretty, not tacky. But what feels really different now is instead of pineapple soufflé and Ward's Lake nostalgia I get to learn about more local lore. The writer Kynpham Sing Nongkynrih, author of the *Funeral Nights* (2021), talks about the legend of the bored Khasi convict who started digging a hole in the ground which ultimately became Ward's Lake, although it got named after a *sahib*, not the convict. He takes us not to the tourist trap of Elephant Falls but the Mawphlang sacred grove with its stories of brown bull sacrifice and leopard and snake omens. The young guide is awestruck because Nongkynrih is part of his school syllabus. He tries to impress us by finding a leaf with a perfect little heart cut in it by some insect. Later, we realise every guide "spots" the same leaf and the same *rudraksha*. If Nongkynrih realises the subterfuge, he graciously says nothing. In the hush of the forest, a few touristy touches are forgivable. It just means that next time I go to Shillong, I might still find the *rudraksha* bead and the leaf with a heart-shaped hole.

Unlike that pineapple soufflé, I had a pineapple georgette which turned out to look like a bar of soap. But the local pork *thali* in Police Bazaar was better than remembrance of soufflés past. Perhaps, it's just a reminder that one needs to make new memories in old places.

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

Syed Saad Ahmed

I NEVER thought I would be so eager to navigate 700 steps. But amid the wave of revenge travel in August 2021, I visited Mount Abu with a friend — my first vacation since the pandemic began. A hilly honeymoon destination and a watering hole for tipplers from the dry state of Gujarat, Mount Abu was deluged with tourists. But where there's a hill, there's a way.

So, instead of the more popular attractions, we went to Gomukh, a holy spring on the city's outskirts. The descent to Gomukh only offered views of tree canopies and the spring was dry. But as we were returning, I saw a trail penetrating the dense forest. More encouragingly, arrow markers were painted on rocks along the path, signalling a tantalising terminus.

Here, the flora was more diverse than along the staircase to Gomukh. Thanks to image-recognition apps, I could put names to fruits, flowers and fungi I had never known existed. There were kidney-shaped mushrooms that radiated an orange gradient from the centre. These were reishi, used in traditional Chinese medicine. A white flower with lacy strands hemming its petals turned out to be a member of the gourd family. The apps made me feel like an intrepid naturalist, but they could not identify the most bizarre creature I came across: 10-foot-tall clumps of thick grass with lacerating edges. They seemed like gargantuan spiders that would start crawling any moment.

But the joy of discoveries was tinged with unease. We were deep inside the Mount Abu Wildlife Sanctuary, a rich sloth bear habitat. Every rustle conjured visions of chancing upon a bear and the gory repercussions. There were two of us, but we disagreed on how to deal with a charging beast. I suggested we stand our ground while my friend advocated running for our lives.

The telltale sign of human presence — plastic and litter are omnipresent across Mount Abu — was conspicuously absent along the route. We kept walking into massive webs, though thankfully, we missed the spiders even

A Whole New World

Mount Abu might be a touristy hill station, but it offers plenty of roads less travelled



PHOTOS: SYED SAAD AHMED

OFF THE TRAIL

(Clockwise from top) Nagaki Lake; Craig's Path; Sage Gautam's Temple

as we brushed off the tingling strands.

The track crisscrossed dry stream beds coursing down the mountain slope. At one of these junctions, I spotted a scaly stripe on a boulder. On closer inspection, it turned out to be a three-foot-long mottled snakeskin!

Further ahead, a rustling began that wouldn't stop even when we or the wind did. The sound seemed to be getting closer. I was apprehensive until a partridge peeked at us and darted, screeching in alarm. I am glad it was just a bird, for we wouldn't have been much good at either fight or flight.

As the trail went uphill, the thick forest canopy gave way to cloud-studded skies. On reaching the mountaintop's edge, we spotted a saffron splash amid the sea of green below. It turned out to be the destination the signs were pointing to — a small temple built on a platform cut into the slope. Its architectural embellishments and stone carvings suggested antiquity. I later discovered that it was the temple of Gautam, a sage who is said to have done penance here.

As a squall hit my face, it struck me that it had been almost two years since I saw such an expansive vista. The streams, check dams and woods stretching beneath my feet were a stark counterpoint to my neighbours' houses, which was largely the "view" I had had since the pandemic.

