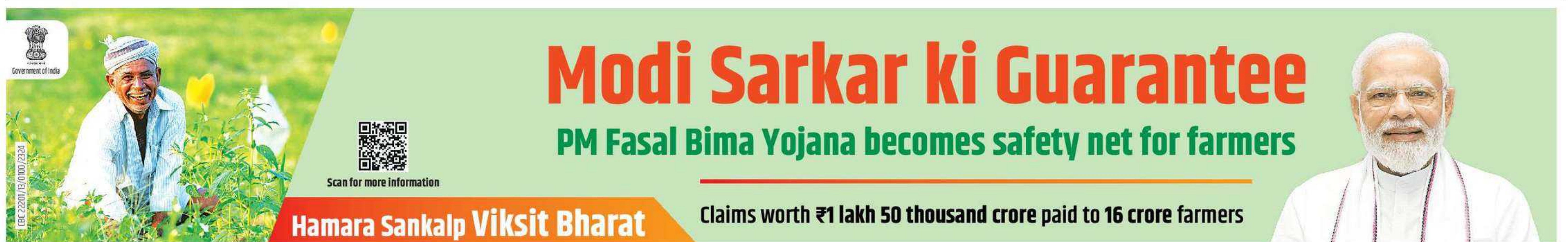




Hindustan Times

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Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee
 PM Fasal Bima Yojana becomes safety net for farmers

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat Claims worth ₹1 lakh 50 thousand crore paid to 16 crore farmers

Soren returns to Ranchi, digs heels amid ED hunt

Raj Kumar
 letters@hindustantimes.com

RANCHI: Jharkhand's ruling coalition reposed faith in embattled chief minister Hemant Soren after a late-evening meeting on Tuesday, capping a dramatic day that saw the 48-year-old leader emerge in Ranchi after driving 1,300km by road from Delhi, where an Enforcement Directorate team missed him a day earlier, sparking a massive political storm over allegations that he was absconding.

The meeting, held at the chief minister's residence in Ranchi, was attended by all legislators of the ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led alliance, and his wife Kalpana Soren, amid mounting speculation that she might step in as CM if he is arrested by the federal agency.

"I reside in your hearts," he said in Ranchi after paying tributes to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary, while responding to a query regarding his absence.

"We all are committed to following the footsteps and ideologies of the Father of the Nation. We are proud that such people were born among us and guided us," he added.

continued on →7



Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren leaves for a meeting in Ranchi on Tuesday. PTI

CM took a 1,300km overnight car ride as his plane was under watch

Neeraj Chauhan and Neha LM Tripathi
 letters@hindustantimes.com

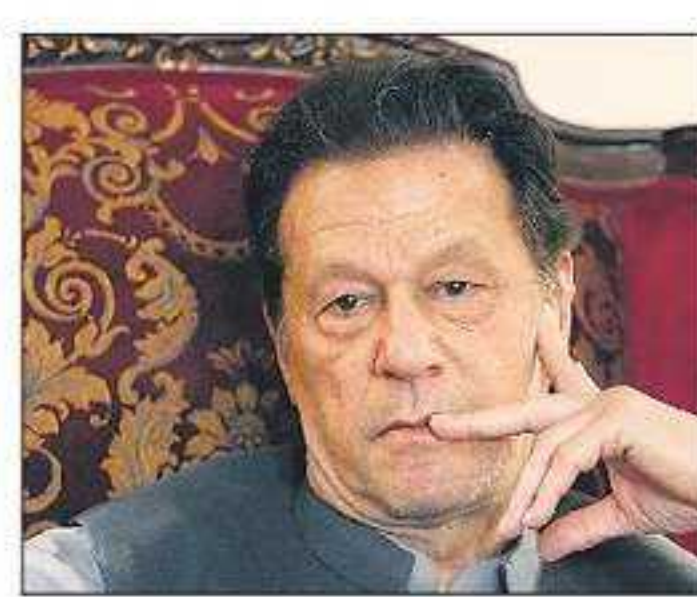
NEW DELHI: While the Enforcement Directorate continued to camp at the airport in Delhi waiting for Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren to board a return flight to Ranchi, the

48-year-old leader undertook a 1,300-km journey by road to reach the state capital on Tuesday, people familiar with the matter said.

Soren landed at New Delhi's IGI airport on Friday and was expected to fly out by a private plane, airport officials said. This aircraft was parked at the airport

and an ED team was stationed at the airport in case he sought to fly back to Ranchi.

Soren was "around" New Delhi for legal consultation, the people cited in the first instance said, stressing that there was no need for the agency to go looking for him in Delhi since he had already responded to ED summons. →P8



Imran Khan

IMRAN KHAN GETS 10-YR TERM FOR 'EXPOSING OFFICIAL SECRETS'

Rezaul H Laskar
 letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: A Pakistan court on Tuesday gave a 10-year prison term to former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi for leaking confidential state information in what has come to be known as the cipher case.

The verdict, delivered nine days ahead of the February 8 general election, is expected to further affect the prospects of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Khan's supporters have contended this was the latest in a raft of legal cases aimed at sidelining the cricketer-turned-politician, who continues to enjoy widespread grassroots support.

Presiding judge Abul Hasnat Zulqamain announced the ruling at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi. →P19

INS Sumitra rescues 19 Pak sailors, nabs pirates

Rahul Singh
 letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Indian Navy on Tuesday said that its offshore patrol vessel INS Sumitra rescued an Iranian-flagged fishing vessel (FV) hijacked by armed pirates off the Somali coast, the second such action in the last 24 hours in the Arabian Sea where the security situation has deteriorated significantly due to the resurgence of piracy and missile and drone attacks by Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

FV Al Naeemi, the second Iranian-flagged vessel to be rescued by INS Sumitra, was carrying a crew of 19 Pakistani nationals.

The Indian Navy also helped rescue a hijacked Sri Lankan fishing trawler in the Indian Ocean on January 29, in a joint operation with the Seychelles Defence Forces and Sri Lanka Navy around 955 nautical miles east of Mogadishu. This action involved INS Sharda, also an offshore patrol vessel.

"INS Sumitra, having thwarted the piracy attempt on FV Iman, carried out yet another successful anti-piracy operation off the east coast of

continued on →17



Commandos stand guard with a group of detained pirates after the Indian Navy freed a hijacked fishing vessel. INDIAN NAVY/AFP PHOTO

India welcomes competition in global politics, says Jaishankar

Niraj Pandit
 letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: India does not fear Beijing and rather welcomes competition and tries to be better than other countries, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said at an event in Mumbai on Tuesday. "It

(China) is India's neighbour and is going to deploy resources and shape South Asia's geopolitical situation in 'China's way,' Jaishankar said, adding that rather than complaining about what China is doing, he said India's response is, "Let me do better than that." →P10

Chandigarh mayor drama: Invalid votes, and a BJP win

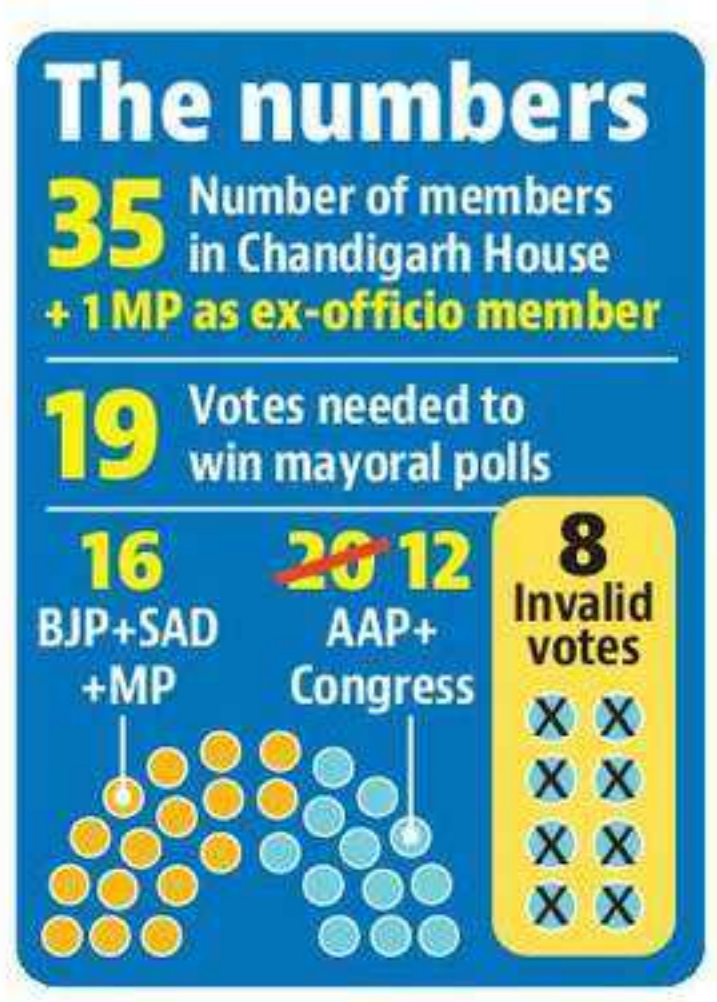
Mandeep Kaur Narula
 letters@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday won the Chandigarh mayoral poll after the chair scrapped a fourth of the Opposition's votes in a controversial decision, sparking allegations of vote tampering that marred the first electoral showdown between the ruling party and the 27-party Indian National Development Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

In a House of 35 (and one MP, the BJP's Kirron Kher, as ex-officio member) the INDIA bloc can-

didate Kuldeep Dhalor was tipped to win after the Aam Aadmi Party, with 13 members, and the Congress, with 7, joined hands and supported a joint nominee. But he was defeated by the BJP's Manoj Sonkar after the nominated councillor officiating the election, BJP office bearer Anil Masih, declared eight votes invalid.

No official reason was given for the decision during the announcement of the results. Masih, later in the evening, said that the ballot papers had some pen marks. →P9



LAND-FOR-JOBS: DAY AFTER LALU, ED SLEUTHS QUIZ SON TEJASHWI

Avinash Kumar
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PATNA: Former Bihar deputy chief minister and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav was interrogated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money-laundering case linked to the land-for-jobs scam on Tuesday, a day after his father and former chief minister Lalu Prasad was quizzed in the matter. The interrogation lasted for over nine hours, as he left the ED office at around 8.05pm, people familiar with the matter said. →P8

IMF UPGRADES INDIA GROWTH ESTIMATE TO 6.7%

Roshan Kishore
 letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: IMF has made an upward revision to its growth forecast for India for the fiscal year 2023-24, taking it to 6.7%. While this is an upward revision of 40 basis points — one basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point — it is still lower than India's own estimates for GDP growth in 2023-24, which is 7.3%. →P23

All 14 suspended MPs to be back for session

HT Correspondent
 letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday revoked the suspension of 14 Opposition MPs, who were penalised along with 132 others during the Winter Session of Parliament last month, to allow them to attend President Droupadi Murmu's first address to both Houses in the new Parliament

building and the Budget Session from Wednesday.

A record 146 opposition MPs were penalised over a span of six days during the 14-day Winter Session after they refused to budge on their demand for a statement from home minister Amit Shah on Parliament security breach on December 13. Of these, 100 were from the Lower House and 46 from the Upper House. →P8

3 YADAV FAMILY MEMBERS IN FIRST SP LIST FOR POLLS

LUCKNOW: The Samajwadi Party on Tuesday released a list of candidates for 16 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, naming Dimple Yadav, wife of party supremo Akhilesh Yadav, and two other leaders from the Yadav family — Akshay Yadav and Dharmendra Yadav for the elections that are still months away. Dimple Yadav, a three-time MP, has been fielded from the Mainpuri seat, which she won in a bypoll after Mulayam Singh Yadav's death. →P8

First snow leopard census in India puts national count at 718 across 6 hilly states



A snow leopard near Shimla.


Jayashree Nandi
 letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: There are around 718 snow leopards in the country, the first-ever population estimation exercise of the vulnerable species by the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPA) Program has found.

Union environment minister, Bhupendra Yadav released the report, *Status of Snow Leopards in*

India, during the National Board for Wildlife meeting in Delhi on Tuesday.

During the assessment held from 2019 to 2023, a total of 241 unique snow leopards were photographed. Based on the analysis, Ladakh has the highest estimated population of the animal (477) followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu & Kashmir (9). →P10




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{ MY INDIA } ED CHARGE SHEET

'Lalu, family got land from job candidates'



RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav and his family members acquired a discount, separate land parcels from the candidates who were given jobs in the railways with a purpose to "consolidate" the land already owned by the family to increase the size of their overall landholding and, therefore, its value in the real estate market, the ED has claimed in its charge sheet filed earlier this month in the land-for-jobs money laundering probe. Overall, seven land parcels in Patna were transferred at throwaway prices in the name of Yadav's wife Rabri Devi and daughter Hema Yadav by the family members of the candidates or the candidates themselves who applied for and received jobs as Group D substitutes in railways when Yadav headed the Union ministry for railways between 2004 and 2009. →P8

{ MY INDIA } PILOTS DE-ROSTERED

Baku flight takes off without ATC all-clear



Two IndiGo pilots were taken off flying duty after they allegedly took off from Delhi airport for Baku, Azerbaijan's capital, without the requisite clearance from Air Traffic Controllers (ATC), officials aware of the matter said. The pilots of flight 6E 1803 from New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport took off for Baku at 7:38pm before clearance was provided. "The aircraft... was asked to prepare for take off. The pilots, however, took off instead," an official said, declining to be named. "The incident was noted and brought to the knowledge of the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation), after which the pilots were de-rostered." IndiGo confirmed the incident and said it was probing the matter. →P15

{ MY INDIA } INDIA-U.S. TRADE

Garcetti calls for changes to taxation, regulatory system



US ambassador Eric Garcetti on Tuesday called for changes in India's investment, intellectual property, export and taxation regimes and said the government's drive for self-reliance could slow the pace of trade and economic development. Garcetti, speaking on the theme of "Strengthening Indo-US relationship in Amritkal-Aatmanirbhar Bharat" at an event organised by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, highlighted rapid advances made by the two sides in areas such as defence, emerging technologies, critical minerals and semiconductors. However, he contended India and the US won't be able to realise their full potential in trade and investment unless New Delhi brings about changes in areas such as export controls, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the corporate tax regime, which he described as "opaque". →P9

{ MY INDIA } BIHAR POLITICAL DRAMA

'Grand Alliance does not need JD(U) chief'



The Mahagathbandhan (Grand Alliance) in Bihar does not need CM Nitish Kumar to fight for social justice, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said, as he broke his silence on the JD(U) chief's exit from the coalition and slammed him for "taking a U-turn each time little pressure is exerted" by the BJP-led Centre. "The Mahagathbandhan will fight for social justice in Bihar. We don't require Nitish Kumar for that purpose, we don't require him at all," Gandhi said at Rangbhumai Maidan in Purnea district, where his party's ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered from West Bengal during the day. "So this is the condition of Bihar — a little pressure is exerted, and he (Nitish Kumar) makes a U-turn," he added. →P8

{ MY DELHI } MARCHING CONTINGENT

Delhi Police women win award for R-Day



The all-women troupe of the Delhi Police was on Tuesday adjudged the best marching contingent on Republic Day, officials aware of the matter said. Minister of state for defence and tourism Ajay Bhatt awarded the honour to the Delhi Police contingent while presenting the awards to tableaux marching contingents of the central armed police forces and other auxiliary forces for Republic Day parade 2024. This was the first time that Delhi police deployed an all-women marching contingent during the Republic Day parade, officials said. There were two categories for the awards, said officials, one of which was selected by a panel of judges and the other was judged through an online public vote conducted on website, mygov.in. The Delhi Police women marching contingent won the award in both the categories. →P4

5 killed in conflict with tigers around Corbett since Dec

Jayashree Nandi
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NEW DELHI: Five people have been killed around Uttarakhand's Corbett Tiger Reserve in the past two months, foresters said, highlighting once again that fatal encounters with the big cats are increasing due to their high density in the region.

Three women were killed in early December near Bhimtal following attacks by a tigress. A woman and a man were killed by a tiger on Sunday and Monday near the reserve, officials said.

"That was not normal behaviour for the tigress. It was very clearly aberrant behaviour. DNA profile has shown that she was a two-year-old tigress who attacked them. The tigress was captured and moved to a rescue centre," said Samir Sinha, Uttarakhand's principal chief conservator of forests, referring to the deaths in December.

The woman killed near Chukam village on Sunday had gone outside a solar fenced area to relieve herself when she was attacked, while the same tiger is suspected to have attacked another man on Monday. His body was found 4 km inside the forest, foresters said.

The tiger population in the 512 sq km reserve is the highest in the country. It poses a challenge for habitat management, HT reported in 2020.

"Human-wildlife conflict is a constant challenge for us. This is not only because of growing tiger numbers, but also because some tigers are recolonising older habi-

tats," Sinha said. "For example, yesterday's case was possibly a chance encounter with the tiger."

India's tiger population increased by 6.74% to 3,167 in 2022 from 2,967 in 2018, according to the latest census. Among the assessed tiger reserves, Corbett Tiger Reserve emerged with the largest population of 319 tigers. Reserves such as Bandipur, Nagarhole, Mudumalai, Bandhavgarh and Dudhwa harbour 150 or more tigers.

The All India Tiger Estimation report released last year had flagged the loss of wildlife corridors around the Corbett Tiger Reserve. The Dehradun-Rajaji-Corbett-Ramnagar-Pilibhit-Dudhwa corridor, the western most population of tigers in the Dehradun Forest Division and Rajaji Tiger Reserve along with the Lansdowne Forest Division, Corbett Tiger Reserve, Amangarh, Terai West Forest Division, Ramnagar Forest Division, Haldwani Forest Division, Terai Central and East Forest Divisions, Pilibhit Tiger Reserve and Dudhwa Tiger Reserve is home to as many as 757 tigers in about 8,103 sq km of forested habitat.

This contiguous population harbours one of the major source of tigers in the Western Terai Arc landscape that includes Corbett, and along with tigers of Bardia National Park (125) and Shuklaphanta National Park (36) in Nepal, constitutes one of the largest tiger population in the world. The population has shown significant increase in the past four years in comparison to 604 tigers in 2018, the report said.

{ AYUSHMAN BHAV } CENTRE'S NEW CAMPAIGN

A new push for organ donations

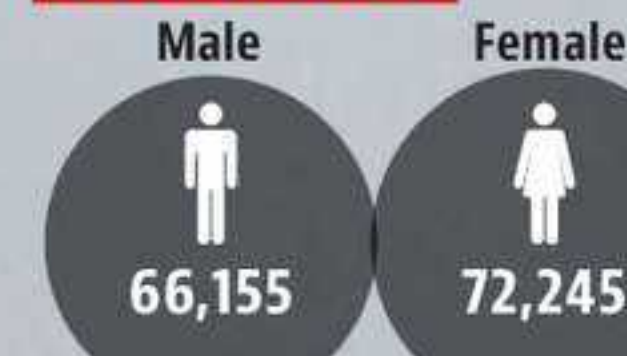
More than 138,000 people have already said they will donate their organs posthumously under the Centre's campaign started in September last year to encourage pledges. A look at the early findings of the Ayushman Bhav campaign.

ORGAN DONATION PLEDGES IN NUMBERS

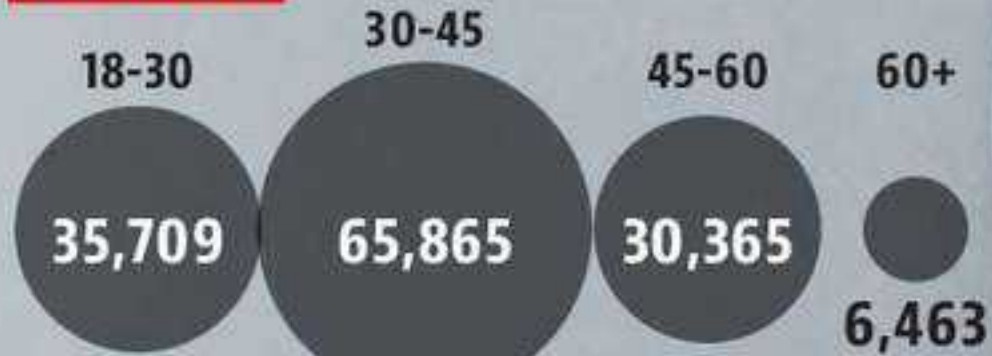
138,599 Total organ donation pledges made across India

Organs and Tissues: 99,295 (Organs: 17,072; Tissues: 17,487)

BY GENDER



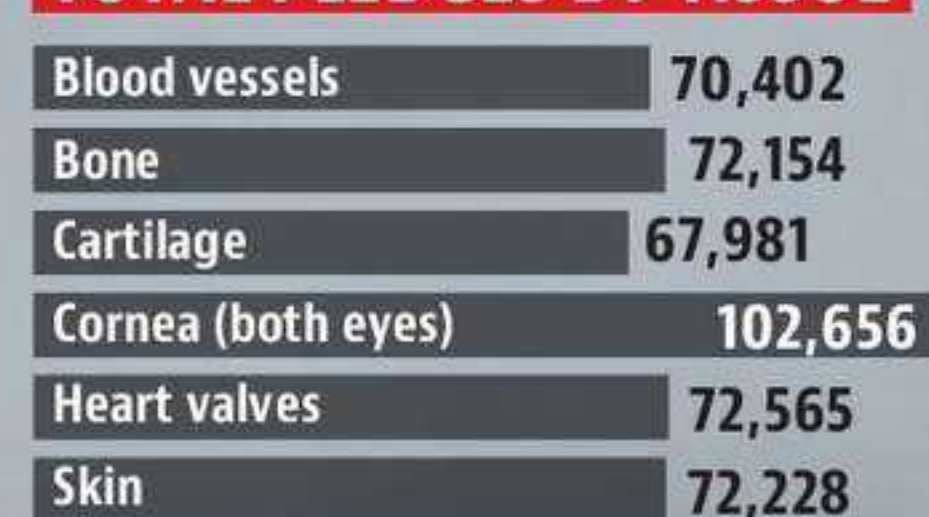
BY AGE



TOTAL PLEDGES, BY ORGANS



TOTAL PLEDGES BY TISSUE



WHAT IS ORGAN/TISSUE DONATION

Organ donation is crucial for a person with end-stage organ disease who needs a transplant. The donated organ may be from a deceased donor or a living donor. Organs such as kidneys, heart, liver, and tissues such as corneas, skin, and bones can be donated after death or, in some cases, while alive. Donation provides a lifeline for individuals with organ failure. It's a selfless act that enhances the quality of life for recipients, fostering hope and resilience in the face of health challenges.

WHO CAN PLEDGE TO DONATE ORGANS

Any person over 18 years and with viable organs, who voluntarily authorises removal of any of his organ or tissue

ENCOURAGING ORGAN DONATION

Centre has taken several steps to improve the rate of organ donation, which include dissemination of information by National Organ & Tissue Transplantation Organization (NOTTO), regional and state bodies (ROTTOS and SOTTOS) set up under the National Organ Transplant Program (NOTP).

Government has set up a website and 24x7 toll-free helpline to guide people on organ donation

<https://notto.abdm.gov.in/>

1800 114 770

Govt has also ensured there are display boards on organ donation exhibited outside ICUs and other locations in the transplant and retrieval hospitals.

{ ENTERTAINMENT } THE BATTLE AHEAD

Test for streaming platforms as outlook no longer over-the-top

Shuchi Bansal

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MUMBAI: The aborted merger between Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) and Sony earlier this month has exposed the vulnerabilities of India's overcrowded over-the-top (OTT) business that is pegged at ₹15,000 crore.

The stratospheric spike in subscriber numbers during the pandemic has tapered off sharply, leaving many of the 40-odd streaming services struggling. The unease caused by customer churn is made worse by platforms slashing budgets and rising self-censorship.

"Sport was once driving the subscription revenue for streaming but JioCinema's move to give Indian Premier League (IPL) free to digital consumers last season led to a fall in SVoD (subscription-based video-on demand) revenues. So, while the number of customers on the platform may have gone up, IPL's paying customers for the last five years have vanished," said the head of a popular production company who declined to be named.

"Likewise, cricket World Cup's premium customers also disappeared when Disney+Hotstar offered the matches free to mobile users."

Disney+Hotstar, which is in advanced merger talk with Jio, has lost 37% of its paid subscriber base over the last year after the platform lost digital IPL rights and offered the World Cup

free. In a note he circulated in November, Elara Capital's Karan Taurani said the platform's subscriber loss may have bottomed out, and that it could see a single digit growth over the next few quarters on account of new movies and web series being showcased.

But industry-watchers in Mumbai point to the big slash in acquisition and production budgets that is impacting the quality of new programming on these streaming services. "The party is over for now. Content companies are sitting on unsold inventory and the cost of capital is biting. This mood will continue for another six months till things stabilise," said the head of the production company quoted in the first instance.

Disney+Hotstar content head, Gaurav Banerjee calls it post-pandemic price correction. "When you build a new category, investments need to be deep and the revenue that you get back is uncertain. We saw that in phase one when we started on the erstwhile Hotstar journey in 2015," he said. But the medium caught the imagination of people and led to a glut of competition with 40 plus streamers, including three big global ones. "It created a bit of a content arms race," Banerjee admitted. And the demand for content during the pandemic distorted pricing as production lines went dry and the cost of content that was ready went through the roof. "That created an imbalance

which needs to get corrected," he said.

"Looking at the trends of the last two to three years, we get a sense that the post-pandemic impact is over and growth will be harder to come by each year. When a category grows, especially if it has grown so rapidly, the saturation too is bound to come in early," says Shailesh Kapoor, CEO of Ormax Media that tracks numbers and trend in the entertainment industry. A report, compiled last November by Ormax, revealed the growth in subscription numbers slowed from 20% in 2021-2022 to 13.5% in 2023. While the 2023-2024 numbers are awaited, Kapoor points to the decline in smartphone sales and slower internet penetration also as plausible reasons for sluggish growth in digital consumption. "I wouldn't be surprised if next year, OTT audience base expands only in single digits." The subscriber base in India's top 20 cities, he says, is "fairly saturated." So, any further growth will have to come from the smaller towns and rural areas, he adds.

The game-changer

From chasing the top of the pyramid, most companies have reset their targets. "Netflix launched lower-priced plans in India to tap deeper into the paying SVoD market while Prime Video launched its AVoD service, Amazon MiniTV," said Rishi Negi, CEO, Endemol Shine India. (AVoD plans offer free content to consumers but with ad breaks). Endemol has made several shows across platforms such as



The stratospheric spike in subscriber numbers during the pandemic has tapered off sharply. SHUTTERSTOCK

Bigg Boss, Trial By Fire, Masterchef. "JioCinema changed the game when it made IPL and entertainment content free and expanded the viewership beyond the top cities. We understand there's humongous traffic for Bigg Boss OTT and Temptation Island," Negi added.

Jio's free premium content offers, however, have made it difficult for others to drive up subscription revenue, argue experts. Viacom18, which operates JioCinema, declined comment for this story.

Sajith Sivanandan, head of Disney+ Hotstar, India, who remains bullish about the OTT business said that while he would not comment on other platforms' strategies, they too were experimenting to maximize subscribers and profits. Disney+Hotstar made the ICC Men's Cricket World Cup free for

mobile users but to watch it on connected TV, one had to be a paid subscriber.

"Building a large, successful streaming business is hard, but we are not in a race to the bottom," said Netflix India's vice president, content, Monika Shergill. Netflix, she adds, believes in three primary metrics for streaming — engagement which drives retention, revenue which ensures continuous investment in the creative industry, and lastly, profit. "These three are all critical to running a healthy, long-term streaming service — and focusing on growth at all costs is not sustainable, as other companies are rapidly discovering."

Netflix's competitor Prime Video has cut jobs and dropped programmes in some of the Asia-Pacific markets it is in. Gaurav Gandhi, vice president, Prime

Video, APAC, told his colleagues in an internal memo that there would be no change in the company's investments focus in Japan and India. Sushant Sreeram, country director, Prime Video India, told HT that the company has over 100 original projects in various stages of development and production across multiple languages — the second largest slate after the US. "We continue to invest heavily in licensing content to provide access to the best of local and global entertainment. We are invested in India, in the long run," he said.

Netflix, too, said it will continue to invest significantly in the country. In 2024, it will showcase shows by Kapil Sharma, Sanjay Leela Bhansali, Imtiaz Ali, Neeraj Pandey and YRF studios.

A profit problem

But at the same time, these streaming platforms are exploring cheaper and longer-running shows on the lines of television shows. "They are exploring non-fiction as well as putting out longer running shows of 30-40 episodes as audience stickiness is critical. The shows that drop daily do not have pricey budgets," said Endemol's Negi. The TVization of streaming platforms is also borne out by the Ormax report that says some of India's most-watched OTT shows are in homes where audiences don't mind the ad breaks.

Though streamers and content companies said even on AVoD plans, the quality of shows is superior to television program-

ming. But while the free content may garner bigger viewership, making money on AVoD platforms is not easy. Advertising spends on digital media may have surpassed total spends on linear television, the fight for each advertising rupee on digital platforms is fierce. Last year, a mammoth ₹46,000 crore in digital advertising was cornered by just two companies, Google and Meta. E-commerce platforms Amazon and Flipkart are also gaining share in digital advertising. Ads on Google's YouTube are very economical and offer a stiff challenge to OTT advertising.

Media agency Initiative India's Rohit Ahuja said the challenge for streaming platforms will lie in scaling the AVoD audience base. "Generating revenue through AVoD plans is feasible if OTT platforms can build sufficient attraction to marquee properties and achieve scale," he said. OTT platforms often price their tent-pole properties at a higher CPM (cost per thousand impressions) due to high content acquisition costs, he added.

Censorship bites creators

Even as profits are hard to come by and subscription growth is slowing, for creators of OTT content, the rising tide of social media hounding, and issues with censorship are big worries. Streaming platforms have begun self-censoring to ensure there are no messy legal battles as happened with Amazon Prime's show Tandav in 2021 or disruption of their business.

Recently, Netflix withdrew the Tamil film Annappoorani from its platform after complaints on social media that the film hurt religious feelings. "In the recent example of Annappoorani, I want to be clear that we removed the film at the request of the licensor. We are here to entertain, and our members come to Netflix to discover stories that represent world class variety and quality," Shergill said. "We have an incredibly broad range of Indian films and TV shows, all of which speak of our long-standing support for creative expression," she added. However, Netflix has also censored Dabakar Banerjee's film they commissioned for its political overtones.

If the I&B ministry's draft Broadcasting Services (Regulation) Bill becomes law, TV and OTT content will need to be pre-certified by a Content Evaluation Committee which has been deemed a retrograde step by media experts. This, and the focus on profitability, may drive platforms to pick popular, massy films and shows and give experimental content a miss leading to a greater mirroring of television programming.

Web content's evolution doesn't necessarily imply a shift towards becoming more mass market, said Rohit Ahuja, formerly with Zee 5. The key lies in striking a balance between mass appeal and edginess to cater to the diverse preferences of the OTT audience. "As the industry matures, achieving this balance becomes imperative for sustaining and growing the audience base," he said.

January 2024 colder, more polluted, shows Delhi data

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NEW DELHI: Delhi's nights this January were its coldest since 2013, the days were its coldest since 2015, even as the air was its most polluted since 2016, showed data from monitoring agencies, underscoring what has been a month of weather extremes for the national capital.

Data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) shows that the city's average maximum temperature this month was 17.9°C — 2.2°C below the long-period average for 1970-2020 (20.1°C).

This is Delhi's lowest average maximum for January since at least 2015, when it was also 17.9°C.

The numbers also corroborated what the Capital's residents have lived through for a month — that January nights have been chillier than usual.

According to IMD data, the city's average minimum temperature this month was 6.4°C, almost a degree lower than the LPA of 7.5°C, and the lowest since 2013 (6.1°C).

To be sure, numbers analysed by HT show a minor deviation from IMD's data due to the weather agency having a day's lag in calculating the maximum temperature. According to IMD, the January maximum average so far is 17.7°C.

The lower-than-usual temperatures, coupled with glacially slow winds, deepened and prolonged Delhi's pollution crisis, force-feeding residents air laced with pollutants well above any accepted standard.

Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data shows that till January 30, Delhi recorded three "severe" air days, 28 "very poor" days, and just one "poor" day. As a result, the city's 24-hour air quality index (AQI) averaged at 354 this month, the highest since the 370 in 2016 — the first full year that CPCB started tracking pollution levels.

In comparison, the average AQI was 311 last January and 279 in 2022. It was 324 in 2021; 286 in 2020; 328 in 2019; 328 in 2018; 304 in 2017 and 370 in 2016.

Delhi had just eight air quality monitoring stations in 2016, while it has 40 now.

The smoke also mingled with the fog to give Delhi a nearly month-long stretch of smog, which hobbled rail and flight services throughout the month and kept passengers stuck at stations and airports, as authorities scrambled to get schedules back on track.

Highway commuters were not spared either, as the smog resulted in a string of pile-ups across the country, especially in

Extended spell of bad air



Chillier January than usual



northern and eastern India, that have killed dozens of people and injured several others.

January has also been unusually parched, showed IMD data, with only "trace" rainfall recorded in the first 30 days of the month — the lowest till at least 2016.

Delhi clocked 20.4mm of rainfall last January; 88.2mm in 2022; 56.6mm in 2021 and 48.1mm in 2020. Delhi had seen only "trace" rainfall in January 2016.

Experts said weak western disturbances across northwest India have left the region with scanty rain and snow, conversely leading to extremely long spells of dense fog.

"Each time there is a western disturbance, we see strong winds and rain. However, these have been missing this January. All that has happened is more moisture has been introduced into the atmosphere, which has led to fog across the plains. In such a scenario, the skies are obscured, the sun is hidden and days are particularly cold," said Mahesh Palawat, vice-president at Skymet meteorology.

The shortage of showers have also helped dust and other particulate pollutants travel freely through the air, added experts.

IMD data showed that Delhi recorded five "cold days" and five "cold wave days" in January.

The weather agency classifies a "cold day" as one when the maximum temperature is 4.5°C or more below normal, and when the minimum is below 10°C.

A "cold wave", meanwhile, is one when the minimum temperature is 4.5°C or more below nor-

mal, or when it is below 4°C in the plains.

Delhi's minimum temperature remained below 4°C for five straight days between January 12 and 16, dropping to a low of 3.3°C on January 15.

Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist at IMD, said five western disturbances hit northwest India this month, but none had any noteworthy impact on Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

"The first half of the month was influenced by upper-level fog, which made days cold. Between January 12 and 16, when we had cold waves, we saw clear skies during the day, but fog would return at night. The second half has seen both upper-level fog and dense surface-level fog persist, which has resulted in isolated cold day conditions in between," he said.

However, Delhi's dry streak may be snapped on Wednesday, said IMD, predicting a strong western disturbance that may bring the Capital gusty winds and light rain.

"We expect strong winds of 30-40 km/hr," he said.

Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director of research and advocacy at the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) said slow winds have been a constant this winter, similar to November and December.

"We have also seen the addition of dense fog in January, which further impacts air quality. Delhi's background emissions are so high that in the absence of winds to disperse pollutants, we have seen the air remain 'very poor' for large parts and spike to severe when winds are completely calm," she said.

75 flights delayed at IGI, 2 diverted as dense fog blankets Capital

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: A western disturbance affecting the Himalayas led to Delhi recording dense fog on Tuesday, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said, adding that visibility in the city dropped to 50m for more than four hours in the early hours of the day.

The fog led to at least 75 flights being delayed, officials at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) Airport said, adding that two flights were diverted to Jaipur due to the inclement weather.

"Both Palam and Safdarjung reported dense fog, with a visibility of 50 metres between 5am and 9am. Humidity was fairly high in the early hours of the day and wind speed was low, which allowed fog formation to take place," said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist at IMD.

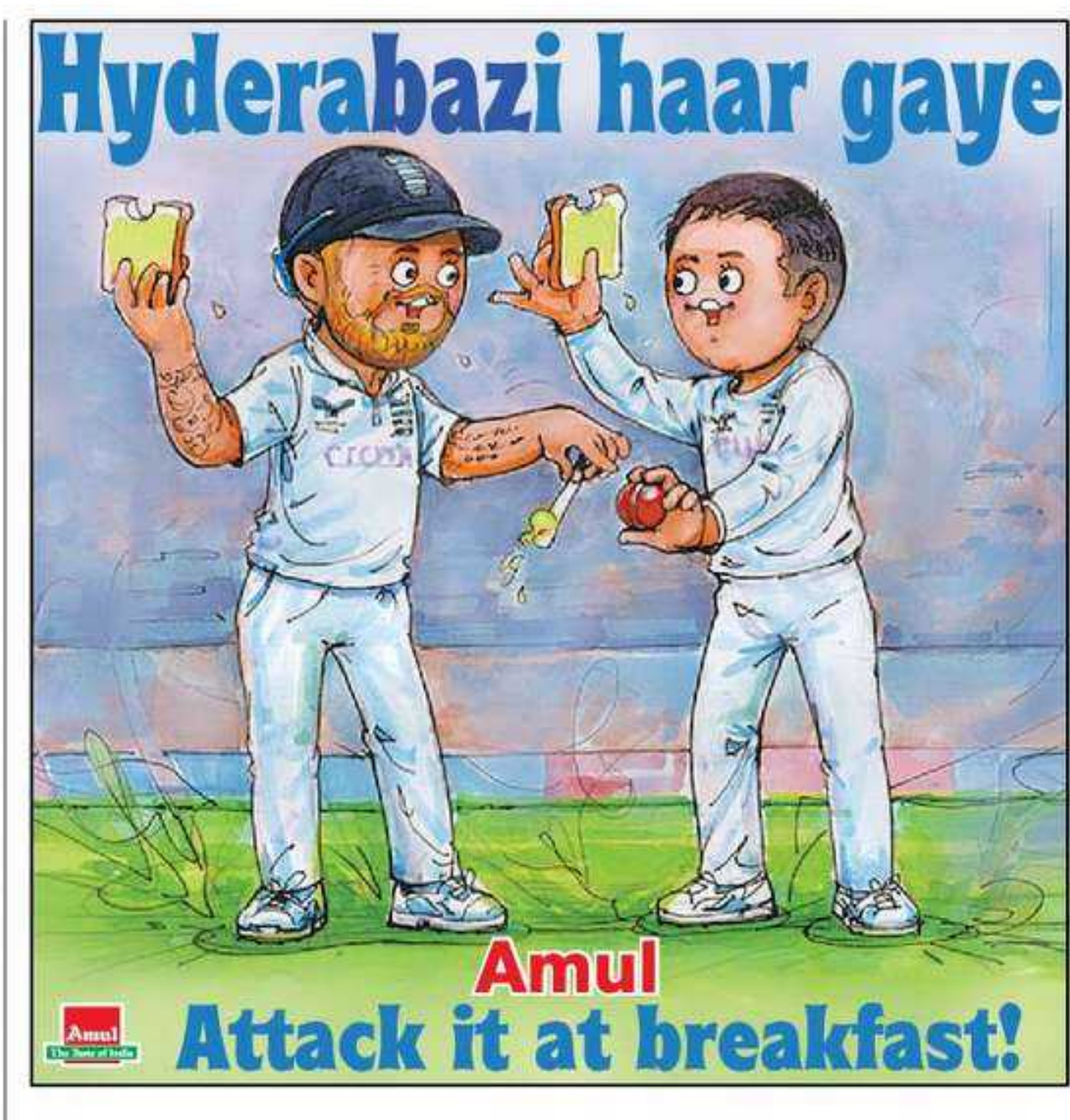
A yellow alert has also been issued for gusty winds of 40kmph.

