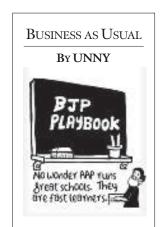
# \*The Indian EXPRESS

JOURNALISM OF COURAGE

MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 16 PAGES

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#### **JAHANGIRPURI**

### Court: Cops accompanied illegal rally, probe if any complicity

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MAY 8

NOTING THAT there was "utter failure" on the part of Delhi Police in stopping the unauthorised Hanuman Jayanti procession in Jahangirpuri last month that triggered communal clashes in the locality, a local court said the issue "seems to have been simply brushed aside" by senior officers — and complicity "if any" of police personnel needs to be investigated.

"The liability on the part of the concerned officials needs to be fixed so that in future no such incident takes place and the police is not complacent in preventing the illegal activities," said Additional Sessions Judge Gagandeep Singh in an order, while referring to the third procession in the area on April 16.

Acopy of the order, which was issued on May 7 rejecting a clutch of bail pleas, has been directed to CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Worried India rating may turn junk, govt pushed 'narrative management' strategy

Dec'19: BBB-, stable outlook

June '20: BBB-, negative

Nov'21: BBB-, negative

outlook, but notes "rating

-term growth outlook and

external resilience

balances still-strong medium

IndiGo 'denies'

boarding to

special needs

NEW DELHI, RANCHI, MAY 8

IN AN incident that raises ques-

tions over the handling of air

Directorate General of Civil

Aviation (DGCA) told The Indian

PRANAV MUKUL & ABHISHEK ANGAD

child with

outlook

**ANISHA DUTTA** NEW DELHI, MAY8

AS THE country fought the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in mid-2020, the Ministry of Finance's economic division was drafting a strategy to counter the 'negative commentary" on India by global think-tanks, indices, and media, amidst worries that this could lead to downgrading of sovereign rating to "junk".

#### **SOVEREIGN RATINGS: DOWN AND UP**

Nov'19: Sovereign rating affirmed at Baa2; outlook changed to negative from

June '20: Rating down to Baa3, negative outlook Oct '21: Affirms Baa3 rating;

outlook changed to stable

Economic Advisor in the Ministry of Finance, Sanjeev Sanyal, prepared a presentation "Subjective Factors that impact India's Sovereign Ratings: What can we do about it?" - for internal circulation within the government. Sanyal is now a member of the Prime Minister's

Economic Advisory Council. The 36-page presentation, seen by *The Indian Express*, noted CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# **EXCHANGE**

'Aggression by Russia, not sanctions, is affecting global food security and prices' **UGO ASTUTO** 

**PAGE 11** 

E.U. AMBASSADOR TO INDIA

#### **AT HIGHEST LEVEL SINCE JAN 2010**

## Demand up, output down: Atta prices at record high

Bakery bread prices up as well with 8.39% inflation in Mar

HARIKISHAN SHARMA NEW DELHI, MAY 8

THE ALL-INDIA monthly average retail price of wheat flour (atta) was Rs 32.38 per kg in April, the highest since January 2010, the earliest month for which data are available.

Atta prices have been rising as both production and stocks of wheat have fallen in India, and demand has risen outside the

Data reported by State Civil Supplies Departments to the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution show the all-India average retail price of wheat flour was Rs 32.78/ kg on Saturday (May 7) - 9.15 per cent higher than the price (Rs 30.03

**FLOUR PRICE RISE** 

Retail prices of wheat

flour (₹/kg) 25 Jan-2010 Apr-2022

ner kg) a year ago. Among the 156 centres for which data are available, the price on Saturday was the highest in Port Blair (Rs 59/kg) and

lowest (Rs 22/ kg) in West

Note: All-India monthly avg

Bengal's Purulia Among the four metros, the average wheat flour retail price was the highest in Mumbai (Rs 49/per), followed by Chennai (Rs 34/kg), Kolkata (Rs 29/kg) and Delhi (Rs 27/kg).

All-India average daily retail prices of wheat flour have been rising since the beginning of the calendar year, having increased by 5.81 per cent since January 1, the data show. The record high in April was significantly higher than the average retail price of Rs 31/kg recorded in April 2021.

Sources said that the steady increase in the price of flour is due to the rise in wheat prices amid the fall in production due to the war in Ukraine, and a higher overseas demand for Indian wheat. The high domestic price of diesel has added to the logistics cost of both wheat and flour

**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

# Security outside the entrance to Kashi Vishwanath temple and Gyanvapi mosque on Sunday. Anand Singh

## Gyanvapi case: One of five petitioners to withdraw, says lawyer

**ASAD REHMAN** LUCKNOW, MAY 8

ONE OF the petitioners in the Kashi Vishwanath Temple-Gyanvapi Mosque complex dispute, Delhi resident Rakhi Singh, is all set to withdraw from the petition on Monday, her lawyer told The Indian Express.

Singh is among five women who had filed a petition in a

Varanasi court in August 2021 seeking an order to allow them to worship at the disputed site. The other four petitioners are Varanasi residents Laxmi Devi, Sita Sahu, Manju Vyas and Rekha Pathak.

Advocate Hari Shankar Jain, who is one of the lawyers representing the five women, said Singh will withdraw from the suit on Monday. "She is withdrawing but that will not affect **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

travellers with special needs, budget airline IndiGo allegedly denied boarding to a specially abled child on a Hyderabadbound flight at the Ranchi airport on Saturday. A senior official of the

> Express that the aviation safety regulator is probing the incident, and that a report has been sought from the airline. IndiGo said in a statement that the child "could not board the flight...as he was in a state of panic". The incident was brought to light in a Facebook post by a pas-

Gupta, told The Indian Express that the IndiGo staff "did not show any compassion".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

senger at the airport who was

waiting to board another flight.

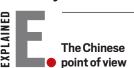
The author of the post, Manisha

## US moves can push Indo-Pacific over edge of abyss, warns China

**SHUBHAJIT ROY** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

PUSHING FORWARD Chinese President Xi Jinping's concept of a "Global Security Initiative", an important Chinese official has said that the Indo-Pacific strategy of the United States, "if left unchecked", would bring "horrible conseguences and push the Asia-Pacific over the edge of an abvss".

Chinese Vice Foreign Minister Le Yucheng, who is one of the top



BEIJING IS trying to clear the air on its intent on the Indo-Pacific, Russia, and possible consequences for the region. Le is an influential official — his words carry the weight of the party and government.

contenders to succeed Foreign Minister Wang Yi, also said, "Rather than learning the painful lessons of conflict and suffering in Europe, they seek to create a "second theatre" and bring the conflict to the Asia-Pacific.'

Beijing refers to the Indo-Pacific as Asia-Pacific, and Vice Foreign Minister Le has been one of the voices presenting the Chinese government's view on developments in the region. Le, a former Chinese ambassador to CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



**JILL BIDEN, TRUDEAU MAKE SURPRISE VISIT TO UKRAINE** 

**RUSSIA BOMBS UKRAINE SCHOOL** MANY FEARED DEAD

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#### Gyanvapi dispute

our case. The other four will continue with the legal proceedings," said Jain.

Asked why Singh was pulling out, Jain said: "There must be some reason if she is withdraw-

Singh was not available for comment, with Jain citing "security concerns" as the reason why she did not wish to speak to the media.

The other petitioners were also not available for comment. A family member of one of them said they did not wish to speak to the media at this juncture.

The dispute has been bubbling through the last week with a court-ordered video survey halted on Saturday after the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee (Gyanvapi) filed an application in the Varanasi court seeking the replacement of Advocate Commissioner Ajai Kumar, accusing him of being "biased". The matter is scheduled to be heard on Monday.

On April 8, while hearing the petitioners, Civil Judge (Senior Division), Varanasi, Ravi Kumar Diwakar, had appointed Kumar to carry out a survey of the Maa Shringar Gauri Sthal at the disputed site -- and directed him to "prepare videography of the action" and submit a report.

On April 21, the Allahabad High Court dismissed a petition filed by the masjid committee challenging the local court's order. On April 26, the Varanasi court again ordered videography of the disputed site, which began

> Name of the Account & Name & Address of Borrower/Guarantors

Shri Ramesh Kumar

Cedar Chaudhary

mt. Pooja Kumar

BAILEY

BAILE

PATNA

MAIN

BRANCH

Chaudhary Son of Shri

W/O Shri Ramesh Kumai Chaudhary, Resident

of Simli, Murarpur, Mohalla- Jamunapur,

P.O-Madhavjee Mills, P.S- Malsalami, Distt-

Patna, Bihar-800008 Also

it Budal Toli, Damriyahi

Ghat, Maharani asthan, Patna city, Bihar-800008

LAXMAN SAW s/o Late

. RAMJI SAW S/O Late

2. BIRJU SAW S/O Late

Distt- Patna-800009

M/S Nice Leather

nsari)

Pro- Md. Husne Alam

/ld. Husne Alam Ansari

Shakila Begum & Zaida

M/S S. Footwear (Pro- Md. Sabir Ansari)

Md Sabir Ansari S/o

. Md. Sakib Ansari,

. Md. Taufik Ansari,

S/o Late Md. Shamshe

S/o Late Md. Shamshe

1. Ms. Zeba alias Naaz

Shamsher Ansari,

All R/O Barkat Khan

Jhauganj, Patna City, District-Patna,Bihar,

**Pro-** Sri Nishant Sharma Smt. Manju Devi,

v/o-Late Dinesh Sha

/ishwkarama Mandir

lajipur, Vaishali-844101

Sri Vikash Sharma,

√ishwkarama Mandir

s/o-Late Dinesh Sharma

lajipur, Vaishali-844101

. Sri Dinanath Sharma

Bazar Ward No 08 Hajipu Vaishali-844101

3. Shri Nishant Sharma

s/o-Late Dinesh Sharma Hospital Road Hajipur Vaishali-8441010

s/o Yugeshwar Mistry

At Sanchipatti, Jauhar

lela Bazar Near

Ka Akhara, Mogalpura

on Friday afternoon amid heavy

The petitioners have sought protection of their right to religion guaranteed by Article 25 of the Constitution, and orders for the defendants (mosque committee) to not create any hindrance to worship at the disputed site.

The petition had sought freedom to worship Maa Shringar Gauri, Lord Ganesh, Lord Hanuman and Nandiji in the "old temple complex situated at settlement Plot No. 9130".

The mosque side has claimed that the petitioners should first identify the plot. "They should first tell the court where exactly is this plot that they are talking about. We had asked the Advocate Commissioner to identify plot No. 9130 before they began the survey, but he did not listen to us. They should first clarify where this plot is," said a mosque

Meanwhile, the local police said they are trying to identify five people who raised "objectionable slogans" at the site when the team of surveyors visited on Saturday. Police have so far arrested one person in this regard, identifying him as Abdul

Salam, a resident of Chandauli district who works in Varanasi, was booked under IPC sections for rioting, creating obstruction in government work, and under section 7 of the Criminal Law Amendment Act for loitering and preventing access to a site. He has been sent to judicial custody. "We will soon

इंडियन बैंक

identify and arrest the others," said a senior police officer.

#### Jahangirpuri

be sent to the Commissioner of Police "for information and remedial compliance".

The Rohini court noted that the sequence of events that took place on Hanuman Jayanti on April 16 and role of the local administration in preventing the incident and maintaining law and order needs to be seen. "It is fairly admitted...on behalf of the State that the last procession which was passing through, during which the unfortunate riots took place, was illegal having no prior permission from police," said the judge

The court further said the contents of the FIR itself show that the local staff of the police station in Jahangirpuri, led by Inspector Rajiv Ranjan, as well as other officials were "accompanying the said illegal procession" on its route instead of stopping

"It appears that local police, instead of performing their duty in stopping the said illegal procession in the beginning itself and dispersing the crowd, was accompanying them to the entire route which later on led to unfortunate riots between the two communities," said ASJ Singh.

The court has made the observations in an order dismissing the bail applications of seven accused -- Imteyaz, Noor Alam, Sheikh Hamid, Ahmad Ali, Sheikh Hamid, S K Sahahada. Sheikh Zahir and Ahir. The ac-

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₹4,40,200.00

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hundred only

10.000.00

₹48.38.000.00

(Rupees Forty

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eight thousand

₹4.83.800.00

(Rupees Four

khs eighty thre

thousand eight

hundred only)

10.000.00

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crores ninety five

Lakhs Only)

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**E-AUCTION NOTICE** 

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of immovable assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property

mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Indian Bank, Secured

Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on 25.05.2022, due to the Indian Bank, Secured Creditor, from the

indernoted borrowers/Guarantors. The specific details of the property intended to be brought to sale through e-auction mode are enumerated below

**Details of Immovable Properties** 

All that Piece and parcel of Land & Bulding situated at Mauza Simli Murarpur, P.S- Malsalami, Thana No-38,Ward No-32/37

Sheet No-272,Khata No-59, M.S Plot No-721, Area- 10 dhu

registered Mortgage in favour of Indian Bank bailey Road

pranch vide Mortgage Deed No-3119 dated 05.04.2019 in Book No-01, Volume No-72, pages from 210 to 227 in CD No

11/year 2019 registered with Sub Registrar office Patna city. Boundary: North: Sri Jaggu Mahato,South:8ft wide Rasta, East: Niz,West:Niz

Equitable Mortgage of All that Piece and parcel of Land & Bulding situated at Mauza- Sabalpur, P.S- Didarganj, Dist-

Patna having Thana No-44, Tauzi –Bihar sarkar, Khata No-665, Cadestral Survey Plot No-789 (part) area 01 katha 06 dhur (1769.3 sqft) vide Registered sale Deed No-587 dated 31.01.2012 in Book No-01, Zild No-13, pages 277

to 288 CD No-02in the name of Ramji saw & Laxman Saw

All part & parcel of Residential land & Building situated

hauganj,Patna City ,Patna-800008, survey plot no-3007(P

Circle No-121 ward No-22/28, present 50, Holding No-196(old

New-233/196 Sheet No-215 measuring land area- 01 katha 1

thurki, Registered Sale Deed no-355 dated 14.01.2002 in the

name of Shakila Begum W/o Md Husne Alam Ansari & Zaida

Chatoon W/o Md Husne Alam Ansari Book No-01, Volume No

19, CD-12 page no-383-402 Boundary (as per deed)North: plo No-3008,South: 8' wide common Gali,East:Part plot of 3007 8

Registered Mortgage: All that part and parcel of the Land and

Building along with present/future construction thereon, vide

registered Mortgage Deed No. 3466 dated 08.05.2015,Book No. 01,Volume No. 64,Page No. 99-110;In the joint name of Md

Sabir Ansari ,Md. Sakib Ansari,Md. Taufik Ansari & Ms. Zeb

alias Naaz Parvin are son and daughter of Late Md. Shamshe

Ansari; (i)Total area measuring 10 Dhur ,comprising in War

No. 22/28(O),47(New),Holding No.-292 Sheet No. 215,M.S

Plot No. 2294 & 2295(P), Circle No. 121, Situated at Mohalla

Mogalpura Katra , Barkat Khan Ka Akhara, Mugalpura, Patna

City ,P.S.-Khajekala, PO-Jhauganj, District-Patna, Bihar and

M.S. Plot No. 2996 & 2997 Fast: Gali Corporation West: Son

Parvin(ii)Total area measuring 611 Sq Ft ,comprising in War

No. 22/28(O),47(New),Sheet No. 215,M.S. Plot No. 2997,Circle

No. 121, Holding No. 292, Situated at -Moshalla Mogalpura

Katra, Barkat Khan Ka Akhara, Patna City, P.S. Khajekala PO-Jhauganj, District-Patna, Bihar and bounded as under(as

per deed No. 3466 dated 13.08.2003):North: M.S. Plot No

2994, South: Lekhadhari Ka Niz Rasta of vendor, East: M.S. Plo

Mauza-bagtaj Khan at pokhra Hospital Road, near cooperative bank, Ward No-17, Revenue thana no-164, Kheshra No-150

k 151 (kha), Khata No-129 & 185, Hajipur, Distt- Vaisha

n the name of Smt. Maniu Devi (W/O Sri Dinesh Sharma)

lishant Sharma &Vikash Kumar (both sons of late Dines

Sharma) purchased vide Sale Deed No-638 dated 28.01 2000

Sale Deed No-1133 dt 24.02.2000sale Deed No-2817 dated

11.05.2007 and Sale deed No-5305 dated 24.07.2014

(Sale Deed No-638 dt.28.01.2000): North: Nizmanmoki

2. (Sale Deed No-1133 dt.24.02.2000): North: Nizmanmoki

South: Area of co operative bank, East:Compound of Bho

3. (Sale Deed No-2817 dt.11.05.2007): North: Rajesh Singh

South: Nij Kharidar150,151(ka), East:Compound of Bholi Devi West: Manju Devi kheshra 150,151(ka).

4. (Sale Deed No-5305 dt. 24.07.2014): North: Anil rai&ors South: NijKharidar, East: Bholi Devi, West: NijKharidar.

Boundary of the said property in present situation: North Buildin

of Anil Rai & ors, South:Boundary of cooperative Bank,East

Bidders are advised to visit the website (www.mstcecommerce.com) of our e auction service provider MSTC Ltd to participate in online

bid. For Technical Assistance Please call MSTC HELPDESK No. 033-22901004 and other help line numbers available in service provider

help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd, please contact <u>ibapiop@mstcecommerce.com</u> and for EMD status please contact

or property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and conditions please visit: https://ibapi.in and for clarifications related to

this portal, please contact help line number '18001025026' and '011-41106131, 03340609118, 09330102643 and Authorised Officer- 8986185704.

Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with https://ibapi.in and

No. 2996, West: M.S. Plot No. 2999

M/S Vikash Medical Hall. All part & parcel of property consisting of Area-08 decimals,

Soundary of the Property:

Devi, West: Manju Devi

South: Area of co operative bank

ast:NizManmokir, West: Municipal Road

Building of BholiDevi, West: Hospital Road.

nded as under(as per deed):North: Akhtari Khatun South

–Barkat khan ka Akhara,Moghalpura, P.O

Nizampur Gulmahia Chak, Soundary: North: Nij Lekhyakari, South:nahar, East: Sukhalu P.O. Sabalpur, Didarganj, Singh & Ganesh Singh West:Niz Lekhyakari

3009, West: Corporation Gali

of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

cused had argued that they had been falsely implicated and were not present at the spot on the day of the incident.

While dismissing the bail pleas, the judge said material investigation in the case is still underway and several offenders who were allegedly involved in riots are yet to be apprehended.

"The apprehension has been expressed by the prosecution that the public witnesses will not come forward as the rioters are known criminals of the area. Therefore, the apprehension of threatening/influencing the witnesses cannot be ruled at this stage, if the accused/applicant is enlarged on bail at this stage. The chargesheet is yet to be filed. The allegations are serious against the accused/applicant," said the

#### IndiGo

"He (the staff on duty) had made up his mind and that was it," said Gupta, adding that she 'works in the social sector" and "has the experience in dealing with matters of disability rights". She took a flight on another air-

line to Delhi. Gupta also posted a video of the incident, along with her Facebook post, showing several passengers at the airport arguing with the IndiGo ground employee, seeking to speak with a senior supervisor. It shows the child seated on a wheelchair.

In the post, Gupta wrote that there was a delegation of doctors on the same flight who asked the ground staff to get the airport doctor to take a call on the fitness

Property ID

Encumbrance on

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even thousand four

only) as on 06.09.2021 with further interest,

costs, other charges

nd expenses thereon

till realization of bank's

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Rs.21.63.445/-

Rupees Twenty one

Lakhs sixty three thousand four hundred

orty five Only) as on

interest, costs, othe

charges and expenses

hereon till realization

IDIB20202161

Not Known

Rs. 59,10,092.00

ninety two only) as on 19.07.2021 with

further interest, costs

other charges and

expenses thereon till

ealization of bank's

IDIB20202174

Not Known

₹1.15.79.838.00

Rupees One crore

fteen lakh sevent

nine thousand eigh hundred thirty eight only) as on 07.12.2019

with further interest

costs, other charge

and expenses thereor

till realization of bank's

IDIB20202175

Not Known

Rs. 1,52,41,767.00

Rupees One Crore Fifty two Lakhs forty

hundred sixty sever only) as on 30.12.2019

charges till the date of

IDIB20202186

thousand seve

interest, cost&

ten thousand

of bank's dues

of the child — and offered "full support" to the child and his parents on the flight.

It also said that several passengers, including a man who identified himself as a government official, questioned the airline staff's decision.

This child is...uncontrollable. He is in a state of panic', the Indigo manager kept shouting and telling everyone. But all we could see was a young adolescent, sitting very quietly on a wheelchair, terror-stricken by how he was being called out as a risk to the normal world. The only person who is in panic is you', a woman passenger retorted," Gupta wrote.

The parents of the child could

not be reached for comment.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Gupta said: "The child had a breakdown. It seemed that he had gone on a spiral of stress and the mother had slapped him once. There was a bit of crying and the sound echoed. In the meantime, the mother said sorry to her child and started hugging him to calm him down. She also cried. At this point, a person from Indigo Customer Service came to them and said if the child continues in this manner, he won't be allowed to board'

Gupta said: "The child was fed, given medicines and taken care of by their parents, and he was not showing any 'risky behaviour'. However, when board-

ing began, he was not allowed to

According to her, several people "stood up against this discrimination"

"One of them showed Supreme Court judgments on treating the specially abled with dignity. The employee did not budge and kept saying that he was the final authority. While I had to leave around 7.45 pm, I saw the parents pleading from the other side of the glass doors to let them board, but no one moved," Gupta said.

In a statement, an IndiGo spokesperson said: "In view of the safety of passengers, a specially-abled child could not board the flight with his family

on May 7, as he was in a state of

"The ground staff waited for him to calm down till the last minute, but to no avail. The airline made the family comfortable by providing them hotel stay and the family flew the next morning to their destination. We regret the inconvenience caused to the passengers. IndiGo prides itself on being an inclusive organisation, be it for employees or its customers; and over 75,000 specially-abled passengers fly with IndiGo every month," the spokesperson said.

In Ranchi, Birsa Munda airport director Vinod Sharma said they were looking into the issue. (WITH ENS, RANCHI)

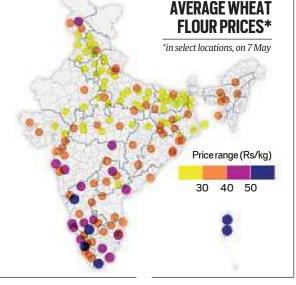
### Wheat demand up, output down; prices of atta soar

The retail inflation, based on the Consumer Price Index, of non-PDS 'wheat/atta' reached 7.77 per cent in March 2022, the highest since March 2017, when it was recorded at 7.62 per cent.

Along with wheat flour, the prices of bakery bread too have registered a sharp increase in recent months. Retail inflation for bakery bread was 8.39 per cent in March this year, the highest from January 2015 onward, the period for which comparable data are available.

The prices of flour and bread are rising at a time when the country is staring at a fall in wheat output. The government had set a wheat production target of 110 million tonnes for 2021-22, which is higher than the estimated production of 109.59 million tonnes in 2020-21. In fact, the second advance estimates released by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare on February 16 pegged the wheat output for 2021-22 at 111.32 million tonnes.

The sudden increase in temperatures in March, however, dampened the government's



hopes of record production. Officials now say the total wheat production for 2021-22 might fall short of the target. Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said last week that wheat production was expected to be around 105 million tonnes. A statement issued by the Food Ministry cited the early onset of

summer as a reason for the decline in wheat yield.

The fall in production and higher demand from private buyers has seen wheat prices in the open market hovering above the minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 2,015 per quintal announced by the government for

2021: Ranked 97, called an

"electoral autocracy"

"electoral autocracy"

2022: Ranked 93 on LDI,

BBB-. In its explanation, among

other aspects, Fitch said,

"Relations with Pakistan are,

moreover, negatively affected

by the repeal of the special sta-

tus for Kashmir and recent

changes to the status of illegal

immigrants based on their reli-

gion. A stronger focus by the

ruling Bharatiya Janata Party on

its Hindu-nationalist agenda

since the government's re-elec-

tion in May 2019 risks becom-

ing a distraction for economic

reform implementation and

could further raise social ten-

Sanyal said the "consistent"

negative commentary about

India was also becoming the

opinion of sovereign rating

son. In this situation, procurement by government agencies is expected to fall short of the target. As per Food Ministry estimates, wheat procurement during the current rabi marketing season is likely to be 195 lakh tonnes, significantly below than the government's initial procurement target of 444 lakh tonnes and last year's actual procurement of 433 lakh tonnes. As per FCI portal, 156.92 lakh tonnes of wheat had been

procured until April 28. Food Ministry data show wheat stocks stood at 190 lakh tonnes at the beginning of 2022-23, which, with the 195 lakh tonne procurement in the current season, is expected to rise to 385 lakh tonnes. Taking into account the allocations for distribution under the National

Food Security Act (NFSA), 2013; Other Welfare Schemes; and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), 2022-23 is expected to end with a balance of 80 lakh tonnes of wheat in government stocks, a little more than the minimum stocking norm of 75 lakh tonnes as on

## Govt pushed 'narrative management' strategy

that 18-26 per cent of a country's sovereign rating is based on subjective factors such as assessments on governance, political stability, rule of law, corruption, press freedom, and so

"In most cases, India's ranking on these subjective factors is well below peers. This pulls down its sovereign ratings," it said. Rating agencies, according to Sanyal, used the World Bank's World Governance Indicators (WGI) as a proxy for these subjective factors. Highlighting WGI as the singlemost important index, it said, the inputs that go into the making of the WGI were "arbitrary" and based on impressions from the Western press or small surveys of NGOs and a handful of

academics. "There is a danger that we may witness a drop in WGI scores due to the latest negative commentary on India by think tanks, survey agencies and international media. This could possibly downgrade our Sovereign Ratings to junk. Hence, it is of utmost importance to reach out to these think-tanks and survey agencies and set a positive narrative about India in general," Sanyal said in the presentation.

When contacted by The Indian Express, Sanyal declined to comment, and said: "We never comment on internal presentations."

Observing that most reports in 2019-20 projected a "negative commentary" on India, the presentation noted: "Specifically, Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act of 2019, Citizenship Amendment

#### FREEDOM HOUSE AND V-DEM'S INDICES **FREEDOM HOUSE** Liberal Democracy Index (LDI) and other components

2019: Score 75/100, "free" 2020: Score 71/100, "free"

free"

**VARIETIES OF DEMOCRACY (V-DEM) 2019:** Ranked 85 for the

Act, 2019, National Register of stable on June 18, 2020, al-Citizens and construction of a though it affirmed the rating at Hindu temple at a disputed religious site by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his 'Hindu nationalist' Bharatiya Janata Party are seen as an exercise 'targeting Muslims' and 'threatening secular nature' of our country."

In fact, Moody's had downgraded India on June 1, 2020, from Baa2 to Baa3 (the lowest investment grade of ratings) and maintained a negative outlook. Amongst other reasons, Moody's had "Governance is material to India's credit profile and a material factor in today's downgrade... Policymakers' limited success in achieving stated objectives in recent years - an important aspect of governance under Moody's definitions together with Moody's expectation that policymaking will remain challenged is an important driver in both the downgrade to Baa3 and the assignment of a negative outlook.'

agencies, and the finance ministry's protests on such opinion reaped no results. "Experience is that the rating agencies will usually go ahead and publish," his presentation said. The government did reach out to sovereign rating agencies in the coming months. On

October 5, 2021, Moody's is committed to peaceful devel-

opment and seeks harmony, solidarity and cooperation in the region... And the attempt to "copy and paste" the Ukraine crisis in the Asia-Pacific is doomed to fail," he said. Le sought to float the idea of

a "global NATO": "Recently, some people have called for building "a global NATO", and NATO is interfering frequently in Asia-Pacific affairs. This is cause for concern to regional countries."

He obliquely took aim at the Quad, the strategic security forum of the US, India, Australia, and Japan: "We cannot allow bloc-based confrontation to repeat itself in the Asia-Pacific; we cannot allow certain countries to succeed in their self-serving attempt to drag the Asia-Pacific into conflict; we cannot allow small and medium-sized countries in our region to become the tool or victim of hegemony."

Investors Service raised the outlook on India's sovereign rating to 'stable' from 'negative' in a revision after almost two years, minimising the chances

of any rating downgrade. Both Moody's and Fitch Ratings declined to comment on queries sent by The Indian Express.

Sanyal's presentation said the WGI was based on 32 third party sources and has been updated annually since 2002. Of these 32 data sources, 24 incorporate India, but not all sources score countries on all six WGI parameters. "The WGI scores run with a two-vear lag. Hence. the latest available scores are for the year 2018. However, most third-party sources publish their reports every year. The commentary in these reports provides a clear indication of which way the scores will move in the coming years,"

it said. "We need to reach out to the top third-party sources initiate continuous discussions, clearly spell out the country's reform measures and sensitise them of our internal matters," it

The government felt that there was a need to keep continuous engagements with third party sources of WGI to set "positive narrative about India in general" adding that "last moment protests are of no use." Most of these sources seem to be swaved by general western media and NGO narratives rather than any indepth objective analysis, it said, emphasising "consistent narrative management is important".

On the global concerns over

the "no-limits" ties between China and Russia, he said: "Some people have twisted the words of the recent China-Russia joint statement and misinterpreted "friendship has no limits and cooperation has no forbidden areas" to mean that China had "prior knowledge" of Russia's special military operation in Ukraine and even "endorsed" it. They have therefore concluded that China must be held accountable for the conflict. This is absurd. China is not involved in the conflict, still less the one who created it. So how could China be responsible? The relationship between China and Russia is based on the principles of non-alliance, non-confrontation and non-targeting of third parties, and it is not subject to the influence of any third party.

**FULL REPORTS ON** www.indianexpress.com

#### indices. Among 24 countries severely affected by "third 2021: Score 67/100, "partly wave of autocratization" 2020: Slips to 90, among top 10 autocratizing countries

2022: Score 66/100, "partly

Fitch Ratings too revised India's outlook to negative from

two theatres — war in Europe and the Asia-Pacific — and win both. This is a very dangerous proposition. Rather than learning the painful lessons of conflict and suffering in Europe, they seek to create a "second theatre" and bring the conflict

"The US "Indo-Pacific strategy" indicates that the US seeks not so much to change China as to shape the strategic environment in which China operates. For quite some time, the US has the edge of an abyss. To these people, let me stress that China

position in the past as well.

NATO", and responded to concerns over China's "no-limits" partnership with Russia, in the context of the invasion of Ukraine. Responding to a question about the US wanting to control Europe while letting the Europeans bear the losses, Le said: "There is a famous line in (the American web series) House of Cards: "Politics requires sacrifice. The sacrifice of others, of course."

Le, who spoke on May 6 on "Seeking Peace and Promoting Development: An Online Dialogue of Global Think Tanks of 20 Countries", said: "Some people urge the US not to forget about China when contending with Russia, but to regard the Eurasian continent as a battlefield and to focus on

#### China

India, has articulated Beijing's Le spoke about a "global to the Asia-Pacific.

kept flexing its muscle on China's doorstep, creating exclusive groups against China and inflaming the Taiwan question to test China's red line. If this is not an Asia-Pacific version of NATO's eastward expansion, then what is? Such a strategy, if left unchecked, would bring horrible consequences and push the Asia-Pacific over



New Delhi

#### Date: 07.05.2022 Place: Patna **Authorised Officer** Indian Bank

# THE CITY

#### TO COME UP ALONGSIDE EXISTING FLYOVER: PWD

## 3-lane flyover to connect ITO to Ashram in the pipeline

**GAYATHRI MANI** 

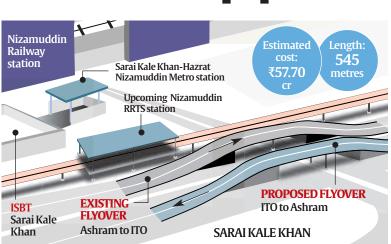
TO ENSURE a smooth commute between Central, East and Southeast Delhi, the Public Works Department (PWD) is planning to construct a three-lane flyover for vehicles travelling from ITO towards Ashram at the Sarai Kale Khan T-Iunction. This will come up alongside the existing flyover, which provides connectivity from Ashram to ITO.

Officials said the new flyover will also help decongest the Sarai Khan ISBT and Tjunction where several other projects, such as the Rapid Rail Transit System (RRTS), are coming up.

"Sarai Kale Khan is going to become the city's transport hub, with the RRTS, Delhi Metro, Nizamuddin Railway station and ISBT merging at one place. There is also a plan to integrate these... Once the RRTS station, which is under construction, is ready. the area is expected to become more congested. To avoid this, the PWD has decided to construct this additional flyover which will take the load of surface traffic coming from ITO and provide space for buses and local traffic below," said an official.

