

WORLD

UKRAINE REMAINS
DEFIANT AS KEY PORT
MARIUPOL TEETERS
ON BRINK [PAGE 12](#)

J&K Police arrests Ph.D student under UAPA for 2011 online article

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, APRIL 17

THE JAMMU and Kashmir Police's recently created State Investigation Agency (SIA) on Sunday arrested a Ph.D student under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act. The student has been arrested for an article written by him that was published in an online news magazine 11 years ago. It said the article published on November 6, 2011, in the online magazine *The Kashmir Walla* was "highly provocative, seditious and intended to create unrest in Jammu and Kashmir".

A student at Kashmir University, Fazili, 39, is pursuing his doctoral studies in pharmaceutical sciences. He was scheduled to get married in a fortnight. He was a recipient of the UGC Maulana Azad National Fellowship for five years till March 2021.

Officers of the SIA raided the residences of Ph.D student Abdul Aala Fazili and Fahad Shah, the editor of *The Kashmir Walla* who

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FOREX CRISIS

Lanka delegation heads to US for \$4-bn bailout talks with IMF

Team led by new FM to also meet Indian delegation led by Sitharaman

AGENCIES

COLOMBO, APRIL 17

A SRI LANKAN government delegation is headed to the US on Sunday to engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to secure a \$4-billion package as it desperately tries to salvage the country's beleaguered economy, which is currently reel-

Protesters in Colombo on Sunday marking the April 2019 Easter Sunday attacks. *Reuters*

ing under a severe forex crisis. The delegation led by Sri Lanka's newly appointed finance minister Ali Sabry will hold talks

with the IMF between April 19 and April 24. Sabry has said that Sri Lanka is seeking a bailout package of \$4

billion from the IMF, having earlier resisted calls to seek a facility from the global lender. In a separate interview, Sabry had told *The Sunday Express* that Sri Lanka needs bridge financing of \$3-4 billion to tide over the next 6-9 months to pay its import bills.

The Sri Lanka delegation is also likely to meet an Indian team in Washington DC on the sidelines of the IMF meetings to explore further assistance from New Delhi

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SITHARAMAN'S U.S. PLAN: G20, IMF, CHIP FIRMS [PAGE 11](#)

JAHANGIRPURI COMMUNAL FLARE-UP

Security personnel in Jahangirpuri on Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

23 picked up day after clash; police say many have criminal record

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

A DAY after communal clashes broke out in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a shobha yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti, the Delhi Police on Sunday arrested 21 persons and apprehended two minors on charges of rioting and unlawful assembly.

Police said initial investigation has revealed that one of the accused, who works at a mobile

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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Nadda targets Cong: 'Speaks against terror, but releases terrorists'

J P Nadda
was in
Karnataka
Sunday. *PTI*EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, NEW DELHI,
APRIL 17

ATTACKING THE Congress in the wake of recent incidents of communal violence, BJP national president J.P. Nadda indicated on Sunday at a public meeting in the Vijayanagara region of Karnataka that his party will be targeting the main opposition party in the run-up to the 2023 polls on the issue of dropping of cases in the state against activists of the radical Popular Front of India (PFI).

Speaking at a public rally following a meeting of the BJP state executive, Nadda drew a reference to Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai's speech earlier, when he accused the Congress and its former chief minister Siddaramaiah of dropping-dropping cases against PFI

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



'It's brilliant for Indian cricket to see youngsters play in a way that is exciting'

GARY KIRSTEN,
FORMER SOUTH AFRICA
CRICKETER AND INDIA COACH;
MENTOR, GUJARAT TITANS
[PAGE 10](#)

THE WORLD

CLASHES NEAR JERUSALEM HOLY SITE

PAKISTAN WARNS AFGHANISTAN ON MILITANTS [PAGE 12](#)

Inflation heats up but why it hasn't singed political economy yet

Food prices haven't boiled over, poor protected but hike in wages a concern

AANCHAL MAGAZINE & ANIL SASI

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

INFLATION has hit a 17-month high. Disaggregated data for March Consumer Price Index shows nearly a dozen commodity groups including clothing, milk, vegetables, and personal care, surging to multi-month highs, suggesting inflation is turning structural with

easing fuel prices unlikely to temper the trend.

But the runaway prices have not adversely impacted political outcomes, given the results of recent state elections.

Analysts point to multiple factors at play. One, inflation in food — where the price sensitivity of the households is the highest — wasn't on the boil until the last few months.

Two, subsidised food supplies

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INSIDE



AT PEACE COMMITTEE MEET, BJP COUNCILLOR BLAMES 'IMMIGRANTS'

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House razed, govt to rehabilitate Khargone family

IRAM SIDDIQUE

KHARGONE, APRIL 17

DAYS AFTER Hasina Fakhroo's house built under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana was demolished by the district administration in the Khaskhaswadi locality of Madhya Pradesh's Khargone, the government reached out to the family over the weekend, pro-

Hasina's house was built under PM Awas Yojana. *File*

viding them ration and exploring rehabilitation options.

The *Indian Express* had reported on Monday, April 13, that 60-year-old Fakhroo's was one of the 12 houses demolished in the locality as part of a drive against illegal properties following clashes nearby during a Ramnavami procession a day earlier.

On Saturday (April 16) afternoon, officials from the district

administration along with those from the Nagar Nigam visited Fakhroo and her family who have taken shelter in an abandoned mosque nearby. After providing them ration, the officials took the thumb impressions of family members, and informed them they would be moved into a multiplex.

Hasina Fakhroo's son Amjad

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TOREX



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FROM PAGE ONE

Lanka delegation

in the form of additional credits for essential commodities and balance-of-payment support.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is also leaving for the US late on Sunday to attend spring meetings of the World Bank and IMF, as well as G20 finance ministers and central bank governors (FMCBG).

Sitharaman will take part in bi-lateral meetings with several countries, including Indonesia, South Korea and South Africa, apart from Sri Lanka.

The US visit by the Sri Lankans comes after the nation's finance ministry announced last Tuesday that it is suspending repayments of foreign debt, including bonds and government-to-government borrowing, pending the completion of a loan restructuring programme with the IMF. Sri Lanka had to meet \$7 billion of debt payments this year.

This was the first ever debt default by Sri Lanka in its history. Amid widespread protests and calls for the removal of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the country's 22 million people are facing crippling 12-hour power cuts, and an extreme scarcity of food, fuel and other essential items, such as medicines.

On Saturday, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Sri Lanka (SEC) announced that the Colombo Stock Exchange will remain temporarily closed for a week from Monday to provide investors an opportunity to have "more clarity and understanding" of the current economic conditions that would help them "to make informed investment decisions".

With the acute shortage of forex, an Indian credit line of \$500 million for fuel imports has provided a lifeline to the island nation. India recently announced that it would extend a \$1 billion line of credit as part of its financial assistance to deal with the crisis.

(WITHPTI)

Jahangirpuri

phone repair shop, is the main conspirator and allegedly has a criminal record.

DCP (Northwest district) Usha Rangnani said, "During investigation, one of the conspirators, Mohd Ansar (35), a resident of B Block in Jahangirpuri, has been arrested. He was found to be previously involved in two cases of assault. He was also arrested repeatedly under preventive sections and booked five times under the Gambling Act and Arms Act. Further investigation is on."

"We have recovered three firearms and five weapons from the possession of those arrested," she added.

According to senior officers, at least eight of those arrested have a criminal record, with some being arrested in the past on charges ranging from rioting to attempt to murder.

The FIR, registered at Jahangirpuri police station based on a complaint filed by inspector Rajiv Ranjan Singh, states: "It was a peaceful shobha yatra procession to mark Hanuman Jayanti, but around 6 pm, when they reached a mosque in C-block, a man, identified as Md Ansar, along with four-five associates came and started arguing with the people involved in the yatra. The argument escalated and stone-pelting started from both sides, and a stampede ensued."

Inspector Ranjan further states in the FIR that following the argument, he requested those involved to make peace and they had dispersed. "... But within minutes, both sides again started pelting stones and raising slogans. I informed the control room and additional forces rushed to the spot.

Senior officers said the probe

will expand over the coming days. They claimed to have recovered over 100 video clips from Saturday and identified around 50 "miscreants" so far. Officers said they are verifying several claims – including a purported video showing members of the yatra wielding guns and whether there had been an attempt to plant saffron flags at the mosque. Officers also said they are relying on facial recognition software to identify those involved in the violence.

The FIR, police said, has been lodged under IPC sections 147 (rioting), 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon), 149 (unlawful assembly), 307 (attempt to murder), 120-B (criminal conspiracy), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant from his duty), 323 (causing hurt), 436 (mischief by fire), 34 (common intention) and 427 (mischievous causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) and Section 27 of the Arms Act.

Inflation

to most vulnerable families provided them a cushion.

Three, though inflation has been moderately high, it hasn't remained elevated for a long period. Four, the general tolerance level to inflation in India is seen as higher than in other countries.

And finally, the political Opposition may have flagged price rise but has stopped short of offering tangible solutions. Indeed, when it comes to fuel prices, for example, Opposition-ruled states haven't been rushing in to cut duties – given its revenue implications.

The lack of noise, however, is cold comfort.

What's worrying the government's economic managers is the rise in wages due to rising food prices, which will have a spill-over effect on wholesale inflation.

An unprecedented revision in essential medicine prices from April 2022 and the cascading secondary impact of fuel prices is only expected to intensify the process of inflation turning structural.

"It is largely going to be a concern around food prices; food is the overwhelming component in the inflation index at about 45 percent of the basket. While the other components of clothing and footwear have shown high inflation in the last 2-3 prints, food is where the price sensitivity of households is the highest. High food prices bite consumers the most," says Rahul Bajoria, Chief Economist, Barclays.

Apart from seasonal factors, food prices have surged with the pass-through effect of high fuel prices and a likely higher consumption in rural areas where workers migrated during the pandemic.

"In terms of production, nothing dramatic has happened. The issue of supply chains has also been pretty much straightened out. So where is it coming from? One possible answer is, post-pandemic and after the lockdowns, there has been an urban-to-rural flight of people... So, the number of people in the villages has probably gone up relative to pre-pandemic time. This has essentially led to more food being consumed in villages, which are at the points of production. There may actually have been a reduction in the surplus coming to the market," says Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India.

High inflation may not be showing much impact on the political economy as the poor seem to have been protected by the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), which has now been extended till

September 2022.

Referring to this, State Bank of India's Group Chief Economic Adviser Soumya Kanti Ghosh says, "Free food grains is one of the reasons. The second reason is that inflation often happens in select commodities such as tomato, onion, potato, which leads to agitation. But this time, most articles in most consumption baskets have seen inflation. Also, inflation is high in items such as edible oils, palm oils; petrol and diesel prices are also high. I don't know if politics is divorced from economics. Too early to say since inflation has been largely under control apart from the two years after the pandemic."

Unlike in India, high inflation in developed countries also follows a huge fiscal expansion. "You had that initial kick that came through whatever repressed demand it was, but that is for a very small segment of society. Most other people drew down their savings. So, if you look at what's been happening in India, consumption was moderated. It's only started recovering a little bit now. And that's when inflation has started kicking in," Sen said.

Experts note that with the pandemic affecting MSMEs on a larger scale, the pricing power rests more with the corporates now. A prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict is also expected to add to the already elevated price levels of commodities. "The second order effects of fuel prices will be largely felt through public transport and logistics costs; it will be felt through the airlines, railways, and passenger fares. The secondary effects will show if a service becomes expensive, it will be a function of wage costs going up. The second order pass-through in services tends to be smaller as far as energy prices are concerned," Bajoria says.

According to rating agency Crisil, the Russia-Ukraine crisis has amplified the cost pressures and supply disruptions across the world and for India, the impact will be predominantly felt through high crude oil prices.

During the first nine months of the current fiscal, urban inflation at 5.5 per cent was 50 basis points (bps) higher than rural inflation and it is the urban poor (bottom 20 per cent) that faced the highest inflation, at 5.6 per cent, according to CRISIL. This is because fuel, with the highest inflation, has a larger share in consumption for the bottom 20 per cent than other income classes in urban areas.

Meanwhile, inflation for producers – measured by the Wholesale Price Index (WPI) – has been in double digits this financial year and scaled a record high in November, led by the low base of fiscal 2021 and sharp increase in commodity prices.

According to the RBI, a likely record rabi harvest would help keep domestic prices of cereals and pulses in check. Global factors such as the loss of wheat supply from the Black Sea region and the unprecedented high international prices of wheat could, however, put a floor under domestic wheat prices while edible oil price pressures are likely to remain elevated in the near-term due to export restrictions by key producers as well as loss of supply from the Black Sea region.

"Inflation is likely to rise from two factors: last year, at this time price growth was negative for items such as cereals, so the low base effect will push inflation higher. Market supplies are dwindling marginally for food items such as wheat. Exporters are selling wheat in the global market taking advantage of the Russia-Ukraine conflict. If this can be checked or controlled by the government, it will have an impact not only on the wheat prices but also the food subsidies," Devendra Pant, Chief Economist, India

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J&K Police

is already in jail, and the magazine's office premises and conducted intensive searches. The searches were in connection with a First Information Report registered against Fazili, Shah, and other associates for the "seditious" article, the SIA said.

Shah was arrested on March 14 under the Public Safety Act after he was bailed out twice earlier by the courts. He was arrested on February 4 for a report in his website on a gunfight in South Kashmir which quoted family members saying their son who was killed in the gunfight was not a militant. While he was bailed out by the court, he was re-arrested following an FIR registered against him in Shopian for another report in the magazine. When he received bail the second time, the police booked him under PSA.

"The article titled 'The shackles of slavery will break'... on the one hand is highly provocative, seditious and intended to create unrest in Jammu and Kashmir, written with the purpose of abetting the youth to take the path of violence by glorifying terrorism, and on the other, the write-up prompted and propagated the false narrative, which is essential to sustain secessionist cum terrorist campaign aimed at breaking the territorial integrity of India," the SIA said in a statement.

Fazili came to limelight during the 2016 street protests when he participated in several television programmes condemning the use of force on civilian protesters. He was called for questioning by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) five years ago.

In its statement, the SIA said the online magazine article used "prescriptive language with instructional intent, encouraging secessionist elements to carry out terror activities". "The repeated reference to freedom and terror outfits rhetoric makes it amply clear that the article is not merely propaganda. Rather, it is articulation of Pakistan ISI and the vision of its sponsored terrorist secessionist networks," the SIA said.

The SIA statement also mentioned the scholarship awarded to Fazili. "Government of India paid him Rs 30,000 per month for five years till March 2021 through UGC MANF (Maulana Azad National Fellowship) so that he can sustain himself and complete his Ph.D," it said, adding the agency has "seized incriminating evidences, which include material in computers, laptops and other digital equipments".

Khargone family

Khan said, "They (the officials) first told us they will shift us to a multiplex, but that building is in a communal area, so we refused. Then the team asked us where our old house was. We told them we have been living in Khaskhaswadi for

three decades, but they still went around with locals searching for our house in different localities."

When contacted, Khargone District Collector, Anugraha P told *The Indian Express*, "The government will rehabilitate the family."

While district administration officials said the plot occupied by Hasina Fakhroo's family belonged to the revenue department, Amjad Khan showed tax receipts and electricity bills from 2017-18 based on which his father Fakhroo Pathan had applied for benefits under the PM Awas Yojana. He said the family had been living in the kuchha house on that plot in Khaskhaswadi for three decades.

After Fakhroo Pathan – the primary applicant under the PM Awas Yojana – died in September 2020, his wife Hasina became the beneficiary. The first instalment of Rs 1 lakh under the scheme was credited into Hasina's bank account on October 28, 2020. "We moved to a makeshift shed in the plot and began constructing our house in place of the kuchcha house. We received the second instalment of Rs 1 lakh on March 31, 2021. We too spent our savings of Rs 1 lakh towards construction. We received the final instalment of Rs 50,000 on April 4, 2022," said Amjad Khan, showing the bank passbook.

Soon after the construction was completed under the PM Awas Yojna, Hasina Fakhroo received a notice from the Khargone tehsildar on September 17, 2021, stating the plot was on government land. Asking her to submit an explanation by September 29, it also said they could face legal action including eviction. "We went to tehsildar's office on September 29... they would make us sit the whole day, only to give us another date... We are daily wagers and can't afford to sit in government offices all day, but we still kept going there," Amjad said.

In the reply submitted to the tehsildar's office on behalf of his mother, Amjad Khan stated, "The woman (Hasina) is a widow who has constructed the house under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana. She does not have any other plot apart from this. If required, this can be investigated and verified. We request justice."

Meanwhile, Amjad Khan also received a call from the corporation officials to come and take a certificate dated December 31, 2021, issued by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan congratulating his family on construction of the house under the PM Awas Yojana.

While the third and final instalment under the Awas Yojana was credited to Hasina's bank account on April 4, 2022, she received a notice on April 7 stating the house was built on encroached land and hence should be vacated. It asked them to submit a response within three days or face demolition.

"We prepared our reply on April 9, but since it was a Saturday,

we could not submit it at the tehsildar's office. On April 10, curfew was imposed in town (following the clashes) and we couldn't step out... the next day, a team of officials came and demolished our house with bulldozers," said Amjad.

A mother of five sons and two daughters, Hasina said, "My married daughter has a house, but it is too small for all of us. It was then that our community people came forward to help. Akram bhai gave us a place in this wada (cowshed) and three days after the demolition we removed broken utensils from under the rubble for cooking food." On his part, Akram Khan said, "It does not matter if it is Amjad or Akshay, I opened my house on humanitarian grounds for them to stay until they find a shelter elsewhere."

A team of district officials accompanied by a police force visited Hasina Fakhroo's family at Akram Khan's cowshed and took photographs and videos. "They asked us if we would like to shift to a dharmshala where we would get food, but we refused. We told them we don't want to go anywhere and are concerned over our safety and life. A roof has been provided over our head by our community and we are staying here," she said.

Nadda's speech came on a day when prohibitory orders were clamped in Karnataka's Hubballi after protesters damaged police vehicles and pelted stones over a morphed post on social media.

On Saturday, communal clashes broke out in northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti. On the same day, several people were injured in stone pelting at Holagunda of Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh during a Hanuman Jayanti procession.

Several other incidents of communal clashes have been reported this month, particularly from Khargone in Madhya Pradesh, which was linked to a Ram Navami procession, and Karauli in Rajasthan.

Hitting back at Nadda, the Congress asked why the BJP government has not acted against PFI.

Without addressing Nadda's charge directly, Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said: "As far as the PFI is concerned, will JP Nadda explain what is his excuse for not acting against the PFI in the last eight years? We all know the real reason, perhaps there may be some kind of jugalbandi." He said taking out a "shobha yatra" has been "part of the syncretic tradition" of India and "we rarely saw communal disharmony around it". "Today, widespread incidents are being reported from places where the BJP wants to reap political dividends, including in Karnataka where Nadda was speaking. Doesn't he know the BJP and its fringe elements are spewing venomous speeches and inciting violence. Why is the PM silent on it? Why doesn't Home Minister Amit Shah take action against those who are indulging in violence? They won't because it helps them keep the country in a permanent communal frenzy," he said.

"You must have seen, there's an attack on the Ram Navami shobha yatra somewhere, something else at another place. This is Mr Bommai's subject, he is the Chief Minister, the Home Minister. He will certainly investigate the details of it. But on the face of it, I can say, ki yeh designed tareeke se samaj ko khandith karne ki koshish ho rahi hai (this is an attempt to split the society in a designed manner)," Nadda said.

"I am sad to say that today the Congress is behaving in the most irresponsible manner," he said.

Targeting Siddaramaiah, Nadda said: "*Aur mein yeh poochna chahunga, ki kya PFI ke logon ko joh on-books laaye gaye hain, unke chudane ka kaam Siddaramaiah ne kya tha ki nahin kya tha? Iski Karnataka ki janta jawab chahti hai* (I wish to ask, did Siddaramaiah release the PFI people who were once booked or not? The people of Karnataka demand an answer)."

Echoing Bommai's remarks, Nadda said: "*Aataankwad ke khilaf bolte ho, aur aataankwadiyon ko chodte ho. Andar se dosti rakhte ho, aur baahar mukhota lekar ke chalte ho. Inko parda farsh karna aur doodh ka doodh paani ka paani bataana, yeh BJP zameen pe jaake*

4 BJP councillors, 3 from AAP expelled for 'demanding bribe'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FOUR COUNCILLORS from the BJP and three from the AAP have been expelled following a 'sting operation' by a news channel that allegedly showed them demanding a bribe.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said the party has expelled four councillors and two leaders who are husbands of the councillors, as they were seen in the videos. "A probe will be conducted by the party into the allegations. As we have no tolerance for such acts, they have been expelled with immediate effect," he said. Action has been taken against BJP councillor from Kondli Atul Kumar Gupta;

Mangolpuri councillor Radha Devi and her husband Raju Rana; councillor from Timarpur Amarlata Sangwan and Trilokpuri councillor Saroj Singh and her husband Sher Singh.

The three from AAP are councillor and chairman of Narela zone Ram Narayan Bhardwaj; Sangam Park councillor Rinku Mathur; Nimri Colony councillor Neetu Azad and her husband Abhishek Azad. AAP MCD in-charge Durgesh Pathak said the action was taken as the party has zero tolerance for corruption.

The sting operation had purportedly shown councillors demanding around Rs 20-30 lakh for laying cables, parking contracts and other work. In some cases, councillors' husbands were shown demanding a bribe.

BJP accuses AAP of 'faking' corruption fight, it hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE BJP Sunday said that the Aam Aadmi Party was not serious about fighting corruption and only believe in creating a "buzz".

"An atmosphere was created in Delhi as if Arvind Kejriwal ji was trying to fight a big fight against corruption. You will be surprised to know that the anti-corruption branch (ACB) officers said there is no record of calls received on 1031, the anti-corruption helpline," said BJP national spokesperson Sambit Patra.

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta, meanwhile, claimed AAP in Delhi was indulging in corruption in Delhi Jal Board, Delhi Transport Corporation and other depart-

ments, and that its minister, Satyendar Jain, was being investigated over corruption charges. AAP hit back, saying it was the BJP that "unconstitutionally and immorally" took away control of the ACB and curtailed most powers of the Delhi government. "It is a well-known fact that when the 49-day AAP government was formed, the anti-corruption branch worked to the best of its potential and arrested 75 tainted individuals, including several BJP functionaries. The BJP could not bear to see the Delhi government set a benchmark through its anti-corruption mission so it bypassed all laws of the land to unconstitutionally and immorally take away ACB as well as curtail most of the powers of the Delhi government...," it said in a statement.

