



Hindustan Times

FIRST VOICE. LAST WORD.



Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Unprecedented boost to dairy sector

India largest producer of milk in the world, record increase of 58% in milk production in last 10 years; Welfare of 8 crore cattle-rearing families ensured

Hamara Sankalp Viksit Bharat

Scan for more information



Oppn ignored tribals, PM says in MP tribal outreach

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

JHABUA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said that the Congress "did not care" about the tribal youth and children despite being in power for many years.

PM Modi said this while addressing a 'Jan Jatiya Mahasabha' in Madhya Pradesh's Jhabua district.

"Congress ruled for so many years, and they got a chance to work, but only 100 Ekalavya schools were opened...The BJP government has opened four times more Ekalavya schools in the past ten years," PM Modi said.

"It is not acceptable to Modi if even a single tribal child is left behind due to a lack of education. Our tribal society has been earning its living from forest wealth for thousands of years," PM Modi added.

Lashing out at Congress, PM Modi said, "During the Congress rule, legal safeguards were put



PM Narendra Modi being felicitated in Jhabua on Sunday. Union minister Arjun Munda and MP CM Mohan Yadav were present alongside him.

on the rights of the tribals. By making changes to the Forest Property Law, our government returned the rights related to forest land to the tribal society."

"For so many years, sickle cell anaemia was killing hundreds of people every year in tribal families. Congress ran the government both at the Centre and in the states for so many years, but they did not care

about the tribal youth and children who died untimely deaths..." PM Modi said.

An official statement in January said that more than 1 crore

continued on → 9

BLOW FOR INDIA BLOC? KEJRIWAL SAYS AAP WILL WIN 7 DELHI SEATS

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

TARN TARAN (PUNJAB): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is only scared of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and wants to defame and crush it, Delhi chief minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal alleged on Sunday, adding that his party would win all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi on its own, in what would appear to be the latest dent for the Opposition's INDIA grouping.

Addressing an event here to mark the recent acquisition of a power plant by the Punjab government from a private company, he also accused the Centre of withholding Rs 8,000 crore funds of AAP-ruled Punjab.

"Today the BJP is scared of only one party and that is the AAP. The AAP is not letting it sleep," Kejriwal said.

He said in a span of 10 years, the AAP has formed governments in Delhi and Punjab, and has MLAs in Gujarat and Goa. "Wherever we fight elections, we secure many votes. Today the BJP is in fear that if they (AAP) continue to grow like this then there will be an AAP government at the Centre," he said.

Accusing the BJP, he said: "The people of Delhi have resolved to give all 7 Lok Sabha seats to AAP in the upcoming elections." → 5



Chief minister Yogi Adityanath, standing at the back in saffron robe, poses with his cabinet ministers and MLAs, for a photograph after offering prayers in the newly opened Ram temple, in Ayodhya on Sunday.

RLD, BSP, Cong join BJP on Ayodhya darshan, SP skips

Manish Chandra Pandey
manish.pandey@htlive.com

AYODHYA: Over 325 lawmakers in Uttar Pradesh, including those from the opposition Congress and the Bahujan Samaj Party, joined the Bharatiya Janata Party and its allies in a first-of-its-kind joint visit to the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Sunday even though the main opposition Samajwadi Party skipped the bus ride to the temple town

to stir up politics just ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha polls in which Ram temple is expected to be a major plank.

In keeping with their assembly strength, the BJP lawmakers, along with those of its existing allies the Apna Dal (Sonelal), Nishad Party and the Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party, outnumbered those from the opposition, which found representation from two Congress lawmakers and a lone BSP

MLA. The nine Rashtriya Lok Dal lawmakers, who so far were part of the opposition alliance but are now said to be just an announcement away from joining the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance, were there too, as much for display of devotion as for expression of new-found bonhomie with BJP.

After the roughly two-hour drive that included a brief stopover at Barabanki for refresh-

continued on → 9

{ RAJYA SABHA POLLS }

4 OBCs on BJP list of 7 candidates in U.P.

Manish Chandra Pandey
manish.pandey@htlive.com

LUCKNOW: Four Other Backward Classes (OBC) leaders were on the list of seven candidates that the Bharatiya Janata Party on Sunday declared for the February 27 Rajya Sabha polls from Uttar Pradesh. The list also has two upper castes and a member

of the Jain community.

The polls have been necessitated as the term of 10 Rajya Sabha MPs, including nine from the BJP, is set to expire on April 2.

The BJP list names former Congress leader RPN Singh, a three-term OBC (Sainthwar) lawmaker from Padrauna, who made a political switch to BJP in

2022. It also includes two women. One of them is Sadhna Singh, a former lawmaker who courted controversy due to a remark directed at BSP chief Mayawati. Former Agra mayor and businessman Navin Jain is also on the list. The other names include Amarpal Maurya, another OBC leader and BJP's UP general secretary, who is

close to deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya.

Chaudhari Tejveer Singh, a three-time Jat MP from Mathura is also among the party picks. The other woman on the BJP list is Sangeeta Balwant, former lawmaker who hails from Ghazipur. She is also an OBC (Bind).

"Like always, the BJP list is

continued on → 9

CLAMPDOWN IN DELHI AHEAD OF FARMERS' STIR

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Prohibitory orders under Section 144, which bars large gatherings, were imposed in the northeast district of the national capital on Sunday in view of farmers' 'Delhi Chalo March' on February 13, an official said.

A large number of farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab are expected to march towards the national capital on Tuesday under their Delhi Chalo March organised by around 200 farmer unions.

"Information has been received that some farmer organisations have given call to their supporters to gather/march to Delhi on February 13 for their demands of law on MSP. No one will be allowed to breach law and order situation," according to an order issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (northeast) Joy Tirkey.

The order said the farmers are likely to sit Delhi borders till their demands are met. "Keeping in view the kind of behaviour and adamant approach farmers showed during protests in the past, there is a possibility of mobilisation/activities of farmers/supporters from their respective districts to Delhi along with tractor/trolleys/arms. Farmers will also come from Haryana, Punjab, UP, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, MP and other possible area," it said.

"There are five different points in the order like — prohibit gathering of general public at all borders between Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and nearby areas in the jurisdictional area of northeast district. Prohibit entering of tractors, trolleys, buses, trucks, commercial vehicles, personal vehicles, or horses etc, carrying protesters in Delhi from Uttar Pradesh." → 5

Australia dash Indian dreams



Australia's U19's Mahli Beardman, left, celebrates the wicket of India's Uday Pratap Saharan during the ICC U19 men's Cricket World Cup Final between India and Australia, in Benoni, South Africa on Sunday. A fresh chapter was added to the script of Australia's domination over India in the ICC World Cup finals when they bagged the Under-19 title with a 79-run victory here on Sunday.

