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AUTOMATIC CASH REFUND IF FLIGHT DELAYED BY 3 HOURS OR MORE IN U.S.

The White House issued new rules on Wednesday requiring airlines to provide automatic refunds in case of flight cancellations or significant delays

NEW RULES SPECIFY LENGTH OF DELAY

President Joe Biden's administration defined 'a significant delay' as one lasting at least three hours for domestic and six hours for international flights. Under current regulations, airlines decide how long a delay must last for them to issue refunds. Also, airlines must automatically issue refunds without passengers having to explicitly request them

CONSUMERS CAN INSIST ON CASH REFUNDS

- Airlines can still offer a seat on another flight or travel credit, but consumers can reject such offers and insist on a cash refund
- New rules also cover checked-in bags. Airlines must automatically refund checked-in bag fees if the bag isn't delivered within 12 hours of the flight landing for domestic and 15-30 hours for international

\$43 bn

THE SIZE OF REFUNDS ISSUED BY TOP U.S. AIRLINES BETWEEN 2020 AND 2023

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VILVAMPUR • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KAZHICODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNEELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTAVAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLEGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THIRUSSUR • KALABURGI

WEAK I.T. INFRA

RBI curbs on Kotak against adding online customers

BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @Mumbai

IN a major blow to prominent private sector lender Kotak Mahindra Bank, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday barred it from onboarding new customers through its online portal and mobile app. The RBI also ordered the bank to stop issuing fresh credit cards, citing "serious deficiencies" in the Mumbai-based lender's IT risk management.

RBI had earlier taken similar actions on others in the lending/payments space. However, this is by far the biggest punitive action on a large commercial bank. "These actions are necessitated based on significant concerns arising out of Reserve Bank's IT examination of the bank for the years 2022 and 2023 and the continued failure on its part to address these concerns in a comprehensive and timely manner. Serious deficiencies and non-compliances were observed in the areas of IT inventory management, patch and change management, user access management, vendor risk management, data security and data leak prevention strategy, business continuity and disaster recovery rigour and drill etc" the regulator said.

The curbs are only on onboarding new customers via online and mobile modes. The bank can continue to serve its existing customers, RBI clarified. "Our branches continue to welcome new customers, providing them with all services, apart from issuance of new credit cards," Kotak Mahindra Bank said. It added that it has taken steps to adopt new technologies to strengthen its IT systems and is working with RBI to resolve the pending issues.

In December 2020, RBI had barred HDFC Bank from issuing new cards and launching digital initiatives after red flags were raised about repeated technological outages. The restrictions were later lifted.

Ecological disaster: Corals in Gulf of Mannar show signs of mass bleaching

SV KRISHNA CHAITANYA @Chennai

ALARM bells are ringing in the biodiversity-rich Gulf of Mannar Marine Biosphere Reserve as the coral reefs there have started to show early signs of mass bleaching (death of corals). The state forest department has ordered rapid underwater surveys to assess the situation.

In March, TNIE had reported about NOAA (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration) of the US issuing a red alert for Gulf of Mannar as "above normal" sea surface temperature (SST) is likely to trigger mass bleaching leading to coral mortality.



A completely bleached *Porites* colony in Gulf of Mannar | EXPRESS

NOAA had forecasted that bleaching would occur between the last week of May and the first week of June. However, bleaching has started as early as third week of April.

Speaking exclusively to TNIE, Jagdish S Bakan, director, Gulf of Mannar Biosphere Reserve, said coral bleaching was spotted in some pockets of the reserve last week. "Because

of the NOAA alert, we have been constantly monitoring the situation. Thoothukudi-based Suganthi Devadason Marine Research Institute (SDMRI) and Chennai-based National Centre for Sustainable Coastal Management (NCSCM) were roped in to carry out field and modelling studies," Bakan said. NCSCM has expertise in undertaking ocean circulation modelling to understand the distribution of ocean temperature around the coral areas of Gulf of Mannar and Palk Bay. "MODIS satellite data would be used to monitor the SST from April to June 2024," Bakan said, and added that necessary work orders to SDMRI and NCSCM were already issued. P5

Longstanding feud led to TN woman's murder, not politics

BAGALAVAN PERIER B @Cuddalore

DAYS after contradictory claims were made regarding the death of 43-year-old J Gomathi of Pakkirimaniyam village in Cuddalore district on the polling day on Friday, TNIE, after exhaustive interviews with a number of people including the woman's brother-in-law K Jaisankar and a few other relatives, found that the murder was because of longstanding personal enmity between two groups and was not politically motivated.

Over the last two days, the Tamil Nadu police had filed cases against at least four people, including state BJP chief K Annamalai, for sharing social media posts that claimed that the woman was murdered for voting for the saffron party in the Lok Sabha poll. The Cuddalore district police, in a statement on Tuesday, had rejected the allegation and said the murder was due to existing enmity between two groups.

When TNIE visited Pakkirimaniyam on Wednesday, tension has not eased in the village located close to Srimushnam town in Cuddalore district. Police have been deployed in considerable numbers in the village of 150 households that comes under Ramapuram panchayat. Most of the families in the village, including the victim and the accused, belong to the Vanniyan community. TNIE had to overcome various police restrictions to meet the families.



Ten people were booked for the murder of J Gomathi

Fight over land dispute, says kin

Jaisankar, a PMK functionary who is the brother-in-law of the murder victim and husband of the vice-president of the Ramapuram panchayat, said the key issue was a dispute over 33 cents of poramboke land, a part of which was allegedly registered in the name of J Kalaimani, the main accused in the murder case, through illegal means

Attacks party over Pitroda's remarks on inheritance tax

Cong's loot won't stop even after you die: Modi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Rajpur/Bhopal/Bengaluru

CONGRESS leader Sam Pitroda's faux pas on inheritance tax in the US gave Prime Minister Narendra Modi fresh ammunition on Wednesday to attack the party over its proposed wealth redistribution.

Indian Overseas Congress chairman Pitroda, in an interview, said that in the US, 55% of a person's wealth is "grabbed" by the government when he or she dies and only 45% goes to children. He called it "an interesting law".

Addressing a campaign rally in Chhattisgarh, Modi cited Pitroda's comment and said the Congress will loot people during their lifetime and even after death. "Congress ka mantra hai Congress ki loot 'zindagi ke saath bhi, zindagi ke baad bhi,'" Modi said borrowing the Life Insurance Corporation's famous tagline.

To control the damage, the Congress distanced itself from Pitroda's comments. Party leader Jairam Ramesh said Pitro-

da's comment on inheritance tax does not reflect the party's views on the subject. "I would like to categorically state that Congress has no plan on the inheritance tax," Ramesh said.

In Madhya Pradesh's Sagar and Betul, both reserved constituencies for tribals, Modi re-called a three-decade-old Congress decision in Karnataka to add all Muslim castes to the backward caste basket.

"Congress has always been working at snatching the rights of SCs, STs and OBCs to bolster its vote bank," he charged.

In his sharp riposte, Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah described it as an irresponsible statement. Siddaramaiah said based on the Chinnappa Reddy Commission report and taking consideration of the social and economic status, Muslims were brought under '2B' of the OBC category in the state. "But this has been there for the past three decades. During this period, the BJP in the state or Centre never questioned it," he pointed out. P7

'MY OWN VIEWS'

Congress leader Sam Pitroda said his views on inheritance has nothing to do with the Congress party. "I mentioned US inheritance tax in the US only as an example in my normal conversation on TV. Can I not mention facts?" he asked

Till you are alive, the Congress will impose more tax and after your life ends, it will impose the burden of inheritance tax on you

Narendra Modi

Left, BJP hope to prick Rahul's 'balloon'

CITHARA PAUL @ Kochi

WAYANAD offers an interesting paradox. It is probably the only constituency in India where one cannot see Congress flags flutter at any party convention even though its candidate is none other than Rahul Gandhi.

It is also one constituency in Kerala where nobody is unsure of who the winner would be. And in this paradox lies the story of this picturesque constituency, considered the "safest Congress seat" in the country.

Clearly, bitter lessons the party learnt in 2019, when Rahul contested from Wayanad for the first time, prompted the Congress to avoid its own, as well as ally IUML's, flags this time.

That Rahul took refuge in Wayanad, where the Muslim League calls the shots, was something the BJP had gone to town with in 2019. Visuals of Rahul campaigning amid a sea of League flags went viral. And that had seriously impacted the Congress' fortunes in north India.

The Congress, hence, has been extremely careful this time. Instead of flags, it has been using balloons - in shades of saffron, green and white.

It is the demography of Wayanad constituency - Muslims form 35% of population and Christians 13% - that makes it a safe bet for the Congress. Rahul had won with a margin of 4,31,770 votes in 2019, a record

in Kerala. Despite the desperate efforts of the Congress to underplay the 'Muslim connection', the BJP has not allowed it to go unnoticed. Every top BJP leader who

came to Wayanad made it a point to take a dig at Rahul for contesting from a place "where the majority is in minority".

Though there is no hype around Rahul's candidature this time compared with 2019, ironically, it is this same factor, which the BJP has been harping on, that will help him this time as well.

If there was someone who had ardently hoped that Rahul would not be contesting from Wayanad this time, it would be Annie Raja. A feisty face of the CPI - and also a close friend of Rahul - Annie was the first to hit the campaign trail.

Her name was announced at a time when there was speculation that Rahul would not be contesting from Wayanad, as there was stiff opposition from the CPM and the CPI against him running against an INDIA bloc ally.

However, the state Congress unit relentlessly pleaded with Rahul to contest again from the same constituency. Moreover, the lack of such a sure-shot 'safe seat' elsewhere in the country also may have prompted Rahul to choose Wayanad yet again. CONTINUED ON P5



ILLUSTRATION: NANDA PARDIKAR

5 DROWN

IN TWO SEPARATE INCIDENTS IN COIMBATORE, TIRUPPUR

Three Class XII students of Perur Pachapalayam village in Coimbatore district drowned while taking bath in a check dam near Alandurai in the district on Wednesday. In a separate incident, two eight-year-old boys drowned while bathing in a pond at Uppalayam in Tiruppur district | P5

Building assets for Viksit Bharat

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Housing for all)

Swachh Bharat Mission

Jal Jeevan Mission

Supporting efforts of Government of India

Urban Transport

Energy Transition

Financing

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25th April, 2024

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Environment secretary Supriya Sahu speaking at the conference | EXPRESS

Carbon markets to bankroll TN's green projects

We are only state in nation with a Green Climate Fund, says environment secretary

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Tamil Nadu government is looking at carbon markets to finance its green projects and to ensure local communities benefit from it, according to Supriya Sahu, secretary of the Environment, Climate Change, and Forest Department.

Delivering her keynote address at the Conference on Carbon Neutrality organised by the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on Wednesday, the secretary said, "We are the only state in the country with a Green Climate Fund. Though announced earlier, it is now being rolled out with the Tamil Nadu Infrastructure Finance Management Corporation (TNIFMC) acting as the fund manager for the Government of Tamil Nadu. TNIFMC would select industries and corporates to access the allocated funds which amount to over ₹1,000 crore. Another ₹1,000 crore has been allocated for the green shoe option."

To a query on whether any such projects have been identified, Sahu said that the state is currently in the process of identification.

"This is a strategic move. They (TN government) are planning to integrate with carbon markets," said Kavin Kumar Kandasamy, chief executive officer of ProClimate, a firm that is providing recommendations to the state government

CARBON MARKETS AND THEIR CREDIT SYSTEM

Carbon markets have two kinds of players: companies that are polluters and companies which are looking to decarbonise. A carbon credit is a generic term for a tradeable certificate or permit representing the right to emit a certain amount of carbon dioxide (usually 1 metric ton) or an equivalent amount of a different greenhouse gas. It is, in a sense, the basic trading unit for carbon markets. Countries or governments set carbon allowances or caps based on their targets for reducing emissions. Entities that reduce their emissions below these set limits, can sell their surplus 'allowance' as carbon credits to those exceeding their emission limit.

on a pro bono basis in creating a robust carbon credit ecosystem. He said the state is way ahead when it comes to the energy quotient. Tamil Nadu is already into energy transition and now the state government is looking at community and climate, he added.

Sources, on condition of anonymity, said that the state has zeroed in on seven to eight projects, which could potentially be funded through green credits, but did not provide any details. Firstly the project has to be listed on a registry after which it will be rated by a rating agency and then it gets approval, they added.

Bus takes sharp turn, conductor and his rickety seat fly out, land on road

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Tiruchy

A conductor, who was sitting on the back seat of a government bus in Tiruchy, fell out of the moving vehicle along with the seat on Wednesday. The conductor, Murugesan (54), sustained minor injuries, said sources.

The city bus was going from Tiruchy bus stand to K K Nagar and the incident happened when it crossed Kalaiyarrangam Hall and turned right.

The eye-witnesses said they were shocked to see the conductor being thrown out of



Bus said to be over 10 years old | EXPRESS

the bus along with the seat. "However, there were no major injury. He picked up the

coins fallen from his bag and got into the bus," they added.

Sources in TNSTC said the bus was more than 10 years old. They added that while the broken seat was put inside the same bus, the passengers were shifted to another bus.

An official from TNSTC's technical department denied the incident initially and asserted that a seat did not fall from the bus.

When the official was provided with the photo of it, he confirmed that the conductor sustained minor injuries and they are enquiring into the matter.



CLOSING OUT KOOVAGAM

Marking Lord Aravan's death, the transwomen who married him go through the rituals of widowhood on the final day of the Koovagam festival | SRIRAM R

Four youth hurl petrol bomb at statue of Ambedkar, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Cuddalore

FOUR youth were arrested after the petrol bomb they allegedly hurled at an Ambedkar statue missed its target and exploded in the compound of a panchayat office at Ambalavananpettal Colony.

The accused are P Sathishkumar (29), G Krishnakumar (21), M Vijayaraj (22), and V Vetrivel (23) of Ambalavananpettal village and all belonging to a caste Hindu community.

Sources said the incident happened on Tuesday night when the youth were returning from a temple festival, in an inebriated state. They had made the bomb using petrol from their bike, sources added.

Following inquiry, police filed cases against the accused under various sections of the IPC, Explosives Substances Act, and SC/ST (PoA) Act.

SP R Rajaram deployed police personnel in the village as a precautionary measure.

In response to the incident, VCK cadre, led by Cuddalore Corporation Deputy Mayor P Thamaraiselvan, staged a protest near the Ambedkar statue, and urged the authorities to invoke Goondas Act against the suspects.

HC ON RAAJA'S RIGHT: REVENUE FROM ALL 4.5K SONGS SUBJECT TO APPEAL OUTCOME

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Madras High Court on Wednesday passed an interim order stating that all revenue accrued through commercial exploitation of over 4,500 songs composed by music director Ilaiyaraaja would be subject to the outcome of an appeal filed by Echo Recording Private Limited challenging his rights over the songs.

A division bench of Justice R Mahadevan and Justice Mohammed Shaffiq passed the interim order while adjourning the appeal filed by the company to June. On the argument of Ilaiyaraaja's counsel that the composer

would continue to hold the rights over his songs, the court wondered if the composer could claim rights over the lyrics of the songs too since they were penned by others or restrict his claim only to the composition. The bench observed that the songs would not carry much value without the lyrics.

Senior advocate Satish Parasaran, appearing for the composer, submitted that the lyricists of the songs would receive royalty irre-

spective of the songs being commercially exploited either by the composer or by the producer.

Echo Recording Private Limited had filed the appeal against the order of a single judge. According to the appeal, the order permitted Ilaiyaraaja to exploit the rights over his songs although such a right has not been provided under the Copyrights Act. The company argued that as per the legislative framework in India, music directors would

lose their right over the songs once they receive remuneration for their work from the producer of the film.

The organisation had bought the rights of around 4,500 songs from the producers of all the movies concerned and had been commercially exploiting them until Ilaiyaraaja moved the HC against the company, the appeal said. Based on the order of the single judge, the music composer gave license to another music company for the 4,500 songs and was commercially exploiting them apart from receiving royalties from Echo Recording Private Limited, the counsel for the company alleged.



Submit report on Vallalar centre site, judge tells TN

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Chennai

THE Madras High Court's first bench consisting of Chief Justice S V Gangapurwala and Justice J Sathya Narayana Prasad on Wednesday directed the Tamil Nadu government to submit a report prepared by a team of archaeological experts on the site proposed for the construction of the Vallalar International Centre in Vadalur.

When the petition seeking a direction to the state government to drop the plan to construct the centre at the Peruvelli arena located adjacent to the Sathya Gnana Sabhai came up for hearing, the state government, represented by advocate general PS Raman, submitted details on the facilities to come up at the centre, as directed by the court during the previous hearing.

The state, while pointing out that an official of the ar-



chaeology department has already inspected the site, assured that any structure of archaeological significance, if found during construction, would be preserved.

However, the CJ observed that it would be better if a team of archaeological experts assessed the site and submitted a report and directed the government accordingly. The state government replied that it will constitute a team of three experts to perform the study. The bench also transferred the case to the special bench hearing cases related to temples.

'STATE UNIVERSITIES SUFFER DUE TO DISAGREEMENT AMONG AUTHORITIES'

Chennai: Academics has taken a backseat amid internal disagreements between various authorities, the Madras HC observed on Tuesday. It also expressed concern over three universities in the state functioning without vice-chancellors for an extended period of time. The court made the observations while hearing a writ petition filed by advocate B Jagannath for the inclusion of a University Grants Commission (UGC) nominee in the search panel to appoint a V-C for Madras University. Observing that the universities have been without V-Cs for a year now, the bench stated, "Authorities are required to be sensitive in manning the universities. The only consideration should be educational excellence." ENS

PETITION SEEKING ED PROBE INTO ₹4CR SEIZURE LINKED TO NAINAR DISMISSED

Chennai: A division bench of Justices MS Ramesh and Sunder Mohan of the Madras HC on Wednesday dismissed a petition that sought an ED investigation on cash seizures from persons allegedly connected to the BJP and Congress candidates in Tirunelveli constituency. CM Raghavan, an Independent candidate, had filed the petition over the ₹3.99 crore seizure from three persons allegedly connected to BJP's Nainar Nagenthran and another ₹28.5 lakh from the office of DMK's Tirunelveli east district secretary, DMK, in alliance with Congress, had fielded Robert Bruce here. The ED submitted that the sections under which the case - in relation to the seizure of ₹3.99 crore - was filed were not scheduled offences under PMLA and hence could not be investigated. A detailed order would be passed later, the bench said. ENS

Wounded tigress passes away in Kumari forest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Kanniyakumari

A 12-year-old tigress, which was found in an injured state at a private rubber estate in Kulasekaram forest range in Kanniyakumari district, was later found dead on Wednesday. The tigress was spotted with injuries inflicted by porcupine quills.

According to sources, a rubber tapper, Bhoothalingam (63) from Thittavilai of Thirunan-



thikarai went to tap rubber at the estate at Kakkachal on Wednesday morning. Around 7.30 am, the injured tigress started the worker, and he was injured. As he raised an alarm, locals rushed him to a hospital.

Forest department officials said that another man fell from his two-wheeler upon spotting the tigress and was injured.

The tigress was later found dead. District forest officer E Prasanth said that the big cat had been injured by porcupine quills, due to which it eventually passed away.

A team of veterinary doctors performed a postmortem examination, following which the tigress was cremated near Pechiparai Zero Point.

Daily Starscope

PETER VIDAL

25th April: The current planetary picture is pretty powerful. But, which way will events go? Will they be welcome or not? That's what we find difficult to say. My opinion is that we all have the ability to make moral choices and the more of us who behave with courtesy, honesty and care for others, the better the whole world will be.

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)
An emotional Moon is a very redefining presence for you, but you should guard against complacency. The only concern is that you may be tempted to overlook fundamental details, especially at work. There should still be plenty of time to achieve one of your short-term goals, by the way, so don't panic.

Taurus (Apr 21 - May 21)
Financial pressures will soon rise once again, but this time it's joint connections which need sorting out. If you're dealing with someone else's money, or they're handling yours, take all the necessary precautions. At home, you now have another chance to improve relationships with children and your relatives.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
Home and family affairs are central to your thinking, and no future plan will succeed unless you are careful to consult relations, and everyone else you live with, as widely as possible. After all, if they say 'no', they won't be able to complain later.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)
You can still act behind the scenes if you wish, but the mood of the times is gradually changing. Right now the best thing you can do is talk to as many people as possible about what your next step should be, and when you should take it. Pick your time with care.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)
Your confidence is liable to slip without warning, but never imagine that all is lost, or that you are doomed to failure. It is all a matter of being as patient as possible, and allowing certain long-term problems to iron themselves out. Carry on, turn the clock back? Perhaps - but only briefly.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23)
You may now show yourself in your true colours, and that might involve risking a disagreement with someone who is close to you. Both frankly and at work you may assume more authority by showing that you know what you're talking about. And about time, too!

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)
The mood should be growing lighter by the day, although secret fears still trouble you. One pathway to use your current planetary patterns is to delve into all those timeless mystical and spiritual mysteries. If you get a sense of life's underlying purpose, then you'll be able to renege your priorities so that they suit you better.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)
Now you have most of the information at your fingertips, you can afford to take the lead socially. For some time you have been irritated by others' tendency to push the reserves forward, but now you can call your bluff. What should you do? Be flexible and be prepared for last-minute changes.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)
You can afford to put your foot down at home, even if other people don't like it. The Moon's role in your chart reveals that you have the advantage, and it will be a rare person who can call your bluff. What should you do? Be flexible and be prepared for last-minute changes.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)
Your private and professional lives are linked in ways which defy analysis; before you can explore new career opportunities, you need to work out where you stand in relation to an emotional tie. And when business and pleasure mix, you'll have to work out where your loyalties lie.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)
You should be very sure indeed to check all legal plans extremely carefully. There's nothing to be gained from allowing standards to slip, and everything to be achieved by keeping things high as possible, especially in matters of the heart.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)
You still appear to be a personal quantity, but at least the financial news should be reassuring. Partners will be able to offer you much sensible and sound advice, so please listen very carefully, and leave no stone unturned in your unending quest for the truth.

SUDOKU EVIL
TEST YOUR NUMBER CRUNCHING SKILL WITH OUR UNIQUE PUZZLE

Fill in the grid with digits in such a manner that every row, every column and every 3x3 box accommodates the digits 1 to 9, without repeating any.

4				5				9
1		2			4			8
5			9					
	7	3						
2			7	8				5
						7	2	
					1			6
8			6		4			7
	1			8				2

CROSS WORD

ACROSS

- Allowance obtained through an embassy (10)
- It's held by solicitors to be permissible (5)
- Tongue no longer red (7)
- Small companies have places for pets (7)
- Ellis spins a yarn (5)
- All the points appear in a right solution (6)
- Ready to throw a line to one in trouble (6)
- A widespread current issue (5)
- Show zeal then change employment (7)
- Muddled girl takes nothing up (7)
- Cur over a quarter? That's serious (6)
- Coarse types confuse love with lust (5)
- An impressive thing to wear (6,4)

DOWN

- Cuts out exercises without hesitation (7)
- Award for a priest of unusual merit? (5)
- American revolution remains supremely secure (6)
- Run sail out when away from the mainland (7)
- Proverbially hard on one's toes? (5)
- A blockade that should pay dividends (10)
- Their union offers security (4,3,3)
- Loosening the rubber prevents you from doing this (7)
- Muddled girl takes nothing up (7)
- Cur over a quarter? That's serious (6)
- Coarse types confuse love with lust (5)
- Light or sound recorder (5)

JUMBLE UNSCRAMBLE THESE JUMBLES, ONE LETTER TO EACH SQUARE, TO FORM FOUR ORDINARY WORDS.

BY DAVID L. HOYT AND JEFF KNUREK

ROYWR
OPLIS
TKELET
CLEFEE

Answer here:

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS

Across: 1 Unwept, 4 Ordo, 9 Tenth, 10 Award, 11 Treas, 12 Doctor, 13 Post office, 15 Treason, 20 Face, 22 Llano, 23 Accalm, 24 A Nest, 25 A cent.

Down: 1 Untidy, 2 Worse, 3 Prizes, 5 Rites, 6 Trade, 7 Enlist, 8 Under canvas, 11 Ink, 15 Office, 16 Stella, 17 Narmol, 19 Seal, 21 Care.

Sump pipeline rusted, TDS level in water 200ppm above safe limit

Contaminated water troubles residents of Kannagi Nagar

SUBASHINI VIJAYAKUMAR @Chennai

RESIDENTS of Kannagi Nagar are grappling with health issues owing to poor quality of drinking water supplied to their homes. For nearly two months now, they have been receiving water that exceeds permissible levels of total dissolved solids (TDS). According to metro water officials, the contamination is due to rust in the iron pipes through which water is supplied from the sumps. They added that the TDS levels in the water range from 700-1,000 ppm, while the permissible levels for potable water should be below 500 ppm. Not only is the water unfit for drinking and cooking, but also causes skin irritation and allergies when used for bathing, say residents.

Kannagi Nagar has more than 23,000 families that were resettled in the houses built by the Tamil Nadu Urban Habitat Development Board (TNUHDB) and has a population of more than one lakh. When TNIE visited the area on Tuesday, the water from pipes at multiple locations was yellow in colour and salty. The residents also showed multiple cases of skin allergies on their bodies, which they said was due to the water.

A group of residents who had come to meet the councillor regarding the issue said that they have been dealing with water issues since they moved there. "Initially, we used to travel a long distance to get water. Now, the water we get near our homes is unusable. If we cook rice using this water, it goes bad within two hours. We have been forced to shift to water cans for cooking and drinking which has increased our household expenses. However, we have to continue to use the water for bathing and other purposes causing severe itching and allergies," said S Lakshmi, a resident.

Sources said the water is supplied to the resettlement site from three sumps, with the largest having a capacity of 11 lakh litres. They added

Q If we cook rice using this water, it goes bad within two hours. We have been forced to shift to water cans for cooking and drinking which has increased our household expenses



S Lakshmi, a resident



Residents say the water, which is yellow in colour, is unfit for drinking and cooking, but also causes skin irritation and allergies when used for bathing | EXPRESS

that the main sump has not been cleaned for many years, leading to accumulation of sediment up to 2.5 ft.

Some residents said they were forced to use drinking water cans to bathe their children who are more susceptible to the allergies. "While doctors give us ointments, they say that we would continue to have the problem since we use this water to bathe," said another resident. She added that a water can costs ₹30-35 and their family has to buy 10 cans every week.

Metro water officials said that the water quality was affected due to the rust in the iron pipes and work to change them has started. The project has been pending since 2018. "The pipes from the sump to the houses are rusty and in a bad condition. We

received concurrence from TNUHDB and the work to replace them started in March. Once it is done, the problem will be solved," said an official. He also added that the sumps in the locality have been cleaned regularly.

However, according to former AI-ADMK councillor TC Karuna, the water quality is bad due to maintenance issues at the Nemmeli desalination plant. "The officials have said that to fix the problem, they have to receive parts from another country. I have been complaining to them continuously without any solution in sight," he said. He also alleged that the TDS level of the water has exceeded 1,000 ppm several times due to which the residents are getting allergies.

Three cops suspended for demanding bribe

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

TAMBARAM city police commissioner Amalraj has suspended three police personnel - head constable Shankar and two other constables - attached to the Manimangalam police station on charges of demanding a bribe of ₹50,000.

