THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024, NEW DELHI, LATE CITY, 18 PAGES

**JOURNALISM OF COURAGE SINCE 1932** 

₹7.00 (₹8 BIHAR & RAIPUR, ₹12 SRINAGAR) WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM



Security personnel carry bodies of Maoists killed in Tuesday's encounter in Kanker district of Chhattisgarh. PTI

## Intel, long night trek & a river crossing: How securitymen struck at Bastar Maoists, shot 29

Were alerted about presence of senior Maoists; 15 women among the dead

**JAYPRAKASH S NAIDU** CHHOTEBETHIYA, KANKER

AN ARDUOUS trek through the hilly terrain of Abujhmad in the dead of night led a team of roughly 200 security personnel to a hilltop, where a group of Maoists were believed to be gathered. What followed was a four-hour encounter in which 29 Maoists, including two divisional committee members of the CPI (Maoist), were killed on Tuesday.

A day later, details have begun to emerge of what marks **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

### Migrant from Bihar killed in Anantnag terror attack

**NAVEEDIQBAL** SRINAGAR, APRIL 17

A MIGRANT worker, identified as Raju Shah from Bihar, was killed in what police called a terror attack in Bijbehara town of Anantnag, in South Kashmir, on Wednesday night.

The attack came on the eve of filing of nominations for the Anantnag-Rajouri Lok Sabha constituency. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti and NC candidate Mian Altaf are scheduled to file their nomination papers on Thursday. NC vice-president Omar Abdullah is also scheduled to hold a rally in Anantnag.

The constituency will go to polls in the third phase on May 7.

According to police, the migrant worker was shot at about 9 pm on Wednesday. He was rushed to hospital where he succumbed to injuries. "Terrorists fired upon & critically injured one person identified as Raju Shah, resident of Bihar... He has been evacuated to hospital for treatment. Area cordoned off," J&K Police said in a post on X.

"The injured person, who was shot at by terrorists, succumbed to his injuries at the hospital. Search operation underway in the area," police said later.

All Valley parties condemned the attack, which is the third such incident this year.



**CURTAINS ON CAMPAIGN, VOTE TOMORROW FOR 102 SEATS** 

## Modi cites his 'guarantee', Rahul invokes 'threat' as Phase I ends

Came with hope in 2014, trust in 2019, says PM

MANOJ CG, **SUKRITA BARUAH & LALMANI VERMA** NEW DELHI, GUWAHATI, GHAZIABAD, APRIL 17



IN THE final hours of campaigning for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections in which 102 constituencies across 21 states

and Union Territories will vote Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Wednesday invoked Lord Ram on the occasion of Ram Navami, stepped up his attack on the Opposition INDIA bloc and said while he went to the people with hope in 2014, trust in 2019, he was now approaching them with guarantee for a third straight term in office.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, on the other hand, targeted Modi and called this election an "ideological" battle, claiming that the BJP and RSS were "trying to end the Constitution and the democratic system of the country". He claimed the BJP would not cross the 150 mark in the polls and that there was a strong undercurrent in favour of the INDIA bloc.

The high-decibel campaign for the first phase — it has the maximum seats in the sevenphase election — drew to a close Wednesday. Tamil Nadu (39 seats) and Uttarakhand (5 seats) are two states where voting will be completed Friday. The first phase also includes 12 seats in Rajasthan, 8 in UP, 6 in Madhya Pradesh, 5 each in Assam and Maharashtra, 4 of Bihar, 3 of West Bengal, 2 each in Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**MORE REPORTS PAGES 6, 7** 



An election meeting in Assam's Nalbari where Prime Minister Narendra Modi campaigned for ally AGP's candidate Phani Bhusan Choudhury on Wednesday. ANI

## State's economics & identity: Twin challenges in BJP's TN opportunity

P VAIDYANATHAN IYER CHENNAI, NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

AT THE heart of the North-South politics playing out most intensely in Tamil Nadu — all 39 Lok Sabha constituencies there go to polls Friday — is what can be described as twin trust deficits issue: one relates to 'financial resources' and

other to 'political representation'. While the fight over resources has taken political wings during the campaign, that over representation manifests itself in ways unique to Dravidian political history — Tamil pride and culture and opposition to Hindi, a centralised governance model, and the politics of polarisation based on faith.

The BJP did not ally with either of the two Dravidian parties, DMK or the AIADMK, and is pushing hard to increase its vote share in the state. It hopes to bag at least four Lok Sabha constituencies — Vellore, Coimbatore, Tirunelveli and Kanyakumari — in the state which it considers the last frontier in the south to get a foothold. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Jat rumblings to anti-incumbency: Cong hopes Rajasthan halts a run

**HAMZAKHAN** JAIPUR, APRIL 17

IN BOTH 2014 and 2019, the BIPled NDA made a clean sweep of all the 25 Lok Sabha seats in Rajasthan. As 12 seats go to polls in the first phase on Friday, the Congress hopes to break that trend this time.

The Congress is relying on anger among Jats, anti-incum-



ANIL BALUNI BJP LOK SABHA CANDIDATE, GARHWAL

bency and coalitions, while the BJP is banking on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's hold over voters, Ram Temple, abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, and a perception about India's "powerful" image abroad, apart from consolidating its power through inductions of leaders from other parties.

Of the 12 seats, at least three — Churu, Nagaur and Dausa — are CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

#### DIFFERENCES IN HOW HC INTERPRETS LAW

## Can UP interfaith live-in couples get police protection? Yes, no, maybe

In 15 orders by six benches of the Allahabad High Court over past year, 12 couples were denied cover on definition of 'live-in', three got relief

**AJOY SINHA KARPURAM** & KHADIJA KHAN NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

CAN INTERFAITH couples in a consensual live-in relationship fearing a backlash get police protection in Uttar Pradesh? Yes, no, even maybe. This is because the answer

depends on varying interpretations by the Allahabad High Court of a key provision in the state's anti-conversion (also called 'love jihad') law, a scrutiny of court orders by *The Indian* Express shows.

Records show that the High Court dismissed pleas for police protection from at least 12 interfaith couples in live-in relationships since August 2023, signalling in eight of them that UP's

Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Act, 2021, crimi nalises such relationships. In al 12 cases, the court was informed by both partners that they were in a consensual relationship.

Records also show that in at least three other cases — again, consensual, inter-faith — including one dating back to January last year, the court granted police protection to live-in couples under the same law but with conditions. In two of these cases, the key rider was that the couple had to register their marriage under the new anti-conversion law within a stipulated time period.

These 15 cases were heard by six different benches of the High Court, and their contrasting positions assume significance since the law has been challenged in **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

### Cooch Behar set to vote, EC cites poll code, stops Bengal Governor's tour

**DAMININATH** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE ELECTION Commission on Wednesday put a halt to West Bengal Governor C V Ananda Bose's proposed tour of Cooch Behar on Thursday and Friday, saying it would be a violation of the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) as polling there is scheduled on Friday and the silence period begins Wednesday evening.

After the EC came to know about the proposed tour to Cooch Behar, where polling is scheduled



in the first phase, it advised the Governor's office against undertaking the trip, an EC source said. No local programme can be

organised for the Governor as the MCC is in place and the poll is scheduled as well, the EC told Bose's office.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## Ahead of Musk visit, rules notified for FDI up to 100% in space

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

Bastar IG Sundarraj P and

others check the weapons

Kanker, on Wednesday. PTI

seized after the encounter in

BUSINESS AS USUAL

**BY UNNY** 

Hope foreign service officers are not deputed for poll duty.

THE FINANCE Ministry has notified amended rules under the Foreign Exchange Management Act to operationalise its earlier decision to allow up to 100 per cent foreign direct investment (FDI) for the space sector through three categories of liberalised entry routes.

The notification dated April 16 comes ahead of Tesla chief Elon Musk's visit to India early next week during which he is expected to meet space startups,



Musk is due to travel to India next week

Starlink is a project by SpaceX, the firm founded by Musk, to provide high-speed Internet access to anywhere in the world using a constellation of thousands of low-earth-orbit satellites.

In February, the Cabinet had approved the amendment to the FDI policy for the space sector, allowing up to 100 per cent investment in certain categories.

According to the latest **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 

#### make a push for his space venture Starlink's plans and announce his electric vehicle (EV) Finance Ministry notification, investment plans.

## Heart diseases linked to maternal deaths? A study tries to join dots

PAGE 1 **ANCHOR** 

#### **ANONNA DUTT** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

IT WAS only when 23-year-old Dhaanu succumbed to heart failure during childbirth in a Tamil Nadu village that her family realised that she had an undiagnosed congenital heart defect. Neither did they know that her death could have been prevented if Dhaanu had been screened in the early stages of

epaper indianex press.com

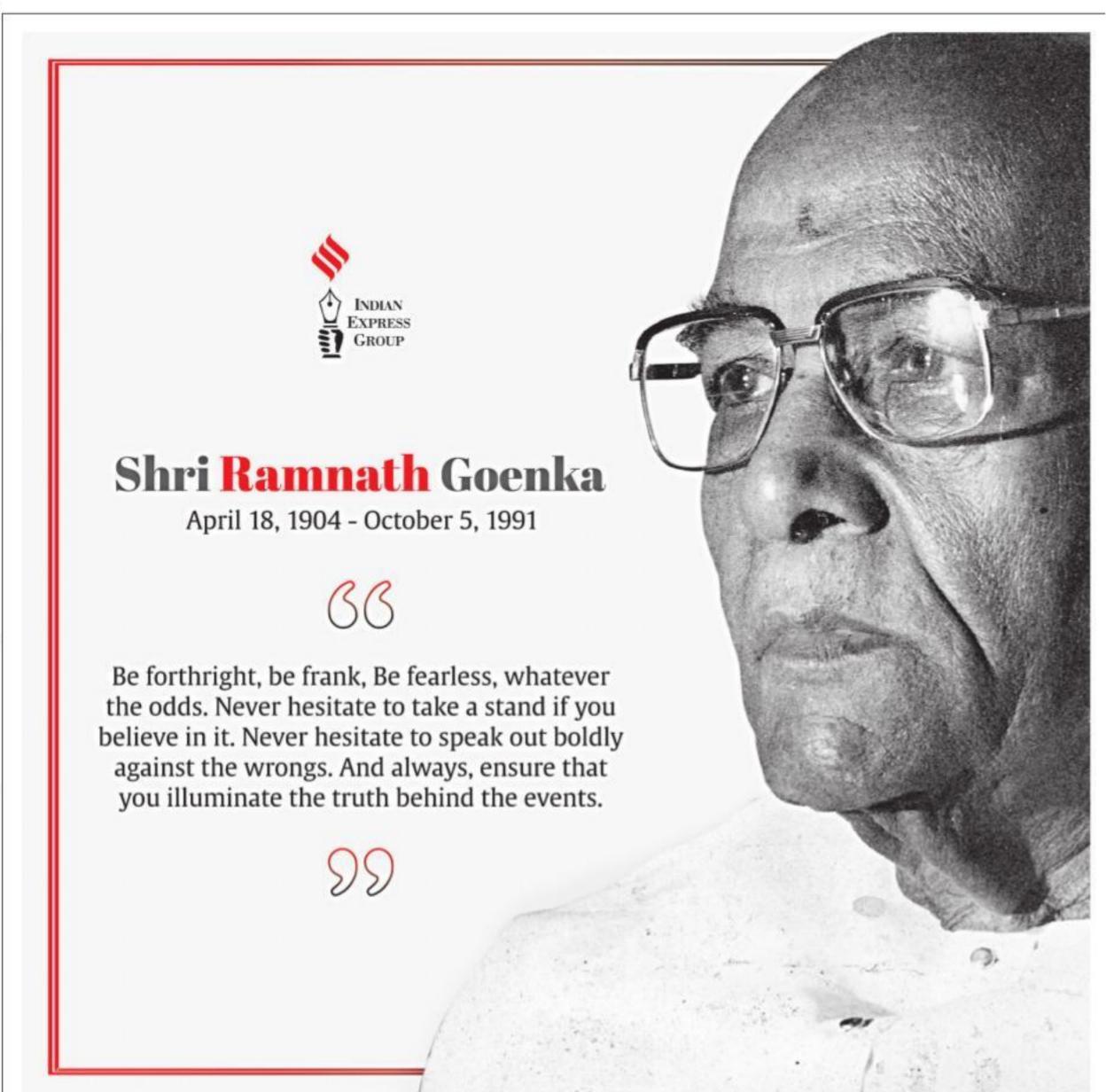
#### **MATERNAL MORTALITY RATIO** (Per lakh live births)

2014-16 2015-17 122 2016-18 113 2017-19 103 2018-20 97 SDG goal (by 2030) 70

her pregnancy. The primary health care centre in her village **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** 



**MATERNAL MORTALITY** ratio (MMR) is a key indicator of public health preparedness. Over the last two decades, India's MMR has gone down by 70 per cent, according to a 2022 study. Government data pegs it at 97 deaths per lakh live births between 2018 and 2020.



## THE WORLD

#### SWEDEN PASSES LAW TO EASE LEGAL CHANGE OF GENDER

The Swedish parliament passed a law Wednesday lowering the age required for people to legally change their gender from 18 to 16. Those under 18 still need approval from a guardian, a doctor and the National Board of Health and Welfare. A gender dysphoria diagnosis — defined by medical professionals as psychological distress experienced by those whose gender expression does not match their gender identity is — is no longer required.

#### **BRIEFLY**

#### **PAKISTAN**

#### Heaviest rain in decades floods villages, kills 63

Peshawar: Lightning and heavy rains led to 14 deaths in Pakistan, officials said Wednesday, bringing the death toll from four days of extreme weather to at least 63, as the heaviest downpour in decades flooded villages on the country's southwestern coast. Most of the deaths were reported from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province. Collapsing buildings have killed 32 people, including 15 children and five women, officials said. Dozens more were also injured in the region, where 1,370 houses were dam-

#### **AFGHANISTAN**

#### 2 TV channels face action for violating norms

*Islamabad:* The Taliban have suspended the activities of two TV stations in Afghanistan, alleging they failed to "consider national and Islamic values." An official from the Information Ministry's Media Violations Commission, Hafizullah Barakzai, said a court will investigate files on the two Kabul-based stations. Noor TV and Barva TV cannot operate until the court gives its verdict. "Despite repeated warnings and recommendations," he said "they did not consider national and Islamic values," Barakzai

said on Tuesday.

WEST HOPES SANCTIONS ON IRAN WILL LIMIT ISRAELI ACTION

## Israel has decided to retaliate against Iran, says UK; Tehran says prepared

Cameron, in Jerusalem, says G7 needs to warn Iran over tensions

**REUTERS** 

JERUSALEM, APRIL 17

ISRAEL HAS clearly decided to retaliate against Iran for missile and drone attacks, Britain's foreign minister David Cameron said in a visit to Israel Wednesday. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after meeeting with the German and British foreign ministers, said "we will make our own decisions... Israel will do everything necessary to defend itself."

Iran, meanwhile, said Wednesday its military was ready to confront any attack by Israel, with the air force saying it was prepared for action. Iran's Air Force chief warned its warplanes were in the "best state of preparedness" to counter any attack.

"It's clear the Israelis are making a decision to act," Cameron said in his visit to Jerusalem. "We hope they do... as little to escalate this as possible."

Washington and other Western governments hope new economic sanctions against Iran will help persuade Israel to limit the scope of its retaliation. Cameron said Britain wanted to see coordinated sanctions against Iran by the G7, which are meeting this week in Italy.

"They need to be given a clear unequivocal message by the G7," the British minister said.



Army Day parade at a military base in northern Tehran, Iran, Wednesday. AP

## 5,000 lives in one shell: Gaza's IVF embryos destroyed by Israeli strike

**REUTERS** 

GAZA CITY, APRIL 17

WHEN AN Israeli shell struck Gaza's largest fertility clinic in December, the explosion blasted the lids off five liquid nitrogen tanks stored in a corner of the embryology unit.

As the liquid evaporated, the temperature inside the tanks rose, destroying over 4,000 embryos and 1,000 more specimens of sperm and unfertilized eggs stored at Gaza City's Al Basma IVF centre.



Destroyed nitrogen tanks in Al Basma IVF Centre in Gaza **city earlier in April.** Reuters

The impact of that single explosion was far-reaching -- an example of the unseen toll Israel's assault has had on the 2.3 million people of Gaza.

The embryos in those tanks were the last hope for hundreds of Palestinian couples facing infertility.

"We know deeply what these 5,000 lives, or potential lives, meant for the parents, either for the future or for the past," said Bahaeldeen Ghalayini, 73, the Cambridge-trained obstetrician and gynaecologist who established the clinic in 1997.

Citing safety, California varsity cancels speech by pro-Palestine valedictorian

**REUTERS** 

LOS ANGELES, APRIL 17

THE UNIVERSITY of Southern California, citing safety concerns and passions around the latest Middle East conflict, has canceled its valedictorian speech from a Muslim student who said she was being silenced by anti-Palestinian hatred for views on human rights.

USC Provost Andrew Guzman said in a statement on Monday that the decision to scrub the traditional valedictorian address at next month's graduation had "nothing to do with freedom of speech" and was simply aimed at protecting campus security.

The valedictorian, Asna Tabassum, in her own statement challenged the varsity's rationale, questioning "whether USC's decision to revoke my invitation... is made solely on the basis of safety." Guzman's statement did not refer to Tabassum by name. Nor did it detail any particular threats.

The provost referred more broadly to how "discussion relating to the selection of our valedictorian had taken on an alarming tenor". As a consequence, "we have decided that our student valedictorian will not deliver a speech at commencement".

over Chernihiv, which is about

Three explosions ripped

through a busy central area of

the city just after 9 a.m. local

time, destroying a hotel, officials

150 km from the capital Kyiv.



## **Emirates suspends** check-in at Dubai after record rain

**REUTERS** DUBAI, APRIL 17

EMIRATES AIRLINE on Wednesday suspended check-in for passengers departing until midnight after record rains caused significant damage across the United Arab Emirates.

The airport, which is the world's busiest for international flights and a major transit hub advised passengers in Dubai not to come to the airport. The carrier said passengers arriving to Dubai and already in transit would continue but warned of delays to departures and arrivals.

Dubai International, the hub for Emirates Airline, separately said that it was experiencing significant disruptions with flights delayed or diverted due to the heavy rains. "We are working hard to re-

cover operations as quickly as possible in very challenging conditions," it wrote on X. The airport briefly suspended operations Tuesday as rains caused flooding across Dubai and elsewhere.

The UAE recorded up until

Suu Kyi shifted from

iail to house arrest,

says military govt



People wait for their flight at the Dubai International **Airport, Wednesday.** Reuters

#### TOLL IN OMAN DUE TO RAIN RISES TO 19

Oman: In Oman, at least 19 people were killed in heavy rains in recent days including 10 schoolchildren swept away in a vehicle with an adult, , according to a statement Wednesday from the country's National Committee for Emergency Management. AP

Tuesday 9 p.m the largest amount of rainfall over a 24 hour period since records began in 1949, according to the National Centre of Meteorology.

## Russian strike kills 17 in north Ukraine

TENDER NOTICE For and on behalf of President of India, the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer

(Gen) North Central Railway, Jhansi invites open tenders through online (E-Tendering) for the following work:-Description of work: Part-A: Orai: Construction of community hall at Ora station. Part-B: Virangana lakshmibai- Replacement of old/dilapidated quarters at east colony Jhansi. Part-C: Construction of 13 units Type II quarters or

replacement account at Nandkhas station under ADEN/HQ/I/JHS Tender Value: Rs. 29,16,313/- Only Bid Security: Rs. 58,300/- Only Completion period:- 06 months Tender No.: JHS-ELG-W-T-04-2024-25

Closing date of tender: - 10.05.2024 (upto 15:00 Hrs.), Tenderer will submit the tender online upto 10.05.2024 (upto 15:00 Hrs.). Complete details & for submission of tenders can be seen in Indian Railway website

🖪 North central railways 🏶 www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in 🥼 @northcentralrailway 💥 @ CPRONCF

#### NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Procurement Tender Notice No- JHS/DYCMM/2024/11

E- PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE On behalf of the President of India, The Dy. Chief Material Manager, General

Store Depot, Jhansi are invite the following E procurement tender Tender No.

			Opening Date
51245111A	Argon Gas + (1-5%) Oxygen gas for SS Welding. Delivery in firms returnable cylinders without any rent to our destination. Capacity of cylinder 07 Cubic meter.	2625	08.05.2024
51235855	LED UV Bulb as per annexure-1 attached.	10 NOS.	08.05.2024
51235018C	Effuent parameter analysis instrument for Bio-Toilet as per specification.	1 NOS.	13.05.2024
EMD: NIL,	Note: 1. The complete information of		

other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders for this purpose venders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III digital signature certificate issued by CCA under IT act 2000. 3. Rules entered into financial rate page and duly singed digitally signature shall only be considered rates and any other financial entry in any other form / letter had if attached by vender shall be original straight

way ignore and shall not be considered. 💽 North central railways 🏶 www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in 🥼 @northcentralrailway 💢 @ CPRONCR

#### **EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR ENGAGEMENT OF** HONORARY VISITING SPECIALISTS

#### NOTICE

Medical Director, Central Hospital, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 invites applications from eligible candidates for selection and engagement of 2 (two) Honorary Visiting Specialists, 01 (one) each in the discipline of Gastroenterology & Paediatrics as per following schedule:

 Number of visits/Number of Hours and Honorarium to be paid :-

Discipline	Hours of Duty	Specialist/Super Specialist (MD/DM/DNB)		
Gastroenterology (Super Specialist)	1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1 1	Rs. 60,000/- per month		
Paediatrics (Specialist)	4 hours a day for 6 days/week	Rs. 78,000/- per month		

 Educational qualification and experience: (a) Post Doctora qualification i.e. DM in the discipline of Gastroenterology (Super Specialist). (b) Post Graduate qualification i.e. MD or equivalent in the discipline of Paediatrics (Specialist).

Age limit: Between 30 to 64 years.

 Tenure: The contract of appointment will be initially upto 30.06.2024 which is subject to renewal/extension on yearly basis. . Detailed advertisement with terms & conditions, format of application form, enclosures etc. are available on South Eastern Railway website www.ser.indianrailways.gov.in under head 'News & Recruitment Info'. Applications may be submitted to Medical Director, Central

Hospital, South Eastern Railway, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 or email ID md@ser.railnet.gov.in by 02.05.2024. (PR-46) Medical Director, Central Hospital, Garden Reach

South Eastern Railway

### Videos showed flames and columns of black smoke rising

#### **REUTERS** CHERNIHIV, APRIL 17

THREE RUSSIAN missiles on Wednesday slammed into the centre of Chernihiv, a city in northern Ukraine near the Russian border, killing at least 17 people, wounding dozens more and damaging civilian buildings, officials said.

President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called on Kyiv's allies to rush in air defence support after the city, which had a pre-war population of 300,000, became the latest target of an intensify-

ing Russian air strike campaign. "This would not have hap-

THE NEW YORK TIMES

THE COST of a proposed NASA

mission to gather rocks on Mars

and return them to Earth is spiral-

ing upward and slipping further

into the future. So on Monday,

space agency officials asked for

ideas on simplifying the mission

billion is too expensive," Bill

Nelson, NASA administrator, said

at a news conference Monday.

"And not returning samples until

The mission, known as Mars

2040 is unacceptably too long."

"The bottom line is that \$11

and trimming its price tag.

APRIL 17



A building after Russia's strike in Chernihiv, Wednesday. Reuters

pened if Ukraine had received sufficient air defence equipment and if the world's determination

NASA worried as mission to gather

**NASA's Perseverance Mars** 

Sample Return, is central to the

search for signs that life may have

existed on the red planet. The idea

is to bring samples of rock and soil

back to Earth so that scientists can

prod and poke at them using their

rover. Reuters

Mars rocks gets costlier, delayed

to counter Russian terror had been sufficient," Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram app.

most sophisticated tools.

NASA had hoped that Mars

Sample Return would cost \$5

billion to \$7 billion, and that the

rocks would arrive on Earth in

2033. NASA officials said on

Monday that after they looked

over the review, they agreed

with that cost estimate, and that,

liver the rocks before 2040.

to some very innovative new pos-

sibilities for design and certainly

leave no stone unturned," said

Nicola Fox. associate administra-

tor for NASA's science mission.

#### said. The strike also damaged several multi-storey residential buildings, a hospital, an education facility and dozens of private cars, officials said. Over 60 people were wounded, acting

ing civilians, attacked with three Iskander cruise missiles, governor Vyacheslav Chaus told the Suspilne public broadcaster.

## Sindh HC asks Pak

*Karachi:* Coming down heavily on the continuous suspension of social media platform X in Pakistan since February, the Sindh High Court (SHC) on Wednesday directed the Ministry of Interior to revoke its decision on the suspension within one week, according to a media report.

SHC Chief Justice Ageel given budget constraints, the current Mars Sample Return Ahmed Abbasi said, "What are mission would not be able to deyoua chieving via shutting down trivial things... The world must laugh at us," Geo News reported. "We're going to need to go off

The Elon Musk-owned X has tional security threats.

**ASSOCIATED PRESS** mayor Oleksandr Lomako said. Russia, which denies target-APRIL 17

### govt to revoke X's blocking in a week

been suspended since February owing to the government's decision to curb access to X citing na-

MYANMAR'S JAILED former leader Aung San Suu Kyi has been moved from prison to house arrest as a health measure

due to a heat wave, the military government said as it freed more than 3,000 prisoners under an amnesty to mark this week's traditional New Year holiday. Suu Kyi, 78, and Win Myint, the 72-year-old former president of her ousted government, were among the elderly and in-

firm prisoners moved to house arrest because of the severe heat, military spokesperson Major General General Zaw Min Tun told foreign media representatives late Tuesday. The move has not yet been publicly announced in Myanmar. Suu Kyi's transfer comes as the

army has been suffering a string of major defeats at the hands of pro-democracy resistance fighters and their allies in ethnic minority guerrilla forces.

The nationwide conflict began after the army ousted the



Aung San Suu Kyi in 2020. AP

elected government in February 2021, imprisoned Suu Kyi and began suppressing nonviolent protests that sought a return to democratic rule.

Suu Kyi has been serving a 27-year prison term on a variety of criminal convictions in a specially built annex of the main prison in the capital Naypyitaw, where Myanmar's meteorological department said temperatures reached 39 degrees Celsius

on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the Assistance Association for Political Prisoners over 20,351 arrested on political charges since the 2021 army takeover are still detained, mostly without being convicted.

### PROPONENTS OF 'GREEN ISLAM' MOVEMENT AIM AT EDUCATING 200 MILLION MUSLIMS TO SET AN EXAMPLE

## How Indonesia clerics are using faith to drive climate activism

**SUI-LEE WEE** JAKARTA, APRIL 17

THE FAITHFUL gathered in an imposing modernist building. Their leader took to his perch and delivered a stark warning.

Grand Imam Nasaruddin Umar said: "The greedier we are toward nature, the sooner doomsday will arrive."

Then he prescribed the cure as laid out by their faith, which guides almost one-quarter of humanity. Like fasting during Ramadan, it is every Muslim's obligation, to be a guardian of the earth. Like giving alms, his congregants should give waqf, a kind of

religious donation, to renewable energy. Like daily prayers, planting trees should be a habit.

The nature is a central theme in the sermons of Nasaruddin, the head of the Istiglal Mosque in Jakarta, Indonesia. Dismayed by the trash sullying the river that the mosque sits on, he ordered a cleanup. Shocked by utility bills, he retrofitted Southeast Asia's largest mosque with solar panels, slow-flow faucets and a water recycling system — changes that helped make it the first place of worship to win a green building accolade from the World Bank.

He is not alone in this country of more than 200 million people, the majority of them Muslims, in



Solar panels at Istiqlal Mosque in Jakarta in 2023. NYT

trying to kindle an environmental awakening through Islam. Top clergy have issued fatwas, or edicts, on how to rein in climate change. "As the country with most

Muslims in the world, we have to set a good example," Nasaruddin said in an interview. Some clerics see environmentalism as peripheral to religion. Surveys suggest there is a widespread belief among Indonesians that climate change is not caused by humans.

But educating 200 million Muslims, the proponents of the Green Islam movement sav. can drive the change.

Prabowo, the head of environ-

"People will not listen to laws, they don't care," said Hayu

mental protection at the Indonesian Ulema Council, the nation's highest Islamic authority. "They listen to religious leaders because their religious leaders say you cannot escape God's laws." The fatwas issued are not

legally binding, but he said they have had notable effect.

The Istiglal Mosque is a testament to what can be achieved. Nasaruddin said installing 500 solar panels has lowered the mosque's power bill by 25%.

The grand imam said that he wants to help transform 70% of

Indonesia's 800,000 mosques into "eco-masjids," or ecological mosques.



### FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

## Modi cites his 'guarantee', Rahul invokes the 'threat'

and 1 seat each in Chhattisgarh, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, Jammu and Kashmir, Lakshadweep and Puducherry.

Assembly elections in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim will also be held Friday.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, as many as 49 of the 102 seats, including 38 alone in Tamil Nadu, were won by parties which are now in the INDIA bloc. The BIP and allies, including parties in the North-East, had won 48 seats. Three were won by the BSP and one each by the AIADMK and the undivided Shiv Sena.

On Wednesday, addressing a public meeting in Agartala in Tripura where the BJP is up against a coalition of Congress and the CPM, Modi said the two parties have come together to save their "loot ki dukan".

Slamming the Congress, he said the party while in power had adopted the "Loot" East policy while the BJP had turned it into the Act East policy. The Congress, he said, had turned the region into an "adda of bhrashtachar" (hub of corruption) and the Communists spoiled the state's prospects.

Taking a swipe at Rahul Gandhi, the Congress and the CPM, he said, "The Congress

one of the largest anti-Maoist op-

erations in Chhattisgarh's Bastar

region — a milestone in the state's

fight against Left Wing Extremism

since it marks the entry of secu-

rity forces into the Maoist strong-

of the encounter, villagers are re-

luctant to speak of the incident.

Brick structures meant to be

Maoist memorials mark the area.

and a large gate suggests one is en-

tight-lipped, Lingaram, a resident

of Akameta, claims one of the men

killed is his cousin. He claims his

family tried to reason with him to

quit the banned outfit, but in vain.

the biggest challenge leading up

to the encounter was walking in the dark over five or six hills of dif-

ferent heights, ranging between

evening of April 15, the DRG

According to officials, on the

200 metres and 550 metres.

According to security sources,

While most villagers here are

tering Maoist territory.

A few kilometres from the site

hold of Abujhmad.

Yuvraj, who is critical of the use of investigative agencies, is now demanding the arrest of Kerala Chief Minister on corruption charges. No corrupt person will be spared."

Modi invoked Lord Ram at Agartala and at another rally in Nalbari in Assam. Taking a break at noon in the middle of his address in Nalbari, he asked the gathering to switch on the flashlight of their mobile phones saying, "Prabhu Ram ka Surya Tilak ho raha hai, hum bhi phone se Prabhu Ram ko pranam kar rahe hain." In Agartala, he said he is visiting the North-East, where the Sun rises first in the country, on Ram Navami when Ram Lalla is being adorned with the Surya Tilak at the Ram temple in Ayodhya after having to "live in tents" for long. "After my Nalbari rally,

watched the Surya Tilak on Ram Lalla. Like crores of Indians, this is a very emotional moment for me. The grand Ram Navami in Ayodhya is historic," he said on X, also posting two photographs of him watching the ceremony on a tablet. "May this Surya Tilak bring energy to our lives and may it inspire our nation to scale new heights of glory," he said.

In Nalbari, Modi said he had gone to the people in 2014 with hope, in 2019 with the message of

(District Reserve Guards) and BSF

started a search operation based

on inputs of Maoist movement in

Binagunda and adjoining areas.

"We shared five inputs, including

two inputs giving the exact loca-

tion of the North Bastar divisional

committee Maoists in Binagunda

area, underlining the fact that it

has been acting as a permanent

camp of the Maoists since April 5,'

Personnel of the DRG and BSF

left different locations late

Monday evening, and gathered at

a village. They crossed Kotri river

and passed through a few other

villages before surrounding the

hill where the Maoists were pres-

ent. A source who was part of the

operation said, "We eventually

reached Kalpar hill, from where

Maoists were just 2 km away. We

cordoned off the hill. The Maoists

had no escape route, they knew

they were trapped. They opened

fire at us, and we retaliated. Three

of our men suffered injuries, but

C lassifieds

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a source in the BSF said.

• Intel, night trek & river crossing: How securitymen struck at Maoists

trust and was now seeking a mandate again with 'Modi ki Guarantee'.

The BJP, he said, is a party which works with the mantra of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas'. Maintaining that his government does not discriminate when it comes to implementation of schemes, he said, "In the next five years, 2 crore more new houses will be built and everyone will get them without discrimination. In the next five years, you will continue to get free ration... You tell me, have any of you faced discrimination in NDA schemes?"

Rahul Gandhi, addressing a joint press conference with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav in Ghaziabad in Uttar Pradesh, slammed the Prime Minister over the electoral bond scheme, calling it the "world's biggest extortion scheme" and Modi the "champion of corruption".

"This election is an ideological one. On the one hand, there is the RSS and the BJP who are trying to end the Constitution and the democratic system of the country. And on the other hand is the IN-DIA bloc which is protecting and defending the Constitution and the democratic system," he said.

Gandhi said there are big issues such as unemployment and

we managed to avoid casualties

because of meticulous planning."

around 12.30 pm on Tuesday and

House Officer Laxman Kewat,

who was part of the operation, de-

scribed the sultry weather com-

bined with the weight of their

backpacks as challenging. Another

risk, he said, was getting "ex-

posed" since a dry forest in sum-

tri-junction of Kanker and

Narayanpur in Chhattisgarh, and

Gadchiroli in Maharashtra — is

considered a safe haven for north

Bastar division committee of

Maoists, which has in the past tar-

geted security forces and civilians.

cross the Kotri river. The local ad-

ministration has been trying to

construct a bridge here for a while,

but work has run into opposition

Governor visit

from locals, officials say.

To reach the area, one has to

The encounter spot — at the

mer offers good visibility.

lasted for around four hours.

The encounter broke out

Pakhanjur police Station

price rise, but the BJP is engaged in diverting attention from them. "Sometimes the PM goes underwater in the ocean and sometimes he is on a seaplane but does not talk about issues," he said.

Asked how many seats he expects the Congress-SP alliance to win, Gandhi said he does not want to predict the number of seats but can definitely say that the coalition will do very well in Uttar Pradesh. On the overall scenario, he said, "15-20 days ago, it seemed that the BJP would go up to 180 seats. Now it seems that it will go up to 150 seats only. We are getting reports from every state that our position is getting stronger and there is an undercurrent (in favour of the INDIA bloc)."

Yadav said that "winds of change" are blowing from western Uttar Pradesh and there will be an INDIA bloc "clean sweep" from Ghaziabad to Ghazipur (western UP to eastern UP).

Congress communication head Jairam Ramesh said, "PM Modi claims he came to the people in 2014 with hope, in 2019 with trust, and in 2024 with his guarantees. In reality, he has dashed the hopes of 2014, betrayed the people's trust since 2019, and his exit is now guaran-

teed in 2024."

The encounter has almost wiped off the Partapur area committee of the banned CPI (Maoist), sources said. Apart from Partapur, the north Bastar division committee comprises Raoghat, Kuve and Kisodo area committees.

Speaking to reporters on Wednesday, IGP (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P said this is the biggest encounter in the past three decades. Of the 29 bodies recovered, 15 are of women. Among the dead are Shankar Rao and Lalita, who were divisional committee members of CPI (Maoist). Both carried a reward of Rs 8 lakh on their arrest, and the operation was undertaken based on intelligence inputs on their presence at the site.

Among others killed were Madhvi, Ramshila and Ranjitha, members of north Bastar division; Jugni, Sukhlal and Shrikant of Partapur area committee; and Rupi, a commander of Medhki LOS (local organisation squad). - WITH PTI INPUTS

100 per cent FDI has been allowed for the space sector category of manufacturing and operation of satellites, satellite data products, and ground segment and user segment, out of which up to 74 per cent would be through the automatic route and government nod would be required for investment beyond 74 per cent.

