

instant approval

EXPRESS NETWORK

KERALA: DAY AFTER PFI LEADER HACKED TO DEATH, RSS **WORKER KILLED**

BORIS JOHNSON TO BEGIN INDIA VISIT ON APRIL 21 **PAGES 6, 7**

MHA proposal: SPs, DIGs who don't serve at Centre can't get stint later

DEEPTIMANTIWARY NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

IN ANOTHER move that is set to be opposed by the state governments, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has proposed that an Indian Police Service (IPS) officer who does not come on central deputation at the Superintendent of Police (SP) or Deputy Inspector General (DIG) level may be barred from central posting for the rest of his/

This comes close on the heels of the Centre sending a proposal to states to amend the All India Service Rules that would allow it to call any IAS (Indian Administrative Service), IPS or IFoS (Indian Forest Service) officer on central deputation, with or without the state's consent. In another revision of rules in February, the Centre also scrapped the empanelment requirement for DIG-level IPS officers on central deputation.

The latest proposal, sent to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), is seen as an attempt to address the shortage of officers at the SP and DIG levels at the Centre. According to sources, there are over 50 per cent vacancies at both these levels in the different central armed police forces and central police organisations.

Currently, the rules state that if an IPS officer does not spend three years on central deputation till the Inspector General (IG) level, he/she will not be empaneled for central deputation, MHA sources said that due to the existing rules, most IPS officers come on central deputation only at the IG level, leading to severe

shortage at the SP and DIG levels. Most states don't relieve SPs and DIGs for central deputation as they have enough vacancies at these levels. Since there are fewer posts at the IG and above levels, these officers are then sent to the Centre.

Sources in the IPS said the Centre was taking a short cut that would hurt the services. "IPS officers at the SP and DIG levels are not coming to the Centre **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Police personnel at the spot where the clashes took place in Jahangirpuri, in Northwest Delhi, on Saturday. Praveen Khanna

Stone-throwing in Delhi on Hanuman Jayanti, six policemen among injured

ANAND MOHAN J& **MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL**

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

SOHINI GHOSH

and inclusivity".

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16

UNDERLINING THAT India has

remained "unshakeable and res-

olute" despite "changing circum-

stances over thousands of years,"

Prime Minister Narendra Modi

said Saturday that "our faith and

culture is of harmony, equality

mode after unveiling a 108-feet

statue of Lord Hanuman in

Morbi in Gujarat's Saurashtra

region, the Prime Minister said

the project of establishing four

such statues in four corners of

the country is a reflection of the

resolve of Ek Bharat, Shresth

Bharat (one India, best India).

The life of Lord Ram, he said,

In an address via virtual

COMMUNAL CLASHES broke out in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a Shobha Yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti on Saturday, police said. According to officers, stones were thrown in the area, and the situation re-

India unshakeable,

culture of harmony,

inclusivity, says PM

DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PUNE, VADODAR

This is the first major communal flare-up in the national capital since the February 2020 Northeast Delhi riots, which left 53 people dead and many more

While no casualties were reported on Saturday, police said 10-12 people were injured, including six officers. They had been taken to hospital and were

After the violence, police in all 14 districts were put on high alert and senior officers were asked to be on the ground. "Commissioner of Police, Delhi has directed that in view of communal situation in Jahangirpuri, all officers up to the rank of Special Commissioners of Police of both zones shall be in the field

and ensure that communal situ-

ation is not disturbed in any part

of Delhi. Rest of the officers shall

also be on alert," read a message that went out to all senior officers of the Delhi Police.

Police said that during the yatra, an argument broke out between two communities. "Things escalated, and both sides started pelting stones at each other. They damaged public property and torched vehicles," a senior police officer said. Senior officers rushed to the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Sonia steps in, calls old guard, Prashant Kishor to plan party revival

EXPRESS NETWORK

13 OPPOSITION **LEADERS QUESTION** PM 'SILENCE' ON HATE SPEECH PAGE 6

was an ideal example of Sabka Saath, Sabka Prayas (taking everyone along with everyone's effort).

"For me, 130 crore people of this country take the form of Lord Ram. It is through their resolve, their work that the country is moving forward," he said. "Hanumanji is that power and support who gave the right of honour and respect to all forest species and forest dwellers. He CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MANOJCG NEW DELHI. APRIL 16

> IN HER first major move after the Congress's humiliating defeat at the hustings, Congress president Sonia Gandhi assembled Saturday a group of veterans and poll strategist Prashant Kishor to plan the party's revival for the 2024 general elections.

Kishor made a detailed presentation at Sonia's 10, Janpath residence — Rahul Gandhi and Privanka Gandhi Vadra too were present — after which the party president decided to set up a panel to look into his proposals.

Kishor is said to be eager to work with the Congress. The party recently brought in one of



Kishor signals may join party; Sonia forms panel to look at his proposals

gist for Karnataka. Sources said the leaders asked Kishor to join the party formally – this would prevent him from working with other parties as a poll consultant, a major concern for a section of the leadership.

Sources said Kishor was open to the idea of joining the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

wins Bengal LS, Assembly seats; victories for Cong, RJD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A LITTLE over a month after it won elections in four states, the BJP suffered a setback in by-elections to four Assembly and one Lok Sabha seat, the results of which were announced on Saturday. The party could not win any of these elections, including for an Assembly seat in Bihar, where it is in power with the JD(U). In West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, and Maharashtra, candidates of ruling parties

emerged victorious. The Trinamool Congress won both the Asansol Lok Sabha and Ballygunge Assembly seats, a signal that Mamata Banerjee continues to enjoy broad support in the state that she swept last May, even though the margin of the TMC's victory in Ballygunge did

come down. In Asansol, TMC candidate Shatrughan Sinha, a former BJP leader, won a prestige battle against BJP MLA Agnimitra Paul by a massive margin of 3,03,209 votes. The seat had been won by Babul Supriyo for the BJP in 2014 and 2019, but the former Union minister switched to the TMC in September 2021, and became its

And Keshu Bhanderi from (post-monsoon) crops harvested Sumra in Dhrol taluka of

Jamnagar, is satisfied with the Rs 6.655/quintal that he has received for his 50 quintals of the this year. crop — well above the MSP of Rs

minds though, are two major

Cotton yields have been impacted by pink bollworm insect pest attacks, while unseasonal/ excess rain during January and the sudden spike in temperatures after mid-March have hit

'Never in my wildest dreams had I seen cotton prices this

village of Rajkot taluka. However, he adds in the same breath, his kapas yields have been only 2 quintals per bigha, a third of the levels in good years. "The higher

prices will simply make up for my production shortfalls this vear." he says. Likewise, the per-bigha wheat yield from Mansukh Rangani's five bighas has aver-

bigha farmer from Kharachiya

aged only 5 quintals, down from the 8 quintals last year. On April 9, the Mumbaibased Cotton Association of

Ahmedabad

The man with the most unenviable job in Sri Lanka: Ali Sabry, Finance Minister







NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN COLOMBO, APRIL 16

AS SRI Lanka's Justice Minister, Ali Sabry had to defend his government's decision not to allow burial of Muslims who died of Covid. There was stiff criticism from the community, even his family, but he put aside his own religious beliefs.

Now, the 51-year-old Sabry, a lawyer, is his country's new Finance Minister, assigned the Herculean task of putting a derailed economy back on the rails.

He replaced Basil Rajapaksa who resigned earlier this month along with the rest of the cabinet -- this was a move by Basil's brothers, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, to appoint fresh faces in the hope of placating the angry people on the streets demanding that the ruling first family "go home".

Hours after his surprise appointment, Sabry sent in his res-



ignation.

Sunday Express at his law chambers in a quiet lane of Colombo's Kollupitiya, Sabry said that **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**





Sri Lanka FM Ali Sabry: Need to firefight immediately

In an interview with The

Shatrughan Sinha after winning in Asansol. PTI MORE REPORTS, PAGE 6 **Bypolls: TMC**

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

SEEKING "PEACEFUL and coop-

erative" ties with India, Shehbaz

Sharif, Pakistan's new Prime

Minister, has written to Prime

Minister Narendra Modi, saying

this can be achieved through

that in a letter received Saturday,

Sharif also said Pakistan remains

committed to "regional peace

former Pakistan Prime Minister

Nawaz Sharif, has replied to a let-

ter which Prime Minister Modi

wrote a couple of days ago,

shortly after they exchanged

messages on Twitter. In his let-

ter, Modi had called for "con-

structive engagement".

The Sunday Express has learnt

Sharif, younger brother of

"meaningful dialogue"

and security".

CHANDIGARH, APRIL 16 FROM JULY 1, domestic con-

sumers in Punjab will not have to pay for power up to 300 units per month. Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann made the announcement as he completed a month in office.

Mann also said that bill arrears up to 2 KW until December 31, 2021, would be waived for all consumers, farmers would continue to get power free, and there would be no change in the power tariff for industrialists.

For many domestic consumers however, receiving the benefits of free power will be contingent on restricting their consumption below 600 units for every billing cycle of two months. Therefore, anyone who consumes more than 600 units will be billed for the entire consumption, not just for the excess above 600 units.

This condition will not apply to Scheduled Castes, Backward Classes, Below Poverty Line



month is now free

RESPONDS TO LETTER FROM PM

Seek meaningful talks

with India, peaceful

ties: Shehbaz to Modi

Pak PM says his country committed to regional peace

PMs Sharif, Modi exchanged

messages on Twitter earlier

In New Delhi, officials read the

Ties between the two coun-

Pakistani response as "positive".

tries plummeted after the

Balakot air strikes following the

Pulwama terror attack in

February 2019 and the end of

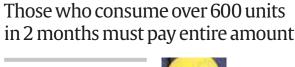
J&K's special status under Article

370 in August that year. The two

countries have downsized High

Commissions and there are no

full-time High Commissioners in



KANCHAN VASDEV



Chief Minister **Bhagwant**



Shehbaz Sharif asked him to

come forward to address the

Kashmir issue so that the two

countries could concentrate on

tackling poverty and unem-

ployment, Modi congratulated

him on his election as Prime

Minister and said India desired

peace and stability in a region

Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on his election as the

Prime Minister of Pakistan, India

desires peace and stability in a

region free of terror, so that we

can focus on our development

challenges and ensure the well-

being and prosperity of our peo-

ple." Modi said in a Twitter post.

tweeted: "Pakistan desires peace-

ful & cooperative ties with India.

Responding to this, Shehbaz

"Congratulations to H. E.

free of terrorism.

FREE POWER will significantly increase the subsidy burden on the state whose financials are in poor shape. The Punjab government already picks up a Rs 6,000 crore annual subsidy tab on account of free power to farmers, and Rs 4,000 crore for charging nearly 22 lakh SC/BC/BPL families less for every unit.

(BPL), and freedom fighters consumers, who will get 600 units free in all cases. "If they utilise more than 600 units, they will CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



THE WORLD

RUSSIA RENEWS STRIKES IN KYIV

EX-PAK PM RAJA PERVAIZ ASHRAF IS NEW SPEAKER PAGE 14

Farmers celebrate high prices, worry about input cost, lower yields

GOPAL KATESHIYA GONDAL (GUJARAT), APRIL 16

DILIP GAJERA, a farmer from Masitala village of Gondal taluka in Gujarat's Rajkot district, watches as his kapas (raw unginned cotton) is auctioned at the agricultural produce market committee (APMC) mandi yard in Gondal. He is excited as he loads the auctioned sample bale onto his tractor trolley and drives to the weighbridge. The weight slip reading is 25 quintals -- at Rs 12,930 per quintal, that's worth Rs 3,23,250.

The 42-year-old has every reason to smile. He has harvested nearly 95 quintals of the fibre crop on 28 bighas of his 30-bigha holding. Gajera's earlier lots of 34.2 quintals and 35.6 quintals, sold in November and March, fetched him Rs 8,905/quintal and Rs 9,555/quintal respectively – well above the government's minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 6,025/quintal for long-staple "How can I complain", he

asked, "when the average realisation for my crop last year was Rs 5,500/quintal (less than the corresponding MSP of Rs 5,825)?"

too at the auction sheds of the Gondal APMC.

Mulji Parmar from Ran village in Kalyanpur taluka of Devbhumi Dwarka district, has sold 10 quintals of jeera (cumin seed) at Rs 19,805 per quintal. The seed spice traded at Rs 12,500-13,000/quintal at this time last year. Mansukh Rangani from

Rampar Mota village of Paddhari taluka in Raikot, watches mandi labourers weigh and bag 125 quintals of wheat that has realised Rs 2,530 per quintal, against the MSP of Rs 2,015.



Cotton at the APMC mandi yard in Gondal, Rajkot. Gopal Kateshiya

time when they market their rabi (winter-spring) crops of wheat, chana (chickpea), jeera, dhaniya (coriander) and saunf

Gondal is one of the biggest

APMCs in Gujarat, and attracts

farmers from across the

Saurashtra region. This is the

Many also bring cotton and groundnut -- which are kharif

from late-October -- to sell now, hoping to get higher off-season prices. Their bets have paid off At the back of the farmers'

concerns. The first is over yields.

wheat and jeera.

high," says Ramji Bhuva, a 7-

India slashed its estimate of the CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

people."

Stone-throwing

spot and additional forces were called in, said police. "Police tried to control the crowd during which several personnel were injured,'

On Saturday night, the area had been locked down, roads were barricaded, and police in riot gear had been deployed in large numbers. The roads were littered with glass shards, bricks, and stones. A burnt out shell of a scooter lay on the road.

Auto parts mechanic Akash Thakur (20), said he had parked his bike and was headed to join the Shobha Yatra that was passing through Block B, near Kushal Cinema, when the clashes broke

"Iran for my life. When I came back to where I had parked my bike, I found it was missing. We were celebrating peacefully," Thakur said.

Mastan (27), a resident of Block C, said he was out buying fruits at the time. He claimed that those in the rally raised slogans such as "Bharat mein rehna hoga toh lai Shri Ram kehna hoga." He also alleged that some peo-

ple carrying saffron flags had tried to enter a mosque, and that the violence had escalated because the police presence in the area is usually thin.

"The stone pelting took place from both sides. We tried to stop the clashes, appealed for peace,' Mastan said.

Cab driver Ajay Kumar (27) said he sustained injuries to his leg as he fled the violence. "I had come to check on my parents when I heard news of a clash. There was fierce stone-pelting, and while I managed to escape from the area, my Swift Dzire car was destroyed by the mob. How will I earn my living now?" he said.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal condemned the violence and appealed for calm. "The incident of stone pelting during a Shobha Yatra in Delhi's Jahangirpuri is condemnable. There should be strict action against those who are to blame. I appeal to everyone -hold each other's hand and maintain peace." he tweeted.

Kejriwal said he had spoken to Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal. "He assured that all steps are being taken to ensure peace and that guilty will not be spared," the Chief Minister said.

In a press release, the L-G's office said: "L-G has condemned the incidents of violence and stone pelting in the National Capital as unfortunate and said that none behind these activities will be spared. He took stock of the situation along with CP, Delhi and has appealed to the people to maintain peace...and cooperate with the police in maintaining law and

BJP leader Kapil Mishra said the incidents in Jahangirpuri should be treated as a terrorist attack. He alleged that the area was known to harbour "Bangladeshi infiltrators", and that people had been mobilised for the 2020 Delhi riots from the area. "They should be identified and their homes should be bulldozed." he said.

Manoj Tiwari, the BJPMP from North East Delhi, said, "There has been stone pelting in Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Hanuman lavanti... This incident did not occur all of a sudden; it is a conspiracy. Police should immediately conduct a probe and take strictest action against the culprits. Though the situation is getting back to normal.... there should be a thorough probe on who are the culprits, where the stones came from.. Their houses should be checked for weapons, and their IDs. I can say with confidence that several incidents are taking place through a conspiracy. I would also request Chief Minister Kejriwal that this is not the time to shirk responsibility, but to work collectively and step forward to punish the culprits. Please maintain harmony."

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said the violence was "not a coincidence but a huge conspiracy". "The culprits...should be punished and Delhi Police will definitely ensure that. I will speak to the Home Minister too. But the question arises that in several unauthorised colonies of Delhi -- whether it is Jahangirpuri or Jamuna Paar --Bangladeshis and Rohingvas are staying illegally in large numbers and the Delhi government is giving them electricity and water connections. The Delhi government is answerable as to why they are providing protection to such

FROM PAGE ONE

Delhi Commissioner said on Twitter: "In today's incident in NW District, the situation is under control. Adequate additional force has been deployed in Jahangirpuri & other sensitive areas. Senior officers have been asked to remain in field and closely supervise the law & order situation & undertake patrolling. Strict action will be taken against rioters. Citizens are requested to not to pay heed to rumours and fake news on social

Sonia steps in

Congress — in the past, he consistently denied any such plan.

The meeting gave two messages: Sonia, who had taken a back seat and was planning to relinguish charge once again this August-September, wants to put in place a mechanism to try and revive the party's fortunes; and, the Congress has finally accepted that it needs external help to find its feet again.

Some of the leaders said Kishor told the meeting he was ready to join the Congress without expectations and demands but wanted his road map implemented to help strengthen the party at the grassroots level.

Sources said he wants the Congress to concentrate on some 370 Lok Sabha constituencies, nuance its political messaging, revamp its communication apparatus and address certain organisational weaknesses. Apart from the Gandhis, the meeting was attended by senior leaders A K Antony, Mallikarjun Kharge, Digvijaya Singh, Ajay Maken, Mukul Wasnik, Jairam Ramesh, Ambika Soni and K C Venugopal. Barring Wasnik, none of the G-23 leaders were invited to the meeting. Some of the Congress leaders said what Kishor said in his presentation were "known facts" but agreed that the party needed a focused approach. "With graphs and all, he was telling us about where we have lost our votes... how we deteriorated over the years... region specific and state specific," one leader said.

Others were upset with the idea of bringing in Kishor. "A 137year-old party of Gandhi, Nehru and Patel has been outsourced. This is the biggest insult that you can heap upon yourself, showing that you are incompetent and disliked by the people so you have to bring in somebody who purely works for money," one leader remarked.

The G-23 leaders were annoved that none of them, barring Wasnik, had been called to the meeting. "So, all those gestures of reconciliation and promises of inclusive and collective thinking were a sham. It exposes the hypocrisy of the leadership. This (involvement of Kishor) may further deepen the divide and only time will tell whether it will be helpful or totally counter-productive," a leader said.

Venugopal said a decision on Kishor's suggestions, including on whether he will join the party, will be known in a week. "Prashant Kishor has made a detailed presentation for the 2024 election strategy. It needs some detailed discussion and the Congress president will set up a small group to discuss this entire presentation. That group will submit a report within a week's time for a final decision," he said.

Asked whether Kishor will join the party or will be its strategist, he said all details will be known within a week.

Kishor suggested that the party should contest alone in a few states where it is strong and has remained either in the first or second position in previous elec-

The meeting comes against the backdrop of feverish talk in the party - and much opposition too – on bringing in Kishor for election strategising. He has had many meetings with Rahul and Priyanka but the decision by Sonia to invite him for a presentation before the group of senior leaders signals that the party is serious

about working with him. A section of the party wants him for the Gujarat campaign but he is said to be insisting on the induction of Naresh Patel, chairman of the Shree Khodaldham Trust which manages the temple of Goddess Khodivar, the patron deity of the Leuva Patel community, near Rajkot. But Saturday's meeting indicates that the party wants him to play a role beyond Gujarat. Some party leaders claim Kishor wants Patel to be projected as the party face in the Gujarat Assembly

Kishor has had a volatile relationship with the Congress. In the middle of last year, he met the Gandhis with a proposal for revival of the Congress but many of the senior leaders were not warm to the idea of handing him the charge of strategising.

In December, he hit out at the Congress, arguing that its leadership of the Opposition is not the "divine right of an individual, especially when the party has lost more than 90 per cent elections in the last 10 years". Let Opposition leadership, he had said, be decided "democratically."

Central posting

because the states are not relieving them.... Why should an IPS officer miss a chance to serve at the Centre at a senior level because the state did not allow him to go? Also, this may be counter-productive. If the states don't relieve the officers, there would be no further empanelment. The Centre will eventually not get enough officers at the IG and above levels as well," said a senior IPS officer.

Sources said the situation has arisen due to the then A B Vajpayee government's decision to reduce the size of new IPS batches as part of its cost-cutting measures. From 80-90 new officers, the IPS batches were cut to 35-40 officers (in 1999-2002, the average stood at 36). On the other hand, an average of about 85 IPS officers retire every year.

"While the number of districts in some states has doubled in a decade or so, the availability of officers was cut to one-third," said a former MHA official.

In 2009, there were over 1,600vacancies against a sanctioned strength of over 4.000 IPS officers. The then Manmohan Singh government tried to correct this anomaly by restoring the earlier intake. The IPS batches were increased to as much as 150 -- in 2020, the intake was 200. As on January 1, 2020, there were 908 vacancies against a sanctioned strength of 4,982.

Earlier, most states, including those with NDA governments like Bihar, criticised the Centre's proposal to change the IAS and IPS service rules, calling it an attack on the federal structure of the Constitution.

Bypolls

candidate in the April 12 Ballygunge Assembly by election. Supriyo won the seat in South Kolkata by a margin of 20,228 votes, winning 51,199 votes. The CPM's Saira Shah Halim got 30,971 votes and finished second. The BJP's Keya Ghosh got 13,220

votes and lost her deposit. In Bihar, the RJD took back the Bochaha Assembly seat in Muzaffarpur district after over two decades. The EBC Mallah Mukesh Sahani's Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), which was ousted from the NDA recently, celebrated the result, saying "its purpose of defeating BJP

The Bochaha seat was with the VIP, and the byelection was triggered by the death of its MLA Musafir Paswan. The RID candidate Amar Kumar Paswan defeated the BJP's Baby Kumari by a margin of 36,653 votes, while the VIP's Geeta Kumari got 29,279 votes. Paswan, who joined the RJD recently, is the son of Musafir

Amid a public fracas between the BJP and Shiv Sena, the victory of the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) candidate in Maharashtra's Kolhapur North Assembly seat came as a relief to the ruling al $liance\, and\, a\, setback\, to\, the\, BJP. The$ Congress's Jayshree Jadhav emerged victorious with a big margin of over 19,000 votes. Jadhav, the wife of deceased Congress MLA Chandrakant Jadhav, defeated Satyajit Kadam

A section of the Shiv Sena was initially not keen on supporting the Congress candidate but relented after directions from Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. As the result was known, the Sena mocked state BJP president Chandrakant Patil. who had said he would quit politics and go to the Himalayas in the event of defeat for the party's candidate.

Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said "the victory is creditable in the face of false charges being raked up by BJP against MVA leaders and its attempt to defame the government... All the three constituents of MVA who fought unitedly have set a good example. This should be replicated across Maharashtra."

In Chhattisgarh, the ruling Congress won the Khairagarh seat in Rajnandgaon district by a margin of over 20.000 votes. The BIF candidate came second, while NOTA got the third highest votes. The seat was held by Devwrat Singh, who belonged to the royal family in Khairagarh. Formerly with the Congress, he had won the seat on a Janta Congress Chhattisgarh Jogi ticket.

Both the BJP and Congress had fielded candidates from the OBC community. The Congress's Yashoda Verma won 87,640 votes against the BJP's Komal Janghel, who got 67,481 votes. The JCCJ candidate got only 1,218 votes.

AAP promise

pay only for those units," Chief Minister Mann said. The free power ceiling for these categories of consumers is currently 200

The Chief Minister also announced an incentive for bigger consumers to cut their consump-

"I have a request for well-todo families," he said. "If they can reduce consumption by up to 600 units in two months, they will get 600 units of power free."

Punjab, Mann said, will make power the cheapest in the country for consumers of all categories. Chief Minister of

Delhi has made power cheapest in the country. That is why we have taken guidance from him; sent officials to him to take advice." he said, referring to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leader Arvind Kejriwal. "The money that you save on power, you can spend on your children. Your life will become easier. We will fulfill each and every election promise over the next five years. We will save the exchequer money and return it to the people," Mann said.

In June 2021, Kejriwal had first promised 300 units of free power every month to consumers in Punjab, on the lines of Delhi. Consumers in Punjab were at the time paying the most for power in the country.

There are 73.80 lakh domestic power consumers in the state. Nearly 62.25 lakh -- almost 85 per cent -- consume up to 300 units per month. The government's subsidy bill on this account is expected to cross Rs 5,500 crore an-

The free power bill for farmers amounts to Rs 6,000 crore per annum. The subsidy bill for 21.83 lakh domestic SC/BC/BPL families comes to about Rs 4,000 crore. This group of beneficiaries pays only Rs 1.19 per unit of electricity up to a load of 7 KW.

Former Chief Charaniit Singh Channi had cut power tariffs by Rs 3 per unit in November last year. He had said that 100 units of power would be charged at Rs 1.19 per unit for all domestic consumers. (It was Rs 4.19 per unit then.) Thereafter. consumption between 100 and 300 units was billed at Rs 4 per unit instead of Rs 7. For more than 300 units, the charges were Rs 5.76 per unit as against the earlier rate of Rs 8.76 per unit.

In its first tariff order issued recently, the AAP government had retained these tariffs.

APMC mandis

country's cotton crop for 2021-22 by 8 lakh bales of 170 kg each. Its latest figure of 335.13 lakh quintals is also below the production of 353 lakh quintals for the previous cotton year (October-September).

In the case of wheat, the Centre is yet to revise downward its all-time-high output estimate of 111.32 million tonnes released on February 16.

Farmers like Rangani, Bhuva, Gajera, and Bhanderi have no

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Game Time: Mapping Praggnanandhaa's rise in Indian chess

From the archives: Host Mihir Vasavda is joined by Sandip G to talk about R Praggnanandhaa's win against World Champion Magnus Carlsen in a rapid chess tournament

Seek meaningful talks with India, peaceful ties: Shehbaz to Modi

Peaceful settlement of outstanding disputes including Jammu & Kashmir is indispensable. Pakistan's sacrifices in fighting terrorism are wellknown. Let's secure peace and focus on socio-economic development of our people."

Modi's congratulatory tweet was similar to the letter he sent to Imran Khan in August 2018 when he became Prime Minister of Pakistan.

Congratulating Khan on his assumption of charge, Modi had expressed the hope that the smooth transition of government in Pakistan would strengthen and cement the people's belief in democracy. He recalled their telephone conversation in which they spoke of their shared vision to bring peace. security and prosperity in the subcontinent to make it "free of terror and violence", and to focus on development. They had spoken in July 2018, days after it became clear that Khan looked set to be Prime

With Shehbaz Sharif taking charge, New Delhi is watching developments in Islamabad, Rawalpindi and

Minister

Lahore with "cautious optimism" for a headway in bilat-

Top sources said the change in regime may offer a "diplomatic opening". According to sources in the strategic establishment, the implications may be farreaching.

Emerging from the shadow of his elder brother Nawaz Sharif, Shehbaz, the PML-N president, is known to be close to the Pakistan Army -- he was Chief Minister of Pakistan's Punjab province. The Sharif family has been an advocate of

better ties with India Officials pointed out that

the core concerns of the two countries remain the same, and Shehbaz is well placed to resume the bilateral conversation.

Better trade ties with India could provide the muchneeded boost to Pakistan's economy. Known to be focused on infrastructure projects — construction of roads bridges and flyovers and transport projects in Pakistan Puniab — Shehbaz is keen to deliver before the next Pakistan elections in 2023.

doubt benefitted from high international prices following the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The benchmark Cotlook 'A' Index price for cotton is currently at 159.90 cents a pound, up from 87 cents a year ago. Wheat prices at the Chicago Board of Trade exchange closed at \$10.96 per bushel (of 27.216 kg each) on Friday, compared to \$6.54 a year ago.

This links up with the farmers' second worry.

As global prices of agri-commodities have risen, so have the prices of diesel, fertilisers, and crop protection chemicals, which are all fossil fuel-based. State-owned oil companies have since March 21 cumulatively hiked retail prices of diesel by about Rs 10 per litre. On April 1, the Indian Farmers' Fertiliser Cooperative (IFFCO) raised the price of di-ammonium phosphate from Rs 1,200 to Rs 1,350 for a 50-kg bag, and that of its popular '20:20:0:13' complex fertiliser from Rs 1,290 to Rs 1,400

of '10:26:26' and '12:32:16' complexes were also increased from Rs 1.440 and Rs 1,450 respectively to Rs 1,470 each

"The continued increases in fuel and nutrient prices make me nervous about the coming kharif planting season (from June). How much more will we have to pay?,' asks Haresh Savaliya (51), who harvested 27 quintals of kapas from his 5-bigha holding in Kotda Sangani village, around 32 km from Rajkot city.

PM Modi

is an important formula for Ek Bharat, Sĥresth Bharat," he said.

He said Ram kathas are organised in different parts of the country."Be it in whatever language or dialect, the spirit of Ram katha binds, unites one in the devotion to the Lord. This is the strength of the Indian faith, our spirituality. our culture, our traditions. This is what, even in the troubled period of slavery, unified different sections, different classes to come together to resolve for the freedom of the nation... strengthened ef-

"In spite of the changing circumstances over thousands of years, India has remained unshakeable and resolute. The flow of our faith and culture is of sadbhav (harmony), of sambhav (equality), of samavesh (inclusivity). Thus, when the time came for good to conquer evil, Lord Ram, in spite of being capable and able, took everyone along, unified everyone, people of all composi-

tion, small and large beings, took their help. And after bringing together all, he finished this task -this is Sabka Saath, Sabka Pravas, His life is the best evidence of this, of which Hanumanji is an important part... We have to come together with this spirit, to achieve our resolve for the nation and to make it shine brighter," he said. He said a "mini-Japan" was

taking shape in the Saurashtra cities of Jamnagar, Rajkot and Morbi with specialised industrial $hubs\, creating\, jobs.\, He\, praised\, the$ Kathiawad region for emerging as a power centre, with its tourism and pilgrimage centres. Recalling his long association

with Morbi, Modi said the Machchhu dam failure in August 1979 had led to flooding and deaths. "When the earthquake came in Bhuj, Kutch (2001), the lessons learnt from the Morbi incident, the experience, came to use. The way Kutch has flourished after the earthquake goes to show how Gujarat has the strength to turn disasters into opportunities, as learnt from Morbi, Today, be it ceramics manufacturing, or clocks. Morbi has become an industrial hub for these. Before the Machchhu dam, all one could see in all four directions in Morbi were brick kilns and big chimneys. Today, it is said that on one side there is Morbi, on the other side Rajkot and on the third side Jamnagar.'

"Jamnagar's brass industry, Raikot's engineering industry and Morbi's clock and ceramic industries have become like a triumvirate... seems like a new mini-Japan has been established," he said.

Ali Sabry

despite his own reservations, he decided to continue in his new assignment as a national duty.

"I thought I am not an economist, I am not familiar with this area. So I thought somebody who is more suited would be ideal to do the job. That's why I resigned. I waited three to four-five days, and in this crucial time, we appealed to anyone (to become the Finance Minister). But no one was coming forward. And then I thought at this given time, so many things are at stake, we need to protect the institutions, and we need somebody to govern. And talk to the IMF, talk to the Indian government, you need somebody to represent your country and your nation. So, with reluctance, I thought that I will take back my resignation, and do my level best," he said.

He resigned because "there was a lot of pressure" from his family members not to accept the appointment. "Also, a lot of people were talking about whether I was the right fit for this job. At the beginning, I thought it better to offer the job to someone else who is But no one came forward.

This is not the time to just shy away from responsibility. You put your image and your personal glory and personal comfort on the side and do the job for the nation. It's the nation's call," he said. The task is unenviable. Sri

Lanka has a crippling dollar shortage and cannot import many of the essential goods that it needs for people's daily needs including milk, fuel, rice and medicines. As of April 12, the country had temporarily suspended repayment of all external debts, totalling about \$51 billion. And it has appealed to Sri Lankans living abroad to send remittances home to help the country tide over the crisis

"It is a difficult task, most challenging because Sri Lanka has never had this kind of economic crisis since independence. I understand the important thing is to prevent it from deteriorating further, at least to arrest it until some proper decisions are made. So we need to firefight immediately, protect the vulnerable here and then find a way for the balance of payment crisis until normalcy returns," said Sabry, a friend of President Rajapaksa and, until recently, head of his personal legal team. "It's not about me, it's about

the country," he said. "We need to protect the institutions, the central bank, banking system, its credibility, its association with payment gateways, friendly relationships with international multilateral organisations, foreign countries. These need to be protected and salvaged, at least for the time being." Being a lawyer, he said, what was helping him was his "skill to analyse and present a

case and also to listen". Sabry, whose religious identity sits uneasily with some of the actions of this government, had resigned once before as Justice Minister over the appointment of a controversial Buddhist monk, affiliated to the extremist Buddhist group Bodhiu Bala Sean, as head of a presidential task force constituted to study a proposal for "one country, one law". The appointment raised concerns among Sri Lanka's minorities. The monk, Galagodaatte Gnanasara, had been arrested for anti-Muslim violence, for a week, and was released on bail. He was convicted later for contempt of court, but received a Presidential pardon. Rajapaksa refused to accept

his resignation even at that time, and Sabry continued, after telling the media then that the matter was "in limbo".