Following information from locals that liquor bottles were being sold illegally at Salavakkam in Kanchipuram, head constable Shankar along with the two constables Ganesh and Anandaraj, had gone to the spot. According to police sources, they found Perumal (48) selling liquor illegally, following which they beat Perumal up and took some liquor bottles and ₹2,000 from him. Later, they allegedly demanded ₹50,000 to not file a case, and told him that he was facing jail time of at least a year.

"The man told the three that he did not have the money they were asking for, but would be able to arrange ₹30,000 as soon as possible. Taking his word for it, the three men left the spot with ₹2,000 and the liquor bottles," said a police source.

The incident came to light after Perumal sought treatment at a nearby private hospital for the wounds inflicted by the policemen and the hospital management alerted the Manimangalam police, as per procedure. The commissioner has ordered a probe into the incident.

Food officials to submit risk report on liquid nitrogen use

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

AFTER a viral video in which a child appears to be in severe pain after consuming liquid nitrogen, and later died, in Karnataka, food safety officials here said that they would be submitting a risk analysis report to the state government following which it will decide the next course of action.

P Sathesh Kumar, designated food safety officer, said that after the viral video and the discussion around it, they have been conducting awareness drives for hoteliers, caterers, bartenders etc. on proper handling of liquid nitrogen in the food they serve.

"Wherever possible, we have urged eateries to avoid the use of liquid nitrogen. We will undertake inspections and submit our findings to the state government based on which a decision for further course of action would be taken," Sathesh Kumar said. He added that it was being used in cakes and ice creams by some restaurants and that some bars use them in liquor for a smoky effect.

Liquid nitrogen, used as a freezing agent and for preservation of food, causes burns and gastric or airway perforations apart from possible rapid onset of abdominal pain and respiratory distress.

TENDER CUTS FOUNDER ACCUSED OF CHEATING

CHENNAI: The city police have registered a complaint against Nishanth Chandran, founder for online app Tender Cuts, on charges of cheating an investor of ₹46 lakh. Valasaravakkam Police booked Nishanth Chandran and Sankuniar of M/S GFM retail pvt. Ltd based on a complaint from PV Sathyarayanan (43), a businessman. The complaint stated that Nishanth had approached him for investments three years ago. He had entered into an agreement in 2021 for a franchise in Bengaluru and paid ₹50 lakh. He alleged that Nishanth not only failed to set up the outlet, but has so far only returned only ₹3.5 lakh. ENS

TECHIE HELD FOR SELLING GANJA

CHENNAI: A woman techie, working in a company on OMR, was arrested for allegedly selling drugs at her house in Choolaimedu. The accused was identified as Sharmila. According to the police, another techie told them that he had been purchasing drugs from Sharmila which led them to her apartment. They found 1.3kg of ganja at her house. Sharmila, from Pudukottai, had allegedly been procuring ganja from Suresh and supplying it to employees at her company. Police have registered a case and are on the lookout for Suresh. Sharmila was produced before a magistrate and remanded in custody. ENS

12 held for selling IPL tickets in black

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

TWELVE people were arrested on charges of selling IPL tickets, for the Chennai Super Kings and Lucknow Super Giants match that was held at MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chepauk on Tuesday, at exorbitant prices. The Triplicane police have seized 56 tickets worth ₹1.4 lakh from them.

A team led by inspector of D-1 Triplicane police station were monitoring Chepauk Cricket Ground and its surrounding areas - Pattabiram Gate, Wallajah Road, Bells Road, Wallaja Road Junction, Victoria Hotel Road Junction and Chepauk Railway Station - when they came across the illegal activity, stated a press release. The accused were identified as Elumalai (38) of Andhra Pradesh,

Hayatbasha Noor Mohammad (38) of Triplicane, Shyam (20) of T Nagar; Kishore (27) of Velachery, Vinithkumar (25) of Kannikapuram, Kalleswaran Murthy (24) of Coimbatore, Rajkumar (34) of Pudupet, Vignesh (32) of Nolambur, Suresh (47) of Salem, Venkatasubramanian (51) of Kanchipuram, Santhosh (19) of Kolathur and Sreejith (27) of Kolathur.

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform that Our Proposed Construction of Senior Living Residential Apartment in S.No. 16/1A1A (part), 16/1A1B (part), 16/1A1C (part), 18/2A (part), 18/3 (part) & 20 (part) in Thiyur "A" Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Chengalpattu District, Tamil Nadu has been accorded Environmental Clearance by the State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority, Tamil Nadu. A copy of the said Clearance letter is available with the Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board and may also be seen on the website of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, www.parivesh.nic.in.

By
M/s. Emerald Haven Realty Limited, Ispahani Centre, 4th floor, No.123, 124, Nungambakkam High Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600 034.

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE (DENTAL EDUCATION SECTION) Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi

No.V.12025/15/2024-DE(Pt) Dated the 22nd April, 2024

CORRIGENDUM

In partial modification to the Vacancy Circular of even no. dated 14.03.2024 for filling up various posts of the National Dental Commission, published in the Employment News dated 23.03.2024, it is informed that the Upper Age Limit for filling up the posts of Chairperson (National Dental Commission), Part-time Members under clause (a) of sub-section (4) of Section 4, President (Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Dental Education Board), President (Dental Assessment and Rating Board), President (Ethics and Dental Registration), Whole Time Members (Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Dental Education Board), Whole Time Members (Dental Assessment and Rating Board), Whole Time Members (Ethics and Dental Registration), may be read as 66 yrs and for the posts of Part Time Members (Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Dental Education Board), Part Time Members (Dental Assessment and Rating Board), Part Time Members (Ethics and Dental Registration) may be read as 68 yrs.

2. Last date of receipt of the application is being extended for a further period of 30 days from the date of publication of this Corrigendum in the Employment News. Application in prescribed pro-forma completed in all respects should reach to "Under Secretary (Dental), Room no 501 'D' wing, Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Nirman Bhawan, New Delhi-110011 or by email to dentalenumohfw@gov.in.

(Amit Kumar)

Under Secretary to the Government of India

CBC 17101/11/0002/2425

Tel: 011-23061521

FRAUD ALERT!

Please do not fall prey to fraudulent loan offers from people claiming to represent Vivriti Capital Limited. Your personal and financial data could be at risk. Stay cautious and trust only official channels.

Vivriti Capital Limited is an RBI-registered NBFC that over the last 7 years has built a highly successful franchise, with INR 7,800 + Cr AUM, as well as 400+ clients across 45+ sectors and 20+ states.

For any enquiry, visit our official website www.vivriticapital.com or write to us at grievanceredressal@vivriticapital.com

CLASSIFIEDS

PUBLIC NOTICE

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JC 441712.
SUB B. VIVEKANANDAN, S/o. S. Bommaiyan, residing at Door No. 108, Ranganathar Kovil Street, Dombuchey Village and Post, Bodinayakanur Taluk, Theni District, Tamilnadu. In my Army records my wife's name was wrongly mentioned as SHANTHI instead of her correct name is SHANTHI.V. Hence, I declare that her correct name is SHANTHI.V.
B. Vivekanandan
Dombuchey, 18.01.2024

CHANGE OF NAME

CHANGE OF NAME

I, JC 441712.
SUB B. VIVEKANANDAN, S/o. S. Bommaiyan, residing at Door No. 108, Ranganathar Kovil Street, Dombuchey Village and Post, Bodinayakanur Taluk, Theni District, Tamilnadu. In my Army records my son's name was wrongly mentioned as PRANEETH instead of his correct name is V. PRANEETH. Hence, I declare that her correct name is V. PRANEETH.
B. Vivekanandan
Dombuchey, 18.01.2024

Indian Overseas Bank

SME Guindy Branch: No.10, TNSTIA Building, G S T Road, Guindy
Chennai-600 032 Ph: 044-2250 0466, E-Mail: iob1447@iob.in

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

Description of the Property: Schedule "A" Property (Total Property) All that piece and parcel of Property bearing Door No. 15, New No. 33, Bharathiar Street, Vanniya Teynampet, Chennai - 600 018, Comprised in R. S. No. 3789/3, 3789/5 and 3789/2, C. S. No. 930 & 951, Block No.74 of Mylapore Village, New Teynampet Village, Mylapore Taluk, Chennai District, measuring an extent of 2 Grounds and 1886 Sq. ft., (as per patta) 2 Grounds 1350 Sq. ft., of land and being Bounded on the: North by: Property belonging to Mr. Arumuga Pandithar, South by: Property belonging to Mr. Gopal & Others, East by: House belonging to Subramonia Naicker and West by: Bharathiar Street. And situated within the Registration District of Chennai Central and Sub Registration of Chennai Central Joint-I.

Schedule "B" Property: Flat bearing Flat No.F-1, First Floor in "A" Block, "Sri Lakshmi Homes" in Door No.15, New No.33, Bharathiar Street, Vanniya Teynampet, Chennai-600 018, Flat having 1135 Sq. Ft., of Built Up Area (including Common Area) along with 458 Sq. ft., Undivided Share of Land from and out of Schedule "A" mentioned property, together with Electricity, Water, Sewerage and Drainage Connections and all amenities thereto.

Reserve Price: ₹ 89,49,000/-
EMD: ₹ 8,94,900/-; Bid increase Amt.: ₹ 50,000/-

* The bidders are advised to make their own enquiries regarding outstanding dues of Local Self Government (Property Tax, Water sewerage, Electricity Bills etc.) and Bank will not take any responsibility for the same. All statutory dues to be borne by the auction purchaser.
* Bank's dues have priority over the statutory dues.

Date and time of e-auction: 29.05.2024
between 11.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m.
with auto extension of 5 minutes each till sale is completed at the platform of <https://www.msstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi>.

Inspection of property: During working hours till 28.05.2024, 5.00 pm.

Submission of online application for bid with EMD: 25.04.2024 onwards
Last date for submission of online application for BID with EMD: 28.05.2024 by 5.00 p.m.

Name of Contact Person : Mr.Khurshid Rabbani - Mob: 93370 33233

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the service providers website <https://www.msstcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi> or bank's website www.iob.in.

Place: Chennai
Date : 23.04.2024

Authorised Officer
Indian Overseas Bank

This may also be treated as a Notice under Rule 8(6)/Rule 9(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 to the borrower/s and guarantor/s of the said loan about holding of e-auction on the above mentioned date.

Canara Bank

GUDUVANCHERY BRANCH
140, GST Road, Guduvanchery,
Kancheepuram - 601302, Ph: 044 - 2746 5583,
Email id: ccb269@canarabank.com

POSSESSION NOTICE [SECTION 13(4)] (For Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitisation And Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice dated 13.02.2024 calling upon the borrower, Smt. Varshnee Raj, D/o Rupesh Raj, Flat No SB1,2nd Floor, Sree Andal's Juhu Apartments, 6th Street, Kameshwari Nagar, Nandhivaram, Guduvanchery - 603 202 Also at: No 3/88 First Floor, State Bank Colony, 3rd Street, Saligramam, Near Saligramam Bus Stop, Chennai - 600093, Also at: No 45/6, Prajwal Park, Natesan Nagar, 3rd Main Road, Virugambakkam, Chennai - 600 092 to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 36,31,476.46 (Rupees Thirty Six Lakhs Thirty One Thousand Four Hundred and Seventy Six and Forty Six paise only) within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the said Rule on this 23rd day of April of the year 2024.

The Borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of Canara Bank, for an amount of Rs.37,40,268.32 (Rupees Thirty Seven Lakhs Forty Thousand Two Hundred and Sixty Eight and Thirty Two paise only) and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

SCHEDULE 'A' PROPERTY:

All that piece and parcel of vacant land, bearing Plot No.9 & 10 measuring an extent of 4042.5 sq.ft. (Plot No.9 measuring 2002 ½ sq.ft. and Plot No. 10 measuring 2040 sq.ft.) in the layout named "Sri Sai Square" approved vide LP/DTP No.3/2012, vide proceedings of the Deputy Director of Town Planning dated 05.01.2012 comprised in Sub-Divided Survey No 527/4B, Patta No.6765, as per patta is 527/4B2 and 527/4B3 situated at Nandhivaram Village, Chengalpattu Taluk, Chengalpattu District, within the limits of Nandhivaram Guduvanchery Panchayat and Kattankolathur Panchayath Union. Plot No.9 bounded on the: North by : Land belongs to Radhabai in Survey No.527/4A, South by : Plot No.10, East by : 20 feet wide Layout road, West by : Land in S.No.526/3 'O' and 526/3P, Measuring : Northern side: 60 feet, Southern side: 60 feet, Eastern side: 33 ½ feet, Western side: 33 ½ feet. In all measuring an extent of 2002 ½ sq.ft. Plot No.10 bounded on the : North by : Plot No.9, South by : Land in S.No.527/11, East by : 20 feet wide Layout Road, West by: Land in S.No.526/3 'O' and 526/3P, Measuring, Northern side: 60 feet, Southern side: 60 feet, Eastern side: 34 feet, Western side: 34 feet. In all measuring extent 4042 ½ sq.ft and situated within the Registration District of Chengalpattu and Sub Registration District of Guduvanchery.

SCHEDULE "B" PROPERTY: All that piece and parcel of undivided share of vacant land admeasuring about 432 Sq.ft. of the Schedule "A" Property land together with a Flat measuring 986 Sq.ft. of plinth area inclusive of common area like corridor, Staircase, Landing, Headroom, Overhead tank, Sump, Septic tank, Pump room etc, Car parking and Two wheeler parking Area and bearing Flat No.SB1 in Second floor in the scheme known as "SREE ANDAL'S - "JUHI" APARTMENTS"

Date : 23.04.2024
Place: Guduvanchery

Authorised Officer
Canara Bank



As part of his poll campaign, Minister Udhayanidhi Stalin campaigned for 24 days across the state and travelled 8,465 km. He engaged with 1.24 crore people, addressing them at 122 points spread across 122 assembly segments

Dindigul, Salem on top in stopping child marriages

RTI reply says CSR and FIR filed are far less than the actual number of marriages stopped in past three years

SIVAGURU S @Krishnagiri

DINDIGUL and Salem districts are among the top districts in stopping child marriages in Tamil Nadu for the last three years — from January 2021 to February 2024, revealed data accessed by way of Right to Information Act from the Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department.

However, the Community Service Registers (CSRs) and First Information Reports (FIRs) filed on child marriage cases were far less than the actual number of incidents that were stopped following the interference of authorities, the data showed.

This was revealed in the RTI data accessed by advocate and child rights activist, S Prabakar, from the Commissionerate of Social Welfare and Women Empowerment Department, for the past three years.

It was also revealed after authorities stopped child marriage incidents, police complaints on the cases were not registered by district authorities concerned, and some districts are filling the cases after the incident.

"In 2021 from January to December, 2,638 child marriages were stopped in Tamil Nadu, in



'File cases'

Child rights activist said more FIRs will reduce child marriage and teenage pregnancy cases. "The district administration should make efforts to file cases against people," he said.



which CSR or FIR filed only 707 cases, which is just 26.80%. Similarly, in 2022 from January to December, 2,401 child marriages were stopped in which CSR or FIR was filed on 881 cases, which is 36.69%. And in 2023 from January to December, 1,961 child marriages were stopped, in which 973 cases were registered as CSR or FIR, which is 49.62%. Similarly, in January and February 2024, 347 child marriages were stopped, of which 128 complaints were registered as CSR or FIR, which is 36.89%," explained Prabakar.

He said, "More FIRs will reduce child marriage and teenage pregnancy cases in Tamil Nadu. Apart from stopping

child marriages, the district administration should make efforts to file cases against people."

Salem Collector R Brindha Devi told TNIE that they are working on the issue and taking steps to reduce child marriage, and even recently career guidance programme was conducted for higher secondary school students.

Dindigul district Collector MN Poongodi was unavailable for comments.

However, Dindigul District Social Welfare Officer G Pushpakala told TNIE, "In 2023, the number of child marriages stopped was 121; however CSR or FIR was filed only on 44 cas-

es. We are taking steps to make CSR or FIR for 10 more cases for the year 2023. In many cases after stopping child marriage, there are no sufficient documents to file police complaint against them and in few cases, members of families where child marriages were stopped fled to other districts."

Theni collector RV Shajeevna was unavailable for comment.

An official from Theni district collectorate asked TNIE to contact the Collector after the counting of votes for the Lok Sabha election because the collector was busy with election duty and could not talk to the media on certain topics.

'PM has no bias, he had only reacted to Cong manifesto'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Coimbatore

FORMER Governor and BJP's South Chennai candidate Tamilisai Soundarajan on Wednesday said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi does not discriminate against minorities and he had only reacted to the Lok Sabha election manifesto of the Congress party.

Interacting with the media at the Coimbatore International Airport, Tamilisai asserted that Modi's mantra is development and growth for all and he never differentiated between the minority and majority communities.

In a recent election speech the PM warned that the Congress wants to distribute the nation's wealth among "infiltrators" and "those who have more children" if it comes to power. This is widely deemed to be a reference to the Muslim community.

"Actually the PM stated that our country's resources are plundered and our property should not go into the hands of infiltrators as over one crore who intruded into West Bengal were issued ration cards by the state government," Tamilisai clarified.

In her defence of the BJP stalwart, Tamilisai also said even Muslims benefited from the central government's popular schemes. "Muslims too were among the 10 crore beneficiaries of free LPG connections and the National Health Protection Scheme. However, the opposition parties are creating an impression that only they can protect the minorities. By projecting the BJP and Prime Minister Modi as against them (minorities) they are trying to make it a major issue in the election campaign," she said.

Tamilisai also charged that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi was not in the country to speak against it. "We don't know where he is now. It is sad the Congress is accusing the PM when the party is having a leader like Rahul Gandhi who is unable to stand with the people during the election," said Tamilisai in an apparent reference to his recent absence from the poll campaign owing to illness.

While referring to the BJP government's efforts to empower Muslim women, Tamilisai also took potshots at Tamil

ECI urged to ban Modi's campaigns

Madurai: Various human rights organisations like the People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUC) and the People's Watch, have requested the ECI to impose a ban on PM Narendra Modi's election campaigns, after he allegedly violated the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) and used pejorative language against minority communities during a recent canvassing trail. The bodies collectively submitted a petition to Collector-cum-Retiring Officer MS Sangeetha, in which they said that PM had made a hate speech in Rajasthan's Banswara. Modi's speech, the statement added, was aimed at instigating hatred between Hindus and Muslims.

Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

"Despite CM Stalin speaking about women's rights, he did not take steps to help Muslim women go to the Hajj alone. However, the PM has given visa relaxation and appointed a woman as the V-C of Aligarh Muslim University," she remarked.

Tamilisai also raked up her party's claim that the names of several eligible voters in the state were missing from electoral rolls. She urged the Election Commission to reconsider including the voters in the list as lakhs of voters were denied the right to franchise. "It's sad that the Election Commission officials are saying that they can rectify the fault in the voters list only in the next election," she said.

Tamilisai also questioned why CM Stalin, who is raising his voice even for small issues, remains silent over the alleged deletion of voters from the list.

She also visited the temple near Perumanallur at her native place.



Will uplift lives of OBCs, dalits when INDIA gets power: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

CHIEF Minister MK Stalin expressed his optimism in the ability of the INDIA bloc to fulfil its pledges for uplifting OBC, SC, and ST communities when it comes to power in the centre. He said this in a message delivered at the Social Justice Conference of the Samruddha Bharat Foundation in New Delhi on Wednesday. The message, underscoring Tamil Nadu's significant strides in advancing social justice, was conveyed by DMK's Rajya Sabha MP P Wilson.

Stalin emphasised on the state's historic role, tracing back to the Justice Party Government of 1921, which pioneered reservations for the underprivileged through the communal government order.

He further recalled the protests for reservations held in the erstwhile Madras Presidency. "Post-independence, amidst threats to the reservation system, the resolute protests by the Dravidian Movement... catalysed the first amendment of our Constitution."

The chief minister noted Tamil Nadu's progressive policies, like the implementation of a 69% reservation for OBCs and SC/STs, which surpasses the 50% limit, and the reservation of 7.5% seats in professional courses for government school students.

Furthermore, he mentioned the recent resolution passed by the Tamil Nadu Legislative Assembly, urging the Union government to extend reservations to Scheduled Caste members who have converted to Christianity. He also shared his happiness over the Congress party's election manifesto, which echoes the DMK party's principles.

PETROL BOMB HURLED AT ADVOCATE'S HOUSE, 15 PDS SMUGGLERS BOOKED

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Thoothukudi

A day after a gang, engaged in smuggling PDS rice, hurled petrol bombs at an advocate's house in Kovilpatti, 15 of its members were booked in two cases on Wednesday. Sources said the primary accused, Pampu Karthick (27), is a member of the DMK party.

Sources said Karthick (27) is involved in smuggling ration rice, and has been engaging minor boys to deport bags of rice. This came to light a few days ago, when one minor belonging to Rajiv Nagar refused to do the work, following which Karthick attacked him. Mariselvam, an advocate living in the same locality had questioned Karthick over attacking the boy, added sources.

In the meantime, flying squad officials had seized PDS rice from Virudhunagar, which was said to have been smuggled by Karthick.

The gang led by Karthick suspected Mariselvam of sharing details of smuggling routes to officials, and allegedly hurled petrol bombs at his house in the wee hours of Tuesday. The gang also damaged the street and vehicles belonging to other neighbours in the area. They also ransacked the load vehicle, belonging to Mariselvam, parked 7 km away from his house at a garden on Oothupatti road.

The issue was posted online by state BJP president K Annamalai as well as former chief minister O Panneerselvam, both of who sought action against the accused.



CCTV footage show the gang damaging the advocate's house | EXPRESS

Speaking to TNIE, Mariselvam said over 21 people had barged into his house on Tuesday, but he was able to identify only 15 of them.

Police sources said two FIRs have been registered in this regard; one at Kovilpatti West police station for hurling a petrol bomb at the advocate's house, and another at Koppampatti police station,

where the gang had ransacked a complainant's farm.

"We have collected CCTV footage and further investigation is on," said the police. Over 10 criminal cases, including smuggling of ganja and PDS rice, are pending against Karthick, sources said, and added he is yet to be brought to book.



YET ANOTHER DAY

Birds welcoming the first ray of light as the sun rises above Ottapidaram in Thoothukudi on Wednesday | V KARTHIKA LAGU

Speed up processing applications of solar scheme, Tangedco officials told

S GURUVANMIKANATHAN @Chennai

TAMIL Nadu Generation and Distribution Corporation (Tangedco) has issued directives to all superintending engineers to complete the inspection with regard to PM's Surya Ghar (rooftop solar) scheme. As of April 22, as many as 988 applications are pending for inspection in the state as per the national portal.

The power utility also warned the officials, saying, "If there is any delay in effecting the rooftop solar services, strict action will be taken against the engineers concerned."

A senior official from Tangedco told TNIE, "Due to election-related commitments, we had

temporarily suspended the field visits. Nevertheless, efforts are under way to accelerate installations of rooftop solar across the state. Despite having nearly 40,000 applications under the PM rooftop solar scheme, only less than 10% of the applicants have received their panels. Measures are under way to speed up the remaining installations."

Emphasising the necessity of bidirectional meters, the official also added, "It is imperative to allocate bidirectional meters for all the rooftop solar services. So, we have apprised superintending engineers about reallocating available bidirectional meters from one di-

vision to another to ensure uninterrupted delivery."

Highlighting consumer-related delays, another official explained, "Though many consumers register enthusiastically on the national portal to get solar panels, upon inspection by Tangedco officials to assess feasibility, a significant number of them display disinterest, while some others request time to arrange payment."

While urban residents exhibit eagerness to embrace rooftop solar on their houses, people in rural areas are not interested. Consequently, our focus is on spreading more awareness among rural communities, he added.

Disability rights group seeks infra changes to make polls accessible

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

WITH accessible elections still a long way to go, Disability Rights Alliance has released a report to help the Election Commission of India (ECI) implement the best practices in the state.

While the report commended initiatives such as making candidate lists in EVM order (Form 7A) accessible and the efforts of Chennai district officials in addressing issues at polling booths, it also advocated for improving the infrastructure to

make polling booths more accessible.

According to the report, several measures in the ECI's note released ahead of the elections to ensure inclusion in the voting process and enhance electoral participation were not implemented by the state officials. This included the delayed convening of State Steering Committee on Accessible Election (SSCAE) meetings, registration of voters through other government

databases, braille voter information slips, polling station rationalisation, ramps and priority queues with signage among others. Activists said while the instructions given by the election commission are good, there is no accountability fixed on the officials at the state level to implement them.

"Chennai has pioneered several initiatives to make elections inclusive like having a polling booth at Institute of Mental Health. The district officials also started the work to

make polling stations accessible before other districts and were able to get more work done. District control rooms had sign language interpreters which were good examples. These facilities should be implemented across the state by the chief electoral officer and also across India by the ECI," said Smitha Sadasivam of the Disability Rights Alliance.

However, long-term measures like ensuring polling booths have proper ramps and toilets for disabled persons have been lacking since 2009.

The report also highlighted the gap in registration and enrolment of Persons with Disability (PwD) voters as only 50% of them are registered. There are also issues in streamlining this data registered by the disabled persons in the Saksham application as it doesn't get reflected. The report said the transport service announced by the Tamil Nadu CEO at the last moment was not usable for voters with disabilities as many had tried the 1950 helpline or Saksham app which did not facilitate their transport requests.

EXPRESS READ

Congress urges govt to ensure seamless admission to students under RTE quota

Chennai: TNCC President K Selvarunthagal and the BJP have called upon the state government to ensure seamless admission process for students hailing from economically disadvantaged sections in private schools under the Right to Education (RTE) Act. Selvarunthagal flagged the malfunctioning of the school education department's admissions website. Meanwhile, BJP spokesperson ANS Prasad expressed apprehension regarding the state government's delay in disbursing payments to private schools for RTE Act admissions. Meanwhile, State Platform for Common School System-Tamil Nadu (SPCSS-TN) has urged the government to ensure that the RTE is provided through government and government-aided schools in the state. The group has urged the government to significantly increase the outlay for elementary education and improve infrastructure to enhance their status to neighbourhood schools. ENS



The only occupants remaining at Gomathi's house were an elderly couple, as other family members had gone to the police station | EXPRESS

Enmity regarding land reason for murder: Cops

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

JAISHANKAR, a PMK functionary who is the brother-in-law of Gomathi and vice-president of Ramapuram panchayat, said the key issue was a dispute over 33 cents of poramboke land, a part of which was allegedly registered in the name of J Kalaimani, the main accused in Gomathi's murder, through illegal means. Additionally, the election of Jaishankar's wife as a ward member and later as vice-president enraged B Pandian, another accused in the murder case and an acquaintance of Kalaimani, as neither he nor his family members could get the post.

Speaking to TNIE, Jaishankar said he had tried to reclaim the encroached land for establishing a government veterinary clinic. This led to a confrontation between him and Kalaimani in 2021 and a case was registered against Kalaimani at that time.

"These individuals were waiting for an opportunity to confront me," Jaishankar told TNIE. He recounted how he and his daughter were taunted by Kalaimani en route to the polling booth. "They were generally teasing us. It was not about election or voting," he said. Though Jaishankar left the spot, the quarrel continued between his brother Jaikummar, the husband of Gomathi, and the couple's two sons Jaiprakash and Sathish Kumar, and the attackers near a banyan tree. The three men were later attacked with wooden objects by Kalaimani and his associates.