'EFFECT OF CLIMATE CRISIS FEEDING N-E WITH UNUSUALLY HEAVY SHOWERS'

Jayashree Nandi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Extreme rainfall events of over 15 cm a day have quadrupled in frequency over the Meghalaya plateau in the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills and surrounding areas in Assam between 1950 and 2021 as a result of climate change, a new study has found. Meghalaya has been a high rainfall region, with Cherrapunji and Mawsynram among the wettest places in India and globally. But, India Meteorological Department's data indicates that monsoon rain over the northeastern region, including Meghalaya, is seeing a decreasing trend in the past 30 years. → 8

Amid post-poll unease, Imran's PTI gains edge

Reuters
letters@hindustantimes.com

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's national election vote count concluded on Sunday with independents, mostly backed by jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan, winning 101 of the 264 seats, the election commission's website showed.

The final tally was released more than 60 hours after voting concluded in Thursday's national elections, a delay that has raised questions about the process.

The independents came in ahead of the party of another former prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, which won 75 seats, making it the largest single



Supporters of Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf protest on the Peshawar-Islamabad motorway on Sunday.

party in parliament as Khan's independents ran as individuals. Sharif has said his party is talking to other groups to form a coalition government as it had failed to win a clear major-

ity on its own. Khan's PTI party had threatened to hold nationwide peaceful protests on Sunday if the vote tally was not released

continued on → 9



यूनियन बैंक ऑफ इंडिया Union Bank of India
भारत सरकार का उपक्रम A Government of India Undertaking

Unlock the convenience of tax payments

Support your growth story and help to build the nation with our Tax Collection Service

Service available at all branches

Tax payment through Internet Banking

Scan for Internet Banking

#ChooseHappiness

T&C Apply

SPOTLIGHT | AYODHYA DARSHAN



Uttar Pradesh lawmakers chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' before leaving for Ayodhya, outside Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow; Bharatiya Janata Party MLA Sidharth Nath Singh; U.P. minister Jitin Prasad with other MLAs and MLCs in a bus and chief minister Yogi Adityanath with Vidhan Sabha Speaker Satish Mahana, deputy CMs KP Maurya, Brajesh Pathak and others at Ram temple in Ayodhya on Sunday.

DEEPAK GUPTA/HT AND AGENCY

All for Ram: U.P. lawmakers' faith triumphs

Manish Chandra Pandey

manish.pandey@htlive.com

AYODHYA: Faith and fervour intermingled with politics as Uttar Pradesh lawmakers, cutting across party lines barring the Samajwadi Party, sat in 10 luxury buses that played soft "Ram Dhun" to arrive in Ayodhya for a darshan of Ram Lalla on Sunday.

This was the first such joint venture by lawmakers to the temple town, brimming with pilgrims since the January 22 inauguration. More politicians, including prominent opposition names, are expected here in the run-up to the 2024 Lok Sabha polls, in which the "Ram temple" is likely to be among the BJP's major campaign themes. Delhi and Punjab chief ministers Arvind Kejriwal and Bhagwant Mann will visit Ram temple on Monday.

While all other opposition lawmakers — including those from the Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party and even Rashtriya Lok Dal (though final, a formal announcement of it joining the NDA is still awaited) — hopped on to the buses packed by MLAs of the BJP and its allies, the Samajwadi Party remained an exception, having

announced that its legislators would visit the temple separately, a move that provided the BJP ready political fodder.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath, who joined his ministers and all lawmakers as he landed directly from Pune to be part of the Ayodhya trip, also shared a video in which lawmakers, including assembly speaker Satish Mahana, were seen singing and swaying to the tunes of the devotional song, "Raghupati Raghav Raja Ram". Politics resumed soon after the "divine temple experience" as BJP lawmakers targeted the Samajwadi Party leadership over its decision to stay away from the joint temple visit.

"Mainey Bhagwan Ram se prarthana ki sapa samaptwadi party ho jaaye kyunki jo Ram ka nahin wo kisi kaam ka nahin (I prayed to Lord Ram to finish SP politically as one who can't be of Ram is good for nothing)," said deputy chief minister Keshav Prasad Maurya before he left for Lucknow after the darshan. Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak felt it was a classic case of minority appeasement.

Another minister JPS Rathore recalled the Ayodhya firing in the 1990s when the then SP government under Mulayam



CM Yogi Adityanath with SBSP leader OP Rajbhar, Congress Legislative Party leader Aradhana Mishra, MLA Raja Bhaiya, and other MLAs and MLCs at Ram Temple, in Ayodhya on Sunday. DEEPAK GUPTA/HT PHOTO

Singh Yadav was in power, a decision that saw the Vishwa Hindu Parishad dubbing the then chief minister as "Mulla

Mulayam". Though the SP's 2012 win in Ayodhya in the assembly polls made Mulayam remark, "Ayodhya has forgiven

me", the BJP has consistently invoked the firing on "karsevaks" as proof of "SP's minority appeasement."

"What else can you expect from those whose hands are soiled in blood? They will take time to atone for their sins," Rathore said.

An emotional U.P. assembly speaker Satish Mahana also referred to the firing. "For me it is an emotional moment as I was in Ayodhya when a 'dhan-cha (structure)' stood in place of the temple. I was also there during the 1990 firing. I was here when construction started. Now, it's a divine experience to be able to watch Ram Lalla in all glory," Mahana said.

Almost all other lawmakers, who emerged after their temple visit, were routinely asked by waiting electronic media contingents to comment on SP's decision to stay away. Almost all of them happily engaged in hitting out at the main opposition party, which has traditionally relied on its "MY or Muslim-Yadav" chemistry for poll gains. In the 2022 U.P. assembly polls, the BJP coined its own "MY" formula — one that stood for Modi-Yogi combine to prevail over the opposition.

Before politics started flowing outside, chief minister Yogi Adityanath and assembly speaker Satish Mahana who had invited the lawmakers for

the trip, prayed along with lawmakers. The leaders clapped as devotional hymns were played as Adityanath was also seen guiding pilgrims who were allowed darshan despite the VIP visit.

The decision to allow pilgrims inside Ram temple during the VIP visit was ostensibly made to streamline pilgrim flow as was the decision by the lawmakers to forego the tradition of visiting the Hanuman-garhi shrine ahead of Ram temple visit as the temple was choc-a-bloc with devotees.

Just before the ministers arrived, Champat Rai, the general secretary of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, was spotted telling a group of priests from Delhi that darshan had been allowed for 14 hours to streamline pilgrim flow.