Demolition drive at Sanjay Van

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Tuesday carried out an encroachment removal drive at Sanjay Van, demolishing several unauthorised constructions in the protected forest area of the southern Ridge and clearing 5,000sqm of area, officials said.

In an official statement DDA has said that the encroachment removal drive was carried out in the presence of security personnel and several unauthorised religious structures have been removed.

"A joint committee was formed under chairmanship of district magistrate South Delhi to assess the encroachment in Sanjay Van, which suggested the removal of various illegal structures from the Sanjay Van," DDA said.



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The Delhi Police all-women contingent during the 75th Republic Day Parade. RAI K RAJ/HT PHOTO

Honour for Delhi Police's Republic Day contingent

Aheli Das

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NEW DELHI: The all-women group of the Delhi Police was on Tuesday adjudged the best marching contingent on Republic Day, officials aware of the matter said.

Minister of state for defence and tourism Ajay Bhatt awarded the honour to the Delhi Police contingent while presenting the awards to tableaux and marching contingents of the central armed police forces and other auxiliary forces for Republic Day parade 2024. This was the first time that Delhi Police deployed an all-women marching contingent during the Republic Day parade.

There were two categories for the awards, said officials, one of which was selected by a panel of judges and the other was judged through an online public vote

conducted on the website mygov.in. The Delhi Police women marching contingent won the award in both the categories. The 144-member contingent was led by 2019-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer Shweta K Sugathan.

"It was definitely a new and exciting experience to train and lead a team of completely new people. We were initially practising once every week for months but we had to crunch in four to five hours of practice per day from December to get better results," she said, and added that the preparations for the parade started in July last year.

"There were several challenges in training and getting a completely new team ready for the parade. But compared to last year, when I was the newest person on the team, I was more confident, and it was a fulfilling experience," she added.

This was the second consecutive year that Sugathan, posted as additional deputy commissioner of police-2 (north), led the contingent at the parade. 2024 was also the first time that the Delhi Police displayed an all-women pipe band at the parade. Last year, all members of the pipe band were women — barring the leader — but this year the 85-member pipe band was led by constable Ruyangunuo Kense, officers said.

"This is definitely something that the Delhi Police made from the scratch, and I am really happy that the effort rewarded so well," said Sugathan, referring to preparations for both the marching contingent and the band. Last year, Sugathan became the second woman officer to lead the Delhi Police marching contingent at the Republic Day parade, after Kiran Bedi in 1975.

Two arrested in stage collapse case

NEW DELHI: The Delhi Police on Tuesday arrested two people from Tughlakabad and Kalkaji, in connection with the stage collapse incident at a religious event at Kalkaji Temple in south-

east Delhi on Saturday, officers aware of the case said. A woman was killed and 17 others were injured in the incident.

Rajesh Deo, deputy commissioner of police (south-east), said

the police have arrested two organisers of the event — Satish Kumar, 38, from Tughlakabad Extension and Anuj Mittal, 43, of Kalkaji.

HTC

Delhi govt asks for 12 weeks to demarcate Yamuna's floodplain

Jasjeev Gandhiok

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NEW DELHI: Experts have long held that there is a simple reason why the Delhi government has been unable to protect the Yamuna floodplains — they have never been demarcated and defined.

After the National Green Tribunal (NGT), in October, pushed the administration to do so by setting up a panel for the task, the Delhi government, in a submission to the body on January 29, has sought 12 weeks to complete the virtual demarcation of the floodplains, and a physical demarcation on the ground through signage and pillars.

Floodplains are a critical ecosystem — they are a natural barrier against floods, serve as an ideal recharge mechanism (for rainwater especially), and provide a home to diverse flora and fauna. But they are usually neglected, and often encroached upon — often with disastrous consequences for not just the river, but also human habitations along its banks.

Floods such as the one last year which saw the Yamuna water level rise to an all-time high of 208.66 metres on July 13, with the river's waters almost reaching the Supreme Court and besieging the Red Fort, can be directly attributed to abuse of the floodplains, experts say.

NGT, in October, took cognizance of a media report and formed a committee headed by the Delhi chief secretary to identify, demarcate and notify the floodplains of the Yamuna as per the River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Authorities Order, 2016.

It added that the delineation of Yamuna was required to prevent illegal developments in the floodplains.

The committee also comprises a nominee from Delhi Development Authority, the Secretary (Environment), the Secretary (ministry of Jal Shakti); executive director, National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG); and commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD).

"The committee will get the spot inspection done and ensure demarcation of flood plains of



In October, NGT said that delineation of Yamuna was required to prevent illegal developments.

HT ARCHIVE

Yamuna in the area concerned and suggest measures to prevent and remove the encroachment and unauthorized constructions falling within the flood plains," NGT said in its order dated October 17, 2023.

In a submission on January 29, the environment department of the Delhi government told the tribunal that it will take two weeks for the remote determination of the floodplain area, followed by another two weeks to prepare high-resolution images using Geospatial Delhi Limited (GSDL), a company that maintains and update spatial data through mapping and surveys, and four weeks for on-ground verification of the same area, after which physical demarcation on the ground will commence.

In its submission, the Delhi government added: "The committee has deliberated at length the timelines required for the exercise and found that the operation needs massive interdepartmental collaboration, collection of data, ground surveys, verification and on-ground demarcation to ensure effective implementa-

tion of this Tribunal's directions and thus requires more time. It is prayed further a time of 12 weeks may be granted to the concerned agencies to complete the exercise and ensure compliance."

HT has reviewed a copy of the submission.

Ground situation

The submission added that DDA estimates the so-called Zone O of the Yamuna to be 9,700 hectares with the area occupied by the river itself being around 1,146 hectares.

Of the balance, land available for development is 3,493 hectares (1,647 hectares of this is with DDA); the remaining 5061 hectares is with other department and agencies, and also home to 94 unauthorised colonies.

The Delhi government department also said that DDA carried out a floodplain area demarcation, based on a 2015 NGT order that sought the demarcation keeping in mind a possible "1-in-25 year flood" (a rare occurrence with a 4% chance of occurring every year).

That exercise (done in association with the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi), however, has been questioned by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG), which, in January 2022, directed the demolition of structures in the floodplains noting that the DDA demarcation was "inappropriate" and "not done properly".

In the draft master plan for 2041, which is yet to be notified, DDA split this zone into Zone O1 and Zone O2, with regulated development being allowed in the latter.

What happens now

To determine the area with other agencies and government departments along the floodplains, the NGT-appointed committee has directed GSDL to procure high-resolution images of the floodplain area and coordinate with different departments and agencies for the preparation of a detailed map, the submission stated.

"The committee stressed on the granularity of data required from DDA on this exercise, which included a detailed

department-wise/agency-wise break-up of area in terms of ownership and land use. ...Also directed DDA to submit the area which is clearly free from encroachment and encumbrances and also acquired from DDA about the area under private ownership," the submission added, stating that each government department or agency owning land along the floodplains has to appoint a nodal officer and share information with GSDL within four weeks.

Experts said until the demarcation is done, unauthorised colonies and structures cannot be removed.

"DDA has said it has done a 1-in-25 year floodplain demarcation in the past, but we don't see any bollards or markings in the Yamuna, barring a few limited places, like Baansera. The O-zone also exists on paper and until there is clear demarcation of floodplain area, how can we stop projects from taking place on floodplain land?" asked Bhim Singh Rawat, a Yamuna activist and member of the South Asia Network on Dams, Rivers and People (SANDRP).

UP clears felling of 100k trees for new road along Gzb canal

Peeyush Khandelwal

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GHAZIABAD: The Uttar Pradesh forest department has cleared the felling of more than 100,000 trees and shrubs in the protected forest area of three forest divisions — Ghaziabad, Meerut and Muzaffarnagar — for the construction for two lanes of the 111km Kanwar Marg from Muradnagar to Purkaji near the Uttarakhand border, officials aware of the matter said on Tuesday.

Environmental activists, however, warned that felling such a large number of trees will adversely impact the biodiversity of the region, and will displace the local wildlife.

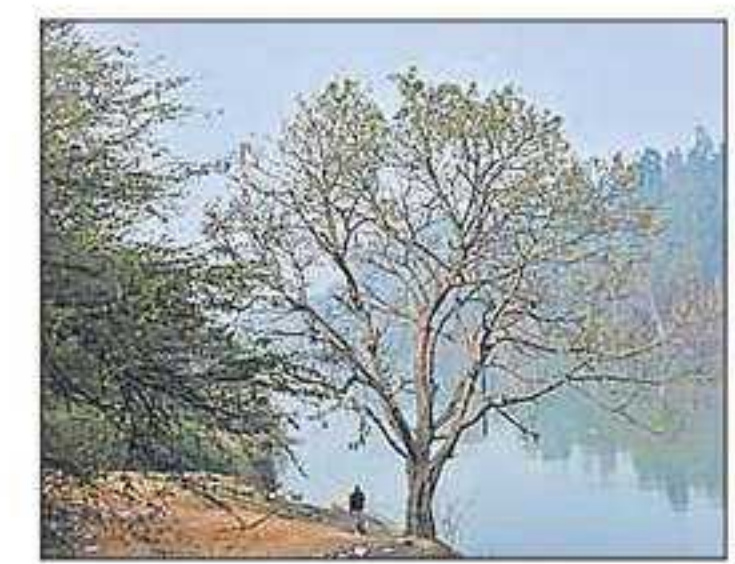
The activists also noted that Ghaziabad, in particular, suffers from high pollution levels, and felling such a large number of trees will only worsen the situation.

Kanwar Marg, which runs along the Upper Ganga Canal, has two lanes that run parallel to the water body along the eastern embankment. The new project, officials said, will run along the western embankment of the canal.

The ₹658-crore project is to be taken up by the UP Public Works Department (PWD), and will be funded by the state government. This road, officials said, will serve as a bypass for light vehicles, and will be an alternate route for kanwariyas travelling to and from Haridwar during the annual kanwar yatra.

"Temporary permission for felling the trees has been received from the Centre to the state government... The felling of trees will start initially in Meerut, with the help of the forest department. We plan to execute the project in lots, with approvals from the concerned forest department officials," said PWD executive engineer Sanjay Pratap Singh, who is the nodal officer for the project.

Another official aware of the project said the foundation stone for the project will soon be laid. "It is being mooted as a priority project for UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath," the official said, on condition of anonymity. Manish Singh, the divisional



The Upper Ganga Canal on Tuesday. SAKIB ALI/HT PHOTO

forest officer for Ghaziabad, said, "We have received temporary forest clearance for felling of trees/shrubs for the project and it is expected that the PWD will initiate the work of felling of trees by next week under supervision of the forest department officials. The entire stretch has about 112,722 trees/shrubs in protected forests of the three divisions (Ghaziabad, Meerut, Muzaffarnagar)."

Another forest department official said that the compensatory afforestation for the project will be taken up in Lalitpur district — 50km from Ghaziabad. "We expect that there will be displacement of wildlife due to the project. Animals such as rabbits, certain reptiles, birds, and even hyenas will lose their habitat as a result. But there is no presence of notified wildlife in the area. The tree felling will also reduce protected forest cover in the three districts," the officer said, on condition of anonymity.

Experts concerned

Environmental activists, however, raised serious concerns.

"The trees along the Upper Ganga Canal are fully matured and old. Felling them will adversely impact the local biodiversity and will also displace wildlife. It will also adversely impact the environment due to loss of forest and tree cover," said Akash Vashishtha, a Ghaziabad-based environmentalist and lawyer.

Vashishtha also questioned the logic of carrying out the compensatory afforestation drive in Lalitpur.

"Ghaziabad district in particular suffers from high levels of pollution and its forest cover has not improved over the years. So, compensatory afforestation in Lalitpur will not help," he said.

Won't allow trees to be cut so easily: SC on Taj zone project

Abraham Thomas

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that it will not allow trees to be felled easily, and pulled up the state of Uttar Pradesh for seeking permission to cut 3,874 trees to construct and widen a highway without providing details on compensatory afforestation.

The court also directed an expert body assisting it on environmental matters to consider an alternate alignment of the road to save the trees.

"One tree gone is gone forever. We will not allow trees to be cut so easily," a bench of justices AS Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan said while considering an application by the Uttar Pradesh national highway division for chopping down 3,874 trees to construct and upgrade the Agra-Jalesar-Etah road. As the trees fall in the zone close to the Taj Mahal, known as the Taj Trapezium Zone (TTZ), the state was required to take prior permission of the court, which is monitoring steps in a petition filed by MC Mehta to preserve the environment around the protected monument.

The state government's application filed in May last year said that all permissions for the road-widening project have been obtained. For this, it required to cut 3,014 trees in Agra and 860 trees in Etah district. Regarding compensatory afforestation, the state said that a request has been made to the district magistrates of Agra and Etah for the allotment of 15.07 hectares and 4.30 hectares of land respectively.

Finding this submission vague, the bench said, "We will not allow this to happen. If the state was serious about compensatory afforestation, it would not have filed such a vague application."

The state's additional advocate general (AAG) Garima

Prasad informed the court that the central empowered committee (CEC) — the expert body assisting the court in forest and environment issues — usually considers the proposal of the state and grants approval based on the permission given by the court. She added that the forest department of the state is not a party before the court.

But the bench said: "Article 51A of the Constitution mandates every citizen to save trees. It is also the duty of states to do so. We want an undertaking from the officers concerned that not only will trees be planted but will also be taken care of. We cannot issue orders in the dark without knowing where the afforestation is to be done. It has to be near the same place."

The bench suggested that the state withdraw the application and file a fresh one after land for afforestation is allotted.

Senior advocate ADN Rao, assisting the court as amicus curiae, said that CEC also examines alternate routes for a road alignment to assess the feasibility of saving trees. "We want to know the feasibility of saving trees by changing the alignment of the highway. If five trees or even one tree can be saved, it will go a long way," the court told Rao, and asked CEC to submit a report before March 12, the next date of hearing.

The state's application said that the tree-felling was part of the upgradation of NH-32IG, and widening it into a two-lane road with a paved shoulder. The proposal got an approval from the state government and a note was forwarded to the Union ministry of road, transport and highways (MoRTH). In September 2022, MoRTH sanctioned ₹685.51 crore for the proposed project. It was at this stage that the state moved an application seeking permission for tree-felling from the top court.

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GPS tracking may be mandatory for every auto-rickshaw soon

Alok KN Mishra
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NEW DELHI: Auto-rickshaws without functional GPS devices will soon not be issued fitness certificates, without which they cannot legally ply in Delhi, officials in the transport department said -- reviving the policy four years after it was paused due to the global pandemic.

"GPS (global positioning system) devices are installed in all of Delhi's 90,000 autos, but are functional in just about one-tenth of them. We will soon make functional devices mandatory to ensure passenger safety," said a Delhi transport department official who asked not to be named.

When asked, transport minister Kailash Gahlot did not comment on the matter.

The move is likely to get some pushback from Delhi's 90,000-odd auto drivers, many of whom said installing the devices will impose an "unnecessary compliance burden" and force them to make a recurring expense that will eat into their income.

Investigations after the blast at the Israel embassy in Delhi on December 26 last year underlined the importance of GPS (global positioning system) devices in autos, said police and state government officials, revealing that satellite data helped officers zero in on the auto-rickshaw used by the suspect around the time of the explosion.

The Delhi transport department on January 27 issued an order directing officials in its auto-rickshaw unit to test GPS devices during fitness certificate checks. Even as this prompted several auto drivers to re-operationalise the small chips installed alongside fare meter, many unions implored the department to reverse the order.

The order was retracted on January 29, 2024, after meetings with the unions, but transport department officials indicated that the order may be reissued soon with a more flexible compliance timeline.



GPS devices are installed in all of Delhi's 90,000 autos but are functional in just about one-tenth of them. HT ARCHIVE

Auto-rickshaws in Delhi are issued fitness certificates at a centre in Burari, located in the city's northern fringes.

The trackers are built into the meter box, said state officials aware of the process. The core of the device is essentially a SIM card, which only relays satellite and location information and cannot be used for calls, texts or for mobile data. The SIM card pushes out location information whenever the meter is switched on, irrespective of whether the meter is running or not. To be sure, the device stops working when the meter is powered down.

Delhi Integrated Multi-Modal Transit System (DIMTS) Limited, which also operates the city's cluster bus service, monitors the GPS devices at the Kashmere Gate data centre.

The SIM remains active for two years, after which it needs to be renewed at the Burari centre. Auto-rickshaw permit licences in Delhi mandate that they all must have working GPS devices, in the absence of which permits are invalid. There is, however, no enforcement as things stand.

Auto-rickshaws have been required to be equipped with these trackers since 2011. In April 2020 due to the pandemic, however, it was no longer mandatory for fitness certificates.

"The exercise was discontinued during the pandemic to reduce compliance burden," said one of the transport officials quoted above.

Auto-rickshaw unions called the new move "unnecessary". Delhi Auto Rickshaw Sangh's general secretary Rajendra Soni said the transport department should not impose GPS devices on auto-rickshaws because the "three-wheelers are open vehicles", and that the device "has no major impact on passengers safety". "The move will put an unnecessary compliance burden on drivers. The GPS has also not helped find any lost auto so far, for instance," said Soni.

Amit Bhatt, managing director of International Council on Clean Transportation, said, "An active and functional GPS makes public transport safer, especially autos and cabs, as it works like a strong deterrent and enforces discipline in people driving these vehicles. The GPS locations which are tracked by the transport department also help the police when it has to investigate a crime where the movement of auto rickshaws has been involved. There is, however, a need to use the GPS data for the purpose of planning, traffic rules enforcement, and checking the violation of rules to make the passenger experience better."

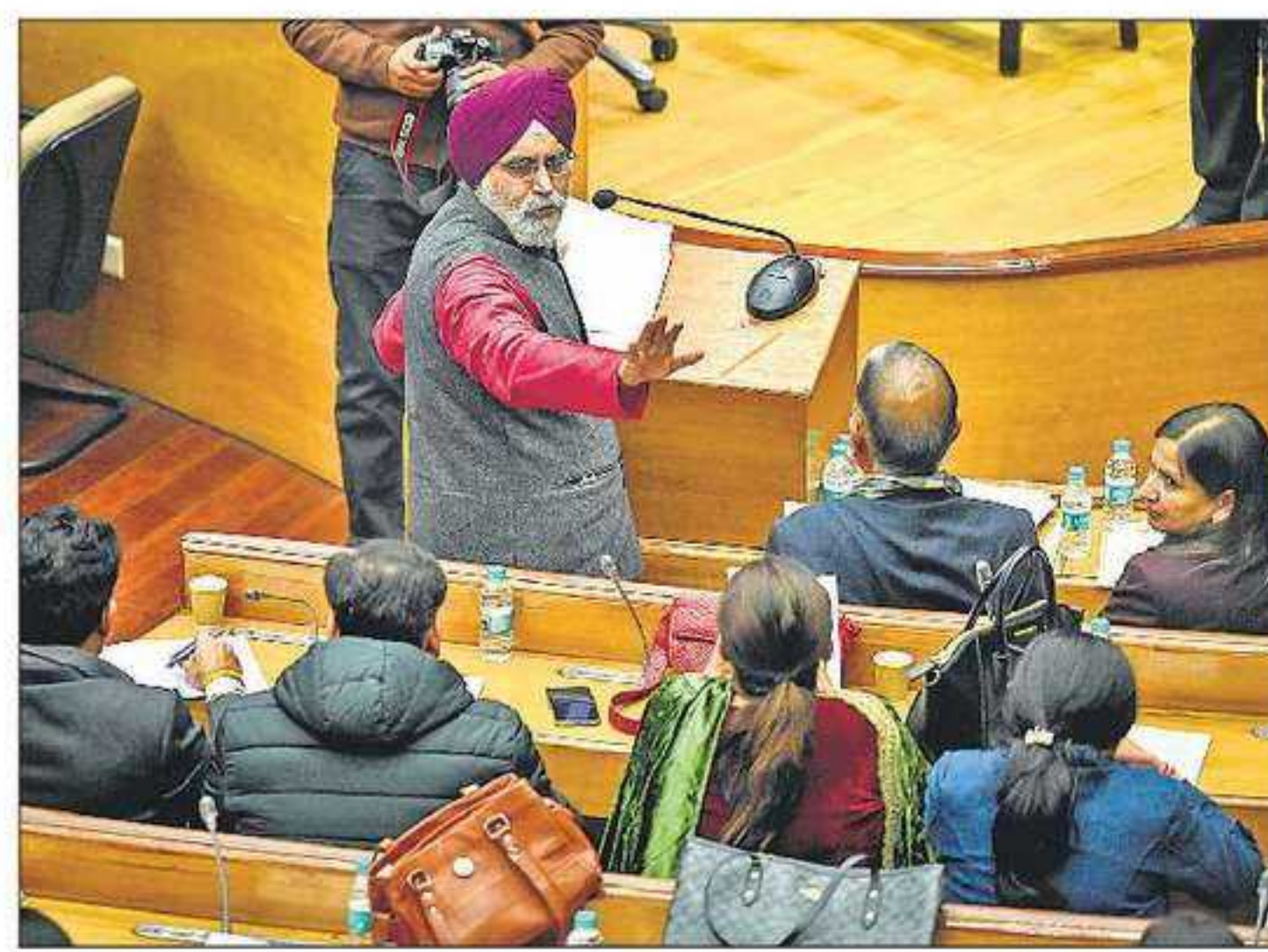
BJP hits out at AAP in MCD over fund crunch and landfill promises

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NEW DELHI: The Municipal Corporation of Delhi on Tuesday discussed the budget for 2024-25, nearly a month after the proposals were tabled before the House by the civic commissioner, with the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party and ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) councillors indulging in a blame game over several issues such as the allocation of funds for the civic body and the promises to clear the three landfills in the national capital.

Initiating the discussion, leader of the Opposition Raja Iqbal Singh said that the AAP administration has failed to fulfil the 10 guarantees that were given by the ruling party ahead of the December 2023 MCD elections. Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in November last year had announced 10 guarantees, including flattening of the three landfills, permanent solution to the parking problem and making the civic schools and hospitals better.

Singh said that the people of



Raja Iqbal Singh at Civic Centre on Tuesday. SANCHIT KHANNA/HT

Delhi were assured that the landfills would be flattened within a year of the AAP coming into power in MCD, but till November 2023 less than 40% of the legacy waste has been cleared. He said that the promises of addressing corruption and 'intel mafia' (reference to illegal constructions) remain unfulfilled.

The senior BJP councillor said that despite the fact the AAP

rules both Delhi government and the MCD, funds promised for landfills, improvement of urban villages and slum clusters have not been released.

"Before AAP came to power, MCD used to get funds under heads for urban villages, horticulture development, UR colonies, JJ cluster sanitation all of which were stopped by the state government. I would urge the

mayor to get these funds restarted with the AAP in power in both places," he added.

"Enrolment numbers are going down but the education committee has not been constituted so far. There is no education committee in place to oversee the education programmes," Singh said. He also alleged that due to non constitution of the standing committee, MCD has not been able to provide the subsidy for uniforms, stationery, bags and scholarships meant for students in the MCD primary schools.

Leader of the House and senior AAP councillor Mukesh Goyal said that instead of making positive suggestions, Singh delivered a political speech. "I have also been a leader of opposition and I have always spoken on budget citing statistics of revenue generation and expenses. But there was no suggestion in Singh's budget speech that was backed by data...On February 8, during my speech I will respond to the allegations about all the promises made by AAP," he added.

WOMAN HELD FOR CHEATING HOTEL HAD ₹41 IN BANK ACCOUNT: POLICE

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NEW DELHI: An Andhra Pradesh woman arrested for cheating a luxury hotel in Delhi of nearly ₹6 lakh had only ₹41 in her bank account when she was nabbed, police said on Tuesday.

The woman, identified as Jhansi Rani Samuel, stayed at the Pullman Hotel in Aerocity for 15 days and allegedly made fraudulent transactions worth ₹5,88,176, police said.

A police officer said that Samuel was not cooperating in the investigation. She initially told the police that she is a doctor and that her husband, too, is a doctor and lives in New York, however this information is also yet to be established, he added.

Samuel was arrested by the Delhi Police on January 13 following a PCR call by the hotel staff. She was initially arrested for cheating, but later Indian Penal Code sections 419 (punishment for cheating by impersonation), 468 (forgery for purpose of cheating) and 471 (using as genuine a forged document) were added to the FIR, the officer said.

AAP hits back, says BJP did nothing in its three tenures

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) mayor Shelly Oberoi lambasted the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) for reducing the discussion on MCD budget to an opportunity for making political allegations, even as she asserted that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) administration will bring a "people-friendly" budget.

Leader of the House Mukesh Goyal also criticised leader of the opposition Raja Iqbal Singh for making a political speech and said that the BJP did nothing during its three tenures at MCD, which is why the people voted them out of power.

"Instead of discussing the

budget, there was more discussion related to the Delhi government. Leader of the opposition has reduced the scope of discussion by venturing into political allegations," Oberoi said during a post-session press conference.

"The House of councillors is a place where we bring proposals in the public interest. However, it is unfortunate that the leader of the opposition has given political colour to the entire discussion. He did not talk about anything related to public interest. Our budget session will continue from February 5 to 7. After this, the final budget of the corporation will be presented by the AAP government on February 8," she added.

She said that the AAP administration will improve sanitation

in the city. The Mayor said that in order to expedite several works that have been stalled due to non formation of the standing committee, the AAP has moved the Supreme Court seeking temporary transfer of the panel's powers to the House. "We are waiting for the decision of the Supreme Court. We want a permanent committee should soon be formed," she added, responding to BJP allegations that the AAP was delaying formation of the committee.

Goyal said that he hoped that the leader of the opposition (LOP) would give suggestions on the budget, and put forward his vision in the interest of the citizens of Delhi. "But, the LOP did not discuss anything about the budget," he said.

AAP poaching claim: BJP writes to top cop

HT Correspondent
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NEW DELHI: A delegation of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leaders on Tuesday met Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora and handed him a letter, seeking an investigation into allegations raised by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) with respect to the purported poaching of legislators.

Several AAP leaders, including chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, have claimed that the BJP attempted to poach seven AAP MLAs by offering them ₹25 crore each.

On Tuesday, North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari, Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva, and leader of the opposition in the Delhi assembly Ramvir Singh

Bidhuri, among other BJP leaders, met Arora and handed him a letter seeking a probe into the allegations. "The allegations by the AAP leaders are false. We have challenged them to present evidence to back their allegations, but they have not yet shown any evidence," said Sachdeva.

"Making false allegations against BJP leaders and then going silent or to apologise is an old habit of CM Kejriwal and his associates, but this time we have decided that we will expose their lies, and that is why we have submitted a complaint to the police commissioner, demanding an investigation," he added.

HT reached out to the AAP and the chief minister's office, but officials there did not comment on the development.



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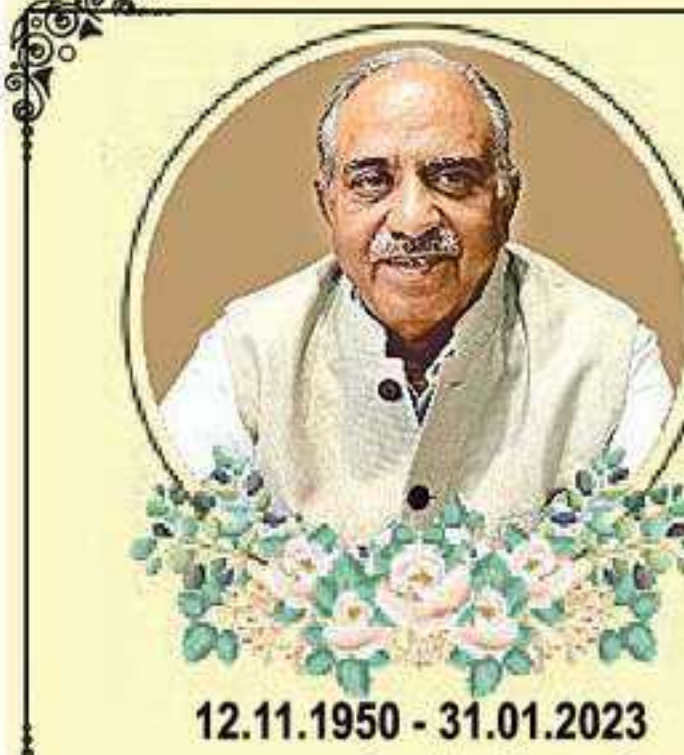
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HC REFUSES TO INTERFERE IN SHARJEEL IMAM'S BAIL PETITION

Shruti Kakkar

shruti.kakkar@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi high court on Tuesday refused to interfere with JNU student Sharjeel Imam's plea seeking bail in a 2020 northeast Delhi communal riots case, involving allegations of sedition and unlawful activities. The court, however, directed the trial court to decide Imam's bail plea by February 17.

When the Delhi Police informed the high court that the trial court has agreed to consider Imam's bail plea afresh, the high court bench led by justice Suresh Kumar Kait said, "We direct the trial court to decide the application within 10 days from the next date of hearing i.e. February 7. If bail is granted that's the end of the matter. If dismissed, the appellant has the right to file an appeal on the ground mentioned in the appeal and any other ground accordingly."

Imam had approached the high court against the trial court's 2022 order denying him bail in the case registered against him for allegedly making inflammatory speeches at various places in Delhi during the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests.

In his speech, Imam had allegedly threatened to cut off Assam and the rest of the Northeast from India.

GGM BIKER RAMS INTO CAR DOOR, FALLS ON ROAD, CRUSHED BY BUS

GURUGRAM: A motorcyclist, on the service lane of the Delhi-Jaipur expressway, rammed into a car after its driver suddenly opened the door, and was flung on to the road, where he was crushed by a bus, police said on Tuesday.

Police said the freak accident occurred on Monday afternoon near Iffco Chowk, when the deceased, identified as Lakhman Singh, 35, was driving his Bajaj Platina motorcycle on the service lane of the expressway. Officers, quoting eyewitnesses, said that at around 1pm, the driver of a Mahindra Thar parked on the side of the road suddenly opened the door which Singh rammed into. He then fell on the road and he was crushed by a Haryana Roadways bus.

Inspector Sandeep Kumar, station house officer of the Sector 18 police station, said Singh was rushed to hospital, where he was declared brought dead.

Kumar said the Thar driver fled from the spot. "The car had a Delhi registration number, and we are trying to trace its owner. We are also scanning CCTV footage of the spot," he said. HTc

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Mayank Austen Soofi



The hanging parandas of Chitli

Traditions of an overlooked bazaar product

{ PUBLIC INTEREST } Bangles, rusks (they are Delhi's best rusks!), malai wali chai, flower sehras for brides and grooms, carrot halwa (including the rare white carrot halwa), wall clocks, bullet coffee (only in winter), crockery, goat meat, jewellery, artificial jewellery, mehendi powder, nebulizers, vegetables, burqas, fish, lehengas, nihari, crisp new crackling currency notes (exchanged for torn notes), sandals, dahi bada... you name it, and Old Delhi's Chitli Qabar Bazar will have a shop selling it. The historic market also has the city's most extensive button shop, dedicated to buttons alone.

It has also shops selling parandas, or chotis, the artificial braids. These hanging parandas of Chitli Qabar are among the most arresting sights of the bazar, hanging right in front of the shops, flanking the bustling market lane.

One such place has been selling parandas for the last 50 years, from the time it was set up by the late Sardar Khan. The founder's grandson stocks gota-kinari as well, the heavily embroidered laces usually appended to the borders of festive lehengas, shararas and saris. The parandas are as

blingy as the gota-kinari, though more shops sell the latter than the former.

The pitch blank strands of the paranda's long hair (cotton threads, actually) are clipped at the end with colourful frills and glossy tassels. A more ostentatious paranda can be as pricey as ₹500. The shopkeeper notes that the golden era of the parandas is over—until some decades ago, Walled City ladies would wear the paranda as part of their everyday dress, even within the home, he says. "But now the parandas are worn mostly during weddings and other functions."

Whatever, these intricately designed parandas stir up the imagination, instantly transporting a viewer to some heritage workshop nestled deep within the cramped Walled City alleys, the skilled hands of the traditional craftsmen rustling out the parandas with immaculate care and craftsmanship.

But these parandas have nothing to do with Delhi—they are mass-produced in the factories of industrial Surat, the shopkeeper clarifies. (Same are the origins of gota-kinari).

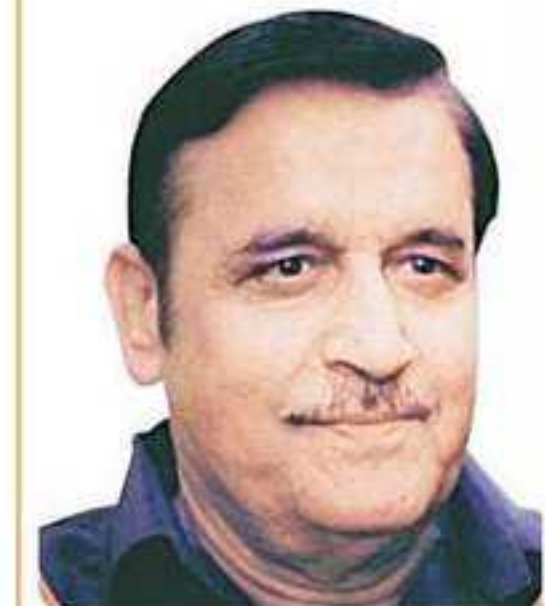
Now a troupe of shoppers storm into the shop. Some of them slowly run their scrutinising hands across the gota-kinari, while others turn towards the parandas.



READ: For more stories by Mayank Austen Soofi, scan the QR code

IN LOVING MEMORY 1st Death Anniversary

MISS YOU DADDY



Sh. Jagdish Chander Ji

(07-03-1948 - 31-01-2023)

Every day in some way We miss you more than words can say, in our hearts your shall always stay loved and remembered every day



Ajay Arora and Yamini Arora
(Son & Daughter-in-Law)
Ayaan Arora
(Grandson)

SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY



01.10.1951 - 31.01.2022

Late Sardar Rupinder Singh Suri Ji (Lucky)

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IN GRIEF

Gurvinder Suri

Suruchi Suri, Simar Suri, Tarun Pall, Ira Suri Pall
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In Loving Memory of
Late Mr. Chander Sen Sayal
2nd May 1929
30th January 2024
Shraddhanjali Kriya
Friday, 02/02/2024, 3pm - 4 pm
House No. 41, Road No. 2, East Punjabi Bagh,
New Delhi-110026
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Sayal's, Mardhekar's and Sharma's

ॐ ANTIM ARDAS ॐ



Jeeti Dilbagh Singh
w/o S. Dilbagh Singh
13th March 1932 - 30th January 2024

She lived a life filled with beauty, dignity and exemplary grace. She gave love and blessings to all she met, and was the tree under which the whole family took cover. She will live on in the hearts and minds of the loving family she leaves behind.

Last rites will be held on the 31st of January at 4pm, at The Lodhi Crematorium.

The Prayer Meeting will be held on the 2nd of February from 3-4pm, at 27-B Prithviraj Road.

Malvinder & Sadhana Singh
Amit & Pavani Sibal
Shhiv Singh
Bharat & Edwina Singh
Jose & Kalika Diaz
Manju Varma

Jai, Mira, Diya.
Anya, Maya
Daniel, Lily

॥ ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥



SMT. GOMTI DEVI

(W/o Late Shri R. C. Aggarwal)

HAS ATTAINED ETERNAL PEACE ON SUNDAY, 28th JANUARY, 2024

A devoted wife, a loving mother, a doting grandmother & an indulgent great grandmother, she will forever continue to be the guiding light of our lives.

PRAYER MEET & BHAJAN SANDHYA

will be held on Thursday, 1st February, 2024 at 'Chinmaya Mission', 89, Lodhi Road, New Delhi, between 4.00 pm - 5.00 pm to celebrate the life of a great matriarch & cherish her in our prayers.

In Reverence :

SONS & DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

Mr. Sudhish & Mrs. Anita Gupta
Dr. Prem & Mrs. Anita Aggarwal
Mr. N. K. & Mrs. Manju Gupta

DAUGHTER & SON-IN-LAW

Dr. Komal & Dr. Atul Jain

GRANDSONS & GRANDDAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

Mr. Kulin & Mrs. Hema Gupta
Mr. Abhishek & Mrs. Vidhu Gupta
Mr. Kunal & Mrs. Cherie Gupta
Dr. Manav & Dr. Mrigakshi Aggarwal
Mr. Aditya & Mrs. Jaskirat Kaur Jain

GRANDDAUGHTERS & GRANDSONS-IN-LAW

Mrs. Parul & Mr. Ajay Mittal
Dr. Prerna & Dr. Divanshu Ojha
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Detailed discussions will be held after Budget meet: Govt

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: The government on Tuesday informed the Opposition that due to the limited time available in the Budget session of Parliament that starts on Wednesday, structured debates will only be held in the next session, even as a number of leaders alleged that federal investigative agencies were being misused against the INDIA parties and demanded a discussion.

"The discussion on the President's speech will start from February 2. Apart from the interim budget, the J&K budget (as the state is under President's rule) will be discussed. They (Opposition) made some suggestions. But the session will be short. We told them those will be handled during the next session," parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi said after the customary all-party meeting held on Tuesday.

The Budget session will start with the President's speech at 11am on Wednesday. The interim budget will be tabled on February 1 and the session will end on February 9. This will be the last session of Parliament before a new Lok Sabha is elected.

Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay raised the Centre's alleged non-payment of West Bengal's financial dues, calling it "an economic blockade". Bandyopadhyay flagged that West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee met Prime Minister Narendra Modi more than 45 days ago, but that the state's funds under the rural jobs guarantee scheme have not been released.

Joshi, meanwhile, urged the Opposition to not display placards in the House and "not force" the Lok Sabha speaker or the Rajya



The all-party meet was held at the Parliament Library Building in New Delhi on Tuesday.

Sabha chairman to act against protesting MPs.

"Forty-five leaders from 30 parties, including the BJP, attended the meeting. The meeting was held in a conducive atmosphere. The government is ready to address any issue. This is the last session of the 17th Lok Sabha. It was decided unanimously that MPs would not bring placards in the House. They raised the issue of suspensions. We have requested the MPs to not come with placards. They should not force the speaker or chairman to take action in the last session," Joshi said.

In the Winter session, an unprecedented 146 lawmakers from the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha were suspended amid acrimony over the security breach in the Lower House after two men jumped from the visitor's gallery into the chamber and sprayed smoke from canisters. The Opposition had demanded home minister Amit Shah's statement, a call the government rejected, even as Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla insisted accountability lay with him. Defence minister and deputy

leader in the Lok Sabha, Rajnath Singh, Joshi and his deputy Arjun Ram Meghwal represented the government in the meeting on Tuesday.

The Congress's K Suresh, Trinamool Congress's Sudip Bandyopadhyay, Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam's TR Bala, Shiv Sena's Rahul Shewale, Samajwadi Party's ST Hasan, Janata Dal (United)'s Ram Nath Thakur and Telugu Desam Party's Jayadev Galla were among the leaders present at the meeting in the Parliament complex.

Congress MP Pramod Tiwari, who represented Rajya Sabha leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge, said he raised the issue of the "violent attack" on the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra led by party leader Rahul Gandhi in Assam and the curbs the state government placed on it. An "unwritten dictatorship" prevails in the country, Tiwari told reporters, accusing the central government of misusing federal probe agencies to target opposition leaders such as Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren and Rashtriya Janata Dal president Lalu Prasad.

14 Oppn lawmakers' suspension revoked; to attend last session

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday revoked the suspension of 14 Opposition MPs, who were penalised along with 132 others during the Winter session of Parliament last month, to allow them to attend President Droupadi Murmu's first address to both Houses in the new Parliament building and the Budget session on Wednesday.

A record 146 opposition MPs from both Houses of Parliament were penalised over a span of six days during the 14-day Winter session over their protests demanding a statement from Union home minister Amit Shah on the Parliament security breach on December 13. Of these, 100 were from the Lower House and 46 from the Upper House.

While a majority of the lawmakers were suspended for the remainder of the session, cases of three Congress Lok Sabha MPs and 11 Rajya Sabha MPs were referred to the privileges committee.

According to a circular issued by the Lower House on Tuesday, "the suspension of Dr. K. Jayakumar, Shri Abdul Khaleque and Shri Vijay Kumar from the service of the House which was effected on 18.12.23 till the submission of the Report by the Committee of Privileges, has been revoked with

effect from 31.01.24."

Likewise, Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar revoked the suspension of 11 MPs from the House, although a formal order in this regard would be announced on Wednesday, a senior official said. The official also said that the opposition MPs were found guilty of breach of privilege and contempt of the Council. HT on January 24 had reported that the suspended MPs may attend the Budget session.

"The Committee of Privileges of Rajya Sabha has held the 11 members... guilty of breach of privilege and contempt of the Council. It had further recommended that the period of suspension already suffered by the members be treated as sufficient punishment for the transgression," the official said.

"...taking note of the situation that the suspended members would not be able to attend the Special Address of President Droupadi Murmu to both Houses of Parliament... for the first time in the new building of the Parliament, the Committee presented the Report to chairman Rajya Sabha," the official added.

Parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi said he requested Birla and Dhankhar to withdraw the suspensions. "All will be revoked. I have spoken with the speaker and chairman. I have also requested them on behalf of the government..." he said.

{ AMID ED SEARCHES }

Soren took 1,300km road trip to Ranchi

Neeraj Chauhan and Neha LM Tripathi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren returned to Ranchi from Delhi, nearly 1,300km away, by road on Monday night to avoid officials keeping a watch at New Delhi airport to trace the 48-year-old Jharkhand Mukti Morcha leader, people close to him said on Tuesday.

Soren reached Ranchi in the early hours of Tuesday and later held a meeting of the ruling alliance lawmakers at the chief minister's residence to discuss the political situation in the state. In photographs and videos shared by Soren's office on X, a large number of MLAs and ministers were seen greeting him before attending the meeting. Soren's wife Kalpana was also present at the meeting.

Soren wasn't at his south Delhi house when a team of Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials reached at 7am on Monday. The federal agency searched the house in the Shanti Niketan neighbourhood on Monday and camped at the location for nearly 13 hours waiting for him. They seized about ₹36 lakh cash, a BMW SUV registered in Haryana and some documents from his Delhi residence, officials said, declining to be named. Soren was "around" New Delhi for legal consultation, people close to him said on condition of anonymity, stressing that there was no need for the agency officers



Jharkhand chief minister Hemant Soren raises slogans after paying tributes at an event to mark the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi in Ranchi on Tuesday.

to go looking for him as he had already responded to ED.

The agency that investigates financial crimes on Saturday asked Soren to confirm his appearance on January 29 or 31 for further questioning in a money laundering probe. Soren informed the ED's Ranchi zone assistant director on Sunday that he would appear before the probe team at his Ranchi residence at 1pm on January 31. He was last questioned in the case on January 20.

Soren landed at New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International airport on Friday and was expected to fly out by another chartered plane owned by a private firm, airport officials said, wishing to remain unnamed. This aircraft landed on Saturday night and remained parked at the airport. An ED team was stationed at the airport in case he sought to fly back to

Ranchi. The central agency's Prevention of Money Laundering Act probe against Soren pertains to an alleged land scam linked to the ownership of a parcel of land measuring 7.16 acres in Bajra area of Ranchi. It has been alleged that the land parcel was acquired through proceeds of crime involving the illegal sale of army land. Soren has dismissed the case as politically motivated and said the details of his assets were in the public domain.

The agency has arrested 14 people in the case, including 2011 batch Indian Administrative Service officer Chhavi Ranjan, who served as director of the state's social welfare department, deputy commissioner of Ranchi, Bhanu Pratap Prasad, and businessman Amit Agrawal and Bishnu Agrawal, who own shopping malls in the state capital.

Nitish takes a U-turn whenever BJP exerts pressure, says Rahul

Aditya Nath Jha

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PURNEA: The Mahagathbandhan or Grand Alliance in Bihar does not need chief minister Nitish Kumar to fight for social justice, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday said, as he broke his silence on the Janata Dal (United) chief's exit from the coalition and slammed him for "taking a U-turn each time little pressure is exerted" by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led Centre.

"The Mahagathbandhan will fight for social justice in Bihar. We don't require Nitish Kumar for that purpose, we don't require him at all," Gandhi said at Rangbhumai Maidan in Purnea district, where his party's ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra entered during the day.

"Right now, Baghel ji (former Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel) told me a joke. The joke goes like this... Your chief minister took oath at the governor's house. Some of his ministers also took oaths. Celebrations were going on. Nitish Kumar decided to go back to his home. Suddenly, while going back, he realised he left his shawl at the governor's house. He went back and met the governor. The governor was shocked and said you came back so quick this time," he said.

"So this is the condition of Bihar, a little pressure is exerted, and he (Nitish Kumar) makes a U-turn," he added.

On Sunday, Kumar announced



Rahul Gandhi

the end of the 17-month-old coalition government run by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), JD(U), Congress and Left parties, and took oath as chief minister for the ninth time. It was not for the first time that Kumar switched sides.

Gandhi said the current Mahagathbandhan allies are ready to fight for social justice.

"It was my party which put up pressure on Nitish Kumar and the RJD for conducting a caste census, which the BJP never wanted," the Congress leader said, referring to the caste survey that resulted in the state hiking quotas to 75% last year.

The BJP blamed Gandhi for Kumar's exit from the Mahagathbandhan.

"Rahul Gandhi has been proven to be inauspicious for the INDIA bloc. The alliance breaks wherever he goes... The same happened in West Bengal and Bihar. In Uttar Pradesh, if he bows down before Akhilesh Yadav, then it is a different thing... Rahul should first do 'nyay' within the party," Union minister Giriraj Singh said.

BIHAR HOUSE MEET FROM FEB 10, NITISH MAY SEEK TRUST VOTE ON FIRST DAY

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PATNA: The Bihar assembly will meet for its budget session starting February 10, according to a notification issued on Tuesday, with the new government led by chief minister Nitish Kumar in coalition with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) likely to seek a trust vote on the first day of the session, according to people aware of the matter.

The state budget will be tabled on February 12, the people cited above added.

According to the parliamentary affairs department's notification, Bihar governor Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar will address both houses of the state legislature on February 10 and the economic survey will be placed on the same day.

Still, there remains uncertainty about who will be the next speaker in the House, with the Awadh Bihari Choudhary still to tender his resignation, even as BJP leader Nand Kishore, former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi, former deputy CM Tarkishore Prasad and others have served a notice to the state assembly secretariat, seeking his removal. The budget session will be the first after fresh political turmoil engulfed the eastern state, as Kumar on Sunday snapped ties with the Grand Alliance, joined hands with the BJP and took oath as chief minister for the ninth time.

{ LAND-FOR-JOBS SCAM } IN CHARGE SHEET

ED INTERROGATES TEJASHWI; RJD ATTACKS CENTRE

Avinash Kumar

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PATNA: Former Bihar deputy chief minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav was interrogated by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money-laundering case linked to the land-for-jobs scam on Tuesday, a day after his father and former chief minister Lalu Prasad was quizzed in the matter.

According to people aware of the details, Tejashwi arrived at the ED office in Patna at 11.25am, as a large number of party workers and supporters, who gathered at the premises, raised slogans against the federal agency and the BJP-led Centre.

Tejashwi was accompanied by his sister and Rajya Sabha MP Misa Bharti, brother Tej Pratap Yadav, and lawmaker Manoj Jha. His statement was recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. He left the ED office, showing the victory sign, at 8:05pm, the people cited above said. On Monday, Lalu was quizzed for 10 hours in the case.

The RJD claimed the BJP's top leadership is "afraid" of opposition parties, and it is targeting them by "misusing" central investigation agencies ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. "It is not ED. Call it BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah... they are doing it with all those who have the courage to stand up against them," Jha said.

Deputy chief minister Samrat Choudhary said: "Lalu ji gulped down fodder when he was the chief minister and got land registered in lieu of jobs when he was railway minister. ED is investigating the corruption case."

FORMER UNION MIN'S KIN KILLED IN RAJ CAR CRASH

ALWAR: Congress leader Manvendra Singh's wife was killed and the former MP and his son were injured when their SUV met with an accident in Alwar on the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, officials said.

Manvendra Singh, who is son of the late BJP stalwart and former Union minister Jaswant Singh, and his family were on their way to Jaipur from Delhi when the accident happened.

Police said the driver, Narendra, apparently lost control of the car near Naugava.

Chief minister Bhajan Lal Sharma expressed grief over the incident.

Lalu, kin 'consolidated' their land: ED

Neeraj Chauhan

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NEW DELHI: Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) chief Lalu Prasad and his family members acquired at a discount, separate land parcels from candidates who were given jobs in the railways, with a purpose to "consolidate" the land already owned by the family to increase the size of their overall landholding and, therefore, its value in the real estate market, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has claimed in its charge sheet filed earlier this month in the land-for-jobs money laundering probe.

Overall, seven land parcels in Patna were transferred at throwaway prices in the name of Lalu's wife Rabri Devi and daughter Hema Yadav by the family members of the candidates or the candidates themselves who applied for and received jobs as Group D substitutes in railways, when Lalu headed the ministry of railways between 2004 and 2009.

Interestingly, some of those who transferred their land to the Lalu family in return for the jobs did so to people who worked for Rabri Devi as security guard and Gaushtala (dairy) worker, and they, in turn, transferred land to the family, the charge sheet



Lalu Prasad

explained.

A Delhi court last week took cognisance of the charge sheet, which names Rabri Devi, daughters Misa Bharti and Hema Yadav, along with others as accused under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). The federal investigation agency seems to have stepped up the pace of its investigations in recent weeks. On Monday, it questioned Lalu in Patna and on Tuesday, it was the turn of his son Tejashwi Yadav.

Neither Lalu nor Tejashwi has been named as an accused in this charge sheet. To be sure, agencies often file supplementary charge sheets as the investigation progresses.

"Illegal gratifications obtained by Lalu Prasad, the then railway minister, through his family members and associate in the form of land parcels in lieu of railway jobs are proceeds of crime (POC) derived out of criminal activity.

The land parcels (which are POC) were acquired by the Yadav family members to consolidate the land holdings already in their possession. The POC were acquired in the name of Rabri Devi, Misa Bharti, Hema Yadav and company AK Infosystems Pvt Ltd (in which the family holds ownership)," the ED charge sheet, seen by HT, said.

The land parcels received from the candidates were adjacent to a parcel of land bought by Rabri Devi in 1991, the charge sheet said. "It is not a simple case of accepting illegal gratification in the form of separate land parcels but a larger design to consolidate land holdings already in the name of accused persons to boost profits in the real estate market," it added.

The candidates or their family members, in return for the jobs, transferred two land parcels to Rabri Devi. "Another two land parcels were purchased by two other individuals, Hridayanand Chaudhary and Lalan Chaudhary (who worked in Rabri Devi's Gaushtala), and subsequently both of them transferred their land parcels to Hema Yadav through gift deeds. All four land parcels were situated adjacent to the land bought by Rabri (Devi) in 1991. This was done to increase the size of landholding and increase the price and attract-

iveness/desirability of the now consolidated land parcels in the real estate market," the charge sheet added. Referring to AK Infosystems, registered at D-1088, New Friends Colony, Delhi, which is also used by Tejashwi Yadav as his residence in the Capital, the ED charge sheet said, it "acted as a tool for Lalu Prasad Yadav to hold on to ill-gotten wealth without being detected by authorities".

By acquiring AK Infosystems in 2014, in which Rabri Devi and Tejashwi Yadav hold 85% and 15%, respectively, the family also acquired the assets of the company, ED said.

The federal agency further claimed that after the Income Tax department initiated proceedings against the Yadavs in 2017, targeting their proxy holdings, the family's chartered accountant Suman Kumar Nayak met Rabri Devi in Patna and "advised the family to regularise the affairs of all the companies". "The motive was to avoid detection by authorities and to project things in a way which add tinge of legality to the past transactions/asset acquisition of the companies and to cover the loopholes left during handing over the company with intention to avoid the inquiries from various agencies," the charge sheet said.

3 Yadav kin in first SP list for LS polls

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: The Samajwadi Party (SP) on Tuesday named candidates for 16 Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh, becoming the first party to publish a list for the 2024 general elections. The first list has three Yadav family members, including sitting MP Dimple Yadav from Mainpuri.

The first list came out amid ongoing seat-sharing talks with INDIA bloc partner Congress. So far, the SP has offered seven seats to long-standing ally Rashtriya Lok Dal and 11 to the Congress. Though the alliance seats are not demarcated yet, party functionaries said the 16 seats in the first list are by-and-large not overlapping with any partner's demands.

Eleven of the 16 candidates are from Other Backward Classes (OBC) — four Kurmis, three Yadavs, two Shakyas, one Nishad, and one Pal. There is one Muslim, one Dalit, two Khatris and one Kshatriya. There are two women in the first list. The party declared

Dimple Yadav, wife of party chief Akhilesh Yadav, as the candidate for pocket borough Mainpuri, a seat won by the late Mulayam Singh Yadav in 2019. Dimple won a bypoll in December 2022.

Akhilesh's nephew Akshay Yadav (SP chief national general secretary Ram Gopal Yadav's son) will contest the Firozabad seat, which he had lost to the BJP in 2019. From Badaun, the party fielded Dharmendra Yadav.

"Hoga PDA ke naam, abki ekjut madaam," the SP said, referring to its *pichda* (backward), Dalit and *alpsankhyak* (minorities) ticket.

The party gave the ticket to 93-year-old incumbent Shafiq-ur-Rahman Barq from Sambhal. It fielded Devesh Shakyas from Etah, Utarsh Verma from Kheri, Anand Bhaudauria from Dharhaura, and Annu Tandon from Unnao. State Congress Committee spokesperson CP Rai said talks on seat-sharing are still on. "So, it would not be appropriate to comment. However, it would have been better if both the parties declared their seats/candidates together."

'Review orders on J&K internet ban not to be kept in cupboard'

Abraham Thomas

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NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday said that orders reviewing whether or not the internet should be suspended in a particular region are not meant to be "kept in cupboard", giving two weeks to the Jammu & Kashmir administration to take instructions on making them public.

A bench of justices BR Gavai and Sanjay Karol, which was told by the state administration that there was no requirement to place such review orders in the public domain, responded: "Review orders are not to be kept in the cupboard. Let the state show from the orders we have passed that there is no requirement to publish review orders."

The court was hearing an application first moved in 2020 by the Foundation for Media Professionals (FMP), which challenged the internet shutdown in the erstwhile state of Jammu & Kashmir (now a Union territory) for varied periods, between January and April 2020.



The top court was hearing an application moved in 2020.

These orders were withdrawn in February 2021 after a Special Committee headed by Union home secretary assessed the prevailing situation and recommended that the ban be withdrawn.

Advocate Shadan Farasat, appearing for the foundation, said the Supreme Court in two consecutive orders passed in January 2020 (Anuradha Bhasin v Union of India) and May 2020 (FMP v Jammu & Kashmir), categorically held that the publication of orders imposing internet shutdowns is a must. The court appeared to agree with this submission. "If you read our orders, prima facie it is clear you have to publish (internet clampdown orders). Take instruc-

tions in two weeks," it told the J&K administration. While the state has published the initial orders banning internet use, it expressed reservations on making the review order public.

ASG KM Nataraj, appearing for J&K, said, "These issues arose during the pandemic. Subsequently, there were two judgments. We have complied with it. Now this application is seeking a review of those orders." The UT administration filed a short affidavit last year giving reasons for opposing the application. It said that neither the Anuradha Bhasin matter nor the subsequent order of May 11, 2020 in the FMP case required the UT to publish the review order.

"Decisions of the special committee (headed by MHA secretary) deal with highly sensitive and secret/confidential matters relating to militancy, terrorism, cross border infiltration, security and defence of the nation...Likewise, the deliberations and findings of the statutory review committee would stand on the same footing," the affidavit said.

CBI files closure report in extortion case against former Mumbai top cop

HT Correspondent

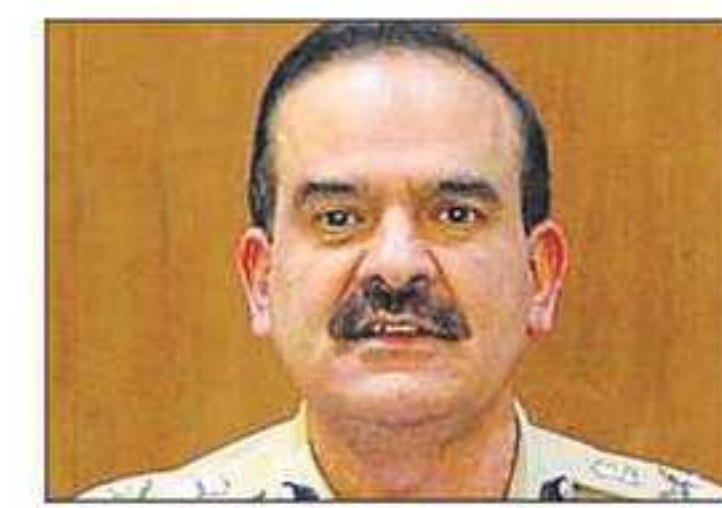
htmumbai@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has approached a local court in Thane to close an extortion case against former Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh and four others.

"The allegations made by the complainant are not corroborated by any independent evidence," the agency said in its closure report filed before the chief judicial magistrate on January 18.

The FIR under section 384 (extortion), among others, of the Indian Penal Code at Kopri police station in Thane on July 23, 2021, also named the then deputy commissioner of police, Parag Manere, builder Sanjay Punamtiya, his associate Sunil Jain, and a private individual named Manoj Ghotkar.

Acting on a petition filed by Singh, the Supreme Court in



Param Bir Singh

March 2022 transferred the probe to the federal agency.

On January 18, CBI filed a closure report before the Thane court, claiming the facts and circumstances "do not substantiate the allegations or disclose any incriminating evidence for launching prosecution against any of the accused persons."

In its plea, the agency said the complaint was lodged five years after the incident and "the complainant could not provide the exact dates/places/time etc. for the alleged meetings in Thane and delivery of the money demanded."

{ AAP, CONG MOVE HIGH COURT } HIGH DRAMA

BJP wins Chandigarh mayor's polls amid rigging allegations

Mandeep Kaur Narula
letters@hindustantimes.com

CHANDIGARH: The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday won the Chandigarh mayoral poll after the chair scrapped eight Opposition votes in a controversial decision, sparking allegations of vote tampering that marred the first electoral showdown between the ruling party and the 27-party Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA).

In a House of 35, the INDIA bloc candidate Kuldeep Dhalor was tipped to win after the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), with 13 members, and the Congress, with 7, joined hands and supported a joint nominee. But he was defeated by the BJP's Manoj Sonkar after the nominated councillor officiating the election, BJP office bearer Anil Masih, declared eight votes invalid.

No official reason was given for the decision during the announcement of the results. Masih, later in the evening said that ballot papers had some pen marks.

Visuals from the chamber showed Masih making some marks on the ballot papers and a scuffle breaking out as Opposition members alleged he had intentionally invalidated the votes.

Sonkar eventually received 16 votes - the BJP has 15 members in the municipal corporation and an additional one from local MP Kirron Kher. Dhalor won only 12.

"That the INDI Alliance fought their first electoral battle and still lost to BJP shows that neither their arithmetic is working nor their chemistry," said BJP chief JP Nadda.

But the Opposition alleged that the election was stolen and vowed to go to the court. "Gandhiji was assassinated on this date and after 76 years, they (BJP) have murdered the democracy... The whole country is seeing how they stole votes," AAP chief and Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said.

In the evening, the AAP moved the Punjab and Haryana high court, seeking a fresh election and alleging presiding officer, against all rules and regulations, announced the result that the eight votes have been declared

invalid but did not utter a single word for the invalidity of the votes and the party to those these invalid votes were polled.

The Union Territory elects a new mayor every year but the stakes were raised this time after bitter rivals AAP and Congress came together to defeat the BJP, which has held the position for eight terms. As part of the alliance, the AAP contested the mayor's post, while the Congress fielded candidates for senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor.

The election was originally scheduled for January 18, but was postponed after Masih, who is the general secretary of the BJP's minority wing, fell ill. After a high court order, the poll was scheduled for January 30.

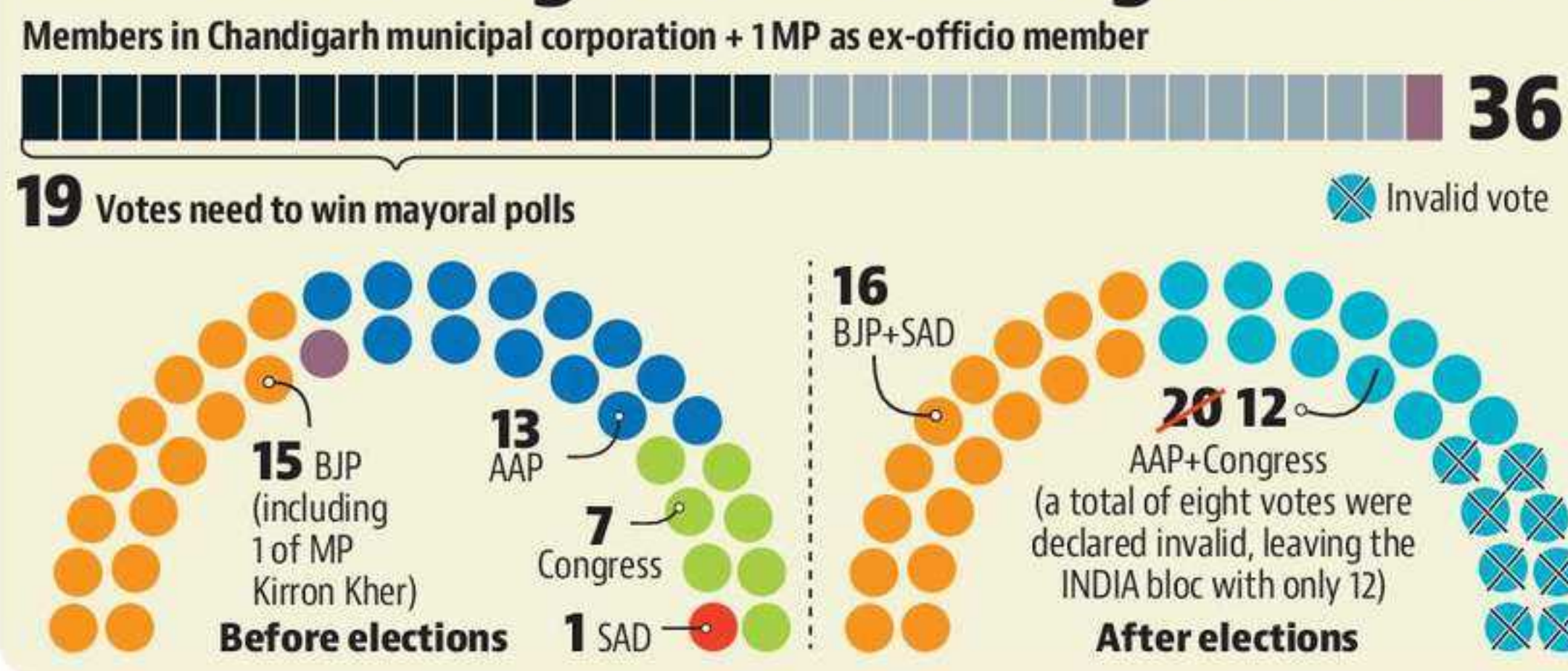
But ruckus broke out soon after the secret ballot process was complete. Masih said that he would first sign the polled votes and then call the polling agents to view the ballot papers while counting. While signatures were being affixed, INDIA bloc councillors started alleging that Masih was "intentionally making tick and dot marks" on the polled ballots. These ballots, they alleged, were later declared invalid.

AAP leader Raghav Chadha questioned the mayoral polls process and said: "What we saw in the Chandigarh mayoral polls today was not only unconstitutional and illegal but also an act of 'desh-droh (treachery)'."

"Victory of our alliance was certain, but sensing imminent defeat, the BJP hatched conspiracies. First, the presiding officer, who was to conduct polls on January 18, was made to fall ill. Thereafter an attempt was made to buy councillors of the AAP. When BJP's 'operation lotus' failed, then they did fraud (in the mayoral polls)," he further said.

A scuffle followed as angry Congress and AAP councillors tried to snatch ballot papers to see the reason for the invalidation, but the BJP councillors helped the chair and officials. Television visuals showed Sonkar being hurriedly installed in the chair even as pandemonium ensued in the House and the Opposition sought to see

Understanding how the voting unfolded



the ballot papers.

"The agent of the Congress-AAP candidate was not allowed to see the ballot papers. The presiding officer announced a rejection of eight votes, declared the BJP candidate winner and went away. BJP members rushed to the table and tore the ballot papers," said Congress leader Pawan Bansal.

As per councillors, some ballot papers even got torn. The Opposition walked out of the House as voting for the senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor began. The BJP won both positions unopposed.

In the evening, Masih defended himself. "Before polling the votes, 11 councillors of Congress and AAP had said that they wished to replace their ballot papers and the needful was done. As per the law, I made signatures on polled votes and I had clearly said that agents will be called for cross checking the results," he said.

"The allegations against me are baseless as the eight votes already had small marks on them, making them invalid. If the Opposition wanted to get clarifications, they should have calmly checked the papers and should not have tried to take them or torn them," he added.

Chandigarh BJP chief Jatinder Malhotra said, "After the news of breaking the INDIA came, Congress knew that they wouldn't get a Lok Sabha seat in Chandigarh or Punjab. Congress councillors intentionally made invalid votes."

Kejriwal lashes out: 'Murder of democracy'

Alok KN Mishra
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NEW DELHI: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday pinned the Aam Aadmi Party-Congress combine's loss in the Chandigarh mayoral polls to "electoral malpractice", as he accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) of "rigging the ballot" and said the incident set a bad precedent for the country ahead of the general elections.

"Exactly 76 years after Mahatma Gandhi was killed, they have killed democracy. It is a black day for democracy as the BJP indulged in electoral malpractice, which was captured by cameras and which the entire country is now watching on social media. They got their candidate elected mayor of Chandigarh by force," Kejriwal said in a press conference at his residence on Tuesday evening.

In the 35-member House, the BJP's mayoral candidate Manoj Sonkar won 16 votes, while the INDIA bloc candidate Kuldeep Dhalor won 12. BJP office-bearer Anil Masih, who was nominated as the election's presiding officer, declared eight of the INDIA bloc's votes invalid.



Arvind Kejriwal

"The BJP had ill intentions from the beginning. They appointed a party worker as the presiding officer. The election was scheduled on January 18, but the presiding officer suddenly reported sick and the election was indefinitely postponed. We moved the court and got a new date fixed. In the meantime, they intimidated our (AAP+ Congress) councillors and tried to coach them," he added.

"It would have been the INDIA bloc's first victory. They indulged in electoral malpractices despite court directions," Kejriwal said.

BJP leader and Union minister Pralhad Joshi, in a post on X, called the INDIA bloc "brain dead". "That the INDI alliance fought their first electoral battle and still lost to BJP shows that neither their arithmetic is working nor their chemistry," he said.

US envoy seeks changes in India's export, FDI policies

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NEW DELHI: US ambassador Eric Garcetti on Tuesday called for changes in India's investment, intellectual property, export and taxation regimes and said the government's drive for self-reliance could slow the pace of trade and economic development.



Eric Garcetti

Garcetti, speaking on the theme of "Strengthening Indo-US relationship in Amritkaal-Aatmanirbhar Bharat" at an event organised by the Indo-American Chamber of Commerce, highlighted rapid advances made by the two sides in areas such as defence, emerging technologies, critical minerals and semiconductors.

However, he contended India and the US won't be able to realise their full potential in trade and investment unless New Delhi brings about changes in areas such as export controls, foreign direct investment (FDI), and the corporate tax regime, which he described as "opaque". He also sought the removal of other barriers for US companies to invest in India.

Noting that being "more frank with one another" is part of deepening the overall relationship, Garcetti said export controls and policy have to change for India and the US to achieve their goals and achieve the required economic growth.

The US wants to see FDI shifting from China to India, "but if you look at the honest numbers... FDI isn't flowing into India at the pace it should be. Instead, it is going to Southeast Asia, into countries like Vietnam," he said.

While the US wants India to be self-reliant, it also wants a "India that doesn't look at self-reliance as a fortress", given the ability of Indian companies to compete anywhere in the world and invest and create jobs in the US. Garcetti said "this is not a paradigm of old, of invaders coming in to extract".

He added, "This is a relationship of equals, that when we break down the walls in both of our governments, whether they are bureaucratic, taxation, regulatory [and] part of our federal system, you only release more jobs, more prosperity, more

investment and more strength." Garcetti contended that "no country can be self-reliant anymore" and he wanted to see supply chains critical to America coming to India. "The rhetoric that everything has to be made here in India will slow down the pace. If you tax inputs, many of you in manufacturing know that you are taxing your outputs. You're not taxing us, you are not protecting the market, what you are doing is limiting the market and we want to bring in greater investment," he said.

As previously reported by HT, the US has been pressing India to reduce tariff and non-tariff barriers to allow American agricultural products.

"We also have to see that opaque corporate tax practices still are a barrier to too many [US] companies that want to be here," Garcetti said, adding that American firms also want to ensure protection of intellectual property.

"Courts often decide that there is a violation of intellectual property but then there is no consequence. This is now increasingly important to Indian companies too because Indian companies are producing patents at such a roaring rate now compared to the past" he added.

"India is big enough to have its own market but if you want to have dominance in the global marketplace, you have to decide on these standards together. It is so exciting to see that happen with 4G, 5G, Open RAN [radio access network]," he said.

Without naming China, Garcetti said the "main competitor" of the US and India wants to use telecommunications to spy on its citizens and on others around the world.

Garcetti also said firms want faster permissions, speedy customs clearances, and tax and regulatory stability.

INDIA, U.S. MUST MOVE FORWARD IN STRATEGIC AND BUSINESS SECTORS: DEFENCE MINISTER

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Defence minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said India and the US are natural partners who must move forward in the strategic and business sectors amid the current turmoil in the global geopolitics, while stressing that capital and technological know-how from the US can help India become a developed country by 2047 and in-bound investments can provide American companies high returns.

"India and the US support a free, open and rules-based international order. Due to this, there is a lot of alignment in our strategic interests. The current relationship is driven by the twin congruence of shared values and aligned interests, which is a guarantee for long sustainability and robustness of ties," Singh said.

He was addressing a conference on Strengthening Indo-US Relationship in Amrit Kaal - Aatmanirbhar Bharat organised by Indo-American Chamber of Commerce (IACC).

"India is the largest democracy in the world, and the US is another big democracy. When two big democracies cooperate, it will only benefit the democratic world order. This will act as a force multiplier for rules-based order across the globe."

The government has laid the groundwork for a strong and self-reliant "New India", and the American investments can play a vital role in helping realise the vision of "Viksit Bharat" (developed India). Calling it a win-win situation for both countries, he said India's fast-growing economy, its demographic dividend, skilled workforce, and huge domestic market guarantee high returns to US companies.



NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY
TENDER CANCELLATION NOTICE
E-Tender notice no 03/2024 dated 08.01.2024 in which tender mentioned at S.I. no 03, was to be opened on 29.01.2024 will be opened on 02.02.2024 due to administrative reasons. Please see the Indian Railway IREPS website www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager (engg.) CPRO/W-524 Iztanagar Do Not Smoke Bid/Cigarette in train

Hindustan Times
EARLIER, I THOUGHT RAP WAS ONLY ABOUT GIRLS, CARS... MC SQUARE
CHECK OUT TODAY'S EDITION

Online Tender Notice No.16 of 2023-24 (2nd Attempt)
Sports Authority of Gujarat
Administrative Building, PIU Branch, 3rd Floor, Beside EVM Ware House Office, Near Vavol Railway Crossing, Sector 13-B Gandhinagar-382016

Secretary, Sports Authority of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Administrative Building, PIU branch, 3rd Floor, Beside EVM Ware House Office, Near Vavol Railway Crossing, Sector-13-B, Gandhinagar invite "Annual Operations And Maintenance Contract of Danadi Kutir Museum At Gandhinagar" for Rs. 7,98,39,928.00 The tender may be download on the website <https://tender.nprocure.com> can be viewed online on the website.

For any further information contact to PIU Branch in the office of Secretary, Sports Authority of Gujarat, Gandhinagar, Administrative Building, 1st Floor, Beside EVM Ware House Office, Near Vavol Railway Crossing, Sector-13-B, Gandhinagar office hour, Contact no.9998717526.

INF/2359/23-24

office of Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, P.W.D. Moradabad
No.-119/Nivida-Moradabad/2023-24 Dated :-08-01-2024
E-Procurement Notice Inviting Tender

On behalf of the Governor of UP, tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from registered contractors in column No-8 from 01.02.2024 at 10.00 am to 07-02-2024 at 12.00 noon. Amount mentioned in column no. 5 & 7 shall be mandatory deposited by Net Banking Only through E-tender portal. Technical bid/Prequalification of tenders shall be opened on 07-02-2024 at 12.30 noon in office of undersigned by tender committee in presence of authorised representatives/bidders who wish to be present. Financial bid of the tenders who qualify in technical bid shall be opened on date and time as specified by a notice in the office of undersigned. In case of Government holiday the required process shall be carried out on next working day.

Sl. No.	DISTR. ICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs.in lacs)	Bid Security (Rs.in lacs)	Time of completion of the work (Including rainy season)	Cost of tender documents including GST (RS.)
1	MIBD	Renewal work along with General Repair on Thakurdwara-Dilari road. Km-1 to 19 and 20(470)	448.56	8.98	12 Month	300+2000+54=2354

Rules/conditions & details of the tender are available at website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. Bidder have to login Prahari URL <http://wms.uppwd.gov.in/prahari/> and upload their documents As per G.O No.-879 (1) / 23-7-2020 dated 25-08-2020 and E-IN-C (Vikas) and Head of Department letter-4650 / 4NL-OC / 2020 dated 27.08.2020.

(Mohd. Naved Ahmad Khan) Executive Engineer Provincial Division, PWD Moradabad
(S.P. Singh) Superintending Engineer Moradabad Circle, PWD Moradabad

UP-201733, Dt. 29.01.2024 Website : www.upgov.nic.in For and on behalf of Governor of UP

Think LNG, Think of Petronet LNG Limited

- Highest ever PBT and PAT in the current quarter Q3, FY 2023-24 of Rs 1,597 Cr and Rs 1,191 Cr respectively.
- Highest ever PBT and PAT in the current nine months ended on 31st December, 2023, of Rs 3,761 Cr and Rs 2,799 Cr respectively.
- Growth in PBT and PAT in the current quarter Q3, FY 2023-24, over the PBT and PAT in the Previous quarter Q2, FY 2023-24 by 45% and 46% respectively.
- Growth in PBT and PAT in the current nine months ended on 31st December, 2023, over the PBT and PAT in the corresponding nine months by 7%.
- Growth in volume throughput in the current nine months ended on 31st December, 2023 over volume throughput of corresponding nine months by 21%.