Gomathi, who had no knowledge of the quarrel and was returning from agricultural work, tried to intervene to protect her sons, and was attacked by the gang. She sustained injuries and was pronounced dead later at the PHC in Andimadam in Ariyalur district. Jaikummar sustained fractures in his hand and leg while his two sons sus-

tained injuries in their heads and are under treatment at a hospital in Vriddachalam.

Jaikummar, declined to comment citing the ongoing controversy and his health. "I have spoken about it to several people and facing troubles because of it. I am also not feeling well due to injuries," he told TNIE.

After police booked a case against BJP chief Annamalai for spreading rumours about the murder, he released another video in which a person, later identified as BJP president of Cuddalore west district K Maruthai, was seen purporting to ask questions to Jaikummar. Repeated attempts by TNIE to reach Maruthai for his comments went in vain.

Another close relative of Gomathi said she and Jaikummar were added as members of BJP by another person in the village by giving missed calls to a party number "However, he was never an active member of the party, and politics had nothing to do with her murder. Ever since Jaishankar opposed encroachments, the accused and their families have been picking fights with us without cause," the relative said.

While the village is considered a stronghold of the PMK, a few neighbours of Gomathi said the accused families resided close to Gomathi's house and claimed to be members of the DMK. "They do not hold any significant positions in the DMK, but tried to project themselves as prominent local functionaries of the party," a neighbour said.

A press statement from the Cuddalore district superintendent of police on Tuesday night reiterated that there was no political motive behind the murder. "Based on the statements of 15 villagers, including 10 eyewitnesses, the accused were arrested. Enmity regarding land was the reason and the rumours are unfounded," the police statement said.

Three Class 12 govt school students drown in check dam in Coimbatore

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Coimbatore

THREE Class 12 students from a village in Coimbatore drowned while taking a bath in a check dam near Alandurai in the district on Wednesday.

The deceased were identified as M Praveen (17), P Kavim (16) and V Dhakshan (17), who hailed from Perur Pachapalayam. They were accompanied by a friend, named Sanjay (21). The police said that the three deceased were studying in Class 12 at the Government Higher Secondary School at

Theethipalayam. They, along with their friend, went to Perumal Kovil Pathy check dam near Alandurai on Wednesday around 4 pm. The four youths

Two kids drown in Tiruppur

Two boys drowned while bathing in a pond at Uppalayam on Tuesday. The deceased were Gokul (8) and his classmate Aswini (8). The families of both kids initiated a search and found their dresses and bicycles near a pond at East Uppalayam. A team of fire service personnel retrieved both the kids' bodies from pond.

ventured into the check dam, which has more than ten feet of water, to take a bath. Police said Praveen, Kavim and Dhakshan did not know how to swim and drowned in the check dam. Sanjay alerted Fire and Rescue Services.

Station Officer PN Anilkumar and Thondamuthur fire station launched a search for the drowned students. The fire brigades retrieved the bodies of the three students by 5.30 pm. The Alandurai police shifted the bodies of the deceased to the Coimbatore Medical College Hospital for post-mortem.

Edu department refuses to send govt school students for B.Ed practical exam

N DHAMOTHARAN @Coimbatore

THE faculty members of the Government College of Education For Women in Coimbatore have alleged that the district school education department refuses to send government school students to attend the practical examination of Bachelor of Education (B.Ed) course students.

They said that B.Ed students should showcase their teaching abilities to school students in front of an external examiner during the practical examination.

A teaching staff told TNIE, "Following Tamil Nadu Teacher Education University (TNTEU) announcement that practical examination would be conducted in March, we approached the Chief Educational Officer (CEO) R Balamurali seeking permission to send government school students to our college for the practical examination of second-year B.Ed students."

"However, the CEO said that he cannot send government school students to the college. Instead of this, the CEO suggested that the practical examination be conducted at the CCMA government higher secondary school (Woman) at Raja Street. Meanwhile, the practi-

cal examination was postponed by the TNTEU. However, the university is planning to conduct the practical examination for the students in July. But, as the CEO refuses to give permission, it will be a challenge to conduct the practical examination to B.Ed students," he said.

CEO Balamurali told TNIE that considering student safety, they cannot send students outside and he said that practical exams can be conducted in the classroom at school.

But another faculty member told TNIE that up until the previous year, approximately 30 students from CCMA School participated in the practical examination.

He recalled that earlier they had provided transport facilities and students also came with their teachers to this examination.

"Practical examination should be conducted at the colleges only as per norm and it cannot be conducted at school as per the CEO's wish," the faculty member said.

"Therefore, the TNTEU should resolve this matter by issuing guidelines regarding student participation in practical exams through the school education department," he further urged.

Rahul's victory margin may dip, LDF candidate has better voter connect

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

CLEARLY displeased, the Left has been grumbling over the move ever since. Annie, though taken aback by Rahul's candidature, is expected to garner more votes than any previous Left candidate in the constituency because of her national stature and innate ability to connect with people. Her native, religious roots could also work to her advantage - her family was among the early Christian settlers in the high

ranges of north Kerala.

The candidature of BJP state president K Surendran was a surprise. It has indeed spiced up the fight in Wayanad. That the BJP central leadership decided to field its state president in a constituency where the party has minimal reach - its vote share has never crossed 9% in any of the elections - is still intriguing to many. Several star campaigners of the BJP - Union minister Smriti Irani, Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma, and

Tamil Nadu BJP chief K Annamalai - arrived in Wayanad to campaign for Surendran. It is another story that these VIP visits were more about Rahul and less about Surendran. Though PM Modi has been saying "Congress shehzada" will lose from Wayanad this time, nobody would have realistic expectations of such an outcome. Rahul's opponents would be eyeing a dip in his victory margin. That does not seem unlikely as 'Gandhi awe factor' is no longer visible in Wayanad.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited advertisement including contact information, registered office, and details of a secured loan agreement for a property in Chennai.

FEDERAL BANK advertisement including details of a secured loan agreement for a property in Chennai, mentioning the bank's branches and services.

Canara Bank advertisement featuring a detailed 'SALE NOTICE' for an asset recovery management branch in Coimbatore, listing multiple properties for auction and their details.



Kotak Mahindra Bank Limited

Registered office: 27 BKC, C 27, G Block, Bandra Kuria Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400051.

APPENDIX-IV-A [REFER PROVISO TO RULE 6(B)]

AUCTION CUM SALE NOTICE - E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE IMMovable PROPERTIES

E-Auction Cum Sale Notice for sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) & (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Table with 7 columns: Loan Account No., Name of the Borrower/Co-Borrowers, Demand Notice Amount and Date, Reserve Price (RP), EMD (10% of RP) and Last Date, Inspection Date & Time, Date of Auction & Time, Total Outstanding, and Known Encumbrances, if any.

The Auction will be conducted online through the Bank's approved service provider M/s C1 India Private Limited, at their web Portal www.bankauctions.com.

Place : Chengalpattu Date : 24-04-2024



WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY Gati Shakti Branch Open E-Tender Notice Date: 23.04.2024. Dy. CE/GS/Bhopal, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders against following works, upto 15.30 hours on the date mentioned against tender.



NOTICE TO THE BORROWER INFORMING ABOUT SALE (30 DAYS NOTICE) RULE 6 (2) & (6) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002. To: 1(a) Mr. Kalyanam (Applicant) S/o. Manivel Nadar, 1(b) Mrs. Veeramallu (Co-Applient) W/o. Mr. Kalyanam.

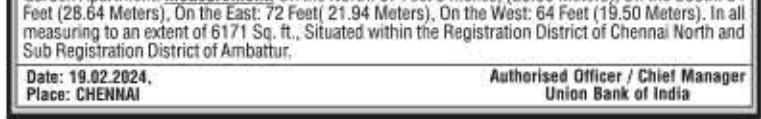
AXIS BANK LIMITED Structured Assets Group, 1st Floor, Jawahar Towers, New No.3, Old No.2, Clubhouse Road, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002.

DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. To, BORROWERS: 1. M/S Venus Metal Agencies, represented by its Proprietor, Mr. Sethuraman Annamalai, Office : No 170, Sydhanth Road, Periamet, Chennai - 600 033.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited

erstwhile Capital First Limited, amalgamated with IDFC First Bank Limited and presently known as IDFC First Bank Limited. Registered Office - KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai- 600031.



EQUITAS SMALL FINANCE BANK LTD (FORMERLY KNOWN AS EQUITAS FINANCE LTD) Registered Office: 4th Floor, Phase - II, Spencer Plaza, No.769, Mount Road, Anna Salai, Chennai, Tamil Nadu. Pincode-600 002. Ph: 044-42995000, 044-42995050.

QuoteExpress TRY TO LEAVE THE EARTH A BETTER PLACE THAN WHEN YOU ARRIVED. SIDNEY SHELDON

पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Circle Sastra Centre, Chennai, No.769, Second Floor, Spencer Plaza, Chennai-600002

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTY/IES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

S.No.1: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: B0: Kilpauk (106510) (Now Parked with Circle Sastra Centre) A/C: Lakshmi Electricals - Lakshmi Electricals, No 26, 1Ind Cross Street, C1 T Nagar West, Chennai - 600 035.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property in the name of Mr. R Damodaran: Land and residential building (Front portion) situated at New Door No.6, Old No.6, in Plot Nos. 41 & 42, Re-survey No.248 & 242, T.S. No.72, Gandhi Street, West Jones Road, West Saidapet, Chennai-600015.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 30,10,000/- EMD ₹ 3,01,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 50,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 13.10.2014 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 22.01.2015

S.No.2: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: B0: Tiruvallur (158710) (Now Parked with Circle Sastra Centre) - Mr. N. Mahendran - 15876015000056. Mr. N. Mahendran, No.6, Church Cross Street, Anna Indira Nagar, West Tambaram, Chennai - 600 045.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belongs to Mr.N. Mahendran: All that piece and parcel of house site, at bearing Plot No.6, measuring an extent of 1990 Square feet, comprised in survey No.20/3A, in the layout named 'anna indira nagar approval No.143/89, situated at No.30 Peerkankaranai Village, Tambaram Taluk, Kancheepuram District, Building Planning Permit No.2883/78/153-2013-2014, dated 28.03.2014.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 19,00,000/- EMD ₹ 1,90,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 25,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 29.09.2023 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 03.01.2024

S.No.3: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: B0: KK Nagar (251000) (Now Parked with Circle Sastra Centre) - Optical Expression - A/C: 2510000S00000037. M/s Optical Expression, No 4, 5 Kurnaran Optical Main Road, Vadapalani, Chennai-600026.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property in the name of Mr. S.Anwar Basha: All that piece and parcel of land and building situated at No.83, Nerkundram Village, Maduravayal Taluk, plot No 205 measuring an extent of 1200 Sft comprised in S.No 127/2 at Muniyappan nagar and bounded on the North: Plot No. 204, Plot belonging to Mr.Sivaprakasam South: Plot no 206, Plot belonging to Mrs.Jayashree Subramanian, East: Land in S.No 128, West: 24 feet road. With a linear measurement North to south on the Eastern side : 25 feet, North to south on the Western side : 24 feet, East to west on the Northern side : 47 feet, East to west on the southern side : 51 feet. In all totally measuring 1200 sqft and lying within the Registration District of Chennai South and Sub Registration District of Virugambakkam.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 73,00,000/- EMD ₹ 7,30,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 1,00,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 05.01.2023 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 16.03.2023

S.No.4: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: PNB- 80 CHENNAI-MOULIVAKKAM (058110) (Now parked with Circle Sastra centre Chennai) - Name: MURUGAN P - 0581601502643. Mr.P Murugan (Mortgagor / Mortgagee), No.60, J.J. Vajrathi Nagar, Matha Nagar, 1st Main Road, Moulivakkam, Chennai - 600 125.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belonging to Mr.P Murugan S/O.Late Paramasivan: "A SCHEDULE PROPERTY". ITEM No. 1: All that piece and parcel of plot measuring 1800 sq. ft. bearing plot No.31, (As per CMDA's Approval and

Regularisation Permit No.41/2005 & D.Dis. No.3611/2002), dated 12.01.2005), Situated at Gerugambakkam Village, Lakshmi Nagar Layout, Comprised in Survey No.6/1, Sripurambuthur Taluk, Kancheepuram Dist., within the Registration Dist of Chennai - South and Sub-Registration District of PAMMAL. Bounded on the North by: Plot No.33, South by: 24 Feet Road, East by: Plot No.32, West by: Plot No.30A. Measuring: East to West on the Northern Side : 30 Feet, East to West on the Southern Side : 30 Feet, North to South on the Eastern Side: 60 Feet, North to South on the Western Side: 60 Feet.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 28,35,000/- EMD ₹ 2,83,500/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 50,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 01.06.2023 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 19.08.2023

S.No.5: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: B0: CHENNAI MYPALORE (034300) (Now parked with Circle SAISTRA Centre, Chennai) - Mr. Raju Azhagar and Mrs.Pothumani. Ms.Pothumani W/o.Late.Raju Azhagar (Borrower / Mortgagor), Old No 4 and New No.6, Nethaji Street, Saligramam, Chennai - 600093.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belonging to Mrs.Pothumani: All the piece and parcel of land measuring 776 sq ft together with the building constructed thereon consisting of ground floor and first floor bearing Old Door No. 4, New Door No. 6, Nethaji Street, Saligramam, Chennai 600093 comprised in Old No. 96/3 Part, T.S.No. 158, Block No. 29 of Saligramam Village, Egmore Chungambakkam Taluk, Chennai District and bounded on the North by: property belong to Devaraj Chettiar, South by: House belongs to Devanayagi's, East by: Velu Chettiar's vacant site, West by : Nethaji Street. Situated within the Registration District of Chennai South and Sub Registration District of Virugambakkam. Latitude and Longitudes Coordinates: 13.057556 80.201091.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 60,30,000/- EMD ₹ 6,03,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 1,00,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 12.07.2019 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 21.09.2019

S.No.6: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: PNB - R.H. ROAD, CHENNAI (438600) (Now parked with Circle Sastra centre Chennai) - VARTHALI MEDIA WORKS PRIVATE LIMITED, Varthali Media Works Pvt Ltd, No.108/125 Luz Church Road, Mysapore, Chennai - 600 004.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belonging to Mrs.V Nandini: All that piece and parcel of land bearing Plot No.1, measuring an extent of 1635 Sq ft, comprised in grama nathani Survey No.46/1, Zamin Pallivaram Village, Tambaram Taluk, Kancheepuram district, along with super structure thereon admeasuring 800 Sq ft, and situated at pachaimman Koil Street, Bharathi Nagar, Zamin Pallivaram, Chennai-600043 and bounded on the North By: Vailhiyar Street Extension, South By: Property owned by Mr.Muniandi, East By : Pachaimman Koil Street, West By : Property owned by Mr.Dass And situate within the Registration District of Chennai south and Sub Registration district of Pallavaram. Latitude and Longitudes Coordinates: 12.970145, 80.165393.

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 52,20,000/- EMD ₹ 5,22,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 1,00,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 17.05.2023 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 04.09.2023

S.No.7: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: B0: CHENNAI- SELAIYUR (111310) (Now parked with Circle Sastra centre Chennai) - M VIGNESH. M Vignesh (Borrower), No.36,CLC Work Road, 5th Main Road, New Colony, Chrompet, Chennai - 600 044.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belonging to Mr. M. Vignesh: All that piece and parcel of Land and Building bearing Plot No.104, Old Door No.22, New Door No.36, 5 th Main Road, New Colony, Chrompet, Chennai - 600 044 comprised in Old Survey No.515/1, New Survey No.515/3 part.Old Survey No.514, New Survey No.514/2, part situated in No.125,Zamin Pallivaram Village, measuring an extent of 300 Sq.ft (27.871 Sq.mt) UDS in the land out of total extent 4950 Sft together with Flat No.C2, second Floor, having built up area 557 Sq.ft RCC terraced building (including common area with all amenities), Building known as "Shabeels Parvath" Alandur Taluk, Kancheepuram District. Bounded on the Northy: Plot No.105, Chrome Leather Company, South by: Plot No.103, East by: Road and Ayyakulum no within school compound, West by : Plot No.102 and Road. Latitude and Longitudes Coordinates: 13.038222, 79.673278

RESERVE PRICE ₹ 16,00,000/- EMD ₹ 1,60,000/- BID INCREASE AMOUNT ₹ 50,000/- Dt. of Demand Notice us 13(2) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 17.05.2023 Possession Date Us 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002: 09.09.2022

S.No.8: Name of the Branch & Account, Name & addresses of the Borrower/ Guarantors: PNB - 80 CHENNAI-MOULIVAKKAM (058110) (Now parked with Circle Sastra centre Chennai) - Name: MURUGAN P - 0581601502643. Mr.P Murugan (Mortgagor / Mortgagee), No.60, J.J. Vajrathi Nagar, Matha Nagar, 1st Main Road, Moulivakkam, Chennai - 600 125.

Description of the Immovable Properties mortgaged/owner's Name(mortgagors of property(ies): Property belonging to Mr.P Murugan S/O.Late Paramasivan: "A SCHEDULE PROPERTY". ITEM No. 1: All that piece and parcel of plot measuring 1800 sq. ft. bearing plot No.31, (As per CMDA's Approval and

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMovable PROPERTY

Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets mortgaged / charged to the Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

TAMILNAD MERCANTILE BANK LTD (Regd. office at 57, V.E.Road, Thoothukudi) MADURANTAKAM BRANCH No.95, GST Road, Madurantakam - 603 306.

AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR IMMovable PROPERTY

Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets mortgaged / charged to the Bank under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6 (2) & (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

TERMS & CONDITIONS

- 1. The intending bidders should pay 10% of the reserve price of the property as Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) by means of a Demand Draft drawn in favour of "Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd" on or before 13.05.2024 within 11.00 AM.
2. The intending bidders may inspect and satisfy themselves about the property/properties and may approach the Branch Manager to inspect the property documents related to the property...
3. The successful bidder shall have to deposit 25% of the Bid Amount (including EMD) on the same day or the next working day without fail and EMD shall be adjusted towards 25% of the bid amount immediately on the sale being knocked down in his favour.

Place : Chennai Date : 22.04.2024 (For Madurantakam Branch) Tel: 09950 10888 / 9976634444

MAHATRANSCO Extension of sale period for SRM e-Tender No. T-55/2023-24. The sale period & last date of submission for following SRM e-tender is further extended up to 14.05.2024 upto 13:00 Hrs. Date of opening (Tech. bid): 14.05.2024 at 15:00Hrs. (If possible). All other terms & conditions of the e-tender will remain unchanged.

Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. Corporate Office : 802, Natraj By Rustomjee, Western Express Highway, Sir M.V. Road, Andheri East, Mumbai - 400 069, Maharashtra. Chennai Branch : Challa Mall, 3rd Floor, Unit No.305, New Door No.11 and 11A, New Property Tax Door No.17/50, Old Door No.11/50, Block No.140, Sir Theyyagaraya Road, T Nagar, Village, Guindy Taluk, Chennai- 600017, TN.

DEMAND NOTICE Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorised Officer of Aadhar Housing Finance Ltd. (AHFL) under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (the said Act).

Place : Chennai Date : 25.04.2024 Authorised Officer Aadhar Housing Finance Limited

DEUTSCHE BANK AG PUBLIC NOTICE - AUCTION CUM SALE OF PROPERTY Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of M/s. Deutsche Bank AG, having one of its places of business at # 4-4A, Western Tower, Sunny Side, Shafi Mohammed Road, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600006 ("Deutsche Bank AG").

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Secured Property Address, Reserve Price, EMD, Auction Date. Row 1: All that piece and parcel of property bearing Flat No. 5, in Second Floor Block Porton measuring 1665 Sq.ft., super built-up area, and for a reserved Car Park measuring 160 Sq.ft., together with 359 Sq.ft. Undivided share in Land bearing Municipal Oldst Door No. 13/9, Oldst Door No. 66, Old Door Nos. 66/1 to 66/11, New Door Nos. 30/1 to 30/11, Jemimah Road, Vepery, Chennai - 600007, comprised in O.S.No.1477, R.S.No.899, in Block No.17, Puraaswakkam Division, measuring 4 grounds and 692 Sq.ft., bounded on the North by: R.S.No. 900, South by: Jemimah Road; West by: R.S.No.898, East by: R.S.No.901; Situated within the Registration District of Central Madras, and Registration Sub District of Periamet.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION: 1. The property can be inspected on 23rd May 2024 between 11am to 3pm. The bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the office of undersigned along with a Demand Draft/Pay Order of Rs.15,00,000/- (Rupees Fifteen Lakhs only) towards the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") favoring "M/s. Deutsche Bank AG EMD" so as to reach the office of Deutsche Bank AG at # 4-4A, Western Tower, Sunny Side, Shafi Mohammed Road, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600006 on or before 04th June 2024 at 2 pm. The earnest money deposit shall not carry any interest. Along with bid form the proposed bidder shall also attach his/her identity proof, proof of residence (such as copy of the passport, election commission card, ration card driving license etc.) and a copy of the PAN card issued by the Income Tax department.

Place: Chennai Sd/- Sathesh C, Authorized Officer- Deutsche Bank AG, Contact Numbers: 09641822229, 09662116688

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RAIL WHEEL FACTORY Yelahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064 Website: www.rwfindianrailways.gov.in TENDER NOTICE NO.RWF/S/P/001/2024-25 dt.22.04.24

DEMAND NOTICE (SECTION 13(2)) TO BORROWER/GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR Demand Notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Through Paper Publication To. Borrowers: Orchid Traders, No 37, Thiruvaidyan Street, Gopalapuram, Chennai- 600086. Mrs.Umanthi, D/o.Pothina Apparao, 5,59, Crystal Cove, Sathyadev Avenue, M R C Nagar, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai-600028

DEMAND NOTICE (SECTION 13(2)) TO BORROWER/GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR Demand Notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of Canara Bank, Mysalope Branch (hereinafter referred to as "the secured creditor"), appointed under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") do hereby issue this notice to you as under:

Schedule-A: Details of the credit facilities availed by the Borrower. Table with 6 columns: Account Number, Product, Sanction Date, Sanctioned Amount, Disbursed Amount, Liability as on 16.04.2024. Total: 25,54,70,913.02

Whereas the demand notice sent to you by Regd. Post / Courier. Schedule-B: (Details of secured assets): Property No.1: Name of Title holder Mrs.Umanthi P. All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.F7, First Floor, Double Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 361 Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 778 sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.2: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.F9, First Floor, Single Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No 50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 226Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 485sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.3: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S3, Second Floor, Double Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 376Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 810 sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.4: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S5, Second Floor, Double Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 433Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 931sq.ft. in Plinth area situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.5: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S6, Second Floor, Single Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 298Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 646sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

RAIL WHEEL FACTORY Yelahanka, BANGALORE - 560 064 Website: www.rwfindianrailways.gov.in TENDER NOTICE NO.RWF/S/P/001/2024-25 dt.22.04.24

MYLAPORE BRANCH 129 Royapettah High Road, Mysalope, Chennai-600004 Mobile: 94441 20915 E-Mail: cb0915@canarabank.com

DEMAND NOTICE (SECTION 13(2)) TO BORROWER/GUARANTOR/MORTGAGOR Demand Notice issued under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 Through Paper Publication To. Borrowers: Orchid Traders, No 37, Thiruvaidyan Street, Gopalapuram, Chennai- 600086. Mrs.Umanthi, D/o.Pothina Apparao, 5,59, Crystal Cove, Sathyadev Avenue, M R C Nagar, Raja Annamalaiapuram, Chennai-600028

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Property No.3: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S3, Second Floor, Double Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 376Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 810 sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

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Property No.5: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S6, Second Floor, Single Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 298Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 646sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.6: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S8, Second Floor, Double Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 363Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 781sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY Electrical (General), Construction, Chennai Egmore TENDER NOTICE No. E-HQ-CN-MS-EOT1-2024-25 Dated: 22.04.2024 For and on behalf of the President of India, The Dy Chief Elec Engineer/Gen/Cons / S. Rly/ Egmore, Chennai-600 008 invites E-Tender for the following works.

AXIS BANK LIMITED Structured Assets Group, 1st Floor, Jawahar Towers, New No.3, Old No.2, Clubhouse Road, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002. DEMAND NOTICE Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. To, BORROWERS: 1. M/s Royce Aluminium & Alloys Pvt Ltd, Registered Office: No 500/ 573, Kamraj Bhavan, Mount Road, Teyyanpet, CHENNAI - 600 018. Also at: No. 215, Siderhams Road, Apparao Garden, Choolai, CHENNAI - 600 012.

DEUTSCHE BANK AG PUBLIC NOTICE - AUCTION CUM SALE OF PROPERTY Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002. The undersigned is the Authorized Officer of M/s. Deutsche Bank AG, having one of its places of business at # 4-4A, Western Tower, Sunny Side, Shafi Mohammed Road, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600006 ("Deutsche Bank AG").

Table with 5 columns: Sr. No., Secured Property Address, Reserve Price, EMD, Auction Date. Row 1: All pieces and parcels of the Property bearing Flat No.6, in the 1st Floor measuring 1747 Sq.ft., together with an 499 Sq.ft., undivided share in land measuring 13 Grounds 833.50 Sq.ft., comprised in T.S.No.4/2 Part, New T.S.No.4/77, 4/78 and 4/80, puzhuvil village in Block No. A of the Building known as 'Jain Antharika' and land bounded on the North by: Rathnammal Street; South by: K. Jayashankar Property; East by: Block No.10C and 10D; West by: 80 Feet Road. Situated within the Sub-Registration District of Kodambakkam and Registration District of Chennai.

TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PUBLIC AUCTION: 1. The property can be inspected on 09th May 2024 between 11am to 3pm. The bids shall be submitted in a sealed envelope to the office of undersigned along with a Demand Draft/Pay Order of Rs.11,40,000/- (Rupees Eleven Lakhs Forty Thousand only) towards the Earnest Money Deposit ("EMD") favoring "M/s. Deutsche Bank AG EMD" so as to reach the office of Deutsche Bank AG at # 4-4A, Western Tower, Sunny Side, Shafi Mohammed Road, Thousand Lights, Chennai - 600006 on or before 16th May 2024 at 2 pm.

Property No.7: All that piece and parcel of "Residential Flat bearing Flat No.S9, Second Floor, Single Bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos.58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos.58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 225Sq.ft. UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft. and measuring an extent of 485sq.ft. in Plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34, Egattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building. And situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.8: All that piece and parcel of a Flat bearing Double Bedroom Apartment No.F6, having built up area of 640 Sq.ft in First Floor of the building known as "DGM TEJAS" together with car parking area, EB connection and 298 sq.ft of undivided share of land erected on the land bearing Plot No.50 western side, comprised in Old Survey Nos. 58/1 and 58/2, as per Patta (No.546), New Survey Nos 58/1A/B and 58/2B1, measuring an extent of 720 Sq.ft (5716+1504+720 sq.ft) situated at No.34 Ekattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and the land being bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building, situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.9: All that piece and parcel of Residential Flat bearing Flat No.5, First Floor, Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos 58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos 58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 225 sq.ft UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft (5716+1504+720 sq.ft) situated at No.34 Ekattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and the land being bounded on the North by: Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building, situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

Property No.10: All that piece and parcel of Residential Flat bearing Flat No.4, Second Floor, Single bedroom Apartment, "DGM TEJAS" in Plot No.50, Western Side in City Park, Comprised in Old Survey Nos 58/1 & 58/2, as per Patta No.546, New Survey Nos 58/1A/B & 58/2B1 measuring an extent of 225sq.ft UDS in land out of 7220 Sq.ft (5716+1504+720 sq.ft) and measuring an extent of 825 sq.ft.in plinth area with one car parking situated at No.34 Ekattur Village, Thirupurur Taluk, Kancheepuram District and the land being bounded on the North by Road and Plot No.49, South: Vacant land, East: Land with Mango Trees, West: Plot No 50 part and building, situated within the Registration District of Chengelpet and Sub Registration District of Thirupurur.