Under the earlier policy, any foreign investment in manufacturing and operating satellites was allowed only with government approval.

Automatic FDI has also been permitted up to 49 per cent for launch vehicles and associated systems or subsystems, and creation of spaceports for launching and receiving spacecraft. Government approval would be required for investments beyond 49 per cent. Manufacturing of compo-

nents and systems or sub-systems for satellites, ground segment and user segment will be fully under the 100 per cent automatic route, the ministry said. The investee entity shall be

subject to sectoral guidelines as issued by the Department of Space from time to time, the notification said. The new rules came into effect from April 16.

'Satellites - manufacturing and operation' has been defined as end-to-end manufacturing and supply of satellite or payload, establishing the satellite systems, including control of in-orbit operations of the satellite and payloads. 'Satellite data products' has been defined as reception, generation or dissemination of earth observation or remote sensing satellite data and data products, including Application Interfaces (API).

'Ground segment' refers to supply of satellite transmit or receive earth stations, including earth observation data receive station, gateway, teleports, satellite Telemetry, Tracking and Command station, and Satellite Control Centre etc.; while 'user segment' refers to supply of user ground terminals for communicating with the satellite, which are not covered under the ground segment.

The ministry has also defined 'launch vehicles and associated systems or sub-systems' as a vehicle and its stages or components that is designed to operate in or launched.

place spacecraft with payloads or persons, in a sub-orbital trajectory, or earth orbit or outer space; while 'spaceport' will refer to the base from which spacecraft are

### • Space FDI rules | • Can UP interfaith live-in couples get police protection?

the Supreme Court along with similar laws from some other

UP's anti-conversion law requires prior sanction from the state for religious conversion and prohibits such conversion for the purpose of marriage. Section 3(1) of this law prohibits conversion by misrepresentation, force, fraud, undue influence, coercion, allurement, etc. This includes "conversion by solemnisation of marriage or relationship in the nature of marriage" if it falls under any of the prohibited grounds. In eight of the 12 cases where

police protection was denied, the High Court cited the portion in Section 3(1) that includes "conversion by solemnisation of marriage or relationship in the nature of marriage" — and equated livein relationships with "relationship in the nature of marriage". Records show these grounds were first raised by the state government in at least nine of these

In the latest instance of this provision being invoked, the High Court on April 4 initially declined cover to an interfaith couple in a case where a Muslim man faced an FIR in which he was accused of kidnapping a Hindu woman and compelling her into marriage. Both the partners had moved the court against the FIR.

"Section 3(1) of the aforesaid Act, 2021 prohibits such living relationship, which is in the nature of matrimonial bonds... in view of the above, the FIR cannot be quashed unless they solemnise their marriage in accordance with law," a bench of Justices Vivek Chaudhary and Narendra Kumar Johari stated.

The High Court's ruling was based on the ground that the marriage was not solemnised by declaring that one of the individuals has undergone religious conversion under the anti-conversion law. However, the bench subsequently allowed the woman to go to a "protection home" in Lucknow until the marriage was solemnised, and provided a police

escort noting that she "apprehends harm from her family member".

This year, between February and March alone, High Court Justice Renu Agarwal rejected nine petitions from interfaith couples for protection with orders that either state "... such type of act cannot be supported and protected by the Court. Therefore, the petition has no substance and is liable to be dismissed" or "...it is not considered desirable that live-inrelationship of the petitioners be protected in contravention of the statutory provisions law...hence, petition has no force and is liable to be dismissed and

is dismissed accordingly." In seven of these cases, Justice Agarwal underlined that the "Conversion Act applies to relationships in the nature of marriage or live-in relationship" under Section 3(1). The court held that protection could not be granted as "Petitioners have not yet applied for conversion as per provisions of Section 8 and 9 of the Act, hence, the relationship of petitioners cannot be protected". Under Sections 8 and 9 of

UP's anti-conversion law, for a marriage to be solemnised between interfaith couples, the partners who decide to convert must submit a declaration to a District Magistrate before and after conversion. This process also involves the police conducting an enquiry to determine the "real intention" of conversion and the District Magistrate publishing post-conversion declarations, including details such as permanent address, name of father or husband and of the conversion process itself.

In another case, in March 2024, Justice Agarwal's order stated that live-in relationships were prohibited in Islam. "In fact any sexual, lustful, affectionate acts such as kissing, touching, staring, etc., are 'Haram' in Islam before marriage because these are considered parts of 'Zina' which may lead to actual 'Zina' itself," the order stated.

#### Living together 'out of their own free will'

However, the Allahabad High Court has also granted police protection to such couples under the same law in at least three other cases over the past year.

In two such cases last year, on January 24 and 27, Justice Deepak Verma granted protection to interfaith couples in live-in relationships on the condition that they apply for conversion under Sections 8 and 9 within two weeks.

In both cases, records show Justice Verma ruled that the protection granted will be automatically "vacated" (revoked) if the couples did not follow the court's directions.

In the third case, Justice Arun Kumar Deshwal noted that a couple had applied for religious conversion and held that protection would be granted once they verified that they were majors. Similar legislation were also

passed by BJP governments of the time in several other states, including Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat Himachal Pradesh, Haryana Jharkhand and Uttarakhand Karnataka, which had passed a similar law in 2021, repealed it after the Congress government came to power last year. The UP law is under challenge

before the Supreme Court, as are similar laws passed by some of the other states. In 2020, Citizens for Justice

and Peace (CJP) approached the apex court against the UP law, arguing that it violated the right to privacy, individual liberty and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution. The CJP has also challenged the anti-conversion laws of Himachal, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh.

In the Supreme Court, the case was last listed on April 25, 2023 and is pending before a bench led by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud. A petition to transfer all the challenges against similar laws in various states in the respective High Courts is also pending before the bench.

### Twin challenges in BJP's TN opportunity

The complaints and allegations regarding financial resources are different for each southern state though. For Tamil Nadu, they are delayed or inadequate relief support for natural disasters, Centre playing politics on infrastructure projects, and unfair deal in the sharing of resources; for Karnataka, it's about lower devolution of Central funds, non-payment of GST compensation; and for Kerala, it is about the Union government curbing borrowings by state undertakings.

Some of these complaints have escalated to court battles between the states and the Union government, and have also been finding an echo in the states from speeches in the Assembly to political rallies and public addresses by state leaders of Congress, DMK and the Left governments in the states.

The real representation question kicks in only two years later subject to the next government's decision on the delimitation exercise that will substantively expand the Lok Sabha strength based on demographic changes in the states.

The likelihood that southern states will have a relatively lesser voice compared with Uttar Pradesh and Bihar post delimitation certainly doesn't ring a bell among voters in Tamil Nadu, political parties though are acutely conscious. This resentment finds expression in complaints that southern states are being meted out unjust treatment.

At times, it goes overboard, and the party then fumbles to undo the damage. For instance, Udhayanidhi Maran, son of Chief Minister MK Stalin and himself

the Youth Welfare and Sports Development Minister, recently equated 'Sanatana Dharma' with Covid and dengue, and called for its eradication. "This is immature and was best avoided," said a senior DMK leader, who did not wish to be named. But Udhayanidhi's position and stature in the party is such that his statements had to be defended by many. "There was a needless scramble," the leader

There's an essential difference between the Periyarfounded Dravidar Kazhagam (DK) and Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) founded by C N Annadurai, former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu. "DK expects people to be atheist, DMK doesn't... some founding members happened to be atheist,' says A S Panneerselvan, Fellow, Centre for Study in Public Sphere, Roja Muthiah Research Library, in Chennai.

At least two DMK politicians, IT Minister P Thiaga Rajan and Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments Minister PK Sekar Babu, openly flaunt their religiosity. "Nobody looks at them as non-Dravidians... Both are articulate, and open about faith,' Panneerselvan pointed out.

It is in religiosity and Tamil culture again where Prime Minister Narendra Modi also jostles to find space. The courting of adheenam (Shaivite sect) is not lost on the Tamil Brahmins and its religious leaders. "Custodians of the philosophical and theological literature on the Savia Siddhanta, the various adheenams in Tamil Nadu are non-Brahmin sects," a religious

Brahmin leader, who did not wish to be named, said. "The ordering of a sengol from the adheenam, giving it importance in Parliament, are all attempts to reach out to the religious non-Brahmin Tamil population in the state," the leader noted.

But Modi is adding elements to BJP's appeal. "The Kashi Tamil Sangamam is an effort to rediscover the cultural links between Kashi in Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu," explained a BJP leader adding it also serves to bring north Indians closer to the Tami people, and reduce the coarse opposition to Hindi. "Even as the BJP goes about this project, in his public rallies Modi first seeks forgiveness for his inability to address the people in Tamil... And says BJP has promised to promote Tamil's global recognition and vouches for his love of the Tamil language and culture," the

leader said. The DMK, however, presents a strong pushback, and given its presence in the grassroots, in every village and every panchayat, the fight for BJP is not easy. "It's also an ideological battle – between centralisation and decentralised politics. DMK's leadership is located here, decisions are taken here...," said

Panneerselvan. An academician, who did not wish to be named, also said that ideas like 'one nation, one election, one language or one religion', are resented by people in Tamil Nadu. "You cannot be seen as insensitive to the economic and cultural sensitivities of the non-Hindi speaker," said the academician, who worked with the University of Madras.

fielded Lalit Yadav, 34, against BJP heavyweight Bhupender Yadav However, the Congress has faced a rebellion over Lalit Yadav's candidature, with several leaders such as two-time MP Karan Singh Yadav, leaving the party and joining the BJP. In Karauli-Dholpur, the Congress has fielded Bhajan Lal Jatav, who faces an uphill battle as he is from Bharatpur and has been contesting from there. The Congress's Dholpur MLA Shobharani Kushwah has kept her distance from party programmes.

In Ganganagar, the BJP has fielded Priyanka Balan, replacing five-term sitting MP and former Union minister Nihal Chand Meghwal, who, unlike Kaswan, hasn't rebelled.

The Congress has fielded AICC secretary Kuldeep Indora, who was defeated in the Assembly polls earlier. Since this is a reserved seat, the Congress has been playing up Balan's background as the daughter-in-law of a non-Scheduled Caste family, and is also banking on the factionalism

According to another source, the poll panel came to know of the trip on Wednesday after the Governor's office informed the District Magistrate about his plans. The source said the communication to the Governor's office was unprecedented, but the poll panel acted in order to maintain the sanctity of the silence period before polling. The EC noted that the district administration and police would be deployed for poll management on Thursday and Friday and they would have to be diverted to provide security

The purpose of the Governor's visit was not immediately clear.

cover, the source said.

Under Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, no campaigning is allowed in the 48-hour silence period before polling, which brings with it a higher level of enforcement by election authorities, EC sources said. The poll panel had issued standing instructions to all District Election Officers and police chiefs to make sure that "all high-profile persons, campaigners, political workers who are not voters of that election area shall exit immediately that election area on beginning of the silence period to ensure free and fair poll process", according to the EC source.

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MMR: A study to join the dots

lacked diagnostics or a skilled obstetrician to read the warning signs. That's set to change with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) funding a study to analyse the number of maternal deaths due to heart diseases and develop a treatment protocol to prevent future mortality.

Maternal mortality rate (MMR) is an important concern for any country since it is a key indicator of women's health. Since deaths during childbirth is preventable, MMR is also an indication of basic public health preparedness. Over the last two decades, India's MMR has gone down by 70 per cent, according to a 2022 study. Government data pegs it at 97 deaths per lakh live

births between 2018 and 2020. Whenever the number of maternal deaths goes down because the commonest risk factors – excessive bleeding infections (47%) and infection (12%) — have been tackled, heart disease becomes the next big risk factor. It's this that ICMR is planning to tackle through its study. To be funded by ICMR, the Rs 8-crore study, which will be held across 50 centres and AIIMS, will not only identify the 10 most common heart diseases in pregnant women but develop their treatment protocol that can be accessed in remote rural pockets. "Obstetricians are doing a

great job in managing haemor-

rhage and septic complications. Now, unless we focus on improving care for heart diseases in pregnancy, the maternal mortality cannot come down further. India as a nation has specifically planned for improving care to women with heart disease," said Dr Justin Paul, professor at the Institute of Cardiology at Madras Medical College and the lead investigator of the proposed study. "We will then randomise participants and study the outcome of using the newly-developed protocol care versus the usual care."

Pregnancy carries an increased risk of cardiovascular events because of several metabolic changes in the body. Significant cardiovascular changes happen in the mother within the first eight weeks of pregnancy. According to a *Lancet* study, the risk of heart failure steadily increases up to 24 weeks, plateaus by 30 weeks and peaks again around delivery. Sometimes pregnant women, especially those belonging to the lower economic strata, may have an underlying problem such as a congenital heart disease that is diagnosed for the first time.

### Cong hopes Rajasthan halts a run

likely to see a tough fight. In the remaining nine, the BJP is either comfortably placed, such as in Jaipur City and Bikaner, or has an edge, like in Ganganagar, Jhunjhunu and Bharatpur.

In Churu and Nagaur, Jats have kept both the parties guessing. Both the BJP and Congress have fielded Jats from the two seats.

ing to tap into Jat anger over denial of BJP ticket to sitting MP Rahul Kaswan, allegedly at the behest of Rajendra Rathore, a Rajput, while the BIP has thrown its weight behind paralympian Devendra Jhajhariya. Kaswan, who has since left the BJP, is now the Congress candidate. The poll contest is being seen a Kaswan versus Rathore fight. In an attempt to put the spotlight back on its candidate, the BJP coined the slogan, "Dilli mein Narendra, Churu mein Devendra", while Modi spoke about his "old relations" with Ihajhariya at a rally in the area.

The non-inclusion of Jat leaders in the top three posts in the as Union Minister. It has also inducted Jat leaders from the Congress like Jyoti Mirdha last

year, and Richpal Mirdha, Vijay Pal The BJP has fielded Jyoti

was fielded by the Congress. Dausa, where State minister

Congress's Murari Lal Meena.

Congress banking on Brijendra Ola's "clean" image versus BJP's Shubhkaran Choudhary, who was in the news over his remarks that anyone not voting for the BIP was a deshdrohi (anti-national).

party's cadre is strong.

Union minister Arjun Ram

Kirodi Lal Meena has been in the news for snapping at some of his rallies and berating the audience, is likely to see another close contest. Congress leader Sachin Pilot has a hold over the region, especially among the youth and Gujjars. The BJP has fielded Kanhaiya Lal Meena against the In Jhunjhunu, the contest seems evenly placed with the

In Jaipur City, the BJP is ex-

pected to win by a comfortable margin, so much so that Congress's Pratap Singh Khachariyawas sounded dejected when his name was announced. In Jaipur Rural, BJP's Rao Rajendra Singh may not be a strong candidate, but the

Meghwal seems comfortably placed in Bikaner, as does Swami Sumedhanand Saraswati (BJP) in

Sikar, where the Congress has left the seat for CPI(M) candidate Amra Ram. The Left has been shrinking in the region; in the Assembly elections last year, Amra Ram polled just 20,000 votes from Danta Ramgarh, behind Congress and BJP candidates. While there will be consolidation of Congress and Left votes, their joint share in 2014 was just 29 per cent against Saraswati's 46 per cent; in 2019, the BJP's vote share jumped to 58 per cent, against the 38 per cent polled by Congress and Left.

has made all-out efforts to retain the seat, making it prestige battle as Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma hails from the area. The **Jats of Bharatpur and Dholpur** have been seeking inclusion in the Central OBC list. Sharma has assured that the state is pursuing the issue, and indicated that there will be positive results. The Congress has fielded Sanjana Jatav, 25, who

tions by just 409 votes.

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No.ECR/CAO/Con/WT/Tender/North/02-24-25 Dated: 15.04.2024 NOTICE NO. - ECR-CAO-C-N-02-24-25 E-tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work 1. Name of work with it's location: Balance earthwork, Blanketing work in embankment and construction of minor bridges/RUBs from Sahebganj to Madhubani in connection with construction of Hajipur - Sagauli new BG rail line project. 2. Approx, cost of the work of: Rs. 89,48,41,855.70 3. Bid Security Amount: Rs. 46,24,200.00 4. Date and time for closing of tender: 06.05.2024 at 14.30 hrs. 5. Website particular, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and addressed of the office from where the tender form be purchased etc.: The above E-Tender, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on websie i.e. http://www.ireps.

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In Churu, the Congress is hop-

state — CM and two deputy CMs — is seen as one of the reasons behind the community's anger towards the BJP. The party has been trying to counter this. Nationally, it has allied with the RLD, and has been emphasising that Rajasthan Jat leaders have been appointed to several key posts, including Jagdeep Dhankhar as Vice President and Kailash Choudhary

Mirdha and Alok Beniwal recently. Mirdha from Nagaur, while the Congress has left the seat for Rashtriya Loktantrik Party (RLP) chief Hanuman Beniwal. This is a reversal of their 2019 roles when Beniwal won the seat as the NDA candidate, defeating Mirdha, who

The Congress is banking on Jat anger in Bharatpur too, but the BJP

lost the December Assembly elec-

In Alwar, the Congress has

within the BJP in the area.

Generally cloudy sky.

SKYWATCH

0.6°C above normal

#### THREE ACCUSED, INCLUDING WOMAN, ARRESTED

pretext of helping him, and

then stole Shakib's phone and

wallet as he inspected the dam-

to them and a scuffle broke out.

Over the next 20 minutes, the sit-

uation escalated as the men as-

saulted and stabbed the 36-year-

old. "Amidst the commotion, the

scooter rider shot at Shakib and

fired at the public, injuring a 15-

year-old homeless boy," said DCP

(North) Manoj Kumar Meena.

**HIMANSHU HARSH** 

AT THE Aam Aadmi Party's first

Sankalp Sabha at Ambedkar

Nagar's Joshi Colony on Tuesday,

part of its mega Lok Sabha poll

campaign, several residents ex-

pressed support for jailed Delhi

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

tions as the ED is yet to recover a

single piece of evidence against

Kejriwal," said Imran, who's been

an admirer of the CM since his

The campaign, 'Jail ka jawab

four Lok Sabha

vote se', will comprise 40 sabha

meetings in areas falling under

Constituencies — East, South,

West and New Delhi — that the

AAP is contesting as part of a

seat-sharing deal with the

Congress. The party's target is to

organise 200 sabhas by May 23.

AAP Delhi convener Gopal Rai

said, "They said Kejriwal was ar-

rested because he is corrupt. But

if there's still anyone in the po-

litical sphere who honestly in-

spires people, then it's Kejriwal."

Addressing the gathering,

Anna Hazare movement days.

"I don't believe in the allega-

NEW DELHI. APRIL 17

The latter, however, caught on

age to his vehicle.

## Behind cab driver's assault-murder near Red Fort, theft that turned fatal

**ARNABJIT SUR** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FOUR SMALL-TIME criminals and a theft that took a fatal turn - this was what led to the assault and murder of 36-year-old cab driver Shakib, in a road rage incident, near Red Fort on Monday night.

The Delhi Police Wednesday arrested three of the accused — Anita (28), her step-brother Sajid (19) and Salman (24) — while the fourth assailant is on the run.

An officer said the four had planned to carry out pickpocketing at a traffic signal, on the intersection between SP Marg and Netaji Subhash Marg, near Red Fort. Anita got her baby along to use as a distraction while the men carried out the crimes.

Police said CCTV footage showed the four at the spot one of them on a scooter along with a woman and a child while the other two were on foot when an accident took place between a cab and an e-rickshaw and the two drivers got into an altercation. As a crowd gathered around, the thieves sensed an op-

AAP protests post removal, asks EC: What of our complaints against BJP?

**HIMANSHU HARSH** NEW DELHI. APRIL 17

THE AAM Aadmi Party (AAP) Wednesday alleged that the Election Commission (EC) was working as an "extended wing" of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) as it defended its post on X against Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which was taken down after orders from the poll body.

During a press conference, AAP's chief national spokesperson Priyanka Kakkar alleged, "By aligning with the BJP, the EC has started considering itself above the Constitution and laws of the country."

An EC spokesperson declined to comment on the issue.

Questioning the EC's impartiality after X was asked to remove the party's tweet, she said, "Till now, we have given 9 complaints to EC... on BJP's hoardings... posters... The EC is not taking any action against them.'

The AAP spokesperson further said "without any evidence or recovery", the BJP is slinging mud at the Delhi CM on its social media posts but the EC had been "turning a blind eye".

"Where is the lie in our post? After the BIP received Rs 60 crore from Sarath Reddy, whom they previously depicted as the 'kingpin' of the alleged liquor scam, ED made him a witness... he got bail by giving false statements against Kejriwal," alleged Kakkar. "EC directed to remove the post without even giving us a chance to present our case," she added.

Earlier, the EC had also ordered *X* to take down certain posts of YSR Congress, TDP's N Chandrababu Naidu and Bihar Deputy Chief Minister and BJP leader Samrat Choudhary for violation of the Model Code of Conduct, the microblogging site had said on Tuesday.



Shakib succumbed from stab portunity to make a quick buck. While the woman stood at injuries on the right side of his a distance, the men nicked abdomen and gunshot wounds some money from the battery on the left side. vehicle driver's pocket on the

The DCP said the assailants then fled — two men and the woman drove off on the scooter towards the Old Delhi Railway Station, while the fourth escaped in the crowd.

#### Tracing the assailants

A case of murder was lodged and a team was constituted under ACP (Kotwali) Shankar Banerjee and SHO (Kotwali) Jatan Singh. They analysed CCTV footage around the spot and looked into criminal records of case. "... A thorough check was



(Left) Two of the men in police custody; (above) the victim, Shakib. Express

possible suspects.

On further investigation, footage showed the accused taking an auto-rickshaw — after possibly abandoning the scooter and auto drivers around the spot were questioned for leads. Video footage also threw up details of the scooter's numberplate; when checked, it turned out to be fake.

Eventually, it was a tip-off about the woman seen in the incident footage that provided a breakthrough. Police said they found that one Sunita, the woman's sister, lived in Yamuna Bazaar and was previously arrested in an attempt to murder

conducted for all persons named Sunita in Yamuna Bazaar but she had relocated to Ansar Vihar in Loni with her family," said an officer. Following raids, police found

that Sunita died six months ago and her sister, Anita, and mother lived in Bawana. Based on information provided by the mother, police arrested Anita from Khajuri Khas. Officers said through her, Sajid was also arrested from the same area. During questioning, they revealed that Salman and another man were also involved.

"The four used to frequent the Red Fort area and those nearby to carry out petty crimes but they have not been arrested in any case in Delhi so far," said another officer.

Police have booked Anita for harbouring the accused persons while the others have been booked for murder.

Police said Anita has shel-

tered several persons involved in criminal offences. Salman, a Sangam Vihar resident, was previously involved in two offences, including an Arms Act case, reg-

## At AAP's first Sankalp Sabha, support for Kejriwal — and discontent against BJP

Mandawali-based contractor.

"Kejriwal has done a good job for

the local people. We don't have any issue with any party, be it

AAP or BJP... we just want someone who will work for us." Peeved by BJP's 'mandirmasjid rhetoric', Alam added, "They don't work in sectors of employment and education... re-

Puran Chand, a retired Delhi printing press employee, declared that he would vote against Kejriwal's arrest. "BJP is scared of Kejriwal... Politicians are corrupt as long as they are in other parties, as soon as they join their (BJP) party... their washing machine, all

ligion won't run our homes."

become clean," he alleged. Dr Atul Gupta, a private anaesthesiologist, alleged that the whole motive for arresting Kejriwal was to distract people from the electoral bond issue. A former BJP loyalist, he said parties grow corrupt once they come to power. "I was a BJP supporter when Congress was in power... but once they (BJP) came to power, they surpassed Congress

in corruption," he claimed.

(The writer is an intern with The Indian Express)

#### **HIGHLIGHTS KEJRIWAL GOVT'S WORK & ACHIEVEMENTS**

## New website launched, AAP invokes Ram Rajya once again

**GAYATHRI MANI** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

WITH A silhouette of Lord Ram holding a bow and arrow juxtaposed with a picture of Arvind Kejriwal with the Tricolour in hand, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) launched a new website —AAP ka Ram Rajya — as part of its Lok Sabha poll campaign, on the occasion of Ram Navami Wednesday.

According to party insiders, the aim of the website is to attract "Hindu voters", highlight work done and schemes implemented by the AAP government in Delhi in the last nine years, and to keep Chief Minister Kejriwal's voice alive among the people. "In Lok Sabha polls, the BJP plays up the religious and Hindutva angle... AAP's pitch of Ram Rajya is also to get that vote bank, at least in Delhi...," said an AAP leader.

With a blue-coloured background screen and footprints in yellow — the party colours — the home page of the website (https://aapkaramrajya.com) reads "kya hai aapka Ram Rajya" (What is AAP's Ram Rajya?) in Hindi with a link to a video of Kejriwal giving a speech on the topic in the Delhi Assembly.

Scrolling down, the website is divided into four sections — Delhi, Punjab, Goa and Gujarat, bearing the faces of Kejriwal, Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, AAP's Goa and Maharashtra head Amit Palekar, and party's Gujarat chief Isudan Gadhvi, respectively. While clicking on the Delhi

and Punjab sections leads one to videos highlighting the party's schemes and achievements in



(L-R) Senior AAP leaders Saurabh Bharadwaj, Sanjay Singh, Atishi, and Jasmine Shah announcing the website. PTI

health, education, employment, agriculture, electricity, pilgrimage, and other sectors in the two states, the Goa and Gujarat sections only have one video each and the announcement: Coming soon.

Earlier in the day, announcing the website along with senior leaders Atishi, Saurabh Bharadwaj and Jasmine Shah, AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh said at a press conference, "What is the concept of Kejriwal's Ram Rajya? This is the Ram Rajya that was discussed and fulfilled by Lord Shri Ram. Mahatma Gandhi wanted to implement it to bring equality. To fulfil the dreams of Ram Rajya, Kejriwal has done tremendous work in Delhi in the last 10 years."

He said this is the first Ram Navami without Keiriwal, who is in jail in connection with the Delhi excise policy case. "Despite being in jail, the CM only cares about the people of Delhi, and he keeps sending out messages to the people through letters and us," said Singh.

The AAP leaders appealed to the people to see the website and vote on the basis of work done by the AAP governments in Delhi and Punjab.

Responding to the launch, Delhi BJP President Virendra Sachdeva said, "As soon as Kejriwal realised that the people of the country are welcoming the rapid construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, he and his party leaders quickly changed their stance overnight and started portraying themselves as supporters of temple construction, even depicting themselves as devotees of Lord Ram and Hanuman..."

He said the act of launching the Ram Rajva website by "corrupt leaders of the AAP" has hurt the people of Delhi."

The website, though, is not the first time AAP has invoked Lord Ram. Finance Minister Atishi had presented a Rs 76,000-crore Ram Rajya-themed budget for 2023-24 mentioning "Lord Ram" and "Ram Rajya" at least 40 times.

## Don't need certificate of being religious from anyone: Agarwal

Veteran Cong leader begins campaign from Chandni Chowk

**SAMAN HUSAIN** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE CONGRESS does not need a certificate of being religious from anyone, said veteran Congress leader and the party's Chandni Chowk candidate Jai Prakash Agarwal as he kicked off his Lok Sabha poll campaign on the occasion of Ram Navami Wednesday. During the day, he visited Old Delhi's Gauri Shankar Mandir along with his family to

seek blessings. Agarwal, a prominent figure in Delhi politics, began his career as a councillor in the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) and has served in various capacities in the Congress. Elected to the Parliament five times, he has represented the Northeast seat and has also been a member of the Rajya Sabha. In this election, he will face off against BJP candidate Praveen Khandelwal.

Highlighting his connection to religious practices, he said: "Ram Navami is a very important festival for me... Since childhood, my parents have been teaching me about religion... I used to hold their hands and visit this temple and the Hanuman Mandir, Shani temple, Markat wale Hanuman Ji, Nayi Dilli wale Hanuman Ji, Kalkaji Temple... So, that emotion is present in my heart and I have carried it my whole life."

He also emphasised the role played by the Congress in opening the Gauri Shankar temple and asserted that his religious credentials do not require validation



JP Agarwal visited Old Delhi's Gauri Shankar Mandir, along with his family, to seek blessings on Wednesday. Express

from others. "... We were the ones who opened the locks of this temple... (and) inaugurated (it)... the BIP tends to forget these facts but time is almighty and will remind them of (it)... we do not need a certificate of being religious from anyone," Agarwal said.

Asked about the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, he said: "If anything is done with a religious intent, then it is pious... the one who stands with the poor in hard times, who helps them get access to proper food, clothing and jobs is the one who will receive blessings..."

"I would have believed that the BIP would win (the election) if they had reduced inflation, hunger... if they had reduced joblessness, then our factories in different industrial areas would have also flourished. But that is not the case — wherever I look, I see that people are unhappy," the leader said.

He added, "During the Covid

pandemic, people walked hundreds of kilometres on foot... bodies lay rotting on the roads for days but there was no one to look after them. Did we see a single leader tear up due to this? Governance does not mean being forceful, one needs to govern with compassion in their heart and this is what religion also teaches us, this is why I think that Lord Ram will give his

blessings to the INDIA bloc." Meanwhile, Delhi Congress Chief Arvinder Singh Lovely held a meeting with the senior leadership to draw up a roadmap for the election campaign. Duties were assigned to party workers to ensure not only the victory of the three Congress candidates in Delhi but those of the alliance partners as well. "Congress and IN-DIA candidates are standing on very strong wickets and are sure to sweep all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi," he said.

## Free bus rides, monthly aid & Sunita bhabhi's troubles: AAP's message to woo women voters

At the Sankalp Sabha held in Ambedkar Nagar's Joshi Colony

**GAYATHRI MANI** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FREE BUS rides, Rs 1.000 per month for women, and Sunita Kejriwal's travails — this is the message being taken across by women leaders and workers of the Aam Aadmi Party to Delhi's female voters in a bid to gain their support ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Around 46% of the total voters in Delhi are women. According to the Election Commission. Delhi has a total 1.47 crore voters — 79 lakh male and 67 lakh female voters.

**on Tuesday.** *GopalRai/X* 

Attacking the BIP, he gues-

Also at the event was AAP's

tioned, "I want to ask why it

keeps changing candidates if its

previous ones have done well?..."

East Delhi Lok Sabha poll candi-

date, MLA Kuldeep Kumar, who

appealed to the people to give

him a chance and support the

party as an answer to Kejriwal's

arrest. "Delhi votes on May 25...

Let them (the BJP) know that the

people of Delhi won't tolerate

such actions against their

beloved CM... You have been

cheated for the past 10 years...

According to sources, the party has deployed a 2-4 member team in each mandal, ward and booth level to reach out to women, especially home makers, and tell them about the women-centric schemes and initiatives taken by the Arvind Kejriwal government.

"Earlier, we would highlight schemes like free bus travel, education for their children, electricity and the government's plan to give Rs 1,000 to every (eligible) woman under the Mahila Samman Yojana. But after the Chief Minister's arrest,

our teams also tell women about how Bhabhi (Sunita Kejriwal) is holding the entire party together...," said a leader from the women's wing.

Neither Maheish Girri nor

Gautam Gambhir (MPs from the

constituency) showed up once..."

Kumar, expressing their dis-

gruntlement against the ruling

BJP. "Gambhir (the current East

Delhi MP) plays cricket, what

does he know of governance?"

yelled an elderly lady, adding

that people must support a local

candidate so that they can reach

can't even meet their watch-

men," said Parvez Alam, a

"Forget meeting MPs, we

out to them in time of need.

Several residents agreed with

Another party leader said the strategy behind promoting Sunita is to woo voters as well as to make her popular among the public as she is the party's star campaigner and will be participating in rallies and sab-

Sarika Chaudhary, AAP women's wing president, said so far, 20,000 meetings have been held in slums, unauthorised colonies, and residential

areas of constituencies and wards falling under the four Lok Sabha constituencies — East, South, West and New Delhi that AAP is contesting. She said the target is to hold 45,000 meetings by the end of April.

"Due to the festival season, meetings slowed down but in the next couple of days, our target is to increase daily meetings to 4,000-4,500... Reaching out to women in affluent areas is difficult due to security reasons but women in unauthorised colonies and slums are participating in a large number of meetings...," she said.

9-YEAR-OLD SPOTTED A PATROL TEAM, SHARED HIS ORDEAL

## Bicycle stolen, boy gets brand new replacement — courtesy a Delhi cop

**ARNABJIT SUR** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

FOR NINE-YEAR-OLD Tarun, a resident of North Delhi's Aryapura, his bicycle meant everything. Gifted by a friend only three months ago, he took it everywhere, especially to go to school – a smooth ride of 15 minutes as compared to before when he had to change two buses and spend 30 minutes

commuting. However, he was left crestfallen last Wednesday when he

found out that his bike had been stolen from outside his house.

Tarun, who studies in Class 4, went crying to his mother's packaging factory where she worked as a labourer.

His mother, Dhanno Devi, told The Indian Express, "I told him to wait for a month at least as buying another bicycle would have been financially tough for us at the moment as we have to take care of three children... a good bicycle costs at least Rs 3,000 to 4,000... however, he was adamant that he wanted his cycle back

Tarun, whose father works at a plastic manufacturing factory and two sisters study in Classes 9 and 12, had received the cycle from a friend who gave it away as a gift after seeing his keenness to learn how to ride it.

The loss was particularly difficult to bear for Tarun as he had got the brakes repaired the same day the cycle got stolen.

Said Devi, "He got the cycle refurbished after taking some money from us... he was planning to take it to school as otherwise, he has to change two buses



to reach there. He usually reaches late, after 8 am, when

the classes have already begun..." A week later, on another Wednesday, April 17, he spotted a patrolling team of Delhi Police, went up to one of the officers, and shared his ordeal.

Said SHO of Subzi Mandi Police Station, Inspector Ram

Tarun with his new bicycle and the SHO of Subzi Mandi Police Station, Inspector Ram Manohar Mishra (centre). Express

Manohar Mishra. "We saw that the child was disheartened about his bike being stolen and his eyes had welled up...we brought him to the police station and asked him about details of the theft... he told us that he did not spot it outside his house when he came back from

school." The SHO and his team took Tarun to a local cycle shop and within hours, he had a brand

new bicycle. "I thought that Tarun's parents would not be able to afford

a replacement immediately and

noticed that the child was really attached to his bicycle. He told us that he will use the vehicle to ride to school, which usually takes him a very long time on a bus. So, I bought him the cycle at my personal expense," said Mishra. An elated Tarun told The

Indian Express, "I knew Delhi Police officers will help me get back my cycle... I am happy that now I have got a new cycle, which is better than the previous one... I can now go to school quickly without getting scolded for reaching late."

#### REPORT IN NGT SAYS ONLY 11,000 SUCH BOREWELLS SEALED

## City has 19k illegal borewells — close to half remain open

**ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

A REPORT filed in the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has highlighted Delhi's worst-kept secret illegal extraction of water. As per this report, submitted by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB), over 19,000 illegal borewells have been identified but only around 11,000

have been sealed so far. The highest number of such cases was seen in Northwest Delhi. Authorities in Northeast Delhi were not able to identify any illegal borewells (see box). While data showed over 20,000 illegal borewells, many were termed duplicate entries/not traceable. Actual number of illegal borewells in the city is anticipated to be much higher and water table in several areas that lie at a distance from Yamuna has dipped drastically over the years, experts said.

Delhi has been reeling under a water crisis in recent months, with a war of words breaking out between Water Minister Atishi and L-G V K Saxena after a woman was killed during a quarrel that started over the use of a common tap in East Delhi.

Extraction of groundwater is not allowed in Delhi without prior permission of the competent authority. The Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) in each district is required to supervise illegal groundwater extraction through Sub-Divisional Magistrates, and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee is required to assess environmental compensation, according to the Environment Department's standard operating procedure on regulation of groundwater extraction.