The SP's decision to abstain from the temple visit even though veteran lawmaker Shival Yadav was the first of opposition legislators to demand that the speaker should arrange a joint Ayodhya visit of the legislators. He then backed out of the February 11 temple visit, stating that his request was for January 22 inauguration. "Now, we would visit sep-

arately," Yadav said.

Congress lawmaker Aradhana Mishra 'Mona' was part of the temple delegation as was BSP's lone MLA Uma Shankar Singh.

The RLD's nine lawmakers were all there as well, a decision that not only showcased their religious zeal but also indicated their growing proximity to the BJP.

The Congress, which had on the eve of the temple visit expelled its leader Pramod Krishnam, the head of the Kalki Dham in Sambhal, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and chief minister Yogi Adityanath would visit on February 19, was quick to indicate that Ram was for all.

"We came here as we are all for Ram and then this wasn't a BJP invite but one from the assembly speaker, who represents all," said Aradhana Mishra who also sought to defend the SP. "I think one can visit temple whenever they find it right," she added.

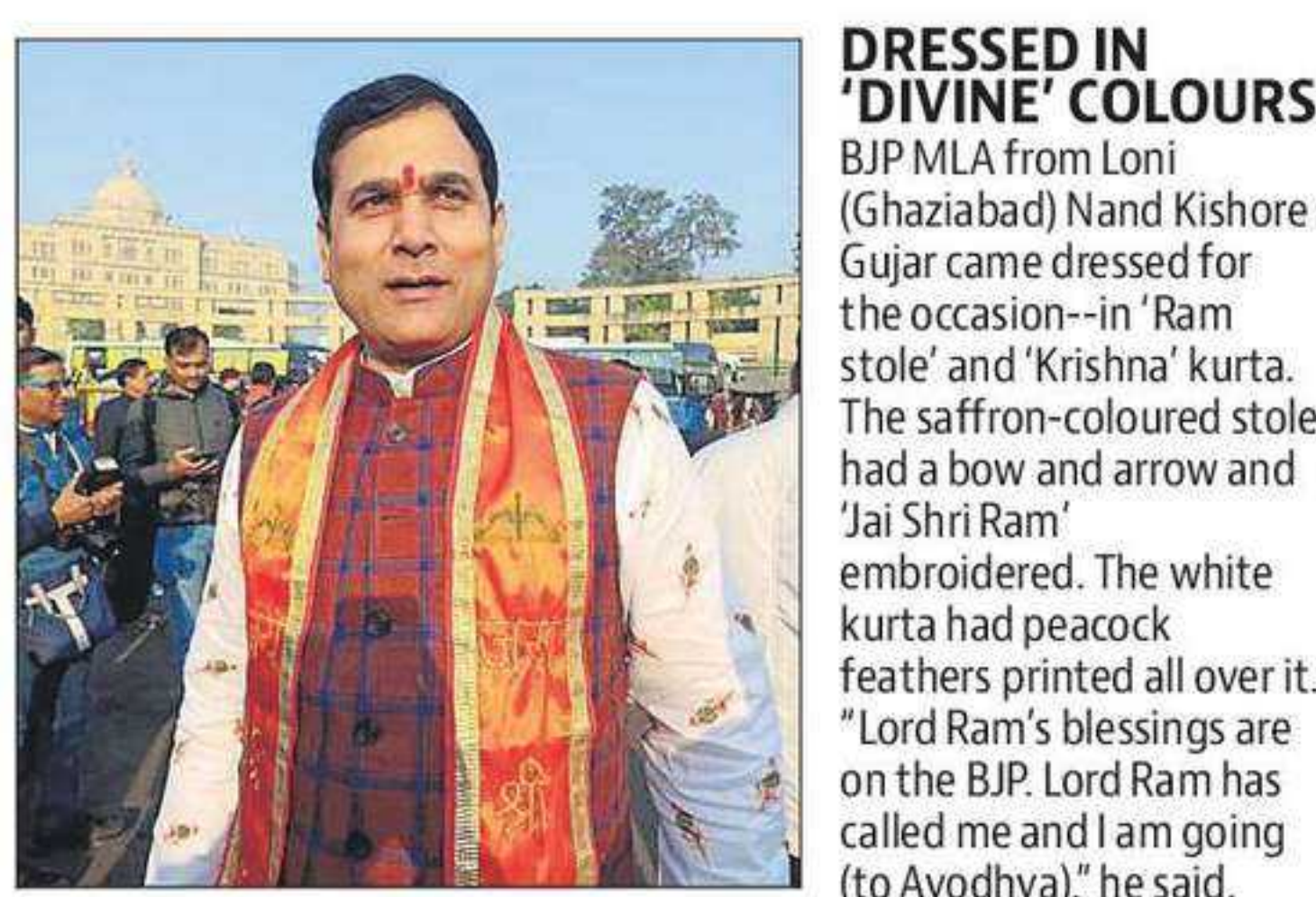
The BJP's OBC allies, including leaders of Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party, Nishad Party and Apna Dal (S), were in full attendance as was Jansatta Dal (Loktantrik) chief Raghuraj Pratap Singh "Raja Bhaiya".

Before the journey



ALL SET BEFORE MLAs LEFT FOR AYODHYA

All arrangements were in place outside the Vidhan Bhawan before the MLAs set off for Ayodhya to offer prayers to Ram Lalla on Sunday. Tea/coffee dispensers and snack packs were being carried along for the trip.



DRESSED IN 'DIVINE' COLOURS
BJP MLA from Loni (Ghaziabad) Nand Kishore Gujar came dressed for the occasion — in 'Ram stole' and 'Krishna' kurta. The saffron-coloured stole had a bow and arrow and 'Jai Shri Ram' embroidered. The white kurta had peacock feathers printed all over it. "Lord Ram's blessings are on the BJP. Lord Ram has called me and I am going (to Ayodhya)," he said.

MLC'S ATTIRE ATTRACTS ALL

BJP MLC Arun Pathak, a resident of Kanpur, came clad in a yellow Kurta with "Jai Shri Ram" with "bow and arrow" printed all over. His Kurta became a talking point among his colleagues who had gathered outside the Vidhan Bhawan. He said he wore the Kurta for the first time and after returning from the temple will never wear it again and keep it as a souvenir.



DEVOTIONAL TRIP WITH FAMILY FOR MLA

BJP MLA Praveen Patel from Phulpur (Prayagraj) came with the wife and two children. His wife Goldie Patel said: "Feeling joyous on going for the very first darshan at the temple with the entire family."

{ BUS RIDE TO AYODHYA }

Legislators feel honoured, show camaraderie

HT Correspondent

letters@htlive.com

LUCKNOW: Some Uttar Pradesh lawmakers had dressed for the occasion, others were in their usual apparel on Sunday for the first official group trip of the state legislators to the Ram temple in Ayodhya ever since the Pran Pratishtha of Ram Lalla was performed there on January 22.

