

## EXPLAINED



**SIMPLY PUT**  
**MAKING SENSE OF**  
**COVID TRENDS**  
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## J&K Police arrests Ph.D student under UAPA for 2011 online article

**BASHAARAT MASOOD**  
SRINAGAR, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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## FOREX CRISIS

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

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

**AGENCIES**  
COLOMBO, APRIL 17

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



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

ing under a severe forex crisis.

The delegation led by Sri Lanka's newly appointed finance minister Ali Sabry will hold talks

with the IMF between April 19 and April 24.

Sabry has said that Sri Lanka is seeking a bailout package of \$4

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

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

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**SITHARAMAN'S U.S. PLAN: G20, IMF, CHIP FIRMS** PAGE 13

## JAHANGIRPURI COMMUNAL FLARE-UP



Security personnel in Jahangirpuri on Sunday. Gajendra Yadav

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

**MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

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## BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



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

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

**AANCHAL MAGAZINE & ANIL SASI**  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

easing fuel prices unlikely to temper the trend.

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

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

Two, subsidised food supplies

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## REGION

**PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER BHAGWANT MANN'S DELHI VISIT POSTPONED, NEW DATE TO BE DECIDED IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS**

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## House razed, govt to rehabilitate Khargone family

**IRAM SIDDIQUE**  
KHARGONE, APRIL 17

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



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

viding them ration and exploring rehabilitation options.

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

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

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

Hasina Fakhroo's son Amjad

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TOREX



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FROM PAGE ONE

Lanka delegation

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Reuters reported that India "is willing to commit up to another \$2 billion in financial assistance to Sri Lanka...as New Delhi tries to regain ground lost to China in recent years."

In January, India had extended a \$400-million currency swap to Sri Lanka under the SAARC Framework and to defer an Asian Clearing Union settlement of \$515.2 million until May 6, 2022.

The economic crisis has also triggered political turmoil in the island nation.

Earlier this month, Sri Lanka's entire Cabinet -- aside from President Gotabaya and his elder brother, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa -- resigned from their posts after thousands of people defied a countrywide state of emergency and curfew, and joined street protests denouncing the government.

According to sources, President Gotabaya has made arrangements to swear-in a smaller Cabinet soon. It will not feature any member of the Rajapaksa family other than Prime Minister Mahinda.

President Gotabaya had fired his brother and finance minister Basil Rajapaksa from his post earlier this month and invited the Opposition parties to join a unity Cabinet to tackle public anger against hardships caused by the economic crisis. The Opposition rejected the offer and is planning to move a no-trust motion against the government. (WITHPTI)

Jahangirpuri

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

DCP (Northwest district) Usha Rangnani said, "During in-

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

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

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

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

Inspector Ranjan further states in the FIR that following the argument, he requested those involved to make peace and they had dispersed. "... But within minutes, both sides again started pelting stones and raising slogans. I informed the control room and additional forces rushed to the spot. Senior officers asked them to be peaceful, but one side was constantly doing stone-pelting and we fired 40-50 tear shells to disperse the crowd. We controlled the crowd but, in the meantime, they also attacked police personnel. Sub-inspector Meda Lal received a gunshot injury, and six-seven policemen and a local were also injured."

The DCP said they have arrested Md Aslam, 21, whom they identified as the man who allegedly fired at the sub-inspector. "A pistol was recovered from his possession," an officer said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express* on Sunday, Meda Lal said "eight to 10 rounds" had been fired. "If police had not placed themselves in between (the two sides), a lot more people would have been injured," he said.

Apart from Ansar and Aslam, the DCP identified the arrested men as Zahid (20), Shahjad (33), Mukhtyyaar Ali (28), Mohd Ali (18), Amir (19), Aksar (26), Noor Alam (28), Zakir (22), Md Akram (22), Md Imtiyaz (29), Mohd Ali (27), Ahid Khan (35), Salim (36), Sheikh Saurabh (42), Suraj (21), Neeraj (19), Suken (45), Suresh (43), Sujeet Sarkar (38).

The accused include scrap dealers, fish sellers and employees of shops that repair mobile phones and fans. On Sunday, the families of the men insisted they had been picked up in police raids despite not being involved in the violence.

Special CP (Law and Order) Dendendra Pathak, however, dismissed claims that arrests had been made arbitrarily. "We made these arrests after ascertaining facts... like CCTV footage and human intelligence. We investigated this in a fair and professional manner and have taken action accordingly."

A day after the violence, which left 10-12 people injured, including seven police personnel, tension was palpable in the area.

An aman (peace) committee organised by authorities during the day came to an abrupt halt as a BJP councillor blamed "illegal immigrants" for the violence, leading to flared tempers. Tensions also mounted outside Jahangirpuri police station on Sunday afternoon as BJP workers and women from families of those arrested for Saturday's violence raised slogans against each other.

During the day, the BJP MP from the constituency, Hans Raj Hans, as well as the party's Delhi unit chief, Adesh Gupta, visited the area.

In a statement on Saturday, the Aam Aadmi Party blamed the BJP for the violence, saying, "Seeing how the recent events have panned out, it is clear that

the BJP itself is behind the violence. Adesh Gupta himself honoured and felicitated eight goons who were arrested for vandalism and hooliganism. When you yourself honour such goons, you send a message to the masses that you are on the side of violence. The AAP also celebrated the Hanuman Janamotsav wholeheartedly through its shobha yatra... as well as Delhi government's Sundarkand in Gole Market area later in the day. Why is it that such violence doesn't take place in AAP's events and only happens when BJP organises it? It is clear that the BJP is a party of goons and thugs who only care about creating violence and causing riots."

The VHP, meanwhile, maintained there had been no provocation from those participating in the yatra. Its state wing president Kapil Khanna said, "The yatra was organised by VHP's youth wing Bajrang Dal. By the time it reached the C-block chowk, there was stone pelting. There was no provocation from our side. It was a peaceful procession."

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

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

Inflation

to most vulnerable families provided them a cushion.

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

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

The lack of noise, however, is cold comfort.

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

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

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

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

"In terms of production, nothing dramatic has happened. The issue of supply chains has also been pretty much straightened out. So where is it coming from? One possible answer is,

post-pandemic and after the lockdowns, there has been an urban-to-rural flight of people... So, the number of people in the villages has probably gone up relative to pre-pandemic time. This has essentially led to more food being consumed in villages, which are at the points of production. There may actually have been a reduction in the surplus coming to the market," says Pronab Sen, former Chief Statistician of India.

High inflation may not be showing much impact on the political economy as the poor seem to have been protected by the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY), which has now been extended till September 2022.

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

Under the PMGKAY scheme, 5 kg of food grains (wheat, rice, coarse grain) is provided to each beneficiary each month free of cost. About 80 crore beneficiaries are covered by the scheme and the quantity provided is over and above their entitlements under the National Food Security Act.

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

Experts note that with the pandemic affecting MSMEs on a larger scale, the pricing power rests more with the corporates now. A prolonged Russia-Ukraine conflict is also expected to add to the already elevated price levels of commodities.

"The second order effects of fuel prices will be largely felt through public transport and logistics costs; it will be felt through the airlines, railways, and passenger fares. The second-order effects will show if a service becomes expensive, it will be a function of wage costs going up. The second order pass-through in services tends to be smaller as far as energy prices are concerned," Bajoria says.

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

"Core inflation is expected to face pressure from companies passing on costs to retail prices to a greater extent next fiscal. Food inflation is likely to remain benign on account of normal monsoon, though rising fertiliser costs and international food prices could add some upside," it said in a February note.

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

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

On the food price front, according to the RBI, a likely record rabi harvest would help keep do-

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

Also, feed cost pressures could continue due to global supply shortages, which could have a spillover impact on poultry, milk, and dairy product prices. And among the non-food items, the spike in international crude oil prices since end-February poses substantial upside risk to inflation through both direct and indirect effects.

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

J&K Police

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

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

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

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

In its statement, the SIA said the online magazine article used "prescriptive language with instructional intent, encouraging secessionist elements to carry out terror activities". "The repeated reference to freedom and terror outfits rhetoric makes it amply clear that the article is not

merely propaganda. Rather, it is articulation of Pakistan ISI and the vision of its sponsored terrorist secessionist networks," the SIA said.

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

Khargone family

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

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

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

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

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

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

Meanwhile, Amjad Khan also received a call from the corporation officials to come and take a certificate dated December 31,

2021, issued by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan congratulating his family on construction of the house under the PM Awaz Yojana.

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

"We prepared our reply on April 9, but since it was a Saturday, we could not submit it at the tehsildar's office. On April 10, curfew was imposed in town (following the clashes) and we couldn't step out... the next day, a team of officials came and demolished our house with bulldozers," said Amjad.

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

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

Nadda

activists in the past. Nadda said the Congress speaks against terrorism but releases terrorists. "I want to speak a bit on what I have understood of the speech in Kannada by the Chief Minister. You spoke about the PFI and how there is an effort to create disturbances by this group in society," Nadda said.

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

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

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

Echoing Bommali's remarks, Nadda said: "Aataankwad ke khilaf bolte ho, aur aataankwadiyon ko chodte ho. Andar se dosti

rakhte ho, aur baahar mukhota lekarke chalte ho. Inko parda farsh karna aur doodh ka doodh paani ka paani bataana, yeh BJP zameen pe jaake karegi (You speak against terrorism, and you release terrorists. You maintain a friendship inside but put on a mask outside. The BJP will work on the ground to expose them and make things clear)."

The BJP leader also said that corruption and the Congress party were synonyms. "Where there is the Congress, there is corruption and where there is Congress, there is commission, and they are two sides of the same coin. Where there is BJP, there will be a mission," he said.

The Congress, when it was in power between 2013 and 2018 under the leadership of Siddaramaiah, had ordered the dropping of cases against nearly 175 activists of the PFI. The majority of the PFI activists were linked to cases of violating prohibitory orders to stage protests in Mysuru during communal tensions. The BJP had objected to the dropping of cases at the time.