The matter was first raised before NGT's Principal Bench in 2022, wherein the applicant, Pritipal

WHAT THE REPORT SHOWS Illegal borewells Illegal borewells No. yet to be **North West** identified sealed/closed sealed/closed Central 8,178 20,522\* 11,197 North **North East** (\*some duplicate entries/not traceable/incomplete addresses) Shahdara A DISTRICT-WISE BREAK-UP West New **East** South Delhi ■ Identified
■ Sealed west South East 2,434 1,573 676 358 297 183 116 84 South South West Northeast: No illegal borewells on DJB's identified list Data submitted by the Delhi Jal Board to the NGT

Sharma, had asked that the Tribunal issue directions to seal illegal borewells on two plots in Aya Nagar, from where groundwater was being extracted and supplied to residents through water tankers at a cost. DPCC imposed an environmental compensation of Rs 9.46 lakh on the operator of the borewells earlier this month.

medial measures are taken.

The DPCC told the Tribunal

this week compensation of Rs 70.65 crore was imposed, but only Rs 53 lakh has been recovered from just 121 violators. The cost was imposed in 18,481 cases. The DPCC has used the amount on "development of infrastructure for water quality surveillance" pertaining to ground water.

Following the directions of the NGT, the Chief Secretary held a meeting on April 12 with officials of the DJB, the MCD, the DPCC, the Revenue Department, Delhi Police, and UD Department.

Post this, the DJB and Revenue Department were directed to take action on illegal borewells in areas that "are overexploited or where extraction of water is being used for profiteering," and "accord permissions where water table is satisfactory and water is potable."

"Illegal extraction also occurs when... permission is not given, even where it is feasible," read the minutes of the meeting.

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE DELHI High Court, while acquitting a man convicted under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act due to serious gaps in the prosecution's case, has observed that a wrongful conviction is far worse than a wrongful acquittal.

**MALAVIKA PRASAD** 

The High Court was hearing the plea of a man who was sentenced to five years' imprisonment by the trial court in January 2023 on charges of sexually assaulting his sister's niece, a 12year-old, in 2016. The man moved the High

Court against his conviction under Sections 8 (sexual assault) and 10 (aggravated sexual assault) of POCSO Act and offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"As a wrongful acquittal shakes the confidence of people, a wrongful conviction is far

The HC was hearing the plea of a man who was sentenced to five years'

worse than wrongful acquittal

HC: Wrongful conviction far

**ACQUITS MAN CONVICTED UNDER POCSO ACT** 

imprisonment by the trial court on charges of sexually assaulting a 12-year-old relative worse. A child abuser in the even-

tuality of false implication even continues to suffer a blot of social stigma which is much more painful than the rigours of a trial and imprisonment. Prosecution case is marred by inadequacies and contradictions which strike to the root of the prosecution case and, as such, prosecution has failed to bring home the charge against the accused beyond reasonable doubt," said a single judge bench of Justice Anoop Kumar Mendiratta in its April 15 order.

The order notes that the minor girl had alleged in 2016 that while her aunt (chachi/wife of father's brother) was in the bathroom, the accused (the brother of the aunt) had "kissed her and pressed her chest" and had thereafter threatened to kill her if she made a complaint against him.

The HC noted that the man's defence was supported by police entries and the deposition of two witnesses who were present along with him and other family members for resolving the matrimonial disputes between the aunt and uncle (the father's brother) of the minor girl, and called it "trustworthy".

"The fact that 'M' (aunt/chachi of victim) was not examined by the investigating agency to even confirm if any such incident had happened during her alleged proceeding to the bathroom at the relevant time, reflects that allegations have been accepted at face value," the bench said.

#### **BRIEFLY**

#### 3 children drown in Munak Canal

Delhi: Three New teenagers drowned while bathing in the Munak Canal near the Haiderpur water treatment plant in Rohini on Wednesday, police said. "A PCR call was received at 3.20 pm regarding the drowning of three children," a senior police officer said.

#### Fire in Hari Nagar building

New Delhi: A fire broke out in a three-storey residential building in west Delhi's Hari Nagar area, officials said on Wednesday. No casualties were reported, an official of the Delhi Fire Services (DFS) said. PTI

Noting that it found "serious

deficiencies in the working of governmental agencies assigned the task of taking remedial action on complaints regarding... illegal borewells in Delhi," the Tribunal had, in March, directed the DJB to file a status report on all illegal borewells identified and closed in the city. It had also asked the DPCC to submit details on environmental compensation that had been imposed, collected, and utilised, and directed the Chief Secretary to convene a meeting to ensure re-

The DPCC was directed at the meeting to expedite the recovery of cost imposed, while the DJB was asked to improve efficiency in water supply by preventing leakages. The amount collected as compensation for illegal groundwater extraction is to now be utilised for rejuvenation of water bodies.

Going by the minutes, "recovery of EC (environmental compensation) is poor," "District Magistrates stated that there is a need for verification of data of illegal borewells, as addresses are incomplete and vague, and "they also stated that they sometimes face strong objection from the public while sealing borewells... this is due to failure of DJB in providing drinking water." The matter is listed for hearing before the NGT Thursday.

In a separate matter before the NGT, DIB said in 2019 it had then identified over 19,000 illegal borewells.



#### **GLOBAL EMPLOYABILITY UNIVERSITY RANKINGS AND SURVEY**

By TIMES HIGHER EDUCATION (UK), one of the world's foremost university rankings organisation **BASED ON A** SURVEY CONDUCTED **AMONG 9,000 EMPLOYERS** WORLDWIDE

ONLY THESE SIX INSTITUTIONS FROM INDIA ARE RANKED AMONGST THE TOP IN THE WORLD FOR PRODUCING THE MOST EMPLOYABLE GRADUATES:

Delhi

IISc. Bangalore

IIT Bombay Amity University

varthana

IIM Ahmedabad

IIT Kharagpur

## Visit one hospital, mohalla clinic daily: Bharadwaj to chief secretary

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

**DELHI HEALTH Minister Saurabh** Bharadwaj has directed Chief Secretary Naresh Kumar to visit one government hospital and Mohalla Clinic in the Capital every day and get firsthand feedback on "scarcity" of medicines and consumables by interacting with patients and their attendants, officials said on Wednesday.

The minister has also asked Kumar to furnish daily reports on the matter.

In a statement, Bharadwaj termed Kumar's recent explanation – that all routine files of departments are not routed through

#### **Refund XUV** owner or replace with new car, Mahindra told

**NIRBHAY THAKUR** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

OVER A decade after buying a brand new Mahindra XUV that had its share of glitches, its owner can now flash a national consumer court order directing the vehicle manufacturer to either refund the entire Rs 13 lakh or replace it with a new car in 60 days. In December 2011, Ghaziabad

resident Manoj Kumar Sharma purchased a Mahindra XUV for Rs 13 lakh. To his misfortune, the car had faults in ignition, braking etc. In 2012, problems with ignition arose which led to a car crash wherein the consumer had a 'narrow escape'. It was then repaired by Mahindra, but to no avail.

Sharma moved various consumer courts that passed orders in his favour. However, Mahindra moved the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) in Delhi against these orders. NCDRC, on April 9, directed Mahindra to replace the XUV with a new vehicle or pay the entire refund of over Rs 13 lakh to the consumer in 60 days, failing which the court would impose a 10% interest on the amount from the date of purchase on the manufacturer. In its defence, Mahindra said

the car was sold in perfect condition and no defects were noticed. It also alleged that when the car was brought to the workshop, it was checked and repaired to the consumer's satisfaction. The owner was represented by advocates KK Sharma and Mohit Sharma.



Health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj

tions or their suitable alternatives.

him due to which he cannot supervise the availability of medicines and consumables – on the issue a "frivolous excuse". The minister said that the ground reports "unequivocally indicate" a "distressing scarcity" of free medicines while it has been asserted by the chief secretary and the health secretary that every patient is receiving all essential medica-

response on the statement. Referring to a meeting on April 8, Bharadwaj, in a file note, said the chief secretary, the health secretary and the director general health services had briefed him that all medicines are available, and if anything is not, their substitutes are being provided.

"In order to get a firsthand and true experience with respect to shortage of essential medicines and consumables in hospitals, it is directed that instead of taking shield of different rule positions, the chief secretary should personally visit one Delhi government hospital and one Mohalla Clinic during OPD (outdoor patient department)hours-8.00 am to 2.00 pm," the note stated.

## HC: Woman can't be held responsible for suicide by 'lover'

**MALAVIKA PRASAD** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE DELHI High Court has recently observed that if a "lover" dies by suicide due to "love failure", then the woman cannot be held responsible for abetting the man's suicide while granting 'prearrest' (anticipatory) bail to a woman and a man.

An FIR was registered by a man alleging that the two applicants had abetted his son's suicide. The woman was stated to be in a romantic relationship with the deceased while the other applicant was stated to be a common

A single-judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan, in its April 16 order, held, "If a lover commits suicide due to love failure, if a student commits suicide because of his poor performance in the examination, a client commits suicide because his case is dismissed, the lady, examiner, lawyer respectively cannot be held to have abetted the commission of suicide. For the wrong decision taken by a man of weak or frail mentality, another person cannot be blamed as having abetted his committing

suicide." When the body of the deceased was found by his mother in his room, a "suicide note" was also recovered in which he had written he was ending his life because of the applicants.

Justice Mahajan said a bare

reading of IPC Section 306 (abetment of suicide) demonstrates that there are twin requirements - suicide and abetment to commit suicide. The court said "prima facie" from the WhatsApp chats placed on record, it appeared that the deceased was of "sensitive nature and constantly threatened" the female applicant of ending life whenever she refused to talk to him. The court also noted that the two applicants were granted interim protection last year pursuant to which they joined the investigation.

"It is correct that the deceased had written the name of the applicants in the suicide note, but, in the opinion of this court, there is nothing mentioned, as to the nature of threats in the alleged suicide note written by the deceased of such an alarming proportion so as to drive a 'normal person' to contemplate suicide," the high court said. It said that prima facie, the alleged suicide note "only expressed a state of anguish" of the deceased towards the applicants, but it "cannot be inferred that the applicants had any intention" that led to the suicide.

"The allegation with respect to applicants teasing the deceased in regards to the failure of his romantic relationship with the (female) applicant... however, does not appear to be instigation which would amount to abetment of suicide in terms of Section 306 IPC," the high court underscored.

#### MAITHON POWER LIMITED (A Joint Venture of Tata Power and DVC)

Registered Office: Corporate Center, 34 Sant Tukaram Road, Carnac Bunder, Mumbai-400009, Maharashtra, India.

CIN-U74899MH2000PLC267297, Website: www.tatapower.com/mpl EXTRACT OF FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER/YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH, 2024

0 8		Quarter Ended	Quarter Ended	Year Ended	Year Ended	
Sr. No.	Particulars	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	31" March 2023	31 <sup>st</sup> March 2024	31 <sup>st</sup> March, 2023 Audited	
		Audited	Audited	Audited		
1	Total income from operations	903.16	655.84	3,360.32	3,027.95	
2	Net Profit for the period before tax	83.04	88.08	455.63	370.94	
3	Net Profit for the period after tax	90.42	78.69	448.70	339.20	
4	Total comprehensive income for the period	89.36	77.87	447.64	338.38	
5	Paid-up equity share capital (Face Value of ₹10 each)	1,508.92	1,508.92	1,508.92	1,508.92	
6	Reserves (Excluding Revaluation Reserve)	828.37	551.30	828.37	551.30	
7	Networth	2,337.29	2,060.22	2,337.29	2,060.22	
8	Outstanding debt	1,600.44	1,615.18	1,600.44	1,615.18	
9	Debt equity ratio	0.68	0.78	0.68	0.78	
10	Earnings per share (EPS)(of ₹10 each)					
	Basic (₹)*	0.60	0.52	2.97	2.25	
	Diluted (₹)*	0.60	0.52	2.97	2.25	
11	Debenture redemption reserve	49.63	129.05	49.63	129.05	
12	Debt service coverage ratio *	1.38	1.27	1.69	1.63	
13	Interest service coverage ratio *	4.44	3.41	5.11	3.88	

\*Quartely ratios are not annualised

 The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors at their meeting held on 16" April 2024.

The above is an extract of the detailed format of Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 52 of the SEB (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the annual financial Results is available on the website of stock exchange www.nseindia.com and Company's website www.tatapower.com/mpl.

For and on behalf of Board of directors Ashish Khanna DIN: 06699527 Chairman

Date : 16" April, 2024

Place: Mumbai

राष्ट्रीय विज्ञान शिक्षा एवं अनुसंधान संस्थान भुवनेश्वर NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE EDUCATION AND RESEARCH, BHUBANESWAR परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग, भारत सरकार का एक स्वयंशासित संस्थान AN AUTONOMOUS INSTITUTE UNDER DAE, GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

#### ADMISSION TO MASTERS PROGRAM IN MEDICAL AND RADIOLOGICAL PHYSICS

The National Institute of Science Education and Research (NISER) Bhubaneswar, invites applications from interested candidates for the M. Sc. program in Medical and Radiological Physics at the Centre for Medical and Radiation Physics, NISER, Odisha, India.

PROGRAM DETAILS

per AERB guidelines

IMPORTANT DATES

Degree awarding institute	Homi Bhabha National Institute, Mumbai and NISER			
Duration of the course	2 years Master's program and 1-year mandatory internship.			
Total No. of seats	10			
Minimum qualification and selection	60% marks in B. Sc with physics as a main course and JAM 2024 / JEST 2024 scorecards. The shortlisting will be based on JAM 2024 / JEST 2024 marks, followed by interview for selection.			
Fellowship	Rs. 16,000/- p.m. + HRA and mentorship grant as per DAE rules, during master's program.			
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Last date of online application Date of interview Announcement of final selection list

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However the Applicants / Co-Applicants/ Mortgagors herein above having failed to repay the ful amount with interest/other charges, notice is hereby given to the Applicants / Co-Applicants Mortgagors in particular and to the public in general that the undersigned being Authorized Officer of the M/s. Varthana Finance Private Ltd, Delhi, Branch has taken POSSESSION of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this day of 16-04-2024.

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President

ess.com

Kumar was not available for a





Mamata with Alipurduar candidate Prakash Baraik. Partha Paul

## In North Bengal stronghold of BJP, TMC eyes inroads

**2019 RESULTS** 

Alipurduar

Jalpaiguri

Cooch Behar

**SEATS WON** 

IN 2019

BJP

fielded Rajbongshi or Adivasi can-

didates to represent significant lo-

minister Nishith Pramanik in

Cooch Behar and Jayanta Roy in

Jalpaiguri and replaced sitting

Alipurduar MP John Barla with

stronghold when the party, riding

a 'Modi wave', won seven of the

eight seats there in 2019, with only

Malda South going to the

Congress, as the TMC was routed

recorded a landslide victory in the

2021 state elections, the BJP's win-

ning spree in North Bengal has

continued. Notably, the BJP won

six out of the seven Assembly seg-

ments under

the Jalpaiguri

Lok Sabha con-

stituency, with

the exception

of Rajganj, in

the 2019 polls.

However, by

2021, the TMC

had wrested

control over

five of the

Jalpaiguri seats

in the state

Assembly polls.

was hit by an

unexpected cy-

killed five and left hundreds in-

jured just after the Lok Sabha poll

dates were announced. Mamata

rushed to the site of devastation

was officially announced, the BJP

IT Cell chief and Bengal co-in-

charge, Amit Malviya, slammed

the CM of being allegedly indiffer-

that the Centre was to be blamed

for the scale of the disaster and al-

dues under the PM Awas Yojana-

said that the people of his con-

stituency would "strengthen

Modi ji's hand again". "People of

North Bengal have understood

that if India develops, their lives

(2019)

MA, Dunger College, Bikaner

₹2.35 CR

None

None

too will improve," he said.

I Hereby Declare

ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL, 70, Union Law Minister, Bikaner MP, fielded again

TOTAL ASSETS

**3.77** CR (2024)

Movable assets

Liabilities

Education

Immovable assets

Pending criminal cases

BJP candidate Tigga, however,

Hitting back, Abhishek said

ent towards North Bengal.

Grameen (PMAY-G).

However, even before her visit

within hours.

The district

that

Even though the TMC

north of the Ganges.

North Bengal turned into a BIP

Madarihat MLA Manoj Tigga.

The BJP has repeated Union

cal caste groups.

ATRI MITRA AND RAVIK **BHATTACHARYA** KOLKATA, APRIL 17

THE FIRST phase of the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal is crucial for the BIP as the party looks to exceed its tally of 18 seats out of the state's 42, which it won in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

The three constituencies in North Bengal going to the polls on April 19 – Alipurduar, Cooch Behar and Jalpaiguri – were all won by the BJP in 2019.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress (TMC), which has been ruling the state since 2011, has been going all out to wrest these seats from the BJP to make inroads into its main

Opposition's stronghold. Among the issues raised by the contenders in their campaigns are the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), and concerns over political vio-The lence.

Election

Commission (EC) has proposed to deploy 272 central armed police force (CAPF) battalions in the first phase to ensure that the

man every booth. With both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Mamata

central security personnel could

campaigning vigorously across North Bengal, the polling in the three seats is expected to set the tone for the other six phases. Mamata and her nephew Abhishek Banerjee have ad-

dressed multiple rallies in the three constituencies, with the party supremo alleging that the BJP "has done nothing for the people of North Bengal". Spearheading the BJP's cam-

paign, PM Modi too visited North Bengal more than once and highlighted corruption allegations and the Sandeshkhali cases.

In the three first-phase seats, both the BJP and the TMC have PHASE 1 CAMPAIGN COMES TO A CLOSE

## In three-way Tamil Nadu battle, DMK in pole position amid challenge from AIADMK, BJP

DMK camp is confident but says there might be 'narrow' margins in few contests

**ARUN JANARDHANAN** CHENNAI, APRIL 17

THE LOK Sabha elections in Tamil Nadu have always been swept by one of the two major alliances since 2004, barring 2009 when there was a split verdict. That year, the DMK and its allies won 27 of the 39 seats, while its rival coalition, led by the AIADMK won the rest of the seats.

With the state's 39 seats going to the polls on April 19, there are signs that the electoral battle may again be headed for a similar "one-sided" mandate. However, there seems to be some difference. Though the ruling DMK seems to be in the pole position just like in 2019, when the alliance led by it bagged 38 seats in a landslide, the party faces strong resistance in some regions.

In this election, the DMK is also facing a tough fight in some of those seats where the AIADMK – which severed ties with the NDA





in September last year and is contesting the polls alone – has seemingly fielded weak nominees, while the BIP-led alliance has named strong candidates. A notable exception in this regard is Coimbatore, where both the DMK and the AIADMK are working overtime to counter the challenge posed by state BJP chief and former IPS officer K Annamalai.

Prominent NDA faces who are likely to give their rivals a run for their money include the BJP's Nainar Nagendran in Tirunelveli, Puthiya Needhi Katchi (PNK)

founder and BJP candidate A C Shanmugam in Vellore, BJP's Pon Radhakrishnan in Kanyakumari, TTV Dhinakaran of the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK) in Theni and O Panneerselvam, who is contesting from Ramananthapuram as an Independent with the support of the NDA.

The AIADMK, on the other hand, is likely to fiercely counter the DMK in its stronghold of Western Tamil Nadu. Dharmapuri may especially be headed for a photo finish as Pattali Makkal

Katchi (PMK) leader and former Union minister Anbumani Ramadoss's wife Soumya is in the fray as an NDA candidate.

The BIP, on the other hand, is

optimistic of its prospects in Theni and Coimbatore. Along with Dharmapuri and Tirupur, these four seats were flagged by the DMK leadership for "special focus" in the campaign's last leg. Despite its dismal show in the

2019 elections, the BJP is hopeful of improving its vote share from the 3.6% it garnered five years ago while failing to open its account.

As various independent assessments predict that the BJP may get 10-15% of the votes this time, Annamalai claims that this figure would go higher.

Despite the AIADMK and the NDA intensifying their campaigns in the last leg, the DMK remains confident of sailing through.

Meanwhile, the AIADMK insiders

are upbeat about the party's

chances in seats like Kallakurichi,

Namakkal, Pollachi, and Tiruppur.

DMK sources admit that their concerns are primarily about "potential narrow wins" in seats like

**2019 RESULTS** 

Tiruppur and Dharmapuri. The DMK's confidence, sources say, stems from the party's

"successful steering" of its alliance since 2018. The DMK leads the alliance comprising the Congress Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and the Left Front. DMK insiders also claim that the party's confidence is further bolstered by the "successful political accommodation" of allies. The DMK has even let Vidhuthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi (VCK) and Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam

(DMMK) contest on its symbol.

## In Western UP, crackdown on Opp a concern but BJP rides high on welfare

**LALMANI VERMA** 

MUZAFFARNAGAR, BIJNOR, MORADABAD, APRIL 17

**AMONG MANY voters across** several Western Uttar Pradesh constituencies bound for the Lok Sabha polls in the first phase on April 19, there seems to be some resonance for the Opposition parties in the wake of arrests of Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and ex-Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren by Central agencies and the the Income Tax department's freezing of the Congress party's bank accounts. But, while they question the timing of these actions, they don't find it a strong enough reason to vote against the ruling BJP.

The battle in these eight seats would be mainly between the leged the state was not paid its BJP-RLD combine and the SP-Congress alliance, while the BSP is contesting solo in the polls.

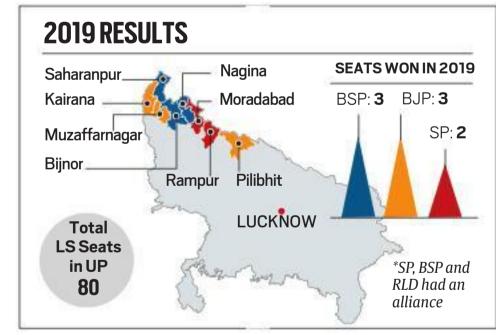
The INDIA bloc in UP, comprising the SP, Congress and AAP, may have gone to town calling the crackdown against the Opposition leaders an alleged attack on democracy and describing the electoral bonds scheme as a "scam" — but these issues are yet to dominate talks. Instead, rural voters are mainly discussing caste and local candidates.

During a lengthy political debate outside a private sugar mill in Muzaffarnagar's Khatauli last Friday, sugarcane farmer Guddu Gujjar of Bahanpur village criticised the Narendra Modi government for inflation and the menace of "dangar (stray cattle)" that damage crops.

When asked about the agencies' action against Opposition



Akhilesh Yadav with AAP leader Sanjay Singh at a meeting. PTI



leaders, Gujjar said: "He who wields the cane, owns the buffalo. Had the ED been fair, it would have taken action against some BJP leaders too."

Vinod Saini, who runs a shop selling mini harvesters, wondered why the agencies did not act against the Opposition leaders in the past 10 years. "The BIP is trying to cripple the Opposition," he said.

The RLD, which has its support base across Western UP,

crossed over from the INDIA bloc to the BIP-led NDA in February this year, giving it a shot in the arm in the elections.

In Kawal village, which falls under Muzaffarnagar district but is part of the Bijnor Lok Sabha constituency, farmer Krishnapal Saini, speaking about the arrests of Opposition leaders, said, "He who does wrong, will have to pay the price. But action should also be taken against the corrupt within the BJP."

Meerapur RLD MLA Chandan Chaudhan is the NDA candidate in Bijnor Lok Sabha seat.

Jat-dominated Rathur village of Jansath town is part of the Muzaffarnagar seat where Union minister Sanjeev Balyan is the BJP candidate against the SP's former MP Harendra Singh Malik. Both are Jats. The BSP has fielded Dara Singh Prajapati, an OBC.

RLD supporter Ahlawat said he would vote for the BJP in Muzaffarnagar. His wife Somwati had voted for the RLD in 2014 and 2019 but is a "a Modi fan" now. Ahlawat's friend Bhangeram Saini said the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) promised by the BJP is a "necessity".

Regarding Opposition allegations on the BJP about electoral bonds, he said, "They are a means of taking donations. In the past too, ruling parties got the highest donation. What's new in that?" Regarding the I-T raids on the

Congress, Pradeep Karnwal, a Brahmin who lives in the Vaishnav Vihar colony near Nagina town in Bijnor district, said, "The BIP is doing manmarzi (highhandedness). How will Congress campaign if it can't use money in its bank accounts?"

Regarding Kejriwal's arrest, Mohammad Naim in Moradabad's Kanth area said the Delhi CM and the AAP were gaining popularity nationwide, even in Western UP.

"The arrest of key AAP leaders has disturbed the momentum of the INDIA bloc. So, actions against Opposition leaders appear to be strategic moves of the BJP. People think about these issues, but they ultimately vote on caste and religion."



## Chhindwara, lone Cong seat in MP, the biggest test for Naths

**ANAND MOHAN J** BHOPAL, APRIL 17

IN TWO days, six constituencies in Madhya Pradesh — Sidhi, Shahdol, Jabalpur, Mandla, Balaghat, and Chhindwara — that comprise the state's tribal belt will cast their vote.

Chhindwara was the lone seat in Madhya Pradesh that the Congress managed to win in 2019. This time, all eyes are on whether the party can retain it, especially in the face of a challenge being mounted to Chhindwara MP Nakul Nath, the son of former Chief Minister Kamal Nath. Over the past couple of months, the BJP state unit has gone all out to wean away Nath's support bases and poach Congress loyalists, including three-time tribal MLA and sitting Chhindwara mayor Vikram Ahake. The party claims that 2,000 Congress leaders who were disgruntled with the Naths had joined the BJP. Nakul had won Chhindwara last time by a margin of 37,536 votes.

Historically, Madhya Pradesh's estimated 21% tribal population was a base that the Congress nurtured. However, the BIP has slowly made inroads into these areas. The Assembly elections last November, when the BJP secured 163 of the 230 Assembly seats, further affirmed that this vote has been swinging towards the BJP. The BJP won 24 of 47 tribal seats in 2023, an improvement from 2018 when the party could win only 16 as compared to the Congress's 30.

The BIP attributed this to wel-

fare schemes, local governance and the celebration of tribal icons by top leaders, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The Congress, meanwhile, had won 66 seats in the Assembly polls. In the Assembly constituencies that fall within the boundaries of the six seats voting in Phase 1 the party retained Chhindwara and four of the five seats in the Balaghat district. It also defeated former Union minister Faggan Singh Kulaste from the Niwas seat.

The Congress believes these Assembly results are not reflective of the Lok Sabha elections and is hoping that it can retain Chhindwara.

Apart from Chhindwara, Mandla is another seat where the Congress sees a fighting chance. Here, the party's four-time MLA, Omkar Singh Markam, is contesting against sitting BJP MP Faggan Singh Kulaste.

ning high against Kulaste over the lack of development, the Congress hopes to play spoilsport. In the rest of the seats, the BJP feels it doesn't have much of a

With anti-incumbency run-

competition owing to a poor Congress organisation.

The BJP has once again fielded

sitting Shahdol MP Himadri Singh while on the Congress side is three-time MLA Phundelal Marko. In Sidhi, the ruling party has fielded Rajesh Mishra, who will take on Kamleshwar Patel. In Jabalpur, the BJP has fielded Ashish Dubey and the Congress has fielded Dinesh Yadav. In Balaghat, the BJP's candidate is Bharti Paradi, while the Congress candidate is Samrat Saraswat.

### SWING STATES

## In Vidarbha face-off, Cong survival, BJP prestige at stake

#### **VALLABHOZARKAR** MUMBAI, APRIL 17

THE CONGRESS seems to be fighting for survival, while the BJP's prestige is at stake as five Lok Sabha seats from Maharashtra's Vidarbha region go to the polls on Friday in the first phase. The contest will see bigwigs like Union minister Nitin Gadkari and state minister Sudhir Mungantiwar in the fray from Nagpur and Chandrapur respectively.

In 2019, the BJP had won three - Gadchiroli-Chimur, Bhandara-Gondia and Nagpur – of these five seats while the undivided Sena and Congress had won Ramtek and Chandrapur respectively. Following the political re-

mess.com

alignment in the state after the splits in the Shiv Sena and NCP, both the Congress and BJP seem to be wary about which side the current may blow.

Sources in the Congress claim the OBC Kunbi community's anger with the BJP over "flipflops" on the Maratha quota issue may work in its favour in Nagpur, Chandrapur and Bhandara-Gondia.

The NDA – comprising the BJP, Shiv Sena and NCP – has gone into the polls on the development plank while the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) – comprising the Congress, Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) – is trying to rake up issues of growing unemployment.

A direct fight between the Congress and BJP is on the cards

in four of the five seats, which have distinct issues ranging from Naxalism to farmer distress.

Incidentally, Chandrapur was the only Lok Sabha seat among the state's 48 that the grand old party had won five years ago. In an attempt to regain its hold in the region, once seen as the party's bastion, the Congress deployed its top leaders like former president Rahul Gandhi in Bhandara-Gondia and party chief Mallikariun Kharge in Nagpur. On the other hand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held two rallies – one each in Chandrapur and Ramtek – while Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed a

rally in Bhandara-Gondia. In Ramtek, the Shiv Sena's Raju Parve will take on the **2019 RESULTS ■**Gadchiroli-Chimur

■ Bhandara-Gondia ■ Nagpur ■ Ramtek ■ Chandrapur BIP **Undivided Shiv Sena 1 Congress** 

Congress's Shyamkumar Barve, who became the party's official candidate after his wife Rashmi Barve's nomination was rejected. The Sena here is also marred by infighting after a section of its leaders claimed that Parve is an "outsider". In the run-up to the

elections, Parve was declared the candidate reportedly after the BIP pressured its ally to drop sitting MP Krupal Tumane.

In Chandrapur, BJP minister Mungantiwar will be up against the Congress's Pratibha Dhanorkar, the widow of former MP Suresh Dhanorkar, who passed away last year.

Meanwhile, Gadkari, who is seeking his third straight term from Nagpur, will take on Vikas Thakre. Despite the Union minister's vote share rising by 10 percentage points in the last election as compared to 2014, Congress insiders believe that the party stands a chance as people have increasingly been talking about local

issues. In Bhandara-Gondia, seen to

be the paddy belt of the region, sitting BJP MP Sunil Mendhe will lock horns with Prashant Padole of the Congress, which has fielded a candidate here for the first time in 25 years. The seat almost always fell in the undivided NCP's kitty as it is considered to be a stronghold of Rajya Sabha MP Praful Patel, who sided with Ajit Pawar after the party's split.

The Gadchiroli-Chimur seat, which is the largest constituency in the state by size and is seen to be Naxal-affected, is gearing up for a tough contest as sitting MP Ashok Nete of the BJP takes on Gandhian scholar Namdeo Kirsan of the Congress, which is banking on the influence of Leader of the Opposition Vijay Waddettiwar in the region.

### INDIANEXPRESS.COM/ELECTIONS

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IN TAMIL NADU **AIADMK BATTLES** 

**QUESTIONS OF LEGACY, FUTURE AFTER MGR, JAYA** 

## THE INDIAN EXPRESS, THURSDAY, APRIL 18, 2024 DECISION 2024





TO THE LAST MILE

Cornelius Mawa, a porter, carries VVPAT and EVMs to a remote polling station in Shillong on Wednesday, two days ahead of the first phase of LS polls. Reuters

## 'Our identity, our land, In TMC manifesto, CAA repeal our jobs': Mehbooba sets campaign tone

**BASHAARAT MASOOD** PULWAMA, SHOPIAN, APRIL 17

THE SILENCE of villages in south Kashmir was on Wednesday interrupted by the noise of car engines and loudspeakers. For the first time since the abrogation of J&K's special status in 2019, south Kashmir's Pulwama and Shopian districts were witnessing political activity at this scale.

Leading the roadshow, which stretched over 60 kilometres and passed through 30 villages, was former CM and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti. In what is expected to set the tone of her campaign, she chose not to focus on the traditional "bijli, sadak, paani" discourse, appealing instead to people's emotions with a campaign focused on identity, unity, demographics and jobs.

"This time, I am not seeking votes for a road, a pavement or a bridge," she told residents of Imam Sahib village. "This time, I am seeking your votes to take your voice to the Parliament. I am seeking votes for our iden-

"They (referring to the BJP at the Centre) want to assault our identity; their eyes are on our land and jobs," she said at Nervani village. "We will not let

tity, for our land and our jobs."

and a slew of welfare schemes

KOLKATA, APRIL 17

PDP chief is

fighting from

Anantnag-

Rajouri seat

them control these things. But for

that you have to raise your voice.

They want us to surrender, accept

defeat. They have pushed us into

the river, our job is to stay afloat."

with posters and slogans such as

"Hubbul Watan Minal Iman (lov-

ing one's homeland is a part of

faith)" and Faiz Ahmed Faiz's "Bol

ke lab azad hain tere (Speak out,

your words are free)" — reminis-

cent of the Assembly elections

one rope," she told people in

Kashmiri while visiting Wachi.

"Na bikne wali, na jhukne wali

(she won't be a sellout, nor will

she bend)," the crowd shouted,

an epithet used for separatist pa-

triarch Syed Ali Shah Geelani in

considerable violence over the

past decade, she said to resi-

dents, "Your children were

slapped with PSA (Public Safety

Act); so was I." **FULL REPORT** 

www.indianexpress.com

In south Kashmir, which saw

"Let all unite and hold on to

from 1987.

his rallies.

The roadshow was peppered

FROM REPEALING the con-Citizenship tentious Amendment Act (CAA) to giving 10 free LPG cylinders to BPL families, the Trinamool Congress, led by West Bengal Chief Minister Banerjee, Mamata Wednesday released its 10-point manifesto in Kolkata. Titled "Didir Shopoth" or

"Mamata's pledges", the TMC manifesto promised to implement several welfare schemes of the West Bengal government such as Lakshmir Bhandar, Kanyasree across the country, if it formed the government at the Centre. "We are committing to form-

ing the government at the Centre as part of the INDIA alliance. TMC is committed to fulfilling these promises...," TMC MP Derek O'Brien said during the unveiling of the manifesto in Kolkata along with former state Finance Minister Amit Mitra and his successor Chandrima Bhattacharya.

TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee wrote in the party's manifesto, "In the last 10 years, the BJP government has relentlessly undermined the tenets of federalism, pluralism, liberty, and democracy enshrined in the Constitution. Misusing Central agencies, they have tried to suppress the Opposition voices and



**West Bengal CM and TMC** chief Mamata Banerjee in Silchar, Wednesday. Express

target anyone who questions their anti-people policies.'

Promising to repeal the CAA, the rules of which were notified by the BJP government at the Centre just weeks ahead of the election dates were announced, the TMC manifesto said, "The botched-up CAA will be abolished and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) will be discontinued. We will also not implement the UCC.'

The manifesto also promised to bring a constitutional amendment to Article 155 to ensure that "Governors are appointed in consultation with state legislatures."

The party also said that it would "not accept the 'One Nation, One Election' proposal, saying, "The federal rights of all states will be firmly preserved."

toppling governments will be de-

Criticising the BJP, the party manifesto said, "The practice of cisively curtailed... We will Constitution to make the provisions of the anti-defection law more explicit and immediate in their application," it said.

Among several welfare measures announced in its manifesto included free 5 kg of ration delivered to the doorstep of every BJP family every month, "dignified housing" for all poor families in the country, adequate access to clean cooking fuel and "affordable" prices of petrol and diesel through a "price stabilization fund" to curb "fluctuations". Giving the slogan of "bord-

hito aay, shromikder sahay" (Increased income to help labourers), the TMC promised 100 days of guaranteed work all MGNREGA job card holders with an increased minimum wage of Rs 400 per day, nationally."

To the farmers, the TMC promised that minimum support price (MSP) for crops will be legally ensured as per the recommendations of the Swaminathan Commission, and added that it would be set at a minimum of 50% higher than the average cost of production for all crops.

Among other pledges, the manifesto also promised to institute a mandatory three-year 'cooling-off period' before retired judges can accept government appointments or political **WITH PTI INPUTS** 

#### **OPP RALLY IN GHAZIABAD**

## 'Undercurrent in favour of INDIA bloc': Akhilesh, Rahul hold unity show

**LALMANI VERMA** GHAZIABAD. APRIL 17

SHARING THE stage in Ghaziabad on Wednesday, the last day of canvassing for the first phase of Lok Sabha elections on April 19, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav took on the BJP on a range of issues — from dynastic politics to poll bonds and said the ruling party will be "restricted to 150 seats".