Extract Of Un-audited Financial Results For Quarter And Nine Month Ended 31st December, 2023

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone						Consolidated					
		Quarter Ended		Nine Month Ended		Year Ended	Quarter Ended		Nine Month Ended		Year Ended		
		31/12/23	30/09/23	31/12/22	31/12/23	31/12/22	31/03/23	31/12/23	30/09/23	31/12/22	31/12/23	31/12/22	31/03/23
1	Total income from operations (net)	14,747.21	12,532.01	15,775.87	38,935.27	46,025.42	59,899.35	14,747.21	12,532.57	15,775.87	38,936.16	46,025.42	59,899.35
2	Net Profit for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	1,597.31	1,101.95	1,585.56	3,761.38	3,516.50	4,334.54	1,596.84	1,098.79	1,580.87	3,755.64	3,487.11	4,282.18
3	Net Profit for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	1,597.31	1,101.95	1,585.56	3,761.38	3,516.50	4,334.54	1,596.84	1,098.79	1,580.87	3,755.64	3,487.11	4,282.18
4	Net Profit from ordinary activities after tax	1,190.67	818.10	1,180.54	2,798.62	2,625.69	3,239.94	1,212.98	855.74	1,196.46	2,888.00	2,707.02	3,325.82
5	Other Comprehensive Income	-	(4.24)	-	(4.24)	(1.40)	(5.68)	0.01	(4.19)	-	(4.17)	(1.36)	(4.36)
6	Total Comprehensive Income	1,190.67	813.86	1,180.54	2,794.38	2,624.29	3,234.26	1,212.99	851.55	1,196.46	2,883.83	2,705.66	3,321.46
7	Equity share capital	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00	1,500.00
8	Other Equity (excluding revaluation reserve)	-	-	-	-	-	13,434.74	-	-	-	-	-	13,764.56
9	Earnings per share (Face value of Rs. 10/- each)												
a)	Basic (Rs)	7.94	5.45	7.87	18.66	17.50	21.60	8.09	5.70	7.98	19.25	18.05	22.17
b)	Diluted (Rs)	7.94	5.45	7.87	18.66	17.50	21.60	8.09	5.70	7.98	19.25	18.05	22.17

Note:-
1. The above results have been reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at the meeting held on 29th January 2024. The Statutory auditors of the Company have carried out Limited review of the aforesaid results.
2. The above is an extract of the detailed format of the Statements of limited review of Standalone and Consolidated Financials Results, for the quarter ended 31st December 2023, filed with the stock exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (listing and other disclosure requirements) Regulations' 2015. The full format of the Statements of Un-audited Standalone and Consolidated Financials results are available on the websites of National Stock Exchange, the Bombay Stock Exchange and the website of the company (www.petronetng.in).

Place : New Delhi
Date : 29th January 2024

By order of the Board
Vinod Kumar Mishra
Director (Finance)
DIN: 08125144

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718 snow leopards in India, most in Ladakh, says study

Jayashree Nandi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: There are around 718 snow leopards in the country, the first ever population estimation exercise of the vulnerable species by the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPA) Program has found.

Union environment minister, Bhupinder Yadav released the report. Status of Snow Leopards in India during the National Board for Wildlife meeting held in Delhi on Tuesday.

During the assessment conducted from 2019 to 2023, a total of 241 unique Snow Leopards were photographed. Based on the analysis, Ladakh has the highest estimated population of the animal (477) followed by Uttarakhand (124), Himachal Pradesh (51), Arunachal Pradesh (36), Sikkim (21), and Jammu and Kashmir (9).

The study covered approximately 120,000 sq km of Snow Leopard habitat across the trans-Himalayan region, including Ladakh, J & K, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh; surveyed 13,450 km of trails; and deployed camera traps at 1,971 locations for 180,000 trap nights (each night a single camera is active). According to the environment ministry, the study estimated the presence of Snow Leopards in 100,841 sq km and recorded its presence in 93,392 sq km.

The estimation of Snow Leopard population is important because of the species' role as an apex predator in the Himalayan ecosystem. As an apex predator, it exerts top down regulation of



prey populations, thereby influencing the ecological equilibrium of its habitat.

The Snow Leopard is designated in the 'vulnerable' category by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It faces multiple threats including overgrazing, human-wildlife conflict, poaching, free-ranging dogs, habitat degradation, and climate change impacts.

The species is found in 12 countries, Afghanistan, Bhutan, China, India, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Nepal, Pakistan, Russia, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan, and its global population is estimated at 3020 to 5390, according to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program.

The report also mentions the

need for establishing a dedicated Snow Leopard Cell at Wildlife Institute of India, with primary focus on long-term population monitoring, supported by well-structured study designs and field surveys. "Consistent monitoring is essential to ensuring Snow Leopards' long-term survival. For the same, states and UTs can consider adopting a periodic population estimation approach (every 4th year) in the Snow leopard range. These regular assessments will offer valuable insights for identifying challenges, addressing threats, and formulating effective conservation strategies," the ministry added.

Snow Leopards are high-altitude rock specialists and have been recorded in high rocky

areas, alpine meadows, alpine steppe shrub, and high altitude forests. They generally live above the tree line at elevations of 2,700-5,000 m. During winter, the Snow Leopard may descend to lower elevations, but in summer moves back up mountains to the steepest and most remote terrain according to the Global Snow Leopard and Ecosystem Protection Program.

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) is the National Coordinator for this exercise that was carried out with support the support of all snow leopard range states, the Nature Conservation Foundation, Mysuru and WWF-India.

"Preserving the snow leopard population in India demands a comprehensive strategy. This includes safeguarding and rejuvenating crucial high-altitude habitats, collaborating with local communities in conservation initiatives and ensuring that they benefit from conservation, enforcing strong anti-poaching measures, and addressing human-wildlife conflicts. In addition, applied research, policy advocacy, and addressing climate change impacts are essential to sustain snow leopards in the long run. Fortunately, most of these aspects are well covered in the National Snow Leopard Conservation Plan of the Government of India (GOI). Ensuring its diligent implementation is vital to protect both the snow leopards, their high Himalayan habitat and the future of people inhabiting this region," said Rishi Kumar Sharma, head, Himalayas Conservation Program, WWF-India.

PANCHAYAT OFFICIAL SUSPENDED AMID K'TAKA FLAG ROW

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

BENGALURU: A panchayat official has been suspended in connection with the flag controversy in a Mandya village of Karnataka, even as chief minister Siddaramaiah blamed "Godse's descendants" for disturbing peace in the state.

Tension earlier gripped the Keragodu village over the removal of a "Hanuman Dhwaaja." As Mandya witnessed a massive demonstration by the BJP and Janata Dal (Secular) on Monday to protest the removal of a flag with a portrait of Lord Hanuman from a 108 ft flagpole, the Keragodu village Panchayat Development Officer was suspended on Tuesday.

The order, issued by Mandya zila panchayat chief executive officer Sheikh Tanveer Asif, said that "permission was granted solely for hoisting the national flag. However, the PDO allowed the hoisting of the Hanuman flag and did not take steps to remove it until January 28".

Meanwhile, the CM alleged the opposition's agitation was aimed at gaining political mileage. "There are people amongst us who worship (Nathuram) Godse though they speak about Mahatma Gandhi as well," he told reporters. Earlier, MP Sumalatha had alleged that the incident happened due to "district administration's failure to maintain law and order".

Video of locals facing off with PLA in Ladakh comes to fore

Ravi Krishnan Khajuria
letters@hindustantimes.com

JAMMU: Weeks after army chief General Manoj Pande described the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh as "stable but sensitive", a new video has surfaced that shows Indian shepherds having heated arguments with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) soldiers in the Chushul sector.

HT has seen the video, which is believed to be shot on January 2. Shared by the leader of the Opposition in Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh and sitting councillor from Leh City, Tsering Namgyal, the 6.5-minute video shows how around six to eight PLA soldiers arrived in a combat vehicle and blew sirens in Taklung Chorok valley to scare away the shepherds and livestock.

"However, the shepherds put up a brave face and refused to leave the place and even pelted a few stones at the Chinese soldiers. The shepherds had heated arguments with the Chinese soldiers telling them clearly that the area belongs to India and they should go back," said Namgyal.

The development comes at a time when India and China have been locked in border row along LAC in eastern Ladakh since

THE 6.5-MINUTE VIDEO SHOWS HOW AROUND SIX TO EIGHT PLA SOLDIERS ARRIVED IN A COMBAT VEHICLE AND BLEW SIRENS IN TAKLUNG CHOROK VALLEY

May 2020.

Indian and Chinese soldiers have thus far disengaged from Galwan Valley, Pangong Tso, Gogra (PP-17A) and Hot Springs (PP-15). However, both armies still have tens of thousands of troops each and advanced weaponry deployed in the Ladakh theatre, and problems at Depsang and Demchok are still on the negotiating table.

At his annual media briefing on January 11, Pande had said the situation in the Ladakh sector was "stable, yet sensitive," adding that the army's operational preparedness was high, and its deployments "robust and balanced." Talks at the military and diplomatic levels are on to resolve the outstanding issues along LAC, he had said.

The Chinese soldiers also shot videos of the shepherds. The incident happened on

January 2 near patrolling point 36 in Taklung area, which lies in Chushul sector. After heated arguments, the Chinese soldiers left the place, said Namgyal. "Following the incident, Indian Army and Chinese Army also met in the Chushul sector on the same day to resolve the issue before it could flare up. On January 11, the sub divisional magistrate of Nyoma block, Jigmet Angchuk also visited the place to assess the situation," he added.

The video is of an incident that took place in first week of January, officials aware of the matter said in Delhi on Tuesday. "Ever since the incident, the Indian Army has requested the villagers not to go close to LAC to avoid confrontation with the Chinese soldiers. However, if we keep conceding to Chinese claims, they may put up tents and a check post on our land," said the Leh City councillor.

Namgyal said that he flagged the issue to the Nyoma SDM, who has claimed that the issue has been amicably resolved and there was no need to escalate it. Intelligence sources told HT that a report of the latest incident had been sent to the Union home ministry.

Calls and messages to the Leh deputy magistrate Santosh Sukhadeve went unanswered.

{ JAISHANKAR AT IIM-MUMBAI }

Global politics is a competitive game: EAM

Niraj Pandit
letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: India does not fear Beijing and rather welcomes competition and tries to be better than other countries, external affairs minister S Jaishankar said during an interaction with students at the Indian Institute of Management, Mumbai on Tuesday.

"It (China) is India's neighbour and is going to deploy resources and shape South Asia's geopolitical situation in 'China's way'. I don't think we should be scared of China. I think we should say 'okay, global politics is a competitive game. You do your best, I will do my best'," Jaishankar said



S Jaishankar PTI

"We are the first country who helped Sri Lanka in its crisis," he said. He further emphasised that rather than complaining about what China is doing, he said India's response is, "Let me do better than that."

The event, "In Conversation with Dr S Jaishankar", moderated by author Vijay Chauthaiwale, the diplomat-turned-politician, touched upon the Red Sea crisis and India's Neighbourhood First policy.

The Red Sea, a vital conduit for East-West trade, is witnessing persistent disruptions due to the Yemeni Houthis militia's attacks on ships, causing a significant uptick in fuel and interest costs, longer voyages and strained capacities of the

logistics sector. Jaishankar spoke about the Indian Navy's deployment of warships in the Red Sea region to deal with attacks on merchant navy vessels.

"We did it because we have a double problem; we have a piracy problem, and we have a missile drone problem."

Using references of characters from the Ramayana, Jaishankar explained diplomacy to the students. Citing an example of how India helped neighbouring countries during Covid-19, he said, "We sent out doctors, including military doctors, to many countries in the Indian Ocean, so that is where I make the connection with the Ramayana."

New Bangladesh foreign minister Hasan Mahmud to visit India from February 6
NEW DELHI: Bangladesh's new foreign minister Hasan Mahmud will make his first bilateral visit to India next week to take forward relations between the two countries and to frame plans for future cooperation, people familiar with the matter said on Tuesday. Mahmud is scheduled to arrive in New Delhi on February 6, the people said. He will meet his Indian counterpart S Jaishankar for wide-ranging talks on February 7 and deliver a lecture at a New Delhi-based think tank.

Mumbai court permits accused in Elgaar Parishad case to visit K'taka to receive award
MUMBAI: A special court in Mumbai on Tuesday permitted Anand Telumbde, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case of Maharashtra, to travel to Karnataka for two days to receive an award from the government, officials said. Telumbde, currently out on bail in the seven-year-old case, had filed an application seeking permission to travel to Bengaluru from January 31 to receive the Basava Rashtriya Puraskar Award 2022-23 from Karnataka government.

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Family. # 9810428285

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused Hemant S/o Sh. Kanwarpal Singh, R/o C-222-23 near Barat Ghar, Chanchal Park, Bakkarwala, Delhi has committed (or suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide FIR No. 14364/18 U/s 411 IPC P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused Hemant can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Hemant has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Hemant of case FIR No. 14364/18 U/s 411 IPC P.S. Moti Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this court (or before me) to answer the complaint on or before the day of 01.03.2024.

By Order,
Ms. Shagun
Metropolitan Magistrate-04,
West, Room No. 268,
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi.
DP/1129/W/2024 (Court Matter)

PRIME MINISTERS MUSEUM AND LIBRARY
Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011
(Autonomous Body set up by the Govt. of India)

The Prime Ministers Museum & Library (PMMML), an Autonomous Body under the Ministry of Culture, seeks qualified candidates, who has Degree of PhD in Modern Indian History for appointment to the post of Research Associates on contractual basis.

Sl. No.	Name of the post	No. of posts	Remuneration	Experience	Period of engagement
1.	Research Associate	4	Rs. 75,000/-	Experience in publications	1 year

Interested candidates may send their applications along with self-attested copies of PhD Degree and experience certificates, if any etc. to this office address i.e. The Director, Prime Ministers Museum & Library, Teen Murti House, New Delhi-110011 so as to reach latest by 29th February, 2024.

CBC 09142/12/0054/2324

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CBC 48129/12/0054/2324

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Interested firms/suppliers may please see the detailed Terms & Conditions of the respective Tender from the above mentioned sites before submission of the tender.

Officer In-charge Purchase (Medical)
DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0326/23-24

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Sunny S/o Sh. Kailash R/o Gali No.06, 25 Foota Road, Mukandpur-II, Delhi, have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence case/e-FIR No. 11250/18 U/s 379/411/34 IPC., has been registered at P.S. Burari, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, Sunny cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, Sunny has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused, Sunny of case/e-FIR. 11250/18 U/s 379/411/34 IPC., registered at P.S. Burari, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 01.03.2024.

By Order
Sh. Mayank Aggrawal, LD. MM,
Room No.266, Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
DP/1064/N/2024

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, इटावा

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा विस्तारिकरण सूचना

इस कार्यलय परांक 160/विद्युत/मंडल/निविदा विज्ञापन दिनांक 17.01.2024 वार ई-निविदा सं० 164/EDCE/2023-24 तक की सूचना समाचार पर ट्राइम्स ऑफ इण्डिया, नई दिल्ली एवं दैनिक जागरण, कानपुर में प्रकाशित की गयी थी, परन्तु अपरिहार्य कारणवशा निविदा ई-पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर अपलोड नहीं हो सकी। अतः कार्य को आवश्यकता को ध्यान रखते हुये निविदा की तिथि विस्तारित की जाती है। निविदा विस्तारिकरण, निविदा की अन्तिम तिथि एवं निविदा खुलने सम्बन्धित समस्त विवरण ई-पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर ऑनलाइन उपलब्ध है। शेष नियम एवं शर्तें यथावत् रहेगी।

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PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Md. Zaid, S/o Sh. Nasir Ahmad R/o RZ- 235, Gali No.17, Tughlakabad, Extension, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.79/2018 u/s 356/379/411 IPC, P.S. Chittaranjan Park, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Md. Zaid cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Md. Zaid has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Md. Zaid of FIR No.79/2018 u/s 356/379/411 IPC, P.S. Chittaranjan Park, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 02.03.2024.

By Order,
Ashwani Panwar
Metropolitan Magistrate-04, South East Court No.10
Saket Court Complex, New Delhi
DP/1060/SD/2024

F.No. 20025/34/2023-NCST
Government of India
Ministry of Tribal Affairs

Filling up of three (3) posts of Director 'Group A' in National Commission of Scheduled Tribes (NCST) on deputation basis including short term contract in the Level 12 in the pay Matrix (Rs. 78800-209200/-)

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For more details please visit our website <https://tribal.nic.in>. The application through proper channel should reach at the following address within 60 days from the date of publication of the advertisement in the Employment News.

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Under Secretary
(NCST Division)
Ministry of Tribal Affairs
Gate No. 2, Ground Floor, Jeevan Tara Building
Ashoka Road, Patel Chowk, New Delhi
Email: arvind.mudgal70@nic.in
Telephone: 011-23340462
CBC 43101/12/0023/2324

JAMMU AND KASHMIR POLICE
DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS JAMMU
0191-2561578 (O), 0191-254780 (F)
email:- ssp@jammu@jkpolice.gov.in

LOOK OUT NOTICE

SHO P/S Arnia, Jammu intimated that one Rajani Devi W/O Rashpal R/O Chak Tara had gone missing, since 16.09.2023. Accordingly, his missing report was entered at P/S Arnia, Jammu vide DDR No. 15 dated 21.09.2023. Despite thorough search his whereabouts are still unknown. As such photograph of above named missing is being published for the information of Police establishments/public in general and if anybody having any clue related to his whereabouts/present location, kindly communicate the same on the below mentioned contact/Telephone numbers.

Description Roll:-

Name	: Rajan Devi
W/O	: Rashpal
Residence	: Chak Tara,
Age	: 32 years
Height	: 5 ft 01 Inch
Complexion	: Wheatish
Face	: Oval

Contacts/Telephone Numbers:-

1. DPO, Jammu	: 0191-2547807, 0191-2561578
2. SSP Jammu	: ssp@jammu@jkpolice.gov.in
Mail I.D	
3. PCR Jammu	: 0191-2542000
4. SP Hqrs., Jammu	: 0191-2439919
5. SDPO R.S. Pura	: 01923-250240
6. Landline of P/S Arnia	: 01923-272236

For Sr. Superintendent of Police Jammu
DIP-14472-23

AYODHYA : BASKING IN

With the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Temple, the city of Ayodhya is firmly on the path to becoming the world's biggest spiritual tourism hub. As the central hub of Ramayana circuit it has immense potential to attract foreign and domestic tourists. The double engine government seems to have bigger visions for the city, with huge infrastructure projects intending to firmly establish it on the global tourism map. 178 projects worth ₹ 31,000 crore are underway to transform Ayodhya into a world-class city. This revitalized abode not only cherishes its ancient culture and civilization but also embraces modern urban development, seamlessly blending tradition with contemporary amenities to meet the demands of the future. Ayodhya is evolving into a 'Solar City,' symbolizing a timeless heritage and progressive urban features.



“The gravity and sensitivity with which our country has untied this knot of history shows that our future is going to be much more beautiful than our past, the construction of this temple of Shri Ramlalla is also a symbol of peace, patience, mutual harmony and coordination of Indian society”

-Narendra Modi, Prime Minister

AARTI TIMINGS

Mangla Aarti 4.30 AM Shringar Aarti 6.30 AM Bhog Aarti 12.00 Noon Sandhya Aarti 7.30 PM Bhog Aarti 9.00 PM Shayan Aarti 10.00 PM

REVOLUTIONIZING HOSPITALITY INFUSING GLOBAL FACILITIES WITH LOCAL FLAVORS

Homestays in Ayodhya, offering an affordable taste of local flavors, have become a practical choice for visitors nationwide. Beyond providing cozy accommodation, these homestays also offer the delight of savoring home-cooked Awadhi cuisine. Encouraging the initiative, the state government motivated residents to initiate homestay projects as a source of additional income to revitalize their homes. CM Yogi Adityanath urged people to consider homestays, assuring them of full support. The CM's appeal instilled confidence resulting in the inauguration of 51 homestays and 600 paying guest facilities on 17 January. A day before the consecration ceremony, all homestays and paying guest facilities were fully occupied. Neera Yadav, a resident of Ayodhya, manages a homestay in the Kaushlesh Puri neighborhood, sharing, "I've transformed five rooms in my home into a

homestay. Guests from Kerala, Telangana, Maharashtra and Rajasthan are staying here, relishing the Awadhi thali, nimona, fara, bhujia-chana and other homemade delicacies from my kitchen. Employing two cooks, the business is thriving, marking my transition from a housewife to an entrepreneur. Abhinav Srivastava has transformed his family's ancestral residence in Daulatpur village into a charming homestay. Additionally, he has erected two Swiss Cottages on the property. With the Samda bird sanctuary in proximity, the demand for his homestay has surged among visitors. Notably, a prominent diamond merchant from Gujarat has reserved his homestay, immersing himself in the village atmosphere and savoring the local cuisine. All homestays and paying guest accommodations had been linked to the Divya Ayodhya App, a platform launched by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

ARRANGEMENTS FOR 30000 DEVOTEES



A range of accommodation options, including hotels, dharamshalas, guest houses, homestays, paying guest facilities, tent cities, shelter site dormitories, etc., have been arranged for the devotees. Currently, there are 60 hotels with 40 rooms each, capable of accommodating a total of 7200 persons per day (PPD). Similarly, there is an estimated provision of 17 halls and 2742 rooms in 171 Dharamshalas and guest

houses. According to the arrangement for accommodation of 4 people (per room) in these 2742 rooms and 5 people (per room) in 17 halls, it is believed that more than 11000 PPDs can stay in Ramnagari for darshan and worship.

RESORT IN AYODHYA

In its ongoing commitment to enhance the tourism experience in Ayodhya, the state government has collaborated with an American firm to build a 100-room resort in the temple town. The owner of an American real estate company, hailing originally from Hyderabad, reveals that suitable land has been earmarked for the resort, emphasizing the favorable investment policy of the tourism department. The strategic development of hotels and resorts is poised to elevate the overall experience for tourists and devotees visiting the revered Shri Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

FLIGHT OF ECONOMIC PROSPERITY

The Uttar Pradesh government is gearing up for the ground breaking ceremony expected to be held in the second week of February at Lucknow. Ayodhya has been amongst favourite places for investors during the UPGIS attracting investment proposals worth more than ₹ 1.54 lakh crore. So far, investment projects worth more than ₹ 8770 crore of 16 departments are ready to be launched in Ayodhya. This will provide employment to more than 17000 youth.

Department	Proposed Investment (₹ Crore)	Employment (approx.)
Housing	3234	484
Tourism	2020	4351
UPSIDA	1230	1320
Forest	550	600
Higher Education	490	530
Horticulture	443	5950
MSME	189	1775
Dairy Development	150	285
Energy, New & Renewable Energy	107	50
Technical Education	113	598
IT & Electronics	100	500
Cooperative	57.37	100
Medical Education	48.15	327
Ayush	15	100
Animal Husbandry	13	89
Handloom & Textile	5	50

INFRA-DRIVEN GROWTH FOR TOURISM

Uttar Pradesh will have a large economic impact as the country gets a new spiritual place that could attract more than 5 crore tourists every year. According to the American, firm Jefferies Equity Research, the development will also set a template for infrastructure-driven growth for tourism in the country as the makeover of a new airport, a revamped railway station, and improved road connectivity, among

others, are likely to drive a multiplier effect with new hotels and other economic activities. According to the report, increasing the number of tourists in Ayodhya will also boost overall tourism in India and will help in increasing the GDP in future. The share of tourism in GDP in the year 2018-19 was \$ 194 billion, which is expected to increase to \$ 443 billion in 2032-33. At present, the share of tourism in the country's GDP is 6.8

percent, whereas the share of tourism in the GDP of China, America and other developed countries is more than 8 percent. Jefferies expects growth in multiple sectors on the back of a surge in tourism, and increased economic and religious migration to the city including Hotels, Airlines, Hospitality companies, FMCG companies, Travel ancillaries, Cement manufacturers.

- Indian Hotels Co has signed contracts for two new properties in Ayodhya
- ITC Hotels is exploring opportunities in Ayodhya
- OYO Rooms will add 1,000 hotel rooms in Ayodhya
- Restaurant Brands Asia (RBA), Devyani International and Jubilant Foods are either in discussions to set up outlets or have already begun setting up outlets.
- IndiGo has announced direct flights to Ayodhya from Delhi, Ahmedabad and Mumbai.
- Air India has announced direct flights to Ayodhya from Bengaluru, Kolkata and Delhi
- Spicejet and Akasa Air have also announced flights connecting Ayodhya with other cities
- IRCTC has announced Ayodhya tour packages
- Besides, other likely beneficiaries of the historic opening include EIH Ltd, Britannia Industries, Godrej Consumer, Westlife Foodworld, Hindustan Unilever, Sapphire Foods, MakeMyTrip and EaseMyTrip

It was so beautiful. A once in a lifetime opportunity. It's an honour for everybody to witness this and to be born in India. This is truly a blessing.

Ram Charan
Actor

I had tears of joy in my eyes. I can't describe this moment in words, everyone here is so happy.

Hariharan
Singer

To be a part of this occasion is itself a wonderful feeling and I feel really blessed. This is my first visit to Ayodhya and I am hoping to come a lot more and seek divine blessings of Shri Ram.

Anil Kumble
Former Cricketer

This is the real Diwali. Maryada Purushottam Ram is a symbol of goodness and spirit of sacrifice. Today, those sentiments can be seen here.

Anupam Kher
Actor

The amazing architecture of Ram Temple in Ayodhya is ready to impress anyone who visits here. Happy to receive blessings of Prabhu Shri Ram.

Sachin Tendulkar
Former Cricketer

It's a rare opportunity. I feel Hanuman ji, who is my deity, has personally invited me. We are fortunate to witness Pran Pratishtha.

Chiranjeevi
Actor

THE TRETA YUG GLORY

MUKUT

Crafted in North Indian tradition, the crown is made of gold and adorned with rubies, emeralds and diamonds. At the centre of it is an emblem of Surya Dev. On the right, strands of pearls are woven

TILAK

The forehead bears a traditional tilak, made of diamonds and rubies

KUNDAL

Designed to complement the mukut, these earrings follow the same design, adorned with peacock motifs and are embellished with gold

KANTHA

The neck is graced by a crescent-shaped necklace intricately studded with gems. It features floral designs symbolising good fortune, with an image of Surya Dev at its centre. It is crafted from gold and inlaid with diamonds, rubies, and emeralds. Strands of emeralds hang below, enhancing its appearance

PADIKA

A necklace worn below the throat and above the navel, significant in divine ornamentation. It is a five-stranded necklace made of diamonds and emeralds, featuring a large, ornate pendant

MUDRIKA

Rings adorned with gems and featuring dangling pearls are worn on both hands

KANGAN

Beautiful gem-studded bangles are worn on both hands

KANCHI or KARDHANI

Adorned around the waist is a gem-studded waistband, made of gold and decorated with diamonds, rubies, pearls, and emeralds. It also features small bells symbolising purity, with hanging strands of pearls, rubies and emeralds



The 51-inch idol of Shri Ramlalla has been decked in ornaments based on extensive research and study following the descriptions of Shri Ram's scripturally appropriate attire.

VAIJAYANTI or VIJAYAMALA

It is the third and longest necklace, made of gold and intermittently studded with rubies. Worn as a symbol of victory, it depicts symbols auspicious to the Vaishnav tradition - the Sudarshan Chakra, Lotus, Shankh, and the Mangal Kalash. It is also decorated with flowers including lotus, champa, parijat, kund, and tulsi

AT THE FEET

At the feet of the idol is a decorated lotus, under which a gold garland is arranged

GOLDEN BOW

In the left hand is a gold bow adorned with pearls, rubies, and emeralds, while the right hand holds a golden arrow

CHHADA or PAINJANIYA

The feet are adorned with gem-studded anklets and toe rings, inlaid with diamonds and rubies, along with golden ankle bells

ATTIRE

Shri Ramlalla is adorned in Banarasi fabric, featuring dhoti and a Pataka (angavastram), which are embellished with pure gold zari and threads, featuring auspicious Vaishnav symbols - Shankh, Padma, Chakra, and Mayur.

KAUSTUBHA MANI

Worn at the heart is the Kaustubha Mani, decorated with a large ruby and diamonds. It is a scriptural tradition that Lord Vishnu and his incarnations wear the Kaustubha Mani at their heart, hence its inclusion

BHUJBANDH

These are armlets on both arms, studded with gold and precious stones

GARLAND

Around the neck of the idol is a garland featuring colourful floral patterns

TOYS

Since the idol is the form of a five-year-old child (Ramlalla), traditional toys made of silver are placed. These include a rattle, elephant, horse, camel, toy cart, and a spinning top

UMBRELLA

A resplendent golden umbrella is set over the idol's halo



There are some feelings in my heart that I cannot find words to express. Everyone is emotional and happy. On this historic moment, every city and village in the country has turned into Ayodhya and every path seems to be heading towards the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi

-Yogi Adityanath
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

AASTHA SPECIAL TRAINS

After the consecration of Prabhu Shri Ramlalla, the desire of the devotees to get a glimpse of him has now reached its peak. Indian Railways has decided to operate special Aastha trains to Ayodhya from the next month. These special trains will have minimal stops and connect various cities and towns across India to Ayodhya Dham station. These special trains will initially run from main locations such as Delhi, Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Goa, Telangana, Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir etc. Only vegetarian food will be provided on board by the IRCTC for these special trains.

At a glance

Connecting to Ayodhya

These trains will depart from 66 different cities across India, making it easier than ever to reach the holy city. From bustling metros like Delhi and Mumbai to smaller towns with ardent devotees.

Comfort and Convenience

Each train will have 22 coaches, ensuring

ample space for your comfortable journey. Onboard catering will offer delicious vegetarian meals to keep travellers energised throughout the trip.

Fast and Efficient

Forget long, winding journeys. These special trains will have minimal stoppages, making travel time to Ayodhya as swift as possible.

SPECIAL BUS SERVICES

The state government has decided to operate 600 special buses on 6 specified routes to facilitate the transportation of devotees and tourists visiting Ayodhya. This service will be started across three designated locations. A specialized team within the transport department has been formed to manage and oversee the operations of these buses, ensuring round-the-clock services for the convenience of passengers at identified points. The specified locations for the

operation of these special buses include Saket Bridge, Ayodhya Depot Bus Station, and the Naka intersection on the highway. The buses will traverse through key routes such as Basti-Gorakhpur, Barabanki-Lucknow, Akbarpur-Azamgarh-Varanasi, Gonda-Bahraich, Sultanpur-Prayagraj-Varanasi and Raebareli. At present, a fleet of 300 buses is already in operation on various routes, contributing to the efficient and extensive transportation network in the holy city.

SACRED ECHOES JAI SHRI RAM RESOUNDS IN AYODHYA

The resounding chant of 'Jai Shri Ram' fills the air, echoing from the heart of Ayodhya to the temple precincts throughout the day. Devotees, arriving not only from diverse states across the nation but also from international locations, alongside those from various districts of Uttar Pradesh, continue to pour in substantial numbers daily. The spiritual atmosphere remains charged with devotion, creating a profound and memorable experience for all who visit the sacred site. In the wake of the consecration of Prabhu Shri Ramlalla, Ayodhya has witnessed an unprecedented surge in spiritual fervor, attracting a massive congregation of devotees eager to seek darshan. Within a span of six days since the consecration ceremony, an astounding 18.75 lakh pilgrims have flocked to the grand temple in Ayodhya to offer prayers to Ramlalla. Following the consecration ceremony on January 22, the temple doors opened to devotees on January 23, witnessing an influx of worshippers from different corners of the country. Under the guidance of Chief Minister



Yogi Adityanath, a dedicated committee has been instituted to meticulously coordinate arrangements, ensuring a seamless darshan experience for devotees. The committee includes state transport minister, Chief Secretary, DGP, ACS to the Chief Minister and principal secretary of urban development department.

23 January	5 lakh
24 January	2.5 lakh
25 January	2 lakh
26 January	3.5 lakh
27 January	2.5 lakh
28 January	3.25 lakh
29 January	2 lakh
30 January	1.5 lakh

The event of Pran Pratistha is a symbol of India's identity, self-respect and self-confidence. The festival of lights has started all over the world. Prabhu Ram is the pride of the country.

Swami Gobind Dev Giri Maharaj
Temple Trust

The consecration ceremony of Shri Ramlalla was grand in Ayodhya. We are getting emotional. There is a feeling of satisfaction throughout the country.

Sri Sri Ravi Shankar
Spiritual Guru

I am emotional. My situation is the same as that of Vashishtha ji after Shri Ram ji returned from exile.

Swami Ramabhadracharya
Jagatguru

Today is a day of pride for India, India is writing a new slogan today. Ram Rajya has started. Our Hanuman ji is dancing very well. We are very happy on Ramji's festival. Best wishes to the world.

Dhirendra Shastri
Peethadhishwar, Bageshwar Dham

We came here when Shri Ramlalla was in the tent. Today a grand temple is being built. Today a new history of Sanatan has been created.

Baba Ramdev
Yoga Guru

I feel like the luckiest person on this earth. Sometimes I feel as if I am in a dream world.

Arun Yogiraj
Sculptor, Shriramlalla

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Rakesh @ Manu, S/o: Aalu @ Prabhudayal, R/o: Jhuggi, Near Sai Mandir, Chhatrapur, New Delhi and Jhuggi, Near Shiv Mandir, Sapera Basti, Rangpuri, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 67/2018, U/S 224 IPC, P.S.: Hari Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Rakesh @ Manu cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Rakesh @ Manu has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

By Order Swati Bhardwaj Metropolitan Magistrate-06 West, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tender Notice No.: C/NCR/CASH PICKUP/2024/01 Dated: 29.01.2024 For and on behalf of the President of India, Principal Chief Commercial Manager/North Central Railway/Headquarters/Prayagraj invites open e-tenders for the following works. The details of the work are as follows.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr. P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Sunder Lal S/o Sh. Ram Nath R/o H.No. A-11, Street No. 8, Gamri, Delhi has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case Regd. No. 7341/18 U/S 138 NI Act, P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Sunder Lal cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Sunder Lal has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE FOR MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

Sr. No. (1) E-Tender No. CPM-ENG-GSU-BSP-24-23-24. Date: 24.01.2024 Work : Yard remodeling works at Pendra Road including formation and track work, Construction of E1 Building, SSE (P/Way) office and other allied & miscellaneous work in relation to CEWR/L connectivity at Pendra Road of Bilaspur Division of South East Central Railway.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Manish R/o House Near Pole No.992, G/F, Vill. Daryapur Khurd, Post Office Ujwala, Najafgarh, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Ct Cases/698/2017 U/s 135 Electricity Act P.S. Baba Haridas Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused Manish cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Manish has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

By Order SH. VINOD KUMAR MEENA Addl. District & Sessions Judge (South-West) Special Court (Electricity) Court No.609, Dwarka District Courts, New Delhi

Appeal for Identification

General public is hereby informed that one person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 65 Yrs., Complexion: Wheatish, Height: 170 CM, Sex: Male, Wearing: Black Colour Jacket and Green Colour Pant, Place of Recovery: Found dead under Metro Line Opposite Fruit Market, Shastri Park, Delhi.

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY

General Public is hereby informed that one person Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, Address: Unknown, was found dead at Opposite Mahila Park, Kotwali Delhi on 25.01.2024. In the area of P.S. Kotwali in this regard a case has been lodged vide DD No. 48A dated 25.01.2024 at P.S. Kotwali, Delhi.

INDIAN RAILWAYS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA/भारत सरकार

MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS/रेल मंत्रालय (RAILWAY BOARD/रेलवे बोर्ड) CORRIGENDUM-7 Subject: E-Tender no. TM-2302 for the procurement of Integrated Track Monitoring System from Zero Speed (ZITMS) and its operations and maintenance.

UJVN LIMITED

H.O.: "UJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006, Telephone: 0135 - 2763808 Fax: 0135 - 2763508 CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866, Website: www.ujvn.com

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EDUCATION, ADMISSIONS, CHANGE OF NAME, PERSONAL. I. FARIDA Naseer, W/o Mohd Naseer, R/o-4566, Gali Shahdara, Ajmeri Gate, Delhi-110006, have changed my name from Farida Naseer to Farida Begum for all future purposes.

CHANGE OF NAME

I. YOGESH Kumar S/o Matwar Singh, R/o H.No-6831-A, Sec-3, Ballabgarh, Faridabad, Haryana-121004, have changed my name from Yogesh Kumar to Yogesh Rawat for all future purposes.

LOST & FOUND

I. RAJENDRA Prasad Jain S/o Late Babulal Jain, R/o A-82, Sector 51 Noida, UP, have lost Yamuna Authority Allotment letter allotted me for B-266, Sector -20, YEIDA, UP on 17.01.2024. Finder Contact: 9810013655.

PERSONAL

I. RAJESH Dhanekar w/o chhattar singh house no 60/72 gali no 6 dayanand nagar bahadurgarh haryana 124507 has changed my name to Rajesh for all purposes.

PUBLIC NOTICES

PUBLIC NOTICE APARTMENT BEARING NO. 703, (ON SIXTH FLOOR) IN BUILDING/TOWER NO. 15 SITUATED AT "COMMON WEALTH GAMES VILLAGE" (CWGV), LOCATED AT OFF NATIONAL HIGHWAY 24, ADJACENT TO AKSHARDHAM TEMPLE, NOIDA CROSSING, DELHI-110092.

NOTICE

I, Nishakant Tiwari, Panel Advocate, State Bank of India, inform that the loan account - mortgaged property in M/s Alien India - Khasra No. 388, Village-Loni (Chakhandi Area), Mohalla-Jamalpur, Tehsil-Loni, District-Ghaziabad, property owner - Shri Haji Babu Qureshi S/o Shri Karam Ilahi resident - Main Market, Loni, District Ghaziabad, related original deed no. 11805 dated 24.05.2004 whose registration Book No. 1, Volume no. 4282, Page no. 115- 148, but is registered in Sub-Registrar Office - Ghaziabad, is lost somewhere and could not be found despite a lot of efforts.

PUBLIC NOTICES

THE PUBLIC at large is hereby informed that Late Smt Sunita Kumari W/o Ajay Pratap R/o Sai Baba Colony, Rani Dhara, Almor, Uttarakhnad-263601 was having residential property in joint ownership along with her son Vaibhav Pratap, in our project Expressions by Valika, HSG-028, Sector-88B, Plot No. 35, ST, H-33, Level-2, admeasuring 914.61 sq.ft, which her legal heirs Ajay Pratap, Neelika Kumari, Kriti Khola and Vaibhav Pratap requested the company to be transfer to her Son Vaibhav Pratap. Any person having any objection to this please may contact the company officer's details as under 15 days after No Claim will be accepted.

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CENTRE ADVISORY SEEKS TO BOLSTER WOMEN'S ROLE ACROSS DEPTS

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Centre on Tuesday launched an interministerial effort to push for greater participation by women in the workforce, releasing an advisory for employers to promote equal participation in the workplace by enforcing statutory provisions, stressing on national minimum standards and protocols for creches, and starting a public survey on facilities available to women at workplaces.

The collaborative plan comes amid concerns over the low participation of women, about 35.9% in the workforce, officials aware of the matter said.

