







## Linking Aadhaar to voter ID should remain voluntary

One of the clear successes of Indian democracy has been the regular conduct of elections and the relatively high participation of electors in the voting process compared to other countries. Besides the fact that the process is relatively simple with the use of the electronic voting machine, high voter turnout has also been possible due to registration drives by the Election Commission of India (ECI). Periodically, the ECI does face the issue of a cleaning up of electoral rolls due to increases in migrant populations in urban sprawls, demographic changes due to the entry of more eligible voters, besides deaths of older people. But repeated cycles of elections have allowed for a cohesion in this process with voters allowed to register based on proofs of their age and current place of residence. The Aadhaar number is not a proof of citizenship and is meant to be issued to residents, while only adult citizens who are resident in India are eligible to vote. Instrumentally speaking, matching the Aadhaar number to the electoral roll in order to perform verifications is not a foolproof process. The Internet Freedom Foundation has cited data to show that self-reported errors in the Aadhaar database are higher than those in the electoral database. There is also evidence that Aadhaar-linkage with voter identity cards, as in the Assembly elections in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh recently, for example, led to the arbitrary deletion of eligible voters on a large scale. Besides, with the Aadhaar number now being used to access a variety of services, linking to voter IDs, when aggregated from booth level data, can possibly lead to misuse by agencies. The absence of a data protection law heightens the risk of this possibility as well. The insistence on linking Aadhaar with the voter ID militates against these principles. The ECI should limit itself to utilising existing proofs for voter authentication and Aadhaar declaration should remain voluntary.

### LETTERBOX

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Business opportunities  
are like buses, there's  
always another one coming.

- Richard Branson

## THE FINANCIAL WORLD

RNI NO. DELENG/2011/38860  
PRINTED & PUBLISHED BY SWINDER BAJWA  
ON BEHALF OF FW MEDIA  
PRINTED AT JAGJIT PUBLISHING CO. PVT LTD  
D-12, INDUSTRIAL AREA, PHASE-1, MOHALI,  
PUNJAB 160059  
PRINTER & PUBLISHER SWINDER BAJWA  
OWNER: FW MEDIA  
PUBLISHED AT: BUILDING NO-23, NEHRU PLACE  
NEW DELHI 110019; PHONE: 9888040061  
EDITOR\* ABDUL WASEY  
(\*RESPONSIBLE FOR SELECTION OF NEWS UNDER THE PRB ACT)



R.K. VIJ SAYS ATTENTION NEEDS TO BE PAID TO LINGERING ISSUES IN INDIA'S POLICE AGENCY

## Criminal laws: The shackles of 1861 need to go

As India is celebrating 75 years of Independence, the police continue to be in the public gaze, most often for antagonistic reasons. Criminal laws and procedures, though modified, and the shadows of India's colonial legacy do not appear to leave the police agency any time soon.

India's parliamentarians rose to the occasion and passed The Probation of Offenders Act, 1958, with an objective more to reform, rather than punish, offenders. Realising the urgent need to check the social evil of dowry, the Dowry Prohibition Act was passed in 1961. More revolutionary changes were made in the Indian Penal Code (IPC) in 1983 and 1986 and by introducing Sections 498A (cruelty by husband and his relatives) and 304B (dowry death) along with certain amendments in the Evidence Act. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, was enacted in 1989.

The definition of rape has been widened and offences related to sexual assault made tougher. Comprehensive laws such as the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act, 2012, and the Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Act, 2015, have been enacted. Electronic documents and signatures have been given legal sanctity to facilitate online transactions and check cybercrime under the Information Technology Act of 2000. The National Investigation Agency was constituted in 2008 (after the deadly 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai) to investigate and prosecute offences affecting national security. All these statutes have added a progressive and more humane chapter to the history of our criminal justice system.



The constitutional courts have also made far-reaching contributions. By reading down Section 377 of the IPC, the Supreme Court granted relief to the LGBTQ+ community. Custodial torture and sexual harassment of women have been held to be violations of fundamental rights. The jurisprudence of providing compensation to victims of crime has evolved over time. The right to privacy has been recognised as a fundamental right. The demon of 'sedition' (Section 124A), which was brought into the IPC in 1870 to suppress the national movement, has recently been caged by the Supreme Court so that its constitutionality can be decided and its alleged misuse be curbed.