The two leaders also reasserted their confidence in the Opposition INDIA bloc's performance in the coming polls, which will see the ruling BJP-led NDA attempt a rare third term in

"We are getting reports from every state that our election (prospects) are improving and there is an undercurrent," Rahul, flanked by Akhilesh, told media persons after the rally, without specifying the number of seats he believed his party would win. Targeting the BIP and calling

the coming polls "an election of ideology", Rahul said, "On one side are the RSS and BJP who are trying to finish the Constitution and the democratic set-up. On the other side is INDIA and Congress which are trying to defend and protect the Constitution and democracy."

Saying that "winds of change were blowing in UP and will spread across the country", Akhilesh claimed the BJP "will be swept off" by the INDIA bloc "from Ghaziabad to Ghazipur". "PDA (pichhda, Dalit and alp-



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav in Ghaziabad, UP, on Wednesday. Gajendra Yadav

sankhyak) will defeat the NDA," he said.

Rahul also flagged "unemployment, inflation, and representation" as the major issues in the coming elections. When asked about his earlier statement on eradicating poverty "with one swipe", he said, "No one is saying that poverty will be finished in one go. We are saying that poverty can be given a big blow."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had criticised Rahul for the poverty remark, calling him a "royal magician".

Criticising the PM, Rahul said: "The reality today is that 22 individuals have money equal to what 70 crore people have. Another reason for poverty is that Modi has concentrated all the money with 20 to 25 individuals... He has given nothing to the poor in the past 10 years."

On BJP's allegation of "parivarwad (dynastic politics)" against Opposition parties, Akhilesh said, "The BJP people

should today take a pledge that they will not give a ticket to any family member and will not appeal to any parivarwala for votes.

He also spoke about electoral bonds and said the nowscrapped scheme had exposed the BJP. "The BJP has become a godown of all the corrupt.' Akhilesh said. Rahul said electoral bonds

were the "world's biggest scheme of extortion". All the explanations of the PM on the scheme were not going to make any difference, he added, "Because the entire nation knows that the Prime Minister is a champion of corruption." As per the seat-sharing pact

in UP, while the Congress is contesting 17 seats, the SP will fight for 62 seats. SP has also given one seat to the TMC. Meanwhile, on a question

about the possibility of him contesting from Amethi or Rae Bareli, Rahul said he will abide by his party's decision.

#### BALLOTIN **UTTAR PRADESH BJP MLA fields**

son against party nominee

Lucknow: Raising a banner of revolt, BJP MLA Babulal Chaudhary has fielded his son against the party candidate and incumbent MP Rajkumar Chahar from the Fatehpur Sikri Lok Sabha seat. Babulal Chaudhary, who is from the Jat community, asserted that his son Rameshwar Chaudhary was selected through consensus reached at a panchayat of community.

#### **MAHARASHTRA** There is, will be a

Modi wave: Rana *Amravati:* BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Amravati, Navneet Rana, Wednesday blamed political rivals for "distorting" her remarks to make it seem as if she was

questioning the existence of a "Modi wave". "There was a Modi wave, there is a Modi wave and there will be a Modi wave," Rana said.

## make BJP win Nanded, shift of voters still open

As Chavan battles to

**ALOK DESHPANDE** NANDED, APRIL 17

AS THEY waited for a ride in the scorching heat on the road leading to Pethvadaj town in Nanded's Mukhed tehsil, an elderly couple wondered why Ashok Chavan chose to quit his party overnight. "We voted for him (Ashok Chavan) and he became the Chief Minister. How can he change his party suddenly? We will have to decide what to do now," the man said.

Ashok Chavan, two-time Maharashtra Chief Minister and former Maharashtra Congress chief, is no longer in his original party. He is the Rajya Sabha MP of ruling BJP and is not even contesting the ongoing Lok Sabha elections in Nanded. But for people and his opponents, he is BJP's candidate, and the outcome of this election will determine his future.

"My fight is against Ashok Chavan. Prataprao (the BJP candidate and incumbent Lok Sabha MP) was disliked by his own party legislators who had demanded a different candidate from BJP leadership. He is disliked by the people of Nanded. Had it not been for Ashok Chavan, the



election," Congress candidate and former MLA Vasant Chavan said. But with less than 10 days for the polling, several issues have

**Former** 

started bothering the BJP. Over the past two weeks, several instances of Maratha workers in various villages stopping the BIP leaders from entering have been recorded. BJP's slogan "Ab ki bar 400 par'

is facing negative reactions as it is getting attached with the opposition narrative of BJP's eye on changing the Constitution. So much is the impact that Chavan in a press conference had to assure that the constitution will not be changed. Muslims, who have been the traditional supporters of Ashok Chavan, have yet not opened the cards as he continues to try to woo the community recalling the ties of the last 40 years With 4.75 lakh Muslim and Dalit votes, the BIP is trying hard to keep up momentum. FULL REPORT

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## Second seat: Why Naveen is contesting from West Odisha

**SUJIT BISOYI** 

BHUBANESWAR, APRIL 17

Patnaik will contest from a second seat, Kantabanji, in the state's western region, besides his traditional bastion of Hinjili, in the upcoming Assembly elections. Party insiders say Patnaik

**ODISHA CHIEF Minister Naveen** 

picking a second seat in the western part of the state — a rerun of the 2019 polls — is aimed to counter the BJP's growth in the region. As compared to the coastal and southern regions, the BJD, leaders say, is "relatively weak" in the western parts, and Patnaik's decision is meant to

highlight his commitment to the region, which comprises five Lok Sabha seats and 35 assembly segments. Kantabanji falls under the Balangir Lok Sabha segment.

It was in 2019 that Patnaik, for the first time in his political journey, decided to contest from a seat in the western region, sensing BJP's emergence in the state. He had then chosen Bijepur, under the Bargarh parliamentary seat, apart from Hinjili. While he won both the seats with a thumping majority, Patnaik retained his traditional seat, vacating Bijepur.

His decision to contest from a second seat in western Odisha had helped the regional party win a majority of assembly seats,



polls from Hinjili and Kantabanji

Fighting

Assembly

even as the BJP swept the Lok Sabha polls in the region, winning all five parliamentary constituencies. Lok Sabha and assembly polls in the state are held simultaneously.

"The CM is not the leader of one particular constituency, he is the leader of 4.5 crore people. People in all 147 constituencies want the CM to represent them in the assembly. Though he can represent only one seat as per law, the move proves his commitment to all constituencies," senior BJD leader Prasanna Acharya said.

In Kantabanji, Patnaik will take on sitting Congress MLA Santosh Singh Saluja, who has been repeated by the party, and BJP's Laxman Bag, who lost the last poll by a narrow margin.

In the last assembly polls in Kantabanji, Bag had secured 64,118 votes (33.53%), losing by just 118. BJD's Ajay Kumar Das had finished third in Kantabanji,

securing 54,527 votes (28.51%). With a significant presence of Punjabi and Marwari voters, Kantabanji has traditionally witnessed a fight between two archrivals — Saluja and BJD's Ayub Khan – since 2000.

The constituency's geographical position — it shares the border with neighbouring Chhattisgarh and is nestled between the Balangir and Kalahandi parliamentary constituencies — makes it strategically significant. "In fighting from here, the chief minister also hopes to also counter the BJP wave from Chhattisgarh," said a senior BID leader.

Ever since he started contesting assembly polls in Odisha in 2000, Patnaik has been representing the Hinjili assembly seat under Aska Lok Sabha seat. Both assembly seats will go to polls in the fifth phase, on May 20.

### EXPRESS INTERVIEW

## 'This election is about choosing the Prime Minister, making it a vote for Modi'

AS UTTARAKHAND gears up to cast its votes for all five Lok Sabha seats on April 19, the contest on the Garhwal seat, won by the BJP on all but two occasions in the past four decades, is keenly anticipated. The party has nominated its national chief spokesperson **ANIL BALUNI** for the seat. He spoke with **AVANEESH MISHRA**. Excerpts

You have been campaigning in Garhwal for several days now. What has been your experience so far?

This election has been unlike any other in my lifetime. Even children enthusiastically rally behind our flag, chanting 'ab ki baar 400 paar' and 'Modi hai to mumkin hai'. This fervour indicates a landslide victory in the making. With

just five Lok Sabha seats in Uttarakhand, we are poised to win them all. For example, in the constituency of Devprayag Vidhan Sabha, our projections suggest 80-85% votes to us. Moreover, many political analysts predict a sweep of 76-77 seats out of 80 in Uttar Pradesh as well. While on the national level we are targeting over 400 seats, in Uttarakhand we are saying 'ab ki baar 25 lakh paar', which means we will win all five seats with a margin of over 5 lakh votes each.

#### What are the main issues?

First of all, people recognise that this election is about choosing the Prime Minister, making it a vote for Narendra Modi. Consistently, the campaign's key themes have been positive, the government's accomplishments over the past decade. While countries like the US, the UK, France and Germany struggled to provide free vaccines during the Covid-19 pandemic, Modi ji ensured their distribution. Free ration reaches 80 crore

people, everyone holds Ayushman cards, now we will roll it out for all senior citizens over 70, farmers benefit from Kisan Samman Nidhi, and over 4 crore people have been provided housing. Additionally, schemes like lakhpati didi and drone didi empower women.

Looking ahead, our agenda focuses on 'developed India, developed Uttarakhand, and developed Garhwal'. Initiatives like the Rishikesh-Karnprayag railway line promise transformative



Anil Baluni (left) with Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami at Joshimath in Chamoli on Tuesday. ANI

change for Uttarakhand. Last year, the Chardham vatra attracted 50-60 lakh pilgrims, underscoring the region's immense tourism potential. My constituency, Garhwal, boasts attractions like Rishikesh's global recognition for yoga and wellness, the hill station of Pauri,

Lansdowne, thrilling Ganga rafting adventures, and Jim Corbett National Park. We are committed to developing these destinations, curbing migration, and ensuring employment opportunities in every household, with tourism serving as the primary driver.

#### You have held important posts like national chief spokesperson of BIP... How does that play out in the campaign?

PTI

I have indeed been closely associated with the central leadership and have established strong connections with central ministers. As a result, people have high expectations of me, believing I can effectively address their concerns and deliver results. In a sense, this election carries the weight of hope, a belief in the future, as voters look to me to fulfil their aspirations. They see me as a candidate rooted in the state and also as one who will be their voice in Parliament, work as a bridge between state and the centre.

Garhwal has recently faced ecological challenges like

#### land subsidence in Joshimath. How do you plan to address these issues if elected?

Ecological concerns, such as those seen in the Himalayan range, are indeed pressing issues. While halting such phenomena entirely may prove challenging, we are committed to minimising its impact and facilitating the relocation of affected populations with minimal disruption.

The Ankita Bhandari murder case has drawn attention in this constituency, with the Congress targeting the BIP over it. How do you respond?

The Congress's attempts to divert attention from developmental issues are evident. Ankita Bhandari was a daughter of Uttarakhand and any injustice

have always spoken whenever there was oppression against any Uttarakhandi anywhere in the country. We remain vigilant regarding this case, and if any wrongdoing is found, I will be at the forefront of demanding justice.

against her concerns us deeply. I

Your critics say that your responsibilities in Delhi may take more of your time than the demands of the state. All these are unfounded. My

roots in Garhwal run deep. Attempts by the opposition to portray me as disconnected from Garhwal are baseless. My opponent (Ganesh Godiyal) is the outsider. In his affidavit he mentioned his residence in **FULL INTERVIEW** 

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#### WORDLY WISE

REAL MUSEUMS ARE PLACES WHERE TIME IS TRANSFORMED INTO SPACE.

— ORHAN PAMUK

## The Indian EXPRESS

∽ FOUNDED BY ∽ RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## SENSE OF AN OPENING

BJP's attempt to gain foothold in Tamil Nadu can open an alternative to Dravidian politics — if voters find an echo

NTHE LAST lap of his high-octane campaign in Coimbatore, where he is the BJP candidate, K Annamalai told this newspaper that the party will win seats "in double digits", coming in second "in all the remaining seats" in Tamil Nadu this time. As all 39 seats in Tamil Nadu go to polls on Friday, the confidence the party's state president exudes frames the salience that Tamil Nadu has in the BJP's electoral calculus. The southern states — Tamil Nadu, in particular — are key to achieving the party's goal of "400 paar". The BJP believes that the formidable wall of Dravidian politics will be breached this year, with the electoral contest in Tamil Nadu becoming a three-cornered one.

In a state that has kept national parties at bay for five decades, this is easier said than done. The first challenge for the BJP has been to rid voters of the impression that it is just another party trying to control the state from far-away Delhi. Ever since the CN Annadurai government rode to power in Madras state in 1967 and inaugurated the Dravidian era in Tamil politics, power has alternated between the DMK and AIADMK. With that landmark victory, the belief that national parties can only damage Tamil interests took deep root. Through its embrace of state-specific issues during its 2024 campaign — including the dispute over the island of Katchatheevu, over which it targeted both Congress and the DMK — the BJP has sought to correct this impression. Its eagerness to shed its image as a "centralising" party is also evident in the free hand that it has given its state president. For example, when Annamalai's persistent attacks on the AIADMK came in the way, from the BJP's perspective, of a much-needed alliance last year, the response from Delhi was muted. The BJP's other great challenge in the state is overcoming what is seen as an unbridgeable gap between a party of Hindi-speakers and an ancient, proud culture. To that end, the BJP has enthusiastically sought to champion the Tamil language and culture at every level — from playing up the centuries-old connection between the north and south via the Kashi Tamil Sangamam, started in 2022, to giving the Sengol, an ancient Chola symbol of power, pride of place in the inauguration of the new parliament building. The Prime Minister himself has frequently invoked the state's contributions, including tracing the lineage of Indian democracy back to an over 1,000-year-old inscription in Tamil Nadu's Uthiramerur.

At the booth, where most voters have been loyal to the symbols that have long dominated the state's political landscape — the DMK's rising sun and the AIADMK's two leaves — the BJP's lotus has been a rare sight. The BJP may see an opening for a third party in Tamil Nadu. How voters respond to this call will shape the party's future in navigating the formidable challenge of creating an alternative to Dravidian politics.

### Undiplomatic

In his defence of the government, India's Ambassador to Ireland also sounds like a functionary of the ruling party

F COURSE, INDIAN diplomats stationed overseas should showcase the values of Indian democracy, stand by them, defend them when they are under attack. A newspaper editorial, howsoever critical it may be, is hardly an attack that needs an Ambassador to get so riled up. But skins are thin these days and Indian Foreign Service officer and Ambassador to Ireland Akhilesh Mishra did get riled up. And in what looks like a zeal to appear more loyal than professional, he shot off a rejoinder that makes him look prickly, not exactly the mature voice representing a global power. The Irish Times editorial, headlined 'Modi tightens his grip', predicts a "comfortable third term" for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and argues that his "undoubted personal popularity and economic success... will play the major part in his victory." It then goes on to say that he has "leant heavily on a widespread crackdown on free speech and opposition parties" and refers to the role played by Central agencies and the arrest of Arvind Kejriwal.

Mishra's rejoinder lists key achievements of the government and praises the PM's "impeccable personal character" and "unprecedented popularity." It's right to underline that "Hindus of India possess incredible diversity of thought, ways of life and political beliefs, covering the entire spectrum from extreme left to extreme right..." and "regularly vote to power non-Hindu nationalists." Where Mishra blurs a professional line is when, to make his case, he attributes Modi's popularity to "the fight against the deeply entrenched ecosystem of corruption (created by the 55-year rule, including the first 30 years by a single dynastic party in India)". He uses brackets but the punctuation isn't the point. This makes his rejoinder a political rebuttal rather than a note from a diplomat.

In a constitutional democracy, bureaucrats are meant to be above the political fray, and represent, serve and defend the country, not a government. This is why the All-India Services (Conduct) Rules unequivocally state, "Every member of the Service shall maintain... political neutrality." Mishra's swipe at the Congress, unfortunately, betrays a broader trend across ideological lines and governments. In West Bengal, the transfer of senior IPS officers and even a chief secretary became politicised. Earlier this year, officials at the Union Finance Ministry helped prepare a "White Paper" on the economy and referred to "our government." Bureaucrats, of course, should be free to express their personal opinion — that, indeed, enriches public discourse. But in the discharge of their duties, they must remember they work for the Government of India – not the party in power. That's not an academic distinction, it's what safeguards the institutions and the Constitution. On X, the handle of the Indian Embassy in Ireland is an active one, showcasing events that reflect the richness of India — from a Tamil festival to a Kerala tourism briefing. Surely, Ambassador Mishra doesn't need to sound like a party activist to make a diplomatic point.

#### THE ARTIST IS DISMISSED

A Munich museum's actions against an employee for hanging his artwork in its gallery is a letdown

AKE IT UNTIL you make it" is an aphorism liberally preached across societies. How else, the hustle culture asks, will one move ahead of the herd and make the cut from could-be to she-whose-time-has-come, if not without a display of a bit of spunk and make-believe? In October last year, for instance, Bonn's Bundeskunsthalle Museum discovered an uncatalogued painting among its exhibits in a show on identity and immigration while dismantling it. On its Instagram feed, the museum put up the painting, Georgia, and identified its artist, propelling its sale.

A technical staff at the Pinakothek der Moderne museum in Munich, however, found out to his peril recently, that the dictum might not hold true for everyone. The technician was laid off for having hung one of his own artwork in the modern and contemporary section of the gallery that features artwork by Andy Warhol, Paul Klee and others. He had hoped for a career break as an artist. Instead, the painting was removed after visiting hours, the employee dismissed and a criminal complaint for wilful damage to property filed against him

by the museum. The employee was also barred from visiting the museum premises. Who would not be inspired when surrounded by greatness or by the prospect of a guaranteed audience? The museum's action also points to a less validatory dimension of such spaces. In their role as gatekeepers of high art, there remains an element of asymmetry between their purpose of allowing everyman to partake of their cultural repositories and determining how and what visitors consume as art. A more appropriate gesture, in this case, perhaps, would have been a warning and a second chance — at the job and at having his

## The Mahayuti's dilemma



Maharashtra coalition's seat-sharing troubles show clever politics isn't always good for healthy competition

Suhas Palshikar

WITH 48 SEATS and an all-round political chaos, Maharashtra is emerging as one of the most watched states during this Lok Sabha election. In the last two elections, the state witnessed a complete domination of the BJP and Shiv Sena. The two parties together polled 48 per cent votes in 2014 and crossed the halfway mark in 2019. This dominance could have transformed the framework of political competition in the state. But Lok Sabha victories also brought to the fore the state-level ambitions of both parties. After their early taste of power in the state in 1995, both the BJP and Shiv Sena were sulking that power eluded them in the Maharashtra assembly after 1999. But when the opportunity did come in 2014 (and then in 2019), both parties wanted to encash the opportunity at each other's cost.

For the BJP, state parties have often been stepping stones and after the rise of Narendra Modi in 2014, the newly-aggressive BJP was in no mood to play second fiddle to its state partner. On the other hand, the dramatic improvement in its performance in both parliamentary elections convinced the Shiv Sena that it deserved to lead the state rather than let the BJP dominate.

Their 2019 break-up made headlines, but the two parties have never been comfortable with each other since the Lok Sabha victory of 2014. They parted ways in the 2014 assembly election, only to patch up post-election. Thus, the destabilisation of the framework of competitive politics in Maharashtra began with the sudden rise of the BJP as the main player in the state's politics in 2014. This process continued after the assembly elections of 2019. "Smart politics" resulting in splits in the Shiv Sena and NCP helped Fadnavis and BJP make a comeback. Thus, developments since 2019 and more so following the fall of the Sena-NCP-Congress government were only a part of the more long-term and ongoing process of party fragmentation and reconfiguration.

The question is: How have these developments affected the BJP in its search to be the single dominant party in the state? It has not been able to get the chief ministership even

Politically, the current moment is an enigma: Traditional electoral calculations about the strength of each party either in different regions or among different communities are no longer relevant. In fact, this is a moment of complete fragmentation and fluidity that may see a prolonged life. While the BJP may be hoping to do well because it is contesting a larger number of seats against Congress and the NCP, there is no certainty about which social forces may support which party—in fact, the more likely scenario is the fragmentation of most

social forces.

after the intrigues of 2022-23. But its supporters may draw satisfaction from the fact that the BJP was, and continues to be, the real force behind the "Mahayuti" that currently rules Maharashtra. There is no doubt that one deputy CM is in fact the super CM. The other gain for the BJP has been that with splits in the two strong state-level players, the political space is now more easily available for it to conquer. Following the splits, both factions of the NCP and Shiv Sena are weaker, more entangled in the rivalry to outdo the other faction of the original party and unable to pose a threat to the BJP. In a sense, this fits well with the BJP's objective of occupying all political spaces held by state-level players.

And yet, this so-called political cleverness may not help the BJP much, at least so far as the current Lok Sabha elections are concerned. Already, within the state government, the BJP has to be content with a limited share and is forced to keep many of its ministerial aspirants out of the council of ministers to share power. Now, with two partners to deal with, the BJP also runs the risk of disappointing many of its loyal and older aspirants wanting to ride piggyback Modi's popularity to reach Delhi. An extremely complicated process of seat sharing has been going on within the Mahayuti.

It seems that BJP would end up getting to contest at the most 30 seats — five more from last time. Will that help the party increase its seat tally from last time's 23 seats? Or, will this three-way alliance and its strains result in a less impressive performance? These questions are important for the BJP because unless it improves its performance in Maharashtra (and in Bihar, Odisha, West Bengal and Telangana), the party will not be able to retain its 300-plus strength, let alone add to that. That is where Maharashtra remains crucial for the BJP in its larger, nationwide game plan.

The BJP might be boasting of its smartness in splitting two parties in quick succession; it may also believe that the road to its success goes via the disruption of pre-existing patterns of competition in the state, but recent developments in Maharashtra have

in reality thrown the state into a social and political mess. Politically, the current moment is an enigma: Traditional electoral calculations about the strength of each party either in different regions or among different communities are no longer relevant. In fact this is a moment of complete fragmentation and fluidity that may see a prolonged life. While the BJP may be hoping to do well because it is contesting a larger number of seats against Congress and the NCP, there is no certainty about which social forces may support which party — in fact, the more likely scenario is the fragmentation of most social forces. This brings the politics of the state to the threshold of a complete reconfiguration.

There are, however, three critical dimensions of the so-called smart politics of breaking stable patterns which will continue to haunt state politics beyond this election, and indeed beyond electoral politics, spilling over into the political economy and social relations. One, the blatant politicisation and demoralisation of the state's bureaucracy, including the police. Two, the complete delinking of decision making process from any policy perspective. And three, the unsettling of the social fabric. While communalisation of the social sphere is emerging threateningly, the cynical manner in which the BJP and its current partners have handled the Maratha issue, deceiving the Marathas and unnerving the OBCs, has the potential of tearing the social fabric apart.

The question that the mess in Maharashtra begs is: Is it worthwhile to pay this social and policy price even if that brought some political gains? Various parties and factions, vying to keep their foothold firm, are only dragged into the game of adding to this mess and contributing to degeneration of politics in the name of doing politics. In its wisdom, the BJP has indulged in this risky game in the state. Maharashtra's recent experience shows that clever politics is not necessarily good for healthy competition or social harmony.

> The writer, based in Pune, taught political science



## A TEACHER LIKE NO OTHER

Mark Lee brought creativity, an inquiring spirit to teaching, life

OOPALEE OPERAJITA

ROGER EDWIN MARK Lee, (1940-2024), Mark Lee, to the world, was an outstanding educationist and thinker who served the Krishnamurti foundations (started by Jiddu Krishnamurti) in America and India and taught in its schools for close to six decades. Lee was a teacher, school principal, school founder, director (of Oak Grove School, California), foundation director, and, finally, a trustee of the Krishnamurti schools; and, then, of the foundations. If you had to count the people who were closest to Krishnamurti on the fingertips of one hand, Mark Lee would be right there and rather prominent. It was in the nature of who he was that he never spoke of, or broadcast, that most vital personal connection.

Before Krishnamurti passed away, he had asked Mark Lee to bathe his body prior to his cremation. To my mind, Mark was the son Krishnamurti never had. His quotidian life bore — and radiated — truth, tangible peace, integrity, and joy, all of which he shared with his friends, and us, his beloved students.

Lee was my English teacher at Rishi Valley School when I was eight years old. He arrived at school close upon the heels of the departure of our English teachers Hilda Yarrow, and her sisters, Eva, Edith, and Mary, of Cornwall, England. I stayed close to him right until he passed away. Now that he is gone, the miracle of being taught by and remaining in constant contact with someone inherently noble in thought, and deed, bears the stamp of the magical. In the

INDIAN EXPRESS

Mark and I often had conversations, across the world, about Krishnamurti, consciousness, awareness, love, fear, death, and the power of silence. He once told me of a discussion he had with Krishnamurti about the overwhelming proliferation of evil and how we might deal with it. Mark asked me what I would do when I encountered rank evil. My response: 'Surround it with love'; 'No,' Mark replied, 'surround it with goodness.'

back of my mind, I had always prepared myself for this loss, but no amount of theorising sets you up for the actual passing. This is a void beyond all voids — it is akin to losing a parent.

As a teacher, Mark brought creativity, an encouraging and inquiring spirit, excellence, compassion and patience to his classroom. He introduced us to Miguel de Cervantes, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, and other writers, when we were eight, and asked me to write the script for 'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner', when I was nine, which was then produced as a play. During that year, Mark also asked me to write the script for a puppet production of Homer's The Odyssey. Mark's style of teaching was noted for its broad range, commitment to the highest benchmarks of creativity, kindness, gentle discipline, and attention to — and consciously including - students who were shy, and not academically strong. In the puppet show he and I collaborated on, the most shy and hesitant students participated, and shone — they had been accorded major roles.

We waited, and waited, each week, to listen to him read to us from Stuart Little and then, Charlotte's Web, in one of Rishi Valley's enchanting outdoor classes. We could never have enough of those readings.

Mark possessed integrity, kindness, goodness, and an unstinted affection for us and for almost everyone he met. He was strikingly handsome, at six-feet-and-fiveinches tall, and the irrepressible warmth he

view of the open fight between supporters of the Akali Dal chief, Harchand Singh Longowal

and the militant Sikh leader, Jarnail Singh

Bhindranwale, within the Golden Temple

Complex. Though the differences surfaced

two months ago, it has now come out as a fight

generated was in proportion to his height. He had a winsome smile, and was always accessible across campus — this made us feel not merely comfortable with him, but trust him, and hold him close to our eight-year-old hearts.

It was Mark who repeatedly invited me to give Odissi dance recitals for Krishnamurti in California. Those were memorable visits I was invited to lunch each day with Krishnamurti and a few others at Arya Vihara; and, after lunch, Mark would ask me to walk back with Krishnamurti.

In large measure, Mark was an embodiment of what Krishnamurti spoke about; and he told me that Krishnamurti himself was an embodiment of his own teaching. Mark and I often had conversations, across the world, about Krishnamurti, consciousness, awareness, love, fear, death, and the power of silence. He once told me of a discussion he had with Krishnamurti about the overwhelming proliferation of evil and how we might deal with it. Mark asked me what I would do when I encountered rank evil My response: "Surround it with love"; "No, Mark replied: "Surround it with goodness." That's what Krishnamurti had said to him

The writer was appointed Distinguished Fellow at Carnegie Mellon University in 1990. She is also a global advisor on public policy, communications, and international relations, and an Odissi and Bharatanatyam artist and choreographer

## APRIL 18, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### HINDU LEADER KILLED

SIX PERSONS WERE killed and eight injured in Punjab and Chandigarh during the past 24 hours while night curfew was imposed in Patiala. Tensions were high in the Golden Temple Complex at Amritsar. Inder Pal Gupta, President of the Hindu Suraksha Samiti was shot dead and seven other persons sustained injuries when three young men, riding a scooter, ran amuck with a stent gun and bomb.

HARCHAND V JARNAIL THE GOVERNMENT HAS adopted a cautious

line of approach to solve the Punjab tangle in

OPPOSITION UNITE THE NON BIP-LOK Dal opposition parties reaf-

not mean that they would contest the elections unitedly. The CPI-M general secretary E M S Namboodiripad, who moved the draft declaration for adoption at the convention of opposition parties admitted differences on policy issues.

Cross-voting In MH

AT LEAST 13 Congress (I) MLAs cross-voted in the biennial elections to the Maharashtra Legislative Council, enabling the Opposition to win an additional seat at the cost of the ruling party. What may have shocked the party leadership was the blatant defiance

of discipline.

between the two groups.

firmed their resolve to continue to mobilise public opinion against the government's failure to maintain national unity and contain growing unemployment and rising prices but

made it clear that their coming together did

### painting assessed, for better or worse.

## THE IDEAS PAGE

## A trusted mediator

Switzerland's initiative to bring countries to negotiating table to discuss the Ukraine-Russia war is in keeping with its standing as a peacemaker, including in several difficult conflicts



CHITRA SUBRAMANIAM

AN INTERNATIONAL PEACE conference on Ukraine organised by the Swiss on June 15-16 will be a masterclass in understanding the art and craft of the impossible. There will be no grandstanding nor will there be a final declaration. But there will be no disappointment either because the process between now and June will be a shock absorber that, at the very least, will succeed in placing all thorny issues on the table.

In this article, I write about why I believe Swiss diplomats are well-placed to shepherd this difficult international dossier. Before I do that, let me tell you what happened last weekend to drive home the point that the tiny Alpine nation has a long history of working in conflict zones because it enjoys the trust of warring parties.

On the night of Saturday and Sunday, April 13-14, when Iran bombed Israel, Swiss diplomats were in constant touch with the crisis room at the White House in Washington. They transmitted a message they had received from Tehran telling them about the attacks, the nature of which would be "destructive." Was it just a message or is there more, considering that this is the first time Iran attacked Israel directly? France, the UK and the US were on the ground defending Israel. The dossier is very "live" here as all wait for Israel's actions.

Switzerland represents the US in Iran since the 1979 hostage crisis. It has a task force on the Middle East and backs a twostate solution to the Israel-Palestine question. Swiss diplomacy does not take a stand on terrorist organisations but departing from practice, it recently called Hamas a "terrorist organisation". Berne made it clear that Hamas is not Palestinians -- and vice versa. It has offered its good offices to the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to speak to all parties in the Middle East to find lasting peace in the region.

Now, I turn to the Ukraine peace conference. Swiss President Viola Amherd and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis told journalists they are aware of the unknowns leading up to June but "in view of the long-standing diplomatic tradition and encouraging feedback during the exploratory phase, it considers it its responsibility to contribute to the peace process in Ukraine."

The Swiss Foreign Office says that there is now sufficient support for the international conference. In addition to achieving a comprehensive, just and lasting peace for Ukraine in accordance with international law and the UN Charter, the meet aims to create a common understanding of a framework favourable to this objective and a concrete roadmap for the peace process.

American President Joe Biden is expected to bring with him the heft of Western democracy. China is currently sitting on the fence, but a wait-and-watch position is their signature when it comes to their ally Russia. Russia has said it will not come to the meet in June but continues to engage with the Swiss, including recently when Cassis met his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov in New York. Diplomats from both countries are in constant parleys. A diplomat from a Western P5 nation told me the first day of the meet might be used to call on Russia to



C R Sasikumar

It doesn't help that Switzerland has frozen the assets of Russian oligarchs in Swiss banks as a punishment for invading Ukraine. These are estimated to be \$8.81 billion and media reports say four Swiss bankers are hiding Vladimir Putin's monies in Swiss banks. Switzerland is also planning a Ukraine Mine Action Conference in October to de-mine the country and has pledged CHF 100,000 over four years, in addition to expertise and other aid. Swiss media reports regularly on Putin's family living in the country.

attend or engage formally.

At the time of writing this piece, comes the news that Russia wants to penalise Switzerland for its stance in the Ukraine war by relocating the South Caucasus talks from Geneva to another country. This only underscores the fact that Moscow takes Swiss action on Ukraine seriously and has its eyes peeled on every move in the run-up to June.

Ever since Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy asked for Switzerland's support in organising the conference in Davos last January, Berne has been in direct contact with numerous states. Switzerland has held talks with the G7 members, EU representatives as well as Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. Ethiopia and Saudi Arabia are also in the loop. Over 100 countries have agreed to attend the meeting.

Foreign minister Cassis had travelled to India in March to meet his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar to discuss the peace conference. At that time, it was believed India could use its good offices with Russia to persuade President Putin to attend. The Indian ambassador's office told me they have informed New Delhi about the June meet and they are waiting to hear back.

No roles for countries have been assigned as yet and it will be interesting to see if the conference falls into the usual North-South

divide or ploughs new terrain. Why is it that the good offices of the Swiss are sought by several states? Discretion, even devotion to the cause, and a strong work ethic make Swiss diplomacy stand out. Some of the world's most thorny diplomatic issues have been handled by Switzerland. In 2021, Geneva played host to a Biden-Putin summit – a first face-to-face between the two since Biden took office. Arms control was high on the agenda. There was no breakthrough but there was much bonhomie when the two met.

The Cold War thawed when US President Ronald Reagan and Russian President Mikhail Gorbachev met in Geneva in 1985. Several Middle East talks have been held in the city, as have the Bosnian Peace negotiations that culminated in the General Framework for Peace in Bosnia, the Dayton Agreement, in 1995. These are examples of governments using Swiss back channels. The late Archbishop of South Africa was often in Geneva before the fall of the racist regime and ushering in of democracy by Nelson Mandela. I have reported on all of them.

One of the modern world's oldest democracies, the Swiss value the importance of rule-based progress. A fully literate population means people receive a lot of reading material at home to get a grip on issues, and their lawmakers. On a single ballot, votes are sought for issues as diverse as a village cycle stand and a decision to elect a politician at the federal level. Local, cantonal and federal politics are given equal weightage. Broad consultation slows down progress but it a cornerstone for confidence building.

Ask yourself how a country of some nine million people produces 10 of the world's best-known brands from watches to chocolates to machine tools to banking and insurance. The magic wand here is called respect for work and a shared capacity to pull in the right direction as democratically agreed.

The June meeting is aimed at getting as many countries around the table as possible to discuss Russia's frontal attack on Ukraine. The meet also hopes to look at some basic tenets of human rights values in a tumultuous world that challenges what is "human" and what is a "right". The Russian attack on Ukraine has shown the continent's vulnerability -- a first since the guns fell silent following World War II in 1945. The frontal aggression by Russia has not only challenged Europeans on their turf but also questioned some of the critical bearings of human rights laws. The Geneva Conventions and their additional protocols (1950), that form the core of humanitarian law, are wartime discussions and laws.

There won't be a final document at the end of the June meeting. It will most likely be a salute to gradualism and back-channel diplomacy. Some of the biggest successes in democracy often have humble beginnings.

> Subramaniam is an award winning journalist and author

#### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Hamas's leaders should understand that no Iranian-backed offensive will rescue them because the US, despite its recent quarrels with the Netanyahu government, remains committed to Israel's security. Both conflicts still appear far - THE WASHINGTON POST from resolution."

## Correcting wrong, laying a path

SC verdict in Delhi Metro case has implications for public service delivery in partnership mode. It sets right precedent for litigation on infrastructure



M JAMSHED

THE CASE INVOLVING DMRC (Delhi Metro Rail Corporation) and DAMEPL (Delhi Airport Metro Express Pvt Ltd) that has been in and out of courts for over a decade, has concluded with the Supreme Court verdict on April 10. This judgment is rare, momentous and could be the guiding precedent for arbitration tribunals and courts. It also has implications for the delivery of public services in partnership mode and is a marker in how we litigate around infrastructure and build resilience into the projects that will be needed to build India's future.

While deciding the curative petition, the bench headed by CJI D Y Chandrachud observed in a rare departure that the Court in deciding the civil appeal and the review petition had erred by interfering with the decision of the Division Bench of the Delhi HC. It also observed that the interference by the Court had resulted in restoring a patently illegal arbitral award, causing grave miscarriage of justice. The judgment upholds the order of the Division Bench of the Delhi High Court which had set aside the arbitral award granted to DAMEPL, thereby granting major relief to the DMRC.