The 545-metre-long flyover will have three lanes and two ramps. The ramp that goes up will be approximately 90 metres long and the down ramp will be 95 metres long. The PWD will also provide two Uturns and one intersection at the grade level. The stilt portion below will be approximately around 360 metres long and will have footpaths, said officials.

Officials added that it will also help decongest traffic at the Delhi-Meerut Expressway T-Junction. "Presently, vehicles coming from Akshardham, Mayur



Vihar, Noida via the expressway also merge at Sarai Kale Khan bus stand and take the existing flyover towards ITO or to reach Sarai Kale ISBT, Ashram or to go to parts of Southeast Delhi. Now, the upcoming flyover will bear this load," said the official.

Experts said the flyover, if planned well, will help decongest the area.

Sewa Ram, senior professor of transport planning at the School of Planning and Architecture (SPA), said, "There are three points where vehicles merge below the road at the T-Junction — vehicles coming from ITO towards Sarai Kale Khan, from Akshardham as well as Noida via Delhi-Meerut Expressway T-junction. From here, traffic goes in different directions which creates congestion. There is a diverging point towards Barapullah flyover. Traffic either goes towards ISBT, ITO, Ashram or Barapullah. So, if the PWD addresses these issues, then the flyover will bring relief from traffic congestion and improve con-

Citing the example of RTR flyover, he added: "The PWD first constructed a oneway flyover on RTR Marg and constructed another flyover for traffic coming from the opposite direction several years later. Commuters had faced problems during

Besides building a new flyover, the department has also decided to widen the service road along the existing flyover on the ISBT side and two other service roads

The department will also improve the existing footpath, drainage system, landscaping, road signages, road safety fixtures etc. Tenders for construction of the new flyover have been floated and the estimated cost is Rs 57.70 crore. Officials said processing the tender will take one-two months and once the work is awarded, the

## Lady Hardinge's new OPD block to open today

**ANONNA DUTT** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

AFTER REMAINING under construction for nearly a decade, the new block for outpatient clinics at Lady Hardinge Medical College will be inaugurated on Monday. Soon after, the "unsafe," old building will be vacated.

"All our clinical departments such as medicine, surgery and gynaecology will shift there after the inauguration on Monday. The old building is not in a good condition and other buildings will come up in its place once a finance approval happens," said the hospital's medical director Dr Ram Chander.

The building is a long time coming. The redevelopment plan for the hospital — which was established as an 80-bed centre in 1916, and grew to become the current 877-bed Sucheta Kriplani hospital and 377-bed Kalawati Saran Children's hospital -was approved by the government 13 years ago.

The first phase of the construction, which focused on an alternative outpatient department that had been constructed in 1956, be-

The project, however, remained in limbo for years after the private contractor abandoned it citing a lack of funds. The half-constructed buildings for years remained a breeding ground for dengue-transmitting

The situation became dire in 2018 when the Central Public Works Department (CPWD) in a report said the structure had become "unsafe"

The report said the roof was in a derelict state. OPD services continued to be provided from the same building to over 2,000 patients daily, including young children and neonates. Citing safety concerns, the doctors in the hospital went on a strike and withdrew it only on the assurance that construction would restart soon.

The space for the old block is likely to be utilised for a 1,300-bed paediatric and neonatal care facility in the second phase of redevelopment, which will make Kalawati Saran the largest children's hospital in Asia — a title currently held by the 837-bed Institute of Child Health and Hospital for Children in

"This building will be dismantled once approval for new blocks comes in. There is a proposal to create the Kalawati Saran Institute of Medical Sciences for Children - it will be a three-block Centre with state-of-the-art facilities for care of children and mothers," said Dr Ram Chander.

## stay open till 3 am

New Delhi: The Delhi BJP reguested the Police Commissioner to not allow bars to stay open till 3 am as the AAP government's move can lead to law and order problems. State BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor wrote a letter in this regard. **ENS** 

#### **RAVI KANOJIA** (07 IUNF 1982 - 09 MAY 2016)



Fondly remembered by his family and colleagues at The Express Group

flyover from ITO to Ashram."

nectivity. Else, it will be a uni-directional

the construction of the other flyover."

across the flyover on the Yamuna side.

flyover will be constructed in a year.

### BJP asks police chief to not let bars



#### BRIEFLY-

#### Two brothers shot at, 1 held

New Delhi: A day after two brothers were shot at by unknown assailants in Subhash Nagar, police arrested one of the accused, a 47-year-old man, in connection with the case. Police said the brothers were inside their car when three assailants fired more than 12 rounds of bullets at them. They are undergoing treatment and their condition is critical, police said.

#### 50-yr-old shot dead

New Delhi: A 50-yr-old man, father of a jailed gangster, was shot dead by unknown assailants in Outer Delhi over suspected gang rivalry on Saturday, said police. The deceased has been identified as Bham Prakash. His son, Kallu, is allegedly a member of the Gogi gang whose leader was shot dead inside the Rohini court last year. **ENS** 

#### इंडियन बैंक **INDIAN BANK Indian Bank Zonal Office,** 📤 इलाहाबाद ALLAHABAD **Budh Marg, Patna**

POSSESSION NOTICE (FOR IMMOVEABLE PROPERTY)

### Notice is hereby given under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets

Enforcement(Security) Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) and 13(12) read with Rules 8 & 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, the Authorised Officer issued a Demand Notice on the dates noted against each Account as mentioned hereinafter, calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said Notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the under noted borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property/ies described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Sec 13(4) of the said Act read with Rules 8 of the said Rules on the dates mentioned against each Account. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Indian Bank for the amounts and interests thereon mentioned against each account herein below:

The attention of borrowers detailed hereunder is invited to the provision of sub section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

	Name		Name of	Description	n of the ch	arged/	Date of Demand Notice
Sr.	of	Name of the	The Borrower/ Guarantor	0 0	ed property	' '	Date of possession Notice
No.	the Branch	Account	(owner of the property)	•	&parcel of consisting		Amount outstanding as on the date of demand Notice
1.	Kankar-		Shri Mukesh	All Part and		Land &	09.12.2021
	bagh	Kumar & others	Kumar, Smt.	Building vide			04.05.2022
	Branch	(A/C-6642406190)	Sugani Devi, Shri Prabhat Kumar,	l Sugani Devi W	//o Late Mol	nan Singh	Rs.2511943.00
	Shri Dili	ip Kumar & Shri R	Rajeev Kumar	situated at M	auza- Khen	nni chak,	(Rs. Twenty Five Lakhs Eleven thousand
Pat	na, Tauzi	oresent thana- Rai i No-370, Thana No	o-112, Khata No-74	4 and survey khe	stry office an shra Plot No	d District- -10 (part),	Nine hundred forty three only)
Ka.	shair na	aar Hiro noth Ea	et of Chiv Negar	Datas 900027	Aron 000 ca	ft /2 0664	as on 09-12-2021

Kanhaiy nagar, Hira path, East of Shiv Nagar, Patna-800027, Area-900 sqft (2.0664 Decimal). **Boundary (As per Deed) North:** 10 feet wide Road in which 5 feet Road charges till the date of niti & 5 feet Road has been left by the front Digar Kharidar, South: Hal Kharidar Digar, East: Hal Kharidar Digar, West: Imroja Kharidar Smt. Shanti Devi All Part and parcel of Land &Building

Kumari & Shri situated at Aditya Shankar Apartment Kumari & Shri Main Punil Kumar having Flat No-306, 3rd floor, Area-Punil Kumar Branch 900 sqft (Build up area), Mauza-Nakhash Chowk, P.S- Town thana, P.S No-177 developed by M/S Aditya

Unique construction Pvt Ltd on Khata No-481,518 & 55. Kheshra No-22,25,27,29 and a part of 33 vide Sale Deed No-8903 dated 17.12.2015 in Book No-01, Volume No-156 page no-561 to 580 in CD No-24/year 2015 registered with District Registry Office Hajipur in the name of Smt Ranju Kumari.Boundary of Flat No-306 (As per Sale Deed No8903 dated 17-12-2015) North: Flat No-304 & Boundary of the Plot, South: Flat cost & charges till the No-305, **East:** Flat No-304 & corridor, **West:** Boundary of the Plot & land Owner niz

date of realization. (Authorized Officer)

realization.

10.12.2021

07.05.2022

Rs.2994355.03

(Rupees Twenty

Nine Lakhs ninety four

fifty five and three

paise only) as on

12-2021 with interest

ousand three hundred



DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL AT PATNA
(Government of India, Ministry of Finance)
A, B & F Wings, Karpuri Thakur Sadan, Ashiana Digha Road, Patna-800 025

Bank of India, Sowan Branch, Buxar

As per order dated 30/03/2022, under mentioned property will be sold by public online e-Auction on the date and time mentioned herein for recovery of Rs.7,03,44,437/-+ interest/cost and other expenses from M/s Vidyadaan & Others, the sum is recoverable together with interest, cost, charges, as per the

10/06/2022 between 12.3

.M. to 4.00 P.M. with aut

xtension clause in case of oid in last 5 minutes before

losing, if required. Th

amount by which the Biddings are to increased

hall be Rs. 20,000/-

92,00,000/

Ninety Two

**∟acs Only)** o

08/06/2022

upto 4.00 P.M.

M/s Vidyadaan & Others (In R.P. Case No. 323/2016 arising out of Certificate No. OA. 243/2015) E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE

Description of Property:

Khata No.	ct - Buxar, details of each lot along with their respective boundary is given below: - ta No. Khesra No. Area Boundary						
987 (old) & 21 (new)	5651 (old) & 3047 (new)		North: Raj Narayan Singh; South: Banke Bihari Singh; East: Ram Bahadur Singh; and West Govt of Bihar	Lacs Only)			
	3046 (new)	56 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain; and West: Alain				
1480 (old) & 43 (new)	324 and 325 (old) & 390 (new)	1 Acre 48 Decimals	North: Shree Kamal Singh; South: Govt. of Bihar; East: Ramadhar Pathak; and West: Govt. of Bihar				
1478 (old) & 43 (new)	323 (old) & 392 (new)	24 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain; and West: Ajain				
379 (old) & 869 (new)	339 (old) & 397 (new)	67 Decimals	North: Shree Kant Singh; South: Dina Kurmi; East: Dinesh Singh Kabaledar; and West: Govt. of Bihar				
379 (old) & 1154 (new)		69 Decimals	North: Sona Kunwari; South: Parmanand Singh; East: Ajain; and West: Aiain				
707 (old) & 1098 (new)	371 & 372 (old) & 440 (new)	81 Decimals	North: Ram Bahadur Singh & Others; South: Govt. of Bihar & Prem Nath Singh; East: Ramakant Singh and West: Ajain.				
707 (old) & 1098 (new)	371 & 372 (old) & 440 (new)	1 Acre 5 Decimals	North: Ram Bahadur Singh & Others; South: Govt. of Bihar & Prem Nath Singh; East: Ramakant Singh and West: Ajain.				
707 (old) & 1098 (new)	5361(old) & 444 (new)	36 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain and West: Ajain				
707 (old) & 1098 (new)	373(old) & 437 (new)	77 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain; and West: Ajain				
T	otal Area		7 Acres 27 Decimals				

**Details of scheme of Property** Schedule 'A'

Decimals (in 8 Lots), District - Buxar, details of each lot along with their respective boundary is given

Khata No.	Khesra No.	Area	Boundary
43	3037 & 3038	74.5 Decimals	North: Judge Yadav; South: Degree Yadav; East: Judge Yadav; and West: Sri Kamal Singh
43	3037	62.5 Decimals	North: Judge Yadav & Ram Parpan Singh; South: Ajab Dayal Singh; East Judge Yadav; and West: Sri Kamal Singh
379	2953	57 Decimals	North: Ajab Dayal Singh; South: Govt. of Bihar; East:Tulsi Yadav; and West: Ajab Daval Singh
1056	388	28 Decimals	North: Ram Bahadur Singh & Others; South: Vidyadaan Society; East: Vidyadaan Society; and West: Chhavar
91	2950	56 Decimals	North: Degree Yadav; South: Nagendre Yadav; East: Nagendre Yadav; and West: Ramadhar Pathak
791	2954	24 Decimals	North: Ajay Dayal Singh; South: Tulsi Yadav; East: Judge Yadav; and West: Ramadhar Pathak
516	3040	10.5 Decimals	North: Karha; South: Ajab Dayal Singh; East: Vidyadaan Society; and West: Diwakar Singh
516	3039	36 Decimals	North: Karha; South: Ajain; East: Divakar Singh; West: Vidyadaan Society.
Tot	al Area		3 Acres 48.5 Decimals

quitable Mortgage of land and building in the name of Vidyadaan Society bearing Registration No. /62558/2008 vide Registered Deed of Absolute Sale baearing No. 10655 dated 12.12.2008 a Mauza - Arriyaon, Buxar, Thana No. 323, Khata No. 43, P.S. - Dumraon, area measuring altogether Acres 82 Decimals (in 4 Lots), District - Buxar, details of each lot along with their respective

Khata No.	Khesra No.	Area	Boundary				
24 (old) & 765 (new)	318 and 319 (old) & 389 (new)	1 Acre 23 Decimals	North: Diwakar Singh; South: Ajab Dayal Singh; East: Ajab Dayal Singh; and West: Govt. of Bihar.				
2024 (old) & 763 (new)	347 (old) & 417 (new)	31 Decimals	North: Karha; South: Videshi Kurmi; East: Videshi Kurmi and West: Karha.				
1799 (new)	397 & 8670	23 Decimals	North: Govt of Bihar; South: Ramadhar Singh; East: Ram Uchit Singh and West: Dudh Nath Singh.				
1799 (new)	400 (new)	5 Decimals	North: Govt of Bihar; South: Ramadhar Singh; East: Dudh Nath Singh and West: Dudh Nath Singh.				
To	otal Area		1 Acres 82 Decimals				
C							

guitable Mortgage of land and building in the name of Vidvadaan Society bearing Registration No S/62558/2008 vide Registered Deed of Absolute Sale baearing No. 10464 dated 03.12.2008 at Mauza - Arriyaon, Buxar, Thana No. 323, area measuring altogether 4 Acres 51 Decimals (in ots). District - Buxar, details of each lot along with their respective boundary is given below:

Khata No.	Khesra No.	Area	Boundary
216 (old) & 1631 (new)		15 Decimals	North: Govt of Bihar; South: Rudra Pratap Singh; East: Shrikant Singh; and West: Chhavar.
216 (old) &	336 (old)	20	North: Govt of Bihar; South: Rudra Pratap Singh; East: Shrikant Singh; and West: Chhavar.
1631 (new)	& 405 (new)	Decimals	
833 (old) &	5650 (old)	1 Acre 44	North: Ram Bahadur Singh; South: Shivyash Singh;
935 (new)	& 3044 (new)	Decimals	East: Vijay Bahadur Singh; and West: Chhavar.
	3045	1 Acre 15 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain; and West: Ajain.
972 (old) &	5653 (old) &	36	North: Chhavar; South: Shiv Nath Yadav; East: Chhavar; and West: Chhavar.
79 (new)	3050 (new)	Decimals	
1944 (old) &	317 (old) &	42	North: Bankey Bihar Singh; South: Diwakar Singh; East: Nij; and West: Chhavar.
516 (new)	3043 (new)	Decimals	
	3042	35 Decimals	North: Ajain; South: Ajain; East: Ajain; and West: Ajain.
1944 (old) & 516 (new)	5648 (old) & 3040	44	North: Karha, South: Sri Awadh Bihari Singh; East:
	& 3039 (new)	Decimals	Sri Vijay Bahadur Singh; and West: Sri Kamal Singh
To	otal Area		4 Acres 51 Decimals

Total Area - 17.085 Acres

Schedule 'B' equitable Mortgage of land in the name of certificate debtor no. 2 namely Sri Surya Kumar Singh S/o Sri Bindeshwari Singh vide Registered Deed of Absolute Sale bearing No. 4182 dated 22.08.1997 bearing Khesra No. 284, Area 195 square metre and situated at Village - Kanwali Kendriyadoon, District - Dehra Doon. Bounded and butted as follows - North Rukmani Garh; South Dr. Arun Kumar Verma: East: Rukmani Gargh: and West: Road.

60,00,000/ (Rupees Sixty Lacs Only)

Rs. 6,00,000/-10/06/2022 between 12.30 .M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto (Rupees Six extension clause in case o oid in last 5 minutes before losing, if required. Th 08/06/2022 amount by which the Biddings are to increased upto 4.00 hall be Rs. 20,000/-

10/06/2022 between 12.30

xtension clause in case of

oid in last 5 minutes before

11.00.000/-Equitable Mortgage of land in the name of certificate debtor no. 3 namely Dr. Arun Kumar Verma 10.00.000 S/o Chandradeep Prasad Verma vide Registered Deed of Absolute Sale bearing No. 4181 dated (Rupees 22.08.1997 bearing Khesra No. 284, Area 250.83 square metre and situated at Village - Kanwali One Crore Kendriyadoon, District \_ Dehra Doon. Bounded and butted as follows - North: Rukmani Gargh South 25 ft. wide Road; East : Rukmani Gargh; and West: K.R. Uniyal, Ten Lacs

quitable Mortgage of Flat belonging to the certificate debtor no. 3 namely Dr. Arun Kumar Verma S/o Chandradeep Prasad Verma bearing G-303 on 3rd Floor of Jaipuria Sunrise Greens measuring 198 sq. ft. vide Registered Deed of Absolute Sale bearing No. 15945 dated 04.07.2009 at Housing Sixty Lacs

P.M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto xtension clause in case of (Rupees oid in last 5 minutes before Only) on or closing, if required. The mount by which the Biddings are to increase thall be Rs. 20,000/-08/06/2022 pto 4.00 P.N **10/06/2022** between 12.30 P.M. to 4.00 P.M. with auto Rs. 6,00,000/-60,00,000/ (Rupees Six

Lacs Only) or

or before

Plot No. 12A. Ahinsa Khand. Indirapuram. Town and District - Ghaziabad. Bounded and butted a closing, if required. The Only) 08/06/2022 ollows - North: Road 100' ft. wide; South: Road 120' ft. wide; East: Road 150' ft. wide; and West mount by which the upto 4.00 siddings are to increase hall be Rs. 20,000/-

(Rupees

Company Name/address: M/s E-Procurement Technologies Limited, B-704, Wall Street-II, Opp. - Orient Club, Near Gujarat College, Ellis Bridge Ahmedabad- 380 006, Gujarat, India, Help Number: 079-68136854/55/51 & 079-68136800, Mobile No. 926556821, Contact Person: Mr. Praveen Kuma Thever, E-mail Address-praveen.thevar@auctiontiger.net, Website add: https://drt.auctiontiger.net.

Details of the facilitation Center:-(i) Office of Recovery Officer, A, B & F Wings, 2nd Floor, Karpuri Thakur Sadan, Ashiyana Digha Road, Rajiv Nagar, Patna 5, (ii) Bank of India, Zonal Office, Chanakya Palace, First Floor, Beer Chand Patel Marg, Patna, Bihar-800001 - Mr. Subodh Kumar, Chief Manager Mob

3788748220, 9454293998, E-mail: Patna ÁRD@bankofindia.co.in and Recovery.patna@bankofindia.co.in Facilitation Centre and property inspection - Bank of India, Zonal Office, Chanakya Palace, First Floor, Beer Chand Patel Marg, Patna, Bihar-800001 - M ubodh Kumar, Chief Manager Mobile No. 8788748220, 9454293998, E-mail: Patna ARD@bankofindia.co.in and Recovery patna@bankofindia.co.in

ACCOUNT DETAIL FOR ONLINE MONEY TRANSFER IFSC CODE

**ACCOUNT NO. & NAME** BANK OF INDIA, ARB, Patna BKID0004410

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF SALE:-

Dated: 30/04/2022

Road 80' ft. wide

Details of e-auction Agency:

The property shall be sold "as is where is basis".

The intending bidders should register the participation with the service provider well in advance and get user ID and password for participating in E-auction

It can be procured only when the requisite Earnest Money Deposit be paid by prescribed mode.

To take part in Auction, each bidder shall deposit Earnest Money (EMD) @ of 10% of the Reserve Price which shall be paid by electronic transfer to the concerned Bank's EMD account or through DD/Pay order drawn in favour of Recovery Officer, DRT, Patna alongwith copy of PAN Card, Address Proof and Identity proof with E-mail ID, Mobile no of bidder. The Envelop containing EMD along with details of documents should be superscribed R.P. No. 323/2016 and in case of the company copy of resolution by the Board members of the company or any other document confirming representation/attorney of the company should reach on or before 4.00 P.M. of 08/06/2022 in the office of Recovery Officer, DRT, Patna or should credit the amount in respecti Bank's/Financial Institution's account. EMD received thereafter shall not be considered.

The successful bidder shall have to pay 25% of the sale proceeds (including EMD) on the next working day of sale through the mode as stated above. The purchaser shall deposit the balance 75% of the sale proceeds before the undersigned on or before 15th day from the date of sale of the property exclusive of such day or if the 15th day be Sunday or other Holiday, then on the first office day after the 15th day alongwith the poundage fee @ 2% upto Rs

1000/- and @ 1 % on the excess of such gross amount over Rs. 1000/- by prescribed mode as stated above. In case of default of payment within the prescribed period, the property shall be resold, after the issue of fresh proclamation of sale. The deposit, after defraying the expenses of the sale, may, if the undersigned thinks fit, be forfeited to the Government and the defaulting purchaser shall forfeit all claims to the

roperty or to any part of the sum for which it may subsequently be sold. The Recovery Officer has the absolute right to accept or reject any bid or bids or to postpone or cancel the e-auction without assigning any reasons. EMD of unsuccessful bidder shall be returned the same day of auction by DRT/Bank by credit to the account of bidder mentioned in bid form.

Prospective bidder may avail online training from service provider. 10. Prospective bidders are advised to go through the website for details terms & conditions of sale before submitting their bids or contact Branch Manager o

New Delhi

Recovery Officer

## Govt-aided schools get edu dept respite

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

OBSERVING THAT teachers of many governmentaided schools are not being paid on time due to the inability of these schools to timely pay their dues, the Directorate of Education has given them more breathing room to fulfil their obligations.

According to provisions of the Delhi School Education and Act and Rules, the managing committee of all government-aided schools have to deposit 5% of the pay and allowances of their employees monthly to enable salaries to be disbursed in the first week of every month. The Delhi government covers 95% of these expenses.

"It has been observed that the payment of salary of quite a large number of employees of governmentaided schools does not get credited in their accounts on time, primarily due to the reason that some of the managing committees are unable to deposit their share of 5% into government account in advance within the prescribed time limit on the pretext of financial problems," the DoE has stated in a recent order. It also said it has received complaints from employees that the managing committees of some schools force employees to hand over 5% of their salary, and deposit the management's share in the government's account after that.

To prevent delays in salaries being paid to teachers and other employees, the DoE has decided to give relaxation to these schools from having to deposit their share every month, and has allowed them to prepare salary bills and submit these to the government with an undertaking that they will deposit their share by the end of the quarter — by June 30, September 30, December 31 or March 31 as the case may be.

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### COOLING OFF

A worker finds a way to beat the heat in the capital, Sunday. The maximum temperature was recorded at 40 degrees Celsius. Praveen Khanna

## More smog guns, sprinklers to control capital's dust menace

**GAYATHRI MANI** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

IN A bid to control air pollution in Delhi, the Public Works Department (PWD) is planning to hire five-six anti-smog guns per division and truck-mounted water sprinklers.

"We are hiring anti-smog guns on a contractual basis to control dust pollution. The recent rain has brought some relief but construction work, like repairing of roads, Metro phase IV, RRTS. and new projects, are going across the city. Road construction and repair work is also being carried out on more than 150 km across Delhi," said a senior PWD official.

Officials added that each division will hire about five-six antismog guns as per the requireOfficials added that each division will hire about five-six anti-smog guns, as per the requirement

ment. Several divisions, like Southwest, North and Central, have also invited tenders for hiring truck-mounted smog guns, including operators.

The department has, however, decided to hire only CNG and BS-VI compliant vehicles. 'We have mentioned in the tender that the vehicle must be BS-VI compliant CNG trucks. The aim is to control pollution and hence the department will not entertain vehicles running on other fuels," the official said.

The anti-smog guns will have a capacity to store 7,000 to 10,000 litres of water. They spray nebulised water droplets in the air with the help of highpressure propellers, thereby causing the dust particles to settle down.

Besides anti-smog guns, the department will also hire "hydraulic-operated sprinkler truck mounted systems" for dust control as part of its anti-pollution measures.

These sprinkler trucks will be GPS-enabled and will discharge water in not less than 50 m horizontal distance. The water will be sprayed in 330-degree rotation in the horizontal plane and 60-degree tilting in the vertical plane and size of droplets will be in the range of 10 to 30 micron,

#### **BJP MLA IN ATTENDANCE**

# At Nuh, guns and threats in show of strength by cow vigilantes

**PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA** NUH, MAY 8

DAYS AFTER Nuh Police registered an FIR following viral videos of purported 'gau rakshaks' forcing a man into an SUV at gunpoint, cow vigilante groups held a mahapanchayat at a cow shelter in the district's Sangel village Sunday.

The groups said they had given the call for the gathering on social media in response to statements made by politicians in Nuh suggesting that "gau rakshaks will not be allowed to enter". They also issued an ultimatum to the state government to end cow smuggling in Nuh within a month.

"Seven demands were raised. It was decided that a district-level committee should be formed to look into the matter. The administration should confiscate property and vehicles of people accused of cow smuggling and auction them. The amount should be given to cow shelters. Fast-track courts should be set up to hear these cases. Further, arms licences for gau rakshaks should be given and FIRs against gau rakshaks should be withdrawn. If there is no action on these demands, we are ready for a 'jail bharo' andolan. We have started a movement and will not stop till cow slaughter is completely stopped," said Bharat



At the mahapanchayat in Sangel village, Sunday. Express

Bushan, a gau rakshak and one of the

In the days leading up to the panchayat, security had been stepped up in the district with three additional companies deployed.

Deputy Commissioner (Nuh) Ajay Kumar said organisers had sought permission for the panchayat and it was granted on Saturday afternoon. "Permission was granted subject to enforcement of certain law and order conditions. We held a meeting with the organisers and informed them that law and order has to be maintained," he said.

Addressing the panchayat, Sohna MLA Sanjay Singh said he extended his "full support" to the gathering: "Today, I am an MLA due to blessings of gau mata and that is why I have come here. It was my duty.'

Singh added that the panchayat was held to ensure cow slaughter does not take place in Nuh: "Haryana was the first state in the country to bring a law to ban cattle slaughter. Whatever decision is taken, you have my support. I will take the memorandum of demands

Kulbhushan Bhardwaj, legal adser, Sanyukt Hindu Sangharsh Samiti, told the gathering that if FIRs are lodged against "gau bhakts", then they will ensure that the current leaders are not voted to

"It is being asked why people are waving weapons. I want to tell the administration that today these gau bhakts have only come to mark their attendance, but if required, we would not let these arms rust. We will fight," he said.

Members of Bajrang Dal and VHP from across the state also attended the mahapanchayat. At the panchayat, at least three men were seen carrying guns and several were carrying swords and axes. The men claimed they had licences for

Sources said one of the conditions laid down by the administration was that no weapons are allowed. On some people carrying swords and guns at the panchayat, the DC said, "We will verify it and take action accordingly.

On reports of some people allegedly vandalising a religious structure near the venue, the DC said. "As per a preliminary report, the structure is a Hindu pitr (shrine), dedicated to an ancestor in the village. It has been reported that some people damaged it. The situation was brought under control. No complaint has been received so far. We will look into it."

SP (Nuh) Varun Singla added, "No complaint has been received in

## Had no intention of harming CM: Bagga on FIR against him

**ABHINAV RAJPUT** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

DELHI BJP leader Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga, who was in the midst of a push and pull between police from three states, Sunday told The Indian Express that he had no intention of physically harming Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and that the Punjab Police was going after him for minor things instead of working to

"There is an FIR against me which says that I wanted to kill Kejriwal; all I had said was that till he apologises (for his statement on The Kashmir Files), I will not let him live peacefully. This does not mean that I had any intention of physically harming him... The FIR is not for any derogatory words I may have used...," he said.

The April 1 case against Bagga is based on a complaint by Dr Sunny Singh Ahluwalia, AAP Punjab spokesperson and party in-charge of Anandpur Sahib Lok Sabha constituency. The FIR quotes Ahluwalia as saying that comments made by Bagga in the media and on Twitter amounted to "criminal intimidation... to cause violence... imminent hurt to Arvind Kejriwal and other AAP leaders in a pre-designed, well planned, orchestrated manner". Sections invoked against him include IPC 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

Bagga protection from any coercive action till the next date of "My party did not go after Kejriwal or arrest him when he called the PM a coward and psy-

On Saturday, the Punjab and Haryana High Court granted

chopath. I think if Indira Gandhi would have been alive, she would have been very proud of him," he said. Bagga was referring to a tweet by Kejriwal in 2015 after the CM's office was raided by the CBI following allegations of corruption against his secretary at the time, Rajendra Kumar. Speaking about Friday's events, Bagga said, "I woke up

around 8.30 that morning when two police officers came... we gave them water. Suddenly, 14-15 more people arrived... Soon, there were 50 police officers in several vehicles... They snatched my phone and those of my family members. They did not allow me to wear either my patka or pagdi... Later, a woman police officer gave it to me, it was kept inside their car. In my religion, one is not allowed to step outside without a turban... they (police) could have at least extended this courtesy."

At Kurukshetra, where the uniab Police team was stopped. the Haryana Police asked for papers like DD entry and permission from the magistrate, which they could not produce, he said, adding, "After that, I was brought back to Delhi."



The case against Bagga is based on a complaint by Dr Sunny Singh Ahluwalia, AAP Punjab spokesperson. Praveen Khanna

## Capital's anganwadi workers resume protest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, MAY 8

MONTHS AFTER their 39-day sit-in protest was stopped, anganwadi workers Sunday took out a rally and marched towards the Delhi Chief Minister's residence in Civil Lines, demanding that all terminated workers be given their jobs back and that the state pay pending salaries to other workers.

Earlier in January, anganwadi workers took to the streets demanding an increase in their honorarium among other things. The protest, outside the CM's residence, lasted

over a month. Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal had then imposed the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA) against the workers, which meant they had to return to work.

On Sunday, the workers said they are unhappy with the state and Centre's reaction to their demands. They tried reaching the CM's residence, but Delhi Police stopped

Usha Das (41), who has been working as an anganwadi worker for 16 years, said she received a showcause notice and a termination letter on WhatsApp on March 12. The letters read that she has been "absent" from her duties and "disrupted the functioning of ICDS schemes". Usha said she has lost her job.

According to the Delhi State Anganwadi Workers and Helpers Union (DSAWHU), more than 884 such workers have been terminated without a reason. "The notice says I was absent and was in the dharna. Is protesting a crime? I was only earning around Rs 4,500. I have four children, and my husband doesn't have a job. After we suspended the protest, we were called back, and I went to Mehrauli and other areas for vaccination drives. How can they send a notice? I have been working for the state for years. I haven't taken leaves. Now, I want my job back and

my pending salary from January...,'

Shakuntala (48), who lives in Harsh Vihar, said her family has been suffering because she lost her job. "I haven't received my payment since January this year. I have been workng as an anganwadi worker since 2006... We will continue our protests and 'gherao' other houses to talk to politicians," she said.

Government officials said they met a delegation from the union (DSAWHU) and received their memorandum. They will look into the complaints and a meeting will be fixed with the members, said the

## STRUCTURAL ENGINEER KNOWN FOR SEVERAL ICONIC BUILDINGS

## Mahendra Raj, man behind Hall of Nations in Pragati Maidan and Salarjung Museum in Hyderabad, dies at 97

**SHINY VARGHESE** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

**ENGINEER** STRUCTURAL Mahendra Raj, known for some of the iconic buildings in modern India, including the Hall of Nations in Pragati Maidan, New Delhi; Salarjung Museum, Hyderabad; Municipal Stadium and Sports Complex, Ahmedabad, passed away Sunday morning at his residence in Delhi. He was 97.

One who worked with all leading architects across the country to create some wall-bending innovations, Raj brought poetic beauty to concrete. Be it the floral relief on the roof of the flower market in Chennai (1985-97); the structural

lightness he achieved on the ground with the Hall of Nations (1971-72); or the paper clip-like inclined folded legs of the Ahmedabad Stadium (1962-65). Many of the buildings were India's first on the world architectural map because of Raj's innovations. In his career spanning over six decades, he brought engineering finesse to over 180 structures across India. "He was a mentor and a guide all

through my life. My career's best buildings, I owe to Raj. These days, there is really not much to talk about in terms of innovations in the profession. The quality and grace of life come only when there is a creative mind behind it. And Raj was such that any mundane thing would become graceful. He was a gardener for



Mahendra Raj. Archive

all architects, he created beautiful things for us. He never saw probPritzker Prize winner architect B V Doshi, who worked with Raj on many projects, including the Indian Institute of Management, Bangalore, and Tagore Hall, Ahmedabad.

