



Covid cases up, UP & Haryana make masks must in dists next to Delhi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

WITH COVID-19 cases rising again, the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana governments on Monday made masks mandatory in the districts surrounding Delhi. The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) is also likely to discuss the mandatory use of masks in the capital at its meeting on Wednesday.

Delhi, UP and Haryana scrapped the fine for not wearing masks in public in the first week of April.

In UP, masks have been made mandatory in Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ghaziabad, Hapur, Meerut, Bulandshahr and Baghpat. Most of the new cases reported in the state on Sunday were from two of these districts. While 76 new cases were reported from Gautam Buddha Nagar, 33 were from Ghaziabad, 7 from Lucknow, 2 each from Meerut and Bulandshahr, and one from Baghpat on Sunday. These are also the districts with the highest number of active cases. Of the 695 active cases in Uttar Pradesh, Gautam Buddha Nagar has 280, Ghaziabad 113, Lucknow 41, Meerut 11, Bulandshahr 5, and Baghpat 2.

In Haryana, Health Minister Anil Vij said masks will be made mandatory in Gurgaon, Faridabad, Sonapat and Jhajjar. Of the 238 new cases reported in the state on Monday, 198 were from Gurgaon and 22 from Faridabad; more than half the districts in the state reported no new case.

Sources said genome sequencing of the samples tested in UP showed the Omicron variant, which drove the surge in January. According to sources, the XE variant (a recombinant variant of Omicron's sub lineages BA.1 and BA.2) hasn't been detected. The samples of new cases in Haryana have been sent for genome sequencing in Rohtak.

In Delhi, the number of new cases remained over 500 for two days in a row, with 501 new cases reported on Monday. The city has been seeing an increasing positivity rate as well — it was 7.72% on Monday. This could be due to a sharp drop in the number of tests after the January wave, with only symptomatic people getting tested.

LAKHIMPUR KHERI CASE

SC sets aside HC bail order, tells Ashish Mishra to surrender

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

THE SUPREME Court on Monday set aside the Allahabad High Court's order granting bail to Ashish Mishra, son of Union Minister of State (Home) Ajay Kumar Mishra, in the Lakhimpur Kheri case and asked him to surrender within a week. The court said the HC had "adopted a myopic view of the evidence" and denied "a fair and effective hearing" to the "victims".

The bench of Chief Justice of India N V Ramana and Justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli asked the HC to decide the bail

**NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN**
DELFT (JAFFNA), APRIL 18

IT IS here, on this island off the Jaffna peninsula in the Northern Province, where India has displaced China to sign a pact with

WPI HAS BEEN IN DOUBLE DIGITS EVERY MONTH IN 2021-22

Growing concern as wholesale inflation up to 14.55%, pressure on retail prices

Trend reversal with CPI inflation converging towards WPI inflation worries policymakers**AANCHAL MAGAZINE & PRANAV MUKUL**
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

WITH PRICES of crude oil and other commodities rising due to disruptions in global supply chains in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war, the Wholesale Price Index or WPI-based inflation surged to 14.55 per cent in March 2022, after a 13.11 per cent reading in February 2022.

This is the second highest WPI print in the 2011-12 series. The annual WPI inflation — inflation at the producer level — has remained in the double-digits in every month of 2021-22 and has almost consistently edged upwards.

For policymakers, a more worrying prospect is that of the Consumer Price Index or CPI-based annual inflation — inflation at the retail level — converging towards the WPI-based inflation, in deviation from the usual trend of the wholesale price inflation collapsing in the direction of the retail price rise.

It presents a peculiar challenge for policymakers: the gap between the two metrics continuing for an extended period points to lingering market inefficiencies, triggered, in part, by the Covid-induced impact at the producer level. Secondly, the rise in CPI inflation, with no cooling off in sight, indicates a shift from the historical trend where the whole-

EXPLAINED
Why the spike, worry

THE SMALL and medium sector bore the brunt of the pandemic. The pricing power has shifted substantially to larger enterprises. The cost push increases showing up in the WPI will likely influence the financial crisis, a worry going forward.

sale inflation typically collapses towards consumer inflation. Ahead of the wholesale

price-based inflation spiking to a four-month high of 14.55 per cent in March, a high base of 7.89 per cent in March 2021 notwithstanding, data released last week showed retail inflation in March had surged to a 17-month high of 6.95 per cent, driven primarily by high prices of fuels and food items such as cereals, vegetables, milk, oils, meat, and fish.

Economists are worried. "You are in a situation where the pricing power has increased in the hands of the producers. So, what will happen is that cost push increases showing up in the WPI will influence the financial crisis. In the past, because we had this very large MSME sector, it was the other way around,"

Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India, said. "Given that the MSMEs have been decimated, the pricing power today has shifted. The kind of patterns one talks about the WPI convergence to the CPI may not work; it may in fact be the CPI convergence to the WPI," Sen said.

The gross non-performing assets (NPAs) of MSMEs, or loans defaulted by these enterprises, rose by Rs 20,000 crore to Rs 1,65,732 crore as of September 2021 from Rs 1,45,673 crore in September 2020. The Covid-19 impact on MSMEs has played out in two ways: One, in the FMCG space, the wiping out of many small firms handed

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GOING TO SCHOOL IN JAHANGIRPURI

Security personnel in Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Monday, two days after communal clashes. Praveen Khanna

THE WORLD

**RUSSIA STRIKES LVIV, PREPARES FOR ASSAULT IN EAST P 10**

Lt Gen Manoj Pande named new Army chief, first from Corps of Engineers

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

LIEUTENANT GENERAL Manoj Pande was Monday appointed the new Chief of Army Staff. He will succeed General M M Naravane on May 1.

The Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt General Pande will be the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to become the COAS.

In a Twitter post, the Indian Army said: "General MM Naravane #COAS & All Ranks of

**He will take charge on May 1**

#IndianArmy congratulate Lieutenant General Manoj Pande #VCOAS on being appointed as the 29th Chief of the Army Staff #COAS of the #IndianArmy. Lt Gen Manoj Pande will assume the appointment of #COAS on 01 May 2022."

He has been Vice Chief of Army Staff since February 1 this year.

An alumnus of the National Defence Academy, he was commissioned in the Corps of Engineers (Bombay Sappers) in December 1982.

According to the Army, he was part of Operation Parakram, the 2001-02 India-Pakistan standoff in the wake of the Parliament attack. The standoff saw massing of thousands of troops on either side of the

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Shelters and sanctuaries to biogas and dung, UP govt readies a stray cattle plan

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, APRIL 18

A MONTH into his second term, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is set to unveil a plan to tackle the stray cattle menace. With the problem emerging as an issue during the Assembly polls, the BJP led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised a solution if returned to power.

The plan includes provisioning for shelters within 10 days to accommodate up to 50,000 stray cattle, going up to

**Stray cattle emerged as an issue during Assembly polls**

PM's Red Fort address to mark birth anniv of Guru Tegh Bahadur

**To address nation on April 21****DIVYAA**
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will address the nation from Red Fort on April 21, to mark the 400th birth anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, the Union Ministry of Culture said on Monday.

The PM's address will mark the culmination of a two-day mega event being organised by the ministry at Red Fort, in collaboration with the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee, Union Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy said. In his speech, which is expected around 9:30 pm after 'shabad kirtan' by 400 ragis (Sikh musicians), the PM is likely to focus on relaying a message of inter-faith peace, said sources.

Ministry officials said the Red Fort was chosen as the venue for two reasons. "First, it was the place from where Mughal ruler

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GUJARAT TO BENGAL TO DELHI

Who runs cricket in India? In many cases, depends on who your father is

Over a third of state units have sons in key posts in cricket administration**NIHAL KOSHIE & DEVENDRA PANDEY**
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

MAHANAARYAMAN SCINDIA, son of Union Minister for Civil Aviation Jyotiraditya Scindia, was appointed vice-president of the Gwalior Division Cricket Association early this month. At a time when dynasty isn't exactly a badge of political honour and when cricket's playing field looks more level than ever, this hardly raised any eyebrows.

For, it was true to Indian cricket board's age-old tradition: a son following his influential father's footsteps in cricket's administration.

Indeed, over a third of the 38 full members of the BCCI today include, at the top, sons or relatives of former officials and of powerful politicians — the highest-ever in the board's history.

"Never have there been so many associations that are ruled by families," said a veteran BCCI official on the condition of anonymity.

This despite red flags waved by the Supreme Court-appointed RM Lodha Committee.

Framing the new BCCI constitution way back in 2016, it had underlined: "In some states all members are from a few families or a single family, thereby perpetuating the control over cricket in the hands of a few." It put an age cap, 70 years, and a

has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh for Khan's family, identifying him officially as the victim of the communal clash.

Angry at police, Khan's brother Ikhlaq said: "When we began searching for him, we were told by his friends who were with Ibraish that day that he was hit by policemen and taken somewhere. We kept pleading to policemen, but no one told us anything."

SP Rohit Keswani indicated there were lapses on police's part. "We were told by the supervisor of the Kapas Mandi that his guard, Kamal Salve, had heard a group brutally beating up a man there. The guard told us that the men kept saying, 'Maaro isko, maaro (Beat him up)', and had run away on hearing police sirens," he told *The Indian Express*, adding that they had been unable to find any footage

The district administration

Police said they had found Khan, a father of an eight-month-old boy, injured and rushed him to the district government hospital, where he died. The unidentified body was later shifted to Indore's M Y Hospital for post-mortem.

The district administration

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WEST BENGAL

OUR STATE UNIT SUFFERING FROM DISEASE, NEEDS MEDICATION: BJP MP PAGE 3

In Jaffna waters, India sinks China bid, but an old net problem rises

Sri Lankan fishermen say Indian trawlers destroying their livelihood, current crisis provides chance to reset ties

the Sri Lankan government for a joint renewable energy project.

Its 5,000 inhabitants, all fishermen, are unaware of the intense geopolitical jostling over their island and two others nearby, Nainatheevu and Analatheevu, that went on most of last year as Delhi successfully persuaded Colombo to cancel a project awarded to a Chinese company, and offered its own instead.

What they do know is that

they have to deal with Indian fishermen from Tamil Nadu who sail into the waters around Jaffna three days a week, destroy fishing nets of the local people, and themselves use "erratai madi" or double-fold nets to bottom trawl the seabed.

The Sri Lanka-India Memorandum of Understanding for the project was among several signed in March during the visit of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, as Delhi extended a

**Delft lies just 45 km north-east of Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram. Nirupama Subramanian**

helping hand to Colombo during the economic crisis with financial assistance worth \$2.4 billion.

In Jaffna, Delhi is being urged to resolve the long-running fishing crisis, and view the opportunity presented by Sri Lanka's crisis not through an India vs China lens, but as a chance to reset its engagement with Sri Lanka with people-friendly projects, including in the Tamil areas.

All of 50 sq km, Delft, also known by its Tamil name Neduntheevu, is located in the Palk Strait. A choppy one-hour boat ride from a Jaffna jetty called Kurikattuwan, Delft lies

just 45 km north-east of Tamil Nadu's Rameswaram. In between is Katchatheevu, which India ceded to Sri Lanka in 1974.

Sri Lanka's territorial waters in this entire area are a matter of severe contestation between Indian and Sri Lankan fishermen. "300 to 500 boats. They come at night on Mondays, Wednesdays and Saturdays. Those are their fishing days, and they come that close," said 42-year-old Regeeswaran, pointing to a buoy not far from the shore.

His neighbour J Arokiyadas complained that when the Sri Lankan naval unit stationed on

the island arrests Indian fishermen trespassing in these waters, "they get calls from the big guys in Colombo ordering their release".

India and Sri Lanka have been engaged on the fishermen's issue for nearly two decades, but have not been able to resolve the matter.

When the alarm bells went off in Delhi though in January

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**GOTABAYA PICKS NEW CABINET PAGE 10**

3 WEST BENGAL

TMC groups clash near MP's house, 8 injured; police arrest 6

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 18

A CLASH broke out between two TMC groups over alleged control of a "construction syndicate" in the Lake Gardens area of Kolkata, leaving at least eight people injured. The incident took place near the residence of TMC MP Sougata Roy. The police arrested six people in connection with the incident.

According to the police, the groups had been trying to take control of the construction business in the locality.

Members of one group also beat up one of the residents in the area after they reportedly did not give them the contract to construct a house.

It was Roy who had called up the police after learning about the incident.

"I have not seen such clashes in this area before. I have been residing here for more than 60 years. I had to call the officer-in-charge of Lake Gardens police station and seek his intervention. Such incidents should not take place," Roy said. Following the incident, a police contingent has been posted in the area.

Slamming the TMC for nurturing a "syndicate raj" in the state, BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya said, "This is just the tip of the iceberg. The TMC is known for its involvement in syndicate raj. Such incidents are not surprising anymore in West Bengal."

CPM state secretary Mohammad Salim said, "TMC workers are now fighting among themselves to take control of the construction business. However, this incident took place right close to the house of their MP."

'Gangrape': Two juveniles among 4 held in Birbhum

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 18

FOUR PERSONS, including two juveniles, were arrested in connection with the alleged gangrape of a minor tribal girl in Birbhum district on April 14 when she was returning from a local fair, police said on Monday.

While two of the accused — Sunil Soren and Lakshiram Soren — were arrested from Panrui in the district late Sunday, the two minors were taken into custody on Monday, said the police. "The suspects' sketches were drawn on the description provided by the victim. Once identified, we tracked their mobile phone locations," said a senior police official.

On April 14 evening, the girl was allegedly dragged to a secluded place by a group before being raped when she was returning home along with a male friend who too was assaulted.

She was admitted to a hospital. While the two arrested adults were produced in court that remanded them to 10-day police custody, the two minor accused were presented in a juvenile court that sent them to a juvenile home.

Nadia gangrape: CBI questions 3 men who brought victim home

Kolkata: The CBI team probing the alleged gangrape in Nadia district on Monday questioned the three persons who had brought the 14-year-old girl to her house after the alleged incident on April 5.

The three, including a woman, were called to the agency's camp office and ques-

State records 17 Covid-19 cases, no new death

Kolkata: West Bengal recorded no new Covid-19 deaths and 17 new cases over the last 24 hours, stated a bulletin issued by the state health department. The state's toll from the pandemic, so far, stood at 21,200.

The fresh cases took the state's tally of infections to 20,17,823. A total of 5,682 swab samples were tested for the virus on Monday. **ENS**

CABINET MEETING

TMC govt to increase number of state civil service posts and IPS officers

Govt to take control of parking lots at all international border checkpoints from local bodies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 18

THE WEST Bengal government on Monday decided to increase vacancies for more state civil service and IPS officers while also recruit thousands in the food and health departments. It also decided to take over parking lots at all international border checkpoints, which are currently under the control of local panchayats or civic bodies.

Addressing a joint press conference along with Transport Minister Firhad Hakim after a meeting of the state Cabinet at Nabanna, Industries Minister Partha Chatterjee said, "The government has a large number of vacant IAS and IPS posts. Since the central government is not filling up the vacancies, the number of districts couldn't be increased. Hence, we have decided to increase the number of vacan-

cies for state civil service and police officers."

"The chief secretary will soon write to the Centre requesting urgent filling up of IAS and IPS vacancies," Chatterjee said.

Hakim, who is also the Kolkata mayor, said, "The state cabinet has also decided to take over all parking terminals as well as their staff. The staff will be employed on a contractual basis. The parking fee structure will be simplified, while trucks ferrying perishable goods will be released early. However, those laden with non-perishable goods will be released according to the requirement on the other side of the border."

Apart from making more recruitments in the health and food departments, the state Parliamentary Affairs minister informed that the government will soon announce solar power and pisciculture (fish farming) units as soon as it gets land in

Nayachar.

He said, "Under various schemes, the health department will hire 11,551 people on contractual basis. The projects will be taken up to improve health services in both urban and rural areas."

The Cabinet also decided to give jobs to the kin of the two murder victims at Mograhat in the South 24 Parganas while the family members of over 20 people, who were killed after being struck by lightning last year in Hooghly and Murshidabad districts will also get jobs.

Despite repeated calls, no Opposition leader could be reached for comments on the Cabinet decisions.

Rs 2 lakh for kin of workers killed in Mangalore accident

The state government on Monday announced compensa-

tion for the kin of five workers from Bengal who died in Mangalore in neighbouring Karnataka. All the victims hailed from Deganga in North 24 Parganas district.

The incident occurred at Sri Ulka LLP, a fish processing unit in the Mangaluru Special Economic Zone on Sunday evening. Mangaluru police Commissioner N Shashi Kumar said.

He said one of the workers fell inside the waste collection tank and became unconscious. "To save him, seven other labourers entered the tank and they too fell unconscious. They were shifted to the AJ Hospital where three died last night. Two others died in the intensive care unit (ICU) this morning," Kumar said.

After learning of the incident, the state government decided to give compensation of two lakh each to the families of the de-

ceased. At a press conference on Monday, ADG (Law and Order) Javed Shamim said, "The government will provide two lakh each to the families of the deceased. Their families have accused the company of foul play and have filed an FIR against it. Chief Secretary Harikrishna Dwivedi has written to his Karnataka counterpart requesting necessary action in the matter."

The victims are aged between 20 and 22. Three others in the ICU are said to be out of danger, the police official said.

"We have registered a case under Section 304 of the IPC (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) against the unit manager and supervisor. Production manager Ruby Joseph, area manager Kubera Gade and supervisors Mohammed Anwar and Farukh have been taken into custody and are being interrogated," Kumar said.



ON PROTEST PATH

SSC job aspirants on a relay hunger strike in Kolkata on Monday. Partha Paul

DEUCHA PACHAMI COAL PROJECT

Tribals to continue their fight to protect heritage: CPI(M) leader

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 18

CPI(M) secretary Md Salim on Monday said the tribals will continue their fight to protect their heritage and tradition against the government's

Deucha Pachami coal block mining project in Birbhum district.

"This is the heritage and tradition of the tribals. They will fight and we will continue our support to them. Earlier, I had said the TMC will flee if it faces resistance. Now, we have seen a trailer of that," he said.

The Trinamool supporters organised a rally on Monday in support of land acquisition for the mining project but protesting tribals showed black flag to them, Salim claimed.

On April 13, representatives of agitators had met with chief minister Mamata Banerjee who

assured to look into their apprehensions and even consider lifting of alleged false police cases.

Salim said, "That (CM's assurance) was a bluff and that was proved by the local TMC supporters. Our movement against the project will continue."

The agitators had called off

the dharna after the meeting with the chief minister.

However, in a press statement, the Birbhum Jomi, Jibon, Jibika o Prakriti Bancho Mahasabha said, "Lifting the sit-in does not mean we have moved away from the agitation."