This curious case has its origin in the Airport Metro Express Line, developed and operated in 2011 under a PPP model between DMRC and DAMEPL. Under this arrangement, all civil structures, including tunnels, viaducts and station buildings were constructed by DMRC and laying of tracks, OHE, signalling and procurement of rolling stock, etc., were done by concessionaire DAMEPL. The saga begins with the suspension of operations on this line by DAMEPLin 2012, citing defects in civil engineering works done by the DMRC. It was requested that these defects be cured within 90 days, failing which it would be treated as material breach entitling DAMPL to terminate the agreement. Subsequently, DAMPEL issued a notice of termination, stating that the defects could not be cured by the DMRC.

Conciliation proceedings initiated by the DMRC could not succeed. Interestingly, in the meantime, the identified defects were fixed, and a joint application was submitted by the DMRC and DAMPEL in November 2012 to the commissioner of metro rail safety for inspection and granting of permission to commence operations. Train operations were restored by DAMPEL on the airport line in 2013. By March, the speed of trains on this line increased to 80 kmph. In June 2013, however, DAMPEL advised their unwillingness to continue to operate this line and ceased operations almost immediately. In the larger public interest, the DMRC took over the almost abandoned airport line and started operating trains and other ancillary services. The subsequent claims and counter claims resulted in the formation of an arbitration tribunal. The next decade was witness to a fascinating process of litigation. The tribunal declared the termination notice given by DAMPEL as valid and awarded

termination payment of Rs 2,782 crore along with interest.

The DMRC challenged the award by filing a petition before the single-judge Bench of the Delhi High Court. It upheld the tribunal award in 2018 on the general premise and principle that so long as the award was reasonable and plausible, no interference was required. The petition by the DMRC was dismissed. It filed an appeal against the order before a Division Bench of the Delhi HC. The Division Bench took note of the tribunal's lack of deliberation on the safety aspects, inspection of CRMS, the efforts made by the DMRC in curing the defects, lack of interpretation of clause 29.5.1(i) and the ambiguity about the date of termination itself, allowed the appeal, and set aside the arbitration award.

But this wasn't the end with Special Leave Petitions filed in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court set aside the order of the high court and restored the arbitral award in September 2021. A review petition filed against this judgment was also dismissed. As a last resort, a curative petition was

filed by the DMRC.

This was entertained by the apex court in exercise of its inherent powers under Article 142 of the Constitution.

The judgments considered several factors — including the factual background, the DMRC's claim and the tribunal's findings, the decisions of the High Court, the judgment of the apex court in appeal, issues in the curative petition and the submissions made by the counsels for the petitioners and the respondents. Its analysis covers in detail the invoking of curative jurisdiction in the event of miscarriage of justice and scope of interference of courts with arbitral awards.

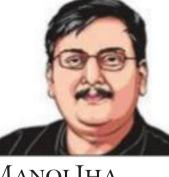
The Court held that, in essence, the arbitral award overlooked vital evidence and failed to reconcile inconsistencies. It held that the Division Bench of the High Court correctly held that the award suffers from perversity and patent illegality. It is also held that by setting aside the judgment of the Division Bench, the Court restored a patently illegal award. which saddled a public utility with an exorbitant liability. This caused grave miscarriage of justice.

Almost following the principle of *fiat* 

justitia ruat caelum, the curative petition was allowed on April 10 and the parties were restored to the position in which they were on the pronouncement of the judgment of the Division Bench of the High Court. An ex debito justitiae for the DMRC. It was also observed in the concluding paragraph that "We have applied the standards of a 'grave miscarriage of justice' in the exceptional circumstance of this case where the process of arbitration has been perverted by the arbitral tribunal to provide an undeserved windfall to DAMEPL.'

There are many lessons to be learnt from this judgment, specifically, the roles and responsibilities of arbitration tribunals, and the requirement of careful and in-depth examination of agreements and contractual clauses. This judgment shall be the guiding light in deciding innumerable pending ar bitration and court cases specifically in the infrastructure sector.

> The writer is former member, Central Administrative Tribunal and former member Indian Railway Board



## Misusing Babasaheb

While seemingly invoking him, ruling party leaders show disregard for his beliefs

Why is it that the good offices

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In 2021 Geneva played host to

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Some of the world's most

a Biden-Putin summit – a

agenda. There was no

two met.

Manoi Iha

WE, THE PEOPLE of India, have inherited a rich culture of legal critique and constitutionalism from our freedom struggle. This is no coincidence because many of our leaders in the anti-colonial movement were lawyers and legal scholars. Collectively, Indians care so much about the Constitution because following BR Ambedkar's view, we recognise that it serves as a bulwark against tyranny and ensures the protection of citizen's rights. For those trampled by small and large tyrannies in India, Babasaheb's Samvidhan is not a mere legal document.

However, it would be a mistake to imagine that they view it like a holy book. Babasaheb's Samvidhan is a social contract embodying the aspirations of the marginalised, poor and powerless people of India.

Central to Ambedkar's vision of the Constitution was the pursuit of social justice. He believed that as a tool for social transformation, it would address historical injustices and thus empower the marginalised sections of society. Babasaheb recognised that society is constantly evolving and advocated for a robust system of checks and balances to prevent the concentration of power and to safeguard India against authoritarianism. His insistence on the inde-

ess.com

pendence of institutions such as the judiciary and the Election Commission was to ensure that the Constitution remains resilient in the face of societal upheavals.

It is this spirit of Babsaheb's conviction regarding the culture of constitutionalism as a force of dignity and equality in India that is under threat from the current government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The unprecedented concentration of power has long moved to direct and full capture of various agencies of the state by the ruling party. BJP leaders have openly and brazenly spoken about changes in the Constitution.

Indeed, the BJP has made promises of such changes in its manifestos, forced its agenda in Parliament to enact such amendments without due deliberation, and indulged in practices that amount to gross disrespect of the Constitution of India.

By repeatedly using his own name and third-person pronouns, a now familiar trademark, the PM's way of capturing attention feeds his need for validation as a person above all others. This is apparent in his claims

that he is the one who "brought Ram". In his speech made at a recent election meeting in Barmer, Rajasthan, the PM said,

he said. "It is Modi who first started to celebrate the Constitution Day" and that, "It is Modi who has developed the five pilgrimage sites pertaining to Babasaheb". He claimed that the INDIA leaders insulted the Constitution and Babasaheb, but he went on to say, "As far as the Constitution is concerned, you can rest assured, and mark Modi's words, that if Babasaheb Ambedkar himself came he would not be able to end the Constitution". By invoking Ambedkar in such a man-

ner, the PM not only violates inherent respect for the deceased leader and his legacy, but also undermines his contributions and memory.

At first glance, the PM's argument relies on an "appeal to authority" of Babasaheb but it represents utter disregard for the complexity of his beliefs and the context of his work. Just because Babasaheb cannot physically come back to oppose the whittling down of the Constitution does not mean he would endorse the approach of this government if he were alive today. By attributing malafide intentions to statements and actions of deceased leaders, especially those who dedicated their lives to the empowerment of marginalised communities and to the development of a fledgling country after Independence, the PM has been exploiting their legacy for his political agenda since he became known as a public figure.

Attributing an intent of abolishing the Constitution of India to Dr Ambedkar is a misrepresentation. It implies a lack of understanding or deliberate disregard for the principles and objectives of Babasaheb. By portraying him as unable to abolish the Constitution even if he were to come back from the dead, the PM diminished Babasaheb Bhim Rao Ambedkar's agency and ignored that he would never have wanted the abolition of the Constitution in the first place.

Babasaheb Ambedkar's living memory in Indian politics is a testament to his commitment to empowering marginalised communities. We invoke his name and memory to underscore the importance of his work and the values he stood for. PM Modi's invocation was not just an affront to Dr Ambedkar but also to the communities he served.

> The writer is a Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament, Rashtriya Janata Dal

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### SECURING FUNDING

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Moving

past bonds' (IE, April 17). PM Modi's assertion that no electoral bonds mean the return of black money only betrays the fact that despite all the hullabaloo, his administration has failed to address the issue of black money. Donations through the EB route accounted for only a part of the overall revenues from voluntary contributions. Even the BJP got a significant share of its funding from non-EB sources. Now that the EB channel is closed, the government should deliberate on other ways of political funding. However, it is crucial that no single party — like the BJP presently — manages to secure the bulk of the total since this would undermine the level playing field required for a free and fair election.

**Kamal Laddha**, Bengaluru

#### DIPLOMATIC BALANCE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The world in the manifesto' (IE, April 17). Irrespective of the political party in power. India's interests are sacrosanct. Neither the US nor China should use India's shoulder to intimidate the other. Our foreign policymakers must mend ties with smaller neighbours that have recently started straying

away due to the nefarious intentions of adversaries. Digging up old territorial issues for domestic political gains will only harm India's interests. We need fewer enemies. But as goes the saying, "There are no permanent enemies, and no permanent friends, only permanent interests" — so we need to look after our permanent interests by striking a diplomatic balance.

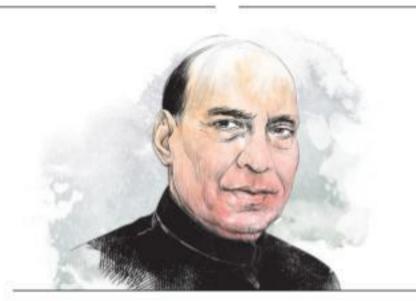
Manish Mishra, Bhopal

#### SIGN OF FREE SPEECH

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Rushdie writes back' (IE, April 17). The publication of Knife: Meditations after an Attempted Murder will be welcomed not only by Salman Rushdie fans but also by all those who support democracy. The re-emergence of Rushdie after the nearfatal attack on him in 2022 in New York is proof of the resilience of the human spirit. Symbolically, it is the victory of the liberal voices against reactionary forces that are out to silence the small but significant voice of art and literature. More than a periodical electoral event, democracy is the acceptance of dissent and ceding space to those who think, speak and write differently. Rushdie's phoenix-like rebirth in the face of near-death is a harbinger of hope to votaries of free speech worldwide. Narendra Dani, Lucknow

## 10 EXPRESS NETWORK





#### VOCAL FOR LOCAL

DEFENCE MINISTER Rajnath Singh, one of the BJP's star campaigners, always tries to use a line or two in a local language while canvassing in southern states. He believes using local salutations helps break the language barrier that many BJP leaders face while addressing such voters. People close to Singh say his attempts to pick the local language are always appreciated by the crowd. Singh, who has already campaigned in 12 states — held 26 public meetings and three roadshows since the notification of elections — makes it a point to hold a significant number of rallies in the southern states.

#### Рното Сору

THE CRPF Director-General, after visiting all the offices of the force, has taken a note of lack of uniformity in office arrangements, especially in the officers' institute of various establishments and headquarters. In a recent communication from the DG's office, instructions have been issued to bring uniformity. Offices have been asked to place a suitable visitors' table and chair in the lounge, keep the "DG's photograph on the left side, a visitors' remarks book in the centre and a pen stand containing a set of blue and black pens" on the right side of visitors' table. All the in-charges have been asked to ensure strict compliance.

#### MISSED CALL ALERT

UNHAPPY WITH repeated complaints by a BIP MLA against four SHOs, an Additional DCP-rank officer of Delhi Police, currently posted in eastern range, has issued an order to the officers, specifying the legislator's claim that they do not promptly answer his calls. The senior officer has directed the SHOs to answer all the calls, make good communication with the complainants and resolve their issues as per the law.

### Lost right hand at age 12, Kerala law graduate secures UPSC rank 282

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE THIRUVANANTHAPURAM APRIL 17

SHE LOST her right hand in a road accident at the age of 12. But that did not shatter Parvathy Gopakumar's aspirations. Ranked 282 in the UPSC civil service exam of 2023, Parvathy has become an inspiration for millions of civil services aspirants.

Parvathy's right hand was amputated below the arm following the accident in 2010. "I was 12 years old at that time. The accident changed my life, but I remained strong and soon learnt to write with my left hand. I continued my education like any other student, the physical disability never became a hurdle in achieving my dream," said Parvathy, who joined civil services coaching at Fortunes IAS Academy in Thiruvananthapuram.

Parvathy, 26, is from Ambalapuzha in Kerala's Alappuzha district. A law graduate from National Law School in Bangalore, she enrolled as a lawyer in 2021. She, however, did not practice law and dedicated her

time for civil services preparation. "This was my second attempt

in the civil services exam. In my



**Parvathy Gopakumar**  in 2022, could not the clear prelims. I expected to figure in the rank list. If IAS isn't allotted, I will try again,' she said.

Her father Gopakumar works as a tehsildar with the state revenue department, while her mother Sreekala Nair is a schoolteacher. Her sister Revathi is a Class 12 student.

Gopakumar said his daughter's rank is among the highest for a candidate in the "physically handicapped" category in the civil services exam in recent years.

"The accident happened on

December 24, 2010 when she was a student of Class 7. Three months later, Parvathy wrote the annual exam with her left hand. This shows her fighting spirit. She always has the grit that everything is possible in life with hard work and motivation. When she did not clear civil services prelims in the first attempt, she was not dejected but gained more confidence to take the exam again," said Gopakumar.

## How SIM card bought with fake ID helped crack cafe blast case

**JOHNSON TA** BENGALURU. APRIL 16

A FAKE Aadhaar provided at a lodge and a SIM card procured with that ID played a crucial part in cracking the March 1 Bengaluru cafe blast case, said sources.

This SIM card, said a source, was used in the phone of one of the persons who provided logistics support for the blast.

Investigators came across this key lead in mid-March as the trail of a baseball cap abandoned by the Rameshwaram Cafe IED bomber led them to one of the lodges in Chennai where he and one more suspect had stayed.

On March 27, based on the findings from searches at Chennai and multiple places in Karnataka, the NIA arrested the logistics support provider — a 30-year-old manager of a Bengaluru fast food outlet named Muzammil Shareef.

The same day, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) also announced for the first time that

Submit details of

stipend paid to

interns, resident

doctors: NMC to

medical colleges

New Delhi: The National Medical

Commission (NMC) Wednesday

asked all medical colleges to sub-

mit details of the stipends paid

to interns and resident doctors

Supreme Court asked the apex

medical education regulator to

submit details of stipends paid by

every college across all states. The

SC direction came in a case of non-

payment of stipends to MBBS stu-

The NMC has asked all col-

leges to submit details of the

stipend paid by their respective

state government and the

stipend paid by college and its

month-wise breakup. The data

sought by the NMC is not only for

MBBS interns, but also post grad-

uate students who work as junior residents and super-speciality

students who work as senior res-

idents in the associated hospital.

2024-25, the colleges will have

to upload monthly stipend de-

tails on their website.

The notice states that, from

dents during their internship.

The move comes after the

by April 23.

#### **BREADCRUMB TRAIL: CHENNAI TO DIGHA**

manager

■ Bengaluru CCTV footage shows cap-wearing bomber, suspected to be Musavir Hussain Shazib

a limited-edition one to mall in central Chennai ■ January 29 mall footage

■ Police trace baseball cap

shows Shazib buying cap and other items, reveals presence of shadowy Abdul Matheen Taha brains behind IS module

the perpetrators of the blast, which left nine people injured, had been identified from earlier investigations in Chennai and Bengaluru as Musavir Hussain Shazib, 30, and Abdul Matheen Taha, 30, two terror suspects from Karnataka who had been missing since 2020 after being

While the arrested persons used elaborate methods to cover

linked to an IS recruitment plot.

■ Probe leads investigators to Chennai lodge where fake Aadhaar was provided ■ Officials link Aadhaar to SIM card used earlier by a Bengaluru fast-food outlet

■ Bengaluru man arrested on March 27, charged with providing logistics support ■ Shazib and Taha nabbed on April 12 from Digha in Bengal's Purba Medinipur

their tracks — multiple SIM cards obtained with fake identities. second- and third-hand mobile handsets, fake ID cards, encrypted chats for communication — they left clues in Chennai.

"A phone number linked to Shareef was found from documents provided at a lodge where the accused stayed in Chennai. This provided a breakthrough," a police source said. Sources said

the SIM card had been used in a phone that was with Shareef four or five months ago, sources said

Sources said Shareef is suspected to have helped the main suspects extensively by providing them SIM cards and fake IDs during multiple meetings.

Juned Sayed in Chennai. According to sources the

group never purchased a new SIM card or phone but only handled those that had changed multiple hands. In one instance, as many as 150 SIMs were found to have been used with a phone linked to a suspect.

Following the arrest of Shazib and Taha in West Bengal's Purba Medinipur district on April 12, agencies have reported finding as many as 35 SIM cards apart from fake ID credentials like Aadhaar cards and driving licences.

#### Two Australian tourists tear pro-Palestine posters, booked

*Thiruvananthapuram:* The Kochi city police Tuesday registered a case against two Australian women tourists of Jewish origin for allegedly destroying pro-Palestine posters put up by the Students Islamic Organisation, the student wing of Jamaat-e-Islami.

police station, does not mention the names of the accused. The case has been registered under IPC section 153 (provocation with intent to cause riot). They were let go as the offense is bailable.

Police said the posters were put up during the New Year. "There was no permission for this, but it was up to the civic body to remove them," police said. **ENS** 

The NIA indicated on March 29

that Taha stayed at lodging facilities in Chennai in February, ahead of the bombing, using the identities of Vignesh BD and Sumit. The NIA has indicated that Shazib was using a fake ID of Mohammed

The FIR, registered at Fort Kochi

According to police, the tourists tore down a poster put up by SIO near the Fort Kochi boat jetty Monday night. A few local youths questioned the women, which led to a heated debate. Police filed a complaint after SIO activists thronged the police station Tuesday night. SIO activists also traced one of the women to a homestay near Fort Kochi.



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Saharanpur on Wednesday. PTI

## BJP is worshipper of satta: Priyanka at UP roadshow

**DHEERAJ MISHRA** SAHARANPUR. APRIL 17

IN HER first roadshow in Uttar Pradesh's Saharanpur ahead of Lok Sabha elections, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Wednesday targeted the government over farm loans, electoral bonds, unemployment and demonetisation.

Drawing a sea of supporters along the 2-km route for the roadshow, which started from Saharanpur's Gol Kothi and concluded at Qutub Sher Chowk, Priyanka sought votes for Congress leader and INDIA bloc candidate Imran Masood.

"This country has worshipped truth and not political power. People do not believe in the Prophet because he had power, he is revered because he served the people, he is a symbol of truth. But they (BIP) are worshipers of satta (political power) and they can do anything for it... The people in power are not able to see the truth of this country, how people are living. Everyone is afraid of (PM Narendra) Modi and is not conveying the truth to him," said the Congress leader as the crowd responded with slogans such as "Hindu Muslim bhai-bhai".

Masood is facing BJP's Raghav Lakhanpal Sharma, who defeated him in 2014, and BSP's Majid Ali. The BSP did not repeat Haji Fazlur Rehman, who won the election in 2019, defeating Lakhanpal by over 22,000 votes.

Hazi Mohammad Hanif (75). a wood carver, said it would be a "trikoneey (three-cornered) fight "I feel that Narendra Modi's

schemes are good. I am benefiting from the pension scheme. Almost all families are getting ration. But the thing that pains me is that the gap between Hindus and Muslims has widened." he said.

55-year-old Mohd Iqbal said the Congress is slowly regaining the space it lost in the last elections."Imran Masood is a good candidate, he does not discriminate on the basis of caste or religion," said the daily wager worker, adding that the "government has done development work but Muslims are being targeted".

Pradip Sharma, who runs a grocery store, said votes of Opposition parties were being consolidated, and the BSP MF did not do any work. "People are angry because of that. Lakhanpal has been MP and MLA in the past and people have seen his work But the Muslim voter wants to give Masood a chance," he said.

## Poll panel allows green clearances during MCC period after initial no

**JAY MAZOOMDAAR** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE ELECTION Commission (EC) has allowed the Environment Ministry to issue green clearances during the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) period after initially refusing permission to do so.

On March 23, a week after the Lok Sabha Elections were announced on March 16, the Environment Ministry had requested the EC to permit the issuance of Environmental, Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), Forest and Wildlife clearances as this had been allowed during the 2019 general elections.

On March 28, the poll panel informed the ministry that the proposal "to grant general exemption till the completion of the election process cannot be acceded to". Following the refusal, the

**Environment Ministry again** wrote to the EC on April 2, pointing out that such clearances "involve a long process... spanning over more than a year" from the conceptualisation stage.

"It would also be relevant to mention here that such Clearances are not in any way related to sanction of new projects and in fact, the application for grant of the aforesaid clearances have been submitted much before the MCC came into force on 16th March 2024 and have been in process over the past few months," the letter said.

The Environment Ministry had argued its case on similar lines in 2019 as well.

Stating that the EC had no objection when a similar clarification was sought in March 2019, the ministry's April 2 letter requested the panel to "reconsider its stand". On April 10, the EC wrote back that it "has no object tion, from MCC angle" to the Environment Ministry's proposal

"The process of project proposal evaluation and clearances was exempted from model code restrictions even before the 2014 polls. The ministry thinks it fit to take a formal approval every time. If there was any confusion, the issue has now been resolved," said an Environment Ministry official

## 6 booked for trying to 'extort' Ravi Kishan

SHOMA SEN LEAVES JAIL

Academic and activist Shoma Sen with her daughter after

being released from Mumbai's Byculla prison Wednesday —

The SC had granted bail to the former professor on April 5. PTI

nearly six years after her arrest in the Elgaar Parishad case.

Among 6 is woman who claimed Kishan 'married her, is her daughter's father'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** LUCKNOW, APRIL 17

AN FIR has been registered in Lucknow against six persons including four members of a family, a Samajwadi Party leader and a journalist — for allegedly trying to extort ₹20 crore from Ravi Kishan by threatening to falsely accuse him of rape, police said citing a complaint by the Gorakhpur MP's wife.

The actor-turned-politician is the BJP Gorakhpur candidate for the Lok Sabha elections.

Among the six named in the



BJP's Gorakhpur MP and LS candidate, Ravi Kishan. File

FIR is Aparna Soni, alias Aparna Thakur of Mumbai, who purportedly asserted in a press conference two days ago that Kishan had married her and is the father of her daughter, a police official said.

Aparna's husband Rajesh Soni, their daughter Shenova Soni (27) and son Saunak Soni (25), Samajwadi Party's state media in-charge Vivek Kumar Pandey and Kursheed Khan Raju, a journalist purportedly associated with an electronic channel, the official added.

The other accused are

The complainant, Ravi Kishan's wife, Preeti Shukla, alleged that the accused threatened her husband with a false rape case. "Preeti Shukla claimed that the woman and other accused are blackmailers. She alleged that she had filed a comthe Mumbai police two years back and she along with her associates was blackmailing their family," said Hazratgani SHO Vikram Singh. Preeti Shukla also accused Aparna Soni of threatening to

harm their family. She alleged

that Aparna demanded ₹20

plaint against Aparna Soni with

crore from them while threatening to frame her husband in a false rape case. On the FIR filed against Vivek Kumar Pandey, Samajwadi Party chief spokesperson Rajendra

Chaudhary said that he was unaware of the development.

## Goa mining contract under EC lens; govt response found 'unsatisfactory'

TAKING COGNIZANCE of a complaint, which alleged that the Goa government and Vedanta Limited signed a lease deed for commencement of mining operations last month after the Model Code of Conduct came into force, the additional chief electoral officer (CEO) in Goa has

Election Commission (EC). The additional CEO stated that submissions made by the Goa government's Directorate of Mines and Geology on the matter were "not satisfactory". The complaint, made by an NGO called Goa Foundation on April 5, had alleged the contract was

meant to "influence elections". In a letter to the Principal

India, on Monday, additional CEO Sunil P Masurkar wrote, "...It is observed that the mining lease deed executed by the department though may amount to be part of the same contractual commitment, however, it is an independent agreement and since it was executed during the MCC period, it was binding on the part of the department to obtain prior permission of EC, and hence contravenes 21 (f) of the guidelines."

"It is to state that though there is no transfer of ownership, there is an allocation of land by way of lease to enjoy certain rights over the land which contravenes 21 (e) of the guidelines," the letter states. The complaint had highlighted that the state and Vedanta Limited signed a lease deed in connection with the Bicholim Mining Block 1 on March 22, after the enforcement agreement is now being used by the government to win votes by informing voters that mining has resumed in Goa".

Subsequently, the CEO's office sought a response from the Directorate of Mines and Geology which explained that the execution of mining lease was conducted as per applicable laws and contractual obligations and that it does not contravene the MCC.

The Directorate submitted that the auction process was initiated on September 30, 2022 and had to be concluded as per rules by April 12, 2024. Vedanta Sesa Goa had on

April 4 said it has commenced mining operations in Bicholim. This is the first auctioned mine to become operational since mining was halted in Goa six years ago. A spokesperson for Vedanta Sesa Goa declined to

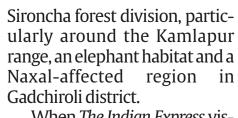
### In Maoist-hit Gadchiroli, a task for forest officials on election duty: Tracking down 'killer' elephant about 300 km away from its herd

out a nightlong operation to chase

CHANDAN HAYGUNDE KAMLAPUR, GADCHIROLI APRIL 17

AS GADCHIROLI district in Maharashtra prepares to vote on April 19 in the first phase of the Lok Sabha elections, the authorities are not just tracking the movement of Naxals, who pose the biggest threat to the polls. Forest Department officials, deployed on poll duty, are also on a mission they hadn't quite anticipated: tracking the movement of a wild elephant which killed two farmers in Telangana earlier this month.

The forest officials are working round the clock to ensure the elephant, named 'ME3', doesn't harm any villager. The elephant is currently moving in the



When The Indian Express visited the Kamlapur Elephant



Camp at Kamlapur village in Aheri taluka on Tuesday, Range Forest Officer (RFO) Naresh Chauke was out to attend an election-related meeting. The previous night, his team had carried

tion to track 'ME3', forest officials

away 'ME3' from the region.

two men in Telangana."

Chauke said, "Despite elec-

During the nightlong opera-

tion duties, we are constantly

tracking the elephant that killed

looked for footmarks, dung and other signs like branches felled by the elephant. Wild elephants get extremely aggressive or violent by human disturbance. So tracking is done with utmost care. Forest officials had also contacted the villagers, appealing to them to not disturb the elephant if they happened to spot it.

Poonam Pate, Deputy Conservator of Forest (DCF), Sironcha division, said the elephant got separated from its herd in Chhattisgarh and entered the forests in Gadchiroli on March 25. 'ME3' has moved

in Chhattisgarh. Officials believe 'ME3' further entered the forests in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district in Telangana by crossing the Pranhita river. In Telangana, the elephant

killed two farmers on April 3 and 4. The elephant again entered Maharashtra in Sironcha division, Gadchiroli, around April 5. Asked about the threat from Naxals during patrolling in the

dense forests, Pate said, "Based on inputs from police and local informers, we avoid going to places where Naxal movement is suspected." Pate described how Maoists had attacked the Kamlapur Elephant Camp in December 2019. Recently, four Naxals were killed in a police encounter in the vicinity of Kamlapur forest range, Pate said.

#### **PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA** PANAJI. APRIL 17

referred the matter to the

Secretary, Election Commission of

of the MCC, and alleged that "the

comment.

#### HC orders J&K admin to issue NOC to athlete to take part in Japan event

#### **ARUN SHARMA** JAMMU, APRIL 17

THE JAMMU & KASHMIR and Ladakh High Court on Monday directed the Union Territory to issue a no-objection certificate to Bilguis Mir, a Kashmiri athlete and coach in Canoeing and Kayaking, to travel abroad for participation as a judge in the Canoe Sprint Olympic qualifier event being held in Japan from April 14-21.

The order came on a writ petition filed by the athlete working as a physical education teacher in I&K's education department. She had challenged non-issuance of an NOC by her employer for her trip to Japan despite repeated requests from the president of Indian Kayaking and Canoeing Association. The association in its letter dated March 22 also requested the J&K Youth Services and Sports Secretary to issue the NOC to Bilquis and ensure her participation as "it was a unique honour for the country to be a jury member in the Pre-Olympics".

Justice Sindhu Sharma, taking note of the petitioner's submission that denial of opportunity may result in loss of reliability in the international forum for future selection, issued notices to the respondents, returnable within four weeks, and directed them to issue the NOC to her to travel Japan for the event. Justice Sharma listed the case on May 24.

Bilquis Mir's counsel Najmi Waziri, who appeared in the case along with advocate Shariq Reyaz, told the court that the petitioner has also been selected as a judge (ITO) for the Paralympics Games to be held in Paris, France, from August 28 to September 8 this year. She has also been nominated from Asia for the same event from September 3–9 this year.

Government advocate Sajad Ashraf said that Bilquis was facing a probe in a case registered under the provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act regarding her appointment as a physical education teacher and hence, she required mandatory vigilance clearance by Anti-Corruption Bureau before processing her case for a visit to a foreign country.

## Over 20 injured in violence during Ram Navami procession in Murshidabad

#### **SWEETY KUMARI** KOLKATA, APRIL 17

AT LEAST 20 people were injured and one woman sustained serious injuries allegedly from stonepelting during a Ram Navami procession in the Rejinagar area of Murshidabad in West Bengal on Wednesday evening.

There were reports of a crude bomb going off as the procession was about to conclude. However, the police did not confirm.

"At least 20 people have been injured in the incident. A woman who had received serious injuries has been admitted to Murshidabad Medical College & Hospital. The rest have been admitted at the local hospital," a police officer said.

Sources said miscreants threw stones at the procession from the roof of a house, leading to violence. Huge forces have been de-

ploved in the area. Earlier in the week, the Election Commission had replaced the DIG of Murshidabad after violence at Kamnagar area where prohibitory orders have been imposed.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who had expressed apprehension of possible violence during Ram Navami and had alleged that BIP could be "fomenting unrest to polarise" the Lok Sabha elections, had said the EC will have to take the responsibility in case of any violence in Murshidabad.

Following the violence in Murshidabad, BJP MLA and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Suvendu Adhikari, hit out at the chief minister, accusing her of provocation and alleged that police fired teargas shells to disperse the procession.

"Mamata Police joined the miscreants in this ghastly attack and fired teargas shells on Ram



A Ram Navami procession at Rishra in Hooghly district on Wednesday. Rishra had witnessed violence in Ram Navami **last year.** Express

devotees to disperse them to ensure that the procession ends abruptly," Adhikari posted on X. "This is the result of Mamata

Banerjee's provocation & incitation. For peaceful and incidentfree celebration of religious festivals in West Bengal, this state

government must be replaced. I would like to urge the Election Commission to kindly take note of the failure on the part of the police," wrote Adhikari.

BJP Rajya Sabha member Samik Bhattacharya said, "This incident is a fall out of daily probation of Mamata Banerjee against Ram Bhakts. What do you expect in a state where the CM considers Ram naam as a challenge?." "Mamata Banerjee's incom-

Ramanavami Shobha Yatras in West Bengal is appalling. Hindus targeted in Rejinagar, Murshidabad, a minority in the area," the BJP claimed on its official X handle. Last year, violence had

petence in safeguarding

erupted in Hooghly district's Rishra and Shibpur in Howrah during Ram Navami amid claims and counter-claims from both the communities on where the first stones were thrown from.

## 'Jai Shri Ram' slogans

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** A case has been registered

BENGALURU, APRIL 17

Ram" slogans, police said.

raise "Jai Shri Ram" slogans.

Ram, no. Only Allahu Akbar," a

person outside the car was heard

Binayaka and Rahul getting out

The video showed Kumar,

saying in the video.

Three men 'assaulted' in

Bengaluru for chanting

by the Vidyaranyapura police under IPC Sections 295A (delib-THREE PERSONS were allegedly erate and malicious acts, inassaulted in Bengaluru tended to outrage religious Wednesday for raising "Jai Shri feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs); 298 (uttering, words, etc, The incident took place near Vidyaranyapura at 3.20pm with deliberate intent to when D Pavan Kumar, Binayaka wound the religious feelings) and Rahul, all in their 20s, were 143 (unlawful assembly); 147 travelling in their car and chant-(punishment for rioting); 504 ing "Jai Shri Ram" when they (intentional insult with intent were stopped by two men on a to provoke breach of the motorbike who allegedly abused peace); 324 (voluntarily causthem and asked them not to ing hurt by dangerous weapons or means); 326 (voluntarily One of the them recorded a causing grievous hurt); 506 (punishment for criminal invideo of the incident which surfaced on social media. "Jai Shri timidation) and 149 (every

> police said. A police officer said all the five suspects are locals and that two of them were identified.

member of unlawful assembly

guilty of offence committed).

of the car and trying to chase the duo who were joined by three A team was formed to nab others to assault the trio with the accused, the officer added.

## 5-year-old among 10 killed as car Unusually heavy rainfall preceded glacial rams into truck on Gujarat e-way lake flooding last Oct: Sikkim govt to NGT

#### **EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE** VADODARA. APRIL 17

TEN PEOPLE, including a fiveyear-old girl, were killed after a speeding light utility vehicle rear-ended a stationary oil tanker on the Ahmedabad-Vadodara expressway near Nadiad in Kheda district on Wednesday afternoon.

The vehicle was headed towards Ahmedabad with at least 10 passengers when it crashed into the oil tanker, according to highway emergency teams and 108 ambulances that rushed to the accident spot.

Kheda SP Rajesh Ghadiya said the crash took place after the vehicle attempted to overtake traffic from the left side of the highway. The oil tanker was on the left-most lane of the highway. "We have now ascertained

that the driver of the light utility vehicle, who is among the deceased, had been driving at top



The wreckage of the car in Gujarat's Kheda district. PTI

speed and trying to overtake from the left lane and crashed into a stationary oil tanker... The impact of the accident can be gauged from the fact that except for its boot, the entire vehicle was crushed in the collision," Ghadiya said, adding nine passengers and the driver were in the vehicle at the time of the accident.

Ghadiya said the police had ascertained the identities of six of the 10 deceased. "Through the documents found on some of the deceased, we have ascertained the identities of six passengers, including a five-year-old girl. They appear not to be related to each other. We are trying to find out what their destination was and who had hired the vehicle. The owner of the vehicle, based in Ahmedabad, is said to be out of station and we are trying to track him down. We have also contacted relatives of the six passengers," he added.

#### **NIKHIL GHANEKAR** NEW DELHI. APRIL 17

IN ITS first attempt at explaining the reasons leading up to last vear's flooding that killed over 40 people, the Sikkim government has informed the National Green Tribunal (NGT) that "more than usual heavy rainfall" — possibly a cloudburst — had preceded the glacial lake outburst flood (GLOF) event in the South Lhonak lake.

The state government has based its conclusion on a report by the North East Space Application Centre (NESAC). which supports Northeastern region with space science and technology. NESAC analysed rainfall before and af-

ter the GLOF using satellite data. Crucially, however, its report mentioned that satellite data for rainfall was not available for about three hours when the incident happened. But, it added, it had rained heavily before the GLOF and there had been chances of more rain.

The Sikkim government's account — filed in its affidavit to the Kolkata bench of NGT, which had taken suo motu cognisance of the October 3 disaster — seems to confirm the initial suspicion of the National Disaster Management Authority that heavy rainfall could have triggered the series of events that resulted in the disaster.

Last year, 40 people were killed and 76 went missing during floods in at least four districts of Sikkim after the water levels of the Teesta River rose as the South Lhonak Lake — a glacial lake situated in the state's northwest at 17,000 feet — burst, leading to the release of water in downstream areas.

In a press release issued on October 4, the NDMA had said that while scientists were investigating the exact cause of the flash floods, the primary reason for the sudden surge appears to rainfall and a GLOF event at South Lhonak Lake.

be a likely combination of excess

Later, it also became known that an ice avalanche sank into South Lhonak creating tall waves that led to the flash flood downstream in Teesta, though scientists are still investigating what triggered the ice avalanche. "The unusually heavy rainfall

over the region appears to have resulted in rapid downstream flow of the Teesta River in much greater volumes than precedented and which exceeded the capacity of the dams installed at the hydropower project at Chungthang Dam," the Sikkim affidavit said. According to the NESAC report on which the affidavit is based,

satellite data on rainfall activity was not available from 10:15 pm on October 3 to 1:30 am on October 4, the period during which the GLOF event and the subsequent dam breach occurred.