Asked about how he views his government's position on minorities, he said, "I am working hard to restore order, restore stability, restore supply lines and protect the rest of the economy, and if we divide ourselves in terms of race, religion, or anything of that sort, it is going to be even more difficult. I hate any sort of division, wherever it comes from. This is not time for divisions, this is time for unity, this is time to put a strong united effort to protect our country.'

All over the world, and even in the most liberal Western democracies, he said, "some people will try to ignite differences among races and religions for their political survival. That's been there since time immemorial, but the majority should understand that these are short-term divisive tactics that will not work. No country can progress unless you think as a country. There is no solution that is separate for each and every one of us. People should understand that.

He said Sri Lanka needs bridge financing of \$3-4 billion to tide over the next 6-9 months to pay its import bills. He said it was "too premature" to say if India was giving an additional \$2 bn, but "the indications are positive" and "Indians have clearly indicated they will stand by Sri Lanka until it stands on its feet again, and normal life can commence... India had been a true friend in need".

The next steps, Sabry said, in the medium-term priority, was to focus on the balance of payment crisis, and after that pursue a development agenda that will put the economy back on track.

"We need to be realistic, it has happened over a period of time. we have lived beyond our means,' he said, pointing to the several tax cuts implemented by President Rajapaksa. He said possible areas of fiscal consolidation were taxes, realistic prices for commodities.

"Every day, the Ceylon Petroleum Corporation is incurring a loss of about a million. Some of the state-owned enterprises are continuing to make massive losses. Ultimately, that also has to be funded through public funding. So I think it's time for us to reflect on what is right, and what is good in the long term for the country, and not take just popular decisions," he said.

Body of student shot dead in Canada brought home to Ghaziabad

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

AMONG THE crowd of family and friends gathered outside Kartik Vasudev's (21) home in Ghaziabad's Rajendra Nagar on Saturday afternoon, waiting for the body to arrive from the airport, were his childhood friends.

"He wanted to come back in the summer, we had made a list of things we wanted him to get for us." said Kamal Thakur (21) an engineering student, who studied with Kartik at DAV Public School, Sahibabad. "He was gone only for a few months, but was always in touch. He would give us minute details of his life there... tell us

about his assignments, the purchase of a phone and the EMI he was paying for it," said Chiravu Balivan (21), who also studied with Kartik.

Kartik was shot dead outside a subway station in Canada's where his funeral was held.

Toronto last week. His body was brought home to Ghaziabad "He would ask us to shift



Kartik was cremated on Saturday in Ghaziabad. Prem Nath Pandey

there, so we could recreate a mini Rajendra Nagar... He always wanted to go abroad and was living his dream. He had the life he wanted there... a good college, good friends," said Kamal, who the neighbourhood.

"He was a good student and was always punctual. We would get scolded all the time, but not

him. If we were to go somewhere, he would be waiting 15 minutes in advance," Kamal recalled.

The body arrived in an ambulance around 4 pm, placed in a coffin inside a box, leaving the family inconsolable as the cover was lifted. He was cremated at Hindon Ghat. "The flight landed around noon, but it took some time to complete the process at the airport. He had gone in January...," said Preeti, Kartik's

Kartik was studying a global management course at Seneca University. He was travelling to work at a restaurant when he was shot outside Sherbourne subway station. The Toronto Police have arrested a 39-year-old man, Richard Jonathan Edwin, in connection with the murder. Jitesh Vasudev, Kartik's father, said, "There is no update on

the investigation. It's a long weekend there, and the next hearing is expected to be on April 20. We need justice, and we plan on travelling to Canada to make sure everything is on

 ${\tt Ahmedabad}$

GUJARAT

BTP set to break up with Owaisi, but AIMIM revs up for foray into Assembly elections

VAIBHAV JHA

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16

MONTHS BEFORE the Gujarat Assembly elections, slated for December this year, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM)'s chief Asaduddin Owaisi landed in Ahmedabad on Thursday to reach out to his party rank and file and look for new alliance partners. Officially, Owaisi arrived in the capital to attend an Iftaar event organised by the state AIMIM unit, even as the visit also served as an opportunity for him to galvanise his activists and boost the party membership drive. The alliance issue has also assumed urgency for Owaisi since the AIMIM's existing partnership with the Bharatiya Tribal Party (BTP) seems to have virtually collapsed now.

Currently, the AIMIM, which is estimated to have around 20,000 workers in Gujarat, has support bases in some pockets in over a dozen districts across the state, where the percentage of the Muslim population is relatively higher. Owaisi's visit was however met with protests in Ahmedabad's Juhapura locality, Gujarat's largest Muslim ghetto, where he went to a mosque to

Making its electoral debut in Gujarat in civic polls last year, the AIMIM had carved a slice of the Opposition space for itself by winning altogether 25 seats, in-



AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi at a press conference in Ahmedabad. Nirmal Harindran

cluding 7 seats in the Municipal Ahmedabad Corporation. The AIMIM had won the remaining 18 seats in the municipalities of Modasa in Aravalli district, Godhra in Panchmahal, and in Bharuch. The party had then nominated its candidates in 14 districts across the state. It had also fielded non-Muslim nominees in several wards, of whom a candidate also won the election.

The AIMIM had then forged an alliance with the BTP, which has some influence in Bharuch and Narmada districts. In the run-up to the Gujarat Assembly polls, the BTP is however eyeing an alliance with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on the ground, according to an AIMIM source, that "it was local elections last year but the coming Assembly polls will be a different ball game".

Meanwhile, addressing reporters during his Ahmedabad tour, Owaisi said he will keep visiting Gujarat this year in order to "correct any mistakes, strengthen the party and give our best in the Assembly polls".

An erstwhile Congress ally, the BTP had broken its alliance with the grand old party ahead of last year's urban local body polls. Joining hands with the AIMIM, it had then accused the Congress of being "two faced". However, the BTP leaders, including Chhotubhai Vasava and Mahesh Vasava, recently met AAP supremo and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, sending out clear signals that their party is heading to tie up with

the AAP for the Assembly polls. Faced with these developments, the AIMIM seems to have initiated its bid to scout for new

tensified its attempts to expand its base in Muslim-dominated pockets in the state.

When asked about the possibility of the BTP preferring the AAP to the AIMIM, Owaisi said, "Every party has the right to work as per their wish. We cannot stop anyone from joining someone else and neither can they. We are also looking for possible alliances and coalitions. However, it will be too early to spell out our preferences now."

As per the 2011 census, of Gujarat's total 6.04 crore population, the Muslim population is over 58 lakhs. However, in the 182-member Gujarat Assembly, there are only three Muslim Gyasuddin Shaikh, Imran Khedawala and Mohammad Javid Pirzada – all of whom belong to the Congress.

In view of the Muslim community's gross under-representation in the Assembly and other bodies, the AIMIM has plans to make inroads in different parts of Gujarat, especially in urban belts stretching beyond major cities.

"Last time AIMIM had contested local body polls on selected seats in a handful of regions. However, this year we are planning to contest on many more seats to expand our bases to cities such as Palanpur, Siddhpur, Surat, Junagadh, among others," said Shamshad Pathan, AIMIM vice president. "We are looking for likeminded parties with whom we can form an alliance. Additionally, we are also strengthening our own bases."

The Gujarat Assembly polls have always been a two-party affair, with the BIP ruling the state for over 25 years and the Congress continuing to play the role of the principal Opposition party. With the AAP now aggressively stepping up its Gujarat moves, planning to contest from all the Assembly seats, the evolving election scene may undergo changes.

In this backdrop, the Congress has sharpened its attack on the AIMIM, accusing it of being the BJP's "B team". "The Muslim community in Gujarat is aware. They have seen the results of UP elections and how AIMIM couldn't manage to win anything but did damage to the secular vote share, which ultimately benefited the BJP. They understand that this party (AIMIM) only approaches them during elections, and they have made up their mind to reject them and give their vote to a party that actually cares for them. This is why we saw citizens protesting against Owaisi when he arrived in Juhapura," said Congress MLA Khedawala.

Hitting back, Owaisi said, "We did not contest the 2014 and 2019 Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat. How many seats did Congress win? Zero. These allegations have now gotten old."

TWO-DAY VISIT TO GUJARAT

PM to inaugurate Global Ayush summit in WHO chief's presence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE VADODARA. APRIL 16

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will be on a two-day visit to Gujarat from April 18 to 20, during which he will inaugurate several development projects in North Gujarat and the tribal district of Dahod. The Prime Minister will also inaugurate a Global Ayush summit at Mahatma Mandir Gandhinagar, in presence of Prime Minister of Mauritius Pravind Kumar Jugnauth and Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-World Health General. Organization (WHO).

After arrving on April 18 evening, the Prime Minister will visit the Command and Control Centre (CCC) for schools in Gandhinagar, which annually collects and analyses over 500 crore data sets using big data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning, in order to enhance overall learning outcomes for students.

On April 19, Modi will lay the foundation stone of multiple development projects at Banas Dairy Sankul in Diyodar, Banaskantha including a dairy complex and potato processing plant.

The new dairy complex and potato processing plant at Diyodar, Banaskantha district, built at a cost of over Rs 600 crore, is a greenfield project. "It will enable the processing of about 30 lakh litres of milk, produce about 80 tonnes of butter, one lakh litres of ice cream, 20 tonnes of condensed milk and six tonnes of chocolate daily," a government release said on Saturday.

The potato processing plant will produce different types of processed potato products like french fries and potato chips,

many of which, will be exported to other countries. These plants will empower the local farmers."

the release added. The PM will also inaugurate the Banas Community Radio Station, established to provide farmers with information related to agriculture and animal husbandry. It is expected that the radio station will connect with over 5 lakh farmers of about 1700 villages.The PM will also lay the foundation stone for four biogas plants of 100 tonnes capacity to be established at Khimana, Ratanpura - Bhildi, Radhanpur and Thawar. The PM will also address a women's convention

which will be attended by woman

pastoralists in big number.

Chairman of Banas Dairy Shankar Chaudhary, said in a release on Saturday, "It is happening for the first time in India that two huge and modern dairy plants have been built in one district. Work on the (latest) dairy plant began in June 2020 and was completed within 18 months amid the adverse conditions owing to Covid-19. Machinery from seven countries have been fitted in the plant. It has capacity to process 30 lakh litre milk which can be expanded to 50 lakh litre per day...'

From Banaskantha, the Prime Minister will head to Jamnagar to lay the foundation stone of WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine (GCTM), in the presence of the Prime Minister of Mauritius, Pravind Kumar Jugnauth, and Dr. Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-World General, Organization (WHO).

'GCTM will be the first and only global outpost centre for traditional medicine across the world. It will emerge as an international hub of global wellness,"

On April 20, Modi will inaugurate the three-day Global AYUSH Investment and Innovation Summit at Mahatma Mandir in Gandhinagar in presence of Jugnauth and Ghebreyesus.

The PM's last stop of the twoday tour will be Dahod, where he will attend the Adijati Maha Sammelan in Kharod village and inaugurate as well as lay the foundation stones of various development projects for Dahod and Panchmahal districts worth around Rs 22,000 crore.

The projects include the Dahod District Southern Area Regional Water Supply Scheme, constructed in the Narmada River Basin, worth around Rs 840 crore. which will cater to the water supply needs of around 280 villages.

The Prime Minister will also inaugurate 66 KV Ghodia substation, Panchayat Houses, Anganwadis and an animal care centre for Dahod district, among other projects.

PM Modi will also lay the foundation stone for manufacturing of 9000 HP Electric Locomotives at the Production Unit and for a project to upgrade the Dahod workshop, established in 1926 for a periodic overhaul of steam locomotives, to an electric locomotive manufacturing unit.

"It will provide direct and indirect employment to over 10,000 people," the release said. The Prime Minister will also lav the foundation stone of various projects of the state government worth around Rs 550 crore. This includes water supply related projects worth about Rs 300 crore, Dahod Smart City projects worth around Rs 175 crores, works related to Dudhimati river project, GETCO Substation at Ghodia, among others.

CASE OVER ASSAULTING COPS

AAP leader Jadeja granted bail, barred from entering Gandhinagar

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16

A GANDHINAGAR sessions court on Saturday granted bail to AAP leader Yuvrajsinh Jadeja and another persons arrested for allegedly assaulting police personnel and dragging one of them on a vehicle's bonnet. As part of bail conditions, the court has, however, barred Jadeja and the other accused from entering Gandhinagar district until chargesheet in the case is filed.

4 booked for

cinema screen in Vadodara Vadodara: Vadodara city's Wadi

police station on Saturday

booked four unidentified per-

sons for allegedly vandalising a

17-feet cinema screen at Alpana

talkies and assaulting the ticket

checker while watching the

newly released flick KGF 2. in a

station states that the four accused

had occupied seats different from

their designated ones in the cin-

ema hall and assaulted two ticket

checkers when they were asked

filed by the cashier of the cinema

, Nimesh Kadkiya, when other

patrons pointed out to the staff

that the four men were occupy-

ing the seats, ticket Kadar

Qureshi and Rakesh Baria asked

the four accused to shift to their

vandalised the 17 feet 3D

screen of the theatre, which

cost Rs 3,50,000...They also

damaged the exit door of the

hall which costs around Rs

booked the accused under IPC

Sections mischief causing dam-

age amounting to fifty rupees

(427), voluntarily causing hurt

(323), uttering obscene words

[294(a)], and offence committed

in presence of abettor (114). ENS

The Wadi police station has

The FIR states, "The four

original seats.

According to the complaint

to shift to their original seats.

The FIR filed at Wadi police

late-night show on Friday.

vandalising

Jadeja and Dipakkumar Zala, who were booked under charges including attempt to murder, argued before the Gandhinagar district sessions court that there was no act committed by them to cause death and neither was there any intention of hurting the complainant police personnel or any other police officer and that there was no bodily injury caused to the said personnel.

Both the accused were booked under IPC sections 332 (voluntarily causes hurt), 307 (attempt to murder), 353 (assaults a public servant) and 114 (abettor present), On the other hand, public

prosecutor HN Raval had argued that the two accused who are "known as students'/candidates' leader, have made a provocative speech against the Government", and that the two 'tried to drive over the police officer" during the protest by Vidyasahayaks, with the Vidyashayaks gathering at the Vidhan Sabha without any police permission.

Additional sessions judge DK Soni deemed it fit to grant bail to

Jadeja and Zala, noting that both are residents of Gujarat and thus their availability during trial will not be hampered.

A student activist and a whistleblower, Jadeja joined AAP in 2020 and in the past three vears, his complaints of irregularities in government recruitment have resulted in the cancellation of two government exams (Bin Sachivalay clerk and office assistant exam and head clerk recruitment by Guiarat Subordinate Service Selection Board (GSSSB) exam), over three

dozen arrests, and an ongoing investigation into irregularities with respect to two more exams.

After the GSSSB head clerk recruitment exam was cancelled following a paper leak, its chairman Asit Vora had resigned on February 8 this year. A press conference by Jadeja where he gave evidence of an alleged paper leak in the recruitment of Van Rakshak (Forest Guard) posts, led to the state government accepting irregularities at a few centres in

CEPT alumna's thesis on conservation of Aliabet wins international award

RITUSHARMA

AHMEDABAD, APRIL 15

ALUMNA Shreeni Benjamin's thesis on coastal management titled 'Mending the gap: Landscape conservation for the island of Aliabet', is one of the three winners of the Asian Edition of the Young Talent Architecture Award 2020 (YTAA 2020). The 30-year-old postgraduate

in landscape architecture from CEPT University has been practising independently in Ahmedabad since she graduated in 2019. Part of the YTAA 2020 exhibi-

tion that showcases winners and finalists of European and Asian edition awards and supported by the European Union was inaugurated Friday at the Lilavati Lalbhai Library, CEPT University. The exhibition has previously been showcased at Venice, Prague and Shanghai, and is now being hosted by CEPT University.

Coastal management is one of the most important parameters to be considered in urban planning for a resilient future.

The research is an attempt to understand the drivers and services of the ecosystem of Aliabet in order to revive and strengthen its resources thereby regaining its position in the larger ecological chain.

"The island of Aliabet is a part



CEPT University alumna Shreeni Benjamin with her award-winning project at the exhibition. Nirmal Harindran

of river Narmada's estuary which has formed connections with the mainland due to the depositions afflicted by anthropogenic activities like the construction of the Sardar Sarovar dam. Once an ecologically rich and diverse chunk of land, it was home to wetland animals and over 350 species of wetland birds coming from Siberia where Aliabet is one of the pause points for them," says Shreeni.

"Because of the dam the island is devoid of the river water, because there isn't enough velocity of the river to flow on the island. And this area has a mix of waters that is the seawater and the river water, which generates the brackish water so brackish water is like the most vital thing for this island to survive. So that really shapes the growth of grass," she added. Her thesis postulates that the

present conditions and disturbances have replaced the existing physical conditions and habitats that have affected biodiversity in many ways. The man-made conditions imposed on Aliabet have led it to become a desert and a saline wastelandIt also looks into suggestions for revival of the island like conserving rain water. strategically planning embankments in certain areas that will capture rainwater and that will stop the high high tides.

"Also, we can convert this is-

land into different habitats, different wetland habitats with different waters like salt, brackish and fresh. For which we can prepare seed bags which can grow in fresh as well as in brackish soil. Also replenishing the mangroves can help in reviving the island, building them as the first line of defence," she further said.

"The wetland habitats will start to develop and then after some point like after 10 years down the line, it will grow into grasslands and then in succession it will ultimately lead to a dense forest," she added.

The YTAA is a part of the European Union Prize for Contemporary Architecture -Mies van der Rohe Award. It is organised by the Fundació Mies van der Rohe with the support of the Creative Europe programme of the European Union.

The YTAA aims to support the talent of recently graduated Architects, Urban Planners and Landscape Architects, who will be responsible for transforming our environment in the future.

In 2020, for the first time, an independent Asia edition was organised with the four Strategic Partners of the European Union in Asia: China, India, Japan and South Korea aiming to promote exchange and cooperation with their YTAA counterparts in Europe.

MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE LIMITED

FORMERLY MANAPPURAM HOME FINANCE PVT LTD

Regd Office: IV/470A (OLD)W/638A(NEW) Manappuram House Valapad Thrissur, Kerala 680567 Corp Office: Manappuram Home Finance Limited, Third Floor, Unit No. 301 to 315, A Wing, 'Kanakia Wall Street', Andheri-Kurla Road Andheri East, Mumbai 400093, Maharashtra. Phone No. 022-66211000, Website: www.manappuramhomefin.com

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the authorised officer of Manappuram Home Finance Ltd ("MAHOFIN") under th Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest *[Act], 2002 (54 of 2002) and it exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with rule 9 of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a **Demand Notice** calling upon the borrowers and co-borrowers to repay the amount mentioned in the notice and Interes thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken **Symbolic possession** of the propert described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13(4) of the said *[Act] read with rule 9 o the said rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the Manappuram Home Finance Ltd as mentioned below for each of the respective properties:

Sr. No.	name of Borrower and Co-borrower and Loan account number / Branch	of which Interest has been created	& Date of Demand Notice sent	possession Notice
1	VISHWAKARMA, REETABEN V	Plot No 109 Shivdhara Residency 2,near Garden City, Kadodara, Bardoli Road, Jolva Surat-394327, Gujarat, India	27-01-2022 & Rs.980936/-	15-04-2022
2	•	Plot No 381, Maa Anandi Township Near D, Ip Darshan School Dindoli, Surat-394210, Gujarat, India	27-01-2022 & Rs.1222063/-	15-04-2022

Date: 17.04.2022 **Authorised Officer**

Aspire Home Finance Corporation Limited A S P I R L Motilal Oswal Tower, Rahimtullah Sayani Road, Opposite ST Depot, Prabhadevi, Mumbai-400025 CIN :- U65923MH2013PLC248741 POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES)

Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd. under th Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & in compliance of Rule 8(1) of Enforcement of Security Interes Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interes (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notice/s on the date mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrower/s to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date o notice(s)/date of receipt of the said notice/s.

the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise powers conferred on him. her under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each account. The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Aspire Home Finance Corporation Ltd., for the amount and interest thereon as per loan agreement. The borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of Sub-section (8) of Section13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

The borrower/s having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general tha

П	Sr No	Loan Agreement No. / Name of the Borrower/Co Borrower/Guarantor	Demand Notice date & Amount	Date of possession Taken	Description of the Property/les mortgaged
	1.	LXJUN00417-180067982 Ramdebhai Jikabhai Khakhas & Nathiben Jikabhai Khakhas	21-01-2022 for Rs. 566926/-	12-04-2022	Plot No.26/2,Ravi Park-2,Near Rokadiya Hanuman Temple, Porbandar,Aditya Road,Near Kashi, Vishwanath Mahadev Temple,Area Khapat,City Porbandar-360577, R.S No.21Paikee1,East-Adj. Land Of Plot No.21 Paikee,West-6 Mtr.Road,North-Land Of Part No.A Of Plot No.26 Paikee,South-Land Of Plot No.25.
	2	LXMEH00416-170044155 Rameshbhai Gobarbhai Rabari & Gobarbhai Vastabhai Rabari	24-05-2019 for Rs. 393169/-	12-04-2022	Milkat No 861 Rabari Vas Opp Jogmaya, Temple At- Sundhiya, Mehsana, Gujarat - 384345
	3	LXMEH00416-170049874 Nagajibhai Lalajibhai Rabari & Ramiben Laljibhai Rabari	28-01-2021 for Rs. 420749/-	12-04-2022	Milkat No - 195/3, Rabari Vas, Near Primary School, At - Bhimpur, Satlasana, Mehsana, Gujarat - 384340

Place : Gujarat Dated : 17.04.2022

Place : Gujarat

Authorized Officer,



The women who fought, the women we must know. Follow their stories on www.indianexpress.com ♦ The Indian EXPRESS







TECHNICAL PARTHER





RAHUL TO VISIT DAHOD ON MAY 1

Hardik absent from Cong meet on tribal issues, he cites 'prior plan'

ADITI RAJA

VADODARA, APRIL 16

THE CONGRESS on Saturday held a tribal rights satyagraha meeting in Dahod, in presence of its elected tribal MLAs, which was not attended by the party's working president Hardik Patel, who had accused the Congress of "ignoring" him, in an interview with *The*

However, Hardik told The Sunday Express that he did not "skip" the Dahod meet but had other commitments.

Meanwhile party leaders said on Saturday that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi is likely to visit Dahod on Gujarat Foundation Day on May 1 to kickstart the party's Adivasi Adhikar Yatra (Tribal Rights Rally) that will pass through the tribal belt.

Declining to comment on the speculations regarding his exit from the party, Hardik told The Sunday Express, "I could not attend the meeting in Dahod because I had a prior plan to visit Salangpur to pay obeisance at the Hanuman temple as it is a very important day being Saturday and Hanuman Jayanti... I had already conveyed to the party that I cannot attend the Dahod event. There is nothing more to read into it."

GPCC Spokesperson Manish Doshi said that Patel's absence was not to be seen as a "major" issue as the event was focused on tribal issues. Doshi said, "The Dahod event was specifically planned to discuss issues faced by the tribal community. All our important leaders were present, including leader of the Opposition Sukhram Rathwa and also the MLAs from tribal constituencies...

Hardik's absence is not to be seen as anything more than it being a tribal rights meeting.

Meanwhile, senior GPCC leaders including state President Jagdish Thakor, Leader of Opposition Sukhram Rathwa and 13 MLAs of tribal constituencies in the state remained present at the event -- MLA Bhavesh Katara also skipped the meeting, sparking off rumours in Dahod about a possible exit of Kataras.

Denying the rumours, Doshi said, "Bhavesh Katara had excused himself from the meeting and informed the party in advance."

Doshi said that the party had invited Rahul Gandhi to kickstart the Adivasi Adhikar Yatra on May 1 from Dahod as well as for the Bardoli Satyagraha on June 12.

"We are expecting that he will attend both the momentous events.. AICC incharge of Gujarat, event. The event will see the commencement of the Yatra, which will travel through the tribal belt of the state... The message that the party is taking across to the tribals is that Congress is with them in ensuring that their rights are not trampled upon." Doshi said.

"The tribal belt extends from

Ambaji to Umergaon in Gujarat but the BJP has not allowed tribals to use the rights they have been conferred upon. Tribal education is given the least importance and their lands are taken away in the name of development... Kaprada, which has the highest rainfall in the tribal belt, is struggling with drinking water. We aim to educate and empower the community through the yatra in the belt, which is a traditional Congress stronghold," the spokesperson added.

Working to improve air connectivity between Gujarat and Mumbai, says Scindia

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA KESHOD, APRIL 16

SURAT. APRIL 16

owners joined BJP in the pres-

fly-by-night firms which pur-

chase grey fabrics in large quan-

FOGWA president Jirawala

said, "Paatil had given justice to

the issues faced by textile indus-

try earlier and helped the indus-

try in each stage. I was with

Congress and now for the better-

ment of the textile industry, I

thought of joining BIP, as it is

worthless to swim against the

flow of waves. I have no expec-

tation of getting any position in

the party, but whatever work is

given to me, I will definitely take

it to a successful end.

tity and default payment.

Adhiveshan meeting.

UNION CIVIL Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia on Saturday said his ministry was working to improve air connectivity between Gujarat and the country's financial capital Mumbai.

He was in Keshod in the state's Junagadh district to inaugurate the upgraded airport and flag off an Alliance Air flight to Mumbai under the Centre's Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS)-UDAN scheme. He said Keshod airport was set up by the then Nawab of Junagadh in 1930 and was lying unused before Prime Minister Narendra Modi decided to revive it.

Revived by the Airports Authority of India (AAI) at an investment of Rs 25 crore, the airport at Keshod will see its first flight connecting it to Mumbai, with Scindia adding that Keshod will soon get connected by air to Ahmedabad as well.

"In the coming days, we plan to provide maximum connectivity to Gujarat," Scindia said at the programme attended by Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel and State Civil Aviation Minister Purnesh Modi.

"...We have connected Porbandar and Rajkot with Mumbai. We are connecting every corner of Gujarat with the country's financial capital." he said.

He said two greenfield airports will be developed in Gujarat, with an annual capacity of 25 lakh and 30 lakh passengers respectively.

Scindia said apart from two greenfield airports, five new flights, flights from Mumbai and Ahmedabad to Keshod, his ministry was present to fulfill the demands of the CM and the state civil aviation minister related to air connectivity.From April 27, a flight connecting Porbandar with New Delhi will start operating, Scindia announced.

The Union civil aviation ministry had taken steps that were not taken in 75 years of the country and had "democratized" flights by making it affordable, Scindia said.



CR Paatil at the FOGWA meeting in Surat on Saturday . Express

ence of state party chief CR Paatil. Besides Paatil, Union Minister of State for Textiles Darshana Jardosh and BJP leaders of Surat Addressing the meeting, BJP city also attended the event, to MP of Surat and Union Minister lardosh said. "The textile induswhich no Congress or Aam Aadmi Party leaders were invited. try is presently an unorganized The meeting was held to dissector and attempts are being cuss major issues faced by the made to make it organized. The powerloom sector including the textile ministry is also working

At weavers' body meet,

The presidents and secrepeople can get employed." At the event, the state BJP taries of 33 powerloom associachief said assured support to the tions of Surat city and district remained present in the Maha textile industry over any issue faced by them

to start skill training centres at

those places where the indus-

tries are established so that more

However, sources in FOGWA "The textile industry employs said that the event was organized the most number of people in the country. For issues related to GST as a platform for Jirawala, who duty or anything else, we are there to support," Paatil said. was with Congress, to join BJP.

Jirawala had started his political career in Sewa Dal of Congress in 1982 and then joined Youth Congress. Later he was made the Surat city

Congress president in 2013. When the then CM of Guiarat Narendra Modi was projected as prime ministerial candidate of BJP in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, Ashok Iirawala, had joined BIP.

However, he returned to $Congress\,in\,2016\,and\,was\,part\,of$

High Court lawyer, his friend

the Patidar Anamat Andolan Samithi protest demanding reservations across the state. In the 2017 Assembly elections, Congress gave ticket to Nilesh Kumbhani and Ashok Jirawala from Kamrej seat in Surat after the latter created pressure on the party and both of them filed nomination forms. However Nilesh Kumbhani later withdrew the form and Jirawala lost the election to V D Zalavadiya.

Meanwhile, on Saturday Paatil also attended a alumni meet of students of PP Sawani school in Varachha.

The state BJP chief also released a video on social media apologizing for mentioning Subhadra as Lord Krishna's wife during a speech at the Madhavpur fair a few days ago.

In the video, CR Paatil said, "I have corrected my mistake in the same speech. But some people had contacted me on phone and told me to apologize. I did and apologized to them on the phone. Later on some people told me to come to Dwarka and apologise, and I told them that I will definitely do it...

To Mark Hanuman Jayanti

A procession to mark Hanuman Jayanti passes through Fatepura Char Rasta towards Rokadnath temple at Nyaymadir in Vadodara on Saturday. Bhupendra Rana

AIM TO RAISE AWARNESS ABOUT SCHEMES. INCREASE REGISTRATION IN E-SHRAM PORTAL Unorganised workers' meet held in six cities

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AHMEDABAD, APRIL 16

'Asangathit Shramik Sammelan' (unorganised workers meet) on Saturday, with Minister of State of Labour and Employment Brijesh Merja joining in virtually at the Ahmedabad congregation. The 'Asangathit Shramik

Sammelan' gatherings held at Ahmedabad, Vadodara, Surat, Rajkot, Jamnagar and Bhavnagar various schemes available to unorganised labour workforce as well as to up the registrations of unorganised labourers under the e-Shram portal, said KG Bhavsar, deputy labour commissioner of Ahmedabad region.

Express that similar gatherings have also been scheduled to be Narendra Modi earlier in the day. on Saturday, were organised held at four cities -with an objective to popularise Gandhinagar, Mehsana, Morbi and Junagadh -- on Sunday.

Meria, who was scheduled to attend the Ahmedabad gathering in-person, said during his virtual address at the event that he was unable to make it to the event owing to the inauguration

Bhavsar told the Indian of 108-feet Hanuman statue at Morbi by Prime Minister "Work for the benefit of the unorganised labour force (by the government) is going on with much enthusiasm...Guiarat is number one in registration of unorganised sector labourers on the e-Shram portal," Merja said

during his address. According to the e-Shram portal's dashboard, between August 2021 and April 15 of this vear, 83.12 lakh workers have registered, putting Gujarat in the

ninth position among all states. According to the data provided by the Gujarat Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Board of Ahmedabad, till date 7.66 lakh building construction workers have registered.

killed in accident on NH 48 on the road, and fled the spot,

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE SURAT, APRIL 16

TWO PERSONS, including a practising lawyer of Gujarat High Court, Hirak Ganguly, died in an accident on the National Highway no. 48, between Vapi to Valsad, near Pardi on Friday

Police said that the 30-yearold Ganguly, a resident of Ahmedabad, along with his three friends. Prashant Sharma. Prashant Rajpurohit, and Abhishek Rajput, were returning to Valsad from Vapi, on two bikes, after having dinner in a hotel in Vapi. Ganguly was riding pillion on Rajpurohit's bike, and they were tailing Sharma, who was on another bike.

Rajpurohit lost control of his bike near a petrol pump at Jogarmandi falia causing both him and Ganguly to fall down. A speeding four wheeler came from behind and ran over Ganguly who was lying injured

police said. Some of the passersby took

both the injured men to the government hospital at Pardi. Ganguly was declared dead

by the doctors on arrival, while Rajpurohit was shifted to Valsad Civil hospital due to severe head injuries. Pardi police also reached

the hospital after learning about the incident. Rajpurohit was later shifted to Kiran hospital in Surat where he was declared dead on Saturday morning. Several people reached

Pardi hospital after learning about the incident. Ganguly practised on the civil and criminal side at the Gujarat HC and also pursued public interest litigations, playing an instrumental role in a 2016 PIL by Ahmedabad-based Manav Garima, to abolish manual scavenging in practice, and ensure fair compensation to

family of the deceased manual

scavengers. Ganguly often extending legal assistance to tribals, Dalits, farmers, fishermen, and other underprivileged sections of the society.

A complaint was lodged with Pardi police station by Sharma, a lawyer, on Friday Police registered an offence

under Indian Penal Code section 279 (rash driving), 337(causing hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others), 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others), 304(a) (causing death by negigence)

Pardi Police sub-inspector K M Baraiya said, "We have visited the spot and checked the bike driven by Rajpurohit and it seems that their bike slipped off and both of them fell on the road... We have registered an offence and have started a probe. We will check the CCTV footage and try to identify the

Mythology, politics behind Gujarat's Madhavpur Mela, and why CMs from Northeast are visiting it

GOPALKATESHIYA RAJKOT. APRIL 16

IN HIS radio address programme Mann ki Baat last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had Gujarat's about Madhavpur Mela, highlighting its links to Northeast India and terming this "deep bond between India's east and west" part of our "heritage" The Mela was inaugurated

on Sunday (April 10) by President Ramnath Kovind. Since then, Chief Ministers from the Northeast regions of the country and a host of Union Ministers have been visiting the fair, with Information and Broadcasting Minister Anurag Thakur saying the event has the "highest political quotient" (Not in quote. He said, "In entire country, there is no other fair which the President and host of Union Ministers and Chief Ministers of a number of states visit.")