After his civil engineering from Lahore in 1946, Raj joined the Punjab Works Department Buildings and Roads, and was later the executive engineer working on Le Corbusier's buildings in Chandigarh.

His work with Corbusier inspired him to go abroad for further studies, after which he moved to New York and worked at Ammann Whitney Consulting Engineers till 1959. He began Mahendra Rai Consultants in Mumbai in 1960. By then, he had met late architect Charles Correa, with whom he built the Hindustan Unilever Pavilion in

Pragati Maidan in 1961. Quite like a crumpled sheet of paper, it was a maze of ramps and platforms enclosed by walls, some caving in, some slanting out. Ten years later, he would open his Delhi office.

"Almost every building of architectural importance in the country, from the seventies to the nineties, has Mahendra Raj's stamp on it. He knew how to articulate an architect's vision through his structural expression. He was a balanced human being, and it showed in his life and buildings. All his work has structural robustness and he would bring to shape any building any architect wanted," says architect and urban designer KT Ravindran.

Ravindran also mentions that Raj was a model for Brylcreem in

New Delhi

runner even until his late seventies. "His going is a deep loss. He carried modern Indian architecture on

the early years and was a marathon

his shoulders. Ours was a jugalbandi. We did many projects together. He had a deep understanding of the architect's intent, and helped to carry forward the idea. His rigour and skill in drawing details are unmatched," savs Rai Rewal, with whom he designed the Hall of Nations.

Raj also helped frame the legislation for the regulation of the profession of engineers, which resulted in the government establishing the Engineering Council of India in 2002. An active member of the International Federation of Consulting Engineers, he has many awards and recognitions to his credit.

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lems, he found solutions...," says

#### AAP, Twenty20 not to contest Kerala bypoll

Thiruvananthapuram: AAP and KI-TEX Group's CSR wing Twenty-20 on Sunday announced that they would not field candidates for the by-election at Thrikkakara assembly seat in Kerala.

The by-election, which would be held on May 31, was necessitated by the death of Congress leg-

Earlier, KITEX MD and chief coordinator of Twenty-20 Sabu M Jacob had announced that Twenty-20 and AAP would have a common candidate in the by-

Jacob on Sunday said the bypoll has no political significance and its outcome would not make any impact. "This by-election is not going to influence or impact the state government. The decision not to field a common candidate was taken after discussions with AAP. We would concentrate on organisational activities," he

AAP state co-ordinator P C Cyriac said his party does not have the habit of contesting byelections in states where it is not in power. "By winning a by-election, AAP cannot influence the present government. We would focus on strengthening the organisation with an aim to contest the coming general elections,"

## 'BJP-RSS turning Ram into Rambo, Hanuman into a symbol of anger'

Period of 'aggressive nationalism' India is passing through will end, says Baghel

**MANOJ CG** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

CHHATTISGARH CHIEF Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Sunday hit out at the BJP and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), accusing them of turning "gentle and benign Lord Ram" into a Rambolike figure and Hanuman into a symbol of anger.

In an interview, the Congress leader told The Indian Express that India was passing through a phase of "provocative and aggressive nationalism"—communal strife was reported from across India in April with no space for "dissent and disagreement". He added that this would pass and the Congress would make a comeback.

"Ram is embedded in our culture. Ram is both sakaar and nirakaar (form and formless) ... We have accepted Ram in various manifestations. We know Kabir's Ram, Tulsi's Ram and Shabari's Ram...," Baghel said.

He went on to add, "Mahatma Gandhi also saw Ram. His last words were 'Hev Ram' and he used to recite Raghupati Raghav

The Chhattisgarh Chief Minister said the Congress will make a comeback

Raja Ram. But today, the way the BJP and the RSS see Ram and the agenda they are setting, the Ram 'Marvada was Purushottam'... they have turned him into a fighter. Rambo bana diya ja raha hain (They are turning him into Rambo). Akramak (aggressive). Hanuman is the epitome of humility, devotion and knowledge. But the posters of him today. If you look at Hanuman's old pictures, the Lord was so beautiful, bhakti se dhyan mudra main (meditative and devotional). And today, angry and aggressive. The way they are setting the mindset

of the society ... they did it with

Ram earlier and are doing it with Hanuman now...'

One of the Baghel government's ambitious projects is the Ram Van Gaman Paryatan Paripath or a tourism circuit envisaged to map the route that devotees believe the deity took during his exile from Ayodhya.

The CM also took a dig at the BJP, saying that its idea of nationalism was imported. "Who met Mussolini? It was BS Moonje ... the drums, caps, everything is imported. Their model of nationalism has no place for dissent and disagreement. Our nationalism is different. Ours is rooted in traditions from the beginning, evolved by the likes of Shankaracharya Kabir, Guru Nanak, Ramakrishna Paramahamsa..

Asked why his party had not been able to convey this message to the electorate, Baghel said that it took the RSS 75 years to make the country understand its version of nationalism. "Remember, it was rejected during Gandhi's time. (VD) Savarkar and his ideas were rejected. But it is like bubbles. in the water. A time will come when they will burst. This period

will also end."

Asked what, in his view, the Congress was not doing, Baghel said, "See, the society is facing a period of provocative nationalism and aggressive nationalism. There is no respect for dissent... The Congress will not be able to do that. It has never done that, is not doing it, and will never do that. But people are supporting it... In the end, love and brotherhood will emerge victorious." "The violence that is taking place in different states, I don't want to take the names of any state. Is anybody leading this violence? Nobody is leading, it is headless. And if headless people set the country's agenda, then it is very unfortunate for the country...,"he added.

The CM said former Congress president Rahul Gandhi was the only leader fighting the BIP without holding back. "He is the only person who attacks the BIP directly. He is not scared. He is the only leader who has been talking about people's issues...". Asked why the Congress was losing despite Gandhi raising people's issues, Baghel said, "It is up to the people to accept it or not."

#### 7 councillors quit Cong, join BJP in Gujarat

Rajkot: Around six months after the administration of the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu suspended the president of Congress-ruled Diu Municipal Council, seven of the nine Congress councillors defected to the BJP Saturday and brought an end to the 15-year-long Congress rule in the civic body.

At a public meeting organised at Ghoghla in Diu, the seven councillors--Haresh Kapadiya, Dinesh Kapadiya, Ravindra Solanki, Ranjan Raju Vankar, Bhagyavanti Solanki, Bhavnaga Dudhmal and Nikita Shah--formally joined the BIP. They were welcomed by Vijaya Rahatkar, BJP national secretary who is the party incharge in DNH & Daman and Diu.

The development comes at the fag end of the current general board of the Diu Municipal Council and the general election is due in around a month's time.

While Congress's Praful Patel could not be reached for comment, Rahatkar said the six councillors joined the BJP to support the "politics of development" practised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "Today, six Congress councillors joined the BJP... Now, the Congress has almost no councillor left..." the BIP leader told media persons. ENS

## MP Navneet Rana challenges Uddhav to enter poll fray

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** MUMBAI, MAY 8

PARLIAMENTARIAN NAVNEET Rana on Sunday challenged chief minister Uddhav Thackeray to contest elections from "anywhere in Maharashtra", adding she was "willing to contest against him and show him the empowerment of women in electoral politics."

After being discharged from Lilavati hospital, where she was admitted for treatment of spondylosis, the Amaravati MP, who was arrested last month, alleged that she was harassed and tortured in the lockup.

Stating that she was jailed along with her husband for "taking lord Ram's name", Rana said the "people of the state will give a befitting reply to them (the state's ruling MVA government) as they have misused their power".

Addressing CM Thackeray, she said, "If you have guts, then contest election from any of the districts in state. I will contest against you and then see who the people of the state choose. You have got the CM's position because of your forefathers' name. I challenge you to enter the electoral process, contest and win the elections. I will contest against you." Rana said she would come up against Shiv Sena in the upcoming civic body election, accusing the party of "massive corruption in the BMC in the past few decades".

"If reciting Hanuman Chalisa is a crime then I am willing to stay in jail not only for 14 days but for 14 years too...The Shiv Sena-led government will pay the price for



victimising me," MP said. Rana and her MLA husband Ravi Rana were arrested under sedition charges after they had announced that they will recite Hanuman Chalisa in front of Matoshri, the personal residence

Though they withdrew their decision, they faced protest from ruling Sena's activists.

of CM Uddhav Thackeray.

The couple was released from jail on Friday after Mumbai session court granted them bail on certain conditions and observed that sedition charges were not made out against the couple.

Rana said she would be visiting Delhi to complain against the state government for "misusing the power" and "committing atrocities on her". She also accused Sena leader Sanjay Raut of giving death threats to her and her husband Ravi Rana

Earlier, responding to Navneet Rana's statements, Shiv Sena spokesperson Manisha Kavande said, "We don't give much importance to her threats... We dismiss them as inconsequential... Circulating the videos of her hospitalisation amounts to violation of secrecy act. This leads to a question whether the hospital was working under pressure. How could a VIP patient like Navneet Rana make her videos public? It is clear they are good at staging drama in public.'

## A fourth-generation lawyer, Justice Pardiwala set for SC step-up

**SOHINI GHOSH** AHMEDABAD, MAY 8

HIS REMARKS on reservation may have invited the ire of several Rajya Sabha MPs in 2015, but during the Covid-19 lockdown and the pandemic's second wave his injunctions and observations were a big reason why the Gujarat government was compelled to submit reports on action taken to help migrant labourers and patients.

On Monday, Justice Jamshed Burjor Pardiwala of the Gujarat High Court is set to take oath as a Supreme Court judge along with Gauhati High Court Chief Justice Sudhanshu Dhulia. The Union

Ministry of Law and Justice confirmed both their appointments on Saturday following the SC Collegium's recommendation earlier in the week.

Justice Pardiwala was born on August 12, 1965, in Mumbai to a family of lawyers and grew up in the town of Valsad in south Gujarat. He completed his schooling in the town's St Joseph's Convent and graduated from JP Arts College there in 1985. A source close to the judge said, "He studied in Gujarati medium throughout college and later

gained proficiency in English." Justice Pardiwala studied law in the town's KM Law College till 1988 and received his Sanad (a charter that lawyers need to prac-



Jamshed Burior Pardiwala. Gujarat HC

tise law) on November 18, 1988.

At 56 years, Justice Pardiwala is among the youngest judges to be elevated to the Supreme Court. Senior Congress leader Gaurav Pandya said, "His father Burjorji Pardiwala was a Congress MLA and served as the Speaker of the seventh Guiarat Assembly (1989-1990) during the chief ministerships of Madhavsinh Solanki and Amarsinh Chaudhary."

Justice Pardiwala's great

grandfather Navrojji Bhikhaji Pardiwala, his grandfather Cawasji Navrojji Pardiwala and his father, all practised law in Valsad.

> Justice Pardiwala shifted to the Gujarat High Court in September 1990 and began practising all the branches of law. He became a member of the Gujarat High Court Legal Services Authority and in 2002, he was appointed the standing counsel for the High Court and its subordinate courts.

He was elevated as an Additional Judge of the High Court on February 17,2011, and was confirmed as a permanent judge on January 28, 2013. He also adjudicated environmental matters and took up the Sabarmati pollution issue suo motu. A source close to

Justice Pardiwala described him as a "judge of the masses" who is "soft-spoken, gentle, and upright".

In 2015, 58 Rajya Sabha members petitioned Vice President of India and Rajya Sabha Chairperson Mohammad Hamid Ansari to initiate impeachment proceedings against Justice Pardiwala for his "unconstitutional" remarks on reservation while hearing a petition by Patidar leader Hardik Patel and others to quash sedition charges against them. The judge initially observed that in his opinion "reservation and corruption are two things that have not allowed the country to progress in the right direction". Following the petition by the members of the Upper House of Parliament, he expunged his remarks and later deleted them through a "speaking to minutes" order.

The judge, in May 2020, headed a Division Bench that heard a PIL plea on the Gujarat government's handling of the Covid-19 crisis. The Bench compared the Ahmedabad Civil Hospital to a "dungeon" and did not agree with the state government's narrative that all was well. Days later, following a roster change on the last working day of the week, Justice Pardiwala was shuffled out of the Bench.

The judge will serve in the Supreme Court till his retire-

#### **IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED** e-Procurement Notice e-Tender for & on behalf of IRCON are invited from bidders meeting qualifying re works in connection with the Construction of Mumbai-Ahmedabad High Speec e-Tender no. IRCON/3026/MAHSR-T2/e-Tender/Vehicle/1 Dt. 09.05.2022

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Irling of Light vehicles for IRCON's officers & Staff in connection to the project of "Design, Supply and Construction of Track and Track related Works including Testing and Commissioning on Design-Build .ump Sum Price basis for Double Line High Speed Railway between Zaroli Village at Maharashtra-Gujarat Border (MAHSR km 156.600) and Vadodara (MAHSR km 393.700) in the State of Gujarat and the Julion Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli in connection with the Construction of Mumbai-Ahmedabad ligh Speed Rail Project" (MAHSR T2 Project)

Estimated Cost of the work or further details and updates, please visit website: <a href="www.etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app">www.etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app</a>
mendments/Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted on the website only.

General Manager /Civil/T2

23.05.2022 up to 15.00 Hrs.

# Victory Day Russia



MESSAGE

### **Denis Alipov**, Russian Ambassador to India

Dear friends,

Today, on May 9, we celebrate the 77th anniversary of the Victory over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War (1941-1945).

The events preceding WWII are well known. Lack of responsibility, collective

predominance of narrow-minded and geopolitically motivated approaches became a fertile soil for unilateral aggressive actions. The British conservatives, rather than joining hands for peace with the USSR to thwart Nazi aggressive plans in Europe, adopted a policy of appeasing Adolf Hitler. The aim was to channel the German aggression to the East, against the Soviet Union. In 1938, these sordid intentions resulted in signing by London and Paris of the infamous Munich

agreement, triggering the countdown to the war. The Victory in WWII is a great common heritage of all countries of the anti-Hitler coalition. By rising above the differences and joining hands they managed to crush Nazism, a misanthropic ideology of racial superiority that threatened the very existence of entire nations and the human civilization as such. Today we bow our heads in veneration to the courage of all who fought shoulder to shoulder against the Nazis.

These days the crucial role of the Soviet Union in defeating the Nazi invaders and liberating Europe and the world from slavery and the horrors of the Holocaust is often glossed over. An egregious injustice to 27 million of Soviet lives lost in the most brutal war ever! Multiple times more than even those who themselves suffered tremendously can imagine. No wonder that 77 years on even these countries tend to diminish the utter unacceptability of Nazi ideology and its derivatives. But we shall never forget. Our memory of heroism and sacrifice shall ever remain strong in our minds and hearts. This memory will never leave space to acquiescence of Nazi ideology in any form and manifestation and attempts to rehabilitate and even glorify Nazi criminals and their

Russians will always remember with gratitude the Indian contribution to the defeat of Nazi Germany. We proudly recall that in 1941 and 1942 friendship societies were set up in India in support of the USSR. Brave Indian contingents were engaged in

providing supplies to the Red Army through Persia. In 1944, two sons of India were decorated with the highest military award of the Soviet Union – the Order of the Red Star.

To commemorate these heroic deeds a memorial monument was unveiled at the premises of the Indian Army Headquarters in New Delhi in 2021. It became one of the symbols of historically strong bonds of

> between our nations, which form a solid base for the Russian-Indian special and privileged strategic partnership. Atrocities of the Second World War teach a good lesson of how to

maintain international relations. Today, the main goal of the global community is to preserve peace and security, with the United Nations playing a key role in this endeavour. In order to prevent deliberate distortions and falsifications of the WWII events Russia initiated the UN GA resolution against glorification of Nazism, which is supported and co-sponsored by the majority of countries, including India.

Russia stands ready to respond to any threat to its national security. Our foreign policy remains focused on maintaining the central role of the UN, its Charter and international law emphasizing the principles of resolution of conflicts by peaceful means, mutual respect, non-interference in domestic affairs, collective approach and dialogue.

We invite all countries to stay united against double standards, hypocrisy in international relations and hidden geopolitical agendas. Cooperation in global affairs is the only way forward, while attempts to undermine the WWII lessons are detrimental to global security.

## **Order of Red Star for Indian soldiers**

USSIA HONOURED soldiers of the British-Indian armies for distinguished services in the transportation of arms, material and food during the Second World War. According to the bulletin of the Information Service of the Government of India, Indian Information, dated September 1, 1944: "The Order of the Red Star was presented to Subedar Narayan Rao Nikkam, village Nerala Hathi, Tehsil Kankanhalli, District Bangalore; and Havildar Gajendra Singh, of village Baraloo, Tehsil Shor, District Almora, who were serving in General Purpose Transport Companies of the Royal Indian Army Supply Corps."

During an impressive ceremony at the Soviet embassy in Tehran, the then Soviet Ambassador, M. Maximov, on behalf of the Presidium of the Supreme Council of the USSR, presented Russian decorations to officers and men of the British and Indian armies. Congratulating the recipients of the honour, the Soviet Ambassador acknowledged their help to the Red Army. "It again emphasises the military cooperation of our peoples not only in the field of battle, but also in those areas which influence the success of operations in the field against our common enemy, Hitlerite Germany," he said.

One of the first reports in the Indian Press on the British intention to lay the road for the supply of war material to Russia appeared in The *Tribune* of Lahore, September 13, 1941. The report quoted Benter's special correspondent in Tehran, who wired: "With Iran's oil wells now safely under British control and with British and Russian forces occupying strategic points on its communications lines as well as blocking the path eastward through the Caucasus, the British and Russian Governments are now intensely studying the problems of sending war material to Russia through Iran. With only one railway and very few roads traversing the country, which is three times the size of France, great difficulties have to be overcome."





Russian President Vladimir Putin greeting the Great Patriotic War veterans, May 9, 2021



**The Immortal Regiment** 

New Delhi

A stretch of this road, known as the East Persia Route, was completed in eight months, an average of three miles a day, by a pickand-shovel army of 30,000 men, women and children, supervised by a staff representing 15 different nationalities. The road was complementary to the West Persia routes for British and American supplies. "The quantity of supplies of jute, rubber, hessian, copper, tin and mercury that India can send to Russia is limited only by the transport facilities available", said an Indian representative of one of the supply organisations according to the Indian Information (January 1944). "Already 1,000 lorries, mostly provided by India, are employed to full capacity. We expect a substantial increase in this number shortly," it said. The scope of the supplies was vast. As

Indian Information said, "Over 5,000 tons of vital war materials per month have been sent from India to Russia during the past six months along the East Persia route, which follows the age-old caravan track now converted into a modern motor highway. Russia has received quantities of gunny bags, tossa canvas, jute ropes, tea, pepper, tin, wolfram and silk. Two special consignments consisted of 1,000 tons of nickel and 1,000 tons of harvest yarn, both of which reached Russia in record time. The harvest yarn was made to a very exacting specification by the Calcutta Jute Mills. It had to reach before the Russian harvest began and the average timing from Calcutta to the handing-over point was 28 days. Tin, mercury, wolfram and silk were flown from China to Assam in American aircraft, and railed to Zahidan for transport by truck. Hundreds of lorries have been used to reach the consignments to our allies in the north, and the road surface from Zahidan right up to the Russian border has been kept in excellent repair."

# 6 EXPRESS NETWORK

# Khalistan flags spring up at Assembly gate, Himachal seals state borders

SHIMLA, MAY 8

**HOURS AFTER Khalistan flags** were found tied on the main gate and slogans scrawled on the walls of the Himachal Pradesh Assembly complex Dharamshala, where usually only winter session is held, the state police Saturday ordered to seal all interstate borders and barriers.

The flags, which were removed by the administration, were put up on the outer side of the gate number one of the Assembly complex. While state Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur condemned the "cowardly" act, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is making inroads in the poll-bound state, termed the incident a "complete security failure" on the part of the BJP-led governments in state and at Centre.

In a late evening order, DGP Sanjay Kundu directed all senior

**DELHI CONFIDENTIAL** 

HEALING TOUCH

THE CENTRAL government and the BJP appear to have begun

efforts to provide "healing touch" in Nagaland, where the party

had to face a tough time over the December 4 civilian killings

in Mon district by security forces. During his three-day visit to

the state. Union minister Raieev Chandrasekhar visited the

district where he announced that he has come there as "PM

Narendra Modi's representative" and as their "colleague, part-

ner and friend in New Delhi". Being the first Union minister to

visit the district after the December killings, Chandrasekhar

spent time with the villagers at the residence of Rajya Sabha

MP from Nagaland S Phangnon Konyak, who is also the grand-

daughter of the founder of Mon town. Party insiders said this

was a gesture to regain the confidence of the Konyak community. The minister also tried to send warm signals to the

tion, sitting in Longwa village - half of which falls in Myanmar

ATTHE release of a book co-authored by noted radiologists Dr

Colonel CS Pant and Dr Vaneeta Kapur in the national capi-

tal on Saturday, a doctor who was on the dais conveyed his

concerns on how medical graduates have to struggle for years

together to first get the degree and then a job. Agreeing with

him, Chief Justice of India NV Ramana, who released the book

recalled how he had tried to discourage his daughter Sri

Bhuvana Nuthalapati, who was also in the audience, while

she was preparing for medical entrance exams. The CJI, who

had seen the struggles of doctors, advised her that it was bet-

ter to be a lawyer like him. She, however, persisted and went

on to get an MD in Radiology and is currently working with

SOON. THE HIS SHIFT from bureaucracy to politics was quick.

Former Enforcement Directorate Joint Director Rajeshwar

Singh got the BJP ticket to contest from Sarojini Nagar con-

stituency in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections a day after

he resigned from service. But it appears that he would take

time to get used to life as an MLA. Singh, as someone who fol-

lows national and international events closely, posts his views

on social media, but every time he comments on anything

other than his constituency issue or issues related to Uttar

Pradesh, his voters remind him that his focus should be on

Sarojini Nagar. When he tweeted on the Russia-Ukraine war

and even Taiinder Bagga's arrest, there were reminders that

he is MLA from UP. "MLA ho UP k Ukraine k nai, Uspar dhyan

STICKING TO DREAMS

ty by reviewing the central scheme implementa



Khalistan flags outside the Himachal Pradesh Vidhan Sabha in Dharamshala, Kangra, on Sunday. Pradeep Kuman

police officers "to seal all inter-state borders and keep strict vigil at the places of probable hideouts" of the miscreants. The senior officials were also directed to keep the special security units, bomb disposal squads and quick reaction teams on high alert and "strengthen the security of dams, railway stations, bus stands, government buildings and vital installations"

The DGP also issued directions to all field formations to "remain on high alert from today", keeping in view "the incidents of Khalistan elements in neighboring states, the "incident of tying of a Khalistan banner in Una" on April 11, and "hoisting of banners and graffiti of Khalistan on the

outer boundary of Vidhan Saba in

Dharamshala". He also cited the

Sikhs for Justice announcing June 6 as voting date for Khalistan Referendum in Himachal Pradesh. An FIR under Sections 153-A,

153-B of IPC, Section 3 of HP Open (Prevention Disfigurement) Act, 1985, and Section 13 of Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) has been registered at Dharamashala police station against Gurpatwant Singh Pannu of the SFI and others.

Earlier, Kangra SP Khushal Sharma said the banners might have been put late in night or early morning on Saturday. "We have removed the Khalistani flags. Investigation is going on," the SI said. Condemning the incident, Chief Minister Thakur said the culprits will be caught soon.

"Only the winter session of the Assembly is held at Dharamshala, and hence it requires tighter security arrangements during that time only. Taking advantage of this, the cowardly incident was will not tolerate it. The culprits will be caught soon. Action will be taken." Thakur said.

**ESHAROY** 

2.6 in 2015-16.

NEW DELHI, MAY 8

THE FERTILITY rate in the

Muslim community has seen

the sharpest decline over the

past two decades, shows a com-

parison of the National Family

pattern over the years, the fertil-

ity dipped further in the com-

munity to 2.3 in 2019-21 from

(TFR) has reached replacement

levels in the NFHS-5 at two chil-

dren per woman in the country,

declining from 2.2 in the NFHS-4,

therefore showing below the re-

placement level of fertility at 2.1.

nities have shown a decline in

the fertility rate, thus contribut-

ing to a decline in the nation's

TFR, the decline has been

sharpest in the Muslim commu-

nity from 4.4 in NFHS-1 (1992-

The Muslim community's

While all religious commu-

The overall total fertility rate

Keeping in trend with the

Health Survey (NFHS) data.

SDM, Dharamshala, Shilpi Beakta said, "It is an alert call for us. We received information around 7.30am. We removed the flags and walls have been repainted. We are going to register a case under relevant sections of the Himachal Pradesh Open Places (Prevention of Disfigurement Act), 1985."

Meanwhile, the AAP slammed the BJP, asking how will its government save the people of the country when it failed in ensuring national security.

On Twitter, Delhi Deputy CM Manish Sisodia said the putting up of the Khalistan flags outside the gate of Assembly building in Dharamshala was a "complete' failure of the BIP government in dealing with the matter pertaining to national security and keeping the respect of the people of the

> 93) to 2.3 at present. fertility rate, however, remains the highest among all religious communities with Hindus fol-

lowing at 1.94 in NFHS-5, down from 2.1 in 2015-16. The Hindu community had a fertility rate of 3.3 in 1992-93. The NFHS-5 has found that the Christian community has a fertility rate of 1.88, Sikhs 1.61,

Jains 1.6 and Buddhists and neo-Buddhists 1.39, the lowest in the country. An accelerated decline in the fertility rate in Muslims has taken place twice — between 1992-93 and 1998-99 as well as between 2005-06 and 2015-16. when it dropped by 0.8 points in these rounds of the NFHS.

NFHS-5: Total fertility rate dips,

sharpest decline among Muslims

"The fertility gap between Hindus and Muslims is narrowing. High fertility is mostly a result of non-religious factors such as levels of literacy, employment, income and access to health services. The current gap between the two communities is because of Muslims' disadvantage on these parameters. Over the last few decades, an emerging Muslim middle class has been realising the value of girls' education and family planning,"says Poonam Muttreja, Executive Director,

Population Foundation of India. The percentage of Muslim women who have had no schooling reduced from 32 per cent in NFHS-4(2015-16) to 21.9 per cent in NFHS-5 (2019-21). In contrast, for Hindus, it saw marginal change - from 31.4 per cent in NFHS-4 to 28.5 per cent in NFHS-5.

The NFHS-5 report said the number of children per woman declines with women's level of schooling. Women with no schooling have an average of 2.8 children, compared with 1.8 children for women with 12 or more years of schooling. Women in the lowest wealth quintile have an average of 1.0 more children than women in the highest wealth guintile, and economic betterment organically leads to lower

fertility rates, the report has found. "The data also shows that Muslims are increasingly conscious of family planning. The use of modern contraception among Muslims increased from 37.9 per cent in NFHS-4 to 47.4 per cent in NFHS-5," adds Muttreia. **FULL REPORT ON** 

www.indianexpress.com



**ANURADHA** MASCARENHAS PUNE, MAY 8

OVERALL, 38 per cent men and 9 per cent women above 15 years of age use tobacco products, as per the National Family Health Survey 5(2019-21) released recently. The report also shows that only 1 per cent of women drink alcohol, compared with 19 per cent of men above the age of 15 years.

The NFHS-5 survey has been conducted in an approximate 6.37 lakh sample households across 707 districts in 28 states and 8 Union Territories. At least 7.24 lakh women and 1.01 lakh men have been covered to provide disaggregated estimates up to district level.

Women (19 per cent) and men (51 per cent) belonging to Scheduled Tribes are more likely to use tobacco than those from any other caste/tribe groups. Among men as well as women, the use of tobacco is higher in rural areas (43 per cent for men and 11 per cent for women) than in urban areas (29 per cent for men and 6 per cent for women). Nearly three-fifths of men (58 per cent) and 15 per cent of women with no schooling or less than 5 years of schooling use to-

**FULL REPORT ON** 

## Asani to turn into 'severe' cyclonic storm today; alert in Odisha, Bengal

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** PUNE, MAY 8

CYCLONE ASANI, which developed over southeast regions of Bay of Bengal, will intensify into a 'severe cyclone' by Monday, the Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

As per the projected cyclone movement track released by the IMD, the storm will reach close to the Andhra Pradesh-Odisha coast by Tuesday. It is unlikely to make a landfall and it could skirt the coastal districts of these states in the next two days.

If realised, cyclone Asani could have similarities like cyclone Jawad that developed in the Bay of Bengal and swerved past close to south Odisha in December last year.

Cyclone Asani rapidly intensified while at sea over the past

According to the 5.30pm observations of the IMD, the storm had intensified into the 'severe' category after moving at a speed of 14 km per hour. It was located



Anchored boats on the shore after the IMD issued an alert for coastal states regarding Cyclone Asani, in Puri, Sunday. PTI

at about 610 km northwest of Car Nicobar, 500 km west of Port Blair, 810 km southeast of Visakhapatnam and 880 km south-southeast of Puri.

Cyclone Asani is very likely to continue to move northwestwards till Tuesday evening and reach west-central and adjoining Northwest Bay of Bengal region, off north Andhra Pradesh and Odisha coasts by Tuesday.

Odisha has been put on a high alert ahead of the heavy rain (64.4mm to 115.5mm in 24 hours) forecast on Tuesday and Wednesday. Under the influence of the system in the Bay of Bengal, thunderstorms, lightning and light rain is forecast over Bihar, Iharkhand, West Bengal and Sikkim till May 12.

In West Bengal, disaster management teams, police and KMC employees have been asked to stay prepared.Boats have been deployed at strategic locations, SDRF and NDRF, Coast Guard and Navy have also been



Security personnel at the encounter site in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday. Shuaib Masoodi

Pakistani among two LeT

militants killed in gunfight

## Maharashtra looks to gain control over cases against political activists

**VISHWAS WAGHMODE** MUMBAI, MAY 8

THOUGH IT had earlier proposed to withdraw cases against political and social activists and had authorised regional administrative committees to take a call on the matter, the Maharashtra government now seems to be wanting to control the withdrawal of cases in which chargesheets have been filed against activists in case of political and social protests across the state. The government had proposed to withdraw such  $cases \, filed \, between \, January \, 2020 \,$ and December 2021.

A source close to the development said that the proposal came up for discussion in a cabinet meeting held last month and a senior Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) minister raised an objection to the proposal. "The view was that if the powers were given to these regional committees, the state government would not have any control over it. And it is possible that the district admin-

What is not covered in the proposal

THE PROPOSAL does not include withdrawal of cases against sitting or former MPs or MLAs as they are controlled by the top court judgment in the case of Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay v/s Union of India and requires the consent of the High Court for withdrawal.

Another source pointed out

fluence of the local political leadership and may force them to withdraw the cases. So, it was suggested to the Home Department to amend the proposal suitably and then bring it before the cabinet," said a source.

that political opponents have

been misusing the central inves-

tigative agencies against the

Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi

(MVA) leaders for more than two years. "It is quite possible that the threat of central agencies can be given to these officials for withdrawing the case. And it needs to be taken into consideration and requires government control over it," added the source.

As per the proposal of the Home Department, it has been proposed to withdraw the cases registered against political and social activists wherein the charge sheet has been filed between January 2020 and December 2021. These cases include the ones where there was no loss of life, and damage to the public and private properties was not more than Rs 5 lakh.

In 2020, the MVA government had also taken the decision to withdraw all the cases wherein the charge sheets have been filed till December 2019. Political parties and social organisations carry out various protests and agitations to attract the attention of the government to issues involving larger public interest and others, said an offi**BASHAARAT MASOOD** SRINAGAR, MAY 8

TWO LASHKAR-E-TAIBA militants, one of them a Pakistani national, were killed in a gunfight in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Sunday, police said.

The foreign militant, Haider, was involved in multiple attacks in north Kashmir, including the killing of policemen. The other, Shahbaz Shah, was behind a recent civilian killing in the district, police said.

A joint team of Jammu and Kashmir Police and the Army cordoned off Cheyan village in Devsar area in the morning. The firefight that followed lasted several hours, said police.

"Both the trapped militants were killed," said a police tweet. "Incriminating materials including arms and ammunition re-

Police said Shah, a Kulgam resident, was involved in killing civilian Satish Kumar Singh in the district's Kakran village in Quoting Kashmir Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar, police said the Pakistani militant was active in north Kashmir for over two years before shifting base to south Kashmir.

"Pakistani terrorist Haider was involved in two recent terror crimes in Bandipore," they said, adding that he was behind the killing of two policemen, Mohammad Sulan and Fayaz Ahmad. Police added that in February, Haider killed a special police officer, Zubair Ahmad, in Bandipora. Two policemen and a BSF officer were injured in that attack.