'Mukul case hearing to begin again'

Kolkata: The hearing into Mukul Roy's disqualification as an MLA will begin again in West Bengal assembly, Speaker Biman Banerjee, who had earlier dismissed a petition on it, said on

Monday. Sources said the hearing is likely to begin this Friday. "The honourable court has sent a reminder: I will look into it legally. I will call both parties and hold a hearing," Banerjee said. **PTI**

NOTICE

District: South 24 Parganas In the Court of the Learned 2nd Civil Judge (Sr. Div.) at Alipore

Misc. Case No. 295 of 2010 (Arising out of Title Suit No. 15 of 2005)

Sri Sunil Kedia Petitioner/Plaintiff

Sri Radhyashyam Kedia and Others Opposite Parties / Defendants

An application under Order IX Rule 4 read with Section 151 of the Code of Civil Procedure.

1. Jyoti Prakash Maskara, residing at 15, Ballygunge Park Road, P.S.-Karaya, Kolkata-700019

2. Chabildars R. Mehata, residing at 6, Middleton Street, P.S.-Shakespeare Sarani, Kolkata-700006

3. Amal Chandra Law, residing at 50, Kailash Bose Street, P.S.-Manicktola, Kolkata-700009.

Please take notice that the abovementioned petitioners Sunil Kedia at 15B, Ballygunge Park Road, P.S.-Kasba, Kolkata-700019 has instituted the abovementioned case against you, being the opposite party nos. 3, 4 and proforma opposite party no.6 and you are hereby directed to appear either by person or through an Advocate within 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice and file written objection, if any, failing which the above case will be heard ex parte against you.

By order
Seresthadar
Court of the Learned 2nd Civil Judge (Sr. Div.) at Alipore
South 24-Parganas

Bank of Baroda

Kolkata Zonal Office, GN 38/2, Sector V, Salt Lake, Kolkata 700 091

TENDER NOTICE

Bank of Baroda invites sealed Bids for Sale of Bank's Used Cars on "AS IS WHERE IS & WHATEVER IT IS" basis.

Details of Tender is available on the 'Tender' section of Bank's website: www.bankofbaroda.co.in

Any Addendum/Corrigendum including modification in the Tender document shall be notified on Bank's website only. Bidder should refer the same before final submission of the proposal.

Last date for submission of sealed bid along with EMD: 11.05.2022 upto 3.00 p.m.

Date: 19.04.2022
Place: Kolkata

General Manager (Zonal Head)

Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute Of Medical Sciences
Raebareilly Road, Lucknow - 226014 (U. P.) India, www.sggpi.ac.in,
Tel.: 0522-2494000, 2495000, 2668700, 2668800, 2668900, Fax.: 91-522-2668017, 2668078.

Notice
(Advertisement No. I-50/ A, B, D, E/Rectt./2021-22 for Post of Sister Gr-II, Technician (Radiology), Medical Lab technologist, Junior Medical lab Technologist)

On line application forms link against Advertisement No. I-50 / A, B, D, E / Rectt. / 2021-22 (Live from 29.03.2022 to 19.04.2022) has been further extended up to **03.05.2022** at 5:00 PM.

Please visit SGPGI website (www.sggpi.org.in) / (www.sggpi.ac.in)

Advt. No.: I/02/Rectt./2022-23 Joint Director Administration

ALL INDIA COUNCIL FOR TECHNICAL EDUCATION
(A Statutory Body of the Government of India)
Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi-110 070
011-29581202, 29581246, 29581114 Website: <https://www.aicte-india.org>

SWAYAM CELL

F.No. 40-35/AICTE/SWAYAM/EOI/2017 (Part File) Dated: 19.04.2022

Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI) for Development of Self-Paced/Credit Courses for SWAYAM Platform

AICTE being the 9th National Coordinator invites proposals from all Educational Content Developers and Faculty Members of all Technical Higher Educational Institutions all over the Country including "Freelancers" and "Individuals" who are not associated with any College/University for development of MOOCs on emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence, Nano Technology, Blockchain, Quantum Computing, Mixed Reality, Data Analytics, Indian Knowledge System, Innovation Sustainable Development etc. and any other areas falling under "non-formal" education as Self-Paced or Credit Course for SWAYAM MOOCs Platform. Aspiring Course creators may please send their proposals along with a Three Minute Introductory Video and curriculum describing unit wise contents in not more than 3000 words of the proposed MOOC. AICTE reserves the right to accept or reject the proposal for creation of new online courses for SWAYAM. The complete proposals may be sent at aicteswayam1@aicte-india.org

The last date of receipt of proposals is **15th May, 2022**. For details, please visit website at www.aicte-india.org

Advt. No. SWAYAM Cell/AICTE/04/01/2022 **Member Secretary**

Global EOI for Lignite Beneficiation Plant

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Ltd., (GMDC) is one of India's leading mining and mineral processing companies. Ranked 132nd among India's Fortune 500 companies (2017) and in the Top-5 by market capitalisation in the mining sector, we are a debt-free company. We have also undertaken forward integration with a lignite-based thermal power plant along with wind and solar power installations.

GMDC now wants to invite interested Vendors for setting up a Lignite Beneficiation Plant at GMDC's 'Mata No Madh' Lignite Project at Kutch, Gujarat, India.

EOI for inviting interested Vendors for setting up Lignite Beneficiation Plant

EOI Document Downloading start date	19/04/2022 at 11:00 hrs IST
Pre EOI submission Meeting	29/04/2022 at 12:00 hrs IST
EOI submission due date	11/05/2022 at 17:00 hrs IST
Date of opening EOI	13/05/2022 at 11:00 hrs IST

SCOPE OF WORK

A key role of the Vendor shall be selection of efficient, cost-effective and state-of-the-art technology, judiciously considered to fetch higher yield of desired quality, commissioning of plants and thereafter Operation & Maintenance for a period of five years.


The scope of work of the Vendor / Technology service provider will broadly cover design, planning, engineering, installation, testing and commissioning of a Lignite Beneficiation Plant for GMDC of throughput capacity of 2.0 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) on Build, Operate and Maintain (BOM) concept.

Interested firms may please visit our websites
www.gmdcltd.com & gmdc.nprocure.com for more details.

Gujarat Mineral Development Corporation Ltd.
(A Government of Gujarat Enterprise)

Khanij Bhavan, 132 Feet Ring Road, Near University Ground, Vastrapur, Ahmedabad - 380 052.

EXPLORING LIMITLESS POSSIBILITIES



ROURKELA SMART CITY LIMITED,

Rourkela

Udit Nagar, Rourkela-769012,
Email: rourkelascl@gmail.com

C-83

BID ID - RSCL/826/2022
DATE. 14.04.2022

NOTICE INVITING TENDER NATIONAL

COMPETITIVE BIDDING

The Chief Executive Officer, RSCL invites bids from eligible contractors for the following project:

SL. No	Name of the Projects	Estimated Cost of the Project Rs. Cr.
1	Streetscaping of Road in Chhend Main Road with Operation and Maintenance in Rourkela on Percentage Rate Basis	3.86

Tender Fee is Rs. 11,200/- each. The complete BID documents can be viewed/downloaded from official portal of Rourkela Municipal Corporation (<https://www.rmc.nic.in>) or e-procurement portal of Odisha (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) from 16.04.2022 to 02.05.2022 (up to 17:00 Hrs. IST). Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 22.04.2022 at 12.30 A.M. in the Conference Hall of RSCL. For queries, intending bidder may contact General Manager (E&T) vide Phone No. 8249833105 and Email ID: rourkelascl@gmail.com.

Sd/-
Chief Executive Officer
Rourkela Smart City Limited
OIPR-13080/11/0002/2223



@ieExplained

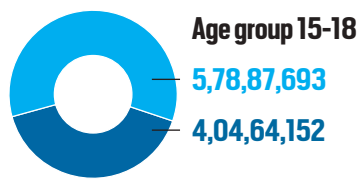
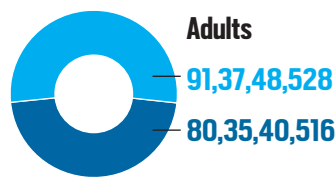
#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

DASHBOARD, AS ON APRIL 17

TOTAL DOSES 186,54,94,355

First dose Second dose



AGE GROUP 12-14:

1st dose: 2,43,55,282, 2nd dose: 1,71,544

Precautionary 60+

2,51,64,108

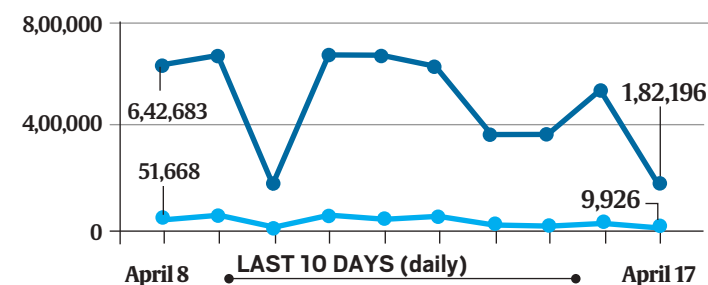
Precautionary 15-59

1,62,532

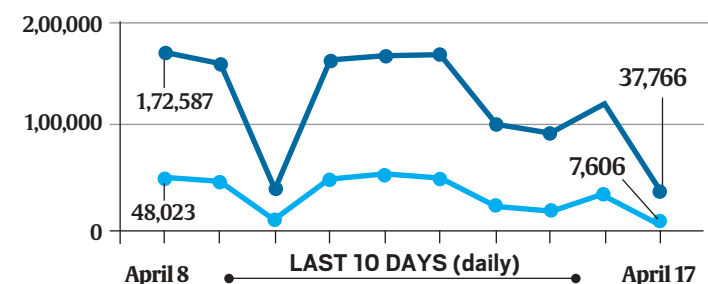
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3,40,762

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WHAT ARE THE INVICTUS GAMES, PATRONISED BY BRITAIN'S PRINCE HARRY?

THE 2022 Invictus Games opened on Saturday night in The Hague, Netherlands, where Prince Harry paid tribute to the Ukrainian team, telling them, "The world is united with you... And my hope is that these events, this event, creates the opportunity ... of how we as a global community can better show up for you."

The Games are scheduled to run until April 22. The first edition of the Games was held in London in 2014, and subsequent competitions were organised in Orlando, US (2016), Toronto, Canada (2017), and Sydney, Australia (2018). The current Games were supposed to have been held in 2020, but were postponed due to the pandemic. The 2023 edition will be held in Dusseldorf, Germany.

For the 'unconquered'

The Games are an international competition similar to the Paralympics, but meant for wounded, injured, and sick military service personnel and war veterans.

The Games website says: "The word 'invictus' means 'unconquered'. It embodies the fighting spirit of wounded, injured and sick Service personnel and personifies what these tenacious men and women can achieve post injury. The Games harness the power of sport to inspire recovery, support rehabilitation and generate a wider understanding and respect for those who serve their country."

Prince Harry's Games

The Invictus Games are the brainchild of Harry, Duke of Sussex, who attended the Warrior Games in the United States in 2013, and wanted to start something similar in London. The Warrior Games are a multi-sport event organised by the US Department of Defense to "celebrate the resiliency and dedication of wounded, ill, and injured active duty and veteran US military service members".

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NEW DELHI, AHMEDABAD, APRIL 18

ON TUESDAY, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, will perform the groundbreaking ceremony for the first-of-its-kind WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM) in Jamnagar, Gujarat. Earlier, the Prime Minister had said the GCTM would go a long way in enhancing wellness in society.

What is traditional medicine?

The WHO describes traditional medicine as the total sum of the "knowledge, skills and practices indigenous and different cultures have used over time to maintain health and prevent, diagnose and treat physical and mental illness". "Its reach encompasses ancient practices such as acupuncture, ayurvedic medicine and herbal mixtures as well as modern medicines," the WHO says.

Traditional medicine in India is often defined as including practices and therapies — such as yoga, Ayurveda, Siddha — that have been part of Indian tradition historically, as well as others — such as homeopathy — that became part of Indian tradition over the years. Ayurveda and yoga are practised widely across the country; the Siddha system is followed predominantly in Tamil Nadu and Kerala; the Sowa-Rigpa system is practised mainly in Leh-Ladakh and Himalayan regions such as Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Darjeeling, Lahaul & Spiti.

What will the GCTM be about?

On November 3, 2020, Dr Tedros announced the establishment of the WHO GCTM in India. The Union Cabinet in March this year approved its establishment in Jamnagar with the signing of a host country agreement between the Government of India and the WHO. India has committed an estimated \$250 million to support the GCTM's establishment, infrastructure and operations.

The GCTM will aim to focus on evidence-based research, innovation, and data analysis to optimise the contribution of traditional medicine to global health. Its main focus will be to develop norms, standards and guidelines in technical areas relating to traditional medicine.

At press conference on Monday, the Ministry of AYUSH (Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homeopathy) said it will seek to set policies



The Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA), Jamnagar, will temporarily house the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine. ITRA

For many millions of people around the world, traditional medicine is the first port of call to treat many diseases... This new center will help to harness the power of science to strengthen the evidence base for traditional medicine"

— DR TEDROS ADHANOM GHEBREYESUS
WHO DIRECTOR-GENERAL

and standards on traditional medicine products and help countries create a comprehensive, safe, and high-quality health system. The GCTM will support efforts to implement the WHO's Traditional Medicine Strategy (2014-23), which aims to support nations in developing policies & action plans to strengthen the role of traditional medicine in pursuing the goal of universal health coverage. According to WHO estimates, 80% of the world's population uses traditional medicine.

Why has the WHO felt the need to advance knowledge of traditional medicine?

The WHO says 170 of its 194 WHO Member States have reported the use of traditional medicine, and these member states

have asked for its support in creating a body of "reliable evidence and data on traditional medicine practices and products". It says the Jamnagar centre will serve as the hub, and focus on building a "solid evidence base" for policies and "help countries integrate it as appropriate into their health systems".

The WHO has flagged many challenges faced by traditional medicine. For instance, national health systems and strategies do not yet fully integrate traditional medicine workers, accredited courses and health facilities.

Second, the WHO has stressed the need to conserve biodiversity and sustainability as about 40% of approved pharmaceutical products today derive from natural substances. "For example, the discovery of aspirin drew on traditional medicine formulations using the bark of the willow tree, the contraceptive pill was developed from the roots of wild yam plants and child cancer treatments have been based on the rosy periwinkle," the WHO says.

Third, the WHO has referred to modernisation of the ways traditional medicine is being studied. Artificial intelligence is now used to map evidence and trends in traditional medicine. "Functional magnetic resonance imaging is used to study brain activity and the relaxation response that is part of some traditional medicine therapies such as meditation and yoga, which are increasingly drawn on for mental health and well-being in stressful times," it says.

Fourth, the WHO has said traditional medicine is also being extensively updated by mobile phone apps, online classes, and other technologies. The GCTM will serve as a hub for other countries, and build standards on traditional medicine practices and products.

Has India taken up similar collaborative efforts earlier?

Yes. In 2016, the Ministry of AYUSH signed a project collaboration agreement (PCA) with the WHO in the area of traditional medicine. The aim was to create benchmarks for training in yoga, Ayurveda, Unani and Panchakarma, for traditional medicine practitioners. The collaboration also aimed at promoting the quality and safety of traditional medicine and consumer protection by supporting WHO in the development and implementation of the WHO Traditional and Complementary Medicine Strategy.

At least 32 MoUs for undertaking collaborative research and development of traditional medicine have been signed with institutes, universities and organisations from the US, Germany, UK, Canada, Malaysia, Brazil, Australia, Austria, Tajikistan, Saudi Arabia, Ecuador, Japan, Indonesia, Reunion Island, Korea and Hungary.

A constituent laboratory of the Council of Scientific & Industrial Research — Institute of Himalayan Bio-resource Technology (CSIR-IHBT), Palampur — has signed an MoU with National Research Institute of Chinese Medicine, Ministry of Health and Welfare, Taiwan, to collaborate in areas of mutual interest, which include medicinal plants, bioactive molecules, and herbal formulations etc.

Also, the CSIR and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation have signed an MoU to identify opportunities for scientific and technological research between researchers within and outside India, including collaborations with foundation-funded entities in the areas including traditional medicine as well as beyond.

Why Jamnagar?

An interim office of the GCTM is planned to be set up at the Institute of Teaching and Research in Ayurveda (ITRA) in Jamnagar. The Central Public Works Department is expected to set up the office by July 31, at an estimated cost of Rs 13.49 crore.

ITRA, supported by the Gujarat government and financed by the central government, is the first university to offer education and training in the field of Ayurveda across the world, according to the Ministry of AYUSH. The university is a WHO collaborating centre for traditional medicines. The WHO and the central government are also aiming at using technology and innovation, such as artificial intelligence, to map traditional medicine trends, innovations and patents, linking to WHO's Innovation Hub.

Why markets fell: War, China, price worries

SANDEEP SINGH

MUMBAI, APRIL 18

THE BENCHMARK Sensex at the BSE fell sharply by 1,172 points or 2% on Monday under pressure from lingering global inflation concerns, expectations of a faster pace of rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve, and concerns over weakness in the Chinese economy, alongside rising cases of coronavirus infection.

While the Sensex fell 2 per cent and Nifty was down 1.7%, other key Asian indices too fell sharply. The Nikkei in Japan was down 1.9% and the Shanghai Composite in China fell by up to 1.3%. Premier indices in leading European markets, however, traded in the green.

Infosys was the biggest loser on the BSE, falling 7.3% during the day. Other major losers were HDFC Ltd (4.8%) and HDFC Bank (4.7%). Infosys and HDFC Bank announced worse-than-expected fourth quarter results last week.

War, Fed worries

The Indian markets that opened after four

days responded to growing concerns over developments including the continuing Russia-Ukraine war, and a possible European Union embargo on Russian gas and sanctions on Russian crude in the next set of punitive actions against Moscow.

Given the persistent inflation, there is apprehension in the market that the Fed might increase the pace of rate hikes — increase by 50 basis points instead of 25 basis points. While rates are expected to be raised, a sharper hike could result in faster outflows of foreign portfolio investor funds, keeping emerging economy markets and Indian domestic equity markets under pressure.

FPI outflows that had tempered since March 15, have increased over the last six trading sessions. Monday witnessed a sharp outflow of Rs 6,387 crore; outflows over the last six trading sessions have amounted to Rs 16,358 crore.

Chinese concerns

Concern over rising Covid cases in China and slower-than-expected growth in the Chinese economy have impacted market

sentiment. Shanghai, which has been under a strict lockdown since March, reported three deaths on Monday. With the resurgence of the virus slowing down economic activity, China's economy grew 4.8% in the first quarter, AFP reported. The Chinese National Bureau of Statistics warned of "significant difficulties and challenges" ahead, AFP said.

Experts feel that restrictions in China are likely to hurt global supply chains that have already been impacted by the war in Ukraine, and fuel inflation further.

Spike at home too

Along with inflation, the recent spike in Covid cases in Delhi and parts of Haryana has emerged as a fresh concern.

On Monday, Delhi reported 501 new infections, a little lower than the 517 on Sunday (but with a sharp fall in tests from 12,270 on Saturday to 6,492 on Sunday), but still almost four times the number of 131 at the beginning of the month. Haryana has seen an increase by a similar factor, although absolute numbers are lower than Delhi's.