On Sunday, Siddaramaiah posted on social media that the Congress did not discriminate against criminals on the basis of caste and religion. "We abide by the truth and the law of the land. We are in favor of free and fair action by the police. We oppose politically motivated actions," he said.

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

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

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

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

Without addressing Nadda's charge directly, Congress communication department head Randeep Surjewala said: "As far as the PFI is concerned, will J P Nadda explain what is his excuse for not acting against the PFI in the last eight years? We all know the real reason, perhaps there may be some kind of jugal-bandi."

Surjewala said that taking out a "shobha yatra" has been "part of the syncretic tradition" of India and "we rarely saw communal disharmony around it".

"Today, widespread incidents are being reported from places where the BJP wants to reap political dividends, including in Karnataka where Nadda was speaking. Doesn't he know that the BJP and its fringe elements are spewing venomous speeches and inciting violence. Why is the Prime Minister silent on it? Why doesn't Home Minister Amit Shah take action against those who are indulging in violence? They won't because it helps them keeping the country in a permanent communal frenzy," he said.

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

*Islamabad:* Pakistan on Sunday extended for two months the period for India to transport 50,000 metric tonnes of wheat and life-saving medicines as humanitarian assistance to war-torn Afghanistan via Attari-Wagah border crossing. Foreign Office said that the time period granted for transportation of the humanitarian assistance expired on March 21 and the Government of India recently requested for extension in time period to complete the transportation process. "As a manifestation of our sincere efforts towards addressing the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, it has been decided to grant two months' extension to facilitate completion of the transportation," the Foreign Office said. PTI

TORA AGARWALA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FORMER ASSAM Congress president Ripun Bora on Sunday joined the All India Trinamool Congress in Kolkata, becoming the latest leader to leave the grand old party in Assam. Bora's move to the TMC follows that of Sushmita Dev, who

joined Mamata Banerjee's party in August last year.

"From today I have started my new political journey!" Bora tweeted Sunday evening, sharing his resignation letter, addressed to Congress president Sonia Gandhi.

A tweet from the official Trinamool Congress handle said: "Delighted to welcome Shri@ripunbora, Former Minister

Ripun Bora (left) with TMC national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee. PTI

of Panchayat & Rural Development, Minister of Education in Assam, former Rajya Sabha MP & former President of Assam Pradesh Congress committee! He joined us today in the presence of Shri@abhishekaic." In the recent Rajya Sabha election, Bora, who was the joint Opposition candidate, had failed to retain his seat. Considering the

Opposition had the number, Bora's loss was controversial and led to a war of words between the Opposition parties (Congress and AIUDF), each blaming the other of "cross voting". In his resignation letter, Bora alleged that there was "infighting" within the Congress for "vested interests". "Instead of fighting aggressively and unitedly to prevent

BJP at this critical juncture... the leaders of this grand old Congress party at different levels are fighting each other for their vested interests." He also alleged that it was an "open secret" that a section of senior leaders from the state Congress had been "maintaining secret understanding with the BJP government mainly with the Chief Minister."

Chandigarh



Contractor’s  
licence  
suspended for  
not paying fee

**Mohali:** The mining department suspended the licence of a Jammu-based contractor after he failed to deposit around Rs 26 crore of licence fee to the department. The contractor was allotted one mining site in Ropar district and one in Mohali district.

According to the officials of the mining department, contractor Rakesh Kumar Chaudhary is yet to deposit fee of Rs 11 crore for the mining site in Mohali and Rs 15 crore in Ropar district.

“The licence has been suspended and the contractor is asked to deposit the fees. If the contractor fails to comply with the terms, his licence shall be cancelled,” the officer added. The mining department had also directed the contractor not to work at the sites in the blocks allotted to him until the fee is paid. **ENS**

Man refuses to repair tyre,  
assailants stab his brother

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MOHALI, APRIL 17

A TYRE shop owner’s cousin was attacked and seriously injured by two men in Mullanpur Garibdas on Thursday after he tried to defend his brother who had refused to fix the tyre of the assailants’ car. An FIR was registered in the matter on Sunday.

Complainant Charanjeet Singh, brother of shop owner Balbir Singh, told the police that on Thursday night, he was sleeping when he got a call from Balbir who told him that he was two men were at his shop and abusing him.

Balbir had reportedly denied service and had refused to fix the car’s tyre, which made the two accused angry. This developed into an argument

before Charanjeet reached the spot.

When Charanjeet reached the shop, one of the assailants first hit him with his car’s door and then stabbed him with a sword when he was on the ground. Charanjeet Singh was taken to Government Multi-Specialty Hospital (GMSH), Sector 16.

“They fled towards Kurali in their car without getting it repaired,” Charanjeet stated in his complaint.

Acting on the complaint, police registered a case under sections 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (assault), 324 (voluntary causing hurt by means of dangerous weapons or means), 341 (wrongful confinement), 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) against the two unidentified people.

Two killed as cars collide head-on on Kharar-Kurali highway

**Mohali:** Two persons were killed while five were injured on Kurali-Kharar highway Sunday after two cars collided head-on with each other. The injured were admitted to various hospitals in Mohali.

Those killed were identified as Malik Singh, 62, and Karan, 22. The accident happened when a Hyundai Verna car coming from Kurali hit the railing of the road


and collided with another car coming from the opposite side. The driver of the Verna car had lost control.

Those injured were Balwinder Singh, Taranjeet Kaur

and Baljeet Kaur, all relatives of the victims. The two other injured were Arhdeep Singh and his friend who is yet to be identified.

Police officials said that

Balwinder Singh, Taranjeet Kaur and Baljeet Kaur suffered serious injuries and were admitted to Mohali hospitals. Police launched an investigation after seizing both the vehicles. **ENS**



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**Muralidhar Krishna Rao**  
Chief Financial Officer

Place : Mangaluru  
Date : 16 April, 2022



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**The name of Dera Sacha Sauda buzzed in Himachal, millions of people participated in the samagam**

**Dharamshala/Kangra**

Once again the name of Dera Sacha Sauda has buzzed in Himachal’s plannets. Dera Sacha Sauda celebrated its foundation day in Dharamshala, Himachal, so where Himachalis from every district of Himachal reached here to participate in this samagam. Many leaders of Himachal BJP and Dharamshala MIA Vishal Nehra, have made their presence felt in this samagam. The management of Dera Sacha Sauda also present on the occasion of this samagam. On the other hand, following the holy words of Dera Sacha Sauda Sant Gurmest Ram Rahim Singh Ji Issa and following the path shown by him, raboo kits were given to more than 2000 needy families of Himachal and organised a huge medical check-up camp. In which counting thousands of patients, the team of MD doctors gave them medicines. Dera Sacha Sauda has its own record in the works of humanity. It is noteworthy that 74 years ago on 29th April 1948, the revered Beparwah Sai Shah Mastana Ji Maharaj had established Saredharma Sangam Dera Sacha Sauda. The Sath Sangat

of Dera Sacha Sauda present in the country and around the world celebrates these happy days every year by doing good work for humanity. This time the police ground of Dharamshala was chosen for the samagam on behalf of Dera Sacha Sauda Himachal branch and the samagam has been done in this ground itself, but this police ground also fell short in front of Sath Sangat in the heavy count from 8 districts of Himachal and people had to sit outside

and listen to the praises of the Samagam. On this occasion, a CD of the holy words of Dera Sacha Sauda Sant Gurmest Ram Rahim Singh Ji Issa was also narrated. Dera chairperson Dr. P. R. Nain told that every year this month is celebrated with great pomp and gaiety by the sath-sangat of Dera Sacha Sauda. On this occasion, for the whole month, sang-sangat does charity work. He told that this caravan of charity continued throughout the month of April.





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# Pendency of cases, shortage of judges continue to cripple courts

JAGPREET SINGH SANDHU  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

WITH NEARLY 4.5 lakh pending cases, the Punjab and Haryana High Court is now at the fourth position among the 25 high courts in India, in terms of pendency of cases. The Rajasthan High Court tops the list with a maximum of 5,89,086 pending cases, followed by the Bombay High Court with 5,81,469 cases and 5,67,747 pending cases at the Madras High Court.

However, with all the benches of the Punjab and Haryana High Court now functioning through physical mode from March 28, the pendency of cases here, which has reached 4,49,943, is expected to come down.

On March 24, 2022, the Chief Justice of the HC ordered that all cases will be held through physical mode only from March 28. The decision was made in view of the decline in the number of Covid-19 cases and ease in restrictions.

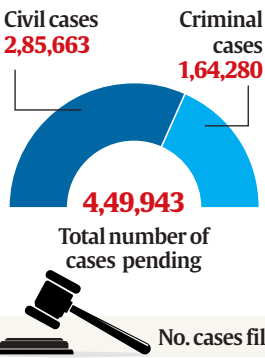
It was in March 2020, that the High Court had imposed restrictions on conducting the Courts through physical mode, due to the spread of Covid-19 cases.

## 37 judges short against sanctioned strength of 85

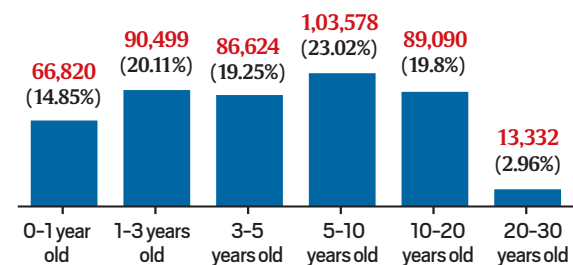
The Punjab and Haryana High Court is currently short of 37 judges, and is functioning with 48 judges against the sanctioned strength of 85. The collegium of HC, comprising the Chief Justice and two senior-most judges, has recently rec-

### LONG WAIT TO HEAR THE VERDICT

#### CASES PENDING AT THE PUNJAB AND HARYANA HIGH COURT



#### NO. OF YEARS OF PENDENCY



No. cases filed by senior citizens - 23,972, No. cases filed by women - 21,613

#### PENDING CASES AT

	UT District Court	Mohali District Court	Panchkula District Court
0-1 year	29,826 (40.3%)	21,418 (43.85%)	9,186 (36.32%)
1-3 years	29,292 (39.58%)	18,473 (37.82%)	9,853 (38.96%)
3-5 years	11,749 (15.88%)	7,387 (15.12%)	5,074 (20.06%)
5-10 years	2,914 (3.94%)	1,436 (2.94%)	1,143 (4.52%)
10-20 years	212 (0.29%)	112 (0.23%)	31 (0.12%)
20-30 years	14 (0.02%)	17 (0.03%)	4 (0.02%)
upto 30 years		3 (0.01%)	

Source: National Judicial Data Grid

ommended the names of 13 advocates for elevation as the high court judges, after a gap of more than one-and-a-half years. But, 15 of its judges are retiring in the next two years, including four this year.