Police said the slain militants belonged to Lashkar-e-Taiba. This is the second major gun-

fight in south Kashmir in the past three days. On Friday, three militants, in-

cluding top Hizbul Mujahideen commander Mohammad Ashraf Khan alias Ashrf Molvi, were killed in the forests of south Kashmir's Pahalgam that falls on the Amarnath yatra route. Police had termed Khan's killing a ma-

www.indianexpress.com Woman accuses Rajasthan minister's son of

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

rape; FIR filed

A 23-YEAR-OLD Jaipur-based woman has accused a Rajasthan minister's son of rape, officials on Sunday. The Delhi Police has registered a 'zero FIR', according to which the woman was allegedly raped on multiple occasions beeen January 8 Jast vear and Anri

17 this year in Jaipur and Delhi. The FIR has been registered in North Delhi and charges include causing hurt by intoxicating drugs, causing miscarriage, abducting a woman to compel her for marriage and criminal intimidation.

The woman has alleged she met the accused through Facebook last year. She said the two met in Jaipur following which the accused invited her to Sawai Madhopur on January 8, 2021. "My drink was spiked. The next day, when I woke up...he showed me photos and videos of myself where I was naked. I got worried and started crying... reads the FIR

The woman has alleged the accused met her again after that in Delhi and forced himself on her. " He made me stay at a hotel where he got our names registered as husband and wife. He then promised to marry me...but then he got drunk and abused me...He would beat me up and make obscene videos of me. He would threaten to upload them and make them viral... said the woman in the FIR.

"On August 11 last year, I found I was pregnant with his baby...He said he can't have the baby....He forced me to take a pill but I didn't..." reads the FIR.

## A 'golden record' of citizens to transfer welfare benefits — and plan more

**VALLABHOZARKAR** MUMBAI, MAY 8

Dr Pant and Dr Kapur.

THE REMINDER

do, bhai" was one of the advices.

THE MAHARASHTRA government is planning to prepare a Unified Citizen Data Hub (UCDH) that will contain a wide range of information about an individual in order to help streamline the transfer of welfare benefits and plan more

Citizens will get a unique ID - 'a golden record' — within the MH-UCDH portal that will help the government take datadriven decisions on targeting people through schemes and monitoring the existing ones.

The government will create this platform after merging 56 databases through 377 agencies and bodies - including zila parishads, police, municipal corporations, collectorates, and the health, education and finance departments — in order to create a 360-degree profile of any particular citizen, said an official aware of the project.

The government believes the hub will help it reduce irregularities in social welfare schemes.

Currently, the state uses the Maharashtra Direct Benefit Transfer (MahaDBT) Portal to transfer benefits and subsidies -



scholarships, loan waivers, agricultural support, etc.

But there are challenges with this. Multiple departments manage legacy systems and the beneficiary details are scattered. There is no single platform where data is readily available for scheme planning and beneficiary identification.

During the Covid lockdown, for instance, the government

was initially unable to provide relief to sections like auto and taxi drivers, construction workers and other workers as it either did not have bank details of all the beneficiaries or had no way to verify their identity. The official mentioned above

said: "The details of the most.of the beneficiaries are also incomplete, inaccurate, not updated or available at all. There is a lack of unique identifiers for identifying various entities. There is also difficulty in identification of family or household, monitoring of the quantum of benefits paid at various levels of entity — for example on individual-level, familylevel, location-wise and ability to cross-check data (such as beneficiary details, benefits claimed, etc.) with databases of other government agencies."

And even though the use of Aadhaar data and the MahaDBT Portal has proved useful for transferring benefits, more challenges remain with the process. "In the present system, a 360-

degree view of the beneficiary and state social benefit system is not available. There is no facility to plan and administer schemes. Historical data and analysis of payouts made before linking of Aadhaar data is not available. The portal also maintains records of

only registered citizens - it is not an exhaustive database of all eligible residents. The data primarily pertains to individuals and not organisations. Most importantly, there is also a possibility of leakages," said the official.

The identification of beneficiaries irrespective of their movement across various locations also becomes an issue.

"We are in the process of appointing a system integrator who will design, develop, deploy and maintain MH-UCDH. The platform will have the details of citizen's demographic information and master record of every citizen," said the official.

#### 2 FIRs in MSU protests Vadodara: The Vadodara city pounarmed at the protest site lice Sunday lodged two separate

Fine Arts row: Police file

FIRs in two incidents of protest against the Faculty of Fine Arts at MS University in Vadodara that came under attack Thursday from right-wing groups for displaying "objectionable" paintings that "hurt religious sentiments". Officials of Sayajigunj police

station are complainants in both FIRs. In the first FIR, two people were identified and booked for allegedly assaulting a constable of the police station while on duty to disperse the mob. Police constable Bharat Magabhai, who was Thursday, has stated the two accused-Kartik Joshi and Dhruv Parikh-allegedly obstructed him from performing his duty during the mob violence inside the faculty campus. "Dhruy Parikh and Kartik Joshi charged toward me warning, "No one can tell us what to do". They first manhandled me and then slapped me two-three times," the police constable states.

The second FIR is against 31 workers of the ABVP who staged a protest outside the MSU head office Saturday and clashed with the police.

## Drainage system, jewellery, toys among Rakhigarhi excavation finds

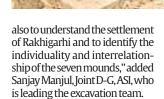
NEW DELHI, MAY 8

THE LATEST round of excavations at the 5,000-years-old Harappan site of Rakhigarhi in Haryana's Hisar district have revealed the structure of some houses, lanes and drainage system, and what could possibly be a jewellerymaking unit, say officials from the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), while announcing the completion of the three-month-long phase of excavations.

The digging, which has been going on at three of the seven mounds, has also revealed pieces of copper and gold jewellery, terracotta toys, besides thousands of earthen pots and seals.

"The idea of this phase of excavation is to make the archaeological site of Rakhigarhi accessible to people by exposing the structural remains and conserving them for future viewing, along with providing amenities to the visitors," said Ajay Yadav, Additional Director-General, ASI.

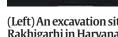
"In addition, the objective is



Situated around 150 km from Delhi, Rakhigarhi is among the five iconic sites announced by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during her Budget Speech in February 2020.

The other sites are Hastinapur in Uttar Pradesh, Sivasagar in Assam, Dholavira in Guiarat and Adichanallur in Tamil Nadu.

The site was first excavated by the ASI in 1998-2001. Later, Deccan College, Pune, excavated





wall has been traced, conveying the possibility of a walled settlement. The noteworthy antiquity found at both the mounds include steatite seals, terracotta unbaked sealing with relief of elephants and Harappan script.

In this field season, at Mound 7, two female skeletons, who were buried with a plethora of pottery and adorned jewellery like jasper, agate beads and shell bangles, have been excavated. The DNA samples from the skeletons have been sent for further analysis, say officials.

The new field season will commence by September 2022,

### of ASI-protected temple **NIRUPAMA SUBRAMANIAN** CHENNAI, MAY 8 JAMMU AND Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha partici-

century Martand Sun temple, a

A contingent of Kashmiri

Pandits affiliated to the Panun

Commissioner Pandurang K Pole,

IGP K Vijay Kumar, Deputy

Commissioner Piyush Singla and

other officials accompanied Sinha.

mands by Hindu groups for open-

ing the temple for worship, but no

religious ceremonies have been

previously allowed at the site. al-

though individual worshippers

have not been prevented from of-

fering prayers, local sources said.

Mostly, it has been a picnic site for

tutional changes to the status of

I&K, there have been demands

from Hindu groups, including the

Kashmiri Pandit community, for

restoration of Hindu temples in

Kashmir. Mostly the demands

have centred on temples that

were functional until the 1990s,

when most Kashmiri Pandits fled

the Valley in the face of militancy.

Such demands have increased

Since the August 2019 consti-

people of the area.

There have been periodic de-

**J&K LG joins pooja at ruins** 

protected monument under the **I&K LG Manoj Sinha** charge of the central government's Archaeological Survey of India. were flown in from Kerala. The This is the second religious ceremony in three days at the site, Indian Express has learnt. As the LG which the ASI has tagged as a "site took part in the rituals, several of of national importance". The ASI his security personnel ringed the does not permit prayers at a proarea where the pooja was being

tected site unless it was a funcheld. The site was turned into a tioning place of worship at the fortress for most part of the day. time the the body took charge of it. A press release issued by Sinha's office said he took part in a Kashmir group were in atten-"navagraha ashatamangalm dance, as was the former BIP pooja" at the temple, which was Assembly member Surinder "held in the presence of saints, Ambardar. Kashmir Divisional

pated Sunday in a religious cere-

mony held in the ruins of the 8th

community and local residents". It is unclear if the administration took permission from the ASI for the event. The press release did not mention if ASI clearance was obtained for the pooja, ASI officials

members of Kashmiri Pandit

were unavailable for comment. The leader of the group that conducted a pooja on May 6 told The Indian Express they had not taken permission from the ASI, as it was a Hindu temple and worshippers should be allowed to conduct religious ceremonies and

offer prayers. According to the press release, the LG "reiterated the government's commitment to protect and develop ancient sites of cultural and spiritual significance". He was quoted as saying that the administration was "making dedicated efforts to transform historical spiritual places of J&K into vibrant centres that will guide us on

the path of righteousness..." over the past three months, and The priests for the ceremony have been expanded to include

870

1436.00

3960.00

1000.00

803.28

704.00

Martand temple. On May 6, a group of over a 100 people led by the mahant of a Hindu peeth based in Karauli in Rajasthan, recited the Bhagvad Gita and the Hanuman Chalisa at Martand.

In November 2021, the National Monuments Authority, headed by Tarun Vijay, former editor of the RSS journal Panchajanya and former Rajya Sabha MP, said in a statement that it was planning to make a bid for the UNESCO World Heritage Site status for Martand among other sites in J&K.

Across the country, religious worship at protected monuments has been a fraught issue over the years. According to Rule 7(1) of the 1959 Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Rules, meetings, receptions, party, entertainment or conferences cannot be held at a protected monument without permission in writing from the central government. Rule 7(2) says this shall not apply to any event held "in pursuance of a recognised religious usage or custom". However, every government, including the present government, has stuck by the practice of not permitting religious activities or events at sites that were not "live" places of worship at the time of being designated as a protected monument by the ASI.

As such, prayers are not allowed at the mosque in the precincts of Qutub Minar despite demands by Muslims of the area. Similarly, religious worship and rituals are banned in the 12th century Sidhpur Mahalaya temple in Gujarat's Pattan district, and at Shore temple in Mahabalipuram, Tamil Nadu. But they are allowed at Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri and at Jama Masjid in Delhi because these were "live" monuments, functional temples at the time the ASI took them over

hold 'sankalp' rally in Jammu, seek justice

PoJK oustees

**ARUN SHARMA** JAMMU. MAY 8

**CUTTING ACROSS party lines,** thousands of displaced persons from Pakistan-occupied areas of Jammu and Kashmir (PoJK) gathered at a sankalp (pledge) rally here from across the country and reiterated their demand for getting back their native areas falling across the Line of Control, which

are illegally occupied by Pakistan. The first-ever mega rally of this kind was organised by the Jammu Kashmir People's Forum headed by Romesh Sabbarwal, a prominent RSS activist, at the . Padamshri Padma Sachdeva PG College for Women Gandhi Nagar here.

According to political observers, the rally appeared to be aimed at setting the tone to make Centre agree to the Delimitation Commission's recommendation for nomination of some representatives of displaced persons from PoJK to the Assembly, apart from two Kashmiri migrants, including a woman. These nominated MLAs, as per the Delimitation Commission's recommendations, will have all voting rights in the House as has been the case in Puducherry Legislative Assembly, they pointed out.

"Twenty-four seats have been kept vacant in the Legislative Assembly for people of PoJK," Sabbarwal said, adding the Commission had not touched them while redrawing the boundaries of Assembly and Lok Sabha constituencies. "Since onethird of the people had got displaced from areas of PoJK in 1947, eight of those seats shall be put to elections," he said, appealing to all PoJK displaced people to apply for domicile certificate.

#### **ANDHRA PRADESH**

### Maoists boxed into 2 divisions after losing ground: DGP

**SREENIVAS JANYALA** HYDERABAD, MAY 8

THERE HAS been a significant decline in Left Wing Extremism (LWE) in Andhra Pradesh in the last one year, both in terms of incidents and its geographical spread, according to the Andhra

The LWE-related activities in the state have largely been confined to Alluri Sitharama Raju, the new district carved out of Paderu

**US-returned** TN

couple, flees with

held from Andhra

A COUPLE who reached Chennai

from California early on Saturday

were murdered allegedly by their

driver and his friend, police said,

adding that they arrested the

duo—who had fled in the former's

car with 9 kg of gold and 60 kg of

silver jewellery—from Ongole in

Andhra Pradesh, 300km north, by

Srikanth, 60, and Anuradha, 53,

who had been in the US with their

children for the past 10 months,

reached Chennai airport around

3.30am, driver Krishna took them

to their home at Dwaraka Colony

police (south) N Kannan, said the

murders happened around 1pm.

brief visit two months ago and

went back. During that period,

Krishna overheard a phone con-

versation made by Srikanth about

a big property sale worth Rs 40

crore. He assumed the cash had

been kept in the house. Even though Krishna was staying there,

he did not have the keys. So he de-

cided to wait for their arrival and

committed the crime along with

a friend, Ravi Rai from Darjeeling,"

had worked for Srikanth for about

seven years. It was their US-based daughter Sunantha who raised

the first alarm as she could not

contact her parents. She asked a

family friend to visit the couple,

but the door of the house was

found locked and the car was missing, according to the police.

the house around noon and broke

open the door, it found remains of

bloodstains and emptied shelves. The police accessed the call data

records of Srikanth's phone,

which had received FastTag mes-

sages showing that their car had

passed through toll booths on the

Chennai-Kolkata national high-

way. The police then informed

their counterparts in Andhra Pradesh. The police said they

found evidence of suspicious ac-

tivity also at the family's farmhouse on Chennai's outskirts.

alerted the Andhra police, who ar-

Meanwhile, the police traced Krishna's phone to Ongole and

When a police team reached

Krishna, who is from Nepal,

said Kannan.

Additional commissioner of

"After they went to the US, Srikanath came to Chennai for a

in Mylapore's Brindavan Nagar.

According to the police, after

car, jewellery;

**ARUN JANARDHANAN** 

CHENNAI, MAY 8

the evening.

Driver kills

division of Visakhapatnam district and Rampachodavaram division of East Godavari district, with the Maoist cadre operating in the belt declining from 100 to 48 now, said AP Director General of Police

(DGP) K V Raiendranath Reddy.

The Maoist military formations responsible for their guerrilla actions saw a sharp reduction from 2 companies comprising a total of 50 members to a mere platoon with 10 members in the last one year, as per information gathered by the state police's Special

Intelligence Branch.

the site from 2013 to 2016.

Maniul added that this is the

first time excavations have been

done on Mound No. 3, which has

revealed "an aristocratic settle-

ment", but said that more rounds

of excavation will be needed to as-

certain the structure and nature

A total 13 trenches are open

At Mound 1, a huge quantity

across three mounds: Mound No

1, Mound No 3 and Mound No 7.

of debris/waste of semi-precious

stones such as agate and car-

nelian have been found, along

with evidence of street planning

At Mound 3, a burnt-brick

with a general width of 2.6m.

of this elite settlement.

The DGP said that while there used to be 8 Maoist Area Committees - in Kalimela, Narayanpatna, Nandapur, Coffee Dalam, Galikonda, Pedabayalu, Gumma and Boipariguda — in early 2019, their tally has now dropped to 4 Area Committees along the Andhra-Odisha Border

According to the AP Police officials, only 2 Divisional Committees — Visakha East and Malkangiri-Koraput Border — 4

Area Committees — Galikonda, Pedabayalu, Gumma, and Boipariguda — and 1 military platoon of left extremists are active in the AOB region now. They said Central Committee member Gajarla Ravi alias Uday is the lone highest-ranking Maoist member operating in the AOB's Special Zonal Committee (SZC).

The DGP said that public perception towards Maoists has been changing and they are fast losing their local support due to their "violent activities'



Sector/ Urban Estate

56, Gurugram II

19, Rewari

55, Faridabad

62. Faridabad

65, Faridabad

2P, Palwal

n All Zones



## Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran Offers e-Auction of

Schools, Creche, Nursing Home and Clinic Sites in all Zones On 21th May, 2022

Category

**Nursery School** 

Nursery School - 1 (Near Plot No-431P)

(Corner Site)

Primary School Site (Near Plot no. 1223)

(Near Plot no. 230)

Nursery School Site (Near Plot No. 2764)

Nursery School Site (Near Plot No. 2718P)

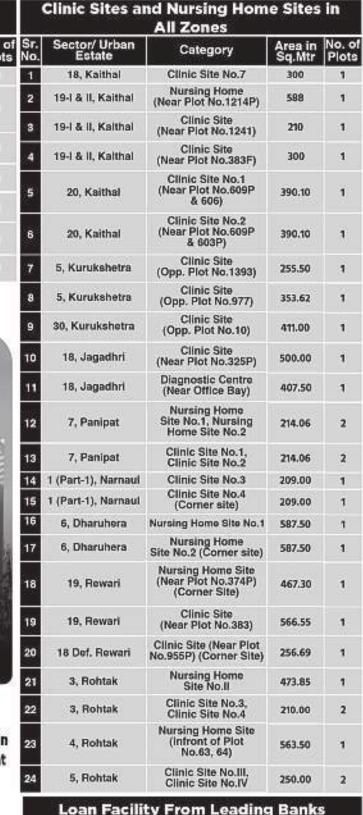
Nursery School Site (Near Plot No. 1990)



No. o	Area in Sq.Mtr	Category	Sector/ Urban Estate	Sr. No.
1	1321.89	Nursery School (near Tube Well)	1, Ambala	1
1	4532.00	Nursery-cum Primary School Near Dispencery	8, Ambala	2
1	610.50	Creche Near Plot No-1377	10, Ambala	3
1	1080.00	Nursery School Site (in front of plot no.227p &228)	4, Karnal	4
1	671.80	Nursery School Site opp. Plot no. 128 P	3, Kurukshetra	5
1	892.00	Nursery School Site opp. Plot no. 1127	4, Kurukshetra	6
1	6676.00	Nursery School Site opp. Plot no. 354	8, Kurukshetra	7
i	1050.00	Nursery School Site No. Il In front of H.No. 290P	4, Rohtak	8
1	2016.00	Nursery School (Corner Site)Adjoining Plot No. 360GP and 319	13, Bahadurgarh	9
1	2160.00	Creche-cum-Nursery School Site	7, Jind	10
1	1392.00	Nursery School Site	11 Extn., Jind	11
1	774.00	Nursery School Adjoining plot no. 716 & 717	9, Gurugram - I	12
1	828.00	Nursery School Near plot no. 114P to 116	9A, Gurugram - I	13
1	1012.00	Nursery school Nursery school site Adjoining plot no. 170 & 171	9A, Gurugram - I	14
1	792.00	Nursery School Adjoining plot no. 1013 & 1036	10A, Gurugram - I	15
10	3441.16	Primary School in front of Plot No. 70 P	42, Gurugram-II	16
1	1292.76	Nursery School adjoining R.B. Site	42, Gurugram-II	17
1	2145.44	Nursery School Near Plot No. 306P	47, Gurugram - II	18
1	3766.35	Primary School Near Plot No.430	52, Gurugram - II	19
1	2805.19	Nursery School Near Plot No. 31P	52, Gurugram - II	20

Registration will close one day before the scheduled date of e-Auction, at 5 pm.

e-Auction Portal https://hsvphry.org.in e-Auction will start at 10:00 AM



Loan Facility From Leading Banks \*Terms And Conditions Applicable

Helpline Number: 8360516607 (9 AM to 5 PM), 1800-180-3030 (8AM TO 8 PM) EMD is calculated on base price, the first round of bidding will start from base price.

For any queries email us at eauctionquery.hsvp@gmail.com Reserve Price are fixed by HSVP above base price and same will not be disclosed.



Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran



The detailed information of the sites and terms & conditions of e-auction will be available on https://hsvphry.org.in.





New Delhi



rested both the accused. "If the police probe were delayed for a few

more hours, they would have crossed the border and entered Nepal," said Kannan.

site from e-auction without any notice.

#### WORDLY WISE

DEATH LEFT ITS OLD TRAGIC HEAVEN AND BECAME THE LYRICAL CORE OF MAN: HIS INVISIBLE TRUTH,

HIS VISIBLE SECRET. — MICHEL FOUCAULT

## The Indian EXPRESS

Sounded By 

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## Who's counting

WHO's excess mortality data stretches credulity. Yet, there's no need to be prickly, India has its task cut out

HE WORLD HEALTH Organisation's (WHO) report on excess mortality due to Covid-19 has pegged the India figure at nearly 10 times the official toll at 47.4 lakh. As an analysis in this newspaper showed, this raises several questions. India's death toll of 5.23 lakh so far is, most possibly an undercount, but the WHO's data suggests that over 90 per cent of deaths in India have gone unreported. Even the base number of expected deaths (in a no-Covid scenario) for the year 2020 which the WHO has used in its report is almost nine lakh more than the average number of deaths recorded each year in India for the last 15 years. Still, the WHO estimates reflect similar numbers by many other agencies and are based on well-established mathematical models. How effective are these in getting close to what actually happened, capturing the several variables of a pandemic given India's size and diversity — from high urban population-density Kerala to rural settings in other states — will always be open to question.

Counting the Covid dead is not a mere academic exercise. This effort is crucial to addressing the shortcomings of public health facilities and framing responses to future medical emergencies. It is also a vital part of the endeavour to heal the wounds of those who have suffered in the past two years. The Covid compensation exercise, under the watchful gaze of the Supreme Court, will, hopefully, encourage families to report their loss. Accurate information is paramount to the process, especially when, in a sharply polarised discourse, even science is contested. In the first month of the first pandemic year, an oft-quoted study said up to three million Indians could die by mid-April 2020. The author has since then back-tracked and acknowledged that his assumption of mortality rate was a little off the mark. The WHO's record on Covid hasn't been much to write home about. Its own study concluded that crucial time was lost in the fight against the virus because the global health agency delayed the announcement of an international emergency. It spent weeks persuading China to allow a team of international scientists to visit Wuhan after the outbreak. It then swung to the other extreme late last year after the relatively-less virulent Omicron began to infect people worldwide. Instead of educating the world about the nature of this new variant, it rang needless alarm bells.

That said, it would be, well, unscientific, to be prickly and attribute sinister motives to the WHO. Barely days ago, its Director-General Tedros Ghebreyesus and Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the WHO Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in Jamnagar, that will play a key role as a "global repository" of traditional medicine practices across the world. What the WHO's Covid death estimates underline is the need for India to further strengthen its death recording system, finetune its accuracy and transparency. In fact, the success of India's vaccination programme has been facilitated by distribution and supply-chain processes on the ground, from the shop-floor to the primary health care centre, backed by a robust digital architecture of reporting and recording. Given the rapid digitalisation of social systems, this should translate to strengthening the Civil Registration System and Sample Registration System as well, the two main tools for recording births and deaths. Let the WHO and experts do their job, the Centre and state governments should do theirs.

# Question of timing

Surprise interest rate hike raises questions over RBI's aims. Its mandate is to target inflation, not shore up rupee

RAJESWARI SENGUPTA

THE RESERVE BANK of India normally makes policy announcements in line with a well-defined schedule. But on May 4, it unexpectedly tightened monetary policy, increasing its policy interest rate and reducing liquidity in the banking system. Markets were taken aback by the announcement with the 10-year government bond yield jumping by 25 basis points to reach 7.38 per cent. Why did the RBI do this? Even after the governor's careful explanations, the answers remain unclear.

At one level, the answer is obvious: Inflation pressures are rising. Since the last MPC meeting of April 8, headline CPI (consumer price index) inflation has gone up from 6.1 per cent to 7 per cent, and the forthcoming inflation numbers are expected to be even worse. Clearly, the RBI had to respond. So, it raised the policy repo rate by 40 basis points to 4.4 per cent and increased the cash reserve ratio by 50 basis points to 4.5 per cent.

This explanation, however, does not seem entirely adequate because nothing fundamental has changed since the last policy meeting. Even back then, it was obvious that inflation pressures were rising — the wholesale price index (WPI) was already in double digits, inflation in the US and Europe was increasing, commodity prices were spiking due to the Russia-Ukraine war, and supply chain constraints were tightening as China imposed severe lockdowns to deal with a resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic. But the RBI did not think that these pressures warranted policy tightening.

What made the RBI change its mind? Under the inflation-targeting framework, the central bank's thinking is typically revealed by its inflation forecast. If it projects that inflation will be above target for some time, it implies that the central bank is concerned about rising prices and will be taking action to bring inflation down. In the last policy review, the RBI projected that inflation would

So what made the RBI change its mind? Under the inflation-targeting framework, the central bank's thinking is typically revealed by its inflation forecast. If it projects that inflation will be above target for some time, it implies that the central bank is concerned about rising prices and will be taking action to bring inflation down. In the last policy review, the RBI projected that inflation would moderate to 5 per cent

by the end of the fiscal year,

somewhat higher than the 4

per cent objective, but not

explaining why the central

bank saw no need to tighten

unduly so, thereby

at that time.

moderate at 5 per cent by the end of the fiscal year, somewhat higher than the 4 per cent objective, but not unduly so, thereby explaining why it saw no need to tighten at that time.

Presumably, the RBI now thinks that the inflation pressures will either be more intense or more durable than it had earlier expected. And the RBI felt that its policy stance was now "behind the curve", meaning that urgent action was needed to quell these pressures. Otherwise, it would have waited till the next MPC meeting on June 8 to increase the reporate. But it is impossible to know whether this was really the motivation as the RBI didn't release a revised inflation forecast — and because other explanations are also possible.

One possibility relates to the exchange rate. The US Federal Reserve was expected to announce a 50 basis point increase in interest rates later that day. So, it is possible that the RBI wanted to jump ahead of this announcement by announcing its own 40 basis point rate increase, maintaining (more or less) the interest differential against the US dollar and thereby keeping the dollar-rupee exchange rate relatively stable.

exchange rate relatively stable.

It's not obvious why exchange rate stability would be a priority for the RBI. After all, its legal mandate is to achieve an inflation target, not an exchange rate. But the RBI does seem determined to limit the rupee's depreciation. The April 8 statement highlighted that India's foreign exchange reserves had increased to \$607 billion at the end of 2021-22. In contrast, the May 4 statement mentioned that India's foreign exchange reserves now amount to \$600 billion — a decline of \$7 billion. Clearly, the RBI has been intervening in the foreign exchange market to stem the rupee depreciation. So, it appears plausible that the unexpected increase in the policy rate was done to defend the currency

against further depreciation pressures. There are, then, two potential explanations for the RBI's sudden move. Both have rationales, but both also have costs. Consider the first possibility that the RBI has now radically revised its inflation forecast (without, of course, releasing the same). Inflation targeting works best if monetary policy is predictable, with interest rate actions being announced on a regular schedule, based on clearly-explained inflation forecasts. On the contrary, sudden moves convey the message that the RBI is getting worried that it is no longer in control of the inflation situation, which is hardly a reassuring signal to send to the markets.

Next, consider the possibility that the RBI wanted to keep the exchange rate stable. The problem is that India is facing an adverse terms of trade shock in the form of rising oil prices, which is putting pressure on the current account deficit. If the RBI allowed the exchange rate to depreciate in response, this would alleviate the current account deficit. Perhaps more importantly, depreciation would help the nascent recovery by ensuring that exports can continue to grow, despite the difficult international circumstances. And there is the additional problem that targeting the exchange rate violates the RBI's legal mandate.

The RBI now faces a difficult task in the months ahead. At the broadest level, it needs to address the costs of its surprise announcement by reinforcing the credibility of the inflation-targeting framework. Specifically, it will need to focus — and be seen to be doing so — squarely on its inflation target, rather than the exchange rate or any other objectives. And it will need to convince the public that it is actu-

ally trying to get inflation under control.

To do this, it will need to continue to tighten policy, but in a gradual, predictable and transparent manner.

The writer is associate professor of Economics, IGIDR

## EYE ON THE PLATE

Food inflation has not started to hurt India yet. Stepping up domestic production can help country duck global trend

CONSIDERABLE PART of the RBI's statement accompanying its last week's exceptional monetary tightening measures focused on the challenges arising from food inflation. That problem, till recently, was largely confined to edible oils (from soaring international prices even prior to the Russia-Ukraine war) and the likes of onion and tomato (due to unseasonal heavy rains). But now there is fear of food inflation getting "generalised". The Food and Agriculture Organisation's food price index has shown a 29.8 per cent year-on-year increase for April. Moreover, all commodity group price indices have posted huge jumps: Cereals (34.3 per cent), vegetable oils (46.5 per cent), dairy (23.5 per cent), sugar (21.8 per cent) and meat (16.8 per cent). Simply put, food inflation is already rising across-the-board globally — because of supply disruptions from the war, dry weather in South America, high crude prices inducing greater diversion of corn, sugar, palm and soyabean oil for bio-fuel, and so on.

The transmission of the above global inflation to domestic food prices basically depends on how much of a country's consumption/production is imported/exported. Such transmission is evident in edible oils and cotton, where up to two-thirds of India's consumption and a fifth of its production are imported and exported, respectively. The same is starting to happen in wheat. Till two months ago, the country seemed set to harvest a bumper crop and also surpass last year's all-time-high exports. But with the heat wave from mid-March severely impacting yields, both public stocks and overall domestic availability are under pressure, even as open market prices have risen to export parity levels. Not surprisingly, the Centre has decided to slash wheat allocations and offer more rice under its flagship free-grains scheme. Export demand is, likewise, helping maize trade well above its minimum support price (MSP). But that, alongside higher oil meal prices, will also push up livestock feed costs and, in turn, translate into inflation in milk, egg and meat

For now, though, the consolation is that there is little to no inflation in pulses, sugar, onion, potato and most summer vegetables. To that extent, food inflation isn't yet "generalised" in India. Sugar is one commodity where retail prices haven't gone up much, despite record exports by mills. The reason for it is production also hitting a historic high. In short, while global food inflation is a reality, the only way to contain the effects of it getting "imported" is to step up domestic production. That would call for early announcement of kharif MSPs with credible procurement plans for oilseeds and pulses; ensuring timely availability of seed, fertiliser, crop protection chemicals and credit by actively engaging the industry; and not resorting to knee-jerk export bans or stocking controls, which will only disincentivise producers.

#### Freeze Frame

**EPUNNY** 





## WHY BJP NEEDS RAHUL GANDHI

A wedding function to a party adrift, shrinking him suits its politics

Aakash Joshi

JUST FOR A minute, let's forget about his name. A leader of the Congress went to a party as part of a friend's wedding celebration. The BJP — which has six times the number of Lok Sabha MPs than the Congress, and rules in several more states — and its social media warriors went into overdrive. The wedding guest's morality was questioned, and many accused him of working against the national interest by attending a social function with the Chinese envoy. The latter accusation, like much of what is said on the internet, turned out to be false.

The reason for the overreaction is not just that a politician went to a nightclub. It makes sense only because that politician is Rahul Gandhi.

The images from the club came at a bad time for the Congress: The party's eight-yearlong crisis was underlined once more with Prashant Kishor deciding not to help with its revival late last month. And at pivotal political moments in recent times — when the Punjab Assembly election campaign kicked off in December 2021 or when the Congress took out a peace march during the 2020 Delhi riots — Rahul Gandhi has been missing in action, often on trips abroad.

Yet, his style of working is not, in essence, the business of either the BJP or the government. Rahul holds no public office of concern to anyone but the voters of Wayanad constituency. Why, then, has India's most dominant political force been obsessed with a diminished leader from the Opposition?

For the Hindutva Right's political juggernaut, the obsessive demonisation of Rahul Gandhi yields dividends. Yet, this constant targeting isn't just a matter of tactics and political convenience. For all his faults, the

Despite the fall in Rahul Gandhi's popularity, it is useful for the BJP to present him as the alternative on the national stage to strengthen the TINA factor. Would the BJP leadership compare as favourably with Mamata Banerjee — a politician risen from the streets — or even M K Stalin or Jagan Reddy, who are both sons of leaders but do not have either the 'elite' or 'outsider' tag? Rahul Gandhi's demonisation by the ruling forces has as much, if not more, to do with his background as it does with his political failures.

leader represents — in however shrunken a manner — a significant ideological and political challenge to the RSS-BJP.