Markets outlook

Given global geopolitical concerns and inflation, equity markets are likely to remain volatile in the near term. FPI flows may remain unstable, and may witness an increased outflow in line with an anticipated increase in the pace of the Fed's rate hike.

Domestic inflation, which hit 6.95 per cent in March, continues to be a cause for concern. Continued inflation pressure may force the RBI to go for faster rate hikes, which would hurt growth and demand in the economy.

In its recently released Monetary Policy statement, the central bank signalled a shift in its focus from reviving growth to mitigating risks posed by inflation. While keeping policy rates unchanged for now, it indicated a possible hike in repo rates going forward.

"In the sequence of priorities, we have now put inflation before growth. Time is appropriate to prioritise inflation ahead of growth," RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das said after unveiling the bi-monthly policy review.

Over the next few days, earnings announcements for the fourth quarter will also play a part in the movement of the markets.

Who are the PFI, why BJP is accusing the Congress of going soft on them

JOHNSONT A

BENGALURU, APRIL 18

BJP PRESIDENT J P Nadda and Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai indicated on Sunday that the BJP will use the withdrawal of police cases against activists of the Popular Front of India (PFI) during 2013-18 to target the Congress in the run-up to the 2023 Assembly elections.

The withdrawal of cases during former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's tenure has often been cited by the BJP, including before the 2018 Assembly elections, to suggest that the Congress is hand in glove with the radical Islamic group. In response, the Congress has asked the BJP why it is not taking strong action to ban the PFI, if it believes the group is indeed involved in subversive activities.

Popular Front of India

The PFI was created in 2007 through the merger of three Muslim organisations, the National Democratic Front in Kerala, the Karnataka Forum for Dignity, and the

Manitha Neethi Pasarai in Tamil Nadu. The formation of the PFI was announced at a rally in Bengaluru during what was called the "Empower India Conference" on February 16, 2007.

The PFI, which emerged in the aftermath of the ban on the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI), has projected itself as an organisation that fights for the rights of minorities, Dalits, and marginalised communities. It has frequently targeted the allegedly anti-people policies of the Congress, BJP, and JD-S in Karnataka, even as these mainstream parties have accused one another of being in cahoots with the PFI to gather the support of Muslims.

The PFI has itself never contested elections, and has been involved in carrying out social and Islamic religious work among Muslims on the lines of the work done by right-wing groups such as the VHP and Hindu Jagaran Vedike among Hindus. Like the radical Hindu groups, the PFI doesn't maintain records of its members, and it has been difficult for law enforcement agencies to pin crimes on it after making arrests.

In 2009, a political outfit named Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI) evolved out of the PFI. Its stated goal is "advancement and uniform development of all the citizenry including Muslims, Dalits, Backward Classes and Adivasis", and to "share power fairly among all the citizens".

PFI's political footprint

The PFI/SDPI has influence mainly in regions with large Muslim populations. The SDPI has built a presence in coastal Dakshina Kannada and Udupi, where it has won polls for village, town, and city councils.

Until 2013, the SDPI contested only local elections, and had won seats in 21 civic constituencies around the state. By 2018, it had won 121 local body seats. In 2021, it captured three local councils in Udupi district.

From 2013 onward, the SDPI has fielded candidates in elections to the Karnataka Assembly and Parliament. Its most creditable performance came in the 2013 state elections, when it finished second at the Narasimharaja seat, part of Mysore Lok Sabha constituency. In 2018, the SDPI came

third in Narasimharaja behind the Congress and BJP, winning over 20% of votes. It also contested the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha elections for the Dakshina Kannada seat, but could poll only 1% and 3% respectively.

Cases against PFI men

Minor cases filed against supporters of the three main parties — Congress, BJP, and JD-S — have often been dropped when a rival party comes to power, which deems these cases as motivated. Cases related to alleged violations of prohibitory orders during communal disturbances, and against farmers and pro-Kannada activists during agitations, have been withdrawn routinely.

The BJP government of 2008-13 ordered the dropping of cases against Sangh Parivar members involved in attacks on churches in Dakshina Kannada, as also cases filed against Christians for reactionary violence during the attacks.

After coming to power in 2013, the Congress government dropped cases against SDPI and PFI members accused of involvement in communal disturbances during the

previous BJP government's tenure. Siddaramaiah's government approved the dropping of a total 176 cases filed against 1,600 PFI activists during 2008-13. These related to protests and communal flare-ups in Shivamogga (114 cases from 2015), Mysuru (40 cases from 2009), Hassan (21 cases from 2010), and Karwar (one case in 2017).

On August 31, 2020, B S Yediyurappa's BJP government ordered the withdrawal of 62 cases against 312 individuals. Most of these cases involved violations of prohibitory orders by both Hindus and Muslims during times of communal tensions, and religious events. Among those against whom cases were dropped was the BJP MP from Mysore, Prathap Simha.

Political point-scoring

Although the PFI has not been proscribed by the Government of India, the BJP has often tried to paint the group as being extremist on account of its pro-Muslim stance. In Karnataka, the BJP has often cited murders of workers of right-wing groups affiliated to the BJP by alleged PFI cadre to seek a ban on

the PFI. However, in more than 310 cases registered against the PFI in Karnataka since 2007, there have been convictions in only five. Some major incidents of political violence to which alleged PFI members have been linked:

■ The murder of RSS worker R Rudresh in Bengaluru in 2016, in which the National Investigation Agency (NIA) named Asim Shariff, president of the PFI's Bengaluru unit, as an accused.

■ Also in 2016, Mysuru Police arrested Abid Pasha, a youth with PFI links, for the murder of Bajrang Dal worker K Raju. Pasha has been accused of being involved in six communal motivated murders in the area.

■ In 2017, police in Dakshina Kannada arrested two PFI activists in connection with the stabbing of RSS worker Sharath Madivala, 28, in Bantwal town.

■ Persons linked to the SDPI are accused in a 2019 attempt to murder Tanveer Sait, Congress MLA from Narasimharaja.

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A TIME TO HELP

Delhi must shore up outreach to Colombo, while underlining that aid is for the people, not a lifeline to Rajapaksas

AS SRI LANKA begins talks with the International Monetary Fund this week, there is much that Delhi can do to assist its island neighbour as it struggles to overcome a grave and unprecedented economic crisis. India has already extended assistance worth \$2.4 billion since January. Two elements of this package are credit lines, one for fuel worth \$500 m, and the other for food and other essential items worth \$1 bn. Delhi has swung these high value credit lines in a record time of four months, between December 2021 and March this year. However, these will run out by the end of May. An IMF bail-out is bound to take six or eight months to finalise. As Sri Lanka's Finance Minister Ali Sabry told this newspaper, the country needs \$3 to 4 billion immediately in order to meet its import bills over the next few months. At Colombo's request, Delhi is reported to be considering a \$2 bn package that may include extension of the fuel credit line and a deferral of payments to the Reserve Bank of India. Besides this, India must consider dipping into its ample food stocks to send emergency supplies of rice, wheat flour, milk and medicines to ease Sri Lanka's shortages. The economic crisis in Sri Lanka is extraordinary, and Delhi should go the extra mile to ease the situation there.

Undoubtedly, the crisis was triggered by the Sri Lanka leadership's faulty economic policies, including a borrowing spree for wasteful expenditure on non-paying fanciful infrastructure projects, ill-advised tax cuts that shrank revenue, and the failure to restrict imports to essential items. Inexplicably, one of the items that Sri Lanka imports is fish. In 2021, even as the dollar crunch was making itself felt, Sri Lanka's annual import bill was \$21 bn, higher than in any previous year. In the wake of the Easter bombing attacks that brought back the twin concerns of terrorism and security, the Rajapaksas, with their record of the military defeat of the LTTE, were re-elected – Gotabaya as president and Mahinda as prime minister. But the outpouring of people's anger in Colombo and elsewhere has sent a clear message to the Rajapaksa family that their political capital has run out. In their term in office so far, they have succeeded in concentrating enormous powers in their hands, been brazenly nepotistic, taken actions to undermine rights and freedoms and kept alive a Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarian narrative.

Even as it reaches out to Sri Lanka, Delhi must message more clearly than it has done so far that its assistance is aimed at mitigating the crisis for the people, and is in no way intended as a political lifeline to the Rajapaksa family. Indeed, India, which has managed to finalise many long-pending strategic agreements with Sri Lanka over the last three months, must also take the opportunity to convey clearly that it does not view its engagement purely through a geopolitical lens, but is a genuine well-wisher of all the people of Sri Lanka, irrespective of their ethnicity or religion.

FREEDOM, UNFREEDOM

Elon Musk's attempt to control Twitter foregrounds questions of where threats to free speech come from, how to protect it

ON THE FACE of it, there is no direct connection between the US supreme court's 2010 verdict in *Citizens United v Federal Election Commission* and Elon Musk's bid to purchase Twitter, a publicly-listed company. Yet, in essence, the move by the world's richest man to play arbiter of free speech aims to make global the fallout of that verdict: Money, and its use to promote particular interests, is seen as essential to free speech. Given the "poison pill" defence by Twitter's board, Musk's attempt at a hostile takeover may well be scuppered. But the larger questions that the episode has raised remain moot. Where do the greatest threats to free speech come from – the state, powerful individuals, or the AI-led architecture of social media? How should the limits – if any – to the right to speak be formulated?

In a nutshell, Musk's views on Twitter echo those of politicians – often on the Right – that its content moderation tools are an attack on free speech. A self-described "free speech absolutist", he has been at the centre of controversy before for allegedly misleading tweets that helped his business interests. In the aftermath of allegations of allowing elections to be manipulated, and Covid misinformation, social media sites have indeed increased regulation. Some of his suggestions – an "edit button", greater transparency on how content is deemed unsuitable – carry merit. But his larger, somewhat messianic mission – that complete private ownership in his hands will solve free speech dilemmas – must be seen for what it is.

The rise of social media has given a handful of companies an inordinate amount of influence over politics and the public conversation. And, by eliminating the need for mediators between the powerful and the people, they also gave the former unfiltered means to amplify their agenda. In the aftermath of decisions like *Citizens United*, this has meant that individual actors can spend their way to crowd out other, contrarian voices. And the near-universal spread of social media giants has allowed platforms to become a propaganda frontier in global conflicts. This flies in the face of what were imagined as the conventional threats to free speech – ideologically-driven organisations and overly-powerful executives. Constitutionalists found that the most reasonable protection against those threats is a decentralisation of power, the system of "checks and balances", and giving all citizens equal rights before the law. Musk's solution, in terms of first principles, is the opposite: A concentration of power in his own hands.

CHAI, POLICE & YOU

Police-public relationship is damaged by distrust.
Saharanpur's new police cafe is a welcome step to reboot

COULD TALKING OVER chai and samosas help repair the generally unhappy relationship between police and the *aam janata*? That is the hope behind a new cafe run by the women and men in khaki in the Police Lines area of Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur. Bailout Cafe has come up over the dilapidated remains of an old police cafeteria. The spruced-up space, with bright pink interiors, ample seating and decor made with upcycled waste, reflects the hope that even a relationship damaged by years of mistrust can be repaired and restored. This optimism shines through even in the exclusion of WiFi – if people can look up from their phone, perhaps they will begin to see each other in the fullness of their humanity.

That the cop-citizen relationship is in dire need of a reboot cannot be denied. It is also evident that the challenge of repairing and restoring would be formidable. This is true of any place in the country, but arguably, particularly in UP. In the Yogi Adityanath-ruled state, the police is a favoured instrument of power, used to keep not just the criminals out, but also the dissenters down, and the populace in line. Here, for the police to even acknowledge that it suffers from a serious image problem is a major step forward. At Bailout Cafe, this comes in the form of a stone wall featuring words like "corrupt", "scary" and "rude" which show just how the average citizen perceives the police.

Having accepted that a problem exists, the task for Saharanpur's cops will now be to actually build on this initiative and take constructive steps towards a more harmonious bond with the local communities. Many relationships have grown deeper and richer over a cuppa. This one can too.



FARZANA SHAIKH

THE TRUMPIAN-STYLE ASSAULT on Pakistan's Constitution by former Prime Minister Imran Khan, who was removed from office following a parliamentary vote of no-confidence in early April, is the latest demonstration of just how far some of the country's elected leaders will go to secure and stay in power.

In 1971, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto famously took a wrecking ball to the edifice of the state to fulfil his ambition to become prime minister at any cost. In 1999, the incumbent prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, moved to accumulate absolute power by seeking to declare himself "Commander of the Faithful (amirul momineen)" under a sharia-dominated Islamic state.

While Bhutto triumphed, he ended up presiding over a truncated Pakistan that eventually oversaw his execution. And while Sharif's Islamic fantasy gained some traction, his efforts were thwarted by a military coup and years in political exile.

Whether Khan was inspired by the playbook of his predecessors to attempt his own gamble is hard to say. What is clear is that he expected to succeed where others – more blessed with brains and less sanctimonious – had come a cropper. So, what accounted for his assumption, apart from the well-rehearsed claim that nothing could go wrong for one famously said to be on the "same page" as Pakistan's all-powerful military?

One explanation clearly lay with Khan greedily imbibing the commentary of lazy observers who had turned to his captaincy of Pakistan's winning cricket team, which brought home the World Cup in 1992, as sufficient proof of his skills in managing a large and complex country like Pakistan. Extraordinary as it may now seem, many were seduced. Yet within months of taking over as prime minister, Khan was left floundering in the face of economic and foreign policy challenges that far eclipsed any hazard he may have experienced on the cricket pitch.

Khan's legendary appeal as a glamorous celebrity with a talent for reaching out across a broad spectrum of society in support of his philanthropic causes was another much-touted asset that enabled his projection as a leader with a flair to build political bridges and

Regime change in Pakistan is unlikely to herald a fundamental shift in 'civil-military' imbalance

deliver on an ambitious programme of reform. It, too, proved hollow. Khan's show of bonhomie, ostentatiously on display among his wealthy benefactors, soon fell away to reveal an ugly habit of verbal abuse aimed at Opposition parties, whom he routinely cast as "thieves" and "looters".

Faced with daily harangues of corruption and wrongdoing, it is no wonder that Opposition parties chose to withhold co-operation and behave as spectators while Khan's government sank under the weight of its misgovernance and the constraints of a wafer-thin majority in parliament.

But neither his record of misgovernance nor the vicious treatment meted out to Opposition parties were as fatal to Khan's political fortunes as his ill-judged moves vis-à-vis Pakistan's military establishment. Widely seen as the key enabler of Khan's electoral victory in 2018, the military had grown visibly wary of its protégé.

Although Khan was praised for his policy of "smart lockdowns" to alleviate the economic hardships caused by the Covid pandemic, his failure to contain double-digit inflation or to arrest the critical depletion of Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves fuelled disquiet. No less alarming to Khan's erstwhile patrons was his erratic handling of Pakistan foreign relations, especially with the country's traditional allies, notably the United States. These concerns intensified fears that some of the mud thrown at Khan would inevitably come to stick to the military – an ominous development that was already showing signs of spreading in the military's main recruiting ground in the rich and powerful province of Punjab.

It was time to let go. As if on cue, a very public fallout precipitated by the hubris which now clouded Khan's every judgement served as the opportunity for the military to re-set its relations with Khan.

In October last year Khan stepped in to resist the transfer of General Faiz Hameed, Director-General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), a close confidante, who Khan wished to retain in the post in order, it was said, to maximise his chances of being returned to power at the time of the

next elections.

The feverish public speculation that followed Khan's decision to delay the notification of Hameed's transfer sealed his fate. After being forced to accept Hameed's transfer, Khan was made to understand that whatever policy differences needed settling between his government and the military, internal military appointments were not subject to negotiation.

Jealously guarded as the military's prerogative, often in defiance of civilian authority, the matter of military appointments has long been a sure-fire way of inflicting maximum damage on recalcitrant civilian governments in Pakistan and hastening their demise – as was most dramatically underscored in the failed attempt by Nawaz Sharif in 1999 to replace General Pervez Musharraf as army chief that invited a military coup.

But it would be quite wrong to read Khan's defiance of the military as an attempt to rejuvenate democracy. On the contrary, Khan and his upwardly mobile middle-class base remain firmly wedded to a brand of authoritarian populism that, much like the military, is openly contemptuous of politics and the language of liberal democracy, which they roundly associated with a "scheming West".

It is not insignificant that in selecting a target to blame for his removal from office, Khan chose to single out the US rather than the military as the chief culprit. Many have rightly read this choice as a canny move by Khan to revive a narrative of victimhood and conspiracy by external forces against Pakistan that has long been known to play well in the country, and not just among Khan's constituency.

But it also suggests that Khan regards his problems as stemming not so much from his partnership with the military, but from the "betrayal" by its current high command who he believes reneged on its promise to guarantee a second term for him. Whatever the outcome of the recent regime change in Pakistan, it is unlikely to herald the onset of a fundamental shift in the country's so-called "civil-military" imbalance.

The writer is Associate Fellow, Asia-Pacific Programme, Chatham House, London



G S BAJPAI, VERSHIKA SHARMA AND MEHAK BAJPAI

THE RIGHT TO REPAIR

India must not be an outlier to the movement to empower the consumer

THOUGH THE WORLD of consumer technology is bustling with electronic goods, options to get them repaired are getting fewer. Repairing is becoming unreasonably expensive or pretty much impossible because of technology becoming obsolete. Companies avoid the publication of manuals that can help users make repairs easily, manufacturers have proprietary control over spare parts and most firms refuse to make their products compatible with those of other firms. Planned obsolescence results in products breaking down too soon and buying a replacement is often cheaper and easier than repairing them.

However, this trend is changing in several parts of the world. Apple recently announced that consumers will have the right to purchase spare components of their products, following an order of the Federal Trade Commission of the United States, which directs manufacturers to remedy unfair anti-competitive practice and asks them to make sure that consumers can make repairs, either themselves or by a third-party agency. The momentum is, however, not so strong in India.

The rationale behind the "right to repair" is that the individual who purchases a product must own it completely. This implies that apart from being able to use the product, consumers must be able to repair and modify the product the way they want to. The absence of repair manuals means that manufacturers hold near-monopoly over repair workshops that charge consumers exorbitant prices. Tech giants contend that security and privacy con-

cerns may crop up if products based on a technology patented by them are opened up by third parties. However, many countries have taken initiatives, adopted policies and even tried to enact legislation that recognise the "right to repair" to reduce electronic waste.

Monopoly on repair processes infringes the customer's "right to choose" recognised by the Consumer Protection Act, 2019. Consumer disputes jurisprudence in the country has also partially acknowledged the right to repair. In *Shamsher Kataria v Honda Sael Cars India Ltd* (2017), for instance, the Competition Commission of India ruled that restricting the access of independent automobile repair units to spare parts by way of an end-user license agreement was anti-competitive. The CCI observed that the practice was detrimental to consumer welfare.