'Loudspeakers in mosques social issue;' Raj Thackeray to visit Ayodhya on June 5

AJAY JADHAV
PUNE, APRIL 17

MAHARASHTRA NAVNIRMAN Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Sunday raised the issue of loudspeakers in mosques again and said, "Some people are considering the issue of speakers in mosques as a religious issue but it should be seen as a social issue."

Talking to media persons where he also announced a public rally in Aurangabad on May 1, Thackeray said he would be visiting Ayodhya on June 5 along with other MNS leaders. Incidentally, Shiv Sena leader and minister Aaditya Thackeray too has announced that he would be visiting Ayodhya in May.

"The loud sound of speakers on mosque is creating problems not only for Hindus but for the Muslim community as well. This issue is pending for long. If you are



Raj Thackeray at a press meet on Sunday. Express

going to play loudspeakers five times a day, we will play Hanuman Chalisa in front of the mosque the same way. It is my request to all patriotic Hindu community members of the country to be ready. I am not saying anything further since Ramzan is going on. If they are unable to understand by May 3 and consider their religion more important than the law and the Supreme

Court, they need to be given a befitting reply," Thackeray said.

"We don't want riots in Maharashtra and country. We don't want to hamper the peace. The Muslim community should consider the issue on humanitarian grounds. We don't oppose their prayers... but if they are making others listen to their prayers, they will also have to listen to our prayers."

Regarding action against MNS workers for reciting Hanuman Chalisa, the MNS chief asked how their action could be illegal if loudspeakers are not being removed from mosques. "The Supreme Court has banned the use of loudspeakers... Are we not going to understand the situation? Muslim community should also understand this issue. Religion cannot be more important than the country. They should realise that citizens are facing problems due to loudspeakers," he said.

Sena MLA's wife dies by suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 17

SHIV SENa MLA Mangesh Kudalkar's wife Rajni Kudalkar died by suicide at their residence in Kurla (east) on Sunday night, police said. The police are in the process of finding out the reason behind the extreme step, they added. The incident took place around 9.15 pm at the MLA's residence in Kurla when Rajni, 42, was found hanging in the kitchen by a family member who alerted the police control room. The police are in the process of searching the premises to find out if she left behind any kind of note stating the reason behind the extreme step.

The police have sent the body for a post mortem at a nearby government hospital. They said they will record statements of her family members to find out if anyone abetted her suicide.

3 WEST BENGAL

5 PROTESTERS 'FALL SICK'

Resolve SSC candidates' issues: Pradhan to TMC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, APRIL 17

UNION EDUCATION Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday appealed to the Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC) government in West Bengal to address the grievances of School Service Commission (SSC) candidates who are protesting in Kolkata demanding jobs.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines on an event in the city, Pradhan said, "There should not be any negligence in the recruitment of teachers as they build the future generations. Irregularities in the recruitment of teachers have happened in several states and they paid the price for it. Even the high court has said something on it. The law should take its own course. There should be no compromise when it comes to recruit-



Union Education Minister
Dharmendra Pradhan. PTI

ment of teachers." A relay hunger strike by a section of SSC candidates at Gandhi Statue on Mayo Road in the city seeking jobs entered 10th day on Sunday.

Four of the protesters were detained by the police in the Khalighat area when they tried to submit a memorandum at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's residence. They, however, were

released later.

Meanwhile, five SSC candidates observing relay hunger strike fell sick and were taken to the SSKM Hospital. "Many of the protesting candidates are falling sick. The police are not allowing us to reach the CM to share our grievances. We want jobs and we will not stop our agitation," said a protesting candidate. SFI members expressed solidarity with the protesters and visited the protest venue.

"These work education and physical education candidates have cleared their SSC exam in 2016. But they have not got jobs so far. Today four of them went to meet the chief minister but the police not only stopped but also manhandled them. This is very unfortunate that the chief minister is too busy to meet these protesters. We will launch a bigger movement, if needed," said SFI state secretary Srijan Bhattacharya.

Kolkata International Film Festival starts on April 25

Kolkata: The 27th Kolkata International Film Festival (KIFF) will start on April 25 with the screening of legendary filmmaker Satyajit Ray's masterpiece 'Aranyer Din Ratri'.

The event will conclude on May 1. The festival, which is generally held in November every year, was postponed to January due to the pandemic. But it was deferred again due to the third Covid-19 wave in January and the fact that several members of the organising committee contracted the infection.

At a press conference on Saturday, KIFF director Raj Chakraborty said 163 movies from 40 countries will be screened across 10 venues. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee will inaugurate the event, he said.

A special section has been arranged in the memory of filmmaker Buddhadeb Dasgupta, legendary actor Dilip Kumar, Bengali actress Swatilekha Sengupta and European directors Jean Paul Belmondo, Jean Claude Carriere, and Je Luc Godard.

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Sd/-
Muralidhar Krishna Rao
Chief Financial Officer

Place : Mangaluru
Date : 16 April, 2022

28 new Covid-19 cases, no death

Kolkata: West Bengal logged 28 new cases of Covid-19 on Sunday, taking its tally to 20,17,806 cases. However, no deaths due to Covid-19 were reported due to the virus. The state's toll currently stands at 21,200. According to a health department bulletin, 8,175 samples were tested in the state. Over the past 24 hours 45 Covid-19 patients recovered in the state, taking the number of recovered patients to 19,96,295. The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in West Bengal now stands at 98.93 per cent. In the past 24 hours, a total 41,345 vaccine doses were administered in the state.

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL

TELANGANA QUESTION

ELECTION STRATEGIST Prashant Kishor's meeting with the Congress leadership, including the Gandhis, has put the party's Telangana unit in a spot. Kishor has made a presentation to the Congress leadership and the party has gone on record saying it will appoint a committee to look into his suggestions. What is interesting is that Kishor is said to be working for the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) in the state. He is said to have met TRS chief and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu in February. The Congress in Telangana had been attacking Rao and his government vociferously. In fact, there were reports that state Congress president Revanth Reddy had at a public meeting said that PK, as Kishor is known, cannot do anything in the state. Incidentally, AICC in charge of Telangana Manickam Tagore on Sunday put out a tweet, saying rumours of Congress coalition with the TRS are totally false. He argued that the Congress won't move back an inch from its commitment to save Telangana from the TRS and BJP. Interesting times ahead.

PAYING TRIBUTES

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar last week went to New York and participated in the Ambedkar Jayanti celebrations. Ambedkar's years in Columbia University and in the US shaped his ideas and Jaishankar sought to highlight his journey. Indian Consul General in New York Randhir Jaiswal attended the event along with the local community. It was well attended by the local community and a video on Ambedkar's life was shown.

'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' being strengthened through initiatives like Hunar Haat: Thakur

Mumbai: Stating that there was no dearth of talent in India, Union minister Anurag Thakur on Sunday said 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' was being strengthened through initiatives like Hunar Haat. Thakur was speaking here after inaugurating the 40th edition of the Hunar Haat, a platform to provide market and opportunities to traditional arts and crafts of India. The 12-day event is being held at the MMMDA Ground here. "Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) is being strengthened by initiatives like Hunar Haat. In this 40th edition of Hunar Haat, more than a thousand craftsmen and artisans coming from 31 states have put up 400 stalls. There is no lack of talent in India," he said.

On Army commanders' meet agenda: impact of Russia-Ukraine war

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

IMPACT OF the Russian invasion of Ukraine on India will be among the topics of discussion during the five-day Army Commanders' Conference beginning Monday in the national capital. The conference will be addressed by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on April 21.

"During the conference, the senior leadership of the Indian Army will review the operational situation along the active borders, assess threats in the entire spectrum of conflict and undertake analysis of capability voids to further focus on capability development and operational preparedness plans," a Defence Ministry statement said. "Discussions on aspects pertaining to infrastructure development in border areas, modernisation through indigenisation, induction of niche tech and assessment on any impact of the Russia-Ukraine war are also scheduled."

The prolonged Russian-Ukraine war is likely to have implications for India's defence equipment procurement in the light of Western sanctions against Russia. India is said to be dependent on Russia for defence procurement.

Mann's Delhi visit postponed, new date to be decided soon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

CHIEF MINISTER Bhagwant Mann on Sunday postponed his visit to Delhi schools and mohalla clinics scheduled for Monday. Mann had earlier planned to visit Delhi along with officials of Punjab, including Health and Education Secretary to study the Delhi model of schools and mohalla clinics set up by the AAP government in Delhi to replicate those in Punjab. The visit was, however, postponed. Sources said that

KARNATAKA

Nadda: PM, Bommai, BSY have put state on development path

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, APRIL 17

IN A boost for Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who has been criticised by the Opposition for being slow in dealing with right-wing communal groups, BJP national president J P Nadda on Sunday said that Karnataka is being led to a golden age of development by the triumvirate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Bommai and former chief minister B S Yediyurappa.

"I have not come here to give you a lecture but to tell you that with the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, under the leadership of Basavaraj Bommai, and with the grace of B S Yediyurappa, Karnataka can advance to a golden age of development," Nadda told a meeting of the state executive of the BJP in Vijayanagar on Sunday. "We are all very, very lucky that we are working in the BJP when there is a towering leader like Narendra Modi who is not only a national leader but an in-



BJP national president J P Nadda with Karnataka CM Basavaraj Bommai on his arrival in the state on Sunday. PTI

ternational figure," Nadda said. "Only the BJP is a national party and all others are family parties and no other party is an ideology-based party." "There is no leader in the Congress party or any regional party who can come forward and talk about what they are going to do to change the lives of people. They will talk of caste, regionalism, and language issues, they will talk of causing divisions but they will not have two words to say for wip-

ing the tears of the poor," he said. Nadda expressed confidence that the Karnataka BJP will pull off a repeat victory in the state in the Assembly polls scheduled to be held next year. "I am not only happy with the functioning of the BJP in Karnataka but I am also fully confident that you will fight with full strength on mission repeat." The state executive meeting was being held amid an ongoing churn in the Karnataka BJP over several issues, including the lead-

Pak gives India 2 more months to ship humanitarian aid to Afghanistan

Islamabad: Pakistan on Sunday extended for two months the period for India to transport 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and life-saving medicines as humanitarian assistance to

war-torn Afghanistan via Attari-Vagah border crossing. Foreign Office said that the time period granted for transportation of the humanitarian assistance expired on March 21

and the Government of India recently requested for extension in time period to complete the transportation process. "As a manifestation of our sincere efforts towards ad-

ressing the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, it has been decided to grant two months' extension to facilitate completion of the transportation," the Foreign Office said.

Four arrested for 'unlawful conversions'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, APRIL 17

POLICE ON Sunday arrested four persons, including two women, in the Andakhori area of Azamgarh district in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly trying to convert people to another religion in an unlawful manner.

This comes just two days after 26 persons were arrested under the anti-conversion law in Fatehpur district of the state. One of the accused arrested on Sunday had rented a house in Azamgarh where he along with others used to call people and convince them to get converted to Christianity, the police said. Those arrested are Rakesh Kumar of Delhi, Ajay Kumar, Reeta Devi and Geeta of Azamgarh, officials said. Rakesh was living in Azamgarh on a rented accommodation for around two months.

Bilariyaganj station house officer (SHO) Vijay Prakash said they received information that some people were trying to convince people to adopt Christianity after having rented a house in Andakhori. People in large numbers would visit the house where the accused were luring them with money and other things. "We conducted an inquiry into the complaint and found the allegations to be true. We will check how many people the accused were able to get converted," the SHO added.

Day after communal violence, peace meeting in Delhi locality

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

A DAY after communal clashes broke out in Northwest Delhi's Jahangirpuri following a shobha yatra organised to mark Hanuman Jayanti, a meeting of aman (peace) committees on Sunday to discuss the way forward ended abruptly after a BJP councillor blamed "illegal immigrants" for the violence.

Tension prevailed in the area even as companies of CRPF and the Rapid Action Force manned the streets in full riot gear. In the middle of the chowk, where the violence broke out on Saturday, broken stones and shards of glass were swept away as police erected a white tent to hold the meeting.

Senior police officers from the Northwest district flanked by DCP Usha Rangnani, aman committee members from Mahender Park, Jahangirpuri, and Adarsh Nagar, and BJP councillor from Adarsh Nagar Garima Gupta attended the meeting. The DCP appealed for peace, promised strict action, and asked the aman committees, which

GUJARAT

Chief taking decisions unilaterally: AIMIM vice-president resigns

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, APRIL 17

ALL INDIA Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimin (AIMIM) Gujarat vice-president Shamshad Pathan resigned from the party and his post on Sunday, blaming the party's state president Sabir Kabliwala of "taking decisions unilaterally that would help the BJP" win the upcoming Assembly elections.

Pathan said that more AIMIM members would resign starting Monday. "Our party's state president is working in such a way that BJP is benefitted (in the upcoming Assembly elections) because there is no vision on how to take the party forward, how to fight the assembly elections," he said. "The state president takes unilateral decisions... it shows that he does not want the party to grow here and win seats, thus implying that it wants to give BJP an advantage. If he has any election strategy, he does not discuss it with anyone in the party cadre or among office-bearers," Pathan added. When asked why such grievances were not aired before party chief Asaduddin Owaisi on April 14 during his visit, Pathan said, "He (Kabliwala) did not allow party workers to meet Owaisi sa-



Shamshad Pathan said that more AIMIM members would resign. Twitter

hab because he knew had a meeting been allowed, the grievances against him would've come out in the open."

When *The Indian Express* reached out to Kabliwala, he denied any differences with Pathan and said his resignation was sudden. Pathan, however, added that he is not closing any options or future prospects of continuing with AIMIM at this juncture.

When asked of his future plans, Pathan, who is also an advocate, said, "Right now, I plan to celebrate Eid, whatever happens will happen after Eid. Politics is a game of probabilities, I'm not saying no (to AIMIM), I'm not saying yes today or for the future, because I've no qualms with Owaisi sahab, or his work ethics."



Police and paramilitary forces at Jahangirpuri, a day after the clashes. Gajendra Yadav

comprise members from different communities, to play an active role in combating rumours to ensure peace in the area. "Both groups should have restrained themselves. There should be law and order, and communal harmony. Police will investigate with fairness and neutrality. If a situation arises, some mischievous elements take advantage of it. There is scope for rumours and spreading fake news. I request you all to not follow such things," the DCP said.

The senior officer then spoke briefly on the way forward: "Mischievous and anti-social elements should be contained. If you spot them, please take action and call us. There will be strict action against rioters." Councillor Gupta then asked the DCP for permission to speak. "I want to say this in open public. Hindus and Muslims have lived together in peace. The problem in our area, if I come straight to the point, is the Bangladeshi Muslims who have started living here," Gupta said.

Raut: Non-BJP CMs may meet to discuss political situation

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, APRIL 17

A CONFERENCE of non-BJP Chief Ministers and leaders is likely to be held in Mumbai soon to discuss the current political situation in the country, said Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday, even as he claimed that there was a plan afoot to impose President's Rule in Maharashtra citing law and order situation in case of riots over Lord Hanuman.

He said West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee has written to other non-BJP CMs and leaders expressing her concern over the current situation in the country and emphasising on the need to discuss it. "CM Uddhav ji Thackeray and NCP chief Sharad Pawar will be taking the initiative to convene a conference of all non-BJP CMs and Opposition leaders in Mumbai soon. Prominent issues, including unemployment, inflation, misuse of central investigative agencies, and communal harmony will be discussed to chalk out the way forward," he informed media persons here.

Meanwhile, in his weekly column Rokhthokin Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, Raut said MNS chief Raj Thackeray was running the BJP's agenda.

"MNS chief Raj Thackeray initially raised the issues of 'Marathi Manos' and Marathi pride. When the issue did not stand before the Shiv Sena, it has now turned to Hindutva and has threatened playing Hanuman Chalisa outside mosques if their loudspeakers are



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut

not stopped. The MNS chief, Raj Thackeray, is running the BJP's agenda. It is also a part of their preparations for the municipal elections in Mumbai and Thane. In case riots break out in the name of Lord Hanuman, there is a game plan to impose President's Rule in Maharashtra citing the law and order situation," he wrote.

He pointed out that while there has begun politics on loudspeakers in mosques in Maharashtra, Ram Navami riots broke out elsewhere in the country. "Even Lord Ram will be restless over the developments in Madhya Pradesh's Khargone," he said.

"The idea of building an akhand hindu rashtra [united Hindu state] through non-violence with a stick in hand is good but the country is being pushed to instability and tension with violence in the name of Ram. It will lead to sowing the seeds of a new partition and while creating akhand hindustan out of religious hatred, we will have to pick up the pieces of our own country..." he wrote.

KEA

Government of Karnataka
KARNATAKA EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY
Sampige Road, 18th Cross, Malleshwaram, Bangalore-560 012 Phone: 080-23 460 460 (5 Lines)
Fax: 080-23461576 e-mail: keaugcet2022@gmail.com Website: http://kea.kar.nic.in

No. ED/KEA/ADMN/CR-01/2022-23 **Date: 16-04-2022**

NOTIFICATION

CET - 2022 - ADMISSION TO PROFESSIONAL COURSES IN THE STATE OF KARNATAKA FOR THE YEAR 2022-23

- As per Rule 3, Rule 6(3) & Rule 7 of Karnataka Selection of Candidates for Admission to Government seats in Professional Educational Institutions Rules 2006 (Amendments) and pursuant to the directions of the Government, Karnataka Examinations Authority (KEA) is inviting applications from the eligible Karnataka Candidates including the ward/s of Jammu & Kashmiri migrants for conduct of **"Common Entrance Test-2022"** as per the following time table for the purpose of determining the eligibility / merit, for admission to the First year or First semester of full time courses for Government share of seats in Engineering, Technology, Naturopathy & Yoga, B. Pharma and Pharma-D, Agriculture courses (Farm Science) and Veterinary courses, in Government / University / Private Aided / Private Un-Aided Professional Educational Institutions in the State of Karnataka for the academic year 2022-23 as per the seat matrix to be notified by Government.
- In order to become eligible to obtain admission through KEA to the above mentioned professional courses, a candidate must register for CET-2022, fill the application through online, pay the application fees, download the admission ticket and appear for the Common Entrance Test-2022 conducted by KEA, Bangalore.
- For admission to Medical or Dental or Ayurveda or Unani or Homoeopathy courses, candidates must compulsorily qualify in the **UGNEET – 2022** (National Eligibility cum Entrance Test) exam conducted by the National Testing Agency.
- For admission to Architecture course, candidates should appear and get qualified in NATA-2022 (National Aptitude Test in Architecture) conducted by the Council of Architecture. (Further the candidates must compulsorily register for CET-2022, fill the application through online and pay the application fees.)
- Eligibility:** As per Rule 5(1) of Karnataka Selection of Candidates for Admission to Government seats in Professional Educational Institutions Rules 2006 (Amendments), No candidate shall be eligible for admission to Government Seats unless he is a citizen of India and satisfies any one of the eligibility conditions specified therein. The candidates who do not satisfy any of the Clauses / Eligibility Criteria are not eligible for admission to professional courses under Government quota seats through KEA.
- UGCET-2022-Information Bulletin consisting of details about mode of submission of application through online, eligibility clauses, academic eligibility criteria etc is hosted on the KEA Website for the information of the candidates. Candidates can download the same from KEA Website. Candidates have to apply online for admission to various Professional Courses through KEA.

Schedule for online application – payment of fees – submission of special category certificates.

| | | |
|----|--|---|
| 01 | Registration and filling of Application Online for CET-2022 | From 1:00 PM on 18.04.2022 to 05.05.2022 up to 11:59 pm |
| 02 | Last date to pay the application fees – online | 06.05.2022 |
| 03 | Provision for corrections, if any (The candidates can change / modify the information furnished in the online application as per their eligibility) only for fee paid candidates | From 11:00 am on 07.05.2022 to 10.05.2022 up to 5:30 pm |
| 04 | Submission of Special Category Original Certificates on the specified dates (As per schedule given in Information Bulletin) | 02.06.2022 to 08.06.2022 |
| 05 | Downloading of Admission Tickets for CET-2022 | From 11:00 a.m. on 30.05.2022 |

Common Entrance Test – 2022 Time Table

| Date | Day | Timings | Subject | Marks |
|------------|----------|---------------------|-------------|-------|
| 16.06.2022 | Thursday | 10.30 am – 11.50 am | Biology | 60 |
| | | 02.30 pm – 03.50 pm | Mathematics | 60 |
| 17.06.2022 | Friday | 10.30 am – 11.50 am | Physics | 60 |
| | | 02.30 pm – 03.50 pm | Chemistry | 60 |

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| | | | | |
|------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------|----|
| 18.06.2022 | Saturday | 11.30 am to 12.30 pm | 4th Standard level | 50 |
|------------|----------|----------------------|--------------------|----|

AGRICULTURIST QUOTA - Schedule for Verification of documents and time table for Practical examination will be published on the KEA Website in due course.

Note:
(i) A candidate who had obtained a seat in any discipline through KEA (CET Cell) in any of the previous years and not surrendered the seat before the last date fixed for entry of options for final round of seat allotment for the respective disciplines will not be eligible for allotment of a seat to the same discipline during 2022. However, he / she is eligible to appear for CET-2022 for allotment of seat in any other discipline as per rule 15 (5) of Karnataka Selection of Candidates for Admission to Government seats in Professional Educational Institutions Rules, 2006.
(ii) Academic Eligibility / admissions to Colleges/ Seat Allotments made to and by the colleges shall be subject to rules / conditions specified from time to time / approval by MCI, DCI, AICTE, COA, NCISM, NCH, PCI, Government, University, Apex Bodies, etc.
For more details candidates are requested to visit KEA Website **http://kea.kar.nic.in**
KEA Helpline Nos.: 080 – 23 460 460 (Five Lines) 9.30 am to 6.00 pm (except General Holidays)

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Kolkata

BRIEFLY

MAHARASHTRA

Sena MLA's wife dies by suicide

Mumbai: Shiv Sena MLA Mangesh Kudalkar's wife Rajni Kudalkar died by suicide at their residence in Kurla (east) on Sunday night, police said. The police are in the process of finding out the reason for the extreme step, they added. The incident took place around 9.15 pm at the MLA's residence in Kurla when Rajni, 42, was found hanging in the kitchen by a family member who alerted the police control room.