What is the Madhavpur Mela

The Mela is a religio-cultural fair taking place every year in Madhavpur, a village on the Porbandar coast, also known as Madhavpur Ghed. The village has temples of Madhavraiji, or Lord Krishna, and his consort Rukmini, believed to have been built in the 15th century. It is also known for its sandy sea beach, the turquoise waters of the Arabian Sea, a sea turtle hatchery

and the Osho Ashram. The fair begins on Ram



At Madhavpur Mela in Porbandar. Chirag Chotaliya

Navami, Lord Rama's birth anniversary falling on the ninth day of the month of Chaitra in the Hindu calendar, and culminates on Tryodashi, the 13th day of the month.

Mythology behind the fair

The fair celebrates the marriage of Lord Krishna with Rukmini around 4,000 years ago, as per Hindu mythology.

According to mythology, Lord Krishna had established his kingdom in Dwarka near Porbandar. Rukmini, daughter of King Bhimak of the present-day Arunachal Pradesh, wanted to marry Krishna, while her brother wanted to marry her off to Shishupal, Krishna's cousin.

Therefore, Krishna abducted Rukmini, brought her to Gujarat and tied the knot with her at

Madhavpur village. Today, to mark the wedding, marriage rituals go on for five days.

EXPLAINE

Significance and scaling-up of

The Madhavpur Mela, though, is unique as it is held in summer, was till five years ago just one of the hundreds of fairs

held in the state. In 2018, the state government,

in collaboration with the Centre, took over its organisation, with an aim to highlight the event's connection with the Northeast and to highlight cultural connections of the North-east with the western part of

the country.

The government invited Governors and Chief Ministers of Northeastern states to the fair, along with art troupes from the region. A handicraft exhibition is ment presents the fair as an annual effort to integrate the culture of the Northeast with that of the west

This year, the government has taken on lease 41 bigha private land for creating parking lots, a helipad where five helicopters can land at a time, a stage for politicians to address the gathering, exhibition ground, etc. The government has also hired 100 public transport buses to ferry people of Porbandar, Devbhumi Dwarka, Gir Somnath and Junagadh districts to Madhavpur free of cost.

Fair's economy

Earlier, the Madhavpur village panchayat used to earned around Rs10 lakh to Rs15 lakh per year by auctioning off space for stalls on the Mela nu Medan. Visitors would mostly be people from villages surrounding Madhavpur.

But since the government took over, the village panchayat's revenue has increased manifold. In 2022, the government leased land from farmers for a few days and then gave it to the village panchayat for auction. The panchayat generated Rs35 lakh by auctioning off 98 plots for various rides and stalls. Locals selling food items and soft drinks also do swift business

However, farmers whose land is taken on lease lose their standing summer crops.When The Indian Express visited the fair ground, remains of alfalfa crops could be seen in one porcompensates farmers for this crop loss.

Role of the panchayat

Since the government took over the task of organising and managing the fair, the panchavat's role is becoming irrelevant. At the inauguration of the ongoing fair on April 10, no one from the panchayat was given a seat on the dais.

'The religio-cultural fair has been turned into a fair of politics with little regard to traditions,' complains Bhanu Bhuva, incumbent sarpanch of Madhavpur. Arvind Raiyani, Gujarat's

Minister of State for Transport and Tourism, disagrees. "This is a place of heritage value, requiring the government's intervention for its development. Of course it has to be done by taking the village panchayat along, and we are doing that. We had sent invites to everyone but people are not turning up due to differences in ideologies," Raiyani claimed.

Importance in state politics

Madhavpur is the biggest village of Porbandar district, with 13,000 voters. Till 2002, it was part of Mangrol Assembly seat, a Congress bastion. In 2007, it was made part of Kutiyana Assembly seat. The BIP, which has been in power in Gujarat for the past 27 years, had won Kutiyana seat for the first time in 1998 and held it for the next two terms. In 2012, strongman Kandhal Iadeia of NCF won it and retained it in 2017.

booked for sedition **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

Rajkot court rejects bail

application of advocate

RAJKOT, APRIL 16

THE DISTRICT and sessions court of Rajkot on Saturday dismissed the bail application of advocate Sohil Mor in a sedition case registered against him by the Rajkot city police.

The court of additional sessions judge KD Dave rejected Mor's bail application.

Additional public prosecutor Samir Khira contended that the accused was an advocate and hence a person who knew the law but chose to break it.

Khira further submitted that the accused has been booked for serious offence like section as provided in Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), for promoting entity between two groups as provided in IPC Section 153(A) and that the investigation by police so far has established that prima facie there's is a case against the applicant.

Adding that therefore, the accused doesn't deserve to be granted bail as also for the reason nat investigation is still ongoing. Mor was booked by

University Police in Rajkot city on February 20 after one Jyotiba Sodha filed a complaint alleging the 44-year-old advocate passed derogatory remarks against Maratha ruler Shivaji in a WhatsApp group of residents of Syama Prasad Mukherjee Township on February 19.

Sohil Mor was booked by police on Feb 20 after Jyotiba Sodha filed a complaint alleging the advocate passed derogatory remarks against Maratha ruler Shivaji in a WhatsApp group

According to the FIR, when Sodha, one of the residents of Syama Prasad Mukherjee Township, contacted Mor on telephone to seek clarification about his comments, Mor allegedly told her that another country had gained control and that people of certain communities should leave.

According to the FIR, Mor, who is also a resident of Syma Prasad Mukherjee Township, allegedly tore off photos of Lord Ganesha pasted on doors of certain residents of Svama Prasad Mukheriee Township and also allegedly destroyed torans, hangings considered auspicious.

"We brought it to the notice of the court that Mor was an advocate and a notary who had full knowledge of law but had willingly broken the law and prima facie, had committed serious offence like sedition and therefore doesn't deserve bail," Khira said. Mor is presently lodged in ju-

dicial custody. Ahmedabad

Classifieds

PERSONAL

CHANGE OF NAME I Poonam Spouse No. 14676682X Rank NK Name - Sandeep Nagar, 270, Engineer Regtment Resident, Village & Post Iklama, Tehsil -Goharganj, Dist. Raisen, State - MP, Pin - 464993 I Have Changed My Name Poonam to Poonam Nagar vide Affidavit date

CHANGE OF NAME

: 29/03/2022

I have change My Name from **PATEL VALLABHKUMAR GIRDHARBHAI** to **PATEL VALLABHBHAI GIRDHARBHAI** Address: 67, Deepmala Bunglows, Nr. Cadila Bridge, Ghodasar,

CHANGE OF NAME

Ahmedabad -380050

I have changed my name as **BAROT JAYMITABEN VIKRAMBHAI** from

BAROT JAYMITABEN VIKRAMKUMAR

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PROPERTY

CHANGE OF NAME I have change My Name from **PATEL LILABAHEN VALLABHKUMAR**

PATEL LILABEN VALLABHBHAI

Address: 67, Deepmala Bunglows, Nr. Cadila Bridge, Ghodasar, Ahmedabad -380050

CHANGE OF NAME

I have changed my name as BAROT **MAYUR VIKRAMBHAI** from **BAROT MAYUR VIKRAMKUMAR**

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Notice No.: 02, 2022-23 The Executive Engineer, Sujlam Suflam Unit No-2, 2nd floor, State Water Data Centre Building, Sector-8 Gandhinagar PIN-382007, Phone No-079-232-36712 invvites applications for Preparation of Selection list from eligible candidates for Agriculture Expert in District Program Management Unit (DPMU) on contract basis under Atal Bhujal Yojna (Atal Jal).

Application Format, Qualification Detail and other Detail may be seen at Mahiti Niyamak Dept. Office website www.statetenders.gujatat.gov.in and GWRDC website http://gwrdc.gujarat.gov.in. The qualified Candidates may apply to the "Executive Engineer, Sujalam Sufalam Unit No-2, 2nd floor, State Water Data Centre Building, Sector-8 Gandhinagar PIN-382007. Ph No-079-232-36712" only by RPAD/Speed post and ensure that their application reaches by Dt. 30/04/2022 with all documents. INF/103/22-23

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GOVERNMENT OF UTTAR PRADESH
UTTAR PRADESH CORE ROAD NETWORK DEVELOPMENT

PROGRAMME (UPCRNDP)

REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB)

E-Procurement Notice (Engineering, Procurement, Construction ("EPC") Contract

following Two-Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)

NATIONAL OPEN COMPETITIVE PROCUREMENT

The Government of India has received financing from the World Bank lowerd the cost of the Ulter Pradesh

Core Road Network Development Project and intends to apply a part of the proceeds to cover eligible

Bidding will be conducted through national open competitive procurement using a Request for Bids (RFB) as

("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

specified in the World Bank's 'Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016_Revised August 2016'

The Governor of Ultar Pradesh through Chief Engineer, Externally Alded Projects (Roads), UPPWD

(Implementing Agency) now invites online Bilds from eligible Bidders for the construction of works as tabulated

Contract

Package No.

UPCRNOP

UPG/05/

2022

interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given

below during office hours. Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) an

minimum qualification criteria (Section III – Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of

the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 3.14 and 3.15 of the "Procurement Regulations" setting

The bidding document is available online on http://etender.up.nic.injurder the organisation head "PWD."

Externally Aided Project (World Bank Tenders)*] (website) from 20-04-2022 to 20-05-2022 for a nor

refundable lee as per column no 5 of the table above. This fee is to be paid online on website http://rajkosh.up.nic.in/PayWithoutReg.aspx.as.per.instructions.given.in BDS Clause 6.3. The bidders would be responsible for ensuring that any addends available on the website is also downloaded and incorporated.

For submission of the bid, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the Certifying Authorities authorised by Government of India for issuing DSC. Aspiring bidders who have not

obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-procurement in this Project, may obtain the same

from the website: http://etender.up.nic.in/The Invitation for Bids under UPCRNDP is published on this website under the organisation head "PWD - Externally Aided Project (World Bank Tenders)". Any prospective bidder

can logon to this website and view the invitation for Bids and can view the details of works for which bids are

invited. The prospective bidder can submit bids online; however, the bidder is required to have

enrolment/registration in the website and should have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC), for signing and encryption issued by a Certifying Authority licensed under Controller of Certifying Authorities of India, in the form of smart sandle-taken. The DSC can be obtained from any authorized cardifying agencies. The bidder

Bids comprise two Parts, namely the Technical Part and the Financial Part, and both parts must be submitted

simultaneously online on http://elender.up.nic.in on or before 17:00hours on 20-05-2022 and the Technical

Part of the bids will be publicly opened online at the address given below on the same day at 17:30hours, in

the presence of the bidders' designated representatives and anyone who chooses to attend. The 'Financial Part" shall remain unopoined in the e-procurement system until the second public Bid opening for the financial

part. Any bid or modifications to bid (including discount) received outside e-procurement system will not be

considered. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue. The electronic bidding system would not allow

A pre-bid meeting will be held on 02-05-2022 at 15.00 hours at the office of Chief Engineer, Externally Aided

Projects (Roads), UPFWD, Nirman Bhawan, 96, MO Marg, Lucknow-225 001 to clarify the issues and to

answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Tristructions to Bidders' of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid

meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for

Other details can be seen in the bidding document. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to

system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates,

the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to

(a) Name & Designation of Officer: Chief Engineer, Externally Aided Projects (Roads), UPPWO.

should register in the web site http://etender.up.nic in using the relevant option available.

Cost of

Document (Rs.)

including

GST

Period of

Completion (Days)

Construction

Period + 730 +

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OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER **RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR** (E-Mail: serwbpr2004@yahoo.com, Tel/Fax:- 0680-2404287) No. RFP // 1414 //RWC//BAM//Dated. 13.04.2022

1st Corrigendum to Bid identification No. Online Tender/50-2021-22/BPR The partial modification of bridge works vide above identification has been made as follows:

Date of availability of tender: 20.04.2022 to 04.05.2022 upto 3.00 PM instead of 06.04.2022 to 20.04.2022.

Date of opening of Technical Bid.: 05.05.2022 at 11.00 AM instead

of 21.04.2022 at 11.00 AM Date of opening of Financial Bid: Will be intimated later on.

All other contents will remain unchanged. Sd/- P.K. Jena Chief Construction Enginee R.W. Circle, Berhampur OIPR- 25071/11/0008/2223

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER OF FISHERIES (Government of Gujarat) Dr. Jivaraj Mehta Bhavan, Block No. 10, 3rd floor, Gandhinagar-382010

E-T	E-Tender are publically invited for the work as described below								
Tender Notice No	Description of work	Estimatd cost in Rs	(1) Tender Fee (2) EMD (3) Time Limit						
01/ 22-23	Maintenance dredging at Umarsadi fish Landing Centre Ta-Pardi, Dist-Valsad	10,01,56,000.00/-	(1) Rs.18000/- (Non-refundable) (2) Rs.1001600/- (3) 4 Months (Excluding monsoon)						

Downloading start date and last date of online submission: From Dt.

19/4/2022 to Dt. 27/4/2022 up to 18.00 Hrs

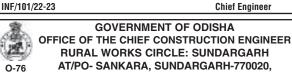
2. Last date of Submission of tender fee, EMD and other documents through RPAD/Speed post only: 04/05/2022 up to 18:00 Hrs.

Date and Time of Bid opening: Dt. 05/05/2022 from 12.00 Hrs onwards

Downloading of Tender document and submission of Price Bid in the elec-tronics format can be done only through https://www.nprocure.com.

Price bid in Physical form shall not be accepted in any case 6. Necessary correction or additions, if required will be brought to notice on

https://www.nprocure.com. Commissioner of Fisheries reserve the right to accept or reject any or all tenders to be received without assigning any reasons thereof.



AT/PO- SANKARA, SUNDARGARH-770020, E-mail address- serw_sundargarh@yahoo.com No. Tender Online - RWCCESNG -06 of 2022-23, Letter No. 884

	e-Procurement NOTICE
Type of the Work	: Bridge (BSY)
Class of Contractor	: As specified in the column-6 of the Annexure

pe of the work	. Dridge (DOT)
lass of Contractor	: As specified in the column-6
me of Completion	: As specified in the column-5

Class of Contractor	:	As specified in the column-6 of the Annexur
Time of Completion	:	As specified in the column-5 of the Annexur
Detail Projects		As nor Anneyure attached

3.	Time of Completion	As specified in the column-5 of the	e Annexure
4.	Detail Projects	As per Annexure attached	
5.	Estimated Cost	As specified in the column-4 of the	e Annexure
ŝ.	Other details		

Procurement	Bid	Availability of Tender		Last Date &	Date & Time of		
Officer	Identification	on-line fo	or bidding	Time of	opening of tender		
	No.	From	То	Seeking	Technical	Financial	
				Tender	Bid	Bid	
				Clarification			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
Chief	RWCCESNG-	18.04.2022	02.05.2022	30.04.2022	04.05.2022	Will be	
Construction	06 of 2022-23	11:00 AM	5:00 PM	5:00 PM	11:00 AM	intimated	
Engineer, Rural						separately	
Works Circle,							
Sundargarh							

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Chief Construction Enginee Rural Works Circle, Sundargar OIPR- 25133/11/0009/2223



OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RWS&S DIVISION, KENDRAPARA At : Ichhapur, Post : Shree Baladevjew,

Email: eerwsskendrapara@gmail.com Identification No. RWS/104/2021-2022 Letter No. 2741 / Dated. 31.03.2022

This corrigendum has been made for the NIT-104 invited online vide this office letter No. 1525 / Dated. 04.03.2022 with date for selling, closing, clarification and opening which was on dt. 02.04.2022 (selling date), 21.04.2022 (closing date), 04.04.2022 (clarification date) 22.04.2022 (opening date) as per 1st corrigendum has been amended and to be read as 24.04.2022, 12.05.2022, 25.04.2022 and 13.05.2022 respectively as follows:

LPCD Retrofitting RPWS Scheme to Raghudeipur of Derabish Block and Gogua of Mahakalapada on clubbed up mode in the District of	SI. No.	Name of Work	Cost (Apprx.) Rs. In Lakhs	EMD to be deposited online	Class of Bidder	Cost of Tender Paper	Period of completion
LPCD Retrofitting RPWS Scheme to Raghudeipur of Derabish Block and Gogua of Mahakalapada on clubbed up mode in the District of	1	LPCD RPWS Scheme to Derakeshpur, Mantripada and Nuahat on clubbed up mode under Derabish Block in the District of	₹ 268.27	Nil	"B" & "A"	₹ 10000	330 days
Rendrapara(USINI Furius)	2	LPCD Retrofitting RPWS Scheme to Raghudeipur of Derabish Block and Gogua of Mahakalapada on clubbed up mode in	₹ 322.02	Nil		₹ 10000	360 days

Sd/- (Er. B.K.Nayak) Executive Engineer RWS&S Division, Kendrapara OIPR- 25004/11/0009/222



GOVT. OF ODISHA DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, DRAINAGE CIRCLE, CUTTACK GANDARPUR-753 003

E-PROCUREMENT NOTICE NO.-ACEDC-CTC-01/2022-23 email Id :- sedrainagecirclectc@gmail.com

: Renovation by Dredging of Basulei Nalla from BD

ļ '	Ivalle of Works		6.50 KM to 11.52 KM under DIP.		
2	Total number of package.	:	1 no. individual package.		
3	Amount put to Tender	:	Rs. 6,58,24,694.00		
4	Bid Identification No.	:	ACEDC-CTC /DD-JSPR - 01/2022-23		
5	Period of completion	:	11(Eleven) Calendar months.		
6	Avadabdity of Tender On - Line.	:	19.04.2022, 16.30.00 Hours to 10.05.2022, 17.30 Hours.		
7	Date of Opening of Technical Bid.	:	11.05.2022 at 10.00 hours in the O/o the Additional Chief Engineer Drainage Circle, Cuttack		
8	Class of Contractor	:	Special And Super Class.		
9	Bid Security	:	Bid Security Declaration		
10	Cost of Tender paper	:	Rs. 10,000/-		
11	Procurement Officer	:	Additional Chief Engineer Drainage Circle, Gandarpur Cuttack, -753003.		

Tender will be accepted If registered in the CDMS Portal Further details can be seen from the Govt, web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in. Addendum / Corrigendum/ Cancellation if any equired will be published only in Govt. web site www.tendersorissa.gov.in

> **Additional Chief Engineer** Drainage Circle, Cuttack OIPR- 32174/11/0001/2223

indianexpress.com



any lare submission of birds.

Albids must be accompanied by a Bid-Securing Declaration.

verify the website for the latest information related to this bid.

(b) Official Address: Nirman Bhawan, 96, MG Marg, Lucknow-226 001

discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.

The address(es) referred to above are:

nco fiamp@bwqquqaeeofiam3(c)

d Telephone (+91)(522)2236496

I arrive at a conclusion not an assumption.

Chief Engineer (EAP)

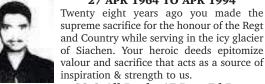
Inform your opinion with detailed analysis.

The Indian Express. For the Indian Intelligent.



SALUTE THE SOLDIER

27 APR 1964 TO APR 1994 Twenty eight years ago you made the



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



Name of Tender: RRC LG-02 ENCLOSED FULLY

AUTOMATED COAGULATION ANALYSER 3RD GENERATION MACHINE

Last Date of Online & **Physical Tender Submission**

Dt: 25/04/2022

Details & Tenders Available on

www.nprocure.com



GUNNER

TAMIL SELVAN

DISTRICT WATER & SANITATION UNIT - SABARKANTHA (Govt. of Gujarat Undertaking) TENDER NOTICE NO: - 02 OF 2022 - 23

Unit Manager, D.W.S.U - Sabarkantha, Jal Bhavan, Nr. Circuit House Bye pass Road, Himatnagar Mob. 8141306115 Invites tender for below mentioned work by 'E-tendering System. For work Open Well Work As per Mention in Last Date for Tender dt.20/04/2022 upto 18.00 hours and last date for physi cal document subbmition date: 21/04/2022 upto 15.00 hours by PPAD /Seed Post / Courier to reached at office. Amout of work is Rs. 39.85 laks. The Concern villages pani samiti reserves the right to cancel on or all tenders with out giving any reason. Tender documents available on website http://www.wasmo.nprocure.com. for detailed information of tender & conditions, contact office mentioned above during office hours and is binding to all Any Amendment regarding this tender will be shown / publish on Website only. Drinking Water Supply Helpline for Rural Area: 1916, 18002333944

GUJARAT STATE ELECTRICITY CORPORATION LTD.

Sikka Thermal Power Station. At PO Sikka, Dist. Jamnagar-361141. e-mail: cegstps.gsecl@gebmail.com Website: www.gsecl.in CIN: U40100GJ1993SGC019988

E-Tender Notice No. 226

Online Tenders are invited for 1) Work of complete Boiler overhauling during AOH/COH as per IBR of 250 MW Unit No. 3 & 4 at STPS

Tender documents available on GSECL Website www.gsecl.in (for view, download and submission in hard). Party has to submit tender in online also on web site www.nprocure.com. Vendor, Manufacturers, Contractors are requested to locate the same from above web site. Please be in touch with our above site for any future Amendment Corrigendum

Chief Engineer (G), STPS.

GOVERNMENT OF GUJARAT NARMADA, WATER RESOURCES, WATER SUPPLY AND KALPSAR DEPARTMENT ON LINE TENDER NOTICE NO. 01 OF 2022-23

In the name of Governor of Gujarat State, the Executive Engineer Himatnagar Irrigation Division, Hadilpul Chhaparia, Himatnagar 383 001 (Phone:02772-242710) invites tenders for the (1) Extension, Renovation and Modernization work of Hahtmati Distribution Canal System of HRP "B" Zone Ta:- Prantij having the Estimated Cost of Rs. 691.03 Lac And (2) Extension, Renovation and Modernization work of Main Canal of HRP "C-1" Zone Ta: Prantij having the Estimated Cost of Rs. 704.15 Lac from contractor registered in appropriate Class in Narmada, Water Resources, Water Supply and Kalpsar department andlor Road and Building Department of Gujarat State.

1. Tender download Dt.12/05/2022 up to 18.00 Hrs.

2. On line tender submission Dt.12/05/2022 up to 18.00 Hrs. 3. Submission of EMD, tender fee and other documents up to Dt.19/05/2022 up to 16.00 Hrs. (By Registered Post AD / Speed Post only)

4. Opening of tender on Dt.20/05/2022 at 12.00 Hrs.

For More information contact this office & see http://www.statetenders.gujarat.gov.in website tender can be downloaded from INF/HMT/25/2022 website www.nwr.nprocure.com.

Preliminary Notification under sub-section (1) section 11 of the Act. Revenue Department,

Sachivalaya, Gandhinagar (The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitatio & Resettlement Act, 2013) (30 of 2013)

No: AM-M-2022-143-LNV-1221-2147-GH In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (1) of section 11 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation & Resettlement Act, 2013 (No.30 of 2013) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act"), the Government of Gujarat hereby declares that the and/Iands mentioned in the Schedule annexed hereto is/are required for the purpose of acquisition for the public purpose of "Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project"

2. It is notified that, The area of land/lands required according to below mentioned Schedule for the above project is 0-09-57 hector/acre/sq.mtrs. and is at Desad Village of Gandevi Taluka of Navsari District;

 The public purposes involved in the above project is Construction of the infrastructure project "Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project" 3) The reasons necessitating the displacement of the affected persons are

due to acquisition of the Land, specified in the SCHEDULE for public purpose of Construction of the infrastructure project of "Mumbai Ahmedabad High Speed Rail Project" 4) Under Section 10A of the Act vide of 12 of 2016 exemption is given under Section 10A of the Act vide Revenue Department, Government

of Gujarat Notification No: AM-2021-534-M-LNV-1221-2147-GH, Date:09/11/2021 it is not required for the summary of the Social Impac assessment report

5) The particulars of the Administrator appointment under section 43 of the Act are as under -

Prant Officer, Navsari, Prant Office, Navsari. All the persons interested in these lands are hereby notified not to obstruct and disturb any Surveyor or other staff to enter upon and survey the land Any transactions in respect of whole or part of these lands in whatsoever manner including by sale, lease, mortgage, change of name, exchange entered into after the date of this Notification made without permission of the Collector shall not be taken into consideration by the officer assessing the compensation under section 27 of the Act for a particular portion of the

land as may be finally acquired. The Government of Gujarat, if satisfied about acquisition of the land for aforesaid public purpose, may publish final declaration under section 19 of the Act in this regard in the manner and timeframe so prescribed under the Act. In case the acquisition is dropped partially or entirely, such facts shall

be notified in a proper manner as provided under the Act In exercise of the powers under clause(g) of section 3 of the Act the State Government is pleased to designate Prant officer, Navsari function and discharge the duties as Collector under the provisions of the Act in respect of

6. Objection to the acquisitions, if any, may be filed by the person interested within 60 (sixty days) from the date of the publication of the notification as provided under section-15 of the ACT before the Collector o Competent Authority

SCHEDULE

Village: Desad District: Navsari Old Survey No. New Survey No. Required Area of the / Old Block No. /New Block No land H.A.Sq.mt. 363 paiki 1 0 - 09 - 5

TOTAL 0-09-57 By order and in the name of Governor of Gujarat,

(H. J. Rathod) INF/NAV/23/2022 Under Secretary to Government

EXPRESS NETWORK

Maya expels Brahmin leader **Nakul Dubey** from BSP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, APRIL 16

BAHUJAN SAMAJ Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Saturday expelled former minister and prominent Brahmin leader Nakul Dubey from the party for "indiscipline" and indulgence in "anti-party" activities.

BSP sources said the action was taken following reports that Dubey might "switch over

A former MLA from Lucknow, Dubey is considered a trusted man of party national general secretary Satish Chandra Misra. Dubey had accompanied Misra when the latter had addressed 'Vichar Gosthis' across Uttar Pradesh last year to woo Brahmin voters and develop a "bahichara" between Brahmins and Dalits ahead of the 2022 Assembly elections. Dubey, too, had addressed these rallies.

Dubey was a Cabinet minister in the last Mayawati government between 2007 to 2012.

UK PM ARRIVES IN AHMEDABAD ON APRIL 21, TALKS WITH MODI APRIL 22

Johnson set to discuss ties with PM amid 'threats from autocratic States'

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

BRITISH PRIME Minister Boris Johnson will visit India next week, in the backdrop of Russian invasion of Ukraine that has led to some divergences in Delhi's and London's positions on the crisis.

Johnson, who arrives in Ahmedabad on April 21, is expected to announce major investment in key industries in both the UK and India, boosting jobs and growth at home, as well as new collaboration on cutting-edge science, health and technology.

In New Delhi, he will meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 22 for bilateral talks "in the face of global economic challenges and threats from autocratic states", a British High Commission statement said.

The High Commission said that Johnson will visit India this



Johnson is expected to announce major investments

week to "deepen our long-term partnership for peace and prosperity with a fellow leading democracy, in the face of global economic challenges and threats from autocratic states".

In Ahmedabad, Johnson will have a meeting with leading businesses and discuss the UK and India's "thriving commercial, trade and people links", the statement said. This will be the first time a UK Prime Minister Third time materialising?

BORIS JOHNSON was supposed to come to India for the Republic Day celebrations last year, but the trip was cancelled. He was thereafter expected to come to Delhi in April last year but that visit was

visits Gujarat, India's fifth largest

state and ancestral home of

around half of the British-Indian

the following day, will hold "in-

depth talks on the UK and India's

strategic defence, diplomatic and

economic partnership, aimed at

bolstering our close partnership

and stepping up security co-op-

eration in the Indo-Pacific", the

Johnson, who will meet Modi

population in the UK, it said.

also cancelled due to the Delta wave of the pan-

demic. His visit comes in the backdrop of Russia's invasion on Ukraine and the two sides are expected to talk about Covid-19, Russia-Ukraine conflict and China.

The statement said he will

use the visit to drive progress in

the Free Trade Agreement (FTA)

negotiations launched earlier

this year — a deal with India is predicted to boost "our total trade by up to £28 billion annually by 2035 and increase wages across the UK by up to £3 billion". Speaking ahead of the visit,

Johnson said: "As we face threats to our peace and prosperity from autocratic states, it is vital that gether. India, as a major economic power and the world's largest democracy, is a highly valued strategic partner for the UK in these uncertain times.

"My visit to India will deliver on the things that really matter to the people of both our nations - from job creation and economic growth, to energy security and defence."

Last year, Modi and Johnson had agreed on a UK-India Comprehensive Strategic Partnership, announcing more than £530m in investment into the UK and committing to a deeper bilateral relationship across trade, health, climate, defence and security, and connecting our people. India was identified as a priority relationship for the UK in the 2021 Integrated Review and was invited by the UK as a guest to last year's G7 in Carbis Bay.

13 Opp leaders issue joint statement against hate speech, communal violence

MANOJCG

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

LEADERS OF 13 Opposition parties, including three Chief Ministers, on Saturday came together to speak out against recent incidents of communal violence and hate speech

They argued that the "silence" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government against those "who propagated bigotry and incited and provoked society through words and actions was an eloquent testimony to the fact that such private armed mobs enjoyed the luxury of official patronage".

The joint statement was issued by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, NCP chief Sharad Pawar, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, her Tamil Nadu counterpart and DMK chief MK Stalin, Jharkhand Chief Minister and JMM chief Hemant Soren, RJD chief Tejashwi Yadav and NC chief Farooq Abdullah.

The other signatories included CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury, his CPI counterpart D Raja, Forward Bloc's Debabrata Biswas, RSP's Manoj Bhattacharya, Muslim League's P K Kunhalikutty and CPI(ML) Liberation's Bhattacharya.

The statement came on a day Gandhi, in an article in The Indian Express, hit out at the government against the politics of polarisation.

There is much talk from the Prime Minister of acknowledging India's multiple diversities. But the harsh reality is that under his ruling dispensation, the rich diversity that has defined and enriched our society for centuries is being manipulated to divide us and, worse, to harden and get more firmly en-

trenched," she said in the article. In the statement urging people to maintain peace and harmony and demanding stringent punishment for perpetrators of communal violence, the Opposition leaders said: "We are

CORRUPTION CASE

extremely anguished at the manner in which issues related to food, dress, faith, festivals and language are being deliberately used by sections of the ruling establishment to polarise our society."

"We are extremely concerned with the growing incidents of hate speech in the country by people who appear to have official patronage and against whom no meaningful and strong action is being taken. We strongly condemn the recent outburst of communal violence witnessed across several states. We are deeply concerned, as reports indicate that there is a sinister pattern in the areas where these incidents have occurred. Incendiary hate speeches preceded the aggressive armed religious processions unleashing communal violence,"

The leaders pointed out that "social media and the audio-visual platforms are being misused with official patronage to spread hatred and prejudice,' and questioned the silence of the Prime Minister.

the statement said.

The leaders vowed to "work together to strengthen the bonds of social harmony that have defined and enriched India for centuries" and "combat and confront the poisonous ideologies which are attempting to en-

trench divisiveness in society". "We reiterate our firm conviction that our country will prosper only if it respects, accommodates and celebrates its many diversities in full measure. We appeal to all sections to maintain peace and foil the sinister objective of those who wish to sharpen communal polarisation. We call upon all our party units to independently and jointly work for peace and har-

mony," the statement added. While Mamata's decision to be part of the joint statement is interesting, given her party's strained ties with the Congress, the absence of leaders of four parties - SP, BSP, AAP and Shiv

Sena – stood out.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

British High Commission said.

As Cong wins, **Baghel delivers** promise: 33rd district in Chhattisgarh

GARGIVERMA RAIPUR, APRIL 16

HOURS AFTER Congress won the bypoll to Khairagarh Assembly seat in Chhattisgarh, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday delivered on his pre-poll promise and declared Khairagarh-Chuikhadaan-Gandai as the state's 33rd district.

This is the sixth district declared in the state since Congress came to power in 2018.

Revenue Secretary N N Ekka confirmed that work to form the new district has begun.

Baghel had promised that the new district would be declared within 24 hours of a Congress MLA being elected. "We have managed to do it within hours," he said.

newly Congratulating who defeated BJP's Komal Janghel by more than 20,000 votes, Baghel declared the district formation. He also announced that Salhewara would be declared a tehsil, and Jalbandha would be a up-tehsil. Verma had come to Raipur to express her gratitude. Speaking at the event, Baghel recounted the speed of his government: "Rahul Gandhi-ji had promised loan waiver in 10 days; we did it in 2 hours of coming to power."

Khairagarh is an important seat for BIP as well, with former CM Raman Singh coming from the region. Singh, along with Union minister Prahlad Patel and Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan, campaigned in the constituency regularly.

Raman Singh said after the results, "We accept the will of people, but this election was swayed by the promise of making a new district. They have no proof of work; no work has happened in the constituency..."

TMC wins in Bengal, BJP slide continues

BYPOLL RESULTS

ATRIMITRA

KOLKATA, APRIL 16

CONTINUING ITS winning streak in West Bengal, the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) on Saturday swept the bypolls, retaining Kolkata's Ballygunge seat while wresting the Asansol parliamentary constituency from the BJP. The fresh election outcome again highlighted TMC supremo and Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's dominance in state politics, which has been continuing for over a decade now. The BJP is the principal

Opposition party in Bengal, but the bypoll results indicated a further erosion in its support base in the state. The saffron party not only lost its Asansol constituency to the TMC - which clinched it for the first time ever — but its candidate also came third in Ballygunge seat and lost her deposit.