Some jurisdictions offer limited scope for exercising the right to repair. For instance, under the Australian Consumer Law consumers have a right to request that certain goods be repaired if they break too easily or do not work properly. Manufacturers must provide spare parts and repair facilities for a "reasonable" time after an item is purchased. These repair facilities and spare parts are, however, not available after the specified time. There is also no obligation to provide information or diagnostic tools that allow people to repair things independently of manufacturers.

Repair cafés are a remarkable feature of the Australian system. These are free meeting places where volunteer fixers gather to share

their repairing skills with people who bring in items such as bikes, clothing, appliances, and household goods that need mending. The sessions are usually held on a regular (often monthly) basis in cafés, community centres, and at various other venues.

The Massachusetts Motor Vehicle Owners' Right to Repair Act, 2012 requires automobile manufacturers to provide spare parts and diagnostics to buyers and even independent third-party mechanics. The UK also introduced the path-breaking "right to repair" in 2021 that makes it legally binding on manufacturers to provide spare parts.

Big companies often deploy mechanisms that practically forbid other enterprises to repair their products. Digital warranty cards, for instance, ensure that by getting a product from a "non-recognised" outfit, a customer loses the right to claim a warranty.

If people want to fix things in a timely, safe and cost-effective way, whether by doing it themselves or taking it to a service centre of their choice, providing access to spare parts and information is imperative. A well-drafted legislation will not only uphold the right to repair but may aid in striking a much-needed balance between intellectual property and competitive laws in the country.

G S Bajpai is the Vice-Chancellor of Rajiv Gandhi National University of Law, Punjab, where Vershika Sharma is Research Associate. Mehak Bajpai is a Research Scholar at National Law University, Delhi

APRIL 19, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

INDIA-SAUDI TALKS

INDIA AND SOUTH Arabia are to set up a joint commission to give an impetus to their co-operation in economic and technical fields. The ministerial level commission is likely to hold its first meet in October at a venue that will be decided later. The agreement is an outcome of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's recent visit to Saudi Arabia. During the talks, the Saudi side indicated interest in India's economic development and the possibilities of Saudi capital profiting from Indian industrial technology and consultancy services. The Saudi ministers of agriculture, petroleum and finance called on the prime minister sep-

arately. Mrs Gandhi also called on King Khaled and Prince Fahd and discussed bilateral issues and international matters.

GOKAK PANEL REPORT

AN INFORMAL MEETING of the Karnataka cabinet discussed the modalities of the Gokak commission report which recommends the use of Kannada as the first language in the state's schools. A decision on the issue will be taken on April 19. The government it is believed does not want to take a decision before the meeting of the Karnataka legislators scheduled for the morning of April 19. Meanwhile, the Janata

Party and the BJP have decided to boycott the meeting. The Janata leaders feel the meeting will serve no purpose and demanded the full implementation of the report's recommendations.

ERSHAD'S CLAIMS

BANGLADESH'S CHIEF MARTIAL law administration General H M Ershad that he would not deviate from his country's claims to share the Ganga water at the Farakka and ownership of the Talpatty Islands. He said he hoped that India would display a neighbourly attitude in solving problems between the two countries.

The IDEAS PAGE

A new shine to old ties

India and UK have faced legacy issues, fundamental paradoxes. Now, amid a changing strategic scenario, Boris Johnson's visit is well timed to move the relationship forward



RAJA-MANDALA
BY C RAJA MOHAN

THE CURRENT UPBEAT mood on India's relations with Britain stands in contrast to the entrenched pessimism in Delhi and London about their prospects. Although many contentious issues remain, including the visible differences over Ukraine, the outlook for bilateral ties has never looked as good as it is today. The bitter legacies of colonialism had made it impossible for the two sides to pursue a sensible relationship in the past. But over the last couple of years, Delhi and London have begun a promising and pragmatic engagement devoid of sentiment and resentment.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi hosts British premier Boris Johnson this week in India, the moment is ripe to turn the expansive new possibilities — in trade, investment, high technology, defence, and regional cooperation — into concrete outcomes. The two bureaucracies have been working on a roadmap to transform bilateral relations by 2030 under the supervision of External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and British Foreign Secretary Liz Truss. Modi and Johnson can give it a decisive political push.

India's post-colonial engagement with Britain has been riddled with multiple paradoxes. One is the deeply intimate relationship between the two elites that sat uncomfortably with a rough-edged political relationship between the two governments. Delhi's lingering post-colonial resentments and London's unacceptable claim for a special role in the Subcontinent generated unending friction.

The consequences of Partition and the Cold War made it harder for Delhi and London to construct a sustainable partnership. As the two sides make a determined effort to transcend the paradoxes, the regional and international circumstances provide a new basis for mutually beneficial engagement.

Central to this is the under-appreciated role of the US in transforming the bilateral ties between Delhi and London. It was the US that first recognised India's rapidly-growing relative weight in the international system. At the turn of the millennium, Washington unveiled a policy of assisting India's rise. This was based on a bipartisan American consensus that a stronger India will serve US interests in Asia and the world. Over the last two decades, it has led to a quick transformation of US relations with India.

That brings us to the second paradox. At the dawn of Independence, India saw London as the natural interlocutor with an unfamiliar Washington. Britain saw itself as a guide to the US in navigating the intricacies of the post-Partition Subcontinent. That, of course, did not do much good for Britain or the US in India.

Today it is Washington that is setting the pace for Delhi's relationship with London. Britain was much slower in appreciating India's new geopolitical salience. It is now playing catch up. That India's relations with two key countries of the Anglosphere — the US and Australia — could be better than those with Britain is something that would have



C R Sasikumar

been unimaginable in the 1950s. Even more improbable was the proposition that Delhi could build these relations with Washington and Canberra without any reference to London.

That brings us to the third paradox on China's role in shaping India's relations with the West. For Washington, the strategic commitment to assist India's rise was rooted in the recognition of the dangers of a China-dominated Asia. London in the last two decades was moving in the other direction — a full embrace of Beijing. Former British PM David Cameron and the treasury secretary, David Osborne, had declared a "golden decade" in relations with China in 2015. The City of London was ready to merge itself with Asia's rising financial centre — Shanghai. Things were on course until the US pulled the plug on Britain's China romance. Once the American deep state decided to confront Chinese power in the late 2010s, London had to extricate itself from the Chinese Communist Party's powerful spell.

As the US unveiled a new Asian strategy, Britain followed with its own "Indo-Pacific tilt" that helped secure the region against China's muscular policies. This provides a very different regional context for the elevation and consolidation of India's strategic partnership with Britain.

Sceptics will say the regional dynamic is not all favourable to India and the UK, and point to Pakistan — which has long stuck in the throat of India's relations with Britain. Unlike the US and France, which are committed to an "India first" strategy in South Asia, Britain remains torn between its new enthusiasm for India and the inertia of its historic tilt towards Pakistan. Delhi is acutely conscious that London's affection for Pakistan will persist as a complication. But India is confident that Pakistan's relative decline in the region is bound to make it a less weighty factor in India's bilateral relations with Britain. Optimists might even imagine Delhi persuading London to nudge Pakistan towards political moderation and regional reconciliation.

The question of Pakistan brings us to the fourth paradox — the domestic dynamics of Britain that have tended to sour ties with India. For long, the reigning assumption in Delhi was that the Labour Party was empathetic to India while the Tories were not. That ceased to be true quite some time back, as the

Sceptics will say the regional dynamic is not all favourable to India and the UK, and point to Pakistan — which has long stuck in the throat of India's relations with Britain. Unlike the US and France, which are committed to an "India first" strategy in South Asia, Britain remains torn between its new enthusiasm for India and the inertia of its historic tilt towards Pakistan. Delhi is acutely conscious that London's affection for Pakistan will persist as a complication. But India is confident that Pakistan's relative decline in the region is bound to make it a less weighty factor in India's bilateral relations with Britain. Optimists might even imagine Delhi persuading London to nudge Pakistan towards political moderation and regional reconciliation.

Labour Party's vote bank politics at home began to target India and its position on Kashmir. Under Jeremy Corbyn, Labour took it to an extreme. The Tory leadership has rejected this approach and helped build a measure of political confidence with India.

The complications generated by Britain's internal politics are not limited to Pakistan and Kashmir. The bad news is that most of India's internal issues get politicised in Britain. The good news is that Delhi is learning to engage with British domestic politics. Delhi has figured out that the interconnected politics of India and Britain — shaped by the large South Asian diaspora of nearly four million — can be cut both ways.

Although the Tories have drawn close to India since Johnson took charge, the relationship between the Conservatives and the BJP leads us to the fifth paradox. If the Tories are romantic about the Raj, nationalists in India bristle at the British imperial connection. Yet, together they are constructing a new relationship between India and Britain.

For post-Brexit Britain, the romance with the past has an urgent realist basis — making the best of its historic ties. Having walked out of Europe, Britain needs all the partners it can find and a rising India is naturally among the top political and economic priorities. Delhi meanwhile has become supremely self-assured in dealing with London. With the Indian economy set to become larger than Britain's in the next couple of years, Delhi is no longer defensive about engaging Britain.

Even more important, Delhi recognises the value of a deep strategic partnership with London. It may be recalled that former prime minister Inder Kumar Gujral had famously dismissed Britain as a "third rate power" 25 years ago. That statement was as untrue then as it is today. Britain remains the fifth-largest economy, a permanent member of the Security Council, a global financial hub, a centre of technological innovation, and a leading cyber power. It has a significant international military presence and wide-ranging political influence. Realists in Delhi are trying to leverage these British strengths for India's strategic benefit.

The writer is a senior fellow with the Asia Society Policy Institute, Delhi and a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Harrowing accounts of sexual violence by Russian troops in Ukraine are increasing. Impunity must end."
— THE GUARDIAN

The pivotal player

Failure to stop wars and hold superpowers accountable has diminished UN's stature. But don't write off the UN yet



SHASHI THAROOR AND
E D MATHEW

IN THE AFTERMATH of the 2003 American invasion of Iraq, unprovoked and without the United Nations Security Council's approval, many obituaries were written of the global body as it failed to prevent an unwanted war. Almost two decades later, the UN's relevance is yet again debated over similar circumstances as Russia, another P5 member, has invaded Ukraine without the Council's assent or any immediate provocation.

A unilateral war, without the UN's sanction, goes against the fundamentals of its Charter. After all, the organisation was established, in the wake of the devastating World War II, to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war". It was created to give peace a secure foundation and to uphold equal rights of men and women, and of "nations small and large".

Critics point out the impunity with which the five permanent members of the Security Council go about advancing their self-interests unhindered, as long as they do not step on each other's toes. Russia chairing the Council meeting to consider a resolution deplores its own actions was aptly compared to the fox being in charge of the chicken coop. Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy lost no time to demand that a country that commits war crimes should not be allowed to hold a permanent seat in the Security Council. While a change there requires an amendment to the UN Charter that is next to impossible, the General Assembly did vote to suspend Russia's membership of the Human Rights Council.

With President Vladimir Putin ordering his country's nuclear forces to heightened alert status, a red line has been crossed, adding a chilling dimension to the conflict. Belarus quickly abandoning its status as a non-nuclear-weapon country, reaffirming its readiness to host Russian nuclear weapons on its territory, is a fallout of grave concern.

True, the UN could not prevent the conflict in Ukraine, the first war on European soil for many decades. True, the stature of the UN stands diminished. Yet, puzzling as it may sound, the UN has a pivotal role to play amidst the war and it will continue to have a significant role even after the war has ended.

The answer to this puzzle can be found in the 2001 Nobel Peace Prize citation. (So far, the UN, its specialised agencies, related agencies, funds, programmes, and staff have won the prestigious Peace Prize 12 times). Awarding the 100th Peace Prize to then secretary-general, Kofi Annan, the Nobel Committee stated its wish "to proclaim that the only negotiable route to global peace and co-operation goes by way of the United Nations". It was an eloquent testimony to the UN's raison d'être in our troubled world.

Ever since its inception, the UN has been at the forefront of several efforts to reconstruct societies torn apart by conflicts and to maintain ceasefire among warring par-

ties. The first such operation, the UN Truce Supervision Organisation (UNTSO), launched in 1948 following the Arab-Israeli conflict the same year, is still operational. So is the second one, the UN Military Observer Group (UNMOGIP) launched in 1949 to maintain the ceasefire between India and Pakistan in Jammu and Kashmir. Each, for different reasons, can be considered a failure, since neither has been able to produce or maintain peace.

Major success stories from among the more than 70 peacekeeping operations during the past 75 years do exist, however. They include, among others, restoring peace in Cambodia, the Balkans, Timor Leste, and Liberia — all societies torn apart by brutal civil wars. Among the glaring failures are the debacle in Somalia and the inability to stop the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that killed more than 8,00,000 people in just three months.

Nearly 4,200 peacekeepers from some 120 countries have died serving under the UN flag, including more than 160 from India, the highest number for any troop-contributing nation. In 2007, India became the first country to deploy an all-women police contingent to a peacekeeping mission, to war-torn Liberia. India is currently the third-largest troop contributor to UN peace operations with over 5,500 uniformed personnel serving in seven missions.

The tragedy in Ukraine raises immediate questions: Who will stand by the country during its reconstruction? Who will protect the millions of people, internally displaced as well as those who fled the country seeking refuge elsewhere? Europe's worst humanitarian and refugee crisis in decades has witnessed the number of refugees who have fled to neighbouring countries, including Russia, nearing five million.

Humanitarian relief has become the UN's forte, but it is not the whole story. With the war in Ukraine and NATO's increasing military build-up in Eastern Europe, more crises cannot be ruled out. There is no guarantee that the war may stop in Ukraine. A stray incident could ignite more disarray and violence ahead. Issues such as European security and arms control will need to be resolved through dialogue to prevent further disaster. In all these, the UN will have a major role to play.

While the UN will be grappling with the humanitarian crises unleashed by the war, parallel attempts are necessary to restore multilateralism as the norm of the world order. Errant superpowers exempting themselves from that principle will only lead to more catastrophes. Eventually, the very structure of the Security Council, the veto system, and even its membership will need an overhaul to reflect the realities of the 21st century.

However, those who rush to write obituaries for the UN whenever it fails to avert a conflict should not overlook the fact that the only global body of its kind is the sum of its parts and cannot exceed the political will of its member states. As Dag Hammarskjöld, the second Secretary-General, famously said about the organisation: "The UN was not created to take mankind to heaven, but to save humanity from hell."

Tharoor, a former UN Under Secretary-General (2001-2007), is Lok Sabha MP from Thiruvananthapuram, and Mathew is a former spokesman for the United Nations



C UDAY BHASKAR

Lessons from Moskva

For one, sinking of warship exposes Russia's limitations in war against Ukraine

THE SINKING of the Russian navy's Black Sea fleet flagship, Moskva, on Thursday (April 14) is a major setback for Russian President Vladimir Putin and the pre-ordained yet ill-advised war launched by Moscow against Ukraine on February 24.

This war will soon enter its third month and the loss of the Moskva has multilayered significance for both Russia and Ukraine. The symbolism of the sinking of a major naval ship is deeply complex and import-laden the world over. Military history is replete with tales of major naval battles and how the loss of a single ship or a flotilla altered the asymmetry of that particular encounter and perhaps impacted the larger war that the nation in question was engaged in.

The image of a major surface combatant — such as a heavy cruiser like the Moskva (12,500 tons) or an aircraft carrier or a sleek destroyer — steaming into action with the (national) colours hoisted evokes an emotive sentiment of the heroic warrior of yore astride his noble steed going into battle. Names of ships are often embossed and internalised in the national consciousness. Hood for the British, the Bismarck for Germany, Belgrano for Argentina and the Khukri in the Indian case are illustrative.

The sinking of the Moskva whether due to a strike by a Ukrainian missile or a raging fire and the sympathetic explosion of ammu-

nition is moot. But the impact in Russia has been one of considerable shock and dismay. President Putin is reported to have a special association with the Russian navy and the Moskva in particular. Russian state television reported the loss of the Moskva sorrowfully and invoked the spectre of World War III. A well-known news presenter, Olga Skabeyeva, gravely informed her viewers of the sinking of the ship and added: "What it escalated into can safely be called World War III." The anchor further stated: "Now we're definitely fighting against NATO infrastructure, if not NATO itself. We need to recognise that."

Whether this grim prognosis will unfold depends on how President Putin responds to the loss of the Moskva but it is evident that this development has come as a huge morale booster for Ukraine and its beleaguered President Zelenskyy. The Moskva had acquired a degree of notoriety for Ukrainians who saw it as a symbol of Russian oppression and intimidation. Sending it to the bottom of the Black Sea by adroit use of drones (as a decoy to confound the formidable anti-missile defence systems on the Moskva) and accurate cruise missile attacks is being interpreted as a vindication of Ukrainian resolve, innovation and chutzpah. The triumphant victory slogan among Ukrainians is that the Russian bear has been maimed.

Many tactical lessons will be gleaned

from the sinking of the Moskva when more credible information is available. However, a preliminary analysis would suggest that the Russian navy's deployment and protection of its major surface assets in the Black Sea against a determined adversary were inadequate. Drones and cruise missiles are now par for the course and more recent wars and skirmishes in both West Asia and Eurasia/Central Europe have seen the use of such unmanned platforms and precision-guided munitions.

Some commentators are claiming this to be the beginning of the end of the big surface ship. But such certitude would be both hasty and misleading. The Moskva was designed in the mid-1970s and was an "old" ship. The density of ordnance fitted on the upper deck was always deemed to be very high as compared to more modern warships and these are issues that will be scrutinised by professionals.

For India, there are many strands related to the Moskva that will merit review. Foolproof missile defences have always been an elusive military objective and from the Patriot systems deployed in the first Gulf war (for Kuwait) in 1990-91 to the claims now being made about the current technology, the hit ratio is often burnished to a fault.

Military planners are seized of this challenge — the vulnerability of a major platform

at sea against the advent of the nimble, unmanned aerial platform and the stealthy lethality of the latest missiles. Moskva and its final damage control grapple before it sank will provide valuable cues for professionals.

Another area that may warrant tentative comment is the quality of the human resource (HR) of the Russian military — and its navy in particular. Media reports suggest that many of the Russian military personnel pressed into the Ukraine war are recent conscripts and have short periods of service. It is not evident yet as to whether or not Moscow has sent its battle-hardened elite troops into this "special operation". But the current setbacks would indicate that short tenures with minimal training to reduce standing costs are not conducive to the kind of hybrid warfare unspooling in the Ukraine war.