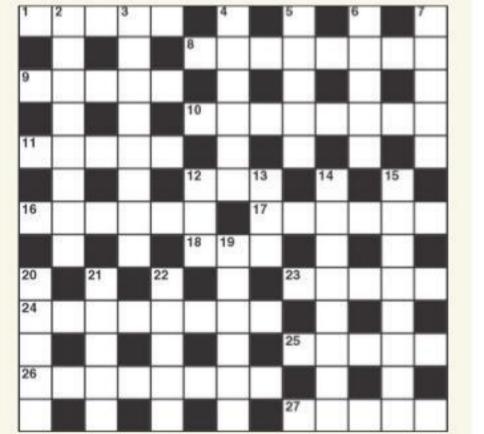
There was, it said, good amount of rainfall over north

western Sikkim around 10 pm on October 3 and conditions were favourable for further heavy rainfall over northern Sikkim area beyond 10 pm and till the lake burst occurred. "However, this could not be confirmed because of the absence of satellite images after 22.15 PM,' the report said.

Himanshu Thakkar of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People said that even if rainfall was a causative factor of the disaster, the Sikkim government should explain what action they took when they got the information about the GLOF.

not emptied when there was almost an hour between when they got the information about the GLOF and the point when Teesta 3 dam broke. The fact is, South Lhonak lake was known to be a potential source of flood since at least the 1990s due to rapidly changing sizes of glaciers," said Thakkar.

#### **CROSSWORD 5341**



#### **ACROSS**

1 Form of wool provided by some

**8** Standing directive for road users **9** Uniform the leader required for

an occasion (5) 10 Funny chap TV and press are brought in to study (8) 11 Finish doing a headstand (3,2)

**16** Decline to make a further grant? **17** One way a man may get lost (6)

**12** Sailor possibly low on cigarettes

**18** A beard may help to make a jaw neater(3)

23 Arrival time (5) **24** Chips for computers (8) **25** Point out a device for climber (5)

**26** People may have to put up with

**27** A stone may bar the way (5)

#### **DOWN 2** Perfume the French sell with

**3** Many had made certain they would be blamed (8) 4 The company in love with a girl

**5** Stop being an outsider (5) **6** Boy gets pass in (5) 7 Joins up in defence of the skunk

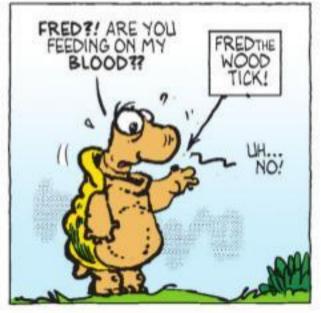
12 Meal, possibly Indian, Chinese or Russian (3) **13** Hurried from Grand Central

 Impressive form of industrial action(8) Bugler's ultimate job (4,4) Things said about fifty planets

**20** Climb the whole range (5) **21** Swings round and goes off (5)**22** Good man, totally stable (5)

Solutions Crossword 5340 Across: 1 Conspiracy, 6 Nail, 10 Opine, 11 Pull it off, 12 Beverage, 13 Knelt, 15 Heedful, 17 Saracen, 19 Washout, 21 Sadiron, 22 Habit, 24 Eviction, 27 Freighter, 28 Drama, 29 Tape, 30 Neapolitan Down: 1 Cook, 2 Noiseless, 3 Piece, 4 Raphael, 5 Callers, 7 Adobe, 8 Life tenant, 9 Tinkered, 14 Chew the fat, 16 Frontage, 18 Cormorant, 20 Trestle, 21 Stirrup, 23 Bleep, 25 Tidal, 26 Earn

#### **OVER THE HEDGE** by Michael Fry & T Lewis





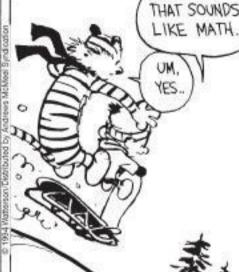




#### **CALVIN & HOBBES** by Bill Watterson



I SUPPOSE WE COULD MEASURE THE HILL, TIME OUR DESCENT, CALCULATE OUR RATE IN FEET PER MINUTE, AND CONVERT THAT INTO MILES PER HOUR





#### **MARVIN** by Tom Armstrong





# DON'T EVER TRUST A TEACHER

### **JUMBLED WORDS**

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

Aspiring to a \_\_\_\_\_ that does what it does very well is a noble pursuit - Narendra Rocherolle (5,8)**EOYLLN PAISE** 

**AYSSS KNUBMU** 

pursuit - Narendra Kocherolle Answer: Aspiring to a small business that does what it does very well is a noble SOLUTION: SEPIA, SASSY, LONELY, BUNKUM

#### 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

SUDOKU

	-		-		_		-	
6				2				5
			9		4			
		6				1		
8		6 2 5				5		7
		5				3		
			1		7			
4				8				6
	2		6	4	5		8	

5 1 8

5534 SUDOKU 3 SOLUTION 9 2 6

#### **DAY TODAY**

BY PETER VIDAL

#### **ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)** This could be a physically and emotionally

exhausting week unless you take care to relax and rest whenever necessary. The last thing you want to do at this stage in your affairs is risk a burn-out. Professionally speaking, you're on to a winner, but only if you follow a hunch.

#### **TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)** Partners are going to

be amazed by your flair and nerve. Don't forget, though, that other people deserve some of the credit for your current success, and it would be unwise to appear ungrateful or arrogant. There is still time to indulge a favourite

#### **GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)** Although you have good reason to feel

fancy, by the way.

encouraged by current shifts in a partner's status, always remember that it's when you're feeling optimistic that you should guard against complacency. A change of mood is coming in a few days, and you'll become businessy.

#### Professional partnerships and close personal relationships are important to you, but the prospects for an amicable

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

agreement with at least one individual are becoming ever more distant as the situation grows increasingly complex. LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

#### The situation at home is becoming

more intense. You are beginning to doubt whether what you have built for yourself is sufficient to provide you with the kind of stability and security you so richly deserve. Your work turns out best if you take an idealistic turn.

#### **VIRGO** (Aug 24 - Sep 23) It's imperative that you consult

partners over your plans, holding whatever discussions are

necessary. As a result, there are matters of a financial nature which may have to be set aside. There is still much to be said for giving a particular partnership a break.

## "Why was the Teesta 3 dam

#### LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23) You may well be reaching a turningpoint, at least as far as your business

affairs are concerned. It's important that you don't impose your value judgments on people and situations that don't concern you. Younger relations need support.

#### SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23) You have no choice

but to enjoy today's confrontational atmosphere. I say that partly because, if you allow yourself to be sucked into some of the bad feeling that is around, your morale will suffer. Once you have dealt with a financial flap you'll be

#### SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

ready to face family.

It's time to stand up for your reputation and

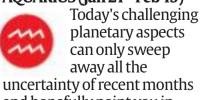
defend your

achievements to whoever is prepared to listen. As much as anyone else, you deserve recognition for all those long hours of hard work, without which other people would not be where they are today.

#### CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20) Never forget the importance

of attending to your spiritual needs, a facet of life which is so often ignored amid the pressures of daily struggle. In a strange way you will be more successful financially if you pay attention to life's larger picture.

#### AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)



and hopefully point you in the right direction. Don't hold on to the past: you don't need it any more. You're keeping your secrets, but then that is part of being so imaginative.

#### PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) The fiery planet Mars is aligned

with the part of your horoscope ruling material aspirations, a fair indication that your income is about to increase. The catch is, so will your

expenses. It's very much a question of easy come, easy go, so there's no point in hanging on to the past.

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

## Why China economy grew faster than expected, what lies ahead

**ANIL SASI** 

NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

CHINA HAS reported a stronger-than-projected economic growth of 5.3% per cent in the January-March quarter of 2024,

despite challenges ranging from a lingering property market downturn to continued sluggishness in domestic demand. The quarterly gross domes-

tic product (GDP) print is sharply higher than the 4.8-5% growth projected by economists, and more than the 5.2% expansion recorded in the fourth quarter of last year.

#### **Drivers of growth**

The numbers released by China's National Bureau of Statistics on Tuesday showed growth was propelled by an expansion in the services sector, and upbeat external demand that boosted export growth, especially in the industrial sector.

Fixed-asset investment grew by 4.5% in

the first three months of this year, indicating government support to growth. This is despite the weakness in February, when industrial production was disrupted by the Chinese Lunar New Year holiday. There are however question marks over how enduring the gov-

ernment support would be in the coming months. Amid the overall positives,

the jobless rate has come in at 5.2% for March, which is remarkably low for an economy

said to be undergoing a transition. The unemployment rate for 30 major cities was even lower than the nationwide figure.

#### Potential headwinds

Economists find it hard to come up with a consistent read-through of the Chinese GDP data because of multiple pressure points. The trade friction with the US is an issue, with Washington having slapped higher tariffs on Chinese exports, which has progressively clouded Beijing's trade forecasts. The slowdown in some economies of



For many Chinese, investable surpluses are stuck in real estate investments that are now mired in delays. The NYT

Western Europe, especially Germany, is another major economic risk factor for China. Retail sales grew by 3.1% in March on a year-on-year basis, compared with a combined growth of 5.5% in January and February. This slowdown in consumption will be a continuing worry for Chinese policymakers going forward, given how strongly retail sales are tied with the consumption story. For a lot of Chinese people, investable surpluses are stuck in real estate investments that are now mired in delays. That in turn impacts their spending on goods and services. China's troubled property market, a key

drag on GDP growth last year, continued to

disappoint, with the investment decline in

the sector deepening to 9.5% in the first quarter on a year-on-year basis, compared to a slide of 9% in the first two months of the year. While some of the latest growth trends are being attributed to an ongoing reallocation of investment from real estate to manufacturing, the big question is whether this is likely to endure — and whether the government has

the heavy lifting to drive up growth. What must be kept in mind is that total fiscal expenditure from the government is

the resolve and resources to continue doing

pegged at about 8.3% of GDP this year, which is only marginally higher than last year's, according to Moody's estimates. So, it might not really be a major stimulus on a net basis in the coming quarters.

#### The broader impact

Any uptick in the growth figures of the world's second largest economy would have an impact on global growth. A more-than-5% growth for a \$18.6 trillion economy is by no measure a small achievement. This is even more important given that China's growth averaged 10% a year in the three decades after its economic reforms in 1978.

The World Bank had forecast China's growth to be 5.2% in 2023, before it slowed to a projected 4.5% in 2024. The tough challenge for Beijing, therefore, would be to keep the economic growth momentum at the January-March rate in the coming quarters.

The growth outlook is clouded by continued weakness in the real estate sector and an anticipated weakness in global demand over the short term. Add to this intrinsic structural constraints to growth, including high debt levels, an aging population, and slower productivity growth than in the past.

The big risk: if the property sector downturn were to extend beyond initial expectations, impacting consumer sentiment and spending, this could have a cascading impact, putting pressure on suppliers, creditors, and local government revenues — and lead to a slide in public investment — a major factor that supported growth during the latest quarter.

Additionally, according to the World Bank, the Chinese economy is vulnerable to softer global demand and increased geoeconomic tensions. Climate change and the rising frequency of extreme weather events also pose a downside risk.

"There has been substantial reallocation of investment from real estate to manufacturing where returns are higher," Elitza Mileva, World Bank Lead Economist for China, said in a December 2023 report. "A fair and competitive market and a predictable regulatory environment will ensure that capital flows to the most productive firms and sectors."

#### EXPLAINED CLIMATE

**EXPLAINED** 

GLOBAL

### WHAT WAS BEHIND THE HEAVY RAINFALL THAT FLOODED DUBAI?

**ALIND CHAUHAN** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE) recorded the heaviest rain ever after a severe thunderstorm hit the country on Monday night, killing at least one person, and causing damage to homes and businesses.

According to the state-run WAM news agency, the rain was "a historic weather event" that surpassed "anything documented since the start of data collection in 1949" — that was before the UAE was established in 1971.

Heavy rain is unusual in the UAE, which is an arid, Arabian peninsula country. However, it occasionally rains in the region during the cooler winter months.

#### What happened?

The thunderstorm began on Monday night, and by Tuesday evening had dumped more than 142 millimetres (mm) of rain onto the desert city of Dubai. Usually, the city witnesses this much rain in a year and a half. An average year sees 94.7 mm of rain at Dubai International Airport.

The heavy rain led to disruption of air travel as flights were either diverted or delayed. Operations at the airport were temporarily suspended for 25 minutes on Tuesday afternoon. Across Dubai, homes were flooded and vehicles were abandoned on roadways. Popular shopping centres like Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates were also flooded.

The city of Al Ain, which is nearly 130 kilometres (km) away from Dubai, witnessed record rainfall of 254 mm.

#### What led to the heavy rainfall? The primary reason for this heavy rain

was a storm system, which was passing through the Arabian peninsula and mov-



A person walks in flood water in **Dubai on Wednesday.** Reuters

ing across the Gulf of Oman.

According to a report by the Associated Press, the rain could have been exacerbated by cloud seeding, a process of spraying salt mixtures in clouds that would result in condensation of the cloud and eventually cause rainfall. The UAE's National Center for Meteorology had flown six or seven cloud-seeding flights before the rain, the AP report said.

Higher temperatures cause evaporation of water not only from land but also oceans and other water bodies, meaning a warmer atmosphere holds more moisture. For every 1 degree Celsius rise in average temperature, the atmosphere can hold about 7% more moisture. This leads to an increase in precipitation intensity, which

However, it is extremely difficult to atevents.



Some experts suggested that climate change could also be behind the heavy rain. The UAE's average surface temperature has increased by 0.4 degree Celsius between 2003 and 2022.

ultimately can cause severe flooding.

tribute any particular extreme weather event to climate change. Multiple factors, like patterns of natural climate variability, such as the El Niño, contribute to such



## The last 72-hour election drill

The most critical time in the election process includes the last day of the campaign period, the 48-hour non-campaign period, and the day of polling itself. Here's what happens behind the scenes



RAVI MITTAL & RAJAT BANSAL

VOTES IN the first phase of the Lok Sabha election will be cast on April 19. The most critical time in the election process includes the last day of the campaign period (72 hours before the poll), the non-campaign period (the last 48 hours), and the poll day. Candidates are afforded the opportunity to make a final impression on the electorate, while the period of "election silence" allows voters to take a reflective pause.

Several behind-the-scenes logistical and operational activities ensure that the elections are conducted smoothly. The scale of the exercise is immense — around 97 crore voters, 10.5 lakh polling stations, 1.5 crore polling officials and security staff, 55 lakh EVMs, and 4 lakh vehicles across the country — and timely and meticulous planning, rigorous implementation, and close supervision are essential to ensure free, fair, participative, and peaceful elections.

The election machinery is especially sensitive to violations and legal challenges, and geared towards disseminating accurate information and preventing the spread of misinformation and disinformation.

#### The last 72 hours

The monitoring of campaign expenditure includes the last check of candidates' expenditure registers and strengthening the inspection teams. There are Flying Squads (FSs), Static Surveillance Teams (SSTs), Excise Teams, and a 24X7 District Control Room.

The FSs operate in three shifts round the clock in each Assembly constituency, swiftly responding to complaints. They can seize cash or items intended as bribes, document evidence, and initiate legal proceedings.

SSTs are stationed at critical locations, and focus on intercepting illicit goods such as liquor and large amounts of cash to deter malpractices and prevent undue influence.

The adherence of political parties and



ahead of the April 19 Lok Sabha vote in Bastar, Chhattisgarh on Tuesday. PTI

**DECISION** 

2024

candidates to the Model Code of Conduct is strictly monitored to prevent any activity that can disrupt societal harmony or unduly influence voters.

The District Election Officers (DEOs) collaborate with senior police officials to develop strategies to manage any potential disturbances during the critical 72 hours leading

This includes the sealing of borders to keep out anti-social and disruptive elements.

up to the close of the voting.

A concentrated effort is made to educate voters on the polling process, including timings, locations, valid identification documents, and the importance of ethical voting. The final assessment is made of the Assured Minimum Facilities (AMFs) at the polling stations, which include the provision of drinking water, shade, wheelchairs, clean toilets, etc for the comfort and convenience of voters.

#### The last 48 hours

Under Section 126 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, the election campaign halts during the "silent period" that lasts for 48 hours ending with the conclusion of the poll.

The District Magistrate issues orders under Section 144 of the CrPC, 1973, prohibiting unlawful assemblies, public meetings, and

> the use of loudspeakers, and limiting gatherings to no more than five persons. Door-to-door campaigning is still permitted. Political functionaries and party workers who are not voters of the constituency are expected to leave once campaigning ends.

This period also sees "area domination" activities by the Central Armed Police Forces, a restriction on opinion polls, and political advertisements

through electronic and social media, and the enforcement of a ban on the sale of liquor. To ensure transparency at critical polling

stations, measures including the deployment of micro-observers, video and still cameras, webcasting, and CCTV surveillance are im-

On the day before polling, randomlyformed polling parties are dispatched to the polling stations with electronic voting machines (EVMs) and other election materials. They move with security personnel in designated vehicles. Reserve EVMs are allocated to the Sector Officers.

There is coordination with other depart-

ments — for example, Health for emergency medical assistance, telecoms and discoms for uninterrupted services, and the print media and All India Radio to disseminate election-related information to the public. Candidates are informed of all activities from time to time.

#### The Polling Day

The general restrictions on the poll day include using only one vehicle for the candidates, their agents, and party workers. However, using these vehicles to ferry voters to polling stations is considered a corrupt practice under Section 133 of the RP Act, attracting penal action under Section 123(5) of the Act. The use of mobile phones (except by officers on duty), canvassing, using campaign-related posters or banners, and loudspeakers or megaphones within 100 metres of a polling station are banned.

Under Section 135(B) of the RP Act, employees are given a paid holiday on the poll date. Only persons entitled under Rule 49D of the Conduct of Election Rules, 1961, are allowed inside polling stations, including polling officers, public servants on duty in connection with the election, a child in arms accompanying an elector, etc.

Booth Level Officers are stationed at Voter Assistance Booths to help voters locate their details in the alphabetical electoral roll locator for the polling station. Before polling commences, the Presiding Officer must demonstrate a marked copy of the Electoral Roll and the EVMs, and conduct a mock poll before the candidates' polling agents.

During the poll, polling officials monitor activities such as voter queues, voter identification, applying indelible ink, and ensuring the swift replacement of malfunctioning EVMs. A complaint-handling mechanism functions at the block level to address all complaints and gueries within 30 minutes. After the polls close, EVMs are sealed and

securely transported to the reception centre under security. The strong rooms where EVMs are stored have robust security measures, including a triple-tier guard, a double lock system, and round-the-clock CCTV monitoring. Facilities are provided for candidates to monitor the strong room.

Dr Ravi Mittal is District Collector, Jashpur, Chhattisgarh. Rajat Bansal is Commissioner, Commercial Tax-GST Department, Chhhattisgarh.

## How a beam of sunlight was directed to the forehead of Lord Ram

**ANJALI MARAR** BENGALURU. APRIL 17

Ram Navami.

A THREE-MINUTE-LONG Surya Tilak ceremony — in which a beam of sunlight was projected onto the forehead of Lord Ram's idol was performed at noon on Wednesday in long. Ayodhya's newly-built Ram temple, marking the occasion of EXPLAINED

This was achieved using a special mirror-lens arrangement, designed by astronomers at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics (IIA), Bengaluru, that has been installed in the

building by a team from the Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee. What was the science behind Ram Lalla's Surya Tilak?

#### **Step 1: Predicting the position** of the Sun (every year)

When following the Gregorian calendar, the date of Ram Navami — the Hindu festival celebrating the birth of Lord Ram varies every year. This is because the Gregorian calendar is a solar calendar (based on Earth's revolution around the Sun

— one revolution equals to one year), while the Hindu calendar is a lunar calendar (based on the Moon's revolution around Earth — one revolution equals to one month).

The solar year has roughly 365 days, whereas the lunar year is roughly 354 days Given that the IIA team's

brief was to channelise the

Sun's rays such that they fall **SCIENCE** on the Ram idol's forehead on Ram Navami, its first task was to calculate the position of the Sun in the sky on that day in any given year. Astronomer Annapurni Subramaniam, Director, IIA, told The Indian Express that

#### first of which was to estimate and predict the position of the Sun in the sky on a particular day in a particular year." Step 2: To channelise the Sun's

"there were two challenges to address, the

rays to fall at the desired spot After astronomers estimated where the Sun was in the sky, their second task was to channelise the sunbeam "in a manner that it will fall on the idol's forehead for a certain amount of time", Subramaniam said.



#### **M2** L1, L2, L3, L4 are lenses; M1, M2, M3, M4 are mirrors. The mirrors reflect sunlight, the lenses converge the rays. (Final design of the system) Tilak

(Left) Sunlight falls on the forehead of the Ram idol in the temple in Ayodhya on Wednesday PTI; a representation of the system of lenses and mirrors. X/@karandi65

The IIA team, which began designing the apparatus three years ago, proposed a **MIRROR-LENS SYSTEM** four-mirror-and-four-lens array for this purpose. "The first mirror, responsible for receiving the sunlight, has to be positioned at an angle along the path of the Sun rays,"

she explained.

three other mirrors, and would pass through four lenses until it was of the desired intensity, and would be directed to the idol's forehead. The mirrors would direct the beams while the lenses would make them converge to the required intensity.

The light would then be reflected to

This opto-mechanical system operates on a principle similar to that of a periscope (see graphic). Given that the Sun's position *vis-à-vis* the first mirror will vary each year, a specially designed 19-gear system was built to make the requisite adjustments.

"Once a year, one tooth of the gear will have to be manually turned so that the angle of the pickup mirror (first mirror) is adjusted, and it is ready to capture the Sun's rays," Subramaniam said.

The number 19 was chosen to correspond to the Metonic cycle – a period of 19 years in which there are 235 lunar months, after which the Moon's phases recur on the same days of the solar year. This means that every 19 years, the system will effectively reset, and the cycle will then begin again.

#### But temple is not complete, this is not the final setup

The glass tube set-up, housing the lenses and mirrors, runs from the third floor of the temple all the way to the sanctum sanctorum. This huge set-up requires precision handling, and a clean environment to operate. The IIA team was especially concerned about the final mirror positioned inside the sanctum sanctorum, where general activity and havans can lead to soot and dust gathering.

"Care must be taken to prevent the fumes (from the sanctum sanctorum) from reaching the final mirror. The lenses and the mirrors should not get clouded," Subramaniam said. This is why the design allows the final mirror to be opened and cleaned, if required.

Since the construction of the temple is yet to be complete, the installation of the final system has not yet taken place. On Wednesday, for the temple's first Ram Navami celebration, a modified version of the system, having four mirrors and two lenses, was deployed from the second floor of the temple building.

## 13 ECONOMY





₹73,750

₹83.54

\$89.78

₹86,500

SENSEX: 72,943.68 ▼ 456.10 (0.62%) NIFTY: 22,147.90 ▼ 124.60 (0.56%) NIKKEI: 37,961.80 ▼ 509.40 HANG SENG: 16,251.84 ▲ 2.87 FTSE: 7,873.03 ▲ 52.67 DAX: 17,851.21 ▲ 84.98

#### **BRIEFLY** —

#### Oil falls 3% as demand worries outweigh risks

Bengaluru: Oil prices slipped nearly 3 per cent on Wednesday, pressured by a rise in US commercial inventories, weaker economic data from China and US progress on Ukraine and Israel aid bills. Brent futures for June were down \$2.44, or 2.7 per cent, to \$87.58 a barrel at 12:20 p.m. ET (1720 GMT), while US crude futures for May were down \$2.32, or 2.7 per cent, at \$83.00 a barrel. **REUTERS** 

#### **ICICI Lombard** General posts 18.9% rise in net

Mumbai: ICICI Lombard General Insurance has reported an 18.9 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 520 crore for the quarter ended March 2024 as against Rs 437 crore in the same period a year ago. The board of directors has proposed final dividend of Rs 6 per share for FY24. The company's solvency ratio was 2.62 times as of March 31, 2024 as against 2.57 times in December 2023 and higher than the minimum regulatory requirement of 1.50 times.

#### **ZEELannounces** streamlined structure

New Delhi: ZEE Entertainment Enterprises Ltd on Wednesday announced a streamlined organisational structure with its MD and CEO Punit Goenka assuming direct charge of critical verticals, including domestic broadcast business.

#### 'Microsoft, OpenAl deal to dodge EU probe'

Bengaluru: EU antitrust regulators have concluded that Microsoft's \$13 billion investment into OpenAI is not an acquisition, sources said, signaling the deal will avoid a formal probe that could have led to onerous remedies for the US tech giant. **REUTERS** 

#### Daimler India to foray into battery electric segment

New Delhi: Daimler India Commercial Vehicles has said it plans to foray into the domestic battery electric segment with the launch of the all-electric next-generation light duty truck eCanter in the next 6-12 months.

#### FROM GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC INVESTORS

## Ahead of FPO, Voda-Idea raises 75,400 cr from anchor investors

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI, APRIL 17

VODAFONE IDEA (VIL) on Tuesday announced closure of its anchor book allocation, raising about Rs 5,400 crore from global as well as domestic investors ahead of its mega follow-on public offering (FPO).

According to a statutory filing by the company, VIL said it has allotted 490.9 crore shares to 74 funds at Rs 11 apiece, which is also the upper end of the price band. This translated into a transaction size to Rs 5,400 crore. Of the total allocation to anchor investors, 79.52 crore stocks, or 16.2 per cent of the total, were allocated to five domestic mutual funds through a total of 11 schemes.

Those who were allotted shares include GQG Partners **Emerging Markets Equity Fund,** Fidelity, UBS Fund Management, Abu Dhabi Investment Authority. Australian Super, Troo Capital, Morgan Stanley, Citigroup Global

**GEORGE MATHEW** 

STATE BANK of India (SBI) is yet to

submit the bill for printing 8,350

electoral bonds of Rs 1 crore de-

nomination which became in-

fructuous after the Supreme Court

scrapped the scheme in February,

may have to shell out Rs 43.90

lakh to SBI for the 30th phase of

the electoral bond sale in January

this year. "The final bill for the

printing of 8,350 bonds (of Rs one

crore denomination) has not

been received by the govern-

ment of India till date,"

Department of Economic Affairs

said in its reply to the RTI appli-

cation filed by Commodore

(inclusive of GST) has been levied

to the government as commission

so far, consequent to the sale of

electoral bonds in 30 phases, DEA

said. The government has paid Rs

11.60 crore (inclusive of GST) so far

as commission, consequent to the

sale of electoral bonds in 29

phases, DEA said. This means the

government has to pay Rs 43.90

(30th phase) is under considera-

clusive of GST) has been levied to

the government towards printing

of electoral bonds, till date.

Further, an amount of Rs 6.720 has

"Commission for phase XXX

An amount of Rs 1.9 crore (in-

lakh for the 30th phase.

tion for payment," it said.

An amount of Rs 12.04 crore

Lokesh K Batra (Retd).

Moreover, the government

MUMBAI, APRIL 17

the government said.

#### **ALLOTTED 490.9 CR SHARES**

■ VIL has allotted 490.9 crore shares to 74 funds at Rs 11 apiece

Markets Mauritius, and Jupiter Fund Management. Domestic investors, including Motilal Oswal Mutual Fund, HDFC Mutual Fund, SBI General Insurance and Quant Mutual Fund, were allocated shares in the anchor round.

The Rs 18,000-crore FPO of Vodafone Idea will open for public subscription on April 18 and conclude on April 22, marking the biggest FPO in the country. The price band has been set at Rs 10-11 per share. According to analysts, this could be the third-largest anchor book after One 97 Communications and LIC raised Rs 8,235 crore and Rs 5,627 crore in the anchor round, respectively. The largest FPO in the Indian market was a Rs 15,000 crore sharesale by YES Bank in 2020.

SBI yet to submit bill for

8,350 electoral bonds: Govt

**Govt printed** 

8.350 bonds

since Dec 29

AHEAD OF the Lok

Sabha elections, the

government printed

Rs 8,350 crore since

crore face value worth

December 29, 2023 be-

fore the Supreme Court

struck down electoral

bond (EB) scheme on

February 15, citing vio-

lation of right to infor-

mation and freedom of

been levied for 'Device to verify

Mask-A-Print Security', DEA said.

tions, the government printed

8,350 bonds of Rs 1 crore face

value worth Rs 8,350 crore since

December 29, 2023 before the

Supreme Court struck down elec-

toral bond (EB) scheme on

February 15, citing violation of

right to information and freedom

tween December 29, 2023 and

February 15, 2024 amid expecta-

tions among political parties that

6.826 lakh electoral bonds have

been printed till date, DEA said.

Overall, the government had

printed a total 33.000 numbers of

SC will clear the EB scheme.

These bonds were printed be-

As per available information,

Ahead of the Lok Sabha elec-

speech.

of speech.

8,350 bonds of Rs 1

### May need more support from govt: Voda-Idea CEO

**JATIN GROVER** & RISHIRAJ NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

VODAFONE IDEA may need further support from the government once the current moratorium on the adjusted gross revenue (AGR) and spectrum dues ends in September 2025, chief executive officer Akshaya Moondra said on Wednesday. The company may either seek further deferral on the payments or urge the gov-

into equity, he said. "After one-and-a-half years, we will be in a position to see what support we need from the government. Initially, we may need some support and it's the

one crore face value bonds worth

Rs 33,000 crore and 26,600 Rs 10

lakh face value bonds worth Rs

2,660 crore till date. Political par-

ties mobilised Rs 16,518 crore in

30 phases of the Electoral Bond

Scheme since 2018, with corpo-

rates and businessmen account-

ing for a major chunk of the

money donated through these

570 crore through bonds in the

donors were getting ready for the

31st phase of bond sale in

February or March, the SC stepped

in and scrapped the scheme be-

fore the election dates were an-

nounced. This phase would have

been a money spinner for parties

in view of the Lok Sabha elections.

94 per cent of the bonds were of

Rs one crore face value in most of

the 30 phases, indicating that cor-

porates and high networth indi-

viduals were the principal donors.

that while donors who buy bond

are not required to pay any serv-

ice charges (commission) to SBI

and even printing cost of EBs, it is

the government or ultimately, the

tax-payers who bear this cost...

for enabling transactions of

'anonymous tax-free funding' to

political parties through opaque

Electoral Bonds Scheme 2018," RTI

activist Batra said. These bonds

were issued by SBI in denomina-

tions of Rs 1,000, Rs 10,000, Rs 1

lakh. Rs 10 lakh and Rs 1 crore.

"The irony" of the EB scheme is

According to records, around

last phase (30th phase).

Political parties received Rs

While political parties and

bonds.

ernment to convert the dues

government which will have the right to choose either to convert or defer the dues. That is their choice every time," Moondra said. Vodafone Idea's total dues stand at around Rs 2 trillion, of which 98 per cent — Rs 1.96 trillion — is owed to the government in AGR and spectrum dues. The bank debt is only of Rs 4,400 crore. Once the moratorium ends in September 2025, the company will need to pay to the government Rs 29,100 crore for FY26 and Rs 43,000 crore annually from FY27 till FY31.

Moondra explained that there are two streams of instalments — one is the original instalment, which in FY26 is about Rs 17,000 crore and in FY27 about Rs 26.000 crore. **FE** 

#### **UNCTAD REPORT**

## Economy projected to grow at

**YOSHITASINGH** UNITED NATIONS, APRIL 17

INDIA'S ECONOMY is projected to grow by 6.5 per cent in 2024, according to a report by the UN which noted that multinationals extending their manufacturing processes into the country to diversify their supply chains will have a positive impact on Indian exports.

**UN Trade and Development** (UNCTAD) in its report released on Tuesday said that India grew by 6.7 per cent in 2023 and is expected to expand by 6.5 per cent in 2024, continuing to be the fastest-growing major economy in the world.

"The expansion in 2023 was driven by strong public investment outlays as well as the vitality of the services sector which benefited from robust local demand for consumer services and firm external demand for the country's business services exports," the report said, adding that these factors are expected to continue to support growth in India in 2024.

The report also noted the increasing focus by multinationals on India as a manufacturing base as they diversify supply chains, a reference to China.

# 6.5% in 2024

## Musk likely to unveil \$2-\$3 billion India investment during visit

KTHROUGH

AKTHROUGH

Elon Musk.

**ADITISHAH & ADITYA KALRA** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

TESLA CHIEF Elon Musk is set to announce an investment in India of \$2-\$3 billion, mainly for building a new factory, when he visits New Delhi next week to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi, two sources familiar with the discussions said.

Musk will meet Modi on Monday during his India trip, when the billionaire is expected to unveil his plans to enter the world's third-largest auto market where electric car adoption is still in its infancy.

India's EV market is small but growing and dominated by local carmaker Tata Motors. EVs made up just 2 per cent of total car sales in 2023, but the government is targeting 30 per cent of new cars to be EVs starting 2030. Musk's visit comes as Tesla

battles slowing sales in the major markets of the United States and China, and has this week announced layoffs affecting 10 per cent of its workforce. Details of Musk's India visit

are closely-guarded, with the CEO only publicly confirming on his social media platform X that he will meet Modi in India. The two sources said Musk will likely give an investment

figure for India without sharing

details such as a timeline or a

state where the plant will be

Tesla did not immediately respond to a request for com-

For years, Musk opposed

EVs and lobbied for a change.

lion and sets up a factory.

scouting for showroom space

PRIZE

#### Tesla again seeks shareholder nod for Musk's 2018 pay voided by judge

Bengaluru: Tesla on Wednesday asked its shareholders to once again approve CEO Elon Musk's recordbreaking \$56 billion pay that was set in 2018, but was rejected by a Delaware judge in lanuary.

The compensation includes no salary or cash bonus, but sets rewards based on Tesla's market value rising to as much as \$650 billion over the next 10 years. The re-vote

India's high import taxes for

The government in March unveiled a new EV policy lowering import taxes to 15 per cent from as high as 100 per cent on some models if a carmaker invests at least \$500 mil-

Tesla has already started

comes ahead of next week's quarterly earnings for Tesla, which is grappling with weak demand as well as a reputational hit to Musk from his political leanings and comments last year.

Musk's pay was rejected by Kathaleen McCormick of Delaware's Court of Chancery, who termed the compensation granted by the board as "an unfathomable sum" that was unfair to shareholders. **REUTERS** 

in New Delhi and Mumbai, and its Berlin factory is producing right-hand drive cars it aims to export to India starting later this year, *Reuters* has reported.

Musk is also likely to attend an event organised by the government in New Delhi with space startups, the two sources said. Musk owns US space company SpaceX. **REUTERS** 

## Apple, CleanMax ink JV for solar projects around 207,000 tonne of car-

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU** NEW DELHI, APRIL 17

APPLE HAS formed a joint venture with renewable energy provider CleanMax to invest in six rooftop solar projects with a total capacity of 14.4 megawatts (MW). Besides accelerating the development of renewable energy projects across India, the JV will help provide clean power to Apple's offices and the two retail stores in the country.

The accruing benefits from the financed projects will assist Apple in addressing the emissions associated with its corporate operations in India.

The US tech giant first achieved 100 per cent renewable energy for its global corporate operations in 2018. At present, more than 18 gigawatts (GW) of clean electricity power Apple's global operations and more than triple the amount in 2020, the tech giant said in a post in Apple Newsroom. Sharing its commitment to

manufacturing supply chain,

2030 climate goal, the company said clean energy and water are essential building blocks for a responsible business. "We're racing toward our ambitious Apple 2030 climate goal while taking on the long-term work to transform electrical grids and restore watersheds to build a cleaner future for all," said Lisa Jackson, Apple's vice president of environment, policy and social initiatives. CleanMax — a leading re-

newable energy provider in the commercial and industrial sector across Asia — has successfully installed 14.4 MW of rooftop solar in six industrial sites in India as part of its tie up with Apple. These installations are expected to mitigate bon dioxide emissions throughout their operational life. "Our mission is to be sustainability partner to corporates, and we consider this JV to be a big milestone in our journey," said MD Kuldeep Jain.

"It showcases an industryleading approach to the creation of green energy assets. The growing interest from other consumer brands in such joint ventures is a positive sign of the shift towards sustainability."

CleanMax presently has a portfolio of 2 GW of operating renewable assets and a clientele exceeding 750 across various industries.