INDIAN EXPRESS IS NOT AN INDUSTRY. IT IS A MISSION.

— Rammath Goenka

HUBBALLI CASE SHOULD REFOCUS ATTENTION ON WOMEN'S SAFETY

WHILE the brutal murder of Neha Hiremath on a Hubballi college campus in North Karnataka has left people in shock and outrage, it has also raised the political temperature in a state that votes on Friday. The murder, committed by Neha's former classmate, a Muslim, swiftly became a political issue and ignited a slugfest on 'love jihad', a term used by Hindutva organisations to denote an alleged trend of Muslim men luring Hindu women into romantic relationships in order to convert them to Islam. For the BJP, the case came up at an opportune moment, allowing it to sharpen its narrative of saving Hindu girls and community appeasement. Neha's grieving father, a Congress corporator, endorsed the love jihad angle; protests have broken out across the state demanding justice for the student. All this has put the government on the defensive. CM Siddaramaiah has rejected the claims of love jihad, said the killing was due to "personal reasons", and that the police were handling the case with efficiency. The government has promised to set up a special court to fast-track the case and punish the murderer, who was caught within an hour.

Political leaders should realise that this is neither the time nor the occasion to talk of either love jihad or an affair, but to deal with the case as a heinous crime that should not be repeated, definitely not on any campus. It involves the safety of women, whether at home, on campuses, on streets, or at workplaces. Women are increasingly being attacked for rejecting advances by men or for choosing to end a relationship, and religion has little to do with it. In Neha's case, the perpetrator had obviously reached the point of obsession and needed professional psychological help to deal with it.

With electioneering in the slog overs, it is inevitable that the Neha case will remain political and the BJP will play the love jihad card to the hilt. For the Congress, which is battling charges of minority appeasement and looking to reclaim at least a few Lok Sabha seats, the case could prove to be a minor setback. Instead of playing on people's emotions to sway their vote, parties ought to move away from divisive issues and talk of real problems affecting everyday life. But as in love and war, all is mistakenly deemed fair in elections too.

ODISHA NEEDS PLAN TO STOP 'WITCH' HUNTS

THREE-fourths of witchcraft-related murders in India are reported from just four states. According to the National Crime Records Bureau, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha take the top slots in that order, accounting for 66 out of the 85 such murders logged in 2022. The official number is just a tip of the iceberg. In Odisha, for example, NCRB puts the number of murders at 10; however, a fresh dataset compiled by rationalist thinkers says at least 606 people were brutally killed in the state in the name of witchcraft over the last 11 years, which translates to over 50 such murders every year.

In an age where the downside of artificial intelligence is debated with frenzy, superstition continues to kill. Most of it comes from the usual suspects: the tribal hinterlands. All the states that continue to report such brutal violence have sizeable tribal populations. Tribal-dominated areas are marked by poor human development indicators—access to healthcare and education top the list of critical challenges in these regions where quacks reign supreme. In Odisha, 67 percent of the murders triggered by witchcraft suspicion are reported from seven such districts.

Despite efforts to generate awareness against superstition, brutalities continue in the name of witch hunting. In January, a 55-year-old tribal man of Malkangiri district was allegedly murdered by two young people including the victim's cousin. Analysis reveals that almost a fifth of such murders are carried out by relatives and a majority of the perpetrators are from the same community. The state government brought in the Odisha Prevention of Witch Hunting Act 2013 a decade ago, but its impact has not been encouraging, as the numbers would vouch. Though the law came into existence, the administration failed to frame the rules and finalise a dedicated scheme. Seven years back, a composite action plan was devised and departments were asked to take action, but the response has been lukewarm with no budgetary heads created for the purpose. Much as the spate of witchcraft-related violence warrants vigorous awareness campaigns, the government has to go beyond perfunctoriness and launch targeted intervention in regions afflicted by the malaise. It must come up with a specific plan that acts as a deterrent, because the law alone has not gone far in stopping such violence.

QUICK TAKE

THE VOYAGE GOES ON

IT'S great news that Nasa has managed to revive Voyager 1, the spacecraft farthest from Earth, thanks to some crafty remote engineering. The oldest spacecraft, launched in 1977 and initially intended to last five years, has again started sending data from 15 billion miles away. One of the main ideas behind the craft was to communicate with other life forms, should it encounter them. So it's a storehouse of information on our planet, including music. Thanks to Robert Brown, an American ethnomusicologist who curated the global list, among the recordings is Kesabai Kerkar's 'Jaat kahan ho'. Isn't it otherworldly to think that aliens might one day listen to a Bhairavi bandish?

TWO conjoined developments last week in the US Congress need to be understood for their far-reaching consequences for the world order that will inevitably appear on Indian shores sooner rather than later. The first is about the House of Representatives passing the bill last Saturday for a whopping \$61.8-billion aid to Ukraine, and the second devolves upon a bill on the House floor titled the 21st Century Peace Through Strength Act, tabled by the House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Michael McCaul, in these troubled times when the "world is on fire".

McCaul's bill sets a new threshold in the US's sanctions policy towards adversaries, which allows the transfer of frozen Russian sovereign assets in the US to meet Ukraine's needs. It is rather Kafkaesque that the US proposes to fund its proxy war against Russia with Russian reserves. To be sure, the European Union will follow suit. McCaul is a hugely influential Republican politician from Texas and he figured lately as a key interlocutor in the complex manoeuvring that resulted in Donald Trump signing off on the Ukraine aid bill on Friday in a thrilling restoration of "bipartisan consensus" in foreign policy, belying the polarisation in American politics when it comes to the core issues of the preservation of the US's global hegemony.

Russia and China have been apprehending such a historic escalation of the weaponisation of the dollar by the US, empowering itself to confiscate the reserves of adversaries and utilising them as funds to rearm itself. The subtext here is that Washington is retracting from its solemn commitment of the early 1970s to make the dollar freely available to all countries for transactions in return for acceptance of its status as reserve currency of the international community—enabling the US, in turn, to live a profligate lifestyle by printing its currency wantonly and risking massive debt burden (touching \$34 trillion in April and adding \$1 trillion worth of debt to the total balance every 100 days). The US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell warned in February that the nation is on an "unsustainable" path, as apparent also from the diminishing credibility of US bonds and recent surges in gold and bitcoin prices.

Instead of addressing the debt crisis, the US is adopting an ingenious way of "income generation" by seizing the sovereign reserves of other countries. To-

The US has a history of clipping the wings of even its close allies when they become too big. It's unlikely to support the rise of a second superpower in Asia

INDIA'S EPISODIC DIPLOMACY IGNORES THE BIG PICTURE

M K BHADRAKUMAR

Former diplomat



SOURAV ROY

day, Russia and China are in the cross-hairs. Such an arbitrary, unilateral rewriting of the rules of international financial order is fraught with cataclysmic chain reactions. In geopolitical terms, what is no longer possible to obfuscate is that the US's unspoken agenda in the Ukraine war all along had been to weaken Russia and stifle its potential to be an independent voice and effective presence on the global stage—put differently, to reduce Moscow to a subaltern role in world politics—that also sets a precedent for the incoming showdown between the West and China. The US-Russia-China triangle is returning with a vengeance, reminiscent of Henry Kissinger's doctrine that was conceived in a similar period of American political

weakness following the Vietnam war. In the emerging scenario, it is anybody's guess whether India's episodic diplomacy is pivoted on the above 'big picture'. For India, the Ukraine war has largely been about the access it gained to Russian oil at discounted prices—which the US condoned, given Delhi's compliance with Washington's core agenda of atrophying the India-Russia defence partnership consciously, deliberately over time. As regards China, India of course has frozen cooperation with its neighbour in any direction, instead of attempting to leverage cooperation to mutual benefit and to moderate differences over time, which is largely the pattern of international diplomacy in modern

history, except for a clutch of eternal enemies as on the Korean peninsula or Turkey-versus-Armenia.

To be sure, a moment of truth lies ahead for India as to whether it is sustainable for it to be a lotus eater in sunny climes living in a state of dreamy forgetfulness and idleness like the people represented in the world of Homer in classical age. The point is, there is a naive belief pervasive in the Indian mindset that with philistinism being the motivating force of American political culture, so long as India can pander to American business interests, especially the military-industrial complex, all is well with the world.

On the other hand, in reality, China's experience shows otherwise, as the recent six-day visit by the US Treasury Secretary to Beijing amply testified. Simply put, as much as the Biden Administration is seeking stability, predictability and communication channels in the US-China discourse, the competition is intensifying and the pressures on trade and technology remain relentless.

Then there is the incredible sales pitch by the government that their enthusiasm for India's past is not necessarily a rupture or divergence with the interests and values of the US or Europe; on the contrary, it may forge a deeper historical foundation for strategic alignment between our country and the West. Such sophistry won't fly. We shouldn't be kidding ourselves. The US has a history of clipping the wings of even its closest Western allies if they become too big for their boots. It dealt with Japan in the 1970s when its foreign trade bloomed. Again, Germany, which was regarded as a potential superpower hardly 2-3 years ago, is today threatened with 'de-industrialisation' after being forced by the Biden administration to abandon the Nord Stream gas pipelines built by Russians. The time has come to start thinking in a more reasonable way. Climbing up the greasy pole of international politics is no picnic. And make no mistake that the West is determined to preserve its four-century old dominance. When it comes to India, in particular, they will never allow "another China" to emerge in Asia. Herein lies India's predicament. Today's happenings were foreseen by the great visionary Russian strategic thinker Yevgeny Primakov in the 1990s, when he proposed a Russia-India-China alliance.

(Views are personal)

THE CHANGING POLITICS OF ASPIRATION IN DIGITAL AGE

SAJJAN KUMAR

Political analyst associated with PRACCS, a Delhi-based research institution

WHILE mapping Indian political shifts, it helps to watch the intersection of three matrices—aspiration and anxieties, digital and local, and cultural and material. The binding thread in this maze is the country's youth, the anchor of the political shift.

Factor this: 66 percent of India's population is under the age of 35, which combines the bulk of millennials and Gen Z born in the post-Mandal and post-socialistic era. Then consider that 98 percent of the millennial and Gen Z cohorts are active smartphone users who watch mobile videos every day. Keep in mind that internet data consumption is increasing even in rural India. This mix of factors informs the digital citizenry that is in search of a relatable anchor. Thus, while caste, community and ethnic identities matter among young people, their aspirations are mediated more through the prism of material politics, which is beyond the discourses of government jobs and reservations.

Political parties wanting to attract these votes focus on three factors: the ability to reach out to millennials and Gen Z, speak a language of aspirational politics that resonates with the majority of these cohorts, and project leaders who are relatable across spatial and communitarian divides. It would be interesting to see the relative location of the two big national parties, the BJP and Congress, on this.

For the Congress, while their national organisational and leadership profile is much weaker than BJP, their social media presence has reasonable parity against the ruling party. This is visible from the fact that even when BJP wins elections, it often struggles to maintain a lead in narrative wars—as was evident during the farmers' protest and the Manipur violence.

What explains this seeming parity in narratives despite the organisational gap? Therein lies the generational vantage point. According to Vaibhav Walia, communications lead in the Congress war room for 2024 polls, the party recently invested a lot in identifying and recruiting digital volunteers. The drive started during the Bharat Jodo and Bharat Jodo Nyay yatra, where a number was provided for interested young people to give a missed call. Having received around 3 lakh calls, the party followed up and designated the selected ones as Nyay Yoddhas. The list was expanded from the list of donors who were approached and assigned responsibility.

The party now organises weekly video calls with them, whose narratives are synchronised. Since these volunteers do not have an institutional stake in the party, Walia claims they work spiritedly if they like an assigned narrative. It helps that the median age of these Yoddhas is 28.



Parties wanting to attract young voters focus on targeted outreach, language of communication, and relatability of leaders. Though the Congress has made recent strides in social media outreach, misreading the changing youth aspirations may be costing it votes

However, this social media parity doesn't easily translate into votes for the Congress for two main reasons. One, unlike the BJP, the Congress is speaking the aspirational language of the pre-reform era in which discourses on reservation and demands like caste census capture the headline. The ground has shifted. A majority of millennials and Gen Z do not get enthused with these narratives. Two, on the relatability of leaders, the gap between the BJP and Congress is huge. Thus, even otherwise popular Congress narratives do not cut ice with intended voters, as was the case during the assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh, three states dominated by OBCs, where the caste census issue had few takers.

What has changed on the ground is the aspirational mode of new generations, as

some recent study visits revealed. For instance, young tribal men and women in the Northeast speak a language of their ethnic identity, but are enthusiastically becoming a part of India's developmental story. The careerist aspiration of settling in metropolitan cities is ubiquitous. Similarly, large sections of the Pandra-Khatri Dalits of Sundarban, Rajbangshi and Bagdi in the northern and western part of Bengal seem fascinated with Modi and the BJP, as they find the party and leader more relatable. The same pattern is visible in young people among the so-called tea tribes of Assam and children of refugees settled generations ago in Dandakaranya across Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra. Their aspiration of upward mobility is about corporate jobs and petty entrepreneurship; the discourse on reservation is marginal.

Ground reports reveal that the old grammar of politics that the Congress adopts is being peddled by a few caste or community leaders, whose aggressive assertion is leading to a counter mobilisation of the others. For instance, the anchors championing the discourse of reservation beyond the cap of 50 percent and pitch for a wider caste census are emerging mainly among leaders hailing from castes such as the Yadavs in Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, and Marathas in Maharashtra. Similarly, the assertive farmers' protest and demand for guaranteed support prices are seen by several communities in Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh as a ploy by the Jats to recapture power by hiding their caste identity behind the occupational one. Among these communities, the youth aspire to move beyond a pure farmer-centric identity.

We are witnessing a new wave of democracy where the grammar and language of politics has changed. This is aspirational India where anachronistic discourse of a pre-1990 era will alienate the majority, the spirited team of social media volunteers notwithstanding. In this backdrop, the BJP and the Congress are diametrically apart—the former is posturing a futurist vision, the latter is looking back.

(Views are personal) (sajjanjnu@gmail.com)

MAILBAG

WRITE TO: letters@newindianexpress.com

Blind negligence

Ref: Young, restless & jobless in the most populous country (Apr 24). The gargantuan unemployment problem in India continues to be a major socio-economic issue that is yet to attract the due attention of both state and Union governments. This blind negligence would certainly lead to many social crises. Slyampillai, Tiruchirappalli

Vocational training

To tackle youth unemployment in India, we must prioritise investment in vocational training programmes. Simultaneously, we must encourage entrepreneurship by facilitating easier access to funding and resources. We also need to promote sectors with high potential for job creation, such as technology and healthcare. Narayanan Kirikumundayur, Thrissur

Aping West

The unemployment situation started because of fast urbanisation. People left their villages and traditional jobs. They started aping western styles of education and wanted to work in urban centres. Do we need so many PhDs in our country? Anantharaman Subramanian, Chennai

Unopposed win

The BJP has won Surat's Lok Sabha seat unopposed and electoral democracy has bitten the dust. Congress candidate Nilesh Kumbhani lost due to the 'rejection' of his nomination because of a signature mismatch. An unbiased thorough enquiry is needed to restore the people's faith in our electoral democracy. Buddha Jagdish Rao, Visakhapatnam

Bizarre conclusions

Ref: Cong plans to cut Dalit quota, give it to Muslims: PM Modi (Apr 24). The dissection of the Congress election manifesto by the BJP leadership and coming to its own bizarre conclusions is nothing but an election gimmick to polarise the electorate. This is appeasement politics at its worst. It is time for the common man to be sagacious and vote for the party that can solve real problems. Biju C Mathew, Thiruvananthapuram

Order timing

The Calcutta High Court cancelled a large number of teacher appointments because bribes had been offered to secure the jobs. The verdict has lent hope to school job aspirants that they would get appointed in future in a fair manner. It has also given a much needed shot in the arm to the BJP. As the judgement was pronounced in the middle of the campaign, the question is if it breaches the Model Code of Conduct. Rajamani Chelladurai, Tirunelveli



P. Chidambaram @PChidambaram_IN I am disappointed that a sober politician like Rajnarain Singh should speak falsehoods. Was he reading a document written by ghosts in invisible ink?



Pawan Khera @PawanKhera Has he said that the Congress will bring this policy? Is discussing & debating different ideas not allowed in this ancient land of Shastarth?



Akhlesh Yadav @yadavakhlesh The way the city of fragrance is leading the BJP to defeat as a response to positive politics, will be known in history as 'Kannauj-krant'.

Will HC order on teacher job scam have an impact?

3 seats — Darjeeling, Balurghat & Raiganj — go to polls in 2nd phase

SULAGNA SENGUPTA @Kolkata

THE second phase of the Lok Sabha polls in West Bengal due April 26 comes on the heels of the Calcutta High Court order on the teacher recruitment scam which declared the appointment of over 24,000 teachers illegal. Three constituencies — Darjeeling, Balurghat and Raiganj — have a sizeable number of such candidates.

Among the three, Darjeeling will witness the most interesting contest: a veritable BJP versus BJP. BJP MP Raju Bista is pitted against Kurseong party MLA Bishnu Prasad Sharma who is contesting as an independent.

In 2009, BJP's Jaswant Singh won the Lok Sabha election, backed by Bimal Gurung and the Gorkha Janmukti Morcha, riding the Gorkhaland wave. This was the lone seat that the BJP won in West Bengal. Since then the Darjeeling Lok Sabha seat has been in the BJP grip with the party promising to resolve the Gorkha impasse.

SS Ahluwalia won the seat in 2014 followed by Raju Bista in 2019. BJP MLA from Kurseong

BP Sharma revolted against the party and is contesting as an Independent candidate this LS election from Darjeeling.

TMC's Gopal Lama will be contesting against Raju Bista. Gopal Lama, 70, is a retired civil servant and leader of the Bhartiya Gorkha Prajatantrik Morcha (BGPM). A TMC candidate from Darjeeling, Lama served as OSD in the Gorkhaland Territorial Administration (GTA) until 2017 after retiring in 2014.

The key issues plaguing Darjeeling include separate statehood for Gorkhaland, tea workers' issues and pollution. For many years, the push for a separate state of Gorkhaland has been a significant issue. In 2017, tensions escalated with a violent 100-day protest that resulted in 11 fatalities. Since 2009, BJP has consistently won Darjeeling with the backing from the hills, pledging a lasting solution to the region's problems.

"The people of north Bengal do not want to listen to Mamata Banerjee's promises anymore. The more she comes here, the more her party will lose the

votes. The TMC is knee-deep in corruption. Their ally in the hills, the BGPM, also indulged in corruption while running the GTA," said BJP's Bista.

In Balurghat, the TMC has intensified its efforts to get hold of the seat which it lost in 2019. BJP Sukanta Majumdar is trying to woo people with the railway projects that the Union government has planned for the constituency.

The TMC has fielded cabinet minister Biplob Mitra to wrest the seat. PM Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and Trinamool national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee have addressed public rallies in Balurghat, indicating the importance of the seat.

In Raiganj, the battle in 2019 went the BJP way. Debasree Chaudhuri won it by over 60,000 votes. However, this time the party has fielded her from the Kolkata Dakshin seat and given the ticket for Raiganj to Kartick Paul, a greenhorn in electoral politics. In a four-cornered contest between the BJP, Trinamool Congress, Left Front, and the Congress in 2014, CPM's Md Salim, who is the current state secretary and a politburo member of the party, was elected by



DARJEELING COMPRISES 6 ASSEMBLY CONSTITUENCIES

TOTAL VOTERS 16,11,317

MALE 8,17,687 FEMALE 7,93,609

3RD GENDER: 21

2019 VERDICT

Winner: Raju Bista (BJP)

Votes polled 750,067 %age of votes 59.19

Losers: Amar Singh Rai (AITC)

Votes polled 3,36,624 %age of votes 26.56

2024

Raju Bista: BJP
Gopal Lama: Trinamool Congress
Munish Tamang: Congress

TEST OF SAFFRON STRENGTH IN N BENGAL

DARJEELING FACTS

- Congress and CPM dominated it until 1980s.
- Gorkhaland movement in 80s gave birth to regional parties like the GNL.
- Since 2009, BJP secured 3 consecutive wins, primarily due Bimal Gurung, leader of GJM faction
- Gorkhaland demand is the most significant factor, shaping alliances
- 'Son of the soil' narrative gains traction, with voters preferring local candidates

BALURGHAT ISSUES

- Was a stronghold of Left Front constituent RSP, which won the seat consecutively from 1984 till 2009
- For the BJP, winning Balurghat is a matter of prestige, since its state president is the candidate
- Improving railway connectivity
- Corruption, lawlessness and the ruling party's indecisiveness to act against criminal elements
- Welfare of SC/ST women

BALURGHAT COMPRISES 7 ASSEMBLY SEGMENTS

TOTAL VOTERS 12,54,497

MALE 6,53,841 FEMALE 6,00,646

3RD GENDER: 18

2019 VERDICT

Winner: Sukanta Majumdar (BJP)

Votes polled 539,317 %age of votes 45.2

Losers: Arpita Ghosh (AITC)

Votes polled 3,36,624 %age of votes 42.24

2024

Sukanta Majumdar: BJP
Biplob Mitra: Trinamool Congress

KEY FACTS

- It shares border with Bihar and Bangladesh and was a Congress bastion until 1991
- The Rajbanshis comprise a large part of the Hindu vote and lean heavily towards the BJP

a thin margin of 1,500 votes. In 2009, Congress and TMC shared seats against the Left Front and the B.J.P. Congress' Deepa Dasgupta won the seat by over one lakh votes. Two factors can brighten up

the BJP's poll prospects. After winning the seat in 2019, the BJP also performed commendably in the 2021 assembly elections, winning four of the 7 seats. The remaining went to the ruling Trinamool Congress.

Another factor that might help the BJP is the Trinamool's choice of candidate, Krishna Kalyani, the party candidate, switched sides after the Assembly elections in 2021. In its campaigns, the BJP questions the

political morality of Kalyani for contesting as a Trinamool candidate while keeping his BJP MLA status intact. The Congress has fielded Ali Imran Ramz a.k.a. Victor, a comparatively young face.

SC reserves order on VVPAT cross-verification petitions

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @NewDelhi

THE Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its verdict on a batch of petitions seeking direction to the Election Commission of India (ECI) and the Centre to ensure that voters are able to verify through VVPATs that their vote has been "counted as recorded".

A two-judge bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Dutta reserved the verdict after hearing extensively from the petitioners, the poll body and other respective parties.

The bench, however, observed that it does not have authority over the conduct of the elections. Earlier in the day, when the hearing started, the SC sought some clarity from the ECI on the issue of control unit, storage of EVMS. Post lunch, the ECI informed the court that the flash memory of the microcontrollers in EVMS cannot be reprogrammed.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan appearing for one of the petitioners, argued that the flash memory of Micro Control Units can be reprogrammed. When the ECI conveyed this to the ECI officer, he clarified that

ALSO IN TOP COURT

Soren moves top court against ED arrest

Former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren moved the Supreme Court, saying the high court is not pronouncing verdict on his plea challenging arrest by the ED in a money laundering case. A bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Dutta was told by senior advocate Kapil Sibal that the HC had reserved its verdict on February 28 on his plea but still no decision has been delivered.

Bengal plea against HC order on teachers' job

The West Bengal government moved the Supreme Court against the Calcutta High Court order invalidating the appointment of 25,753 teachers and non-teaching staff made by the state's School Service Commission (SSC) in state-run and state-aided schools. The state government, in its appeal, said the HC cancelled the appointments "arbitrarily".

it was wrong to say that the Micro Control Units can be reprogrammed.

He said that all the machines are stored in a strong room for 45 days. The control unit stores the polling data so it is sealed. During commissioning, all three units are also sealed with a pink seal. VVPAT is also sealed and signature is taken from all polling agents.

The court also told the petitioners that the report they all were relying on said that there is no incident of hacking yet.

"We are not the controlling authority of another constitutional authority. We cannot control the elections," it said.

It also stated that what best could be done to ensure safeguard and strengthen the current system of EVM system, would be done, since going back to ballot paper was out of question. Asserting that the EVMs are stand-alone machines that cannot be tampered with, the ECI officer said, "The VVPATs could also not be tampered with."

Cong says no inheritance tax plans, rather former BJP minister endorsed it

PREETHA NAIR @NewDelhi

THE Congress on Wednesday hit out at PM Narendra Modi over his barbs on Congress leader Sam Pitroda's remarks on inheritance tax and asserted that it has no plans to introduce such a tax.

The party also cited former Union minister Jayant Sinha's endorsement of inheritance tax to allege that it was the Modi government that wanted to do so.

Citing a statement by Pitroda, president of the Indian Overseas Congress, Modi said the Congress intends to snatch the assets and rights of Indians. Pitroda has talked about the inheritance tax law in the United States while answering a query on the "redistribution of wealth" issue.

In a post on X, Congress general secretary in charge of communications Jairam Ramesh said the Congress has no plan to introduce an inheritance tax. Former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi had abolished Estate Duty in 1985, he said, adding that it is the Modi

government that has wanted to do so. He said, "Fact One: Jayant Sinha, then Minister of State for Finance, stated that he wanted to introduce Inheritance Tax in 2014. Fact Two: In 2017, reports emerged that the Modi Sarkar was going to re-introduce inheritance tax. Fact Three: In 2018, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley praised Inheritance Taxes for spurring large endowments to hospitals, and universities in the West. Fact Four: News reports emerged that Modi Sarkar would introduce an Inheritance Tax in Union Budget 2019," Ramesh said. "Over to you PM Modi - what is your party's stance on this issue?" he said and shared media reports on Jayant Sinha and Jaitley's remarks "in favour" of an inheritance tax.

Pitroda wrote on X, "Who said 55% will be taken away? Who said something like this should be done in India? Why is BJP and the media in panic? I mentioned US inheritance tax only as an example in my normal conversation on TV. Can I not mention facts?"

Wrong to say Cong taking away OBC quota & giving it to Muslims: K'taka CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Bengaluru



'Social Injustice' BJP leaders slammed the state gov't for its alleged proposal to include Muslims as backward caste for reservation, and called it "social injustice". Siddaramaiah called the PM's statement on reservation an irresponsible statement.

SLAMMING PM Narendra Modi and the BJP, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said that they (BJP) feared losing the elections and that is why they are spreading lies saying Congress is snatching the reservation given to Backward class and Dalits and giving it to the Muslims. "No Prime Minister in our country has taken the (PM's) post so low," he said.

Addressing a rally in Madhya Pradesh, Modi had said on Wednesday that Congress had given reservation based on religion in Karnataka through the backdoor by putting all Muslim castes along with the OBCs.

BJP leaders in Karnataka, too, slammed the state government for its alleged proposal to include Muslims as backward caste for reservation, and called it "social injustice" to 36 castes who are in backward class at present.

Reacting to Modi's statements, Siddaramaiah said that this was an irresponsible statement by a person holding such a responsible post. "The PM should prove it, or else he has to apologise before the people of the nation," he said.