ENS

UTTAR PRADESH

Two held for killing minor

Meerut: The Meerut police on Sunday arrested two persons in connection with the murder of a 14-year-old boy whose beheaded body was found in a forest area on Saturday. The father of the victim had accused two persons, Nadeem (19) and Faisal (23), of the murder. Police said the duo confessed to the killing. "According to our preliminary investigation, Nadeem and Faizal were harassing the victim's 19-year-old sister... When the victim objected, they threatened to kill him," said a police officer.

ENS

JHARKHAND

Cable car site sealed for probe

Ranchi: The Deoghar administration has sealed the ropeway site at Tirkut Hills, where three people were recently killed following a cable car tragedy, officials said on Sunday. It has also asked Damodar Ropeways and Infra Ltd to maintain status quo of the place ahead of the start of a probe into the accident. CCTV cameras have also been installed to keep vigil on the site, officials said.

PTI



Students prepare for competitive exams on the banks of the Ganga, as part of free weekend classes, in Patna, Sunday. PTI

Big draw on banks of Ganga in Patna: mock tests for Rlys

SANTOSH SINGH

PATNA, APRIL 17

FOR THE last two months, Kali Ghat by the Ganga at Patna has seen large crowds during the weekends, unusually so.

Sunday, too, is no different. Sitting on the steps of the sprawling ghat are thousands of students — from Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra — scribbling away on mock test papers for the Group D Railways examination.

The previous day, this same set of students, about 7,000, wrote a mock test for the Railways' RRB-NTPC examination.

These 90-minute mock test sessions are the brainchild of S K Jha, a mechanical engineer by qualification who has been coaching Railways and SSB aspirants since 2014.

"My motto is to democratise these mock tests for Railways exams," says Jha. So he holds these free sessions, attracting a huge turnout. Many of these aspirants are from underprivileged backgrounds — wards of daily wagers, farmers and rickshaw-pullers.

"But I do not ask for their background. It is a war against unemployment. My attempt is to give momentum to the preparation of



The 90-minute test sessions are the brainchild of SK Jha, a mechanical engineer.

students," says Jha, who spends up to Rs 45,000 per session. "As my coaching centre can accommodate only about 1,200 students, I have to conduct these mock tests at Kali Ghat on Saturdays and Sundays in the morning."

After the mass protests in January over the change in the Railways' recruitment policy, Jha was booked — along with three other teachers including the popular "Khan sir" — by the police for "provoking the protests" and stopping public servants from discharging their duties.

Khan sir and Jha were later called by the Patna administration to present their side of the story.

The Centre eventually walked back its decision on the recruitment. The RRB-NTPC and Group D exams are now scheduled for May and July respectively. These mock tests will continue for two

more months.

Manoj Keshav, son of a Gaya farmer, says after writing the test Sunday: "Our big numbers show the extent of unemployment and the desire for government jobs."

Jha, originally from Birpur, Supaul, had done his B.Tech (Mechanical) from an Odisha college and taken up a job in Maharashtra — just for 10 days. He then turned to coaching in 2014, starting a centre in Patna with just four students.

About 2,000 students are enrolled at his centre and his YouTube channel has about 6.5 lakh active subscribers. He charges Rs 99 for teaching a subject on his channel. His students are all praise for him.

Says Ravi Paswan, a student from Gumla, Jharkhand: "I have been living in Patna for three years after graduation. My father barely earns Rs 20,000 per month but still supports me".

Shambhu Mandal, a Madhepura student whose father is a marginal farmer, said: "Though Ashok Rajpath area has many coaching centres, no one thought of holding free tests. It is a great gesture by Jha sir."

Jha said he had been overwhelmed by the turnout. "I can identify with them. My idea is to do my bit for them."

TRACKING NEW COVID VARIANTS

Send sewage samples to sentinel sites monitoring poliovirus: Centre to states

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

WITH THE possibility of a new Covid-19 variant triggering a fresh surge in cases, the Centre has told the states to send sewage samples to all sentinel sites that currently carry out surveillance of poliovirus.

This is among the key strategies that have been communicated to the states last week, even as a few urban centres in the country have witnessed an increase in the Covid-19 cases.

India's active caseload stands at 11,558. While the country's weekly positivity rate stands at 0.27%, Delhi reported a positivity rate of 5.33% on Saturday. At the meeting with the states, the Centre said "there was no cause for concern" as the majority of cases continued to be linked to the highly transmissible Omicron BA.2, which drove the third wave. However, surveillance and monitoring of a new variant would remain the top priority to detect the emergence of the new clusters, sources told *The Indian Express*.

The Centre has specifically asked the states to implement a

two-prong approach to detect a new variant of the novel virus. First, all tertiary and secondary care hospitals should be set up with dedicated influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infections (SARI) clinics, the states were told.

"It should be like an OPD where people with influenza-like symptoms can straightway go to. States have been asked to conduct 100 per cent RT-PCR testing and the samples should be sent for genome sequencing so that we know if and where a new variant is emerging," sources said.

Second, sources said, states had been informed that the National Centre for Disease Control would be the coordinating agency for the surveillance and monitoring of any variant detected from sewage samples.

Sewage surveillance helps capture any new variant and the spread of Covid-19 in a community setting. By measuring the levels of virus in the untreated water over a period, local health authorities can ascertain early warning signals of emergence of new clusters. At present, states such as Karnataka have begun sewage surveillance.



A police vehicle damaged by protesters in Hubballi district late on Saturday evening. PTI

HUBBALLI: 4 POLICEMEN AMONG INJURED

Protest over derogatory WhatsApp status turns violent; 40 arrested

KIRAN PARASHAR

BENGALURU, APRIL 17

FORTY PEOPLE were arrested and section 144 was imposed in Karnataka's Hubballi city after protesters pelted stones outside a police station and damaged police vehicles over a derogatory social media post, widely shared online, on Saturday, police said. Four police officers were among several people injured in the incident.

According to the police, on Saturday evening, several people gathered and staged a protest to arrest Abhishek Hiremath, who had allegedly posted an objectionable and morphed photo on his WhatsApp status. Following a complaint at the Old Hubballi police station, the police took Hiremath into custody.

However, late on Saturday night, not satisfied with the police action, the protesters gheraoed

the police station, pelted stones and damaged police vehicles. An inspector among four police officers were injured in the incident, police said. The police fired shots in the air and had to resort to tear gas shells to disperse the crowd.

The police said that about 40 people have been taken into custody following the incident.

Hubballi-Dharwad city police commissioner Labhu Ram said that section 144 has been imposed till April 20.

On Sunday, CM Basavaraj Bommai said, "Police have taken action over a WhatsApp status post. However, there has been violence in old Hubballi. If anyone takes law into their hands, the police will take action. Don't look at this incident from a political point of view but from law and order."

JD(S) leader and ex-CM HD Kumaraswamy said incidents like this have raised concerns over peace and harmony in the city.

14 dead in two days as heavy rainfall, storms lash Assam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

GUWAHATI, APRIL 17

AT LEAST 14 people, including two minors, were killed as severe storms and rain lashed various parts of Assam over the past two days, an Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin said.

According to the bulletin, eight people died on Friday (four in Dibrugarh, three in Barpeta and one in Goalpara), and another six lives were lost on Saturday (three in Tinsukia, two in Baksa and one in Dibrugarh). The deaths were caused due to storms and lightning.

In all, at least 21,000 people were affected, as the storms left behind homes and properties destroyed in its wake. At least 7,344 houses were damaged in the storms, which uprooted trees and electric poles in several areas. The inclement weather conditions are expected to continue till April 18, said authorities.

Parts of Northeast have been marked by torrential rainfall since the beginning of the month. In an advisory issued earlier this week, the India Meteorological Department had warned of heavy rainfall over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya till April 18.

On Thursday, more than 1,000 houses were affected in a cyclonic storm in Meghalaya's Ri-Bhoi.

HANUMAN JAYANTI

5 held for hoisting saffron flag on dargah in Gujarat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

RAJKOT, APRIL 17

FIVE PERSONS were arrested and a juvenile was detained after they allegedly tried to hoist a saffron flag on a dargah during a "Hanuman Jayanti procession" taken out without police permission in Veraval town of Gir Somnath district late on Saturday, police said.

Two FIRs were filed, one by a police officer and another by a member of the dargah.

Gir Somnath SP Manoharsinh Jadeja said the incident took place between 6 pm and 9 pm when a procession was passing through Vakhariya Bazar area of Veraval town. As it reached Magrebisha Babu's Dargah, a few from the proces-

sion hoisted a saffron flag on the dargah premises, he said.

"Around 100 persons were part of the procession. As it passed by the dargah, three men from the procession entered the dargah premises and hoisted a bhagva (saffron) flag on the roof of the toilet block there," the SP told *The Indian Express*.

Jadeja said as they hoisted the flag, others in the procession recorded videos and circulated those online. One of the purported videos shows a man on the terrace of the dargah waving a saffron flag as others dance to loud music. The SP and other top officials rushed to the area and defused the situation. "We have registered two FIRs and arrested five persons so far. A juvenile was detained," Jadeja told *The Indian Express*.

Haridwar: Stones hurled at procession, 13 booked

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

DEHRADUN, APRIL 17

THIRTEEN MEMBERS of a minority community have been booked following allegations of stone-pelting and sloganeering during a "shobha yatra" taken out as part of Hanuman Jayanti celebrations in Haridwar on Saturday night.

The alleged incident took place when the procession of over 100 people was passing through a 200-metre Muslim belt in the Danda Jalalpur village under the Bhagwanpur police station area. Heavy police force has been deployed in the village and police teams are combing the area in search of others involved.

The FIR was registered under Sections 153 A (promoting enmity between different groups

on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc., and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony), 195 A (threatening any person to give false evidence), 147 (rioting) and 148 (rioting, armed with deadly weapon) of the IPC. At least nine of the named accused have been arrested so far.

"The procession was planned for around 3 pm but it got delayed and started at 6 pm on Saturday. Around 8.10 pm when the procession, in which religious slogans were being raised, was passing through a Muslim-dominated stretch, some people started hurling stones at the procession. Police teams responded soon and brought the situation under control. Around 2-3 persons have received minor injuries," said Garhwal (Range) DIG Karan Singh Nagryal.

10 injured as two groups clash in Andhra's Kurnool

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

HYDERABAD, APRIL 17

At least 10 persons were injured in stone pelting at Holagunda of Kurnool district in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday evening.

Two groups had clashed near a religious place during a procession of Hanuman Jayanti, police said. Officials said when the procession, during which devotional songs were being played, was crossing a religious place, police told procession leaders to stop playing the songs as prayers were going on nearby. The procession

organisers complied, but as soon as they crossed the area, the songs resumed, which irked members of another group who started hurling stones at the procession.

Kurnool DSP said the stone-pelting lasted for 5-10 minutes and the sizeable contingent of policemen posted as security along the procession route brought the situation under control. "A few persons were injured, but nothing serious happened. We are investigating the case and if anyone is found violating the rules, we will book them," an official said. The procession continued after the brief disruption.

Mauritius PM arrives on 8-day visit

SHUBHAJIT ROY

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

MAURITIUS PRIME Minister Pravind Kumar Jugnauth is in India on an eight-day visit beginning Sunday to strengthen ties between the two countries in both economic as well as strategic sectors, especially in maritime security.

He arrived in Mumbai on Sunday, where he was received by Indian officials.

Announcing the visit, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said Jugnauth will travel to Gujarat as well as Varanasi apart from his engagements in New Delhi. It said Jugnauth will be accompanied by his spouse Kobita Jugnauth and a high-level delegation during his visit from April 17 to 24.

"India and Mauritius enjoy uniquely close ties, bound by shared history, culture and heritage. The upcoming visit will further strengthen the vibrant bilateral ties," the MEA said in a statement. It said Jugnauth will



Pravind Kumar Jugnauth

EXPLAINED
E Growing bonds

MAURITIUS IS an important economic partner for India. In recent years, its importance on the strategic sphere has increased, as India has sought to strengthen maritime security in the western Indian Ocean region. The Mauritius PM's visit is expected to take forward this bilateral co-operation that has been challenged due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

participate in the ground-breaking ceremony of the WHO-Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar on April 19 and the Global Ayush Investment and Innovation Summit in Gandhinagar on April 20, along with PM Narendra Modi.

"Apart from official engagements in Gujarat and New Delhi, the PM of Mauritius will also visit Varanasi during the visit," it said. India has been one of the largest trading partners and exporter of goods and services to Mauritius since 2007.

India's exports to Mauritius are largely of petroleum products. Besides petroleum products, main items of India's exports to Mauritius are pharmaceuticals, cereals, cotton, shrimps and prawns, frozen boneless bovine meat. Main items of Mauritius exports to India are vanilla, instruments and apparatus for medical/surgical sciences, needles, aluminum alloys among others.

In January this year, Modi and Jugnauth inaugurated the Social

Housing Project, and laid the foundation stones for a Civil Service College and an 8 MW Solar PV Farm project, which, Modi said, "will help mitigate the climate challenges that Mauritius faces as an island country".

India had extended a US\$ 353 million to Mauritius in May 2016 as a Special Economic Package for five priority projects, of which the Social Housing Project was the last to be completed.

Two agreements were also exchanged, one for extension of US\$ 190 million Line of Credit to Mauritius for the Metro Express and other infrastructure projects and MoU on the Implementation of Small Development Projects.

In March, Mauritius became a member of the Colombo Security Conclave, a grouping of India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. The grouping of NSAs from these countries works for regional security by focusing on areas such as maritime security, countering terrorism, combating trans-national crime and cyber security.

A Saharanpur cafe tries to bring down 'perception wall' between people, police

AMIL BHATNAGAR

SAHARANPUR, APRIL 17

WALK INTO Bailout Cafe in Saharanpur and words like "corrupt", "scary" and "rude" pop out at you from a stone wall. This unusual decor choice stems from a survey where people were asked to describe, in one word, the police — the ones running this establishment.

The cafe and this 'wall of perception', says an officer, is an attempt to bring residents and the police closer in an informal setting.

"The idea of a cafe was sanctioned by the SSP and we began working on it in December. It was quite an uphill task since all

of it had to be managed while the police duties continued. Even elections took place in between. But we wanted to create a unique space for everyone," said Preeti Yadav, CO City 1, who designed the cafe.

Once a dilapidated canteen with barely any sitting arrangement, the cafe, situated inside the police lines, now boasts of bright pink exteriors, an entrance paved with locally-sourced marble and stones, and exterior and interior seating of over 40.

The decor uses recycled material — a fountain made with bottles as conduits and bulbs fitted inside cheese graters doubling up as lamps.

Two boards on the entrance

list out instructions. One of them is that the cafe does not provide wifi in order to encourage interactions and conversations between people and police.

"Most of the materials have been sourced from the local market. For instance we made messages on wood boards that are leftovers in furniture manufacturing," said Yadav, a third-generation police personnel from her family.

The proceeds from the cafe will go to the department's coffers.

In the afternoon, policemen could be seen having a cold beverage during a quick break from duty. Young students stood outside the pink gate clicking selfies. Wives of policemen came

with their friends to show them around.

"This is a blessing for us. Where we generally live are very small quarters. We are unable to invite anyone. With this place, we can hold gatherings with our family. Even host birthday parties for children," said a constable visiting the cafe.

The cafe has slowly started to create a buzz in the area. Locals in the area are quick to point out directions. "I saw pictures of the cafe and it looks appealing. Even though we usually don't visit police lines unless there is an issue. But it appears to be a place where we can go with friends. I would most definitely like to visit the cafe," said Akash, a college student.

7 | E. EXPLAINED

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2022

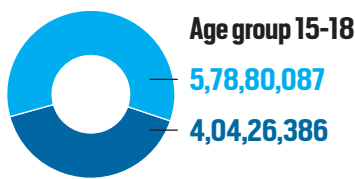
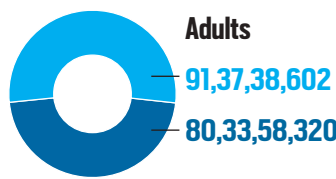


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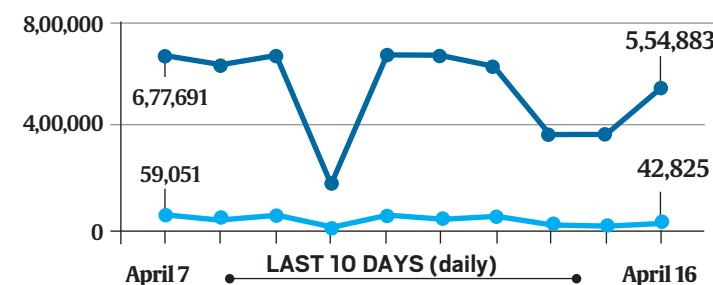
If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

DASHBOARD, AS ON APRIL 16

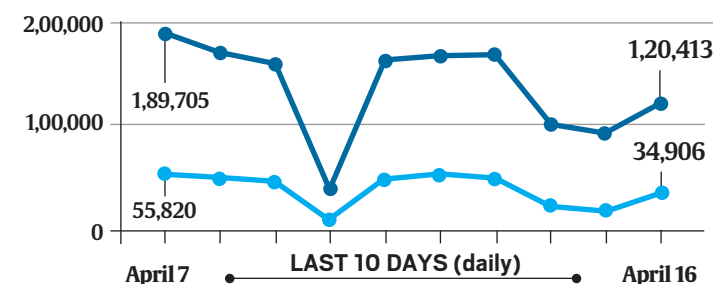
TOTAL DOSES 186,51,53,593
■ First dose ■ Second dose

AGE GROUP 12-14: 1st dose: **2,42,97,421**, 2nd dose: **1,65,229**

| | | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Precautionary 60+ | Precautionary 15-59 | Doses On April 16 |
| 2,51,43,387 | 1,44,161 | 13,21,870 |

ADULTS



AGE GROUP 15-18



EVERYDAY EXPLAINERS

HEALTH

WHAT IS HAEMOPHILIA? WHY DOES IT AFFECT MEN MORE THAN WOMEN?

SUNDAY, APRIL 17 was World Haemophilia Day. It is a medical condition that severely reduces the ability of blood to clot; even a minor injury can cause severe bleeding. It is mostly an inherited condition, and affects males much more frequently than females.

Over 2.09 lakh people worldwide were living with haemophilia, according to the Annual Survey 2020 of the World Federation of Hemophilia. India had the highest incidence at 22,594.

Why men

The sex of an individual is determined by a pair of "sex chromosomes" — XX for females, and XY for males. When an X chromosome each from the mother and the father are paired, the offspring is XX (female); when an X chromosome from the mother pairs up with the father's Y chromosome, the offspring in XY (male).

Haemophilia is caused by a defect in the X chromosome. If a girl has one defective chromosome, her other X chromosome

can compensate for it. She will not suffer from the condition — but will be a carrier. Only if both her X chromosomes are defective will she suffer from haemophilia. But if a boy is born with a defective X chromosome, he does not have the second to compensate, and will suffer from haemophilia. That is why haemophilia is more common among men.

'Royal disease'

Britain's Queen Victoria (1819-1901) is the world's most widely known carrier of haemophilia. From her, the condition spread among a number of European royal families, which is why haemophilia was once known as the "royal disease". Victoria passed on a defective X chromosome to three of her children. Her son Prince Leopold died at age 30 as a result of loss of blood after injury. Victoria's daughters Princesses Alice and Beatrice were carriers who passed on haemophilia to other royal families, notably those of Spain and Russia.

AMITABH SINHA

GAYA, APRIL 17

ON SUNDAY, Delhi reported 517 new cases of coronavirus, up almost four times since 131 at the beginning of this month. In Haryana, the count has increased by four times until Sunday, although the number is less than that in Delhi. For the first time since the third week of January, active cases in the country have begun to rise again. The quantum of the rise is still very small, but the increasing trend has continued for four days now.

Just when the pandemic seemed to be getting over in India, the rise in cases in Delhi and Haryana has begun to sound alarm bells once again. The silver lining, as of now, is the fact that the rise in cases has been restricted in these two states, basically Delhi and its neighbourhood, and has not been reported from other parts of the country.

Possible causes

Unlike the other major cities such as Mumbai, Bengaluru, Chennai or Pune where the number of daily new cases dropped to the lower double-digits, Delhi has continued to report a significantly higher number of cases, over 100 per day on an average. In the last few days, however, there is a clear surge. On Tuesday, Delhi detected more than 200 new cases for the first time in a month. The cases have continued to rise every day after that, and on Saturday 461 cases were detected, the highest in six weeks. Similarly, Haryana's tally of 202 cases on Saturday was the highest in five weeks. These two states together contributed over half of India's total cases on Saturday.

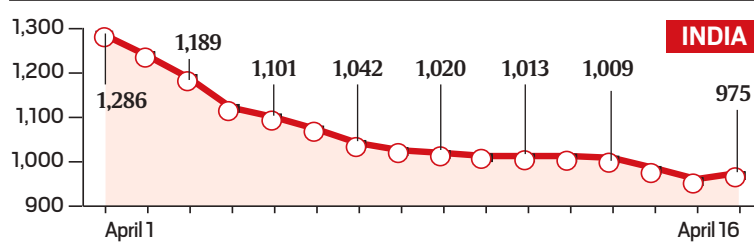
The reasons for the rising numbers in Delhi and Haryana are not definitively clear right now, but the most plausible explanation is that it is being caused by the withdrawal of the mask mandate and doing away with all restrictions. These moves are not unique to Delhi, or Haryana, and have been withdrawn from the entire country, but

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

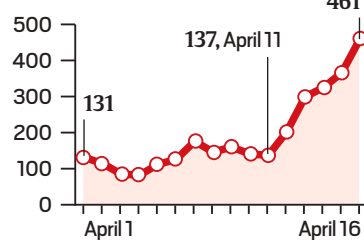
Making sense of Covid trends

Daily new cases are rising in Delhi and Haryana, as are active cases nationwide. Lifting of restrictions could be a reason, but it's too early to worry about a fourth wave when no new variant has been detected.

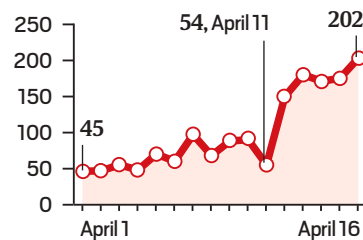
DAILY NEW COVID-19 CASES



DELHI



HARYANA



Anurag Agrawal, former director of Delhi-based Institute of Genetics and Integrative Biology (IGIB), noted that the trends first become evident in major urban centres. Agrawal said the current rise being witnessed in Delhi is consistent with what would be expected if people stopped wearing masks and began interacting more freely. Schools and offices have reopened, travel is back to normal and most businesses have begun operating at full capacity. It is not surprising to see the cases rise amidst increased interactions with reduced restrictions.