The names of sessions judges to be recommended for elevation is believed to be in the pipeline. The previous list for elevation was cleared by the HC collegium three years ago.

The process of appointing

judges is, in fact, lengthy and time consuming. Once cleared by the states and the governors after recommendation by the HC collegium, the file containing the names with intelligence bureau reports is placed before the Supreme Court collegium, when it meets.

The names cleared are then sent to the union law ministry before their warrants of appointment are signed by the President. The entire exercise

can take several months, if not taken up on priority basis.

## Chandigarh District Court has more pendency than Mohali, Panchkula

Among the trial courts of Tricity, Chandigarh has a pendency of 74,007, while Mohali has 48,846 cases, and Panchkula has the least, 25,291 cases pending.

NJDG data show that Chandigarh District Court has

23,757 civil cases and 50,250 criminal cases are pending. At Mohali District Court, 25,048 civil cases and 23,798 criminal cases are pending. At Panchkula District Courts, a total of 9,719 civil cases and 15,572 criminal cases pending.

## No administrative member at CAT Chandigarh

While crisis in the Punjab and Haryana High Court is far from over, a similar crisis of non-availability of administrative member in the Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Chandigarh bench, has come under the judicial scanner of the High Court.

The HC, on a petition filed by Boota Singh, has asked the Additional Solicitor General, Government of India, to assist the HC on what steps the Union of India proposes to take to resolve this.

Singh is a retired Assistant Plant Protection Officer of Central Integrated Pest Management Centre. Singh had initially moved CAT seeking a relief in his service matter.

However, due to non availability of an administrative member, required to constitute the bench at CAT, his matter couldn't come up for hearing. Then, he moved the High Court, stating that the functioning of the CAT has been handicapped and the hearing of his case is being delayed.

The last administrative member stationed at Chandigarh demitted her office in June, 2020 and the present situation has been prevailing for the last almost two years.



During cyclothon in Panchkula on Sunday. This was organised by the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas through Petroleum Conservation Research Association and oil PSUs to disseminate the message of conserving petroleum products. Express

## Man booked for rape, abetment to suicide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MOHALI, APRIL 17

THE ZIRAKPUR police booked a man for abetment to suicide, rape and criminal intimidation.

The complainant in the case stated to the police that his 25-year-old sister was working at a mall at Zirakpur and on November 10, she left home for her workplace but did not return.

The complainant told the police that he lodged a missing person's complaint at the police station but on April 14, he came to know that his sister was admitted to Government Medical College and Hospital (GMCH), Sector 32, Chandigarh.

According to the complainant, when he reached the

hospital, he found that his sister had consumed poison and died.

"We cremated her in a haste and did not get her post-mortem conducted. But now we came to know that a man had made false promises to her to marry her. My sister left home to marry the man but he used to torture her and also used to tie her hands so that she could not call anyone and also could not flee," the complainant alleged.

Acting on the complaint, the Zirakpur police registered a case against Rakesh Kumar under sections 343 (wrongful confinement for three or more days), 376 (rape), 306 (abetment to suicide) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Zirakpur police station.

## Two arrested with pistol, live cartridges

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MOHALI, APRIL 17

THE CRIMINAL Investigation Agency (CIA) of the district police arrested two persons and recovered a .315 bore pistol and two live cartridges from them.

The arrested accused were said to have come to the city to commit a crime. The police suspect that the arrested accused could have links with some of the gangs operating in the state.

The arrested accused were identified as Gagandeep Singh and Chetan Kumar. Both the accused belong to Hoshiarpur district.

Sources in the police said that the CIA team received a tip-off that the accused had come to the city and were looking to commit a crime. The CIA team set up a special naka and arrested both the criminals from near Dara studio in Phase VI.

A case under relevant sections of the Arms Act was registered against both the accused at Phase I police station.

## Theft accused gives the slip to police, caught

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MOHALI, APRIL 17

A THEFT accused, who was brought to Phase VI civil hospital for his COVID-19 test prior to his production before the duty magistrate, fled from police custody. The police personnel, however, managed to catch the accused from the residential area in Phase VI.

The Nayagaon police on Saturday arrested Jitendra Kumar, alias Jeetu, in connection with a theft of gold ornaments.

The police party brought Jeetu to Mohali for his production before the duty magistrate but when he was undergoing his Covid-19 test at Phase VI civil hospital, he managed to give the slip to the police personnel and fled.

The police personnel chased him and caught him after Jeetu's foot was stuck in the grill of a park in Phase VI park.

The Phase I police booked Jeetu. The accused is said to be a notorious criminal. He was booked in a theft case in 2017.

## The police personnel chased him and caught him after Jeetu's foot was stuck in the grill of a park in Phase VI park

**Fancy number auction: UT fetches Rs 1.5 cr**  
*Chandigarh:* THE UT administration Saturday fetched Rs 1.50 crore through the online auction of the fancy number of CH01CJ series. The auction was organized by the Registration and Licensing Authority (RLA) Sector 17. The fancy number 'CH01CJ0001' fetched the highest price - Rs 15.44 lakh while 'CH01CJ0002' fetched Rs 5.46 lakh. **ENS**



Students perform at Pecfest 2022 in Chandigarh on Sunday. Kamleshwar Singh

### COVID-19 VACCINATION

## 'Booster dose may provide protection in subsequent waves'

PARUL  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

WITH A steady decline in the number of Covid cases, there has also been an ease in restrictions pertaining to Covid. People are also now moving towards the booster dose of Covid vaccination, and experts have advised that it is only wise to get the dose.

"Considering the fact that vaccination protects from Covid-19 disease severity, hospitalisation and death among patients, it is wise to get the booster dose after nine months of completion of two doses of Covid-19 vaccination. It is seen that immune response wanes off with time in about 9-12 months' time which should be boosted up with another dose. There is evidence that since Covid vaccines also induce cell mediated immunity and offer cross-protective immunity against different variants of virus, the dose may provide protection in the subsequent waves," said Prof Madhu Gupta, Department of Community Medicine and School of Public Health, PGI and Principal Investigator for the clinical trials of the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine

**It is seen that immune response wanes off with time in about 9-12 months' time which should be boosted up with another dose.**

— PROF MADHU GUPTA  
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY MEDICINE AND SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH, PGI

at the institute.

As many as seven private hospitals began the drive of administering the precautionary Covid-19 vaccine to all those above the age of 18 from April 10 onwards. All those who have completed nine months after receiving the second dose are eligible. Bedi Hospital, Sector 33, Healing Hospital, Sector 34, Chandigarh City Hospital, Santokh Hospital, Sector 38, Jindal IVF Memorial, Sector 20D, Chaitanya Hospital, Sector 44 and Cloudnine Hospital Industrial Area, Phase II, presently have a stock of 1,700 doses, including Covishield and Covaxin vaccine. According to Dr Suman Singh, Director Health Services, the booster dose is im-

portant and the private hospitals can buy more stock from the central government, once the doses are over.

The cost of a booster dose at private hospitals is Rs 380.

According to Dr Ramneek Bedi, Advisor, World Medical Association, the vaccination programme of booster dose has started for people above 18 years and both on-the-spot and through online registration. But, at the moment, only 15 to 20 people are getting the dose in a day. "The number may increase in the coming days. At present the cases are fewer, and so are the numbers. Many have also not completed nine months after the second dose," said Dr Bedi.

"The booster dose should be taken by all as immunity generated by the second dose wanes. In some countries a second booster is also being considered. The only group which has not yet been cleared for boosters is young children (age limit varies). Serum Institute of India has suggested that booster dose should be given six months after the second dose instead of nine months," said Prof Rakesh Kochhar, former head, Department of Gastroenterology, PGI.

AFTER COMING to power last month, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is trying hard to fulfill all the promises made to the people during campaigning. With the onset of summer, people are looking for uninterrupted drinking water and power supply. AAP's Mohali MLA Kulwant Singh speaks to JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP about the party's roadmap in fulfilling these demands.

## A month after the formation of the government, how do you see its performance?

Our government delivered on all fronts and the promises which were made to the people are being fulfilled. The promise of providing 300 free electricity units is also fulfilled and people are happy. With the launching of the helpline num-



AAP MLA Kulwant Singh

ber against corruption, there is a decline in corruption and in the coming days it will be eradicated.

## 'Most cyber crimes do not get reported due to social stigma'

IN AN atmosphere of growing cyber-crimes, Gurcharan Singh, Cyber Faculty Head at Central Detective Training School (CDTS), Sector 36, clears many things about cyber threats, security and the scope of digital space in our lives in an interview with SAURABH PARASHAR. CDTS works under Bureau of Police Research & Development (BPRD). Its prime function is to train police personnel. The CDTS has introduced many courses in the cyber investigation in the recent past.

## Where does Chandigarh stand in view of protection against cyber crimes, crime rates and detection of the crimes?

UT Police is doing very well when it comes to detecting and investigating cyber crimes, as compared to many other states. Recovery rate is quite good.

## Why do our investigation agencies fail to completely curb cyber crimes?

Most cyber crimes are not reported due to social stigma and that's is the major reason that cy-



Gurcharan Singh

ber crimes go scot-free. Further, there is no lamination of any geographical boundaries. Cyber criminals operate across world and they need not be physically present at the scene to commit the crime. This complexity of criminals operating from multiple locations and lack of knowledge make it harder for the LEA to completely curb the menace.