This inspired me to climb every mountain and search high and low for panoramic outposts. On a guided trek along Craig's Path, I took in the whole city, built around Nagaki Lake. Expectations were low from the banal-sounding Sunset Point, but the smouldering skies kept me glued to the clifftop. A forest clearing with a solitary temple en route to Agneshwar Mahadev reminded me of the alpine meadows I had camped in before the pandemic.

When it comes to Indian mountains, the Himalayas get the most attention. But four days in Mount Abu left me besotted with the Aravallis. For at every turn, I had come to expect a surprise — or at least, a stunning view.

Syed Saad Ahmed is a writer and a communications specialist

FOOTPRINTS ON THE PAGE

In uncertain times, travelling into the well-worn pages of old favourites can be as rewarding as sojourns into destinations old and new

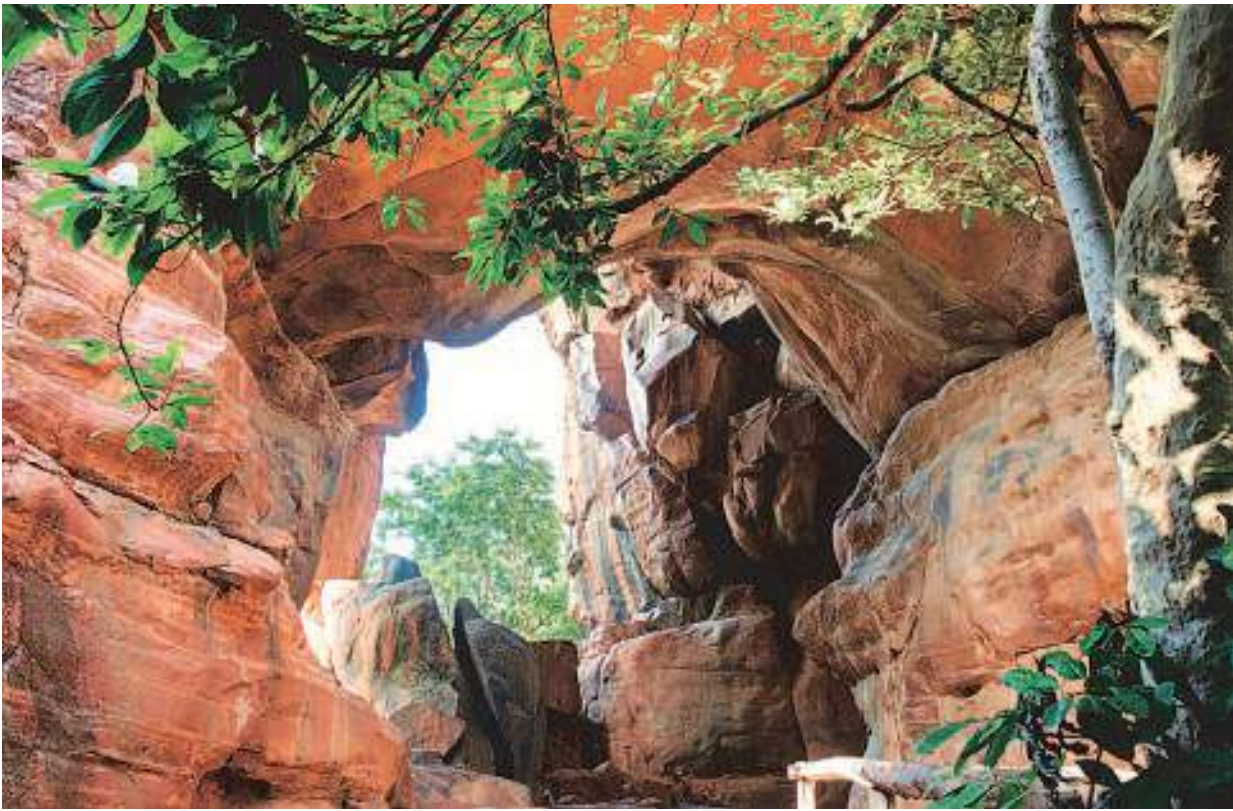
Stephen Alter

EVERY BOOK is a journey. This cliché has never been more apparent for me than it was during the recent and, hopefully, receding pandemic. Over the past two years, while most of the world was in lockdown, I finished writing one novel and began work on another, each of which transported me to places both familiar and unknown.