That would suggest that large big cities too could see a surge in cases in the near future, although no city is showing such signs as of now.

Low numbers elsewhere

The surge in Delhi is not being powered by the emergence of any new variant of the virus, and does not seem too big a concern as of now. The numbers are not expected to

go very high because there is no significant change in the two factors that drive a surge — emergence of a fast-transmitting variant, and availability of large pool in a susceptible population. As such, the rise is likely to be temporary, and manageable.

While active cases at the national level have shown an increase in the last few days, the detection of new cases has remained at more or less the same level. The 1,150 new cases detected on Saturday were indeed significantly higher than 949 and 975 cases on two previous days, but it is too early to suggest a trend. The seven-day moving average of new cases, which masks the daily fluctuations and presents a more consistent trend, is continuing to decline.

Over 10 states and Union territories are currently reporting cases in single digits, many of them no cases at all. The national case numbers remain at the lowest level in the last two years. Positivity rates are going



Covid-19 testing in Jammu. PTI

down consistently.

Fourth wave fears

The surge in cases in Delhi and Haryana would renew fears about the beginning of a fourth wave in the country. However, it is hazardous to predict anything about a fresh wave of infections. The evolution of the virus is a completely random and unpredictable event. And at this time, it does seem that a fresh wave of infections in India would be driven only by the emergence of a new variant. This is mainly because of the fact that the bulk of India's population has already been infected with the Omicron variant and it is expected that the population would have attained a fair degree of immunity against this variant. Reinfection by the same variant is not unknown, but is not frequent either.

It is not yet clear how long the immunity gained from prior infection is effective. The current understanding is that it would last at least six to nine months. That is also the rationale for the nine-month gap in administering booster doses of vaccine. That would mean that most people who were infected by the Omicron variant during the third wave would probably have effective immunity for a few more months. Concerns about this being the start of the fourth wave, therefore, may not have much basis as of now. Unless, of course, a new dangerous variant is found floating in the population.

Why is UK sending asylum-seekers to Rwanda?

RAHEL PHILOPOSE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE UNITED Kingdom has signed a deal with Rwanda to send some asylum-seekers to the East Central African nation, a move that according to Prime Minister Boris Johnson, will "save countless lives" from human trafficking. The main target of the pilot scheme will be single men arriving in the UK on boats or in lorries. "Anyone entering the UK illegally... may now be relocated to Rwanda," Johnson said on Thursday, calling the scheme "an innovative approach, driven by our shared humanitarian impulse and made possible by Brexit freedoms".

It emerged over the weekend that the top civil servant at the British Home Office had told Home Secretary (minister) Priti Patel that he could not certify that the plan would be a sufficient deterrent to illegal migration, and that she would, therefore, have to issue a "ministerial direction" overruling him for the policy to go ahead. And on Sunday, the leader of the Church of England, Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby declared in his Easter sermon that the government's plan amounted to "subcontracting our responsibilities", and did not "stand the judgment of God".

What is the plan?

Essentially, people who have arrived in Britain since January 1 (and those who may arrive later) as stowaways in trucks or boats can be flown 6,400 km to the landlocked African country, possibly for good. The asylum-seekers



British Home Secretary Priti Patel and Rwandan Foreign Minister Vincent Biruta after signing the agreement in Kigali on Thursday. AP

could be on one-way flights to Rwanda within weeks, the UK government said on Friday. They would then be assessed for eventual resettlement in that country.

The UK has paid the government in Kigali £120 million for housing and integrating the migrants as part of the pilot scheme, which will initially last for five years, the Associated Press reported. The agreement seeks to ensure "that people are protected, respected, and empowered to further their own ambitions and settle permanently in Rwanda if they choose," Rwandan Foreign Affairs Minister Vincent Biruta said.

What's the goal?

According to Patel, the idea is to improve the UK's asylum system, which faces "a combination of real humanitarian crises and evil people smugglers profiteering by exploiting the system for their own gains". Johnson has said it would break the "business model" of traffickers and disrupt the flow of illegal migration, while leaving "lots of capacity for the very generous

safe and legal routes" into the UK.

In an interview to the BBC, Justice and Migration Minister Tom Pursglove said the UK was spending almost £5 million daily to accommodate illegal migrants in hotels. By comparison, the £120 million payment to the Rwandan government for five years is a better deal. Johnson's government has not given a precise estimate of what the deal may cost. However, *The Times* reported that it could potentially cost £20,000-30,000 to send each migrant.

What's the problem?

In 2021, over 28,000 people arrived in the UK after crossing the English Channel in small boats, up from just 8,500 in 2020. For years, migrants have travelled to the UK from northern France, hiding on ferries and in trucks. Tighter regulations following the Covid-19 pandemic moved the bulk of this illegal traffic to boats — a dangerous crossing that has resulted in dozens of migrants drowning.

As part of the new plan, the British Navy will ensure that "no boat makes it to the UK

undetected", Johnson said. Those who arrive illegally could be prosecuted, "with life sentences for anyone piloting the boats", he said.

What's the criticism?

UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, has said migrants must "not be traded like commodities and transferred abroad for processing". "UNHCR remains firmly opposed to arrangements that seek to transfer refugees and asylum-seekers to third countries in the absence of sufficient safeguards and standards. Such arrangements simply shift asylum responsibilities, evade international obligations, and are contrary to the letter and spirit of the Refugee Convention," Assistant High Commissioner for Protection Gillian Triggs said in a statement. Human Rights Watch (HRW) flagged "Rwanda's appalling human rights record", and Amnesty International UK called the plan "shockingly ill-conceived".

Opposition leaders in the UK have said the scheme is "unworkable", "extortionate", and an attempt to distract from the 'party-gate' scandal.

Who else does this?

Several other countries, including Australia, Israel, and Denmark, have been sending asylum seekers overseas, according to global media reports.

Australia has been maintaining offshore detention centres since 2001, and according to the country's Border Force, over 4,000 individuals were relocated to places like Nauru and Papua New Guinea between 2012 and 2019, the BBC reported.

What is parboiled rice, and why Centre wants to stop purchasing it

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

LAST WEEK, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and members of his Cabinet staged a dharna at Telangana House, demanding a uniform paddy procurement policy. The protest came after the Centre said it was stopping the purchase of excess parboiled rice, of which Telangana is a major producer. The Centre has said demand is low and it cannot waste money on buying the excess quantity of parboiled rice.

What is parboiled rice?

The dictionary meaning of 'parboil' is 'partly cooked by boiling'. Thus, the expression parboiled rice refers to rice that has been partially boiled at the paddy stage, before milling. Parboiling of rice is not a new practice, and has been followed in India since ancient times. However, there is no specific definition of parboiled rice of the

Food Corporation of India or the Food Ministry.

Today, there are several processes for parboiling rice. For example, the Central Food Technological Research Institute (CFTRI), Mysuru, uses a method in which the paddy is soaked in hot water for three hours, in contrast to the more common method in which paddy is soaked for 8 hours. The water is then drained and the paddy steamed for 20 minutes. Also, the paddy is dried in the shade in the method used by the CFTRI, but is sun-dried in the common method.

The Paddy Processing Research Centre (PPRC), Thanjavur follows a method known as the chromate soaking process. It uses chromate, a family of salt in which the anion contains both chromium and oxygen, which removes the odour from the wet rice.

All processes generally involve three stages—soaking, steaming and drying. After passing through these stages, the paddy goes for milling.

PARBOILED RICE STOCK WITH FCI (LAKH TONNES)

| STATE | STOCKS |
|----------------|--------------|
| Andhra Pradesh | 0.66 |
| Telangana | 16.52 |
| Chhattisgarh | 1.49 |
| Odisha | 2.07 |
| Jharkhand | 2.98 |
| Kerala | 3.00 |
| Tamil Nadu | 12.09 |
| West Bengal | 0.43 |
| Karnataka | 0.1 |
| Bihar | 1.09 |
| Haryana | 0.11 |
| Punjab | 0.04 |
| TOTAL | 40.58 |

As on April 1. Source: Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Are all rice varieties suitable for parboiling?

Generally, all varieties can be processed

into parboiled rice, but it is ideal to use long slender varieties to prevent breakage during milling. However, aromatic varieties should not be parboiled because the process can make it can lose its aroma.

What are the benefits?

There are several benefits. For example, parboiling makes rice tougher. This reduces the chances of the rice kernel breaking during milling. Parboiling also increases the nutrient value of the rice. Third, parboiled rice has a higher resistance to insects and fungi.

However, parboiling comes with some disadvantages too. The rice becomes darker and may smell unpleasant due to prolonged soaking. Besides, setting up a parboiling rice milling unit requires a higher investment than a raw rice milling unit.

How much is the stock of parboiled rice in the country?

According to the Food Ministry, the total stock of parboiled rice is 40.58 lakh met-

ric tonnes (LMT) as on April 1, 2022. Out of this, the highest stock is in Telangana at 16.52 LMT, followed by Tamil Nadu (12.09 LMT) and Kerala (3 LMT). The stock was in the range 0.04–2.92 LMT in 10 other states — Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Karnataka, Bihar, Punjab and Haryana.

The Centre will procure 1.36 LMT of parboiled rice from Telangana for the Kharif Market Season (KMS) of 2020-21. For the ongoing KMS 2021-22, the Centre expects to procure 5.82 LMT parboiled rice from only two states—Jharkhand (3.74 LMT) and Odisha (2.08 LMT). From the other 10 rice-producing states, including Telangana, the Ministry has no plan to procure parboiled rice. In the coming days, the total parboiled rice stock will increase to 47.76 LMT.

How high is the demand?

The Food Ministry pegs the parboiled rice demand at 20 LMT per annum for distribution under the National Food Security Act, 2013. According to the Ministry, the de-

mand for parboiled rice has come down in recent years.

In the last few years, production in parboiled rice-consuming states such as Jharkhand, Kerala and Tamil Nadu has increased, resulting in less movement to the deficit states.

Earlier, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) used to procure parboiled rice from states such as Telangana to supply to these states. But in recent years, parboiled rice production has increased in these states. So, the Ministry says, the current stock of parboiled rice is sufficient to meet the demand for the next two years.

What has been the pattern of procurement from Telangana?

Telangana has been the major supplier so far. Data available with the Food Ministry shows that the FCI procured 25.62 LMT of par-boiled rice from Telangana during both seasons — kharif and rabi — in 2020-21. The quantity was even higher in 2019-20, at 44.71 LMT.



The Indian **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

SMALL STEPS

Prime Ministers Modi and Sharif signal possibility of a thaw between India, Pakistan. There is room for cautious optimism

THE CALL FOR “constructive engagement” with Pakistan by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the response by his just-appointed counterpart in Islamabad — seeking “peaceful and cooperative ties” with India through “meaningful dialogue” — appear to provide an opening to expand cooperation between the two countries. That the Pakistan army appears keen to improve ties as well is also ground for cautious optimism.

On the face of it, Islamabad’s insistence on placing the Kashmir issue front and centre in its ties with India can scupper any attempts at diplomatic and commercial outreach. The rhetoric around Kashmir in the country’s domestic politics also means that more often than not, bilateral ties end up taking two steps back for every step forward. For example, last year, the then Prime Minister Imran Khan decided to roll back a decision that would have allowed the import of Indian cotton yarn and sugar over the Wagah border just days after he had signed off on the proposal. That decision put paid to the possibility of expanding the peace that the renewal of the 2003 ceasefire along the LOC just weeks earlier had brought in its wake. Hence, despite the ceasefire and the articulation of the so-called “Bajwa Doctrine” — the Pak Army chief has called for “geoeconomics” to replace geopolitics as a way to ensure peace and prosperity in the region — little headway has been made in ending the diplomatic freeze that came about in the wake of the Pulwama terror attack and the constitutional changes in the domestic status of Jammu and Kashmir. It is important to realise that at this juncture, Shehbaz Sharif heads an unstable coalition government and despite losing the no-confidence vote in the National Assembly, Imran Khan shows no signs of going quietly into the night.

There is, however, a template to gradually expand ties between the two countries. The ceasefire agreement — the peace has largely held since February 2021 — made room for continuing discussion on “core concerns” while allowing cooperation wherever possible. And, Pakistan allowed the over-land transport of Indian wheat to Afghanistan during the humanitarian crisis in the wake of the US’s withdrawal. That spirit can be used, in the short term, to pick the low-hanging fruit for the bilateral table. In fact, given the skirmishes and attacks along its western border with Afghanistan, Pakistan has every incentive to ensure stability to its east. Neither country has had a full-time high commissioner in the other since 2019, India has withdrawn the Most-Favoured-Nation status to Pakistan and the proposal for trade in cotton and sugar stands aborted. To begin with, each of these initiatives can be revived to broaden the opening that the two prime ministers have created.

CONSULT THE STATES

Proposal on IPS officers could face disapproval of states. Centre must take them into confidence, increase uptake of personnel

THE CENTRE MUST not implement in a hurry the Union Home Ministry’s new proposal to change the deputation rules of Indian Police Service (IPS) officials. As reported by this newspaper, the ministry has suggested that IPS officers who do not come under central deputation at the Superintendent of Police (SP) or Deputy Inspector General (DIG) level may be barred from a central posting for the rest of their career. The move could stoke the embers of the already-simmering discord between the Centre and state governments on the issue of deputation. In January, several states, including a few where the BJP holds office, had expressed strong disapproval of a plan to change the service rules of IAS, IPS and Indian Forest Service officers. The rules that give the Centre unilateral powers to impose its will on deputation-related matters were rightly seen as a violation of the Constitution’s federal principles. Another decision, in February, to scrap the empanelment requirement for DIG-level IPS level officers for central deputation invited similar criticism. The home minister’s new proposal could drive another wedge between the Centre and states.

In recent years, the states have not been on the same page with the Centre on issues as diverse as allocation of GST revenues, Covid-vaccine supply, jurisdiction over the BSF and the role of enforcement agencies like the CBI, Enforcement Directorate, Income Tax Department and Narcotics Bureau. The Centre’s use of the enforcement agencies has often evoked memories of the Indira Gandhi era when the Union government would frequently resort to high-handedness in its dealings with the states. The fact that at least nine states have withdrawn consent to the CBI from conducting investigations speaks of their mistrust of this agency. The Centre would do well to not complicate matters by embroiling administrative and law enforcement agencies in this tension. Now that the home ministry’s new proposal is before the Prime Minister’s Office (PMO) for approval, there is a chance to course-correct and take the states into confidence — especially because Prime Minister Narendra Modi often cites cooperative federalism as the credo of his government.

The home ministry’s new proposal is seen as a panacea to the shortage of officers at the SP and DIG levels at the Centre. The shortage can be traced to the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government’s decision, in 1999-2002, to reduce the size of new IPS batches. During the UPA government, steps were taken to correct this anomaly. This endeavour must continue. In any case, the issue must not become the cause of another rift between the Centre and states.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



RAJA MENON

ONCE UPON A time, there were three South Asian countries that were, small to medium-sized, puttering along on their chosen paths to national prosperity with varying degrees of success. None of them was destined to be a great power but each, in its own way, had its attractive qualities. Myanmar, China’s closest neighbour with a long history of cross border trade, was the first country to voluntarily turn towards Beijing, from 1988, when the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) took over the reins of government. World sanctions followed, but Beijing reassured the generals of its continued support and in 1989, signed a treaty of trade and cooperation that made China the sole supporter of the illegitimate military government.

The discontent in Myanmar continued against the military government’s leaning towards China until the internal situation exploded in 2007, with a full and brutal military crackdown. Myanmar had a creditable human development index rating earlier, and diversified trade with the outside world. But the strong western sanctions after 2007, made China virtually its sole trading partner. This writer, on a visit to Myanmar in 2008, was aghast to see the mountainous stacks of Burma teak logs piled up inside the army’s military cantonment. The link with China became essential for the regime’s survival but did little to increase economic prosperity. Wood alone accounts for about 70 per cent of Myanmar’s exports to China. It’s clear that China is stripping bare Myanmar’s centuries-old teak forests.

Pakistan is a country that started well, in 1947, being allocated what is probably the world’s largest man-made irrigation system in Punjab and a thriving international harbour at Karachi. Not burdened by any governmental emphasis on Fabian socialism, Pakistan’s economy thrived, although the army entered politics as early as the mid-Fifties. Once it was touted as a progressive country, and visitors arrived from South Korea to study its economic model. Internationally, it played its cards well, receiving military aid in plenty from the US and later on from China. The first agreement on economic cooperation with

China’s economic intervention has proved disastrous for Myanmar, Sri Lanka and Pakistan

As in the case of Myanmar, China earned the goodwill of the Colombo government by supporting it during the civil war and using its veto to block UN sanctions. Today, the Sri Lankan economy is in complete meltdown, with China holding the largest amount of Sri Lankan debt. Private banks have run out of funds to finance imports. Its main sources of revenue, tourism and remittances, have dried up, and the government is in a crisis.

China was signed in 1963, immediately after India’s border defeat. It would not be incorrect to say that both Pakistan’s internal dynamics and external policy has been influenced by its enmity with India, which became the core of the army’s raison d’etre and its continued role in politics. The growing radicalisation of Pakistan was set in motion during the reign of General Ziaul Haq who virtually Islamised an already Muslim country. Of course, the state was “used” by the US to create the Taliban to fight the Russians in Afghanistan and then dumped in 2001 when the US attacked Afghanistan.

The year 2012 was a defining moment for Pakistan when it launched a military operation against terror and signed on to the China Pakistan Economic Corridor. Probably, one thing was the cause of the other. New Delhi and Washington imagined wrongly that the CPEC would lead to a major People’s Liberation Army-Navy (PLAN) expansion into the Indian Ocean through Gwadar, which even now is a largely disused port. In what proved eventually to be a classic debt trap, the Chinese investments went to the head of Pakistan’s leaders — especially Imran Khan who started his political career as a CPEC sceptic. As a conservative IMF estimate put it, Islamabad’s poor management of the economy and reckless borrowing has put its immediate financial needs (2022) at \$51 billion.

Most of the World Bank’s warnings to Islamabad go back to right after 1971 war, and include admonishments to the government to increase the tax base as well as root out corruption in tax collection. The CPEC project unveiled by Xi Jinping in 2015 is China’s flagship project in the BRI but the cost ballooned from \$46 billion to \$62 billion for opaque reasons. In turn, Pakistan would be China’s gateway to the Islamic world and the Indian Ocean and help mitigate the criticism of its brutal Uyghur genocide.

Pakistan’s own government has accused the CPEC of over-charging a random project by \$3 billion. Projects chosen are unviable like the Gwadar port and the Lahore Metro and attracted huge public criticism. The CPEC was put on hold and rebooted. The IMF warned

Islamabad of the CPEC repayment boosting the current account deficit, forcing Pakistan to cut Chinese interest payments for 10 years. The CPEC has been a humbling experience for China and an economic disaster for Pakistan.

Sri Lanka could well have been the country of which a poet said — if there be a heaven on earth, it is this (albeit a tropical paradise). Blessed with human development indices second only to Japan’s in Asia, its largely Buddhist people have lapped up the free education offered by the government. But as in paradise, there was the devil with a poisoned apple in the form of Mahinda Rajapaksa, who insisted on a port in his constituency — Hambantota. Against all economic surveys and advice, the port was built, it floundered and Sri Lanka transferred the land as equity to China for 99 years — reminiscent of the deals struck by the East India Company.

From 2012 to 2016, China accounted for 30 per cent of all FDI to Sri Lanka, becoming the top source of foreign investment. Today China is funding 50 projects in the country, involving more than \$1 billion, including the Colombo Port and the Lakvijaya thermal power plant. There is a strong rumour that project costs are padded for corrupt reasons so that the Chinese loans are accepted at 6.5 per cent interest, as against 2.5 per cent from the ADB. As in the case of Myanmar, China earned the goodwill of the Colombo government by supporting it during the civil war and using its veto to block UN sanctions. Today, the Sri Lankan economy is in complete meltdown, with China holding the largest amount of Sri Lankan debt. Private banks have run out of funds to finance imports. Its main sources of revenue, tourism and remittances, have dried up, and the government is in a crisis.

It’s incredible how the recourse to availing Chinese money by Myanmar, Pakistan and Sri Lanka has led to a feeling of hubris among the leaders, inducing them to take bad economic decisions in the perception that Beijing is footing the bills.

The writer, a former rear admiral in the navy, is the author of A Nuclear Strategy for India

A LOPSIDED RULE

Confidentiality ring amendment creates opacity in antitrust disputes



SRIKANT PARTHASARATHY & AMIRTHALAKSHMI R

THE COMPETITION COMMISSION of India (CCI) has realised that disputes arising out of antitrust matters, also known as competition or cartelisation, require confidentiality. The problems that arise in the commission’s investigation under Sections 3, 4 or 5 of the Competition Act are germane to the suo motu powers given to the director-general of the commission, which have now extended toward establishing an opaque confidentiality ring. This was recently used in an order dated March 7, passed by the DG-CCI on the Amazon dispute, wherein Amazon (the defendant) decided to take the confidentiality route towards its submissions.

In Europe, where Amazon has a presence, antitrust matters are largely regulated under the guidance note for Articles 101 and 102 of the Treaty of the European Union, which states: “Through confidentiality rings, DG Competition (EU) can safeguard the rights of defence while respecting the legitimate interests in the confidentiality of the information providers. In addition, confidentiality rings remove or reduce the burden of preparing non-confidential versions of documents.”

In 2015, the EU mandated the creation of a data room to respect the confidentiality of certain documents. The EU has to protect this mandate to ensure that the right of defence is not prejudiced. The CCI has taken an alternative view by vaguely replacing the intent with the regulation which states, “Confidentiality Ring (sic) the Commission may do so after providing a reasonable opportunity to the informant to represent its case before the

The reason the CCI decided to establish a confidentiality ring is exactly the opposite of the EU directive. The EU would like to protect the information provider, but the CCI seems to want to protect the documents of the defendant. This contradicts the intent in regulation 1 wherein the CCI intends to protect the informant and regulation 2 which gives unfettered rights to ‘parties’ in the dispute which, according to any reasonable person, includes the defendant.

Commission.” This casts an onus on the informant. Turning to the provider of confidential information, the party seeking confidentiality has to submit reasons and the same must be rebutted by the informant, CCI or any other parties, largely driven by the CCI. The question before the CCI now is whether it must adhere to the rule that every party to a dispute must be heard. Yes, but as redacted by the parties seeking to present the information, at the discretion of the CCI. This presents a two-pronged issue. First, what would happen if the informant seeks additional documents so that the agency is not prejudiced? By hearing parties out, through redacted information the CCI is bound to be questioned as to the reasons for deciding in a certain manner and worse, could stifle the process at the start.