The partnership is expected to enable industries to transition towards renewable energy sources and optimise their energy expenses by facilitating access to renewable energy financing.

#### **HIKES STAKE TO 70.3%**

## Adani family infuses additional ₹8,339 cr into Ambuja Cements

**ENSECONOMIC BUREAU** MUMBAI. APRIL 17

CEMENTS on AMBUJA Wednesday said its promoters Adani family have infused an additional Rs 8,339 crore in the company by fully subscribing to its warrants program.

With the current round of capital infusion, the promoters have increased their stake in Ambuja Cements by a further 3.6 per cent to 70.3 per cent, the company said in a release. So far, the Adani family have infused a total amount of Rs 20,000 crore into the cement and building materials company; it invested Rs 5.000 crore on October 18, 2022 and Rs 6,661

crore on March 28, 2024. "The additional investment will fortify the company's financial position, providing it with enhanced capabilities to pursue its ambitious growth plans and capitalize on emerging opportunities in the market," Ambuja Cements said in a release. The fund infusion will be instrumental to accom-

#### **SO FAR INFUSED ₹20K CR IN TOTAL**

■ So far, the Adani

family have infused a total amount of Rs 20,000 crore into the cement and building materials company; it invested Rs 5,000 crore on October 18, 2022 and Rs 6,661 crore on March 28, 2024

tonnes per annum by 2028 by the cement vertical, the release said. Further, it will also enable ini-

tiatives including debottlenecking capex to enhance operational performance, as well as bringing efficiencies across resources and supply chain. Ambuja, with its subsidiaries ACC Ltd and Sanghi Industries Ltd, has taken the Adani Group's cement capacity to 78.9 MTPA (million tons per annum) with 18 integrated cement manufacturing plants and 19 cement grinding units across the country.

### Rajan: India not reaping benefits of demographic dividend

WASHINGTON: India is not reap-

ing the benefits of demographic dividends, former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan said on Tuesday, emphasising that there is a need to focus on improving the human capital and enhancing their skill sets. "I think we are in the midst of it (demographic dividend), but the problem is we are not reaping the benefits," Rajan said at a conference on "Making India an Advanced Economy by 2047: What Will it Take" at the George Washington University here.

"That's why I said 6 per cent growth. If you think that's about what we are right now, take away the fluff in the GDP numbers. That 6 per cent is in the midst of a demographic dividend. It is much below where China and Korea were when they reaped their demographic dividend. "And that's why I'm saying we are being overly complicit when we say this is great. This is not because we are losing the demographic dividend because we are not giving those guys jobs," he said.

## IMF calls for fiscal restraint in year with most elections ever

A record 88 countries have held or are holding national elections in 2024

**REUTERS** WASHINGTON, APRIL 17

Fund urged countries on Wednesday to rein in fiscal spending and rebuild their buffers, but said that could prove difficult in the world's biggest-ever election year. A record 88 countries, home

THE INTERNATIONAL Monetary

to more than half of the world's population, have held or are holding national elections in 2024, the IMF said, noting that governments tend to spend more and tax less during election years. "The most acute risk to public

finances arises from the record number of elections being held in 2024, which has led to it being dubbed the 'Great Election Year," the IMF said in its new Fiscal Monitor publication. The US will hold its presidential election in November, while voters in India will begin voting later this month. Taiwan, Portugal, Russia and Turkey have already held elections.



Meanwhile, in a separate development, the IMF's executive board has backed a key change to give it more freedom to support countries in crisis even if debt renegotiations with big creditor governments like China are still ongoing.



POWER CONSUMPTION grew nearly 10 per cent year-on-year to 70.66 billion units (BU) in the first half of April this year, showing improvement in economic activities and consumption patterns, according to the Power Ministry data.

According to the data, power consumption in the country rose to 70.66 BU during April 1-15 this year from 64.24 MU in the yearago period. The peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day rose to about 218 GW in the first half of April compared to 206 GW in the same period a year ago. The highest supply in a day during the entire month of April last year was about 216 GW.

The ministry has projected a peak power demand of 260 GW during the summer season (April to June) in view of longer heat wave duration.

### Container Corporation of India Ltd. E-tender notice no.CON/Area-III/SURVEY/TNPM/0424/01

E-tender cum e-reverse auction in two e-bids system are invited from the interested parties for Hiring of Professional services for Survey of containers/cargo and Inventory Management for

CONCOR Terminal at ICD/TNPM. Last date of submission of e-bid online is on 09.05.2024 upto 15.00 hrs and opening of the e-bids online on 10.05.2024 at 11.30 hrs. For brief NIT, please log on concorindia.com/eprocure.gov.in. For detailed e-tender document and for online submission log on tenderwizard.com/CCIL. Corrigendum/addendum, if any, will be hosted on websites only. before the last date of submission. For any clarification, please contact no. 044-26482192 and M/s ITI Ltd-011-49424365 for online submission or email sr.ro@concorindia.com. Sd/- CGM/Chennai Cluster Head

#### CGSPC GUJARAT STATE PETROLEUM CORPORATION LIMITED

#### NOTICE INVITING OFFER

Sale of Associated Natural Gas from CB-ONN-2000/1 and CB-ONN-2002/3 Block

Gujarat State Petroleum Corporation Limited, on behalf of the consortium of CB-ONN-2000/1 and CB-ONN-2002/3 Block, invites offers from interested Buyers for purchase of Associated Natural Gas on fall-back and as is where is basis from below mentioned fields.

Location / Delivery Point

Quantity

(SCMD)

CB-ONN-2000/1	1250	Ingoli field at Pissawada, Dhoika, Anmedabad
CB-ONN-2000/1	1500	Sanand East-1 field at Ghuma, Ahmedabad
CB-ONN-2002/3	2000	Sanand Part A field at Manipur, Ahmedabad
Interested Parties,	meeting	eligibility criteria mentioned in the RFP and willin
to accept terms of	the GS	<ul> <li>C. are requested to participate in the E-Biddin</li> </ul>

process for purchase of Gas from any or all of the above fields as per the terms nterested Parties are requested to download respective Request for Proposal (RFP) and Gas Sales Contract (GSC) from: https://eps.buyjunction.in/gasbidding

**GSPC Corporate Office:** GSPC Bhavan, B/h Udhyog Bhavan, Sector-11, Gandhinagar-382010 https://gspcgroup.com/tender.aspx

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plish the capacity of 140 million

### Classifieds

#### PERSONAL

I, Suresh Chand S/O Sh. Inder Pal Singh R/o RZ-65, Block- D, Pratap Garden, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, inform that Suresh Chand & Suresh Chander both are one & the same person. 0050240643-1

I. No15815152M Hay Pawan Kumar serving in 1 FOD, c/o 56 APO have changed name of my daughter from Riya Lamba to Riya vide affidavit dt 06/04/2024 at Udhampur.

I, Arjun Singh changed the name of my son Vineet Verma to Akhil Verma. R/o II-C-62, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, UP, PIN-201010. Vide Affidavit dated 15.04.2024 before CJM, Churachandpur, Manipur. Birth date 05.12.1998.

0050240644-1

I Anisha Katyal Dinesh D/o Dinesh Katyal, R/o Flat No 402, Omaxe the Nile, Dendra Tower, Sohna Road, Sector-49, Gurgaon, Haryana -122001; have changed my name to Anisha Katyal for all **future purposes** 0050240642-1

It is for general information that I,SHAHBAZ KHAN,S/o-SHAMSHER KHAN, residing at, H No-V-125, Gali. No-24B, Vijay-Park, Maujpur, PO: Seelampur, DIST:North East-Delhi, Delhi -110053, declare that name of mine and my mother has been wrongly-written as SHABAJ KHAN and NUSARAT KHAN in my 10th-class education Documents, The actual name of mine and my mother is SHAHBAZ KHAN and NUSRAT BEGUM respectively, which may be amended accordingly.

It is for general information that I WUNNAVA VENKATA BIRAJA SHANKAR RAMALINGAM S/O **VENKATA JAGANNATH RAO** WUNNAVA R/O 203, BEST PARADISE APARMENTS, PLOT NO-4. SECTOR-19. DWARKA. NEW DELHI-110075 declare that the name of my wife has been wrongly written as W SANDHYA in my service book. The actual name of my wife is WUNNAVA SANDHYA which may be amended accordingly.

0040724478-4

0040724405-6

I.YASHPAL S/O BAL SINGH CHAUHAN.R/O-B-323, SARASWATI VIHAR, DELHI-110034, have changed my name to YASHPAL CHAUHAN, permanently. 0040724476-2 I,Vinod Kumar Aggarwal,S/o

Late Sh.Chander Bhanu Aggarwal, R/o 3794, Street.No.5, Kanhaiya Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035, have change my name to Vinod Aggarwal, S/o Late Sh. Chander Bhan Aggarwal. 0040724476-6 I, Vaishnavi D/O-No-15679069M,

H.No.2-45, Ba0049, Plot.No.103, Survey.No.83,Duwaraka Nagar, Post-Badangpet, Tehsil-Balapur, Dist-KV Ranga Reddy, State-Telangana, Pin-500058, have changed my, name fm Vaishnavi to Vastrala Vaishnavi for all future purpose.Vide affidavit, before public notary, Telangana, Dated-15-Apr-2024. 0040724470-11

Hav(OCC) Krishnaiah V R/o-

I, VINESH KUMAR, S/O

MAHENDER PAL,R/o H.NO.5/124, NIRANKARI COLONY, DELHI-110009, inform that VINESH KUMAR and VINESH, both names are same 0040724470-7 person. Sukirti D/o Bhuwan Chand R/o B-8

**Suraksha Apartment Abhay** Khand- III Indirapuram Ghaziabad have changed my name from **Sukirti Dutt to Sukirti** 

0050240645-1 I,V Naramma, M/o No-

15679069M.Hav(OCC) Krishnaiah V. R/o-H-No 2-75, Village & Post-Yellur, Teh & PS-Kollapur, Dist-Mahbubnagar, State-(AP), Pin-509102, have changed my, name fm V Naramma to Vastrala Naramma.for all.future purpose. Vide affidavit. before public notary Telangana, Dated-15-Apr-2024.

0040724475-4

I,V Jagadeeshwar,S/O No-15679069M.Hav(OCC) Krishnaiah V R/o-H.No.2-45,Ba0049, Plot.No-103, Survey.No.83.Duwaraka Nagar. Post Badangpet, Tehsil-Balapur, Dist-KV Ranga Reddy, State-Telangana, Pin-500058, have changed my, name fm V Jagadeeshwar to Vastrala Jagadeeshwar for all, future purpose. Vide affidavit.before public, notary Telangana, dated-15-Apr-2024.

0040724475-5

**I,Shruti** D/o Sh.Dwarka Prasad Bansal, R/o 3538/3, First-Floor, Narang Colony, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035, have change my name to Shruti Bansal. 0040724476-5

I,Shamshad S/O Nanwa,R/o H NO-24, Gali No-01, Old Mustafabad.Delhi-110094.have changed my name to MOHD SHAMSHAD MALIK. Permanently. 0040724470-5

I.Shahnaz.D/o Md.Shabeer.R/o F-139, Block-F, Vijay Vihar Phase-2,Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Shahnaz Parween.

0040724475-1 I, Mukesh Kumar Garg, S/O-Shri Kapoor Chand Garg, R/O-F-20, Budh Vihar, Phase-1, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Mukesh in future.

0040724477-2

I Mahendra Narayan Singh S/o Shiv Narayan Singh R/o Gram-Silauta, PO-Baidpur, Baidpur,

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0070899117-1

Banka, Bihar-813211, have changed my name to Mahender Prasad Singh

**I,Shahnaz,D/o** Md.Shabeer, R/o F-139, Block-F, Vijay Vihar Phase-2, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Shahnaz Parween.

0040724475-2

**I,Salim** Khan S/o Habib Ali R/o H.No.-96, 4th Floor, Ghalib Apartment, Parwana Road, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, have changed my name from Salim Khan to Salim Ahmed for all future purposes. 0040724475-3

I,SHAHNWAJ,S/O-SULTAN AHAMAD,R/O-House.No-136.Sector-B2.Pocket-C, Near CNG Pump, Narela, Delhi-110040, have changed my name to SHAHNWAJ AHEMD.

0040724477-1

**I,Rajesh** Kumar Jain,S/o Sh.Surender Kumar Jain and Smt.Santosh Jain, R/o.H.No.950, Gali.No.63, Lekhu Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035, have change my name to Rajesh Jain. 0040724476-4

I.Prabhat Jain, W/o Sumat Prasad Jain.R/o H.No.913.Gali Inder Wali, Kucha Pati Ram, Bazar Sita Ram. Delhi. have changed my name to Prabha Jain, for all Purposes.

0040724470-2

I.PRIYANKA JAIPURIA W/O SAURAV AGARWAL R/O F-4/1, Near MCD School, Model, Town-II, Delhi-110009, have changed my name to PRIYANKA AGARWAL. 0040724475-9

I,Nitu Tarve,W/o Nirjhar Kumar, R/o. F4, 1103, Panchsheel Greens-1, Greater Noida, West Gautam-Budh-Nagar, Uttar Pradesh.-201308,Have Changed My, Name To Nitu Parmanand Tarve, For All Purposes. 0040724470-6

I,Mrs.Laxmi W/O-No-15679069M, Hav(OCC) Krishnaiah V R/o-H.No-2-45,Ba0049, Plot.No.103, Survey.No.83, Duwa raka Nagar, Post Badangpet,Tehsil-Balapur, Dist-KV Ranga Reddy, State-Telangana, Pin-500058, have changed my name fm Laxmi to Vastrala Laxmi for

all, future purpose. Vide

affidavit, before public notary,

Telangana, Dated-15-Apr-2024.

0040724478-3

I, Kumari Anshu W/o Mr. Sameer Ratan Verma R/o Flat No. 1/12. Semal Road, Shipra Sun City. Indirapuram, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh-201014 have changed my name from Kumari Anshu to Anshu Verma for all future purposes.

0040724417-1

I, Mohd Raghib, R/o-411, 4th-Floor, Tower-C, Sanskriti Apartment, Sector-1, Greater Noida West, Gautam Budha Nagar, U.P.-201306, have changed my son's name from Mohd. Ayan to Mohammad Ayyaan. His correct date-ofbirth is 30.04.2017 instead-of 30.04.2015, for all purposes.

0040724477-6

I,LAVEENA VERMA AHUJA D/O DHARAM VIR VERMA R/O F-24, GROUND-FLOOR, GREEN PARK MAIN, DELHI-110016. HAVE **CHANGED MY NAME TO** LAVEENA VERMA FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040724477-8

I,Kawaljeet,W/O.Charanjeet Singh,R/O.WZ-254,gali no.10,Gblock, Hari Nagar, New Delhi-110058, have changed my name to Kawaljeet Kaur, for all Purposes. 0040724476-8

I,Kapil Kumar,S/O.Om prakash,R/O.WZ-979A, gali.no.-13, Near-Pachranga Achar, Guru-Nanak Nagar, Tilak-Nagar, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Kapil, for

all Purposes. 0040724476-7 I,KAPIL,S/o Sh.Namd Ram,R/o-170, Janta Colony, Circular-Road, Shahdara, Delhi-110032, have Changed the name of my minor daughter

RIYANSHI SINGH to RIYANSHI

I.JC-595033W.Sub Gh Mohd

VERMA, fot all future puposes. 0040724477-9

Najar, RO- Zampora, Tehsil-Beeru , District-Budgam. In my service records name of my daughter has been wrongly mentioned as Rafat Akhtar instead of Rifat Akthar.It needs correction. Objections be filled to concerned authorities within seven days.

0020475070-1

I.Indrawati.D/O mange ram.R/o D-626,J.J COLONY-WAZIRPUR, ASHOK VIHAR.DELHI 110052.and Indro and Indira Rani and Indrawati are the same person and now we have to name Indrawati. Have Changed my name to Indrawati, for all future 0040724476-9 purposes.

I.Hemant Kumar Singla, S/o-Satish Kumar Singla, R/o-C-80, Pratap Vihar, Part-3, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi-110086, declare that I have changed my name to Hemant

Singla, forever. 0040724477-4 I.Harpreet.W/o Surinder Singh, R/o, A-43, Kh. No. 41/17, and 41/18, Upper First-Floor, Guru-Nanak Enclave, Nilothi

Extn., Nilothi, New Delhi-110041, have changed my name to Harpreet Kaur 0040724478-6 I, Harmeet Kaur Khurana, W/O.Jitender Singh

Sabharwal,R/O.K-59/4,Fateh Nagar.near Jheel Park.New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Harmeet Kaur Sabharwal, for all Purposes.

0040724470-1 I Suneel alias Abhinnit KP

Tiwaari S/o Sh. Janardan Tiwari R/o E-34, Near 22-Block, Baba Farid Puri, West Patel Nagar, Patel Nagar S.O., Central Delhi, Delhi-110008 have changed my name to Suneel Evvaan Sagr Tiwari for all purposes.

0040724405-4

I,Charanpreet Singh Sawhney, S/o S. Amarjeet Singh Sawhney, R/o.Flat.No.G-1002,Raheja Atharva. Sector-109. Daultabad. Gurugram, Haryana-122006, have changed the name of my son ANHAD SAWHNEY aged-17years and he shall hereinafter be known as ANHAD SINGH 0040724477-3 SAWHNEY.

1.CATHERINE.W/O WILLIAM SAMUEL, R/O 5/16, ASHOKA ROAD, SHIPRA SUN CITY, INDIRAPURAM.GHAZIABAD.UT TAR PRADESH-201014, changed my name CATHERINE SAMUEL.

0040724476-1 I,Bakkanna V F/O-No-

15679069M, Hav(OCC) Krishnaiah V R/o-H-No 2-75, Village & Post-Yellur, Teh&PS-Kollapur, Dist-Mahbubnagar, State-(AP), Pin-509102.have changed my name fm Bakkanna V to Vastrala Bakkanna, for all future purpose. Vide affidavit, before public notary Telangana, Dated-15-Apr-2024.

0040724470-10

I, Shahida Ishaq.W/o Ashfaq Ahmed.R/o-B-265, Gali No.8, Mandawali Fazalpur, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Shahida Ashfaq.

0040724475-6

I,Ashfaq Ahmad,S/o Mehboob Elahi,R/o-B-265,Gali.No.8, Mandawali Fazalpur, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Ashfaq Ahmed. 0040724477-5

**I,Adarsh** Dewan,S/o Mantosh Kumar Dewan R/o B-60,Ist Floor, Sohna Road, Southend Floors, Sector-49, Gurgaon (Haryana), have changed my name to Adarsh Kumar Dewan, for all Purposes.

0040724470-4

I,Aayush Adarsh Dewan,S/o Adarsh Kumar Dewan, R/o B-60.Ist-Floor.Sohna Road. Southend-Floors, Sector-49, Gurgaon (Haryana), have changed my name to Aayush Dewan.for all Purposes.

I, Tribhuwan Bhainsora S/O Ramesh Singh, R/o Plot No-33. 34-A, Sainik Enclave Part-2, Jharoda Kalan, South West Delhi, Delhi-110072, I have changed the name of my minor Son Ardhya Bhainsora aged about 13 Years and He shall hereafter be known as Aradhy Bhainsora 0070899160-1 I, Rathi Beigum is Legally

wedded, Wife of JC-595033W,Sub Gh Mohd Najar, RO-Zampora, Tehsil-Beeru , District-Budgam. In my husband's service records my name has been wrongly mentioned as Rathi instead of Rathi Beigum. It needs correction. Objections be filled to concerned authorities within seven days.

0020475071-1

I, Rajender Parshad, S/o Late Ishwar Chand R/o-16, Rajdhani Enclave, Pitampura, Delhi-110034, have changed my name to Rajender Parshad Gupta. 0040724476-3

I, Narayan Singh, S/o Gokal Singh,R/o E-596, Budhnagar, Inderpuri, New Delhi-110012, have changed my name to Narain Singh for all purposes.

0040724478-1

I, Meenu W/o Anil Gupta R/o C-1/47-48, 2nd Floor, Budh Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Meenu 0070899151-1

I, Manju Anil Gupta alias Manju Anil Kumar Gupta D/O Chaman Lal Gupta, R/o H. No-42, Road No-78, West Punjabi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi- 110026. have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Manju

0070899164-1 I, Krishan Manoher S/O Roshan Lal, R/o z-228, Kashmiri Colony, Paprawat Road, Najafgarh, South West Delhi, Delhi-110043, have changed my name

and shall hereafter be Known as Krishan Lakhiwal. I. KESHEO DUTT SHARMA/ SHRI DIWAN SINGH SHARMA R/O

VILLAGE-KHAWASPUR, P.O.-CHILA RAILWAY STATION, DISTT.-BULANDSHAHR, CURRENTLY R/O 19, SANCHAR VIHAR APARTMENT, FLAT, NO.C-58/4, SECTOR-62, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDH NAGAR. U.P., confirm that KESHAV DUTT **SHARMA & KESHEO DUTT** SHARMA both name are

belongs to same person. 0070899148-1

I, Avinash S/o Jagdish Prasad Jaiswal R/o A-13, Prem Nagar-3 Part-2, Shani Bazar Road, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi-110086 have changed my name from Avinash to Avinash Kumar Jaiswal for all future purposes. 0040724442-1

I, Asmita De Saha, W/o Arup Kumar Saha R/o Mahavir Vihar, Dwarka Sector-1, Delhi have changed my name to Asmita De vide Affidavit dated 22-02-2024 before Notary Public, Delhi. 0070899116-1

R/o M-54, Vikaspuri, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name 0040724478-2 to Anup Kaur.

I, Anoop Kaur W/o Kartar Singh

I, Anilkumar Joginder Gupta alias Anil joginder gupta S/O Joginder Kumar Gupta, R/o H. No-42, Road No-78, West Punjabi Bagh, West Delhi, Delhi-110026, have changed my name and shall hereafter be Known as Anil Kumar Gupta. 0070899161-1

I. Ravi Bhati S/o Anavar Singh R/o 105, Tilpata karanwas, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201306 have changed my name to Ravinder Singh.

0070899056-1

I Sarfaraz Ahmed S/o Nasir Ahmed R/o House No.4902, Gali Mufti Sahab Wali, Bara Hindu Rao, Delhi-110006 have changed the name of my minor son from Mohammad Basit Qureshi to Mohd. Basit Qureshi for all purposes. 0040724405-3

Chandeep Singh S/o Surjit Singh R/o 122 SF, C2-Block, Janak Puri, Janakpuri B-1, West Delhi, Delhi-110058 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Rubani Arora to Rubani Kaur Arora for all 0040724405-1 purposes.

TChandeep Singh S/o Surjit Singh R/o 122 SF, C2-Block, Janak Puri, Janakpuri B-1, West Delhi, Delhi-110058 have changed the name of my minor daughter from Raina Arora to Raina Kaur Arora for all 0040724405-2 purposes.

TBijesh Kumar S/o Mahinder Singh R/o Ward No-3, Bhagwangarh, Jagadhri, Jagadhri, Yamuna Nagar, Haryana-135003, have changed my name to Raj Kumar

0070899104-1

I. SUPREET KAUR, W/O HARPREET SINGH DUGGAL, A-179.2ND-FLOOR.PRITAMMARG KEWAL-PARK AZADPUR, DELHI-33, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUPREET KAUR DUGGAL' 0040724470-9

PRITAMSINGH DUGGAL', A-

179,2ND-FLOOR PRITAMMARG

**KEWAL-PARK AZADPUR DELHI-**

I, HARPREET SINGH, S/O. LT, S.

33, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO HARPREET SINGH DUGGAL. 0040724470-8 I, Tarun Jain S/O Ashok Kumar Jain R/O A-32, Vivek Vihar, Phase-2, Delhi-92, declare that I

had changed my name to Tarun Kumar Jain. Documents with the name Tarun Jain may be read as Tarun Kumar Jain. Both names are of the same person.

0040724136-3

#### LOST & FOUND

I Shri Rajeev Singh S/o Shri Kiran Pal Singh R/o 304 SF, Omicron-1, Greater Noida Kasana, PO Kasana Distt Gautam Budh Nagar, UP-201310 has lost my Original Allotment Letter Dated 16.08.2010 vide Allotment No BHS124021 in respect of Flat No. 304SF, measuring 121 sq. mts. Block-18 Sector-Omicron-1 Greater Noida UP. Finder may contact on 9350121515.

I, Anu Mahajan R/o 174, Plot No. 1, Sector 4, Dwarka, New Delhi-75 have lost my original documents of property 184-C, MIG Flats, Rajouri Garden, N.D.-27. Finder please contact 9354797845.

0040724446-1

I, Kamlesh Rao W/o Late Shri Yogender Rao, HNO.C-38, Naharpur Village, Delhi-110085. have lost My Original FRD IN Respect of Property No Plot no 529, Pkt. A-I, Sector.No 37, Rohini Delhi, wild file No F.16(26959)2012 RHN, Application No.122640 and Priority No.12025. Its which is not traceable.

0040724439-1 I, Renu Sahney W/o Late Usha Rani Jagota, Have Lost Original GPA, Agreement to Sell,

Property Documents Chain i.e Possession Letter etc, Property No:WZ-108, Plot No.G/B/4, Harinagar, New Delhi.Finder Contact.9810510661

0070899153-1

I,Nirmala Verma W/o-Late Sh SPL Verma, have lost the original DDA Allotment Letter for property G 26 Ashok Vihar Phase-1 Delhi-52. If found please cont: ninois@gmail.com

0040724416-1

**I,Sundeep** Kumar Saharan S/o Late Shri Ramdhan Singh have lost my property paper, Original GPA (made by Ram Niwas) of,Khasra No.648, Shardhanand, Colony, Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi-110042. And Scooty RC No.DL14SD3428. If Found, Contact-9540057335

**Lost** my original Agreement to

Sell of my Plot No.56, Block-C, Rosewood City, Gurgaon, Harvana (in the name of M/s-Rajkumar Enterprises Pvt Ltd and M/s-Mankind Pharma Ltd). Finder may Contact-Saurabh Gupta at-49, Sector-15, Part-1, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001

0040724421-1 Original property-document i.e.

sale deed of Upper-ground Back-Side Portion of Property-No.C-6 and C-7 Acharya-Niketan, Mayur-Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110091, executed by Sh.Mast Ram & Sh.Om Prakash Sharma Regn.No.494, dated-12-01-2011, has been lost. Finder contact: Bharti Chakraborty W/o, Subrato Chakraborty Mobile No.9654028197.

0040724478-5

### **RECRUITMENT**

### SITUATION VACANT

#### **OTHERS**

**Applications** invited for Project Associate-I in SERB project under Dr. Hemlata Agnihotri, Department of Biophysics, UDSC, New Delhi - 110021. Details of the essential qualification are available at www.du.ac.in and https://biophysics.du.ac.in/ dated 10-04-2024.

> 0040724224-1 DP/4319/CD/2024

#### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Dimpi, Proprietor M/s Mehul Enterprises, Office at. 104, Mangolpur, Kalan, New Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case CT No. 5064/2018 U/s 138 NI Act registered at P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said Dimpi cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Dimpi has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Dimpi accused of CT No. 5064/2018 U/s 138 NI Act P.S. Farsh Bazar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 21.05.2024 By Order

Sh. Aridaman Singh Cheema, Metropolitan Magistrate -03, Shahdara, Court No. 19, Karkardooma Court, Delhi

**SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL** 



DP/4347/SHD/2024

Parveen

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Parveen D/o Md. Alauddin R/o Raviyadav ka makan Gali No. 11 Kapashera New Delhi. Age about 19 years, Height 5'3" complexion Shallow, Built Medium, Face Round, wearning Black Colour Top, Blue Jeans & Golden Colour Belly in feet has been missing since 08.04.2024 from her house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this girl but no clue has come to light so far.

In this regard a DD No. 60A dated 08.04.2024 has been lodged at PS Kapashera, New Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this girl may kindly inform to the following. Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Email: cic@cbi.gov.in Fax: 011-23011334 Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218 DP/4412/SW/2024

SHO Kapashera, New Delhi Ph. 9717825903, 7065036226

#### SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL



General public is hereby informed that one girl namely Jvoti. D/o Asharfi Lal. R/o R-117/2 Model Town-III, Delhi. Age 30 yrs., Height 5'3", Shallow Complexion, Oval Face, Medium Built wearing green suit salwar has been missing since 02.04.2024 from the area of PS Model Town, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 105A

Dt. 05.04.2024 has been lodged at PS

light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

Model Town, Delhi, Since efforts have been made by local

police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in : 011-23011334 Fax : 011-23014046 011-23015218

DP/4443/NW/2024

PS Model Town, Delhi. Ph.: 011-27008600, 8750870230

S.H.O.

#### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Rajesh Chauhan S/o Bhim Singh R/o A-117, Yedu Appartment, Shalimar Garden, Sahibabad, U.P. has committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 65/2017, U/s 325/341/506/34 IPC, PS Jyoti Nagar, Distt. North-East, Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Rajesh Chauhan can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Rajesh Chauhan has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation are hereby made that the said accused person(s) Rajesh Chauhan of FIR No. 65/2017, U/s 325/341/506/34 IPC, PS Jyoti Nagar, Distt North-East, Delhi are required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 27.05.2024.

DP/3937/NE/2024 (Court Matter)

DP/4457/ED/2024

By Order Ms. Preeti Prewa CMM, Court No. 59, Ground Floor Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

Metropolitan Magistrate-04

Central District, Room No.180,

Shahdara Karkardooma Courts, Delhi

Room No.-13,

#### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused

Prashant S/o Sh. Babu Ram R/o H.No. 221 Gali No 5 Pandit Mohalla Kondli East Delhi 110096 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR NO.12219/20 U/S 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Madhu Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused Prashant cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Prashant has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Prashant of FIR NO.12219/20 U/S 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Madhu Vihar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 31.05.2024 By Order UDBHAV KUMAR JAIN

#### PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused (1) Rakesh

Kumar Katariya S/o Somnath Katariya (2) Vijay Kumar Katariya S/o Somnath Katariya R/o 552, Mandawli Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 225/17 U/s 324/451/34 IPC P.S. Karol Bagh New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused (1) Rakesh Kumar Katariya (2) Vijay Kumar Katariya cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused (1) Rakesh Kumar Katariya (2) Vijay Kumar Katariya has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused (1) Rakesh Kumar Katariya (2) Vijay Kumar Katariya of FIR No. 225/17 U/s 324/451/34 IPC P.S. Karol Bagh, Delhi. is required to appear before this Court to answer the said By Order complaint on or before 05.06.2024 Ms Shipra Dhankar, Ld Metropolitan Magistrate-01

PUBLIC NOTICE

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC AT LARGE IS HEREBY INFORME BY WAY OF THIS NOTICE THAT MY CLIENT SH. PARVEEN CHAUHAN SA ATE SH MAHAVIR SINGH AND HI FAMILY RIO A-3, PHASE-2, ASHO VIHAR, NEW DELHI -110052 HAV SEVERED ALL THEIR SOCIAL RELATIONSHIP FROM HIS SON NAMEL MR RAHILI CHALIHAN AND DISOWNE HIM FROM THEIR MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY DUE TO HE OSTILE ATTITUDE IN THE FAMILY THEREFORE, AS MY CLIENTS SHALL NOT BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY OF THEIR ACTS DONE IN PAST, PRESENT OF AASHU PALI (ADVOCATE) Lawyer's Chamber No-376, Block -II

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

DELHI HIGH COURT, NEW Delhi-110003

ily client namely Mr. Nand Kishor Verm S/o Late Sh. Indermal R/o House No 1342, Pocket C, Madanpur Khadar, J.J. Colony, Amar Nath Sweet Corner, Delhi 110076, that he has discovned his son namely Dayanand Verma, his wife namely Laxmi Verma and their progeny from inheriting his all type of movable and movable opposities. That my client has proken all the relations physically nentally, socially, and legally from the above said persons and shall have no concern with his son namely Dayanand Verma along with his wife namely Laxm erma, and progeny in any manner

K.K. Sharma (Advocate) Ch. No. 384, Patiala House Court, New Delhi-1

#### PUBLIC NOTICE

Sakshi D/o Shri Birendra Kumar Singh Aged about 22 years R/o 204-B DDA Flats, Gazipur, Delhi-110096, have changed my name from Sakshi to Sakshi Kumari for all future purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information to t general public at large that my client Jagjit Singh, s/o Samay Singh, r/o Plot No.591, Village, Brijwasan, Delhi 110061, hereby disown his son Manish and his wife, Pooja from al his movable and immovable propertie and in case anyone has dealing with them of any nature, the same shall be solely at their own cost and risk.

> VIKAS SHARMA (Advocate A-SO LGF Defence Colony New Delhi-24

**PUBLIC NOTICE** client Sh. Krishan Chand S/o Sh Gyani Ram Sharma R/o Flat A-13 Sector-06, Shree Balaji Apartment Dwarka. New Delhi has severed al his relations with his Daughter Koma Rani with immediate effect due to her responsible and obnoxious behavior with my client and debarred from his all movable and immovable properties. My client shall not be responsible for any act or omission of said person, if any person dealing with her shall do so at his/her own risk and responsibility

RAMBILASH SHARMA (ADVOCATE) SHOP NO. 88, KHANNA MARKET. OPP. ST. STEPHEN HOSPITAL NEAR TIS HAZARI COURTS, DELHI --11054

PUBLIC NOTICE agesh Kumar Singh, D/o Roop Ram, D-96, Delhi-110092 While coming by Auto Rikshaw NDMC Office on 28.03.2024, she have lost Deed dated 25.06.2010, original Dissolution De lated 10.08.2010 and original Affidavit (NOC lated 10.08.2010 with Smt. Varsha Rani W/o S Ramesh Chander Kohli R/o 759/A/45, Leki Nagar, Tri Nagar, Delhi-110035 in respect NDMC Kiosk opp. H-Block, Connaught Circ

> Deo Raj Singl (Advocate Chamber No.B-10 Baba Guru Charan Singh Block Tis Hazari Court, Delhi-11005

SURBHI AGARWAL D/O SE PAWAN KUMAR GUPTA EX. WIFI OF SH. AMIT AGARWAL R/O I 3/32, PHASE-2, ASHOK VIHAR NORTH WEST DELHI, DELHI 110052 declare that I got divorced from my husband SH. AMIT AGARWAI vide Court Decree HMA No. 1467/13 dated 31.07.2018. Further I have changed the name of my minor daughte

namely VARNIKA AGARWAL age

14 years and she shall hereafter

in future for all purposes

known as VARNIEKA AGARWAA

PUBLIC NOTICE

t is for general information that

PUBLIC NOTICE It is for general information that SURBHI AGARWAL D/O SH PAWAN KUMAR GUPTA EX WIFE OF SH. AGARWAL R/O B-3/32PHASE-2, ASHOK NORTH WEST

VIHAR DELHI DELHI-110052 declare that I go divorced from my husband SH AMIT AGARWAL vide Cour Decree HMA No. 1467/18 dated 31.07.2018. Further I have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as **SURBHIE GUPTAE**.

**PUBLIC NOTICE** Be it known to all that my clients Chunni Lal and his wife Rekha Devi Both R/o H. No. 307, Street No.2, Than Singh Nagar, Anand Parvat, Karol Bagh Central Delhi, Delhi-110055 have severed all legal/social elations with their son Navin Kumar and his wife Sarita and disowned hem from their all movable and immovable properties as they become quarrelsome and disrespectful to my clients. My clients shall not be responsible for

Ch. No.513, Rohini Courts, New Delhi

Anshul Gupta (Advocate)

their acts.

#### **PUBLIC NOTICE** Be It Known that my client Smt Angreje

W/o Late Sh Ram Pal R/o House No. 345

MCD Colony, North West, Badli, North West Delhi, Delhi-110042 have disowne and severed all her relation with her so namely Mr SUSHIL and his wife Mr SHYAM and debarred them from he novable and immovable properties/asset during her life time and after death Anybody dealing with them in civil and eriminal matter shall be doing at his/her/their Own risk, Cos and responsibility KUM. CHANCHAL (Advocate

Enrl No.: D/1061/2021

Tender Notice No.: S/66/02/24-25, Dtd: 15-04-2024. E-Tender are

Closing/Opening Date: 06-05-2024.