After starting the first book, *Birdwatching* (2022), I had planned to visit Gangtok and Kalimpong, where some of the incidents in my story take place. This trip was scheduled for March 2020, but with the tragic and terrifying spread of the virus, I was forced to cancel tickets and rely on published sources as well as my imagination. The second book, *Death in Shambles*, retraces an earlier journey to a fictional hill station, Debrakot, which was the setting for my first novel, *Neglected Lives* (1978). Written 45 years ago, when I was all of 20, that book described a romantic, youthful escape into the mountains, while this time Debrakot serves as a backdrop for a darker, more disturbing quest.

As I've often said, I write with my feet, particularly when it comes to travel memoirs. The process of composing a novel is similar to extended treks I've taken in the mountains. It is accomplished in regular stages of approximately 1,000 words a day. Each morning, when I sit at my desk, I set off on a path I haven't explored before. The keyboard on my laptop provides stepping-stones along the route. One word leads on to the next and sentences progress into paragraphs until I finally reach a suitable halt and set up camp for the night. When writing fiction, I seldom know where I'm headed. Most writers don't plot out the endings of stories in advance but allow their creative instincts to guide them. While wrong turns and detours are part of the wandering process, corrected or revised in later drafts, the final destination remains uncertain until the concluding chapter.

Of course, many novels like EM Forster's *A Passage to India* (1924) or Khushwant Singh's *Train to Pakistan* (1956) are structured around journeys. Italo Calvino's *If on a Winter's Night a Traveller* (1979) also comes to mind, a modern classic in which the act of reading (and writing) provokes an unpredictable itinerary of events, mapped out within the pages of Calvino's book itself. Not long ago, I reread Sunil Gangopadhyay's *Aramyer Dinratri* (1968, *Days and Nights in the Forest*) translated into



GETTY IMAGES



STEPHEN ALTER

ROCK AND STROLL

(Clockwise from top) At the Unesco world heritage archaeological site of Bhimbetka rock shelters in Madhya Pradesh; the Giant Wild Boar Rock; a leopard at Satpura Tiger Reserve; Pachmarhi in the Satpura range

and discontentment. After reading this novel, I also re-watched Satyajit Ray's film adaptation (1970), which recreates, in vivid black-and-white, the shadowy, disturbing sense of a dislocated, rootless journey.

Soon after travel restrictions were eased, at the beginning of this year, I felt an urge to set out for places I'd been dreaming of visiting during the enforced hiatus of the pandemic. Wildlife and wild spaces have always attracted me, and like the characters in *Aramyer Dinratri*, I set off into the forest. Heading for Pachmarhi and Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh, I spent a week in the jungle, searching for wildlife and visiting prehistoric rock shelters where ancient forest dwellers painted pictorial epics on the walls of caves. Thousands of years ago, these nomadic hunter-gatherers felt a need to narrate their adventures through images committed to stone. They recount the pursuit of prey, acts of bravery and cowardice, as well as victory and celebration. Like all good hunting tales, the rock art contains elements of exaggera-



STEPHEN ALTER

tion and embellishment, like the image of a giant boar, with horns as well as tusches, who chases away a terrified hunter. Being a writer and a traveller, I felt an immediate kinship to these visual storytellers who lived itinerant, unsettled lives in the Satpura and Vindhya Ranges that border the Narmada Valley.

Whenever I travel, I choose a book to carry with me. In this case, I had consciously picked an old favourite, Hugh Allen's *The Lonely Tiger* (1960), which describes wildlife in the Satpura region. Amid the verdant jungles, I came upon living creatures from Allen's stories as well as species depicted in the cave paintings. Encountering a magnificent male leopard on one of my outings, as well as a sloth bear with cubs, I felt I had finally escaped the confinement and isolation of the past two years. Here were timeless tales that I could follow into an uncertain, uncharted future.