Several BJP lawmakers were clad in saffron kurtas with "Ram-Nami" stoles. Most legislators decided to come alone while some came along with their spouses and a couple of them also brought their children as well. The scheduled time for the departure of 10 state roadways luxury buses carrying the lawmakers was 8.15 am.

Ritesh Gupta, the BJP MLA from Moradabad city seat, was the first to turn up at 7.40 am. "I am going along with my wife. We are going there together and it will be the first visit to the temple town for both of us," he said on arrival. "All legislators were invited with their spouses. I feel blessed that I am going today,"

he added. When asked about the Samajwadi Party, he said: "They are unfortunate".

The second one and the first woman legislator to arrive was BJP MLA from Etawah Sadar Sarita Bhaduria. Sitting and sipping tea at the assemblage area for legislators, she said: "I am lucky and appreciate the invite by CM Yogi Adityanath and speaker Satish Mahana. It was very nice of them to have organised this trip."

On Samajwadi Party, she said: "Samajwadi Party declined (the invite) because of politics. All people believe in Lord Ram but the SP fears that going to the Ram Temple would disturb their vote politics." After Gupta and Bhaduria, other lawmakers began coming in droves and camaraderie was palpable and by that time the morning had turned quite sunny.

On arrival, all of them said virtually the same thing as Gupta and Bhaduria about themselves and the Samajwadi Party. However, there was suspense till 8 am about the members from other parties as only the BJP lawmakers could be seen.

The first non-BJP lawmaker



Vidhan Sabha speaker Satish Mahana along with all BJP MLAs leaving for Ayodhya from Vidhan Bhawan in Lucknow on Sunday. DEEPAK GUPTA/HT PHOTO

who turned up at the venue—the front of the Vidhan Bhawan—was Rashtriya Lok Dal's (RLD) Sadabad (Hathras) MLA Guddu Chaudhary. "I don't mix faith and politics. I am going for my faith in Lord Ram. No one should read politics in it. Bharat Ratna to Chaudhary Charan Singh and Lord Ram does not indicate any politics. If the SP members are not going, it's their choice and decision," he said.

Chaudhary came with wife and their son. While Chaudhary was guarded in his statements, RLD Legislature Party leader Rajpal Baliyan said: "It's about Lord Ram. In going there, I am feeling blessed." When asked about RLD going to the BJP-led NDA, he said: "Consider it final...Decision will be taken by (RLD chief) Jayant Chaudhary". Soon, another RLD MLA Pransann Chaudhary joined the two.

There were no saffron or party flags, neither any images nor placards. As the groups started growing bigger, several groups of BJP lawmakers began chanting 'Jai Shri Ram'. RLD members too joined the groups though they did not join the chanting.

It was known beforehand that the RLD and Congress members would go and the SP won't go but there was no word about the

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) which has a member each in the assembly and the council. And then arrived BSP MLA Uma Shankar Singh. By 8.45 am, the 10 UPSRTC buses—numbered '1' to '10'—began lining up. Each had a seating capacity of 44.

Soon Mohsin Baza came and then came the Congress Legislative Party leader Aradhana Mishra 'Mona', Kunda (Pratapgarh) MLA and Jansatta Party Loktantrik chief Raghuraj Pratap Singh. "Just look at the happiness on each and every face here. It is a big honour not only for me, but for all the legislators (who are going to Ayodhya)," he said.

Vidhan Sabha speaker Satish Mahana came wearing a saffron headgear and mingled with the members of both the houses of the legislatures and their families.

"I am of all the members and all the members are mine," he said. All the buses were blue. They left between 9 am and 9.15 am. All through the way, at major intersections, on the 135 km road between Lucknow and Ayodhya, the buses were showered with petals.

Faith a personal matter, we will go when we feel like it: SP members

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: Samajwadi Party (SP) legislators on Sunday hit back at Bharatiya Janata Party lawmakers who criticised them for not joining the Ayodhya Ram temple trip hosted by chief minister Yogi Adityanath and speaker Satish Mahana on Sunday.

"The BJP, as always, continues to politicise religion and gods," the SP legislators said.

Samajwadi Party MLC Lal Bahari Yadav, former leader of opposition in the U.P. Legislative Council, said: "What business do they have to criticise others over matters of faith? It is each one's personal matter. We have been revering all the Hindu gods always, and do it on our accord. It was a sponsored trip. We will go whenever we feel like going, and there will not be any need for us to publicise it."

It was a sponsored trip. We will go whenever we feel like going, and there will not be any need for us to publicise it

LAL BAHARI YADAV,
Samajwadi Party MLC

SP MLA from Jalalpur (Ambedkar Nagar) Rakesh Pandey said: "I have been going to Ram Janmabhoomi for ages. I live in this Ayodhya area only. I have even visited the temple once since the Pran Pratishtha, and will go whenever I feel like."

SP MLA Amitabh Bajpai from Arya Nagar in Kanpur said: "Why should we go to any

religious place on the invite of the BJP or the BJP government? Faith is a personal matter. If I have to go, I will decide when to go as per the wishes of my parents and family. The BJP has always been using religion for politics."

The Samajwadi Party had turned down the invitation extended by speaker Satish Mahana right at the outset.

On Saturday, a Samajwadi Party spokesperson had said: "No Samajwadi Party member will go with the group. We will go as per our convenience."

Samajwadi Party leader Shival Yadav was among the leaders who had suggested that the speaker should take the MLAs for "darshan" at the consecration ceremony of Ram Lalla on January 22. He later said the SP will not be part of the February 11 group because his demand for taking the MLAs to the January 22 ceremony was not met.

"We will now request the leader of the opposition (Akhilesh Yadav) to arrange for a separate tour for 'darshan' for Samajwadi Party MLAs," Shival Yadav said on Thursday (February 8).

The speaker had invited all the legislators for the trip. The BJP and its allies, Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party (SBSP), Apna Dal (S), Nishad party members, and MLAs and MLCs from other parties such as the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD), Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) and Jansatta Dal Loktantrik went, the SP was the only party whose lawmakers did not go. The SP has 108 members in the assembly and nine in the council.

The BJP members then criticised the SP members' decision, calling them "unfortunate" and saying "...the lord did not call them...they did not go because of electoral politics."

{ ON BUS TO AYODHYA }

Will visit even when mosque comes up: Lone BSP lawmaker

LUCKNOW: All eyes turned to Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MLA Uma Shankar Singh as he joined lawmakers gathered outside the Vidhan Bhawan here to embark on their trip to the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Sunday morning. Singh was the only representative from the BSP in the group.