## Are our investigation agencies capable of coping with high-tech criminals?

Cyber crimes are dynamic in nature and the criminals are getting more innovative. The Government of India working

hard to keep pace with the changing technology and deal with high-tech criminals.

## Where are we lacking to prevent ourselves from increasing cyber frauds and crimes?

Level of generating awareness in the masses is inadequate. Secondly our dependency on the devices has increased manifold, thereby resulting in more vulnerability toward cyber crimes.

## What will be the future of cyber security, safe digital marketing, banking in India?

Future is bright. We are heading towards cashless and digital marketing. Government of India is putting all out efforts towards cyber security and making the e-commerce foolproof.

## What will you suggest to a common person to protect themselves from growing cyber threats?

My suggestion to the common person is to follow cyber hygiene to protect from the cyber threats. Government of India, Ministry of Home Affairs

is in place to meet the challenge.

## Last year there was a huge outcry over faulty power supply. What is your government's plan?

People must not worry about this. Our government has all plans in place for uninterrupted power supply. There will be no undeclared power cuts.

## Any other projects which you have started after becoming the MLA in Mohali?

As of now there are many projects in pipeline which will be launched in the coming days. We have been monitoring the projects which were delayed during the tenure of the previous government. The developments works will be completed within a stipulated time limit.

have recently circulated a manual for cyber hygiene indicating the dos and don'ts while using cyber space. Prevention is always better than cure.

## How do you see the future of cyber security?

A lot of job avenues for cyber security professionals are in store. Further, fastest growing cyber crimes will also pose a lot of challenges for the Law Enforcement Agencies to keep pace with the technology.

## What is being done to empower the investigating agencies to deal with cyber crime?

The Government has established the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) with components like National Cybercrime Threat Analytics Unit (TAU), National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP), National Cybercrime Training Centre (NCTC), National Cyber Crime Research and Innovation Centre (NCCRIC) along with a series of training programmes and raising the infrastructure to empower the investigating agencies.







WORD ON QUALITY RELAXATION AWAITED

# Shrivelled wheat grain percentage between 10-20%: Central team



Labourers sort wheat at the grain market at Ayali Kalan in Ludhiana on Sunday. Gurmeet Singh

ANJU AGNIHOTRI CHABA  
JALANDHAR, APRIL 17

THE CENTRAL teams that recently visited Punjab to reassess proportion of shrivelled grain in wheat procured by Punjab agencies have found that the proportion of such grain in the samples collected by them stands between 10 to 20 per cent. This is way beyond the permissible limit of 6 per cent shrivelled grain so far allowed by the FCI. The central agency had earlier rejected several consignments of wheat procured by state agencies as they did not meet the specifications.

After this, Centre had formed several teams to assess wheat procured across several districts of Punjab. These teams collected samples from various mandis,

**‘PLAN TO EXPORT 10L TONNES WHEAT TO EGYPT’**

Ambala: Former Union Minister of State and Ambala MP Rattan Lal Kataria has stated that India would export 10 lakh tonnes of wheat to Egypt. Leading private companies are lifting wheat crop from the grain markets to help government meet the export target. Kataria said that the under the Modi government, India would become an important wheat exporting country.

ENS

covering 4-5 mandis in every Punjab district.

The reports after lab tests of these samples have already been sent to the Centre to decide on relaxation of the current 6 per cent specification.

At present, state agencies are procuring for central pool at MSP of Rs 2015 per quintal. However, FCI will only lift the grain from the state agencies after Centre clears the air on quality specification.

It is learnt that in some dis-

tricts of Malwa, the percentage of shrivelled grain was up to 20% and more.

FCI sources informed that in some mandis in Bathinda and Kapurthala, the shrivelled grain percentage was over 10 per cent, while in others it even exceeded 20 per cent.

“In most parts, the shrivelled grain percentage was between 12% to 18% while in some areas it was around 10% as per the recent assessment by the central team,” said FCI sources, adding

that now they are waiting for the relaxation by the Centre government so that they can send the procured grain by state agencies directly from the mandis to the consumer states.

“We are hopeful that Centre will give relaxation after seeing the results of these reports as in 2019 too Centre had relaxed the specifications when the loss of lustre was reported in the grain due to heavy rains during the harvesting season,” said FCI sources.

Farmers have been facing heavy losses due to huge loss of yield which is between 4 to 6 quintals per acre due to unusually hot March.

Farmers said that weather conditions are not in their hands and the government should compensate them for the loss of the yield this year.

The FCI, meanwhile, had reiterated that procurement should be as per Centre’s specifications or else the stock will be returned from godown/plinth.

Experts have pointed out that while shrivelled grain yields less flour, it does not lose its nutritional value.

“It is good for consumption as nutritional value of micro-nutrients does not get affected only flour quantity is less,” said Dr Narinder Singh Benipal, Chief Agriculture Officer Ludhiana.

## BJP leader criticises Mann over meeting with UK MP Dhesi

New Delhi: BJP leader and former Army chief J J Singh on Sunday lashed out at Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann over meeting with UK MP Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi and said the AAP should clarify if it endorses the “pro-separatist and anti-India” views of the British lawmaker. Dhesi, a Labour Party MP, met Mann along with AAP Rajya Sabha member Raghav Chadha last week.

After the meeting, Dhesi tweeted, “Grateful to Punjab Chief Minister @BhagwantMann for warmth with which he received me at his Chandigarh residence. We...discussed at length NRI hopes, anxieties and desire to see Punjab progress. He assured me his best to address

these issues.”

Commenting on the meeting, Singh said, “It is very unfortunate that AAP government in Punjab...is going the extra mile to welcome Labour Party MP Dhesi whose views are pro-separatist and anti-India. AAP owes an clarification to the country whether it supports his views on Kashmir and other matters which are against our country.”

The BJP leader further said Mann should disclose what transpired in the meeting with Dhesi and what commitments the AAP government in Punjab has given to him. Dhesi had criticised the Indian government’s revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

PTI

## Major fire breaks out at factory in Sonipat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

A MAJOR fire broke out on Sunday at a chemical factory in Kundli industrial area of Haryana’s Sonipat district and more than 20 workers were evacuated and the situation brought under control, a top official said.

Nearly 20 fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, which have now subsided and the fire should be brought fully under control by late in the night, Sonipat Deputy Commissioner Lalit Siwach said over the phone. Fire tenders from Kundli and nearby areas, including Narela in Delhi, Haryana’s Rohtak, Bahadurgarh, Sonipat, Samalkha and Panipat were summoned to douse the flames, he said. “The factory is related

to making peppermint oil and ancillary chemicals, all of which are used in making toothpaste,” he said. Siwach said more than 20 people were working in the factory at the time of the incident, “but all were evacuated in time”.

Meanwhile, the Sonipat district administration faced the problem that a GAIL gas pipeline ran nearby and high temperatures caused by the burning chemicals could have resulted in a mishap, but timely action prevented any untoward incident from happening.

Earlier, a police official from Kundli, Sonipat had said about 50 fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the flames, but the DC said many were kept on standby mode just in case the fire would have spread to other units in the vicinity of the chemical factory.

# Navigating faction-riven Cong, Warring may run into Sidhu wall

NAVJEEVAN GOPAL  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

BARELY A week after Congress supremo Sonia Gandhi appointed the three-time party MLA Amrinder Singh Brar alias Raja Warring, 44, as the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee (PPCC) president, the state party unit seems to be bracing for a fresh round of factional fights and dissension. Raja Warring replaced Navjot Singh Sidhu as the PPCC chief, who had resigned in the wake of the party’s debacle in the recent Assembly polls following Gandhi’s directives.

After taking charge of the Punjab Congress, Warring convened his first meeting of party leaders at Amritsar on Friday, but Sidhu skipped it and instead chose to meet party dissidents like ex-PPCC chief Sunil Jakhar and expelled Congress leader Amrik Singh Dhillon. The Congress was ousted from power in the Assembly polls, which was attributed primarily to its rifts and intense infighting. Amid a massive wave for the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which swept the state, the grand old party was routed in the polls, managing to win just 18 out of the total 117 seats.

The factionalism that plagued the Congress stemmed mainly from Sidhu’s aggressive bid to get declared as the party’s chief ministerial face in the elections instead of the incumbent CM and



After taking charge of Punjab Congress, Warring convened his first meeting of party leaders but Sidhu gave it a miss

Dalit leader Charanjit Singh Channi, Jakhar was engaged in his own political posturings.

Sidhu’s resentment was evident after top Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had declared Channi as the party’s CM candidate just ahead of the polls. It was another matter that Channi lost from both his seats, Bhadaur and Chamkaur Sahib, in a state that accounts for 32 per cent Dalit population — the highest in the country. Sidhu also lost the election from his Amritsar East constituency. Days after losing low following his resignation as the Punjab Congress chief, Sidhu again got active, raising issues, meeting party leaders and activists, and questioning the functioning of the newly-formed Bhagwant Mann-led AAP government on a host of issues, including law and order and sand mining.



It was perceived as Sidhu’s attempt to stage a comeback to the helm of the state party unit. However, apparently miffed with his performance and conduct as the PPCC chief, especially his persistent moves to undermine Channi, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) leadership decided to ask Warring, a combative partyman, to lead the state unit.

Despite the AAP’s wave, Warring, who is considered close to Rahul Gandhi, managed to win his Gidderbaha seat for the third consecutive time. He had been the Youth Congress president during 2014-2018. While he did not attend the Congress meeting held by Warring, Sidhu met during that day the party’s four-time MLA Amrik Singh Dhillon, who was expelled by the leadership for contesting as an Independent candidate after

Wheat price up in intl market, extend benefit to farmers: Hooda

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

WITH THE rise in wheat price in the international market, former Haryana CM Bhopinder Singh Hooda said Sunday that the benefit of the hike should be extended to farmers.

Hooda said that the price of wheat at the international market has increased to Rs 3,000-3,500 per quintal.

The big wheat exporters — Russia and Ukraine — are missing from the wheat export market due to war and wheat rates are also higher than MSP being offered by the Union government.