Some of the efforts were rolled out in an event titled "Women in the Workforce for Viksit Bharat", jointly organised by labour ministry and the women & child development ministry. According to an advisory handbook released by the labour ministry, the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) indicates that there has been an increase in women's workforce participation from 22% in 2017-18 to 35.9% in 2022-23.

"Though women's participation in workforce has increased in recent years, there is ample scope for further improvement ... through effective implementation of existing policies by employers," the advisory said.

The advisory reiterates the strict implementation of The Maternity Benefit Act, 1961, a key act governing women's work conditions which was amended in 2017 to include provisions related to creches and surrogate mothers. It also stresses that employers should provide paid maternity leave as per the law.

"The advisory for female construction workers across the country mandates them to be given 26 weeks of maternity leave by their employers. Now, this is nothing less than revolutionary..." WCD minister Smriti Irani said at the event. Union labour and employment minister Bhupender Yadav said the most effective way to empower women is through a women-led development approach. Earlier on Tuesday, the two ministries, via the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO), launched a survey seeking details about policies and initiatives that have been taken at the workplace for women.

SC seeks religion-wise data of students in key institutions

Utkarsh Anand
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Tuesday asked the Union government to give religion-wise data of students studying across institutions deemed to be of national importance after the latter argued that the Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) cannot demand minority status owing to its special character as an educational institution.

The seven-judge Constitution bench, led by Chief Justice of India Dhananjaya Y. Chandrachud, called upon the Centre to adduce the statistics to back its claim that no other institution of national importance has any religious minority as a dominant group.

"Do you have the data regarding that? There is no question of reservation in such institutions because it's barred under Article 15 (prohibiting discrimination based on religion)," the bench, which also comprised justices Sanjiv Khanna, Surya Kant, JB Pardiwala, Dipankar Datta, Manoj Misra and



SC is hearing a case regarding the minority status of Aligarh Muslim University. HT ARCHIVE

Satish Chandra Sharma, observed. "It asked if you have the data, give us a break-up," it told solicitor general Tushar Mehta, who represented the Centre in the case and argued that the idea of granting minority status to AMU, which is an institution of national importance, fall afoul of ideals of social justice and equality.

According to Mehta, all institutions of national importance must show diversity and the national structure and therefore, AMU cannot press for a minority status to defeat the representation that the

marginalised sections of society are entitled to. If declared a minority institution, AMU need not reserve seats for Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, other backward classes (OBC) and economically weaker sections (EWS).

"If AMU, despite being one of the finest universities would not have reservation for ST/SC/OBC and would have at least 50% reservation for Muslims, a deserving candidate of SC/ST community would not have reservation but a person having all economic resources at his command will have entitlement to this institution based only on religion," contended the law officer, arguing on the sixth day of the hearing related to AMU's minority status.

As Mehta informed the bench that there are as many as 165 such institutions of national importance, the court sought to know the religious composition of these institutions. "We will provide give it in 2-3 days. All such universities have students from all walks of life," the S-G said.

The Constitution recognises "institution of national importance" (INI) under Entry 63 of the Union List. The Centre grants the status of INI to premier higher educational institutions in India through an act of Parliament. IITs, IIMs, AIIMS and Delhi University also figure in the list of 165 INIs.

The court is seized of a clutch of petitions, seeking reconsideration of the Supreme Court's five-judge bench judgment in the Azeem Basha case in 1967. The 1967 judgment declared that AMU was not a minority institution and could not enjoy protection for minorities to administer educational institutions under Article 30(1) of the Constitution. In 1981, Parliament passed amendments to the AMU Act to change the definition of "university" in its endeavour to grant minority status to AMU.

The Allahabad high court, however, junked these amendments in 2006, leading to AMU and the then United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government to challenge it before the Supreme Court.

Ruling likely on prayers in Gyanvapi cellar today

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

VARANASI: The Varanasi district court will decide on Wednesday whether a Hindu plaintiff Shailendra Kumar Pathak Vyas and other devotees will be allowed to offer prayers in a cellar (takhana) on the southern side of the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi. The hearing in the case completed on Tuesday.

Vishnu Shankar Jain, one of Vyas's lawyers, said that he asked the court to allow the plaintiff to perform puja in the cellar and create an entry gate for the space.

Shailendra Kumar Pathak Vyas had filed the suit, through lawyers Vishnu Shankar Jain, Subhash Nandan Chaturvedi and Sudhir Tripathi, on September 25 last year, urging the court to appoint the district magistrate as the receiver of the cellar.

The plaintiff alleged that the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee (AIMC), which man-

ages Gyanvapi mosque, "keep visiting the cellar and they may take it over".

Advocate Akhlaque Ahmad, representing the AIMC objected to the plea, arguing that it was barred by the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, which locks the religious character of shrines as they existed on August 15, 1947, with the exception of Ayodhya.

"The cellar is a part of the Gyanvapi mosque. So worship could not be performed. Therefore, puja should not be allowed," Ahmad argued.

On January 17, the Varanasi district court appointed the district magistrate as the receiver, directing him to keep the cellar safe and not allow any change in it. On January 24, a district administration team led by additional district magistrate Prakash Chandra completed the proceedings in connection with the DM becoming the receiver of the cellar and taking it into his custody.

{ INDIGO AIRLINES } DELHI-BAKU FLIGHT Flight takes off without nod, 2 pilots grounded

NEW DELHI: Two IndiGo pilots were taken off the roster after the airline's flight from Delhi to Azerbaijan capital Baku allegedly took off on Sunday night without clearance from the air traffic controller, officials aware of the matter said on Tuesday.

The flight departed from the Indira Gandhi International Airport at around 7.38pm on January 28.

An official familiar with the matter, who spoke on the condition of anonymity, said: "The aircraft was lined up at 9 runway and was asked to prepare for take off. The pilots, however, took off instead."

He added: "The incident was noted and brought to the knowledge of the DGCA (Directorate General of Civil Aviation), after which the pilots were de-rotated." IndiGo said it was investigat-

ing the matter. "With reference to reports around IndiGo flight 6E 1803 operating between Delhi and Baku on January 28, 2024, the incident is currently under investigation and appropriate action will be taken as necessary," the airline spokesperson said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA), too, has begun an investigation in to the matter, a second official familiar with the matter said. "The indigo pilot of 6E-1803 has been off duty till the investigation," a top DGCA official told news agency ANI.

"The pilots of IndiGo's January 29, 2024, Delhi-Baku flight (6E 1803) have been removed from flying duty as the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) investigates whether they took off without the required air traffic control (ATC) clearance," it added. HT

HT Education



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विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, इटावा

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

1. ई-निविदा सं० :- 183 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड द्वितीय, इटावा के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड भरथना से पोषित क्षेत्रों में 33 केवी० केबिल बॉक्स व स्टेट थ्रू को बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 2. ई-निविदा सं० :- 184 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड द्वितीय, इटावा के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड बकेवर से पोषित क्षेत्रों में 33 केवी० केबिल बॉक्स व स्टेट थ्रू को बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 3. ई-निविदा सं० :- 185 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड द्वितीय, इटावा के अन्तर्गत उपखण्ड उदी से पोषित क्षेत्रों में 33 केवी० केबिल बॉक्स व स्टेट थ्रू को बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 4. ई-निविदा सं० :- 186 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड प्रथम, इटावा के क्षेत्रान्तर्गत ओ एण्ड एम० मद के तहत शक्तिप्रस्त 33 केवी० केबिल बॉक्स बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 5. ई-निविदा सं० :- 187 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड प्रथम, इटावा के क्षेत्रान्तर्गत ओ एण्ड एम० मद के तहत शक्तिप्रस्त 33 केवी० स्टेट थ्रू बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 6. ई-निविदा सं० :- 188 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड प्रथम, इटावा के क्षेत्रान्तर्गत ओ एण्ड एम० मद के तहत शक्तिप्रस्त 11 केवी० केबिल बॉक्स बदलने का कार्य मय आपूर्ति सहित कराना। 7. ई-निविदा सं० :- 189 / EDCE / 2023-24, विद्युत वितरण खण्ड द्वितीय इटावा के अन्तर्गत विभिन्न पैकेजों के विरुद्ध जमा योजना मद में कार्य कराया जाना। उक्त ई-निविदा दिनांक 12.02.2024 को 01:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन अपलोड की जा सकेंगी एवं अगले कार्यदिवस दिनांक 13.02.2024 को 03:00 बजे खोली जायेगी। निविदा से सम्बन्धित ई-निविदा प्रश्न निविदा शुल्क / ई०एम०डी० घनराशि एवं अन्य नियम व शर्तों का समस्त विवरण उ०ए० शासन के ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट पोर्टल <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध होगा। पत्र संख्या- 342 वि०वि०मं०/ ई-निविदा विभाजन अधीक्षण अभियन्ता दिनांक- 29/01/2024 विद्युत वितरण मण्डल, इटावा "सुनहरा भविष्य बनायें, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएँ"

Public Works Department
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, PWD,
BILASPUR CIRCLE, BILASPUR (C.G.)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
No. 299/G Bilaspur, Dated : 23.01.2024
Public Works Department (PWD) invites proposal for Planning, development, estimation and Structural design, detailed engineering and related services for the work
CONSTRUCTION OF 1000 SEATER AUDITORIUM IN HIGH COURT PREMISES AT BODRI BILASPUR WITH ALL MODERN FACILITIES.
Probable cost of project - 2500.00 Lacs
Minimum eligibility for participants shall be as below :-

S. N.	Building project cost	The applicant firms, firms farming joint venture/ consortium shall be	Earnest Money (In shape as per Annexure-1 Favor of Executive Engineer, PWD Division No. 2 Bilaspur	No. Of Call
1	For project cost between Rs. 10 to 25 crore	Empanelled as architect in class "C & above class" in C.G. PWD	Rs. 15,000=00	1st Call

General condition :- All the documents & Information as per para 7.4, shall be submitted through speed post/Registered post, so as to reach the office of under signed on or before dated 12.02.2024 by 17.30 hour. Any documents received after the last date and time will not be entertained.
The detailed RFP is available on the website www.cgstate.gov.in from where it can be downloaded for submission. CG.PWD reserves the right to reject all or any of the application without assigning any reason. Right to modify the process of Pre-qualification is reserved with CG.PWD
Superintending Engineer
Public Works Department
Bilaspur Circle, Bilaspur
G-07334/2

BAJAJ HOLDINGS & INVESTMENT

Performance Highlights Q3 FY24
Consolidated profit after tax: **↑ 28%**

Particulars	(₹ In Crore)				
	Q3 FY24	Q3 FY23	9M FY24	9M FY23	FY23
Total income	133	116	492	421	527
Share of profits of associates	1,578	1,235	4,402	3,360	4,667
Profit before tax	1,665	1,305	4,761	3,644	5,012
Profit after tax	1,644	1,286	4,551	3,498	4,851

Particulars	(₹ In Crore)				
	Q3 FY24	Q3 FY23	9M FY24	9M FY23	FY23
Total income	125	107	1,917	1,841	1,937
Profit before tax	86	66	1,802	1,720	1,779
Profit after tax	66	49	1,692	1,666	1,712
Investments (at cost)	11,295	10,445	11,295	10,445	10,542
Investments (at market value)	1,90,273	1,47,549	1,90,273	1,47,549	1,32,034

BAJAJ HOLDINGS & INVESTMENT LIMITED | CIN: L65100PN1945PLC004656 | Website: www.bhil.in
Registered Office: C/o Bajaj Auto Limited Complex, Mumbai - Pune Road, Akurdi, Pune - 411 035
Corporate Office: 6th Floor, Bajaj Finserv Corporate Office, Off Pune - Ahmednagar Road, Viman Nagar, Pune - 411 014

This is an abridged representation of the unaudited financial results of Q3 FY24 and is not for the purpose of legal compliance. As required by regulations, the results have been prepared as per Indian Accounting Standards (Ind AS).

BAJAJ **MAHARASHTRA SCOOTERS**

MAKE YOUR MONDAY MORNING PLAYFUL
Catch the latest section of **Problematics** to solve a set of intriguing puzzles.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

SR. NO	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./ AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT/ EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/ EMAIL
1	HARYANA AGRO INDUSTRIES CORPORATION LIMITED	EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR PARTICIPATION IN SELL E-AUCTION PROCESS ON STAR AGRI BAZAAR PORTAL FOR SALE OF SLOW-MOVING ESSENTIAL COMMODITY ITEMS ON 7TH FEBRUARY 2024	CLOSING DATE 07.02.2024	5000/- AS PER THE CONTRACT NOTE	http://www.haic.co.in http://www.harhith.com	172-2561305 haicpk@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in
RO NO 13/2024/0/24541/1/97

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM

SR. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP./ AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./ AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/ EMAIL
1.	HPGCL	NIT REF NO 2023/HBC_307531_1 BID DOC NO. 31/CE/PLG/RGTPP/FGD-250	THE DUE DATE OF BID SUBMISSION EXTENDED 19.02.2024 & OPENING OF PART-I TECHNO-COMMERCIAL BID 21.02.2024	www.hpgcl.org.in	8354782005 xenp22.pki@hpgcl.org.in

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : www.haryanaprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in
RO NO 13/2024/0/24544/1/97

2 killed, 3 injured as fresh clashes erupt in Manipur

Utpal Parashar

letters@hindustantimes.com

GUWAHATI: At least two people were killed, three injured and two others went missing after armed groups from both Kuki and Meitei communities engaged in a heavy gunfight in ethnic strife-torn Manipur on Tuesday, people familiar with the matter said.

The incident took place near Kadangband village in Lamshang area at the border of Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts. While Kangpokpi is a Kuki-majority district, Imphal West is dominated by Meiteis.

Two individuals were killed in a firing incident between armed miscreants at bordering area of Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts, the Manipur Police said in a post on X.

The deceased were identified as Nongthombam Michael (33), and Meishnam Khaba (23), both from Meitei community, police officers said on condition of anonymity. They added that at least two people have gone missing in the incident. The injured have been shifted to the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences



At least 210 people have lost their lives in the clashes so far. AFP

(RIMS) in Imphal, officers said. One of the injured has been identified as M Barish, the former state unit president of the BJP youth wing. He is also admitted at RIMS, where his condition is stated to be critical, a senior officer said, requesting anonymity. Meanwhile, several videos purportedly from Manipur circulated on social media, one of which shows armed miscreants defiling a dead body. HT could not independently verify the veracity of the videos.

"Reports of gunfight between

two groups in the border area are confirmed. We are getting conflicting reports about deaths and injuries. We also know about the videos getting circulated, but they have to be checked for authenticity before commenting on them," Th Kirankumar, deputy commissioner of Imphal West, said.

An army officer posted in the ethnic violence-hit state on condition of anonymity said: "It is confirmed that there was heavy gunfight between two groups of armed miscreants along the bor-

der between Kangpokpi and Imphal West districts. We are in receipt of several unconfirmed reports on deaths and injuries and aware of some videos circulating on social media."

Tuesday's incident came three days after a Kuki armed village defence volunteer was killed and three others injured in a gunfight between groups from the warring communities in Kangpokpi district on January 27. The gunfight broke out after armed miscreants entered the vicinity of the hill village of Satang Kuki and launched a gun and bomb attack, police had said.

Manipur has been in the throes of ethnic violence between the majority Meitei community and the tribal Kukis since May 3 last year, with other communities increasingly sucked into the violence that has continued unabated. Over the past eight months, at least 210 people have lost their lives, and over 50,000 people have been displaced. More than half the state's population of 3.2 million belongs to the Meitei community, while the Kuki community, who make up about 43%, live mostly in the hills.

Drive to digitise agri banks commences

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Union minister for home and cooperation, Amit Shah, on Tuesday launched a ₹225 crore drive to computerise over 1,000 agriculture and rural development banks and offices of the registrar of cooperative societies in states and Union territories across the country.

The cooperation ministry has identified 1,851 agriculture banks in 13 states and Union territories for the project. They will eventually be linked to the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), the largest state-backed bank for rural business and infrastructure,



Amit Shah

through a common national software. This is the second major digitisation project undertaken by the ministry after an ongoing project involving 63,000 primary agricultural cooperative societies. The launch was organised by the cooperation ministry in collaboration with

National Cooperative Development Corporation.

"The projects will go on to modernise and bring efficiency in the cooperative sector by bringing the entire ecosystem on a digital platform. This will help in improving transparency and accountability," Shah said.

Of the total outlay of ₹225 crore, ₹95 crore will be spent on computerisation of the registrar of cooperative societies, the local authorities mandated to register cooperatives, which are businesses run jointly by members who share profits and losses.

Digitisation of cooperative banks will help farmers get medium- and long-term loans, the minister said.

"Agriculture banks are present only in 13 states and there is a need to expand it to other states as well," Shah said. The latest computerisation initiative will increase the operational efficiency, accountability and transparency in agriculture and rural development banks by "standardising business procedures through a Common Accounting System (CAS) and Management Information System (MIS)", an official said separately. Digitisation will also reduce transaction costs, facilitate loan distribution to farmers and enable real-time data access for better monitoring and assessment of schemes, the minister added.



Satnam Singh Sandhu

PB EDUCATIONIST NOMINATED AS RAJYA SABHA MP

NEW DELHI: President Droupadi Murmu nominated Chandigarh University founder-chancellor Satnam Singh Sandhu to the Rajya Sabha on Tuesday.

The son of a farmer, Sandhu is one of India's leading educationists, people aware of the details said. He founded the Chandigarh Group of Colleges at Landran in Mohali in 2001 and subsequently, Chandigarh University in 2012, which found a place in QS World Rankings 2023, first among private universities in Asia.

"He is actively involved in large-scale community efforts to improve health and wellness and also to advance communal harmony through his two NGOs," a person aware of the details said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said he is "confident the Rajya Sabha proceedings will be enriched by (Sandhu's) views". "I am delighted that Rashtrapati ji has nominated Shri Satnam Singh Sandhu Ji to the Rajya Sabha," he wrote on X. "Thank you PM @narendramodi for the faith you have placed in me and the opportunity you have given me to become a small part of your monumental mission," Sandhu said on X. HT

{ MODI'S PERSONAL DIARY SHARED ON X }

Martyrs' day: PM pays homage to Mahatma

Saptarshi Das

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday paid tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on the 76th anniversary of his assassination and said that his government would always work towards realising Gandhi's dream for the nation.

"I pay homage to Pujya Babu on his Purnima Tithi. I also pay homage to all those who have been martyred for our nation. Their sacrifices inspire us to serve the people and fulfil their vision for our nation," Modi's post on X said.

An X handle called "Modi Archives" - a digital archive of personal narratives from people who have interacted with Modi through the course of his career - said it was posting some pages from the PM's personal diary where he had written down some of Gandhi's quotes. The account is developed by the BJP and the data collection is volunteer driven.

"We bring to you pages from Narendra Modi's personal diary, which demonstrate that not only did he extensively read Mahatma Gandhi, but he also wrote down Gandhi's quotes in his personal diary as something of inspirational value to him. These entries continued to guide his interactions later on," the handle, which aims to put in one place testimonials about



PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his death anniversary in Delhi.

Modi, posted, "I have no weapon but love to wield authority over anyone," said one of the handwritten quotes, reportedly said by Gandhi on 9 September 1942.

"My greed of non-violence is an extremely active force. It has no room for cowardice or even weakness. There is hope for a violent man to be someday non-violent. But there is none for a coward," another quote said.

"Do not believe in the doctrine of the greatest good of the greatest number. It means in its nakedness that in order to achieve the supposed good of fifty-percent, the interest of forty-nine percent may be, or rather, should be sacrificed. It is a heartless doctrine," said another quote.

HC TO HEAR SHAHI EIDGAH MOSQUE PLEA ON FEB 22

PRAYAGRAJ: The Allahabad high court on Tuesday said it will hear on February 22 a plea regarding maintainability of a bunch of suits seeking removal of Shahi Eidgah mosque in Mathura, claiming it was built after demolishing a Hindu temple. The court asked the Hindu side to file its response to the application challenging maintainability of the suits by February 6.

It also gave all parties till February 13 to file their written statements in all suits pertaining to the Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi-Shahi Eidgah dispute.

Fixing February 22 as the next date of hearing, Justice Mayank Kumar Jain made it clear "no further time shall be granted" to file objection/rejoinder affidavit/written statements.

"...The defendants are directed to file their written statements by February 13, 2024, on the suits where written statement is not yet filed," the court said in the order.

On January 17, the HC had given time to the Hindu side to file its reply on the application of the Muslim side moved regarding maintainability of the suit that seeks removal of the Shahi Eidgah mosque, abutting Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi temple, claiming it was built after demolishing a Hindu temple on the orders of Mughal emperor Aurangzeb. HT

Missing Indian student found dead in US

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: An Indian student studying at Purdue University in the US state of Indiana has been found dead on the university campus, the varsity statement said. The deceased, identified as Neel Acharya, had gone missing on Sunday.

Officials from Tippecanoe County Coroner's Office were called around 11:30 am on Sunday to 500 Allison Road in West Lafayette for a possible body. Upon arrival, a "college-aged male" was found deceased outside Maurice J. Zucrow Laboratories on Purdue's campus.

"It is with great sadness that I inform you that one of our students Neel Acharya has passed



Neel Acharya

away. The leadership in the Department of Computer Science expresses our profound sorrow for his passing. I am deeply saddened by his loss. My condolences go out to his friends family and all affected," Chris Clifton, interim head of the university's Computer Science Department, said in an email to the department on Monday. He pursued a double major in

computer science and data science and was a John Martinson Honors College student.

"He aspired to pursue numerous academic achievements and shared profound connections with friends... Neel could be counted on to reach out to others and make them feel included. He was an achiever and an inclusion, with his most notable qualities being genuine kindness and unwavering compassion," Clifton said.

Clifton told the local newspaper that he received an email from the Office of the Dean of Students confirming Acharya's death. "A deceased person was placed in that matched Neel's description and had Neel's ID on (him)," he said. Victim's mother Goury Acharya, in a post on X on

Monday, said: "Our son Neel Acharya has been missing since yesterday January 28 (12:30 AM EST) He is studying at Purdue University in the US. He was last seen by the Uber driver who dropped him off at Purdue University. We are looking for any info on him. Please help us if you know anything." Responding to her post, India's Consulate General in Chicago, said: "(The) Consulate is in touch with Purdue University authorities and also with Neel's family. The consulate will extend all possible support and help." The exact reason for death is not known yet.

Acharya's demise comes after another Indian student Vivek Saini and was hammered to death by a homeless drug addict in Georgia state's Lithonia city

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA O-2338
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BALASORE
No.- 376 / WE, Dt.- 25.01.2024
e-procurement Notice

- Name of the Work:- "Building Works."
- Estimated Cost:- As per Annexure.
- Time for completion:- As per Annexure.
- No. of Work:- As per Annexure.
- Summary for key dates is provided below:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No	Availability of tender On-line for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender	Date & Time of Opening of Tender	
		From	To		Technical Bid	Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer Rural Works Circle, Balasore	N.C.B. No.-71 of 2023-24	01.02.2024 at 11.00 A.M.	12.02.2024 up to 5.00 P.M.	Di. 12.02.2024 up to 1.00 P.M.	Di. 13.02.2024 at 11.00 AM.	will be intimated latter

Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in
Any other changes/Corrigendum may be seen only in website www.tendersodisha.gov.in

S/d:-Er.N.V. Harihar Rao
Chief Construction Engineer,
Rural Works Circle, Balasore
OIPR - 25105/11/0092/2324

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
CIVIL MAINTENANCE DIVISION BHEP-I, CHANDERKOTE
Email: xendambhep@gmail.com

E-NIT No.: 24 of 2023-24 Dated: 24.01.2024
For and on behalf of the Managing Director, Jammu and Kashmir Power Development Corporation, e-tenders from registered PWD/PCD/CPWD contractors are invited for below mentioned work:

S. No.	Name of the Work	Estimated Cost (in Lakhs)	Cost of Tender Document (Non-Refundable) Bid Security/EMD (in Lakhs)	Time Allowed for Completion (Retainable)	Class of Contractor
1	Repair/Reconstruction of settled crown of TRT Stage-I inside Collection Gallery, including treatment to detached shotcrete, shootout rock bolts and other allied works	488.00	Rs. 5000	9.76	90 days 'A'

- Scope of the works mentioned above is defined in the Tender Document/BoQ of the work. Minimum requisite eligibility and the terms & conditions applicable for each work are also laid down in the Tender Document.
- The Tender Document for the works mentioned above can be downloaded from e-tendering portal of J&K Government www.jktenders.gov.in and the official website of JKPCD www.jkpcpd.nic.in.
- The tendering process shall proceed as per the following Schedule of Events:

S. No.	Event	Date & Time
1.	Tender publish date on www.jktenders.gov.in and www.jkpcpd.nic.in	25.01.2024 at 09.00 AM
2.	Bid document download start date	25.01.2024 at 09.00 AM
3.	Bid uploading start date	25.01.2024 at 09.00 AM
4.	Pre bid meeting	01.02.2024 at 03.00 PM
5.	Bid uploading end date	14.02.2024 at 11.00 AM
6.	Opening of the Technical Bids	15.02.2024 at 11.00 AM
7.	Opening of the Financial Bids	After the evaluation of technical bids

- Any corrigendum/modification to Tender Document shall be available on e-tendering portal of J&K Government www.jktenders.gov.in and JKPCD official website www.jkpcpd.nic.in. The Applicants are advised to visit these sites before deadline for submission of bids.
- Price bids/Financial Bids of only technically qualified bidders shall be opened.
- Pre-bid meeting shall be held in the office of Chief Engineer (Civil) BHEP Chanderkote at above mentioned date and time.
- JKPCD reserves the right to reject the e-NIT or any subsequent bids without assigning any reason thereof and shall not be bound to accept the lowest or any other Bid or to give any reason for such decision.
- For any queries, the bidders should contact during office hours on following mobile numbers: 9419121036, 9797088487 or should contact in person in the office of Executive Engineer CMD BHEP Chanderkote.

No.: CMD/BHEP/T-1/2501-06
Date: 24.01.2024
DIP-J-5068-P-23

Executive Engineer
Civil Maintenance Division
BHEP Chanderkote

Department of Women and Child Development
Govt. Of NCT of Delhi
5th Floor, ISBT-Building, Kashmiri Gate, Delhi - 110006
MISSING CHILDREN

Sr. No.	Description	Photograph
1.	Name: Khushi (Kept by Child Welfare Committee) Age: 4 months, Colour: Wheatish. The Child was found abandoned in Kalkaji temple on 01.08.23. When child fell ill & hospitalised the matter was reported to P.S. Kalkaji. Child's case was produced before Child Welfare Committee (CWC) South East through P.S., CWC ordered to keep the child in WHC Sarita Vihar after discharge from hospital for care & protection. Child is in WHC since, 21.09.2023	

Note: Parents/Guardians/Relatives of above mentioned children may contact at address/phone number given at Sl. No. 1 given below:-

- Welfare Home for Children, 1-B, Institutional Area, Sarita Vihar, New Delhi-110044, Contact no.: 8860835349/011-26954150/269747023, Email: welfare2007@gmail.com
- District Child Protection Unit-VIII (South-East) Kasturba Niketan Complex, Lajpat Nagar-II, New Delhi-110024, Ph. No.: 011-20887340, Email: southeastcpu8@gmail.com

Director
Women & Child Development
Please give information to CHILDLINE 1098 about children who need care and protection
DIP/Shabdarth/Classified/0313/23-24

Office of Superintending Engineer, Rampur Circle, P.W.D. Rampur
Letter No. 320/E -Tender R.Cir./23-24 Dated: 20.01.2024
Short Term Notice Inviting E-Tender

On behalf of the Government of UP, tender for following work are invited by the Superintending Engineer, Rampur Circle, PWD Rampur online on website <http://etender.up.nic.in> from registered contractors with UP PWD (as per column no. 8). The bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract. Bids must be downloaded online from 10:00 AM on date 01.02.2024 to 03:00 PM on date 07.02.2024 and the technical bids will be opened online date 07.02.2024 at 03:30 PM in Office of Superintending Engineer Rampur Circle PWD Rampur and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified.

2. Details of the works are following:

Sl. No.	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lakhs)	Cost of Bid Document	Time of Completion	Category of contract (as per work)	Address of Executive Engineer of the work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1		Renewal with BC of Behsuma Chandpur Thakurwara Jaspur road km 74(130) to 87(020)	340.00	19.00						
2		Renewal with BC of Suawala Surjannagar road km 1 to 18(350)	418.00	22.80						
3		Renewal with BC of Chidiyapur Sampur NH-34 Nehar Seva road km 1 to 20(100)	360.00	20.00						
4		Renewal with BC of Kiratpur Nagina Harewali Sherkot road km 40(800) to 48(800)	162.00	10.10						
5	Bijnor	Renewal of Kiralpur Maujampur Mandawali road km 1 to 9	82.00	6.10						
6		Renewal of Bijnor Nangal Najibabad road km 37 to NH-34 km 30 via Jalpur, Dahipur, Shymwala, Sabalgarh, Kotawali road km 1, 2(750), 3(600), 4(550), 5(750), 6(900), 7(850), 10(850), 11(700), 12(250), 13, 14(900)	67.00	5.35						
7		Renewal of Seohara Khanpur to Behsuma Chandpur Thakurwara Jaspur road km 2(600), 3(650), 4, 5(300), 5(200), 6, 7, 8(400), 9(800)	54.00	4.70						

2354.00/- (Tender Cost be accepted only by Net banking)

06 Months including rainy season
02 Months including rainy season

"A & B" in road category
"A, B & C" in road category
"A" in road category
"A & B" in road category
"A, B & C" in road category

Construction Division-2, P.W.D. Bijnor (Hq Najibabad)
Rampur Circle P.W.D. Rampur
Moradabad Zone P.W.D., Moradabad

> The Rate adopted in the BOQ are including all other taxes but excluding GST.
> The Bid Security and tender cost should be deposited online through Net Banking as per Column 5 & 6 in the table.

All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.in>. The bidder have to login on Prahari URL <http://www.uppwd.gov.in/Prahari> to upload required documents as per Government order no. 879/123-7-2020 dt. 25.08.2020 & E.N.C./H.O.D.'s up pwd order No. 4859/4M-LC/2020 dt. 27.08.2020

Executive Engineer
CD-2, PWD, Bijnor
(Hq Najibabad)
UP-201786, Dt. 29.01.2024
Website: www.upgov.nic.in Email: cpwdbijn@gmail.com

Superintending Engineer
Rampur Circle, PWD, Rampur
Ph. 0595-2351163
Email: pwdrampur@gmail.com

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
भवन प्रमंडल, खगड़िया
"शुद्धि पत्र"

एतद् द्वारा सर्वसाधारण को सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय द्वारा आमंत्रित राष्ट्रीय स्पर्धा ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं-21/2023-24 जो विभिन्न समाचार पत्रों में प्रकाशित हुआ है, जिसका PR. No. 14685(BCD)/2023-24 है को अपरिहार्य कारणवश निम्नांकित रूप से विस्तारित की जा रही है :-

क्र. सं.	विवरण	पूर्व में प्रकाशित तिथि एवं समय	संशोधित तिथि एवं समय
3	प्रीबिड मिटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान	दिनांक-18.01.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल, भागलपुर। दिनांक-22.01.2024 को 12:00 बजे अपराह्न में मुख्य अभियंता (रो), भवन निर्माण विभाग, बिहार, पटना।	दिनांक-03.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल, भागलपुर। दिनांक-09.02.2024 को 12:00 बजे अपराह्न में मुख्य अभियंता (रो), भवन निर्माण विभाग, बिहार, पटना।
4	परिमाण विपत्र (आउटलॉड करने) की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक-11.01.2024 से 01.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	दिनांक-25.01.2024 से 15.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
5	निविदा प्राप्ति (अपलोड करने) की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक-02.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न	दिनांक-16.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न
6	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय	दिनांक-03.02.2024 को 3:30 बजे अपराह्न।	दिनांक-17.02.2024 को 3:30 बजे अपराह्न।

निविदा की शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेगी।
PR-016133 (BCD) 2023-24

कार्यपालक अभियंता
भवन प्रमंडल, खगड़िया
नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

बिहार सरकार

भवन निर्माण विभाग, भवन प्रमंडल, भागलपुर
राष्ट्रीय/स्पर्धा ई-निविदा पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट एवं www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर
ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या-09/2023-24

SBD Based

- विज्ञापन दाता का पदनाम एवं पता :- कार्यपालक अभियंता, भवन प्रमंडल, भागलपुर।
- निविदा आमंत्रण की तिथि :- दिनांक-25.01.2024
- प्रीबिड मिटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान :- (1) दिनांक-19.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल, भागलपुर।
(1) दिनांक-22.02.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न मुख्य अभियंता(रो), भवन निर्माण विभाग, बिहार, पटना।
- परिमाण विपत्र (आउटलॉड करने) की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक-09.02.2024 से 01.03.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
- निविदा प्राप्ति (अपलोड करने) की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक-02.03.2024 को 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
- निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक-04.03.2024 को 3:30 बजे अपराह्न।
- परिमाण विपत्र का विक्री स्थान :- वेबसाइट (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
- निविदा प्राप्ति का स्थान :- वेबसाइट (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
- निविदा वैधता की अवधि :- 120 दिन

क्र. सं.	कार्य का नाम	परिमाण विपत्र (लाख में)	अग्रघन की राशि	परिमाण विपत्र का मूल्य + बीड प्रोसेसिंग फीस	कार्य समाप्ति की अवधि
1.	भागलपुर अधीक्षण महाविद्यालय, भागलपुर के परिसर में 600 क्षमता के ऑटोमेटिक मवन (G+1) के निर्माण (कन्रीचर सहित) का कार्य।	1710.10	34,20,200.00	eproc2.bihar.gov.in वेबसाइट के अनुसार	12 माह

10. विस्तृत निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर देखा जा सकता है।
विस्तृत जानकारी www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

PR. No. 016126 (BCD) 2023-24

नशे की मार, बर्बाद करे खुशी परिवार।
कार्यपालक अभियंता
भवन प्रमंडल, भागलपुर



OPINION

The
Hindustan Times
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

OUR TAKE

Expressway to prosperity

CEA's review of the Indian economy presents an optimistic roadmap to a \$7 trillion economy. But bumps on route will have to be negotiated

Tomorrow's being an interim budget, there will be no customary Economic Survey today. The Economic Survey, more than anything else, presents the government's narrative on the economy. That, however, has not prevented the government from laying down its narrative on the economy ahead of its last Budget before the general elections. The chief economic advisor (CEA)'s office, on Monday, released a document called "Indian Economy: A Review", which does precisely that even though the CEA has emphasised that it is not to be confused with the Economic Survey (which will come out in July).

What does this document tell us about the Indian economy during the 10 years of the Narendra Modi government? It argues that the period has been marked by important reforms, some incremental, others game-changing, which have brought the Indian economy to the cusp of long-term sustained growth in the ballpark of 7%. Barring geopolitical disruptions, the report says that the Indian economy may reach the \$7 trillion GDP mark by 2030 and is well placed to realise the government's objective of India becoming a developed economy when it completes 100 years of Independence in 2047. The document also argues, in a subtle way, that even though GDP growth rates have been higher in the pre-Modi period, the current performance is qualitatively better as it comes in the backdrop of a slowdown in global growth. At the same time, the document also argues that most international agencies are underestimating India's growth potential. Much of this is fair.

To be sure, the document is not just a set of assertions. It also celebrates what can be described as the government's basic economic philosophy. This is best understood as supply-side interventions to boost material and human infrastructure, an expansion of the welfare net to cushion the livelihoods and living standards of the poor and a commitment towards inflation control that extends beyond the realm of monetary policy interventions.

Does all this mean that there are no problems with the Indian economy? Uneven recovery is a major problem for the economy and some of the assertions in the document such as private consumption being robust need to be taken with a pinch of salt. It remains to be seen whether the interim Budget goes with this reality or the narrative that all is fine with the Indian economy.

Killing them with coaching classes

Yet another JEE aspirant has killed herself in Kota, after leaving behind a note addressed to her parents, in which she raved, "I am a loser." Last week, a NEET aspirant from the district had committed suicide. The district reported 27 cases of students killing themselves last year. Kota, the heartland of coaching centres, has been in the spotlight for student suicides, and the government has released guidelines to address the issue.

Kota is a symptom of a large societal crisis. Multiple factors have fed into its making. Rising aspirations, lack of educational opportunities, fear about employability, peer pressure among students and social pressure on parents have contributed to the creation of an ecosystem that is robbing children of their childhood. Children are forced into coaching classes for competitive exams as early as middle school. This would mean choices of study are forced on them even before they have a basic introduction to subjects, courses and professions. Even those who crack the entrance tests are tired by the time they join the university stream. Many among those who fail to qualify struggle with low self-esteem and poor confidence, and embrace mediocrity. In extreme cases, the battle to succeed, when they are expected to enjoy childhood, ends in suicide. These suicides are nothing but societal murders.

Prescriptive measures such as counselling are provided for adolescent children to overcome the pressure of failure. These need to be extended to parents as well. Schools need to be proactive in counselling families to see beyond competition. Education has to be a process of reflection; a reductionist approach that perceives it as a mere instrument to further material progress is self-defeating, and disastrous for society.

New deal in statecraft, boost to India-US ties

iCET's transformative potential was never in doubt. On the first anniversary of its launch, both nations need to institutionalise its working

Exactly a year ago, on this day, the India-United States (US) initiative on Critical and Emerging Technology (iCET) was formally unveiled. In an oversized yet packed room in the US Chambers of Commerce, national security advisors Ajit Doval and Jake Sullivan consulted leading representatives from industry and government along with other stakeholders. Both countries set on a path to architect a new framework for cooperation. Led by the National Security Council Secretariat (NSCS) in India and the National Security Council (NSC) in the US, the iCET served as a unique experiment in statecraft. The NSCS had not done anything like this until now.

The enthusiasm in the room was unmistakable. Industry captains pledged their support to deepen ties across a range of strategic technologies from defence and Artificial Intelligence to semiconductors and space. The two governments produced a "fact sheet" on iCET—the first set of formal documents outlining priority areas. An iCET ecosystem grew over the next four months. Deals were

negotiated. Longstanding areas of cooperation that predated iCET but lacked strategic focus were placed under the spotlight. NSCS and the NSC were able to identify gaps, readjust priorities, and gently push line ministries in both countries to work toward clearer outcomes. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State visit to Washington, DC, in June 2023 served as a forcing function for iCET torchbearers both within and outside of government.