He questioned Modi on where the Congress had said they were going to snatch the rights of SC/ST and give them to the Muslims.

The CM also slammed the previous BJP government in Karnataka, which made an attempt to take 4% reservation of the Muslims to Vokkaligas and Lingayats.

He said one cannot change reservations that have been granted constitutionally as per their whims and fancies.

I've embraced Indian thought, says Dalai Lama

YESHI SELI @ Dharamsala

HIS Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama has been living in India for over six decades now and says that he is a follower of the Nalanda tradition.

"Most of my life I have spent in India. Even though physically my body is Tibetan, mentally I have been nourished by the Nalanda tradition, which is a thousand years old. I am a Nalanda practitioner - which is an Indian tradition - and I have embraced Indian thought," HH Dalai Lama told this newspaper.

Speculation is rife on whether HH will announce his successor on his 90th birthday, which will be on July 6th, 2025. However, for now, that day is going to be observed as International Peace Day.

There are close to 83,000 Tibetan refugees between India and Nepal (nearly 73,000 live in India now). However, after the Galwan clashes, the inflow of Tibetan refugees to India has trickled down to less than 100 a year. There are nearly 1.4 lakh Tibetans living in exile across the world. Tibetans in exile have been engaged in back-



Tibetans in exile engaged in back-channel talks

There are close to 83,000 Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal. However, after the Galwan clashes, the inflow of Tibetan refugees to India has trickled down to less than 100 a year. There are nearly 1.4 lakh Tibetans living in exile across the world. Tibetans in exile have been engaged in back-channel talks with the Chinese in the two years.

channel talks with the Chinese during the past two years. "We have back-channel communication with the Chinese, but we have no immediate expectations in the short term," Penpa Tsering, political leader and head of the Central Tibetan Administration also known as Sikyong, told this newspaper.

Between 2002 and 2010, nine rounds of talks were held between the Tibetans in exile

and China, but there was no outcome.

Tibetans in China are being repressed, especially those who have families in exile, according to CTA, who also allege that China spreads disinformation. Transnational repression is being extensively followed by China, causing fear among everyone. "In China, everyone is literally reduced to a barcode, and every move and transac-

tion is monitored. Families of refugees become natural suspects. Tibetan children are forcibly taken to study in Chinese boarding schools," according to CTA. Among all the countries globally that are supporting Tibetans in exile, the US is the most vocal and pronounced. They have even issued reciprocal rights for Tibetans to travel to China with the Chinese government. "We follow the Middle Path and have been advocating the Tibet issue internationally," said Norzin Dolma, Minister, CTA.

A Tibetan refugee, currently living in Nepal, says that nearly all Tibetan refugees in Nepal are being monitored and are under surveillance due to the increasing influence of China on Nepal. "We are scared to talk or communicate freely, as Chinese officials spring up from literally anywhere in Nepal," a Tibetan refugee from Nepal told this newspaper.

While Tibetans in exile haven't given up dreaming of regaining lost ground, the realities as of now in Tibet are challenging and harsh for the six million Tibetans living there.

MHA unit for real-time mitigation of online fraud, banks to link database

MUKESH RANJAN @NewDelhi

THE Ministry of Home Affairs is working on forming a new wing called Cyber Fraud Mitigation Centre under the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) to deal with cyber financial fraud in real-time to save the victim's money, sources said on Wednesday.

Termining the move a real game-changer, the sources said that the FMC will onboard all the agencies dealing with such crimes, including the government, banks, telecom service providers, IT intermediaries and social media companies, who so far till now have been working from different locations and in silos.

The interaction among them mostly takes place through an electronic medium that leads to time lag in processing a complaint to counter and retrieve financial fraud or transactions, they added.

A source, while confirming that the move is part of the 100 days agenda of the MHA for the new government, said, "To pre-



vent and mitigate an online financial fraud in real time, there has been a realisation in the government to work out a seamless synergy among organisations like banks and financial institutions, telecom service providers, IT intermediaries, and social media platforms."

As there is a requirement of linking bank databases and deputing their representatives with the CFMC, not all banks have agreed so far, but major ones have agreed to deploy their representatives, the sources said. "Almost two dozen repre-

sentatives of major banks, five telecom service providers, two representatives of the Haryana police, and two from the Delhi police have already been positioned at CFMC for near real-time coordination to stop cyber-enabled fraud," a source said.

Currently, the Citizen Financial Cyber Frauds Reporting and Management System (CFC-FRMS) has been developed by the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre (I4C) as part of the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) by integrating law enforcement agencies, major banks and financial intermediaries, they said, adding that the system is able to take instant action on complaints of financial cyber fraud reported by citizens to prevent the flow of money from the victim's account to the fraudster's account and to share online fraud-related information in near real-time.

The sources said that a national cyber crime helpline number '1930' has been operationalised to report any financial cyber fraud case.



INDIA	Max	Min	Mumbai	Max	Min
Ahmedabad	40	27	Mumbai	34	27
Bhopal	39	25	Panaji	24	13
Jaipur	39	26	Patna	42	26
Amritsar	37	22	Lucknow	40	25
Chennai	36	29	Port Blair	34	27
Kolkata	40	29	Imphal	33	16
Srinagar	22	06	Chandigarh	39	22

RLD ONBOARD, BJP LOOKS FOR DOMINANCE

Litmus test for Jayant crossover to NDA in Jat politics heartland

8 SEATS IN PHASE-II

INDIA bloc allies — SP and Congress — contesting 4 seats each, while BSP going it alone in Western UP constituencies

2019 WINNER

TOTAL SEATS 8

BJP 7: Meerut, Aligarh, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Mathura

BSP: Amroha

BAGHPAT	MEERUT	AMROHA
GHAZIABAD	GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR	MATHURA
ALIGARH		

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

HAVING acquired more political muscle through Jat support by taking Jayant Chaudhary-led RLD onboard, the BJP is aiming for a dominance on the eight seats—Amroha, Meerut, Baghpat, Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Bulandshahr, Aligarh and Mathura—set to vote on April 26, while the Opposition bloc is ready to put a stiff fight.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the BJP, while facing the challenge from SP-BSP-RLD grand alliance, won seven of these seats. Only Amroha was won by the alliance.

In 2024, the BJP has reworked its strategy by allying with the RLD and allotting the Baghpat seat to the party that has Jats as its core support base.

To regain lost ground, the SP has tied up with the Congress. The BSP is going it alone. In this phase, both SP and Congress are contesting on four seats each as per their seat-sharing arrangement. While the SP has fielded candidates in Meerut, Baghpat, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Aligarh, Congress will contest in Ghaziabad, Mathura, Amroha and Bulandshahr.

The fate of former Union minister Mahesh Sharma, who is seeking a third term on the BJP ticket from Gautam Buddha Nagar, Ramayan fame actor Arun Govil in Meerut and actress Hema Malini, who is seeking a hat-trick from Mathura, will be decided in this phase.

Former Mumbai Police commissioner Satya Pal Singh is not in the fray this time. He had de-

feated RLD chief Ajit Singh in Baghpat in 2014 and Jayant Chaudhary in 2019. BJP has allotted Baghpat to the RLD and Dr Rajkumar Sangwan has been fielded as NDA candidate.

Amroha is set to witness a contest among Congress's Danish Ali, BJP's Kanwar Singh Tanwar, and BSP's Dr Mujahid Hussain. The BSP suspended Ali, who was its MP from Amroha, last year for "anti-party" activities and he joined the Congress.

The BJP stronghold Meerut will witness a three-way fight among BJP's Arun Govil, SP's Sunita Verma and BSP's Devvrat Kumar Tyagi. In Meerut, the SP has fielded dalit candidate Sunita Verma replacing OBC aspirant Atul Pradhan. The BJP won the seat in 1996, losing it to Congress in 1999 and BSP in 2004. BJP's Rajendra Agrawal, who has been denied the ticket this time, won the Meerut seat in 2009, 2014 and 2019. The BJP has replaced Agrawal with Govil.

Baghpat, an RLD bastion, is in for a three-cornered contest among RLD's Rajkumar Sangwan, SP's Amarpal Sharma and BSP's Praveen Baisala. Former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh had won the seat thrice in 1977, 1980 and 1984. His son Ajit Singh won it in 1989, 1991, 1996, 1999, 2004 and 2009. However, BJP candidate Sompal won the seat in 1998.

A BJP bastion since it came into existence in 2008, the Ghaziabad seat is set for a fight between BJP's Atul Garg, Congress's Dolly Sharma and BSP's Nandkishor Pun-dhir. The BJP is banking

on the popularity of Garg to retain the seat, while BSP plans to cash in on anger among Rajputs in rural areas over denial of ticket to two-time BJP MP and Union minister General (ret'd) VK Singh. The Congress is working on the Brahmin-Muslim formula.

In Gautam Buddha Nagar, Mahesh Sharma, who was elected to the Lok Sabha in 2014 and 2019, is seeking a third term as the BJP candidate. He is facing the SP's Rahul Awana, a Gujarat leader, and BSP's Rajendra Singh Solanki, a Rajput.

The Bulandshahr reserved seat is all set for a contest among BJP's Bhola Singh, who won the seat in 2014 and 2019, BSP's Girish Chandra, MP from Nagina, and Congress's Shiv Ram Valmiki.

In Aligarh, BJP's Satish Gautam (Brahmin), who won the seat in 2014 and 2019, is in the fray for a third term. The BSP has fielded a Brahmin candidate, Hitendra Kumar aka Bunty Upadhyay, a former BJP leader. The SP has nominated Bijendra Singh.

In Mathura, two-time BJP MP Hema Malini is seeking a third term. She is pitted against Mukesh Dhangar of Congress and Suresh Singh of BSP. The Congress was earlier planning to field boxer Vijendra Singh in Mathura but he joined BJP.

PREETHA NAIR @ Baghpat

ALONG the narrow lanes of Baghpat's Chhaprauli Dehat village, the smiling photographs of former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh and his grandson Jayant Chaudhary don the walls of many houses. It is not an uncommon sight in the land of Jat politics and home to Charan Singh's family. The peasant leader, who was recently conferred with Bharat Ratna, represented Baghpat in the Lok Sabha thrice. While his son Ajit Singh won the Baghpat seat seven times, his grandson Jayant Chaudhary lost the seat to BJP's Satyapal Singh in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Political equations have, however, changed with Jayant Chaudhary's RLD joining the NDA camp. As Baghpat goes to polls on April 26, it will be an acid test for Jayant who stitched an alliance with the BJP ahead of polls. In the three-cornered contest, RLD's Raj Kumar Sangwan, SP's Amarpal Sharma, and BSP's Praveen Bansal are in the fray. Interestingly it is the first time since 1977 that RLD fielded a candidate from outside the

Chaudhary clan in Baghpat. Jayant's cross over to the BJP camp amid seat-sharing talks with INDIA ally SP dealt a rude shock for the opposition bloc.

The jury is still out on Jayant's move, says Lokesh Tyagi, a Jat farmer in Pali village. Jaikishan Singh, an ardent supporter of the RLD, differs. "Chowdhury Charan saab brought glory to our village. I don't think the Modi government gave him the award to get RLD on their side. My family has been voting for the Chaudhary family for generations. Jayant will carry forward his grandfather's legacy," he says.

It is a common refrain echoed by most of the Jat community in the sugar belt. The alliance will reap benefits for NDA, says BJP supporter Kishen Lal Saini, pointing out that the Jats were divided between the BJP and the RLD earlier. "Most Jats were unhappy with the RLD's alliance with the SP. The BJP is the natural ally of RLD. Akhilesh's party is only for Muslims," says Saini.

For the same reason, Jayant lost to BJP's candidate in Baghpat in 2019 when he had tied up with the SP and BSP, he says. The caste fault-lines that emerged after the 2013 riots in the neighbouring Muzaffarnagar continue to cast a shadow on the relationship between the communities. Though the region has seen a revival of bonhomie between Muslims and Jats after the farmers' strike in 2019, Jayant's migration to the BJP is a blow to the unity efforts initiated by many, including farmer leader Rakesh Tikait. Though the dominant Jat population will hold sway, Baghpat has a significant Muslim population, too.



Jailed Amritpal, slain singer's father may enter election arena

HARPREET BAJWA @ Chandigarh

WARIS Punjab De head and pro-Khalistani preacher Amritpal Singh, currently lodged at Dibrugarh jail in Assam under the stringent National Security Act, is likely to contest elections from the Khadoor Sahib Lok Sabha seat.

The speculation is equally strong about Balkaur Singh, the father of Punjabi singer Sidhu Moosewala, who may contest the polls from Bathinda.

Rajdev Singh Khalsa, the lawyer of Amritpal Singh, today met him in the jail, told this newspaper over the phone that he (Khalsa) requested him to contest the polls from Khadoor Sahib as it would amount to a referendum on whether his arrested by the AAP-led Mann government was right. "He told me that he would contest," said Khalsa, adding the jailed preacher could file his papers once the process begins.

Sources said a mainstream political party is considering support the preacher. Meanwhile, Tarsem Singh, father of Amritpal Singh said he would meet him on Thursday at Dibrugarh jail after a long time. "We didn't discuss the polls. We are not in favor of his contesting the election. We need to first meet him," said Tarsem.

On the other hand, Balkaur Singh, the father of slain singer-turned-politician Sidhu Moosewala, is likely to contest the polls as an independent from Bathinda. However, the family has not yet come out with any formal statement.

What defines Gujarat poll narrative? Slip of tongue

DILIP SINGH KSHATRIYA @ Ahmedabad

THE BJP sprang to damage control in Gujarat after statements of its two leaders triggered controversies.

Addressing party workers in Visavadar constituency a few days ago, BJP leader Bhupat Bhayani, a former AAP MLA who switched to the saffron party, said, "Rahul Gandhi is 'impotent', and we should not give country's reins to him."

After the statement sparked an outcry, Bhayani defending his statement told the media, "In democracy, everyone has a right to express one's views. I never intended to insult or humiliate anyone. I was only trying to draw a line between PM Narendra Modi and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. There is no comparison between Modi and Rahul."

The Congress said such statements show BJP leaders' culture. "Former MLA Bhayani who was caught with a girl in a hotel can only make such low-level statements," Congress spokesman Hemang Raval said, advising Bhayani to consult a neurosurgeon.

BJP Junagadh district president Kirit Patel made remarks that hurt the sentiments of

Kshatriya community. "Even if a queen gives birth to a specially abled child, he will inherit power and rule the state; now kings and queens are born from the ballot box."

The statement irked the Kshatriya community, which is already sore over BJP leader and Rajkot candidate Parshotam Rupala. The community has been agitating against the Rupala. They demanded that the BJP drop Rupala as its Rajkot candidate.

Condemning the statement, Kshatriya Community Coordination Committee convenor Karansinh Chavda said, "BJP has failed to stop its leaders from making derogatory remarks against the Kshatriya community, so the community has decided to not vote for BJP candidates. It failed to respect the community's demand and drop Rupala as party candidate. Now we will aggressively campaign against the ruling party."

Facing flak, Kirit Patel released a video apologising to the Kshatriyas. Minister of state of home Harsh Sanghvi and BJP's general secretary (organisation) Ratnakar are holding district-wise meetings with Kshatriya leaders in a damage control exercise.



BJP intimidating people, alleges Guj Cong chief

Gujarat Congress president Shaktisinh Gohil on Wednesday alleged that the BJP was intimidating voters and asking them to either vote in its favour or refrain from voting in the Lok Sabha elections. The ruling party in the state was misusing the government machinery to pressure the voters, he claimed. The opposition party also released a phone number for voters to share the evidence, if any. "It is a fundamental principle of democracy that the sacred festival of elections should be held neutrally without fear or bias," Gohil said.

After house for Rahul, Vadra posters don Amethi landscape

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Amethi

WHILE the ongoing suspense over the Congress's candidate for Amethi persists, posters seeking the candidature of Robert Vadra, husband of AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, have cropped up outside the local offices of Congress in Amethi and Gauriganj, here on Wednesday.

The posters, reading: "Amethi ki janta kare pukar, Robert Vadra ab ki baar" (the people of Amethi want Robert Vadra here on Wednesday).

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'Who took mangalsutra of soldiers' wives away?'

Samajwadi Party leader Dimple Yadav on Wednesday said the BJP should answer "who snatched the Mangalsutra of wives of soldiers' killed in Pulwama. She was referring to Modi's allegations at an election rally that if the Congress came to power, it would redistribute the wealth of people to Muslims. "Those who talk of the Mangalsutra should also talk about the Pulwama Incident. Our soldiers were martyred and the mangalsutra of their wives were snatched from them," Yadav said at a rally in support of SP candidate Annu Tandon.

the BJP has announced sitting MP and Union Minister Smriti Irani as its candidate, the Congress is yet to name its pick.

Interestingly, Vadra has been quite vocal in seeking to contest from Amethi this time, stating that people there want him to represent them. He claims that voters feel that if he were to contest from Amethi, they would have the option of correcting their mistake of electing Irani in 2019. Vadra has been publicly expressing confidence that the people of Amethi would ensure his victory by a huge margin if given the chance.

However, the Congress brushed off speculation over Vadra's candidature, stating that the decision on the party's candidate would be made public soon. Reacting to the posters cropping up in Amethi seeking Vadra's candidature, Congress spokesperson Surendra Rajput said that such posters were an issue for the BJP. "Vadra is not in politics, but every person has his supporters. The decision on who will be fielded by the Congress from Amethi will be taken soon," said Rajput. He said such decisions were not made through posters, but by the Central Election Committee.

After series of flip-flops, Akhilesh to contest from Kannauj & file papers today

NAMITA BAJPAI @ Lucknow

AFTER a series of flip-flops, the Samajwadi Party on Wednesday officially declared Akhilesh Yadav as the party candidate from Kannauj.

Two days ago, the party had named Tej Pratap Yadav, Akhilesh's nephew, as the candidate from the seat.

"The Samajwadi Party national president will file his nomination papers for Kannauj

Lok Sabha seat as party candidate at noon tomorrow, (Thursday)," said a post on party's official 'X' handle.

As per senior SP leaders, the decision to declare Akhilesh as the party candidate was taken following pressure from the district unit of Kannauj. The district leaders argued that the SP chief's candidature from the seat would not only ensure party's win in Kannauj, but also consolidate the party's position

in at least four adjoining constituencies as well.

"Over 100 SP leaders and office-bearers from Chhimbaramau, Tirwa and Kannauj assembly segments along with those from Bidhuna and Rasoolabad assembly segments of Kannauj parliamentary constituency had met Akhilesh Yadav during the last two days insisting that he must contest from the seat," said a

senior functionary.

"Agreed that fielding Tej Pratap Yadav was not a wrong decision but Akhilesh's candidature is a better option," summed up a senior SP leader.

In fact, the SP chief was inclined to contest from Kannauj right from the beginning but decided to field Tej Pratap thinking that it would hamper party's campaign in the state.

Sources claim that the SP chief was also facing pressure from Tej Pratap's father-in-law Lalu Prasad to field him from Kannauj. Tej Pratap is married to Lalu's daughter Rajlakshmi.

Till Wednesday morning the party leadership had not taken a final call on Akhilesh's candidature. SP national general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav had come out to deny any uncertainty over Tej Pratap's candidature, saying he was the offi-

cial candidate of the party.

Kannauj seat has been an SP bastion for several decades. In 1999, Mulayam was elected MP from the seat. However, in 2000, Akhilesh made his debut from Kannauj and he was re-elected in 2004 and 2009 general elections from the same seat.

Then Dimple Yadav was elected as MP from the seat twice—in 2012 and 2014. In the 2019 elections, BJP's Subrat Pathak defeated Dimple.



THREE Astronauts will be sent by China to Tiangong space station, part of plan to put people on moon by 2030



Table with weather forecasts for various cities including Beijing, Colombo, Dhaka, Dubai, Houston, Istanbul, London, Los Angeles, Melbourne, Moscow, New York, Singapore, Tokyo, and Washington.

Russian deputy def minister arrested for taking bribe

MOSCOW

A top Russian military official arrested on suspicion of accepting a bribe was sent to pre-trial detention on Wednesday after appearing before a court in central Moscow, court officials said in a statement.

Timur Ivanov, 48, one of Russia's 12 deputy defence ministers, was arrested Tuesday evening, Russia's Investigative Committee said in a statement. It gave no further information, apart from specifying that Ivanov is suspected of taking an especially large bribe a criminal offense punishable by up to 15 years in prison.

According to a statement from the court, investigators told Moscow's Basmany court on Wednesday that Ivanov had conspired with third parties to receive a bribe in the form of

unspecified property services 'during contracting and sub-contracting work for the needs of the Ministry of Defence'.

An acquaintance of Ivanov's, identified as Sergei Borodin, was also arrested and ordered into pre-trial detention on the same charges, court officials said in a separate statement. Both men are to remain in custody until at least June 23.

According to the defence ministry's website, Ivanov was appointed to the post in 2016 by a presidential decree. He oversaw property management, housing and medical support for the military, construction and reconstruction of facilities. Russia's state news agency quoted Kremlin spokesman as saying that both President Putin and Defence Minister Sergei Shoigu were informed about Ivanov's arrest. AP

Senate OKs aid, Ukraine to get US weapons in hours

President Joe Biden signs legislation that earmarks \$61 billion of the \$95 billion war assistance for Kyiv

WASHINGTON

PRESIDENT Joe Biden signed into law on Wednesday a \$95 billion war aid measure that includes aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan.

The announcement marks an end to long, painful battle with Republicans in Congress over urgently needed assistance for Ukraine.

"We rose to the moment. We came together, and we got it done," Biden said at White House event to announce the signing. "Now we need to move fast, and we are." But significant damage has been done to the Biden administration's effort to help Ukraine repel Russia's brutal invasion during the funding impasse that dates back to August, when the Democratic president made his first



A file photo of 155 mm M795 artillery projectiles are stacked in Scranton. The Pentagon could get weapons moving to Ukraine within days as it has a network of storage sites in the US and Europe that already hold them that Kyiv needs | AP

emergency spending request for Ukraine aid. Even with a burst of new weapons and am-

munition, it is unlikely Ukraine will immediately recover after months of setbacks.

Biden said the transfer of an initial aid package of military assistance will begin in a matter of hours the first tranche from about \$61 billion allocated for Ukraine, according to US officials.

It is expected to include air defence capabilities, artillery rounds, armoured vehicles and other weapons to shore up Ukrainian forces who have seen morale sink as Russian President Vladimir Putin has racked up win after win.

But longer term, it remains uncertain if Ukraine after months of losses in Eastern Ukraine and sustaining massive damage to its infrastructure can make enough progress to sustain American political support before burning through the latest influx of money. "It's not going in the Ukrain-

ians' favour in the Donbas, certainly not elsewhere in the country," said White House national security spokesman John Kirby, referring to the eastern industrial heartland where Ukraine has suffered setbacks. "Mr. Putin thinks he can play for time. So we've got to try to make up some of that time." Russia now appears focused on Kharkiv, Ukraine's second largest city. Russian forces have exploited air defense shortages in the city, pummeling the region's energy infrastructure, and looking to shape conditions for a potential summer offensive to seize the city.

House Speaker Mike Johnson delayed a vote on the supplemental aid package for months as members of his party's far right wing threatened to move to oust him. AP

IDF readies 2 reserve brigades for Rafah attack

TEL AVIV

THE Israel Defense Forces (IDF) on Wednesday said it was readying to deploy two reserve brigades for missions in the Gaza Strip, as the military appeared to move ahead with plans for an offensive in the southern Gaza city of Rafah as it seeks to remove the Hamas terror group from its last major redoubt in the enclave, The Times of Israel reported.

The 679th "Yiftah" Armored Brigade and the 2nd "Carmeli" Infantry Brigade, which had been operating on the northern border, were set to take responsibility for areas of central Gaza that have remained under Israeli military control since troops largely pulled back from other areas of the Strip earlier this month, according to an Army Radio report.

The move will free up Nahal Brigade troops currently holding the central corridor to join the rest of the 162nd Division in preparing for future operations, including planned offensives in Rafah and central Gaza, military sources have said.

The IDF said the two reserve brigades "prepared in recent weeks for their mission in the Gaza Strip." They "practiced battle techniques and learned the main insights and lessons from fighting and maneuvering in the Gaza Strip so far," the military said. The mobilized brigades were to be placed under the 99th Division. During the first few months of the IDF's ground offensive, the division had been



DEATH TOLL SO FAR 36,130 Ship off Yemen attacked by Houthis A ship near the strategic Bab el-Mandeb Strait saw an explosion in the distance Wednesday, marking what may be a new attack by Yemen's Houthi rebels through the crucial waterway for international trade. The explosion comes after a relative lull from the Houthis after they launched dozens of attacks on shipping in the region over Israel's ongoing war on Hamas.

Woman trying to attack soldiers with knife shot The Israeli military says its forces shot dead a Palestinian woman after she allegedly ran toward Israeli soldiers with a knife in the southern West Bank on Wednesday. The military said it took place at Okfim Junction near the Palestinian city of Hebron. No soldiers were injured. Palestinian authorities identified the slain woman as 20-year-old Malnuha Harahsheh. AP

Call by US university students to stop doing business with Israel

WASHINGTON

STUDENTS at a growing number of US colleges are gathering in protest encampments with a unified demand of their schools: Stop doing business with Israel or any companies that empower its ongoing war in Gaza.

The students are calling for universities to separate themselves from any companies that are empowering Israel's military efforts in Gaza and in some cases from Israel itself. The demands vary from campus to campus. Among them: Stop doing business with military weapons manufacturers that are supplying arms to Israel, Stop accepting research money from Israel for projects that aid the country's military efforts, Stop investing college endowments with money managers who profit from Israeli companies or contractors, Be more transparent about what money is received from Israel and what it is used for.

Student governments at some colleges in recent weeks have passed resolutions calling for an end to investments and academic

partnerships with Israel. Such bills were passed by student bodies at Columbia, Harvard Law, Rutgers and American University.

Officials at several universities say they want to have a conversation with students and honor their right to protest. But they also are echoing the concerns of many Jewish students that some of the demonstrators' words and actions amount to anti-semitism and they say such behavior won't be tolerated.

Sylvia Burwell, president of American University, rejected a resolution from the undergraduate senate to end investments and partnerships with Israel.

Burwell cited the university's 'longstanding position' against the decades-old Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions movement. Protesters have drawn parallels to apartheid in South Africa.

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu lashed out at the pro-Palestinian demonstrations on US college campuses in a video statement released Wednesday, saying the response of several university presidents has been 'shameful'. AP/PTI

Police arrest teens for bishop stabbing

SYDNEY

AUSTRALIAN police arrested seven teenagers accused of following a violent extremist ideology in raids across Sydney on Wednesday to protect the community from a potential attack, officials said.

The seven, aged 15 to 17, were part of a network that included a 16-year-old boy accused of the stabbing of a bishop in a Sydney church on April 15, police said. Five other teenagers were still being questioned late Wednesday by the Joint Counter-Terrorism Team, which includes federal and state police as well as the Austral-



Flores sit on a fence outside the Christ the Good Shepherd church in suburban Wakely in western Sydney | AP

ian Security Intelligence Organization, the nation's main domestic spy agency, and the New South Wales Crime Commission, which specialises in extremists and organised crime.