India is grappling with similar challenges — of seeking to reduce the size of its manpower-intensive army through short tenures for soldiers — and thereby ensure fiscal savings and consolidation. The efficacy of such policies may be culled from the Ukraine war, as and when it concludes — hopefully without escalating into the major global conflagration that has been so dramatically unveiled on Russian television.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HINDUS AGAINST HATE

AS HINDUS, WE are called to recognise that the divine resides equally in all living beings. This recognition requires that we affirm the dignity of all beings and practice the virtues of non-injury (ahimsa) and compassion (karuna). As representatives of diverse Hindu traditions with deep histories, we are dismayed to see Hindu leaders in India and abroad openly embracing Hindutva—a century-old political ideology that sees citizens of other faiths as inherently foreign and not qualified to enjoy the full benefits of Indian citizenship. The images and videos of saffron-clad sadhus, sadhvis, and swamis calling for genocidal violence against millions of Indian Muslims in December 2021 are a chilling sight that we cannot ignore. And since the so-called "Dharma Sansad" in Haridwar, we have seen Muslim women put up for "auction" on an app created by college students, and hijab-wearing Muslim girls being denied their right to equal education in Karnataka. The time is long overdue for Hindus around the world to break our collective silence and speak out against this hate that violates the deepest teachings of our tradition.

Abhi Janamanchi, Karuna Mohan, and others

WAIT AND WATCH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Small

steps' (IE, April 18). Pakistan's overtures for reviving talks with India are welcome. The fact that the neighbouring country is acknowledging the need for economic cooperation to replace political compulsions makes one believe that the two nations can make mutually beneficial advancements. Having said this, one needs to wait and watch for the same thought trajectory to continue and take concrete shape while withstanding the expected shrill noises from the unceremoniously disposed Imran Khan and other hawkish groups in Pakistan.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

POLICE SHORTAGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Consult the states' (IE, April 18). There can be no logical denial of the fact that there is an acute shortage of IPS officers in the country. The issue of shortage of IPS officers on central deployment at the level of SP and DIG has a direct bearing on the efficiency of organisations that they are expected to serve. The short-term solution to this issue would be to increase the quota of officers of CAPFs own pool to be considered for positions now exclusively reserved for IPS officers, and the government should discuss with the UPSC the modalities for considering not just state police service officers but also CAPF officers to be promoted to the IPS ranks.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

AMIT SHAH SET TO ATTEND APRIL 29 MEET

Kerala BJP plans drive against rising ‘religious terror’

SHAJUPHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
APRIL 18

KERALA BJP has decided to start a campaign against what it calls “growing” instances of “religious terrorism” in the state, with Union Home Minister Amit Shah slated to attend a meeting of BJP’s state leadership on April 29 to chalk out the action plan.

State BJP president K Surendran on Monday said the party will intensify its campaign against “religious terrorism” in Kerala.

“The party will apprise the Union Home Minister about all issues related to growing religious terrorism, including love jihad (as Hindutva organisations dub inter-faith marriage involving Muslim men), which are detrimental to society,” Surendran said. “In the last six years, 24 BJP-RSS workers have been killed in Kerala, seven of them by the Popular Front of India. Scores of Christian women have been converted to Islam through the barbaric act of love jihad.”

The PFI, created in 2007 through the merger of three Muslim organisations, has pockets of influence in southern India, especially in Kerala and Karnataka.

The BJP’s announcement follows the murder of an RSS worker in Palakkad, allegedly by PFI-SDPI activists, and interfaith marriage of CPI(M) workers in Kozhikode.

The RSS worker was hacked to death on Saturday, a day after a PFI cadre was killed, allegedly by BJP-RSS men in the same region of Palakkad. Surendran denied any role of BJP workers in the PFI activist’s murder and alleged that the ruling CPI(M) has rolled out the red carpet for minority terror-



K Surendran

ism in Kerala. “Minority fundamentalism has grown as a threat to Kerala. The BJP will not go back on its campaign against terrorism even if more of our party workers are killed,” he said.

Sources in state BJP said the party will make another attempt to woo the Christian community, mainly on the “love jihad” issue. Party leaders say only the BJP can embrace “Christian concern in interfaith marriages”, as CPI(M) and Congress have to adopt a balancing act without hurting either side.

Last week, when a CPI(M) worker belonging to Muslim community had married a Christian woman in Kozhikode, her family had blamed the role of external forces. After visiting the woman’s family, BJP leaders had sought an investigation by central agencies. The saffron party alleged that terror outfits were behind the marriage and offered all help to the woman’s family for a probe by central agencies.

Former CPI(M) legislator George M Thomas had initially stated that the interfaith marriage had hurt harmony in the region but made a climbdown later, saying that the party wants to promote interfaith marriages. The BJP has alleged that Thomas was forced to change his stand under duress from communal outfits.

ANTI-NEET BILL

Bill ‘delayed, ignored’ for long, Stalin likely to call all-party meet

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, APRIL 18

THE TAMIL Nadu government may call an all-party meeting to discuss the issue of the Bill against NEET that is pending with Governor R N Ravi for more than 200 days, Chief Minister MK Stalin said on Monday.

Ravi had returned the Bill once and the government sent it back again, Stalin said. The Bill is since pending for nearly 70 days, he pointed out. Noting that a Bill that was unanimously passed by the Assembly is lying idle for over 210 days at the Raj Bhavan, Stalin said, “It is delayed... ignored...”

In such a scenario, Stalin, in the Assembly on Monday, said, “We cannot afford to attend a tea party organised at the same Raj Bhavan campus, because attending that would be an insult to people of Tamil Nadu; an insult to the constitutional values of the Assembly.”

Stalin was referring to a government decision last week to boycott events, including a tea party organised by the Governor at Raj Bhavan.

Stalin said he also wrote to Governor Ravi explaining all these. “More precisely, there are absolutely no personal issues between me and Governor Ravi... our relationship is very cordial. He praised us a lot for governance. Basically, he is a friendly man who gives us respect, and we also give him due respect.” These, he said, are “values and

EXPLAINED
E Pending for long

THE TN Admission to Undergraduate Medical Degree Courses Bill, passed by the Assembly on September 13, 2021, was returned by the Governor to the state government on February 1, 2022 for reconsideration. On February 8, 2022, the Bill was adopted again by the Assembly and was sent to the Raj Bhavan. It is pending since.

traditions we have been keeping in this state for decades”.

However, Stalin added, he places interests of the state above all this. “So, as a Governor, he should forward the anti-NEET Bill to the President of India. Delaying that is not in the interests of the state. He is not sending it to the President, which means he is insulting not only me but the people of Tamil Nadu,” he said.

“The single agenda before me is to protect the interests of the state and serve the people...,” Stalin said. He said there were unconfirmed reports that Ravi had finally sent the files about the Bill to the President. “If not, we will take further decisions by calling an all-party meeting, if required,” he said.

TN ministers skip event presided over by Governor

Chennai: Two Tamil Nadu Ministers on Monday skipped a university convocation attended by State Governor R N Ravi.

The incident came on a day when CM M K Stalin told the Assembly that the ruling DMK boycotted the ‘At Home’ reception organised by the Raj Bhavan last week due to the pendency of the anti-NEET Bill adopted by the House earlier.

Ravi, also the Chancellor of Annamalai University, presided over the 84th convocation of the well-known varsity here. But, Higher Education Minister K Ponmudy and his colleague MRK Panneerselvam (agriculture) gave the event a miss, though they were supposed to attend the function. Panneerselvam, later, said the two Ministers did not participate over the NEET issue. **PTI**

Punjab, Haryana set to miss wheat target

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA & SUKHBIR SIWACH
JALANDHAR, CHANDIGARH,
APRIL 18

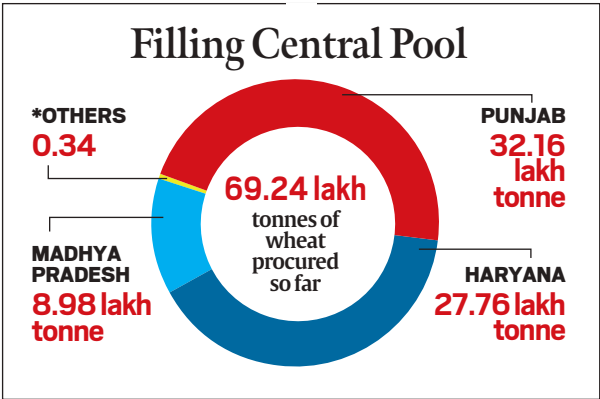
PUNJAB AND Haryana, the two major contributors of wheat to the central pool, are set to miss their procurement targets this Rabi season with multiple factors hitting the arrival of wheat in mandis in both states.

Apart from excessive heat in March hitting crop yield, several farmers are holding their crop back in hope of further spike in international prices bringing in better returns. The global demand for Indian wheat is expected to rise amid Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, but major wheat exporters. Private players too are picking more wheat than expected in both states.

PUNJAB

Punjab, which was the biggest contributor to the central pool last year, had set itself a target to procure 130 lakh tonnes of wheat this season. However, the unusual surge in temperatures in March led to shrivelling of grain that is expected to bring down yield by around 15%. Punjab’s total wheat production, which used to be 170 to 175 lakh tonnes earlier, is likely to settle between 140 to 150 lakh tonnes this year.

Paramvir Singh (24), a young farmer, said that he has sold just



one-third of his produce and is holding back the rest.

“This time, the yield is very less and we would not be able to meet the expenses. So, we have decided to keep maximum produce with us to sell it later, expecting a price higher than the MSP (Rs 2,015 per quintal) in the coming days,” said Paramvir.

Another farmer, Abjinder Singh Sangha of village Gowara in Malerkotla, said that he has decided to hold 25% of his total produce for now. “This year there would be huge demand of wheat in the global market due to the war between Russia and Ukraine as both the countries have 25% share of wheat in the export market,” said Sangha. He said farmers are acting to make up for the loss due to yield loss.

So far, government agencies in Punjab have only purchased

54.74 lakh tonnes out of targeted 130 lakh tonnes, which comes to 42% of the target. Currently, around 7 to 8 lakh tonnes of wheat is coming to the state’s mandis daily. A senior officer in the state Punjab Food and Civil Supplies Department said the procurement this season would be around 100 lakh tonnes only. Private buyers too are picking wheat from both inside and outside the mandis at a premium of Rs 5-10 on the MSP declared by the government. While last year they had purchased just 1.17 lakh tonnes in the entire season, this year already they have picked 3.16 lakh tonnes in Punjab till date.

In 2021, government agencies had procured 132.08 lakh tonnes, 2 lakh tonnes more than the target in the 34 days Rabi season that began on April 10.



WELCOMING THE GUEST

Mauritius Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth during his arrival at Rajkot Airport on Monday. Jugnauth is in India on an eight-day visit, which began on Sunday, to strengthen ties between the two countries. Chirag Chotaliya

Integrated command centres in all 100 smart cities by August 15: Puri

ANISHA DUTTA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

OF THE 100 cities being developed under the Smart Cities Mission (SCM), 80 have already set up Integrated Command and Control Centres, while the rest will have them by August 15, Housing Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said Monday.

Integrated Command and Control Centres or ICCCs are a key component of the Smart Cities project, which aims to develop 100 citizen-friendly, self-sustainable urban settlements. “Work has begun in almost all government-funded projects in the Smart City Mission, and projects under SCM will be complete by next year,” Puri said, adding the projects being executed under SCM are the “fastest among government schemes” despite Covid.



Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri at an event in Surat on Monday. Hanif Malek

Puri was addressing the three-day ‘Smart Cities, Smart Urbanization’ conference in Surat organised by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs in association with Surat Smart City Corporation Development Ltd as part of the central government’s Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav.

Designed for real-time monitoring, the ICCCs were initially aimed at controlling and monitor-

ing water and power supply, sanitation, traffic movement, integrated building management, city connectivity and Internet infrastructure. However, they will now also be linked to the Home Ministry’s Crime and Criminal Tracking Networks and Systems or CCTNS. These command centres also functioned as war rooms during Covid-19.

With the Union government preparing a 60-point action plan following PM Narendra Modi’s meeting with secretaries in September, the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry has also begun work to finalise its recommendation for providing ICCCs as a service to states and smaller cities. *The Indian Express* had reported on November 27, 2021.

The ministry aims to implement a pilot project across UP, Maharashtra, Karnataka, MP, Rajasthan and Tamil Nadu.

Delhi-based Bluecraft Digital Foundation, Ilayaraja wrote, “Both these striking personalities succeeded against odds that people from socially disempowered sections of the society face. Both saw poverty and stifling social structures from close quarters and worked to dismantle them, but both are also practical men who believe in action rather than mere thought exercises.”

He added, “Pro-women legislation such as the banning of triple talaq and the rise in sex ratio due to the historic ‘Beti Bachao Beti Padhao’ movement, which has brought in social transformation, is something that Dr BR Ambedkar would have been proud of.”

With the foreword fuelling speculation that the BJP may nominate him to the Rajya Sabha, Ilayaraja drew the ire of those opposed to the saffron party.

Born in 1943 in Pannaipuram village near Madurai, Ilayaraja, fondly referred to as “Raaja sir” in his inner circle, got his first exposure to music and compositions in his teenage years through lines penned by his elder brother Pavalar Varadarajan, a member

HARYANA

In the first 17 days of wheat procurement in Haryana, the state’s mandis have witnessed nearly 20% less wheat arrival compared to last year. Haryana has set itself a target to procure 85 lakh tonnes of wheat this Rabi season. However, state government officials believe that the final procurement would be around 10-15% less than the declared target. Some officials also feared that this gap could touch even 25% by the time procurement drive wraps up on May 15.

Again the state agencies blame adverse weather conditions for the low yield, which they claim have hit arrivals in mandis.

A senior officer of Haryana Agriculture and Farmers Welfare Department confirmed that a section of farmers is holding back wheat, anticipating a hike in the prices. More acreage being dedicated to mustard this year is also among the factors contributing to less wheat production.

According to the official figures, till April 17 this year, 32.91 lakh tonnes has reached state’s mandis, while as much as 41.11 lakh tonnes of wheat was procured till this day last year.

A farmer from Fatehabad, Satyawan Singh, said: “Farmers may hold back stock up to 5 per cent this time while the remaining 25 per cent wheat is likely to be stored by traders. Farmers can’t hold back a lot of wheat.”

Communal polarisation BJP ploy to distract people from real issues: Cong

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

HOURS AFTER BJP president J P Nadda lashed out at the opposition parties, the Congress hit back saying it is the saffron party and its government which continue to feed people the “opium of communal polarisation” by “inciting violence and hatred” to distract their attention from price rise, unemployment and a shattered hope for the future.

Talking about the politics of polarisation, Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said, “While parts of India are ravaged by riots and violence why is the Prime Minister so conspicuously silent? Why does he not denounce hatred no matter where it comes from? Why do perpetrators of hate get political patronage? Why are those who incite violence rewarded and, most of all, why are youth being incentivised to attack and abuse? Your attempts to perpetuate hate, stoke communal tension and divide are dangerous for our nation and our people.”

“As India celebrates the 75th year of country’s Independence, the last eight years will be marked in India’s history for a vicious attack on the Constitution,” he said. Surjewala said the “BJP and its government have been and are at war with its own people, be it the youth, the women, the poor, the Scheduled Tribes, the Scheduled Castes, backwards and the minorities”.

He asked Nadda whether he does not have any remorse about “letting 23-crore Indians slip into poverty of which 4.7-crore Indians have slipped to extreme poverty”.

The party also accused the government of having compromised the national security. “Even today... Chinese continue to occupy important strategic places within our territory in Depsang Plains and Gogra Hot Springs,” Surjewala said.

Govt procures 69 LMT wheat in current season

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

THE CENTRE has procured 69.24 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of wheat for over Rs 13,000 crore till April 17 during the rabi marketing season (RMS) 2022-23, Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution said on Monday. In a statement, the Ministry said that 5.86 lakh farmers with Minimum Support Price value of Rs 13,951.41 crore have benefited so far from the wheat procurement during the current season.

According to the Ministry, wheat procurement has commenced in nine states—Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Chandigarh, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat and Rajasthan.

A maximum quantity of 32.16 LMT has been procured from Punjab, followed by Haryana (27.76 LMT) and Madhya Pradesh (8.98 LMT). So far, 2.56 lakh farmers in Punjab, 2.15 lakh in Haryana and 1.08 lakh in Madhya Pradesh have availed the MSP for their wheat crop.

The MSP of wheat for the RMS 2022-23 is Rs 2,015 per quintal.

Last year, the government had procured a record 433 LMT wheat. This year the total wheat procurement may be lower due to the rising overseas demand and a possible shortfall in the output due to sudden rise in temperature in March. The Centre has, however, pegged the wheat procurement to reach at 444 LMT this year.

As on April 1, 2022, wheat stock in the central pool stood at 189.8 LMT, which is almost 2.5 times of the buffer stock requirement of 74.60 LMT at the beginning of the new financial year.

There has been an increase in demand for Indian wheat in the overseas markets amid Russia-Ukraine conflict. India has set a target of 10 million tons of wheat export in 2022-23. According to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India has exported a record 7 million tons of wheat in 2021-22, valued at \$2.05 billion. Out of the total shipment around 50% of wheat was exported to Bangladesh in the last fiscal.

“Growth in wheat exports is driven mostly by the demand from countries such as Bangladesh, United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Oman and Malaysia,” the Ministry said in a statement last week.



BJP president J P Nadda in Karnataka’s Hampi on Monday. PTI

‘Petty politics’, Nadda hits out at Opp in open letter

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

LASHING OUT at the “petty politics” of the opposition parties, BJP President J P Nadda on Monday alleged that a group of parties has “come together yet again” to wage “a direct onslaught on the spirit of our nation and cast aspersions on our hardworking citizens”.

Nadda, who unleashed a sharp attack on them in an open letter to citizens, asked the opposition why have they “forgotten the shameful happenings in Karauli, Rajasthan,” and questioned their “haunting silence” on the issue. He was referring to the developments in Karauli following the alleged stone-pelting at a bike rally passing through a Muslim-dominated area on the Hindu New Year on April 2, leading to incidents of violence.

Nadda’s open letter comes in the wake of a group of opposition parties issuing a joint statement, targeting PM Narendra Modi for his “silence” over the recent incidents of communal violence.

Nadda said the youth in the country want “opportunities not obstacles, development not divisions” while urging the parties to “change track and embrace politics of development”.

Taking a strong exception to coming together of opposition

parties to criticise the BJP over the recent incidents of hate speech and communal violence, Nadda recalled the incident of police firing on “Hindu sadhus sitting outside Parliament who had marched to Delhi with the demand of banning cow slaughter” in November 1966. Nadda listed the incidents of communal violence from 1969 to 2013.

“Let me remind everyone that it was the UPA controlled by an extra-constitutional NAC that brought in the most horrific communal violence Bill which stopped to new lows of vote bank politics by even UPA standards,” the BJP president wrote in the open letter. He added that the “most horrific massacres against Dalits and Tribals” have taken place under the Congress regimes.

In their joint statement, which followed an article Congress president Sonia Gandhi wrote for *The Indian Express* in which she alleged “fear, deception and intimidation were pillars of Modi government”, the leaders, including Sonia, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee, Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin, Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren and NCP chief Sharad Pawar, have expressed concern over “the manner in which issues relating to food, dress, faith, festivals and language are being deliberately used by the ruling establishment to polarise society”.

Defending the music maestro, BJP state president K Annamalai said those upset with Ilayaraja were powerbrokers and claimed that the “ecosystem created by the DMK” would not be able to throttle the composer’s voice.