The poll results also saw a sharp rise in the Left's vote share in Ballygunge, where the CPI(M) candidate became the runnerup. In Asansol, the CPI(M) recandidate came third. Congress candidates lost their deposits in

SANTOSH SINGH

THOUGH THE Vikassheel Insaan

Party (VIP) finished third in the

Bochahan bypoll on Saturday, its

leader Mukesh Sahani was seen

distributing sweets, highlighting

the BJP's "mistake" of snubbing

the Extremely Backward Classes

(EBC) Mallah leader and ousting

Another key message from

the Bochahan loss for the BJP is

considering upper caste

Bhumihar its pocket borough, A

fair chunk of Bhumihar voters

reportedly backed the RJD can-

the VIP from the NDA.

PATNA, APRIL 16



TMC supporters celebrate in Kolkata on Saturday after Babul Supriyo's victory in the Ballygunge byelection. Express

both constituencies.

While the Trinamool's candidate in Asansol, actor-turnedpolitician Shatrughan Sinha. bagged the seat with a margin of over 3 lakh votes, the party's nominee in Ballygunge, former Union minister Babul Supriyo, won the seat with about 20,000 votes, which was a sharp drop from the party's previous victory margin of about 75,000 votes.

Some in the TMC said the drop in the party's margin of victhere was a "negative campaign" against Supriyo because he Khan said in a video message.

Snubbing Sahani, taking Bhumihars for

granted cost BJP in Bihar's Bochahan

switched to the party from the BJP and had a "perceived communal image

Senior TMC leader and minister Firhad Hakim, however, said: "The results have again proved that we never do politics based on 30% or 70% people. We always reach out to 100% of the

Soon after the bypoll results came out, BJP MP Saumitra Khan targeted the state BJP leadership.

"When inexperienced politi-

the ship at the last minute and

won the Bochahan bypoll by

36,763 votes against runner-up

Bochahan bypoll result seems to

be that BIP can no longer take EBC

Sahani/ Nishad votes for granted.

Even though BJP has several lead-

ers, including MP Ajay Nishad, in

its ranks, VIP chief Mukesh Sahani

seems to have been able to split

Mallah and some other votes

from BJP. VIP got over 29,000

votes in the Assembly segment

that has over 35,000 Mallah votes

besides over 55,000 Scheduled

Caste (SC) votes. This means the

VIP seems to have cut away not

The important aspect of

Baby Kumari of the BIP

Majumdar said the party would introspect. "There are lot of factors which played a role for this electoral result. We will definitely introspect. But it is true that a large number of people could not vote due to TMC's terror." Since the Assembly elections

president Sukanta

last year, when it won 77 seats, the BJP has failed to win any elections in West Bengal, including bypolls late last year, and February's civic elections.

With the Left getting its foot back in the door, the BJP now has the twin challenge of tackling both them and the TMC.

The Left is now looking to attract a bigger share of the minority vote, which has largely gone to the TMC since the 2011 Assembly elections.

In the Ballygunge bypolls, the CPI(M) candidate, Saira Shah Halim, did well in Muslim-majority wards. Leaders, including Halim, have pointed out that the Left's agitations on issues such as the death in February of student leader Anis Khans and the violence in Birbhum in March had

iust substantial Sahani votes but

Bochahan bypoll is the unusual

shift of Bhumihar voters towards

RJD. About 20-25 per cent

Bhumihar voters are said to have

supported RJD. While this may

not be hinting at shifting political

affiliation, it could be sending a

message to the NDA regarding the

miniscule representation of its

community in positions of power.

A local factor was former BJPMLA

Suresh Sharma, a Bhumihar, dis-

sociating himself from the

Bochahan campaign. Sharma has

been upset with the BIP after los-

ing 2020 Assembly polls.

Another takeaway of the

also some SC votes.

- WITH INPUTS FROM SANTANU CHOWDHURY

United MVA defeats BJP in Kolhapur

Jayshree Jadhav after

winning the byelection in

Kolhapur on Saturday. Express

MANOJ MORE PUNE, APRIL 16

A FIRMLY united Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) proved too much for BJP to handle as Congress candidate Jayshree Jadhav emerged victorious in the Kolhapur North Assembly bypoll with a margin of over 19,000 votes, counting for which took place on Saturday.

Jadhav, wife of late Congress MLA Chandrakant Jadhav, deated Satyajit Kadam of RID in a contest where both sides left no stone unturned to woo voters.

After her victory, Jadhav said the people of Kolhapur have given the BJP a befitting reply for the kind of politics it has practised. "Kolhapur is a Shahu Nagari. It belongs to Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj where there is no place for casteism... people of Kolhapur have shown BJP its place. They have given the BJP a

befitting reply...," she said. Jadhav secured 97,307 votes

while Kadam won 77,726. A section of the Shiv Sena. which was initially not keen to support the Congress candidate but later relented after directives from Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, took potshots at BIP state president Chandrakant Patil. The Kothrud MLA had said he would quit politics and go to the Himalayas if the BJP candidate loses. The Sena put up boards which stated, "Himalaya ki god mein" (in the lap of Himalayas), taunting Patil.

Court refuses to extend CBI custody of Anil Deshmukh

SADAF MODAK MUMBAI, APRIL 16

A SPECIAL CBI court on Saturday refused to extend CBI custody of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh, stating that the grounds put up by the central agency were not good and satisfactory.

The CBI, which had arrested Deshmukh in connection with a corruption case on April 11, has sought to extend his custody by three days.

"In my view, sufficient CBI custody of accused Shri Anil Deshmukh has already been granted. Pertinently in earlier remand applications, the CBI had based their grounds for seeking custody as per the allegations about exercising influence over the transfer and posting of officials and considering the said grounds, CBI custody was granted. Therefore, in my view, since sufficient CBI custody was granted, the grounds for further custody... are not good and satisficatory," Special Judge D P

Shingade said in his order. The CBI had arrested Deshmukh, his staffers Sanjeev Palande and Kundan Shinde as well as dismissed Mumbai Police officer Sachin Waze in the case. While it had sought Deshmukh's custody, the agency had requested that remaining accused be sent to judicial custody as their custodial interrogation was not needed. Special Public Prosecutor Ratandeep Singh told the court that Deshmukh has been accused of taking bribes for transferring and posting police officers. The CBI remand plea said that the police officers who paid bribes have to be identified and confronted

with the former minister.



Former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh

Deshmukh, through his lawyers Aniket Nikam, Inderpal Singh and Geeta Chataule, opposed the CBI plea stating that he has already been in custody for 11 days. Nikam said that the central agency had in its remand plea only given stereotypical reasons for seeking extended custody. He also argued that there was no progress in the probe.

"The agency is seeking further custody of a 73-year-old man on flimsy grounds. There are no details of the progress made or confrontation done with others in custody," Nikam said.

The court directed that all accused, who were already in judicial custody in a separate money laundering case lodged by the ED, along with Waze also being in NIA custody for the Antilia terror scare case, be returned to jail.

Meanwhile, a separate plea filed by lawyer Shekhar Jagtap, representing Palande - seeking directions to the CBI to preserve CCTV footage from the CBI office where the accused were interrogated – was disposed by the court saying that the lawyer is at liberty to approach an appropri-

ate forum. Jagtap had said that there was no CCTV camera at the interrogation room of the CBI office in violation of Supreme Court guidelines.

GORAKHNATH TEMPLE ATTACK

ATS invokes stringent UAPA against accused

RJD's Amar Paswan gets the

Certificate of Election after

didate instead of their pre-

son of former Bochahan VIPMLA

Musafir Paswan whose death ne-

cessitated the bypoll, had jumped

RJD candidate Amar Paswan,

winning in Bochahan. PTI

dictable choice, BJP.

MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW, APRIL 16

THE UP Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) on Saturday invoked the stringent Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against Gorakhnath Temple attack accused Ahmed Murtaza Abbasi.

"On the basis of evidence collected during the interrogation, electronic surveillance and financial transactions, the UP Police added sections 16, 18, 20 and 40 of the UAPA against Ahmed Murtaza," said an ATS of-

On Saturday, Abbasi was produced before a Gorakhpur court, which sent him to judicial custody for 14 days

'The prosecution informed the court about the decision of ATS to also impose sections of



A video grab of the incident in Gorakhpur. PTI File

UAPA on the accused and sought extension of his custody. Considering this, the court extended the judicial custody of Abbasi for 14 days," said senior lawyer PK Dubey.

The official said that they would now appeal to get the case transferred to the NIA/ATS special court in Lucknow for further hearing.

The ATS, which is investigating the case, had brought Abbasi to Lucknow and questioned him in detail about his foreign visits in 2016 and his dubious money

counts, said the official, adding they also found that the accused was in touch with people outside India and collected information Besides Abbasi, his father

Muneer Ahmed was also questioned about his son and his ac-According to the official, the

forensic report of Abbasi's cellphone and laptop that were sent to a laboratory for examination. "We are yet to verify a few details provided by Abbasi during the interrogation. We need to cross-verify information pro-

ATS has been waiting for the

vided by him," added the officer. The UAPA allows the investigating agencies to get a longer remand of the accused and an extended duration to file a charge

Gorakhpur jail after the hearing. An IIT-Bombay graduate and a local resident, Abbasi was arrested on April 3 for allegedly attacking police and PAC personnel posted at Gorakhnath temple with a sharp-edged weapon

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Police, who booked Abbasi on the charges of attempt to murder and promoting enmity between two groups, had described the attack as part of a "serious conspiracy" that "could be called a terror inci-

Abbasi was initially sent to police custody for 12 days. Abbasi's family, however,

said he had been undergoing treatment for depression since WITH PTI INPUTS

high alert after clashes in

high alert following clashes between two communities in Northwest Delhi on Saturday evening. Shortly after the incident, Prashant Kumar, ADG Law and Order, stated that an alert has been issued to state police departments to maintain vigil

On Saturday evening, pa-

Noida Police on

Northwest Delhi Noida: Noida Police remained on

while trying to forcibly enter the temple, whose chief priest is against anti-social elements.

trolling was carried out in all three zones - Noida, Central and Greater Noida. Officers also took out a flag march in crowded areas.Police are maintaining security measures in metro stations, markets and areas with mixed population. Security will also be stepped up on routes where processions will be taken out in order to prevent any clashes or law and order situation, said police. **ENS**

EXPRESS NETWORK

After online classes for 2 yrs, students protest offline exams

Universities call it step towards restoring 'normalcy', but students across states seek 'parity'

SHEETAL BANCHARIYA, **PALLAVISMART**

NEW DELHI/MUMBAI. APRIL 16

WHEN ALLAHABAD University announced to conduct offline exams on March 24, it sparked widespread protests.

University officials countered that the move was "in line with restoring normalcy" and was taken after a high-power committee - formed to look into students' representations against offline exams – submitted its report in favour of pen-and-paper ex-

University's public relations officer Jaya Kapoor said: "Some of the protesting students sprinkled petrol on themselves and it became a law-and-order situation. The administration requested the Vice-Chancellor to reconsider the decision. So. on March 25 it was decided that all second-year students would be promoted and third-year students' exams would be held online.'

Several universities have decided to hold offline exams for the semester ending in May-June 2022. But with little clarity over hostel arrangements, exam

Maoists claim

Bastar jungles,

CHHATTISGARH POLICE and the

CRPF on Saturday denied con-

ducting any airstrike in Bastar af-

ter Maoists released a press note

with pictures and alleged that

security forces conducted strikes

in the jungles of South Bastar us-

Party of India (Marxist) on Friday

alleged in a two-page press note

that the security forces bombed

Kottam, Rasam, Eraam, Sakiler,

Madapa, Duled, Kannemarka,

Potemangum and Bottam areas

taken place," he said. "Also, we come in aide of the state police;

Committee's spokesperson Vikalp, alleged that more than 50 bombs were dropped within an hour, targeting them. No injuries

were reported, it mentioned.

In April last year, DKZC had

Bastar I-G Sundarrai said: "In

alleged a drone strike and re-

leased the picture of a fallen

Bastar, like the rest of country, se-

curity forces are involved in pro-

tecting life and property. The

Maoists are trying to malign our

image out of desperation at los-

ing ground. Their leaders, all out-

siders, are misusing tribal peo-

ple. It is time people see their

"CRPF denies all allegations lev-

eled of any attack on Maoists us-

ing drones. Maoists are losing

support of the locals due to good

governance, which is why they

WITH ENS-DELHI INPUTS

The CRPF said in a statement,

real, violent faces.

are spreading lies.'

state police lead operations. The Maoist release, issued by

Dandakaranya

The banned Communist

airstrike in

forces deny

GARGIVERMA

schedules and hybrid class timetables, the decision has been met with opposition in most

On April 13, Maharashtra Higher and Technical Education Minister Uday Samant announced additional 15 minutes for each hour students sit for an offline exam.

Since February 28, students and faculty at the Visva-Bharati University in West Bengal's Santiniketan have been protesting against the decision to hold offline exams without reopening

"Initially, when the hostels were not operational and senior batches began attending offline classes on December 1, 2021, students rented rooms. Since there is limited accommodation in the Santiniketan area, first-year students were unable to find housing. They continued to take online classes and are now hesitant to take offline exams," said Somnath Sow, a final-year BA economics student at Visva-Bharati

"The 26-day movement helped us secure our demands and online exams will begin on



Students of Rashtrasanta Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University stage a protest against offline exams. File

ing hostels has been officially met, but in reality, things are still not clear. So protests are on," said Chaiti, a student at the university's department of art history.

Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakrabarty refused to comment. Lack of accommodation is also why engineering students of Kolkata-based Jadavpur

University have been protesting the decision to hold offline exams. "Students in their final semester do not want to relocate from their hometowns for the remainAlso, no one is willing to give their property on rent for a few months," said Akash Sekh, a second-year master's student of international relations.

However, the university has already released the schedule for offline exams and for some courses, the exams will commence on April 24.

Calls to University V-C Suranjan Das went unanswered. At Delhi University, students have been demanding that their

end semester examinations be

conducted online. The university

In Maharashtra, confusion over the format of the final exam has triggered a debate. The Maharashtra Student Welfare Association (MSWA) has started a social media campaign to "bring

leges to hold mock tests."

Semester exams for the first,

"The majority of the course-

dent at DU's Lady Irwin College.

dean of students' welfare, said: "In

order to return to normalcy, we

must return to offline exams."

However, Pankaj Arora, DU's

He said: "Due to Covid, the

'odd' semester was shorter than

usual and we decided to keep

their exams online. The 'even' se-

mester offline exam duration has

been increased by 30 minutes.

The university is also willing to is-

sue a directive to individual col-

mat after writing to the Chief

"The final-year students will be competing with each other for admission to higher education courses and in the job market. If their assessment is done in different formats, the competition will not be fair." said Vaibhay Edke. MSWA president.

While Savitribai Phule Pune (SPPU) and University Rashtrasanta Tukdoji Maharaj Nagpur University will be holding offline exams, Mumbai University has announced a more "blended approach" - exams of traditional courses will be online, whereas for professional courses it will be offline. Also, many autonomous colleges in Mumbai have decided to hold final exams offline.

"For professional courses, students were anyway writing descriptive answers for 60 out of 100 marks for the past two exams.' said Vinod Patil. Director of Board of Examinations and Evaluation, Mumbai University.

Countering the students' demand for "uniformity", he said, "Anyway there can't be parity as courses, curriculum, exam pattern and evaluation methods are different in all universities.

10% discount for **Sunny Leone** fans at meat shop

KIRAN PARASHAR BENGALURU, APRIL 16

A MEAT seller in Karnataka has

announced a 10 per cent discount for fans of actor Sunny Leone.

Prasad K N, 27, has been running his meat shop - DK Chicken – in Mandya district, around 100 km from Bengaluru, for nearly two years. He says reading about the philanthropic work undertaken by Leone inspired him to offer the discount.

"Due to her past work in the porn industry, she is often looked at as a sex symbol. To know her. I looked into her life, which was really interesting and inspiring. I was surprised to see that she has done so much for society. From adopting a daughter to running a school and extending help during the pandemic, she has really been an inspiration," Prasad said. To avail the discount, customers have to show that they follow Leone on Instagram and Facebook, have at least her 10 photos on their phone,

Day after PFI leader's murder, **RSS** man killed

SHAJU PHILIP THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

A DAY after a local leader of the Popular Front of India (PFI) was hacked to death, an RSS worker was killed the same way in Palakkad district of Kerala on Saturday afternoon.

Police said S K Sreenivasan (45), an RSS worker and former office-bearer, was attacked by a fivemember gang who stormed into his two-wheeler shop in Melamuri, a BJP stronghold in Palakkad.

Quoting eyewitnesses, police said the attackers parked their motorcycles outside Sreenivasan's shop. Wielding swords, three of them stormed into the shop and hacked Sreenivasan several times, before escaping on their motorcycles. CCTV footage showed the suspected attackers reaching the street outside Sreenivasan's shop on three motorcycles.

BJP leaders alleged that the PFI was behind the attack. The PFI did On Friday afternoon, the PFI's

Elappully area president, A Subair (44), was hacked to death outside a mosque. According to police, Subair and his father were on a motorcycle when they were hit by a vehicle. As they fell on the road, some men emerged from another vehicle and attacked Subair before fleeing the spot

The PFI had alleged that the RSS-BJP was behind the murder; the BJP district leadership had denied the allegation.

Police confirmed that a vehicle abandoned by Subair's killers was registered in the name of RSS worker S Sanjith, who was killed last November, allegedly by members of PFI and its political outfit Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI). Subair was also a member of the SDPI.

Sanjith's family said the vehicle was parked in a workshop before his death, and they had not got it since then.

Another vehicle which is suspected to have been used by Subair's attackers was found abandoned. Police have found named Rameshan, who is ab-



sconding since the incident.

Sreenivasan

The FIR calls Subair's death a 'political murder". Four RSS-BJP workers who were allegedly involved in an attack on a PFI worker last year are being questioned.

The conspiracy behind the murder is clear. By killing a local PFI leader, RSS wants to foment communal trouble," state PFI president C P Muhammed Basheer had said on Friday.

Meanwhile, BJP's state general secretary and senior party leader in Palakkad, C Krishna Kumar, alleged that the PFI was behind the attack on Saturday. "Police could not prevent the killing of the RSS worker when armed criminal gangs were roaming in the city. Yesterday, we already denied the role of our workers or any Sangh Parivar men in the killing of the PFI worker." he said.

"Police neglected the PFI plan to trigger violence across the district, Melamuri region in Palakkad had reported communal violence in the past, but the police did not take any precautionary steps. The ruling CPI(M) and its police force have surrendered before terrorists," state BJP president K Surendran said. Opposition Leader in Assembly VD Satheesan said the killings were a fallout of the state government's communal appeasement. "The CPI(M) is appeasing both the SDPI and RSS, which they call social engineer-

Police have sounded an alert to prevent further violence. About 300 police personnel have been deployed in Palakkad, where Additional District Magistrate K Manikandan has issued prohibitory orders till April 20 "sensing that religious hatred may emerge in the wake of the two killings." State DGP Anil Kanth warned that strict action would be taken against those who

ing." he said.

Now special court's relief to Aakar Patel, order asking CBI to recall notice upheld

Way lookout circular issued shows lack of understanding of relevant law: court

ANAND MOHAN J

NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A SPECIAL court on Saturday upheld a trial court's order asking CBI to withdraw a lookout circular (LOC) issued against former Amnesty International India chief Aakar Patel. The court noted that the LOC issued was based on wrong interpretation and understanding of the law", and cautioned CBI by stating that its power to "investigate and prosecute is not an unbridled power".

on the intervening night of Thursday and Friday. the trial court's order asking the Calling it a lie. Bastar CBI director to issue Patel an apol-Inspector General P Sundarrai ogy. The CBI had issued the LOC in said that these are part of Maoist connection with a case registered conspiracy to distract and scare against Amnesty International India in 2019 under the Foreign When contacted, CRPF D-G Contribution (Regulation) Act. Kuldiep Singh denied there was Patel headed the organisation at Maoists. "No such operation has

Zona



Aakar Patel

ties, was stopped twice from leaving the country.

Judge Mann has asked Patel to appear before a trial court and furnish a bond for his appearance and asked him not to leave the country without the trial court's permission

The judge said that the "man-In the order, Special Judge Santosh Snehi Mann also set aside ner in which the LOC has been issued shows lack of understanding of the relevant law, and hence need for orientation of the officers (concerned) of CBI, not only sensitization but also to bring objectivity in the actions is not out of context". The court said, "LOC issued against the respondent is bad in US to deliver lectures at universi-Order of the trial court

quashing/setting aside the LOC does not suffer from any infirmity and is a well-reasoned order based on the principles of law." The court, however, noted that

a "balance should have been struck qua the prosecuting agency that the respondent accused may flee from the country, and fundamental right of the respondent accused to travel abroad, by putting conditions taking recourse to section 88 CrPC, which empowers the court to take bond for appearance". The judge said the court's observations are "not of the nature of exercising power of superintendence, they are out of concern and the petitioner (CBI) is expected to take them in right spirit".

It said CBI's power to "investigate and prosecute is not an unbridled power". The court said, "In glaring cases of excesses committed in actions, there may arise the need for fixing accountability. In on wrong interpretation and understanding of law, and not out of malice or ill will. Hence it is not a fit case to call for fixing the accountability for issuance of LOC. On trial court's directions to

the CBI director to tender a writ-

ten apology and its general observations on monetary compensation, Judge Mann said that "it is a settled legal proposition that trial court can step in to compensate for police excesses and illegal actions of the State when fundamental rights are violated." The CBI had argued that LOC

was issued considering that Patel was an influential person and well-connected with entities outside India, because of which he may evade the law. On this, the court held this submission has "no force in law to support and sustain." "Subjective satisfaction of the IO to assess the situation for issuance of LOC must flow from the objective criteria," the order read.

FILL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com media posts about her movies.

'Pandemic may have increased learning poverty, help children adjust first'

AS OFFLINE classes resume in schools across the country, Central Square Foundation (CSF) founder ASHISH DHAWAN, who works closely with the Centre and many states on addressing foundational learning gaps, believes authorities should help children adjust before picking up textbooks.

Dhawan, who is also a founding member of the Ashoka University, is currently setting up Convergence Foundation, which will work across many areas in the social sector, including women empowerment and air pollution, by setting up organisations along the lines of CSF, which primarily works on school

He spoke to **SOURAV ROY** BARMAN on a variety of topics, including the government's NIPUN Bharat programme, which CSF helped develop and implement, foundational learning deficiencies deepened by the pandemic and higher education reforms announced by the UGC.

Before the pandemic, you had cited a World Bank report to say that 55% of India's 10vear-old children lack foundational learning skills, which is classified as learning poverty. What has been the

impact of the pandemic? The percentage may have risen to 65 per cent now. The question is how to bring it down to 20-30 per cent over the next decade? We know learning is breaking down early and we have to go to Class I, II, III. If you can't do basic math, addition, subtraction, then how do you do fractions in class IV or V? How do you do algebra in class V or VI? So



that every child needs to master by the end of class II. The committee that drafted the National Education Policy (NEP) understood this and said in the report

India's top priority in school education and should be pushed in mission mode. And then the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat programme was launched.

How does NIPUN Bharat

It will prioritise foundational learning in a large public system. So for classes I, I and III, the government has created a separate project, where it will pay for all the teaching-learning material, teacher professional development assessment. The Centre also sets goals and objectives and handles the monitoring aspect. The implementation is done by the states. The CSF has MoUs with 12 states. We have project management units that work at the state level. So it's a team of people who work with the Department of Education on foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN).

FLN at a time when the pandemic was not on the horizon. But as children return to school after a long gap, what are the interventions required to help them cope?

NEP helped institutionalise

States have a four-six month catch up. So, the idea is to keep the textbooks aside for the time being. Right now, if a child is in class III, the truth is he never attended school in class I or II. So in the first few months, teach

them the most basic concepts. Then only do we even open the class textbook and then in the next six months, the goal should be to catch up with the key concepts.

> **Should NIPUN be** redesigned to address the specific needs

NIPUN goals remain the same. Within NIPUN, each team needs to do some catching up. We will still do formative assessment, have a teacher guide with lesson plans, have a workbook, need reading material in the classroom and need a math kit to make it easier for kids to understand abstract concepts in complete form. So I don't think NIPUN needs to be redesigned, because it is a scheme for the next five years. Within NIPUN,

take their time to catch up.

During the pandemic, we saw schools were the first to close and last to open.

I think that mindset will change now. People have to internalise that life has to go on even if you face the next Omicron. I was in New York for Christmas, New Years and kids had to go back to school in January when Omicron was raging in the US. There is no greater risk in opening schools and our policymakers now need to internalise that because what we didn't do early on is any form of cost benefit analysis. We should have started school earlier. If you do a cost-benefit analysis, there is a risk, but the cost of keeping kids at home for two years is not being measured and it's an impact on a whole generation of kids. So, I think people will internalise now that we can't do this again.

The latest UDISE report has shown a sharp drop in private school enrolment and rise in

thing. The temptation of English

FULL INTERVIEW ON: www.indianexpress.com

Ahmedabad

ABHISHEK ANGAD DUMKA, APRIL 16

IS THE Adivasi community uncouth; does it follow any religion; does it have a global vision, and why is the Santhal rebellion, which took before the 1857 Revolt. left out of mainstream history?

These were some of the questions that emerged during a discussion on 'Tribal Literature: Present and Future' during the inaugural State Library Literature Festival in Dumka district.

The event was centred around refurbishment of 'Rajkiya Bhramanshil Pustkalay (Library on Wheels)' built on a truck in 1958, which had travelled thousands of kilometres in remote areas of Iharkhand, Although not mobile anymore, it was refur-



Writers discuss tribals: Aloof? Perception 'unfounded'

Rajkiya Bhramanshil Pustkalay (Library on Wheels), built on a truck in 1958, at Dumka State Library Literature Festival. It has travelled thousands of kilometres in Jharkhand. Express

bished by Odisha-born poet and bookseller Akshay Bahibala, who travels with his "Walking Bookfairs" — a van full of books —

in small towns to promote books. Writers from the tribal community such as writer-poet Anuj Lugun, winner of Sahitya Akademi Yuva Puraskar in 2019, and Mahadev Toppo, a leading litterateur from Jharkhand, discussed on how

COACHES DERAIL, MUMBAI OFF-TRACK

Commuters were left stranded after three coaches of the Chalukya Dadar-Puducherry

Express derailed after colliding with the CSMT-Gadag Express near Matunga station in

100 local trains and 13 long-distance trains were cancelled. Ganesh Shirsekar

Mumbai on Friday night. The Central Railway took over 15 hours to restore services. Almost

The perception that the tribal community is backward, and that it does not know the ways of the world, is "unfounded", Lugun said. 'Sosobonga, which are orally recited epics of Adivasis, particularly in Mundas and Asur communities, tell us about how there should be balance between na-

ture and humans," he said.

Adivasis are perceived differently.

Toppo said the lockdown culture has existed for long in the Adivasi communities, "For a few months each year, in a bid to protect baby animals, growing shrubs and plants, Adivasis don't venture into forests. When the viewpoint of Adivasis is such, how can an Adivasi person be called uncouth or ignorant? This is the real challenge in front of upcoming writers and generation to bring this view out to the mainstream.'

Ashish Dhawan

these are basic foundational skills that this should be

INTERVIEW arising out of the

THE EXPRESS

interruption caused by the pandemic?

No, I don't think so. The the Centre has told the states to

government school enrolment. What does this indicate? That is purely an economic

and accountability lure parents into sending their kids to private schools. And normally, you need income above a certain threshold to do it. So, if your income has been hit, that's the demand shock. Covid also had a supply shock, where schools were shut for so long and there was no revenue. They couldn't justify charging. They couldn't do zoom classes, As a result, parents were not willing to pay. So, many private schools even closed down.

SUNDAY STORY



At the Galle Face in Colombo. Since April 9, thousands of Sri Lankans have gathered here demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and his family members step down. Reuters

GALLE STORM

Amid crippling shortages, collapse of the economy and a political impasse, protesters across Sri Lanka have come together under the rallying cry of "Go Gota Go". NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN travels along the island country's uneasy fault lines, from Colombo in the south to Jaffna in the north, to find that the protests may have served to paper over some of these cracks

ALLE FACE is Colombo's show-piece sea front. China and India have cheek-by-jowl real estate here. The Taj Samudra is an old property, dwarfed by the towering Shangri-La of the Hong Kong chain of hotels. And next to it, India's Larsen & Toubro is constructing an ITC hotel. Out in the water is the Chinese Port City project, coming up rapidly on reclaimed land.

Nearly seven decades ago, the Federal Party representing the country's Tamils held a one-day satyagraha on the green next to the sea, opposite what was then the parliament building. It was a peaceful protest against the Sri Lankan government's 'Sinhala Only' legislation that took away the official language status of Tamil. But the demonstration was broken up as mobs armed with sticks attacked the protesters, cracking skulls as the police looked away. The rest is history.

That same site is now the centre of another peaceful protest. Thousands of mostly young Sri Lankans have gathered here daily since April 9 demanding that President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and other family members in office, including his brother Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa, step down. The old parliament building now functions as the presidential secretariat

On a patch of green between President Rajapaksa's office and a soaring statue of S W R D Bandaranaike, the prime minister whose controversial language policy had brought Tamils out on the streets seven decades ago, a tent city of protesters has sprung up. Called 'Gota Go Gama' — named after the angry "Go Gota Go" slogan resounding on the street these days — this symbolic village of resistance has come up against the Rajapaksa regime. Hundreds of people have been camping at the site, with the numbers swelling in the daytime.

The protests began in March as small candlelight vigils at traffic junctions in Colombo. The demonstrators were protesting long power cuts imposed by the government because it did not have enough dollars to buy the diesel needed to run the power plants.

Since the middle of last year, essential items have been in short supply as imports have been restricted and prices have skyrocketed. With supplies dwindling, shops have had to restrict purchases and even those with money found themselves shut out. Queues stretch outside fuel stations and government-run fair price shops, with people waiting three to four hours to fill their vehicles or plastic cans. Double lines of cars wait for petrol, with people discussing if it is better to return for a refill at quarter tank or empty.

The protests have grown, bringing out students, teachers, lawyers, doctors, nurses and other professionals and youth. The government has so far not cracked down.

Unarmed police regulate the traffic around the area which leads to Colombo's main business district. Vehicles honk in solidarity with the protesters as they pass through.

What next? Beyond their assertion that the Rajapaksas must go, not many at the protest site know what the future holds in store for

them and their country.

"Iknow they are not going to resign just because we are asking them to go. But the pressure of the people is important. Our voices will be heard in Parliament and Parliament has to make its decisions based on that," says 43-yearold Rebecca David, a rights activist who has been at the Galle Face protests from the start.

The government had declared a full-week holiday for the Sinhala and Tamil New Year on April 14, hoping people would stay indoors. But that had the opposite effect: New Year's Day saw the maximum turnout at Galle Face, with the atmosphere festive and carnival-like.

"Now it looks like people won't give up till they get a result. They want to see the President step down," says David. "They want to see change."

...

March 31 was a turning point for the Rajapaksas. That day, hundreds of people protesting the shortages marched to the President's private home in the Colombo suburb of Mirihana Pangiriwatta. Many of them were middle-class residents of the area and were shouting slogans seeking the President's resignation. "Prosperity for rulers while hardship for people" was one slogan. They attempted to break through the barricades and clashed with police, who had to use water cannons and tear gas. Police vehicles were torched.

Until then, President Rajapaksa believed that as the architect of the military victory against the LTTE, he and his brothers had earned enough goodwill from the people to see them through the crisis.

The protests had actually begun much earlier in the countryside, as farmers shouted themselves hoarse against the overnight switch to organic farming and the ban on chemical fertilisers — measures taken to save precious foreign exchange. But until the protests reached Colombo, the Rajapaksas were sanguine. But that day of violence outside his house served as a reality check for President Rajapaksa. He is now said to be sequestered in his high-security official residence in the Fort area of Colombo, while his elder brother, the Prime Minister, is in his official residence at Temple Trees.

A day after the incident, on April 1, the President imposed an emergency and the police imposed a curfew in the capital, its suburbs and several outlying areas. In defiance of the curfew, protesters marched through the streets, daring the police to arrest them. By April 5, both curfew and emergency had to be withdrawn. On the same day, the government appeared to have lost its majority. A group of 42 parliamentarians belonging to the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, an alliance partner of the Rajapaksas' Sri Lanka Podujana Party, said they had withdrawn from the coalition.

But for those who believed this was a "regime change" moment for Sri Lanka, there was disappointment. No challengers have emerged from the Opposition to overturn Prime Minister Rajapaksa, President Rajapaksa, who got all his cabinet ministers to resign — Prime Minister Rajapaksa remained in office





— invited all Opposition parties and groups to form a national government to deal with the crisis. There were no takers for this either.

Meanwhile, the Rajapaksas are only too aware that there are few protests outside Colombo and its suburbs, and that if they wait it out, the weary protesters may head back home. The protesters know that too — that every moment of delay caused by the political impasse will only serve to strengthen the Rajapaksas' resolve to cling on.

There is also suspicion that India's \$2.4 bn financial assistance, while bringing much needed food and fuel to the country, is helping the Rajapaksas.

Most analysts trace the economic crisis to ill-advised tax cuts that President Gotabya Rajapaksa ordered after his 2019 election. The cuts came into effect just before the pandemic, at a time when the 2019 Easter bombings had already gutted the tourism industry.