Stephen Alter lives and writes in Mussoorie. His most recent book is *Birdwatching: a novel*

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TOP OF THE WORLD



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. AP

NORTH KOREA

Kim warns: Can 'preemptively' use nuclear weapons

Seoul: North Korean leader Kim Jong Un warned again that North Korea could preemptively use its nuclear weapons if threatened, as he praised his top army officials for a massive military parade in Pyongyang this week. Kim expressed "firm will" to continue developing his nuclear-armed military so that it could "preemptively and thoroughly contain and frustrate all dangerous attempts and threatening moves, including ever-escalating nuclear threats from hostile forces, if necessary," the North's official Korean Central News Agency said on Saturday. KCNA said Kim called his military officials to praise their work during Monday's parade, where the North showcased the biggest weapons in its nuclear arsenal. **AP**

AUSTRALIA

PM Morrison decries China's interference

Sydney: Australia's Prime Minister accused China on Saturday of "form", or a record, on interference in foreign politics, after his home minister said Beijing's unveiling of a security deal with the nearby Solomon Islands was timed to influence an election. With most polls showing Scott Morrison's conservative coalition headed for a loss in the May 21 election, it has sought to highlight its national security credentials, such as a tough approach to China. **REUTERS**

UNITED KINGDOM

Lawmaker quits after viewing porn in House

London: A British lawmaker from the governing Conservative Party has resigned after admitting he watched pornography on his phone in the House of Commons chamber. Neil Parish, an MP since 2010, announced his decision on Saturday after pressure from members of his party who sought to defuse sleaze allegations before Britain holds its local elections on May 5. Parish, 65, stepped down after what he described as a moment of "madness." He said he was trying to look at a tractor website, but stumbled into a porn site with a similar name and watched it for "a bit." **AP**

RUSSIAN STRIKE HAS KNOCKED OUT ODESA AIRPORT: KYIV

Ukraine fights to hold off Russian advance in south and east Donbas

AP & REUTERS

KHARKIV, APRIL 30

UKRAINIAN FORCES fought Saturday to hold off a Russian advance in their country's south and east, where the Kremlin is seeking to capture the industrial Donbas region. A Russian missile strike at the airport in the southwestern port of Odesa has damaged the runway and it can no longer be used, the Ukrainian military said on Saturday.

The UN continued trying to broker an evacuation of civilians from the increasingly hellish ruins of Mariupol. Russian state news outlets reported Saturday that 25 civilians had been evacuated from the Azovstal steelworks, though there was no confirmation from the UN or Ukrainian officials. Russia's RIA Novosti news agency said 19 adults and six children were brought out of the plant, but gave no further details.

Meanwhile, Vladimir Yermakov, Russia foreign ministry's head of nuclear non-proliferation, said all nuclear powers must stick to logic laid out in official documents aimed at preventing nuclear war, adding that Moscow believes risks of nuclear war should be kept to a minimum.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said in an interview that Russian and Ukrainian negotiators talk "almost every day." However, he told Chinese state news agency Xinhua that "progress has not been easy." Lifting sanctions imposed on Russia is part of peace negotiations, which are "difficult" but continue daily, Lavrov added.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged as much in his nightly address. "If the Russian invaders succeed in realising their plans, at least in part, they will still have enough artillery and aircraft to destroy the entire Donbas. Just as they destroyed Mariupol," he said.

Germany takes Italy to ICJ over Nazi grant claims

REUTERS

THE HAGUE, APRIL 30

GERMANY HAS filed a case against Italy at the highest UN court because Rome continues to allow victims of Nazi war crimes to claim compensation from the German state even after an earlier ruling that such claims violated international law.

Germany's application to the ICJ published on court website late on Friday, says Italy continues to allow compensation claims to be brought in domestic courts despite the ICJ's 2012 ruling that this violated Berlin's right to immunity under international law.

Berlin says there have been over 25 new compensation claims filed in Italy against the German state for damages arising from Nazi crimes during World War Two. Germany says it has filed the case at the ICJ now because an Italian court has said it will decide by May 25 whether to force a sale of buildings, some of which house German cultural, archaeological and educational institutions.



Destroyed houses in Irpin, on the outskirts of Kyiv, Ukraine, on Saturday. AP

Moscow stole several hundred thousand tonnes of grain: Ukraine

REUTERS

KYIV, APRIL 30

RUSSIAN FORCES have stolen "several hundred thousand tonnes" of grain in the areas of Ukraine they occupy, Ukraine's deputy agriculture minister said on Saturday.

Speaking to Ukrainian national TV, Taras Vysotskiy expressed concern that most of what he said was 1.5 million tonnes of grain stored in occupied territory could also be

stolen by Russian forces.