“What crime did Ilayaraja commit?” asked former state BJP chief and Union minister L Murugan.

9 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 57,166.74 ▼ 1,172.19 (2.01%) NIFTY: 17,173.65 ▼ 302.00 (1.73%) NIKKEI: 26,799.71 ▼ 293.48 HANG SENG: 21,518.08 ▲ 143.71 FTSE: 7,616.38 ▲ 35.58 DAX: 14,163.85 ▲ 87.41

International market data till 1900 IST

SECTOR WATCH
FOOD DELIVERYWhy have rivals
Swiggy, Zomato
come together to
fund an SaaS firmPRANAV MUKUL
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

RIVALS IN the food-delivery space Swiggy and Zomato have together invested in SaaS company UrbanPiper, which provides a single-window platform to restaurants to help run their operations. The Bengaluru-based startup, which counts marquee restaurant chains like McDonald's, Pizza Hut, KFC, Subway, Taco Bell, Rebel Foods among its customer base, raised \$24 million in its Series B funding round, it said.



Delivery executives in Mumbai. Swiggy, Zomato invested in UrbanPiper. File

EXPLAINED

REGGATORS onto a single dashboard and connect it with their points of sale resulting in a 70 percent decrease in order failure," it said. The company, which has over 150 employees in India, plans to increase its headcount to over 250 in the next 1 year.

Investment round

The round was led by existing investors Sequoia Capital India and Tiger Global with Swiggy and Zomato being on-boarded as new investors. "A slew of reputed angel investors also participated in the funding round including Pankaj Chaddah (Shyft), Ankur Nagori (Curefoods), Saahil Goel and Vishesh Khurana (Shiprocket), Khadim Bhatti and Vara Kumar (Whatfix), among others," the company said.

It added that currently it processes over 18 per cent of all online food orders placed each month in India, and has grown over 10 times in the last two years. "Currently, a restaurant signs up with an average of 6-10 different online channels/aggregators – making it challenging to manage multiple tablets/dashboards. Through UrbanPiper, restaurants can integrate all these ag-

The significance

Sequoia India's principal Shraeyansh Thakur said: "Due to pandemic-led disruptions, merchants now increasingly want to adopt digital channels and upgrade their operations. UrbanPiper is at the forefront of this digital transformation and is strategically positioned to build infrastructure connecting digital players to merchants in the F&B ecosystem..." The investment round also assumes significance because it brings rivals Swiggy and Zomato on the same table for the first time. Both the companies have been strategically funding startups albeit with different future roadmaps. Swiggy recently led a \$180 million investment round in bike aggregator platform Rapido, while Zomato agreed to buy Blinkit, in addition to buying a stake in food robotics firm Mukunda Foods.

RBI 'STATE OF THE ECONOMY' REPORT

'Global policy tightening may precipitate rocketing inflation'

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, APRIL 18

CAUTIONING ON the 'grim' near-term global outlook, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday said the surge in commodity prices is already posing inflation risks, especially through the conduit of surging imports.

"Rapidly widening trade and current account deficits co-existing with portfolio capital outflows weigh on external sustainability, although the strength of underlying fundamentals and the stock of international reserves provide buffers," the RBI said in its 'State of the economy' report. Retail inflation has gone up to 6.95 per cent in March. Food and beverages in-



The RBI, Mumbai. Near-term global outlook appears grim, it said in a report. File

flation was the main driver, rising to 7.5 per cent in March from 5.9 per cent in February, the RBI report said. "India too is experiencing tremors from these (global) developments. The fallout of the war and retaliatory sanctions is already evident in inflation prints and balance of payments developments," the RBI report said. While the RBI

kept the repo rate unchanged in the April policy review, it has initiated the process of normalisation of the accommodative policy.

According to the RBI, the near-term global outlook appears grim, caught up in a vortex of geo-political risks materialising rapidly, strained supply chains and the quickening pace of monetary policy normalisation. "Emerging market economies are bracing up to contend with swift shifts in risk sentiments and tightening of global financial conditions that could produce real economy consequences which may thwart incipient recoveries or even precipitate rocketing inflation and economic downturns," it said.

"The Indian economy is not immune to these negative exter-

nalities," the report said.

India faces these challenges from a position of strength built on broadened vaccine coverage, financial sector resilience, robust export and remittances and fiscal reprioritisation to spur capital spending on infrastructure, it said. "Going forward, spurring private investment remains a key thrust area for sustaining growth on a durable basis," the report said.

As India enters Samvat 2079, the third wave seems to be behind and, with the removal of all curbs, alongside a broadening of vaccination, economic activity is returning to speed, it said. "Most sectors are reaching or have exceeded pre-pandemic levels. Bank credit has gathered pace and the job market is gathering steam..."

SAT admits
Ramkrishna
plea against Sebi

Mumbai: The Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) has admitted former NSE MD-CEO Chitra Ramkrishna's plea against an order by Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) relating to governance lapses at the bourse and directed her to deposit an amount of Rs 2 crore.

It also directed NSE to deposit Rs 4.73 crore towards leave encashment and deferred bonus of Ramkrishna in an escrow account as against Sebi's direction where the amount was to be parked in the Investor Protection Fund Trust. In an order dated February 11, Sebi slapped a penalty of Rs 3 crore on Ramkrishna for alleged governance lapses in a case related to the appointment of Anand Subramanian as the Group Operating Officer and Advisor when she was at the helm of NSE as its MD&CEO. Sebi had asked NSE to forfeit the excess leave encashment of Rs 1.54 crore and the Rs 2.83 crore deferred bonus of Ramkrishna. ENS

'Loan assets securitised by
NBFCs jump 43% in FY22'

Total value of loan assets securitised by NBFCs, including housing finance firms, rose around 43% last fiscal to Rs 1,25,000 crore, an Icrs Ratings report said

₹87,300 cr

amount of loans securitised in FY21 by NBFCs (non-banking financial companies) and HFCs (housing finance companies)

Securitisation refers to pooling of cash-flow-producing assets such as mortgages, loans, bonds and subsequent issuance of securities in the capital markets backed by these collateral pools



Growth in securitisation volumes in FY22 was on account of:
■ Lower base of FY21
■ Quick recovery in economic activities after 2nd Covid wave
Source: Icrs Ratings/PTI

Securitisation volume in FY24 is expected to touch pre-Covid level of ₹2 lakh crore

MINDTREE IN EXCHANGE FILING

'Merger talks with L&T arm speculative'

Mumbai: Stock markets were on Monday abuzz with "speculative" talks about the merger of Larsen & Toubro Infotech and Mindtree Ltd, both belonging to L&T group.

L&T acquired 61 per cent in Mindtree in July 2019 and had been categorised as the promoter. L&T holds 74.05 in L&T Infotech.

"We wish to clarify that news reports of a merger between

Mindtree Ltd. and L&T Infotech are speculative in nature," Mindtree said. "In this regard, we would like to state that there is no information available with the company as of today, which is required to be reported under extant SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, and which may have a bearing on the stock price of the company,"

Mindtree said in an exchange filing. "The share price movement on April 18, 2022, was in line with that of industry peers as well as the day's market indices," it said. "At present, we do not have any information that is required to be disclosed in accordance with the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015," L&T Infotech said in a filing. ENS

SBI, others
hike MCLR;
EMIs to rise

Mumbai: Equated monthly instalments (EMIs) on home, car and other loans for borrowers are set to rise with several banks, led by SBI, raising the marginal cost of funds based lending rates (MCLR).

SBI hiked the MCLR by 10 bps across tenures. MCLR is the lowest rate that a bank or lender can offer. Other banks including Bank of Baroda, Axis Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank also raised their MCLR by 5 bps each across tenures. MCLR is applicable to fresh corporate loans and floating rate loans taken before October 2019. SBI's 1-year MCLR stands at 7.1 per cent, slightly lower than the 7.25 per cent at HDFC Bank, PNB and ICICI Bank. BoB's 1-year MCLR is 7.35 per cent, while Axis Bank's is 7.4 per cent. The RBI recently kept repo rate steady at 4 per cent, announcing its plan to gradually withdraw accommodative policy. ENS

MoS IT: Leading global names
interested in India as chip hub

New Delhi: The government is expecting to sign a "significant" number of MoUs with players in the semiconductor ecosystem during India's first global semiconductor conference that is scheduled for later this month, said Minister of State for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said on Monday.

RAJEEV CHANDRASEKHAR
MoS, Electronics & IT File

The conference, called Semicon India 2022, will be organised in Bengaluru from April 29 to May 1. "The interest that is being

shown by leading names of the world in India as a design, manufacturing, packaging, display, compound fab hub is unprecedented," he said. The Centre is expecting some of the biggest names in the semiconductor space to participate in the conference, Chandrasekhar said.

In December last year, the Union Cabinet had approved a Rs 76,000-crore policy programme for semiconductor and display manufacturing ecosystem. ENS

ED attaches assets worth
₹757 cr of Amway India

Cooperating with authorities 'towards fair legal, logical conclusion of outstanding issues': Firm

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has attached assets worth over Rs 757 crore of one of the country's most known multi-level marketing (MLM) and direct-selling companies, Amway India, as part of a money-laundering investigation.

The agency issued a statement on Monday, alleging that the company was perpetrating a "scam" by running a pyramid "fraud" in the guise of direct-selling MLM network. "The entire focus of the company is about propagating how members can become rich by becoming mem-

bers. There is no focus on the products.

"Products are used to masquerade this MLM pyramid fraud as a direct-selling company," the ED alleged. An Amway spokesperson said they are cooperating with the authorities "towards a fair legal, and logical conclusion of the outstanding issues". Amway said the ED action was with regard to an investigation dating back to 2011 and since then, the company has been cooperating with the agency and has shared all the information sought by it from time to time. PTI

Canon's new demand segment:
Streaming of religious servicesNANDAGOPAL RAJAN
NEW DELHI, APRIL 18

CANON, A global leader in camera and imaging technologies, is seeing the pandemic trigger surge in new demands. Manabu Yamazaki, CEO and president, Canon India, said the demand for high-definition, highly functional equipment to stream religious services is something they had never before imagined as an independent vertical.

He told indianexpress.com, "This is probably where we realise maybe some of these

professional equipment need even more marketing investments to make itself known to those new groups of customers," adding that online education and the wedding industry is also pushing demand for professional video equipment.

Yamazaki said there are "encouraging signs of people trying to reinvest in the market and restart this whole operation and even migrate into something new", adding that there are signs of new businesses flourishing in the market.

Full report on
www.indianexpress.com

GOLD

₹53,461



RUPEE

₹76.26/USD



OIL

\$106.03



SILVER

₹69,932

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of April 15

TOTAL INDUSTRY PREMIUM UP AT ₹2.2L CR

FY22: Pvt insurers
gain market share,
health top portfolioGEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, APRIL 18

COMING OUT of the stress created by the Covid-19 pandemic, the domestic general insurance industry — led by state-owned New India Assurance (NIA) — has ended FY22 with a premium of Rs 2,201 lakh crore, up 11 per cent over Rs 1,98 lakh crore premium mobilised in FY21. However, latest Irdai data shows that private players are fast gaining market share and catching up with four public sector players which hitherto dominated the sector.

Thanks to the pandemic and stagnant motor third party premium for the last two years, in FY22, health portfolio has topped the motor business to become the largest segment in the industry for the first time in the history of Indian general insurance industry. The total health premium of the industry has risen by 26 per cent to Rs 66,167 crore (Rs 52,689 crore in the year ago) till February 2022 while total motor premium (own damage and motor third party motor premium) has expanded only by 3.62 per cent to Rs 63,052 crore (Rs 60,851 crore a year ago) during the period. Crop insurance premium which has fallen by five per cent to Rs 26,654 crore till February 2022, is still the third largest portfolio of the Indian general insurance industry.

While NIA raised its market share to 14.76 per cent (14.33 per

'20-46 days for
health claim
settlement'

Mumbai: Settlement of health insurance reimbursement claims after discharge on an average takes about 20 to 46 days from the date of intimation to the insurer, reveals a survey. Conducted by insurance player SecureNow, it showed patients are quite prompt in informing the insurer of the claim, with most intimating the concerned insurance company within a week of hospitalisation. ENS

cent in FY21), all four main line general insurers — NIA, National Insurance, United India Insurance, Oriental Insurance and National Insurance — lost 212 basis points of their market share to private players and have a total share of 34 per cent as of FY22-end.

Five standalone private health insurance companies, led by Star Health & Allied Insurance Company, saw a 32.53 per cent rise in gross direct premium income in FY22 to Rs 20,880.08 crore against Rs 15,755.18 crore a year ago. For the first time, private player ICICI Lombard General Insurance, with a premium of Rs 17,976 crore emerged India's second largest general insurer. Full report on
www.indianexpress.com

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY - e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No : T No.11/2022-23/SE/Q
Laying of pumping main and gravity main to OHSRs, distribution network in Erour Edamon road and its by roads.
● EMD : Rs. 2,00,000/-
● Tender fee : Rs. 10000+1800 (18% GST-it will be paid by the contractor on reverse charge basis while filing his returns) ● Last Date for submitting Tender : 09-05-2022, 02:00 pm ● Phone : 0474 2745293
● Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in | www.etenders.kerala.gov.in
KWA-JB-GL-6-70-2022-23
Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Kollam

GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

Tender Notice No.01/2022-23/SE(PD-3)/EE(PD-4)/DB/GVMC/
Dt:16-04-2022 (Package-I&II)
1.Number of Works : 02 (Two)
2.Value of works (ECV) : Rs.16.98 Crores
3.Down loading Starting Date : 16-04-2022 @ 5.00 PM
4.Down loading End Date : 04-05-2022 @ 4.00 PM
5.Last date for Submission of bid : 04-05-2022 @ 5.00 PM
Note: Further details at <http://www.apcprocurement.gov.in>
C/o the Executive Engineer (PD-IV) Division Commissioner GVMC

NMDC Limited
(A Government of India Enterprise)
Bailadila Iron Ore Mine, Kirandul Complex,
Kirandul-494556, Dist.-South Bastar Dantewada, Chhattisgarh.
CIN : L3100TG1958GOI001674

No. BIOM/KDL/CTRT/OTE/2022/001 Dated: 18-04-2022

Press Notification

E-OPEN TENDER ENQUIRY

Bailadila Iron Ore Mines (BIOM), Kirandul Complex, Kirandul, CG invite offers in 2 bid system from the eligible bidders for the following works:

Sl. No.	Name of work	Downloading of document from website	Est'd. Value of work (Rs. in Lakhs)	Last Date & time of bids submission
1.	Face-lifting work of Type - I/NC/DS Quarters from I/NC/DS/193 to I/NC/DS/288 at Kirandul Township.	29-03-2022	127.41	26-04-2022 15:00 hours
2.	Face-lifting work of Type - I/NC/DS Quarters from I/NC/DS/385 to I/NC/DS/488 at Kirandul Township.	28-03-2022	137.53	26-04-2022 15:00 hours
3.	Construction of Retaining wall and Channel for Slope protection work behind Godown Gallery TR-26 and TR-34 of BC-1117 at Dep. 11B.	28-03-2022	197.69	25-04-2022 15:00 hours
4.	Construction of Ladies Rest Shelter at SP-II and 11B Mines, BIOM, Kirandul Complex.	28-03-2022	46.75	25-04-2022 15:00 hours
5.	Loading and transportation of Fine Ore or 10.00 LT.	28-03-2022	123.90	25-04-2022 15:00 hours
6.	Construction of Multi Gym and Yog Shala at Kirandul.	29-03-2022	198.99	28-04-2022 15:00 hours
7.	Expansion of Dumper platform Dep. 14 for operation of 100 ton Dumpers.	28-03-2022	41.18	26-04-2022 15:00 hours
8.	Miscellaneous works at Baila Club.	29-03-2022	62.14	29-04-2022 15:00 hours

The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from 28/03-03/2022; 11:00 Hrs. from following website links:

1. NMDC website - <https://www.nmdc.co.in/nmdctender/default.aspx>
2. Central Public Procurement Portal - <https://www.eprocure.gov.in/epublishapp> and search tender through tender enquiry number.
3. MSTC-Portal : https://www.mstcecommerce.com/eprochome/nmdc/buyer_login.jspwww.nmdc.co.in

The bidders are requested to submit their bids online through MSTC Limited website. The details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The Bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date. For further clarifications, bidders may contact General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, BIOM, Kirandul Complex, email : contract.kdl@nmdc.co.in

For and behalf of NMDC Limited



Kolkata

TOPOF THE WORLD



Rally opposing joint military exercises in Seoul Monday. AP

NORTH KOREA Missile tests: US, S Korea urge fresh talks

Seoul: The US special envoy for North Korea said on Monday that Washington and Seoul agreed on the need for a strong response to North Korea's recent spate of missile tests, though they remain open to dialogue with the country. Sung Kim flew to South Korea on Monday for talks two days after North Korea conducted a new type of missile test in its 13th round of weapons firing this year. Experts say North Korea wants to advance its weapons arsenal and wrest concessions such as sanctions relief from its rivals. Weapons tested include nuclear-capable missiles able to target both the US mainland and its allies, such as South Korea and Japan. AP

ISRAEL Intercepted rocket fired from Gaza: Military

Jerusalem: The Israeli military says it intercepted a rocket fired from the Gaza Strip into Israeli territory on Monday. It was the first time in months that a rocket has been fired into Israel from the blockaded Palestinian territory controlled by the Hamas militant group. Earlier on Monday, Israeli troops shot and injured two Palestinians during clashes that broke out during an arrest raid in occupied West Bank. Israeli military said it arrested 11 Palestinians in operations across territory overnight. AP

IRAN Tehran warns Israel on making 'tiniest move'

Tehran: Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi on Monday warned that Israel will be targeted by his country's armed forces if it makes "the tiniest move" against Iran. He spoke as talks stalled in Vienna over a deal to rein in Iran's nuclear capabilities, which Tehran says are used for peaceful purposes. Israel opposes a deal, saying it does not do enough to curb Iran's nuclear programme or its military activities across the region. "If the tiniest move by you happens against nation of Iran, center of the Zionist regime will be destination of our armed forces," Raisi said, referring to Tel Aviv. AP

MISSILES ALSO SLAMMED INTO KHARKIV; 7 KILLED IN LVIV

Russia strikes Lviv, prepares for assault in eastern Ukraine



A tyre shop destroyed by an airstrike in Lviv on Monday. AP

YURAS KARMANAU LVIV, APRIL 18

RUSSIAN FORCES launched missile attacks on the western city of Lviv and pounded a multitude of other targets across Ukraine on Monday in what appeared to be an intensified bid to grind down the country's defences ahead of an all-out assault on the east.

At least seven were reported killed in Lviv, where plumes of black smoke rose over a city that has seen only sporadic attacks during almost two months.

In other developments, a few thousand Ukrainian troops, by Russia's estimate, remained holed up at a mammoth steel mill in Mariupol, the last known pocket of resistance in the devastated southern port city after seven weeks of bombardment.

And Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy submitted a filled-out questionnaire in the first step toward obtaining accelerated membership in the EU — a desire that has been a source of irritation to Russia for years. Zelenskyy, though, has offered to

drop any effort to join NATO, one of the Kremlin's key demands. The Russian missile strikes on Lviv hit three military infrastructure facilities and an auto mechanic shop, as per region's governor, Maksym Kozzytskyy. He said wounded included a child.

A hotel sheltering Ukrainians who had fled fighting in other parts of the country was among the buildings badly damaged, Lviv Mayor Andriy Sadovyi said.

A powerful explosion also rocked Vasylykiv, a town south of the capital of Kyiv that is home to a military air base, according to residents. It was not immediately clear what was hit.

Kharkiv, Ukraine's second-largest city, was hit by shelling that killed at least three people, according to AP journalists on the scene. One of the dead was a woman who appeared to be going out to collect water in the rain.

Military analysts say Russia is increasing its strikes on weapons factories, railways and other infrastructure targets across Ukraine to wear down the country's ability to resist a major ground offensive in the Donbas. AP

Britons captured in Ukraine appear on Russian TV, ask for swap with Putin ally

REUTERS APRIL 18

TWO BRITISH fighters captured in Ukraine by Russian forces appeared on Russian state TV on Monday and asked to be exchanged for a Ukrainian ally of President Putin who is being held by Ukrainian authorities.

It was unclear how freely the two men — Shaun Pinner and Aiden Aslin — were able to talk. Both spoke separately after being prompted by an unidentified man. The footage was broadcast on Rossiya 24 state TV channel. The two men asked British Prime Minister Boris Johnson to exchange them for pro-Russian politician Viktor Medvedchuk. Medvedchuk was shown asking to be swapped, too, in a video released around the same time on Monday by Ukraine's SBU intelligence service via social media.



Shaun Pinner (left) and Aiden Aslin. Reuters

Medvedchuk, in his appeal to Putin and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, asked to be exchanged for the "defenders of Mariupol and its citizens who are there today and have no opportunity for a safe exit through a humanitarian corridor."

Both Pinner and Aslin fought on the Ukrainian side in Mariupol, which is now almost under Russian control apart from the sprawling Azovstal steelworks where some Ukrainian fighters remained holed up.

Shanghai quarantine centre: 24-hr lights, no hot showers

City reports three Covid deaths

ASSOCIATED PRESS BEIJING, APRIL 18

SHANGHAI AUTHORITIES on Monday reported the first Covid-19 deaths. All three people who died were elderly, had underlying diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, and had not been vaccinated against the coronavirus, city Health Commission inspector Wu Ganyu told journalists.

China on Monday said 23,362 people had tested positive for the virus over the previous 24 hours, most of them showing no symptoms and almost all of them in Shanghai. As the cases surge, National



As many as 23,362 people tested positive in China in the past 24 hour. AP

Exhibition and Convention Center, with 50,000 beds, is among more than 100 quarantine facilities set up in Shanghai for people who test positive but have no symptoms.

Beibei sleeps beside thousands of strangers in rows of cots in a high-ceilinged exhibition center. The lights stay on all

night, and the 30-year-old real estate saleswoman has yet to find a hot shower.

Other quarantine sites include temporary prefabricated buildings. Residents of other facilities have complained about leaky roofs, inadequate food supplies and delays in treatment for medical problems.

"We haven't found a place with a hot shower," Beibei said. "Lights are on all night, and it's hard to fall asleep."

"Bathrooms are not clean" at NECC, Beibei said. "So many people use them, and volunteers or cleaners can't keep up." Beibei and her husband were ordered into the massive centre last Tuesday after spending 10 days isolated at home following a positive test. Their 2-year-old daughter, who was negative, went to her grandfather, while her nanny also went into quarantine. AP

DOZENS STILL MISSING SOUTH AFRICA FLOODS TOLL TOUCHES 443

Rescuers searched for dozens of people still missing in South Africa's KwaZulu-Natal province on Sunday after heavy rains in recent days triggered floods and mudslides that have killed 443 people, with a further 63 people unaccounted for. The floods have left thousands homeless, knocked out power and water services and disrupted operations at Durban

Pak court sentences six men to death for lynching Sri Lankan

M ZULQERNAIN LAHORE, APRIL 18

AN ANTI-TERRORISM court in Pakistan's Punjab province on Monday sentenced six men to death and nine others to life imprisonment for their involvement in the lynching of a Sri Lankan national over alleged blasphemy.

Anti-Terrorism Court Lahore Judge Natasha Nasim also handed down two-year rigorous imprisonment each to 72 accused people, including nine juveniles.

The judge, who held the in-camera trial inside high-security Kot Lakhpat Jail on a day-to-day basis, sentenced one accused — Ali Asghar — to 5 years in jail while acquitted another suspect, Bilal. "Of the total 89 suspects, the

EXPLAINED What was the case

A MOB of over 800 men, including supporters of radical Islamist party Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan, allegedly attacked a garment factory and lynched its general manager Priyantha Kumara and set him ablaze for tearing a poster of TLP inscribed with Islamic verses during his inspection of machines in the factory on Dec 3.

ATC on Monday announced its verdict handing down death sen-

tence to six, life imprisonment to nine and two years jail term each to remaining 72 accused for their involvement in lynching and burning the Sri Lankan national," a court official said.

The judge also instructed the six prime suspects, who were sentenced to death, to pay Rs. 2,00,000 as compensation to the legal heirs of the deceased.

The nine accused who were given life imprisonment will have to pay a fine of Rs 2,00,000/- each and Rs 2,00,000/- compensation to the legal heirs of the deceased.

The court official said total 46 prosecution witnesses had recorded their statements against the suspects. The prosecution had sought death penalty for 80 suspects. PTI

PM SEEKS CHINA'S SUPPORT FOR KARACHI CIRCULAR RAILWAY

Shehbaz to take CPEC forward with new vigour: PML-N leader

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, APRIL 18

PRIME MINISTER Shehbaz Sharif will take \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) forward with new vigour, vitality and in a rejuvenated manner, ensuring multifaceted development of the flagship project of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a top leader of the ruling PML-N said. Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, a leader of the ruling Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), made the remarks on Sunday while discussing the future of the Pakistan-China relations and future cross border collaboration in China's CGTN programme 'The Hub' with Wang Guan.

Imran partyman is new PoK 'premier'

Islamabad: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's regional president Sardar Tanveer Ilyas was on Monday elected as new "premier" of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) in an election boycotted by the Opposition. Khan nominated Ilyas as the party's candidate after his hand-picked "premier" Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi resigned on Thursday following a revolt in the ruling party against him. PTI

"In the first day in office as PM, Shehbaz Sharif met the Chinese Acting Ambassador and told her

Boris faces new 'partygate' claims ahead of India visit

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LONDON, APRIL 18

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson is facing new allegations on Monday around "partygate", the scandal surrounding government officials breaching Covid rules with illegal lockdown gatherings, and will be hoping to escape some of the heat when he leaves for India on Thursday.

Johnson has already been fined for one such party for his birthday in June 2020 along with UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak.

However, according to UK media reports, Johnson is believed to have been linked with around six of the 12 lockdown parties under police investigation. "The Sunday Times" quoted a source as saying that a leaving drinks gathering for Number 10 Downing Street's outgoing director of communications, Lee Cain, in November 2020 was allegedly "instigated" by Johnson.

It has led to renewed Opposition calls for Johnson, 57, to step down. Labour Party Deputy Leader Angela Rayner said that "if the latest reports are true", it means "not only did the PM attend parties, but he had a hand in instigating at least one of them"

LANKA CRISIS: PM MAHINDA PART OF TEAM

Gotabaya appoints new Cabinet, calls for system change

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO, APRIL 18

SRI LANKAN President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Monday appointed a new 17-member Cabinet that excluded his close relatives except Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, as he called for a "system change" amid growing demand for his resignation over the worst economic crisis faced by the island nation.

Rajapaksa, 72, swore in a 17-member Cabinet on Monday in addition to the three ministers he had earlier appointed.

That meant no place for the oldest member of the family Chamal Rajapaksa, Mahinda's son Namal Rajapaksa.

Speaking to the new ministers, President Rajapaksa sought their support for an efficient, clean government. He said he expects honest, efficient, and untainted governance from the Cabinet.

The President's Media Division said there were no changes to the ministerial positions held by the President, Prime Minister, External Affairs Minister GL Peiris, and Finance Minister Ali Sabry.



Sri Lanka President Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Court extends travel ban on central bank former governor

Colombo: A local court on Monday extended a travel ban on Ajith Nivard Cabraal, former governor of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka, from travelling abroad. The court has also ordered him to appear in court again on May 2, the Colombo Gazette newsportal reported. PTI

Speaking to his newly inducted Cabinet Ministers, the President termed his decision to ban chemical fertilisers in farming "a mistake" and that corrective steps were being taken now. Rajapaksa also said his government should have opted to go for an IMF bailout much earlier. "It was a mistake not to go".

THE WATCH, MADE AS GIFT IN 1910, HAS BEEN RETURNED TO THE MAKER'S FAMILY IN THE NETHERLANDS. IT STILL WORKS

A Nazi soldier stole a watch in 1942 that turned up 80 years later

CLAIRE MOSES APRIL 18

AFTER NEARLY 80 years, a watch that was taken by a Nazi soldier during World War II, lost in a cornfield and later hidden in a clock on a farm in Belgium has been returned to the grandchildren of its maker. And it still works.

"I think it's really beautiful and remarkable that this all came together," said Richard van Ameijden, the grandson of the watchmaker. "It came right out of the blue."

The pocket watch was crafted in 1910 by Alfred Overstrijd, a Jewish man from the Dutch city

of Rotterdam who was then learning to be a watchmaker. He made it as a gift for his brother, Louis, for his 18th birthday. An inscription on the back of the watch includes Overstrijd's name and the place and time it was made as well as the fact that it was intended for his brother.

In 1942, Louis Overstrijd was arrested by the Nazis, at which point it's likely that a soldier took the watch from him, or from his house, according to Rob Snijders, a Dutch historian who specialises in Jewish history. Both Overstrijd brothers were ultimately sent to the Nazi concentration camp at Auschwitz and did not survive the Holocaust.

For van Ameijden, the reunion with his grandfather's watch was uplifting, but it was also a rude awakening to continuing atrocities.

"When I look at the watch, it touches me partly because there's a war now as well," van Ameijden said, referring to Russia's recent invasion of Ukraine. "I imagine that children and older people who are sleeping in subway stations in a bombed Mariupol are holding their belongings. I think of that when I see this watch."

How the watch travelled from Louis Overstrijd in Rotterdam to a cornfield in the Flemish part of Belgium is not



The pocket watch includes an inscription on the back stating the maker's name and the place and time it was made. NYT

entirely known, but Snijders has reconstructed the journey.

During the war, people across Belgium and the Netherlands

were forced to accommodate Nazi soldiers. A Belgian farmer named Gustave Janssens housed three soldiers and, unhappy about the situation, made them use a cornfield next door as a bathroom. It's likely that the watch fell from the pocket of one of the soldiers in the field, Snijders said.

When Janssens found the watch, he must have noticed the Dutch name on the back and figured that the soldier had stolen it, Snijders explained. Which is where it stayed for next 80 years.

Recently, the farm in Belgium was sold, and members of Janssens' family went through the belongings, Pieter Janssens, the farmer's grandson, said. By

chance, he said, the family came upon the pristine pocket watch made in 1910, with the inscription on the back. He then emailed Snijders, in an effort to trace the watch to its original owner.

Such requests can be difficult, Snijders said. "It's complex; most of the time it doesn't work," he said. "It can take years."

Still, Snijders posted details of the watch's history on social media and hoped for the best.

Within 24 hours, Snijders received the information that the watchmaker, Alfred Overstrijd, had a daughter who had survived the war and had three children living in the Netherlands. Snijders later found van

Ameijden, one of the watchmaker's three grandchildren, on LinkedIn. He arranged a meeting between the descendants of the farmer and the watchmaker, during which the watch was officially handed back. "There were tears, I saw them," said Snijders, who attended the two-hour gathering this month in Rotterdam, which was earlier reported by Radio Rijnmond, a Dutch radio station.

Van Ameijden said he and his sisters would share possession of the watch for the time being and that they regretted that their mother was not alive to see the heirloom from her father, with whom she was close. NYT

BRIEFLY

United's Fernandes involved in car crash

London: Manchester United midfielder Bruno Fernandes was involved in a car crash on Monday on his way to the club's training ground. No parties involved were understood to have sustained serious injuries and the Portugal international is expected to train today, a club source said. United manager Ralf Rangnick will address the media later on Monday. United, who are fifth in the Premier League standings with 54 points from 32 games, face second-placed Liverpool on Tuesday.

REUTERS

PM condoles TT player Vishwa's death

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Monday condoled the death of promising table tennis player Vishwa Deenadayalan in a road accident near Shillong in Meghalaya. Modi said the death of the Tamil Nadu paddler on Sunday was shocking and saddening. "The demise of TT champion Vishwa Deenadayalan is shocking and saddening. He was admired by fellow players and had distinguished himself in several competitions. In this tragic hour my thoughts are with his family and friends. Om Shanti," the Prime Minister tweeted. Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju too condoled the death and posted on Twitter: "Very sad to learn that young Table Tennis player from Tamil Nadu, Deenadayalan Vishwa died in an accident at Ri-Bhoi in Meghalaya while on his way to Shillong to participate in the 83rd Senior National Table Tennis Championship. My deepest condolences to his family. RIP" PTI

Herah clocks fastest 100m of 2022

Sacramento: Five-time Olympic champion Elaine Thompson-Herah posted the fastest women's 100 metres in the world this year with a time of 10.89 seconds at the Golden Games in Walnut, California on Saturday. The Jamaican won her semi-final in what was her first outdoor 100m of the season. She opted not to run the final, with no reason given for her decision. "Feels good to be back. Season opener 10:89," the 29-year-old said on Twitter. Thompson-Herah became the first woman to win back to back Olympic sprint doubles when she retained her 100m and 200m titles in Tokyo and capped a memorable Games with gold in the 4x100m relay.

REUTERS

Nadal back on court ahead of French Open

Madrid: Australian Open champion Rafa Nadal resumed training on Monday after four weeks out due a stress fracture in his rib, a month out from the French Open where the Spaniard will bid for a record-extending 14th title. Nadal, 35, last played in the final of Indian Wells against Taylor Fritz on March 22, falling to a straight-sets defeat. The injury forced him to skip claycourt tournaments in Monte Carlo and Barcelona.

REUTERS

A hundred, a hat-trick, a thriller

Buttler's aggression with the bat, Chahal's guile with the ball help Rajasthan Royals edge out competitive Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 runs



RR spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who grabbed a hat-trick, ended up with impressive figures of 5 for 40.

SYNOPSIS: Jos Buttler's 103 off 61 and Yuzvendra Chahal's 5 for 40 overcame Aaron Finch's 58 and Shreyas Iyer's 85 as RR narrowly beat KKR

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
APRIL 18

RAJASTHAN ROYALS edged a thriller by seven runs to hand Kolkata Knight Riders their third successive loss at the Brabourne Stadium. Jos Buttler's second century of the season launched RR to 217, but despite Yuzvendra Chahal's game-changing hat-trick, KKR were in with a chance before they were dismissed in the last over.

Buttler belts ton No 2

What does Buttler bring to T20? The ability to whack any length out of the park. But equally important, also an almost uncanny awareness of the field and the ability to exploit any opening he can find. There was a 13-metre difference in the boundaries on both sides of the wicket at the Cricket Club of India on Monday night. Now all batsmen look to target the shorter side and bowlers try to prevent that.

But Buttler's game sense is something else. He'd already carved Umesh Yadav for two boundaries in the third over when he squeezed him square to the longer side. It would have been a certain four had Venkatesh Iyer not given chase and pulled it back a couple of inches inside with a big slide. Batsmen are nearly always content with the third run in such cases, and on shorter outfields, even the third is a stretch. But Buttler had already completed the third by the time another fielder picked up the ball, and he glimpsed a window for the fourth. He rushed back and was prepared to put in the dive, which saw him safely in.

The rest of the innings was a blur of boundaries, as was the entire match for that matter. Again, it was interesting to see how Buttler operates. Pat Cummins attempted a yorker around off; it didn't quite land in the blockhole but wasn't far. But Buttler has

IPL TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR
GT	6	5	1	10	0.395
RR	6	4	2	8	0.380
LSG	6	4	2	8	0.296
RCB	6	4	2	8	-0.142
SRH	6	4	2	8	-0.077
KKR	7	3	4	6	0.160
PBKS	6	3	3	6	0.109
DC	5	2	3	4	0.219
CSK	6	1	5	2	-0.638
MI	6	0	6	0	-1.048

hardly any across shuffle, it is more of a coiling setup where he bears down harder into the ground. That allowed him to stay inside the line and shovel the ball back over Cummins to the straight boundary. An across step would have likely cramped him for that particular line. In any case, he is adept at clearing the front leg to create some room if it comes to that.

Buttler does move around when he has to, as he did when he was aiming to swing to the shorter leg-side rope. In his first century of the season against Mumbai Indians, he'd slowed down considerably at the end; he didn't let that happen on Monday in a 59-ball ton. A fortnight ago, Lucknow Super Giants had chased down 211 against Chennai Super Kings at the same ground with three balls and six wickets to spare. And a week ago, also at the same ground, KKR had been dismissed for 171 chasing Delhi Capitals' 216, albeit in an afternoon start.

Finch, Shreyas respond in kind

The fresh opening combination of Sunil Narine and Aaron Finch failed first ball as the former was run out, but it was all KKR thereafter for a while. Finch was jittery initially, walking down the pitch and getting beaten. He soon settled in to play some incredible shots, pummelling it through the line. He backed away off to R Ashwin, to a ball that was neither short nor full. If he was done in the

At 178 for 4 after 16, it was KKR's game to lose. Chahal made that a reality. Within four balls, he had the two Iyers, Venkatesh and Shreyas, stumped and leg-before.

air, it didn't show, for he just went through with his shot and the ball landed beyond long-off. Eleven of the 28 balls he faced were hit for boundaries. He was gone by the ninth over, but KKR had gone past 100 too.

Skipper Shreyas' strength lies square of the wicket on the off and he made sure he played to it. He went back in the crease to guide the ball between short third man and backward point. He moved to the leg side and upper-cut for six when the shorter off-side boundary was in play. He reverse-swept Ashwin flat over the third-man rope, and also stepped out to lift him over midwicket. All along, he kept working the ball around the outfield, more so on the leg side. It was highly effective, calculated chasing, and seemed set to take KKR home, but Yuzvendra Chahal was not done yet.

Chahal tricks KKR

At 178 for 4 after 16, it was KKR's game to lose. Chahal made that a reality. Within four balls, he had the two Iyers, Venkatesh and Shreyas, stumped and leg-before. He spun a wrong'un past an advancing Venkatesh, and after bowling wide to Shreyas, slid it in full and quicker into the KKR captain, completely cramping him. Shivam Mavi and Pat Cummins followed off the last two balls of the over, giving Chahal a hat-trick as well as a five-for.