The strategy worked. A range of announcements peppered the long and hard-negotiated joint statement at the end of the visit. The American semiconductor company Micron pledged investments in India. It has subsequently broken ground in Gujarat. General Electric Aerospace and Hindustan Aeronautics Limited announced the coproduction of jet engines in India. The Congressional waivers required in the US to implement this deal have been attained. The US National Science Foundation has signed several agreements with its Indian counterparts to forge and foster collaborations. India became the 27th country to join the Artemis Accords, a set of principles that guide civilian space exploration.

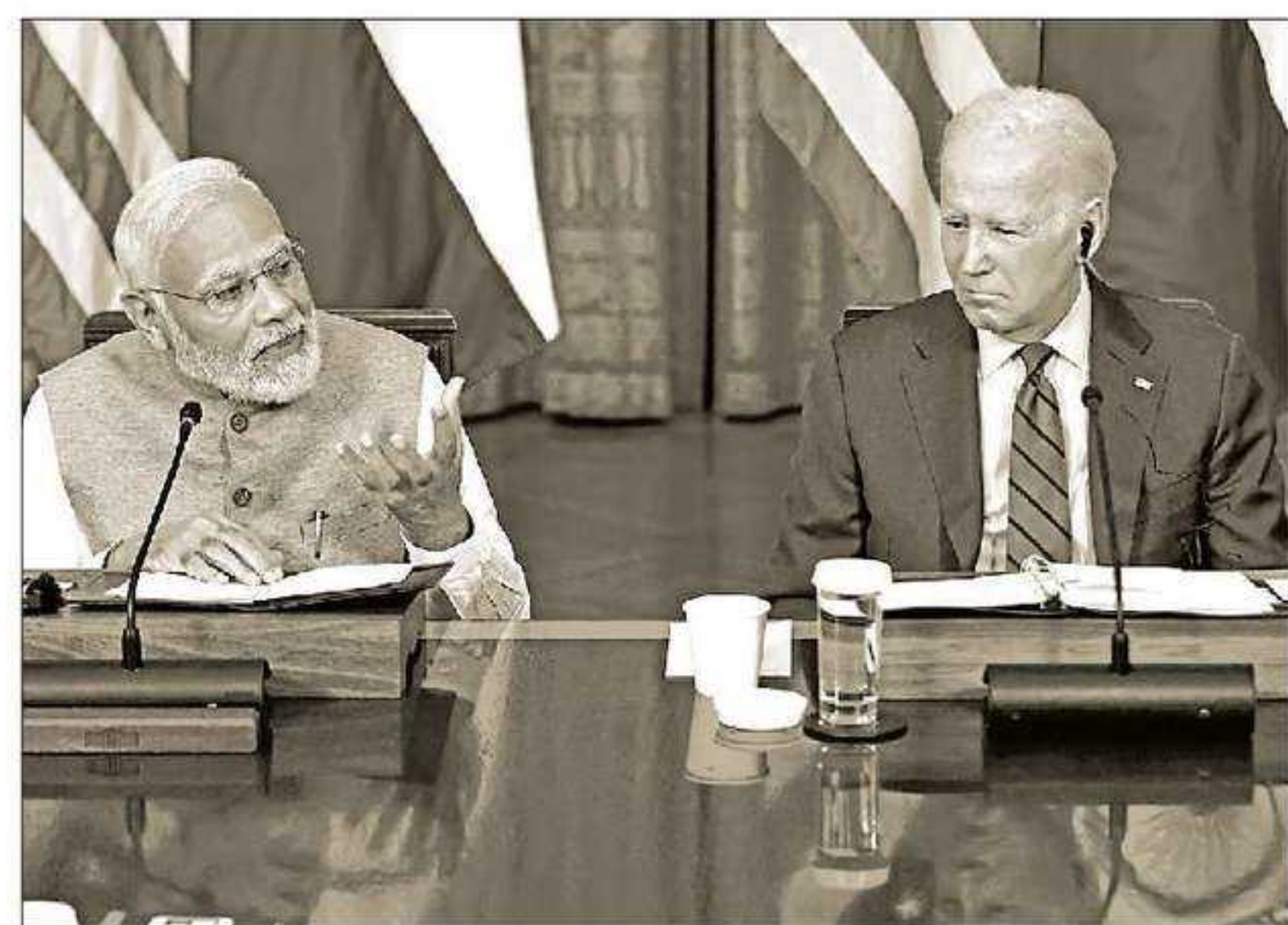
Indus X, a new defence innovation ecosystem, was created. It is led by agencies associated with India's ministry of defence and the US department of defense. A few large deals are soon expected to materialise between Indian and American com-

panies in niche defence-related technologies — to be co-developed and manufactured in India. There is an ongoing formal process to demask the export controls labyrinth in the US. Equally, there is a serious effort to streamline regulations in India to attract inward investments and cement manufacturing commitments in strategic technologies.

There are many more examples of iCET-led outcomes. In sum, there is little doubt that the NSC-NSCS-led structure is delivering. There will likely be a high-level iCET meeting in New Delhi sometime soon. As senior officials take stock and think through the future of the iCET, I highlight two sets of observations.

First, whilst the NSC-NSCS structure has done more than many might have expected to incubate the iCET and coordinate and shape outcomes, it is time to think more carefully about the institutional future of the initiative. As many of its different verticals have taken root and are being considered at different levels in ministries, industry, and academia, it might be worth creating an iCET council that includes key ministries of both countries that have been invested in this effort. The NSC and the NSCS should be a part of this council. This process will give greater agency to ministries, institutionalising the iCET imperatives into a formal structure.

Moreover, the council could become the collective support base for the iCET initiatives and dealmak-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's State visit to Washington, DC, in June 2023 served as a forcing function for iCET torchbearers both within and outside of government

REUTERS



Rudra Chaudhuri

ing. Such a structure also depersonalises the iCET that is currently, to an extent, dependent on individuals who have more than ably led this process. Yet, these individuals will move on. For the long-term sustainability of the iCET, both governments could consider the question of institutionalisation by the time the next iCET meeting takes place.

Second, it is worth keeping in mind that strategic technology cooperation takes time to mature. The iCET began with big bang announcements, but these are not replicable every quarter or even every year. As one senior official put it to me, "The iCET is as much about constantly preparing the groundwork for outcomes as it is about outcomes themselves." This is about the long haul. Deregulation in India is a work in progress, as is the case with unbundling different categories of export control regimes in the US.

Similarly, if one or two sets of negotiations on the coproduction of defence-related products fall apart, it is not necessarily a failure of the iCET

but rather one of negotiations — sometimes much is lost in translation. Trust takes time to develop. Actors on both sides, in time, will do better to co-learn and co-produce the shared syntax required to deepen cooperation. As the groundwork continues to be laid, even if the quantum of deal announcements reduces over a given period of time, the industry needs to keep an eye on the future. After all, it is both the primary mover of the iCET and potentially its greatest beneficiary.

The iCET has the potential to transform the US-India relationship many times over. Moreover, it promises manufacturing, jobs, and access to critical technologies to India's burgeoning strategic industrial ecology, made up of both established players and an ever-increasing range of smaller ones. What is immediately required is patience and an active effort to institutionalise iCET 2.0.

Rudra Chaudhuri is director, Carnegie India. The views expressed are personal

Game on: The Biden camp's comeback plan

Donald Trump dominates the American political theatre at the moment. His indictments and court cases have helped consolidate his base. His resounding success in the initial Republican primaries has made it clear that he will be the party's nominee for the presidential elections this November. Negotiations in the United States (US) Congress, where funding for Ukraine, Israel and border security remains tied together in a package, are held hostage largely due to Trump's signal to the party's Congressional leadership to make life difficult for Joe Biden. And polls show either a really close race or a Trump edge in the national elections when matched with Biden.

On the other side, Biden is struggling with two wars. The Israeli offensive has fractured his political coalition, with people of colour and minorities alienated from the administration for what they see as American complicity in war crimes. There is now a real threat to American soldiers on the ground as seen in Jordan, and American economic interests as seen in the Houthi attacks in the Red Sea. The Ukrainian resistance against Russia is diminishing due to fatigue in the West. Macroeconomic indicators look reasonably good but the popular sentiment on the economy is down due to cost of living, with blame largely attributed to Biden.

His age and occasional fumbles don't help, neither does his vice president Kamala Harris's limited popularity. And the White House is being blamed for the surge in illegal immigration from the southern border. And that is why Trump looks like he has the momentum. But conversations with a set of top Democratic operatives in Washington DC indicate that while they are keeping a close watch on the evolving political landscape, the President is confident of returning to the White House. Their confidence appears to be based on four factors.

The first is simply time. "It is just too early. Nine months is an eternity in politics. Let the choice become starker," said one of Biden's closest advisors who has seen multiple presidential campaigns. The predictive value of the current political mood is limited given the dramatic pace at which events have been unfolding in both the US and the world. The Democrats believe that the Republicans are taking up all the oxygen in the room at the moment given the primary races, but as it becomes clear that Trump is the nominee, the choice will become clearer, and Biden will continue to step up the offensive against the Republican candidate.

Trump, the thinking goes, is no longer an unknown candidate like he was in 2016. He has had eight years in public life, and in those eight years, he has given the Democrats a lot of material to play with — his erratic administrative leadership, casual and regular violation of laws and rules, the high attrition rates in his own team, his extreme polarising rhetoric that alienates immigrants and minorities, his role in the January 6 mob attack on the US Capitol, his legal cases, and his abrasive behaviour. Once the binary is clear on the ballot on polling day, the Democrats hope that their currently disillusioned younger base will return to the party's tent, recognising the danger Trump represents to American democracy.

Two, the Democrats believe that the eco-

nomical sentiment will change in three respects. First, with the economy slowly getting out of the fears of recession, interest rates dipping, growth momentum sustained and robust employment figures, there is a sense that inflation will continue to dip. And as grocery and rent costs dip, Biden's team hopes that the current anger against the administration will subside. Second, Biden will continue to tout his major legislative accomplishments, manufacturing push, and real financial investments across domains, from infrastructure to climate to modern tech. The Democrats recognise that there is a lag till the impact of these measures is felt on the ground but are hoping that this will assume tangible forms by the end of the year. And the third is Biden's focus on labour and unions. As the first president to stand in a picket line to express solidarity with striking workers against the auto industry, and with the endorsements of top unions, the Democrats believe that their old working-class coalition, which is where Trump has made inroads, will return to Biden.

Three, the Democrats will make abortion — and a possible legal crackdown on other individual rights — a key campaign plank. The Supreme Court verdict overturning national protection to abortion was due to Trump's nominees to the court. The decision has alienated women, but also men. And it has kindled fears of backtracking progress on issues such as the legal sanctity of same-sex relationships.

Abortion was seen as the single most important driver of voter attitudes during midterm polls where the Democrats put up a better-than-expected performance. It has also resulted in the Republicans losing in referendums on the issue in Red states. The Democrats will point to the past and Trump's role in enabling the decision and paint a future where the Republicans will aim to have a national legislation against abortion protections. This, they believe, will galvanise women, especially in suburban areas.

Finally, Biden's team appears to believe that it has the advantage both among key demographics and key states. More Asian Americans, Hispanics, and Blacks still vote for the Democrats than the Republicans even if Trump is steadily making inroads into these segments. More college graduates still vote for the Democrats than for Trump. Fewer moderate Republican and independent voters will vote for Trump than they did in the past. And the battle in states such as Pennsylvania, Georgia, Michigan, Wisconsin, Arizona and Nevada remains close and Biden's pathway to a majority in the electoral college requires him to win fewer of those swing states than what Trump needs.

When Biden met China's President Xi Jinping in California in November 2023, according to a column in the *Washington Post*, he told the Chinese leader not to pay too much attention to opinion polls. "You will be meeting with me in five years," he was reported to have said. Biden may or may not be right. He is definitely down at the moment. But it is never a good idea to underestimate the man who was first elected to the Senate in 1973, hasn't lost a major national election since, and thrives on being the underdog. The game is on in America.

The views expressed are personal



Prashant Jha

{ DHANANJAYA Y CHANDRACHUD } CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

In our work as judges, we realise the importance of compassion, universality, tolerance and equality which Gandhiji preached in all his acts, deeds and words

On the death anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi

How Bihar has fared under Nitish Kumar

Nitish Kumar has been the chief minister of Bihar for nearly two decades and has built a reputation as an administrator. So, how has Bihar fared under him on growth, human development and governance indices?

From 2011-12 to 2021-22, Bihar's Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) grew at a compound annual growth rate of 5.9%, close to the national average (2011-12 prices). However, Bihar's GDP is the lowest among major states although a higher growth is easier to achieve at a lower base. There is very little evidence of convergence of Bihar's GDP with other leading states. In Net State Domestic Product (current prices 2011-12), Bihar's GDP was 43% of Gujarat's GDP, 41% of Karnataka's GDP, and 34% of Tamil Nadu's GDP; in 2021-22, the share of Bihar's GDP was down to 35% of Gujarat's, 33% of Karnataka's and 32% of Tamil Nadu's GDP. So, Bihar's GDP has rather diverged, given other states too experienced high economic growth rates.

Bihar's per capita income (PCI) remains the lowest in India. The state's NSDP per capita was 70% of the national average in 1960-61; it had come down to 33% of the national estimate by 2005 when the Janata Dal (United)-Bharatiya Janata Party combined gained office in 2005. In 2020-21, Bihar's NSDP per capita was still 33% of India's. Thus, after nearly two decades in power, Bihar's PCI relative to India's has remained stagnant with marginal divergence, not convergence. Bihar is also experiencing a reversal of structural change: The workforce in agriculture increased by 50% from 12.5 million to 18.95 million between 2017-18 and 2022-23. While India's workforce in agriculture also increased by 60 million between 2020 and 2023, the increase proportionately is much higher in Bihar, due to reverse migration during Covid-19.

At the same time, Bihar's manufacturing sector growth rate (GSDP constant 2011-12) from 2017-18 to 2021-22 has declined by 1.1%, only partly because of the pandemic. The share of manufacturing in Gross State Value Added (2011-12) also declined from 9.1% in 2017-18 to 7.3% in 2021-22. As we argue in a recent research report, Bihar faced deindustrialisation over the last decade: The number of factories in operation in Bihar in 2019-20, after falling for 10 years, was just 1.32% of India; while in terms of net value added the

share remains merely 0.5% of India. The only sectors that grew were related to construction and a few services (often real estate services).

The reasons are not far to seek. Governance is the key. In NITI's Ease of Doing Business rankings (2019), Bihar ranked 26 out of 29. In 2021, Bihar received just 0.29% of India's Foreign Direct Investment. Without basic enabling conditions, the state failed to attract foreign investment.

In terms of exports, Bihar's current share is just 0.52%. NITI Aayog's Export Preparedness Index 2022 ranks Bihar nine among 10 major landlocked states. Moreover, more than 60% of Bihar's exports are one good — petroleum products — courtesy of the Barauni (Begusarai) oil refinery. Also, Bihar's merchandise exports were 2.9% of GDP as compared to 35.9% for Gujarat.

On the Social Progress Index 2022 (PM's Economic Advisory Council measuring social progress across basic human needs, foundations of well-being, and opportunity), Bihar ranks 35th among 36 states/UTs; 30% of households do not have access to toilets and piped water is for just 13% of households as compared to 35.5% for India.

Bihar ranks 18 among 19 states in NITI Aayog's Health Performance Index (2019-20). The neonatal mortality rate for Bihar is five times and the infant mortality rate is more than 3.5 times that of Kerala. That is mainly because Bihar tops the list in the proportion of shortfall of health care providers in public health facilities. Similarly, NITI Aayog's School Education Quality Index 2019 ranks Bihar at 19 among 20 large states. How can schools and health services improve when appointments are short of 220,000 teachers (some appointments started in 2023), universities need 21,500 staff (March 2022), and public health services are short of 57,000 doctors and paramedics (till March 2021)?

Good governance is often the pivotal component in social and economic transformation. In the 2021 Good Governance Index of the department of administrative reforms, Bihar was ranked 15 among 18 states. This is the story of Bihar's "sushasan".

Santosh Mehrotra is a research fellow, IZA Institute of Labour Economics, Bonn; Rakesh Ranjan is senior research fellow, International Institute for Migration and Development, Kerala. The views expressed are personal



Santosh Mehrotra



Rakesh Ranjan

WORLD

Classified docs leak: Pakistan court jails Imran for 10 years



An army helicopter conducts a search operation following an attack by BLA in Balochistan province on Tuesday. AFP



Taylor Swift REUTERS

X lifts ban on Taylor Swift searches
WASHINGTON: Social-media company X lifted the ban on searches for Taylor Swift on Monday evening, after blocking users from searching for her following the spread of fake sexually-explicit images of the pop singer on its site last week. REUTERS

Italy to OpenAI: ChatGPT violated European laws
LONDON: Italian regulators said they told OpenAI that its ChatGPT artificial intelligence chatbot has violated European Union's stringent data privacy rules. AP

Taiwan holding military drills amid China threats
PINGTUNG: Taiwan is holding spring military drills following its recent presidential election and amid threats from China, which claims the island as its own territory that it is determined to annex, possibly by force. AP

France announces new measures to calm protests
JOSSELYN: France's Prime Minister Gabriel Attal said on Tuesday he is implementing controls on foreign food products in order to guarantee "fair competition" amid farmers' protests. In his speech at the National Assembly, Attal told lawmakers "the goal is clear: guaranteeing fair competition, especially so that regulations that are being applied to (French) farmers are also respected by foreign products". AP

Ex-PM has already been disqualified from standing for the February 8 poll on the basis of a graft conviction last year

Rezaul H Laskar
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NEW DELHI: A Pakistan court on Tuesday gave a 10-year prison term to former prime minister Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi for leaking confidential state information in what has come to be known as the cipher case.

The verdict, delivered nine days ahead of the February 8 general election, is expected to further affect the prospects of Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party. Khan's supporters have contended this was the latest in a raft of legal cases aimed at sidelining the cricketer-turned-politician, who continues to enjoy widespread grassroots support.

Presiding judge Abul Hasnat Zulqarnain announced the ruling at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, where the trial was conducted. Both leaders were present in the special court, which was established under the Official Secrets Act to prosecute Khan and Qureshi for leaking a diplomatic cable received from Pakistan embassy in Washington.

Khan and the PTI have for long claimed that the diplomatic cable contained a purported threat from the US to oust him as prime minister. Khan was ousted in a no-confidence vote in 2022 and is not eligible to contest the election as he is already serving a three-year jail term. More than 150 other cases are pending against him.

The diplomatic cable, based on then envoy Asad Majeed's meeting with US state department official Donald Lu, was at the centre of PTI's claim that the US administration conspired with elements in Pakistan to dislodge Khan.

Following his removal from office in the no-confidence

Trouble piles up for ex-PM

Imran Khan received a 10-year jail sentence on Tuesday for leaking state secrets. Following are details of the main cases among 150, Khan says, have been launched against him since being ousted in 2022. Incarcerated Khan faces long-term political isolation after antagonising the all-powerful Pakistan army.

GIFTS CASE
• Khan was handed a three-year prison sentence in Aug 2023 for selling gifts worth more than 140 million rupees (\$501,000) in state possession and received during his 2018-22 premiership.
• Some of the gifts include perfumes, diamond jewellery, dinner sets and seven watches, six of them Rolex — the most expensive being a 'Master Graff limited edition' valued at 85 million rupees (\$304,000).

SECRETS CASE
Khan is charged with making public a classified cable sent to Islamabad by Pakistan's ambassador in Washington in 2022. He has said the cable was proof of a conspiracy by the military and US government to topple his government in 2022 after he visited Moscow just before Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Washington and Pakistan's military deny that.

LAND BRIBERY CASE
• Khan was previously arrested for four days in May last year on charges that he and his wife received land as a bribe through the Al-Qadir Trust — a charitable trust set up by Bushra Watto, Khan's third wife, and Khan in 2018 when still in office.
• Authorities have accused Khan and his wife of receiving the land, worth up to 7 bn rupees (\$25 million), from a property developer charged in Britain with money laundering.
• Authorities accused Khan of getting the land in exchange for a favour to the property developer by using £190 mn repatriated by Britain in the money laundering probe to pay fines levied by a court against the developer.



motion in the National Assembly, or lower house of Parliament, Khan leveraged the cable's contents to claim a US plot against his government, sparking political protests and widespread unrest during which PTI workers targeted army facilities and installations.

Khan's trial was marred by controversy, including interruptions and allegations of procedural irregularities. At one point, the Islamabad high court

invalidated Khan's trial in jail and called for a fresh trial in open court. However, the federal cabinet backed the continuation of the trial in jail, leading to its resumption.

The PTI, too, expressed its dissatisfaction with the trial, saying it was not consistent with legal principles and justice. It also signalled its intention to contest the court's decision.

Khan was sidelined from the general election after being con-

victed in a case related to the improper sale of state gifts and Tuesday's verdict is expected to further cut into the prospects of his political comeback.

Qureshi, a close aide of Khan, was earlier cleared by election authorities to contest from a parliamentary seat in Sindh province. However, his conviction means he, too, has been disqualified from contesting elections for five years.

The sentence also reflects the

rift between the powerful military establishment and Khan, who was often accused by detractors of coming to power in 2018 with the help of the army. They said the army had engineered defections from other parties to boost the prospects of the PTI. Before he fell out with the army over the poor performance of the PTI government and interference in senior army appointments, Khan had often claimed he and the

military were on the same page. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) party of former premier Nawaz Sharif, who returned to Pakistan last October after four years in self exile, is now widely expected to win the upcoming election.

On the other hand, the PTI is contesting the election against the backdrop of a sustained crackdown on its leaders and after being denied an electoral symbol.

This is your [supporters] war and this is your test that you have to take revenge for every injustice by your vote on February 8 while remaining peaceful. — Imran Khan, posted on X

SIX MILITANTS KILLED IN BATTLE WITH SECURITY FORCES IN PAK

KARACHI/QUETTA: At least six militants were killed in an overnight gun battle with security forces in western Pakistan's Balochistan province, an official said on Tuesday.

Provincial government spokesman Jan Achakzai said "security forces successfully repulsed coordinated attacks" on at least three state facilities including a paramilitary HQ and a police station.

"Six terrorists were eliminated" during the assault in central Bolan district, he told AFP. Medical rescue teams reported 13 civilians were wounded, with two in critical condition.

The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) — an armed separatist group — claimed responsibility for the attack.

4 killed in political rally
At least four people were killed on Tuesday in a bombing near a political rally, officials said, as the nation prepares to go to the polls next week.

Police in the Balochistan provincial capital of Quetta said a bomb planted on a motorbike detonated as supporters rallied for the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party of jailed ex-prime minister Imran Khan. AFP

NEW HONG KONG LAW IN WORKS TO EXPAND SECURITY CONTROL, SAYS LEE

HONG KONG: Hong Kong's leader John Lee announced on Tuesday the city would urgently create a new security law to crush pro-independence threats, nearly four years after authorities extinguished a huge democracy movement.

The law will expand on legislation imposed by China in June 2020 to silence dissent, adding in crimes such as insurrection and external interference.

Critics of the existing security law have said it has affected Hong Kong's status as an international hub, and culled freedoms the city had long enjoyed.

The new law, which the Hong Kong government said it will open up to public consultation, will bolster the authorities' ability to crack down on perceived threats. "While the society as a whole looks calm and very safe, we still have to watch out for potential sabotage and undercurrents that try to create troubles, particularly when some of the 'independent Hong Kong' ideas are still being embedded in some people's mind," Lee told a press conference.

"The threats to national security are real, we have experienced them badly... we don't want to go through that painful experience again," he said, adding that "some foreign agents may still be active in Hong Kong".

Since Britain handed Hong Kong back to China in 1997, the city has been under a "one country, two systems" regime, in which the legal and court structures are separate from the mainland. AFP

Israel-Hamas war rages as mediators push for ceasefire, hostage deal

Agencies
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GAZA STRIP: Deadly fighting and bombardment rocked Gaza on Tuesday as international mediators pushed for a new halt in the Israel-Hamas war and a deal to release hostages.

Heavy Israeli strikes and urban combat across the besieged Gaza Strip killed 128 more people overnight, the health ministry in the Hamas-run Palestinian territory said.

In the Israeli-occupied West Bank, where violence has surged since the start of the war, Israeli undercover troops raided a hospital in the northern city of Jenin, killing three men the army said were members of a "terrorist cell".

The Gaza war, now in its fourth month, has left much of the coastal territory in ruins and sparked a spiralling humanitarian crisis for its 2.4 million people, many of whom face the threats of hunger and disease.

The deadliest ever Gaza war has been triggered by Hamas's unprecedented October 7 attack that resulted in about 1,140 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally of official figures.

Militants also seized 250 hostages, of whom Israel says around 132 remain in Gaza, including the bodies of at least 28 dead captives.

Israel's relentless military offensive has killed at least 26,751 people in Gaza, most of them women and children, according to the Gaza health ministry.

Truce talks in Paris
In the latest efforts to broker a new truce, a meeting in Paris on Sunday between top US, Israeli, Egyptian and Qatari officials



Workers prepare to bury the bodies of unidentified Palestinians after they were returned by Israel through the Kerem Shalom crossing, at a mass grave east of Rafah, Gaza Strip on Tuesday. AFP

resulted in a proposed framework. Hamas confirmed on Tuesday that it had received the proposal, saying on its Telegram account that it was "in the process of examining it and delivering its response".

A proposal for a new ceasefire in the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza would involve three stages, including the release of hostages held by the Islamist group and Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails, a senior Hamas leader told Reuters on Tuesday. Women, children, the elderly and wounded would be released in the first stage, the Hamas leader said.

Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, whose government helped broker a previous truce in November, voiced hope an

initial deal might lead to a permanent ceasefire.

No prisoner release
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, whose office earlier also called the talks "constructive", on Tuesday ruled out releasing "thousands" of Palestinian prisoners as part of any deal to halt fighting in Gaza.

"I would like to make it clear... We will not withdraw the IDF (army) from the Gaza Strip and we will not release thousands of terrorists. None of this will happen," he said in an address at Eli settlement in the occupied West Bank.

Israel's top ally the United States expressed hope for a deal, with Blinken telling reporters that "very important, productive work has been done".

BIDEN SAYS 'NOT LOOKING' FOR 'WIDER WAR' IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

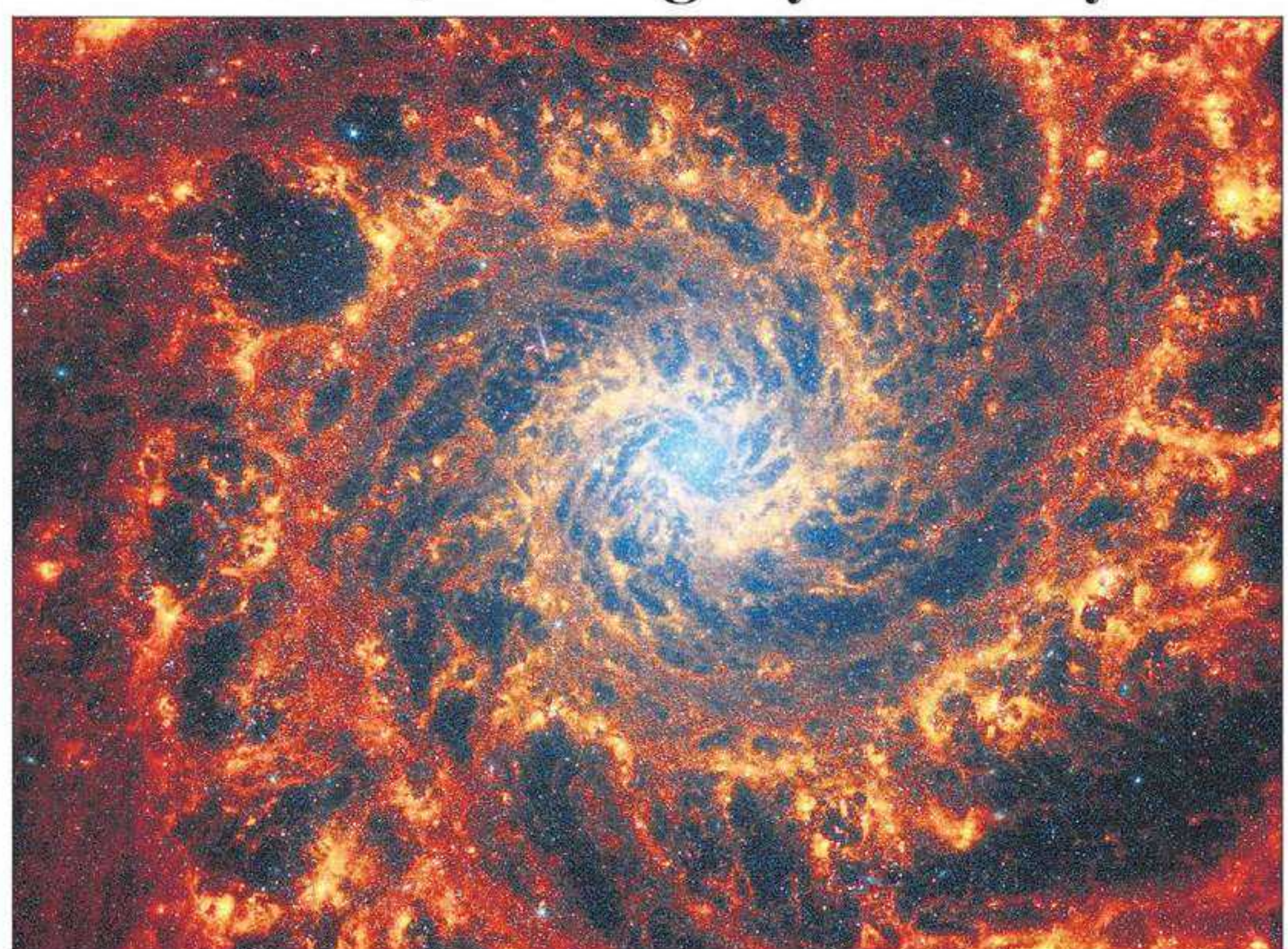
WASHINGTON: US President Joe Biden said on Tuesday he is not seeking to escalate tensions in the Middle East, as he weighs up a military response against Iran for a drone strike in Jordan that killed three US troops.

"I don't think we need a wider war in the Middle East. That's not what I'm looking for," Biden told reporters at the White House as he left for an election campaign trip in Florida.

Biden said he has decided how to respond to the drone attack, but did not elaborate.

The attack on the US base in Jordan on Sunday also wounded more than 40 troops. It was the first deadly strike against US troops since the Israel-Hamas war erupted in October and marks a major escalation in tensions that have engulfed the Middle East.

A visual treat, 32mn light-years away



Spiral galaxy NGC 628, located 32 million light-years away from Earth, is seen in an undated image from the James Webb Space Telescope. Webb's image of NGC 628 shows a densely populated face-on spiral galaxy anchored by its central region, which has a light blue haze that takes up about a quarter of the view. REUTERS

{ NEURALINK } GIVEN PERMISSION BY U.S. FDA FOR HUMAN TRIAL

Elon Musk's startup implants brain chip in first human

Reuters
letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: The first human patient has received an implant from brain-chip startup Neuralink on Sunday and is recovering well, the company's billionaire founder Elon Musk said.

"Initial results show promising neuron spike detection," Musk said in a post on the social media platform X on Monday.

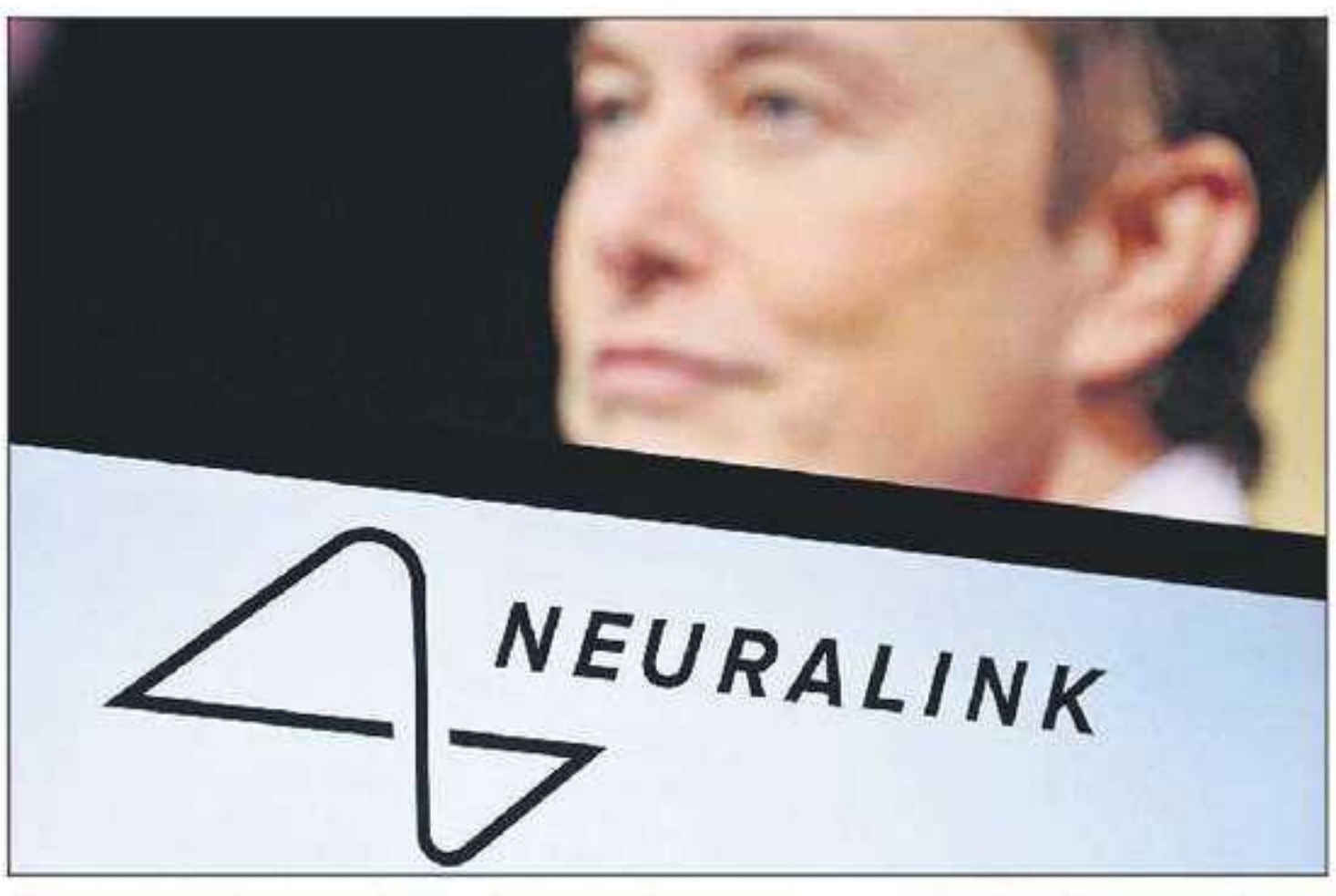
Spikes are activity by neurons, which the National Institute of Health describes as cells that use electrical and chemical signals to send information around the brain and to the body. The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had given the company clearance last year to conduct its first trial to test its implant on humans, a critical

milestone in the startup's ambitions to help patients overcome paralysis and a host of neurological conditions.

In September, Neuralink said it received approval for recruitment for the human trial.

The study uses a robot to surgically place a brain-computer interface (BCI) implant in a region of the brain that controls the intention to move, Neuralink said previously, adding that its initial goal is to enable people to control a computer cursor or keyboard using their thoughts alone.

The implants' "ultra-fine" threads help transmit signals in participants' brains, Neuralink has said. The first product from Neuralink would be called Telepathy, Musk said in a separate post on X.



Neuralink logo and Elon Musk photo are seen in this illustration taken, on December 19, 2022. REUTERS

The startup's PRIME Study is a trial for its wireless brain-computer interface to evaluate the safety of the implant and

surgical robot. Neuralink has faced calls for scrutiny regarding its safety protocols. Reuters reported earlier

this month that the company was fined for violating US Department of Transportation (DOT) rules regarding the movement of hazardous materials.

The company was valued at about \$5 billion last June, but four lawmakers in late November asked the US Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate whether Musk had misled investors about the safety of its technology after veterinary records showed problems with the implants on monkeys included paralysis, seizures and brain swelling.

Musk wrote in a social media post on September 10 that "no monkey has died as a result of a Neuralink implant". He added that the company chose "terminal" monkeys to minimise risk to healthy ones.

buzz

NHRC DySP Isam Singh chosen for the President's police medal
Isam Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police posted in the Investigation Division of the National Human Rights Commission, NHRC, India has been chosen for the Police Medal for Meritorious Services on the occasion of Republic Day, 2024.

GAIL PAT jumps 42% for nine months ended Dec 31, 23
GAIL (India) Ltd reported Revenue from Operations of Rs 98,304 crores for up to Q3 FY24 as compared to Rs 1,11,443 crores in the corresponding period of the financial year 2022-23.

15 ITBP Officials awarded Medals on 75th Republic Day-2024
Total 15 ITBP officials have been conferred with Police Medals on the occasion of 75th Republic Day, 2024 with 3 with President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and 12 with Police Medal for Meritorious service.

Sashastra Seema Baf's personal medals
On the 75th Republic Day, President of India has awarded Gallantry Medal, 1st BAR to Gallantry Medal, President's Medal for Distinguished Service and Medal for Meritorious Service for 34 Officers and Officials of SSB.

ICE personnel awarded with Presidential awards
On 75th Republic Day, President of India has bestowed prestigious President's Tatrakshak Medal (PTM) and Tatrakshak Medal (TM) to Indian Coast Guard personnel, for their act of conspicuous gallantry, exceptional devotion to duty, recognising their unwavering commitment and exceptional service in safeguarding the nation's maritime interests.

REC Limited signs MoU with National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Ltd

REC Limited, a Maharashtra CPSE under the Ministry of Power and a leading NBFC, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Investment and Infrastructure Fund Limited (NIIFL) to collaborate on a suite of funding solutions for Renewable Energy Projects as well as large-scale infrastructure projects in India.

The MoU was signed in the presence of Vivek Kumar Dewangan, CMD, REC and Rajiv Dhar, CEO and MD, NIIFL by Daljeet Singh Khatri, ED (Finance), REC, and Prasad Gadhkari, Executive Director & Chief Strategy Officer, NIIFL.