But some economists believe the problem began much earlier, in the years after the war ended in 2009. Armed with an IMF bailout, Mahinda Rajapaksa, then president, went on a borrowing spree for non-paying infrastructure projects.

As Sri Lanka now prepares for tough negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), Ahilan Kadirgamar, who teaches economics at Jaffna University, warns that those already crushed by the pandemic and the economic failures of the government would be the most affected by the conditions that the international lending agency is bound to impose.

"The people who have come out on the streets today due to economic hardships are affected by cuts to social welfare and public services. Working people are going to be most affected as IMF conditions lead to austerity measures and market pricing of goods and services," predicts Kadirgamar.

One noticeable aspect of the street protests is the secular language of the participants. If

there is one refrain other than Go Gota Go, it is this: "The Rajapaksas divided Sri Lankans by race, language and religion. We will never allow anyone to do that again".

Tamils and Muslims, two of Sri Lanka's minorities that have long suffered othering by the majority Sinhala-Buddhists, are today among the protesters. Jaffna parliamentarian M A Sumanthiran

believes it is an important moment in Sri Lanka's history of ethnic relations that the protesters are even taking up Tamil causes such as post-war justice and reconciliation, addressing war crimes, the repeal of the Prevention of Terrorism Act, among others. However, the view from laffna is somewhat

However, the view from Jaffna is somewhat different. Here, there are no queues outside grocery shops or petrol pumps. However, fishermen, whose boats need diesel or kerosene, are among those hit by the shortages. At the Gurunagar jetty, fishermen have placed plastic cans in the queue, hoping supplies will arrive soon.

The times are tough, but the Tamils who have lived and survived the war years say they have known worse.

When the LTTE was in control of the peninsula, the government would send only limited quantities of petrol, diesel, kerosene and food rations by ship from Colombo, calculating that most people had fled, and the supplies would fall into the hands of the Tigers. There was no cooking gas either, as the government feared these would be used to make explosives. Ditto with batteries. Medicines were in short supply too. After the bombing of Chunnakam power station, the peninsula, which used to get a total of one hour of power supply from this thermal plant when the war began between the Sri Lankan forces and the LTTE, lost all access to electricity. A generation of Jaffna students grew up studying with the help of kerosene lamps or dynamo-powered bicycle lights. Even after all these years since the war ended, homes still has a wood stove.

"In Colombo, they feel the shortages more because of the shortage of fuel, gas and power cuts. Here, we don't feel it that much because we are used to this kind of scarcity," says Rakesh Kannan, a general practitioner in Sydney, Australia, who is visiting his family in laffna.

At the Nallur Kandasamy temple, where he was offering prayers on Tamil New Year's day, Kannan points at the parking lot, where two-wheelers and bicycles outnumber cars to say that petrol shortages were not a Jaffna problem.

He recalls the shortages from his time as a student, including when he was an undergrad student at the Jaffna teaching hospital: "I studied with a kerosene lamp."

While Colombo has long been accused of neglecting Jaffna's post-war economic development, in the present crisis, the war-torn Northern Province city appears to have been protected by its food self-sufficiency — farmers grow rice and vegetables — and a stoicism developed through its own war-time experiences. "People are saying very proudly that we didn't die of a power cut then," says Sumanthiran. Plus, Jaffna benefits from dias-

pora remittances, though not to the same extent as during the war.

Rajan Hoole, founder of the Jaffna University Teachers' Human Rights that stood up against the violence and repression of the Tamil Tigers, says Sri Lanka is now "paying the price for the original sin of the 1948 Citizenship Act", which rendered stateless and disenfranchised the Malayaha Tamils or Indian Origin Tamils (ethnically different from the Tamils of northern and eastern Sri Lanka) who worked in the tea plantations and who made up around 11 per cent of the population at the

"Until the mid-1960s, this 11 per cent was earning 65 per cent of our foreign exchange. They were the mainstay of the free education and free health we enjoyed... It has caught up with us now," says Hoole.

So far, there has been only one protest in Jaffna over the economic crisis. On social media, some in the Tamil community have mocked the Sinhalese outreach to minorities to join the "Sri Lankan" protests, asking why the majority community had displayed no such solidarity when the Tamils were suffering during the war years.

Despite this bitterness, says Sumanthiran, there is an acute awareness, especially among students, that this problem is as much a crisis for them as it is for the Sinhalese, that landless workers and the very poor among the Tamils would be hit the hardest.

Sumanthiran says the present crisis even offers an opportunity to address the Tamil question, through the abolition of the executive presidency, as some in the Opposition are demanding.

In many ways, it is ironic that the statue of SWRD Bandaranaike at Galle Face has become a beacon for the protesters. Google now throws up "Driving Directions" to the statue, with real-time information on how long it might take to reach the centre of the protests.

Bandaranaike, an Oxford-educated lawyer, was a founder-member of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party, and among the earliest to mine Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism for political advancement. His advocacy of "Sinhala Only" set the country down a path that the Rajapaksas, who were members of the same party until 2015, rounded off to their advantage six decades later, by claiming to have restored Sinhala pride with the defeat of the LTTE.

In the years since, a new generation has come of age. They may not know much about Sri Lanka's failures of the past, but they are in the midst of a massive breakdown now, and sense that majoritarianism does not have the answers.

Standing near the towering Bandaranaike statue, D M Dissanayake, a lawyer in his 40s, says, "The Rajapaksas were heroes for winning the war against LTTE. After the Easter Sunday attacks, people thought the Rajapaksas are the sole protectors of the Sinhalese... They were swayed by triumphalism. Now people's eyes have opened."

— THE PROTESTERS —

The protests have seen students, teachers, lawyers, doctors and nurses gathering at at Colombo's Galle Front

SHEMODYA JAYASEKARA, 23 Under-graduate student at the University of Sabaragamuwa in south-central Sri Lanka; studying Food Business Management



It is her first day at the protests and she is accompanied by her parents. Her father works in the security divi-

sion of Colombo Port, and her mother is a home-maker. "I came because the ruling leaders do not give us what we expect from them. The economy is in a crisis. We have money but food is not available. We have cooking gas for now, but we don't know if we will get a refill. There are long queues," she says, adding, "I hope to work in this country after I finish my studies, but I see so many undergrads without jobs. We have been at home for two years and our university has not resumed physical classes because there is no power."

AQEEL AHAMAD, 22 Engineering student at Moratuwa University in suburban Colombo



"Everyone is affected by this government, by the family running this government.

We want a democratic

country... a peaceful environment...not an atmosphere filled with communal and ethnic racism," says Ahamad, who is accompanied by his father, a businessman. "One of my aunts in Kandy was affected in the riots of 2018 — her house and vehicles were torched. I face racism in public places, even in my college," he adds.

Blaming the Rajapaksa family for "every problem in the country", he hopes "people will vote next time for eligible candidates without being driven by ethnic, religious concerns or money"

DMDISSANAYAKE, IN HIS 40s



"Civil society activists and others had been warning people that if Rajapaksas come to power

economic crisis because they never had a proper economic plan. But Rajapaksas were heroes for winning the war against LTTE," said Dissanayake. After the Easter Sunday attacks, he adds, "people thought the Rajapaksas are the sole protectors of the Sinhalese... They were swayed by triumphalism. Now people's eyes have opened."

MK RAGUNATHAN, 68 Retired as a consultant physician at a government hospital in Galle



"I have seen how politicians have divided this country using religion, language, caste. In the last two years, the econ-

omy has deteriorated in a way that was not even seen during war years," says Ragunathan, adding, "With so many protesting here, I didn't think it was right for me to sit at home. I came here as a common man to volunteer my services as a doctor."

REBECCA DAVID, 43 Rights activist



"The Rajapaksas are not going to resign just because we are asking. But the pressure is important. When we demand

here, our voice will be heard in Parliament," says David, who has been part of the protests "since the beginning". David and her group are also starting "Teach Out" sessions for protesters to inform them "the Constitution, the powers of the president" etc.

Urging India to "help the people, not the government", she adds, "People suspect that the BJP government is helping our government because they are quite similar in many ways".



P CHIDAMBARAM
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The BJP has enough evil geniuses who have the capacity to craft state-specific strategies: one such strategy is the deliberate effort to kick up controversies around

food, dress and prayer in

Karnataka

Hate speech thrives and divides

THE HIJAB, halal and aazaan controversies are rocking the state of Karnataka. They have been manufactured as part of a carefully designed campaign to divide the people of Karnataka into two camps — Hindus and Muslims — ahead of the State election in 2023.

■ Hijab is a dress where the girl/woman covers her head when she steps out of her home. Hindu women in north India, Sikh women, Christian nuns and some others (including Sikh men) also cover their heads.

■ Halal is meat from slaughtering animals or poultry, according to Islamic law, through a cut to the jugular vein or windpipe and draining all the blood. Other religions have rules for preparing food: Judaism prescribes kosher food and many Hindu sub-divisions prepare food according to certain rules.

■ Aazaan is a call to prayer broadcast from mosques five times a day, often through loudspeakers. Hindu and Christian places of worship toll bells. Hindu religious festivals are usually accompanied by reciting scriptures or playing devotional music that is amplified through loudspeakers.

CENTURIES OF CO-EXISTENCE

Hijab, halal and aazaan are not new practices. They have been part of Islam ever since Islam came to India. The people of Karnataka (and the old Mysore kingdom) had accepted these practices

for centuries; no one objected to them, and no Muslim objected to Hindu religious practices. To put it shortly, Hindus, Muslims and Christians — as well as followers of other faiths — have peacefully co-existed with each other.

Until the BJP entered Karnataka. The BJP has ruled Karnataka for a few terms, in a coalition or alone. In recent years, it has ruled by enticing legislators from other parties to switch sides — the effort was labeled as Operation Lotus. The BJP faces a State election in 2023. Its governments have been non-performers and its position in Karnataka is quite shaky. Opposition parties have learnt to build protective walls to counter Operation Lotus. Hence, the need to build another narrative that can polarize the voters and attract the majority of the Hindu votes. The BJP has enough evil geniuses who have the capacity to craft state-specific strategies: one such strategy is the deliberate effort to kick up controversies around food, dress and prayer in

The sudden proscription of hijab in schools and colleges by the state government was challenged in Court. A Full Bench of the High Court of Karnataka framed the question as "whether wearing of hijab was an 'essential religious practice' ", and ruled that it was not. The question was irrelevant. The only relevant question was whether the State had the power to proscribe hijab and thus violate the right to privacy (and agency) of the Muslim student and her right to education. An appeal has been lodged in the

Supreme Court and it is hoped that the real issues will be addressed and resolved.

HATE SPEECH THRIVES

Such controversies lay the ground for hate speech. There has been an abundance of hate speech on both sides, though the initial provocateur, in many recent cases, was the Hindu zealot(s). Sadly, few prominent citizens of Karnataka spoke up: among the notable exceptions were the historian Mr Ramchandra Guha and the industrialist Mrs Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw. The peddlers of hate speech turned their ire on the two!

Hate speech has crossed all bounds in some states, especially Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. A repeat offender is Yeti Narasinghanand, working as a priest in Dasna Devi temple. Last year, during a Hindu religious congregation in Haridwar, he had made derogatory remarks against Muslim women, was arrested and after some weeks released on bail. On April 3, 2022, he delivered a speech at a self-described 'Hindu Mahapanchayat' in Delhi when he said "to protect your sisters and daughters, take up arms." Among the dire predictions he made was that a Muslim will be prime minister of India either in 2029 or 2034 or 2039! The police recorded an FIR but did not arrest him or move for cancellation of his bail.

Another horrifying example is the case of Mahant Bajrang Muni, a self-styled religious leader. On April 2, 2022, a video showed him addressing a gather-

ing in Hindi. He said, while the crowd cheered him, "If anyone from your community harasses any girl in the area, I will pick up your daughters from your homes and rape them." The target was obvious. The National Commission for Women demanded his arrest. He was arrested eleven days later.

TOLERATING INTOLERANCE

Ironically, acts of violence, intolerance and hate were committed on the day celebrated as the birthday of Lord Ram, who is *Maryada Purushottam*, the epitome of righteousness. These acts and utterances cannot be dismissed as extreme rants by agent provocateurs. They have the support of the BJP and the RSS who are determinedly on a course to consolidate and expand the Hindu core of India which now lies in the Hindi-speaking states.

Hartosh Singh Bal, writing in the influential Foreign Affairs, has observed, "More than 400 million people either do not subscribe to Hinduism or do not practice the kind of Hinduism that the RSS holds supreme. They will nonetheless be subject to what is, ultimately, an imperial project that attempts to homogenize the Hindu population while ensuring that India's Muslims and Christians are relegated to second-class citizenship."

Amidst growing intolerance, the studied silence of the highest authorities of the country is not a mere lapse of governance.

Fifth COLUMN TAVLEEN SINGH Twitter@tavleen.singh

Bulldozing justice

LET ME start with a question. Would it be right for the homes of policemen and officials in charge of law and order in Khargone to have their houses bulldozed? I ask because when violence breaks out in a public place it is because the local administration fails, and it must be held accountable. But instead of the tortuous process of inquiry commissions that take decades to give their verdict, would it not be better to punish officials without due process? It is keeping this question in mind that we need to examine the demolition of the houses and properties of those charged with rioting in Khargone. What happened was outrageous because it was a violation of the fundamental principles that govern the rule of law, but public outrage has been subdued by the voices of those who believe that it serves

Muslims right.
On social media I have heard jubilant 'new' Indians celebrate what happened in Khargone. I have engaged with them to point out that without the rule of law democratic countries become autocracies and what prevails is the law of the jungle. And the response has been that if the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh had waited to punish rioters through due legal process they would have remained unpunished for years. This is true. And there is a solution that is so obvious I feel foolish repeating it here, but it clearly needs rep-

The reason why the justice system moves so slowly is because it is broken and badly needs fixing. There are some obvious reforms that can be made effortlessly. The most necessary of these, in my view, is to scrap the ludicrous procedures that exist from colonial times. An example that comes immediately to mind is that of Aryan Khan. On the day that he was given bail he would have been able in another country to walk out of court immediately. But, not in India. Here he was taken back to the cell in which he was confined for a month and made to wait another two days for the procedures of his release to be completed. Why do these

Why does it take the courts 20 years of deliberations before punishing those responsible for the bombings that killed nearly 300 people in Mumbai in 1993? Why do judges need to write short novels to make their judgments? Why do the police need thousands of words to make charges that could be made in a few paragraphs? Why do lawyers succeed in delaying trials? Why are there no deadlines for trials to end? These are only some of the questions that need urgent answers, but the answer cannot be to establish the law of the jungle instead of the rule of law.

What we saw in Khargone was the law of the jungle. The Home Minister of Madhya Pradesh defended what happened on the grounds that those who throw stones will have their homes reduced to stones. Well, what would he say to the old lady whose picture appeared on the front page of this newspaper last week? Hasina Fakhroo is in her sixties and clearly too old to be a rioter, but her house was reduced to rubble before she could prove that it was built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

Long is the list of cases in which people have been punished without due process, and the list does not begin with Narendra Modi coming to power as the Congress party would have us believe. An example from supposedly benign Congress times is that of Lalit Modi. All the cases that were made against him have been thrown out of court, but he was hounded out of India as a result of a shameful media trial in which those responsible for upholding the rule of law played an ugly part. More recently this happened in the Sushant Singh Rajput case where the media was manipulated through calculated leaks to turn his suicide into a murder case. A young woman's life was destroyed by TV anchors who declared her guilty on primetime. Should these anchors have their homes bulldozed? When should we stop using bull-

Once we give officials the right to bulldoze the homes of suspected rioters and the right to seize the properties of alleged offenders, we establish the rule of the jungle. Once we allow income-tax inspectors to raid the homes of alleged tax evaders without proof that they have evaded taxes, we do the same. This is a practice

that has been going on much too long. What has changed since Narendra Modi took office is that somehow it is always Muslims that end up spending months in jail in cases that are bailable. It is shameful that this happened to a standup comedian for a joke he had not cracked. Shameful that student leaders and journalists, nearly always Muslims, spend months in jail on usually dubious charges. Let us then ask what happens to a country in which senior political leaders and high officials show total disdain for the rule of law on the fallacious grounds that the process of justice takes too long. The answer is that they are in clear violation of the Constitution of India, and the consequences are grim. When the rule of law is weakened, it weakens democracy because the rule of law has to be sacrosanct in democratic countries.

Ahmedabad

The message behind BSP's loss in UP polls



THE 2022 Uttar Pradesh election verdict is a latent function of deep communal and casteist mobilisation. However, it is being camouflaged under the garb of development and good governance. On the one hand there was 'Kairana, Kashi, Ayodhya, Mathura, Jinnah, Assi-Bees, bulldozer (against a particular community), Teen Talag', and on the other side, the mobilisation of Brahmins, non-Yadavs (Kurmi, Lodh, Gujjar, Jaat, Rajbhar, Maurya, Saini, Nonia, Chauhan, Nishad, Nai), and non-Jatavs (Pasi, Dhobi, Kori, Khatik, Valmiki, Dhanuk) became the fulcrum of electioneering. Above all, the mainstream corporate media, YouTube media, pollsters, and so-called intellectuals, on the basis of flop-rallies by leaders of two political parties, described the UP elections as bipolar. Once this perception crystallised amongst masses, they forgot unemployment, price rise, Covid

deaths, Hathras case, Unnao case etc.
This false consciousness created a strong perception that the contest is between the BJP and SP and that the BSP is not in the fight at all. So the Muslims, OBCs, and a few upper-caste voters who have traditionally voted for the BSP, deserted it. Had this section voted for development and good governance, for which the BSP had the best record during its 2007-12 term in UP, they would have picked the party again.

It is a fact that in this election the BSP lost approximately 74 lakh votes in comparison to 2017. The SP gained 1.26 crore and its ally, the RLD, gained 10 lakh votes. In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the BSP had tied up with the SP and RLD, and since the Dalit vote is often based on ideology, therefore in all probability, the BSP votes have shifted to the SP and RLD to defeat the BJP.

So did the BJP raise its tally? Of course, because of the Congress (which lost approximately 32 lakh votes) and the Shiv Sena (did not contest). The voters of these parties have no hesitation in voting for the BJP. It is in this context that the theory that the Dalit vote has shifted to the BJP is nothing but an

ignorance of history

Historically, non-Jatavs have always voted for the BJP (or the Jana Sangh). At one point, they were also considered Congress vote bank, before shifting to the BSP. This narrative was constructed to save the so-called upper-castes from being questioned — why did they vote en-bloc for the BJP.

That the BSP is the B-team of the BJP is another narrative which speaks volumes about caste prejudice. In Goa, the Trinamool Congress contested polls for the first time and did not win any seat, and in turn helped the BJP to retain power. Yet, nobody calls the TMC a B-team of the BJP. Mamata Banerjee also travelled to UP to campaign for the SP.

The caste prejudice in Indian politics is not only towards the BSP's Mayawati. Take Congress's Charanjit Singh Channi. In Punjab polls. Jat Sikhs and Hindus did not vote for Channi although he is a well-educated and seasoned politician. It is established fact that in Punjab, the Akalis and the Congress come to power alternatively, and the Jat Sikhs, Hindus and Dalits have voted for the Congress for 70 years. However, this time, AAP weaned away Jats, Hindus and non-Ravidasis and Ramdasis from Congress by projecting a Jat Sikh as CM.

Then what is the way forward for BSP?
The answer lies in the fact that the BSP is not
only a political party, it is a social movement.
Losing and winning an election is part of the
movement and till the gaps in democracy
are filled, BSP will remain relevant.

Nonetheless, after five elections (UP polls – 2012, 2017, 2022 – and two general elections – 2014, 2019) it has been established that the mainstream society is not ready to accept the BSP as a centrist party, even though it is hailed for its good governance, social justice (land distribution), propoor schemes (Ambedkar Village, Kanshiram Housing Schemes), and development (with GDP of the state on a par with the national numbers during 2007-12).

Therefore, it has to reinvent its old ideology and identify elements which exploit Bahujans in institutions of governance, education, production and social life. It has to repeat its 2007 performance to provide representation to Bahujans in institutions of governance to strengthen democracy.

Kumar is professor of sociology at Jawarharlal Nehru University

Suraj Yengde, the author of Caste Matters, curates the fortnightly 'Dalitality' column





The world through my eyes is just as colourful

ALL THROUGH my childhood and teenage years, I noticed some inadequacies in my vision. For instance, when I picked up a dull-coloured shirt, others would call it bright. But I never knew I was colourblind. My 'inadequacy', I presumed, had to do with how I saw certain colour combinations. I just told myself that my colour sensibilities were a little different from everyone else. After being associated with a few film projects as assistant director, working on some television productions, and making short films and video albums, I joined a film institute in Kochi as faculty. I was about 28 years old then.

At the institute, I was asked to help with the admission process. Some lecturers on the panel insisted that we also make arrangements for a colour-blindness test while selecting candidates. We put up some colour boards and I was given the responsibility to spot the colour-blind candidates.

That is when I realised that I was colour blind.

I realised the problem but I knew nothing about it. So, I started reading up. Since I was also an aspiring filmmaker, I was nervous about my future.

Once it became known that I had

colour blindness, people around me also became curious. They would show me things and ask me about its colour. Even now, some friends ask me in jest, "What is the colour of this shirt?" For me, however, it was less about not recognising a particular colour and more about the realisation that I may be seeing a different world.

I was told my problem is with Red and Green, among the most common forms of colour blindness.

Then, I came across a report that said that even British-American film director Christopher Nolan is colour blind. It came as a huge relief. The fact that an internationally celebrated filmmaker was also colour blind gave me immense confidence.

So when the Supreme Court issued an order directing the Pune-based Film and Television Institute of India (FTII) not to exclude candidates suffering from colour



A still from Pothan's Kumbalangi Nights. Facebook/Kumbalangi Nights

blindness from its courses on filmmaking and editing, I welcomed it wholeheartedly. The petitioner—a student who was

The petitioner — a student who was denied admission to FTII's Diploma in Film Editing course in 2015 after he was diagnosed as colour blind — had also cited Nolan's example.

Looking back, I feel that if I hadn't known about Nolan, things would have been far more challenging for me emotionally in the early part of my career. My transition, from suspecting that I had a problem with my vision to thinking that I had 'lesser' colour sense, to finally understanding that I had colour

blindness, was slow.

The SC order said that

"colour blindness is not a
form of blindness but a detrue. I would say that there

ficiency." So true. I would say that there might be a problem in my vision, but not in my sensibility.

Shyju Khalid, a renowned cinematographer, once told me, "While we see a largely dull world and all the dirt around, maybe you have a graded vision." In films, colour grading refers to curating colours carefully to convey an atmosphere, emotion and style.

However, at times, the condition does

make me conscious at work. To counter it, I have developed an immersive working style, engaging deeply with cinematographers and designers to avoid any conflict.

Until the recent Supreme Court order, I didn't even know about the FTII case. When a prestigious institute denies admission to a colour-blind aspirant, it ruins the dreams of many. More importantly, it makes someone feel inadequate or unqualified.

Now however, we know that there are

Now, however, we know that there are many colour-blind actors and filmmakers. I believe that the scope of our vision is significant too. The colours and patterns we see are so different and beautiful. In a way, we can see the lives around us more closely because we are denied many colours. The Supreme Court order said, "Art is non-conformist in character..." Very true. The perspective of colour-blind people should be welcomed as the influence of cinema on people is also different and relative. I would go as far as to say that being colour blind is not an inadequacy but an extra advantage for a filmmaker. That's how I see the apex court's order.

Pothan is an acclaimed director, producer and actor, associated with Malayalam films such as Kumbalangi Nights and Joji.

As told to Arun Janardhanan

On the LOOSE LEHER KALA leherkala@gmail.com

AFTER DEPICTING blowzy romance via wind machines, designer wardrobes and incredulous coincidences, celebrity filmmaker Karan Johar's latest foray into the business of love is a down-to-earth endorsement of www.iitiimshaadi.com. The website, promoted by the very aptly named company Alma Mater Matters Pvt Ltd invites registrations only from alumni of top institutions, with the explanation that "people desire companionship of matching intellects with similar experiences". It's perfectly natural that like gravitates towards like, the latest examples being Ranbir Kapoor and Alia Bhatt, But Johar has been receiving a lot of flak on Twitter for promoting a "regressive and discriminatory" approach to marriage, as if India's

Searching for love (conditions apply)

The scope of our

vision is significant

too. The colours we

see are so different

and beautiful. We

us more closely

because we are

denied many

colours...

see the lives around

unabashedly conservative wedding protocols have ever been anything else.

Internet matchmaking has become ubiquitous even in India, taking on the space once occupied by newspaper matrimonial ads. It can be overwhelming, sorting through lakhs of jeevansathi.com and shaadi.com profiles, constantly worrying about a potential prospect misrepresenting themselves. A friend of mine was alarmed to discover that someone she matched with on Tinder was a truck driver before starting a transport business. I pointed out that Russell Crowe was a waiter before making it in Hollywood to which she snapped she had nothing in common with people in the trucking industry. Right or wrong, we are all shameless traditionalists when it comes to choosing life partners, operating in our own little gilded circles, reluctant to consider an outlier. If one is venturing outside of one's comfort zone, a filtering is required. That's where *iitiimshaadi.com* scores; it makes no bones about sifting out the grain from the chaff, so to say.

It is worth noting that there are over 1,500 matrimonial websites in India, catering to orthodox Hindu demands, largely based on caste. Minorities (Muslims and Christians) would be wasting their time on many of them (however, they have their own specific websites full of equally tasteless idiosyncrasies). A glance through the top five matchmaking sites is a revelation; candidates who fail to identify their own caste and graciously tick "caste no bar" in their quest for a mate have a far smaller pool of responses to choose from. There are two reasons for this. One, Indians are hopelessly insular and casteist. Two, a lack of full disclosure is viewed suspiciously; perhaps a candidate is hiding an unsavoury past. Under the heading "Caste No Bar" I repeatedly saw: "SC/ST Please Excuse", contradictory yet noteworthy—this is a rare specimen indeed, who stops short of taking a deep plunge but is at least, willing to look beyond his own sub-caste.

It is to be wondered that after all this painstaking anthropological streamlining and pairings based on socio-economic hierarchies, if, a few years in, people do a rethink and decide these yardsticks were wholly idiotic—and that giving oneself up to mad passion might have been more conducive to happiness. But romantic inexperience leads to the fear that the lovers one chooses may be chronically wrong (and there'll be no one to blame). Mate selection is an issue in other countries too. In the West they go about it like normal adults, picking partners with a shared vision for the future, and similar interests. Critically, mummypapa are not involved and nobody cares what a partner's random ancestors did, 300 years ago. Indians approach their personal lives the way they do a 12th Board examination—industriously, the virtues of continuity of society hammered into them.

mered into them.

This attitude of risk averseness has led to an over-dependence on tribe and a cynical distrust of romance. After all, most of literature concerns the perils of scandal and doomed love; in *Anna Karenina*, Anna leaves her husband for Vronksy, condemning herself to a life of despair and death. Lydia, in *Pride and Prejudice*, is reduced to poverty by eloping with the county rake, Wickham. In this era, the path to true love may be paved with choices, but the safest is going en route the only destination that matters: a carefully strategized marriage.

The writer is director, Hutkay Films

New Delhi: Fuel sales fell in the first half of April as a record rise in prices in a short 16-day period dented demand, preliminary industry data showed Saturday. Petrol sales fell almost 10% over the same period in the preceding month, while diesel demand slid 15.6%. PTI

NET PROFIT AT ₹10,055.2 CR FOR FOURTH QUARTER, ₹36,961.3 CR FOR FY22

HDFC Bank Q4 net up 22.8% on better asset quality, higher interest income

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAL APRIL 16

HDFC BANK on Saturday posted a net profit of Rs 10,055.2 crore on a standalone basis for the quarter ended March 2022 (Q4FY22), up 22.8 per cent against Rs 8,186.51 crore in the year-ago period.

Net interest income (NII), the difference between interest earned and interest expended, rose 10.2 per cent to Rs 18,872.7 crore in Q4 as against Rs 17,120.2 crore a year ago, with credit growth of nearly 21 per cent and 16.8 per cent rise in deposits on-year.

at 4 per cent on total assets, and 4.2 per cent based on interestearning assets." the bank said.

Advances rose 20.8 per cent to Rs 13.69 lakh crore in Q4FY22. Retail loans grew 15.2 per cent, commercial & rural banking loans by 30.4 per cent, and corporate & other wholesale loans by 17.4 per cent Asset quality improved with non-performing assets (NPAs) at 1.17 per cent of advances as against 1.32 per cent a year ago.

"We continued to add new liability relationships at a robust pace of 2.4 million during the quarter," the lender said. It

NII RISES 10.2%

■ Net interest income (NII) rose 10.2% to ₹18,872.7 crore in Q4 as against ₹17,120.2 crore

recorded a 16.8 per cent growth in deposits at Rs 15.59 lakh crore as of March 2022, with CASA deposits rising 22 per cent and time

deposits increasing 12.3 per cent. Provisions and contingencies for the quarter ended March 31, 2022 were Rs 3,312.4 crore (consions of Rs 1,778.2 crore and general and other provisions of Rs 1.534.2 crore) as against total provisions of Rs 4,693.7 crore for the same quarter a year ago. Total provisions for the current quarter included contingent provisions of

approximately Rs 1,000 crore. The bank held floating provisions of Rs 1,451 crore and contingent provisions of Rs 9,685 crore as of March 2022. Total provisions (comprising specific, floating, contingent and general provisions) were 182 per cent of the gross non-performing loans. Net rev-

enues (net interest income plus

cent to Rs 26,509.8 crore against Rs 24,714.1 crore a year ago.

For the full fiscal FY22, the bank posted a profit of Rs 36,961.3 crore, a growth of 18.8 per cent over the previous year, and net interest income at Rs 72,009.6 crore, up 11 per cent over a year ago. The bank's shares fell 1.90 per cent on the BSE to Rs 1,464.85 Thursday.

Meanwhile, as per a PTI report, HDFC Bank said it will raise up to Rs 50.000 crore in the next one year by issuing bonds. Further, its board has approved to re-appoint Renu Karnad as non-executive director on the board for five years.

INTERVIEW: VICE PRESIDENT & MANAGING DIRECTOR, INDIA, META

'Meta has not cracked all of metaverse; want to help others build compelling use-cases'

tity from Facebook last October, will continue to work on building access to the proposed metaverse through devices that enable a more immersive version of the internet, AJIT MOHAN, Vice President and Managing Director, India, Meta told AASHISH ARYAN and PRANAV MUKUL in an interview. He also spoke about the future of internet advertising in the metaverse and the company's plans in the upcoming auction of broadcasting rights for the Indian Premier League. Edited excerpts:

Given that political ads comprise a small proportion of your revenue and the heat that they bring through allegations of the platform being biased, how does the cost-benefit work out?

I don't have a point of view on this, really. This is, globally, one of the calls that we took a while back In the context of the role that we can play - just as businesses connect to consumers, we have discovered that our platforms are used to drive causes. We saw that one of the roles we played in the pandemic was to bring attention to the public health agenda. The code of the platform is that you can build communities and get a message across, and therefore I can imagine the utility from a campaign point of view as well. When you look at political ads as a percentage of total (revenues) both in India and globally, it becomes pretty apparent that the

Companies across the world have stepped up their metaverse investments. How does the future of advertising on internet change on Web 3.0

driver for us is not revenue.

from when we articulated the idea of metaverse and the change of identity to Meta, there has been massive excitement from across industry and business leaders across the spectrum, and I've seen this excitement in India as well.

Leaders instinctively get the power of a more immersive internet, and what it means to move from 2D to 3D, not just from a consumer point of view — with use cases such fitness and gaming but also from enterprise perspecusers in a more immersive manner. We have been pretty open in saying that we do not know all the



"I don't think we're a media company. I think we partner with other media companies, and hopefully they've seen value in leveraging our

AJIT MOHAN

platforms"

Going back to the acquisition of Oculus in 2014, the company has been making hefty investments in AR (augmented reality) and VR (virtual reality) for a while now. We have no illusion that we are building the metaverse. We know that we are going to contribute to what will become metaverse and that different companies will create different spaces. It should be interoperable, a lot more than what mobile internet was. At the same time, we do not have any illusion that we have cracked all of it, either in terms of technology or how interoperability will work, or even what the different revenue streams will be. What we do know is that there is going to be a lot of work on access side on devices that enable more

Governments and regulators policies for cryptocurrencies How important is it for these policies to be laid down as

immersive version of the internet

On the last version of the in-

and policy changes over the last few years on the back of recognising that. We have the opportunity to learn from that as we think about how to design the different building blocks that will form the metaverse over the next 5-10 years. For example, we have been baking in privacy as a core design principle in to every product feature and it will translate quite well. We have to proactively work with stakeholders, including regulators around the world to make sure that we build these frameworks in a way that allows innovation but absorbs the learnings of the last 20 years.

Would Meta be interested in buying rights to broadcast IPL?

One. I don't think we're a media company. I think we partner with other media companies, and hopefully they've seen value in leveraging our platforms. We ourselves don't see us as a media company. I don't think we will build particular use cases. We are thinking more along the lines that we can build frameworks and help with foundational tools on both the software and hardware side that will enable other developers to build compelling use

The role that Meta has is fundamentally around building the toolkits, enabling other partners and developers, and therefore in this context, we don't have the intention to bid for IPL rights that are opening up in the next few weeks. It is the context of the role we see ourselves in, of building the metaverse, and not because we think IPL is not a fantastic property. I have seen the power of IPL in building(Disney+) Hotstar.