Subianto declared winner in election

JAKARTA

INDONESIA's electoral commission formally declared Prabowo Subianto president-elect in a ceremony on Wednesday, after the country's highest court rejected challenges to his landslide victory lodged by two losing presidential candidates. Subianto, who is currently defense minister, won the election with 58.6% of the votes, or more than 96 million ballots, more than twice the amount received by either of the other two candidates. But his rivals alleged that his victory had depended on large-scale fraud and widespread state interference.

Authorities blocked streets leading to the General Election Commission compound, where more than 4,200 police and soldiers were deployed. Wearing matching long-sleeved white

shirts, Subianto and vice president elect Gibran Rakabuming Raka waved to their supporters as they arrived at the building. "The race has finished... the tough contest, with sometimes heated debates, is over," Subianto said during the ceremony, attended by the country's political elite, including rival candidate Anies Baswedan and his running mate Muhaimin Iskandar. "And now our people demand that political leaders must work together and collaborate for the people's welfare and to eliminate poverty and corruption in Indonesia," Subianto said.

Subianto will take office in October, succeeding the popular Joko Widodo.

The Constitutional Court rejected the arguments saying the legal teams of the losing candidates had failed to prove allegations that Subianto's victory was the result of widespread fraud. AP

Smoke seen in ANA flight carrying 200

EXPRESS K&A D

Oil sprayed from an All Nippon Airways plane giving the appearance of smoke as it landed Wednesday at Shin Chitose airport in northern Japan, but none of the 213 people on board was injured, officials said.

Oil sprayed from an All Nippon Airways plane giving the appearance of smoke as it landed Wednesday at Shin Chitose airport in northern Japan, but none of the 213 people on board was injured, officials said.

Possession Notice (For Immovable Property) Rule 8-(1) Whereas the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of IIFL Home Finance Limited (Formerly known as India Infinitus Housing Finance Ltd) (IIFL-HFL) under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, a Demand Notice was issued by the Authorized Officer of the company to the Borrower/Co-Borrowers mentioned herein below to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Section 13(4) of the said Rules. The borrower in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of IIFL HFL for an amount as mentioned herein under with interest thereon. The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, if the borrower clears the dues of the "IIFL HFL" together with all costs, charges and expenses incurred, at any time before the date fixed for sale or transfer, the secured assets shall not be sold or transferred by "IIFL HFL" and no further step shall be taken by "IIFL HFL" for transfer or sale of the secured assets.

GIC HOUSING FINANCE LTD. REGD OFFICE: National Insurance Building, 8th Floor, 14, J.T. Road, Churchgate, Mumbai - 400020. TAMBARAM BRANCH: NO.2C, SOLOMON STREET, ADHI NAGAR, TAMBARAM (EAST) - 600059. Ph: 044-40056991, E-Mail: tambaram@gichindia.com. DEMAND NOTICE (IN PURSUANCE WITH SECTION 13(2) OF THE SARFAESI ACT, 2002) GIC Housing Finance Ltd. (GICHL) has sanctioned loans to following borrowers for residential premises by creating equitable mortgage and in favour of GICHL LTD. The repayment of the loan(s) is irregular and the account(s) are finally classified as Non-performing Asset in accordance with directions and guidelines of National Housing Bank. GICHL LTD, has therefore invoked its rights under section 13(2) of the SARFAESI ACT, 2002 and called upon the borrowers to repay the total outstanding mentioned against each within 60 days from the date of demand notice in pursuance to Rule 3 of security interest (Enforcement) Rule 2002. The borrowers have not acknowledged receipt of the notice. The following borrowers are hereby called upon again publicly to pay total dues mentioned against them plus the charges & interest accrued till date within 60 days from today failing which GICHL LTD, shall resort to all or any legal rights to take possession of the premises, dispose it and adjust the proceeds against the overdue amount. The borrowers are also restrained from alienating or creating third party interest on the ownership of the properties.

FEDERAL BANK YOUR PERFECT BANKING PARTNER DEMAND NOTICE Notice U/S 13 (2) of SARFAESI Act 2002, (Hereinafter Referred to as act) r/w Rule 3(1) of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. 1) Karthikeyan Prabu Shanmugasundaram, S/o Shanmugasundaram, 2/149, J. Krishnapuram, Sullur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641 671 // No.4, Vijayalakshmi Nivas First Floor, West Mada Street, Madambakkam, Tambaram, Kancheepuram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 126. 2) Lavanya.K, W/o.Karthikeyan Prabu Shanmugasundaram, No. 4, Vijayalakshmi NivasFirst Floor, West Mada Street, Madambakkam, Tambaram, Kancheepuram, Chennai, Tamil Nadu - 600 126 // 2/149, J.Krishnapuram, Sullur, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu - 641 671. The 1st of you as Principal Borrower and 2nd as Guarantor/Co-Obligor/ Co-Borrower/Mortgagor from our Bank's Chinnamannur Branch A) Property Power Loan for Rs.10,55,000/- (Rupees Ten Lakh Fifty Five Thousand only) on 09.11.2020 to meet personal needs and B) Property Power Loan (Term loan) for Rs.22,30,000/- (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh Thirty Thousand only) on 20.01.2021 to meet personal needs after executing necessary security agreements / loan documents in favour of the Bank. Towards the security of the aforesaid credit facility availed from the Bank, 1st of you have created security interest in favour of the Bank by way of mortgage in respect of the following immovable property. DESCRIPTION OF MORTGAGED IMMOVABLE PROPERTY/IES All the piece and parcel of the land measuring 5760 Sq.ft : i) Commercial site that measuring an extent of 1920 Sq.ft together with building existing and / or to be constructed and all other improvements thereon comprised in Plot No. 57, S.No.2/4 (As per sub division S.No.2/4A1, 2/78) respectively, of Odaipattu Village, Uthamapalayam Taluk, Periyakulam Registration District, Tamil Nadu State within the registration Sub District of Chinnamannur. Bounded on: East by: Plot No. 56 Karthikeyan Prabu vacant site, West by: Plot No. 58 vacant site, North by: Plot No. 36 vacant site and South by: 23' wide east west common pathway. ii) Commercial site that measuring an extent of 1920 Sq.ft together with building existing and/or to be constructed and all other improvements thereon comprised in Plot No. 56, S.No. 2/4 (As per sub division S.No. 2/4A1, 2/78) respectively, of Odaipattu Village, Uthamapalayam Taluk, Periyakulam Registration District, Tamil Nadu State within the registration Sub District of Chinnamannur. Bounded on: East by: Plot No. 55 vacant site, West by: Plot No. 57 Karthikeyan Prabu vacant site, North by: Plot No. 37 vacant site and South by: 23' wide east west common pathway. iii) Commercial site that measuring an extent of 1920 Sq.ft together with building existing and / or to be constructed and all other improvements thereon comprised in Plot No. 55, S.No. 2/4 (As per sub division S.No. 2/4A1, 2/78) respectively, of Odaipattu Village, Uthamapalayam Taluk, Periyakulam Registration District, Tamil Nadu State within the registration Sub District of Chinnamannur. Bounded on: East by: Plot No. 54 vacant site, West by: Plot No. 56 vacant site, North by: Plot No. 38 vacant site and South by: 23' wide east west common pathway. The aforesaid hypothecated / mortgaged security properties are hereinafter referred to as 'the secured assets'. The undersigned being Authorized Officer of the Federal Bank Ltd. hereby informs you that a sum of a) a sum of Rs.9,45,585.49 (Rupees Nine Lakh Forty Five Thousand Five Hundred and Eighty Five, paise Forty Nine only) is due from you jointly and severally as on 07.06.2023 under your Property Power loan with number 19217600001696 and b) a sum of Rs.20,25,914/- (Rupees Twenty Lakh Twenty Five Thousand Nine Hundred and Fourteen only) is due from you jointly and severally is due as on 07.06.2023 under your Property Power loan with number 19217600001829 with Chinnamannur Branch of the Bank. In view of the default in repayment, your loan account/s is/are classified as Non-Performing Asset on 04.07.2023, as per the guideline of RBI. You are hereby called upon to pay the said amount with further interest @ 12.60% per annum with monthly rests along with overdue interest 2% from 05.06.2023 till the date of payment and costs within 60 days from the date of this notice, failing which, the Bank will exercise all the powers under section 13 of the Act against you and the above mentioned secured assets such as taking possession thereof including the right to transfer them by way of lease, assignment or sale, or taking over the management of the secured assets for realising the dues without any further notice to you. It is informed that, you shall not transfer by way of sale, lease or otherwise any of the above mentioned secured assets without the Bank's written consent. In the event of your failure to discharge your liability and the bank initiates remedial actions as stated above, you shall further be liable to pay to the bank all costs, charges and expenses incurred in that connection. In case the dues are not fully satisfied with the sale proceeds of the secured assets, the bank shall proceed against you personally for the recovery of the balance amount without further notice. Your attention is also invited to the provisions of section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets (security properties). This notice is issued without prejudice to the other rights and remedies available to the bank for recovering its dues. This notice was issued on 05th day of July 2023 and the same was served on you but seems not received by you which necessitated this publication as per the SARFAESI Act. Date : 05.07.2023 THE FEDERAL BANK LTD (AUTHORISED OFFICER) Place : Coimbatore

THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS THE ALL-NEW APP STAY UP-TO-DATE WITH THE LATEST NEWS

Tesla likely to postpone India plan

Carmaker was expected to announce a multi-bn dollar investment till last week in the country



ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

US electric carmaker Tesla will now harness its existing facilities to ramp up production rather than investing in a new manufacturing unit.

This decision by Tesla may put its India plans on hold where the carmaker till last week was expected to announce a multi-billion dollar investment to make affordable electric cars in the country.

"We've updated our future vehicle lineup to accelerate the launch of new models ahead, previously mentioned start of production in the second half of 2025. So, we expect it to be more like the early 2025, if not late this year. These new vehicles, including more affordable models, will use aspects of the next-generation platform as well as aspects of our current platforms, and we'll be able to produce on the same manufacturing lines as our current vehicle lineup," said Tesla CEO

Elon Musk on Tuesday in a post earning call.

"So, it's not contingent upon any new factory or massive new production line, it will be made on our current production lines much more efficiently. And we think this should allow us to get to over 3 million vehicles of capacity when realized to the full extent," he added. Lars Moravy, head of Tesla's engineering, further said new manufacturing processes and production lines come with "some risks," and the automaker made a "major shift" to utilise its facilities to build low-cost vehicles in a fast and efficient manner for now. Investors welcomed this cautious approach of Tesla as shares of the company surged 12% during after-hours trading, despite the company's quarterly results falling short of estimates.

If Tesla decides to postpone its India plan, it will be a big setback for the current government which brought in a major change in its EV policy and lowered taxes on imported cars to attract global automakers. Following this, Musk announced that he would be visiting India and meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

This fuelled rumours that Musk would announce entering into the Indian market, giving a big boost to PM Modi who is contesting for a third term in the ongoing general elections.

'Inheritance tax a needless debate, not suited for India'

MONIKA YADAV @New Delhi

ON April 23, Sam Pitroda, Chairman of the Indian Overseas Congress, supported the Congress party's stance on wealth redistribution and proposed implementation of an inheritance tax law in India, drawing on the model in the US. Prime Minister Narendra Modi criticised Pitroda's "inheritance tax" comment, accusing the party of revealing "dangerous intentions" to seize people's assets and rights.

"In America, there is an inheritance tax. If one has \$100 million wealth and when he dies, he can only transfer 45% to his children, 55% is grabbed by the government. That's an interesting law. It says you, in your generation, made wealth, and you are leaving now, you must leave your wealth for the public, not all of it, half of it, which to me sounds fair," Pitroda had stated in an interview.

So what is the fuss all about?

Inheritance tax, also called estate tax, is imposed on the total value of money and property left behind by a deceased individual before it is passed on to their legal heirs. This tax is usually determined by considering the value of the assets minus any eligible exemptions or deductions. The main goals



It was Congress which repealed it, and BJP despite being in power for 10 years has not done anything. Issue needs to be deliberated

Ashwini Mahajan, national co-convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch

systems, and decisions on wealth transfer and intergenerational equity. In India, there is no tax on inheritance as the Inheritance or Estate Tax was eliminated in 1985.

What are experts saying?

As per Ashwini Mahajan, national co-convenor, Swadeshi Jagran Manch, no party has given any serious thoughts on inheritance tax. It was Congress which repealed it, and BJP despite being in power for 10 years has not done anything to bring inheritance tax. "The issue needs to be discussed and deliberated," says Mahajan.

As per Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, M&A Tax Partner at Nangia Andersen LLP, such taxes are not suited to India.

"Currently, considering various social, economic and political factors, Corporate and Personal income taxes, including capital gains tax on the direct tax side and GST on indirect tax side have seen a significant surge in the last few years, much beyond the projections and there doesn't seem to be a need to introduce a new tax without an adequate rationale," Nangia said.

Inheritance tax could have major implications on family-owned businesses and could create economic disequilibrium.

of inheritance tax are to raise government revenue and facilitate wealth redistribution.

In Japan, inheritance tax rate is 55%, among the world's highest, with South Korea at 50%, France follows at 45%, and the UK and US at 40%. These rates showcase diverse global approaches to wealth distribution and taxation. Inheritance tax influences economic policies, social welfare

Company's shares surge 12%

Lars Moravy, head of Tesla's engineering, further said new manufacturing processes and production lines come with "some risks," and the automaker made a "major shift" to utilise its facilities to build low-cost vehicles in a fast and efficient manner for now. Investors welcomed this cautious approach of Tesla as shares of the company increased 12 per cent during after-hours trading

A setback for current government

If Tesla decides to postpone plan in the country, it will be a big setback for the current government which brought in a major change in its electric vehicle (EV) policy and lowered taxes on imported cars to attract global automakers. Following this development, Elon Musk announced that the Tesla chief would be visiting India and meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi

Q4FY24 RESULTS

LTIMindtree net profit falls 1.2% to ₹1,100 crore



UMA KANNAN @Bengaluru

LTIMINDTREE on Wednesday reported a 1.2% decline in net profit for the March quarter at ₹1,100 crore compared to ₹1,114 crore in the year-ago period, missing market expectations. Its revenue from operations stood at Rs 8,893 crore, up 2.3% y-o-y, amid a tough macro environment and clients reducing discretionary tech spending.

The sixth-largest software company's CEO and MD Debashis Chatterjee during the earnings conference said revenue growth will return in Q1FY25 and that growth will be broad-based.

He added that macro issues are still weighing on the overall demand recovery. Its order inflow for the full year stood at \$5.6 billion, registering a 15.7% growth over FY23, and EBIT margin stood at 15.7%. Talking about margin, the CEO said as we got into the middle of FY24

we realised that some of the assumptions made were not going the way we wanted because of various macro conditions. Going forward, the company has robust margin plans.

Chatterjee also said that clients' priorities continue to revolve around data transformation and that though the market is still cautious, the company's execution will be better in FY25.

Talking about revenues, he said we had furloughs in Q3, we had gradual reversal of furloughs, which also impacted the overall revenue

ramp up and some of the large deals that we had closed, the ramp up was slower than expected, impacting the revenue. Its BFSI vertical, which is its largest revenue driver, fell 6.6% YoY in the March quarter and the CEO said they did have unexpected cancellations of two projects in that client base, resulting in some impact on margin.

Axis Bank profit at ₹7,130 cr on margin uptick, loan sales



BENN KOCHUVEEDAN @Mumbai

THIRD-LARGEST private sector lender Axis Bank on Wednesday reported a growth in net income at ₹7,130 crore as against a one-time loss of ₹5,728 crore in the year-ago period after it bought out the retail banking unit of Citi India. It reported a 17% growth compared to it booked in the previous quarter, boosted by balanced growth in advances and deposits along with an uptick in margins.

For the full financial year, the city-headquartered lender's consolidated net income soared 160% to ₹24,861 crore from ₹9,580 crore year-on-year, which was also spooked by the Q4 loss last year and the management led by chief executive officer Amitabh Chaudhry attributed the good set of numbers to healthy margins coupled with balanced deposit and loan growth of 13% and 14%, respectively. Analysts lapped

up the numbers saying they are above their estimates. Rahul Malani, a research analyst at Sharekhan by BNP Paribas, said, "Axis Bank reported better-than-expected number in Q4 led by better NIMs and higher treasury gains and supporting other numbers too."

The key operational metric of net interest income, which is the income a bank earns from loans after paying for the deposits, clipped at 11% to ₹13,089 crore, which for the full year touched ₹49,894 crore. Interest income grew on the back of higher advances and the margin or net interest margin, it earned, which gained by 5 bps to 4.06% and the fee income grew 23%. Of this, retail fee grew 33%, he said. The bank's balance-sheet grew to ₹14.77 lakh crore by the end of March, of which deposits were ₹10.68 lakh crore and assets were ₹9.65 lakh crore, a rise from ₹13.17 lakh crore in March 2023.

HUL profit dips 1.53% on decline in commodity prices



ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @Mumbai

MCG major Hindustan Unilever on Wednesday reported a 1.53% fall in consolidated net profit to ₹2,561 crore for the fourth quarter of FY24 on account of deflation due to softening of commodity prices. It had reported a net profit of ₹2,601 crore in the year-ago period, as per a regulatory filing from HUL.

Net sales were almost flat to ₹15,013 crore in the March quarter. While HUL's total expenses were up 1.15% to ₹12,100 crore in the March quarter from ₹11,962 crore a year ago. The total income of HUL during the fourth quarter of the previous fiscal was flat at ₹15,441 crore compared to ₹15,375 crore a year ago.

In the March quarter, the company's gross margin improved 350 bps year-on-year and its advertising and promotional (A&P) investments in-

creased 200 bps as it continued to step up investments on its brands.

However, HUL's "EBITDA at 23.4% declined 30 bps primarily on account of 60 bps impact from termination of GSK consignment selling arrangement and investments in long-term capabilities".

During the quarter, HUL's home care segment grew 1.27% to ₹5,709 crore. However, its beauty and personal care segment was down 2.5% to ₹5,125 crore during the quarter under review as against ₹5,257 crore a year ago. The hair care segment delivered volume-driven high-single digit growth led by out-performance in Dove and Tresemme. Skin care and colour cosmetics grew in low-single digit.

Its foods & refreshment reported a 3% growth in revenue to ₹3,910 crore in the quarter under review. The segment has 4% flat volume growth.

RBI increases minimum net owned fund for ARCs to ₹300 cr

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU @Mumbai

THE Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday issued a master direction to the asset reconstruction companies (ARCs) increasing the minimum net owned fund (NOF) to ₹300 crore from the ₹100 crore now.

An ARC buys non-performing loans or bad assets from banks and financial institutions for a mutually agreeable amount at an upfront payment of 15% and later recover the money from the borrower, thus cleaning up their balance sheets.

The RBI said the higher NOF requirement of ₹300 crore, which will go up on an ongoing basis, is to ensure prudent and efficient functioning of ARCs, which number more than two dozens now, and to protect the interest of investors.

As per the new direction, "to commence business of securitisation or asset reconstruction, an ARC is required to have NOF of ₹300 crore and thereafter, on an ongoing basis. Before commencing the business of securitisation or asset reconstruction, an ARC shall apply for registration and obtain a certificate of registration from the RBI." The directions also state that no ARC shall invest in land or building, except for investment for its own use up to 10% of its owned funds.

Ultraviolet eyes global leadership in electric motorcycle market in 5 years

ARSHAD KHAN @New Delhi

BENGALURU-based Ultraviolet Automotive wants to become the global leader in the electric motorcycle market over the next five years, Narayan Subramaniam, CEO & Co-Founder of the company told TNIE in an interaction.

"Not only in India but we are eyeing for leadership all across Europe, North America, South America and parts of Asia. All our products, the F77 and the upcoming ones are going to be disruptive in terms of design technology and performance," said Subramaniam as he launched F77 MACH 2 on Wednesday at Rs 2.99 lakhs.

Currently, the company is the only player which makes performance electric bike in the country. While the market for this niche segment is still small, it is expected to grow exponen-



tially in the next few years due to mass adoption. At present, Ultraviolet sees all the players competing in the 300cc-600cc segment as its competition. The size of this segment is pegged at over 1 lakh units per month.

The co-founder added that the core to achieving a leadership position is to build a great product. "Everything revolves around this and we think we got

it right. All the features are top notch and now we have managed to bring the price below the ₹3 lakh mark," he stated.

To support the ambitious goal, Ultraviolet is holding talks with investors to raise fresh capital. "It is a capital-intensive industry. We are in conversation with a few investors. The funding will be used to fast-track our expansion plan," said Subramaniam. Last year, it was reported that the company was looking to raise \$120 million. Before this, the company raised over \$55 million from big names such as Europe's EXOR Capital, Qualcomm Ventures, TVS Motor and Zoho Corp.

Subramaniam said they will be rolling out 1,000 bikes/month from Bengaluru facility by the end of this year. From next year, Ultraviolet has plans to do multiple shifts and expand the production facility as well.

Roche signs MoU with VinCense for diabetes care in Tamil Nadu

Roche has announced that the company has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with VinCense, a digital health monitoring offering by MedloTek Health Systems. Under the terms of the agreement, the two companies aim to implement three programmes in Madurai district of Tamil Nadu state -- screening 100,000 individuals over the next two years for diabetes, hypertension, obesity, etc; intervention for uncontrolled diabetes mellitus management; and intervention for tuberculosis - diabetes mellitus co-morbidity management. The partnership will use comprehensive integrated digital health solutions to drive early detection, intervention and care continuum in the state. As per ICMR-INDIAB-17 study by the ICMR, the prevalence of diabetes and other metabolic NCDs in India is a growing concern.

Business & Beyond



Vedanta Aluminium expedites shift to renewables, deploys biomass for power gen

Vedanta Aluminium, India's largest producer of aluminium, is making its fuel mix more sustainable with the deployment of biomass briquettes for power generation. The company is now utilizing 20 tonnes of biomass briquettes per day at its world-class alumina refinery in Lanjigarh, Odisha. This will help potentially decrease the unit's greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by more than 10,000 tonnes of CO2 equivalent each year, in addition to reducing its reliance on fossil fuels.

Biswojit Biswal new head of PNB Baleswar Circle

Biswojit Biswal appointed as the new Circle Head of Punjab National Bank for the Baleswar Circle. With an impressive career trajectory, he brings invaluable experience and fresh perspectives to his role. Starting as an Agriculture Officer in 2009, he has succeeded to become one of the youngest Circle Heads of PNB. Prior to this assignment, he was working as the Circle Head of Aurangabad Circle. His journey spans across diverse regions of the country, including Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, and Bihar, where he gained his skills and expertise. Now, embarking on his first assignment in Odisha, he brings a wealth of knowledge and strategic insight to the Baleswar Circle, covering five major districts such as Balasore, Bhadrak, Jajpur, Keonjhar & Mayurbhanj with 67 branches and substantial business mix of over ₹5,400 Crore.



Rafael Nadal said he will only play at the French Open if he feels 'capable enough to compete well'.

All-rounder says he thrives playing under pressure, credits captain Cummins for SRH's freedom

NITISH RISING TO THE OCCASION

ASHOK VENUGOPAL @Chennai

ANDHRA'S Nitish Kumar Reddy is one of the finds for Sunrisers Hyderabad this IPL season.

The then chairman of the national junior selection committee, Aashish Kapoor, was all praise for the youngster while talking to this daily in 2020.

"It feels really good to be contributing to the team's cause. I am happier when the team wins," said Nitish in an exclusive chat with this daily.

Everyone knows about Nitish the bowler, but his prowess with the willow has surprised many.

"Aashish sir had told me to learn to bat at No 5 and No 6. He told me I needed to adapt and gain experience batting in the middle order if I wish to play at a higher level. I worked on that



Nitish Kumar Reddy has shown his ability with the willow this season | AP

with my coach CD Thomson," added Nitish.

Last year, SRH had a forgettable season but they look a formidable unit this season under the new captain Pat Cummins.

Playing along with one of the best bowlers in the world like Cummins can be a rewarding experience for a young lad.

"He (Cummins) is one of the best bowlers in the world. I learnt from him how to keep things simple. He's not a guy who thinks a lot. He just works on his routines and all that. He

asks us to bowl according to wickets, and conditions and not worry too much about the batter. In other words, he wants us to have self-belief in our abilities," said Nitish.

Cummins has been leading by example which is one of the reasons why SRH have made a remarkable turnaround from the previous seasons.

So has Nitish made any adjustments to his batting this season? "I go in with a calm mind, I just think about the process and the situation. I want to bat effectively so I have changed my practice routines where I get to practice everything, including power hitting.

Full story: newindianexpress.com

SRH look to maintain red-hot run

Batting records could be on the agenda again as Hyderabad, the league's form team having won four on the bounce, face Bengaluru, the current wooden spoon holders. A look...

BACK TO HOME COMFORTS

The last time they played a game at home, it was the first week of April. Since then, on their travels, they have emerged as the great entertainers having breached scores in excess of 250 twice in three matches.

BENGALURU BOWLERS AND OLD WOUNDS

On one of Hyderabad's travels, Travis Head, Abhishek Sharma and Heinrich Klaasen went crazy at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium.

SIRAJ VS HEAD

Mohammed Siraj returns to familiar environs hoping to reverse a worrying start to the season (five wickets in eight games and ineffective in the powerplay).

Live on Star Sports and Jio Cinema, 7.30 PM

Pant doing what Pant does best

SWAROOP SWAMINATHAN @Chennai

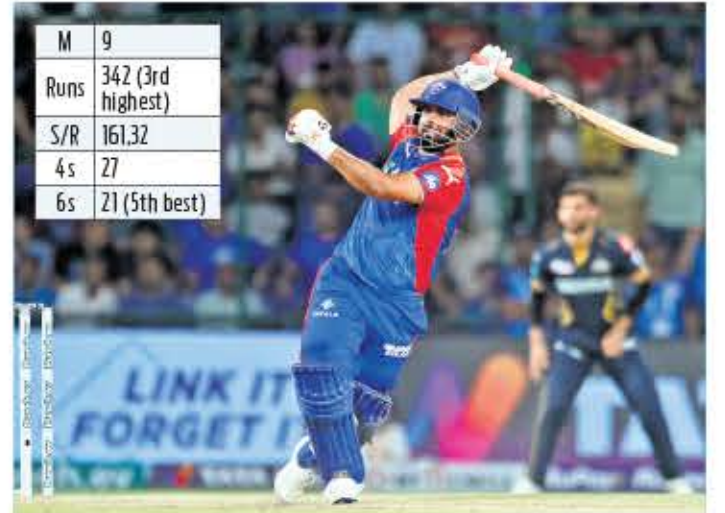
ON the evidence of the Indian Premier League's first month, Rishabh Pant will be on the flight when India departs for the T20 World Cup late next month.

If the first eight matches were a glimpse of Pant from 2022 and beyond, his ninth, against Gujarat Titans, was the full-length film. It was the Pant vast swathes of the cricketing public had fallen in love with.

He played some of his greatest hits as the visiting bowlers willed in the face of a thrilling late assault. In the end, he finished with a 43-ball 88 to help Delhi finish with 224.

The two important things, power-hitting coaches always say, is the base and balance of the batter. Pant has never believed in that but he elevated that to art on Wednesday.

Pant is an outlier as far as power-hitting goes and he once again showed why; it's all about the hands, a swivel of the hips and the extension of the hands to reach out to wide deliveries outside the off stump before somehow generating enough power to access areas in front as well as behind square on the off-side.