Attempts have been made to blend some elements of the inquisitorial system into the (prevalent) adversarial system by making judicial inquiry into custodial death and custodial rape mandatory and dig out the truth to punish the guilty. However, the

police continue to be haunted by allegations of being a brute force. The trust deficit does not appear to have bridged despite the power to arrest having been curtailed, the use of handcuffs restrained, the presence of a lawyer permitted during interrogation, CCTV cameras installed in the police stations, and human rights bodies allowed to keep a constant eye. Lawmakers are still reluctant and the judiciary apprehensive about making voluntary confessions before a police officer admissible.

Many committees have been constituted and recommendations made to reform the criminal justice system in general and the police in particular, but to no avail. The latest in focus is the Supreme Court order in Prakash Singh v. Union of India (2006). The poor and tardy compliance with the directives has been explained in the book, *The Struggle for Police Reforms in India: Ruler's Police to People's Police*. This public

interest litigation was filed with an objective of transforming 'a ruler's police into a people's police'. The writer, Prakash Singh, has said that even the directive of separating investigation from law and order, which only required a sanction of a few more posts, was not implemented by States and Union Territories in the true spirit. Despite 'Police' being a State subject, no State government has given due attention to police reforms so far. Though the Police Act of 1861 was made applicable to all provinces after the 1902-03 Commission's recommendations, no State or UT has adopted the Model Police Act drafted by Soli J. Sorabjee.

Though there was no connection between the magistrates and the police in the system established in England from 1829 onwards, the mutiny made this arrangement possible for the purpose of utilising the police primarily for the maintenance of British rule in India. All such provisions, despite having outlived their purpose long ago, still continue to exist not only in the States' Police Acts but also in the criminal codes. It is no wonder then that the District Superintendent of Police is unable to transfer his Station House Officers without the approval of the District Magistrate in U.P.; the performance appraisal report of a Superintendent of Police is still written by the District Magistrate in some States (including Chhattisgarh) despite the Supreme Court's directions to the contrary; and the introduction of the police commissionerate system in metropolitan areas (as per the provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code) is always resisted tooth and nail.

R.K. Vij is a former Special Director General of Police of Chhattisgarh. Views are personal



RAJESH GUPTA EXPLORES WHY UNIVERSAL BASIC INSURANCE IS A BETTER PROPOSITION

## Making out a case for the other UBI in India

It took the COVID-19 pandemic to expose the precariousness of human society across the world. As the importance of social security came into focus after the major waves of the pandemic, the debate on universal basic income (UBI) began to resurface in policy circles across the globe. However, there is another UBI that needs to be examined in the Indian context, i.e., universal basic insurance. Before discussing the second UBI, or insurance, it is worthwhile looking at the design options for social security.

Income shocks result in a free fall of those living on the line of basic living wages (say line 1) down towards the critical survival line (say line 2). In any case, a fall that is further below line 2 needs to be prevented as it can be catastrophic — a household can end up facing a poverty trap. Social security systems are like a safety net placed at line 2. These social security nets can be of three types. The first is a passive safety net which catches those falling from line 1 and prevents a fall below line 2. The second is an active safety net which works like a trampoline so that those who fall on it are able to bounce back to line 1. The third is a proactive safety net which acts like a launchpad so that those who fall on it will not only bounce back but will also move up beyond line 1.

The first type of safety net is basically a social assistance programme meant for the most income-deprived sections of society. The second type of safety net is a scheme with a higher outlay. The third type of social security net is the most desirable option but requires immense resources and institutional capacity. For social security, people on the south end of the income line need social assistance schemes. Those on the north end of the income line should have voluntary insurance.

Social security mainly encompasses food security, health security and income security. India operates the widest spectrum of social security schemes which cater to the largest number of people than any other country. The sheer scale of Indian social



security programmes delivered to millions of households spread over a vast geography is mind-boggling.

The Indian food security programme, for example, has over 800 million beneficiaries being provided heavily subsidised food grain under the National Food Security Act (NFSA). The NFSA is the world's largest food security programme. About 120 million children are provided free lunch under the Mid-Day Meal Scheme. In addition, some 50 million people benefit from the free meals programme run by a few State governments. Nevertheless, there are issues of financial sustainability and leakages in the food security programme.