This is likely because the CCI has to hear the objections that the informant may have regarding the reasons for keeping information confidential. But objections could be made only if the defendant can prove beyond a reasonable doubt that the information is confidential. The usual ground for seeking this protection is the defendant’s reputation. However, this defence can be used to indiscriminately to subdue any counter that may arise from the informant, who may not possess the intricate details of how a cartel works.

The second question is about the relief under Section 35 of the Act that empowers the CCI to establish a confidentiality ring including the parties in dispute to disseminate the information for which the confidentiality clause is invoked. However, this is immediately

caveated by Regulation 8 of the “Confidentiality Ring” Amendment of April 8, which states that the informant shall not be part of the ring. This will essentially lead the CCI to gather more information surreptitiously for the determination of the case. It has also effectively rejected the informant’s right to know the information, which would be necessary to establish their claim.

This is not only empowers the CCI to further its cause of suo motu investigation but also brings secrecy to cases of high-value disputes. The reason the CCI decided to establish a confidentiality ring is the opposite of the EU directive. The EU would like to protect the information provider, but the CCI seems to want to protect the documents of the defendant. This contradicts the intent in regulation 1 wherein the CCI intends to protect the informant and regulation 2, which gives unfettered rights to “parties” in the dispute to summarily drop the confidentiality card which, according to any reasonable person, includes the defendant.

We have imported the “Confidentiality Ring” from the EU but we may have done it in a manner that none of the decisions can be challenged. The protection provided to the informants, unfortunately, turns out to be to the advantage of the defendants, who are usually large multi-billion dollar entities. It enables the CCI to ringfence its investigation creating legal immunity for “all” involved.

Parthasarathy is a professor of international law & Amirthalakshmi R is a principal counsel at the chambers of Srikant Parthasarathy

APRIL 18, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

KARNATAKA VIOLENCE

THE AGITATION FOR the implementation of the Gokak committee report in Karnataka took a violent turn claiming the lives of two people in police firing in Chitradurga, 150 km from Bangalore. There was also violence in Bangalore when fans of matinee star Rajkumar went on the rampage. There were violent incidents in Jamkhandi in Bijapur district. People went on relay hunger strikes in several parts of the state. In Chitradurga, supporters and opponents of the Gokak committee report clashed. The police fired killing two persons. Thirty-two persons were injured in stone-throwing.



SENSITIVE MATTER CODE

CODES OF CONDUCT for political parties and journalists will be evolved so that divisive secessionist and communal incidents are neither politicised nor given undue publicity. This consensus was reached at a meeting of the standing committee of the National Integration Council. The draft code for political parties will be aimed at keeping communal parties above party politics. The code for the parties will follow.

PM’s US VISIT

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi will visit

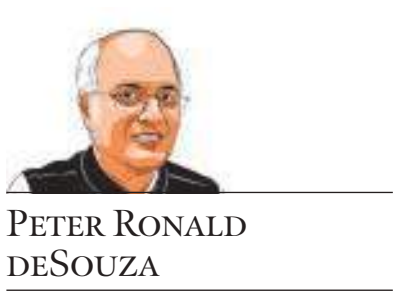
the United States of America in July for a meeting with the American president, Ronald Reagan. While the dates of the visit are yet to be settled, indications are that Mrs Indira Gandhi will be in the US in the first half of the month. The visit is expected to last a week.

NAUSHAD AWARDED

THE DADASAHEB PHALKE award for outstanding contribution to the cause of Indian cinema will go to noted music director Naushad Ali. The award consists of a Swarn Kamal, a cash prize of Rs 40,000 and a shawl.

When the judiciary stands up

Supreme courts of Kenya and Pakistan have had their own H R Khanna moments. They have upheld constitutional values against the executive’s excess



PETER RONALD
DESOUZA

WHEN ONE IS weighed down by the bleakness of things, it is sometimes worthwhile to look elsewhere — perhaps across the border — for some much-needed cheer. Students of comparative constitutional democracy have in the last fortnight been gifted with some good news. The recent rulings of the supreme courts of Kenya and Pakistan, firm in their conclusions and audacious in their reasoning, have given us reason to distribute mithais. The classical principle of constitutional democracy, that of “checks and balances”, has been retrieved from its zone of neglect and restored to its rightful place at the heart of the constitutional order.

As a political scientist, I prefer to see the main message of these rulings at this level of core principles rather than in terms of the relevant constitutional articles as legal scholars do, because the ensuing discussion should not be about the letter of the law but its underlying ethics. These, after all, are disputes not of fact but of interpretation. I see these two judgments of the supreme courts of Kenya and Pakistan as their Justice H R Khanna moment, the moment when law confronts power and does not flinch.

Before I move to a brief discussion of each ruling, two important observations need to be made for they contribute to the ongoing debate about “decolonising the law” in post-colonial societies. This is particularly true in India, Kenya, and Pakistan, countries that carry the legacy burden of the British legal system. The first is that the principles of law, because they are abstract and capacious, can indeed be inhabited by a progressive politics. One has only to be imaginative, argumentative, and bold. The silliness of the British conservative tradition, therefore, need not be the dominant way to read British jurisprudence.

The second is that constitutional courts, in these raucous post-colonial societies, should not get overwhelmed by the tumultuous politics but should, instead, find and occupy that independent space for justice uncompromised by special interests. Such a space exists. Supreme courts hence need to regulate the flow of politics rather than be submerged by it.

The Kenyan case relates to the initiative of the executive, known as the Building Bridges Initiative, or BBI for short, to pass a law to make major changes to the 2010 constitution. The debates that followed centred around the amending power granted by relevant articles, the basic structure doctrine, the proper procedure to be followed for any amendment, the error of reading words into the constitution that were not there, the thinking behind the stated constitutional principle of “public initiation”, and so on. It is a fascinating debate that took place in the supreme court over several months. Confident about its autonomy, the court publicly broadcast its proceedings. We do not have the space here to rehearse these debates and so, for our purposes, all we need, as students of democracy, is to reflect on the decision of the Bench of seven judges to strike down the BBI initiative as unconstitutional. The Bench stared down the executive and declared BBI unconstitutional. Such boldness on BBI was also shown by the two lower courts, the high court and the court of appeal, re-establishing thereby the power of law to discipline errant authority. In total, 19



C R Sasikumar

judges of the three courts debated its constitutionality. Through their courage, the learned justices of the Supreme Court of Kenya restored the sanctity of the constitution and the principle of limited government that is at the heart of a constitutional democracy. In post-colonial societies, the executive often tends to see the electoral verdict as giving it unlimited power. In its H R Khanna moment, the Kenyan judiciary disabused them of this illusion.

The five-member bench of the Supreme Court of Pakistan in a unanimous ruling, rejected the decision of the deputy speaker of parliament to disallow the no-confidence motion against the prime minister and also the follow-up decision of the president to dissolve the National Assembly. Both decisions were deemed unconstitutional. The chief justice, in fact, asked the president’s lawyer, who had argued that the decision was as per the law, that if this was indeed the case how come Pakistan was in a constitutional crisis.

In justification of its action, the executive in Pakistan used all the usual tricks in an executive’s arsenal, from arguing about the sovereignty of the legislature, making its decisions non-justiciable, to the independent authority of the Speaker, to even issues of national security. During the proceedings, the learned judges consulted the chair of the electoral body, the head of national security, the leader of the opposition, and again, as in Kenya, after listening to the fine debates in law, ruled that the rejection of the no-confidence resolution and the dissolution of the National Assembly were unambiguously unconstitutional. By upholding the sanctity of the constitution, the five judges rejected the “doctrine of necessity” — live with the illegal decision of the executive since it is necessary — behind which many Courts often hide. They too stared down the executive and did not blink. This is not easy. Subsequently, the reconvened National Assembly passed a no-confidence motion against the prime minister. The sanctity of the constitution was restored.

One could argue that these are unique episodes in otherwise weak judiciaries, as is

One could argue that these are unique episodes in otherwise weak judiciaries, as is the reality in many post-colonial societies. But in both Kenya and Pakistan, in the last few years, there have been other examples of such judicial independence. In 2017, the Supreme Court of Kenya nullified the election of the president because the process was seen to be compromised and beset by irregularities. In 2021, the Pakistan Supreme Court instructed the executive, through the Evacuee Property Trust Board, (EPTB) to rebuild, from its own resources, a Hindu temple that had been vandalised and to recover the expenditure from the vandals.

the reality in many post-colonial societies. But in both Kenya and Pakistan, in the last few years, there have been other examples of such judicial independence. In 2017, the Supreme Court of Kenya nullified the election of the president because the process was seen to be compromised and beset by irregularities. In 2021, the Pakistan Supreme Court instructed the executive, through the Evacuee Property Trust Board, (EPTB) to rebuild, from its own resources, a Hindu temple that had been vandalised and to recover the expenditure from the vandals.

There are four factors to explain this boldness of the courts. The first is the quality of the law itself. When the law is clear about the necessary constraints on the executive, then arriving at such rulings is less difficult. Second, when the political elites in the country, both within the House and in other institutions, publicly question the actions of the executive, the courts are emboldened because they now have important public allies. Third, when there is a robust public discourse about the unconstitutionality of the executive decision, the court carries the burden of reversing the declining legitimacy of the constitutional order. But the most important is the fourth factor, the courage of the judges. Max Weber, the eminent German social theorist, in a seminal essay titled, ‘Politics as a Vocation’, laid out three qualities necessary for politicians with a vocation. They must have vision, passion, and a sense of responsibility. I believe judges too must have the same qualities. Vision to imagine the future that the constitution envisages for the country. Passion to see themselves as the custodians of its constitutional values. And a sense of responsibility that makes them fair regulators of arrogant politics.

In their recent judgments, these qualities were shown by the courts in Kenya and Pakistan. Sadly, they were missing in the case of Father Stan Swamy.

The writer is co-editor of Companion to Indian Democracy: Resilience, Fragility and Ambivalence, Routledge, 2022. He is the DD Kosambi Visiting Professor at Goa University. Views are personal

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The PM [Shehbaz Sharif] will therefore need to place his speed, efficiency and penchant for hard work within a different framework. He will also need to adjust his working style in order to work through the cabinet instead of only through the bureaucracy.” — DAWN, PAKISTAN

Holding Moscow to account

Loopholes in international law will make it difficult to hold Russia accountable for Ukraine war. Diplomacy, sanctions appear the better bet



FAIZAN MUSTAFA AND
UTKARSH LEO

THE REPORTS OF atrocities in Bucha in Ukraine have shocked the world. The condemnation of this apparent massacre has taken two forms. One, tough rhetoric that holds Russia (or Putin) accountable for the apparent “war crimes” and “crimes against humanity”. And, two, a fresh round of sanctions by the US and its allies “to impose severe and immediate economic costs on the Putin regime”.

The laws of war and international humanitarian law offer protection to civilians and other non-combatants by restricting “the means and methods of warfare”. These laws are part of the Geneva Conventions (GC) of 1949, the First Additional Protocol to the GC 1977 and the rules of customary international humanitarian law. Though Russia is a party to the GC and other international and regional human rights treaties — the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the European Convention on Human Rights, for instance — Moscow does not appear to be playing by the book.

Russia’s culpability in war crimes is not new. The country’s forces executed 60 civilians in Chechnya in 2000. In 2015, Russia used cluster bombs in residential areas of Syria. The same year, it vetoed a UNSecurity Council resolution to recognise the 1995 Srebrenica massacre of 8,000 Muslims by Bosnian Serbs as a genocide.

In Ukraine, Russian missiles, artillery shelling and airstrikes have hit hospitals, schools, nurseries and residential buildings, violating Article 8 of the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court 1998, and resulted in more than 1,600 deaths and injuries to more than 2,000 people. Allegations that Russian forces launched a chemical attack in Mariupol, massacred civilians in Bucha and killed, tortured, and raped civilians and looted their property in other places in Ukraine are being probed. Such acts come under “crimes against humanity” as defined by Article 7 of the Rome Statute. It is no surprise that the UN General Assembly adopted a resolution to suspend Russia from the Human Rights Council.

However, the path to bringing Russia to justice is exceedingly difficult. The International Criminal Court (ICC) prosecutes individuals accused of war crimes and genocide. But the ICC lacks an enforcement body — like a police force — and relies on cooperation between member countries to make arrests and extraditions. But Russia — like the US and India — is not an ICC member country. The court has no jurisdiction over Moscow.

Similarly, the International Court of Justice will be unable to hold Russia accountable because of Moscow’s veto power in the UNSC.

An approach outside of the UN, like establishing an ad hoc tribunal — such as the Nuremberg war crime trials — will raise legitimacy issues. It is also unlikely that Putin

would be held accountable by the European Court of Human Rights.

The US has announced the freezing of assets of Russia’s largest financial institution, Sberbank, as well as those of the country’s largest private bank, Alfa Bank, and the European Union (EU) adopted a fifth package of restrictive measures banning the import of all forms of Russian coal (fully effective from August), caviar, wood and spirits. However, the European sanctions will not apply to the transportation and financing of trade in oil and gas. In fact, since the war started the EU has paid Russia €35 billion for energy imports. Revenue from oil and gas exports accounts for 39 per cent of the Russian federal budget revenue.

Russia is Europe’s key supplier of natural gas and crude oil — it accounts for 45 per cent and 27 per cent, respectively, of the region’s requirement for the two commodities. This dependence gives Putin a huge bargaining chip. And, Russia is being helped by Switzerland, the world’s largest commodity trading hub, which is neither an EU member nor a part of the European Economic Area.

Following criticism from the EU, the Swiss Federal Council has, by and large, adopted the EU measures against Russia. But as the EU is yet to announce sanctions on Russian oil and gas, Switzerland is not required to impose sanctions under its Federal Embargo Act. Swiss trading houses continue to buy Russian oil. Reports show that Swiss commodity traders were the largest buyers of Russian oil in February and March and approximately 4 million Swiss francs flow daily into Russia from Switzerland as a result of this oil and gas trade.

Due to weak regulation, the details of these trades are hard to uncover. Commodity trade is an example of transit trade. It is only the money that flows through Switzerland, the raw materials never touch Swiss territory. Unless Switzerland strengthens its regulation around commodity trading, its humanitarian aid, and tweets in support of Ukraine have no meaning.

At the same time, Russia’s future appears grim. To an extent, it has managed to find new buyers — like India and China — for its oil at discounted prices. However, it is unlikely that both countries will ditch their Middle-East suppliers completely. So, if Europe drops it as a supplier, Russia will find it exceedingly difficult to find replacements. To find new natural gas customers (like India, Pakistan and China), Russia will require massive investments in pipelines.

Though Russia is using loopholes in international treaties and its leverage over Europe to dictate terms, its triumphalism is likely to be short-lived. The EU’s 10-point plan to reduce Europe’s dependence on Russian natural gas will significantly impact Russia in the long term. Even though sanctions appear to be circumvented, the Russian economy is hurting and Moscow has been pushed towards a selective default on its sovereign debt.

With rising inflation and economic hardship looming over Russian citizens, the possibility of regime change in Moscow cannot be ruled out.

Mustafa is vice-chancellor and Leo is assistant professor at NALSAR University of Law, Hyderabad

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

DIAGNOSIS & CURE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A virus rages’ (IE, April 16). Sonia Gandhi has expressed her apprehensions as to how the country is getting trapped in the quagmire of hate politics. It is correct that instead of constructively utilising the diversity of India for the betterment of the country, the divisive politics that is being actively pursued will only help in fragmenting the nation on caste and communal lines. Any discontent seeping into the armed forces is fraught with horrendous consequences, which a democratic country like ours can hardly afford in today’s global scenario. Let there be a clarion call for all major institutions of the country to honestly and sincerely play their mandated constitutional and statutory roles instead of buckling under the pressures from any party in power.

Andleeb Naqvi, Greater Noida.

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A virus rages’ (IE, April 16). There is a lot of truth in what the Congress president writes about the state of affairs in the country, but sadly, it is also a reflection of the failure of the Congress and other opposition parties to hold the ruling party to account, which keeps sweeping elections despite its discordant policies. It is clear that the tried-and-tested strategies of the past are no longer working,

especially for the Congress, and a better way has to be found to connect with people and highlight the failings of the government. The country needs a strong Opposition to keep the government in check, but this will not happen unless it comes up with more effective ways of taking on the BJP. Unfortunately for the Congress and the Opposition, there is not much time left before the next general election, and they will have to get their act right quickly if they are to stop the BJP juggernaut.

Hemant Contractor, Pune

HELPING NO ONE

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Hate speech thrives and divides’ (IE, April 17). The religious divide that we are witnessing in Karnataka is deplorable. Decades of urbanisation and growth have been undone by vicious actors who are targeting the secular fabric of the state. The BJP is using its UP and Haryana rulebook to stir up religious controversies in India’s Silicon Valley. What is surprising is that people are participating in it — from hijab protests to beef to even removing loudspeakers around religious sites. Do these actions speak well for a nation whose PM has ambitions of becoming a figure on the world stage? How is this helping the youth?

Gaurav Gupta, Gurgaon



KUNAL RAY

GEETANJALI SHREE’S HINDI novel, *Ret Samadhi* — translated into English as *Tomb of Sand* by Daisy Rockwell — has been short-listed for the International Booker Prize. Expectedly, this has energised the Indian literary sphere. There have been many articles and commentaries about the author and the translation since the announcement of the shortlist. In fact, it all began when the novel made it to the Booker Prize longlist. Any association with the Booker sends us into a tizzy. The Indian media ecosystem leaves no stone unturned in hailing such events as big moments for Indian literature. We adore the Booker.

Ret Samadhi was written in 2018. Geetanjali Shree is an important voice in contemporary Hindi writing. I have been an admirer of her fiction. Her novels such as *Mai* and *Khai Jagah* are also available in English translations. In fact, I read the *Roof Beneath Their Feet* (Tirohit) some years ago when I found a copy at a second-hand book shop in Pune. She has, therefore, an important body

Books beyond the Booker

Writers in Indian languages deserve recognition on their own terms

of work that is available in English translation and predates the recent Booker recognition. However, it took the Booker nomination for the larger literary sphere in this country to take an interest in the author and her writing. Does this attitude indicate a systemic malaise? Probably. It also shows that our literary discourse and conversations even today are guided by foreign awards or longlists and shortlists. It is not a culture that discusses writing or a writer for their own merit unless validated by a foreign award nomination or an award of some kind. Do we then have to wait for Bookers and other such awards to know writers Geetanjali Shree and many others like her that remain unknown and untranslated in India? Would we look at writers like Vaikom Muhammad Basheer and Vinod Kumar Shukla differently if they had received the award?

Having said that, does this nomination indicate better days for translations? It is a known fact that in the last few years, several leading English language publishers in India

have focused on translations to identify contemporary texts from various modern Indian languages and make them available to a larger reading public. Some of the leading literary awards in India such as the JCB Prize have also gone to translated works of fiction in the recent past.

Are we to believe that there’s a newfound interest in translation among English language publishers. I think publishers too are looking for a new set of voices to bring to their readers beyond the monotony of English writing in India and the small cultural sphere it comes from. Translations help broaden our horizons and imagination about the country we live in and call home. They help us understand or at least acquaint ourselves with an India that exists beyond Delhi, Mumbai, Bengaluru and Chennai or even show us sides of these cities that English writing doesn’t capture. Think of Malayalam author, M Mukundan’s *Delhi: A soliloquy*, for instance.

Translations are of critical importance, especially in a multilingual country like

India but will this Booker recognition help to strengthen our interest in translated works? Will the interest survive after the award? These are important questions. The answers may not be known as yet but considering the way awards function or have functioned in the past, one can certainly deduce that at the most, they create a momentary interest in the author and the book. Such interest doesn’t sustain a literary culture. We, therefore, have to find our own parameters and create our own systems and networks to discuss books, writers and their writing. It is also a paradox perhaps that despite our linguistic diversity, we are unwittingly urged to believe that the only way to interact with the various literatures of India is through English, which is such a colonial attitude. The fact that the Booker is considered a marker of excellence is in itself an expression of servitude.

The writer teaches literary and cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune

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IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

GARY KIRSTEN, FORMER SOUTH AFRICA CRICKETER, WORLD CUP-WINNING INDIA COACH, AND MENTOR, GUJARAT TITANS

“The most successful franchises in IPL history have had the least amount of player churn”

Gary Kirsten talks about guiding young Indian talent in the IPL, his coaching philosophy, memories of the 2011 World Cup win and providing opportunities to township players back home in South Africa. The session was moderated by Sandeep Dwivedi, National Sports Editor, *The Indian Express*

Sandeep Dwivedi: Long before you became the World Cup-winning India coach, you were a household name in India as a cricketer. A solid opener, you seemed to have cracked that run-making code. How did you evolve as a batsman?

As a cricketer, you need to work something out. You need to come up with a plan to score runs. From a very young age, I was mentored by people who helped me understand how to perform. And, I think, by doing that, allowed me to kind of formulate my way of scoring runs. Like you rightly said, I wasn't necessarily easy on the eye, but it was effective.

Sandeep Dwivedi: After Greg Chappell, India took a leap of faith and appointed you, someone with no real coaching experience. It is said, India needed a coach of a certain personality type — they wanted someone the dressing room could trust and not someone who would thrust his way (on the players).

It was a journey with the Indian players in terms of a team going from an average performing unit to the best in the world. There is always talent in the team, skill and ability, but I think it was about helping the team understand how everyone needed to fly in formation. That is what teams are about, a bunch of individuals coming together. There are certain things that you do in a team environment that allow consistency for performance.

Sandeep Dwivedi: There is this one picture from the World Cup final win at the Wankhede Stadium, where the players are trying to lift you on their shoulders and you are almost embarrassed. You are not the kind of person who would want to be in the spotlight...

Yeah, absolutely. I think that's what coaching is about. I don't necessarily feel that I need to be lifting trophies; the players are the ones who need to do that. I just enjoy the work. For me, the highlight with India was the three-year journey of starting out as a young inexperienced coach to walking a journey with the players. We could excel over a three-year period and watch individuals give the most prolific performance of their careers. Certainly, a lot of the batsmen were playing the best cricket of their lives at that point. So that was the fun part.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Even (MS) Dhoni is rarely seen in the frame when the team is celebrating or posing with the Cups. How exactly did you read this?

I think he's just an ultimate team player. He is a great leader, his interest is in the performance of the team. As a captain, his mindset was always to look at the team first and see at the way the team could be thriving. He never dwelled on his own performances. His focus was always on how the team could do well.