Umesh Yadav had RR worried with an assault on Trent Boult in the 18th, but Prasidh Krishna and Obed McCoy would keep KKR seven runs short.

Brief scores: Rajasthan Royals 217 for 5 (Buttler 103, Samson 38, Narine 2-21) beat Kolkata Knight Riders 210 (S Iyer 85, Finch 58, Chahal 5-40) by seven runs

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER



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

When McCullum touched the sky



Down memory lane, Brendon McCullum found a reason to smile. Fifteen seasons ago on this day, it was the unveiling of the Indian Premier League and the cricketing razzmatazz that would gradually become 'India ka tyohaar', had a heavy metal beginning, thanks to McCullum's 73-ball 158 not out for Kolkata Knight Riders against Royal Challengers Bangalore. Cut to the present, and Knight Riders were at the receiving end of a Jos Buttler onslaught in their game against Rajasthan Royals at Brabourne Stadium on Monday. It offered a throwback to McCullum's

2008 mayhem - sweet reminiscing for the KKR head coach, albeit with a pinch of salt, as he spoke to the host broadcaster mid-game. What has changed in 15 seasons? "After-game parties trumped cricket back then. Now it has changed, with the emergence of so many talented players from all over the world, especially young Indian talent," McCullum said with a smile. Even after 15 seasons, his blitzkrieg remains KKR's tenuous link to an IPL hundred. The head coach wants it to change, having a feeling that something special could happen tonight.

New grunt in town



That Shimron Hetmyer grunt would have comfortably out-grunted the original "grunt creators": Jimmy Connors and Monica Seles - never mind that they played tennis.

It was loud enough to be audible in every living room, via the stump mic. Hetmyer was looking for full monty against Andre Russell in the final over of the Rajasthan Royals' innings. He had hit back-to-back sixes and was nicely set up to hammer a slower bouncer, just that he swung a little too early and missed the ball. A frustrated Hetmyer reacted with a jump and a 'double-yelp'. The delivery was there for the taking. About 15 minutes later, Hetmyer was jumping with joy though, after his direct hit from cover-point effected Sunil Narine's run-out.

Bragging rights



It was a case of unadulterated class trumping T20 pyrotechnics. Take this with a rider, for Andre Russell offered a tentative prod to a Ravichandran Ashwin carrom ball rather than at-

tempting a big hit. It was comfortably the ball of the match, good length, pitching on off-and-middle, turning away a shade and knocking the off stump. It was too good a delivery to get first ball. Russell is strong-armed enough to hit any delivery out of the park, but he couldn't pick the carrom ball. His forward defence was tentative, his dismissal for a golden duck in a high-scoring game was an anti-climax. Ashwin didn't mind. He went for a celebratory run, his fingers pointing towards himself. There was absolutely no doubt about who was the boss.

Real McCoy with the Pushpa hook

Obed McCoy ending up being the man of the moment on his IPL debut was probably not in the script, especially on the night when Jos Buttler scored a century and Yuzvendra Chahal bagged a fiver, including a hat-trick. IPL, however, revels in throwing up unlikely heroes and McCoy was re-splendent in his 'Pushpa' dance moves. Umesh Yadav refused to throw in the towel and kept Rajasthan Royals on



the edge until the end. Kolkata Knight Riders needed 11 runs from the final over and 25-year-old McCoy from Windward Islands had the ball. Sheldon Jackson was taken care of with a delivery that barely arrived, while another slower ball

castled Yadav. McCoy was surrounded by his team-mates who celebrated wildly. As for the bowler, his hook step would have had Allu Arjun's approval.

DC's Marsh in hospital after testing positive for Covid

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, APRIL 18

DELHI CAPITALS all-rounder Mitchell Marsh has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been admitted to a Mumbai hospital. The Australian was found infected during a Rapid Antigen Test conducted on Monday morning. He complained of a headache and slight fever, so the Delhi Capitals decided to have an RT-PCR Test of all its members, out of which Marsh's result returned positive.

Later in the evening, Delhi Capitals confirmed Marsh's positive test result and said the franchise is closely monitoring his condition. "A few more members from the Delhi Capitals bio-bubble, including support staff members, have returned positive tests as well. Though they are all asymptomatic, their condition is being monitored closely by the franchise. All remaining members of the bubble are currently in isolation in their respective rooms, and will be tested regularly," it said in a statement. In the morning, the development had prompted the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) to advise Delhi Capitals to put their departure to Pune on hold till a fresh round of

RT-PCR testing was done.

Marsh became the third member in the Delhi Capitals camp to test positive. On Friday, their physio Patrick Farhart returned a positive result and a day later, a masseur was shown to be infected. Both were separated from the rest of the team.

Delhi Capitals are scheduled to meet Punjab Kings at Pune's Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium on Wednesday evening.

The biggest worry for the Indian board now is to stop the virus from spreading across the teams and they are now working to chalk out another plan to prevent this from happening. On Saturday, for the Delhi Capitals-Royal Challengers Bangalore game, the Indian board had instructed that there would be no handshakes or hugging between players of both teams to avoid any possible transmission.

The players from different teams usually congregate for a chat after games before they disperse. The Delhi players were advised to maintain social distancing during chats and the use of masks had also been recommended. The non-playing team members watching the game from the stands were requested to wear face masks throughout the match, except when eating or drinking.

NEW YORK TIMES
ASHEVILLE, APRIL 18

THE UKRAINIAN comeback attempt had come up just short, and Dayana Yastremska and her four teammates were preparing to pose for their final formal photograph at this Billie Jean King Cup qualifier. The blue and yellow ribbon representing Ukraine that had been stenciled onto the tennis court by special permission was no longer visible, obscured by the red, white and blue streamers that had fallen to the ground as part of the Americans' celebration after their 3-2 victory Saturday night.

The Ukrainians, with some help from the United States' team captain, Kathy Rinaldi, cleared away some of the streamers. But as another official began removing them altogether, Yastremska insisted that they remained next to the ribbon for the photograph.

"They were in the colors of USA, and I wanted to leave this near the Ukrainian colors," she said in an interview. "Because I think it's a good sign of the support we got here and a sign for peace. I wanted it to stay."

It was that kind of week in Asheville: The symbolic gestures were more indelible than the results, and the usual rules of engagement were rewritten in an attempt to dull the edges of a national team competition.



Dayana Yastremska, far right, made sure red, white and blue streamers were not removed from the Ukrainians' formal team photograph after the event.

"It's been hard not to cry," said Billie Jean King, 78, the American who once starred in this competition, which was formerly known as the Fed Cup long before it was renamed for her in 2020. She visited both teams Friday shortly before play began. "I just hope the Ukrainians had a moment of escapism."

After Russia invaded Ukraine in February, United States Tennis Association officials offered to postpone this qualifying-round match.

The Ukrainians demurred, but when it came time to book hotels in Asheville, they conceded they no longer had the money for the usual visiting team expenses. "We said, 'No problem, we will cover all your local costs,'" said Stacey Allaster, CEO for professional tennis at the USTA, which also provided support staff to the delegation. "With the war, it's so horrifying what's going on. What can any individual do? But we can all do little things, and what we can

do is provide a platform for the Ukrainians to demonstrate that they are strong and fighting and are not going to quit." The posters around this city in the Blue Ridge Mountains did not read, "USA vs. Ukraine." They read, "USA hosts Ukraine." On changeovers, the scoreboard flashed information on how to donate to the Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund, and about \$225,000 was raised in connection with the matches. The American cheering squad supported individual players instead of chanting, "Go, USA!"

"We were just trying to find the proper tone and balance," Allaster said.

In that supportive atmosphere, the Ukrainians nearly managed the upset. After falling behind 0-2 Friday, they won both singles matches Saturday in straight sets. Yastremska, a former top-25 player now ranked 93rd on the WTA Tour, often overwhelmed No. 14 Jessica Pegula. More surprisingly, the 201st-ranked Zavatska defeated No. 46 Shelby Rogers. That meant the concluding doubles match would be decisive, and Pegula and Asia Muhammad, making her King Cup debut, earned a 7-6 (5), 6-3 victory over Yastremska and Lyudmyla Kichenok.

"All day, we just really felt that fighting spirit of Ukraine," Rogers said. "It was really special to see but really tough to go against. I'm just so proud of my team for stepping up to that, having nerves of steel."

Rustiness an issue for Tokyo medallist at Asian Wrestling Championship

MIHIR VASAVDA
APRIL 18

FOR THE first time since winning the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics, Bajrang will compete in an international tournament this week at the Asian Championships, which begin in Ulaanbaatar on Tuesday. Upon his return, however, he won't be facing off against some of his old rivals in the 65kg weight class. There'll be no Takuto Otoguro, the Olympic champion from Japan who has been a constant thorn for Bajrang, this week; or even Dautlet Niyazbekov, whom the Indian beat to win the bronze in Tokyo.

In their absence, Bajrang's path to the continental title, which he has won twice, has become fairly smooth.

The biggest challenge, though, will come from within. This was evident during the selection trials for the Asian Championships last month, Bajrang's first competition since the Olympics. In the final against Rohit, Bajrang was far from convincing as he came back from 0-2 down to win 4-2.

It might have passed off as rustiness, owing to a lack of competition, but Bajrang has

been struggling with a knee injury, which forced him to miss the ranking series in Rome and Istanbul this year.

He pointed fingers at the lack of a proper support system, claiming that he had to undergo the rehab process by himself without the help of a professional physio, which delayed his return. Bajrang later played down the comments but when he competes on Saturday, his fitness – as much as form – will come under scrutiny.

Before that, however, there'll be a lot happening from an Indian point of view given that this is the first major championship since last year's Olympics and one that will be a precursor to the Asian Games later this year.

The competition begins with Greco-Roman, a style that's largely been Greek to Indian wrestlers.

On Tuesday, number 2 seed in the 87kg category, Sunil Kumar but for him to match or better his best performance – silver in the 2019 edition – will be a mammoth task given that the weight class is brimming with top-quality wrestlers.

Former Asian champion and top seed Nursultan Tursynov of Kazakhstan will headline this category, which will also include

Iran's Naser Alizadeh, the gold medalist from the last edition, and Uzbekistan's Jalgasbay Berdimuratov. South Korea's Jin-hyeok Kim, a former Asian bronze medalist, will only add to the intrigue and further complicate Sunil's path to the podium.

High-flying Anshu

While Bajrang will largely be up against himself, the fast-emerging star in women's wrestling, the defending champion in the 57kg category, Anshu Malik, will be keen to prove she can repeat the same performance in a stronger field.

One of the biggest attractions of the Asian Championships this week will be the return of the Japanese and Chinese women after six months. The wrestlers from these two powerhouse countries last took part in the World Championships last year, and had skipped the last edition of the continental tournament because of pandemic-related travel problems.

In their absence, Anshu emerged as the best in her class at the Asian Championships and won a silver at the worlds last year. In Mongolia, the top seed will look to assert her dominance in a tricky, seven-wrestler field.

The main challenge for Anshu could come from Japan's Tsugumi Sakurai. A world champion in the 55kg category – a non-Olympic class – Sakurai moved up by a couple of kilos to 57kg to lay down the marker for the Paris Games, where she'll try to overcome twice Olympics champion Risako Kawai to get into the Japanese team.

As the first step in that direction, Sakurai will look to win her maiden continental title in 57kg, with Anshu being her biggest rival. The Indian wrestler, meanwhile, will also have to deal with the challenges posed by junior world champion Nilufar Raimova of Kazakhstan, in what appears to be a three-way contest in this weight class.

With veteran wrestler Vinesh Phogat yet to return to competition after the Tokyo Olympics, Anshu will be one of India's biggest hopes this week along with Sanita Mor – another defending champion – in the 59kg category.

India vs Iran in freestyle

While Japan will be the biggest test for the women wrestlers, India's duels against Iranian grapplers will decide who gets the upper hand in the men's categories.



It will be Bajrang Punia's first competition since the Tokyo Olympics.

India have finished second only to Iran in the last three editions of the Asian Championship but with the Western Asian country sending a squad with some relatively fresh faces, India, who have fielded a strong side, will fancy their chances to finish at the

top. Iran are without some of their biggest names, including world champion Hassan Yazdani in the 86kg, making the task that much easier for the Indians.

Bajrang, for instance, will be up against last year's junior world champion in the 61kg class, Rahman Amouzadkhalili, in his pursuit of a medal while in the 86kg category, Deepak Punia will consider his chances for a maiden Asian title to be boosted in the absence of Yazdani.

But unlike Bajrang, who is a favourite in his weight category, Deepak and Ravi Dahiya, the other medal hopefuls, will have to navigate past difficult opponents.

Deepak, for instance, might have to get the better of Azamat Dautletbekov of Kazakhstan, who has a winning record against the Indian, to win his first Asian gold medal.

And Tokyo Games silver medalist Dahiya, looking to complete a hat-trick of Asian titles in the 57kg category, will renew his rivalry with Uzbekistan's Gulomjon Abdullaev, against whom he has a mixed record, and could be up against Kyrgyzstan's Almaz Smanbekov, who won the Yasar Dogu championship earlier this year.



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LIVER DAY 2022

Love your liver

Better care leads to healthy liver

This crucial organ in your body can be forgiving but you need to care for it. A healthy lifestyle is the key

Your liver is an important part of your body's digestive system but you probably don't give it much thought. It filters everything you eat and drink, including medicine. You must properly care for it in order for it to remain healthy and perform its function.

Your liver is located on the right side of your lower rib cage. It is responsible for a number of vital tasks. It aids in the cleansing of your blood by removing toxic compounds produced by your body. It produces bile, a liquid that aids in the digestion of fat from diet. It also

stores glucose, a type of sugar that offers you an energy boost when you need it.

Keeping your liver in good shape isn't difficult at all. It all boils down to leading a healthy lifestyle. It's significantly more



important to avoid what's terrible for your liver than it is to consume or drink items that are particularly good for it. Don't overindulge in alcoholic beverages.

It can harm liver cells and cause swelling or scarring, which can develop to cirrhosis, known to turn fatal. Eat a balanced diet and exercise on a regular basis. Your liver will be grateful. You'll maintain a healthy weight, which will help you avoid non-alcoholic fatty liver disease (NAFLD), which can degenerate to cirrhosis.

Certain medication should be avoided. Some cholesterol medication might occasionally produce liver problems as a side effect. If you take too much acetaminophen (Tylenol), it can harm your liver.

If you drink alcohol while taking some medication, it may harm your liver. And

some of them can be dangerous when mixed with other drugs. Consult your doctor or pharmacist for the safest method.

Learn how to protect yourself from viral hepatitis, a dangerous liver illness. Toxins should not be touched or breathed in. Chemicals in some cleaning products, aerosols and insecticides can harm your liver. Keep a safe distance from them. Cigarette additives can harm your liver, so quit smoking. Herbs and dietary supplements should be used with caution. Some of these can be harmful. Coffee has been shown in studies to reduce the risk of liver disease. Nobody understands why this is the case but it's something to keep an eye on as further research is conducted.

10 myths about liver disease

There are many misconceptions regarding the liver and its diseases. It is important to clear these so that people can make informed choices for therapy. Here we choose ten of the common-est.

- 1. Myth: Liver conditions can be detected with the Liver Function Test (LFT), which is a simple blood test.**
Fact: Underlying liver problems cannot be detected through LFT. In case of fatty liver and/or fibrosis, LFT could be normal. A fibroscan is necessary to detect these conditions.
- 2. Myth: Whisky, rum or country liquor is worse for the liver than wine or beer.**
Fact: It's the amount of alcohol that matters, not the type of al-

liver disease.

Fact: Every year lakhs of children are hospitalised for liver diseases. Genetic diseases like Wilson disease, fatty liver, metabolic diseases, viral hepatitis and so on are common liver conditions in children.

5. Myth: Fatty liver only affects obese people

Fact: Although fatty liver is more common in obese individuals, it can be present in people of any weight. Lean NASH (Non alcoholic steatohepatitis) is a phenomenon observed in India.

6. Myth: Liver problems cause yellow skin and pain in the upper abdomen.

Fact: Liver disease usually has no symptoms in the beginning. Hepatitis B and C, and cirrhosis, can sometimes be diagnosed 20

to 30 years after they started. What feels like aches and pains in the liver are usually digestive issues.

7. Myth: A liver supplement can correct existing liver damage.

Fact: Studies have shown that liver cleansers or supplements that have flooded the market have no significant proven effect. "What is more important is a healthy, well-balanced diet and exercise."

8. Myth: Only alcohol damages the liver.

Fact: Apart from alcohol, an unhealthy diet, genetics, metabolic diseases such as diabetes, obe-

sity, toxins, viral infections, autoimmune diseases are some of the other major causes of liver disease.

9. Myth: Fatty liver is not a serious disease.

Fact: Around 20 to 35 per cent of Indians are believed to have non-alcoholic fatty liver disease.

Advanced cases of fatty liver can lead to cirrhosis, liver cancer, and eventually liver failure.

10. Myth: All hepatitis B patients need anti-viral treatment.

Fact: Only those patients with hepatitis B, where liver damage is present and viral load is high,

need treatment. Inactive carriers of the virus do not need medicine and only require a six-monthly follow-up.

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Liver transplantation from COVID positive donors – A myth or reality?


In this era of COVID-19 pandemic, liver transplantation worldwide has suffered immensely. Many patients have died due to the unavailability of organs from both live donors (due to hospital and government policies) and deceased donors (policies and COVID positivity). In lieu of this, it is worth revisiting briefly what we know regarding the usability of solid organs from brain dead COVID positive donors. Two important articles recently caught our attention. Since November 2020, COVID positive donors have been allowed to be considered donors in cases of urgent need for liver transplantation. Romagnoli et al. recently published their experience in the American Journal of Transplant (AJT). This study, from Italy, presented 10 patients who received a COVID positive liver. At transplant, the liver biopsy was 100% negative for SARS-COV-2 RNA, and none of the recipients suffered any additional complications due to COVID-19. The second study, by Koval et al. also in AJT explored the outcome of 10 patients who received kidney transplant from 5 different deceased donors with SARS-COV-2 RNA positive status, but otherwise healthy. They reported excellent outcomes at 2-4 months follow up with no sequelae or transmission of COVID-19 infection in the donors. To summarize, we are so bound by a fear of COVID-19 that sometimes we fail to see outside the box. Life outside of COVID is fraught with other medical morbidities and mortality that could be prevented or saved using common or uncommon methods which are not written down in policies. With the examples above, many countries are accepting brain dead donors for extra-pulmonary solid organs, especially when the cause of death is unrelated to COVID-19 and the donor is otherwise healthy. Last but not the least, even in these COVID-19 times, we must remember that organ donation by a single person can save many lives, and it should be our responsibility, if not duty, to pledge ourselves as donors for the sake of humanity.

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