Hooda, who is also Leader of Opposition in Haryana, said wheat production has come down by 5 to 10 quintals per acre due to the weather conditions this season, and the government should give a bonus of Rs 500 per quintal on the MSP to compensate for the loss suffered by the farmers.

The Congress leader said: “The cost of farming has increased tremendously in the past few years, due to weather and inflation. During the Congress government, no tax was imposed on the farmer’s fertilisers, seeds, medicines or farming equipment, but the BJP government has imposed heavy taxes on all these things. During the Congress tenure, people in Haryana used to get cheaper petrol and diesel than neighbouring states. Therefore, every petrol pump along the border of the state used to have a board of the cheapest oil. But now, on the contrary, diesel is cheaper in many neighboring states, including Delhi. This has increased the cost to the farmers too.”

Responding to the questions of journalists in Jhajjar, Hooda said he stood by the announcement of giving benefits of the old pension scheme to the employees. “In future, if the Congress government is formed, the old pension scheme will be implemented in Haryana,” he said.

On the delay in the panchayat elections, he said that the government was running away from the panchayat and municipal elections.

# All eyes on announcement of next CDS, Army chief

MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

WITH THE impending retirement of the Chief of Army Staff, Gen M M Naravane, on April 30, the government is likely to announce his successor any day now. While in the past the name of the COAS designate and equivalents in other two services was announced at least one month in advance of the retirement of the office holder, lately there has been a warning time of only a couple of weeks.

There is a lot of speculation that the government may also announce the name of the next Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) this month itself. The appointment has been vacant since the untimely and tragic death of Gen Bipin Rawat in a helicopter crash in December 2021.

Gen Naravane is considered to be the frontrunner for the appointment of CDS and it has been conjectured in defence circles that the government has been awaiting completion of his tenure as the COAS before making the announcement. This would ensure that the line of succession does not get disturbed unless, of course, the powers that be decide on deep selection.

Under normal course, the Vice Chief of Army Staff, Lt Gen Manoj Pande, should be in line to become the next COAS. If so, he would be the first officer from the Corps of Engineers to be appointed to the top office.

Hitherto, only Infantry, Armoured Corps and Artillery officers have made it to COAS among all the arms and services. However, the Southern Army Commander, Lt Gen JS Nain, is also the same seniority as Lt Gen Pande with only the difference of IC Numbers (inter se seniority of commission) and nothing can be said with any certainty till the name is actually announced.

## Tour of Duty raises hackles of veterans

There has been considerable angst among the veterans community over news reports that the government is about to announce a new system of recruitment called Agneepath or Tour of Duty wherein soldiers would only serve for three years and five years respectively and only a fixed percentage would be selected for permanent pensionable service.

The new system is expected to save substantial sums of money in pensionary benefits to the government besides expanding the reach of recruitment to blocks and villages which have remained untouched in recruitment drives as they have not been the traditional recruitment catch zones. The focus is also on giving the Army a nationalist character and moving away from the caste, religion and region based representation.

While the veterans have been unanimous in their views that the Army needs to cut down on flab and save money which can be used on acquiring much needed equipment, they have severe reservations on the short tenure of the potential recruits in the Army. It has been reasoned that three years is far less a time to assimilate a soldier into the unit and his surroundings and by the time he would get into the rhythm of soldiering it would be time for him to be discharged. Many veterans have written strong pieces in various online publications and have also voiced their opinions on social media opposing the scheme and suggesting improvements.

It remains to be seen whether these concerns are addressed before the scheme is announced publicly or if it will be implemented in the manner in which the news reports have indicated its composition. But



General MM Naravane, Chief of Army Staff. Ministry of Defence

the bottomline is that young people who are in the age bracket of recruitment are getting restless as there has not been any recruitment drive for nearly two years now and those who may lose out due to their being over age would be the biggest losers. The reaction of these young people from the recruitable population to the Agneepath method of recruitment is also not yet known.

## When airplanes, armoured trains were used to attack villagers

Each year, on April 13, the anniversary of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre in Amritsar in 1919 is marked with great solemnity. However, what most people do not know is that the subsequent days were equally horrifying for the people of various parts of the state who had been subjected to aerial firing, bombing and machine gun fire from armoured trains.

On the orders of the Lt Governor Michael O’Dwyer, the airplanes were used to quell peaceful gatherings of villagers in the aftermath of the Jallianwala Bagh massacre. On April 14, four airplanes were sent from Lahore to Gujranwala by the 16 Division to drop bombs and fire machine guns into crowds which had gathered. Around 10 bombs were dropped in Gujranwala and surrounding villages and the crowds were machine gunned. The Hunter Commission Report identifies Second Lieutenant Vincent and Major Carberry as the pilots who fired hundreds of rounds of machine gun bullets and dropped bombs at various locations in and around Gujranwala on April 14, including Khalsa High School in the city.

On April 15, Lt Dodkins carried out more firing on villages near Gujranwala who were suspected to be damaging railway lines. He was said to have been carrying out operational instructions of the Royal Air Force regarding tackling of villagers who may have damaged government property.

On April 16 and 17, an armoured train went from Lahore to Sheikhpura and then onto a place called Chuharkhana where the railway line and railway station had been damaged by protestors. Machine gun fire was directed at the village from the train and a party of soldiers was led into the village by Lala Sri Ram Sud, Sub Divisional Officer (SDO), Sheikhpura, to fire at villagers. On April 17, he led another party of soldiers to a village nearby called Mahniawalia and here again soldiers fired into a group of 25 villagers gathered at a spot. In yet another instant near Chuharkhana on April 17, four innocent people were shot dead by a British Sergeant who was looking for an accused.

While the British had extensively used airpower in the North West Frontier Province and the tribal areas, this was the first and the only instance when aircraft were used against civilian populations in the Punjab.



# Mann’s Delhi visit postponed, new date to be decided in next few days

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

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

Sources said that both the health and education departments had got new secretaries after the government carried out a major reshuffle on Saturday. The new health secretary Ajoy Sharma and new education secretary Alok Shekhar would be taking over offices formally on Monday. They would require some time to understand both the departments.

## MANN HANDS OVER APPOINTMENT LETTERS

CHIEF MINISTER Bhagwant Mann handed over appointment letters to 718 newly recruited officers/employees on the formation day of Punjab State Transmission Corporation (PSTCL) here on Saturday. On the occasion, Mann urged the youth to come forward to contribute for rebuilding the state. Earlier, welcoming the CM and newly recruited officers and employees, power minister Harbhajan Singh said that transmission capacity of PSTCL would be enhanced to 39,588 in 2022 compared to 38,160 in 2021. Additional Chief Secretary to CM and CMD PSTCL A Venu Prasad, principal secretary Local Bodies AK Sinha, special principal secretary to CM Ravi Bhagat, director Local Bodies Puneet Goyal and others attended the event. **ENS**

Sources said that the fresh date for the visit will be decided in two-three days. Also, the violence in Delhi on the occasion of Hanuman Jayanti too had a shadow on the visit, some sources said.

Earlier, when officials of department of power had met Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in the capital last week, it had sparked off a row in Punjab.

While Mann was not a part of the meeting, he met Kejriwal later and the opposition parties had objected to it.

While commenting on the issue, Mann had said that he would take his officers to any state for guidance. He had said that Delhi model was a successful model and he would replicate it in Punjab.

## CM should visit Punjab schools rather than ones in Delhi, says activist

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NAWANSHAHR, APRIL 17

AMID ROW over CM Bhagwant Mann’s plans to visit Delhi schools, a Nawanshahr-based social activist, Parvinder Singh Kittna, has urged the CM to visit government schools in Punjab first. He said that rather than wasting time for visiting Delhi schools, the Punjab Model should be studied, strengthened and popularised.

“Chief Minister should shun politics on the issue and come forward to appreciate the dedication and zest of the school teachers and community for converting most

of he schools into smart schools,” said Kittna. He said that there was a huge gap of number of government schools in Delhi and Punjab, adding that while there were just 1,300 schools in Delhi, Punjab had more than 19,000 government schools.

“Besides, the teachers have also made remarkable contribution towards developing innovative teaching techniques, modules, activities, latest digital applications for ensuring qualitative improvement in education,” he said, urging the CM to objectively study the situation and come out with a policy. He also drew attention towards scarcity of the staff in Punjab government schools.

# Jai Ram Thakur retains BJP leadership’s faith, but rivals wait in the wings

Himachal CM set to lead the party in state polls later this year, but insiders say ‘scenario may change’

OM PRAKASH THAKUR  
SHIMLA, APRIL 17

HE ROSE to the top of Himachal Pradesh politics by navigating internecine power struggles in the state BJP and kept the in-fighting largely in check. Now, amid reports of his rivals in the party manoeuvring, the central leadership has made it clear that Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur will be the BJP’s face for the state elections later this year.

The seeds of Thakur’s elevation were sown during the rule of the Prem Kumar Dhupal government between 2007 and 2012. Internal feud in the party at the time led to the ouster from state politics of then state Cabinet minister Jagat Prakash Nadda and Mahendra Pandey who was the party’s state organisation secretary. While Nadda moved to a central leadership role and is now the BJP national president, Pandey continued to work with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS).

Dhupal lost power in the subsequent election in 2012 as the Congress won. Five years later, even as the saffron party returned to power, Dhupal failed to win from Sujampur. With this effectively ending his chance of becoming chief minister for a third term, the BJP’s surprise pick for the top post was Thakur, a five-time MLA from the Seraj Assembly constituency (known as Chachiot before 2012) with a clean image and a background in the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). His rise to the top post was backed by Nadda and Pandey, who promoted ABVP office-bearers during his time in the state unit.

Facing pushback from the



Himachal CM Jai Ram Thakur

Dhupal faction, Thakur shielded himself by leveraging his deep roots in the RSS and maintaining cordial ties with both the BJP central leadership and the Opposition. Thakur sought the support of former Chief Minister Virbhadra Singh of the Congress, who died last year, and though the BJP had come to power on the back of an anti-corruption campaign against the Congress government, the investigation of the cases did not get expedited. At the time, Thakur announced that he wanted vendetta politics in the state to end.