Rishab Shetty is the new face of Ramraj Cotton



Introducing Rishab Shetty as the new brand ambassador of Ramraj Dhotis, shirts, and kurtas, Arun Eashwar, the Managing Director, Ramraj Cotton, expressed his pleasure, pride and confidence on associating with Rishab Shetty as the new face of Ramraj dhotis, shirts and kurtas.



esteemed dignitaries were present on the occasion and held rich discussions.

IGDTUW hosts a spectacular event



The IEEE IGDTUW student branch along with the ECE department and Training and Placement cell, recently hosted an event featuring Harkirat Singh, a prominent Web3 developer and well-known YouTuber. The audience warmly welcomed the distinguished speaker.

Visit of CMD, NHPC to Subansiri Project



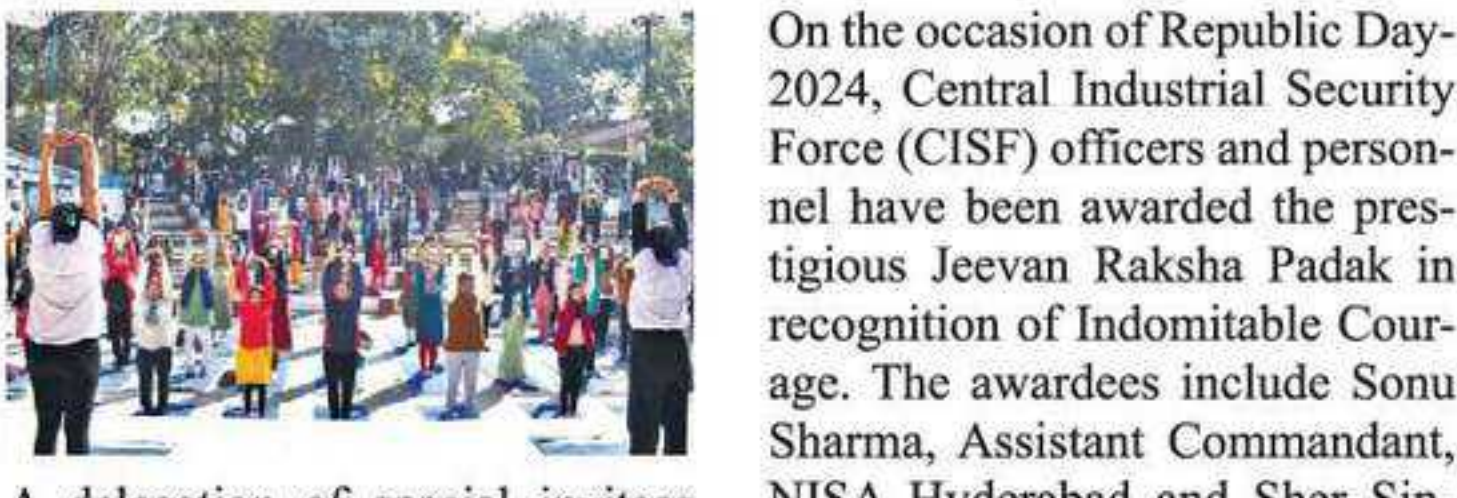
RK Vishnoi, CMD, NHPC, RP Goyal, Director (Finance), NHPC and other senior officials from the Corporate Office visited Subansiri Project on January 24-25. CMD, NHPC along with the Director (Finance) inspected various under-construction sites of project like dam, power house.

The two - days Sufiana Nights concludes



The two-day Sufiana Nights organised by Delhi Tourism concluded on January 28 with the performance of the Sufi Band by Salman Zaman which the visitors greatly enjoyed.

Special invitees of Republic Day visit MDNIY



A delegation of special invitees from various states across the country to participate in the Republic Day celebrations visited Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga on Jan 27. Dr IN Acharya, Program Officer (Yoga Therapy) informed the delegation about various activities of the institute.

Nation honors Bravehearts of CRPF on Republic Day

In a remarkable display of recognition for outstanding valour, the Nation proudly bestowed 66 Gallantry Medals upon the Bravehearts of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) on the occasion of the 75th Republic Day. This marks the highest number of Gallantry Medals awarded among all Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs). The accolades include 1 Shaurya Chakra and 65 Medal for Gallantry.

Successful diversion of Chenab River achieved

A major milestone has been achieved at the 850 MW Ratle HE Project (J&K) with the diversion of Chenab River through Diversion Tunnels at Drabshalla on January 27 at 11:30 AM. The River Diversion will enable the isolation of Dam Area at river bed for starting the excavation/ construction of Dam which is a critical activity. It shall expedite the project construction activities and help in minimising delays so as to facilitate all efforts being made by Project to achieve scheduled commissioning date of May 2026.

NBCC to execute a Rs 2,000 cr project in Kerala

The development of 17.9 acres of land parcel of Kerala State Housing Board at Marine Drive, Kochi to be undertaken by NBCC Ltd, received a boost with the recent Cabinet approval by Kerala State Govt. This Rs 2,000 Cr project includes development of mixed use Commercial cum Residential complex in phases on self-sustainable development model.



The 75th Republic Day was celebrated in EIL offices across the country on January 26 with patriotic zeal and enthusiasm.



On the 8th day of the Sambalpur Book Fair, the literary fervour continued to thrive.



The 14th National Voters' Day was celebrated with great pomp on January 25 as per the instructions of Dr Kinn Singh, IAS, District Election Officer and Dheeraj Sharma, SDM (Election), District West, Raja Garden.



NHPC celebrated India's 75th Republic Day with great enthusiasm and patriotic fervour on January 26, 2024.



Alliance University, Bengaluru, celebrated the 75th Republic Day with a pronounced commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.



Ashwini Vaishnav, Minister of Railways, along with other officials, visited the Bullet Train stall at Vibrant Gujarat 2024.



Airports Authority of India celebrated the 75th Republic Day with patriotic fervour.



CM Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma recently released the first volume of 'Political History of Assam' at a function held at Lok Seva Bhawan in Dispur, Assam.



Alliance University, Bengaluru, celebrated the 75th Republic Day with a pronounced commitment to Sustainable Development Goal 2: Zero Hunger.

Government of Punjab Tender Reference No. EE/PWSSD No. 2/Amritsar/06/2024 Date: 29.01.2024. The Department of Punjab Water Supply and Sewerage Division.

A-12016/7/2022-PGIMSRS कर्मचारी राज्य बीमा निगम EMPLOYEES' STATE INSURANCE CORPORATION (Ministry of Labour & Employment, Govt. of India)

GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER MAHANADI GODAWARI BASIN, RAIPUR (C.G.)

छत्तीसगढ़ शासन, जल संसाधन विभाग कार्यालय मुख्य अभियंता, महानदी गोदावरी कछार, जल संसाधन विभाग, रायपुर (छ.ग.)

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WESTERN RAILWAY - RATLAM DIVISION PROVISION OF DOG KENNEL AND VARIOUS OTHER WORKS No. W/623/NIT/1

MAULANA AZAD NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (An Institute of National Importance under Ministry of Education, Govt. of India) BHOPAL-462003 (M.P.) INDIA

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY RAILWAY RECRUITMENT CELL PRAYAGRAJ Balmiki Charuana, Nawab Yusuf Road, Prayagraj-211001

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (REGD. OFFICE: PSEB HEAD OFFICE, THE MALL, PATIALA) (O/O Superintending Engineer/TL Circle Jalandhar)

G.B. Pant University of Agriculture & Technology Pantnagar Farm, P.O. Haldi-263146 Distt.-U.S. Nagar TENDER NOTICE

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited (REGD. OFFICE: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001) Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813

Table with columns: SN, Post, Pay Matrix, No of post, Distribution. Includes details for Light Vocal (Male) and Classical Vocal (Female).

CHANDIGARH INDUSTRIAL & TOURISM DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED CIN: U45202CH1974SGC003415 E-TENDER NOTICE

Table with columns: S. No., Details of work, Date of purchasing tender, Last Date of Submission of tender, Date of opening of tender.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE Table with columns: SR. NO, NAME OF BOARD/ CORP. AUTH, NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER, OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME), AMOUNT/EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES, WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP. AUTH, NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL

Domestic demand to lift growth: IMF

IMF upgrades India growth forecast to 6.7% for FY24, 6.5% for next two fiscal

Roshan Kishore

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NEW DELHI: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has made an upward revision to its growth forecast for India for the fiscal year 2023-24, taking it to 6.7%. While this is an upward revision of 40 basis points (bps)—one basis point is one hundredth of a percentage point—it is still lower than India's own estimates for GDP growth in 2023-24 which is 7.3%.

IMF has also made an upward revision to India's growth forecasts for the next



The report flags faster disinflation possibly leading to easing of financial conditions as an upside to the global economy. REUTERS

two fiscal years which is now expected to be 6.5%. "Growth in India is projected to remain strong at 6.5% in both 2024 and 2025, with an upgrade from October of 0.2 percentage point for both years, reflecting resili-

ence in domestic demand", the January update to IMF's October 2023 World Economic Outlook report said.

These numbers have been released two days before the second Narendra Modi govern-

ment presents its interim budget ahead of the general elections and a day after a Ministry of Finance document highlighted that (India's) "National Statistical Office, in its First Advance Estimates, has estimated India's real GDP (gross domestic product) to grow at 7.3% in FY24, higher than the forecast made by various national and international agencies" and argued that India was on course to achieve a sustainable 7% GDP growth trajectory.

"In its World Economic Outlook Update (WEO Update - January 2024), the International Monetary Fund has revised upward India's growth forecast for FY24 to 6.7% (from 6.3%) on account of the robust Q2 GDP outturn. The IMF has revised upward medium-term (potential) GDP growth to 6.5% (from

6.3%) reflecting strong public investment, positive labour market outcomes in the latest PLFS (periodic labour force survey) report, and adjustments to our model. IMF continues to view the external sector as strong and is narrowing its current account deficit projection for FY 24 from 1.8% (of GDP) to 1.6%. India continues to be the fastest-growing economy among the major economies of the world", the finance ministry said in a statement on X (formerly) twitter.

An upward revision in India's growth prospects is not the only area where the latest WEO update has an optimistic take on the state of the global economy. It has made an upward revision of 20 bps to global GDP growth for 2023 which now stands at 3.3% instead of the 3.1% projected in the October

2023 edition of the WEO.

The report is also optimistic about a soft landing for the global economy. "In several major economies, the downward revision to the projected path of inflation, combined with a modest upgrade to economic activity, implies a softer-than-expected landing", the report notes.

It has flagged faster disinflation possibly leading to further easing of financial conditions as an upside to the global economy. "New commodity price spikes from geopolitical shocks—including continued attacks in the Red Sea—and supply disruptions or more persistent underlying inflation" prolonging tight monetary conditions and "deepening property sector woes in China" are among the downside risks to global growth.

Markets down 1% amid West Asia tensions

Ram Sahgal

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MUMBAI: Benchmark stock indices retraced much of their previous day's gains to correct by a percent each on Tuesday as foreign and retail investors booked profits in heavyweights like Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), Bajaj Finance Ltd and ITC Ltd. The decline comes amid concerns that rising tensions in West Asia could drive up oil prices and pressure the rupee.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) sold shares worth a provisional ₹1,970.52 crore while retail and high-net-worth individuals (HNIs) sold ₹611 crore on BSE; National Stock Exchange (NSE) figures are available with a lag.

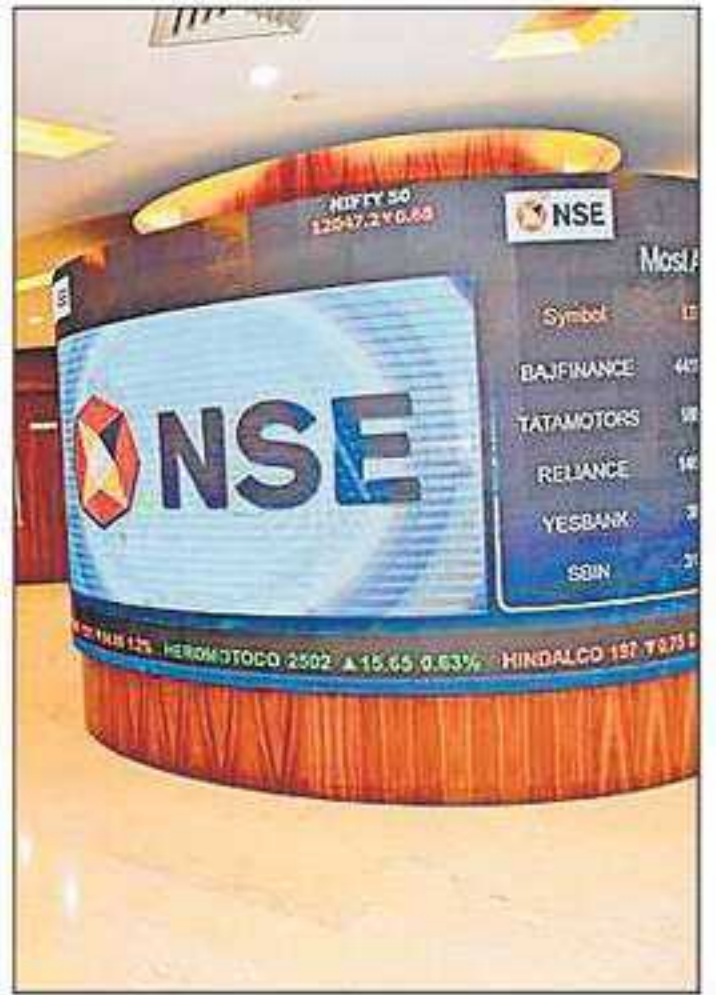
Their combined selling dragged NSE's 50-stock Nifty down by 0.99% or 215.50 points to 21,522.10, and BSE's 30-share Sensex by 1.11% or 801.67 points to 71,139.9.

Domestic institutional investors (DIIs) purchased shares worth a provisional ₹1,002.7 crore.

RIL, which touched a fresh life high of ₹2,919.95 at the opening before correcting, alone contributed to nearly a third of the Nifty's fall. Taken together, the profit-taking in RIL, Bajaj Finance, ITC, Larsen & Toubro Ltd (L&T) and HDFC Bank Ltd accounted for over half of the index's fall.

A day earlier, the RIL stock had surged 7.35% to a high of ₹2,905, on rumours that the company was close to announcing a separate listing for Reliance Jio and Reliance Retail, after having listed Jio Financial Services last August. RIL contributed almost two-fifths of Nifty's 385-point rise on Monday.

"Though the carving-out of two more mini RILs has been expected for long, rumours of an announcement grew and the stock shot up yesterday (Monday)," said an analyst on condi-



On Tuesday, combined selling by FPIs, retail investors and HNIs dragged Nifty down. MINT

tion of anonymity.

Interestingly, huge delivery-based buying preceded Monday's jump on the counter. Delivery as a percentage of traded value surged to 76% and 77% on 23 and 24 January, against the six-month average of 60%. In absolute terms, the counter witnessed delivery of 7.6 million shares and 8.49 million shares over the two days against a six-month average delivery of 3.69 million shares.

The stock reversed some of its gains on Tuesday as reports surfaced of a likely US strike on Iran, which is reportedly backing rebels who killed three US soldiers in Jordan in a drone attack. The profit-taking also came ahead of the 1 February interim budget and the outcome of the US Federal Reserve's (Fed) policy meet concluding on Wednesday.

"Tuesday's profit-taking accelerated in the second half on rising tensions in West Asia," said Ambareesh Baliga, an independent market analyst. "Markets will closely eye the Fed commentary on its rate-cutting trajectory and any populist moves in the budget for further cues. Volatility has become the order of the day, with market impacting news flows surfacing almost daily."

Shipping may get infra tag in boost for vessel ownership

Subhash Narayan

subhash.narayan@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The Union government is working on a plan to grant infrastructure status to the shipping industry, including coastal shipping, two people aware of the development said. The move aims to promote ownership and construction of vessels in the country.

A proposal in the works will allow shipping entities to secure earlier financial access from commercial banks with long-term repayment periods at low interest rates.

Shipyards were granted infrastructure status since 2016, enabling them to avail of flexible structuring of long-term project loans at lower interest rates for tenures equivalent to the economic life of their assets. This also means ship builders can issue infrastructure bonds to meet working capital requirements and enjoy tax benefits. However, this status remains closed to the shipping industry, depriving shippers who need long-term funds to purchase vessels and support domestic shipbuilding with bigger orders.

"Infrastructure sector status would allow Indian companies to buy more ships, both for coastal and global shipping operations, as banking funds would be available for capital-intensive purchases with repayments linked to the asset's life spanning 12-15 years. This has been a demand of the industry that will promote acquisition of ships, barges, offshore rigs and expand the country's maritime footprint," said Anil Devli, CEO of the Indian National Shipowners' Association (Insa).

The ministry of ports, shipping, and waterways (MoPSW) has already proposed including coastal shipping as a sector in the "Harmonised List of Infrastructure" to make it eligible for various concessions and help in attracting cargo and passengers to this mode of transport. One of the two persons quoted above said that this proposal is being expanded to include the entire shipping sector to promote faster growth and development of the sector.

A query sent to the shipping ministry remained unanswered. The proposal may form part



The shipping ministry's capital subsidy scheme is likely to be extended by 10 years. REUTERS

of the interim budget to be presented on February 1.

Apart from infrastructure status, the government is also likely to extend MoPSW's capital subsidy scheme—Shipbuilding Financial Assistance Policy (SBFAP)—by another 10 years under Amritkaal Maritime Vision 2047. The scheme ends in March 2026.

The scheme provides financial assistance to Indian shipyards for shipbuilding contracts signed between 1 April 2016 and 31 March 2026, with the rate of financial assistance starting from 20% in 2016 and diminishing to 11% in 2026.

As per shipping ministry data, as on 31 December 2022, India had a fleet strength of 1,520 vessels with 13.69 million gross tonnage (GT), compared with 1,491 vessels with 12.99 million GT at the end of December 2021. This reflects a net addition of 29 vessels with an increase of 0.7 million GT during the calendar year 2022. India currently has less than 1% share of the global shipbuilding market, which is dominated by China, South Korea, and Japan.

Out of the 1,520 vessels registered as on 31 December 2022, 1,034 vessels (68%) with 1.58 million GT were engaged in coastal trade and the remaining 486 vessels (32%) with 12.11 million GT were deployed for overseas trade. The age profile of Indian merchant shipping vessels indicates that about 44.2% of the fleet is above 20 years of age, 13.7% between 16 and 20 years, 20.3% between 11 and 15 years, 13.2% between 6 and 10 years, while 8.7% was below 5 years. This means that a lot of replacement of existing merchant ships would be required over next couple of years.

'Lower VAT' on aviation fuel may help Jewar

Anu Sharma

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NEW DELHI: The Delhi-National Capital Region's (NCR) second airport in Jewar, Uttar Pradesh, is expected to benefit from significantly lower value-added tax on aviation fuel, according to industry executives and experts.

The existing airport catering to Delhi-NCR, in Gurugram, Haryana, charges a value added tax of 25% on aviation turbine fuel, while the tax at the new airport will be about 1%. Airlines spend 35-40% of their total expenditure on fuel.

"One of the things we do have to offer is lower VAT on ATF. That is important to carriers. Fuel is by far the largest in an airline's profit and loss statement," Christoph Schnellmann, chief executive officer, Noida International Airport Ltd, told Mint.

"If it is something that we can do, or the government can do to lower some of those costs, it will ultimately bring down the cost of travel for passengers. Air travel is price sensitive everywhere," Schnellmann said.

Noida International Airport



Noida International Airport CEO Christoph Schnellmann.

Ltd operates the Jewar airport. The VAT on aviation turbine fuel ranges between 1% and 30% for various airports.

The civil aviation ministry has been actively asking state governments to reduce VAT on aviation fuel, and so far 19 states and Union territories have reduced the tax in their respective territories. The Uttar Pradesh government reduced the VAT on ATF in the state to 1% from 21% in 2022.

The first phase of the Noida International Airport is expected to be operational by the end of 2024, with one runway, and one terminal having the capacity to

handle traffic of 12 million passengers annually. The airport is about 72 km from Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi, 52 km from Noida, and 130 km from Agra.

The airport is already seeing strong interest from domestic as well as international airlines. India's largest airline, IndiGo, will be the launch carrier for the airport. Recently, Akasa Air announced it will base its aircraft at Jewar for domestic and international flights.

Air India Express, the low-cost subsidiary of Air India, is also looking at Jewar airport.

"We will be looking at where the demand is. Certainly, Jewar is a big catchment area. It will serve a specific market and certainly we would like to be there," said Alok Singh, managing director, Air India Express.

"Certainly, demand comes first. I am saying that (lower VAT) is the icing on the cake," Singh added.

Airlines feel a lower VAT would also mean lower fares for passengers. "Any such benefits in terms of cost will be transferred to passengers, which means lower fares for passengers flying out of Jewar airport," said the chief executive officer of a low-cost airline, on condition of anonymity.

Analysts also predict a huge benefit for Jewar airport over Delhi.

"In the case of Delhi airport, 25% is quite high VAT on ATF. I feel the day Noida airport at Jewar is commissioned, Delhi government may be forced to reduce (the tax); otherwise this will be one of the reasons for moving a lot of traffic to Jewar," Vijai Agrawal, former chairman of the Airports Authority of India, said in a webinar.

India M&As in 2023 at highest in almost a decade: Bain & Co

Priyamvada C

priyamvada.c@livemint.com

BENGALURU: Mergers and acquisitions in India last year surpassed volumes seen in most of the past decade, barring 2022, even as global M&A activity slowed, consultancy firm Bain & Co. said in a report. This year, the industry is likely to chalk up a similar run of deals, it added.

Indian companies struck more than 90 M&A deals worth a total of about \$32 billion in 2023 (taking into account only deals that were worth over \$75 million). In 2022, companies had struck 109 deals worth \$118 billion.

"The sustained momentum is driven by availability of attractive opportunities and assets, and heightened activity and disruption in sectors with structural tailwinds and favourable policies," Bain & Co.'s India chairman Karan Singh said in a report published on Tuesday.

"Renewable energy, infrastructure, logistics, and manu-



Indian firms struck more than 90 M&A deals worth about \$32 billion in 2023. ISTOCKPHOTO

facturing accounted for one in every three deals over the past 18 months," he added.

For 2024, more than 80% of the respondents to Bain & Co.'s annual M&A Practitioners' Outlook Survey expect to close a similar number of deals, or more.

"Market sentiment is bullish, with most dealmakers expecting a continuation or an improvement during 2024 across sectors," Vikram Chandrashekar, partner at Bain &

Co., said in the report. "For example, in healthcare, deal volumes have grown consistently over the past five years and the momentum is expected to continue in 2024 with quality assets coming to market and a positive sector outlook," he said. "As more assets become available and competition heats up in India, disciplined diligence can provide the edge to win the deal and set up for value creation."

In 2023, mid-market acquirers with up to \$1 billion in revenue accounted for nearly half of the mergers and acquisitions, mainly to bolster their market positions, Bain & Co. said.

Globally, meanwhile, M&A activity dropped 15% to \$3.2 trillion last year, the lowest in a decade, as dealmakers in a number of countries grappled with high interest rates, regulatory scrutiny, and mixed macroeconomic signals that made them more cautious.

This year, however, firms are eyeing assets that didn't come to the market in 2023.

{ THE CROSSWORDS }

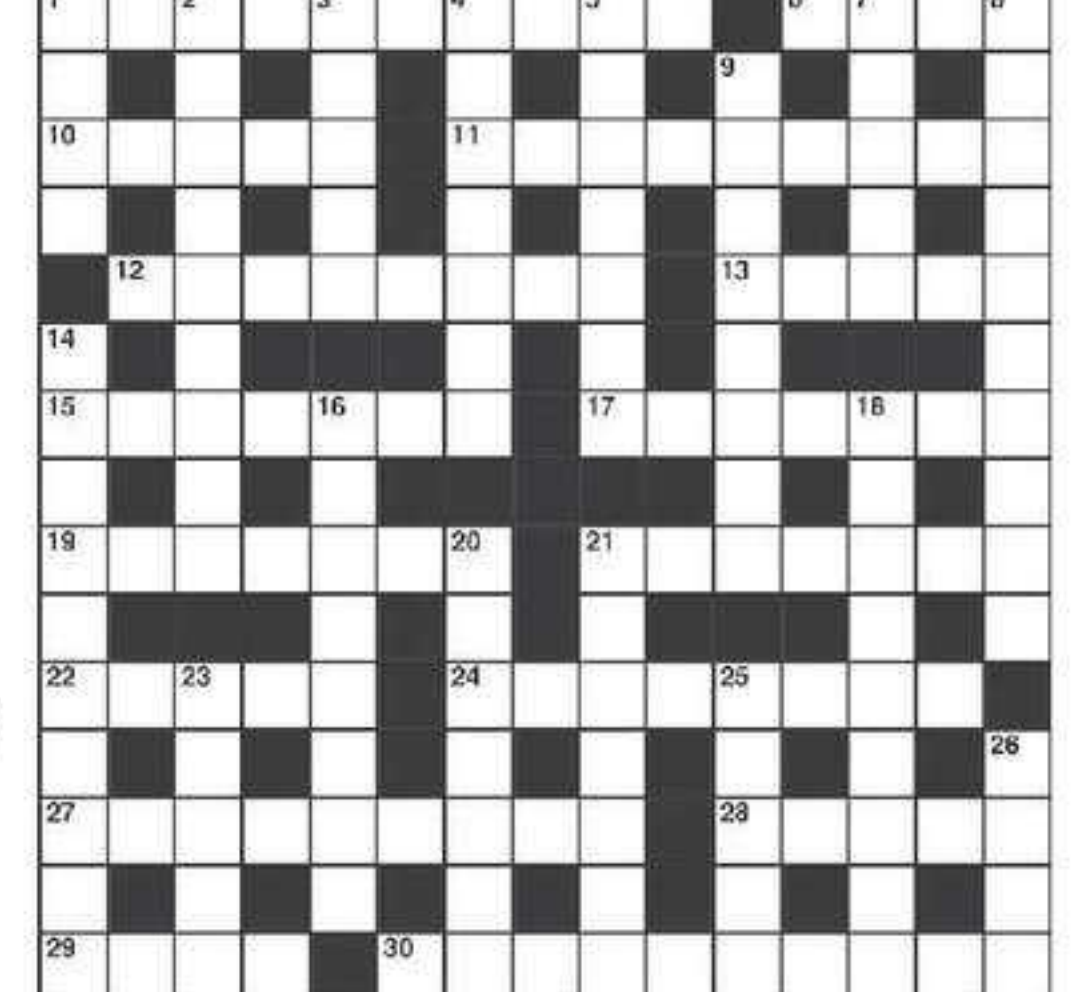
CRYPTIC CLUES

- ACROSS**
- French writer's pseudonym (3,2,5)
 - Card game for well-off circle (4)
 - At festive occasions a journalist is treated (5)
 - Frank had a meal but hasn't yet a seat (9)
 - Burn fuel that draws well (8)
 - More than one ghost writer (5)
 - Furnish with a soft tip (7)
 - The last sort of word to define secrecy (7)
 - A stage between flights (7)
 - Gentleman returning with a fish or meat dish (7)
 - Excuse offered for absenteeism (5)
 - No energy? And no inclination apparently (8)
 - Excited animal that is caught in tangled net (9)
 - Give a protracted speech (5)
 - Secures the same totals of points (4)
 - Down-to-earth Roman tunic perhaps (10)

DOWN

- Shows approval although almost asleep (4)
- Ship's name spoilt by being crooked (9)
- Spanish and German articles entitled to respect? (5)
- Anti-labour act? (4-3)
- Chews up a thousand fishes (7)
- Collect for a service (5)
- Very steep climb for a member of a trio (3,2,5)
- Not always the products of great minds (3,5)
- Family man holds up letters for national assembly (10)
- They make up monograms for people (8)
- Be quick to show pride in appearance (4,5)
- The craft with which Spain built up her empire (7)
- Turn to nuts to get food (7)
- Get used to being in old city quarter (5)
- Lady I take out? (5)
- A smart man is dressed up in lace (4)

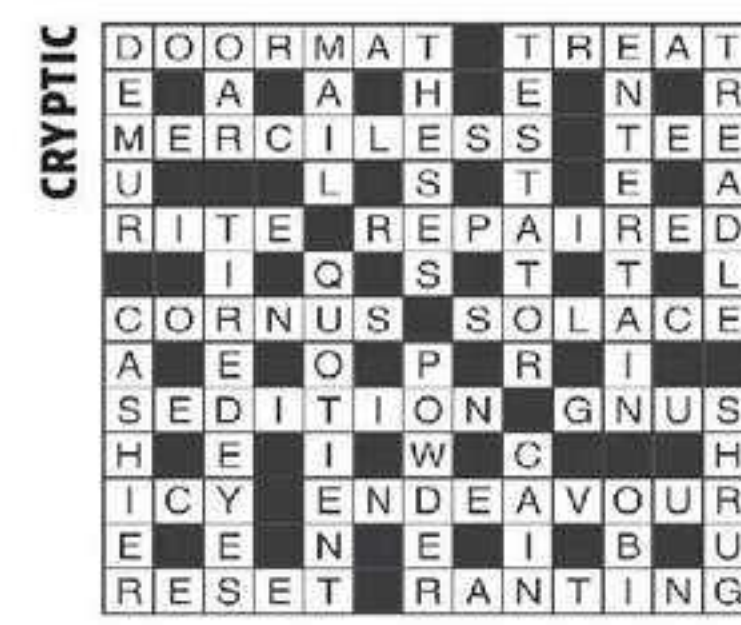
PUZZLE 16770 © Gemini Crosswords 2018 All rights reserved



QUICK CLUES

- ACROSS**
- Cease moving (4,2,4)
 - Paint crudely (4)
 - Main ingredient (5)
 - Of one mind (9)
 - Relevant (8)
 - Discourage (5)
 - To malign (7)
 - Come safely through (7)
 - Simulate (7)
 - The North Star (7)
 - A volatile liquid solvent (5)
 - Ghostly (8)
 - Turn to nuts to get food (7)
 - Get used to being in old city quarter (5)
 - Lady I take out? (5)
 - Submissive (4)
 - The criminal fraternity (10)
- DOWN**
- Largest island of West Indies (4)
 - To bungle (9)
 - Aesthetic discernment (5)
 - Regular procedure (7)
 - Superficial (7)
 - Wife (5)
 - Unaware (2,8)
 - An unexpected gain (8)
 - In great demand (2,1,7)
 - Consistently accurate (8)
 - In the future (9)
 - Haughty indifference (7)
 - Come before (7)
 - Undue hurry (5)
 - To cast (5)
 - Audacious (4)

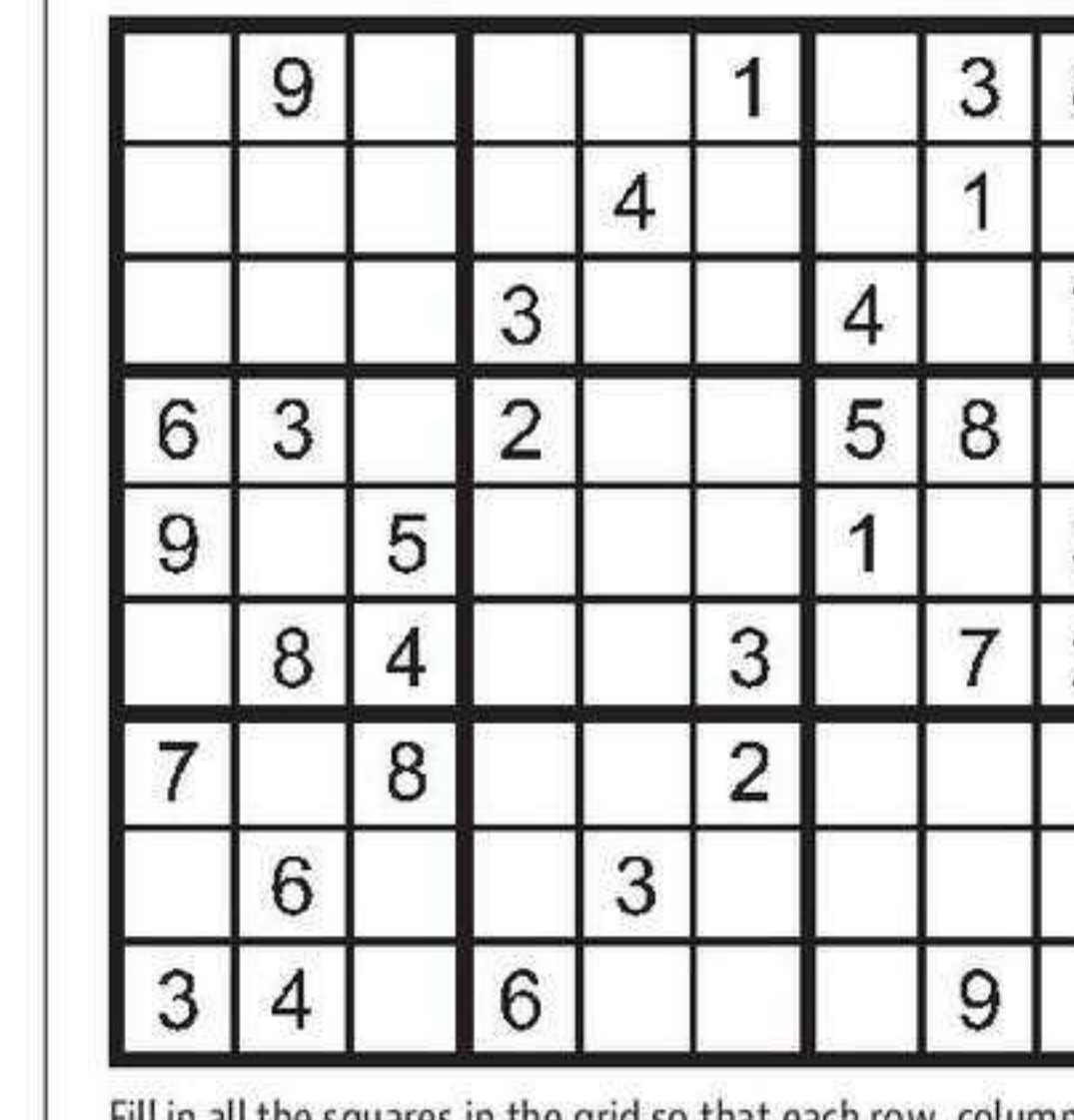
YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (16769)



QUICK



{ SUDOKU } DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★★★



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

Bleak year for IT hiring as Big Four hit multi-year low

Shouvik Das

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NEW DELHI: India's freshly graduating tech talent as well as entry- to mid-career employees are staring at a bleak immediate future as the country's top tech recruiters pull back on new hiring.

In the first three quarters of FY24, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, Infosys Ltd, HCL Technologies Ltd and Wipro Ltd saw a collective decline of 49,936 employees, showed data collated from quarterly and annual financial reports by Mint. It's the worst decline in headcount at the 'Big Four' information technology (IT) services companies in at least five years, Mint's analysis shows.

This drop in hiring has come off the back of global macroeconomic uncertainties that have hammered India's \$245 billion IT services industry.

The drop also comes two years after a record FY22, when



The current drop in headcount is in tandem with a decline in overall revenue and profitability of big IT companies. MINT

pandemic-induced demand for digital transformation among industries saw India's top four software exporters add over 300,000 employees.

Industry experts and analysts say fresh graduates will struggle to find jobs at least until the end of this calendar year, while the immediate aftermath of this could lead to another cycle of rising attrition levels at IT firms.

Infosys and Wipro have announced that they will skip campus recruitments at least until the end of this ongoing quarter.

"This is the first time since FY19 that the companies are looking to skip campus recruitment," said Prasadh M.S., head of workforce research and analytics at workplace statistics firm Xpheno.

The current drop in headcount is in tandem with a decline in overall revenue and profitability of big IT companies. At the end of the December quarter, HCL Tech was the only company among the top four to have posted any meaningful growth, with dollar revenue and net profit rising 5.9% and 12.5% sequentially.

"The Big Four and some of their peers are the only cohort that can spend on building talent for the overall industry. Simply put, onboarding 10,000 employees means adding at least ₹400 crore as employee cost for a company—not many companies can do this," said Prasadh. "As a result, when the Big Four do not go to campuses, the talent supply for India's entire tech hiring demand gets constricted."

As a result, Prasadh said, any non-tech firm looking for tech talent will now need to look at lateral hires from other companies, which in turn will lead to higher costs incurred as the

average cost of hiring will go up. Sunil Chemmankotil, chief executive officer (CEO) of staffing services firm Teamleap Digital, added that the influx of generative AI (artificial intelligence) has coincided with IT services firms experimenting with ways to improve their margins and efficiencies.

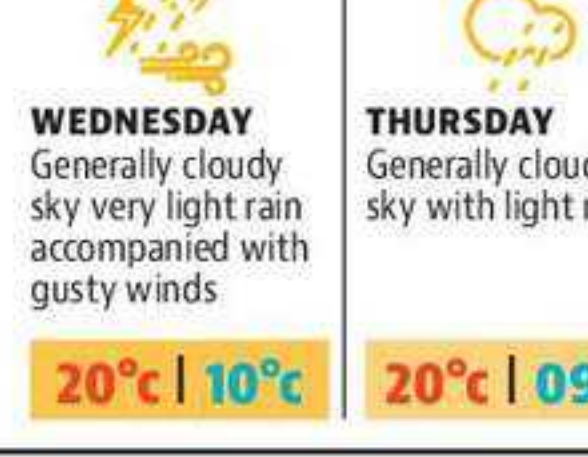
"Typically, these IT firms were dependent on fresher hiring because a lot of entry-level hires would be first trained on basic tasks. The slowdown in fresher recruitments has also been a factor of the influx of AI and generative AI, which has led to a confusion in terms of how AI will intervene."

The key reason for the hiring slowdown was reflected in commentaries by the IT companies during their third-quarter results.

Each of the Big Four CEOs said that the overall sentiment among clients across various industries remained cautious, and discretionary spending by clients was minimal.