Media persons, especially from news channels, jostled to hear what the lone BSP MLA had to say.

"This trip to Ayodhya must not be politicised as we all (lawmakers) are going there under the leadership of assembly speaker. Tomorrow, when a mosque comes up (in Dhannipur, Ayodhya) I will go there even then as my party (the BSP) is a secular party," Singh, who represents Rasara in Ballia, said before boarding the bus for Ayodhya.

On the Supreme Court's

directives, the Uttar Pradesh government has allotted land for a mosque at Dhannipur, which is around 22 km away from where the Babri Masjid was located.

Unlike RLD legislators who took a job at the Samajwadi Party members for not joining the lawmakers' delegation, the BSP MLA refrained from making comments on the issue.

"Several MLAs of the Samajwadi Party had given in writing to the assembly speaker requesting him to take them along (to Ayodhya)," Singh said, and requested media persons not to politicise the trip.

"Arre bhai hum thak gaye hai (I am tired now)," said Singh as newsmen lined up to take his bite.

Singh is related to former prime minister Chandra Shekhar, who represented Ballia in the Lok Sabha. HT

Process to start construction of NLU buildings begins

The university is currently functioning from the campus of an engineering college in Phaphamau

K Sandeep Kumar

ksandeep.kumar@livehindustan.com

PRAYAGRAJ : Within days of the Uttar Pradesh government earmarking Rs 100 crore for Dr Rajendra Prasad National Law University (NLU), Prayagraj, the technical cell of the state planning department as executing agency of the state law department has floated the tender for the construction of residential and non-residential buildings of the university to be undertaken at a cost of Rs 313 crore at Jhalwa.

The university is currently functioning from the campus of an engineering college in Phaphamau. The university's own campus is to be constructed on a 28.599-acre land and it would finally be spread across 33.58-acre.

The last date to upload bid is February 27 with the opening of the technical bids also scheduled

for same day. The entire work is to be completed in 18 months, say officials aware of the matter.

The non-residential buildings that are to be constructed include a academic and administration block of G+4 storeys, a modern girls' hostel of G+11 storeys with a total capacity of accommodating 626 students, including 135 double-seated rooms and another 356 single-seated rooms.

Likewise, boys' hostel of G+11 storeys with a total capacity of accommodating 626 students, including 135 double-seated rooms and another 356 single-seated rooms, will also be constructed. These would be a dining block (G), a guest house (G+10 storeys) having 10 VIP suites and 80 rooms as well as a student facility centre, mini market and indoor sports complex (G+2 storey) and an electric sub-station (G).

The residential buildings for the staff and teachers that are to come up on the campus includes type-2 residence (G+11 storey) having 48 houses, type-3 residence (G+11 storeys with 48 houses, type-4 residence (G+9 storeys) with 40 houses, type-5 residence (G+4 storeys) with 10 houses as well as a vice-chancellor's residence (G).

RECRUITMENT PROCESS OF FILLING SIX POSTS OF ASST PROFS HAS BEEN STARTED.

The agency that would be awarded the task would also undertake extensive external development works on the campus, including constructing an underground water tank of 600 KL, constructing road, footpath, parking, lay external water supply line and external sewer work with manhole, construct RCC drain and set up a rain water harvesting (RWH) system besides constructing a boundary wall and two main gates with guard rooms and toilets.

Horticulture and landscaping work with a green lawn, trees, fountain and a statue of justice besides an open air theatre, two deep tubewell and boring with pump room and a water treatment plant of 150 KLD capacity have also been decided on the campus.

The campus would have a badminton court, a sewerage treatment plant of 380 KLD, an outdoor sports facilities (cricket, basketball, volleyball and football as well as a solar power gen-

eration system too.

In the first phase, for the students the varsity is offering BA-LLB five-year course with 60 seats in the academic session 2024-25, admissions to which are already well underway through combined law admission test (CLAT).

For it, 71 posts had been created earlier. They include 11 posts each of professors and associate professors, 34 posts of assistant professors and 15 other posts.

The recruitment process of filling six posts of assistant professors has also been started.

Dedicated univ to foster NextGen of legal professionals

Dr Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, has been set up as a dedicated institution to foster the next generation of legal professionals poised to shape the future of the legal landscape and contribute significantly to societal improvement. The institution aspires to establish a distinguished tradition of academic excellence, unwavering commitment to the highest ethical standards, and an ardent dedication to the pursuit of justice, informed state higher education department officials.

BJP WORKERS PAY TRIBUTE TO PT DEENDAYAL UPADHYAY

HT Correspondent

letters@htlive.com

VARANASI: Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) workers in the Kashi region have paid tribute to Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay on his death anniversary on Sunday. Gathered at 30,286 booths across 16 districts, the BJP workers recalled Pt Upadhyaya and his service to the nation.

After paying tribute, BJP Kashi region president Dilip Patel said that Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya was a strong nationalist, a pioneer of Antyodaya, and Integral Humanism.

He emphasised that Pt Upadhyaya advocated Integral Humanism to bring happiness to those at the lowest rung of society and for the progress and development of all. The core idea of Integral Humanism is to bring change to the lives of those at the bottom of society. Pt Upadhyaya dedicated his entire life to the service of the nation.

Patel highlighted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi is working to fulfill the dreams of Pt. Upadhyaya to build a strong and powerful India on the foundation of Indian culture. Sanjay Sonkar, regional media in-charge Navratan Rathi, Santosh Solapurkar, Pawan Chaudhary, Dinesh Moriya, etc., have also participated in the programme.

GATHERED AT 30,286 BOOTHS ACROSS 16 DISTRICTS, THE BJP WORKERS RECALLED HIS SERVICE TO THE NATION

{ **MAGH MELA** }

ATVs on patrol duty for safer Sangam banks

HT Correspondent

allahabad.htdesk@hindustantimes.com

PRAYAGRAJ : Sand-friendly all-terrain vehicles (ATVs) are being tested for deployment as police patrol vehicles during the Mahakumbh next year.

Also called quad bikes and capable of moving swiftly even in rocky terrains, two such vehicles are currently guarding the main ghats of the ongoing Magh

Mela area and the tent city that are, together, spread over 750 hectares.

On Mauni Amavasya, deputy commissioner of police (DCP)-city Deepak Bhukar himself patrolled Sangam on an ATV.

DCP (Trans-Ganga) Abhishek Bharti, meanwhile, went around 5 kms in the wetland area on an ATV.

Bhukar said the quad bikes could move on sands without



A policeman patrolling the mela area on an ATV. HT

slipping. While the district police have deployed two such bikes for Sangam patrolling, it

THE QUAD BIKES CAN MOVE ON SAND WITHOUT SKIDDING

may buy more given their feasibility before the grand event early next year.