Sandeep Dwivedi: How difficult or easy was it for you to walk away after the team had won the World Cup?

No, it wasn't difficult. I think it was very clear to me that the journey of three years would end with the World Cup. My personality is such that it is easy for me to move on. I look at those three years as a much cherished time of my life and a massive privilege. In international coaching, you are a custodian of the environment just for a short period of time, it's not going to last forever. So, just enjoy it and get the most out of it. I couldn't have thought of a better time to move on from the job.

Sandeep Dwivedi: You always talk about how the process and journey is more important than the destination. How difficult it is as a coach of a franchise team because of the investment that is being made by the owners and the related pressures? The bottom line is always about winning. So, what happens about the grand plan about building a team? If the results don't go your way, at times, does it become difficult? Do you change your plan?

There is massive pressure on short-term results. Often, the evolution of a team takes time. The danger in any franchise is to make crisis-management decisions where you are chopping and changing the team a lot because you think someone else is going to do a better job than the guy that you originally put in the team. I think one needs to be careful of



WHY
GARY KIRSTEN

With barely any previous coaching experience, Gary Kirsten guided India to the 2011 World Cup title. He moved on to coach his country South Africa and a few T20 franchises, including Royal Challengers Bangalore. One of cricket's most astute brains is back at the Indian Premier League to tackle a different challenge as mentor and batting coach of new franchise Gujarat Titans

that. The most successful franchises in IPL history have been the ones that have had the least amount of player churn because they have stuck with players and backed them. From a coaching perspective, the only way to coach is to allow every player the opportunity to explore his talent. In a high-risk game of short-format cricket, chances of consistent success aren't necessarily always going to be there. There is going to be a lot of hit and miss along the way. But if players show potential, then you've got to back them all the way, even though they might not be performing.

Sandeep Dwivedi: Your assistant during your time with the Indian team, Paddy Upton, in his book, mentions a meeting with Team India. That was probably your first meeting with the team. You

made a grand presentation about a strategy and you were quite happy with how it went. After the meeting, Paddy tells you, 'Don't think it landed'. How difficult it is to connect with a team where players have different backgrounds? More so in the IPL, where a team has players from different countries...

I think the biggest priority, especially as a foreign coach, is to really take time to understand the people and build a connection and relationship. It is much harder when you have got language and cultural barriers as well. So, you need to take a little bit more time and effort into building up those relationships. The other side is to understand people off the field, not just on the field. They are treated as performance tools, and there's an expectation on

them to perform. But the better you understand them as people, the more influence you can have over them as leaders. We all would have examples of people trying to lead us where we don't trust them. They are not going to get much out of us. So, I think that was a priority for me. There was good learning from that first interaction where I thought I would need to present a way to the team rather than just be authentic in front of the team and grow with them.

Sriram Veera: I heard a podcast where you talk about predetermination and batting. You are saying a little predetermination is good.

I think there is a lot more thought that goes into a bowler's plan, especially in the shorter format. I think, in Test-match cricket, because you have got a lot of time and you don't have to make the play, you can just react a lot more. But, in 20-overs cricket, you need to take a chance on trying to work out what the bowling plan is. By doing that, you take a chance that the bowler is going to do something different and you set up yourself for a predetermined event.

Sriram Veera: Was it predetermination when you would walk down the track to bowlers? You were one of the early batsmen in ODI who would walk down the pitch. How did that come about?

It was something that I developed in my game. You needed to find a way to get the ball to the boundary in one-day cricket. So, it was like a release shot that I felt was fairly low risk. But that certainly did help me get the ball to the boundary when I was under pressure. So yes, it was something that I developed in my game that was really helpful to me.

Nihal Koshie: Hardik Pandya (who is captaining Gujarat Titans) in this IPL seems to be the same player he was before his injury. What were the

conversations you had with him? He seems to be enjoying himself and the runs are back.

We've had a number of conversations, but, you know, the coaching conversations are mostly not about me giving him directions. It is more about me helping him understand what he wants to achieve with his batting. He has got some good clarity in that space. He realised that he's

As a captain, Dhoni's mindset was always to look at the team first and see the way it could be thriving. He never dwelled on his own performances. His focus was always on how the team could do well

Sandeep G: Every coach has a guiding philosophy. What is yours?

I think every environment requires something different. So it's really about understanding the environment you are working in. For example, working with a lot of senior players requires a different leadership as compared to when you are with a group of junior, inexperienced players. So, it's really understanding that environment. Your style of leadership will be based on what the requirements are. Young players need a bit more guidance and direction. Senior players just need an

environment where they feel they can make a contribution. I think a lot of it just depends on the environment that you are working in as a coach.

Sandeep G: Does the dynamics of coaching change between formats such as white ball and red ball?

Yeah, there is a massive distinction. Because you are working with an international team, you have got a long time to work with individuals, and you are building relationships and a connection over a long period of time. Also, there are other stakeholders in your international team, there's a lot of people in the country who are interested in the performance of the team. Franchise cricket is very different, because you have much less time. You are just trying to find your flow as a group and trying to get your balance with the team right. It is largely focused — less on building

I do think there's a real indication that young Indian players are feeling more comfortable in the IPL environment... It has created a platform for young Indian players to showcase their talent and they are embracing it

opportunity, which is very exciting. I think it's a brilliant thing for Indian cricket to see these youngsters come through and play a brand of cricket that is very exciting.

Tushar Bhaduri: As a supplementary question to that, the Big Bash in Australia has two foreign players per playing XI. Do you think the IPL can now afford to have less than four foreign players in a XI? Or, is four the optimal number?

I think the foreign players definitely add value to the tournament. You just take the performances of Jos Buttler in this tournament. It has provided massive entertainment to the crowds and performances like that increase the standard and the quality of the event. You wouldn't want that not to be the case. Our game against Rajasthan Royals had our young fast bowler Yash Dayal come in and bowl to Jos Buttler. If there is ever a richer and more pressurised experience that you are going to have, it's that. So, that's going to help him (Dayal) grow very quickly as a player and improve. I think the important thing is to make sure that your standard of competition is at its highest. And, I think all international players would tell you that the quality of the IPL is as good as anywhere in the world, if not better than anywhere in the world at franchise level.

Devendra Pandey: You have worked with players like (Sachin) Tendulkar, (Rahul) Dravid, (VVS) Laxman in the past and now you have in your team Hardik and Shubman Gill. Do you see a change in mindset or approach towards the game?

I think you are comparing apples with pears in many ways. There was massive focus on one format 15 years ago. Now, the conversations I'm having with Indian players are all around short-format cricket. I am not involved in the longer version. If you are asking me if the conversation I had about Test cricket with the Indian players in 2008 as compared to young players now, I wouldn't be able to answer you.

Shamik Chakrabarty: The young South African batsman Dewald Brevis had a rocking start to the IPL. Do you think he is the best young South African batting talent at the moment and should be fast tracked to the senior team?

He is an exciting talent and he seems to be embracing the IPL really well. That is great from a South African perspective. But it's early days in his career. He is definitely showing massive potential. I don't like to use the word 'fast track' because there is no such thing in batting. It takes time. You are going to have a lot of obstacles along the way. He has certainly shown signs and shown real promise in terms of an international career. But it's still early days.

Sandeep Dwivedi: You have worked a lot to develop cricket in townships back in South Africa. How enriching is that experience to see them grow? As an international top coach, how fulfilling is that?

It is incredibly fulfilling because you are able to work with young and talented players who don't necessarily have access to opportunity like a lot of other players do. To provide them with that opportunity is particularly fulfilling. In countries like India, South Africa, and all Test-playing nations, how many kids are out there who are really talented but never get the opportunity to showcase their talent because they don't have a cricket bat that they can afford or they don't have access to a cricket field where they could potentially play on? They don't, in their jurisdiction, have an academy where they could go down and show people how talented they are. They just don't have access to the game at all.

In South Africa that's a big problem in our poorer communities — access to cricket is not always there. I guess it is different in India. You look around and there is informal sport taking place everywhere. In India, it seems like it is mainly just cricket matches going on. Whereas in South Africa, it's probably football in the informal sector. So our foundation (Gary Kirsten Foundation) has tried to take cricket into one of those areas and create a high-performance facility, where young, talented players can walk a couple of 100 metre from their home and come and hit balls in a nice indoor centre or a field.



Illustration: Suvajit Dey

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, APRIL 18, 2022

ECONOMY

TO HOLD BILATERAL MEETS WITH SEVERAL NATIONS, INCLUDING LANKA, INDONESIA

Array of meetings on FM's US agenda: from G20, IMF to chip, energy CEOs

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman will be attending the spring meetings of the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, G20 finance ministers and central bank governors (FMCBG) after leaving for the US late on Sunday.

The Finance Minister will hold bilateral meetings on issues of mutual interest with several countries, including Sri Lanka, Indonesia, South Korea and South Africa, a Finance Ministry statement said.

The Sri Lankan delegation is likely to meet an Indian team in Washington DC on the sidelines of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) meetings to explore further assistance from New



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will also hold one-on-one meetings with CEOs from the semiconductor, energy and other sectors. via @FinMinIndia Twitter

Delhi in the form of additional credits for essential commodities and balance-of-payment

support. India recently announced that it would extend a \$1 billion line of credit as part of

its financial assistance to deal with the economic crisis. India has so far committed \$1.9 billion to Sri Lanka in the form of credits for essential commodities and fuel, and also in loans and currency swaps.

A Sri Lankan government delegation is headed to the US to engage with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to secure a \$4 billion package as it desperately tries to salvage the country's beleaguered economy, which is currently reeling under a severe forex crisis.

During a meeting between Sitharaman and Sri Lanka's High Commissioner to India Milinda Moragoda last Wednesday, the issue of New Delhi extending bridging finance required by Colombo until its economic adjustment programme with the IMF was

discussed.

In the US, Sitharaman will also hold one-on-one meetings with CEOs from the semiconductor, energy and other sectors of priority for the Government of India along with meeting David Malpass, president, World Bank, the ministry statement said.

Sitharaman will also participate in a high-level panel discussion on 'Money at a Crossroad' hosted by the Managing Director, IMF.

Apart from the official meetings with the World Bank, IMF, G20 and Financial Action Task Force, the finance minister will also attend an event at the Atlantic Council, a prominent think tank based in Washington DC, and will also interact with the faculty and students at Stanford University.

SECTOR WATCH
NEW-AGE BUSINESSES

Without naming portfolio startups, Sequoia says will drive governance

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FINALLY BREAKING its silence after some of its portfolio startups were caught in corporate governance issues, Sequoia Capital India has said that it would take "proactive steps" to drive corporate governance at startups it invests in and would ask for more disclosures and rigorously adopt internal audits and controls.

While Sequoia Capital India did not name any startup individually, its comments come when at least three of its portfolio firms — BharatPe, Trel and Zilingo — have been hit with corporate governance issues, including potential instances of fraud. "Recently some portfolio founders have been under investigation for potential fraudulent practices or poor governance. These allegations are deeply disturbing," the venture fund said in a blog post without specifying naming any of the startups.

BharatPe's co-founder Ashneer Grover has left the company after an investigation within the company allegedly found his wife Madhuri Jain and his relatives syphoned money from the firm. Live commerce firm Trel's founders too have been accused of misappropriating the startup's funds and misrepresenting its growth metrics. Singapore-based Zilingo has suspended its chief executive Ankita Bose over accounting issues. Sequoia Capital India's head Shailendra Singh has left Zilingo's board post the allegations.

The venture fund said it would place special emphasis

Its comments come when at least three of its portfolio firms — BharatPe, Trel and Zilingo — have been hit with corporate governance issues, including potential instances of fraud

on complaints raised by whistleblowers and would conduct governance training for founders and senior management, implement whistleblower policies, and focus on a more independent board representation, among other things. "When whistleblowers call us to report on issues, we always take them seriously. We know in some cases they may turn out to be baseless — but we still have to look into them as it is a board member's fiduciary duty. .We won't hesitate to act to protect the interest of the company and employees, even if it costs us financially," the investment firm said.

In 2021, it invested more than \$4 billion in over 70 startups, including the likes of WakeFit and Nykaa-rival Purple, among others. It is also an investor in both the top edtech firms in the country in Byju's and Unacademy. The investment firm was also an early investor in Zomato which hit the bourses last year, and another of its portfolio companies, Mobikwik has filed its draft prospectus with market regulator Sebi for a Rs 1,900 crore initial public offering.

'UPI to lead; BNPL, digital currency to drive online payments growth in 5 yrs'

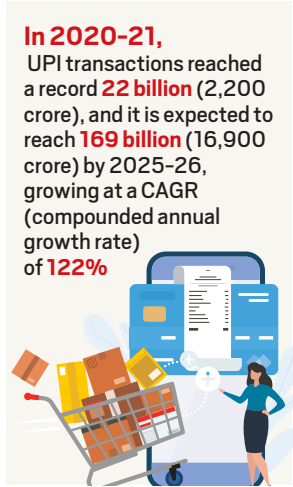
Retail online transaction platform UPI will likely continue to dominate the digital payments space even as newer methods such as BNPL and digital currency are expected to define the future of payments, a PwC India report said

UNIFIED PAYMENTS INTERFACE (UPI), Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL), Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) and offline payments will drive growth of digital payments in India in the next five years

steady growth at a CAGR of 23 per cent (volume wise), and is expected to reach 217 billion (21,700 crore) transactions in FY26 from 59 billion (5,900 crore) in FY22, said the report titled 'The Indian Payments Handbook-2021-26'

THE INDIAN DIGITAL PAYMENTS MARKET saw

Source: PwC India/PTI



Tata Steel board to consider stock split

Mumbai: The board of directors of Tata Steel will consider a stock split at the board meeting to be held on May 3.

Tata Steel shares closed 0.1 per cent lower at Rs 1,319.25 on the BSE on Wednesday.

"The company will consider a proposal for sub-division of the equity shares of the company having a face value of Rs 10 each, in such manner as may be determined by the board of directors, subject to regulatory and statutory approvals

During a stock split, while the number of outstanding shares rises, the price per equity share gets cheaper proportionately

as may be required and the approval of the shareholders of the company," the company said in an

exchange filing.

According to analysts, stock split is done by a company to increase liquidity in the market after the price of a stock rises beyond the reach of retail investors, making the stock affordable for them.

During a stock split, while the number of outstanding shares rises, the price per equity share gets cheaper proportionately. However, sub-division of shares won't lead to increase or decrease in the capital. **ENS**

CNG prices spike; OilMin says awaiting data to make allocation

New Delhi: The Oil Ministry has not made any fresh allocation of natural gas from domestic fields to the city gas sector, sending CNG and piped cooking gas prices to record highs but the ministry insisted that allocations have not been stopped and providing more for the sector would lead to cut in supplies to industries like power and fertiliser.

Despite a decision of the Union Cabinet to give 100 per cent gas supply under 'no cut' priority to the city gas distribution (CGD) sector, current supplies are at March 2021 demand level. This has driven city gas operators to buy high priced imported LNG to make up for the shortfall, leading to a record spike in prices, sources said.

Commenting on the issue, the ministry said it "is waiting for the updated data for the period

'UPDATED DATA'
■ The ministry said it "is waiting for the updated data for the period October 2021 to March 2022 from CGD entities for the allocations in April 2022. This is yet to be received from the entities."

October 2021 to March 2022 from CGD entities for the allocations in April 2022. This is yet to be received from the entities." The ministry said: "Based on data of October 2020 to March 2021 consumption, the allocation for April-October 21 was revised as per the guidelines in April last year." **PTI**

MARKET WATCH

SEVEN OF TOP 10 COS LOSE ₹1L CR IN M-CAP

New Delhi: Seven of the 10 most valued firms suffered a combined erosion of Rs 1,32,535.79 crore in market valuation last week, with Reliance Industries emerging as the worst hit. In the holiday-truncated week, the Sensex tumbled 1,108.25 points, or 1.86 per cent. **PTI**

INTERVIEW WITH MD & CEO, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA LTD

'Auto industry responsible for jobs; disruptive innovation shouldn't disrupt industry'



Hisashi Takeuchi

Maruti Suzuki has flagged concerns over the feasibility of battery EVs but now the company has announced huge investments in the space. Why the shift in stance?

I don't think we are opposed to EVs. My understanding of Maruti Suzuki's position is that whatever is good for India and good for the environment, every technology should be explored. We see that EV is one of the answers, it has good potential. But at the same time, industry experts say that by 2030, EV passenger car scenario may be 10% of the market. This means that 90% of the people (I'll still have) ICE engine, or combination of ICE engine with hybrid technology or some other

I don't think we are opposed to EVs. My understanding of Maruti Suzuki's position is that whatever is good for India and good for the environment, every technology should be explored. We see that EV is one of the answers, it has good potential.."

Lack of enough charging infrastructure was one of the concerns. How confident are you about that changing?

As far as infrastructure is concerned, right now not enough is there, but I think the government is trying to push very strongly to expand the infrastructure for EV charging. I see gradually when vehicle numbers increase, infrastructure will also grow. Both will grow at the same speed, that is my view.

What is your takeaway from the recent incidents of fires on electric two-wheelers?

Safety of our customer is of paramount importance and for this reason, especially in India, the environment is very

tough — the temperature is very high and it is not a good environment for battery and for battery driver. Because of this reason, we have been doing extensive test on our Wagon R — one in Japanese specification and one in Indian specification. We have done very intensive testing in India, so we are sure that our systems are free from accidents and we can make a safe vehicle for

Indian environment. We have been testing on the highways, roads, deserts, and hills.

What is the future road map of Maruti Suzuki in terms of investments in new vehicle technologies?

We have already announced a mega investment in Gujarat, as far as EV is concerned. We also announced that our EV will become available for Indian people by 2025 and that is the first step, and we will keep doing this. At the same time, we will also pursue other technologies like CNG vehicles, which is much better Co2 emissions compared to petrol engine. My view is that we should go ahead in a technology-neutral way, and wherever possible, we should make the best use of older technologies, which has good potential to contribute to the environment. We should try to utilise not one but a variety of technologies.

What are the company's plans in terms of hybrid vehicles?

Hybrid technology is an important technology. EV is a very good solution but hybrid can also contribute a lot and cost-wise, it is not as expensive as EV. Hybrid is a technology that can contribute greatly to the Co2 emission situation in India and even without infrastructure we can develop the market, because it does not need charging infrastructure. We will introduce strong hybrid products in the not-so-distant future.

Why has Okinawa recalled some of its electric scooters

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

TWO-WHEELER EV maker Okinawa Autotech has 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 manufacturer in India.

Why the recall?

The recall comes close on the heels of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, just days earlier, urging manufacturers to voluntarily recall EV batches involved in fire incidents, during a media interview. "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," the company 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". The development comes weeks after an Okinawa scooter erupted into flames claiming the lives of a man and his thirteen year old daughter.

At the time, the company had claimed that the fire in its electric two-wheeler 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. Okinawa, which was established in 2016 out of a manufac-

turing facility in Rajasthan's Bhiwadi, sold more than 46,000 electric scooters in 2021-22, as per data by the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA), and had a market share of 0.39 per cent. In March this year, the company sold more than 8,000 electric scooters.

Why is there an increase in fire related incidents?

Over the past few weeks, over a dozen electric scooters have erupted into flames including those manufactured by Ola Electric, Pure EV and Jitendra EV aside from Okinawa. The companies have launched respective investigations into the instances to ascertain the reasons behind the fires. The Road Transport Ministry meanwhile has also ordered a probe into the incidents.

Three flyers test positive: Hong Kong bans AI flights till Apr 24

New Delhi: Hong Kong has banned Air India services till April 24 after three passengers on one of its flights tested positive for Covid post arrival on Saturday, a senior government official has said.

Passengers from India can arrive in Hong Kong only if they have a Covid negative certificate from a test done 48 hours prior to the journey, according to rules issued by the Hong Kong government, said the official on Sunday.

Air India did not respond to the PTI's request for a statement on this matter. "The three passengers on Air India's AI316 Delhi-Kolkata-Hong Kong flight on April 16 tested positive for COVID-19 post arrival," the official said. Air India flights from New Delhi and Kolkata have been banned till April 24 by the Hong Kong government. **PTI**

BRIEFLY

'GST rates'

New Delhi: The GST Council at its next meeting is likely to consider a proposal to do away with the 5 per cent slab by moving some goods to 3 per cent and the remaining to 8 per cent, sources said.

LIC, FEMA rules

New Delhi: The government amended rules of the FEMA, paving the way for up to 20 per cent FDI in LIC.

NSankar no more

New Delhi: Sanmar Group chairman N Sankar died on Sunday following a brief illness, family sources said. **PTI**

Musk's elusive politics: 'Moderate' but not 'moderate about all issues'

JEREMY WPETERS
NEW YORK, APRIL 17

THE OPINIONS poured in, 280 characters at a time, as to whether it was good or bad that Elon Musk had offered to buy Twitter for more than \$40 billion and take it private.

But what no one seemed to be able to say with any certainty was what kind of political philosophy the enigmatic billionaire believes himself. He is frequently described as libertarian, though that label fails to capture how paradoxical and random his politics can be. He has no shortage of opinions on the most pertinent and divisive issues of the day, from Covid-19 lockdowns ("fascist," he called them) to immigration restrictions ("Very much disagree," he has said.)

There is not much consistency in the miscellany of his public statements or his profuse Twitter commentary — except that they often align with his business interests. He is the co-founder of Tesla, who quit former President Donald Trump's business councils after the administration pulled out of the Paris climate accord. But he recently ran afoul of environmentalists for calling for an immediate increase in domestic oil and gas production, though it would not be helpful to his own businesses in electric cars and solar energy.

He is an avowed enthusiast for the First Amendment. But he has tried to force a journalist to testify in a defamation lawsuit against him, and he has often had outsize reactions to criticism. Musk said he was a registered independent



Tesla CEO Elon Musk in Gruenheide, near Berlin. Reuters file

when he lived in California, the state he famously and loudly left for Texas because he said its business climate had grown too inhospitable. He has described himself as "politically moderate" but added, "Doesn't mean I'm moderate about all issues." He did not respond to a request for comment.

One person who has worked closely with Musk said that it is Musk's firmly held belief that in a functioning democracy, it is anyone's right to say "whatever stupid thing you want." This person, who spoke anonymously, added dryly, "Which he occasionally does."