During his tenure, the chief minister did not face any big internal rebellion unlike Dhupal, whose two terms in power saw senior leaders, including Shanta Kumar, openly challenge his leadership. In 2020, former Speaker Rajiv Bindal’s appointment as the state unit chief put Thakur in a bind as he is believed to be in the opposite camp. But Bindal resigned within four months after it emerged that one of his close associates was allegedly involved in a case of corruption

in the health department. Thakur’s position strengthened further after MP Suresh Kashyap was chosen to be the new state BJP president.

Despite his deft handling of the Opposition and his detractors in the party, Thakur has not entirely succeeded in keeping his critics at bay. Last year, questions were raised following the party’s poor performance in the municipal polls and the Assembly by-elections, but the chief minister prevailed with the support of the central leadership.

This, however, did not put an end to speculation, both within the party and outside, about the return of Dhupal’s son and Union Minister Anurag Thakur to state politics. Earlier this month, Aam Aadmi Party leader and Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia claimed that the ruling party was planning to replace Jai Ram Thakur with the Union minister.

Asked about Sisodia’s claim, Nadda, Dhupal’s long-time bête noire, told reporters in Shimla on April 10 that there was “no possibility of replacing Jai Ram Thakur”. He added, “Under his leadership, the government is doing well. The government will run under his leadership even in the future.”

A party functionary said Nadda’s comments would not quell factionalism in the party, and added that Dhupal was an influential mass leader.

A senior BJP leader said it was too early to rule out the former chief minister and his son. “Let us wait for the results of the Shimla Municipal Corporation election in the coming month,” he added. “After that, the scenario may change.”

## 5,600 Haryana villages get 24 hrs power supply: Ranjit

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, APRIL 17

HARYANA POWER minister Ranjit Singh Chautala on Sunday claimed that 24 hours power supply is being provided in 5,600 villages of the state. He added that the government is making efforts to provide uninterrupted power supply to every village in the state by the upcoming year.

Chautala said that the electricity department is making continuous efforts to reduce the power line loss percentage which will significantly benefit the power utilities. “Tubewell connections are being distributed to the farmers. The portal for new connections will be opened after three months. Haryana is at number one in the country in providing tubewell

connection operated at solar energy. So far about 33,000 connections have been given under Kusum Solar Yojana. The government has set a target of providing 50,000 connections, which will be completed soon,” he added.

He added that the development of the state is possible only with the participation of all citizens. He directed the officers to ensure that the public should not face any problem in getting their works done and the problems of the common man should be taken up on priority basis.

The minister said that the government is working under the policy of zero tolerance in corruption. “Therefore, if any officer or employee is found involved in corruption, then action will be taken against them,” he added.

## PHASE TWO OF LUDHIANA DISTRICT CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

# Prabhnor Singh wins in U-19, Chinmay Jagga clinches U-15 trophy

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUDHIANA, APRIL 17

LUDHIANA DISTRICT Chess Association (LDCA) held its second phase of district tournaments for under-7, under-11, under-15, under-19 and open categories on April 16-17 at Lodhi Club.

The president of LDCA, Arvinderpreet Singh, said that the top player from each category from this round will represent Ludhiana in the state championship next month. A total of 60 players participated in the two-day championship.

In the under-19 category, Prabhnor Singh of Greenland Public School scored a win while



Winners of all age categories. Express

Shaurya Verma grabbed first place in the open category. In under-15, Chinmay Jagga of BCM Arya Model Senior Secondary School Shastri Nagar was the top scorer after winning all five matches. Chinmay was the winner in the under-17 district

championship organised by LDCA last week as well. In under-11, Jahaan Goel of Satpaul Mittal school grabbed first place.

In under-15 girls, BCM’s Prisha Nano Sehgal won first place while Asmi Dhand was the winner in the under-11 group. Asmi got a prize in the under-13 category held last week as well. Kabir Ahuja of Satpaul Mittal School was the winner in under-7 boys while Hridaa Kaur of Sacred Heart Convent School, Sarabha Nagar was the winner in under-7 girls.

Vice president of the Lodhi club, Kawaljeet Singh Dang, was the chief guest and distributed prizes to the winners along with Lodhi club executive member Nishit Singhania.

# स्वच्छ हरियाणा - स्वच्छ भारत



स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण ग्रामीण-2019 के तहत हरियाणा देश में दूसरे स्थान पर

स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण-2020 में 100 से कम शहरी निकायों वाले राज्यों की श्रेणी में देश में Best Performing State में दूसरा स्थान

स्वच्छ भारत दिवस-2020 पर सर्वाधिक ODF+ गांव होने पर हरियाणा को मिला देश में प्रथम पुरस्कार

हरियाणा को मिला स्वच्छ सर्वेक्षण-2021 के तहत स्टेट अवार्ड

नगर निगम गुरुग्राम को मिला सफाई मित्र सुरक्षा चैलेंज अवार्ड

नगर निगम करनाल, रोहतक व गुरुग्राम को मिला गाबैज-फ्री सिटी अवार्ड

प्रदेश के 49 नगर निकाय ODF+ तथा 13 नगर निकाय ODF++ प्रमाणित

देश का पहला एकीकृत ठोस कचरा प्रबंधन बिजली उत्पादन संयंत्र PPP मोड पर मुरथल, जिला सोनीपत में स्थापित

स्वच्छ भारत मिशन के तहत 1 लाख से अधिक घरेलू शौचालयों, 4 हजार से अधिक सामुदायिक शौचालयों व लगभग 7 हजार सार्वजनिक शौचालयों का निर्माण

प्रथम चरण में लगभग 1100 गांवों में घर-द्वार से कूड़ा-कचरा उठाने का काम शुरू



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8

IDEA EXCHANGE

NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



WHY  
GARY KIRSTEN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Illustration: Suvajit Dey





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

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

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, APRIL 17

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

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

The previous day, this same set of students, about 7,000, wrote a mock test for the Railways' RRB-NTPC examination. These 90-minute mock test sessions are the brainchild of SK Jha, a mechanical engineer by qualification who has been coaching Railways and SSB aspirants since 2014.

"My motto is to democratise these mock tests for Railways exams," says Jha. So he holds these free sessions, attracting a huge turnout. Many of these aspirants are from underprivileged backgrounds — wards of daily wagers, farmers and rickshaw-pullers. "But I do not ask for their back-



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

ground. It is a war against unemployment. My attempt is to give momentum to the preparation of students," says Jha, who spends up to Rs 45,000 per session. "As my coaching centre can accommodate only about 1,200 students, I have to conduct these mock tests at Kali Ghat on Saturdays and Sundays in the morning."

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

Khan sir and Jha were later called by the Patna administra-

tion to present their side of the story.

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

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

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

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

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

## Nadda: PM, Bommai, BSY have put Karnataka on development path

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, APRIL 17

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

"I have not come here to give you a lecture but to tell you that with the blessings of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, under the leadership of Basavaraj Bommai, and with the grace of B S Yediyurappa, Karnataka can advance to a golden age of development," Nadda told a meeting of the state executive of the BJP in Vijayanagar on Sunday.

"Only the BJP is a national party and all others are family parties and no other party is an ideology-based party."

"There is no leader in the Congress or any regional party who can come forward and talk about what they are going to do to change the lives of people...



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

they will talk of causing divisions..." the BJP president said.

He expressed confidence that the Karnataka BJP will pull off a repeat victory in the Assembly polls scheduled to be held next year. "I am not only happy with the functioning of the BJP in Karnataka but I am also fully confident that you will fight with full strength on mission repeat."

The state executive meeting

was being held amid an ongoing churn in the state BJP over several issues, including the leadership of the CM, the state chief, and several ministers. There has been speculation of impending changes in the state government after the conclusion of the meeting.

A question mark has been hanging over the future of CM Bommai for several months

### TRACKING NEW COVID VARIANTS

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

KAUNAIN SHERIFF M  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

India's active caseload stands at 11,558. While the country's weekly positivity rate stands at 0.27%, Delhi reported a positivity

rate of 5.33% on Saturday. At the meeting with the states, the Centre said "there was no cause for concern" as the majority of cases continued to be linked to the highly transmissible Omicron BA.2, which drove the third wave. However, surveillance and monitoring of a new variant would remain the top priority to detect the emergence of the new clusters, sources told *The Indian Express*.

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

states were told.

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

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

Sewage surveillance helps capture any new variant and the spread of Covid-19 in a community setting. By measuring the lev-

els of virus in the untreated water over a period, local health authorities can ascertain early warning signals of emergence of new clusters. At present, states such as Karnataka have begun sewage surveillance.

"We have told them that sentinel sites are the same as that of polio. For years now, we are collecting these sewage water samples to detect the presence of any wild polio in India. These sites will now also carry out surveillance for Covid-19. There are more than 60 sites that will be carrying out the surveillance," sources said.

In the backdrop of the national capital and the adjoining regions reporting an increase in cases, the Centre has highlighted the states

that schools should remain open. "We have told states not to go in for a knee-jerk reaction. For instance, there is no need to shut the entire school if five children have tested positive," states were reportedly told.

The Centre told states to issue directions to parents that if their child had symptoms of flu or influenza, they should not come to school and be subjected to RT-PCR test. "We have also told the states to tell school management that if within the school the faculty or children are detected with flu or influenza or respiratory symptoms, they should be requested to go home. But there is no need to shut down the entire school," sources said.

### HUBBALLI: 4 POLICEMEN AMONG INJURED

## Protest over derogatory WhatsApp status turns violent; 40 arrested

KIRAN PARASHAR  
BENGALURU, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, APRIL 17

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

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

Meanwhile, in his weekly column Rokhthok in Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, Raut said MNS chief Raj Thackeray was running the BJP's agenda. "MNS chief Raj Thackeray initially raised the issues of 'Marathi Manos' and Marathi pride. When the issue did not stand before the Shiv Sena, it has now turned to Hindutva and has threatened playing Hanuman Chalisa outside mosques if their loudspeakers are not stopped. The MNS chief, Raj Thackeray, is running the BJP's agenda. It is also a part of their preparations for the municipal elections in Mumbai and Thane. In case riots break out in the name of Lord Hanuman, there is a game plan to impose President's Rule in Maharashtra citing the law and order situation," he wrote.