Bharti said he himself used an ATV to reach immediately at the scene of an incident in the Mela area.

ज्यादा दूध, बेहतर ब्यांत*। कपिला पशु आहार के साथ।

प्यार बढ़ेगा, दूध बढ़ेगा!

कपिला पशु आहार

कामधेनु कैटिल फीड्स प्रा. लि. Mob.: 770600875, 770601402
Toll-Free: 1800 120 4034 Website: www.kapilacattlefeed.com
E-mail: info@kapilacattlefeed.com

*As per the report issued by Infocet basis the analytical report of NDBB CALF, conducted on cattle feed sample of Kapila Pashu Aahar, developed by M/s Kamdhenu Cattle Feeds Pvt. Ltd.

NISSAN

NISSAN MAGNITE
CELEBRATING 100,000 LOVE STORIES

NISSAN MAGNITE **NISSAN MAGNITE EZ-SHIFT AMT** **NISSAN MAGNITE CVT**

Exciting Pre-Paid Maintenance Package for peace of mind 5 Extended Warranty* Easy Finance @6.99%**

#BigBoldBeautifulCelebration

MAGNITE SPECIAL FEATURES

- First-in-segment Around View Monitor
- First-in-segment 17.78 cm TFT Advanced Drive Assist Display
- Wireless Connectivity to Android Auto & Apple CarPlay

MT RANGE STARTS @ **₹5 99 900***
AMT RANGE STARTS @ **₹6 59 900***
CVT RANGE STARTS @ **₹10 20 000***

CELEBRATORY BENEFITS UP TO **₹87 000****
OFFER APPLICABLE ON LIMITED 2023 MAGNITE STOCK

TO KNOW MORE CALL: 8879509258

SCAN TO KNOW MORE

TEST DRIVE TO BOOK NOW: 7065233336 | Book Nissan Magnite | Also Available in CSD | www.nissan.in | /NissanIndia | /Nissan_India | /Nissan_India | @NissanIndia

AUTHORIZED NISSAN DEALERS: UTTAR PRADESH: LUCKNOW: RING ROAD: DREAM NISSAN- 9731158261, VIP ROAD: DREAM NISSAN- 9731158386, BAREILLY: NATH NISSAN- 9731159362, BIJNOR: SARDAR NISSAN- 9619406046, ETAWAH: RING NISSAN- 9731163932, GORAKHPUR: PEGASUS NISSAN- 9731162182, KANPUR: RING NISSAN- 9731164113, MEERUT: ADIV NISSAN- 7088088033, MORADABAD: NATH NISSAN- 9731159762, NOIDA: BRITTE NISSAN- 8448998307, PRAYAGRAJ: DEE NISSAN- 9731158201, SHAHJAHANPUR: NMT NISSAN- 9619406596, VARANASI: GANPATI NISSAN- 9731158668.

*Terms & conditions apply. All prices ex-showroom Delhi. Features may vary from variant to variant. Colours are indicative only and may vary due to printing constraints. Accessories shown may not be part of standard fitment. **The scheme is applicable on vehicles invoiced on or before 29th February 2024 on limited Model Year 2023 Magnite. Please visit your nearest Nissan dealer for more information. *Includes 2 years Standard + 3 years Extended Warranty(to be purchased separately). **Finance is at the sole discretion of finance partners and NRFSI.

When devotion, power mingle, shackles of slavery shatter: Yogi Seers discuss Kashi, Mathura, other issues at VHP's meet

Uttar Pradesh CM attends Gita Bhakti Amrit Mahotsav in Pune

HT Correspondent
Letters@hindustantimes.com

LUCKNOW: Asserting that the shackles of slavery shatter when devotion and power mingle, chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the confluence of "bhakti and shakti" led to the construction of the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya.

"We got the opportunity to see that unprecedented moment," he said, addressing a gathering on the eighth day of the Shri Gita Bhakti Amrit Mahotsav organised in Alandi, Pune.

"It was here that Guru Samarth Ramdas provided his guidance to the brave Chhatrapati Shivaji. When devotion and power mingle, the shackles of slavery shatter. This is what we have witnessed in Ayodhya with the construction of a grand and divine Ram Temple after 500 years of bondage. With the company of saints and the efforts of Prime Minister Modi, we all have been witness to the historical date of January 22. The new and grand Ayodhya is inviting you all," he said.

He described Maharashtra as a land of both "bhakti and shakti", a U.P. government spokesperson said.

During the ceremony, Yogi Adityanath presented an "angvastram" and an idol of Lord Ganesh to Swami Govind Dev Giri, along with releasing a souvenir commemorating the



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath being welcomed at Gita Bhakti Amrit Mahotsav in Pune on Sunday. PTI

saint's life. He was also honoured by Shankaracharya Vijayendra Saraswati with the traditional "angvastram" and Prasad. Reflecting on the occasion of Swami Govind Dev Giri's 75th birth anniversary, Yogi Adityanath expressed his admiration for the saint's lifelong dedication to Vedic Sanatan Dharma and his invaluable contributions to Hindu society, the spokesperson said.

Yogi Adityanath shared his long-standing desire to visit Alandi, a place he had read about in his childhood while studying the Dnyaneshwari.

"At the age of just 15, Pujya Dnyaneshwar Ji Maharaj did the work of showing a new path to the devotees by preaching Dnyaneshwari. In just 21 years, the revered Dnyaneshwar Ji Maharaj had done the work of spreading the spirituality of India across the globe by taking Sanjeev Samadhi," Yogi Adityanath said.

He praised the spiritual legacy of Maharashtra, exemplified by luminaries like Samarthguru Ramdas and Chhatrapati Shivaji, whose valour and devotion

continue to inspire.

Highlighting the significance of Maharashtra's history of bravery, Yogi Adityanath mentioned that defence corridor of Uttar Pradesh, named in honour of Veer Chhatrapati Shivaji, underscoring the enduring spirit of resistance against oppression. He added that when he became the chief minister of U.P., the name of the Mughal Museum being built in Agra was changed to Chhatrapati Shivaji Museum. He also talked about how Chhatrapati Shivaji made Aurangzeb suffer with his bravery.

"We are related to Shivaji, not to the Mughals," he said.

Expressing gratitude for the event, Yogi Adityanath extended an invitation to all attendees to visit Ayodhya, the site of the grand Ram temple, symbolising the triumph of devotion over adversity.