In terms of the Apple privacy changes, globally, there's a \$10billion impact that Meta said it will see as a result of the new policy. For India, could you provide any qualitative or quantitative insights into what impact is being seen by Meta?

There are no numbers to share. What we've publicly announced over the last few weeks. and what's to come, we've clearly worked to make sure that some of the underreporting on web conversions that have come on the back of the Apple changes are addressed. That will continue. The Apple or iOS is a very small share

SECTOR WATCH **CONSUMER INTERNET COS**

Ban after complaints: Amid pushback by restaurants, Zomato defers quality policy

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

AFTER IT drew the ire of hoteliers over a proposed policy to ban restaurants based on customer complaints about food quality, Zomato is learnt to have decided to defer the plan until next month and has informed restaurants that it will seek feedback from them on how it can strengthen the policy before implementing it.

Zomato, in an email sent late Friday night to its restaurant partners, is learnt to have pushed the implementation of the policy from April 18 to May 3. Under the policy, called 'Severe Food Quality' rules, Zomato proposed it would temporarily ban restaurants if consumers complained about their food quality. The platform had listed the presence of hazardous objects in food, serving non-vegetarian food ing the wrong type of meat, and rotten food as examples of severe food quality issues.

Zomato said it would get feedback from stakeholders on the policy. "We seek feedback from all our restaurant partners and would like to understand from you how this framework can be strengthened so it can be in the best interest of all stakeholders involved," Zomato is learnt to have said in the email.

"The disablement will be in consultation with the restaurant management and will only be applicable till necessary remedial actions are undertaken and verified through an Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI)-approved hygiene and safety auditor," the email said.

On its part, the FSSAI welcomed Zomato's policy, say-



ing it would ensure customers receive good quality food.

FSSAI CEO Arun Singhal told The Indian Express, "We are encouraging all stakeholders to offer quality food and Zomato's penalty against multiple offenders could make sure that customers get food of the highest quality.

The FSSAI had earlier launched a hygiene rating for restaurants, cafes, dhabas etc. to make sure customers get good quality food at such outlets. The ratings, voluntary in nature, include several parameters and an inspection by loaudit of a restaurant's premises and food offerings.

The National Restaurants Association of India (NRAI), which had criticised 70mato saying that the firm was overstepping with the policy, said it was set to have a conversation with the firm to resolve its issues with the policy. "While the intent of the policy is understandable, the implementation leaves a lot of grey areas and scope for misuse. Further the action of delisting is draconian. We have initiated dialogue with the Zomato Team and conveyed our views. They will be meeting with us next week to resolve this in a better, more inclusive way, keeping all stakeholders in mind." an NRAI spokesperson said. Zomato did not reply to a request for comment.Full report on

www.indianexpress.com

cases at 31%; 47% cases liquidated' Nearly half of 3,247 insolvency cases have been resolved

'Debt recovery via insolvency

via liquidation, and various resolution processes yielded debt recovery of 31%, an Icra report said



10,000

pending for admission

brunt of losses on their books Various NCLTs admitted 4,946

financial firms face the maximum

₹7.52 lakh cr

claims made by creditors on their

borrowers; lenders could realise

Liquidation means lenders or

only Rs 2.5 lakh crore

bankruptcy cases till December 2021 - 3,247 applications so far closed, while 1,699 are still ongoing

Report details: The data from the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) covers all cases since implementation of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) five years ago till December 2021

Become supply hub, set ₹10L cr target: Goyal to plastics industry plastics industry to become the

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI, APRIL 16

COMMERCE MINISTER Pivush Goyal on Saturday asked the country's plastics sector to set a target to become a Rs 10 lakhcrore industry in the near future by expanding the domestic and export markets as well as by following import substitution.

Felicitating exporters at Exports Excellence Awards organised here by PLEXCONCIL, India's apex trade body of plastics exporters, Goyal said, "India's plasis worth Rs 3 lakh crore annually, out of which one-third is exported. There is a significant growth potential for the Indian world's premium supply hub." "It can target to take its eco-

nomic activity to a Rs 10-lakh crore industry. This could be achieved through more exports and import substitution, which in turn will create immense job opportunities," he added. Goyal praised the plastics sec-

tor for its performance on the exports front, as the industry achieved exports of \$13 billion in FY22 with a growth of 30 per cent and lauded the export target of \$25 billion it has set for 2025. "The plastics industry has done well on and contributed significantly during the pandemic, particularly in supporting the healthcare supplies to the country.

He said the Centre was supporting plastic manufacturers, particularly to ensure that more MSMEs take advantage of national and global opportunities and provide more job opportunities to marginalised sectors.

Goyal advised stakeholders of the Indian plastics industry to upgrade technology, equipment and capacities to manufacture worldclass, quality products and grab global opportunities for plastics to become the prime player.

Arvind Goenka, chairman, PLEXCONCIL, said, "The plastics industry is aggressively progressing achieving \$13 billion of exports in the year 2021-22 with a 30 per cent growth and eying for \$25 billion of exports by 2025."

and the metaverse? In a very short period of time,

answers at the moment.

are debating on formulating and NFTs, and the metaverse? early as possible?

ternet, a lot of these laws and policies had to be developed post facto. We saw this explosive growth and innovation which had a huge impact on global economy as well as the impact on the ability of people to connect in a seamless manthere were a lot of bad actors who could do great harm. Even in some of our own works — we have had a lot of fundamental product work

of the total devices in India. Full interview on www.indianexpress.com

Catching fire over e-scooters, Okinawa recalls 3,215 units

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

TWO-WHEELEV maker Okinawa Autotech said it was recalling 3.215 units of its Praise Pro scooter to fix any issues related to batteries, in what is the first instance of a voluntary recall by an electric vehicle (EV) manufacturer in India.

The batteries will be checked for loose connectors or any damage and be repaired free of charge at any of the Okinawa authorised dealerships pan India," Okinawa said in a statement.

"The electric 2W maker is

working closely with the dealer partners to ensure that the repair experience is as per the convenience of its customers, for which the vehicle owners will be contacted individually," it added.

The moves comes weeks after an Okinawa electric scooter burst into flames, claiming the lives of a man and his 13-year-old daughter. At the time, the company had claimed the fire in its electric twowheeler was an "evident case of short circuit due to negligence in charging the vehicle". The company said it was waiting for the complete investigation to unfold. Earlier this week, NITI Aavog

'Poison pill': Twitter plan to fight Musk's takeover bid

SIMILAR INCIDENTS AMONG OTHER EV MAKERS ■The moves comes weeks

after an Okinawa electric scooter burst into flames, claiming the lives of a man and his 13-year-old daughter. At the time, it had claimed the fire was an "evident case of short circuit due to negligence in charging the vehicle"

CEO Amitabh Kant had, during a media interview, urged manufacturers to voluntarily recall EV

■ Over the past few weeks, more than a dozen electric scooters have caught fire, including those manufactured by Ola Electric, Pure EV and Jitendra EV, aside from Okinawa. The companies have launched respective probes into the incidents

batches involved in fire incidents. Okinawa - established in 2016 out of a manufacturing facil-

ity in Bhiwadi, Rajasthan — sold over 46,000 electric scooters in FY22, according to data from the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA). The company had a market share of 0.39 per cent. In March this year, the company sold over 8,000 e-scooters. Over the past few weeks, more

than a dozen electric scooters have caught fire, including those manufactured by Ola Electric, Pure EV and litendra EV, aside from Okinawa. The companies have launched respective investigations into the instances to ascertain the reasons behind the fires.

The Ministry of Road

Transport and Highways, meanwhile, too has ordered a probe into the incidents and roped in the Centre for Fire Explosive and Environment Safety (CFEES), a unit of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), to constitute an independent team and carry out an in-

vestigation into the incidents. While conclusive reasons behind these incidents are yet to be made clear, industry experts said the rising temperatures in the country and manufacturing defects - both in hardware and software — could be possible causes behind the fires.

BRIEFLY —

M&M stake sale

New Delhi: Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) has agreed to sell over 34.75 lakh shares, constituting 22.81% of the paid-up capital, in Mahindra Sanyo Special Steel Pvt Ltd, to Japan's Sanyo Special Steel Co Ltd in a ₹212 crore deal.

Vedanta on PSU

New Delhi: Vedanta chairman Anil Agarwal called for further liberalisation of defence sector and corporatisation of defence PSUs. PTI

Activision probe

Bengaluru: Activision Blizzard is cooperating with federal investigations into trading by friends of its CEO shortly before the gaming company disclosed its sale to Microsoft Corp, it said in a filing on Friday. **REUTERS**

PRANAV MUKUL NEW DELHI, APRIL 16

A DAY after Tesla chief Elon Musk made a \$43-billion offer to buy Twitter, the microblogging platform's board has armed itself against a possible hostile takeover by taking recourse to what is called a "limited-duration shareholder rights plan", also referred to as a "poison pill".

Poison pill — nuclear option against a hostile takeover

This rights plan essentially allows existing shareholders to purchase freshly issued shares in a company at a discount to the trading price, effectively making any possible buyout plan extremely costly and prohibitive for the party planning a hostile takeover. In this case, the move will prevent anyone from having more than a 15 per cent stake in Twitter by allowing existing shareholders to buy additional shares at a discount.

The Twitter board detailed its defence plan to the US Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) and put out a statement saying it was needed because of Mr Musk's "unsolicited, non-binding proposal to acquire Twitter".

In fact, Musk, who offered to buy Twitter for \$43 billion for \$54.20/share in cash for a 9.2 per cent stake in Twitter, seems to have been displaced as the largest shareholder in the platform. US registered in-

vestment advisor Vanguard Group, on April 8, disclosed that it now owns 82.4 million shares of Twitter, which means 10.3 per cent of the company, ac-

cording to the most recent publicly available filings with the US SEC. As per the filing, the assetmanager increased its stake in the company at some point during the first quarter. Another high-profile Twitter

EXPLAINE



investor, Al Waleed bin Talal Al Saud — a

tweeted. "Being one of the largest

Saudi royal — has said that Musk's offer to buy the microblogging platform is too

Musk's plan

low. Al Saud, in a tweet on April 15, rejected Musk's offer. "I don't believe that the proposed offer by Elon Musk (\$54.20) comes close to the intrinsic value of Twitter given its growth prospects," the Saudi prince

and long-term shareholders of Twitter,@Kingdom_KHC and I reject this offer.

A takeover bid is deemed as hostile when a company attempts to acquire another against the wishes of that company's management. In the Twitter case, the management is represented by the platform's executive board. The board has indicated it is viewing the Musk offer as "hostile".

Musk has gone back and forth on this. His latest plan, according to him, is to buy Twitter outright and then taking it private "to restore its commitment" to what he calls "free speech." But his offer, which seemed to have gotten a clear thumbs down from investors, raises multiple questions, including whether he's serious in the first place and does he have the funds to do this.

His objective for this move to take over Twitter is also fuzzy, including his promise of ensuring

"platform for free speech." Musk insisted last Thursday that his plan was triggered by the realisation that "having a public platform that is maximally trusted and broadly inclusive is extremely important to the future of civilization."

that it lives up to its potential as a

What stands in Musk's way

Since Musk does not have any presence in the social media space, his proposal to buy Twitter is unlikely to raise any antitrust flags. However, there are still question marks over how he would fund the \$43 billion purchase.

Bloomberg columnist Matt Levine wrote in an opinion piece that funding the 9.2 per cent buy in Twitter would have been much easier given that Musk only just diluted Tesla stock worth nearly \$16 billion. However, to finance his purchase of the rest of Twitter's shares would mean tapping into his remaining \$55 billion worth of Full report on

www.indianexpress.com that such a bid will materialise,

Goldman, JPMorgan to be Twitter advisers

REUTERS

NEW YORK, APRIL 16

GOLDMAN SACHS Group Inc has been advising the board of Twitter Inc on its deliberations, following Tesla CEO Elon Musk's \$43-billion offer to buy the social media platform.

On Friday, Bloomberg News reported that the Twitter board had tapped JPMorgan Chase Co

Inc as a second financial adviser. Twitter had, meanwhile, on Friday adopted a 'poison pill' to limit Musk's ability to raise his stake in the social media platform, as technology-focussed private equity firm Thoma Bravo emerged to challenge his \$43 billion bid.

It is not clear how much Thoma Bravo would be prepared to offer and there is no certainty

remains possible that a private equity firm will boost Elon Musk's bid for Twitter by partnering with him

Industry sources said it

sources said. Industry sources said it re-

mains possible that a private equity firm will boost Musk's bid by partnering with him. Silver Lake, a PE firm with

over \$90 billion in assets under management, would be a natural partner for Musk as it offered financing for his \$72-billion bid for Tesla four years ago, which Musk subsequently abandoned. Silver Lake co-chief executive Egon Durban also sits on Twitter's board.

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW The Creative Spark

Mumbai-based artist Atul Dodiya on turning to watercolours during the pandemic, the complexity of self-portraits and his new exhibition in Delhi



ARTS etc The Pleasure Groove

Bengaluru-based musician Ricky Kej on his second Grammy win for an album that voices his environmental concerns



Rinku Ghosh

AME: PRATHAM Sharma: Designation: Project Manager; Preferred pronoun: she/they; Preferred honorific: Ms, Mx. This is the email signature of an IBMer on the office intranet as part of a sensitivity drive that respects an employee's mind over body and validates self-worth, IBM is not the only workplace to break down male/female binaries of identity through language and perception. In the corporate sphere and outside of it, expressions of gender identities are being repurposed to become more inclusive and empathetic. The first step to this is the language one uses, for it determines the way one sees the world and oneself.

Language is key to connecting with marginalised groups such as the LGBTQIA+ as they break out of gender/sexual stereotypes and define themselves through a larger prism. Pronouns like "he" or "she" come with definitive expectations of how one should express one's identity. While this works for people who think in the way of the gender they have been assigned at birth, it is normative and limiting for people who are gender-neutral or still to figure out their identities. It has prompted them to move beyond conventional pronouns to non-binary ones such as "they".

"Our earliest form of communication was gestural, we pointed out things to each other. With the evolution of language, pronouns replaced this behaviour and became, among many things, representative of a personal point of view. Words like 'they' are deictic, which means their meaning can vary according to contexts, time and place. So, it is with pronouns that people are crafting their acceptance within the existing scheme of things and redefining a corporate culture that reflects the society of our time," says Rukmini Bhaya Nair, professor of Linguistics and English, IIT, Delhi.

Making variable pronouns a natural part of introductions in the social space takes the awkwardness away from a mixed gender group. Zainab Patel, head, Diversity and Inclusion (D&I), Pernod Ricard, India, a transgender herself, says, "Such a practice unboxes identity, encourages empathy and makes colleagues non-judgemental. Empathy is key to an organisation's cultural growth. As a man-



How Indian workplaces are slowly waking up to gender sensitivity

agement policy, it works because it shows that the company is willing to come down to everybody's comfort level. That's more important than hiring to ensure a diversity quota."

At the Lalit Suri Hospitality Group, executive director Keshav Suri, 37, has trained his team to approach guests neutrally. "We introduce ourselves with our preferred pronouns and also request guests to share theirs to minimise the risk of mis-gendering. A gender-neutral language, starting from inviting applications to the hiring process, allows people to choose for themselves and, at the same time, express their respect for other gender identities by not assuming. This builds confidence in queer people as they get recognised for who they are and are able to bring their whole selves to work," he says. A compassionate language policy leads to ease of access. "Besides LGBTQIA+ communities, the group has staff from various marginal intersections of society, including people with disabilities and acid-attack survivors. "This has helped the team accept each other and grow," says Suri.

Patel, however, feels not just pronouns, but spoken language as a whole has to change to respect the sensitivities of gender, marginalised communities, races, and filter down to the shop floor. "We still use words like 'baniya' and 'bhangi' to label communities and professions; still use phrases like 'able-bodied men' for a job description instead of writing 'persons who can lift weights.' Language cannot be an extension of bias any longer, it has to value competency. Companies must learn interventions and work out anti-discriminatory policies, backed by a language policy, something like the Vishaka guidelines. Self-identification must come from within," says Patel.

The sensitivity brought on by an inclusive language policy has not only changed perspectives within corporations but built ecosystems. Prachi Rastogi, D&I leader, IBM, says "It has driven a more gender-sensitive intervention at all levels. For example, we have a policy of allowing our lactating mothers to travel with another caregiver at company expense. We have extended this facility to all genders. We extend insurance for affirmative surgeries and give our staff time to heal. We have gender-neutral bathrooms and conduct workshops on both female and male menopause. We have linked promotions and increments to behaviour that encourages diversity and have zero tolerance for violations. Culture must be an upstander, not a bystander. Only then will it enter homes, change mindsets.'

Of course, modifying language to reflect a spectrum of gender identities in the corporate workspace is yet to result in a massive cultural

shift. In fact, linguists across the world are debating on "woke" culture and its appropriate representation in languages. "The notion of concealment vs revelation has come to the fore but the tension must go. Language cannot be given a cursory treatment. For example, will the English language tenets work in non-Western settings or among communities who are outside LGBTQIA+? Some of our $own\,regional\,languages\,have\,genderless\,pro$ nouns. Should we draw on them?" asks Nair.

Parmesh Shahani, author of Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace (2020), is studying Indian languages to build a gender-neutral vocabulary in everyday life. "Historically, LGBTQIA+ have had a legitimate presence in our culture — the transworld has been peopled by kinnaurs, hijras, jogappas and they have influenced our languages. For example, the word 'aap' is respectful and totally gender-neutral. Bengali has a gender-neutral pronoun, 'shey'. The easiest way to bring regional languages to the fore is by incorporating them in the culture space," he says.

Adherence to a language policy may seem like a faddist corporate drill but the effects are showing. Suansh Khare, 30, an employee at a Delhi-based MNC, says, "I was hired for a mainstream position at 28. My ease at work convinced my folks that I could sail through the world." Mohul Sharma, food and beverage services associate at The Lalit, adds, "You exhale because you don't have to suppress who you are and get to show what you are worth beyond your gender identity.'

Some languages are already creating new gender-neutral pronouns like the Swedish "hen". In Finnish, the third-person pronoun, 'hän' has become popular. The French dictionary Le Robert announced last year it had added the pronoun "iel" for its online edition after its researchers noticed its growing usage.

There could also be conscious tweaks within existing frameworks. In January 2019, Hanover became the first German city to use gender-neutral nouns in all official communication. United Airlines became the first airline to offer non-binary gender-booking options. Companies like Accenture are giving employees the option of listing preferred pronouns in their online directories and on conference name tags. New rules of engagement? Certainly. But, more importantly, it is also a way of building a culture of respect.

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Sikkim Gangtok (6D) 53000 - 55000 Coorg Mysore Bengaluru (7D) 43K - 45K Munnar Periyar Kumarakom (7D) 38K - 40K Maldives - Eriyadu Resort (4D) 80000 Mauritius - Maritim Resort (7D) 115000

YOLO Adventures (for 18-35 year olds) Leh Nubra Pangong Hanle (10D) May 31-72000

Pahalgam Gulmarg Sonmarg Srinagar (10D) May 13-69K Meghalaya Shillong Cherrapunjee (8D) May 28-70K

Short Trips

p Tour

celand

Jewels

Nepal

60000

Mauritius

15000

25000

Amritsar with Farm Stay (4D) 29000 - 32000 Haridwar Rishikesh (4D) 32000 - 35000 Sarnath Varanasi (5D) 31000 - 35000 Statue of Unity+Narmada Tent City (3D) 26K-30K Indore Ujjain Mandu (5D) 36000 - 38000

Young Explorers (for 8-18 year olds) Shimla Manali (6D) May 28 - 40000

Nainital Mussoorie Corbett Park (9D) May 23-55K Assam Arunachal Meghalaya(12D)May3 - 85K Sikkim Darjeeling Gangtok Lachung (9D) May 5 - 68K Jaipur Udaipur Pushkar (6D) May 8 - 32000 Kerala (6D) May 8 - 35000

Nepal Pokhara Chitwan (8D) May 18 - 60000 Dubai Abu Dhabi (6D) May 29 - 95000 Mauritius (7D) May 25 - 115000 Iceland (10D) June 19 - 325000 England Scotland (10D) Jun 22 - 250000

Leh Kargil Nubra Pangong (9D) May 21 - 66000 Kashmir (8D) June 18 - 60000 Shimla Manali Manikaran (8D) May 24 - 48000

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DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and

Scenes from a Window

The best antidote to a hospital stay is a dose of avian tonic

ANY HOSPITALS around the world now include "pet therapy" as a part of the treatment and recovery process. Well-socialised dogs (and, maybe, cats), bunnies, guinea pigs and, perhaps, even a rude parakeet or two "visit" their patient clients regularly and raise their spirits, helping them recover more quickly.

I don't know if this line of treatment is being followed by hospitals in India but I do know that all I had to do was to stare outside the enormous plate-glass window of the hospital room I was in and the birds outside did the rest. It was a widescreen window, open to the sky (mercifully, blue) and, at the canopy level of trees growing across the road, bushes and hedges below, and bordering a little sunflower garden in the heart of south Delhi. Time at your disposal, you sit at the window and watch the goings-on. Within two days, you'd begin to notice patterns emerge: like us, the birds, too, had a routine. They were all aamjanta birds who, like aam-janta city-dwellers, went about their daily affairs — but with one big difference. None of them scowled or seemed surly; they seemed to be in the blithest of spirits, which rubbed off on you no matter how much of a hypochondriac you tried to be!

Every evening squadrons of rosy starlings would streak across the sky in tight bunches intent on destroying some distant target (a fruiting peepul, perhaps). Their cousins, the common mynas, would fly in smaller more disorganised rabbles, their squat silhouettes and propeller-like wings invariably reminding you of the wonderful Spitfire fighters of World War II. The big black kites skated past at window level, banking and swooping and

occasionally engaging with each other.
A cluster of *papdi* trees attracted a clientele of green pigeons, who simply dived in and vanished in the canopy. You could hear the always grinning, somewhat foolishlooking brown-headed barbet calling even through the window glass — but they, too, simply vanished once they were permitted entry into what I had begun calling the "Papdi-Hotel". Down below at the edge of the little sunflower garden, a pair of red-vented bulbuls was obviously bringing up a family in the middle of a bougainvillea



HEALING TOUCH Rufous treepie

creeper nearby. Every now and then, one of the parents would alight nearby, look around hastily and dive into the creeper, only to emerge a little while later and whirr off. She (and probably her partner) was least bothered by the tremendous clanging racket emerging from her neighbours, who were constructing some monstrosity out of large flashy aluminium sheets (probably, something for the air-conditioning plant) by cutting and hammering

The parakeets as always were the most wild and wanton: they streaked across the skies at random like bulletheaded missiles, screaming their heads off as they swerved and banked, showing off the hundreds of shades of emerald in their plumage. Watch a flock of parakeets for five minutes and you cannot help but smile. But yes, there was also the furtive and sinister. On my last morning, I noticed a pair of rufous treepies systematically clambering up the branches of a fish-tail palm tree growing alongside the building, searching with all the thoroughness of the Enforcement Directorate dispatched on orders of the highest dispensation. Now, treepies are known for their appetite for baby birds and eggs, so this was not promising. Much of the tree was hidden from me, so I couldn't figure out whether they had found a nest in the end — but the thoroughness of the search gave you chills.

One advantage of this kind of confined birding is that it forces you to observe. Most birders are content on ticking off species on their list and marching on: here you are stuck with one viewpoint all day. And this is when the patterns in the lives of birds begin to manifest themselves and you begin to think, hey, you know they're not living random vagabond lives. Extrapolate that to every other living creature on earth and you will realise that it's all one enormous living system working perfectly in harmony – not so much for the survival of the system itself as for that

of each genetic component of it. Then, shortly before being discharged, I watch a fluffy white, down feather float up to the window, rocking on the air currents, like a boat on a lake. It leans against the window for a long moment before drifting away into the wild blue yonder. Back home, I am awoken at 3 am by the peacocks next door — mewling and screaming — back from some karaoke orgy. As dawn filters in, the koels yodel their egg-dumping schemes to one another, and then, the bunch of babblers living across the wall break into their clamorous cacophony. Punctually, at sunrise, your personal red-whiskered bulbul alarm on the window bougainvillea begins its mellifluous wake-up call.



'Art doesn't always lie in great subjects'

Mumbai-based artist Atul Dodiya, 63, on finding courage to paint self-portraits, creating a shrine for actor Rajesh Khanna and his new exhibition in Delhi

Vandana Kalra

Your exhibition at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art in Delhi, 'Walking with the Waves', has small-scale watercolours painted during the pandemic. Did the pandemic affect the way you work?

When I first heard about COVID-19, it was still a distant virus in China. I did not really take it seriously till the lockdown was announced in India. Gradually, I realised that it would not be possible for me to regularly visit my studio, which is only 15 minutes from home. That is when I brought home some pigments and began to work on paper. It was completely freeflowing and unlike my usual practice, where I reference books, films and art I have engaged with. In this new suite of works, I tap a less busy but more innocent space inside me. One form led to another and, starting from March 22, 2020, to July, 2021, I would mostly complete one work every day. In the course of oneand-a-half years, I have made 366 paintings. The exhibition features 135 of them.

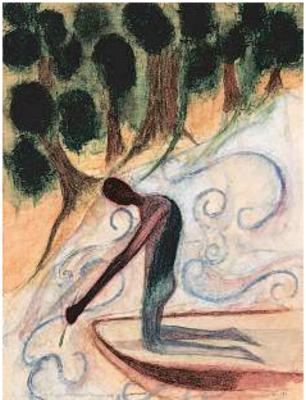
We see a lot of nature and some faceless figures in the exhibition. Tell us about them.

Perhaps, since I was not able to go to nature, I was bringing nature into my room, in my painting. We so often seek peace and comfort in nature; we travel to places to feel close to nature. For this set of works, I was not really taking direct inspiration from any source, but the application in some places did remind Cézanne. The works are not illustrative or forme of Bengal masters such as Rabindranath mal studies, but generate more complex

Tagore, Nandalal Bose, Benode Behari Mukherjee, who were close to nature and often painted their surroundings in Santiniketan. I have chosen to keep the figures largely anonymous, with little clothing and no faces. There is a simplicity in the manner in which I worked on them, which reminds me of my favourite pre-Renaissance masters the simplification of the figure, the clarity of the drawn line that you see in (Italian artists) Fra Angelico, Piero della Francesca and Giotto, who have had a profound effect on my work. Art doesn't always lie in a great subject matter.

There is a figure of an artist with a brush in several watercolours. Is that you? You have previously painted self-portraits.

The watercolours have a figure with a brush and palette, and if you feel he is a painter, and that is me, then probably it is. A large canvas has an expectation and I did not want to impose any weight of reference, history or culture in these works. Picasso once said, each painting is a self-portrait because it depicts what one is thinking, even if it is still life. I also feel that self-portraits are difficult and require courage. There has to be a reason to do one. Some of the best self-portraits are by Rembrandt – the treatment of the skin in oil paint is remarkable and the way he depicted light on the face generates an emotion which he probably felt within. You recognise the likeness of a painter, but it is not the likeness which we are admiring in a self-portrait by Rembrandt, (Vincent) van Gogh or Paul



COLIRTESY: KIRAN NADAR MUSEUM OF ART

DIRECTION (Top) Atul Dodiya at the Kiran Nadar Museum of Art; a watercolour on display at the exhibition that is on

till June 30

A NEW

emotional parallels. When I saw the Hindi film Baazigar (1993) poster, I immediately wanted to do a self-portrait. I took pictures of myself with a toy gun, with glasses that reflected images of Bhupen Khakhar and David Hockney, my first inspirations.

I believe you also watched a lot of world cinema during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, we watched films by Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman, Jean-Luc Godard, Michelangelo Antonioni, Satyajit Ray.

festivals. Our daughter (Biraaj) recently introduced us to new names and new type of cinema, of filmmakers such as Wong Kar-wai, Chantal Akerman, Agnès Varda, of whom I was not aware of. While watching these, at times, I would take photographs of a paused scene and study it later to see if I could use any element in my paintings.

I have also rediscovered Radio Ceylon and listen to it from 6 to 8, every morning. If I hear a new song or something I like, I write it down. I now have a list of 200-300 in my diary.

In fact, during the pandemic I also worked on something radically different for a private commission at Rajesh Khanna's old house in Bandra, Aashirwad. I created A Shrine for Rajesh Khanna with shutter paintings and photographs of the actor, as a homage to the superstar. I rewatched several of his films, such as Raaz(1967), Andaaz(1971), Anand(1971) and Amar Prem (1972). At the same time, I was also working on another film project based on more serious cinema, such as Mani Kaul's *Uski* Roti (1969), *Duvidha* (1973) and MS Sathyu's Garm Hava (1974).

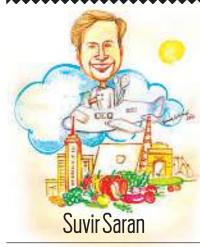
The exhibition also has mythological works. Have you referred to mythology previously in your work? Are you wary of such depictions, given how there have been controversies in the past?

I have done a Mahalakshmi shutter, but this is probably the first. The works are based on stories of Krishna that I have heard. A historian, theorist or philosopher would tackle mythology differently, but, as an artist, I haven't really delved deep into the original source. At times, you lose the creative impulse if you focus on documentation. I have also done some oil paint on laminate and watercolours on the 10 avatars of Vishnu, which I haven't shown yet. There is certainly a tension that we see around religion now, so one is cautious of what one is painting. But I choose to do what I learnt from Tyeb Mehta. He painted Anju and I are big film buffs. We used to be what he wanted. So, he had Durga and Kali, part of several film clubs and attended film but also the demon, Mahishasura.

To Ma'am, With Love

Remembering Mrs Hashmi, teacher, mentor inspiration

SLICE OF LIFE



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

SABIHA HASHMI was born on November 8, 1949, into a family of Indian freedom fighters and literary figures. She was married at 20 and had two sons who were classmates to my brother and me at Modern School, Vasant Vihar, Delhi, where Mrs Hashmi taught art to middle- and senior-school students. She passed away at her home in Bengaluru on April 5 at the young age of 72.

I first met Mrs Hashmi when I joined Modern School in fourth grade, full of restless energy and shame brought on by the awareness of my gay identity. She found something in me curious enough to allow me entry into her classrooms, where she instructed students senior to me. It was as if Mrs Hashmi knew I was hurting inside, was lost in myself, to myself, and to the world. And so she, who was herself an "other" in so many ways (a divorced woman in a conservative nation, a single mom, and an artist), found an opportunity to

be there for another who was an oddity, one who needed an anchor and role model, needed a haven where internal fears could find artistic expression and needed to feel safe from the harsh treatment kids inflict on those who don't fit in.

When I became a teen, Mrs Hashmi told me about how her family's lot in life changed from a place of comfort to abject poverty when her grandfather's furniture business was ruined during Partition. She and her siblings saw very hard days and the separation of their parents who worked jobs in different cities. Mrs Hashmi also told me about her own marriage and how challenging life can become in a difficult relationship and more challenging still when there are children involved. She taught me about dealing with hardships and showed me through her own experiences the importance of making tough choices and persevering despite all odds. Time after time I saw her take on the courage of a lion though her physical frame seemed more akin to that of a much smaller animal,

As I came to the 11th grade, I chose to study the sciences. It was at Mrs Hashmi's behest that I presented the school and my family with my desire to take graphic arts and screen printing as well as my science courses something unheard of. Mrs Hashmi let me know that she would battle teachers who didn't appreciate my unique gifts as a student, and thus allow me significant absenteeism from their classes as I fitted arts and music into my day. There were weeks in those last two years of school when I wasn't seen in any place other than Mrs Hashmi's art room or the music room, and there were nights I got home way past dinnertime, having stayed to finish yet another project. My fellow students envied her love for me and would tease me endlessly about being an extension of her being, and her pet. This was certainly something I didn't always appreciate, as her love came with strict rules of engagement, tough expectations, and high standards.

Mrs Hashmi motivated me, a boy who



WOMAN OF **SUBSTANCE** Mrs Hashmi touched many lives with her peerless grace,

dignity, and

kindhearted tutelage

wasn't athletic, to climb rocks by saying that if I tried, she would let me show off my cooking skills to the others. I ended up climbing the rocks and then making French fries, and my classmates were suitably impressed. She would tell me what books to borrow from the library - (Alexander) Pushkin and (Fyodor) Dostoevsky were two authors I couldn't have read at 15 had it not been for her. At her prodding, I learned to read and write Urdu and took lessons in Hindi. She took me with her to plays and gallery openings; she would read my writing and poetry and return my efforts with reviews that had me striving to do better. In my end-of-school diary, where other teachers wrote flattering and congratulatory notes, she wrote, "Go jump in a well." But the next morning she came with a most glorious recommendation letter for me to send to Sir JJ School of Art, Mumbai, where I was the only student from outside of Maharashtra to get into the commercial arts program in 1991. I've always maintained that everything good I have said, thought or done, I owe to her and her alone.