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

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

AMIL BHATNAGAR  
SAHARANPUR, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

Two boards on the entrance

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

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

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

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

with their friends to show them around.

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

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

**KEA**

**KARNATAKA EXAMINATIONS AUTHORITY**  
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**Government of Karnataka**  
**No. ED/KEA/ADMN/CR-01/2022-23 Date: 16-04-2022**

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

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

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

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

**Common Entrance Test – 2022 Time Table**

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

**Kannada Language Test FOR HORANADU AND GADINADU KANNADIGA CANDIDATES at Bengaluru, Bidar, Belagavi, Ballary, Bijapura, Mangalore Districts only**

18.06.2022	Saturday	11.30 am to 12.30 pm	4th Standard level	50
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**AGRICULTURIST QUOTA** - Schedule for Verification of documents and time table for Practical examination will be published on the KEA Website in due course.  
**Note:**  
(i) A candidate who had obtained a seat in any discipline through KEA (CET Cell) in any of the previous years and not surrendered the seat before the last date fixed for entry of options for final round of seat allotment for the respective disciplines will not be eligible for allotment of a seat to the same discipline during 2022. However, he / she is eligible to appear for CET-2022 for allotment of seat in any other discipline as per rule 15 (5) of Karnataka Selection of Candidates for Admission to Government seats in Professional Educational Institutions Rules, 2006.  
(ii) Academic Eligibility / admissions to Colleges/ Seat Allotments made to and by the colleges shall be subject to rules / conditions specified from time to time / approval by MCI, DCI, AICTE, COA, NCISM, NCH, PCI, Government, University, Apex Bodies, etc.  
For more details candidates are requested to visit KEA Website <http://kea.kar.nic.in>  
KEA Helpline Nos.: 080 – 23 460 460 (Five Lines) 9.30 am to 6.00 pm (except General Holidays)

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## SMALL STEPS

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

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

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

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

## CONSULT THE STATES

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

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

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

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

### FREEZE FRAME



### E P UNNY



RAJA MENON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## APRIL 18, 1982, FORTY YEARS AGO

### KARNATAKA VIOLENCE

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

### SENSITIVE MATTER CODE

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

### PM’s US VISIT

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi will visit

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

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

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

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

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



SRIKANT PARTHASARATHY & AMIRTHALAKSHMI R

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

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

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

## A LOPSIDED RULE

*Confidentiality ring amendment creates opacity in antitrust disputes*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

### NAUSHAD AWARDED

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



# THE IDEAS PAGE

## When the judiciary stands up

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



PETER RONALD  
DESOUZA

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

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

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

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

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



C R Sasikumar

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

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

## Holding Moscow to account

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



FAIZAN MUSTAFA AND  
UTKARSH LEO

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### DIAGNOSIS & CURE

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

Andleeb Naqvi, Greater Noida.

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

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

Hemant Contractor, Pune

### HELPING NO ONE

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

Gaurav Gupta, Gurgaon



KUNAL RAY

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

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

## Books beyond the Booker

Writers in Indian languages deserve recognition on their own terms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



TOPOF THE  
WORLD

Justin Welby, the Archbishop of Canterbury

## BRITAIN

## Archbishop of Canterbury condemns UK's asylum plan

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

## TUNISIA

## Ship carrying fuel sinks; authorities try to curb impact

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

## MYANMAR

## Military chief pardons prisoners to mark holiday

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

## NORTH KOREA

## New weapon tested to bolster nuclear capability

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

## Remaining Ukrainian troops in Mariupol hold on as Russia demands surrender

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

ADAM SCHRECK & MSTSILAV CHERNOV  
KYIV, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
HELSINKI, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

EXPLAINED  
Russia looks for a boost

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Clashes erupt again near Jerusalem holy site

JOSEF FEDERMAN  
JERUSALEM, APRIL 17

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

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

The hilltop compound housing the mosque is the third-holiest



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

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

KRISHN KAUSHIK  
BERLIN, HAMBURG, APRIL 17

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

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

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



Wolfgang Schmidt, German Minister for Special Affairs

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

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

Schmidt told Yanchenko that he understood her "frustration".

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

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

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

## MEANWHILE

## CHINA TO SEND NEXT SPACE STATION CREW IN JUNE

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

## Pakistan warns Afghanistan not to shelter militants

KATHY GANNON  
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



French presidential candidate Marine Le Pen

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

REUTERS  
PARIS, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

## China Covid surge stalls work on aircraft carrier

KJM VARMA  
BEIJING, APRIL 17

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

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



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

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

coronavirus.

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

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

The People's Liberation Army Navy was widely expected to

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

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

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



Devi Sridhar

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

Scotland First Minister Nicola Sturgeon condemned the "hor-

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

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

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

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

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

"I think there was a much

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

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

and Khost provinces.

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

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

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

## 2 minors dead, 8 wounded in shooting at Pittsburgh party

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
PITTSBURGH, APRIL 17

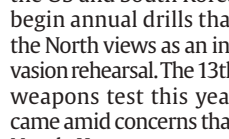
SHOTS FIRED at a house party in Pittsburgh early Sunday left two minors dead and at least eight more people wounded, police said.

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

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

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

No arrests or information about suspects were immediately reported.



Aditi Khanna

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

Devi Sridhar, professor of global public health at Edinburgh University, who is on the Scottish government's coronavirus advisory board, told *The Times* newspaper this weekend that she was sent white powder and a used face mask in the post last year.

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

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



## 13 ECONOMY

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

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

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

discussed.

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

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

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

INTERVIEW WITH MD &amp; CEO, MARUTI SUZUKI INDIA LTD

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



Hisashi Takeuchi

EVEN AS the global automobile industry increasingly shifts towards building vehicles on newer technologies like battery electric vehicles (EVs) or hybrid electric vehicles, India's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India Ltd believes that transition to any new technology should be smooth to the extent it does not disrupt the industry and those employed by it. In an interaction with reporters, the company's newly-appointed managing director & CEO HISASHI TAKEUCHI also spoke about the importance of testing battery EVs for a "tough" Indian environment, and threw light on Maruti Suzuki's plans for future. PRANAV MUKUL reports. Edited excerpts:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SECTOR WATCH  
NEW-AGE BUSINESSES

## Without naming portfolio startups, Sequoia says will drive governance

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

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

The venture fund said it would place special emphasis

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

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

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

## ‘UPI to lead; BNPL, digital currency to drive online payments growth in 5 yrs’

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

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

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

**THE INDIAN DIGITAL PAYMENTS MARKET** saw

Source: PwC India/PTI



## Tata Steel board to consider stock split

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

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

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

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

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

exchange filing.

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

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

## CNG prices spike; OilMin says awaiting data to make allocation

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

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

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

## 'UPDATED DATA'

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

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

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

TWO-WHEELER EV maker Okinawa Autotech has said it was recalling 3,215 units of its Praise Pro scooter to fix any issues related to batteries, in what is the first instance of a voluntary recall by an electric vehicle manufacturer in India.

**Why the recall?**

The recall comes close on the heels of NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, just days earlier, urging manufacturers to voluntarily recall EV batches involved in fire incidents, during a media interview. "The batteries will be checked for loose connectors or any damage and be repaired free of charge at any of the

Okinawa authorised dealerships pan India," the company said in a statement. "The electric 2W maker is working closely with the dealer partners to ensure that the repair experience is as per the convenience of its customers, for which the vehicle owners will be contacted individually". The development comes weeks after an Okinawa scooter erupted into flames claiming the lives of a man and his thirteen year old daughter.

At the time, the company had claimed that the fire in its electric two-wheeler was an "evident case of short circuit due to negligence in charging the vehicle". The company said it was waiting for the complete investigation to unfold. Okinawa, which was established in 2016 out of a manufac-

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

**Why is there an increase in fire related incidents?**

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

## Why has Okinawa recalled some of its electric scooters

EXPLAINED

## BRIEFLY

## ‘GST rates’

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

## LIC, FEMA rules

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

## NSankar no more

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

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

JEREMY WPETERS  
NEW YORK, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

If that's the case, he often can't seem to help himself. After one of Musk's Twitter fans pointed out that President Biden had not congratulated SpaceX for the successful completion of a private space-flight last fall, Musk hit back with a jab reminiscent of Trump's derisive nickname "Sleepy Joe."