If he should become Twitter's owner, Musk said he would scrap the current programme of content monitoring and censoring. Conservatives were elated. Ordinarily, with public figures

so outspoken and wealthy, their political leanings are easy to discern because they are explained in campaign finance disclosures. But Musk's political giving is paltry compared with that of other billionaires like Charles Koch and Peter Thiel. His actions appear to reflect the moves of someone who is not thinking ideologically but pragmatically. Many of his donations were funneled to politicians in states where Tesla has manufacturing operations like Texas and California. "In general, I believe government should rarely impose its will upon the people, and, when doing so, should aspire to maximise their cumulative happiness," he tweeted. "That said, I would prefer to stay out of politics."

If that's the case, he often can't seem to help himself. After one of

Musk's Twitter fans pointed out that President Biden had not congratulated SpaceX for the successful completion of a private space-flight last fall, Musk hit back with a jab reminiscent of Trump's derisive nickname "Sleepy Joe."

Few issues have raised his ire as much as the coronavirus restrictions. Musk's outbursts flared dramatically as he lashed out at state and local governments over stay-at-home orders. He initially defied local regulations that shut down his Tesla factory in Fremont. Given Musk's largely non-denominational political philosophy, some on the right were less sanguine. Ann Coulter, a frequent presence on Twitter, said the billionaire entrepreneur struck her as "mostly apolitical" and "mostly about promoting himself." **NYT**

TOPOF THE
WORLD

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury

BRITAIN

Archbishop of Canterbury condemns UK's asylum plan

THE ARCHBISHOP of Canterbury has condemned a British plan to send tens of thousands of asylum seekers to the East African country of Rwanda, saying the policy did not stand "the judgment of God". Delivering a sermon on Easter Sunday at Canterbury Cathedral, Justin Welby said the strategy announced last week by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson posed "serious ethical questions". Anyone who arrived in Britain illegally since Jan. 1 could be relocated to Rwanda under the deal. Johnson's government said it would help break people-smuggling networks and stem the flow of migrants via the Channel. **REUTERS**

TUNISIA

Ship carrying fuel sinks; authorities try to curb impact

TUNISIA WILL work with other countries that have offered to help it to prevent environmental damage after a merchant ship carrying up to one thousand tonnes of oil sank in Tunisian waters, the defence ministry said on Sunday. The ship was heading from Equatorial Guinea to Malta when it sank seven miles off the coast of the southern city of Gabes on Friday. The Tunisian navy rescued all seven crew members following a distress call. It was carrying between 750 tonnes and one thousand tonnes of fuel, officials said. **REUTERS**

MYANMAR

Military chief pardons prisoners to mark holiday

MYANMAR'S MILITARY government on Sunday began releasing more than 1,600 prisoners to mark the traditional new year holiday, but they didn't include any political detainees despite the country's ruling general vowing to bring peace this year. Myanmar has been under military rule since February last year, when the army ousted the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi. The takeover was met with massive resistance, which has since turned into what some U.N. experts have characterized as civil war. **AP**

NORTH KOREA

New weapon tested to bolster nuclear capability

NORTH KOREA has test-fired a new type of tactical guided weapon designed to boost its nuclear fighting capability, state media reported Sunday, a day before its chief rivals the US and South Korea begin annual drills that the North views as an invasion rehearsal. The 13th weapons test this year came amid concerns that North Korea may soon conduct an even larger provocation. That may include a nuclear test in an effort to expand the country's arsenal and increase pressure on US while denuclearisation talks remain stalled. **AP**

Remaining Ukrainian troops in Mariupol hold on as Russia demands surrender

Will fight absolutely to the end... no intention to surrender: Ukraine PM

ADAM SCHRECK & MSTSILAV CHERNOV
KYIV, APRIL 17

THE SHATTERED port city of Mariupol appeared on the brink of falling to the Russians on Sunday after seven weeks under siege, in what would give Moscow a crucial success following its failure to storm the Ukrainian capital and the sinking of its Black Sea flagship.

The Russian military estimated that 2,500 Ukrainian fighters were holding out at a hulking steel plant with a warren of underground passageways in the last pocket of resistance in Mariupol.

Moscow set a midday deadline for their surrender, saying those who laid down their arms were "guaranteed to keep their lives." But the defenders did not submit, just as they rejected previous ultimatums.

"We will fight absolutely to the end, to the win, in this war," Ukrainian Prime Minister Denys Shmyhal vowed on ABC's "This Week." He said Ukraine is prepared to end the war through diplomacy if possible, "but we do not have intention to surrender."

The relentless bombardment and street fighting in Mariupol have left much of the city pulverised and killed at least 21,000 people, by the Ukrainians' estimate. A maternity hospital was hit by a Russian airstrike in the opening weeks of the war, and about 300 people were reported killed in the bombing of a theatre where civilians were taking shelter.

An estimated 100,000 remained in the city out of a pre-war population of 450,000, trapped without food, water, heat or electricity in a siege that has made Mariupol the scene of the some of the worst suffering of the war.

"All those who will continue resistance will be destroyed," Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov, the Russian Defence Ministry's spokesman, said in announcing the latest ultimatum.

Sweden: Unrest sparked by far-right group's protests goes on

ASSOCIATED PRESS
HELSINKI, APRIL 17

UNREST BROKE out in southern Sweden late Saturday despite police moving a rally by an anti-Islam far-right group, which was planning to burn a Quran among other things, to a new location as a preventive measure.

Scuffles and unrest were reported in the southern town of Landskrona after a demonstration scheduled there by the Danish right-wing party Stram Kurs party was moved to the nearby city of Malmö, some 45 km south.

Up to 100 mostly young people threw stones, set cars, tires and dustbins on fire, and put up a barrier fence that obstructed traffic, Swedish police said. The situation had calmed down in Landskrona by late Saturday but remains tense, police said, adding no injuries were reported in the action.

On Friday evening, violent clashes between demonstrators and counter-protesters erupted in the central city of Örebro ahead Stram Kurs' plan to burn a Quran there, leaving 12 police officers injured and four police vehicles set on fire.

Video footage and photos from chaotic scenes in Örebro showed burning police cars and protesters throwing stones and other objects at police officers in riot gear.

Kim Hild, spokeswoman for police in southern Sweden, said earlier Saturday that police would not revoke permission for the Landskrona demonstration because the threshold for doing that is very high in Sweden, which values free speech.

The right of the protesters "to demonstrate and speak out weighs enormously, heavily and it takes an incredible amount for this to be ignored," Hild told Swedish news agency TT.

EXPLAINED
Russia looks for a boost

TAKING MARIUPOL would represent Russia's first major capture in the nearly two-month-old war that, according to many experts, the Kremlin expected to last just a few days. If it succeeds in capturing Mariupol, Russia will get a significant boost in its bid to control Ukraine's southeastern coast, have a land bridge to Crimea, and free up forces to concentrate on a pivotal battle for Donbass in eastern Ukraine.

He said intercepted communications indicated there were 400 foreign mercenaries along with Ukrainian troops at the Azovstal steel mill.

Ukrainian Deputy Defence Minister Hanna Malyar described Mariupol as a "shield defending Ukraine" as Russian troops prepare for the battle in the Donbass, where Moscow-backed separatists already control some territory.

In a reminder that no part of Ukraine is safe, Russian forces carried out missile strikes Sunday near Kyiv and elsewhere in an apparent effort to weaken Ukraine's military capacity before the anticipated assault.

After the humiliating loss of the flagship of its Black Sea Fleet to what the Ukrainians said was a missile attack, Russia's military vowed Friday to step up strikes on the capital. The Kremlin said Sunday that it had attacked an ammunition plant near Kyiv overnight with precision-guided missiles, the third such strike in as many days.

Russia also claimed to have destroyed Ukrainian air defence radar equipment in the east, near Sievierodonetsk, as well as several ammunition depots elsewhere. **AP**

Clashes erupt again near Jerusalem holy site

JOSEF FEDERMAN
JERUSALEM, APRIL 17

ISRAELI POLICE on Sunday entered the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City to secure the way for Jewish visitors to the flashpoint holy site, fueling clashes that left 17 Palestinians wounded, according to Palestinian medical workers.

The unrest happened just two days after clashes with Palestinians at the same site. Violence in Jerusalem between Israeli forces and Palestinian demonstrators a year ago escalated into an 11-day Gaza war.

The hilltop compound housing the mosque is the third-holiest



A resident looks at a damaged building in an area of Mariupol controlled by Russian-backed separatist forces, on Saturday. **AP**

Germany in a dilemma amid calls to do more to stop Russia

KRISHN KAUSHIK
BERLIN, HAMBURG, APRIL 17

EARLIER THIS month in Hamburg, Halyna Yanchenko, a 33-year-old member of Ukraine's Parliament, spoke via video link from Kyiv at a panel discussion about Europe after Putin's war on Ukraine. Among others on the panel, which included international experts, was a high profile German politician.

Wolfgang Schmidt, who is the head of the Chancellery and Minister for Special Affairs, is one of German Chancellor Olaf Scholz's closest aides. Near the end of the 90-minute panel discussion, an exasperated Yanchenko glowered at Schmidt, expressing Ukraine's disappointment with Germany.

"In 2008, Ukraine could have been member of NATO. But France and Germany blocked it," Yanchenko told Schmidt. She said the ongoing war in her country is "Germany's responsibility", and added that Ukraine is "face to face with the second-most powerful army in the world."



Wolfgang Schmidt, German Minister for Special Affairs

"What kind of a reaction do we hear? Being quite reluctant," she said.

Addressing Schmidt directly, Yanchenko added, "It is actually the time to show you are the strongest in Europe. Show us that you are strong, you are courageous and you can lead."

Schmidt told Yanchenko that he understood her "frustration".

He explained that Germany's dependence on Russian gas could not be wished away, and that many other countries, including Ukraine in the past, have found it tough.

"We are doing what we can do. And will continue to do so. Be assured," Schmidt said.

The exchange between the Ukrainian and German politicians was a glimpse of the discussion taking place within Europe

MEANWHILE

CHINA TO SEND NEXT SPACE STATION CREW IN JUNE

China will launch three more astronauts to its newest space station in June after the latest crew returned this weekend following a six-month stay in orbit, an official said Sunday. The crew of the Shenzhou 14 capsule will spend six months on the Tiangong to add two modules to the station, Hao Chun, director of the China Manned Space Engineering Office, said.

Pakistan warns Afghanistan not to shelter militants

KATHY GANNON
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 17

PAKISTAN FIRED off a sharp warning Sunday to Afghanistan's hard-line religious rulers to stop sheltering homegrown Pakistani Taliban militants who have staged increasingly deadly attacks against the country's military.

The warning followed Afghan reports that Pakistani aircraft late Friday carried out bombing raids in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar and Kunar provinces, killing civilians.

Pakistan has so far refused to comment on the Afghan allegations, instead accusing the Afghan Taliban of doing nothing to stop attacks against Pakistan by militants in Afghanistan.

"Terrorists are using Afghan soil with impunity to carry out activities inside Pakistan," said the Foreign Ministry statement that was unusually harsh in its language.

Pakistan was often accused of harbouring Afghanistan's Taliban fighters before they swept to power last August as America ended its 20-year war. Since their takeover, Islamabad has led the way in pressing the world to engage with the religiously driven Afghan government.

It's not clear, however, whether Pakistan's new Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will be as supportive of the Afghan Taliban as was his predecessor Imran Khan, who was ousted last weekend in a politically tumultuous no-confidence vote.

On Saturday, the Taliban Foreign Ministry called in Pakistan's ambassador to complain of civilians killed in the bombing raids it said happened late Friday, killing refugees in Afghanistan's eastern Kunar



French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen

French officials examine EU anti-fraud agency report on Le Pen

REUTERS
PARIS, APRIL 17

FRENCH PROSECUTORS said on Sunday they are examining a report by the European Union's anti-fraud agency accusing far-right presidential candidate Marine Le Pen and members of her party of misappropriating thousands of euros worth of EU funds.

Le Pen is challenging Emmanuel Macron in a presidential election with opinion polls showing Macron edging ahead in next Sunday's second round runoff.

The Paris prosecutor's office confirmed it was studying a report it received from the EU anti-fraud agency OLAF on March 11.

Investigative website Mediapart wrote on Saturday that the OLAF report claimed Le Pen had misappropriated 140,000 euros of public money with party members in total diverting 617,000 euros. None are accused of profiting directly, but of claiming EU funds for staff and event expenses.

Le Pen's office could not immediately be reached for comment.



Israeli police in the Old City of Jerusalem on Sunday. **AP**

est site in Islam, while it is the holiest place for Jews, who refer to it as the Temple Mount. The competing claims to the site have sparked violence.

This year the Muslim holy month of Ramzan, Christian holy week culminating in Easter Sunday and the week-long Jewish Passover are all occurring

China Covid surge stalls work on aircraft carrier

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, APRIL 17

THE MASSIVE surge of Covid-19 cases in Shanghai city has hit China's shipbuilding industry, including the construction of the country's third aircraft carrier, scheduled for launch on April 23.

For more than a fortnight, Shanghai — China's business and industrial hub with over 26 million people — has been shut



During the lockdown in Shanghai on Sunday. **Reuters**

with a strict lockdown as the city experienced rapid spread of the Omicron variant of the

coronavirus.

Shanghai reported 3,590 locally transmitted Covid-19 cases and over 21,500 local asymptomatic carriers on Saturday, the city municipal health commission said on Sunday.

The lockdown has slowed China's shipbuilding plans and may affect the launch of the country's third aircraft carrier, the Hong Kong-based *South China Morning Post* reported on Sunday.

The People's Liberation Army Navy was widely expected to

launch the aircraft carrier around its 73rd anniversary on April 23.

But the plan faces delay as the rampant pandemic in Shanghai has delayed the transport of some key components, the *Post* quoted a source as saying.

Construction of the Type 003 aircraft carrier has been underway at the Jiangnan Shipyard on Shanghai's Changxing Island since 2017 and was expected to be ready for launch early this year. **PTI**



Devi Sridhar

has a public dimension. Hopefully it's helpful to have scientists out there explaining things for most people," she said.

Scotland First Minister Nicola Sturgeon condemned the "hor-

rendous abuse" — both online and otherwise — targeted at the expert, praising Sridhar as a "hugely important and valuable" adviser to the government.

The white powder delivered to Sridhar turned out to be a hoax, but has made her question the safety of scientists who address public health crises in future.

Sridhar, whose work before Covid-19 incorporated the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Africa and the Middle East respiratory syndrome, MERS, is among

those who had warned in March 2020 that the vulnerable would die without widespread testing and that the UK would fluctuate in and out of lockdown for 18 months.

The scientist has now combined her views into *Preventable*, a book to be published on Thursday, which analyses the way different countries responded to the crisis in an easy-to-digest 432 pages that chart her own journey through the pandemic.

"I think there was a much

Imran says new govt is trying to push him 'out of the game'

Karachi: Former Pakistan PM Imran Khan said the current "imported government" led by Shehbaz Sharif was trying to push him "out of the game" and called his ouster a "fixed" match to make Pakistan's dependent on foreign powers. Addressing a huge rally here on Saturday night, Khan talked about what he described as a conspiracy to oust him. He said he learned three to four months ago that US officials had started meeting leaders of the then opposition at the American embassy. **PTI**

and Khost provinces.

Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid warned Pakistan "not to test the patience of Afghans on such issues and not repeat the same mistake again, otherwise it will have bad consequences." He did not elaborate on the consequences or the numbers of people killed.

Afghanistan's largest news channel, TOLO News, showed images of children's bodies it said were killed in the airstrike. The same channel showed protests by hundreds of residents of eastern Khost province condemning Pakistan and shouting anti-Pakistan slogans.

Pakistan has not confirmed any attack on Afghanistan and Sunday's statement slams the Taliban rulers for doing too little to stop Pakistani Taliban militants using its territory to attack Pakistan. **AP**

2 minors dead, 8 wounded in shooting at Pittsburgh party

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PITTSBURGH, APRIL 17

SHOTS FIRED at a house party in Pittsburgh early Sunday left two minors dead and at least eight more people wounded, police said.

The shooting happened around 12.30 am during a party at a short-term rental property where there were more than 200 people inside — many of them underage, Pittsburgh police said in a news release. Two male victims died at the hospital, police said, and eight more people were being treated for gunshot wounds. A police release initially said nine others were injured, but Pittsburgh Police Chief Scott Schubert revised the numbers at a noon press conference.

Others were injured attempting to flee, with at least two people suffering broken bones by jumping out of the building's windows, authorities said. Arriving officers reported hearing shots in the area and seeing several young people fleeing the area on foot and in vehicles, police said.

Police said as many as 50 rounds were fired inside and several more were fired outside. Shell casings from rifles and pistols were found at the scene, Pittsburgh police commander John Fisher told WTAE-TV. Police are processing evidence at as many as eight separate crime scenes spanning a few blocks around the shooting scene.

No arrests or information about suspects were immediately reported.

Scotland's Indian-origin Covid adviser says was 'shaken' by threat

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, APRIL 17

APROMINENT Indian-origin public health expert who advises the Scotland government on its Covid-19 pandemic measures has revealed the level of threats she has had to face over the course of the country's lockdowns.

Devi Sridhar, professor of global public health at Edinburgh University, who is on the Scottish government's coronavirus advisory

board, told *The Times* newspaper this weekend that she was sent white powder and a used face mask in the post last year.

"I was extremely shaken, and it was probably the hardest part because it was in my real life, not virtual or online," said Sridhar, who often appears on UK radio and television as an expert commentator on the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I have thought often about withdrawing, but it feels like, for better or worse, my job now also

renders abuse" — both online and otherwise — targeted at the expert, praising Sridhar as a "hugely important and valuable" adviser to the government.

The white powder delivered to Sridhar turned out to be a hoax, but has made her question the safety of scientists who address public health crises in future.

Sridhar, whose work before Covid-19 incorporated the 2014 Ebola outbreak in Africa and the Middle East respiratory syndrome, MERS, is among

those who had warned in March 2020 that the vulnerable would die without widespread testing and that the UK would fluctuate in and out of lockdown for 18 months.

The scientist has now combined her views into *Preventable*, a book to be published on Thursday, which analyses the way different countries responded to the crisis in an easy-to-digest 432 pages that chart her own journey through the pandemic.

"I think there was a much

closer working relationship between scientists and the government in Scotland. I do think they were trying to get it right in terms of opening up with caution," she reflects.

In her new book, the 37-year-old gives an overview of how other countries responded to Covid-19 and is optimistic about the next pandemic.

"I think that we can do it better next time. No country did it perfectly. We can learn from each other," she said. **PTI**

Why there are fewer foreigners in Playing XI

There have been 11 instances in 29 matches of teams fielding lesser than four overseas players in the early part of this IPL season

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

ONE OF the main factors that makes the Indian Premier League bigger and better than other franchise competitions around the world is the overseas star power on display. With Indian players – the top ones are the biggest draw cards in the game – not allowed by their board to appear in other leagues, there is anyway a significant difference in the number of eyeballs attracted, and with most of the best international players making a beeline for the IPL, the equation is skewed even more.

But while top overseas stars were considered the lynchpins of teams when the IPL started almost a decade and a half ago, things seem to have changed of late. So much so, that teams don't think twice before fielding fewer than the four overseas players allowed in the playing XI if strategy demands so.

During the ongoing edition, in the first 29 matches there have been 11 instances of teams fielding fewer than four overseas players – including twice when only two were included. This phenomenon may be less frequent as the tournament enters its middle phase and teams get a better idea about what's working and what's not, but playing fewer than the maximum number of foreigners is no longer a taboo or a decision that prompts raised eyebrows.

With the likes of AB de Villiers, Chris Gayle, Jofra Archer and Ben Stokes not part of the IPL this year, and young local talent emerging in droves, teams may be tempted to field upcoming Indian players instead of overseas ones who may take time to get used to local conditions.

Also, with two more teams in the fray from this season, there is more scope for Indian players to make their presence felt. Previously, fast bowling and big hitting used to be skills for which teams used to look towards foreign stars. But with an enviable assembly line of speedsters – both in the national team set-up and the feeder system – and the likes of Ayush Badoni, Tilak Verma, Abhinav Manohar and Rahul Tewatia finding the boundary and going beyond it on a regular basis, there is less reliance on foreign players to make the vital difference in games.

Former India head coach Gary Kirsten, part of the Gujarat Titans backroom staff this term, has had stints with Delhi Daredevils and Royal Challengers Bangalore earlier. He is well placed to observe how local players have come into their own over the years.

"I do think there's a real indication that young Indian players are feeling more comfortable in the IPL environment. I think so far this is a tournament of young Indian players. We've seen a number of them across the dif-



With two more teams in the fray from this season, there is more scope for Indian players to make their presence felt. PTI

ferent teams really showcase their skills and are comfortable doing it in the pressurised environment of IPL," the former South African opener said during The Indian Express Idea Exchange.

Necessity begets success

Some may also argue that not playing the overseas stars, many of whom were acquired at great expense during the auction, points to faulty strategising by the wise men of the franchises. But it's pertinent to remember that several big-name Australian and South African players were unavailable for the first few games. It would have been unfair on the Indians who performed well in their absence to make way when the overseas stars arrived.

It can also be analysed as teams striving to find a good combination. Mumbai Indians, who are yet to win a game this season, started with their full foreign component. After three back-to-back reversals, they suddenly slashed it by half. Coming into their fifth game, they had three foreign players, indicating they were still unsure about their best combination.

On the other hand, Gujarat Titans – who sit near the top of the points table – have fielded four foreigners in every game, signifying they know their strongest XI from the

very beginning even though this is their first season.

Chennai Super Kings is another team in the wrong half of the table, and part of the problem could be the staleness in the team. It's the same core, by and large, that's providing the foundation of the team, and no young domestic talent has attracted attention. They played only three foreigners against Lucknow Super Giants, and though they lost despite putting up over 200 on the board, the performances of Robin Uthappa and Shivam Dube ensured that someone like Kiwi Devon Conway didn't get a look in.

Kolkata Knight Riders have been there or thereabouts too. They started with three overseas players in their first match, but that would have been due to unavailability of Pat Cummins, who can walk into any first-choice XI.

Mumbai Indians have been suffering due to the underperformance of seniors such as skipper Rohit Sharma and Kieron Pollard. Tilak Varma has been impressive, which may have prevented a long-term spot for Singaporean Tim David though Dewald Brevis has shown what he is capable of. Though Daniel Sams has gone for a lot of runs, Riley Meredith has hardly got a look in. The unavailability of David Warner,

Imports not on duty

Indian franchises are increasingly self-assured about bleeding Indian youngsters and not relying on their foreign players if the early season trends are to go by. Here are five of 11 such examples of teams fielding fewer than four foreign players in a playing XI:

MATCH 2: Delhi Capitals included just two in their first game against Mumbai Indians

With several of their first-choice overseas contingent unavailable, DC didn't have many options. Tim Seifert and Rovman Powell were the two foreigners who played. David Warner, Mitchell Marsh and Anrich Nortje were not there.