Rishabh Pant hit an unbeaten 88 off 43 balls to help DC cross 200-run mark | AP

Table with 2 columns: M, Runs. M: 9, Runs: 342 (3rd highest)

Table with 2 columns: S/R, 4s, 6s. S/R: 161.32, 4s: 27, 6s: 21 (5th best)

It wasn't just that Pant finished with a S/R of 204 that would have pleased the Indian management. What would have pleased them is the way he made them. He stuck it out at the beginning as the hosts were in an icky spot even before the end of the powerplay.

So, he had to bide his time while Axar Patel, who had earned a promotion, looked to be the aggressor. His first 12 runs came off 10 balls before he opened up ever so slightly against Noor Ahmad as he clattered a slog sweep over cow corner.

Twelve off 10 became 34 off 26; on a decent surface with lots of resources left in the bank, it was time for the skipper to explode to convert this start. It meant Mohit Sharma's third over — the start of the last five overs — was identified to turn the screws.

Table with 5 columns: Teams, P, W, L, Pts, NRR. Lists stats for RR, KKR, SRH, LSG, CSK, DC, GT, MI, PBKS, RCB.

Updated till DC vs GT match

Tristan Stubbs going big against Sai Kishore, the 26-year-old reserved the best for the last. His sequence went 2, 6, 4, 6, 6, 6 as he found boundaries all round the wicket.

As a massive point of difference — a southpaw who keeps wickets while batting in the second phase of the innings — he was always going to be on the flight as long as he had proved his fitness. With three fifties in nine innings and in fine boundary-hitting form, he has done just that.

EXPRESS READ

Sreeshankar undergoes knee surgery in Doha

NEW DELHI: Long jumper Murali Sreeshankar has undergone a surgery on his injured knee that ruled him out of the Paris Olympics.

Camp for football team in Bhubaneswar

NEW DELHI: The Indian football team will have a four-week preparatory camp in Bhubaneswar starting May 10, ahead of its crucial second round FIFA World Cup 2026 qualifiers.

Deepanshu bags gold in javelin at Asian U20 meet

NEW DELHI: Deepanshu Sharma secured a gold medal in men's javelin as Indian athletes produced a good show on the opening day of the 21st Asian U20 Athletics Championships in Dubai.

Advantage Mumbai: Chhangte nets two late goals to stun Goa in semis

ENS @Chennai

FC GOA were following the script to the T. Boris Singh Thangjam had scored the opening to hand them the lead against Mumbai City FC in the first leg of the ISL semifinals at Bhubaneswar on Wednesday.

Brandon Fernandes then scored within 10 minutes of the second-half to put them in command. It was a dream scenario for the home team. Just when it seemed like Goa would walk with a handy lead going into the second leg, drama ensued.

Lallianzuala Chhangte sparked that with a goal in the final minute of regulation time for Mumbai City. Within seconds, they were on level terms, thanks to Vikram Pratap Singh's strike. However, the home side's pain was far from over. In what can be termed a mad spell, Chhangte stepped up once again in the 96th minute to find the unlikely winning goal.

Boris opened the floodgates in the 16th minute by tapping



Lallianzuala Chhangte (C) wheels away in celebration after scoring against Goa | ISL

in a straightforward square delivery by attacking midfielder Mohammed Yasin. Receiving a long ball on the left flank, Yasin sprinted into the box and sliced in a low cross that was converted into a goal by Boris.

Earlier, Mumbai defender Akash Mishra picked up a knock and had to be replaced with Valpuia in the 13th minute of the match. Goa's second goal

in the 56th minute was when Fernandes broke free with the ball and deposited it into the top corner of the net. When it all looked Goa would cross the line comfortably, Chhangte struck.

With the return leg set to be held in Mumbai, this result is a big boost for Chhangte & Co. In the first semifinal on Tuesday, Odisha beat Mohun Bagan 2-1.

SHOOTING Sift and Niraj toppers in 50m 3P finals

ENS @ New Delhi/Chennai

IN a sport that is stacked, Sift Kaur Samra has emerged as one of the standout shooters in recent times.

The world record holder in the women's 50m rifle 3 positions is one of the brightest prospects in the national team. Her talent was evident on Wednesday as she topped the finals of her event in the ongoing Olympic Selection Trials (OST 1).

Tokyo Olympian Anjum Moudgil finished third in the finals with a score of 449.2.

In the men's equivalent event, Niraj Kumar was the standout in the finals with a score of 462.2, finishing ahead of qualification topper Swapnil Kusale (460.9).

Narsingh chairman of WFI's Athletes' panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

FORMER Commonwealth Games gold medalist Narsingh Pancharam Yadav was elected chairman of the Athletes' Commission of the Wrestling Federation of India on Wednesday during the ongoing Federation Cup in Varanasi.

A total of eight candidates were in the fray to elect seven members of the commission. The elected members then chose Narsingh as the chairman. The other elected members were Sahil (Delhi), Smitha AS (Kerala), Bharti Bhaghei (UP), Khushboo S Pawar (Gujarat), Nikki (Haryana), and Sweta Dubey (Bengal). Nikki was elected as the convener.

bronze medal in the 74kg in the 2015 World Championships, the Maharashtra wrestler earned a quota but two-time Olympic medalist Sushil Kumar first requested for a trial against him and them moved the Delhi High Court seeking the same. The court rejected the appeal clearing Narsingh's way to compete in the Rio Games.

Sport even though the National Anti-Doping Agency (NADA) had cleared him on the plea that his failed test was the result of sabotage. The CAS decision came a day before his opening bout in the Olympics, forcing him to leave Rio de Janeiro without competing.

Narsingh also won a bronze medal in the 2014 Asian Games while his last international event was the 2021 Asian Championships where he finished with a bronze in the 79kg.

Rithik cracks ton as Alwarpet take lead

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @Chennai

S RITHIK Easwaran's century (104) propelled Alwarpet to bag a lead of 59 runs over UFCC, T Nagar on the second day of the senior division league of the TNCA played at SSN college grounds here on Wednesday.

Brief scores: Semifinals: At VNB Nest: Jolly Rovers 380 in 119.2 ovs (Shorey 68, Gurjapreet Singh 4/91) vs Vilay 137/3 in 58 ovs (B Sachin 61 batting). At SSN: UFCC (T Nagar) 143 & 163/4 in 38 ovs (Prasad 55 batting) vs Alwarpet 202 in 71.2 ovs (Easwaran 104, M Mohammed 3/38).

Chennai Achievers win Chennai Achievers defeated

Salem Kings 4-3 in the Elite group finals of the TNTA league.

Results: (all finals) Elite: Chennai Achievers bt Salem Shevor Kings 4-3 (Nithyashree bt Kayasree 4-11, 11-8, 11-9, 2-11, 11-7; Venkat lost to Manikandan 8-11, 5-11, 5-11; Akshay bt Seshanth 11-5, 11-6, 12-10; Abhinav bt Karthikeyan 11-5, 11-7, 11-9; Nithyashree/Ananya lost to Kayasree/Sharvani 11-8, 5-11, 10-12, 11-9, 10-12; Ananya lost to Sharvani 8-11, 7-11, 8-11; Abhinav/ Akshay bt Karthikeyan/Manikandan 9-11, 11-8, 11-7, 12-10). Open: Chennai Achievers bt Jawahar 3-2 (Navayugan 11-2, 11-8, 11-6; Venkatachalapathy lost to Lakshmanan 11-5, 11-8, 3-11, 13-15, 3-1; Narayanan bt Adarsh 11-5, 11-8, 11-4; Mehan lost to Lakshmanan 11-13, 7-11, 11-8, 12-10, 10-12; Venkatachalapathy bt Navayugan 11-8, 9-11, 4-11, 11-8, 11-9). Sub-Juniors: AKG-MST bt VinWin 3-0. Corporate: Ping Pong Paddlers bt Dragon Warriors 3-1.

Triathlon Championships

Adarsh Muralidharan Sinimol and Pragya Mohan will spearhead the Indian challenge at the South Asian Triathlon Championships to be held alongside the Asia Triathlon Cup in Pokhara, Nepal on April 27.

Squad: Men: Telheba Soram, Kshetrinayam Singh, Tushar Deka, Anag Wankhade, Parth Sanikha, Angad Inglekar, Abhishek Modanwal, Ankur Chahar, Parth Mirage, Krishna Patel, Koushik Vinayak Melankar, Sai Lohitaksh KD, Dev Ambekar, Raj Kumar Pawar, Puskar Das, Vishwanath Yadav, Adarsh Muralidharan Nair Sinimol, Ankan Bhattacharjee, Arnab Bhattacharya, Safa Musthafa Sheik. Women: Divyisha Pawar, Dolly Patil, Dhriti Koujalal, Rama Sonkar, Herry Zakavadya, Prerana Sravan Kumar, Siddhi Kadam, Sanjana Joshi, Snehal Joshi, Mansi Mohite, Nafsa Millwala, Pragya Mohan, Punam Biswas.

AGENCIES @London

KAI Havertz and Ben White scored twice as Arsenal thrashed Chelsea 5-0 on Tuesday to surge ahead in the Premier League title race and ramp up the pressure on Liverpool and Manchester City.

Leandro Trossard was also on target in a record win over Chelsea for the Gunners, who move three points clear of Liverpool and four of Manchester City. The destiny of the title remains in City's hands as the defending champions have two games in hand.

Liverpool have also played one fewer game than Arsenal and were scheduled to be in ac-

We have made our people proud: Arteta

AGENCIES @London



Arsenal's Kai Havertz scores the third goal against Chelsea on Tuesday | AP

tion at Everton in the Merseyside derby on Wednesday.

However, Mikel Arteta's men's goal difference advantage now looks unassailable



should it become decisive in the title race. "We have made our people very proud, it is a big derby for us and I know what it means," said Arteta.

"We started the game really well but didn't convert all our chances — we were a bit sloppy in certain areas of the pitch.

"In the second half we were much more disciplined and created chances and were ruthless in front of goal."

Chelsea and Arsenal's title rivals were dealt a huge blow before kick-off as the Blues' danger man Cole Palmer was ruled out due to illness.

Haaland to miss Brighton tie

Manchester City's Premier League title bid suffered a blow after Norway striker Erling Haaland was ruled out of Thursday's crucial clash at Brighton.

Tourists can now visit the world's longest track of a dinosaur boasting 134 footprints in Colorado, USA.

The underground bunkers in Italy, built to protect Benito Mussolini from bombing, are now open to the public.

SRUSHI KULKARNI

DEAREST readers, the countdown to Season 3 of the Netflix sensation Bridgerton has begun, sending the ton into a frenzy of excitement and speculation. Since the announcement of its imminent arrival — from intriguing clips to cleverly hidden Easter eggs and stills from the upcoming episodes and reels offering tidbits from the charming cast — the show has been serially dropping hints at the drama awaiting us. What if we tell you that you can now experience the enchanting architectural marvels that provide the backdrop for these captivating tales? Many of these stunning locations are open to visitors, allowing fans to step into the world of Bridgerton and experience its magic first hand. Here is a list of some of the breathtaking locations featured in Bridgerton that you can visit to immerse yourself in the splendor of this fantasy Regency-era London



Step Into the world of Bridgerton as the locations where the series was filmed are now open to visitors and tourists...



The Bridgerton family

THE ABBEY DELI

With a view of the Abbey and the historic trees at Abbey Green, this deli features multiple rooms and a spacious dining area with a luxurious leather sofa and is the perfect place to relax. Following its appearance in the show as Madam Delacroix's modist, the venue in Bath now offers a special pre-booked Afternoon Tea experience in a Georgian-style private dining room. Guests can enjoy a selection of fresh sandwiches, scones with jam and clotted cream, a variety of sweet treats and a selection of fine teas. Additionally, one can savour exquisite coffee, delicious cakes and freshly prepared pies, quiches, lasagne and salads at the deli. ₹2,060 onwards per person. Open daily, 9 am to 4.30 pm.



HAMPTON COURT PALACE

Once the residence of King Henry VIII, the spot serves as the lavish on-screen home of Queen Charlotte in both Bridgerton and Queen Charlotte: A Bridgerton Story. Situated in Richmond along the picturesque banks of the river Thames in Molesey, this historic palace features expansive outdoor spaces and 60 acres of stunning gardens. Immerse yourself in their Film and TV Location audio guide tour, highlighting iconic scenes from Bridgerton and other productions. Entry fee: ₹2,808. Open daily, 10 am - 5.30 pm.



RANGER'S HOUSE

Set amidst Greenwich Park and Blackheath, Ranger's House in London is an elegant Georgian villa that is home to the Wernher Collection, a renowned assembly of over 700 artworks from medieval sculptures to Dutch Old Masters. Now famous as the frontage of the Bridgerton House in the series, here, visitors can explore a dozen paneled interiors, including works like the Madonna of the Pomegranate from Botticelli's workshop and French tapestries, among others. Entry fee: ₹1,033 approximately. April 1 to October 30, Wednesday - Sunday, 11 am - 4 pm.

WINDSOR GREAT PARK

A historic part of the Windsor Estate in Berkshire, the park is a sprawling royal landscape featuring forests, grasslands, lakes and gardens. It served as the picturesque setting for Bridgerton Season Two, where Kate Sharma's rowboat excursion with a suitor sparks jealousy in Anthony. This vast estate offers a wide range of attractions, including Queen Anne's Ride, Stag Meadow, The Savill Garden and vineyards — stretching for about 16 kms from Windsor Castle to Camberley. Entry free. Open daily, 7 am and 8.30 pm.

THE HOLBURNE MUSEUM

While the exterior of the museum may appear familiar to fans of Bridgerton as the mansion of the wealthy widow Lady Danbury, this 1799 Sydney Hotel turned into a museum showcases the eclectic art collection of a wealthy 19th-century naval officer. It also boasts the last remaining English pleasure garden from the 1700s, Bath's Sydney Gardens and overlooks the Great Putney Street. Visitors can explore its grounds and galleries and Garden Café. Entry fee: ₹1,289 onwards. Monday - Saturday, 10 am to 5 pm and Sunday (and Bank Holidays), 11 am to 5 pm daily, 7 am and 8.30 pm.



ROYAL CRESCENT

In the heart of Bath lies the Featheringtons' home, an 18th-century Georgian townhouse museum restored to its former glory. The crescent features a uniform Palladian design, overlooking Royal Victoria Park. The museum reflects the period between 1776 to 1796 and has been furnished to recreate the ambience of the late 18th century, offering visitors a glimpse into the lives of Bath's elite. Entry fee: ₹1,601 approximately, with tickets valid for 12 months. February 1 to December 31, Tuesday - Sunday, 10 am - 5.30 pm.



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Advertisement for PARADIP PORT AUTHORITY. Includes details about the short e-tender call notice for the allotment of 06 (Six) nos. of Manual Iron Ore plots.

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Interview with Kani Kusruti

PG 4



DAY'S DIARY
Discovery of a diary
In 1983, the Stern magazine's editors-in-chief carried 12 black notebooks filled with Hitler's personal notes, at a press meet in Hamburg

AFTERMATH

Three days later, Stern published a special edition with excerpts from the diaries. The magazine increased its circulation by 4,000,000 and the special issue cost an additional 50 pfennigs



PUBLIC HUMILIATION

A week later, Stern had to admit that it was fooled by the seller. The forensic analysis proved that the diaries' papers had no existence in the Third Reich



CONSEQUENCES

The public prosecutor's office launched an investigation on reporter Gerd Heldemann and the forger, Konrad Kujau. They were sentenced to prison

SISTERHOOD OF TAMIL RAP

Sollisai Sistahs may have started as a one-woman army. But now, this all-women rap group from the city has four rappers who want to bring about a change in society through their meaningful lyrics and foot-tapping beats

SONU M KOTHARI

On a lazy Sunday morning in 2021, as she was adjusting the camera's focus to capture a family who were evicted from their home, their cries turned out to be a trigger for Abishaa. Living in RA Puram for over a decade, this family built a home on the banks of a waterbody closer to a real estate property. Wanting to expand their resources, the realty firm approached the court with a PIL, and eviction was declared. "I was approached to film a protest regarding the eviction. Being there made me realise that we live in a society surrounded by injustice," says Abishaa (stage name: B-Shaa), cinematographer and the key person in the formation of Sollisai Sistahs, an all-women-rap group, a first in Tamil Nadu.

The protest became bigger when one of the family members died and there were media vans and mediapersons with mics mounting the apartment. "Before the death of Kannaiyan, there was nobody to question the injustice they were put through by the court eviction and the builders. When a death is reported, all of a sudden, everybody is interested in the news. This incident was too heavy on me," she explains.

Trying to wrap her thoughts, Abishaa writes, "Nathi kara oro veedunu solli, erikarai oram kudukara veedu, theru peyaru la irukura jaathi a alkura, jaathi veri pudichu neecherai a alkura (You say the house is on the banks of a river, and you give a house by the lakeside, you abolish the caste names from the names of the streets, in a frenzy of getting rid of castes you destroy the slum)". With this, she stepped into the world of rapping. She performed this at The Movement, a community representing Tamil Nadu Hip-Hop artists. It is a crew that meets at



Anna Nagar Tower Park regularly and performs.

Getting motivated by such groups, Abishaa started working on her raps day and night. All her performances circle caste and gender politics and social issues. "Things that happen around me, situations which upset me, and encouraging others to voice out, inspire me to write. That is how I wrote my first rap," she says.

Art is art

Besides writing raps, Abishaa works as a cameraman for Neelam Cultural Centre, founded by director Pa Ranjith, and has been participating in their Margazhiyil Makkalisai, an annual music festival. Preparing for her act in 2022 for the musical evening, she met Kavyaa (stage name: Kavi Chikki), a beatboxer and

a new person. Kavyaa had come to Chennai to research gaana music.

Settled in Bengaluru, Kavyaa grew up listening to gaana music and was very much intrigued to know why people find gaana to be noise rather than art. "Gaana is a form of entertainment but is discriminated against because of the people who perform it. It is an art form of the oppressed. The mainstream media portrays it in a light that the art form is used to objectify women and mock others. I want to show people that gaana is equivalent to any other art form and it is a tool to express thoughts," she shares.

Using art forms to communicate emotions is the ideology that Abishaa and Kavyaa share. When two people with the same beliefs meet, they collaborate. Similar is the story of the duo. "It was an impromptu plan. Abishaa was backstage, getting ready for her performance. We met and she asked me to beatbox for her act," says Kavyaa.

She learnt beatboxing from her friends who practised the art. "The musical element of beatboxing appealed to me and I wanted to learn it. There aren't many women who practice it and many are discriminated against, saying that it requires a lot of stamina and a gruff voice," explains Kavyaa. Being a mediaperson, she wants to change the narrative and voice out against caste politics and social injustices.

Soon the duo became a trio when Abishaa and Raaga Kaatralai (stage name: Swathi), a rapper from Salem, connected on Instagram. They have worked together in creating rap.

Wanting to form a group to grab people's attention on social issues and be a predecessor for others to speak their opinions, Abishaa formed Sollisai Sistahs. The last to join the group was Neya, a school student, interested in writing raps and was inspired to join the team after attending one of their performances.

A band for sisters

Sollisai Sistahs made their first appearance as a band in Margazhiyil Makkalisai 2023. Since then, the team has been invited to various events and spaces including DakshinaChitra, Vyasa Thozhargal's 'Our

Street Our Stories' photo exhibition, and Women's Day celebrations at Goethe-Institut Chennai. "Every art form has a motive and a message to deliver. We are here to prick some ears and make some noise because only through art do you express yourself and what you believe in and kindle curiosity in the listeners to know more. In this process, you start a conversation with the words (rap lyrics) and keep the audience hooked with the music," notes Kavyaa.

The audience is also highly influential as they consume content in various forms. "Cinema shows rap culture in a way demeaning women. The issue is we talk about the degradation and the power struggle among women. We are degraded and stripped of power by other genders, we should be talking to them, and only then will we notice a change," shares Abishaa. According to her, if a movie deals with feminism there should be a feminist's viewpoint in the script. "Directors should approach women with their script when they write about them. They should also be open to unlearn what they know and adapt to what is required of them," she says, adding that when a panel discussion on how women are stereotyped is conducted, it should be made sure that it reaches other genders so that they learn and understand the reality.

To take this a step ahead, Abishaa suggests that more women come forward and put out statements. To help them out, Sollisai Sistahs can be a start. The band is open to anyone and everyone as music sees no gender, caste, or social wealth. With the band sharing their aim to create as many bands of women rappers in the city and state, the conversation comes to an end. Abishaa adjusts her mic as she practises for the group's upcoming welcome performance at Pradeep Kumar's concert.

For details, reach out to [sollisai_sistahs](#) on Instagram.

We are here to prick some ears and make some noise because only through art do you express yourself and what you believe in and kindle curiosity in the listeners to know more.

Kavyaa, rapper



TUNE IN TO YOUNG PODCASTERS

SREELAKSHMI S NAIR

LONG gone might be the days when many of us hurriedly completed our daily tasks, eagerly seeking out the quietest corner of our homes, adjusting the radio antenna, and tuning in to our favourite shows. Yet in a similar fashion, today, most of us have our preferred podcasts whose new episodes we eagerly wait for to listen to. Whether it's captivating stories, informative discussions, or engaging celebrity interviews, podcasts have become an important medium of consumption. While creating a podcast is soon finding a spot in the syllabi in colleges, how about starting them young? Well, here is city-based podcaster Deepika Arun ready to welcome children aged up to 16 years to her upcoming summer podcast workshop. The acclaimed audio producer and narrator of *Kadhai Osai*, an award-winning Tamil audiobook podcast, Deepika shares, "After interacting with some school students about podcasting, I was inspired to organise a summer workshop to introduce children to this exciting world. Children love stories, and when potentially given the opportunity to be storytellers, I think it would be very interesting for them."

audiobooks in Tamil, my mother tongue. I've always been equally fluent in Tamil and English since childhood. To my disappointment, I found that Tamil audiobooks were not as prevalent as their English counterparts," she recalls. Being a voracious reader and storyteller from a young age, Deepika embarked on curating her own set of audiobooks and podcasts in Tamil for both children and adults.

The summer workshop

Deepika has long held a passion for educating young children and students, a facet of her interests that has remained constant over time. "I've always been a teacher at heart," she says. It was during her tenure as an adjunct faculty member at the Asian College of Journalism that she recognised the burgeoning interest among students in podcasts and the underutilisation of this medium, particularly in narrative journalism. "I figured that young people are very interested in the medium, and it was very intriguing for them to know that there is a new medium that they could explore," she notes.

With summer vacations around the corner, children can gear up for an exciting three-day workshop happening in two batches, the first from April 29 to May 1 and the second from May 10 to 12. Deepika sheds light on the workshop's specifics, stating, "The workshop will take place in a studio, offering participants a firsthand experience of recording. They'll explore questions like what it means to write or think for audio, how to post-produce after recording, and the technical aspects involved. Participants will delve into both storytelling and technology." Parents will have the opportunity to listen to the creations crafted by their children during the classes, which will be held for two hours each day.

In a world dominated by screens where voices often get lost in the digital cacophony, pave the way for your child to discover a powerful medium to express themselves and tell their stories through podcasting. Perhaps, in their stories, we might find inspiration to tell our own.

For details, and to register, contact 9176583618 or log onto [www.kadhaiosai.com](#)



PS NIRANJANA

NILA nla odi va... a song that grandfathers sing to put their toddlers to sleep, one that mothers sing while feeding their child, and a catchy tune we unknowingly hum when we look at the bright full moon. Beyond the traditional narration, this Tamil rhyme is now getting a facelift in the form of an audiobook, an idea initiated by T4Tales.

An independent publishing house specialising in creating interactive board books for children in various Indian languages since 2015, T4Tales was born following a mother's concern for her daughter's screen time and a lack of non-digital content available for children to learn more about their mother tongue.

This year, they are publishing two books, including *Nila Nila* by musicians Gurupriya Atraya and Vedanth Bhardwaj, a retelling of the popular old Tamil lullaby about the moon. Their second Tamil publication, it is available for pre-ordering and will be released by

Tales that transcend languages



Vedanth Bhardwaj and Gurupriya Atraya

the end of the month on all major streaming platforms like Spotify, YouTube Music, and Apple Music.

"When we, Gurupriya and I, started working on the song, we did not think we would add four more lines to it. We made it into a full song with a *pallavi* and *charanam* while adding a lot more. You learn a lot about languages when you transliterate them, let it be the conjunctions or the etymology of every word. So it is definitely going to be really helpful," says Vedanth.

The vocals of Gurupriya and Vedanth is supported by the illustrations by Vaishnavi Giri. "As someone who has grown up hearing the older version of the song, to add new layers so that children today can see that song differently was one of the

biggest motivational factors for me to work on this book," says Vaishnavi. "The children today, as we live in different parts of India, don't get to read and write the language in which we speak at home. Transliteration is a great tool in such cases because they already understand it, they just can't read it on

their own," she adds.

The other book is titled *Kahani Chamkeeli* — the third book in the *Kahaani* series, after *Kahaani Purani* and *Kahaani Rangeeli*. All the books have the original native script and the regional language's English transliteration.

Narration beyond scripts

A widespread sentiment among people raised or raising children abroad is how they have often felt quite detached from their culture and language. This becomes a woe especially for parents who struggle to persuade their children as they grow up into bi-cultural or even third-culture young adults. To bridge this gap, Pridhee Kapoor Gupta came up with the idea of creating interactive books that not only have audio additions but also transliterations that help parents unfamiliar with their native language scripts.

Coming from a molecular biology background, Pridhee stumbled upon the idea after understanding the market's need for more accommodating books and started T4Tales.

With teaching as her day job, Pridhee has collaborated on and published close to eight children's books. Their *Kahaani* series, illustrated by Alicia Souza, touches upon various mythological and cultural stories. "It's always been such a lovely initiative, and coming from someone who does not speak their native language, I have always felt like I missed out. So, this is one way I feel like I can contribute, and the best way I know is through drawing," says Alicia on working on the *Kahaani* series. "I love that my son loves them, too. It's so fun to see him pick them out when we have so many other books on the bookshelf, but he picks it out even without knowing I have worked on them," she adds.

The works published by T4Tales not only create a better bond within families but also invoke a sense of nostalgia for parents as they recreate the age-old story time with the grandparents. With interactive boards included in the books, children can explore the story-line themselves.

'Nila Nila' is available for pre-order on [t4tales.com](#) and Amazon.



BOOK NOOK



The Sicilian Inheritance

By Jo Piazza

A twist-filled adventure that takes Sara all over the Italian countryside as she races to solve a mystery and learn the story of Serafina – a feisty and headstrong young woman in the early 1900s thrust into motherhood in her teens who fought for a better life not just for herself but for other women as well.



Grave Expectations

By Alice Bell

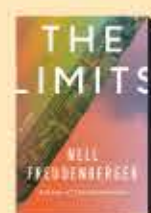
A fast-paced and hilarious debut crime novel in which a burnt-out millennial medium must utilise her ability to see ghosts and team up with a band of oddball investigators to figure out which member(s) of a posh English family are guilty of murder.



Rabbit Heart

By Kristine S Ervin

A brutal memoir documenting one woman's search for identity alongside her family's decades-long quest to identify the two men who abducted – and murdered – her mother.



The Limits

By Nell Freudenberger

From Mo'orea, a tiny volcanic island off the coast of Tahiti, a French biologist obsessed with saving Polynesia's imperilled coral reefs sends her teenage daughter to live with her ex-husband in New York. Following this, fifteen-year-old Pia goes to Manhattan and gets shuttled between her parents' disparate lives.