Power Rig and installation tools 1 & 1.3/8" with all accessories as per specification/drawing no SP23GM0055 and DLW pt no 15630110.

with IREPS, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act

Dy. Chief Material Manager, New Jalpaiguri



PUBLIC NOTICE This is to inform the general publithat my clients Shri Banshi Lai Aron S/o Late Shri Suraj Bhan Resident o 1041GH 5 & 7, Paschim Vihar, Near Sayed Goan, New Delhi, has severe all their relations from his son namel Raiesh Arora and daughter-in-lanamely Smt. Mona Arora r/o 1214, Gi 8 7, Paschim Vihar, Near Save Goan. New Delhi due to their misdeer misconduct and antisocial activitie and behaviour. My client has debarred/disowned them from a their movable and immovable properties and withdrawl all h

**PUBLIC NOTICE** 

This is to bring to the notice of General Public that Original

Relinquishment deed dated 17.08.2021 executed by Mrs Harpal Kaur in favour of Jaskirat

Singh in respect of Property no

HL-1 and HL2, situated in L

Block, Hari Nagar, Jail Road New Delhi, registered as

document no document no

16134 on 17.08.2021 has been

In case the same is found, it may

be returned immediately to the

Progressive Law Group

Tel. nos. 011-42458152-53

9/14, 3 rd Floor,

East Patel Nagar

New Delhi-110008.

Mob no- 9871430462

following address:

Rajpal Singh Gulia (Advocate Enrol . D/540/01 Ch. No-434, Dwarka Court

and consequences.

Karam Singh R/o Old No. - 75, New No.- 210A Front Side, Second Floor, Kh No. 182/150, Prakash Mohalla, East of Kailash, South Delhi, Delhi 110065 ha severed all relations with his son namely So Kulwant Singh S/o Sd. Gurdeep Singh R/o Old No. - 75, New No. - 210A Front Side Second Floor, Kh. No. 182/150, Prakasl Mohalla, East of Kailash, South Delhi, Delh 110065 and has disowned his son from all hi movable and immovable properties, owing to physical abuse, rude, indifferent and unrul behaviour, whosoever deals with him in an matter whatsoever shall do so at his/her ris

PUBLIC NOTICE

2004 and Deed of Declaration dates

Online F.I.R. for lost document has been lodged ON 17.04.2024, SD No: 430 / 2014 Defhi Police vide LR No:1649842/2024. Hence, I hereby inform public at large that anyone finds the same, please submit th same to our above said address. An person(s)(institutions having any claim in th said property may inform us at the abo ssue of this notice. Post that my client shall

IN THE COURT OF SH BHUPESH KUMAR, DISTRICT JUDGE (COMM. COURT-05) ROOM NO.22, BLOCK-I SOUTH-EAST DISTRICT SAKET COURTS, NEW DELHI NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

CS (COMM) NO. 441/2023

Mr. Amit Jani S/o Sh. Lakhmi Chand Agarwal, 1331, Shiv Shkati Nagar, Meerut City, Uttar Pradesh-250002

2024, at 10:00 O' clock, to answer the same, failing which the Suit will be disposed of ex-Given under my hand and the sea of the court, this 04th April, 2024 NOTE: Defendant is informed to file WS within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of

#### commercial suit in 120 days period is mandatory and no extension can be granted.

KTE-03-2024 Dated 13.04.2024) E-Tender [Single packet system] or behalf of the President of India acting through Dy. Chief Engineer-I [Construction], West Central Railway, Bhopal for the following works: Tender No.: BPL-C-II-BINA-KTE-03-2024 **Description of work:** Protection and strengthening of embankment in between Isharwara-Jaruakhera section at Km 1020/15 to 1021/11 & construction of drain in between Sumreri-LC-11 to avoid stagnation of rain water in valley portion in connection with Bina-KTE 3rd Line project, Approx cost of tender: 429.75 lacs, **Earnest Money (₹):** ₹ 3,64,900.00, Date of opening of tender: 06.05.2024 at 15:12 hrs. Completion period: 02 (Two) months including harvest & monsoon period. Note: The complete information of above E-Tender is available in website IREPS (www.ireps.gov.in) and also placed on the notice board of the office

Dy. Chief Engineer-II [Constn] West Central Railway, Bhopal े स्वच्छ भारत अभियान एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

invited by the undersigned for the following works. SI.No.:1; Tender No. : KT245225;

Consignee:-SSE/D/Siliguri Jn., NFR. QTY:- 01 No. Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents Tenderer may log on to the website (www.ireps.gov.in) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with IREPS. In case they are not registered

Serving Customers With A Smile

relation with them. My clients will no be responsible for any act an omission of their above named son & daughter-in-law, whoever deals with them shall do so at his/he esponsibility and risk

Sec.-10 Dwarka, New Delhi DISOWNMENT NOTICE Be it known to all that my client Sd. Gurdee Singh (Aadhar No. 2641 6931 9316) S/o Sd

Pranav Gupta (Advoca Enrl No.: D/2117/2018 412. Lawyer's Chamber Block-1 Delhi High Court, New Delhi- 110003

on benall of the cleans for Authorities and Mr. Arvind Kumar Goel are the joint owners of Residential Property Bearing No. 21, in Block No. K, area measuring 332 Sq. Yds., Stuated at Janopura Extension, New, Dehi Situated at Jangpura Extension, New, Delhi by virtue of Sale Deed dated 06.10.2023 executed by Mrs. Waryam Kaur Juneja, Mr. Inder Mohan Juneja, Mrs. Jasminder Kaur Juneja, Mr. Gurmeet Singh Juneja & Mr. through Mutation Letter dated 29.08.201 23.06.2023. That Original Deed of Declaration dated of Declaration dated 23.06.2023 executed between Mr. Gurpreet Singh Juneja & Mrs. Geeta Chadha in vide Doc. No. 1155 is lost. Online F.I.R. for lost document has been

COURT NOTICE

4E/9, 2nd Fl, Jhandewalan Extn., N. D. . . Mob. 8810391672, P. No. 011-356686;

Mohd K. Hussain (Advocate

(ORDER 5, Rule 20 of the

CANARA BANK ... Plaintiff. AMIT JANI

Whereas Plaintiff has instituted that above Suit FOR RECOVERY against the defendants. You are hereby summoned to appear in this Court in person or by a pleader on the 27th day of MAY

summons with advance copy to the plaintiff and filling of WS in

🚳 WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

(Advertised E-Tendering Tender

Notice No. BPL-C-II-BINA-

the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders.

of Dy. CE/C/BPL. Tenders other than in

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Brief Description: Huck Bolting Equipment Tool consisting of Hydraulic

2000 and participate in the above tenders.

NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY

Tis Hazari Courts, New Delhi

#### **STANDINGS**

RR	7	6	1	0	12	0.677
KKR	6	4	2	0	8	1.399
CSK	6	4	2	0	8	0.726
SRH	6	4	2	0	8	0.502
LSG	6	3	3	0	6	0.038
DC	7	3	4	0	6	-0.074
GT	7	3	4	0	6	-1.303
PK	6	2	4	0	4	-0.218
MI	6	2	4	0	4	-0.234
RCB	7	1	6	0	2	-1.185

#### **Shikhar is undergoing** rehab: Sunil Joshi

Punjab Kings' influential skipper Shikhar Dhawan is currently undergoing rehabilitation after suffering a shoulder injury, the team's spin-bowling coach Sunil Joshi said on Wednesday. Sam Curran stood in as Punjab Kings captain in Dhawan's absence in their match against Rajasthan Royals.

While he is set to miss Thursday's match against Mumbai Indians here, Dhawan also remains doubtful for the April 21 game against Gujarat Titans.

"Regarding Shikhar, the medical team will update. As for now, he is under rehab," Joshi said at the prematch press conference.

Dhawan hasn't had a great time with the bat in IPL 2024, but is still Kings' highest run-getter currently with 152 runs from five innings. scoring at a strike rate of 125.61.

Joshi also said it's high time the toporder batters find their groove and lift the team that is struggling at the seventh place with just two wins and four losses. PTI

#### Hostile crowd will motivate Hardik: Gopal

With Mumbai Indians skipper Hardik Pandya continuing to receive hostile treatment from fans in the ongoing Indian Premier League, his teammate Shreyas Gopal felt on Wednesday it will only strengthen his resolve to come back stronger with some good performances. Pandya was announced as MI captain for the IPL 2024 season, replacing fan-favourite Rohit Sharma, who led the franchise to five titles. The change of guard hasn't gone down well with the fans, who have expressed their displeasure by booing Pandya across venues. Recalling his friendship with Pandya, Gopal said the MI skipper is mentally very strong to get unnerved by the behaviour of the crowd. "I have known Hardik for a decade, and nothing much has changed. He is a really tough guy, and something like this is only going to motivate him," said Gopal during a press conference ahead of the clash against Punjab Kings. "The way he has taken it so far is very inspiring for a lot of us. Although it's not easy to take it daily, he is strong and kudos to him. He has not let it affect him personally. But, it will

## Titans cut to size

Delhi bowl out GT for 89, the lowest total of season, and overhaul target with ease



The net run rate of the Delhi Capitals rebounded to -0.074 after their thrashing of Gujarat Titans. Nirmal Harindran

#### **SYNOPSIS**

Pant has an evening to remember as captain, wicket keeper and batsman as Delhi Capitals make a mockery of Gujarat Titans, dismissing them for 89 before overhauling the target with 67 balls to spare.

**TUSHAR BHADURI** 

APRIL 17

#### **Lively Pant**

IT HAS been only a handful of games since Rishabh Pant made a comeback after a horrific car crash, and the biggest compliment one can make is that one doesn't need to make any such allowances for his performance.

Wednesday's game in Ahmedabad was one where everything he touched turned to gold. Winning the toss can be put down to luck, but Pant's performance behind the stumps was exemplary. He had four dismissals – two catches and two stumpings - and three of them vouched for his impressive reflexes and the regained strength in his legs.

For the David Miller catch off Ishant Sharma, Pant had to change direction to catch an inside edge inches above the ground. Wicketkeepers' first instinct is to expect a catch off the outside edge. The inside edge would have prompted a change of direction, but the ball then ricocheted off the batsman's thigh pad to go to the off-side, necessitating another improvisation. It needed good strength from Pant's legs, after whatever he had gone through due to the accident, to jump in a different direction and send the South African dangerman back.

The two stumpings came via the unlikeliest of sources – Tristan Stubbs – with one on the offside and the other down the legside. The South African got hit for two boundaries in his solitary over but got one to go straight from around the stumps and beat Abhinav Manohar, who had a tortured

stay in the middle, on the outside edge. The back foot had strayed out of the crease, and in the TV umpire's opinion, had not returned behind the line.

Impact Player Shahrukh Khan came and went without making a star impact. An attempted swipe to a wide down the legside made contact with thin air, making the batsman overbalance and move out of the crease. Luck was on Pant's side as even though the ball slipped out of his hands, it went on to hit the stumps with the batsman still out.

But his athleticism was evident even otherwise as well, as he jumped this way and that, showing his expert govework off both pace bowlers and spinners.

And he was there at the end to ensure that Delhi Capitals got the job done in quick time even though they lost four wickets in the chase in David Warner's absence.

#### Titans sleepwalking

The Gujarat Titans batting performance was so devoid of energy and initiative that one wondered if there was something more in the pitch than met the eye. The Delhi Capitals new-ball pairing of Khaleel Ahmed and Ishant Sharma had been hot and cold in the league, but seemed to have got out on the right side of bed for this match. Titans' top order is disproportionately reliant on skipper Shubman Gill and once he was gone in the second over – spooning a catch off an Ishant full ball to Prithvi Shaw at extra cover,

the home side went into a shell. The Powerplay saw only three bowlers with only 30 scored. Mukesh had the returning Wriddhiman Saha bowled off the inside edge, going for an ungainly hoick, and Sai Sudharsan was found short by a brilliant piece of fielding by Sumit Kumar, who rushed to the ball and threw at the base of the stumps at the non-striker's end as the batsmen attempted a tight single. Miller's early dismissal left the

hosts 30/4 after the Powerplay. It seemed that Manohar took the rebuilding brief a bit too seriously and was scoreless for the first eight deliveries he faced, playing out a Khaleel maiden in the process, as the innings seemed to be stuck in quicksand.

Rahul Tewatia has made a name as a finisher but found himself in the middle after just five overs, and failed to take charge. The Impact Player lasted just one ball.

It was not until Rashid Khan appeared at No.8 to inject some impetus into the moribund innings. His 31 off 24 innings included the only six in the 17.3 overs that the Titans batting effort lasted. There was no assistance from the tail with the last three batsmen contributing four runs between them off 24 balls.

#### Aussie explodes at start

Jake Fraser-McGurk announced himself in the IPL with a belligerent half-century on debut against Lucknow Super Giants. The high backlift and all-out aggression came as a breath of fresh air, though he seemed to be put in check a bit by spinners.

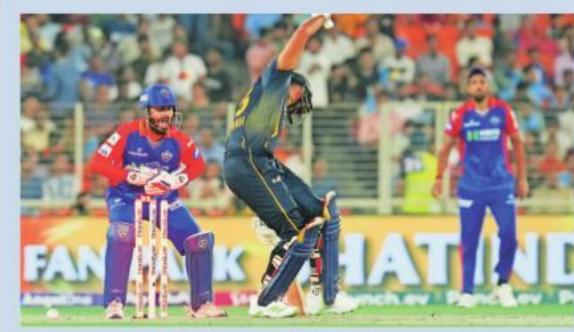
In Warner's absence, the young Aussie – with the record of the fastest List A century to his name – was in no mood to take any prisoners on Wednesday either. The first ball he faced from veteran Sandeep Warrier was a full one, shaping out a bit. It was met with the straightest of bats with a high elbow as the ball was dispatched over the sightscreen. The third ball was smashed past mid-off as almost an eighth of the target was achieved in the first over itself.

When fellow Aussie Spencer Johnson came on to bowl the second one, he was carved over cover for an extraordinary maximum. There was no room for niceties in his game and when he made room to slap another one through the offside, the toe end took the ball to the third man fence. He was gone next ball, but Fraser-McGurk's assault in the first two overs had already wiped off 25 runs from the target, as Delhi Capitals did a big favour to their net run rate, making up somewhat after the 106-run pounding they had received at the hands of Kolkata Knight Riders earlier in the competition.

**Brief score: Gujarat Titans** 89 all out in 17.3 overs (Rashid Khan 31; Mukesh Kumar 3/14) lost to **Delhi Capitals** 92 for 4 in 8.5 overs (Jake Fraser-McGurk 20; Sandeep Warrier 2/40) by six wickets.

## **EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER**

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



Rishabh Pant's glove work since his return has been excellent. Sportzpics

### Pant's smooth glove work

HOW GOOD Rishabh Pant has been with the gloves has been overlooked a bit since his comeback. His batting has been in focus but behind the stumps, Pant has been pretty smooth. Another example of his agility and anticipation was witnessed when Pant coolly dived to his left to catch a dipping ball that resulted in the dismissal of the dangerous David Miller. Ishant Sharma was bowling around the wicket to the left-handed Miller and he got the ball to angle in. Miller closed the face of his bat hoping to steer the ball to the leg side. Credit to Pant that he didn't move even though he would have lost sight of the incoming ball to Miller. From going one way, the ball suddenly went the other way after taking an edge. Pant made it look easier than it seemed because he didn't lose his balance and was ready to move as the ball hurtled away from him. There was an appeal but the umpire didn't give it which resulted in Pant using a review. The Ultraedge only confirmed what Pant was sure of. He also effected two stumpings. Quick hands and great glove work.

#### Ishant continues to burn bright

Age 35 and in the twilight of his career. **Ishant Sharma** has been a bankable bowler for Delhi Capitals. The 'wow ball' arrived when he bowled KKR's Andrew Russell with a 144kph delivery, which saw the batsman applaud as he walked back to the pavilion. But except when Mumbai



Delhi Capitals bowlers went at over 8.5 runs per over, Ishant has kept it tidy. He used a wide-slower ball to fox Shubman Gill into mistiming his

posted 234 and all

shot. Gill ended up giving an easy catch. Ishant has picked up six wickets so far, not too bad for someone who does not play regularly. Ishant had also bowled Punjab Kings' Shikhar Dhawan with a quick delivery that was clocked at nearly 140 kph. He has completed his full quota in just one of the six games he has featured in this year, yet has shown glimpses of his skill more than once.

#### Porel plays for the team, with flair

An innings of 15 is often relegated to a footnote, if mentioned at all. And Delhi Capitals' win was more or less confirmed during the first innings itself. But Abishek Porel's short knock showed that there was something about the 21-year-old. He had caught the eye with some big hitting in



the opening game of the season against Punjab Kings. But given the licence to go after a low total, the left-hander leashed some spectacular shots. He

three boundaries he hit showcased class. Spencer Johnson's back-of-a-length ball was punched through the offside without much flourish. The next ball, an attempted short one, didn't rise above waist height and Porel swivel-pulled it to the deep backward square-leg fence. Apart from the shots, it was the intent to keep going after the bowling that would have pleased the team management.

#### Warrier spirit fells Shaw

Prithvi Shaw wanted to pound the ball with IPL. Except that a surprise ball can create is-

a horizontal bat but it came at him faster than he thought and had him in all sorts of trouble. The bouncer was delivered by fast bowler Sandeep Warrier, making his Gujarat Titans debut. The ball was well directed — zoning in and climbing at a good pace toward Shaw's head. Shaw paid the price

for zero foot movement and no transfer of weight. If he had gone back, he would have been in a better position to handle the bouncer. But Shaw is all hand-eye-coordination — a method that works well in the

**CONTRIBUTIONS MADE** 

**STRIKE RATE** 

127.88

110.53

11 from four balls

24 from 20 balls

2 from six balls

**RUNS@AVERAGE** 

133@19

42@14

HARDIK'S CHASING WOES

**DUBE'S LOWER-ORDER TROUBLES** 

**RUNS REQUIRED** 

27 required from 12 balls

96 needed from 35 balls

77 needed from 37 balls

**INNINGS** 

sues. Shaw's other option was to duck out of the way. Instead, he first looked like he was lining up for the pull but at the last moment was forced to fend off the

ball awkwardly. The ball ballooned in the air and Spencer Johnson took an easy catch at short third man. Warrier saw the second ball he delivered hit for a six over

his head by Delhi Capitals opener Jake Fraser-McGurk. But he redeemed himself with the short ball to Shaw. A saving grace on a forgettable day for his team.

#### THE PERFECT FINISHER

probably be there in his head."

eighth in the 10-team table.

Under Pandya, MI have won two of

their six games so far and are placed

## How India's search for a power-hitter for T20 World Cup is shaping up

TANISHQ VADDI APRIL 17

GOING INTO the 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia, Dinesh Karthik was assigned the finisher role and the batting line-up was built accordingly. However, there is still a question mark on who will be the player who will get the team over the line under pressure situations in the upcoming world cup in the Caribbean and US. While there are a few names that pop out immediately, their IPL franchises are playing in the middle order or top order which does not expose them to high-intensity music during the final over the innings.

Assuming India would not want to go back to Karthik at this stage of his career *The Indian* Express looks at the other possible contenders.

### Hardik Pandya



During his first stint with the Mumbai Indians, Hardik Pandya batted in the latemiddle order and turned into a brutal player in the final overs of the innings. Even for India, he became reliable

in the role at the time. Coming into bat with 75 needed off 38 balls against Australia in Sydney in 2020 Hardik nonchalantly smacked 37 of 18 balls clearing long boundaries with ease to get India over the line.

epaper indianex mess.com

The all-rounder was at the peak of his pow-

could effortlessly clear the boundary at will. "He has a great swing of the bat, a great bat flow with its rhythm and timing of those movements. He also has very good wrists. When you make the point of contact you need to be stable and hit against the strong frontside," powerhitting Guru Julian Wood told this publication However, his powers as a finisher started

ers as a finisher in that phase of his career and

to decline steeply after 2020. In Gujarat Titans, Hardik started to bat as the middle order batter who would take his time initially consolidating the innings before going after the leather in the final overs. In his current stint with Mumbai Indians, as the top order was congested, Hardik was forced to go down to his previous role at the franchise. In three opportunities where he had to finish in high-pressure chases so far in the season against Gujarat Titans, Sunirisers Hyderabad and Chennai Super Kings Hardik failed. He also seems to struggle to clear the ball from word go.

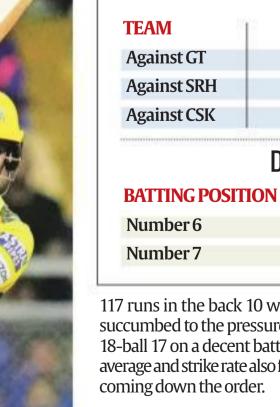
#### **Shivam Dube**

With a bat swing similar to Yuvraj Singh and the ability to muscle the spinners into orbit, Dube also has been in monstrous form for Chennai Super Kings this season. He is striking at 163.51 at an average of 60.50. Though there have been reservations about his ability to deal with bumpers with high pace in the past, the way he dealt with Alzarri Joseph and Mohammed Siraj in the opening game against



Shivam Dube is striking at 163.51 at an average of 60.50 for Chennai Super Kings this season in the IPL. Sportzpics

RCB was remarkable. However, he had breathing space against RCB because of a blistering start from Rachin Ravindra, His actual audition for the job came in against Delhi Capitals when



coming down the order. Rinku Singh

#### 117 runs in the back 10 were needed but he succumbed to the pressure, ending up with a 18-ball 17 on a decent batting wicket. Dube's average and strike rate also fall drastically when

Who could forget Rinku's five sixes against Gujarat Titans which helped Kolkata Knight Riders win a game which was dead and buried? While there was a speculation that the knock

from him might be a flash in the pan, the batter continued to surprise every time in such adverse situations in the 2023 season.

The remarkable aspect of Rinku's finishing has been his composure during the final overs combined with his ability to clear boundaries against both spin and pace without breaking a sweat. He has this uncanny ability to find a pocket of space on either side of the wicket to get a low-risk boundary and also possesses the skill to access high-risk boundary options when push comes to shove. His performances last year had earned him an India call-up in the format and he did meet the expectations. However, things have not gone according to

plan for him in the ongoing season for KKR. While the bulk of the work is being done at the top there hasn't been much need for him and even if there has been a requirement the man-

agement has turned to Andre Russell who re-

gained his devastating form.

#### Wicket-keepers/finishers

Similar to 2022 the Indian top order has heavy traffic with marquee players who cannot keep and this makes it inevitable that the wicketkeeper chosen needs to have finishing skills as well.

**ISHAN KISHAN:** The left-hander is a

pocket-size dynamo with the bat and is a handy wicket-keeper in the format however, it would take a brave selector to put him in a finishing role which he hardly played for his franchise or country before.

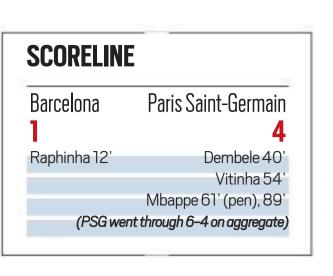
**SANJU SAMSON:** The Rajasthan Royals skipper has been in and around the Indian team and has blown hot and cold when put in other positions than three. The majority of his success in the IPL has come from him batting at three and his record elsewhere has been mediocre.

**RISHABH PANT:** Hitting the ball in the least expected areas is a speciality of the Delhi Capitals skipper. The 36-year-old tends to bat either at four or five for the Capitals and would be one of the closest bets to play the role efficiently at the showpiece event.

**IITESH SHARMA:** The Punjab Kings keeper was impressive last season with his finishing ability and has been part of the Indian side in recent times. But his record has been poor for India and his IPL season so far too hasn't been good. Chopping and changing his bat ting position did not help his cause either.

## Implosion in Barca, fireworks in Paris

Mbappe scores twice as PSG recover from first leg defeat to beat 10-man Barcelona and qualify for semis



#### **FERNANDO KALLAS**

BARCELONA, APRIL 17

PARIS SAINT-GERMAIN'S Kylian Mbappe scored twice in the second half to help his side to a 4-1 comeback win at 10-man Barcelona in their Champions League quarter-final, second leg to wrap up a 6-4 aggregate victory on Tuesday.

After winning 3-2 in Paris and taking a 1-0 lead with an early Raphinha goal in the return, Barca collapsed after going down to 10 men just before the half-hour when last man Ronald Araujo was red-carded for fouling Bradley Barcola.

Former Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele equalised for the visitors just before the break while Vitinha and Mbappe finished the job in the second half, with PSG facing Borussia Dortmund in the semifinals after the Germans beat Atletico Madrid.

Having failed to get past the round of 16 in the last two seasons and being pinned against the ropes by a Barca side who were in the ascendancy, PSG put on a gritty performance to make the most of the home side's mistakes and turn the tie around.

"I feel very proud, the players showed a lot of character and desire," PSG manager Luis Enrique told *Canal+*.

"We showed what we wanted to do here. We conceded a goal but we remained intact in mentality. We did everything to be better than Barca."

PSG manager Luis Enrique, who won the treble in charge of Barcelona in 2015, made three changes from the defeat in

Bringing in Barcola up front was crucial as the France winger was a constant menace to Barca's defence, running up and down the left channel as PSG dominated



Despite failing to make an impact in the first leg, Kylian Mbappe's (centre) late goals took his side to the semis.

from the start.

But Barcelona seemed comfortable to sit back and counter attack, with Raphinha giving them the lead in the twelfth minute.

Teenager Lamine Yamal took a long pass in his stride before slicing past Nuno Mendes in the right channel and putting the ball on a plate for the Brazilian to score the opener.

Barca then wasted a chance to extend their lead when Robert Lewandowski missed from close range and were down to 10 men just before the half-hour after last man Ronald Araujo was shown a red card for a foul on Barcola just outside the penalty

The Uruguay defender and his Barca team mates argued with the referee, saying it was a shoulder charge and Pau Cubarsi was close by and ready to challenge Barcola,

but it was in vain and Araujo eventually made his way off the field.

Former Barcelona forward Ousmane Dembele put the resulting free kick just wide but did not miss the target nine minutes later, firing home for the visitors in the 40th to equalise on the night from another great play by Barcola.

#### **PSG** pressure

PSG were back on top in the second half and piled on the pressure until Vitinha finally managed to put the visitors in front on the night after 54 minutes.

Dembele played a short corner to Achraf Hakimi, who rolled a pass to Vitinha just outside the area and the Portuguese midfielder had all the time in the world to slot a shot just inside Marc Andre ter Stegen's right-hand post.

PSG kept up the pressure and in the 61st

minute Barca full back Joao Cancelo made a reckless sliding tackle to take down Dembele and concede a penalty that Mbappe fired into the top corner to make it 3-1 as PSG moved ahead in the tie.

As Barca tried to find a goal to take the game to extra time, France striker Mbappe made the most of a counter attack to score from close-range and wrap up a semi-final

"Everyone believed in it. We didn't give up," Dembele told *Canal+*.

"We knew we were going to score goals. It was great work from the whole team. The coach's tactics were perfect. We made a great effort after conceding the first

"Qualifying for the semi-final is a big thing. We're crossing our fingers to make it to the final. We'll have to recover well." **REUTERS** 

## Dortmund turn tie around against Atletico at home

#### **SCORELINE** Atletico Madrid Dortmund Brandt 34', Hummels (OG) 49 Maatsen 39' Correa 64 Fullkrug 71 Sabitzer 74' (Dortmund went through 5-4 on agggregate)

#### **REUTERS** DORTMUND, APRIL 17

on Tuesday.

Reuters

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MARCEL SABITZER scored late and set up two goals to send Borussia Dortmund into the Champions League semifinals with a

helter-skelter 4-2 win over Atlético Madrid

After losing the first leg of their quarterfinal 2-1 in Madrid, Dortmund had to come from behind twice over two legs to advance 5-4 on aggregate.

Julian Brandt opened the scoring to level the tie before Sabitzer set up Ian Maatsen to give Dortmund a 2-0 lead on the night.

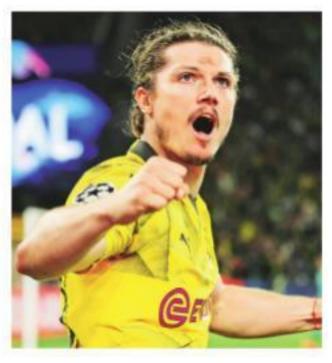
Atlético coach Diego Simeone responded with three changes at the break and they all paid off. A Mats Hummels own goal and goal from substitute Joaquín Correa put the Spanish side back in front on aggregate.

Then Sabitzer set up Niclas Füllkrug in the 71st minute for the Germany forward's first goal after nine scoreless games, and Sabitzer scored himself three minutes later to send Dortmund into the last four.

"That was a rollercoaster, a really great evening," Dortmund chief executive Hans-Joachim Watzke said. "It's not always like that for Borussia Dortmund. The last time we were in the semifinals was in 2013. This is a great day for all Borussen." Dortmund will face Paris Saint-Germain again in the semifinals. PSG progressed to the final four with a 4-1 win at Barcelona. The teams played already this season with Dortmund losing 2-0 in Paris in their opening group match, then drawing 1-1 in their final game as Dortmund topped Group F.

The final will be played June 1 in London, where Dortmund lost the 2013 final 2-1 to bitter rival Bayern Munich.

Tuesday's win stretched Dortmund's unbeaten run at home in the Champions League to 10 games.



Marcel Sabitzer scored late to complete **Dortmund's comeback.** Reuters

"We were close to tying the game, but they were superior, and when a team is superior they should be congratulated," said Simeone, who blamed his team's elimination on wasted opportunities from the first leg when Atletico dominated but failed to build a bigger advantage. Atlético needed goalkeeper Jan Oblak at

his best. He denied Brandt, then Karim Adeyemi, before Brandt finally made the breakthrough in the 34th, firing a powerful shot in off Oblak's leg from a difficult angle after eluding former teammate Axel Witsel. Sabitzer then combined with Maatsen,

who surged past two defenders and fired the ball inside the far post in the 39th. It was the Dutch defender's first Champions League goal.

But Atlético only needed four minutes after the break to level the tie when Hummels' attempted clearance of Mario Hermoso's header ended in his own net.

Correa should have scored shortly afterward when he nudged the ball wide. Simeone — dressed sharply in a black suit flopped to the ground in frustration.

Correa made no mistake in the 64th when he fired in a rebound after his first attempt was blocked.

It put the visitors back in front, but Sabitzer was involved in both goals as Dortmund struck twice in three minutes to send the home fans wild.

"Such nights are special, this Champions League season is special," Brandt said. "To see all these happy faces here in the stadium is pure happiness.'

**MIT-ADT** 

UNIVERSITY PUNE, INDIA

## Afridi out, Babar in: Pakistan cricket's cauldron of intrigue stirs again

Babar Azam has returned as Pakistan

Pakistan has wheels within wheels. It

At present, he is the interior minister.

starts from the top. PCB chairman Mohsin

Nagyi, at the time of his appointment, was

Wahab, the selector, was Naqvi's sports

minister. One doesn't need to be an insider

to say that these are political appoint-

bilities. He is also the team's travelling sen-

when not selecting the team, will be the

change in leadership, there was a PCB-gener-

ated controversy. The press release that an-

nounced Babar's elevation had an ultra-en-

thusiastic quote of outgoing skipper

our captain, Babar Azam... I have nothing

but respect for him ...," he was quoted as

saying. It was a gracious thought but the

only thing was it was fake. Reports say

Shaheen was livid, and wanted to make a

statement of his own. PCB panicked. The

tain. He has led his Pakistan Super League

team to two titles, the many Pathans

presently in the team have always been

part of his coterie. He also is the son-in-law

of one of Pakistan's most popular ex-crick-

eters ever - Shahid Afridi. PCB haven't named a vice-captain but he is likely to cre-

Shaheen isn't just another former cap-

chairman rushed for peace talks.

"As a team player, it is my duty to back

Even before the team gathered after the

national side's batting coach.

Shaheen.

Wahab, meanwhile, has dual responsi-

the caretaker Punjab chief minister.

captain ahead of the upcoming

New Zealand series. AP

Political angle

#### **SANDEEP DWIVEDI**

APRIL 17

MAYBE, IT is the din of the IPL that drowned the pandemonium next door. Of late, a lot has happened in Pakistan cricket.

All set to host New Zealand for a five-

match T20 series starting Thursday, Pakistan's new selection committee has decided on the pool from which they will pick the squad for the T20 World Cup this June. The long list has many surprising comebacks and a ring of intrigue.

Babar Azam has replaced Shaheen Shah Afridi as captain. There are whispers of this being a political decision with Punjab-vs-Pathan overtones. Pacer Mohammad Amir, once jailed in the UK over match-fixing charges, too is recalled. Also returning to the team is all-rounder Imad Wasim. He had retired in disgust, saying he was wronged. Amir and Babar famously don't get along. Imad too isn't part of Babar's gang. The most influential selector, former player Wahab Riaz, has shared a dressing room with most of the senior players. Even for him this certainly isn't a reunion of old

YouTubers, TV pundits and former Pakistan players are taking potshots and bets on how soon Pakistan cricket will go the hockey way. Knives are being sharpened already. They predict all hell will break loose if Pakistan loses to India in the T20 World Cup in June.

In Pakistan, no radical change takes place without the Army in the background. After the wholesale changes, PCB dutifully announced a two-week physical fitness camp at an Army camp in Kakul, Abbottabad. Was it optics or an out-of-the box idea to prepare the team for the season ahead?

Modern fitness trainers and sports science experts look down upon such shortterm fitness programmes. The Novak Djokovics and Virat Kohlis of the world credit lifestyle changes, daily discipline and innovative ideas for their fitness turnarounds.

Pakistan cricket social media handles have several videos of players scaling rope walls, lifting teammates like firefighters do, playing tug-of-war, running on obstacle courses, and push-up competitions. The boot camp outdoor activities look more like party games and players like corporate employees at an off-site retreat.

Babar said the camp improved the team's bonding. PCB would share the evidence. There was a video of Amir cackling while playing pool with Babar. Cricket, pool table and attempted reconciliations aren't new. Once Sourav Ganguly and Greg Chappell too potted coloured balls on a green baize in Zimbabwe. It didn't work.

ess.com



April 18: 1st T20I, Rawalpindi April 20: 2nd T20I, Rawalpindi April 21: 3rd T20I, Rawalpindi April 25: 4th T20I, Lahore

April 27: 5th T20I, Lahore (Live on Fancode)

ate a power centre.

#### Raking up the past

Earlier this month, at the press conference to announce the list of probables for the Army camp, there were allegations of regionalism and toothlessness of selectors. Why are there too many from Lahore? Was the decision to make Babar captain forced on you since till very recently, many of the selectors have been blasting his captaincy on television? There were sheepish smiles by the selectors on the dais.

Razzaq knew the spotlight was on him. During the World Cup, in his avatar as a news channel cricket expert, he had said how Babar is a good batsman but his captaincy wasn't great and he should step aside. At the media interaction, Razzaq, a selector now, said how a person's view changes on switching seats. The explanation wasn't compelling.

Others too might have to go through an urgent rewrite. Amir, on TV, is often asked about his 'best friend' Babar. Sarcasm is a Pakistan staple. He was once asked why he tweets when Virat Kohli scores a hundred but not when Babar does the same.

He didn't hum or haw, but unabashedly said that he was a Virat fan. On another show, he expressed his less-than-flattering views on Babar, the T20 batsman and ior manager. He isn't the only one. Yousuf, captain.

> Babar too carries baggage. Blame it on a TV show with rapid-fire questions. Some time back, he was asked the one word that came to his mind when he heard the name Wahab. "Phupho," he says. There was a burst of laughter on the set. Phupho means Bua, father's sister. But pop-cultural references say Phupho is the gossipy evil aunt who loves to stir the pot.

If ever there was a recipe for disaster, PCB has been true to it, not missing any spice. This is an ensemble of men that would be the dream of any reality show casting director.

Pakistan, historically, doesn't allow the dressing-room atmosphere to impact their performance on the field. Imran Khan-Javed Miandad, Wasim Akram-Wagar Younis... those Men in Green might not be the best of friends but were committed to the larger common cause. But this time, it looks different. Babar's men aren't in the same class and the mistrust is much deeper.









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