Rahul Gandhi's denigration taps into popular discontent. That many political leaders — including a substantial number from the BJP — are dynasts does not detract from the fact that the descendants of Nehru appear to have a stranglehold on the party of the freedom struggle. Just as the House of Windsor is the lynchpin of Britain's ossified, regressive class structure, the Nehru-Gandhis have come to signify a lack of social mobility for the youth — the fact that descent, not achievement is enough to guarantee a career in politics.

For the BJP, especially since the ascent of Narendra Modi, Rahul Gandhi provides the most convenient juxtaposition to further a cult of personality. The PM is self-made, hard-working, openly and almost militantly Hindu, always present, a nationalist. Rahul (in the Right's view) is a dilettante politician, a descendant, eschews responsibility, is of mixed heritage, holds up "pseudo-secularism". Despite the fall in Rahul Gandhi's popularity, it is useful for the BJP to present him as the alternative on the national stage to strengthen the TINA factor. Would the BJP leadership compare as favourably with Mamata Banerjee — a politician risen from the streets — or even M K Stalin or Jagan Reddy, who are both sons of leaders but do not have either the "elite" or "outsider" tag? Rahul Gandhi's demonisation by the ruling forces has as much, if not more, to do with his background as it does with his political

And that background — and Rahul himself — still carries with it an alternative idea that can challenge the BJP's "New India".

ing on the hegemonic. Regional parties and leaders that challenge the BJP electorally in the states have competing interests and lack coherence at the level of ideas. The Congress too appears ill-equipped to battle the BJP. After all, senior leaders have jumped ship, and its "soft Hindutva" tactics show a poverty of ideas. Yet, the Congress remains - in however vestigial a form — the only party with a national presence that can rival the BJP. As Suhas Palshikar argued (IE, April 30), the "Congress space" is still relevant, even if the Congress seems to be less so. It is the centrism of the "Congress space" that can act as an ideological glue to sustain a national coalition of non-BJP parties.

On the ideological front, it appears at first

Unfortunately, that space — a liberal, federal idea of India — seems to be of no concern to many Congress leaders. Too many are willing to back the BJP line on issues like the Ram Mandir and J&K's constitutional status. Not enough have either national name recognition or a mass base. It is in this regard that Rahul Gandhi presents a potent

Unlike, say, a Jyotiraditya Scindia, he cannot be poached. He cannot abandon the Congress and the ideals it once represented — Rahul cannot abandon Nehru's secularism or Indira Gandhi's "garibi hatao" because to do so would be to deny his *raison d'etre* as a politician. In that sense, he is perhaps one of the few significant implacable foes for the BJP that stands in the way of a "Congressmukt Bharat". Best, then, to keep the focus on the name.

aakash.joshi@expressindia.com

## May 9, 1982, Forty Years Ago

#### PM ATTACKS CPM

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi ended her two-day election tour of West Bengal with an attack on the Marxist idea of "one-party rule" to the exclusion of other non-communist parties. Addressing rallies in North Bengal, she said the CPM-led government's highhanded approach should be seen from this perspective. The Marxist Party branded her as "authoritarian" only to hide its "anti-democratic character". In which communist country was there in existence a multiparty system as in India, she asked and then observed: "Marxism and democracy cannot go together." The Prime Minister said that the

Marxists commended certain countries as models for India. But, now these very nations were beset with insoluble problems providing the relevance of the "Congress pattern of development", free from communist and capitalist systems. She accused the CPM of "wrecking democracy in West Bengal under the guise of protecting it".

#### Britain's Message

BRITISH HIGH COMMISSIONER to India, Sir John Thomson, met Foreign Secretary M K Rasgotra in New Delhi on Saturday and delivered to him a message from the British Government on the Falkland Islands crisis. In

New Delhi

the message, Britain is believed to have underscored its stand that implementation of any ceasefire must be unambiguously linked to Argentine withdrawal from the Islands.

#### ZIA'S OFFER

PAKISTAN PRESIDENT GENERAL Ziaul Haq on Saturday offered to lift the nearly three-year-old curbs on political activities if the number of political parties was reduced to two or three major ones, Radio Pakistan reported. Speaking to journalists at Rawalpindi, General Zia said the future political setup of the country would be based on Islamic tenets.



THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, MAY 9, 2022

# THE IDEAS PAGE

#### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The Ukraine crisis and the geopolitical tragedy it has triggered are not enough to kill the hunger of the US and some Western countries to reap political profits -GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA from the situation."

## The cereal wonder

Fear mongering over wheat production must not push government towards an export ban, especially on cereals, the prices of which are at an all-time high



#### By Ashok Gulati and Ritika Juneja

THE RBI TEAM led by Governor Shaktikanta Das must be complimented for raising the repo rate by 40 basis points (bps) and the cash reserve ratio (CRR) by 50 bps with a view to tame inflation. High inflation is always an implicit tax on the poor and those who keep their savings in banks. The real value of their savings gets depreciated with every round of inflation as interest on deposits is often far below the inflation rate. So, controlling inflation is an important mandate of the RBI. The question that arises is: Will the increases in the repo rate and CRR control inflation, especially food inflation? The short answer is, "not yet". Our assessment of the situation is that the RBI has been behind the curve by at least by 4-to 5 months, and its optimism in controlling inflation in the earlier meetings of the Monetary Policy Committee was somewhat misplaced. If the RBI has to make up for lost time, it will have to repeat this feat of raising repo rates and CRR by at least three more times in this fiscal year (FY23) to mop up excess liquidity in the system. Even then, it may be difficult to rein in food inflation, which is surging faster than the overall consumer price index (CPI).

The reason for this is simple. Food prices globally are scaling new peaks as per the FAO's food price index. The disruptions caused by the pandemic and now the Russia-Ukraine war are contributing to this escalation in food prices. India cannot remain insulated from this phenomenon. While on the one hand, it has opened opportunities for Indian farm exports, on the other hand, it has posed challenges as import prices of edible oils and fertilisers surge.

Let us focus here on cereals, which have the greatest weight in India's food CPI. For the first time in the history of Indian agriculture, cereal exports have already crossed a record high of 31 million metric tonnes (MMT) at \$13 billion (FY22), and the same cereal wonder may be repeated this fiscal (FY23). Among cereals, wheat exports have witnessed an unprecedented growth of more than 273 per cent, jumping nearly fourfold from \$0.56 billion (or 2 MMT) in FY21 to \$2.1 billion (or 7.8 MMT) in FY22 (see figure). Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal is upbeat on agri-farm exports, which overall have crossed \$50 billion for the first time in FY22. On wheat, while the government has set a target of 10 MMT for exports in FY23, Goyal in a recent interview said that it may go even up to 15 MMT. This has raised fears amongst many about whether India can export 10 to 15 MMT in the face of the scaling down of the production estimate of the current crop from 111 MMT to 105 MMT due to the heatwave, and the massive drop in procurement in the ongoing season due to higher market rates compared to MSP. However, there is very little talk about rice exports, which have crossed 20 MMT in FY22 in a global market of 50 MMT. That's a much

#### **INDIA'S CEREAL WONDER** ■ Export Earnings (USD Billion) Other Cereals 35 30 9.6 25 20 15 10.2 20.4 10 2019-20 2020-21 2016-17 2017-18 2018-19 2021-22\*

bigger wonder than wheat. (See figure) Some of the concerns on the wheat front

\*Provisional

are genuine, and we need to realise that climate change is already knocking on our doors. With every one degree Celsius rise in temperatures, wheat yields are likely to suffer by about 5 MMT, as per earlier IPCC reports. This calls for massive investments in agri-R&D to find heat-resistant varieties of wheat and also create models for "climatesmart" agriculture. We are way behind the curve on this. But we are way ahead of the curve in distributing free food to 800 million Indians, with a food subsidy bill that is likely to cross Rs 2.8 lakh crore this fiscal out of the Centre's net tax revenue of about Rs 20 lakh crore in FY23. Can Goyal, who is rightly upbeat on agri-exports also rationalise the public distribution system and PMGKAY, as food minister, targeting only those below the poverty line for free or subsidised food and charging a reasonable price, say 90 per cent of MSP, from those who are above the poverty line. The bottom line is: He has to effectively target the massive food subsidy and save resources for the higher import bill on edible oils and fertilisers. Inflation in edible oils has been running amok — to double digits – for a long time, and there has been no relief for consumers on that front.

In the wake of likely lower production

In the wake of likely lower production and procurement of wheat this year, Goyal has done well to substitute more rice in the PMGKAY, and may also do so in NFSA allocations. We would suggest giving an option to beneficiaries to receive cash in their Jan Dhan accounts (equivalent to MSP plus 20 per cent) in lieu of grains. This is permitted under NFSA and by doing so, he can save on the burgeoning food subsidy bill.

Illustration: C R Sasikumar; Graphics: Ritesh Kumar

Source: DGCIS, 2022

and procurement of wheat this year, Goyal has done well to substitute more rice in the PMGKAY, and may also do so in NFSA allocations. We would suggest giving an option to beneficiaries to receive cash in their Jan Dhan accounts (equivalent to MSP plus 20 per cent) in lieu of grains. This is permitted under NFSA and by doing so, he can save on the burgeoning food subsidy bill.

Goyal also needs to ward off any fearmongering over wheat that can push him towards an export ban. That would be the worst thing he could do. It would be an antifarmer move. The problem with our earlier policymaking has been that it is heavily biased towards protecting the consumers in the name of the poor by suppressing prices for farmers through choking markets through imposing stock limits on traders putting minimum export prices or outright bans on exports. He must avoid that route. and let agri-exports flourish. Indian farmers need access to global markets to augment their incomes, and the government must facilitate Indian farmers to develop more efficient export value chains by minimising marketing costs and investing in efficient logistics for exports.

> Gulati is Infosys Chair Professor and Juneja is consultant at ICRIER

## Welfare that changed lives

A pro-poor thrust in government programmes that involved building trust through community mobilisation led to a decline in rural poverty



AMARJEET SINHA

A RECENT WORLD Bank Report has shown that extreme poverty in India more than halved between 2011 and 2019 - from 22.5 per cent to 10.2 per cent. The reduction was higher in rural areas, from 26.3 per cent to 11.6 per cent. The rate of poverty decline between 2015 and 2019 was faster compared to 2011-2015.

In an earlier article ('A greater ease of living,' IE, November 20, 2019), I had argued that poverty has reduced significantly because of the current government's thrust on improving the ease of living of ordinary Indians through schemes such as the Ujjwala Yojana, PM Awas Yojana, Swachh Bharat Mission, Jan Dhan and Mission Indradhanush in addition to the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-National Rural Livelihood Mission and improved coverage under the National Food Security Act.

While debates on the World Bank's methodology continue to rage, it is important to understand how poverty in rural areas was reduced at a faster pace. Much of the success can be credited to all government departments, especially their janbhagidaribased thrust on pro-poor public welfare that ensured social support for the endeavour. It will nevertheless be useful to delineate the key factors that contributed to the success.

First, the identification of deprived households on the basis of the Socioeconomic and Caste Census (SECC) 2011 across welfare programmes helped in creating a constituency for the well-being of the poor, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. The much-delayed SECC 2011 data was released in July 2015. This was critical in accomplishing the objectives of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas". Since deprivation was the key criterion in identifying beneficiaries, SC and ST communities got higher coverage and the erstwhile backward regions in Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Rajasthan and rural Maharashtra got a larger share of the benefits. This was a gamechanger in the efforts to ensure balanced development, socially as well as across regions. Social groups that often used to be left out of government programmes were included and gram sabha validation was taken to ensure that the project reached these groups.

Second, the coverage of women under the Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana and Self Help Groups (SHG) increased from 2.5 crore in 2014 to over 8 crore in 2018 as a result of more than 75 lakh SHGs working closely with over 31 lakh elected panchayati raj representatives, 40 per cent of whom are women. This provided a robust framework to connect with communities and created a social capital that helped every programme. The PRI-SHG partnership catalysed changes that increased the pace of poverty reduction and the use of Aadhaar cleaned up corruption at several levels and ensured that the funds reached those whom it was meant for.

Third, Finance Commission transfers were made directly to gram panchayats leading to the creation of basic infrastructure like pucca village roads and drains at a much faster pace in rural areas. The high speed of road construction under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadhak Yojana created greater opportunities for employment in nearby larger villages/census towns/kasbas by improving connectivity and enhancing mobility.

Fourth, the social capital of SHGs ensured the availability of credit through banks, micro-finance institutions and MUDRA loans. The NRLM prioritised livelihood diversification and implemented detailed plans for credit disbursement. New businesses, both farm and non-farm livelihoods, were taken up by women's collectives on a large scale with community resource persons playing crucial handholding roles, especially with respect to skill development. Fifth, in the two phases of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan in 2018, benefits such as gas and electricity connections, LED bulbs, accident insurance, life insurance, bank accounts and immunisation were provided to 6,3974 villages that were selected because of their high SC and ST populations. The implementation of these schemes was monitored assiduously. The performance of line departments went up manifold due to community-led action. The gains are reflected in the findings of the National Family Health Survey V, 2019-2021.

Sixth, the thrust on universal coverage for individual household latrines, LPG connections and pucca houses for those who lived in kuccha houses ensured that no one was left behind. This created the Labarthi Varg. Seventh, this was also a period in which a high amount of public funds were transferred to rural areas, including from the share of states and, in some programmes, through extrabudgetary resources.

Eighth, the thrust on a people's plan campaign, "Sabki Yojana Sabka Vikas" for preparing the Gram Panchayat Development Plans and for ranking villages and panchayats on human development, economic activity and infrastructure, from 2017-18 onwards, laid the foundation for robust community participation involving panchayats and SHGs, especially in ensuring accountability.

Ninth, through processes like social and concurrent audits, efforts were made to ensure that resources were fully utilised. Several changes were brought about in programmes like the MGNREGS to create durable and productive assets. This helped marginal and small farmers in improving their homesteads, and diversifying livelihoods.

Tenth, the competition among states to  $improve\ performance\ on\ rural\ development$ helped. Irrespective of the party in power, nearly all states and UTs focussed on improving livelihood diversification in rural areas and on improving infrastructure significantly

All these factors contributed to improved ease of living of deprived households and improving their asset base. A lot has been achieved, much remains to be done. The pandemic and the negative terms of trade shock from the Ukraine crisis pose challenges to the gains made in poverty reduction up to 2019.

The writer is a retired civil servant with 38 years in the social sector. Views are personal

## Dividing lines

#### Delimitation Commission's recommendations will deepen divides in J&K

THE DELIMITATION COMMISSION formed to remap the electoral constituencies in Iammu and Kashmir submitted its final report after two years. The Commission's recommendations clearly reflect that the panel has gerrymandered the territorial constituencies to advance the electoral aspirations of the ruling party.

In the first place, the exercise was carried out under the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019 and not in accordance with the Delimitation Act, 2002, which called for the 2001 census to be used as the basis for remapping poll constituencies.

This is not the only anomaly. In 2002, the Constitution of India was amended, deferring the delimitation of the constituencies until the first population Census is undertaken after 2026. Accordingly, the J&K Assembly amended the state constitution through the 29th Amendment deferring the delimitation process till 2026. The Delimitation Commission was set up under the Delimitation Act of 2002 - however, it has redrawn the constituencies in accordance with the provisions of the J&K Reorganisation Act 2019, which increased the number of seats by seven without any basis and criteria.

The Commission considered the 2011 Census for delimiting the territorial constituencies. However, there was scant regard for the population, a cardinal parameter for any delimitation process.

According to the 2011 Census, the population of the Kashmir region is 68,88,475; Jammu has a population of 53,78,538; and Ladakh, which is now a separate Union territory, has 2.74,289 people. The Commission has allocated six extra seats to Jammu and only one to Kashmir. With this, Jammu will have 43 seats and Kashmir 47 in the assembly of 116 seats.

In effect, this means that with 44 per cent of the population, Jammu will get 48 per cent of the seat share, while Kashmir, with 56 per cent of the population, will get only 52 per cent share in seats. This arrangement is designed to create a disparity in regional representation.

The people as well as the political leaders in the region are unable to comprehend what, if any, objective criteria were employed by the Commission for this bizarre apportioning of seats. Despite the objections of various political parties, including the associate members, the panel went ahead with its pre-determined plans, riding roughshod over the aspirations of the people.

In 2002, when the J&K government placed a moratorium on the delimitation of assembly constituencies until 2026, it was accepted that the process must take place in step with the rest of the country. The freeze was also upheld by the Supreme Court. But the BJP, which tomtoms that it has "integrated" J&K with India, has done the opposite by using a different yardstick for the delimitation of seats in J&K.

Thus, a malodour hangs over the entire exercise. Ever since the central dispensation read down the special constitutional provisions of J&K and broke the region into two Union territories, it has been making unceasing efforts to change the electoral demography of the region. The BJP government went ahead with the delimitation process despite a clutch of writ petitions challenging the Jammu and Kashmir

Reorganisation Act, 2019, pending before the Supreme Court, under which the entire delimitation exercise was carried out. The BJP's dismal electoral performance in the region has spurred it to go for an early readjustment of poll boundaries. Despite

fielding its candidates on multiple seats, the party has never been able to bag a single seat from the Valley. During the 2020 district development elections, the party took a drubbing in the Valley. The recommendations of the Delimitation

Commission are completely in line with the BJP's policy of creating an electoral autocracy in J&K as most of the seats were carved out in Hindu-dominated areas. The overhauling of the existing territorial boundaries of the constituencies has significantly brought down the electoral representation of Muslims in the Jammu region. For example, Doda was allotted an additional seat, taking the number of total assembly segments in this Chenab Valley district to three. But of them, two seats are carved out of Hindu-dominated areas despite the district having a Muslim population of over 53 per cent. The Commission's assertions that it had

taken the topography terrain and accessibility into account are without reason. The panel has recommended the merging of the Jammu division's Rajouri and Poonch districts with the Anantnag Lok Sabha seat, thus carving out an Anantnag-Rajouri parliamentary constituency. But there is almost no geographical connectivity between the two regions as they are separated by the Pir Panjal mountains.

The historic Mughal road, which is the shortest route connecting Poonch and Rajouri districts via Shopian to the Valley, remains shut for at least six months a year. Shopian, on the other hand, which is comparatively nearer Rajouri has been made part of the Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency. Moreover, these separate regions do not share common aspirations, as they are culturally and linguistically distinct. This peculiar readjustment of poll boundaries

is beyond comprehension. The BJP government has pursued divisive politics in J&K by pitting one region against the other and creating cleavages between communities. It has been manipulating and manoeuvring the situation to its advantage since August 5, 2019. The J&K Reorganisation Act modified the law of enfranchisement of J&K. Voting rights for the state assembly, which were restricted to only permanent residents, have been extended to non-state subjects. The redrawing of poll constituencies is of a piece with all this. It will deepen the communal and regional divide in J&K and is bound to disempower the people and will have deleterious effects on the political landscape of Jammu and Kashmir.

The writer is the former CPI(M) MLA from J&K. He is the Convenor and Spokesperson of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### BAGGA BAGGAGE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Driving Mr Bagga' (IE, May 7). The arrest, interception and now subsequent release of Tajinder Pal Singh Bagga had all the ludicrous action, straight out of a comic Bollywood scene. On a serious note, the police, doing the bidding of their political bosses was again on display. It is unfortunate that political vendetta, which the BJP as a dominant force in the country seems to be associated with, is now being picked up by fledgling parties like the AAP. The bottom line is that no matter how different their ideology, the police-political nexus is the common denominator binding all the political parties.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurgaon

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Driving Mr Bagga' (IE, May 07). It appears that we are happy just with the fact that we are the biggest democracy in the world and hence do not notice that the powers that be — irrespective of their political spread in the country or their ideology - have no qualms in undermining it for their vested interests. The Bagga episode clearly shows that our Constitution, which frames our democracy, has been compromised both by the all-powerful BJP and the two-state AAP by misusing police, worse by positioning them face to face when their job is to go after criminals. This is antithetical to democracy.

Tarsem Singh, Mahilpur

#### BAD DECISION

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Lanka govt defends move, as Opp envoys criticise it over emergency declaration' (IE, May 8). Hit hard by the pandemic, rising oil prices and government tax cuts, Sri Lanka has been left with as little as \$50 million in usable foreign reserves. There is a grave shortage of food, fuel and electricity. The government's declaration of a state of emergency that gives greater powers to the president to deploy the military, detain people without charge and break up protests seems to be imprudent.

SS Paul, Nadia

#### PROUD MOMENT

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Right man at the right place' (IE, May 8). The Bombay Engineering Group & Centre (BEG&C), better known as the Bombay Sappers, the Indian Army's youngest sappers after Madras and Bengal sappers of the Corps of Engineers, could have celebrated the success of its officer reaching the top rank in the Army way back in 1973. However, it had to wait for almost five decades for the moment, which came when the Central government announced that General Manoj Pande will be the next Chief of Army Staff. Pande's appointment should be a proud moment for the defence forces and particularly for engineers across the country.

Sanjay Chopra, Mohali

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

#### THIS WORD MEANS

#### **MONKEYPOX**

A zoonotic cousin of smallpox, found in Central and West Africa

**HEALTH AUTHORITIES in the United** Kingdom have confirmed a case of monkeypox, a rare viral infection similar to smallpox, in an individual who recently travelled to that country from Nigeria.

#### Monkeypox virus

The monkeypox virus is an orthopoxvirus, which is a genus of viruses that also includes the variola virus, which causes smallpox, and vaccinia virus, which was used in the smallpox vaccine. Monkeypox causes symptoms similar to smallpox, although they are less severe.

While vaccination eradicated smallpox worldwide in 1980, monkeypox continues to occur in a swathe of countries in Central and West Africa, and has on occasion showed up elsewhere. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), two distinct clade are identified: the West African clade and the Congo Basin clade, also known as the Central African clade.

#### Zoonotic disease

Monkeypox is a zoonosis: It is transmitted from animals to humans. According to the WHO, cases occur close to tropical rainforests inhabited by animals that carry the virus. Monkeypox virus infection has been detected in squirrels, Gambian poached rats, dormice, and some species of monkeys.

Human-to-human transmission is limited — the longest documented chain of transmission is six generations, the WHO says. "It is important to emphasise that monkeypox does not spread easily between people and the overall risk to the general public is very low," Dr Colin Brown, Director of Clinical and Emerging Infections at the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA) said on Saturday.

Transmission can be through contact with bodily fluids, lesions on the skin or on internal mucosal surfaces, such as in the mouth or throat, respiratory droplets and contaminated objects, the WHO says.



Monkeypox's symptoms are similar to smallpox's, but less severe. WHO

#### Symptoms and treatment

According to the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), monkeypox begins with a fever, headache, muscle aches, back ache, and exhaustion. It also causes the lymph nodes to swell, which smallpox does not. The WHO underlines that it is not to be confused with chickenpox, measles, bacterial skin infections, scabies, syphilis and medication-associated allergies.

The incubation period (from infection to symptoms) for monkeypox is usually 7-14 days but can range from 5-21 days. Usually within a day to 3 days of the onset of fever, the patient develops a rash that begins on the face and spreads to other parts of the body. The skin eruption stage can last between 2 and 4 weeks, during which the lesions harden and become painful, fill up with a clear fluid and then pus, and develop scabs or crusts.

According to the WHO, the proportion of deaths has varied between 0 and 11%. and been higher among young children.

There is no safe, proven treatment for monkeypox yet. The WHO recommends supportive treatment depending on the symptoms. Awareness is important for prevention and control of the infection.

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** 

# Counting India's Covid deaths

SIMPLY PUT

The WHO's estimate of 47.4 lakh Covid-related deaths in 2020 and 2021 has sparked a debate. Why are such estimates so different from India's official count? A look at the nuances being missed in the debate.

#### **AMITABHSINHA**

PUNE. MAY 8

THE WORLD Health Organization (WHO) report on excess mortality due to Covid-19 is the latest in a series of exercises in the last over a year that tend to suggest India's official death toll is an undercount. The WHO report has pegged India's excess mortality (people who probably would not have died if there was no pandemic) for 2020 and 2021 at 47.4 lakh. Several other studies have shown India's Covid-related death count at anywhere between 25 lakh to 60 lakh. In fact, the upper bound for the WHO study is even higher.

While these figures are being debated, many important nuances are being missed.

#### The official count

Any discussion on the undercount as of now is premature because India has not yet stopped counting its Covid deaths. The 5.24 lakh deaths counted until now is not the final official toll. The number is under constant revision, almost daily, and is likely to remain so for several months, if not years. Kerala, for example, is updating its death toll almost every day, and many other states have been doing it periodically. Last week, Assam added 1,300 deaths on a single day. Other states have made similar adjustments in the past.

Even the death numbers reported in 2020 and 2021 are not final. The more than 21,000 deaths Kerala has reported in the last four months have not all happened this year. Most of them pertain to last year. The 1,300 deaths Assam added on April 25 did not all happen that day, or that month, or this year. They most likely happened the previous year. Several hundreds, possibly thousands, of deaths that states adjusted in 2021 would have actually happened in 2020. The additions to the overall tally are being made on the day these deaths are being confirmed, and not the day these might have happened.

That would mean that even though the death count for 2020 still shows up as 1.49 lakh, chances are that it has already been substantially corrected, and may be revised even further at a later stage. Many of the deaths that would have happened in 2020 but are not included in the 1.49 lakh tally would have been accounted for at a later stage. Those deaths have not been missed; they will reflect in the

#### 5,00,000 **CUMULATIVE COVID-19** 5,24,002 -**DEATHS IN INDIA** 4,00,000 Govt's official count 4,00,312 is 5.24 lakh so far July 1, 2021 3,00,000 3,03,720 May 23, 2021 1,63,396 2,00,000 April 1, 2021 1,00,000 May 1, 2020 May 5, 2022

statistics. The same is true for 2021.

It is difficult to measure the scale of the undercount in a situation like this, particularly when the counting exercise is still on. A physical count, and verification, of the dead in a country as vast as India during such chaotic times is bound to take a little more time than running some equations in a computer model.

The WHO report does not get into calculating the scale of the undercount, for India or any other country. It has done a more straightforward exercise of calculating excess mortality. It has estimated the total number of people who likely died in India in 2020 due to all causes and, from that, has subtracted the expected number of all-cause deaths if there was no Covid. These 'excess' deaths are considered to be a direct or indirect result of Covid-19.

#### Multiple studies and estimates

It is often argued that, because multiple studies have been pointing to similar estimates, they must be reflective of the true death toll in the country. What is being overlooked is that these studies have been throwing up similar estimates probably because they have all been using similar mathematical models and statistical methods. The researchers, and those doing peer reviews, belong to an overlapping set of people.

What these studies certainly show is that there is a general agreement in academic circles on the usefulness of these models in the

ity to simulate the reality in some earlier situations. That, however, is no guarantee that these models have an unquestionable capability to accurately mimic the dynamics of the current pandemic, whose nature and behaviour is far from fully understood. Computer modelling is routinely used by

current situation, possibly based on their abil-

academics to simulate real-life situations. The accuracy of their results depend on the underlying quality of data and assumptions. Because of multiple layers of extrapolations involved, slight changes in assumptions or input data can significantly alter results.

To estimate India's Covid toll, the WHO study has relied, among various sources, on death registration data from the Civil Registration System (CRS). Several media houses had published monthly CRS data for a few states last year, and these numbers did not always match. Depending on which publication was selected to pick these numbers from, the output of the mathematical model would have been different.

Also, the monthly CRS death data, even if obtained through an RTI applications, was only 'provisional' and subject to change. Only the numbers mentioned in the annual CRS report, released last week, are final The quality of assumptions can also induce

large uncertainties in the final result. In March 2020, a widely quoted computer modelling study led by Ramanan Laxminarayan had predicted 1 to 3 million Covid-related deaths in India by the middle of April, roughly three weeks from that time. When nothing like that happened, Laxminarayan acknowledged that the risk of dying from Covid was actually a lot lower than he had originally assumed.

Scientists admit that they still do not fully understand the nature and behaviour of this virus. It is thus difficult to assume that these processes and behaviours that epidemiologists have not fully understood have somehow found accurate description in modelling or machine learning algorithms.

#### **CRS and SRS**

As discussed in The Indian Express earlier, the CRS data released last week do not throw any fresh light on this debate on their own. That is because CRS only has death registration data, and not every death in the country is registered. The actual death data is revealed by the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) whose report for 2020 has not yet been released.

CRS and SRS are annual exercises that complement each other. The SRS uses a door-todoor survey in a few thousand sample towns and villages to produce an estimate of the total number of births and deaths in the country every year. This exercise is repeated after a few months to avoid duplication.

The CRS is a database of all births and deaths that get registered. The CRS database is therefore a subset of the SRS. Over the last few vears, as more and more people are registering their births and deaths, the CRS numbers are converging closer to the SRS estimates.

These two systems might still not be perfect, but they are extremely robust sources of birth and death data. These data are consistent with the findings of the Census and a vast array of other data-collection exercises that together make up all the demographic, social and economic indicators that everyone agrees on.

SRS numbers from the past 15 years have established that about 83 lakh people die in India every year on an average. If the SRS for 2020, whenever it comes out, reveals that 90 lakh or more people died in the country in that year, instead of the expected 82 to 84 lakh, then it would suggest that the computer models used by WHO or other studies were accurate in estimating 8 lakh excess deaths due to Covid-19 in India in 2020. If the SRS numbers are not close to that, it can be inferred that those many

## Working away from office does not affect productivity: study

A STUDY in the United States has suggested that working remotely does not affect productivity. The study was published in IOS Press back in February, and was described on Friday in a press release from Texas A&M University.

The team has found that employee and company resiliency may be enhanced through the opportunity for employees to work remotely during natural disasters and other events that cause workplace displacement. The researchers worked with a large oil and gas company in Houston, Texas, to analyse software data from 264 employees. During the study period, the com- Benden as saying.

pany was forced to close its offices because

of flooding from Hurricane Harvey, which required employees to work remotely for an extended period. Employee data before, during and after Hurricane Harvey showed that although total computer use declined during the hurricane, employ-

ees' work behaviours during the seven-month period of working remotely returned to pre-hurricane levels.

"This is a huge message right now for employers because we're having national debates about whether or not employees should be able to work remotely or in a hybrid schedule," the release quoted researcher Mark

Source: Texas A&M University



NEW RESEARCH

## Why Mother's Day founder Anna Jarvis later hated it

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DEI HI MAY 8

IN ALL the Mother's Day WhatsApp forwards and social media posts that you sent or were sent on Sunday, the name Anna Jarvis probably never figured. Jarvis founded Mother's Day in the US and worked to have it officially recognised – but eventually came to hate its commercialisation, and spent the last of her energies and money to campaign against it.

#### Memory of her mother

Jarvis (1864-1948) was an American activist who founded Mother's Day to honour her mother and "all mothers" in 1908.

Her mother had spent her life working for causes centred on motherhood, and a young Anna once heard her say that she hoped a mothers' day would be founded to commemorate mothers' "matchless service". After Mrs Jarvis died in 1905, Anna wrote to



Jarvis founded Mother's Day in 1908

politicians, businessmen, and church leaders to enlist their support, proposing the second Sunday of May be dedicated to celebrating mothers, with a white carnation — her mother's favourite flower — as its emblem.

In 1908, two Mother's Day events were held in the US; and on May 8, 1914President Woodrow Wilson signed into law an Act to recognise Mother' Day.

#### Definition, celebration There were others before Jarvis — includ-

ing author and suffragist Julia Ward Howe, in May, Mother's Day" early on, and sued who had started a Mothers' Day (note the people for using it for marketing campaigns. placement of the apostrophe) celebration in Iune 1873. Historians note that Iarvis narrowed the definition of 'mother' to one who puts her children's needs first — in choosing the singular over Howe's "Mothers' Day", she wanted people to honour their own mothers who cared for them at home.

Jarvis' version was eagerly taken up by the greeting card industry, the flower industry, etc, and Mother's Day was heavily commercialised. A report in The New York Times from 1964, said: "According to the National Committee on the Observance of Mother's Day, Inc., the day has become a gift-giving occasion second only to Christmas."

#### Jarvis' disillusionment

Jarvis hated it. She threw her energies into arresting this commercialisation through had copyrighted the phrase "Second Sunday In a press release, she demanded, "What

campaigns, litigation, and direct action. She

will you do to rout charlatans, bandits, pirates, racketeers, kidnappers and other termites that would undermine with their greed one of the finest, noblest and truest movements and celebrations?" according to a BBC report. She attacked First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt

for using Mother's Day to raise funds for charity, and was arrested in 1925 after crashing a convention of American War Mothers, who sold carnations on Mother's Day to raise funds. In 1948, Jarvis died, almost penniless and

alone. According to the BBC, one of her final public activities before being admitted to a sanatorium was "to go door-to-door in Philadelphia asking for signatures to back an appeal for Mother's Day to be rescinded".