The event was attended by notable figures including Swami Ramdev, Mahamandaleswar Swami Avadheshanda of Juna Akhara, Swami Chidanand Saraswati, Swami Rajendradas, and other guests,

At the age of just 15, Pujya Dnyaneshwar Ji Maharaj did the work of showing a new path to the devotees by preaching Dnyaneshwari

YOGI ADITYANATH, UP CM

alongside a multitude of devotees and citizens.

CM offers prayers at Dnyaneshwar Maharaj Sanjeevan Samadhi temple

Yogi Adityanath also visited the Sanjeevan Samadhi temple of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj in Pune on Sunday morning and offered prayers.

Swami Govind Dev Giri welcomed the chief minister at the temple. Ministers in the Maharashtra government Chandrakant Patil and Dilip Walse Patil as well as UP Jal Shakti Minister Swatantradev Singh were present on the occasion. Adityanath offered flowers at the Sanjeevan Samadhi of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj and worshipped him as per the rituals.

He also met the saints present there. On behalf of the temple, a picture of Dnyaneshwar Maharaj was presented to the chief minister. The saints felicitated Yogi by presenting the idols of Shri Ram, Janaki and Lakshman.

{ MAGH MELA }

Seers discuss Kashi, Mathura, other issues at VHP's meet

HT Correspondent
allahabad.htdesk@hindustantimes.com

PRAYAGRAJ: Seers discussed various issues, including social harmony, joint family system, propagation of Hindu religion, preservation of culture and love jihad, during a daylong Sant Sammelan organised at the Magh Mela camp of Vishva Hindu Parishad (VHP) here on Sunday.

As per the seers present at the conference, fulfillment of the resolution of building a Ram temple in Ayodhya was a result of the resolutions passed and meditations held on the sands of Sangam in the past. They said after the consecration of Ram Lalla, Muslim community should give up its claim on Kashi and Mathura.

On the call given by seer Swami Jitendranand Saraswati, general secretary, Akhil Bhartiya Sant Samiti, other seers unani-



Seers at the Sant Sammelan organised at the Magh Mela camp of VHP on Sunday. HT

mously held that the Muslim community should withdraw its claim from Kashi and Mathura before Mahakumbh-2025.

"Otherwise, while right now there is talk of just three temples, in future we will claim all temples that were demolished in the past," Swami Jitendranand Saraswati said.

Swami Vasudevanand Saraswati, member of Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra who

presided over the conference, said that soon the seers will discuss the issues of Kashi and Mathura in details. "Today we have all resolved that like Ayodhya, we will also liberate Mathura and Kashi," he said.

VHP's central patron Dinesh said upcoming programmes and plans will be made by reflecting on the topics that have come through the seers. The conference was conducted by Rastriya Sant Sampark Pramukh Ashok Tiwari.

Those who addressed the event included seers Abhay Chaitanya Brahmachari, Ajnesanand, Shyamsundar Das, Santosh Das Satua Baba, Ramkamal Das Vedanti, Ramratan Das Maharaj Falahari Baba, Kausalya Maa of Kinnar Akhada, Gopal Das Tyagi, Hariharanand, VHP's regional organisation secretary Nitin and its state president Kavinder Pratap Singh among others.

HT

Man drowns after falling from pontoon bridge

PRAYAGRAJ: A 30-year-old man riding a motorcycle fell into the Yamuna and drowned while attempting to cross a pontoon bridge in the Saraiakil area of Kaushambi on Sunday morning. The locals took out the body and informed the police. The deceased Mahendra Kumar, a resident of Purkhas village of Kaushambi, was a vendor and used to sell chilli in trans-Yamuna areas of Prayagraj after buying it from farmers. SHO of Sarai Akil police station, inspector Vinit Kumar Singh said the family of the deceased was informed and his body has been sent for autopsy.

SSB SI's body found hanging at his official residence

GORAKHPUR: The body of a 51-year-old sub-inspector (SI) of Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) Ashok Singh was found hanging in his official room at SSB headquarters in Gorakhpur on Sunday morning, police said. No exact reason for this extreme step has been established, however, the body was sent for postmortem, they added. The officials confirmed that Ashok Singh was a resident of district Rajauri in Jammu Kashmir and was posted here for the past two years. On Sunday morning his family members tried to contact Ashok on his phone but in case of no response, the family members contacted other officials who rushed to his room, where his body was found hanging with a rope from his ceiling fan, police said. The police station in charge of Chiluatal said that police had initiated an inquiry into the case. HT

Count of 'Lakhpati Didis' increases six-fold in Kashi

HT Correspondent
letters@htlive.com

VARANASI: The number of 'Lakhpati Didis' in Varanasi district has increased almost six-fold compared to last year. Associated with self-help groups (SHGs), these women from rural areas in the district have achieved success through their hard work and dedication.

In a press statement, the district administration announced that a total of 11,331 self-help groups (SHGs) were formed in the district. Last year, 5,696 women became 'Lakhpati Didis'. However, this year, the number has increased to 30,148.

The statement highlighted that several women from these self-help groups (SHGs) serve as Bank Sakhi, BC Sakhi, and Vidyat Sakhi. Additionally, many of them have established power looms, while others engage in making teddy bears or operate flour mills to earn a livelihood. As per the district officials, Shashi Verma, Kiran Yadav, Alam Ara, Riya Sharma, Sanju Devi, Madhubala, Munni, Sheela, Mamta, and Jaya Patel have achieved the status of 'Lakhpati Didi' in the district. To further increase the number of

women achieving this status, the department is providing them with community investment funds, revolving funds, bank credit linkages, and training opportunities.

In the current financial year, loans have been distributed to 3,421 SHGs from banks. Additionally, the district administration has implemented various innovative initiatives to increase the income of women in these groups by engaging them in various livelihood activities. These initiatives include ventures such as Kashi Prerna Cafe, Kashi Prerna Catering, pearl farming, Namu Drone Sakhi, and production of washroom cleaners. The administration is also allotting shops to SHGs at major temples in the area.

DDU STUDENTS BOOKED FOR CREATING RUCKUS AT WEDDING VENUE

GORAKHPUR: A police case has been registered against some students of the Deen Dayal Upadhyay (DDU) Gorakhpur University after they allegedly created ruckus at a venue booked by the varsity's former head of the history department Mukund Sharan Tripathi for a programme. The occasion was the wedding ceremony of Tripathi's daughter that was held at the convention centre of the university on February 7.

The cantonment police station in-charge confirmed that a case had been registered against the students under section 323 (voluntary causing hurt), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke the breach of peace), 506 (criminal intimidation).

Tripathi stated in his complaint that stones were pelted at the wedding party. The situation was brought under control by the security personnel of the university. The police said they have collected CCTV footage for identification of the troublemakers and a police raid was expected at university hostels to arrest them. HT

Man beaten to death over land dispute in Basti, three held

GORAKHPUR: In a shocking incident, 67-year-old Ram Millan Choudhary was beaten to death while his son Vishal Choudhary and his sister Mala Devi sustained severe injuries when half a dozen armed miscreants barged into their house and attacked them.