On the health security front, for the unorganised sector, there is the Ayushman Bharat Scheme of the central government with over 490 million beneficiaries. In the organised sector, the Central government runs the Employees State Insurance Corporation (ESIC) and Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) catering to 130 million and four million beneficiaries, respectively. Health insurance schemes run by various State governments cover about 200 million people. Only about 110 million people in India

have private health insurance. Despite these large-scale provisions, about 400 million Indians are not covered under any kind of health insurance.

Income security is the trickiest part to tackle in the social security basket. For the organised sector, there are three types of provident fund schemes: General Provident Fund (GPF) which is availed by about 20 million Central and State government employees in the country. The second is the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) which is availed by about 65 million workers in the other organised sector. The third is Public Provident Fund (PPF) that can be availed by any Indian citizen but has contributions from the organised sector mostly. There are about 53 million New Pension Scheme subscribers in the country (about 2.2 million in the Central government, 5.6 million in the State government and the rest in the private sector).

In the unorganised sector, the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Maan-Dhan Yojana (PM-KMY) and the PM-KISAN scheme is availed by about 120 million farmers. Atal Pension Yojana (APY) benefits 40 million people. The

Pradhan Mantri Shram Yogi Maandhan Yojana has about five million beneficiaries while there are about 50,000 beneficiaries under the National Pension Scheme for Traders and Self-Employed Persons (NPS-Traders) scheme. The largest unorganised sector income security programme is the scheme under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act, which has about 60 million beneficiaries. Thus, out of 500 million workers in India, about 100 million have no income security (pension, gratuity or other income) coverage. Proponents of universal basic income cite the informality of the Indian economy as the hurdle in rolling out schemes such as unemployment insurance in the country. However, besides huge fiscal implications (around 4.5% of GDP), the proposal of universal basic income runs the risk of implementation failure due to large-scale beneficiary identification requirements.

The other UBI, i.e. universal basic insurance, is a better proposition for two reasons. One, the insurance penetration (premium as a percentage of GDP) in India has been hovering around 4% for many years compared to 17%, 9% and 6% in Taiwan, Japan and China, respectively. Two, though the economy largely remains informal, data of that informal sector are now available both for businesses (through GSTIN, or Goods and Services Tax Identification Number) and for unorganised workers (through e-Shram, which is the centralised database of all unorganised workers). As a result of the recent initiatives by the Government, the Goods and Services Tax (GST) portal has 13.5 million registrations and the e-Shram portal has over 280 million registrations. As a prototype of a social security portal based on such data, the social registry portal, 'Kutumba', developed by Karnataka is available as a blueprint. Till the Indian economy grows to have adequate voluntary insurance, social security can be boosted through the scheme of universal basic insurance.

Rajesh Gupta is a research scholar. Views are personal.

### BOOKS: REVIEW

## Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk's book to release in September

Turkish novelist and Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk's new work of fiction, 'Nights of Plague', will hit the stands next month, Penguin Random House India (PRHI) announced on Tuesday. The book, slated to release under Penguin's 'Hamish Hamilton' imprint, is a historical novel with events that takes place in 1901 during the third plague pandemic on a fictional Ottoman island. It is currently available for pre-order online.

"The 19th century European novel has an Eastward movement from London, Paris, Berlin, Moscow, to St Petersburg. 'In my novel 'Nights of Plague', however, the action moves in a sphere that is much more Southern, and from

East to West: Hong Kong, Beijing, Bombay, Alexandria, Istanbul, Crete and Venice. Indian readers will notice and enjoy this new novelistic demographic and the warmer setting," Pamuk said in a statement. Pamuk, who is the author of ten novels and three works of non-fiction, is the winner of the 2006 Nobel Prize in Literature. It is April 1900, in the Levant, on the imaginary island of Mingheria — the twenty-ninth state of the Ottoman Empire. Half the population is Muslim, the other half are Orthodox Greeks, and tension is high between the two.