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#### **EXPLAINED CLIMATE**

# Heatwaves and the role humidity plays in making them deadly



JOY MERWIN MONTEIRO

THE CONSECUTIVE heatwaves over South Asia since March 2022 have continued the disturbing tradition of breaking historical temperature records. Mercifully, these record temperatures were not accompanied by the high mortality burden observed in previous heatwaves such as the one during 2015. Why those heatwaves were so deadly is a puzzle

that we are yet to resolve. The recent IPCC report AR6 has emphasised that humidity is also very important while estimating the physiological stress that extreme heat puts on the human body. Instead of the "dry bulb" temperature that is usually measured using a regular thermometer an alternative metric known as the "wet bulb temperature" has been used to measure exposure to extreme heat. The report mentions that sustained exposures to wet bulb temperatures above 35°C are fatal, while sustained exposures to wet bulb temperatures above 32°C are dangerous for intense physical activity. The critical word here is "sustained", which we will come back to later.

These projections are very welcome and are the outcome of more than a decade of work put in by the climate science community. The public health community was, of course, aware of the implications of humidity for a much longer time. Furthermore, a number of recent articles in the media have helped make the public aware of this. However, there has been a growing concern about the 35°C threshold and whether parts of South Asia will become "unsurvivable" in the coming years.

#### **Humidity and temperature**

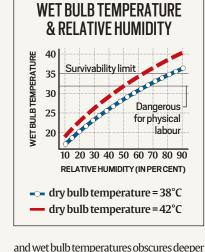
Why is humidity such a critical factor while measuring heat exposure? Humans lose heat generated within their body by producing sweat that evaporates on the skin. The cooling effect of this evaporation is essential in maintaining a stable body temperature. As humidity rises, sweat does not evaporate just like clothes take a long time to dry in humid locations - and makes it difficult to regulate body temperature. This is why we feel more discomfort in humid places.

The wet bulb temperature is usually lower than the dry bulb temperature, and the difference between the two increases dramatically as the air becomes dry. The variation of wet bulb temperature for a fixed dry bulb temperature is shown in the figure.

The humidity required to reach wet bulb temperatures in excess of 35°C over land is exceedingly difficult to achieve for a variety of reasons, which this article will not go into. This is the reason the AR6 says that such conditions are rarely observed nowadays. Wet bulb temperatures in excess of 35°C have been observed in Sindh in Pakistan, but such conditions occur once every three to four years, and probably for a few hours. This fails to meet the criteria of "sustained exposure".

Just because we don't observe such conditions in the current climate does not mean that they will be as rare in future climates. However, the research that backs the AR6 also suggests we are unlikely to experience sustained exposure to wet bulb temperatures beyond the threshold of survivability.

The hype around survivability thresholds



issues, both physiological and political. Firstly, the inability of the body to stabilise its core temperature can have multiple reasons. For instance, increased strain on the heart during periods of elevated temperature could be fatal for those with pre-existing cardiac conditions and is in fact the leading cause of deaths

during heatwaves. Pre-existing respiratory problems and diabetes too are potential causes of death. Such conditions impair the body's ability to efficiently transfer heat to the environment. A less obvious issue is that of dehydration.

Many labourers, especially women, intentionally keep themselves dehydrated due to the lack of toilets in workplaces. Dehydration can lead to decreased sweat production and therefore increased vulnerability to heat stroke during heatwaves. Such public health factors can dramatically reduce the survivability thresholds and underestimate the actual vulnerability of the population.

#### Global and local

There is also a political issue here that often goes unnoticed. A singular focus on increasing wet bulb temperatures subtly shifts the responsibility of action from the local to the transnational arena. Increasing wet bulb temperatures are the byproduct of global climate change, and therefore keeping our population safe becomes the responsibility of international negotiators at conferences such as COP26. Very little can be done at the local level to keep wet bulb temperatures from rising if the factors controlling them are global. On the other hand, understanding the factors that increase vulnerability to heatwaves puts the onus on local actors, who have to provide better sanitation facilities, protect the elderly and those with cardiac conditions, and reduce the incidence of diabetes in the population. Such a focus will increase the pressure to improve our national health infrastructure, whose fragility has become increasingly clear to everyone over the past two years.

In summary, the recent focus on increasing temperature and humidity is a welcome step in building awareness about the impacts of climate change. However, it is important to realise that our vulnerability to heatwaves is a systemic problem that has existed for a very long time, and is not dependent only on increasing greenhouse gas emissions. Refocusing our priorities to highlight critical gaps in our urban and health infrastructure that repeatedly fail to protect the most vulnerable among us will allow us to build a more climate-resilient nation.

Joy Merwin Monteiro is a Climate Scientist working at the Department of Earth and Climate Science at IISER, Pune.



# IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

We'll have to discuss all issues at the ne-

gotiating table. I'm happy to say that we

#### **UGO ASTUTO/EU AMBASSADOR TO INDIA**

# 6 Russian aggression, not sanctions, is affecting global food security and prices?

EU Ambassador Ugo Astuto shares how Europe has a renewed interest in India and both can work together to deepen strategic partnerships on climate, green energy and connectivity while ensuring a rule-based order. The session was moderated by Deputy Chief of National Bureau, SHUBHAJIT ROY

Shubhajit Roy: As India-EU relations are getting stronger by the day, what is

your assessment of this partnership? We are at an extremely positive juncture. That's based on a number of reasons but for sure, it's about shared values as open societies, democracy and convergence of interests. Both India and EU are good global citizens who believe in a rules-based system of international governance and have a cooperative approach. That's the basis of our strategic partnership, which has been gaining momentum over the past couple of years or so. When it comes to trade, last year's decision to resume negotiations for free trade agreements (FTAs) was a very significant moment in launching our strategic partnership. This has been emphasised by European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen during her recent visit. Both India and EU have set ambitious targets for meeting climate change challenges and we can exchange best practices to address them. On green energy, India has invested massively in solar grids and cleaner sources of energy. The EU, with its Green Deal and 55 programmes, has vowed to become carbon-neutral by 2050.

Digital transition is the next area where our interests converge. As democratic and open societies, we want the digital revolution to be human-centric, consistent with our values and beneficial to our citizens, which means it must be underpinned by respect for their fundamental freedoms. We want to create an environment which is not only conducive to innovation and competition but is also respectful of individual rights and data protection. So, we will be working together on issues such as the security of networks. We want connectivity with quality infrastructure. We want to develop links, not dependencies. As our President recently said, connectivity and infrastructure development must be based on fiscal, social and environmental sustainability. We have seen some of your neighbours being ensnared by debt traps because of unsustainable infrastructure projects. Global Gateway is a major policy initiative that will build on the bilateral connectivity partnership agreed upon in 2021. The EU vision of the Indo-Pacific is pretty similar to India's advocacy of a rule-based order. Forty per cent of the trade with Europe passes through the Indo-Pacific and we want to contribute to the success story here. These are some of the areas that bring us together. In Europe, there's a renewed interest in India and we can work together as like-minded democracies.

#### Shubhaiit Rov: Europe has been outrightly critical of the Russian invasion of Ukraine compared to India. What conversations have happened between EU and the Indian leadership?

The unprovoked and unjustified aggression of Russia against Ukraine is a blatant violation of international law and the UN Charter. Russia itself subscribed to these agreements. Our response has to be robust and Europe is united in helping Ukraine defend itself. its future and its right to choose the future of its citizens. Apart from politi-

cal and humanitarian support, for the first time, EU has supplied NATO has never had weapons to Ukraine. aggressive intentions We have five packages of sanctions against vis-a-vis Russia, quite the Russia to disable Kremlin's war macontrary. Russia was chine, to affect Russia's included in the G7, which capacity to continue its aggression and then became G8. NATO bring to account those responsible for this and Russia established a aggression. mechanism for a

Unfortunately, there's also evidence of human rights violations and war crimes. We have seen the indiscriminate shelling of

cities and urban centres, and the targetting of civilians in places like Bucha. We cannot simply accept that might is right as it can have consequences not just in Europe but in the Indo-Pacific. We shall continue to support Ukraine and isolate Russia.

conversation with the EU

#### Nirupama Subramanian: What does a weakened Russia mean for Europe given its historical context and the present reality? What is the specific outcome that you are looking for?

What we need is the immediate cessation of hostilities and a Russian withdrawal. For four years, we've been trying to engage with Russia and establish mutually beneficial relations. The Kremlin narrative about an expansionist NATO being the cause of the current aggression is totally false. NATO has been expanded to respect the free will of east European countries that have emerged from the terrible experience of the Soviet occupation, NATO has never had aggressive intentions vis-a-vis Russia, quite the contrary. Russia was included in the G7, which then became G8. NATO and Russia

have set the framework and roadmap for the resumption of talks, which will start possibly next month. Both sides are aiming at an ambitious and comprehensive trade agreement that can deliver on market access for goods and services. Governments should address procure-**EXCHANGE** ment, include provisions on trade and sustainable development as well as digi-WHY tal trade. It's too early **UGO ASTUTO** to comment. s Ambassador of Karunjit Singh: How has India's the European procurement of Union (EU) in discounted crude oil from Russia India and Bhutan, Ugo impacted its Astuto is overseeing a perception in Europe? transformative change in its Europe, as of tostrategic partnership with day, is the largest importer of oil and gas India. There's a broad from Russia. So, we understand the compulsions of our partners. What we are tryspectrum of issues — from ing to do is wean ourselves away from this trade to environment, dependency. We have started the process and we are determined to do that in a short technology to Indo-Pacific span of time. We are currently discussing that both are collaborating six packages of sanctions that will also afon, which is underpinned by shared values of democracy, individual freedom, pluralism and multilateralism

established a mechanism for a conversation with the EU. Ukraine has never caused any threat to Russia, for sure.

#### Nirupama Subramanian: Right now, Europe is united on sanctions. If this war drags on, how long do you think this consensus will hold?

I would say look at how fast the EU has come together and how effectively we have been coordinating with our friends and allies around the world, including the US, UK, Japan, Australia and Singapore, which are also implementing sanctions. When facing such an existential threat to the rules-based

system of governance, the EU can and does come together to defend its values. Europe will stay

Rakesh Sinha: We've seen the **Chinese aligning** themselves with the Russians on Ukraine. What has been the EU's engagement with China on this?

We had a virtual summit with China on April 1. We have been telling China

that it is also in its interest to speak up and contribute to the international community's efforts to stop the Russian aggression. Speaking in broader terms, we have a complex relation with China, which is a negotiating partner in addressing global challenges like climate. It's a competitor in trade And then our ask is for China to abide by the rules when it advocates a system of governance which doesn't align with our principles of democracy. So, all these different strands come together. Our relationship with China is important but complex. What we are doing is to address this relationship with clarity, pushing back when necessary.

#### Rakesh Sinha: Do you see a post-war order in which the Russians and the Chinese will stick together?

I can't speculate, I can only look at facts and at the statement of intent, which was issued right before the Olympics when Russian President Vladimir Putin visited China. And we see pretty robust expressions, limitless friendship and so on. This came right before the aggression in Ukraine. PVaidyanathan Iyer: It seems that the EU and the individual big countries within it are at cross purposes with each other as far as India is concerned. For instance, Germany and France push bilateral deals with India on defence or big acquisitions. Yet when it comes to trade agreements, the EU supersedes interests of individual countries. How

can we reconcile this divergence? I don't see that in practice. What I see is a remarkable convergence among all member states. We are all on the same page. In the EU, some competencies have been devolved to European institutions, notably trade. So when it comes, for instance, to the FTAs, that's an exclusive competency for the EU to negotiate. But then again, I'm happy to note that there is consensus among all member states that we should proceed in earnest. We all realise the interest we have and the potential which lies in the conclusion of an FTA. This is largely true overall in our approach to India. The EU coordinates. complements and reinforces the policies of individual member states. I do not foresee any issue in terms of divergent perspectives, quite the opposite.

#### PVaidyanathan Iyer: What about security concerns, be it of India or the EU. India is wary of China as EU is of Russia. So how does one factor in

individual concerns? The response must be multidimensional. It also depends on how you look at security. If you look at security holistically, it's not just about the weapons system. We're talking about the digital dimension, the security of networks is becoming more and more important. Our strategy for the Indo-Pacific and its convergence with the vision of India is relevant. It's also about fostering trade and creating conditions so that the next health emergency can be dealt with by an additional level of solidarity. These are also important elements of security. The EU has a strategic compass. We have decided to take measures to address this challenge in terms of working together better and integrating our procurement. We have decided to set up a rapid intervention force of 5,000 troops. Then, you have the efforts undertaken by individual member states, many of whom are partnering with India in security and defence.

Shubhajit Roy: There's a perception that China's rise has been enabled by the West. Europe, too, has helped it weaponise its growing heft despite

#### India flagging concerns about its belligerence. Could something have been done differently?

I don't know about the past. But what I see is a clear sense of purpose now. Yes, the EU is ready to engage with China but will push back when necessary. You mentioned trade. China cannot simply reap the benefits of belonging to a system of open trade without respecting the same ground rules. We want a level playing field for all. There is the EU legislation on investment, which has been enacted at the national level but follows a framework set at the EU level. We have taken measures for the security of net-

Harish Damodaran: The sanctions seem to have inflicted much more collateral damage on other countries than Russia. We know that the Russian rouble has strengthened and Russia is merrily selling its oil. But the global prices of crude, fertilisers and commodities have risen. Should this strategy be relooked at?

China is important but complex. What we are doing is to address this relationship with clarity, pushing back when necessary. We have been telling China that it is also in its interest to speak up

Sanctions are needed to stop the invasion and dent Russia's military capability. Europe is ready to pay a price although we are realising the war's cascading effects on food security and prices. But let me be very clear, the cause is not the sanctions, it's Russian aggression. As long as Ukraine is a battlefield, obviously the production of wheat will be limited. So early peace is in everybody's interest. We've also seen Russia stopping wheat-laden ships in the Black Sea. That's not the consequence of sanctions. That's a deliberate decision taken by Russia. You can see the plundering of agricultural equipment by Russia in Ukraine. Again, this has nothing to do with sanctions. It's the decision of the Russian occupiers. Let's not forget the origin of these issues

Karunjit Singh: Will the proposed India-EU FTA envisage a stricter IPR regime or include a clause on Government procurement? Has the Indian side showed flexibility from its position in 2013 when the agreement

fect the delivery of oil. How can we achieve that? We can improve the integration of our energy system in Europe by interoperability and we are already doing that. The investment done in the past few years is now paying us back. We can invest in our strategic reserves, we can diversify, and we are looking at alternative sources, including LNG from a number of countries. We need to accelerate what we were doing in any case, which means a transition to non-fossil fuel energy sources. We cannot be dependent on a neighbour who can use fossil fuels to blackmail us. We all need to look at

the security of our supply chains and greening our energy needs. Our relationship with FTA negotiations?

#### Shubhajit Roy: Are you disappointed with the pace of the

Illustration: Suvajit Dev

Idon't know about the past. But today, I sense optimism and a chance to bring this negotiation to a conclusion. We have a clear political commitment as articulated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, EU institutions and 27 member states. There is a clear sense of purpose.

Esha Roy: Although the EU has set ambitious targets, the latest IPCC report says we may not be doing enough to meet the 1.5-degree target. Should we look beyond energy transition? Also the finance and technology transfer that was promised to India and other developing countries by developed countries has not happened.

COP 26 has clearly not solved the climate challenge but at least it has done the groundwork for the international community to come together and finally address the issue of keeping the global temperature below 1.5 degrees. It has also helped in a general awareness about climate being an existential risk. An important achievement at COP 26 was the pledge to review our commitment on a yearly basis. I'm hopeful that this awareness is going to translate into even more stringent commitments at COP 27. From the EU side, you are aware of our commitment to become carbon neutral by 2050 and cut emissions, including 55 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases, by

New Delhi

2030. In the EU, this is a legal obligation. The role of India has also been instrumental in COP 26 as your Prime Minister announced solar energy and zero carbon targets.

The discussion on climate finance is important. COP 26 has achieved the objective of making the target of the \$100-billion finance achievable. We are not yet there, so I understand your frustration. But I'm glad to

We cannot simply accept

that might is right as it can

have consequences not just

in Europe but in the

Indo-Pacific. We shall

continue to support

Ukraine and isolate Russia

say that the EU is the first provider in climate finance. Can we do more? Mitigation and adaptation are equally important.

#### Harikishan Sharma: How has the India-EU Water **Partnership** progressed? It has worked well

so far and it brings to-

gether the expertise from Europe and best practices from India on management of water resources. India will have an increased population in cities and towns requiring access to clean water in a sustainable way. It needs a non-polluting waste water system. We have started work on the Tapi river and want to replicate this experience in other places. We also have Twinning Programmes of European and Indian cities to see how we can address water issues.

#### Ananthakrishnan G: At the recent Raisina Dialogue, the Indian Foreign Minister raised questions about how a rules-based order can justify whatever happened in Afghanistan.

The EU has pretty similar views on Afghanistan as India. We would like to see a peaceful Afghanistan posing no threat to neighbours and where citizens can enjoy their rights, particularly women and girls. We know the dangers of a humanitarian catastrophe in Afghanistan. That's why the EU and its member states have been at the forefront of providing humanitarian assistance. We pledged a significant amount at a pledging conference in March. We are ready to help the Afghan population, irrespective of the dispensation in power. Our help does not mean the recognition of Taliban rule. We want to help people survive. Our engagement is based on a principle of solidarity with the Afghan people. We will need rights. And those Afghans who want to leave Afghanistan should be free to. From our side in Europe, we will welcome them.

#### Ananthakrishnan G: But isn't the war against Putin impacting ordinary Russians? Yet you want to support Afghans despite Taliban rule. Isn't there a dichotomy here?

In Afghanistan, we are talking about basic survival needs that are not met by the ruling establishment. Sanctions are not directed against the Russian population, they are directed towards those responsible for the decision to attack Ukraine. They are directed towards the tools that the Kremlin used to attack Ukraine. For instance, there's a blacklist of Russian government officials, making it impossible for them to travel to Europe. We are blocking their financial institutions in Europe because they are used by the Kremlin to fund the war effort. The

#### Deeptiman Tiwary: While it talks of battling global terrorism, Europe's focus on India-centric terror groups, operating with Pakistan's support, has been less than satisfactory. How is the EU going to address this, considering the West needs Pakistan again to engage with Afghanistan?

Counter-terrorism cooperation is part and parcel of the various dialogues we have in place with India, at the EU level and also at the level of individual EU member states. Europe is also a victim of terror and it requires a cohesive and consistent response from the international community, which we are doing, including at Financial Action Task Force (FATF). No country should be harbouring terrorists or allow its territory to be used for targetting other countries.

#### Nirupama Subramanian: Can there be a negotiated end to this war? Prime Minister Modi, during his recent visit to Europe, called for an immediate ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine. Is there a role that India can play here?

I certainly hope there can be a negotiated end to the war. I'm also cognisant of the fact that Ukrainians themselves have signed the terms of this negotiation as a free country, a country which has the right to determine its future. There is a high level of distrust vis-a-vis President Putin, Actually, India does play a role. I understand the Prime Minister has spoken to President Putin as well as President Zelenskyy and I hope that the voice of reason can be heard.



#### AMAZON DEFORESTATION HITS APRIL RECORD

Deforestation detected in the Brazilian Amazon broke all records for the month of April, and that followed similar new records set in January and February, reflecting a worrisome uptick in destruction in a state deep within the rainforest. Satellite alerts of deforestation for April corresponded to more than 1,000 square km, the highest figure for that month in seven years of record-keeping.



Ayatollah Ali Khamenei in Tehran on Sunday. AP

**WEST ASIA** 

#### Syria's Assadin Iran for meetings in rare foreign trip

SYRIAN PRESIDENT Bashar Assad met Iranian leaders in Tehran on Sunday, Iranian and Syrian media reported, marking his second trip to major wartime ally Iran since Syria's civil war erupted in 2011. Nour News, a website close to Iran's Supreme National Security Council, reported that Assad met Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Khamenei President Ebrahim Raisi, It said the leaders praised the strong ties between their nations and vowed to boost relations further. "Everybody now looks at Syria as a power," Khamenei told Assad in the meeting, according to Iran's semiofficial Tasnim news

#### THE GULF Saudi king admitted to hospital

SAUDI ARABIA'S octogenarian monarch underwent medical tests on Sunday, state-run media reported, just weeks after he had the battery of his pacemaker changed. The report in the official Saudi Press Agency did not provide further details about King Salman's condition or the nature of the medical examinations. It said that the king, 86, was admitted to King Faisal Specialist Hospital in the Saudi port city of Jiddah. The monarch's health is closely watched because he holds absolute power in the kingdom.

#### **CUBA**

#### Search on as hotel blast toll rises to 30

SEARCH CREWS with dogs hunted through the ruins of a luxury hotel in Cuba's capital Sunday for survivors of an apparent gas explosion and officials raised the number of known dead to 30. The Hotel Saratoga, a five-star 96-room hotel in Old Havana, was preparing to reopen after being closed for two years when an apparent gas leak caused a massive explosion on Friday. Cuban officials on Sunday raised the known death toll to 30 from 27 even as crews continued to search for dozens still believed to be trapped under the rubble.

## **WORLD** Dozens feared dead after Russian bomb levels school sheltering 90 in Ukraine

**ELENA BECATOROS** & JON GAMBRELL

ZAPORIZHZHIA (UKRAINE)

DOZENS OF Ukrainians were feared dead Sunday after a Russian bomb flattened a school sheltering about 90 people in its basement, while Ukrainian troops refused to surrender at a besieged steel plant that Moscow's invading forces sped to seize before Russia's Victory Day holiday.

The governor of Luhansk province, one of two areas that make up the eastern industrial heartland known as the Donbas, said the school in the village of Bilohorivka caught fire after Saturday's bombing. Emergency crews found two bodies and rescued 30 people, he said.

"Most likely, all 60 people who remain under the rubble are now dead," Gov. Serhiy Haidai wrote on the Telegram messaging app. Russian shelling also killed two boys, ages 11 and 14, in the nearby town of Pryvillia, he said.

The largest European conflict since World War II has developed into a punishing war of attrition due to the Ukrainian military's unexpectedly effective defense. Since failing to capture Ukraine's capital, Kyiv, Moscow's forces have attacked cities, towns and villages in eastern and southern Ukraine but not gained much ground, according to Western military analysts.

To demonstrate success in time for Victory Day on Monday, the Russian military worked to complete its takeover of Mariupol, which has been under relentless assault since the start of the war. The sprawling seaside steel mill where an estimated 2,000 Ukrainian fighters made a last stand is the only part of the city not under Russian control.

All the remaining women, children and older civilians who were sheltering with the fighters in the Azovstal plant were evacuated Saturday. The Ukrainian troops rejected deadlines given by the Russians who said the defenders could leave with their lives if they laid down



US First Lady Jill Biden with Ukrainian First Lady Olena Zelenskyy outside a school in Uzhhorod, Ukraine, Sunday. AP

## Jill Biden pays surprise visit to Ukraine, meets First Lady

Canada's Trudeau makes unannounced visit to Irpin

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** UZHHOROD, MAY 8

JILL BIDEN made an unannounced visit to western Ukraine on Sunday, holding a surprise Mother's Day meeting with First Lady Olena Zelenska to show US support for the embattled nation as Russia presses its punishing war in the eastern regions.

She travelled under the cloak of secrecy, becoming the latest high-profile American to enter Ukraine during its 10-week-old conflict with Russia.

"I wanted to come on Mother's Day," the US First Lady told Zelenska. "I thought it was important to show the Ukrainian people that this war has to stop and this war has been brutal and that the people of the United States stand with the people of Ukraine."

Biden spent about two hours in Ukraine, travelling by vehicle to the town of Uzhhorod, about a 10minute drive from a Slovakian border village where she had toured

### Bono performs in Kyiv metro

IRISH ROCK group U2's frontman Bono and his bandmate The Edge performed a 40minute concert in a metro station in Ukraine's capital of Kyiv on Sunday and praised Ukrainians fighting for their freedom from Russia. "Your President leads the world in the cause of freedom right now... The people of Ukraine are not just fighting for your own free-

a border processing facility.

Zelenska thanked Biden for her "courageous act" and said, "We understand what it takes for the US First Lady to come here during a war when military actions are taking place every day, where the air sirens are happening every day – even today."

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau also made a surprise visit to Ukraine on Sunday. He was in Irpin, which had been



Bono with a Ukrainian soldier in Kyiv, Sunday. Reuters

dom, you're fighting for all of us who love freedom," Bono said.

damaged by Russia's attempt to take Kyiv at the start of the war.

Canadian officials said the PM would meet Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and "reaffirm Canada's unwavering support for the Ukrainian people."

Zelenskyy also met on Sunday with the German Parliament Speaker, Bärbel Bas, in Kyiv to discuss further defence assistance, according Zelenskyy's press office.

#### G7 leaders pledge further economic isolation of Russia

Washington: The Group of Seven leaders said in a joint statement on Sunday that they will reinforce Russia's economic isolation and "elevate" a campaign against Russian elites who support President Vladimir Putin.

After meeting virtually with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, the leaders said they would cut off key services on which Russia depends, reinforcing the isolation of Russia "across all sectors of its economy".

They also committed to phasing out dependency on Russian energy, including by banning imports of Russian oil.

The US on Sunday unveiled sanctions against three Russian television stations, banned Americans from providing accounting and consulting services to Russians, and sanctioned executives from Gazprombank to of Ukraine.

#### US envoys return to Kyiv embassy

Washington: The US's top diplomat to Ukraine, Kristina Kvien, and her team arrived in Kyiv on Sunday, a senior US State Department official said, after Secretary of State Antony Blinken promised on a visit last month to reopen the embassy in the Ukrainian capital soon.

The move is the latest step toward the resumption of a full US presence in Kyiv after diplomats began returning to the western city of Lviv last month, having left the country ahead of Russia's February 24 invasion out of security concerns.

The team's visit was timed to commemorate Victory in Europe Day on Sunday, the official said. Russia celebrates the 1945 defeat of Nazi Germany on its Victory Day on Monday.

Blinken has instructed officials to work toward getting diplomats back in Kyiv as soon as possible "consistent with the safety and security imperatives". **REUTERS** 

Beijing loyalist John Lee elected Senior Pak lawmaker:

## Sri Lanka Opp rejects President's offer to form interim govt

Leaves of security personnel cancelled

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA** COLOMBO, MAY 8

SRI LANKA'S main Opposition party, Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB), said on Sunday that it rejected an offer by President Gotabaya Rajapaksa to its leader Sajith Premadasa to head an interim government, amid continued political uncertainty in the country which is now under a state of emergency.

The Gotabaya-led government has come under massive pressure amid mass protests triggered by an unprecedented economic crisis in the country. The Defence Ministry has requested the public to assist the government in dealing with the crisis with "utmost intelligence and patience". The ministry also cancelled the leaves of all security personnel.

Regarding Gotabaya's offer for an interim government, SJB national organiser Tissa Attanayake said: "Our leader refused to accept the President's offer." Gotabava had talked over the

telephone with both Premadasa and Harsha de Silva, the SJB's economic guru, on the prospect of forming an interim government which had been a demand endorsed by the powerful Buddhist clergy as well as the group which had broken away from the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna SLPP) coalition.

The SJB announced on Saturday that they would back the proposal from the lawyers' body, BASL, which had called for the setting up of an interim government for a period of 18 months with a

move to abolish the presidential system of governance.

They had also called for the repeal of the 20th Amendment of the Constitution, which conferred sweeping powers to Gotabaya in 2020.

Former Sri Lankan president Maithripala Sirisena also met Premadasa on Saturday to ask the SJB to take over the interim government.

Premadasa, 55, has already announced that he would not be a party to any government headed by the two Rajapaksas Gotabava and Prime Minister Mahinda.

The SJB, which has moved motions of no-confidence against the SLPP coalition government and Gotabaya, is putting pressure on Parliament Speaker Mahinda Yapa Abeywardena to advance the date of debate on the no-trust

motions. The government, hemmed in by a month of street protests, has imposed a state of emergency, which gives the security forces sweeping powers to crack down on dissent.

Sri Lanka's Ministry of Defence on Saturday announced that due to the declaration of emergency, the leaves of security forces personnel are cancelled, the Daily Mirror reported. All military personnel are to

report to duty with immediate effect, the ministry said. In a separate statement, the

ministry requested all citizens to 'assist in managing the current economic and social crisis and unrest in the country with the ut-



Sri Lankans demanding cooking gas sit with their empty gas cylinders blocking a busy intersection for a second day, in Colombo on Sunday. AP

China's faith in Pak

## Sherpa guide breaks his own record scaling Everest for 26th time

**BINAJ GURUBACHARYA** KATHMANDU, MAY 8

AN EXPERIENCED Nepalese Sherpa guide scaled Mount Everest for the 26th time breaking his own record for the most climbs of the world's highest peak, expedition organisers said

Kami Rita reached the 8,849meter (29,032-foot) summit on Saturday evening leading a group of Sherpa climbers who fixed ropes along the route so that hundreds of other climbers and guides can make their way to the top of the mountain later this month.

Rita and 10 other Sherpa guides reached the summit without any problems and had



safely returned to lower camps, said Mingma Sherpa of the Kathmandu-based 1 Summit Treks.

Rita, 52, first scaled Everest in 1994 and has been making the trip nearly every year since then. He is one of many Sherpa guides whose expertise is vital to the safety and success of foreign climbers who head to Nepal each year seeking to summit the mountain.

## as Hong Kong's next leader

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** HONG KONG, MAY 8

JOHN LEE, a hard-line security chief who oversaw a crackdown on Hong Kong's pro-democracy movement, was elected as the city's next leader on Sunday in a vote cast by a largely pro-Beijing

Lee was the only candidate and won with over 99% of the vote in which nearly all 1,500 committee members were carefully vetted by the central government in Beijing.

He will replace current leader Carrie Lam on July 1. Her fiveterm was marked by huge prodemocracy protests calling for her resignation, a security crackdown that has quashed virtually all dissent, the recent Covid-19 wave that had overwhelmed the health system — events that



Iohn Lee with his wife after winning the vote to be Hong Kong leader. He, however, was the only candidate in the fray. AP

have undermined Hong Kong's reputation as an international business hub with Westernstyle freedoms.

"I look forward to all of us starting a new chapter together, building a Hong Kong that is caring, open and vibrant, and a Hong Kong that is full of opportunities and harmony," Lee said in his victory speech.

The election followed major changes to Hong Kong's electoral laws last year to ensure that only "patriots" loyal to Beijing can hold office. The legislature was also reorganised to all but eliminate opposition voices.

## security system shaken **SAJJAD HUSSAIN**

ISLAMABAD, MAY 8

Pakistan's security system's ability to protect its citizens and projects is seriously shaken after the Karachi University attack last month, a senior lawmaker said.

CHINA'S CONFIDENCE in

Three Chinese teachers were killed when a blast triggered by a woman suicide bomber from the Baluchistan Liberation Army ripped through a van of the Confucius Institute at the University of Karachi on April 26.

This was the latest targeted attack against Chinese citizens in Pakistan.

Sharing the mood of the Chinese side after the attack to Dawn newspaper on Friday,

Senator Mushahid Hussain, who is also the chairman of the Senate Defence Committee, said: "It has caused serious concern and understandable indignation in China." Hussain led a Senate delega-

tion to the Chinese embassy last week to express his condolences over the loss of Chinese lives. "The Chinese confidence in

Pakistan's security system's ability to protect their citizens and their projects is seriously shaken," said Hussain. "The pattern of attacks is so re-

curring and it's clear that Pakistani promises of 'foolproof security' are mere words...," he said. "If such attacks continue, not just Chinese but other foreign investors will also be forced to review their role in Pakistan," he said.

### FOR MANY AFGHANS, THE HOLIDAY SERVED AS A REMINDER OF DISSONANCE BETWEEN PROMISE OF PEACE AND REALITIES OF THE WAR'S END

## Marking Eid under Taliban rule shows a changed Afghanistan

CHRISTINA GOLDBAUM, YAQOOB AKBARY & **SAFIULLAH PADSHAH** 

KABUL, MAY 8

THOUSANDS OF Afghans had piled into buses and set out down the country's once perilous highways bound for relatives they had not seen in years. Afghanistan's only national park was filled with tourists who had only dreamed of travelling to its intensely blue lakes and jagged mountains when fighting raged across the country.

And Zulhijjah Mirzadah, a mother of five, packed a small picnic of dried fruit, gathered her family in a minibus and wove for

two hours through the congested streets of the capital, Kabul, to a bustling amusement park.

From the entrance, she could hear the low whoosh of a roller coaster and the chorus of joyous screams from Afghans inside celebrating Eid al-Fitr, the holiday marking the end of the holy month of Ramzan. But she could not go further. Women, she was told at the gate, were barred by the Taliban from entering the park on Eid.

'We're facing economic problems, things are expensive, we can't find work, our daughters can't go to school — but we hoped to have a picnic in the park today," said Mirzadah, 25.