MATCH 3: Punjab Kings played three against Royal Challengers Bangalore. They included Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Odean Smith and Liam Livingstone. The likes of Benny Howell were not considered. Jonny Bairstow and Kagiso Rabada were unavailable.

MATCH 9: Rajasthan Royals played

three against Mumbai Indians

Jos Buttler, Trent Boult and Shimron Hetmyer were enough to get the job done. They even bought Navdeep Saini in place of Nathan Coulter-Nile.

MATCH 18: Mumbai Indians played just two against RCB. It didn't work.

They included Dewald Brevis and Kieron Pollard. Players like Daniel Sams, Tim David, Riley Meredith and Tymal Mills were left out.

MATCH 19: DC played three against Kolkata Knight Riders

David Warner, Rovman Powell and Mustafizur Rahman were in the XI, Seifert was overlooked while Mitchell Marsh and Nortje were unfit.

Anrich Nortje or Mitchell Marsh meant Delhi Capitals fielded just two foreigners in their season opener. The absence of a set playing eleven may be the reason for their up-and-down results as they have struggled to find four quality overseas names for every match.

It was only in their first match that Punjab Kings fielded one fewer than the number of foreign players allowed, and it was due to the temporary unavailability of Kagiso Rabada. Same was the case with Lucknow Super Giants in their opening fixture.

Rajasthan Royals have been quite flexible in this regard. They have been doing quite well, but have not been averse to experimenting with the number of overseas players in the playing XI. They have fielded three foreigners in two of their five games, with a win and a loss. Their main foreign stars – Jos Buttler, Trent Boult and Shimron Hetmyer – have been ever-present, unless injured. There is hardly any distinction between Indian and overseas players among the rest.

Fear factor missing

Come to think of it, players such as Chris Jordan, Devon Conway and Adam Milne may have had their moments in international cricket, but still don't have an impressive body of work in the IPL. The team management may believe that a young Indian may have as good a chance to make an impact if given a chance. Someone like Delhi Capitals'

Mitchell Marsh is always susceptible to injury and takes a long time to return to his best. It's always tempting to go for an Indian instead, a safer option.

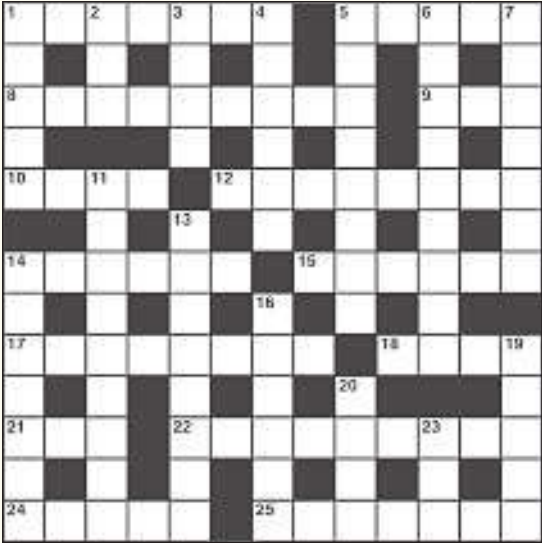
KKR's Aaron Finch is badly out of form, and it remains to be seen how long a rope is given to the Aussie white-ball skipper. Tim Southee is a proven performer, but his inclusion is dependent on team combination.

Names such as Nathan Ellis, Mitchell Santner, Dominic Drakes, Noor Ahmad, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Chamika Karunaratne, Kyle Mayers, Riley Meredith, Benny Howell, Nathan Coulter-Nile, Obed McCoy, Daryl Mitchell, Finn Allen, Jason Behrendorff, Sherfane Rutherford, Sean Abbott, Fazalhaq Farooqi,

Glenn Philipps and Romario Shepherd don't sound nearly as intimidating as some of the foreign players who graced the IPL in its initial years. It may be fair to say that most of these players would have been acquired as back-ups just to fill up the squad.

So, is there a case for reducing the maximum number of overseas players in the final XI going ahead? Kirsten feels no. "The important thing is to make sure that your standard of competition is at its highest. And I think all international players would tell you that the quality of the IPL is as good as anywhere in the world, if not better than anywhere in the world at franchise level," the 2011 World Cup-winning coach said.

CROSSWORD 4717



ACROSS

- Kitty puts flag on vessel (7)
- Easterly gale spoiled a good golf score (5)
- Where there's some order in retreat (9)
- Gout doesn't start abroad (3)
- For this pudding turn the gas to zero (4)
- Separate – that's abundantly clear (8)
- Almost the finest of ancient cities (6)
- Salty service to the Cape? (6)
- Fixed menus that could be meatless (3,5)
- Monster in no great hurry (4)
- A bird that is after quiet (3)
- It is meant for close friends (9)
- Likely to snap under pressure (5)
- A rule in converting green city outskirts (7)

DOWN

- They are posted either side of the door (5)
- Dupe a confused NCO (3)
- Send off a letter for a job (4)
- It's the new mother of Achilles (6)
- Tiny page possibly comes from Cairo (8)
- Instruction for pilot's punishment (9)
- Give one the right to call (7)
- The grandeur of sergeants (9)
- Calm sentry that is becoming agitated (8)
- One drunkard turns to espy another (7)
- Cold weather wear in Ireland (6)
- Attempt to produce an article (5)
- Sticks up for the self-satisfied (4)
- Metal used in casting (3)

Solutions Crossword 4716: Across: 1 Sweeping, 5 Bend, 9 Radii, 10 Tuition, 11 Colour scheme, 13 Rotate, 14 Elopes, 17 Grave charges, 20 Editors, 21 Opine, 22 Slew, 23 Dear dear. Down: 1 Sore, 2 Endmost, 3 Paid on the dot, 4 Nature, 6 Exile, 7 Danseuse, 8 Circular tour, 12 Progress, 15 Precise, 16 Chaste, 18 Aside, 19 Herr.

JUMBLD WORDS

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

You have ____ over your ____ – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength. – Marcus Aurelius (5, 4)

HVEOR



LUMPED



CHINE



EILMPW



SOLUTION: HVEOR, JUMBLD, WIMPLE
Answers: You have **power** over your **mind** – not outside events. Realize this, and you will find strength. – Marcus Aurelius

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 4808

Difficulty Level 4s

Instructions

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

Difficulty Level

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 4807



Tsitsipas seeks to mix things up on different surfaces

REUTERS

MONTE CARLO, APRIL 17

STEFANOS TSITSIPAS captured his second straight Monte Carlo Masters crown with a workmanlike 6-3 7-6(3) win over first-time ATP Tour finalist Alejandro Davidovich Fokina on Sunday, claiming his first title of the 2022 season.

Greek world number five Tsitsipas' second Masters 1000 title comes at the perfect time for the 23-year-old, who is hoping to improve on his runner-up finish at last year's French Open and claim a maiden Grand Slam title this year.

Surprise package Davidovich Fokina, who knocked out top-ranked Novak Djokovic and Indian Wells champion Taylor Fritz in the earlier rounds at Monaco, drew first blood by breaking Tsitsipas to take a 2-1 lead in the opening set.

But the world number 46 Spaniard surrendered his serve in the next game, allowing Tsitsipas to take control of the contest again and go a set up in only 31 minutes with a near-flawless display on Court Rainier III.

The pair traded breaks again in a see-sawing second set before Tsitsipas pounced in the tiebreak to secure the victory and his eighth career title when Davidovich Fokina failed to deal with a blistering backhand.

The victory helped Tsitsipas join Rafa Nadal as the only active player to win consecutive titles at Monte Carlo, with the likes of Juan Carlos Ferrero, Thomas Muster, Bjorn Borg and Ilie Nastase also achieving the feat during their playing days.

Tsitsipas knows his claycourt game is in good shape after he successfully defended his title at Monte Carlo on Sunday but he recognises that he needs to vary his approach to improve on other surfaces.

Tsitsipas won his second straight crown in Monaco with a 6-3 7-6(3) victory over Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina for his first title of the 2022 season.

Asked by reporters if he thought his claycourt displays were better, 2021 French Open runner-up Tsitsipas said: "My tennis is great... everywhere, with clay maybe being the surface that I can adjust the best." "I've had moments where I was trying to apply what I apply on clay on hardcourts.

"It doesn't really seem to be working much. Sometimes it's not really the way to go. "But this has also taught me a lot that I should adjust and I should never really become obsessive that... whatever works on clay should work on faster surfaces."

Tsitsipas said his approach had left him facing difficulties on grass, another of his preferred surfaces. "I was trying in my head to maybe stick to that... 'okay, this is the way I should be also playing on other surfaces,'" Tsitsipas said.

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)



The time for decisions affecting your entire life is over. Now you should be more specific and, over the next month or so, you may find that financial issues are becoming increasingly pressing. The longer you leave them, the more information will come your way.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)



Making choices is never easy, but sometimes it's necessary. Over the next three days you are going to have to come down off the fence and commit yourself one way or the other, even on minor matters. Once you've made up your mind, life will be considerably less complex.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)



Money matters rise up the agenda. A great deal hangs on whether you are concentrating on saving or spending. One planet indicates one thing, another points to something completely different. All very enigmatic, I know, but the answer is that you'll have to listen to your own conscience.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)



Your social and emotional influences are almost perfect but sufficiently flawed to remind you that you're just like any other human being. By all means reach for the stars, but keep a sense of perspective. The more realistic you are, the better your chances of success.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)



You are bound to feel less hurt by chance events or sayings if you realise that you're misunderstanding partners' intentions. It may seem that other people are going behind your back, but that's probably only because you're not being kept informed.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)



If you are contemplating a new involvement in a group or society, then throw yourself in with gusto. The pleasure you gain from such contacts should far outweigh the obligations. Spare a thought for ethical issues today, and check whether your actions are right, or wrong.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)



Mercury is linked to Venus, planet of charm, and the Sun, symbol of pride. You should therefore be full of your own ideas and you can plan ahead and plot a personal professional coup. Even in spare-time activities, you will have a chance to make a name for yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)



Other people are bound to take first place. Indeed, it seems desirable from your point of view that they do so. Your horoscope, you see, sometimes advises you to be selfish, but right now a spot of selflessness is the best way to achieve your goals.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)



There is no escape from the daily grind today. Actually this is a rather positive forecast, for the more you accomplish now, the better able you'll be to take some time off in a couple of days' time. You see, your dreams will be so much more successful if you prepare the ground with care.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)



Pleasure is where it's at today. You do have a puritanical streak, but self-indulgence has its place in the scheme of things, and right now you should follow the old dictum that a lot of what you fancy does you a great deal of good! Plus, at work, make sure your ideas are heard.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)



First things first. You should deal with fundamental issues before you attempt to build castles in the air. Actually, I suspect that you have already realised that this is the only way to proceed, and that you are well in tune with the new mood of down-to-earth realism.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)



You really do need to be more practical and objective about long-term dreams. It is far too easy for you to spend your life living for tomorrow, but tomorrow, as the song says, is a long time away. So, how about the present? Are you going to offer a loved one your support? I hope so.

Sunrisers set the pace

Bhuvneshwar Kumar & Umran Malik restrict Punjab Kings to modest score, which was chased down without fuss

SYNOPSIS: Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Umran Malik combined to take seven Punjab Kings wickets and set up a straightforward chase of 152 for a seven-wicket win for Sunrisers Hyderabad

ABHISHEK PUROHIT
MUMBAI, APRIL 17

THE EXPERIENCE of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and the pace of Umran Malik combined to dismiss Punjab Kings for 151 on a pitch where the ball didn't come on. And the Sunrisers Hyderabad batsmen did not let their bowlers down in a comfortable chase to secure the win with seven deliveries to spare at DY Patil Stadium in Navi Mumbai.

Liam livens it up

After six games this season, Liam Livingstone has a strike rate of 185 and an average over 37. The English all-rounder has made quite an impact, and does it as soon as he comes in to bat. Within his first five deliveries on Sunday, for instance, he'd already lapped Marco Jansen for a four and a six, and also driven him past cover for four more in a much more conventional fashion. Livingstone lapped it so fine it would have been a boundary even if fine leg had been right back on the rope, and he was on one occasion. And then the orthodox stroke in the same over. How does one set a field for him?

He has immense power, and used it judiciously against Malik's express pace. Having seen that it was risky trying to flat-bat his lifters outside off, Livingstone used the pace instead and steered it all the way over third man.

It was only when the length was full enough that he swung it hard down the ground; his partner Shahrukh Khan had to duck under a nearly 150kph bullet that ricocheted back off Livingstone's power-swung for a straight four.

Malik on fire

There is that taut expectation when Malik steams in that can be created only by the very fastest of bowlers. In essence, either the ball will fly off the bat or the stumps will. When batsmen try to slap him through extra cover, the ball hits the bat much earlier and runs to third man, as happened to Shahrukh Khan. Or he is right at the throat before the batsman is through with his futile flail, and the weakest of top edges settles triumphantly in his hands, as happened to Jitesh Sharma. The field for Shahrukh at one stage was deep backward square leg, a very fine leg, a long stop beside the sightscreen, a third man and a deep backward point, leaving no doubt as to what length was coming.

Malik began the season with a primary emphasis on pace, and it seemed at times, pace alone. But he's made life progressively harder for batsmen by adding some control and actually landing the ball on a hard length, instead of going mostly full and broke for the stumps. And when that happened on Sunday, no one was able to handle the heat, barring Livingstone. After he fell for 60 off 33 off the last ball of the 19th over, Malik bowled only the fourth 20th-over maiden ever in the IPL. He uprooted the stumps of No. 9 and No.

ECB appoint Key as managing director of men's team setup

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LONDON, APRIL 17

FORMER KENT captain and England batter Rob Key has been appointed as the new managing director of England's men's setup, the country's cricket board said on Sunday. Key, who has made 21 appearances for England and scored over 19,000 first-class runs, was chosen after a rigorous recruitment process. He will take up the role immediately, relinquishing his current role with broadcaster Sky Sports. "Key will be responsible for the strategy behind the England Men's cricket teams and the performance pathways leading into them. He will also take a key role as part of the High Performance Review which will shortly begin," the England Cricket Board (ECB) said.

Prior to Key's appointment, Andrew Strauss had undertaken the role on an interim basis following Ashley Giles' departure in February after three years. Key played 21 times for England across all three formats including making a Test double hundred against the West Indies at Lord's in 2004 which led to him being named one of the Wisden Cricketers of the Year in 2005. During a playing career that spanned three decades (1998-2015), Key amassed over 28,000 runs with 60 centuries. He captained Kent twice from 2006-2012 and then again from 2014-15. During his time as captain the side won the County Championship Second Division title in 2010 and reached three white ball domestic finals. He was also part of the England side who won the Under-19 World Cup for the first and only time in 1998. After announcing his retirement in 2016, Key became a successful commentator for Sky Sports alongside writing a regular column for the Evening Standard. He has remained involved in the administration side of the game and has previously sat on the ECB's Performance Cricket Committee.

Key said: "It is an absolute honour to take up this role. The chance to have an impact and make a difference is an opportunity given to very few and I will give it everything I have to try shape the next great era of English men's cricket. "I have absolutely loved my time at Sky and I could never have imagined leaving were it not for this incredible opportunity. I'd like to personally thank Bryan Henderson and everyone in the team for their help and support.

"Although at this current moment it has been a challenging time in English cricket, I also think it's as exciting a time as I can remember. With two of our teams near or at the top of the world rankings and an undoubted amount of talent in our game, I hope to try and bring everyone along for the ride so we can all help take English men's cricket to new heights across all formats."



Nicholas Pooran of Sunrisers Hyderabad plays a shot against Punjab Kings on Sunday. Sportspics for IPL

One-man demolition army Miller powers Gujarat home against Chennai Super Kings

SYNOPSIS: Miller shows a glimpse of his pomp, taking Titans to what looked like an unlikely win at one stage. It kept them on top of the table, while consigning CSK to their fifth loss.

TUSHAR BHADURI
APRIL 17

DAVID MILLER turned back the clock, almost singlehandedly pulling Gujarat Titans over the line from a dead-and-buried situation. Chasing 170 against Chennai Super Kings, the table-toppers were 48/4 in eight overs. The South African's unbeaten 94 off 51 balls, with some timely help from stand-in skipper Rashid Khan, secured a three-wicket win with a ball to spare.

Miller shows the way

The last few IPL seasons have not been fruitful for Miller, and there was a feeling that his best days were behind him; that the clean striking that lighted many an Indian summer evening was beyond the left-hander now. He may have lost some consistency but as he showed on Sunday, when Miller gets it right, he is a one-man demolition army.

He is known as a big hitter who relies more on timing than brute force, and at Pune's MCA Stadium he made belligerence look beautiful. Titans were gasping for breath when he took charge. Shubman Gill had gone for a golden duck, hitting a short wide ball straight to point before Maheesh Theekshana's mystery spin was too much for Vijay Shankar and Abhinav Manohar. It all seemed lost, despite Miller's lone stand, when Rashid Khan joined the party.

Going into the last three overs, 48 were needed and Miller needed support. This is



David Miller scored an unbeaten 94. PTI

when Rashid unleashed the MS Dhoni in him in the form of helicopter shots. His strong wrists sent the ball to boundaries on both sides of the wicket as Chris Jordan went for 25 runs in the 18th over.

The Afghan started the 19th, bowled by Dwayne Bravo, with a boundary, and though he was dismissed soon after, the task remaining was well within Miller's grasp.

Gaikwad repays faith

Ruturaj Gaikwad may have been lucky to still be in the playing XI. The lack of runs at the top was hurting CSK in the forgettable start to their title defence, and Gaikwad had not been pulling his weight.

The out-of-touch opener needed some luck upfront and got just that, when a Mohammed Shami nip-backer took the inside edge of Gaikwad's bat, just eluded the stumps and didn't give Wriddhiman Saha a chance behind the wicket.

Gaikwad was struggling to put bat to ball initially, but the Gujarat Titans bowlers made the mistake of bowling short, allowing him to access cow corner with the horizontal bat.

After two early wickets, Gaikwad found an able ally in Ambati Rayudu and their 92-run stand in just over nine overs steadied the ship as well as provided momentum.

Lockie Ferguson has been one of Titans' shining lights, but had an off day and was peppered to the legside boundary on several occasions. With their talismanic skipper Hardik Pandya sitting out due to a groin niggle (Rashid led in his absence), replacement Alzarri Joseph and youngster Yash Dayal didn't follow the script. The back-of-length deliveries often didn't rise above the waist, allowing Gaikwad to swat them away easily.

Shami 'seams' in control

As it comes towards the batsman, the seam of a Shami delivery is dead straight, giving no indication of which way the ball will deviate after pitching. He has not been considered a hotshot T20 performer, but with the new ball (he bowled three overs in the Powerplay) and then towards the end, Shami put the squeeze on the Titans batsmen when everyone around him was going for runs.

Robin Uthappa tried to hit across the line, and was trapped plumb in front. Figures of 1/20 from his four overs, when the other bowlers combined to concede 149 in 16 overs, puts Shami's performance in perspective. He rarely went for the yorker. It was generally a hard Test-match length for him, but the immaculate line and threat of just enough movement either way kept batsmen honest.

It was a strong bowling line-up that the Titans fielded in this game, but it was only Shami who came to the party.

BRIEF SCORES: Chennai Super Kings 169/5 in 20 overs (Gaikwad 73; Joseph 2/34) lost to Gujarat Titans 170/7 in 19.5 overs (Miller 94; Bravo 3/23) by 3 wickets

BRIEFLY

Pujara hits double ton on Sussex debut

Derby: Cheteshwar Pujara redeemed himself with an unbeaten double hundred in the second innings as Sussex snatched a draw against Derbyshire at the 2022 County Championship here on Sunday. Making his debut for Sussex, Pujara was dismissed for six off 15 balls in his first innings on the second day as his team folded for 174 in 56.3 overs in reply to Derbyshire's 505. However, the Indian produced a superb show in his second essay, hitting an unconquered 201 not out off 387 balls. His innings was studied with 23 hits to the fence.

Boe likely to return as doubles coach

New Delhi: Danish legend Mathias Boe is likely to return for a second stint as the doubles coach of the Indian badminton team after Malaysia's Tan Kim Her declined the offer despite the Sports Ministry approving his appointment. Boe, a London Olympics silver-medallist and former world No. 1 doubles player, had trained the Indian doubles players, including Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, ahead of the Tokyo Olympics.

Haryana crowned national champions

Bhopal: Haryana were on Sunday crowned the champions of the 12th Senior Men's National Hockey Championship here, beating Tamil Nadu 3-1 in the shootout after the final ended 1-1 in the regulation time. The match started with Deepak giving Haryana a 1-0 lead in the fourth minute. But Saravana Kumar was able to quickly level the score, getting the equaliser in the 10th minute of the match for Tamil Nadu. In the shootout, Haryana scored thrice in their first four attempts, while Tamil Nadu succeeded in the first attempt but missed in the following three attempts. Haryana won the trophy for the first time since 2011.

Tanish finishes 4th in Danish Open

New Delhi: India's Tanish George Mathew finished fourth in men's 200m freestyle 'A' final at the Danish Open in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Bengaluru swimmer clocked 1:51.38s, 0.19s shy of his personal best time, to finish fourth among eight swimmers in the 'A' final. In the preliminary round, Tanish had finished fifth with a timing of 1:52.87s to qualify for the final. Shakthi Balakrishnan bettered her personal best time to finish seventh in the 'A' final of the women's 200m butterfly.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

EMBARGO IMPOSED...
CAN'T USE FUNDS...
SAHARA IS HAVING ₹ 25,000 CRORE WITH SEBI...

CAN ANYONE RUN WHEN IN SHACKLES?

RUN!

CURRENT SITUATION

Vande Mataram

Since last 9 years, there has been an Embargo of the Hon'ble Supreme Court on Sahara India Pariwar that if the Pariwar raises any fund out of sale of any asset or out of mortgage, that fund will be deposited in SEBI-SAHARA account and not even a single rupee can be utilised for making repayments to public.

This way SEBI-SAHARA account is having around ₹25,000 Crores. SEBI SHOULD MAKE THE PAYMENTS TO THE DEPOSITORS FROM THIS AMOUNT. Why is SEBI not making payments to the public?

This way how can Sahara make timely payments to its depositors? However, Sahara is still making payments but delayed payments.

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