I heard of Mrs Hashmi's passing last week and shared the news in a WhatsApp message

with my mother. She replied, "You have lost your guru." How astute my mother is! I am the youngest of my siblings, born to creature comforts and a family that is whole. By opening my eyes to the world around me, Mrs Hashmi taught me to be the eyes of those without sight, the agitator for those who can't fight back, and the voice for those who have been marginalised generationally, and thus, have neither vocabulary nor expression to even verbalise or show their suffering. Although she was stoic and reticent, I would sometimes see a childlike grin surface — but only if what was being discussed came from a place of honesty, circumspection, and consideration of the other.

Mrs Hashmi awakened humanity and empathy in me and many of my classmates and teachers. She modelled caring and nurturing, both of the self and for the other. She was selfless and powerful, of meagre means and rich vision, short with lofty ideals, a single mother of two with thousands of kids who looked up to her as their guide and mentor. Mrs Hashmi lives in the stories of our lives and is immortal for having blessed so many with her peerless grace, dignity, and kindhearted tutelage.

Amrith Lal

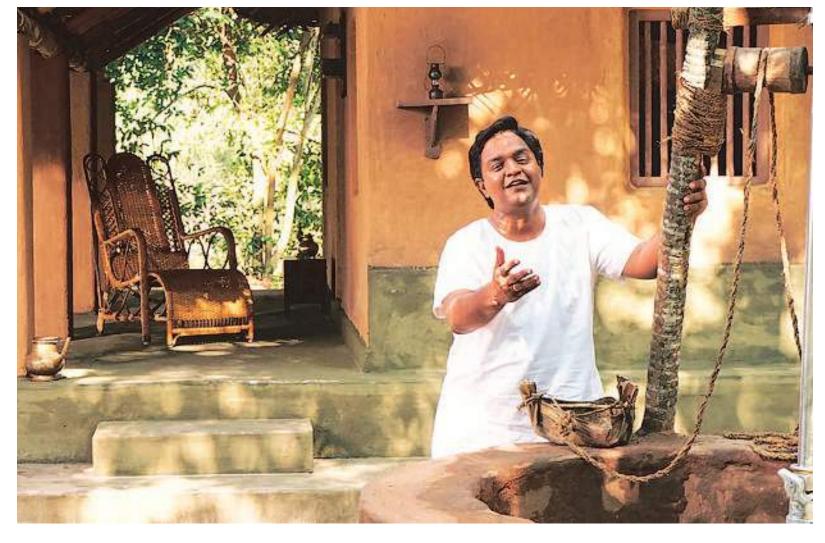
NOTEBOOK in which his elder brother, KP Narayanan, had copied down Kumaran Asan's poems was renowned director KPKumaran's first introduction, at age 10 or 12, to the poet who transformed Malayalam poetry in the last century. Asan has been with Kumaran since then. At 84, Kumaran has lost count of the number of times he's read the poet. With the passage of time, Asan has only grown taller in Kumaran's eves, a grand renaissance figure whose life as a social activist and poet has few parallels in the history of modern Kerala.

Asan is arguably the most important Malayalam poet of the last century, and one of its greatest writers. Gramavrikshathile Kuyil (The Koel On the Tree in the Village), which was released in select theatres in Kerala last week, is Kumaran's tribute to Asan. Kumaran, who has been associated with almost every progressive cultural and political movement of his time, says the biopic is his attempt to capture the soul and spirit of a great social and cultural figure who was misunderstood and misrepresented many times during his short life. During a halfcentury long career, Kumaran directed films such as Athithi (1974), a landmark film for parallel cinema in Malayalam, Rugmini (1988, based on a short story by Madhavikutty), Akasha Gopuram (2008, inspired by Henrik Ibsen's play, The Master Builder, 1892), and a series of short films and documentaries. Film scholar CS Venkiteswaran says that unlike his contemporaries in parallel cinema, Kumaran uses elements of mainstream cinema, like songs, to create an engaging narrative style. Kuyil stands apart from his earlier films for its theme, treatment, unconventional cast (Carnatic musician Sreevalsan J Menon is brilliant as Asan), and the extensive use of poetry.

Kumaran Asan died at the age of 50 in 1924. His first major work — Veenapoovu (The Fallen Flower, 1907) — was published at age 34 and to great acclaim. Asan's life in letters as a published author was short. But in those 16 years, between the publication of Veenapoovu and his tragic death in a boat accident, Asan published close to a dozen masterly works -Nalini (1911), Leela (1914), Sree Buddha Charitham, Prarodanam, Chinthavishtayaya Sita (1919), Karuna (1923), Chandalabhikshuki (1922). These poems have a transcendental quality that distinguished them from the work of his contemporaries; their inner luminosity has not faded after so many years.

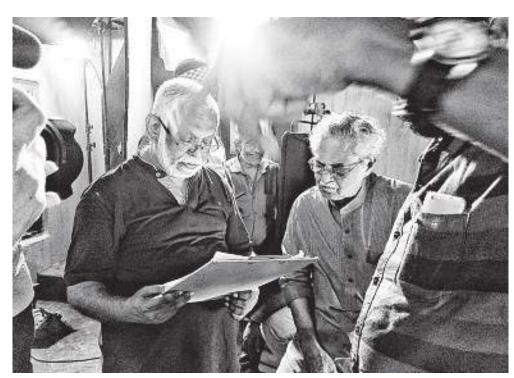
Kumaran's Kuyil focuses on the last seveneight years of Asan's life — a hectic time: He was producing great poetry, had fallen in love with a much younger girl, whom he married at the age of 45, had become a father, and acquired wealth. He was now a widely respected community leader and nominated to Sri Moolam Praja Sabha, a popular assembly at the court of the Travancore king. He'd acquired a self-awareness and confidence about his poetic genius that he chose to reflect on the higher truths of life, primarily ethical questions and the tension between life and death, unlike his contemporaries who were caught in the whirlpool of here and now. Asan was deeply political, but his poetics framed politics in a broad framework of human emancipation and as an intense spiritual effort towards expanding human freedom.

Born in the Ezhava caste, deemed as backward in the erstwhile Travancore state and excluded from public office and employment, Asan knew all about social exclusion. He was the favourite disciple of Sree Narayana Guru, the poet-sage whose radical spiritual vision pro-



IN LETTER & SPIRIT

Director KP Kumaran's biopic on Kumaran Asan celebrates the life and work of an exceptional poet





THE LIVES THEY LIVE

(Clockwise from above) An artist's impression of Sreevalsan Menon as Asan; director KP Kumaran (right) with cinematographer KG $\,$ Jayan on the set of Gramavrikshathile Kuvil; a still from the film

vided fuel for Kerala's transition from being a deeply casteist society in the 19th century to a relatively modern political community. Guru mentored Asan in his formative years and sent him out of Kerala to get educated. In Kavyakala Kumaran Asaniloode, a fine study of Asan and his poetics published in 1969, PK Balakrishnan writes that Narayana Guru was the land and sky where Asan's poetic genius flourished.

Not surprisingly, Asan wrote that the essence and eternal truth of this universe was love ("snehamanikhila saram oozhiyil"). In Chandalabhikshuki, the story of a Dalit woman's self-discovery and conversion to Buddhism, he offers a searing critique of the caste system: "Caste is the smoke of jealousy/seething up in the dark covey of ignorant minds/Filled up with lust for earthly pleasure/And envy at the happiness of others./ It changes its hue with amazing rapidity/ Like the evening cloud, as anger,/Arrogance and rotten misanthropy./ It will divide its own house and estrange/ Near relatives and antagonise classes/ And finally annihilate the whole world" (translated by PC Gangadharan). However, the long narrative poems Chintavishtayaya Sita and Karuna are widely considered his finest works. Sita is part monologue, in which the queen of Ayodhya, in exile in Valmiki's ashram, reflects on her life. Deeply philosophical, it gives Sita agency, who questions the deep patriarchy that underline Raghu's lineage and Raghava's court. An exquisite piece, it reveals a poet in absolute control of his craft and content. He blends philosophy, drama, love, anger, compassion in perfect proportion to deliver a cathartic experience of the human condition.

Kuyil opens with Narayana Guru's consecration of a temple in Aruvippuram in 1888, a landmark event in Kerala history that Guru described as the consecration of Ezhava Sivan when the Brahmin orthodoxy questioned his act. The biopic is not merely an exercise in marshalling facts; it is more of another artist trying to understand the outer and inner worlds Asan journeyed through during the most creative phase of his life. So, despite Asan's persona as a social figure, he is rarely seen among the crowds in Kuyil: The poet is mostly seen in a contemplative mood, with his dear wife, Bhanumathi, and close friends such as Sahodaran Ayyappan.

So, why Asan now? Kumaran believes that Asan, despite the voluminous literature on the poet, has not been understood fully or holistically by Malayalis. His life and work call for a new interpretation: Ours is a time of forgetting, forgetfulness is all pervasive in culture, history, Kumaran says. Political thought and political work blend seamlessly in Asan's life. At the insistence of Guru, Asan had become the founder secretary of SNDP Yogam in 1903, a communitarian outfit of the Ezhava community, after returning from his studies in Bangalore, Madras and Calcutta. Kumaran points out that Asan's writings in Vivekodayam, a magazine he edited, suggest that the poet was essentially a philosopher: He has a vision of emancipation that glows despite being in the shadow of Guru. It was Asan who brought a lot of clarity to the Malayali consciousness with his reflections on love, freedom, man-woman relations, the need to reject caste and so on, Kumaran says, Also, Kumaran was drawn to the storyteller in Asan his major poems are well-constructed narratives. The movie takes its title from a poem Asan wrote in anguish when he was targeted by his rivals in the SNDP Yogam.

Asan needs to be re-read, recognised as a seminal figure of Kerala renaissance. Gramavrikshathile Kuyil is a remarkable effort at situating Kumaran Asan as a renaissance figure and a deeply contemplative poet. It should help the world beyond Kerala discover Asan, whose 150th birth anniversary falls in 2023.

A Day in the Life

Bengaluru musician Ricky Kej on winning his second Grammy alongside The Police drummer Stewart Copeland and being an environmental cheerleader

In fact, Kej and

Suanshu Khurana

EARLIER THIS month, when Bengalurubased music producer Ricky Kej got on the stage at Las Vegas' MGM Grand Marquee Ballroom to accept the Grammy in the Best New Age Album category, alongside The Police drummer Stewart Copeland, it was a moment "unrecognisable and unbelievable" to Kej despite having been up there in 2015 to receive his first Grammy for Winds of Samsara. Kej touched Copeland's feet, as a mark of respect for the age-old guru-shishya parampara, and accepted the hallowed

gramophone for Divine Tides (Lahiri Music). "To collaborate with my childhood idol, somebody I admired my whole life, then to stand on the stage and share a Grammy with him - it was special," says Kej, 40.

In March of 1980, the legendary British newwave rock band The Police came visiting Mumbai for what would be their only performance in the country — a charity concert, put together by the Parsi women of Time

and Talent club. Lead vocalist and bassist the opportunity to create a new album. The Sting, Copeland and guitarist Andy Summers took the now-defunct Rang Bhavan open theatre in south Bombay's Dhobi Talao by storm. The talk-of-the-town gig was one of the most iconic moments in the history of rock concerts in India. Kej, who was born a year later, in North Carolina, the US, would go on to hear about the concert from his father. "In the '80s, my father was fascinated by great bands and had an enviable music

collection," says Kej, who fell in love with the band's punk-rock sound the moment he heard them and found Copeland's music to be particularly striking.

At the time, Copeland was quite discernible, given his fierce intensity on the cymbals. "I found something very poetic about Stewart's drumming... It was truly the backbone of the band and gave the songs of The Police so much emotion," says Kej. And so, posters of The Police and Copeland adorned the wall in Kej's bedroom in Bengaluru, where the family moved to when he was eight.

But Kej, who for years got busy making

advertisement jingles, never factored in the possibility of a collaboration Divine Tides album was with an artiste he revered, much less the entirely created online. thought of winning a Grammy together.

As Kej grew as a musician after his first Copeland met in Grammy win, he was keen on doing a follow-up person for the first time to the album but concerts only a week before the and travel kept him from focussing on making mu-64th Grammy Awards sic. And then, the pandemic hit. "The pandemic forced us all to stay in-

doors and that gave me more I created, the more I kept feeling the need for a collaborator. This had to be somebody who was not just a virtuoso musician but somebody who would help in the writing process, too. The first person who came to mind was Stewart Copeland. I wanted to overreach because he's somebody who's shaped my career, by my just listening to his music." he savs

It was his British friend and mentor Ralph



COURTESY RICKY KEJ MANAGEMEN

EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE (Above) Ricky Kej; after the win with collaborator Stewart Copeland at the 64th Grammy

Awards in Las Vegas

Simon, a music-publishing veteran, who got Kej and Copeland introduced. To Kej's astonishment Copeland agreed after listening to some of the album's music. Divine Tides is also an album that was entirely created online. In fact, Kej and Copeland met in person for the first time only seven days ahead of the 64th Grammy Awards. Over a year, the two kept sending Web files to each other, phone

calls, Zoom e-meets, remote recording sessions and Kej changing his sleep cycle to work with Copeland's Los Angeles timings. The result, after almost a year, is Divine Tides

– the nine-song album that's an ode to the natural world, the resilience of its species. It stems from Kej's deep interest in environmental activism. Not only does he prefer public transport to cars and gets his carbon footprint audited every quarter, he's worked with the government of Andhra Pradesh to promote "zero-budget natural farming", a technique that avoids the use of chemicals and pesticides. He made a song Jai Kisaan (2020) with the tribal farmers of Andhra, and is a supporter and ambassador for a number of UN bodies.

Kej and Copeland have woven diverse soundscapes and elaborate ambient textures by incorporating scores of musicians into the mix. The haunting Our Home features Sangeeta Kaur, the Vietnamese-American vocalist who's won a Grammy of her own,

est mountain range on Earth, with chants, Hindustani classical vocals, sitar interludes and myriad percussion sounds. Gandhi, a gentle ballad appreciating frogs, one of the oldest species on the planet, dwells on the Mahatma's quote: "The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated". "The idea is that if you treat the voiceless well, that means that the moral compass of the country is in place," says Kej, who wanted to gently draw in people to the idea.

too, this year. Himalayas is an ode to the high-

Kej grew up in a wooded area, amid creepy-crawlies. When his family would run away or step on them, it would bother Kej as a child. "I realised early on that there was a significance to each and every species in the ecosystem. Then there was music, which also came from nature - sounds of birds, wind, water, trees," he says.

Growing up in a Punjabi-Marwari family, glued to his father's diverse music collection that ranged from Michael Jackson, Bee Gees, Elvis Presley, Paul Simon, and a lot of African, European and Russian music, Kej decided early on to make music his life's path. But his doctor-father wasn't convinced. So, he joined the city's Oxford Dental College, in 1999, for a course in dental surgery. "I made a deal with my father that once I get the degree, my life would be my own," says Kej, who played with a couple of bands in college that led him to radio commercials. "In dental college, I began to take on jingle projects. I completed my degree a few years later but did not practise for even a day," says Kej, who made commercials for a number of brands, from foods and beverages companies to telecom, creating music for more than 3,500 commercials. "It was the best music education I could have got, working with diverse clients from all over the world," he says.

But he stopped making commercial music in 2013, having figured out that if these multinational brands used music as a powerful medium to sell products, it could very well convey messages that mattered to him. "Why not talk about subjects such as deforestation and gender inequality, which are close to my heart, through music?" he thought. Now plans to make music only to make a positive social impact, to make the world a better place "in my tiny capacity," says Kej.

THE WORLD



A FIGHTER FOR DEMOCRACY

TAIWAN LEADER PENG MING-MIN DIES

Peng Ming-min, a victim of World War II who endured Japanese imperial rule, brutal Chinese martial law and decades of exile to become a leading fighter for democracy and selfdetermination for his native Taiwan, died here, the nation's capital, on April 8. He was 98. His death, at the Koo Foundation Sun Yat-Sen Cancer Center, was confirmed by Lee Chunta, director of the Peng Ming-min Foundation.

WORLD



Singapore Minister Lawrence Wong.

SINGAPORE

Lee says Finance Minister will be next PM

Singapore: Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong said on Saturday that Finance Minister Lawrence Wong would succeed him as the citystate's leader. Wong was chosen as leader of the ruling People's Action Party's (PAP) so-called fourth generation team, according to an announcement on Thursday, paving the way for him to become Prime Minister. "The plan is for Lawrence to succeed me as PM, either before or after (if the PAP wins) the next general election. It is due in 2025 and will surely be a tough fight," Lee said in a social media post on Saturday. Lee, whose father Lee Kwan Yew was the island nation's independence leader, has been PM since 2004. **REUTERS**

AFGHANISTAN

Taliban summon Pak envoy to protest strikes

Kabul: Taliban authorities on Saturday summoned Pakistan's ambassador in Kabul to protest against military strikes inside Afghanistan by Pakistani forces, the Afghan foreign ministry said. A local Taliban official and residents said 36 people were killed in air strikes on Friday. A statement Afghanistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan's Ambassador in Kabul had been summoned over the recent attacks in Khost and Kunar provinces and given a diplomatic demarche to deliver to

FRANCE

Climate change activists block Paris square

Paris: Climate change ac-

Islamabad. REUTERS

tivists forced the closure of a main square in central Paris on Saturday to protest against the environmental programmes put forward by France's remaining presidential candidates. Extinction Rebellion had said on its website that it planned to block a major Parisian location to disrupt the electoral cycle and its "business as usual" attitude. Hundreds of people gathered in Paris' 9th district brandishing banners targeting the candidates, chanting slo-**REUTERS**

ZELENSKYY: MARIUPOL'S DEFENDERS CONTROL ONLY SMALL PART

Russia renews strikes on Kyiv



Firefighters work to extinguish fire after a Russian attack in Kharkiv on Saturday. AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS KYIV, APRIL 16

Russian forces resumed scattered attacks on Kyiv, western Ukraine and beyond Saturday in an explosive reminder to Ukrainians and their Western supporters that the whole country remains under threat despite Russia's pivot toward mounting a new offensive in the east.

Stung by the loss of its Black Sea flagship and indignant over what it alleged were Ukrainian strikes on Russian territory, Russia's military command had warned a day earlier of renewed attacks on Ukraine's capital and said it was targeting military sites.

from eastern Kyiv as Mayor Vitali Klitschko reported a strike on the the city's Darnytski district. He said rescuers and paramedics

Nepal seeks help

from nationals

living abroad to

build up forex

KATHMANDU, APRIL 16

NEPAL IS asking citizens living

abroad to deposit funds in do-

mestic banks as part of efforts to

ensure the financial system has

enough liquidity and to preserve

foreign exchange reserves, fi-

nance finister Janardan Sharma

nied Nepal was facing an eco-

nomic crisis despite the impact

of soaring commodity prices as

the tourist industry, a key source

of revenues, struggles to recover

curbs on luxury goods imports to

rein in capital outflows. By de-

positing their savings in Nepal,

overseas Nepalis would continue

to "maintain their link andbene-

fit from 6 to 7% interest" offered

Nepali nationals living abroad

deposited \$10,000 each in Nepali

banks it could go a long way to

help Nepal overcome the current

liquidity constrains.

He added that if 100,000

by Nepali banks. Sharma said.

Nepal this month imposed

after the Covid-19 pandemic.

Speaking to Reuters, he de-

said on Saturday.

REUTERS

Smoke rose early Saturday to return for their safety. Kyiv was not the only target

Can Mosky, warship be replaced? Can Moskva

> NO. RUSSIA has two other ships of the same class, the Marshal Ustinov and the Varyag, which serve with Russia's Northern and Pacific fleets respectively. Turkey, which controls access to the Black Sea via the Bosphorus, will not let them enter at a time of war.

were at the scene, and information about possible deaths would be provided later. The mayor advised residents who fled the city earlier in the war not

LALITKJHA

WASHINGTON, APRIL 16

LEADING INDIAN-AMERICANS,

including US Congressman Raja

Krishnamoorthi, have slammed a

law professor from University of

Pennsylvania for her disparaging

comments about the Asian

American community, with a spe-

cific disdain for Indian-Americans.

News, Prof Amy Wax from the

University of Pennsylvania al-

leged that "Blacks" and "non-

In a recent interview to Fox

Ukraine's second-largest city, according to firefighters and AP journalists at the scene. The strike near an outdoor market along with residential and industrial buildings killed

Saturday. In eastern Ukraine, an

explosion believed to be caused

by a missile struck Kharkiv,

one person and wounded at least 18, according to rescue workers. Meanwhile, President Volodymyr Zelenskyy acknowledged on Saturday that the Ukrainian forces still defending Mariupol control only a small part of the port city, and face a better-equipped force that is six times larger than their own. Zelenskyy described the area as "not a very large part" of the city. "Nevertheless,

our guys are heroically defend-

ing," he said, speaking to Ukrainian media outlets. "We

are grateful to them for that."

Pennsylvania varsity professor slammed

for comments against Asian-Americans

Western" groups have "a tremen-

dous amount of resentment and

shame against western people for

[their] outsized achievements

"Here's the problem. They're

taught that they are better than

everybody else because they are

Brahmin elites and yet, on some

level, their country is a sh*thole,"

Wax, who has a long history of

She also said the westerners

have outgunned and outclassed

the Asian Americans in every way.

"They've realised that we've

inflammatory remarks, said.

and contributions.

Boris Johnson barred from visiting Russia

RUSSIA IS barring Prime Minister Boris Johnson and other senior British officials from entering the country over their support for Ukraine, the Russian foreign ministry said on Saturday.

Britain has supplied Ukraine with new anti-ship missile systems, armoured vehicles and other military equipment. And Johnson made a surprise visit last week to Kyiv, where he promised to send more military equipment to Ukraine. "The Russophobic course of the British authorities, which aims to incite negative attitude toward our country, is detrimental to the well-being and interests of the British people," Russia's foreign ministry said. NYT

outgunned and outclassed them

in every way... They feel anger.

They feel envy. They feel shame.

It creates ingratitude of the most

demned by the Indian-

Americans across the US. "After

President Trump left office, I

thought the days of calling oth-

ers "shithole" countries were

over." Krishnamoorthi tweeted.

"I'm disgusted to hear this

UPenn Professor define Indian-

American immigrants in such

insulting terms," he said. PTI

The comment was con-

monstrous kind," she said.

Putin, Saudi Prince discuss bilateral ties

Riyadh: Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman on Saturday. The Saudi Press Agency said the two discussed bilateral relations and "ways of enhancing them in all fields.

The Saudi readout of the call said the crown prince affirmed support for efforts that would lead to a political solution to the crisis in Ukraine. The kingdom recently announced \$10 million in humanitarian aid for Ukrainian refugees. The Kremlin's statement added the two also discussed the ongoing conflict in Yemen and their joint work on an oil output agreement. The oil pact has kept a cautious lid on production by major producers, supporting

Billionaire vows to rebuild Mariupol

Kyiv: Ukraine's billionaire has pledged to help rebuild Mariupol, a place close to his heart where he owns two vast steelworks that he says will again compete globally. Rinat Akhmetov has seen his business empire shattered by eight years of fighting in Ukraine's east but remains defiant, sure that what he calls "our brave soldiers" will defend the Sea of Azov city reduced to a wasteland by seven weeks of bombardment. "Mariupol is a global tragedy and a global example of heroism," Akhmetov said. "My ambition is to return to Mariupol and implement our plans so that Mariupol-produced steel can compete in global markets as before." **REUTERS**

Sweden prepares for more clashes as far-right

protests continue

ASSOCIATED PRESS STOCKHOLM, APRIL 16

POLICE IN Sweden say they are preparing for new violent clashes following riots that erupted between demonstrators and counter-protesters in the central city of Orebro on Friday ahead of an anti-Islam far-right group's plan to burn a Quran there.

Kim Hild, spokeswoman for police in southern Sweden said that the police would not revoke permission for a planned demonstration by the Danish right-wing Stram Kurs party in the southern town of Landskrona on Saturday because the threshold for doing that is very high in Sweden, which values free speech.

Police said, however, that the rally would be moved to another undisclosed location, according to TT. Stram Kurs' leader Rasmus Paludan was also planning a Quran burning in Landskrona, the agency said. Hild said police were preparing for the demonstration and possible violence with extra resources "given what has happened in recent days" in the Nordic country.

DEPUTY SPEAKER RESIGNS

Former Pak PM Ashraf appointed as House Speaker



Raja Pervaiz Ashraf (right) takes oath as the 22nd Speaker of National Assembly. Reuters

SAJJAD HUSSAIN ISLAMABAD, APRIL 16

RAJA PERVAIZ ASHRAF, a former Pakistan premier, was on Saturday appointed the 22nd speaker of the country's National Assembly after he was elected unopposed.

Ashraf, 71, from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was administered the oath of office by PML-N's Ayaz Sadiq, who was initially chairing the session.

Meanwhile, Qasim Khan Suri resigned as deputy speaker of Pakistan's National Assembly on Saturday, less than an hour before a session of the House where voting on a no-trust motion against him was to take place for favouring Imran Khan.

Sharing a copy of his resignation on Twitter, Suri said his move signified his association with the vision of his party, the Pakistan Tehreek-i-Insaf (PTI), and democracy.

Ashraf, meanwhile, was the lone contender for the Speaker's position as no other candidate had submitted nomination papers against him. The office of the Speaker fell vacant after Asad Qaiser resigned on April 9 after failing to implement a decision by the Supreme Court to hold a noconfidence vote against ousted prime minister Imran Khan.

After taking the oath, Ashraf thanked his party leaders for deeming him worthy of the po-

Shehbaz's son Hamza is Punjab CM amid violence in House session

Lahore: Hamza Shehbaz, the son of Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, was elected as the new chief minister of Punjab on Saturday in a ruckus-marred election that saw Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party and its ally PML-Q boycott the crucial assembly session. Scuffles broke out be-

tween the treasury and opposition leaders during the six-hour-long session in the Punjab Assembly. PTI-PMLQ coalition candidate Parvez Elahi sustained injuries, while Deputy Speaker Dost Muhammad Mazari, who was siding with the PMLN-PPP candidate Hamza, also got thrashed. Police arrested three PTI lawmakers on the charges of torturing Mazari.

sition. He also thanked the prime minister Shehbaz Sharif and the members of the assembly. He said a "new tradition" had been initiated in parliamentary history, adding that the speaker was the custodian of the house. PTI



Chinese astronaut Ye Guangfu after landing at the Dongfeng site in northern China's Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region on Saturday. AP

Chinese astronauts land after six months on space station

returned to Earth on Saturday after six months aboard their country's newest orbital station in the longest crewed mission to date for China's ambitious space program.

The Shenzhou 13 space capsule landed in the Gobi desert in the northern region of Inner Mongolia, shown live on state TV. During the mission, astroZhai Zhigang and Ye Guangfu beamed back physics lessons for high school students.

On Saturday, state TV showed images from inside the capsule as it traveled at 200 meters per second over Africa before entering the atmosphere.

crew aboard Tiangong, or Heavenly Palace. Its core module, Tianhe, was launched in April 2021. Plans call for completing construction this year by adding two more modules. AP

Won't interfere with protests: Lanka Army

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO, APRIL 16

THE SRI Lankan Army on Saturday said they would thoroughly uphold the Constitution and not resort to violence amidst the anti-government protests across the island nation against the worst economic crisis.

Referring to the social media speculation that the military may be used by the government to launch a crackdown on the



Demonstrators near the Presidential Secretariat in Colombo on Saturday. Reuters

week-long protest near the presidential secretariat, the Sri Lankan Army, in a statement, said it would not resort to violence to quell the anti-government demonstrations.

Meanwhile, Sri Lankan police on Saturday removed several empty trucks parked at a protest site near the presidential secretariat, possibly averting a crackdown on the protesters agitating against the government's handling of the island nation's worst economic crisis.

the first spacewalk by a Chinese woman. Wang and crewmates

naut Wang Yaping carried out

The trio were the second

Hassan, who is soft-spoken

and comes across as reserved,

said that as vice-president, it was

"tough" working with Magufuli

at times, and that she argued

with him on several issues, in-

As president, she said, her

main priority was to revive the economy, build thousands of

schools and health clinics, ex-

cluding his Covid denialism.

SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN BECAME THE ONLY WOMAN HEAD OF GOVT IN AFRICA WHEN HER PREDECESSOR SUDDENLY DIED

Tanzania's first woman President wants to bring nation in from the cold

ABDI LATIF DAHIR DODOMA, APRIL 16

SHORTLY BEFORE midnight on a spring night last year, Samia Suluhu Hassan, then Tanzania's first female vice-president, appeared on television to announce to a shocked nation that the President was dead.

President John Magufuli, an autocrat known as "The Bulldozer," had denied that Covid existed in his country, rejected Covid vaccines and died after a weekslong absence from public view amid unconfirmed reports that he had contracted the virus. His death catapulted Hassan,

62, to a historic position as Tanzania's first female President. Known as "Mama Samia," she is currently the only female head of government in Africa. On Friday, she met in Washington with a fellow path-breaker, Kamala Harris.

Since taking office, Hassan has set off on a different path than her predecessor: She encouraged Covid vaccinations by publicly taking the shot herself, lifted a ban on pregnant girls in schools and began to amend some Magufuli-era economic regulations to lure back investors.

But her first challenge, Hassan said in an interview last week at the state house in the capital, Dodoma, was to overcome the notion that a woman could not lead Tanzania.

"Most of the people couldn't believe that we can have a woman President and she can deliver." Hassan said, "The challenge was to create a trust to the people that yes, I can do it."

She said other African female leaders — including Liberia's first female president, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, and Sahle-Work Zewde, the president (though not head of government) of Ethiopia quickly came to her support, urging her in a virtual meeting to remain confident, seek counsel and listen to her inner voice.

'They all gave me courage that you can do it," said Hassan.



President Samia Suluhu Hassan o at Chamwino State House in the capital, Dodoma. NYT

Since ascending to power in March last year, Hassan has positioned herself as a unifying na-

tional figure willing to challenge the establishment and bent on bringing her country in from the cold after five years of isolationism under Magufuli, who rarely traveled abroad.

Tanzania, a nation of 60 million people that borders eight other countries in eastern, central and southern Africa, was long seen as a bulwark of stability in a region torn by ethnic strife and civil war.

But Hassan, who is expected to run Por president in 2025, takes the helm of a polarised nation with a battered economy and growing unemployment, a slow pace of vaccine deployment and a growing clamor for constitutional overhauls.

In addition to meeting US officials during her trip to the United States, she is also set to court investors, seek assistance in improving public health partnerships and promote Tanzania

In Washington, one issue Hassan is likely to face is the war in Ukraine. Tanzania was among the African nations that abstained from the United Nations vote condemning the war – a move Hassan said was in line with Tanzania's long-standing

as a vibrant tourist destination.

position of nonalignment. Pushed on this, she said that in "Tanzania. we don't know why they are fighting," adding that Russia and Ukraine should sit down to talk. "The world has to convince Putin not to fight,"

tend clean water and electricity to rural areas and complete key infrastructure projects - including a railway line and a major hydropower plant. She said more than 250 new businesses had already been registered in the

country last year.

Liverpool hang on for 3-2 FA Cup semifinal win over City

REUTERS

LONDON, APRIL 16

LIVERPOOL HUNG on to beat Manchester City 3-2 at Wembley Stadium on Saturday to reach the final of the FA Cup and end Pep Guardiola's hopes of a treble. Juergen Klopp's side will meet the winners of Sunday's other semi-final between Chelsea and Crystal Palace in the May 14th final. Guardiola opted to rest several of City's starters, including goalkeeper Ederson, and the weakened side were outplayed by Juergen Klopp's team in the first half, going in 3-0 down at the interval.

Ibrahima Konate headed Liverpool ahead from an Andy Robertson corner in the ninth minute before a dreadful error from City's American back-up goalkeeper Zack Steffen gifted the Reds a second.

Steffen took too long when receiving a back pass from John Stones and Sadio Mane slid in to tackle the keeper and the ball flew into the net. Mane then added another, on the stroke of halftime, in more conventional fashion, driving a volley past Steffen after being set up by Thiago Alcantara.

Guardiola made no changes at the break, even though he had options such as Kevin De Bruyne and Riyad Mahrez to call on, but his side did spark into life. Jack Grealish pulled a goal back 70 seconds after the resumption after Gabriel Jesus did well to beat Fabinho and set up the England midfielder who drilled home. Liverpool keeper Alisson Becker was alert to get out quickly and foil Gabriel Jesus as the Brazilian burst goalwards but while City were improved they still were far from their usual levels of chance creation.

It was puzzling that Guardiola only made one of his possible five changes in the second half, bringing Mahrez on seven minutes from the end although the introduction of the Algerian did make a big impact.

Mahrez cut in from the right and dribbled along the byline before a low ball went through Alisson then Bernardo Silva made it 3-2 in stoppage time. That prompted a frantic final few minutes with Ferandindho and Mahrez both seeing shots deflected out for corners while Raheem Sterling's weak shot was easily saved by Alisson. At the other end Steffen did well to stop Roberto Firmino as Liverpool looked to finish off the contest but the final whistle confirmed their place in their 15th FA Cup final but their first in ten years.

For City it was the third straight season in which they have lost in the last four of the FA Cup. Liverpool remain in contention for four trophies having won the League Cup, reached the semi-finals of the Champions League and still being in the race for the Premier League title where they sit a point behind leaders City.