{ WEATHER }

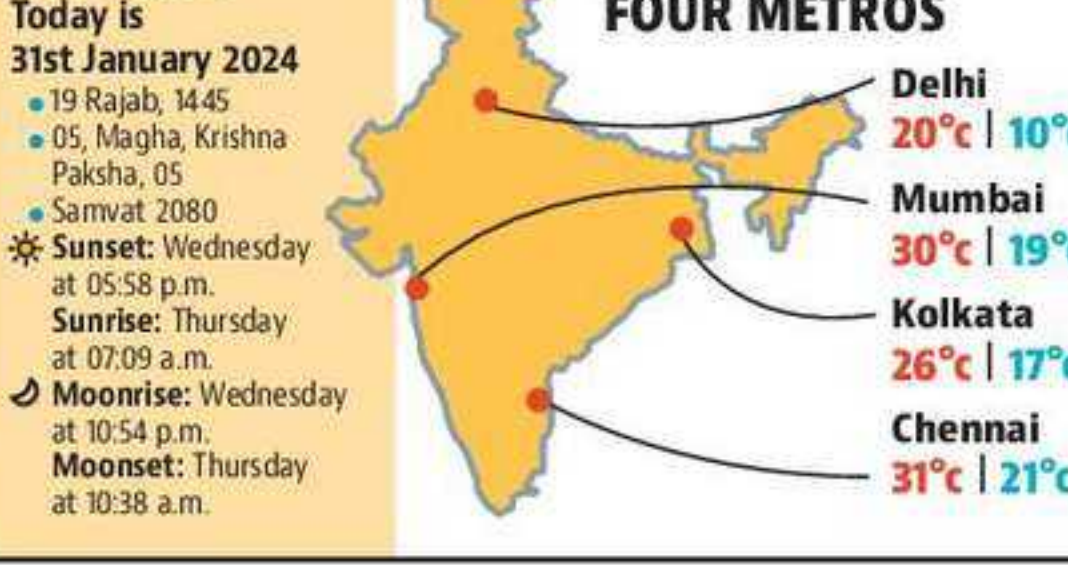
TEMPERATURE HIGH * LOW



ALMANAC

Today is 31st January 2024
19 Rajab, 1445
05, Magha, Krishna Paksha, 05
Samarat 2089
Sunset: Wednesday at 05:58 p.m.
Sunrise: Thursday at 07:29 a.m.
Moonrise: Wednesday at 10:54 p.m.
Moonset: Thursday at 10:38 a.m.

TEMPERATURE IN FOUR METROS



Delhi 20°C | 10°C
Mumbai 30°C | 19°C
Kolkata 26°C | 17°C
Chennai 26°C | 21°C

India waits for proactive captain Sharma to turn up for Vizag Test

One Test down, onus on India captain to show more initiative with bowlers and set a batting precedent

Somshuvra Laha
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KOLKATA: For all the platitudes India have earned as an indomitable force at home, how they failed to pre-empt their usual vanquishers—left-arm spin and a variant of the sweep shot—at Hyderabad is nothing short of perplexing. On the first day, England looked out of depth, out of ideas and probably a bowler short.

And yet by the final day, on a surface that had blamelessly slowed down without compromising on turn, the same England looked more in sync for victory. This, despite India carving a 190-run lead, and then reducing England to 163/5 in the second innings. How did it go all downhill from there?

Ravindra Jadeja and Axar Patel going off the boil together is rare. But this is also an England side buoyed by a mindset that made it attack 54% of the balls bowled to them—highest for any team in India since records were first made available in 2006. Thing is, Rohit Sharma believes his bowlers didn't err.

"When you finish the day, you analyse—what went well, what didn't go well, and things like that. We went back and saw things, we spoke about (them) and I thought the bowlers executed the plan really well," Sharma had said. If this is interpreted as letting England realise a sustainable way of dealing with India's spinners, isn't the onus on Sharma to try something different? Here's Sharma elaborating on it from a batter's perspective at Nagpur (against Australia) last year, after scoring his maiden hundred as captain: "You can't let the bowler bowl six balls on the spot. You have got to try and do something different, and that something different can be your way of doing it, whether it's stepping down the ground, sweeping, reverse sweeping, going over the top..."

As a bowling captain, however, Sharma's decisions felt rather self-defeating. It almost

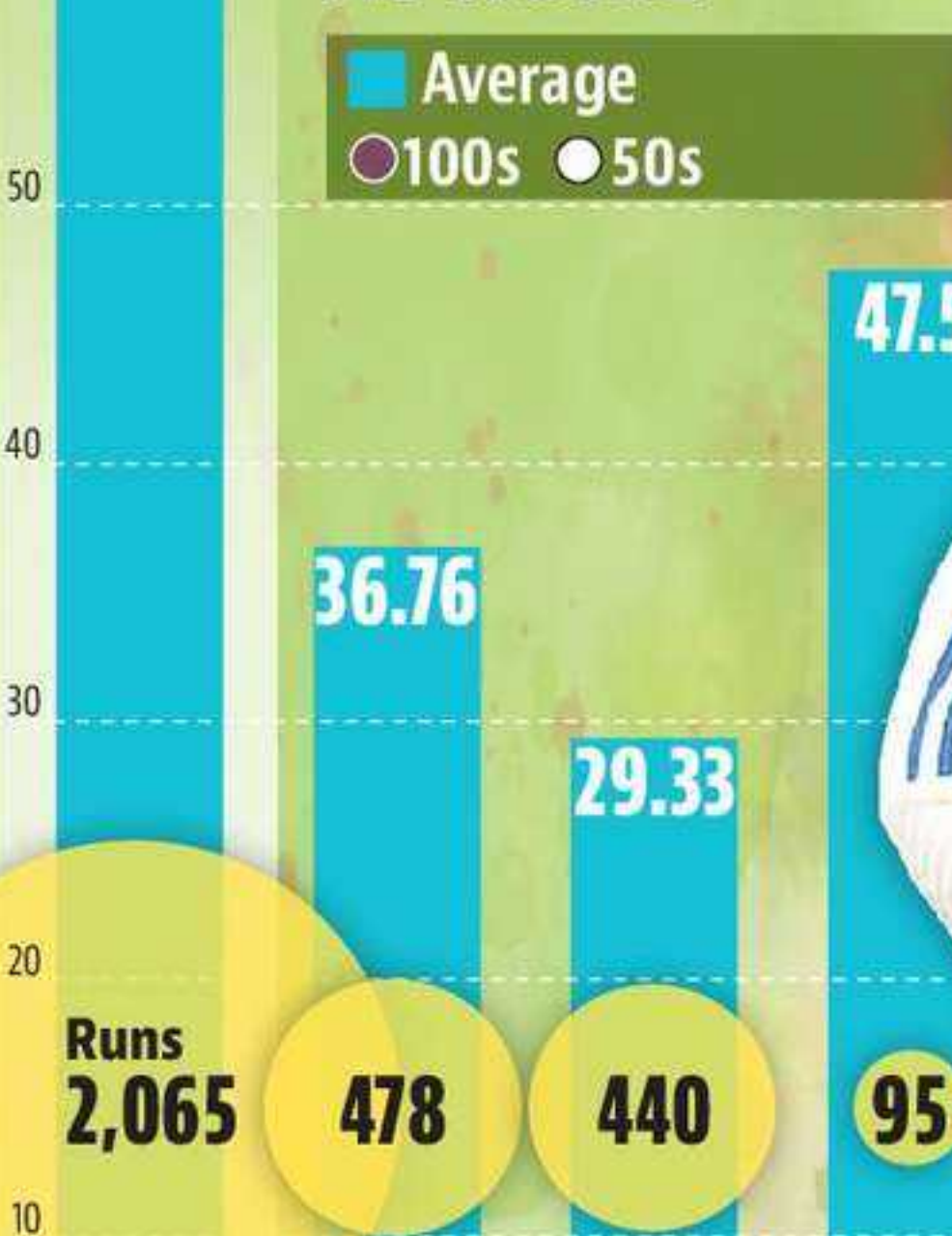
Challenges for skipper Rohit Sharma

After a shocking loss to England in the opening Test, India suffered another setback when injuries ruled out KL Rahul and Ravindra Jadeja. Here's a look at key issues skipper Rohit Sharma will have to tackle in the second Test in Visakhapatnam

India's inexperienced batting

The Indian batting line-up already missing the experience of Virat Kohli in Hyderabad, where they failed to chase down 231 for victory, has been further depleted by the absence of KL Rahul. Sharma remains the most experienced batter in the line-up having played 24 Tests in India. Rahul has played 17.

INDIA BATTERS AT HOME



ROHIT SHARMA	Shreyas Iyer	Shubman Gill	Yashasvi Jaiswal
25 (Mat)	8	9	1
212 (Best)	105	128	80
8	1	1	0
6	3	2	1

Note: Neither Rajat Patidar nor Sarfaraz Khan has played a Test

seemed he was relying too much on his spinners' home track record instead of asking them to bowl wider lines and putting the onus back on England to leave the crease, his field settings ending up facilitating those sweeps and reverse sweeps that delivered hope to England.

Sharma is barely into his third year of captaincy, but more significantly this is a format that has embraced him only as recently as in 2019. With that

backdrop, defeat in the World Test Championship final, at Centurion, bookended by losses at Indore (to Australia) last year and now at Hyderabad, are bound to prompt a few murmurs. That both home defeats—nine wickets at Indore, 28 runs here—came against teams led by highly instinctive captains like Steve Smith and Ben Stokes also dig up the question if Sharma is prone to playing catch-up.

He at least had Virat Kohli during the 2023 home series against Australia. Without Kohli to begin with, and now Jadeja and KL Rahul ruled out, bigger conundrums await Sharma at the Visakhapatnam even before the first ball is bowled.

Kuldeep Yadav becomes a frontrunner for that third spinner slot though it will significantly

weaken India's batting. Sarfaraz Khan joining the squad ahead of this Test is a sign India may want to blood him, but there could be a temptation to accommodate Rajat Patidar and drop Siraj who bowled all of 11 overs in the first Test.

All this of course hinges on the idea of promoting Shreyas Iyer to No 4 and hoping it would work because it's been six Tests now, he hasn't hit a fifty. More disconcerting was the manner of his second-innings dismissal, pushing at Joe Root's off-break with hard hands when India were desperately in need of a partnership. A misfiring Shubman Gill at the top, a lacklustre Iyer in the middle with probably one or two debutants—piecing together this batting line-up becomes all the more challenging now. Sharma

is also in charge of this, probably more personally than he has ever been in the past.

That this job description is diagonally opposite to what Sharma saddled himself with in white ball cricket shouldn't be lost upon him. Quick starts won't matter in this format as much as consolidation and a big innings, which is becoming paramount in the grander scheme of equaling this Test series. This means channelling his focus into spending more time at the crease, displaying more surefootedness against a spin attack that is still inexperienced despite their Hyderabad high, and hoping to employ the same tactic when England take stance. Powerless with the bat, bereft of ideas while bowling, this doesn't feel like India at home. To change that,

Sharma needs to take the reins of this series in every possible way he is capable of.

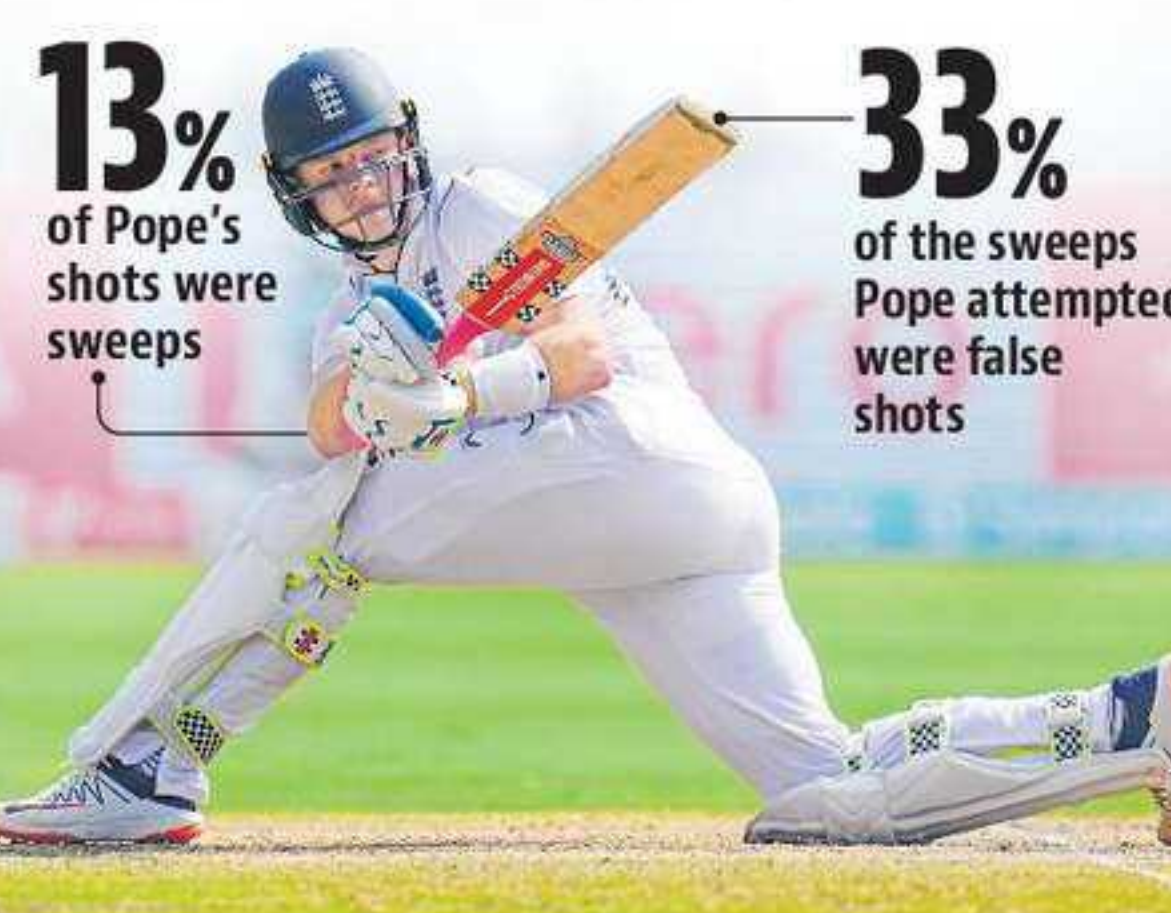
All-spin attack for Eng?

Meanwhile, England head coach Brendon McCullum has not ruled out the possibility of his team playing four spinners in Visakhapatnam.

"[Bashir], again like Tom Hartley, has little first-class experience but we thought his skill could help us in here," said McCullum on SENZ Radio. The guys gave him a huge cheer and he witnessed the Test win. He also comes into calculations for the next Test match. If the wickets continue to spin as much as what we saw in the first Test as the series goes on, look, we won't be afraid to play all spinners, or a balance of what we've got."

Find a counter to the sweep and reverse sweep

India spinners did not have a Plan B when **Ollie Pope** came out sweeping and reverse sweeping on his way to a game-changing 196 in the second innings. 13% of Pope's shots were sweeps and 33% of those were false shots. But even then, he did not stop attacking. And in the Hyderabad Test England batters played attacking shots to 54% of the balls bowled at them.



Who to pick in the XI?

India face two forced changes. It's either **Rajat Patidar** or **Sarfaraz Khan** for **KL Rahul**. Replacing Jadeja could be one of all-rounder **Washington Sundar**, left-arm spinner **Saurabh Kumar** or left-arm wrist spinner **Kuldeep Yadav**. Patidar scored back-to-back centuries against England Lions in Ahmedabad in the shadow tour. Sarfaraz staked his claim with 96, 55 and 161 against England Lions. **Kuldeep's wrist spin** could be a variation England batters are not too comfortable with, while **Saurabh's left-arm spin** could be a like-for-like replacement for Jadeja.

{ STRAIGHT DRIVE }

Amrit Mathur



Lesson from loss: Don't take cricket, rivals for granted

The shock defeat in Hyderabad sends out many messages, the loudest is to cut the noise and maintain balance while spinning narratives around Indian cricket.

As a cricket crazed country we are all guilty of hyping up our cricket and wildly praising our cricketers, and in doing so indirectly disrespecting teams we play against. This tendency peaks against Pakistan when toxic marketing promotions, especially the poisonous promos aired on television, lower cricket to disgraceful depths.

Discovering excessive merit in Indian cricket is a national pastime and in this world view IPL is the best league, which it is. IPL's marketing overdrive positions Dhoni as its lifetime 'big boss', which is fine considering his contribution and impact. Rohit the 'hit man' is also fine but Shreyas Iyer the superstar is a bit rich. Brutally effective in the shorter format but seriously challenged by the short ball. Surely, India has had far better Test players in the middle order.

Hyderabad tells us we are not as good as most of us think. If we were, India wouldn't have lost to Australia in the WTC final played in neutral England. If IPL made us red hot favourites in white-ball cricket, why did we lose (again) to Australia at home in the ODI World Cup final in Ahmedabad on a pitch customised to suit our strengths?

It's not that India isn't good, or that its players don't perform well. But somehow the conversation on television and social media is getting raised to a pitch where other teams are considered inferior and unworthy.

Before Hyderabad, much fun was made of Bazball and England was expected to be crushed in three days on a spin-friendly track. Which was a fair guess because Ashwin is unplayable in India, and he is supported by an army of destroyers (Jadeja/Axar Patel/Kuldeep Yadav/Chahal/Rahul Chahar/Washington Sundar/Ravi Bishnoi/Jayant Yadav) all capable of running through a batting line-up that lacks experience except for Root and Stokes.

Compared to India's riches, England had Leach who won't give sleepless nights to many, and apart from him one Test Rehan and debutant Hartley.

Compared to them, man to man, Saurabh Kumar/Shahbaz Nadeem/Shams Mulani/Sai Kishore/Kumar Kartikeya/KC Cariappa/Dharmendrasinh Jadeja/Jalaj Saxena/Mayank Markande/Siddharth Desai/Karn Sharma/Tanush Kotian are as good. Despite these odds, England

won. Despite conceding a 190-run lead. Despite making 420 in the first innings, India lost.

The message to Indian cricket from Hyderabad is to stay humble, and not take cricket for granted. In any game, two teams compete and victory is never assured, as Australia found out at Brisbane.

While India was busy announcing an imminent triumph, England was quietly training in Abu Dhabi sorting its strategy, getting used to warm Indian conditions and trying to make the most from their meagre bowling resources.

Besides the need to remain balanced in defeat and victory, a more subtle message is emerging from Hyderabad. It is time the constant cheerleading about Indian cricket stopped; viewers and readers deserve honest and objective comments on the team and player performances.

We understand the need to support the home team, and one is aware that totally dispassionate comment is difficult because of compelling constraints. Calling a spade a spade is tough in India, but space must be found for constructive criticism, calling out mistakes and pointing out shortcomings.

Perhaps the strongest voice post Hyderabad is that so many of us can be so wrong. That cricket can defeat the purist and the paanwala is well known, especially about wickets. It is easier to predict election results and the box office fate of films than the nature of the pitch. Everyone tries at every opportunity and not everyone gets it right.

Only recently, nobody read the World Cup final right. While the whole world (experts/fans and Rohit Sharma) was unanimous that the team winning the toss would bat, only one person (captain Pat Cummins, the only one who mattered) thought otherwise. Defying conventional wisdom, he went against traffic in a one-way street to put India in.

The Hyderabad shocker is one more instance when cricket caught all experts (legit and self-proclaimed) on the wrong foot. Nobody gave England a chance, most predicted India rolling them over, but once again cricket sprung a surprise.

The final message to fans from Hyderabad is to chill and cancel the fake hype. Don't expect India to win every time, just enjoy the riveting bat versus ball contest. Admire Ashwin's carrom ball leg-cutter and the audacity of Ollie Pope, who thinks the reverse sweep is as safe as a forward defensive shot.

11,447

Joe Root has more Test runs than the total runs scored by the entire India squad for the second Test. The 17-member squad has a total 10,702 runs to their name



{ U-19 WORLD CUP } SUPER SIX STAGE

Musheer, Saumy guide India to big win over New Zealand

HT Correspondent
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Led by a superb 131 from Player-of-the-Match Musheer Khan, India steamrolled New Zealand by 214 runs in a Super Six Group 1 game of the under-19 World Cup in Bloemfontein, South Africa to extend their all-win run.

Asked to bat first after Kiwi skipper Oscar Jackson won the toss, India rode on a fine 58-ball 52 from opener Adarsh Singh before No.3 Musheer came into his own.

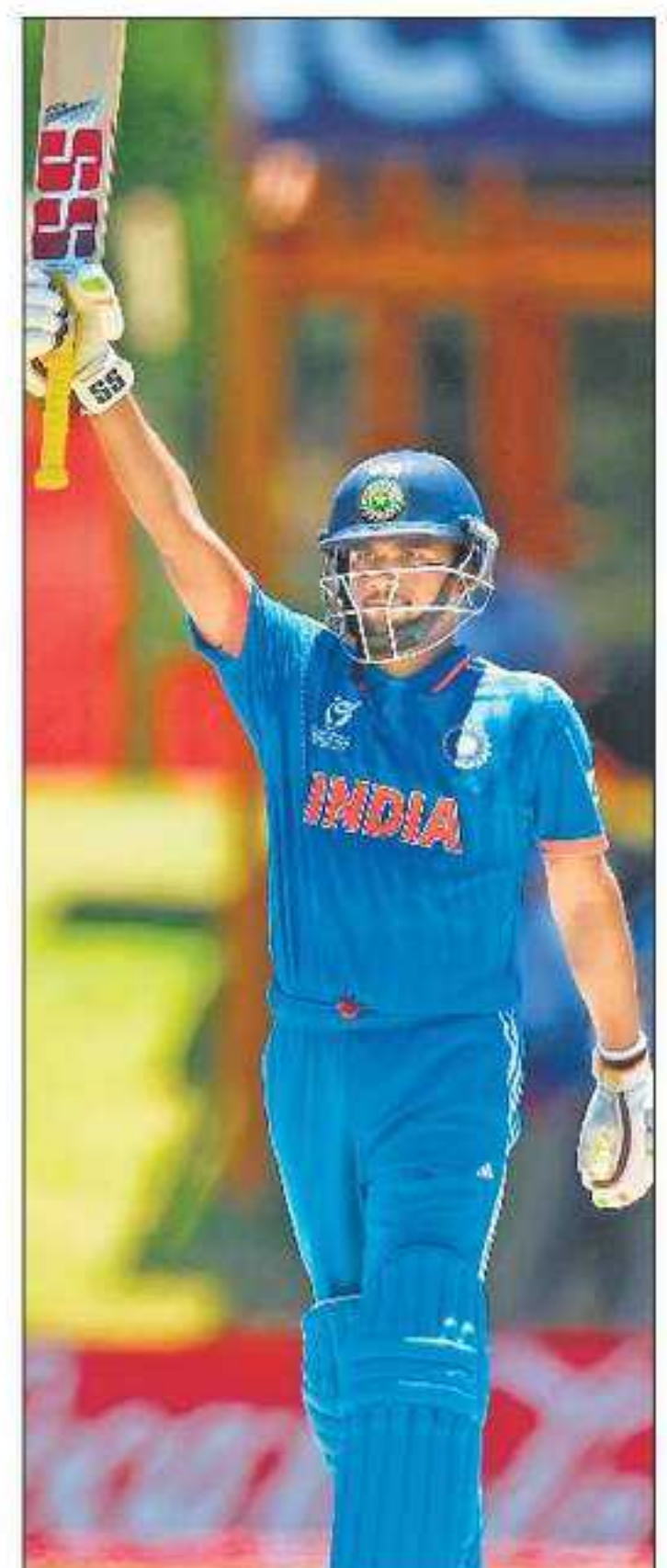
The 18-year-old arrived at the crease in the fifth over of the match and stitched a vital 77-run alliance for the second wicket with Adarsh.

Musheer notched up his second hundred in three matches off 109 balls before falling to Mason Clarke in the 48th over after a well made 126-ball 131. His knock was studded with 13 fours and three sixes.

After failing against Bangladesh in India's tournament opener, Musheer has been on a dream run, scoring 118 against Ireland and 73 against USA before Tuesday's match-winning knock.

Six of India's top seven batters got starts but only Adarsh and Musheer went past 35. Musheer's knock though was enough to push India to a challenging 295/8.

"I have to continue this form in the coming matches. This is a



Musheer Khan celebrates his century against NZ in Bloemfontein on Tuesday.

slow pitch and our bowlers have been bowling well. They are in good form and we are getting the results," Musheer said after the match.

New Zealand's hopes of overhauling the target received a blow early with pacer Raj Limbani striking first ball of the innings.

Getting the ball to cut in sharply from back of length, Limbani broke through the defences of Tom Jones to put New Zealand on the backfoot. Four balls later, he again got the ball to seam in from good length to trap Snehith Reddy plumb in front.

New Zealand got little breathing room as skipper Uday Saharan introduced the left-arm spin of Saumy Pandey from the other end. Pandey found his length early and struck at regular intervals to finish with 4/19 from his ten overs.

That three of his four dismissals were bowled or LBW indicated his discipline. This was Pandey's second four-wicket haul in this World Cup following his 4/21 against Bangladesh. He also took 3/21 against Ireland and 1/13 versus USA.

Skipper Jackson was the top scorer with 19 runs as the Kiwis folded for 81 in 28.1 overs. "Limbani bowled well. He showed a different facet of this pitch when he bowled. We weren't surprised by what the spinners did as we played against Ireland here. We knew what to expect," Saharan said.

India next play Nepal on Friday. **Brief scores:** India 295/8 (Adarsh Singh 52, Musheer Khan 131, Mason Clarke 4/62); New Zealand 81 in 28.1 overs (Raj Limbani 2/17, Saumy Pandey 4/19, Musheer Khan 2/10). **India won by 214 runs.**



Mayank Agarwal. PTI

ILL MAYANK TAKEN OFF FLIGHT AND ADMITTED TO TRIPURA HOSPITAL

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MUMBAI: Karnataka captain Mayank Agarwal had to be deplaned from an Agartala-Delhi Tuesday evening flight and admitted to a private hospital in Agartala after he complained of a burning sensation in his throat and stomach.

Agarwal felt ill and vomited after consuming a liquid on board. "He was taken to the hospital and a KSCA official has been asked to stay with him. He is recovering and feeling better," KSCA president Raghuram Bhat said. Agarwal was travelling with the team for their next Ranji tie against Railways in Surat.

"Mayank Agarwal's (team) manager said while sitting on the flight, he saw a pouch in front of him and thinking of it as water, drank a little bit. He suddenly had irritation in the mouth and could not talk. He has some swelling and ulcers in his mouth. His vitals are stable. We are registering the complaint and will investigate," SP West Tripura Kiran Kumar told PTI. Agarwal will undergo several tests before it is ascertained when he can return home.

Will we get to see Kuldeep 2.0 with the red ball in 2nd Test?

Rasesh Mandani

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MUMBAI: To be a mystery spinner and find one's mystique unravelled by powerful batters and data analytics can leave one deflated. For a while, he was, Kuldeep Yadav's weak moments in the heat of action have often been in public view.

That's until the Kanpur spinner got back to the basics and returned with a straighter, faster, more rhythmic bowling action. We know how it helped Kuldeep resurrect his white-ball career.

Now, in Ravindra Jadeja's misfortune, there may lie an opportunity for Kuldeep to breathe some life into his unfulfilled Test career. A purveyor of the rare art of left-arm wrist spin, having bamboozled the best batters in limited-overs cricket, Kuldeep's Test cricket resume—8 matches in 7 years—speaks of a letdown of epic proportions. If Rohit Sharma could course correct at 31, perhaps Kuldeep at 29 can do it too.

Before the Hyderabad Test, Kuldeep's name was considered. "Kuldeep is a much more mature bowler now. He has not played a lot of Tests in India because of Ashwin and Jadeja. But that is what happens. Like with our middle order, we all got an opportunity late. But that's the reality of it. From what he was a couple of years back, he is much more improved and a very tempting option," Rohit Sharma had said. Now with Jadeja ruled out of



Kuldeep Yadav during a India practice session. PTI

the Visakhapatnam Test starting on Friday due to a hamstring injury and headed for rehabilitation, Kuldeep could become the first-choice replacement. That's unless India go for Washington Sundar as the third spinner, after Ashwin and Axar Patel. They could also go with four spinners, though it is less likely.

Among those who worked with Kuldeep behind the scenes is former left-arm spinner and Uttar Pradesh coach Sunil Joshi. Putting his former selector's hat on, Joshi believes Kuldeep must play. "Of late, Kuldeep has consistently bowled batters through the gate with flight and disguise with the white ball. He will do even better with the red ball because it has

more shine, and he will extract more turn and bounce. He could be very effective because English players have been poor against wrist spin," Joshi said.

One of the reasons Kuldeep found himself out of elite cricket was batters lining up against his slower trajectory. That's been largely corrected by the new-found zip in his bowling action. As Anil Kumble explained on ESPNcricinfo, running in straighter meant the body was more behind the ball which helped the pace at which he bowled. "Naturally, he doesn't have to bowl quicker. It's not that the arm-speed has suddenly become quicker," he said.

Kuldeep's ability to think on his

feet when under the pump was also questioned. If he plays, English batters have given enough evidence of what he must expect. Joshi takes you back to Kuldeep's duel with New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell in the 2023 ODI World Cup. The powerful right-hander had taken Kuldeep down for three straight sixes. The crafty spinner hurled a fast cross-seamer anticipating a reverse-sweep and a wide googly to which Mitchell almost holed out but was grassed in the deep. Kuldeep, nevertheless, was able to stem the flow of straight boundaries and got two other wickets in the spell.

"Mitchell wanted to keep attacking but was never allowed to hit out. That was with the white ball. I will have a word with him before the Test. He is aware of what he has to do. When he lands the red ball on the seam, the effect will be totally different. I don't think they can pre-plan against him," said Joshi.

As a point of difference, India will still have Axar bowling with his higher release point, a vital factor when the pitch is assisting turn, as England left-arm spinner Tom Hartley showed. "On a spin-friendly wicket, high release point can make a bigger impact. Your close-in fielders come into play more," said Joshi.

Although, Jadeja's skill sets are difficult to match in Indian conditions, in Kuldeep's guise, Axar's accuracy and Ashwin's hurt pride, India will try to ride the home wave, once again.

HT

'Felt like my time in this world was up'

NEW DELHI: Rishabh Pant felt his "time in this world" was over when he met with a car accident in Dec, 2022. Pant said he nearly felt he would die after his Mercedes burst into flames after hitting a divider. "First time in my life I felt like my time in this world is up. During the accident I was aware of the wounds, but I was lucky as it could have been even more serious," Pant told Star Sports. "I was feeling that someone saved me. I asked the doctor how long will it take for me to recover, he said it would take 16-18 months. I knew I had to work hard to cut this recovery time," he said.

Nikhat, Lovlina for Strandja Memorial

NEW DELHI: Boxers Nikhat Zareen and Lovlina Borgohain will be among the 19 Indians at the Strandja Memorial boxing in Sofia, Bulgaria on February 1. The squad in the Strandja meet is different from the one that will compete at the Olympic qualifiers later in February. Nikhat, Preeti and Lovlina have already secured an Olympic quota while no male boxer is yet to do so.

Jolly-Gayatri to face Crasto-Ponnappa

BANGKOK: Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand beat Hong Kong's Lok Lok Lui and Wing Yung NG 16-21, 21-10, 21-18 to enter the second round of the women's doubles event at the Thailand Masters. They will face Tanisha Crasto and Ashwini Ponnappa, who beat Taipei's Ling Fang Hu and Xiao Min Lin 21-13, 21-17.

Ali to double up as non-playing captain

ISLAMABAD: India coach Zeeshan Ali will double up as the non-playing captain of the Davis Cup team in its tie against Pakistan on Feb 2 and 3, after Rohit Rajpal failed to travel due to personal reasons.

India's Divya speaks out against sexism in chess

Susan Ninan

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BENGALURU: Divya Deshmukh—18 years of age and among India's brightest young female chess players, has had enough. At the end of the recent Tata Steel Chess tournament in the Dutch coastal town of Wijk Aan Zee, Divya put out an Instagram post that spoke of the constant sexism, 'judgement' and 'hatred' she has been facing in the game as a teen.

"I played a few games which I felt were quite good and I was proud of them and I got told by people how the audience was not even bothered with the game but focused on every single possible thing in the world, my clothes, hair, accent and every other irrelevant thing. I was quite upset to hear this...the sad truth is that when women play chess, they overlook how good they are, their games and strength," the International Master wrote on Instagram. It's an unfortunate, although hardly a surprising revelation. Women in chess have been fighting sexism and misogyny for generations now.

The Tata Steel Chess organisers issued a statement in support of Divya on Tuesday, alluding to the sexist comments she's faced. "Because we are an open tournament, both men and women play. Completely obvious for us, but apparently not for some other people... As a leading tournament we remain committed to promoting women in chess and ensuring a safe and equal sporting environment," it read.

At Wijk Aan Zee, Divya finished 4.5/13 and among her three wins, one came against a 2615-rated player, that's roughly 200 Elo above herself. She had a terrific Tata Steel tournament in September last year where she came in as a last-minute replacement and despite being the bottom seed won the rapid event ahead of several top players, including reigning women's world champion Ju Wenjun.

Divya clarified that the 'audience' she was referring to in her Instagram post wasn't the spectators at the Wijk Aan Zee tournament. "The tipping point for me was the YouTube comments," Divya told Hindustan Times. "If you look at it from a distance it



India's Divya Deshmukh (L) watches the match between Daniel Dardha and Liam Vrolijk at the Tata Steel Masters Chess Tournament in Wijk Aan Zee.

can seem like nothing. But it's been years of this. It has been happening repeatedly to me for the past five years. I don't like to pay attention to such things but sometimes it's just too much and crosses all limits of tolerance."

While many of the disparaging YouTube comments appear to have been taken down by the Wijk Aan Zee organisers, they ranged from remarks over her height, physical build, dental braces, and accent to those that were sexually suggestive. Grandmaster and former women's world champion Susan Polgar responded to Divya's post saying she 'consciously chose to look ugly, plain and unattractive' as a young player herself to avoid drawing male attention. It's a thought that crossed Divya's mind several times too. "But then I thought why should I change how I dress because of some disgusting comments or not-so-nice people? I don't think I should give them that power or control over me."

Divya belongs to a generation

that has been bred on online chess and social media. The unsolicited remarks that come with it are almost inescapable. It's not what an 18-year-old girl playing a game she loves should ideally have to deal with. "All of this started when I was 13-14 years old. Now I block everything out during tournaments and choose not to care but it still doesn't change the situation."

Vitriol from nameless, faceless online trolls aside, Divya says she's often had people come up to her and make condescending remarks about her appearance. "They've even gone to my parents and spoken ill of my behaviour and looks. Sadly, most of these people were parents of other players."

Women continue to remain a minority in chess—comprising only roughly 11 per cent of overall classical-rated players and 2 per cent of Grandmasters. The skewed starting pool is often down to social and cultural barriers and there's a higher drop-out

rate of women in chess, presumably due to sexism among other factors. "So many guys have thrown tantrums when they lost to me, just because I'm a girl," Divya said. "I feel boys tend to underestimate girls and can't stand losing or even drawing against them. Of course, not all boys, but a majority of those I've seen."

The Indian teenager believes that it was necessary to speak up now after being at the receiving end of sexist comments from a young age.

"A lot of female players before me have faced it too and brought up this issue. I want to try and make sure that the generation after me doesn't go through a similar experience," she said. The problem in itself is far too deep-rooted in gender stereotypes and the phantom of cyber hate and online trolls far too pervasive to be wished away overnight. It never hurt though to have one more voice being raised in protest.

Akshdeep rewrites 20km NR, Suraj qualifies for Olympics

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NEW DELHI: Punjab's Akshdeep Singh rewrote his own 20km race walking national record en route winning the India Open Race Walking Competition while second-placed Suraj Panwar from Uttarakhand made the cut for Paris Olympics, in Chandigarh on Tuesday. Akshdeep clocked 1:19:37.56, bettering the 1:19:55 he recorded last February at the National Open Race Walking Championships in Ranchi.

Panwar was second with a time of 1:19:43.08 to become only the second Indian to dip under the 1 hour, 20 minutes. He also bettered the national mark. Panwar's effort was enough to clear the Olympics qualification mark of 1:20:10. Back in February, Panwar had



Akshdeep Singh.

missed the qualification by 0.01s in Ranchi, clocking 1:20:11. Tamil Nadu's Servin finished third with a time of 1:20:29.65.

Tuesday's results mean four Indian men have now qualified for Paris Olympics. Vikas Singh and Paramjeet Bisht are the other two race walkers to have made the cut for Games. Each NOC can send a maximum of three athletes per discipline, which means the National Inter

State Championships in June will serve as a selection trial for the Olympics.

"We will go by the results as well as current form. We expect all four qualified race walkers to turn up," said an Athletics Federation of India official.

In the women's section, Punjab's Manju Rani bagged the top spot with a personal best timing of 1:34:16.67. Uttarakhand's Payal claimed silver (1:34:45.10) and Uttar Pradesh's Munita Prajapati clinched bronze (1:35:36.16) completed the top three.

The Paris qualification mark is set at 1:29:20. Among women, only national record holder and Tokyo Olympian Priyanka Goswami has booked her ticket to Paris. Goswami didn't participate in the event as she is currently training in Australia under coach Brent Vallance.

{ TIME FOR A FRESH LOOK } AUSTRALIAN OPEN

AO tournament director Tiley says doubles tennis not meaning enough

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MUMBAI: Highlighting a host of issues that tennis needs to address, Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley raised concerns about the inability of doubles to attract large audiences.

Tiley, who has been the director of the year's first Grand Slam since 2006, was quoted as saying by The Guardian that tennis as a sport might have lost its way.

This year's Australian Open drew a record attendance of more than a million people through the fortnight. With an aim to hold the attention of a younger generation, the tournament held a music concert inside Melbourne Park and kept courtside bars among other things. However, the crowds in the main stadiums remained slim for doubles matches.

For instance, the number of people inside the Rod Laver Arena on Saturday reduced significantly for the men's doubles final which followed the women's singles final. The women's doubles final that happened the following day didn't attract a big crowd either.



Hsieh Su-Wei (R) of Taiwan and Elise Mertens of Belgium pose with their trophy after winning the Australian Open women's doubles final in front of near-empty stands.

"We're not meaning enough," said Tiley. "We've got to get things right, and we can't keep spinning our wheels on things, and make some decisions. I take an approach from a leadership point of view that I'd rather ask for forgiveness than permission because otherwise you're just not going to be able to move at the speed that you can move at. The sport globally needs to look at it the same way, and do some things that really help it accelerate."

Tiley's comments come as the ATP conducts a review of the doubles format, which could leave a major impact on the future of the professional tour. Doubles in the past enjoyed considerable star power, with players like Bob and Mike Bryan, Serena and Venus Williams, John McEnroe, Martina Navratilova and Martina Hingis being major attractions. That, however, hasn't been the case in recent times as top names choose to stick to singles.

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