As Afghans endured the constant and random violence of the last two decades of war, many held hopes that when peace finally came to the country, Eid al-Fitr would be its high-water mark, a day where families long separated by fighting would finally be able to celebrate together.

Now that war is over. People can travel freely down highways devoid of gunfire, roadside bombs and attempts at extortion. The terrifying drone of warplanes overhead is long gone. But for many, the holiday that began last Sunday in Afghanistan served as a reminder of the dissonance between the promise of peace many Afghans had imagined and



On the day of Eid, many chose to pray outside of the Shir Shah Mina Mosque in Kabul, fearing another attack. NYT

the realities of the end of the war. A crippling economic crisis that has slashed incomes and sent the prices of basic goods soaring forced many families to

forgo for the first time the Eid traditions of new clothes or dried fruit. Mosques were emptier than usual after a recent string of explosions stoked fears of the return of terrorist attacks.

And many women in urban areas, who have been devastated by the Taliban government's restrictions, found little reason to celebrate. On Saturday, the Taliban decreed that Afghan women must cover themselves from head to toe, expanding a series of onerous restrictions on women that dictate nearly every aspect of public life.

"To be honest, we don't have Eid this year," said Mirzadah, who spent the afternoon with her family sitting across the street from the park on a strip of grass.

Most people in Kabul learned that the Taliban had announced the start of the holiday after a roar of celebratory gunfire thundered across the city last Saturday night. Afghanistan was the first Muslim country to officially declare a sighting of a full crescent Moon. kicking off the start of the holiday.

The following morning, hundreds of men with prayer rugs tucked under their arms filed into the Sher Shah Suri Mosque, a large Sunni mosque in the west of Kabul. Across the courtyard, they laid out the rugs in the shade of twisted tree branches while armed Taliban intelligence agents clad in camouflage pants and bulletproof vests patrolled the mosque's grounds for threats — a stark reminder of the threat

of violence that persists despite

the end of 20 years of war In the two weeks leading up

to the start of Eid this year, a bloody spate of terrorist attacks on mosques, schools and public gatherings killed at least 100 people, mostly Afghan Shiites, and stirred fears that the large prayers on the first day of Eid would be the next target.

At the Seyyed Abad Mosque, the largest Shiite mosque in the city of Kunduz in the country's north, only around 50 worshipers arrived for prayers on Sunday morning – compared to 400 to 500 people in previous years, attendees said. Many people, terrified of another blast, steered clear of the mosque altogether. NYT

### TOP-10 VALUED COS' M-CAP DIVES

New Delhi: The top-10 most valued firms suffered a combined erosion of Rs 2,85,251.65 crore from their market capitalisation (mcap) last week, mirroring an overall weak broader market trend, with Reliance Industries emerging as the worst-hit. PTI

DIESEL ENGINES' SHARE IN PVs DOWN, BUT ACCOUNT FOR 50% OF SUV SALES

# In the SUV sweepstakes, a petrol vs diesel face-off

Korean cos relying on 'engine downsizing' in petrol segment; Japanese counter focussed on petrol-only

PRANAV MUKUL& **ANILSASI** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

THE MID-RANGE sports utility vehicle (SUV) space, the fastest growing segment in the country's car market, is bracing for a technological face-off. The South Koreans currently dominate this space, with Hyundai Motor -India's second largest carmaker and its sister concern Kia Motor, between them, packing in multi-

ple models that run on both diesel

and petrol mills.

The Japanese counter, led by passenger vehicle (PV) market leader Maruti Suzuki India and Toyota Motor, is focussed on a petrol-only strategy, riding purely on petrol-powered engines mated with hybrid systems. Two new Suzuki-Tovota SUVs, both powered by petrol engines with hybrid drive units, promise to deliver higher power and considerably better fuel economy to stay in the fight with the diesel options offered by the others.

Both the Maruti-Toyota SUVs code named 'D22' for the Toyota version and 'YFG' for the Suzuki version — are likely off the blocks later this year and could take on the diesel advantage that the South Korean duo, and others like Mahindra & Mahindra and Tata Motors and the Europeans including Germany's Volkswagen and it's Czech sister concern Skoda alongside France's Renault enjoy.

While the share of diesel engines in India's PV segment has dropped from over 60 per cent in FY14 to around 16 per cent, the diesel option still accounts for 50 per cent of the sales in the SUV segment, where Maruti Suzuki and Toyota are intent on cancelling out the diesel advantage enjoyed by others with their petrol-hybrid offerings.

The Japanese strategy is focussed on jettisoning the diesel option for this segment by overcoming the obvious advantages of the diesel mill through their focus on petrol engines combined with hybrid powertrains. What helps

#### SOUTH KOREAN, JAPANESE PLAYERS LAYING OUT PLANS

■ South Koreans currently dominate this space, with Hyundai Motor — India's second largest carmaker — and its sister concern Kia Motor, between them, packing in multiple models that run on both diesel and petrol mills

■ The Japanese strategy, led by Maruti Suzuki and Toyota, is focussed on jettisoning the diesel option for this segment by overcoming the obvious advantages of the diesel mill through their focus on petrol engines combined with hybrid powertrains



in this game plan is that Toyota is a global leader in hybrid technology, with Maruti Suzuki expected to pitch in with its supplier base to increase localisation and thereby make the hybrid offerings more cost-effective.

The localisation effort is being seen as a counter to the tax relief on hybrids, which Toyota has been lobbying hard for, albeit unsuccessfully so far. The bet is also that as the BS-VI emission norms get tighter, the diesel mill will progressively get even priced out.

Both the Japanese players are in the process of attempting to bring hybrids down from the pricier, more premium segments of the car market to lower down the price points.

For Maruti Suzuki, this comes at a time when it has seen its market share drop to around 43 per cent in FY22 from nearly 48 per cent in FY21, and well over 50 per cent in the previous two years. The plan to bring in multiple petrolpowered SUV products mated to hybrid powertrains in order to enhance fuel efficiency heralds the clear intent of not making a comeback in the diesel segment. The company is also focussing on increasing its play in the CNG segment to bring in additional volumes. Incidentally, in the non-SUV segment, Maruti Suzuki's market share continues to be at over 65 per cent, with leadership positions in both the hatchback and MPV (multi-purpose vehicle) segments. The lack of products in the fast growing SUV segment, however, had impacted its overall market share. The extent of reversal of the

Maruti stance is evident from the fact that its two primary offerings in the SUV segment - the Vitara Brezza and the S-Cross - were only offered with diesel engines for over four years into their launch, without a petrol option. The automaker's plan to wean away from diesel came after the new BS-VI emission norms were rolled out two years ago and the company has ruled out getting back into the diesel segment as it feels the sale of such vehicles would further come down with the onset of the next phase of emission norms in 2023 that would further jack up the cost of diesel vehicles.

Incidentally, carmakers such as the Koreans, alongside their diesel push, are also increasingly relying on "engine downsizing" in the petrol segment, with a turbocharged petrol engine option among the variants.

These engines use a turbine that is powered by the engine's exhaust gas to subsequently force that extra compressed air into the combustion chamber, leading to more efficient combustion of the air-fuel mixture.

The result is these smaller turbocharged engines produce more power than a bigger engine, while consuming less fuel.

The primary difference be- corporate the electric motor and

tween the petrol and diesel engines is that petrol engines use spark plugs to ignite the air-fuel mixture, while diesel engines rely on heavily compressed air with-

out any spark plugs. Diesel engines are thereby more efficient and use 15-20 per cent less fuel translating into lower running costs, and also boast of higher low-end torque that provides for a better driving experience with higher loads or on inclines, thereby making them the primary choice for SUVs.

However, they usually cost more than petrol vehicles as diesel technology is more expensive and their servicing and maintenance costs are higher. A hybrid system typically

comprises a petrol engine that is paired to an electric motor and a NiMH (Nickel-metal Hydride) battery pack that enables the vehicle to be driven on a pure electric mode for short distances. The battery pack is recharged by the engine or through regenerative braking. Cars with the hybrid system can be driven for stretches on electric power alone, using the internal combustion engine to top up the battery while running. With this hybrid set-up, the powertrain can deliver a 40-80 per cent jump in fuel efficiency over its non-electrified counterpart, thereby obviating range anxiety typically associated with EVs. But this comes at a higher price, given that they inbustion engine. This hybrid system being deployed by the Maruti Suzuki-Toyota combine would be similar to the one used in the recently unveiled Honda City e: HEV hybrid or the Toyota Camry, but will come in at a lower price point.

Alongside the hybrid powertrain partnership, Maruti Suzuki and Toyota are already working on a pure-play battery electric vehicle (EV). Suzuki Motor Corp, the parent of Maruti Suzuki, has said it would invest Rs 10.440 crore to build a new EV factory and a battery facility in India.

The announcement by Suzuki marked the first concrete commitment on electrification by Maruti, which has maintained that the Indian car market is not yet prepared for a mass shift towards BEVs (battery electric vehicles) and that the pace of development of the supporting infrastructure such as charging points is less than adequate.

Tata Motors and Hyundai Motor have taken a lead in this segment, with strong plans for an electrification of their product offering, at a time when passenger EVs have seen a sharp jump of well over 50 per cent in sales in 2020-21, albeit over a relatively small base.

While Maruti Suzuki has been treading cautiously on the EV track, there was an expectation that the EV version of the WagonR would have been the company's first battery-electric model for India. A prototype of the WagonR EV was showcased in September 2018 and road testing of some 40odd prototypes was also underway. But pricing seems to have been a deciding factor in the WagonR EV project being put on the backburner.

Instead, an SUV is being readied in partnership with Toyota, which with Suzuki has a global partnership agreement, and the product is targetted to hit the markets in three years from now. The vehicle is likely to be produced under both the Suzuki and Tovota badgings, with the Maruti Suzuki version reported to be code-

#### INTERVIEW WITH DIRECTOR OF GLOBAL TRADE, AMAZON

# 'Mission is to help transform buying & selling; look forward to engaging with ONDC'

FOR DOMESTIC exporters enrolled with Amazon's worldwide selling programme Global Selling, the opportunity to cash in on festive sales comes more than just from Diwali. It is one of the reasons why the e-commerce conglomerate has doubled its target of exports from India to \$20 billion instead of \$10 billion by 2025, said ABHIJIT KAMRA, the Director of Global Trade at Amazon in an interview with AASHISH ARYAN. Edited excerpts:

Amazon has doubled its  $export\,target\,from\,India.\,Are$ you not worried that the target could put pressure and lead to fall in quality?

\$20 billion is a very large number. It will have to be all the categories adding up and then the new categories that entrepreneurs are experimenting with. On the geography side, what we do is that the moment a new marketplace opens, we open that for Indian exporters also so that they can benefit from it.

The seller community has evolved significantly over the last few years and now they understand the value of good customer experience. It is also linked to the brand identity. If you put a good product in the customers' hands. they are going to reward you with good sales. The second thing is that there are very transparent mechanisms which encourage good behaviour. And one of the simplest examples of that is customer reviews. If you are doing bad quality product, the customer is going to give you a bad review so the next buyer knows not to buy from you.



Abhijit Kamra via LinkedIn

That is a very transparent way to encourage natural selection, and encourage sellers to up their customer satisfaction game. We are seeing a lot of people respond to that because they now understand that this is a long-term game and they are building longterm brands. The sellers are responding constructively.

#### How much of a challenge will the Open Network for Digital Commerce prove to be?

Our mission is to help transform buying and selling in India and digitise local mom-and-pop stores, micro, small & medium enterprises, and small & medium enterprises. Any initiative which helps in digitising these stores across India, either by simplifying technology adoption or otherwise, is an important initiative. We look forward to engaging with the ONDC to see what role we can play in serving Indian customers.

What are the key product

We are on track this year to hit \$5 billion cumulative exports from India. In 2020, when Jeff Bezos was here, we had taken a pledge of \$10 billion by 2025 and are now doubling it to \$20 billion in the same time frame."

#### categories and cities that have seen growth since the Global Selling programme began?

We are on track this year to hit \$5 billion cumulative exports from India. In 2020, when Jeff Bezos was here, we had taken a pledge of \$10 billion by 2025 and are now doubling it to \$20 billion in the same time frame.

So if you think about north India, we have Delhi which is doing well. But we also have Jaipur, Noida, Jodhpur where a lot of exporters are coming from. And the typical categories include pet products, toys, office products and accessories, and leather bags.

In southern India, again the usual Bengaluru, Chennai and Hyderabad are there. But then there is also a lot of action from Coimbatore, Trichy, and Madurai. The products that are doing well here are home apparel, kitchen products and others. Home entertainment and sports products are also starting

### Poonawalla woos Musk to invest in making Tesla cars locally In a post on Twitter, tagging

New Delhi: Serum Institute of India (SII) CEO Adar Poonawalla on Sunday wooed Elon Musk to invest in India to manufacture Tesla electric cars, saying it will be the best investment he would have ever made. Musk, who has made a successful \$44 billion acquisition bid for Twitter, had in the past asked India to reduce import duties to sell Tesla electric cars but the government has insisted on local manufacturing.

Musk, Poonawalla said, "... just in case you don't end up buying @Twitter, do look at investing some of that capital in INDIA for high-quality large-scale manufacturing of @Tesla cars." He further said, "I assure you this will be the best investment you'll ever make." Last month, Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari had said if Tesla was ready to manufacture its electric vehi- country!" PTI

cles in India then there was 'no problem' but the company must not import cars from China.

Last August, Musk had said that American electric vehicle maker Tesla may set up manufacturing unit in India if it first succeeds with imported vehicles in the country. He had said Tesla wanted to launch its vehicles her "but import duties are the highest in the world by far of any large

## DoT axes NOCC levy for telecom licence holders; satellite broadband cos to benefit

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, MAY 8

DFPARTMENT Telecommunications (DoT) has abolished the network operation and control centre (NOCC) charges that are levied on use of space segments by telecom service providers for satellite telephony, broadband, etc. This is expected to provide a fillip to upcoming satellite broadband companies

The NOCC levy regime was introduced in 2003, and the DoT levied Rs 21 lakh per transponder every year for 36 MHz of spectrum on a pro-rata basis. Additionally, the government also



NOCC charges for telecom service providers, the Indian satellite broadband space which is attracting foreign entrants as well as established domestic players — could increase in viability.

charged Rs 6,000 for every trial of antenna that is used for receiving and transmitting signals.

"There shall be no NOCC charges for use of space segment for all DoT licensees for commercial and captive VSAT services, GMPCS (satellite phone service), NLD (national long distance) and other telecom licensees having unified licence or standalone license. This order shall be effective from April 1, 2022," DoT said in an order dated May 6.

The Network Operations & Control Center was created under the DoT to control the transmissions from ground segment, or satellite earth stations, along with the master control facility under Department of Space to manage the operation of satellites in orbit. Responding to the move, AK Bhatt, Director General, Indian

steps are in the right direction and showcase the government's commitment in supporting the growth of digital communication by leveraging the potential and capability of satellite communication industry". Currently, Sunil Bharti Mittal's

Space Association, said: "We be-

lieve that these progressive policy

OneWeb and Elon Musk's Starlink are the providers planning to launch satellite broadband services in India using low-earth orbit satellites. In February, Reliance Jio had announced that it has formed a joint-venture with Luxembourgish satellite-based content connectivity solutions provider SES, and plans to deliver satellite broadband services across India.

## 'FPI ownership in equities falls to lowest since Mar 2019'

FPI ownership in Indian equities fell to pre-Covid level to a multi-year low of 19.5% this March in NSE500 companies valued at \$619 billion, as per BofA Securities India report



Foreign funds' peak ownership in domestic equities, in December 2021

ownership, highest energy stocks with 16.2%, followed by IT at 14.8%, and

9.3% FOREIGN PORTFOLIO INVESTOR (FPI) OWNERSHIP IN MARCH IN 2019, WHICH WAS A PRE-COVID PERIOD

Of the \$619 billion of FPI incremental allocation were in communication services at 4%

Share loss of FPIs has been well corrected by rising ownership of the stocks by domestic funds, who put in \$6 billion in March and \$14.6 billion in FY22

Source: BofA Securities India/PTI

## Amid policy rate hikes, FPIs remain net sellers in equities in May so far

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DEI HI MAY 8

IN A month that saw the Reserve Bank of India and the United States Federal Reserve raised interest rates, foreign investors pulled over Rs 6,400 crore from domestic equity markets in the first four trading sessions of May.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net sellers for the seventh straight month till April, as they withdrew more than Rs 1.65 lakh crore from equities.

This was mainly on account of the anticipation of a rate hike by the US Fed and the deteriorating geopolitical environment following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

After six months of selling spree, FPIs turned net investors in the first week of April amid correction in the markets and invested Rs 7,707 crore in equities. However, after a short break, they again turned net sellers during the holiday-shortened April 11-13 week, and the sell-off continued in the succeeding weeks too.

In May till date, FPI flows continue to remain negative as they sold nearly Rs 6,417 crore during May 2-6, data released by depositories showed. The trading in market was closed on May 3 on account of Eid. WITHPTI

### BRIEFLY —

#### 'SCI sale bids'

New Delhi: The Centre is likely to invite financial bids for Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) by September, after the process of demerger of non-core assets is completed, an official said. As part of the strategic sale, the Centre is hiving off Shipping House and the training institute in Pune and some other non-core SCI assets

### LICIPOday 5

New Delhi: Life Insurance Corporation's (LIC) IPO was subscribed 1.79 times on the penultimate day of the offer on Sunday. As per data on bourses posted at 7 pm, for 16.20.78.067 shares on offer. 29,08,27,860 bids were received. PTI

### Joshi takes over as CMD of Hindustan Petroleum

New Delhi: Pushp Kumar Joshi on Sunday took over as the new Chairman and Managing Director of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL), the country's third largest oil refining and fuel marketing company.

'Prior to this Dr Joshi was Director-HR of the Corporation from August 01, 2012," the company said in a statement.

Joshi, the senior-most director on the HPCL board, was in January picked by the government headhunter Public **Enterprises Selection Board** (PESB) to replace Mukesh Kumar Surana. Surana superannuated from services on April 30, 2022, but in absence of a formal order from the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) headed by the Prime Minister, Joshi was named interim head.



Pushp Kumar Joshi, the new Chairman & Managing **Director of Hindustan** Petroleum. via Twitter @HPCL

The ACC confirmation of his appointment has now come and he has formally taken over as the chairman and managing director of HPCL. Joshi is also holding the additional charge of Director—Marketing of HPCL. PTI

## strains of Shanghai Covid lockdown **REUTERS** SHANGHAI, MAY 8

SHANGHAI **OUANTA** Manufacturing City would seem like an ideal site to implement China's "closed-loop" management system to prevent the spread of Covid-19 that requires staff to live and work on-site in a secure bubble Sprawled over land the size of

20 football fields, the campus houses factories, living quarters for 40,000 workers, some living 12 per room, and even a supermarket. But as Covid breeched Ouanta's defences, the system broke down into chaos Thursday.

Videos posted online showed more than a hundred Quanta workers physically overwhelm-The turmoil at Quanta under-



Chaos at Apple supplier Quanta shows

Workers take Covid rapid antigen tests in Shanghai. Reuters file

ing security guards in hazmat suits and vaulting over factory gates to escape being trapped inside the factory amid rumours that workers on the floor that day tested positive for Covid.

faces to get its factories, many of them key links in global supply chains, back up to speed even as much of the city of 25 million remains locked down under China's "dynamic-zero" Covid policy.

scores the struggles Shanghai

Taiwan-based Quanta puts together about three-quarters of Apple's global MacBook production and also manufactures computer circuit boards for Tesla.

Quanta did not respond to a request for comment on the videos that appeared on Chinese social media platforms before being taken down. Apple declined to comment and Tesla did not respond to a request for comment.

Ouanta set up its closed-loop to restart work at the factory on April 18 with about 5 per cent of its workforce, or 2,000 employees, with plans to triple that by April 22. Chinese state media touted the restart as an example of how Shanghai was keeping business open in the country's biggest economic hub, while adhering to stringent Covid measures.

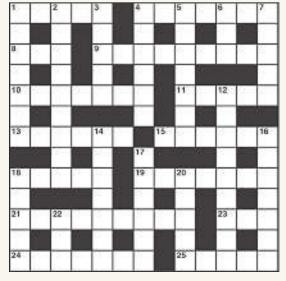
### 'April: Overall biz confidence of India Inc improves'

New Delhi: The latest round of industry body FICCI's Business Confidence Survey reported an improvement in the confidence level of India Inc, with the Overall Business Confidence Index at 67.6 in the recently conducted April 2022 round against 63.9 earlier.

The survey by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) found an improvement in both current conditions and expectations of Indian companies in its latest round. The Current Condition Index improved to 66.1 from 62.6 in the last survey, while the Expectations Index improved to 68.4 from 64.5.

The survey gauges the respondents' expectations for the period April to September 2022. **ENS** 

#### CROSSWORD 4735



#### ACROSS

- Exceptionally speechless
- player(5) 4 He has a taste for a bit of
- embroidery(7) Look round the cathedral (3) Examine in detail a total failure
- (5,4)10 It's overlooked by some
- Moslem women (7)
  11 Poor Swede regularly pulled out of bed (5)
- 13 Union leader caught in a frock gets imprisonment (6) 15 Circumvent with the aid of a
- permit (6) 18 She will show a dress pattern
- 19 Record suppressed by force
- (3,4)21 Over and over it goes (9)
- 23 A pound could be a good investment(3)
- 24 Is in the way of progress (7) 25 Three points go to my opponent(5)

#### DOWN

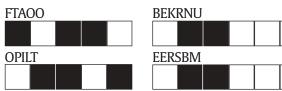
- Tried to change sad eyes (7) Walk about certain to be
- highly esteemed (9) Records book (5)
- Sort of snakes that creep
- furtively?(6)
- 5 Give ground for road
- construction (4,3) 6 Card players play it in the
- saloon(3) Foreign money held by
- grandson (5)
- 12 Are able to make simple
- converse (9) 14 Hurried to include a song
- that's turned out (7)16 He is said to exemplify
- happiness (7) 17 Films may be about raising
- warships (6)
- 18 Mohammedan lawyer in plain clothes (5)
- 20 Let it be put right (5)
- 22 Traveller in cloth? (3)

Solutions Crossword 4734: Across: 1 Close shave, 8 Recur, 9 Epigram, 10 Squeeze, 11 Afton, 12 Scribe, 14 Hoarse, 17 Apply, 19 Emerges, 21 Cleaner, 22 Guess, 23 Enterprise. Down: 2 Lacquer, 3 Spree, 4 Skewer, 5 Agitato, 6 Egret, 7 Amanuensis, 8 Resistance, 13 Bayonet, 15 Regrets, 16 Terror, 18 Piece, 20 Elgar.

#### **JUMBLED WORDS**

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

? Isn't that where the fruit is? - Frank Scully (3.2.1.4)



SOLUTION: AFOOT, PILOT, BUNKER, EMBERS AND THE Truit is? - Frank Scully

#### **OVER THE HEDGE** by Michael Fry & T Lewis







#### **CALVIN & HOBBES** by Bill Watterson



#### **MARVIN** by Tom Armstrong





8

9

5



I KNOW. THAT'S WHY THE

5	3	7	1	2	8	9	4	6
9	4	8	3	6	5	7	1	2
1	2	6	7	4	9	8	3	5
8	9	3	5	1	7	6	2	4
4	6	1	9	8	2	5	7	3
2	7	5	4	3	6	1	9	8
3	1	9	8	5	4	2	6	7

6 8 4 2 7 1 3 5 9

7 5 2 6 9 3 4 8 1

#### **DAY TODAY**

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) There's no need to remind you just

how necessary it is

Your daily schedule

profoundly affected by the fact that you're entering

over the next few

weeks will be

to guarantee that

other people are happy with your progress. Right now you need some reassurance that

family members are content.

with your plans, especially if an upheaval is in the pipeline.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

a new and distinctly serious phase of your life. Like anyone

else, you need the chance to

lead a more orderly routine.

But the next couple of weeks

will give you the opportunity

to find out if that's what

you want.

You must be aware by now of strong undercurrents in your family life, or at least of the possibility that people have big plans for your future. Don't worry if there are delays now, as the end of the week will bring swift solutions.

BY PETER VIDAL

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)



regions of your chart indicates that you've every reason to

celebrate. This is traditionally a time when you show off all your natural skills and advantages to their best. A word for those of you pursuing professional ambitions: make the most of all social offerings and openings.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Venus, the planetary

ruler of partnerships, is still encouraging you to tell others how you really feel, but it is up to you to take their wishes into account much more than in the past. You'll also soon have a welcome chance to settle an outstanding dispute.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

Even delays, difficulties and obstructions will have their place in the scheme of things over the coming period. Your skills, experience and confidence will all benefit as a result of coping with challenging circumstances. That suggests that you'll turn difficulties to your advantage.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23) The time for making

important decisions is fast running out. There's no need to panic just yet, but you should gather whatever additional information is necessary to make the best choices. Yet again, your

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23) Although as a Virgo

greatest asset is your

irresistible charm.

you thrive on love and affection there's something in you that resists being the centre of attention for too long. As a result you may find current emotional

handle. That's why you might be tempted to cut yourself off from a number of contacts.

opportunities slightly hard to

A build-up of planets in lively

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22) You're bound to feel a little more

secretive, especially as friends will be pestering you over matters which are really none of their business. You'll be on safe ground just as long as you are discreet when necessary. Also,

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) It would be a gross understatement to say that as far as

how about occupying the

moral high ground?

several of your major ambitions are concerned, this is a make-orbreak period of your life. Press ahead with all the determination for which you are renowned - and set your sights on victory at the end of the week

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Your personal, emotional and romantic trends are looking decidedly lively. But the last thing you

should be doing right now is ignoring the vital necessity of hard work if you want to advance in your career. If you're on the brink of a major breakthrough, one last push may be needed.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) Not for the first time the planets have

taken up a configuration which holds out superb possibilities as far as all your long-range goals are concerned. Try to plan as far ahead as possible Everything depends on your ability to combine a grasp of detail with a sweeping vision

of the future.

#### **SALUTE THE SOLDIER**

Martyrs on 09th May 1997



Shri A. C. Kumar, **Deputy Inspector General** 



Naik/GD L. Ranjan Singh

Sashastra Seema Bal fondly remembers with gratitude and cherishes the valiant sacrifice of its brave hearts Shri A. C. Kumar, Deputy Inspector Generaland Naik/GD L. Ranjan Singhwho made supreme sacrifice of their lives in the line of duty for Nation on 09th May, 1997.Shri A. C. Kumar.Deputy Inspector Generaland Naik/GD L RanjanSingh were posted at Divisional Headquarters of Manipur and Nagaland Division in Imphal, when they were attacked by unidentified assailants in the Divisonal Headquarter campus and they attained martyrdom We salute the supreme sacrifice of our brave soldiers.

SASHASTRA SEEMA BAL

**KERALA WATER AUTHORITY** e-Tender Notice

Tender No.: 08/2022-23/SE/PHC/PKD. CWSS to Perumatty, Pattanchery

Elappully, Nalleppilly Panchayaths in Palakkad district - Phase V - Supplying and laying balance distribution network and providing balance FHTCs (2140 nos.) in

KWA-JB-GL-6-162-2022-23 Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Palakkad

**NOTICE INVITING E - TENDER** 

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD. Navratna Company (A Govt. of India Undertaking)

acket System of tendering for the follow CON/EP/Area-I/Zonal (NCR)/2022-23

Rs.2,33,815/- (through e-payment)

Annual Maintenance Contract for Day to Day Civil Works at ICD Dadri, ICD/Moradabad, ICD/Agra, ICD/Kanpur, ICD/Kota & ICD/Malanpur.

24 Months from the 15<sup>th</sup> day after date of issue of Letter of Acceptance

Rs. 4000/- plus GST as applicable (through e-payment)

09/05/2022 (11:00 hrs) to 30/05/2022 (up to 17:00 hrs)

Tender fee: ₹11,800. Last date for submitting tender: 27-05-2022 03:00 pm

Eľappully Grama Panchayath (Zone - I part II). EMD: **₹2,00,000**.

Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.ln, www.etenders.kerala.gov.ln

Phone: 0491 2544927.

ame of Work

nttps://kpcl.karnataka.gov.in

arnest Money Deposi

ender Processing Fee

#### **I,** Ajay Batra S/o late Lajpat Rai

Diff

ls=

3s=

5s=

Ger

Batra have lost original share certificate of my residence property, address Flat No. B-8/99, Pharma Apartments, Plot No.88, I.P. Extension, Patparganj, Delhi-110092 Finders contact 9810153086

**LOST & FOUND** 

0040612876-1

FORM NO. RSC-4 [Pursuant to Rule 3(3)]

Before the National Company Law Tribunal Court VI at New Delhi ompany Application No. 194/66/PB/2021 Free Electric Private Limited Applicant

Publication of Notice

Notice may be taken that an application wa resented to the Tribunal on the 25th day of ember 2021 for confirming the reducti of the share capital of the above Compar m ₹40.88.41.680 to ₹ 14.88.41.680.

The notices to individual creditors have een issued. The list of creditors prepare on the 31st day of July 2021 by the Company is available at the registered office of the Company situated at House No. 63. First Floor, H-3 Block, Vikaspur New Delhi - 110018 for inspection on a orking days during 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. ıntil May 18, 2022.

any creditor of the Company has any objection to the application or the details i the list of creditors, the same may be ser ngwith supporting documents) and letails about his name and address and the ame and address of his Authorise Representative, if any, to the undersigned at House No. 63, First Floor, H-3 Block ikaspuri, New Delhi -110018 within 19 ays from date of this notice.

f no objection is received within the time stated above, entries in the list of creditors will, in all the proceedings under the above petition to reduce the share capital of the Company, be treated as correct. may also be noted that a hearing ha

een fixed for Thursday, 19th May 2022 on which the Tribunal shall hear the application. In case any creditor intends to attend the hearing he should make a quest along with his objections, if any. Sanjay Agarwa Authorised Representative for the

Company

## Classifieds

39, HAUZ-KHAS ENCLAVE, NEW-DELHI-110016, HAVE CHANGE MY Minor Son name, from Aditya Singal to ADITYA SINGHAL, FOR ALL, Future Purposes.

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4828

92. New Mulatan changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Sangeeta Nagpal.

I, Keshav,S/O-Late Shri Ramesh Kumar, R/O flat no.2, Pocket E-5, Plot no.6 Sector-7, Rohini.Delhi-110085. have changed my

I. Juhi Begam, W/o Mohammd Anwar, R/o

Nagar, Kirari-3, Nithari, Sultanpuri C Block, Delhi-110086, declare that name of Mine and My Husband has been wrongly written as Ruksar and Raju in my minor Daughter Saniya, aged about 10 Years, in her School Record-17799. The actual name of Mine and My

Sulemam Nagar, Prem

0070784440-1 Husband are Juhi Begam and Mohammd Anwar,

**I,** Om Prakash, S/o Gajpati, R/o Tehsil- Kaimpiyarganj Distt-Gorakhpur (UP)-273158, have Jakhodia, R/o Flat No-303, changed the name of my minor Son Aaditya Azad aged about 16 years and he shall hereafter be known as Aditya Kashyap. Jakhodia. 0070784437-1

Ref No : 1897/T4/TPT/2019

viders / contractors for following contract works:

I Jitender Singh S/o Amar Singh R/o A- 673 Shastri Nagar New Delhi 110052 have changed my name to Jitender 0040612848-1 Janpratinidhi Apartments, Sector-28, Galleria DLF-IV, Gurgaon, Haryana-122009, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Bina Devi

I, Bina Devi, W/o Kishan Kumar

**I,** Shikha Matta, D/o Satpal Gera, R/o I-1613, 2nd Floor, I-Block, Chittranjan Park, Delhi-110019, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Shikha Gera. 0070784436-1 I, Barinder Siingh S/O Bali Ram Singh, R/o D-154, Gali No-19, Dasharth Puri, Dabri, Delhi-110045, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Birendra Singh.