Ukraine's foreign ministry accused Russia on Thursday of stealing grain in territory it has occupied, an act it said increased the threat to global food security.

Agriculture minister Mykola Soloskyi said grain theft had increased in the last two weeks.

"I hear this from many silo owners in the occupied territory. This is outright robbery. And this is happening everywhere in occupied territory," the ministry quoted Soloskyi as saying.

He said such a situation could

create food problems in areas that are currently not controlled.

"There will soon be a wheat harvest in the south. But farmers in this situation may well say: 'Here are the keys to the tractor - go collect it yourself, if you want,'" Soloskyi said.

The Kremlin denied Ukraine's allegations, saying it did not know where the information was coming from. The agriculture ministry said on Friday that six regions in Ukraine had completed their early spring grain sowing despite the Russian invasion.

More bodies found in Bucha, carry torture signs

Kyiv: Ukrainian police said on Saturday they had found the bodies of three civilian men in the Bucha district north of Kyiv, bound and in some cases gagged, with several gunshot wounds that police said indicated they had been tortured.

"The victims were tortured for long. Bullet wounds were found on the extremities of their bodies. Each of the men was shot through the ear," police said. Moscow rejects the allegation. **REUTERS**

Cop killed, 5 injured in 2 blasts in Pak

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PESHAWAR, APRIL 30

A POLICEMAN has been killed and five others injured in two separate blasts in Pakistan's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, police said on Saturday.

A police constable was killed and another was injured when an improvised explosive device detonated close to the main gate of Nisatta police station in Charsadda on Friday, district police officer Suhail Khalid said.

The injured policeman was shifted to the district headquarters hospital. His condition is said to be stable now, Khalid said. No militant group has claimed responsibility for the attack.

In another attack, four people were injured when a roadside explosive went off in Bajaur tribal district of the province on Friday. Police said the injured were shifted to district headquarters hospital, where the condition of the injured was critical. The critically injured persons were later referred to a hospital in Peshawar.

MONKS DEMAND GOVT'S RESIGNATION

Will prove majority in Parliament next week, says Lankan Opposition leader

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

COLOMBO, APRIL 30

A SENIOR leader from Sri Lanka's Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) on Saturday said his party will prove their majority in Parliament next week for the no-confidence motion against the government led by the Rajapaksa family, according to a media report.

President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has asked the Opposition to show their majority by garnering the support of 113 lawmakers in the 225-member Parliament to form the interim government.

"Everyone will be able to see that we command a majority next week and I will not reveal how we are going to do it as of now," *Daily Mirror* quoted SJB MP and Chief Opposition Whip Lakshman Kiriella as saying.

"President should resign from his post and then constitutional reforms should follow to ensure checks and balances among the pillars of the government," he said.

Another SJB MP Mujibur Rahman, who was also present during the press conference, said his party will also push for impeachment against the President. "We have not given it up," he said.

Meanwhile, Buddhist clergy on Saturday held a key convention and warned that people would be influenced to reject all politicians if PM Mahinda Rajapaksa did not resign to make way for an interim government to resolve the political and economic crisis in the country.

Rev Prof Olanagawatte Chandrasiri read out the monks' order after over 1,000 monks staged a protest march demanding the government to act according to their letter addressed to the President dated April 4.

Aspects of Nehru and Mountbatten letters can stay redacted: UK tribunal

ADITI KHANNA

LONDON, APRIL 30

CERTAIN ASPECTS of the personal diaries and letters involving Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, his wife Edwina and India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, at the heart of an appeal to decide whether they can be fully released for open public access, will remain redacted after a UK tribunal ruling.

Judge Sophie Buckley presided over the UK First-Tier Tribunal (Information Rights) appeal to determine the fate of some redacted sections of diaries and correspondence dating back to the 1930s.

The three-member tribunal concluded recently that Southampton University did not "hold" any correspondence entitled "letters from Lady Mountbatten to Jawaharlal Nehru, the first Prime Minister of the newly independent India (33 files, 1948-60), along with copies of his letters to her" as part of its Broadlands Archive and was only



Sri Lankans protest demanding President resign outside President's office in Colombo. AP

EXPLAINED Country banks on IMF talks

THE ECONOMY of the nation melted down after a large 2019 tax cut by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa drained government coffers and Covid hit the lucrative tourism industry. Foreign reserves fell 70% over the past two years to \$1.93 billion, leaving Colombo struggling to pay for essentials. Colombo hopes it can conclude the IMF aid talks in about six months but it cannot control how long negotiations will take.