SPORTLINE: Long jumper Jeswin Aldrin, 20, made heads turn with a series of 8-metre-plus jumps this season and a gold medal at the Federation Cup. The Indian Express travels to Mudalur, the village of the rising star in athletics, to get a taste of the famous Muscoth halwa created by Aldrin's great grandfather and to trace the journey of the shy and reticent jumper destined to break records and bag major medals

ANDREW AMSAN

THOOTHUKUDI, APRIL 16

MUDALUR, A quiet village in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu, is known for its churches, Muscoth halwa and now for the country's latest long jump sensation Jeswin Aldrin.

The 20-year-old with multiple entries in the 8 metre-club and a gold medal at the Federation Cup has strong links to faith and the delicacy. The Singhalese-inspired sweet was first made by Aldrin's great grandfather Joseph Abraham. Aldrin's family is Pentecostal. In Mudalur there are seven churches. The village is believed to be one of the first Christian settlements in the region. Hence the name Mudalur — first village.

Aldrin is deeply rooted in his faith. The first line in his Twitter bio says, "Believe in God". At the main door of his house, there is a banner with a world map and a verse from the Bible printed on it. The hall has framed bible verses on the walls.

 $As\,Aldrin\,and\,his\,family\,gathered\,for\,their$ first meal after he returned home with the gold medal, his father Johnson quipped: You've been to what three countries now? Our halwa to 12."

The family runs two bakeries – one is owned by Abraham's sons. The halwa, which is exported, is made in a kitchen behind their shop. Halwa, long jump and medals are conversation topics during the fish curry and rice meal. Johnson jokes that Aldrin has immense growth potential just like the family's halwa business. He is spot on.

Since his first 8 metre-plus jump at the Indian Grand Prix in March, Aldrin has crossed the coveted distance five times – in one evening in Kozhikode during the Federation Cup earlier this month. One of those efforts was wind-assisted 8.37 metres. His next-best matched the previous national record of 8.26m and earned him a spot in the Indian team for the World Championships in Oregon and surpassed the qualifying standard for the Asian Games and the Commonwealth Games.

Aldrins' growth as a top athlete began when as a sporty kid he took a liking for the outdoors. He was spotted at the school ground more often than in the classroom. He was part of the school's kho-kho and volleyball team and was a decent runner as well. When it came to track and field, he tried his hand at high jump first.

"We got a jump pit stitched at a local furniture store just for Aldrin. We used fixed poles to put the bar on. It was tough to procure a jumping pit for just one student so we managed with what we could. I think that is one of the reasons Aldrin moved to long

Blood, sweet and gold



Jeswin Aldrin at the family-owned bakery, which is famous for the Muscoth halwa. (L) With his parents Esther and Johnson. After winning the Fed Cup gold.

jump," Anitta Irene, one of the physical education teachers at the Daniel Thomas Matriculation Higher Secondary School, said. High jump's loss was long jump's gain. Johnson believes long jump was always

Aldrin's true calling. He recalls Aldrin making a dash to the long jump pit to watch as soon as he had finished the high jump competition at junior meets. Aldrin didn't take much time to pick up the long jump technique and soon started accumulating gold medals in al-

Benson, a volleyball coach at Aldrin's school, feels no one but the youngster deserves credit for becoming one of the finest ath-

most every meet.

letes in the country. "He used to come and practice for hours at the school ground. On weekends he used to go to Anna Stadium, more than an hour away, to practice at the synthetic track. Most kids in our school don't even know what a synthetic track is yet,'

A major turning point in Aldrin's career occurred during the 2019 junior nationals in Ranchi. French coach Antony Yaich, the former head of track-and-field at JSW's Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS), saw potential in a

> Aldrin's elasticity stood out for the Frenchman. Yaich made a major change though. He asked Aldrin to adopt a more efficient method of hitch-hike technique -- where the jumper completes a cyclic-kick motion while airborne -- instead of the hang technique.

"I think Antony deserves a lot of credit. Aldrin is here because of his strict training. Initially, we

were hesitant about sending Aldrin to Bellary to train at IIS but Antony is good at convincing. He just asked us to visit once. When we saw the facilities we couldn't say no," Aldrin's uncle Simon Issac said. The uncle saw the potential in Aldrin years before coach Yaich did. When Aldrin was finishing high school, his parents wanted him to focus on academics and secure admission at a top college. "I had to do a lot of convincing. I explained to them that Aldrin would get into the best institutions and also secure a good job all be-

Aldrin is reserved and likes to keep his replies brief, mostly monosyllables. When at home, he wears his headphones and plays games on his mobile phone. He also likes to stay away from the limelight. When he was called to studios by Tamil news channels after his Federation Cup gold, he hesitantly agreed. "Do we really have to do it now? 'Can you tell them I will give interviews after win-

ning an Olympic medal'," Issac recalled. Those who know Aldrin say he opens up and is a warm person once he gets to know someone well. "He gets attached. He loves his friends and was always up to some mischief with them. He loves talking with his friends," Irene said.

Aldrin has just recently started training with two-time World Championship medallist from Cuba, Yoandri Betanzos and the results are already showing. All his 8 plus jumps have been registered post the Cuban coach's arrival. Aldrin's recent spike in performance means he and national record holder Sreeshankar Murali will be pushing each other to excel. Just like they did during the Federation Cup.

The two jumpers going head-to-head had made for great viewing in what was the best long jump competition ever on Indian soil. The challenge for Aldrin will be to consistently produce the big jumps at the major competitions. An 8.37m jump, without wind assistance, could land him an international medal. "Things are working well with Yoandri. There are a lot of areas that he has found that I need to work on. I will be training hard and giving it my best," Aldrin said.

As Aldrin prepares for a busy year, the family will be praying that the wind doesn't play spoilsport again. "I did a lot of research about the wind assistance and rules post the Fed Cup. I think I have become an expert myself," father Johnson, who not only follows his son's progress but keeps tabs on jumpers around the world, said.

Esther, Aldrin's mother, is also clued in about her son's career. "I stream all my son's competitions and follow his events religiously," she said. "Tell me which event you followed?" Aldrin asked in jest.

"I know your latest effort would have placed you second in last year's top-10 list," she replied. Aldrin thinks and nods. The boy from Mudalur, with his feet firmly on the ground, at times needs a reminder of the giant strides he has made. The eldest son in the family is becoming a household name, just like the halwa his great grandfather created.

WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH 2D **₩**AK542 ♦ A4

The opening lead by West is the ace of clubs, followed by the king of clubs. East en of clubs and then discards the seven of diamonds. West the plays the jack of clubs and you must take stock of a potentially dangerous sit-uation. If you ruff West's club in dummy with the seven of hearts, East might overruff with the jack of hearts. The odds of East having the jack of hearts are overrum with the jack of nearts. In exodus or East naving the jack of nearts are 50/50. If you ruff with the queen of hearts in dummy, East won't be able to overruff but there will be three outstanding hearts to the jack. The odds of the hearts splitting 3–0 are only 22%. So, ruff with your queen since that is your best chance for success. You have lost two club tricks and can see a potential loser in each of diamonds and spades. Oh-oh, the contract appears to be in some

danger. How do you proceed?
The West Hand: S-54 H-J3 D-86C-AKJ10754

The East Hand: S-Q10976 H-6 D-KJ10753 C-Q
You see no reason to delay removing trump and do so with West playing the three and the jack. So far, so good. East discards the seven of spades on the in diamonds and possibly spades as well. Here is one approach for continuing

the pias: Play the four of diamonds from your hand with the hope that West has the king. If West has the king and plays low, your queen is good and you do not lose a diamond trick. If West plays the king of diamonds, you can use the queen of diamonds to discard your potential spade loser. If East has the king of diamonds, you can still make your contract with a successful spade finesse. What do you think of this approach? Have you counted the points that you know West has shown so far? He has shown the AKJ of clubs and the jack of hearts. If he also had the king of diamonds, he would have started with 12 HCP. Did he have avery nice club suit? He sure did. It was seven cards long and topped by the AKJ10. Many would overcall two clubs over your opening 1NT bid if they had the king of diamonds along with all the wonderful clubs found in the West hand. So sn't have the king of diamonds. So much for the app he liked diamonds and spades when he discarded. Did you notice? Looks bad doesn't it? However, making the contract is a cinch if East has both the of spades and the king of diamonds as it appears he does. I'll give you a hint. Think endplay. Think endplay Play the ace and king of spades (the queen did-n't drop and West followed to both your spade leads) and then exit with the jack of spades. Play the ace and king of spades (the queen didn't drop and West followed to both your spade leads) and then exit with the jack of spades. Your line of play was based on a logical assumption that East held the missing hon ors. This isn't always going to work but reaching for a thread of hope is better

NORTH	EAST	WEST	NORTH	EAST	SOUTH			
♦ J876	♠ A1095		1H					
♥ QJ6	• 105	Pass	1NT	Pass	2H			
◆ KQJ10	♦ A652	Pass	3H	Pass	4H			
♣ J5	♣ Q109	Pass	Pass	Pass				
West leads the king of spades. You signal with the ten and West continues the								

from his hand and the queen from dummy. West shows up with two hearts so you know that South started with six of them, not seven. Next North leads the king of diamonds. It is dangerous to play low on this since South might have a singlemond so it is likely that West is showing a doubleton. If South has just one diamond, he is about to discard a lot of clubs on dummy's diamond winners. What

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2369

1. Caustic, harsh (9)

6. Fundamental (5) 9. A sheer fabric (7)

11. A whip for chastising persons (7)

13. The Indian flag for example (9)

15. Opera singer (5)

16. Writing tables (5) 19. Without peer (9)

22. Senior executive (7) 23. Rout (7) 25. Sudden shrill cry (7)

26. Lacking any purpose (7) 27. Pulls or tugs sharply (5) 28. Medical prediction (9)

1. Bad habits? (5) 2. City in North Africa? (7)

4. Drive a weapon violently in some

5. Twin-hulled boat (9)

6. Repast, feast (7) 7. Add sugar to? (7) 8. Principal church (9)

13. In a dull and boring manner (9)14. Possession (9)

17. An orange colour; crocus with

purple flowers (7)

20. White of egg (7) 23. Constellation: The dragon (5)

24. Mitigates or reduces in intensity (5) CRYPTIC CLUES

ACROSS 1. Partnerships but not companies are boundless (9) 6. Joiner's instrument gives angles that

aren't right (5) 9. Stubs in the ashtray, for example (3-

10. Reg and Paul having become entangled with this sound stopper (3-

11. Finds traces among a hundred tested

12. Having a boy in spring is sweet! (7) 13. US infantryman swallows a

licentious Italian rebel (9) 15. Study an attempt in Africa (5) 16. They've nothing on for the time

19. Had been a forger, one didn't let oneself forget (4,1,4)

DOKU

 \mathbf{z}

He used to come and practice for

hours at the school ground. On

weekends he used to go to Anna

Stadium, more than an hour away,

to practice at the synthetic track.

Most kids in our school don't even

know what a synthetic track is

VOLLEYBALL COACH AT ALDRIN'S SCHOOL

22. Sunstroke was still, but remains 23. Possibly dialect for "keep" (7)

25. A proton, perhaps, takes no charges 26. Clare would need a little tea to be

like this (3,4)27. Quick - turn a drip around! (5)

28. Global system copes with unusual occurrence here? (3-6)

1. What G-man isn't going hungry? (5) 2. A less serious way to start a fire (7) $3.\,By\,which\,one\,may\,be\,a\,little\,carried$ 4. They are found growing next to a

5. The final record father passed around is cooked (4-5)

6. Twisted irony in ancient times, poetically cynical (7) 7. Most booed player of football team at home?(7)

8. Oh gimlets can be so frivolous (9)

13. Smuggler participating in arms race 14. Fish served with citrus fruit only 17. Board may supply this computer (7) 18. Was furious at having been branded

4 9

20. Threw a tantrum about Ted getting 21. Dance music from a bygone era (3-

24. Rest outside, for example, and be bound to render service (5)

23. Lewis to ring half of gambling city

Solutions to 2368

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Aspirin, 5 Fibbing, 9 Getting on, 10 Cello, 11 Lookout, 12 Sellout, 13 Rarestamp, 15 Coped, 17 Doing, 19 Lingering, 22 Placing, 25 Tripoli, 26 Total, 27 Bandicoot, 28 Secedes, 29 Emerson Down: 1 Angular, 2 Potpourri, 3 Ruinous, 4 Nightfall, 5 Finds, 6 Bucolic, 7 Igloo, 8 Gloated, 14 Penitence, 16 Poisonous, 17 Deputes, 18 Grilled, 20 Edifice, 21 Gliste 23 Attic, 24 Gibes. CRYPTICCLUES Across: 1Rule out, 5 Poplars, 9 Bus ticket, 10 Rouse, 11 Tsarina, 12 Trucker, 13 Samarkand, 15 Began, 17 East's, 19 Dust cover, 22 Bargain, 25 Unloved, 26 Opted, 27 Detective, 28 Leg-pull, 29 Dryness. Down: 1 Rebates, 2 Las palmas, 3 Olivier, 4 Take a hand, 5 Petit, 6 Perturb, 7 Amuck, 8 Sierran, 14 Disgusted, 16 Gave voice, 17 Embroil, 18 Spandau, 20 Colicky, 21 Reddens, 23 Retag, 24 Nadal.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday April 17

home are signified by serious planetary alignments. The celestial spheres are presenting you with the chance to lay yourself on the line over the next year.

Monday April 18

Say the right thing and you'll keep important people on board. Emotional pressures could cause your financial judgment to slip in the next few months.

Tuesday April 19

One last burst of enthusiasm helps you push forward with new plans. However, there's still a lot of indecision around and you might have to cope with distractions when other people change their minds.

Wednesday April 20 You should take worldly, professional

and business matters seriously if you are to make the most of opportunities.

Thursday April 21 Aspirations are going to keep coming

back all year. A feature of the year will be your tendency to examine relationships to get a fix on why you're attracted to certain types of people.

Friday April 22

The pace begins to pick up today, especially if you have choices to make. This may not be the best moment to make final decisions, unless you're prepared to change them next week.

Saturday April 23

Life is packed with potential. Even the tiny events today will be multiplied and magnified over the coming months.

9 4 8 2 5 7 1 6 3

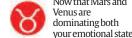
YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

sincere and devoted

your real intentions. Such tendencies are supported by the fact that your romantic charms and social skills will be at their

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21) Now that Mars and



and your domestic affairs, you must proceed as fast as you can to put all family and other close footing. Aside from more serious issues, this is an ideal time for a spot of lavish entertaining.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Mercury, the planet

responsible for your brilliant ideas, is still on your side, and you can be as certain as you ever will

be that decisions and choices you make now will be the right ones. As a matter of importance, you should also pay very close attention to financial developments and expenditure.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) personal life will begin to move faster

and faster, although there will be periods when you come to a sudden full stop. It does not matter now whether your immediate interest is emotional, romantic, domestic. important is that you make a fresh start.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) Passions will be

running high and if you feel that your approaches are ignored or belittled, or that you have been slighted or taken for granted, you may blow up. The last thing you want to do now is

ruin your chances of a massive

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) Has somebody been

boost in a major ambition.

going behind your not been entirely

straight with someone? The best to be hoped for is either that you will gain recognition for your discreet and selfless activities, or that your worldly success will now shed new light on your emotional and spiritual place in

want everything to

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

remain as it is, or to make a complete break professional issues and make a quick decision. A personal dilemma deserves longer-term consideration, so

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22) The week's

developments at work will be dominated by personal relationships and, if

you fall out with colleagues, you will damage your own prospects. The answer is simple, don't try to foist your ideas on people who don't need them. . Try listening instead.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22) As a matter of



mundane note, financial concerns are due to intensify. If this is the month for holidays, you have planned well. By a happy coincidence, Mars and Venus are revealing an excellent prospect for romantic adventures abroad.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) Nothing takes place in isolation, and slight upsets will be

opening the window on a remarkable series of emotional opportunities later in the year. It may be necessary to be firm now, and insist that you get what you need out of a relationship, or at least that the

AQUARIUS (Jan 21-Feb 19) Stick to your



your imagination. PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

now is bound to fire

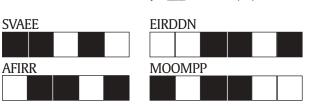


colleagues, and a romantic association may come home to roost. This is a time for you to stretch yourself. Extend your leisure activities into new and untried areas.

Ahmedabad

JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get In the field of observation, chance favours only the _____- Louis Pasteur (8,4)



Answer: In the field of observation, chance favours only the prepared mind SOLUTION: EAVES, FRIAR, RIDDEN, POMPOM

Difficulty Level 3s To solve a Sudoku puzzle. every digit from 1 to 9

must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium: 4s = Hard: 5s = Very Hard; 6s =

3 7 2 1 7 8 4 3 8 5 5 4

5

2

3 6 SOLUTION SUDOKU 4806 7 6 5 1 4 3 2 8 9 2 3 1 8 6 9 7 5 4 5 8 9 4 3 2 6 7 1 6 2 3 7 9 1 8 4 5 174586392 3 9 7 6 2 4 5 1 8 8 1 2 9 7 5 4 3 6 4 5 6 3 1 8 9 2 7

India win jr Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying

New Delhi: India made history by winning the Junior Davis Cup Asia/Oceania Final Qualifying event with a 2-1 victory over Japan at the RK Khanna Stadium here on Saturday. Down 0-1 after Bhushan Haobam's 3-6 6-3 2-6 loss to Naoya Honda, seventh seed India bounced back to win the remaining single and doubles rubbers and claim the event. Rushil Khosla brought India level with a 6-3 3-6 6-0 win over Yuta Tomida and in the deciding doubles rubber the Indian duo outplayed their rivals 6-3

Tsitsipas sets up semis clash with Zverev

Monte Carlo: Defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas came out on top from a thrilling quarter-final clash with Diego Schwartzman, prevailing 6-2 6-7(3) 6-4 on Friday to set up a meeting with Alexander Zverev at the Monte Carlo Masters. The Greek third seed was 5-2 up in the second set but inexplicably lost the plot and trailed 4-0 in the decider before rediscovering his touch.He will take on Alexander Zverev for a place in Sunday's final after the German world number three claimed an epic 5-76-37-6(5) victory against Italian Jannik Sinner. Earlier, Spain's Alejandro Davidovich Fokina reached his first Masters semi-final by beating American Taylor Fritz 2-66-46-3 and will take on Bulgarian Grigor

BAI trials: Sai continues winning streak

New Delhi: World No. 19 B Sai Praneeth continued his unbeaten run as he defeated Sourabh Verma in the stage 2 A men's singles group at BAI's selection trials for the upcoming major international team events here on Saturday. Praneeth, 2017 Singapore Open champion, saw off national champion Verma 21-14 15-21 21-13 in a thrilling match at the K.D. Jadhav Hall inside Indira Gandhi Stadium Complex. The Hvderabad shuttler will next take on Kiran George and Ansal Yadav, who also crossed the preliminary round and are clubbed in stage 2 A group, out of which the topper will play for rank 1 to 4 in a round-robin format.

IWL: Kerala bag 12-0 win vs Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Gokulam Kerala FC be-Indian Women's League on a ruthless note, slamming a dozen goals past a hapless Odisha Police here on Saturday. Indian attacking midfielder Manisha Kalyan wreaked havoc in opposition's defence with five goals (17th, 26th, 33rd, 48th, 73rd minutes) as the Aditi Chauhan-led side struck six goals in each half.Substitute Elshaddai (61st, 86th) struck a double, while the other goalscorers for the Malabarians were Win Theingi Tun (25th), Dangmei Grace (37th), Ranjana Chanu (70th) and Karishma Shirvolkar

Giants, Rahul give Mumbai no respite

LSG captain KL Rahul's unbeaten hundred sets the tone for 18 run win over laggards MI who remain winless so far this season

SYNOPSIS: Rahul's classy ton sets up Super Giants' win, as MI go deeper in

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY APRIL 16

SURYAKUMAR Yadav's dismissal off a Ravi Bishnoi long-hop typified Mumbai Indians' season so far. But as long as Kieron Pollard was there, there was life in MI. The big man tried his best, but gradually the asking rate climbed to 20-plus. Twenty-six runs were required off the final over and MI lost by 18 runs, chasing 200 for victory. Lucknow Super Giants won not only because KL Rahul led from the front and scored a mighty fine century, but collectively they played better cricket than their opponents to thoroughly deserve their victory. Super Giants went to eight points from six games, while after six straight defeats, MI's fall from the perch has been spectacular.

Rahul's classy ton

In the 16th over during Super Giants' innings, as Jasprit Bumrah came back for his final spell, the Brabourne Stadium DI belted out: 'Boom, Boom Bumrah'. MI looked flat on the field and their fans were subdued.

In the MI dug-out, Sachin Tendulkar and Zaheer Khan were having a conversation. Of course, it's not known if the conversation between the two former India stalwarts, now part of the MI support staff, was about Rohit Sharma's use of Bumrah in this game. By then, Rahul was bossing and the MI skipper probably missed a trick by not using his best bowler against the Super Giants' skipper right at the beginning. Rahul's unbeaten century in his 100th IPL appearance was a result of keeping things simple and steadily growing into the game. In top fettle, his batting is very easy on the eye and 66 runs in boundaries and overboundaries, out of 103 not out off 60 balls, attested a fine conversion rate in terms of putting away loose deliveries. But MI barely attacked him upfront, when like most batsmen he was vulnerable.

Twice in this tournament, Rahul has got out to golden ducks and one of those was against Rajasthan Royals in the previous game. Sunil Gavaskar on air was imploring Rohit to start the proceedings with Bumrah: "Confront the man who got out twice in the first ball in this tournament with your best bowler." The MI skipper started off with the part-time off-spin of Tilak Varma instead. Rahul was very keen to get off the mark. He got a short delivery from the offie and pummelled a pull for a four. When Bumrah was eventually brought into the attack in the fourth over, both Rahul and Ouinton de Kock had played themselves in.

The hallmark of Rahul's batting was the way he converted the hittable balls to optimum effect. MI bowlers, bar Bumrah, were generous enough to bowl an overdose of loose deliveries. Tymal Mills was the culprit-in-chief; offering width, howling in the slot and not bowling to his field. His final over, 19th of the innings, was particularly poor. He bowled length outside off, bowled an ill-disguised slower delivery to Deepak Hooda to concede a six, missed his line completely to bowl a big wide and served a half-volley outside off to Rahul to give away another four. The last four took Rahul to his century. That 22-run-over ensured that MI would have to chase 200. Mills went for 54 runs without a wicket in his three overs. Used to Trent Boult's quality, this has been a serious let-down for the five-time champions.

Rahul was always looking to bat long and once he got into the groove, there was no stopping him. He took his singles and doubles well, allowing fours and sixes to take care of them-



KL Rahul's unbeaten century in his 100th IPL appearance was a result of keeping things simple and steadily growing into the game.

IPL TABLE | M | W | L | PT | NRR 4 1 0.450 2 2 2 6 RCB 0.142 3 2 3 3 5 PBKS 6 0.239

2

3

6

0

6

4

0

-0196

0.219

-0.745

-1.048

selves. He also thrived on partnership batting - 52 runs (33 balls) with de Kock to start with followed by a 72-run (47 balls) association with Manish Pandey and a 43-run (21 balls) partnership with Hooda at the death. MI's ground fielding was average. Misfields came thick and fast. Super Giants' fielding, on the contrary, was

Deeper in the mire

5

5

5 1 4 2

SRH

CSK

In the end, after another batting failure $from\,Rohit\,and\,one\,more\,disappointing\,knock$ from Ishan Kishan, it had become Surya-orbust for MI. Rohit showed intent, when he regally clipped Avesh Khan over mid-wicket. But he got out a couple of balls later, trying to run one down to third man and getting a thin edge to wicketkeeper. Dewald Brevis came and readily took the attack to the opposition. Dushmantha Chameera bowled a peach to beat the youngster. Brevis' response was a stunning six over long-on. Back-to-back fours Avesh with consecutive boundaries. It was incredible hitting, but inexperience came to the fore. Brevis made room but mis-hit an Avesh full-toss straight to Hooda at extra-cover. The teenager got ahead of himself. Kishan seems to be bogged down by his Rs 15.25 crore price tag. It has made his batting cagey. After a laborious 17-ball 13, the southpaw dragged a Marcus Stoinis off-cutter on to the stumps. At 57/3, MI looked to Surya to get out of the woods. Over-reliance on individuals cost the team dear.

Brief scores: LSG199 for 4 (Rahul 103*, Pandey 38, Unadkat 2-32) beat MI (Suryakumar 37, Brevis 31, Avesh 3-30) by 18 runs

Blazing Karthik goes boom-boom, spells doom for Delhi Capitals

SYNOPSIS: Dinesh Karthik's 66 off 34 revived RCB from 92 for 5 to 189, which was enough to quell Delhi Capitals by 16 runs

ABHISHEK PUROHIT

DINESH KARTHIK produced another turnaround for Royal Challengers Bangalore, and a chase of 190 was beyond Delhi Capitals despite David Warner's fifty as Josh Hazlewood came up with a three-wicket burst.

Maxwell v Kuldeep

This was DC's first game of the season at Wankhede Stadium. On the larger square outfields at the Brabourne, DY Patil and Maharashtra Cricket Association stadiums, Kuldeep Yaday had had more leeway to toss the ball up and slow it down. He'd collected 10 wickets in four games at an average of 12.4 and an economy-rate of 7.75. But the smaller Wankhede turf was going to be a

When Kuldeep was brought on in the ninth over, Maxwell had worked himself into some rhythm. And DC captain Rishabh Pant had taken the risk of giving Kuldeep the end from which Maxwell could eye the shorter boundary with the slog. And right away, Maxwell looted 23 runs off the over; two sixes and a four to make Maxwell hit to the longer side, bowling full and wide, and Maxwell obliged with a driven four to deep extra cover.

Before Kuldeep came on, RCB were struggling on 47 for 3 after eight overs. Maxwell's assault seemed to have switched the momentum in his side's favour. Wiser after the storm, Kuldeep now changed ends. And the first ball, which was floated up full, Maxwell tamely chipped to long-on, instead of going fullblooded for another maximum. He had been kept to 55 off 34, and Kuldeep had had his re-

DK v DC

There are few sides that will be able to more



Dinesh Karthik's unbeaten 66 for RCB comprised five fours and as many sixes. Sportzpics for IPL

than double their score after losing half the side for 92 by the 12th over. But RCB have already been rescued time and again by Dinesh Karthik this season, and the veteran keeper-batsman ide's call for he

Khaleel Ahmed, the DC left-arm seamer, hadn't been hit for a single six going into Saturday night's game. He was hit for two, both coming off Karthik's bat. For the second one, a slower length ball, he actually bent his knee as if he was facing a spinner and slog-swept cleanly. Heading into his last over, Mustafizur Rahman had given away just 20 runs. Batsmen had been unable to get underneath his full deliveries and had to be content with singles. But Karthik launched him wherever he pleased. There was a fine reverse-hit clear of short third man, and an authoritative swat that flew in the gap between mid-off and extra cover. Mustafizur went fuller to squeeze Karthik's swinging space but that only made him hit straighter and farther, in an over that would end with a damage of 28 runs.

Shahbaz Ahmed has been an ideal partner to Karthik in his revival missions, and he contributed a vital 32 off 21, but the standout was undoubtedly Karthik with 66 off 34, his strikerate close to 200. Kuldeep had another over left, and Pant used him for the last instead of turning to the available part-timer seamers Mitchell Marsh or Rovman Powell. The RCB duo finished on a high with 17 more in the

Warner, Pant exits decisive

David Warner was in the mood alright. He slogged Maxwell for six off the first ball he faced and picked up Josh Hazlewood's first delivery for six more over deep backward square. A powerful straight smack off Mohammed Siraj disappeared so quickly to the rope that to call it dismissive was an understatement.

But DC were still behind the asking-rate going past the halfway mark. In at No 3 for his first game of the season, Mitchell Marsh drew out the momentum Warner injected at the other end, in a flail-and-miss 14 off 24 balls. Had he not been run out at the non-striker's end as Wanindu Hasaranga got his fingers on a Pant hit, he may have hurt DC further. Or he may have scripted some astonishing turnaround. We'll never know

One of the decisive blows had been delivered in Hasaranga's previous over, when and was found leg-before on RCB's review. It made Virat Kohli jolt into one of his wild screaming celebrations, not far from the departing Warner. As Pant began to nail his falling scoops over short fine, it was Kohli who'd land the knockout punch. As Pant scythed Siraj in the air, Kohli timed his jump perfectly at extra cover, his outstretched right hand plucking the ball and sending the crowd wild this time. With Pant's exit for 34 off 17 in the 17th over, DC were to fall well short.

Brief scores: Royal Challengers Bangalore 189 for 5 (Karthik 66*, Maxwell 55, Thakur 1-27) beat Delhi Capitals 173 for 7 (Warner 66, Pant 34, Hazlewood 3-28, Siraj 2-31) by



Kohli has a look at his own celebration

David Warner's wicket was the game-turning moment allright and just in case anyone missed the significance, Virat Kohli reminded them with his celebrations. Warner had been trapped lbw after he failed to connect with a reverse-slog and RCB had taken the decision upstairs for the review. The bowler Wanindu Hasaranga and Dinesh Karthik were so sure but on first replay the point of impact seemed a bit iffy and slowly the Bangalore players started to disperse from the huddle. They stopped again to check the mat-lines replay on the big screen and were joyous to

see the verdict fall in their offer. No one more than Kohli, of course. After an initial cry of fist pump and roar - just a warm up for him - he ran a detour, cut across the path of Warner, screaming his joy which as ever seemed tinged with anger, before he joined his team-mates. Warner, who was having a chat with the umpire about the replay, had a look at Kohli, turned to finish his conversation with the umpire and walked off. At the end of the over, as Kohli was crossing over, he had a look at himself on the big screen, roaring away.

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER



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

Wobbling Warner

Not quite David Warner the fielder's evening thus far. Two mis-fields yielded two fours as he kept diving over the ball. The first off an off drive from Faf du Plessis was admittedly not easy with Warner running to his left at midoff but couldn't get his lunge-stop right. Next one was pretty straightforward one. He had just talked to the bowler Khaleel Ahmed and moved to mid-off when Virat Kohli drove not too far to his right. He got there in time but tumbled over it and had a wry smile. Apart from the misfields, he has been his usual busy stuff, with frequent chats to the bowlers and pressing the captain to place him at second slip for the new batsman Glenn Maxwell. Every now and then, he keeps counting the fielders too for some reason, and has the most chats with the bowlers more than anyone else on the field. He also asks the ball to be thrown to him as early as possible so that he can shine and pass on to the bowler. Once, when Prithvi Shaw was taking his time to pass the ball on, Warner raised his arm first, then shouted out, before taking a couple of steps forward to-

Lalit at ease



When Lalit Yadav joined Capitals couple of years ago, he got a text from Ricky Ponting. "Hi Lalit, Ponting this side!" Yadav couldn't believe that he was the recipient of a mes-

sage from a legend. "But after that, it never felt that I am talking to a legend or sharing a dressing room with him. It felt like he's a companion, a friend. At times, he has been harsh too, but he stays very cool," he told Wisden India. "I've received a lot of nice inputs from him last year, he told me four, five different things that have been helping me." Was one of the things how to fire a direct hit? He did a Ponting to take out Virat Kohli, who hadn't gone too far down the track before changing his mind to return to the crease. But by then Yadav had rushed to his right at backward point, swooped low, and fired a sideways throw ala Ponting to leave Kohli stranded.



DK does what DK does

A slog sweep on a bent knee to a pacer was just the start before Dinesh Karthik decided to turn more innovative in the 17th over. He tried a reverse lap off Khaleel Ahmed two balls later but it dribbled off the toe end of the bat. Next over, first ball off Mustafizur Rahman, he shuffled outside off and tried to lap it to fine-leg but it flew off the edge to third man boundary instead. Rahman slipped in a slower cutter next ball and winced as DK reverse-slapped it over short third man for a one-bounce four. Next ball was smashed through extra cover and chants of DK DK began to echo around the arena. He obliged by lifting two sixes, one of which landed on the first tier over long-off. And when Shardul rebounded after a pulled six with an outside-off yorker. Pant, who gathered that ball, gestured to his bowler to stay calm, stay cool (he touched his head) & even mouthed 'cool cool'. DK was the real cool one, there though.

Covid caution: No handshakes, no hugs

Mumbai: No Delhi Capitals players will shake hands with any player from Royal Challengers Bangalore after the night game at the Wankhede on April 16. Not because there is any problem between the two teams but it's a BCCI mandate to the Delhi team after their physiotherapist Patrick Farhat and another support staff tested Covid positive on Friday. It is understood that the support staff tested positive is the masseur. The paper understands that the BCCI has issued a circular to the Delhi team requesting them to not shake hands & hug players from RCB after the game. The players from teams usually congregate for a chat after games before they disperse. The Delhi players have been advised to maintain social distancing during chats & use of masks have been recommended. The non-playing team members who will watch the game from the stands too have been requested to wear their face masks throughout the game, except eating or drinking. This is the second positive case during this season of IPL which is played in two cities of Maharashtra-Mumbai & Pune. Delhi players have tested negative & have been cleared to take part in the game on Saturday evening. **DEVENDRA PANDEY**

Ahmedabad

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