When a plague arrives — brought either by Muslim pilgrims returning from the Mecca or by merchant vessels coming from Alexandria — the island

**'In this part detective story and part historical fiction, Pamuk has created an imaginary world plagued by an outbreak, not very different from the one we are living in today — except he has been working on this novel for more than four years'**

revolts. To stop the epidemic, the Ottoman sultan Abdul Hamid II sends his most accomplished quarantine expert to the island — an Orthodox Christian. Some of the Muslims, including followers of a popular religious sect and its leader Sheikh Hamdullah, refuse



Nights of Plague  
By Orhan Pamuk (Author),  
Ekin Oklap (Translator)  
Knopf  
704 pages; Rs719

to take precautions or respect the quarantine. And then a murder occurs. "Soon, the eyes of the world will turn to this ancient island, where the future of a fragile empire is at stake, in an epic and playful mystery of passion, fear, scandal and murder, from one of history's master storytellers," reads the description of the book. According to the publishers, Pamuk's new novel is a "masterpiece", and the drawings and hand-drawn maps in the book add texture to its thrilling universe.

"In this part detective story and part historical fiction, Pamuk

has created an imaginary world plagued by an outbreak, not very different from the one we are living in today — except he has been working on this novel for more than four years," said Meru Gokhale, publisher, Penguin Press at PRHI. Pamuk is best known outside his own country for his two most recent novels - My Name is Red (2000) and Snow (2002, English translation 2004).

The former, which won the Impac award, is a murder mystery and love story set among the artistic intrigues of the Islamic miniaturists of the Ottoman court in 16th-century Istanbul. A rich and complex work narrated by a range of voices, it explores the tension between east and west, Islam and Christianity.

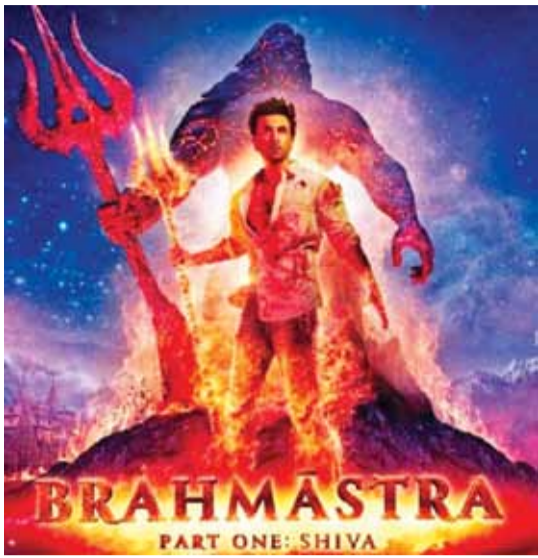
The critically-acclaimed Snow, a thriller set in the 1990s that features a poet who is caught up in a military coup, is the first of Pamuk's novels to tackle politics directly.







# Content makes the film global: Ranbir Kapoor



In the run-up to the release of his pan-India movie "Brahmastra: Part One Shiva", Bollywood star Ranbir Kapoor on Wednesday said he hopes the story resonates with a global audience.

In filmmaker Ayan Mukerji's upcoming ambitious fantasy adventure, Kapoor plays the lead role of Shiva and stars alongside veterans such as Amitabh Bachchan and Nagarjuna.

Described as a blend of ancient Indian culture and spirituality in the contemporary world, "Brahmastra: Part One Shiva" is scheduled to be released worldwide on September 9. "Of course you feel excited and nervous when a film comes out, especially a film of this nature. It is something we really gave our lives to. So there is more pressure. But

I also believe the audience is king and nobody can question them," Kapoor said at the film's promotional event here.

Also starring Alia Bhatt and Mouni Roy, the Dharma Productions movie will be presented in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam by "RRR" director SS Rajamouli.

Kapoor said having someone like Rajamouli, who has gained global recognition with his recent period epic "RRR", support their project is a great honour.

Nagarjuna said he enjoys watching big-scale entertainers and after "Brahmastra..." would love to star in more such movies.

"I would definitely like to star in a big-scale movie and hope Rajamouli sir makes one with me," he quipped.

## Multiple blunt force injuries on Sonali Phogat's body; murder case lodged



**PANAJI:** Goa Police on Thursday said Haryana BJP leader and TikTok star Sonali Phogat's body had multiple blunt force injuries, as per the postmortem report, and a murder case has been registered.

Deputy Superintendent of Police Jyba Dalvi told to Media that there are multiple blunt force injuries on the body. "We have registered the case against her personal assistant

-- the brother of Sonali Phogat. Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Thursday said that DGP has been given full freedom to take decisions in this case.

"There is full freedom to the police department to take correct decisions," he said after the case was registered.