**I,Kuldeep** Singh,S/O Shri Kitab Singh,R/O Pocket-4/215,Akash Ganga Apartment, Sector-24,Rohini,Delhi-110085,have changed my minor daughter

name from Arpita to Arpita

House No-A, 193 Khasra No175-176, Chandan Park,
29 & 30, Industrial Estate, AMBATTUR, CHENNAI - 600 098. Telephone No. 044-23464528-32. Fax No: 044-23464536. Email ID: jmdaavin@gmail.com & aavintpt@gmail.com **TENDER NOTICE** Dt: 06.05.2022 The TCMPF Ltd., invite Two Part Tenders by way of OFF-LINE / E-SUBMISSION from the Private tanker

> Name of the Work Supply of **375 nos.** of Various capacities **Road Milk Tankers** on hire for transportation of milk from/to DCMPU dairies/chilling centers / bulk milk coolers of **Tamilnadu / Andhrapradesh /** 03.00 P.M. 09.06.2022 09.06.2023 up to 01.00 P.M. 03.05 P.M

Karnataka / Kerala / Telengana states and other dairies for the period of 3 years (2022 – 2025) ocument sale between 11.05.2022 to 08.06.2022 from 10.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M and On 09.06.2022 from 10.00 A.M to 12.00 Noon. The Tender Form cost of Rs.2000 + 18% GST and Rs. 100.00 extra by post. For downloading tender documents, EMD and other details, refer website www.tenders.tn.gov.ln and www.aavinmilk.com for off line/ www.tntenders.gov.ln for E-submissions. Tender documents can be

lownloaded at free of cost. DIPR/ 2182 /TENDER/2022 (\*\* சோதனை கடந்து சுதத்திரம் அடைத்தோம் சாதனை புரிந்து சரித்திரம் படைப்போம்\*\*



#### Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran Offers e-Auction of



Commercial Properties of Industrial Sectors in Urban Estates of Faridabad, Gurugram, Panipat & Panchkula

#### On 21th May, 2022

cial Properties of Industrial Sectors in Urban Estates of Faridabad, Gurugram, Panipat & Panchkula Sector/ Urban No. of Property type No. Estate Plots Booth Site 16 24, Faridabad Klosk Site 8 SCO Site 13 **Booth Site** 94 2 Kiosk Site 8 25, Faridabad SCO Site 36 3 18, Gurugram Booth Site 35 4 29, Panipat Booth Site 11 **Booth Site** 11 IA 1, Panchkula SCF Site 4 **Booth Site** 27 DSS Site 14 Repair/SP shop IA 2, Panchkula 30 Site Service Industry 10 shop Site

Registration will close one day before the scheduled date of e-Auction, at 5 pm.

e-Auction Portal https://hsvphry.org.in e-Auction will start at 10:00 AM

Helpline Number: 8360516607 (9 AM to 5 PM). 1800-180-3030 (8AM TO 8 PM)

For any queries email us at eauctionquery.hsvp@gmail.com



Reserve Price are fixed by HSVP above base price and state will not be disclos-



Haryana Shehri Vikas Pradhikaran

The detailed information of the sites and terms &

EMO is calculated on base gape, the first round of bidding will start from base price.

conditions of e-auction will be available on https://hsvphry.org.in.

# YERMARUS TPS OF RAICHUR POWER CORPORATION LIMITED AND FOR BELLARY TPS AND RAICHUR TPS OF KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION

#### ate of Sale of Tender (online) ate & Time of Submission of Tender at & Time of Opening of Tender of United State & Time of Opening of Tender of United State & Time of Opening of Tender of United State & Time of Opening of Tender of United State St Date & Inferior Dening of refuel — Profosize 24 rt.30/fils. For financial eligibility criteria, experience with respect to similar nature of work, etc. please refer to detailed tender notice available on website www.concorindla.com, but the complete tender document can be downloaded from website www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL only. Further, Corrigendum / Addendum to this Tender, if any, will be published on website www.concorindla.com/CRIL, and Central Procurement Portal (CPP) only. Newspaper press dvertisement shall not be issued for the same. Group General Manager (Engg.)

**KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED** 

CIN: U85110KA1970SGC001919

No. A1M1B3/Imported Coal/May 2022 Dated: 09.05.2022 NOTICE INVITING TENDER Name of Work: IMPORT AND SUPPLY OF 6.36 LAKH MT OF COAL FOR

LIMITED OVER A PERIOD OF ONE YEAR, ON FIRM PRICE BASIS. Tenders are invited from reputed mine owners and/or traders of imported coal meeting the Pre-Qualifying Requirements stipulated for Import and Supply of 6.36 lakh Metric Tonnes of Yermarus Thermal Power Station (YTPS) of Raichur Power Corporation \_imited (RPCL), located at Chikkasugur, Raichur district, Karnataka, and for Bellary Thermal Power Station (BTPS) located at Kuditini, Bellary district & Raichur Therma Power Station (RTPS) located at Shakthinagar, Raichur district, Karnataka, Karnataka Power Corporation Limited (KPCL) over a period of One year as per the erms and conditions detailed in the tender document. The tender processing fee and EMD payment through GoK e-procurement portal modes only. The tender docume can be downloaded from the website https://www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in. Last date for receipt of completed bids: 17:00 Hrs on 07.06.2022. Further details can be nad from The Superintending Engineer (Mines), KPCL, No. 82, Shakti Bhavan III Floor, Race Course Road, Bengaluru-560 001. Mobile: 94495 98901. Telefax: 080-

22203894. E-mail: sefuels@gmail.com/cefuelskpcl@karnataka.gov.in Website

## eacl SUDOKU

must appear in each of the row nine

Difficulty Level 4s

To solve a Sudoku puzzle

every digit from 1 to 9

Instructions

h of the nine horizontal			2	8		10
s and in each of the boxes.			9			8
	7	3			4	1
ficulty Level		П	П	5	2	
Very easy; 2s = Easy; = Medium; 4s = Hard;		2			6	
= Very Hard; 6s =	9					6
nius						

IN THE COURT OF SH.BHARAT
PARASHAR DISTRICT JUDGE
(COMMERCIAL COURT)-01
CENTRAL ROOM NO.308 TIS
HAZARI COURTS, DELHI
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING
ATTENDANCE OF DEFENDANT
(Order 5. Rules 20 of the Code
of Civil Procedures)
SUIT NO CS (COMM) NO.3589/2021
ICICI BANK LTD
Versus ...Plaintiff
SNEHA SHARMA
To, ....Defendant

Sneha Sharma D/o Ram Sharma Plot No.589,f-4 Sector-1 Near Max Hospital, vaishali Sahibabad Ghaziabad, U.P.-201010 Also At: Sneha Sharma Johns Software Private Limited B-38, First Floor Sec-64, Noida U.p-201301. WHEREAS you are intentionally evading service of summon it is



District Judge (Commercial Court)-01 Tis Hazari Courts, Delh

(作) IDBI BANK **IDBI BANK LIMITED** PLOT NO. CP-12, VIRAJ KHAND,

**GOMTI NAGAR. LUCKNOW** PIN - 226010 TENDER FOR CIVIL, INTERIOR FURNISHING AND ELECTRICAL WORKS FOR

REGIONAL OFFICE, KANPUR

**UNDER LUCKNOW ZONE** IDBI Bank invites tender for Civil. Interior Furnishing and Electrical Works for Regional Office, Kanpur under Lucknow Zone. The last date of submission of application is May 30, 2022. For details,

please visit Bank's website at www.idbibank.in Lucknow ZH & CGM, May 09, 2022 Lucknow Zone

GUJARAT URJA VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED 🏸 Sardar Patel Vidyut Bhavan,

#### Racecourse, Vadodara 390007 PBX: 0265-2310582, www.guvnl.com

GUVNL invites Tender for procurement of power through Competitive Bidding (followed by reverse auction) from 500 MW grid connected Wind Power Projects (Phase III) with an additional 500 MW capacity under 'Greenshoe Option'. For tender documents (RfS and PPA) and further details please visit www.guvnl.com and https://www.bharat-electronictender.com. The last date of bid submission is 15/06/2022.

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER** 

General Manager (RE & IPP)

"IMPORTANT"

advertising copy, it is not possible to verify its contants. The Indian Express (P) Limited cannot be held responsible for such contents, nor for any loss or damage incurred as a result of transactions with companies, associations of individuals adversing in its newspapers or Publications. We therefore recommend that readers make necessary inquiries before sending any monies or entering into any agreements with advertisers or otherwise acting on an

advertisement in any manner whatsoever.

## I,VINAY KUMAR SINGAL,R/O-K-

**I,** Savitri Nagpal, W/o P. P. Nagpal, R/o, C-Nagar, North West

which may be amended accordingly. 0070784442-1

name to Keshav Bhardwai. 0040612922-3

India vs Canada, 12.30pm, Live on Sports 18

#### **BRIEFLY** -

#### India start with win in Thomas & Uber Cup

Bangkok: The Indian badminton teams began their Thomas and Uber Cup campaigns in emphatic fashion, thrashing Germany and Canada respectively here on Sunday. While the men's team won its 5-0 Group C Thomas Cup encounter, the women counterparts emerged 4-1 victorious in Group D Uber Cup face-off.

#### Tough draws for Indian boxers

Istanbul: Indian pugilists were handed tough draws for the Women's World Boxing Championships, to be held in Istanbul from May 8 to 20. Tokyo Olympics bronze medallist Lovlina Borgohain (70kg) will kickstart India's campaign on Monday but she got a tough draw as she will be up against the former world champion Chen Nien-Chin who she beat in the quarter-finals of the Tokyo Olympic Games. Two-time Asian Champion Pooja Rani (81kg), Nandini and Nikhat Zareen have also been handed tough draws in their respective categories.

#### EPL: Man City open up three-point lead

Manchester: Manchester City reclaimed top spot in the Premier League with a 5-0 drubbing of Newcastle United that allowed the reigning champions to open up a three-point lead over Liverpool at the Etihad Stadium on Sunday. Raheem Sterling scored twice for the hosts with Aymeric Laporte, Rodri and Phil Foden also on target. City have 86 points to Liverpool's 83 with both sides having three games remaining and City now have a superior goal difference. Liverpool face Aston Villa on Tuesday with City up against Wolverhampton Wanderers a day later.

#### Indians continue to shine at Deaflympics

New Delhi: Dhanush Srikanth teamed up with Priyesha Deshmukh to win the 10m air rifle mixed team competition and extend Indian shooters' gold rush at the 24th Deaflympics in Caxais do Sul, Brazil. Shooting on competition day six, Dhanush and Priyesha beat Germany's Sebastian Herrmany and Sabrina Eckert 16-10 in the gold medal match. This was Dhanush's second gold of the Games after having won the individual men's 10m air rifle.

#### Indian GP shifted to Bhubaneswar

Bhubaneswar: The Indian Grand Prix 3 and 4, which were originally scheduled to be held in Madurai, will now be organised here on May 21 and 24. the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) said on Sunday. This is the second time the venue of the two one-day events has been changed. "Earlier these meets were to be held at Madurai. The Grand Prix Meets have been shifted to provide better facilities to the athletes," the AFI said in a

PTI, REUTERS & AP

# Royal revenge

Dismissed by SRH for 68 in an earlier match, Bangalore turn the tables to win by 67 runs in the reverse fixture

**SYNOPSIS:** A century stand between Faf du Plessis and Rajat Patidar followed by another strong finish from Dinesh Karthik set up RCB's massive win as Wanindu Hasaranga ran through Sunrisers with 5 for 18

#### **ABHISHEK PUROHIT** MUMBAI, MAY 8

three matches to play.

AFTER DISMISSING Royal Challengers Bangalore for 68 at Brabourne Stadium for a nine-wicket win a fortnight ago, Sunrisers Hyderabad have been on a losing streak. And RCB extended Sunrisers' winless phase to four games as they handed them a 67-

run hammering at Wankhede Stadium. The

win took RCB to 14 points with two games

left, and Sunrisers are stuck on 10 with

#### Another stirring DK finish

In the 19th over of the RCB innings, the DJ exhorted the Wankhede crowd to shout 'Tyagi, Tyagi.' The Sunrisers pacer had just bowled successive dot balls to new batsman Dinesh Karthik. He was keeping the ball outside off and taking the pace off, and Karthik had just tried a reverse-hit and failed to connect. But after a moment or two of silence, as if they were considering what to do, the fans began chanting 'DK, DK' instead. And Karthik, who'd walked out to those shouts moments ago, proceeded to spoil what had been an excellent over; he moved across, stood outside off behind the line where Tyagi had been operating and slog-swept him over deep midwicket.

In the 19th over of the

crowd to shout 'Tyagi,

Tyagi.'The Sunrisers

pacer had just bowled

successive dot balls to

new batsman Dinesh

silence, as if they were

considering what to do,

the fans began chanting

Karthik... But after a

moment or two of

'DK, DK' instead

exhorted the Wankhede

RCB innings, the DJ

Fazalhaq Farooqi, the left-arm seamer from Afghanistan, had bowled three steady overs for only 22 runs on his IPL debut. He'd taken treatment for a legissue at the start of his third over, and been hit on his leg the very next ball by a strike from Faf du Plessis. Through the pain, Farooqi had even managed to smile at his misfortune. He'd have had reason to feel genuine happiness if Rahul Tripathi had caught Karthik on the deep square-leg boundary. Karthik had just

come back on strike with four balls left in the last

over, and had swung Farooqi straight to Tripathi. The white ball came flat at an awkward time; the setting sun was straight in Tripathi's eyes. It burst through his hands and fell on the rope. Karthik took the remaining three balls of the innings for six, six and four, making it 25 runs off the over and ruining Farooqi's figures too. Farooqi Karthik just cleared a jumping long-on, walloped the next over midwicket and ended the RCB innings with a straight hit.

He had taken 30 off only eight balls, and had given RCB the big over that hadn't arrived until then during the death phase. It was his eighth unbeaten effort out of 12 innings this IPL, and his season strike-rate is

#### Sunrisers' disaster start

Karthik's surge had propelled RCB to 192 for 3 but Rajasthan Royals had comfortably chased down 190 at Wankhede the previous afternoon against Punjab Kings. An opening stand of 46 in four overs had

IPL TABLE							
TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR		
LSG	11	8	3	16	0.703		
GT	11	8	3	16	0.120		
RR	11	7	4	14	0.326		
RCB	12	7	5	14	-0.115		
DC	11	5	6	10	0.150		
SRH	11	5	6	10	-0.031		
PBKS	11	5	6	10	-0.231		
CSK	11	4	7	8	0.028		
KKR	11	4	7	8	-0.304		
MI	10	2	8	4	-0.725		

set RR on their way. But Sunrisers would lose both their openers before the first over was done. Skipper Kane Williamson, going for a pretty tight single, was run out for a diamond duck with a direct hit from short extra cover by Shahbaz Ahmed. Four balls later, Abhishek Sharma swung all over an utterly normal delivery from Glenn Maxwell and was bowled for a duck. So in the space of nine deliveries, RCB had wrested the momentum completely

#### Hasaranga runs through 'em

On a surface where it hadn't been easy to swing pitched-up deliveries across the line, Sunrisers had served up extra pacer through Tyagi and Umran Malik to make it more straightforward for RCB. The duo conceded 67 off a combined six overs, and

Malik was restricted to just two overs after his opening one was taken for 20 by du Plessis and Rajat Patidar. On the other hand, six overs of spin from J Suchith and Abhishek went for only 43.

RCB saw that and used as many as nine overs of spin. Four of those were from the leg-spinner Wanindu Hasaranga, and he ran through a line-up way behind on the asking rate with 5 for 18. He broke a 50-run third-wicket stand by having Aiden Markram caught at deep midwicket by Virat Kohli, who'd gone first ball of the match, popping Suchith straight to

midwicket for his third golden duck of the season, and second against Sunrisers.

In his second over, Hasaranga took out the dangerous Nicholas Pooran, luring the West Indies captain into a slog-sweep with a tossed-up googly that took the edge to short third man. It was an excellent divingforward take by Shahbaz.

#### Two drops in three balls

Malik had put down a similar chance at the same position off Patidar, two balls after Tripathi failed to hang on to a difficult opportunity at midwicket off du Plessis. The second-wicket RCB stand was worth 67 then, it would cost Sunrisers 38 more, and du Plessis would go on to anchor the innings until the very end.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Royal Challengers Bangalore 192/3 in 20 overs (Faf du Plessis 73 not out, Rajat Patidar 48, Dinesh Karthik 30 not out; J Suchith 2/30) bt Sunrisers Hyderabad 125 all out in 19.2 overs (Rahul Tripathi 58; Wanindu Hasaranga 5/18) by



RCB spinner Wanindu Hasaranga ran through the SRH batting line-up by taking five wickets. Sportzpics for IPL

## Delhi Capitals lose to Chennai Super Kings by 91 runs, playoff chances take a hit

SYNOPSIS: Conway, Gaikwad play connoisseur's cricket. Moeen does bowling

#### **SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY**

DAVID WARNER glared at Nitin Menon as he walked past him, livid that the umpire's call didn't go his way. Maheesh Theekshana's leg-before appeal was very confident and the DRS showed that Menon was right. Delhi Capitals desperately needed two points from this game to keep their playoffs hopes alive and against Chennai Super Kings' 208/6, Warner was the team's best bet. The batsman's anger captured the frustration of a failed reverse sweep attempt.

In the end, DC folded up for 117 to lose by 91 runs, a serious blow for them with just three group matches remaining. For CSK, they will take this win and hope against hope.

#### Connoisseur's cricket

Ruturai Gaikwad and Devon Conway bat-CSK missed a trick by not allowing the partnership to bed in during the early phase of the tournament. Conway was given a game upfront before being dropped. Belatedly, when he was brought back to the fold, he instantly got into the groove and added meat to the CSK top-order in conjunction with Gaikwad.

This has been an underwhelming season for the four-time champions. But a successful franchise like CSK will deal with one bad year. The Conway-Gaikwad opening combination offers hope for the future. They score runs playing orthodox cricket, Conway, an established Test batsman for New Zealand, has every shot in the book. Also, he is excellent against spin. Gaikwad, who has a future India



MS Dhoni's cameo ensured CSK crossed the 200-run mark. Sportzpics for IPL

Test batsman written all over him, revels in the bucketload of time against pace, which speaks volumes for his quality. And when they press the accelerator in the shortest format without compromising on their batting principles, cricket becomes very enjoyable.

CSK by and large have failed to make the Powerplays count this term, which also muddled their middle-overs batting. Today, they raced to 57 for no loss after s lease shot came from Gaikwad in the third over against Anrich Nortje, when the batsman danced down the track and treated the tearaway quick like a spinner. Gaikwad's balance, head position, the straightness of the bat everything was copybook. The ball sailed over the long-on boundary for a six. Gaikwad had a slow start to the season. But now he has regained his touch and from that perspective, he would rue his dismissals in the 30s and 40s. A Nortie bouncer got the better of him. It was a 152.6kph delivery all right, but a well-set Gaikwad, batting on 41 off 33 balls, was ex-

Conway made light work of Kuldeep Yadav. He used his feet to hit a six off a length ball before sweeping the next one to clear the deep square leg boundary. When a batsman is using his feet and at the same time, sweeping with aplomb, it becomes very difficult for the bowler. Before taking Kuldeep to the cleaners, Conway had accounted for back-to-back sixes against Axar Patel. The two openers complemented each other; Conway taking on spin and Gaikwad attacking the fast bowlers. Their 110-run partnership came in 11 overs. They now have two 100-plus associations in three games. Conway departed for a 49-ball 87. Shivam Dube and MS Dhoni's cameos ensured that CSK would cross the 200-run mark.

Nortje was DC's most successful bowler with 3/42, including the wickets of Moeen Ali and Robin Uthappa in successive deliveries in the final over. Khaleel Ahmed was the most economical, 2/28. Kuldeep conceded 43 runs in his three overs.

#### Bowling star turn

Rishabh Pant's response to Warner's dismissal was spectacular. He hit Theekshana for three consecutive fours, the first one being a falling lofted straight drive. The DC captain and Mitchell Marsh were going great

Marsh was his first victim, a mistimed slog-sweep finding Gaikwad at long-on. Pant was done in by a skidder, the batsman chopping it on to the stumps. Three balls later, Ripal Patel was beaten in the sir and was holed out to deep mid-wicket. Moeen's figures after two overs read: 2-0-9-3. DC slumped to 81/5 and soon they were 85/7 after Rovman Powell's dismissal. The game was done and dusted. **BRIEF SCORES:** Chennai Super Kings

(Devon Conway 87, Ruturaj Gaikwad 41, Shivam Dube 32, MS Dhoni 21 not out; Anrich Nortje 3/42) bt Delhi Capitals 117 all out in 17.4 overs (Mitchell Marsh 25; Moeen Ali 3/13) by 91 runs

## The future is here: Alcaraz beats Zverev in straight sets to win Madrid Open

**REUTERS & AP** 

SPANISH TEENAGER Carlos Alcaraz won his second ATP Masters 1000 title at the Madrid Open after defeating defending champion Alexander Zverev 6-3 6-1 in front of his home crowd on Sunday.

 $Alcaraz\,looked\,dangerous\,throughout\,his$ run at the claycourt tournament, where he stunned world number one Novak Djokovic and 21-times major winner Rafa Nadal before cruising past world number three Zverev in the title clash. The 19-year-old is the youngest player since start of the ATP Tour in 1990 to defeat three top-five players at the same event. Alcaraz, who win his first Masters 1000 title in Miami last month, made the first move as he broke Zverev to love for a 4-2 lead before comfortably closing out the set on his own serve.

The home favourite broke to love again for a 2-1 lead in the second set as Zverev began to grow frustrated, failing to find ways to stop Alcaraz. Cheered on by the home fans, the sublime Alcaraz found the double break at 4-1 and won the next two games to wrap up the match in just about an hour. The Spaniard got the crowd at the Manolo Santana Stadium on their feet with his variety of shots and relentless hitting as he earned a seventh straight top-10 win



Carlos Alcaraz reacts after beating Alexander Zverev in Sunday's final.

and tour-leading fourth title of the year. Ranked 120 in the world just a year ago, Alcaraz will rise to a career-high no. 6 in the new rankings on Monday.

Novak Djokovic is optimistic about his game going into the French Open despite going another week without a title. The top-ranked Djokovic is yet to win a

**Djokovic optimistic** 

The 19-year-old is the youngest player since start of the ATP Tour in 1990 to defeat three top-five players at the same event

trophy this season while trying to regain his best form after not being allowed to play in the Australian Open because he was not vaccinated for COVID-19. Djokovic lost to Alcaraz in three sets in the semifinals of the Madrid Open on Saturday, when he was trying to make it to his second consecutive final after losing to Andrey Rublev in Serbia last month.

Despite the loss, Djokovic said he leaves Madrid feeling good about his preparations for the upcoming French Open, where he will defend his title. "I definitely played very good tennis, I mean, the best that I have played this vear." Diokovic said. "Probably when the disappointment of losing this match passes, I will have a lot of positives to take away from this week." Djokovic said he felt he could have come away with the victory against the 19-year-old Alcaraz — one the hottest players on tour this season — if he had been "able to capitalize when it mattered" during the match of more than 3 1/2 hours at the "Caja Mágica" center court.

## Annu dominates, sets another record at Javelin Nationals with a throw of 63.82m

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** 

SEASONED THROWER Anu Rani lit up the Javelin Nationals in Jamshedpur with a national record-breaking effort of 63.82m on her very first attempt. The Uttar Pradesh athlete has been India's best woman thrower by a distance for almost a decade now. Sunday was the ninth time she broke the national record as she improved on her previous mark of 63.24m set last year at the Federation Cup in Patiala. Annu's next three throws yielded 60.10m, 56.60m and 58.13m before she passed on the last

The gulf between Annu and her competitors in Jamshedpur was quite large. The silver medal went to Sanjana Choudhary for 53.87m - almost 10m behind Annu's gold-winning attempt. Annu has been consistently improving on her own national mark since first breaching it in 2014 with 58.83m.

Annu had had a quiet season until now after the disappointment at the Tokyo Olympics where she finished 14th in the qualification round. Despite another recordbreaking throw, Annu's hunger to go further won't be satisfied. The 30-year-old thrower



Annu Rani recorded a 58cm improvement on her own mark. File

had worked closely with German biomechanics expert and Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra's coach Klaus Bartonietz in the run-up to the Tokyo Games.

In the men's U-18 (700g javelin) category, Yash Saini of Haryana finished on top with a best attempt of 67.42m. Saini, taking part in his first national-level meet, produced a string of consistent throws of 65.21, 63.24, 64.05, and 65.46m on Sunday. The 17-year-

New Delhi

old was, however, not pleased with his results as he feels he belongs in the 70m club.

"I was hoping to throw with an interna-

tional javelin. I have thrown 72m in training and would have been happy if I had matched that, but considering the slight wind blowing towards us and my niggle, I am happy that I won gold on debut. I have been training for three years, but it is only now that my coaches Arvind Kumar and Dharmender believed I was ready," the youngster said.

In the men's U-20 category, which had only five participants, Vivek Kumar of Madhya Pradesh took top spot with a best throw of 68.67m. The results don't augur well with the U20 World Championships just three months away. India is yet to see another javelin thrower on the podium in the Junior Worlds since Chopra's gold in 2016. The performance level at the U20 men's event can be gauged by the fact that the gold-winning throw was more than 17m short of Neeraj's age-group national record of 86.48m.

The results in the women's U-16 (500g javelin) event was uninspiring with the gold going to Disha of Delhi for just 34.87m about 15m less than the age-group national record of 49.31m set by Deepika of Haryana last year. The U-16 women's event had just

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## Mummy learns to hustle

SHIVANI NAIK MUMBAI, MAY 8

A PEACH chiffon sari trailing, hair let loose and flowing in slow-mo, sun setting over the basketball court on the picture-perfect horizon of the summer camp. It's how her favourite movie, Kuch Kuch Ĥota Hai showed comebacks in basketball. Geethu Rahul nee Geethu Anna Jose did not expect a basketball court scene where a teammate was straight slapped and went down wincing in pain, while the opposite team gnashed teeth and gleefully completed a basket with loud cackles, on her own return to the sport from motherhood at age 36. "The referees didn't even care!" Geethu recalls amidst horrified giggles, adding after another bout of laughter, "only if someone kills you, will they probably give a foul in 3-by-3 basketball!'

A mother of two children now, Geethu jokes that her kids are going to end up watching a 'rowdy player version' of their mother on court in the 3x3 format, adding she has no choice but to adapt to the rough, physical manifestation of basketball, a sport where the 6'2" was India's best in 5X5 till 2013. One of the cleanest rebound defenders of her time - some might say far too gentle in her bearing on court which went against her in a demanding WNBA trial in the US - the 36-year-old is fending the cultural shock of free-for-alls of the 3X3 format, learning the tricks of the licks

Stopping some elbows and palms flying about at each other apparently breaks the players' flow of 3x3 play, so refs let them get on with it, as long as the tempo is ceaselessly continuous. Geethu took a week to gulp down the 'sacrilege' she witnessed.

"In my 20 years of playing 5x5, I never saw anyone get away with slapping an opponent and the ref casually carrying on. The first 3-4 rounds I was zapped," says the former top-scorer of the Asian Championships in a field of Chinese and Korean giantesses, after she turned out for Kochi Stars in the 3x3 franchise league 3BL last month. "But I realised anyway refs are not calling fouls, so I'll also start doing the same and whack about anyone stopping me," she says feinting menace. "There's no respect anyway, so these young girls will help me become rough," she continues, amused. Aryan, 7 and Aradhna, 5 are about to find out that Mummy who returned from a tournament in Chandigarh, has quite literally learnt to brawl without compunction.

#### Basketball and Bollywood

A Bollywood buff all her life, she would be delirious if any movie of the 90s and noughties, referenced the sport she was India's best at. "I was a huge Shah Rukh fan after Kuch Kuch Hota Hai." Geethu even named her children with filmstar-kid names.



Geethu Rahul with her family.

"See, you don't really see a lot of basketball in Indian pop culture. except for the movie scenes. But I'm an even bigger Abhishek Bachchan fan because he played the sport in real life. So my first-born son was Aryan, and instead of Aradhya, I named my daughter Aradhna," Geethu says. "We are Christians, so we never had such names. But I was a big movies fan, so it had to be these ones."

She married a former state-level tennis player and now dentist. Rahul, who told her she'd had enough years sitting at home being a mother. And that she should get out of the house and resume playing basketball since she had been so good at it and loved it to bits. "His name being Rahul, like in the movie, might or might not have firmed up my decision to marry him!" she giggles, "but he's the reason I seriously considered returning to the sport. I was a little hesitant. As someone who played sport he understood how hard it must be to have reached that top level and then suddenly quit." Quit on a dream she indeed had, when she met Rahul circa 2011 after India had defeated China for a gold medal in 3x3 at Qatar. "See, marriage and kid, everything is blissful. My jersey number was 14 and I became a mother in 2014 and I was content. But whenever I saw girls playing on the court, I'd get this very bad urge to play. The game never leaves you," she says. Post-childbirth, she needed to lose weight though it seriously only started to happen when Aryan, 7, started packing her gym bag and told her, "Don't you have to go to the office? Why are you being so lazy? Come let's go. They have become my strictest trainers. They once heard their father and now lecture me about how I need to go to the gym so I can be fit to play on court. They look at my plate and make me eat veggies. It's all reversed," she says. It wasn't that Geethu didn't have a fulfilling India career, though the WNBA trials not working out - for it would've been a breakthrough - is something she'll wonder about for years. "I finally won the Arjuna award and thought it was time to leave," says India's centre for a dozen years - the star that the rest of the Indian team revolved around.

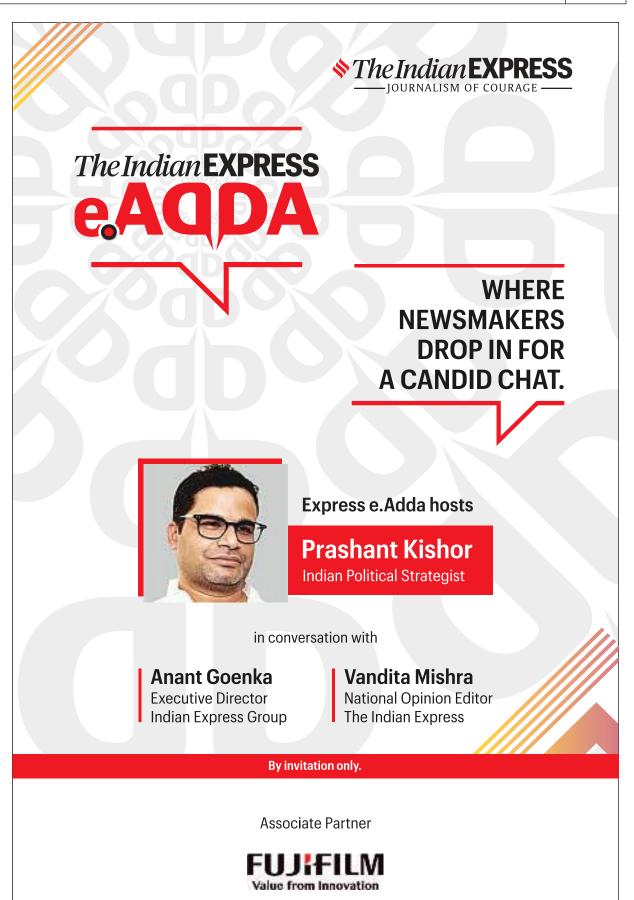
Yet, at a time when all other sports were witnessing franchise leagues take off, basketball just didn't get moving back then. And it gnawed at her. Marriage after two years of courtship seemed like the logical next phase of life. "You know I kept waiting for a basketball league to happen, but it just never did. So when I saw the promos of the 3X3 early in March with Rohit Bakshi as promoter I knew I couldn't miss this chance. There was a tingle in my spine that said no matter what I want to be part of this and I can't stay away from basketball any longer. Still it took a week to get into training. I'm gonna be 36-37, so I'm just happy I could finally be a part of a professional league. Both foreign and Indian players were given the same respect," says the former Indian Railways mainstay.

It was also a merry gathering of her contemporaries, creaking joints, luminous brains, rimless three-Ps and all. "I felt the same excitement we used to when Railways travelled to the North for Nationals, and initially it was tough to say Bye to my children. But I got into game-mode as soon as I saw the court," she says. 3x3 might be a fast-paced blur, but Geethu reckons the Daddies & Mummies still had it in them to match step, even if the pushing and slapping took some learning.

"There were 4 of us mothers there - Smriti, Steffy, me. Even in the men's teams, it was nice to catch up with old players, they're all fathers now - Vishesh (Brughavanshi), Jagdeep (the stylish Punjab player who never joined a pro team and stayed loyal to the state), and Aravind. Of Course we've all changed. Yes, the speed took time, but we have maturity and can control the tempo of the game. A good mix and match of young and old makes for great 3X3. It's fast and great to watch," she gushed.

great to watch," she gushed.

Geethu stresses that 3x3 doesn't lend itself to rewinding and threadbaring, "It's all over in 10 minutes or first to 21 points, so you don't sit and dwell. If you ask me exactly what happened, I won't be able to tell you! But I felt like I was back on my court. I'd think of Aryan and Aradhna as soon as I stepped out. But in those 10 minutes it was just like old times," she says. For someone who followed rules assiduously and rarely got into foul trouble, she returned home to her children in Kochi, with plenty of tales of flapping arms, that might or might not have struck an opponent, all told with a wink and a wicked smile







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