WAVES OF CLEANLINESS

Picking up the trash trails, a few kids take part in a cleanliness drive organised to make the beach a better place.

QUICKFIX

ZUCCHINI KOOTU

INGREDIENTS

- Zucchini: 1, medium-size
- Moong dal: 3 fistful
- Turmeric: 1 tsp
- Salt: as per taste
- Red chilli: 2
- Jeera: 1 tsp
- Coconut: 1/2 cup

METHOD

- Cut zucchini into small cubes or as per your preference. Soak dal for 30 minutes.
- In a cooker, add zucchini, moong dal, turmeric, and salt. Add very little water and pressure-cook it for one whistle.
- Grind the coconut with red chilli and jeera.
- Open the cooker, add the coconut paste, and heat the cooker on a low flame till the kootu comes together.
- Temper mustard seeds and curry leaves with oil and pour it over the dish.



Contributed by Rama Ramanan, Bengaluru

WHATWHENWHYWHERE

Effortless brows

Change your eyebrow game with the newly launched Brow Freeze Gel, which is a crystal-clear wax-gel formula paired with a versatile, triple-action comb applicator.

WHERE: Sephora, Nykaa, Tira, Tata Qiq, Myntra, and ABH exclusive stores.

Melaunge Exhibition

Explore a diverse array of creations, including clothing, accessories, stylish footwear, and captivating home decor, by over 40 designers.

WHERE: The Park, Nungambakkam

WHEN: April 29 and 30



Beat the heat

Beat the heat with an exquisite collection of iced teas in the flavours of hibiscus apple, peach ginger, and more. It comes in two forms: instant premix and pitcher tea bags.

WHERE: www.vahdam.in

Cotton couture

Taniera unveils its latest offerings, the Cottons of India and Summer Blooms collections, tailored for discerning connoisseurs this summer.

WHERE: Taniera stores

PRICE: ₹1,299 onwards



Mul Mul collection

The Shop unveils its Spring Summer collection, 'Maimal Mela'. The material used for this collection is Mul Mul in a wide range of eco-friendly products in clothing, including nightwear, loungewear, men's and women's wear and home furnishings such as table linen, mats, napkins, bed linen, cushions, kitchen items, curtains.

WHERE: Folly, Amethyst

WHEN: April 26 & 27

Stories of Pudhumaipithan

On the stalwart's 118th birthday, Nam Arumai Pudhumaipithan displays a bouquet of select short stories, each being presented in a unique style. Tickets available on BookMy Show app.

WHEN: Today, 7.30 pm

WHERE: Medai - The Stage, Alwarpet



Matchmania

Feathers, A Radha Hotel is set to elevate the IPL experience with an exclusive offer at Vapor. With the IPL fever gripping the nation, they offer a blend of excitement, luxury, and entertainment. Indulge in an array of delectable starters and domestic and imported beverages specially curated for the occasion.

WHEN: Till May 29



Arabic flavoursa

Embark on a sensory voyage through the enchanting flavours and rich cultural tapestry of the Middle East at Sunset Grill, The Westin Chennai Velachery. Experience an exquisite culinary journey curated by Chef Ahmed Bounaji, renowned for his mastery of Arabic cuisine.

WHEN: Till April 29

Coastal cuisine

Malvani cuisine from South Konkan is celebrated for its bold flavours and provides the essence of Maharashtra and Goa's coastal cuisine, savour the seafood at Match Point, Taj Wellington Mews Chennai.

WHEN: Till April 30



Flavours of Kolkata

Embark on a culinary journey to Kolkata, at The Melting Pot, InterContinental Chennai Mahabalipuram Resort. Indulge in dishes like kathi rolls, koshu mangsho and more.

WHEN: April 26-28

CALL: 8939865105



MISS-FIT

Wanitha Ashok

Wanitha Ashok is a Fit India Movement Ambassador and celebrity fitness coach

FITBIT

SETU BANDHASANA BLOCK

(BRIDGE POSE BLOCK)

Since working out in the summer is getting difficult, how do I keep myself hydrated to keep going?

Staying hydrated during summer workouts is crucial for maintaining energy levels and preventing dehydration. Drinking water before, during, and after workout is essential to replenish lost fluids and electrolytes. Many are misinformed about consuming water during workouts, which they think is not safe. Gulping down water is not advised especially when the heart rate is up, it's better to sip water. That's why we have sippers.

ASK AN EXPERT

- Opt for hydrating foods like watermelon, cucumbers, and ice apples to supplement your fluid intake.
- Electrolyte-rich coconut water can also help replenish electrolytes lost through sweat during workouts.
- Eliminate sugary drinks and caffeine.
- Listen to your body, take a break when tired, and hydrate.

The best time to exercise is early in the morning or evening, as the weather is a lot more favourable and the chances of getting dehydrated are low. Swimming is one of the best summer workouts.

By prioritising hydration and listening to your body's needs, you can stay energised and motivated to continue your summer workouts effectively.

This is a supine yoga pose that is derived from the base pose, Bridge Pose. With the support of the block, the backbend becomes easier for beginners. This is also included in restorative yoga sequences, and it helps the spine extend while still being assisted gently. This pose can be used to alleviate back pain and can be a cool-down practice post-Vinyasa Yoga sequences. When the trunk is raised up, it expands the chest, ensuring better and deeper breathing, thus making it a gentle heart-opening practice. This uses props to make the pose accessible and easier for students who may not have the needed strength, flexibility, or balance to do the same pose without props.

STEPS

- Lie down on your back with your knees bent and the soles of your feet kept flat on the ground.
- Extend your arms outwards on the floor.
- Then, raise your hips off the floor and press back into the soles of your feet, allowing your yoga block to rest comfortably under your lower back or directly under your sacrum.
- Make sure that your arms are spread out on the floor next to your body.
- Hold the position for a few minutes as your body adjusts to the stretch and reaps the benefits of a passive backbend.
- Avoid very rigid blocks and instead use light-weight, smooth-surfaced blocks.
- Push down into your feet and raise your hips, then gently remove the block. Lower your back to the floor and focus on your breathing as you remain in the Constructive Rest Pose.
- Finally, relax in Savasana for a few seconds.

BENEFITS

- Lengthening of the spine is easier with the support of a block.
- Opens the psoas muscles, thereby helping the hips gain better stability and strength.
- Block helps to raise the upper back without jerking the movement.
- The chest, rib cage, upper abdomen, shoulders, and upper back get equally activated.
- Makes the back and the hips flexible by elongating the spine.
- Any stiffness in arms or shoulders can be eliminated.
- With concentration, one may achieve breath awareness while practising this pose.
- Aids in giving better shape to the hips and shoulders, ensuring well-toned spinal muscles.
- By holding the breath for long, breathing becomes deeper and slow.
- Channels can be cleared, thereby giving room for more prana flow.
- Activates the sama vayu, and during the time of release, the apana vayu gets activated.
- In this pose, when both prana vayus are active, various chakras get stimulated.
- Reduces stress, anxiety, or any kind of tension in the body.
- Activates the Solar Plexus, Root, and Throat Chakras.
- Helps in lowering and balancing the blood pressure.
- Pressure at the pelvic floor has a healing effect on the inner muscles of the uterus, thereby improving the reproductive system.
- Helpful in reducing the effects of asthma.

LIMITATIONS

- Students who have had any injury or a recent surgery in the hips, pelvis, shoulders, rib cage, spine, knees, neck, or ankles, or any other physical conditions, should avoid this pose.



By N Elumalai, PhD Scholar (Yoga Science) at Meenakshi Academy of Higher Education & Research, Chennai

ARTCORNER



WHISPERS OF BLOSSOMS

Artist Sangeetha DR's acrylic painting depicts a serene spring day transitioning into a misty night.

DIYA MARIA GEORGE

FRAMES OF RESISTANCE

Niththam Photography Exhibition reflects the shards of oppression echoing the sounds of revolution

At times when resistance is a necessity and discussion on injustices is a priority, Neelam Cultural Centre's Vaanam Art Festival uses art as a tool to speak about subversion. Immersed in colours and stories of everyday lives of the working class and oppressed communities, Niththam Photography Exhibition under the festival at Art Kin Centre brings the stories filtered behind these colours into the limelight. "Everywhere in terms of culture and hegemony, art galleries are dominated by Savarna elites. It is a creamy layer and most of the time, we have no idea about how they are selected or if it is a democratic process. Through Vaanam Art Festival and all the other events under the umbrella, we are delivering art in the truest essence. Niththam translates to everyday life, this exhibition documents the struggles of working class people," shares Illa Marudhu, curator of the exhibition.

Blue was a prominent theme in the photographs of Vandhana, a 26-year-old first generation learner from Meghal community in Mumbai. Coming from the homestate of Dr BR Ambedkar, she captures frames of Babasaheb in the streets and some candid moments of Bahujans in Maharashtra. Meanwhile Harshini Ilavenil, a photographer and filmmaker, driven by Ambedkar's vision for social justice and equality, captures the salt pan workers under the blue skies of Puthalam in Kanniyakumari. She focuses her camera on Vijayan and his family who are daily wage workers. In the scorching heat, equipped with tools like shovels and rakes, they meticulously pour baskets of white salt onto the large pile.

Kamaraj Sivanandan shifts the focus from Puthalam to Medhur. Sticking to the blue sky, but with more colour in the foreground, this documentary filmmaker and video producer captures the life in his village where he strives to change the stereotypical notions of Dalit life. "There is a perception that Dalits are landless everywhere and have to earn a living by doing daily wage labour. Most of the peo-



ple in my village are land owners and farmers who take care of their own land. The streets of Medhur, paddy fields, the tree, and the Ayyanar temple are the shapes of stories that I want to tell. We have never seen a Brahmin priest in our Ayyanar temple till today and we proudly perform puja on our own," writes the photographer.

Shifting themes

The blues seamlessly transitioned into verdant greens,

unveiling the stories of tea estate workers. Jayarani, who has been working as a journalist for the past 23 years, presents her photographs clicked in 2008, which was the tenth year anniversary of Manjolar labourers massacre. "A place that had about 12,000 people living, has only 2,000 now. Not a feet of land is allotted to the people who toiled for this tea estate. They have been sent away with a petty sum of money as compensation," Jayarani writes.

We see yet another series brimming with hues of green, capturing the tea estate workers navigating their everyday journey in the hills. Chennai-based journalist Nithya Pandian's 'Red Passport: A Journey Through the Lives of Tamil Dalit Tea Plantation Workers' takes us deep into the heart of these communities. For the past seven years, she has travelled through the rugged terrains of Coonoor, Kotagiri, Munnar, Anamalai, and Manjolai, bearing witness to the realities faced by those whose hands cultivate the world-renowned teas we savour. Dr K Bakya, capturing her hometown, Velur, also brought in themes of green through her pictures.

The colourful hues gradually recede only to be drawn into the stark contrasts of black and white. Krithika Sriram, a Bengaluru-based visual artist explores the concepts of self identity and personal history through her frames. In her work 'Home', she photographs images of her mother, combing her hair and braiding it to put strands of flowers.

She also lists out bits of nostalgia to give the viewers a peek into their lives. She writes, "On visitors' Sunday my mother would come, bringing cooked beef, or a curry she had made out of chicken that she had bought and killed. When she came, she would look through my hair for lice, then plait out for me and put flowers in it before she left. This made me very happy."

Then, the vibrant bursts of colours, celebrations of a community and frames of dances and excitement adorn the walls. Kabilan Soundharajan and Hariram capture the Irular community's Maasi Magam festival celebrations. Kabilan writes, "Despite thousands gathering at the place every year, there is no proper sanitation of toilets implemented around the area. No police protection is provided for the festival either." The photographs are testaments that show how the Adivasi communities have resisted Brahmanism in all



these years.

Capturing the moments of daily life, Sakthivarshini's 'Faces of Uzhavar Sandhai', attempts to capture the farmer's market on a busy day. Janani Kulanthaisamy in her series 'One life', captures her mother waiting for ice vandi. "Lately, waiting for the ice cream has become a part of my mother's daily routine during her treatment. I feel a sense of fulfilment watching her," she writes. Anita Sathima, as a cancer survivor dedicates her project to capturing photos of a cancer victim who lost her life leaving behind her nine-year-old daughter alone.

Violence against humanity

Far away from celebrations, Abishaa's and Santhosh Krishnan's photographs capture the struggles of the oppressed communities, also shedding light on the RA Puram eviction. From the north-east, independent lawyer and journalist Greeshma Kuthar's photographs capture the ongoing violence in Manipur. She writes, "As the war is about to complete a year, people from all communities be it Kuki-Zo or Naga tribes, Meities and Pangals stand affected by this war in Manipur. Yet, nothing that happens in Manipur makes it to prime-time mainstream news in India."

Niththam also exhibited posters, bookmarks, and postcards for people to purchase as they can take something to their homes even after the festival. Commenting that it is important to keep conversations on resistance alive, Anahata Sundarmurthy, visual artist and founder of Art Kin Centre shares, "Exhibitions like these present works that break stereotypes. Discussions should be open every time. We should have a holistic view."



THE VENUS FLYTRAP

FUNDAMENTALS OF FEMINISM IN A FIX

SHARANYA MANIVANNAN
 @SHE_OF_THE_SEA

The columnist is a writer and illustrator

Feminism f-ed up our society, completely," the actor Nora Fatehi said in an interview on the BeerBiceps YouTube channel earlier this month. Only minutes earlier, Fatehi had spoken about a fire within her to prove haters wrong and how her undivided attention was on her work, leaving no time for relationships by choice (and partly because of a relationship experience that had frightened her). Suddenly, she put forth a contrary view, praising the need for conservative gender roles and how life would be better for everyone when these are conformed to.

The host, Ranveer Allahbadia, then played a video about the hormonal differences in male and female bodies, and how the latter are not built for the modern office-hours grind. The two insipidly brought up the Industrial Revolution as being the reason for the 8 am-5 pm schedule, without talking about what came before it in the West, different labour and worker right movement stages and impacts around the world — or indeed about the obvious yet visionary concept that current capitalist hustle systems can change, and need to, and are being challenged. What they inferred instead is that women are just not meant to work outside the home.

Honestly, each time this happens (as it did last year with actor Neena Gupta on the same channel), I just don't get it. It happens quite a lot, actually. Celebrity women all over the world — from singer Shakira who recently said

that her pre-teen sons felt "emasculated" by the Barbie movie and that she agreed with them, to a slew of other Bollywood personalities — assert anti-feminist viewpoints with seemingly almost no self-reflection about how their lives and careers benefit from how feminism reshapes the world for the better.

It's inconsequential whether Fatehi identifies as a feminist herself. If she wants to give up all her personal and professional volition to become a dependent, she should go ahead and do that. (She also wants to "take over the world", but hasn't figured out how yet, but somehow the trad-wife lifestyle is apparently also a part of it.) The gains of the feminist movement will offer the scaffolding she will require should she need to start over from scratch if she becomes disillusioned about what the homemaker life is. It's a life she is fortunate not to have, the kind of life that the vast majority of women in India suffer within.

She'll be just fine — but those who listen to her won't, and she's in a position to influence young people of any gender. When she says, for instance, "Now people want to be in their soft girl era, people want to be in their feminine energy, people want to find themselves. There are a lot of epiphanies right now," she merely rattles off social media hashtags, misrepresenting curation for reality. Is she disingenuous, or ignorant? Either way, she cannot be excused, for either she passes her confusion on to impressionable audiences — young people without the capital and agency she enjoys, who may make choices they can't trace their way back from — or else she deliberately offers misinformation, regurgitating rhetoric that has always caused, and only causes, so much harm.

JITHA KARTHIKEYAN
 jithakarthikeyan@gmail.com

(Jitha Karthikeyan is an artist and curator, passionate about making art accessible to the larger public)

Sulking and disobeying were tactics we adopted as children to navigate our way with adults. Desperate parents succumbed to this silent blackmail and thus was accomplished many childhood desires. Not surprisingly, our land also showed a world that was weary of violent revolutions and wars what the power of non cooperation can truly achieve for a nation and its people. Our independence from colonial rule was largely attained when Indians, led by Mahatma Gandhi, simply decided to peacefully disobey. Artists have often resorted to these means to make their points. Art by itself is a powerful medium, and yet the tool of non cooperation has been cleverly used by artists to register dissent on several occasions.

A recent incident at the

When art speaks louder than words

Venice Biennale was one such manifestation of this mode of protest. For those in the dark, the Venice Biennale is an international art exhibition, first organised in 1895 and considered to be the oldest. The main venue which has pavilions by different countries witnessed a similar protest this year when the Israeli artist and curators decided not to open their pavilion for the visitors. Ruth Patir, the artist who represented Israel at the prestigious event made use of the stage to declare that she refused to open the exhibition until hostages were released and a ceasefire was in place in Gaza. She felt that it would be ironical to talk of the vulnerability of life through the exhibition when innocent lives were being lost because of cold hearts.

Back home, artists have pulled out of various art exhibitions at many critical points in time too. When a major international art festival was organised in Gujarat, many leading Indian artists pulled out just three weeks before the



show opened as a protest against censorship of art and culture by the government. This isn't a new phenomenon that is backed by the presence

of social media. Way back in 1958, the famous American painter, Mark Rothko pulled out of a very lucrative assignment as a quiet form of pro-

test. The artist was given a public commission to paint murals for the luxurious Four Seasons Restaurant inside the Seagram corporate headquarters in Manhattan, at a time when he was still struggling as an artist.

The offer was huge and Rothko was recommended by high profile museum directors for the job. On completion of his paintings, he decided to eat at the restaurant that would soon host his artworks on its walls. It comes as no surprise that soon after his experience, he was so disgusted and proclaimed, "Anybody who will eat that kind of food for those kind of prices will never look at a painting of mine." He soon returned the money and after years in storage, the paintings were given to a museum.

Gandhi once remarked, "Non cooperation is not a passive state; it is an intensely active state, more active than physical resistance or violence." It is indeed heartening that his words ring true even to this day in the world of art, for not all rebellions need to make a hue and cry. We can make a difference with our quiet refusals too!

CHENNAI DIGEST

Dronacharya Award 2024 conferred on A Kanyakumari

The Rotary Club of Madras East in collaboration with Saraswati Vidyalaya presented the Dronacharya Award 2024 at Taj Connemara. The Dronacharya Award 2024, was sponsored by Saraswati Vidyalaya in memory of its founder K



Saraswathi, who was a great social worker and educationist. This year, the award was conferred on A Kanyakumari, recipient of Padma Shri, Violinist - Carnatic Music. The chief guest for the evening was N Gopalaswami, Padama Bhushan recipient and former chief election commissioner.

Yeoman service by ophthalmologists recognised



Dr Praveen Krishna and Dr Vasunathy Vedantham, medical directors of Radhatri Netralaya were conferred the Prof. R.P. Pokhrel (Father of Vision of Nepal) Indo-Nepal Friendship Gold Medal 2024 at a ceremony at the Indo-Nepal Friendship International CME at Hotel

Surya Heritage, Kathmandu. The award was in the name of Prof RP Pokhrel, who is considered to be the father of Ophthalmology of Nepal. The function was graced by Ram Baran Yadav, ex-president, Democratic Republic of Nepal. Dr Praveen and Dr Vasunathy jointly received the award for their yeoman service in the field of community ophthalmology from Nepal Ophthalmic Society and Association of Community Ophthalmologists of India.



A still from *All We Imagine As Light*



A still from *Girls Will Be Girls*

'I HAVE NEVER CHASED OPPORTUNITIES'

Actor Kani Kusruti, whose *All We Imagine As Light* is all set to compete for Palme d'Or at Cannes, speaks about working with female directors, her favourite character that she played, and more

NAMRATA JOSHI

IT'S not yet six months into 2024 and already the year appears to belong to actor Kani Kusruti. Her film *Girls Will Be Girls*, directed by Shuchi Talati, premiered in the World Dramatic section at Sundance and walked away with the audience award. Now, Payal Kapadia's *All We Imagine As Light* is set to compete for Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival.

Then there have been popular series like *Killer Soup*, *Poacher*, and *Maharani Season 3* on OTT, which have taken her to living rooms across India and made her a familiar face in ordinary households. CE caught up with the maverick actor whose roots lie in theatre and who gained recognition in cinema with *Kerala Cafe* in 2009. Is it the best year in her life as an artist so far? In the middle of a shoot in Kerala, Kani spoke about her Cannes tryst and more.

Excerpts:

■ *Girls Will Be Girls* (GWBG) at Sundance, *All We Imagine As Light* (AWIAL) at Cannes. Did you see it coming?

I am very happy for both films. I knew they were going to be sent to festivals but didn't know where. Both have been special in their own way, and I am fortunate to have been a part of them.

■ Both *GWBG* and *AWIAL* are by female filmmakers, Shuchi Talati and Payal Kapadia, respectively. Does gender determine the way people work on a film? Does it impact you as an actor? I don't know if it has to do with gender or if it's about these individuals. All I can say is that they have brought in a very positive working environment. *GWBG* had more than 50 percent female crew. It was amazing to be surrounded by so many women. It felt very democratic and collaborative. It was their conscious decision and



they have worked hard to create such an environment for everyone. I want to give them credit for their work ethic. I feel more comfortable in an environment with an equal representation of women.

■ How was it working with Payal and Shuchi? Payal and Shuchi are very different in their creative processes. With *GWBG* initially, I wasn't sure if I was understanding the story. I was a little confused. But after my first conversation with Shuchi, I felt like working with her. She is a very open-minded director. She will shoot a scene a certain way and then do it again and again as per the interpretation of

each of the actors.

I immediately connected to *AWIAL* on reading the script. Payal's is the first film on which I have rehearsed excessively, way before the shoot. For *GWBG*, a week or so before the shoot Shuchi worked with me on the physique, walk and body language of the character.

Both Shuchi and Payal helped me understand my characters. Half of my acting credit goes to the directors for navigating me in their own way. Both are very collaborative and are very different but in their involvement

with their films, they both have the same intensity.

■ In both films, your character's dynamic with another woman seems to be crucial.

Shuchi auditioned many for the role of Mira, my daughter in *GWBG*. When Preeti Panigrahi did it, it immediately clicked. She interpreted it in the most accurate way. It was while rehearsing with her, that I understood the nuances of the story. It all came to light for me while watching Preeti interpret her character. I was very moved by it. She made everything clear.

Divya Prabha and I have known each other for a long time. We have worked together earlier but in Payal's film, it was more about learning together. Every co-actor I work with makes me learn something. The better craft they have in them, the easier it makes my job.

■ Do you consider any role or film as a turning point or dealbreaker for you?

My most favourite character so far has been Monalisa in *OK Computer*. It's a turning point in my internal journey as an actor. I like to do comedies but rarely get them.

The fact that *Biriyani* was so well received and won many awards gave me a lot more opportunities than before. People started taking me more seriously. I wouldn't say that it is my kind of film, but it brought me a lot of visibility.

■ You seem to like working from the periphery rather than being at the centre of the film industry...

I have never chased films. I haven't put myself out there. I have done whatever has come to me. Only in the past three years have I reached out to people, when I have liked their work.

Girls Will Be Girls had more than 50 percent female crew. It was amazing to be surrounded by so many women. It felt very democratic and collaborative.

-Kani Kusruti, Actor



Al Pacino, Dan Stevens team up for *The Ritual*

VETERAN actor Al Pacino, along with *Downton Abbey*-fame Dan Stevens will be heading a horror film titled *The Ritual*. David Midell is directing the film, he is best known for helming the thriller *The Killing of Kenneth Chamberlain*.

The Ritual is written by Midell, along with Enrico Natale. The film also stars Ashley Greene and Abigail Cowen in significant roles.

Produced by Andrew Stevens, Mitchell Welch and Natale, *The Ritual* follows two priests, played by Pacino and Stevens, who join forces to save a young woman through a dangerous exorcism. The film is reportedly based on the true story of Emma Schmidt, an American woman who underwent terrifying exorcisms.

With a release date yet to be announced, the film is expected to be released in 2025. Meanwhile, Pacino, who was last seen in *Knox Goes Away*, has a slew of films in the pipeline, including *Modi*, directed by Johnny Depp, *In the Hand of Dante*, and *Killing Castro*, among others. On the other hand, Stevens will next be seen in *Among Us* and *Zero Day*.



SANTHOSH PRATHAP TO SHARE SCREEN SPACE WITH ANJALI IN EEGAI

ACTOR Santhosh Prathap will next be seen in Anjali's 50th film, *Eegai*. He took to his social media handles to announce the news with an image of his character from the film. Santhosh will be seen playing a police officer named V Arun in *Eegai*.

The actor is best known for appearing in films like *Kazhuvethi Moorkkan*, *Sarpatta Parambarai*, *Pathu Thala*, and *Maruthi Nagar Police Station*. Billed as a suspense thriller, *Eegai* was first announced early last year. Ashok Velayutham is directing the film from his own screenplay.

Eegai has cinematography by Sridhar G, music by Dharaman Kumar, and editing by Srikanth, with dialogues penned by Bharathan. The film is being produced by Krishnachandrar Ramabadrana.

Santhosh will next be seen in *Aranmani 4*, which stars Sundar C, Raashii Khanna, and Tamannaah. On the other hand, Anjali's next project is the action drama *Gangs of Godavari*.



PREITY ZINTA STARTS FILMING FOR LAHORE 1947

PREITY Zinta has joined the sets of Sunny Deol's upcoming film, *Lahore 1947*. On Tuesday, the actor took to social media to share a behind-the-scenes photo from the sets. She will be making a comeback with the film, which is being directed by Rajkumar Santoshi and produced by Aamir Khan.

Preity was last seen in *Bhalaji Superhit* in 2018, which also starred Sunny Deol. Both the actors have earlier worked together in films like *Hero: Love Story of a Spy* (2003) and *Farz* (2001).

Lahore 1947 was announced in October last year and marks the first collaboration between Aamir Khan and Sunny Deol. Santoshi and Deol have previously collaborated in three box office successes, including *Ghayal* (1990), *Damini* (1993), and *Ghatak* (1996). It also marks the reunion of Aamir Khan and Santoshi after their iconic cult classic, *Andaz Apna Apna* (1994).

Kurangu Pedal to release next week

WE had previously reported that actor Sivakarthekeyan is producing a film titled *Kurangu Pedal* under his banner Sivakarthekeyan Productions. The makers have now announced that the film, directed by Kamalakannan, will hit theatres on May 3.

It is to be noted that *Kurangu Pedal* is one of the three Tamil films selected for the Indian Panorama section at the 53rd International Film Festival of India. The director has previously helmed films like *Madhubaanakadai* (2012) and *Vattam* (2022).

Touted to be a feel-good drama, *Kurangu Pedal* is inspired from the



short story *Cycle*, written by Rasi Azhagappan. Set in the summer of 1980s in Salem's Katheri village, the film delves into the bond between a father and his son, who is determined to learn how to ride a cycle. According to the makers, the film is expected to be a poignant exploration of family dynamics and the pursuit of dreams.

Santhosh Velumurugan, VR Ragavan, M Gnanasekar, Rathish, and Sai Ganesh will play pivotal roles in *Kurangu Pedal*. Kaali Venkat plays the father, while Prasanna Balachander and Jensen Diwakar are also part of the cast.

The film has music by Ghibran Vaibodha, cinematography by Sumeet Baskaran, editing by Shivanandeeswaran, and sound design by Antony BJ Ruban.