Sawant on Wednesday had said the Goa police is thoroughly investigating the death of Haryana BJP leader and actor Sonali Phogat, however, according to preliminary investigation, it looks like cause of death is cardiac arrest.

According to Goa police, Sonali Phogat felt uneasy on Monday night and later in the morning (on Tuesday), she was taken to St. Anthony hospital in Anjuna at around 8 a.m., where she was declared brought dead.

She had come to Goa on August 22 and was staying at a hotel in Anjuna.



Sudhir Sangwan and his friend Sukhwinder Wasi, « Dalvi said. The autopsy was conducted on Thursday. The case has been registered on Thursday following a complaint by Rinku Dhaka

## 'Bulbul-e-Pakistan' Nayyara Noor laid to rest as admirers praise her immortal work

Nayyara Noor, the iconic Pakistani singer who earned the honorific title of 'Bulbul-e-Pakistan' for her mesmerising voice that enthralled music aficionados on both sides of the border, has been laid to rest here after her admirers attended her funeral in huge numbers. Noor, born in India, died after a long battle with cancer in this southern Pakistani city on Sunday at the age of 71. She is survived by her husband and two sons. Funeral prayers of Noor were offered at DHA's Imambarah Yasrab on Sunday, following which she was laid to rest in the Phase VIII graveyard. Showbiz personalities, politicians, journalists and music lovers attended her funeral in large numbers. The News newspaper reported on Monday. Her husband Shehryar Zaidi, a veteran TV actor, told the media that Noor had been suffering from last-stage cancer for one and a half years.



## Suriya starts filming for Siruthai Siva's movie



National Award winner Suriya on Wednesday said he has started shooting for his next film with director Siruthai Siva of "Annaatthe" fame.

The actor made the announcement on his official Twitter account. "Shoot begins...!! Need all your blessings...!! #Suriya42 @directorsiva @ThisIsDSP @StudioGreen2 @UV\_Creations," Suriya captioned the photo with the director and composer Devi Sri Prasad from the film's launch.

Produced by Studio Green and UV Creations, the untitled

movie marks the actor's 42nd project.

Last month, Suriya was announced as the winner of best actor National Award for "Soorai Potturu". He shared the honour with Ajay Devgn for latter's performance in "Tanhaji: The Unsung Warrior".

Suriya recently featured in a cameo in the Kamal Haasan-starrer "Vikram" and starred as himself in a guest appearance in "Rocketry: The Nambi Effect", fronted by R Madhavan. He will next be seen in "Vanangaan".

## Rasika Dugal on reprising characters: Tougher for writers than actors

The difficulty of carving an arc for a relatively known character in a new season of a web series rests more with the writers than the actors who are essaying them, says Rasika Dugal.

Dugal is returning for the second season of the Netflix series "Delhi Crime". She is currently shooting for the third season of Prime Video show "Mirzapur". It is an easier task for the actor to get back into the skin of a relatively old character, she said.

"There are series like 'Delhi Crime' and 'Mirzapur' so it is easy to pick up the characters from season to season. When you are picking up a role from one season to another, the dif-



icult part rests with the writers. It's difficult when the characters are already introduced and then you have to make those characters go somewhere else.

"But for actors, it's much more comfortable because af-

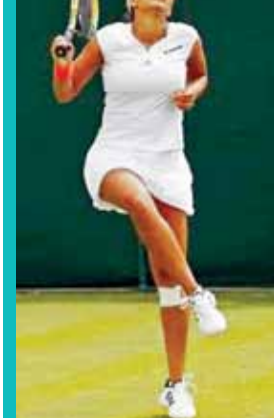
ter a season when you come back, you are like you know them (characters). They have only changed a little bit but we still know what they are and we understand them," Dugal told to media in an interview here.

The actor, whose franchise credits also include Disney+ Hotstar series "Out of Love", said one can never prepare enough to play a brand new role.

"Playing a new role is far more scary as you have to put in a lot of work and you don't even know if you are making the right choice. "Also, whenever you prepare for a new character, you feel maybe if you would have got one more month, you were good to go. An actor can never say they are fully prepared for the role. You can just keep on preparing, and there's no end to it," she added.