"Unless action is taken to empower Parliament by pruning the excessive powers of the president, unless the PM resigns immediately to make way for an all party interim government, we would be compelled to rally the public to tell them to reject all politicians," the order read out by Prof Chandrasiri stated.



Jawaharlal Nehru with Edwina Mountbatten.

Express File

"physically safeguarding the papers" on its premises.

"The information was not owned by the University, and its use was restricted both in contract and in practice to physically safeguarding the papers. This is akin to the papers being held by an expert storage company," the tribunal decision reads. "Matters have moved on considerably since the decision notices... and the vast majority of the Mountbatten Papers have now been made public," it points out. **PTI**

COUNTRY HAS 3 WAYS OF CALCULATING AGE, OFTEN ADDING A YEAR OR TWO TO GLOBAL STANDARD. INCOMING PRESIDENT AIMS TO CHANGE THAT

Age just a number: Millions of S Koreans could soon get younger...on paper

JIN YU YOUNG

SEOUL, APRIL 30

WHEN LEE Jae-hye goes to the US, she is 30. When she's back in South Korea, she is 32. "It's so confusing," said Lee, a video producer in Seoul who frequently flies between the two countries.

That is because South Korea counts people's ages three ways, often adding a year or two to the international standard. This can present situations ripe for confusion, since age determines roles in the social hierarchy and is important in legal milestones such as when one has the right to drink or vote. It undergirds mun-

dane tasks like filling out official paperwork, and it is key to figuring out how to address elders.

But soon, nearly 52 million South Koreans may step into the world of Benjamin Button, shaving up to two years off their ages (if only on paper), if President-elect Yoon Suk-yeol keeps a campaign promise to scrap the nation's unique system.

On April 11, Lee Yong-ho, an official with Yoon's transition team, announced plans to proceed with the change. Yoon, who takes office in May, hopes to do so by making a change to South Korean civil code by the end of next year.

Lee said the shift would reduce confusion and make com-

munication easier, domestically and internationally. It would also help eliminate "unnecessary social and economic costs," he said.

The exact origins of the Korean age system are hard to trace, stemming from long-held beliefs, said Yoon In-jin, a professor specialising in urban sociology at Korea University.

"We can't know or remember the origins of our Korean customs," he said. "It's just the way we have done things."

Here's how the three ways of counting age work.

Under the first, and most widely used, method — often simply called "Korean age" — people are considered a year old



A recent survey found strong support in South Korea for adopting the international standard for determining age. NYT

at birth, and they add a year to their age every Jan. 1. This applies even to an infant born on, say,

Dec. 31, who would be considered 2 years old the very next day. In other words, the birth year, not

the date of birth, determines someone's age. This method is the one most commonly recognised in social situations.

The second is the one the rest of the world uses: starting the count from zero at birth and adding a year on every birthday. The third, and least common, method is known as "year age." Like the international system, it starts from zero at birth, but it adds a year of age every Jan 1 — so that baby born on Dec 31 would turn 1, not 2, the following year. This method applies to laws such as the Military Service Act — which sets the age of compulsory conscription — and the Elementary and Secondary

Education Act, which decides when children begin school.

Such age-counting methods were previously used in other places with Confucianist traditions, such as China and Taiwan, but South Korea is the only nation that still recognises them, according to Suh Chan S, a professor in the department of sociology at Chung-Ang University in Seoul.

Yoon Suk-yeol's push to change the system has wide public backing. In a survey published in January by the polling company Hankook Research, 7 of 10 adult respondents supported getting rid of the age system.

Forty percent said the change would ease conflicts within the

country's social hierarchy. A majority, 53%, said reducing confusion at the administrative and legal levels was a good reason to pass Yoon's proposed change.

"People in Korea don't like having a younger person be their superior at work," he said.

Yoon In-jin doubted that abandoning the Korean age system would lead to broader social changes anytime soon. "From a sociology perspective, customs are so deeply rooted in a society that change won't happen overnight," he said. "The change is desirable, but we'll have to see." But other Koreans do not see any benefit to changing the age system, or the hierarchy that underlies it. **NYT**