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





@ieExplained

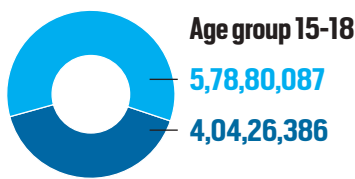
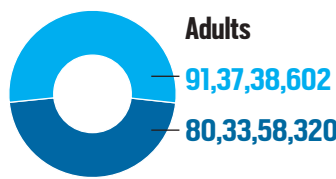
#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)

## DASHBOARD, AS ON APRIL 16

TOTAL DOSES 186,51,53,593

■ First dose ■ Second dose



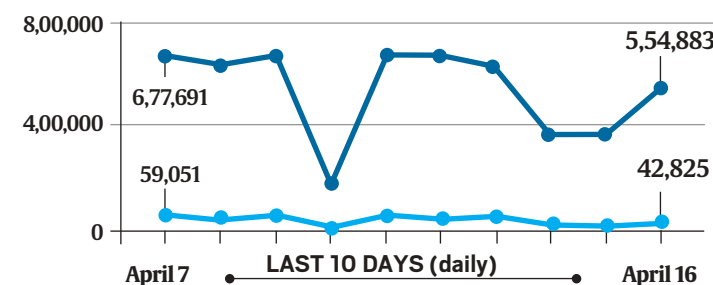
**AGE GROUP 12-14:** 1st dose: 2,42,97,421, 2nd dose: 1,65,229

**Precautionary 60+:** 2,51,43,387

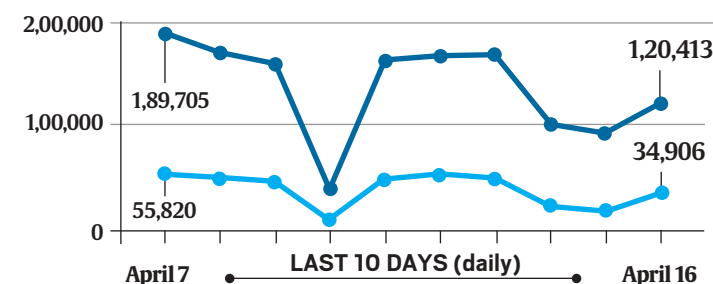
**Precautionary 15-59:** 1,44,161

**Doses On April 16:** 13,21,870

## ADULTS



## AGE GROUP 15-18



## EVERYDAY EXPLAINERS

## HEALTH

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

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

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

## Why men

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

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

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

## 'Royal disease'

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

## AMITABH SINHA

GAYA, APRIL 17

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

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

## Possible causes

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

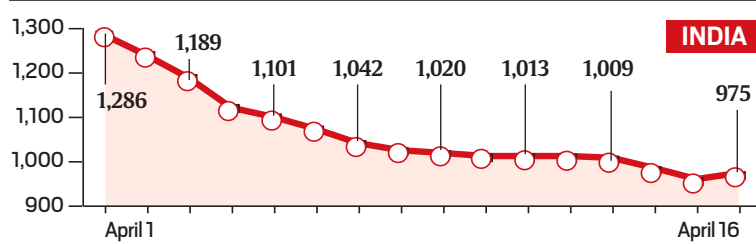
The reasons for the rising numbers in Delhi and Haryana are not definitively clear right now, but the most plausible explanation is that it is being caused by the withdrawal of the mask mandate and doing away with all restrictions. These moves are not unique to Delhi, or Haryana, and have been withdrawn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

## SIMPLY PUT QUESTION &amp; ANSWER

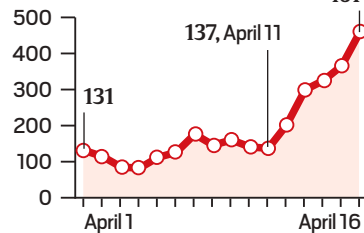
## Making sense of Covid trends

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

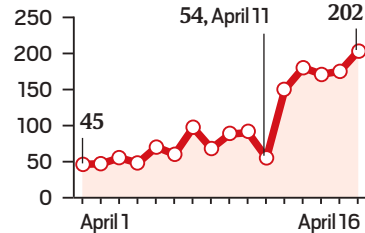
## DAILY NEW COVID-19 CASES



## DELHI



## HARYANA



Covid-19 testing in Jammu. PTI

down consistently.

## Fourth wave fears

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

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

## Why is UK sending asylum-seekers to Rwanda?

## RAHEL PHILOPOSE

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

## What is the plan?

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



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

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

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

## What's the goal?

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

safe and legal routes" into the UK.

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

## What's the problem?

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

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

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

## What's the criticism?

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

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

## Who else does this?

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

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

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

## HARIKISHAN SHARMA

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

## What is parboiled rice?

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

Food Corporation of India or the Food Ministry.

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

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

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

### PARBOILED RICE STOCK WITH FCI (LAKH TONNES)

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

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

### Are all rice varieties suitable for parboiling?

Generally, all varieties can be processed

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

## What are the benefits?

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

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

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

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

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

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

## How high is the demand?

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

mand for parboiled rice has come down in recent years.

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

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

### What has been the pattern of procurement from Telangana?

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



Chandigarh





# Why there are fewer foreigners in Playing XI

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

TUSHAR BHADURI  
NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

### Necessity begets success

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

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

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

very beginning even though this is their first season.

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

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

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

The unavailability of David Warner,

## Imports not on duty

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

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

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

**MATCH 3:** Punjab Kings played three against Royal Challengers Bangalore

They included Bhanuka Rajapaksa, Odean Smith and Liam Livingstone. The likes of Benny Howell were not considered. Jonny Bairstow and Kagiso Rabada were unavailable.

**MATCH 9:** Rajasthan Royals played

three against Mumbai Indians

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

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

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

**MATCH 19:** DC played three against Kolkata Knight Riders

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

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

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

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

### Fear factor missing

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Tsitsipas seeks to mix things up on different surfaces

REUTERS  
MONTE CARLO, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

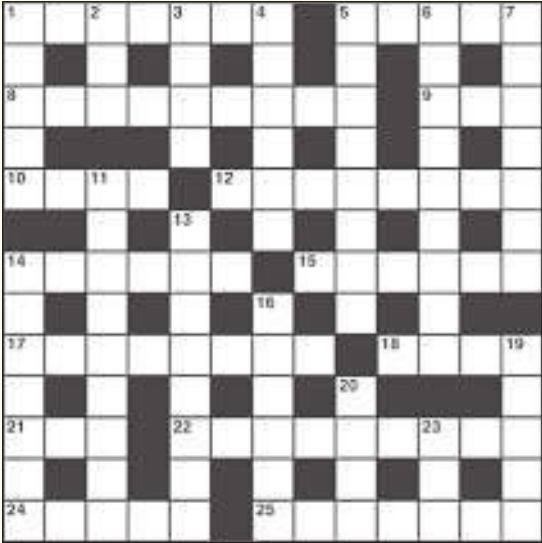
Tsitsipas won his second straight crown in Monaco with a 6-3 7-6(3) victory over Spaniard Alejandro Davidovich Fokina for his first title of the 2022 season.

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

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

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

### CROSSWORD 4717



#### ACROSS

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

#### DOWN

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

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

### JUMBLD WORDS

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

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

HVEOR



LUMPED



CHINE



EILMPW



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

### OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



### CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



### MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



### SUDOKU 4808

#### Difficulty Level 4s

##### Instructions

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

#### Difficulty Level

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



### SOLUTION SUDOKU 4807



### DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

#### ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

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

#### TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

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

#### GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

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

#### CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

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

#### LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

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

#### VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

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

#### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

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

#### SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

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

#### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

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

#### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

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

#### AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

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

#### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

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



# Sunrisers set the pace

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

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

**ABHISHEK PUROHIT**  
MUMBAI, APRIL 17

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

### Liam livens it up

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

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

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

### Malik on fire

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

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

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

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
LONDON, APRIL 17

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

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

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

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

### IPL TABLE

TEAM	M	W	L	PT	NRR
GT	6	5	1	10	0.395
LSG	6	4	2	8	0.296
RCB	6	4	2	8	0.142
SRH	6	4	2	8	-0.077
RR	5	3	2	6	0.389
KKR	6	3	3	6	0.223
PBKS	6	3	3	6	0.109
DC	5	2	3	4	0.219
CSK	6	1	5	2	-0.638
MI	6	0	6	0	-1.048

10 for figures of 4 for 28, and No. 11 ran himself out on the last delivery. It meant Punjab had scored just 19 in the last four.

### Bhuvu shows the way

Having bowled the opening over, Bhuvneshwar had seen that the ball was holding in the pitch, especially when dug in short of a length. He would get all three of his big wickets – stand-in captain Shikhar Dhawan, Shahrukh and Livingstone – with similar pulled-back lengths. And among the merely 22 runs he conceded was a back-away-and-hack from Odean Smith at a short ball that just eluded the converging long-on and long-off and lurched over the rope.

Apart from a few charges at the left-arm spin of J Suchith, Shahrukh had barely managed to middle anything. And as soon as Bhuvneshwar returned for the 17th, he banged it in short and Shahrukh's heave could only end in another straightforward top-edged catch. Off the last ball of his spell, Bhuvneshwar claimed Livingstone. Perhaps the all-rounder was trying to keep the strike or perhaps looking to place the ball wide enough of the sweeper for four. But he ended up just stabbing what was yet another short and widish ball tamely to extra cover.

Sunrisers may have not done wonders with their batsmen-buying at this year's big auction. But even in the absence of Rashid Khan and with the constant development of Malik, their attack is starting to look familiarly threatening again; if the conditions offer even a bit, they'll squeeze all that help out as a bunch. And when Washington Sundar returns after recovering from a split webbing, they'll only get stronger.

### No-hiccup chase

As always with Sunrisers, if any team could make a mess of a chase of 152, it was them. But on Sunday, they didn't. They lost only captain Kane Williamson in the Powerplay, and Rahul Tripathi's 34 off 22 provided the slight thrust that the pursuit needed at that point. At 77 for 3 in the 11th, it could have got interesting considering it was still a Sunrisers chase. However, Aiden Markram and Nicholas Pooran did what was required without attempting anything outlandish. And that was more than enough to collect their fourth win in six matches.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Punjab Kings 151 all out in 20 overs (Livingstone 60; Bhuvneshwar 3/22, Malik 4/28) lost to SRH 152/3 in 18.5 overs (Pooran 35 not out, Markram 41 not out) by 7 wickets



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

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

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

**TUSHAR BHADURI**  
APRIL 17

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

### Miller shows the way

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

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

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



David Miller scored an unbeaten 94. PTI

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

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

### Gaikwad repays faith

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

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

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

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

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

### Shami 'seams' in control

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

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

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

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

### BRIEFLY

#### Pujara hits double ton on Sussex debut

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

#### Boe likely to return as doubles coach

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

#### Haryana crowned national champions

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

#### Tanish finishes 4th in Danish Open

*New Delhi:* India's Tanish George Mathew finished fourth in men's 200m freestyle 'A' final at the Danish Open in Copenhagen, Denmark. The Bengaluru swimmer clocked 1:51.38s, 0.19s shy of his personal best 1-51, to finish fourth among eight swimmers in the 'A' final. In the preliminary round, Tanish had finished fifth with a timing of 1:52.87s to qualify for the final. Shakthi Balakrishnan bettered her personal best time to finish seventh in the 'A' final of the women's 200m butterfly.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

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

## CAN ANYONE RUN WHEN IN SHACKLES?



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

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

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