## POTPOURRI

### Sania Mirza pulls out of US Open due to injury



Star Indian tennis player Sania Mirza has pulled out of the upcoming US Open doubles event due to an injury that she had sustained two weeks back in Canada, a development which will lead to a change in her retirement plans.

The 35-year-old Sania said in an Instagram post that she had injured herself during the Canadian Open in Toronto this month and the scans showed a torn tendon.

"Hi guys, a quick update. I just have some not so great news. I hurt my forearm/elbow while playing in Canada two weeks ago and obviously didn't realise how bad it was until got my scans yesterday and unfortunately I have in fact torn a little bit of my tendon," Sania said in the Instagram post.

### Kamal Haasan starrer 'Indian 2' resumes shoot



The team of upcoming film "Indian 2" is set to start shooting for the remaining portions on Thursday, director Shankar has announced.

The Tamil-language movie is the follow-up to the 1996 vigilante action thriller "Indian", starring Kamal Haasan.

Shankar, who also directed the first part, shared the update on Twitter as he shared the film's new posters featuring Haasan.

"Good morning Indians, we are glad to announce that the remaining shoot for Indian 2 is commencing today! Need all of your support and wishes," the acclaimed filmmaker wrote.

Haasan said he will join the production next month.



## Ranbir Kapoor enjoys a meal off a banana leaf with Rajamouli, Nagarjuna

Actor Ranbir Kapoor on Wednesday tried out a tasty south Indian meal along with ace director S.S. Rajamouli and Telugu superstar Nagarjuna. The trio, who were in Chennai to promote Ayan

Mukherji's upcoming film 'Brahmastra', tried the delectable south Indian meal served to them on a plantain leaf in the traditional way. Ranbir, in particular, seemed to relish the food.

## Celebrated boxer Mary Kom undergoes ACL surgery

Six-time world champion boxer MC Mary Kom on Tuesday underwent a reconstructive surgery to repair an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) tear in her left knee.

The veteran boxer had torn her ACL when she twisted her knee in the first few minutes of her 48kg bout during the the Commonwealth Games selection trials in June. The surgery was done at a Mumbai hospital. "Mary had an ACL injury in her knee for which she underwent surgery today in Mumbai," Mary Kom's coach Chhote Lal Yadav



told to media. Due to the injury, the 39-year-old had missed the CWG, where she had become the first Indian woman boxer to claim a gold medal in the 2018 edition. The multiple-time Asian Championship gold medallist had last competed in the Tokyo Olympics, where she had bowed out in the pre-quarterfinals.

## Arjun Singh Cheema wins men's 50m pistol trial



Punjab marksman Arjun Singh Cheema won the national men's 50m pistol selection trials at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range here on Thursday.

Arjun shot 562 after 60 shots to finish ahead of the CISF's Avishkaar Tomar, who shot 558. The Air Force's Ravinder came third with 558, but with one lesser inner-10 than Avishkaar.

In the junior men's free pistol competition, Abhinav Choudhary of Rajasthan finished first with a score of 554. Haryana's Ankit Tomar was second with 544 while Uttar Pradesh's Akshat Verma was third with 540.

In the junior women's free pistol, Sakshi Suryavanshi of Maharashtra was first with 545, Haryana's Shikha Narwal second with 540, while Divanshi, also from Haryana, was third with an aggregate of 536 points.

## Amit Shah meets Telugu actor Junior NTR during Telangana visit

In a meeting that sparked a buzz, Union Home Minister Amit Shah interacted with popular Telugu actor Junior NTR, a grandson of legendary N T Rama Rao, here on Sunday night during his day-long visit to Telangana.

"Had a good interaction with a very talented actor and the gem of our Telugu cinema, Jr NTR in Hyderabad," Shah tweeted.

In response, Junior NTR said it was a pleasure meeting Shah. "It was a pleasure meeting you and having a delightful interaction @AmitShah ji.



Thanks for the kind words," he said. Telangana BJP president and

MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar said it was a personal meeting and that he was not present.

Some BJP sources claimed that Shah appreciated Junior NTR's performance in ace director Rajamouli's recent blockbuster 'RRR'.

The meeting, however, triggered speculation that it could be a move to attract Junior NTR's fans and also Andhra Pradesh-origin voters in Telangana.

Junior N T Rama Rao, popularly known as Junior NTR, is a son of late Hari Krishna, one of the sons of TDP founder and former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh N T Rama Rao.

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