The incident took place in village Gausi Pur Derwa under Kalwari police station of the district in Basti on Sunday.

Deputy Inspector general (DIG) RK Bharadwaj along with Superintendent of Police (SP) Gopal Krishna visited the village and assured the affected family that the assailants would be arrested soon.

Police confirmed that heavy police force had been deployed in the village as serious resentment was brewing against assailants.

Police have registered a case after a written complaint was filed by Mala Devi against five accused including Harishankar alias Ravan and arrested three accused, said police station in-charge Bhanu Singh. He said victim's son Vishal

TENSION BETWEEN BOTH THE FAMILIES HAD INCREASED SINCE SDM INSTRUCTED FOR DEMARCATION OF LAND

Choudhary, 20, and his aunt Mala devi, 50, who sustained severe injuries, were undergoing treatment at BRD Medical College Gorakhpur where their condition is reported to be critical.

Officials said the incident was the result of the land dispute between Ram Millan Choudhary and Harishankar alias Ravan.

Tension between both the families had increased since the SDM instructed revenue officials for demarcation of land and the next date for hearing was fixed on February 13. Twenty-one people from both sides were directed to appear before the court, the locals said. ABDUR RAHMAN

Plying of 4-wheelers on unsafe old ROB stopped

PRAYAGRAJ: Plying of four-wheelers and other heavy vehicles was prohibited on the old railway over bridge (ROB) at Pani-ki-Tanki near the Allahabad high court from Saturday midnight after experts declared it unsafe for heavy load.

"Following the directives of the district administration, four wheelers, including cars, buses, besides trucks and battery operated rickshaws will be using the new ROB while pedestrians and those on two-wheelers will be permitted to use the old ROB," said assistant commissioner of police (traffic), Shalinendra Singh while confirming the move.

The Pani-ki-Tanki ROB was constructed about 60 years ago. In 2012, it was repaired but that too got damaged. After 2019, the load of the ROB was reduced as a new ROB was constructed adjacent to it.

Recently, its condition was surveyed by officials of the public works department and the Indian Railways.

Following this, a letter was written to the district administration with the recommenda-



Old ROB near Pani-Ki-Tanki in Prayagraj. HT

tion to stop heavy traffic over it. The district administration held a meeting recently under ADM (city) Madan Kumar wherein it was decided that only pedestrians and two-wheelers would be allowed to use the old ROB.

To ensure that traffic is not affected, people coming from Lukerganj towards the high court are being diverted towards Chauhatka. They are being given way through the high court flyover. Those going from Civil Lines are going towards Lukerganj through the new ROB.

However, people fear traffic jams will follow the closing of this ROB for four-wheelers. Most are of the opinion that at least cars and battery-operated rickshaws should have been allowed to ply on the old ROB. HT

FOOD DELIVERY EXEC HELD FOR MOLESTATION

PRAYAGRAJ: A food delivery executive had been arrested after he allegedly molested a minor girl in a lift of an apartment complex here, police said. The incident allegedly took place on Saturday. In his police complaint, the 15-year-old's father said the accused fled when she raised an alarm. A sub-inspector at Civil Lines police station, Anuj Kumar Bharti said the accused was identified as Ajay Kumar Gautam who was booked under the POCSO Act.

ED raids homes of Shine City director's aides

PRAYAGRAJ: The Enforcement Directorate has raided the residences of two associates of Shine City director Rashid Naseem on Saturday. The ED had registered a case of money laundering against Rashid Naseem and his associates. ED teams raided the houses of Mohammad Shamsad Ansari and Shahid Akhtar at Naya Pura in Shivkuti area. The duo has been at large for two years. It is alleged that Shamsad is the director of Proxima, a company which is associated with Shine City. HT



विकास पथ पर अग्रसर जनपद मुजफ्फरनगर




विभिन्न योजनाओं के लाभार्थियों से संवाद

एवं

ग्राम परिक्रमा यात्रा का शुभारंभ

योगी आदित्यनाथ

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश

जगत प्रकाश नड्डा

सदस्य, राज्यसभा

द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

डॉ. संजीव कुमार बालियान

राज्य मंत्री, पशुपालन,
डेयरी और मत्स्य पालन, भारत सरकार

भूपेन्द्र सिंह चौधरी

सदस्य
विधान परिषद

कपिल देव अग्रवाल

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), व्यावसायिक शिक्षा,
कौशल विकास एवं उद्यमशीलता, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. वीरपाल निर्वाल

अध्यक्ष, जिला पंचायत, मुजफ्फरनगर

राजकुमार चाहर

सांसद, फतेहपुर सीकरी

वंदना वर्मा

सदस्य, विधान परिषद

दिनांक : 12 फरवरी, 2024 | समय : अपराह्न 12:30 बजे

स्थान : खेल मैदान, गुरुकुल महाविद्यालय, शुक्तीर्थ बांगर, मुजफ्फरनगर

लाइव प्रसारण

DD NEWS [YouTube.com/DDNEWS](https://www.youtube.com/DDNEWS) एवं [YouTube.com/dduttarpradesh](https://www.youtube.com/dduttarpradesh)

UPGovtOfficial [f CMOuttarpradesh](https://www.facebook.com/CMOuttarpradesh) [X CMOfficeUP](https://www.twitter.com/CMOfficeUP)

सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

Restrictions in NE Delhi ahead of farmers' march



Paramilitary personnel maintain vigil ahead of the Farmers' march to Delhi, which is scheduled to be held on February 13, in Ambala on Saturday.

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Prohibitory orders under Section 144, which bars large gatherings, were imposed in the northeast district of the national capital on Sunday in view of farmers' "Delhi Chalo March" on February 13, an official said.

A large number of farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab are expected to march towards the national capital on Tuesday under their Delhi Chalo March organised by around 200 farmer unions.

"We have imposed Section 144 of the CrPC (prohibitory orders). Information has been received that some farmer organisations have given call to their supporters to gather/march to Delhi on February 13 for their demands of law on MSP. No one will be allowed to breach law and order situation," according to an order issued by the Deputy Commissioner of Police (north-east) Joy Tirkey.

The order said the farmers are likely to sit Delhi borders till their demands are met. "Keeping in view the kind of behaviour and adamant approach farmers showed during protests in the past, there is a possibility of mobilisation/activities of farmers/supporters from their respective districts to Delhi along with Tractor/Trolleys/Arms. F

farmers will also come from Haryana, Punjab, UP, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, MP and other possible area," it said. A precautionary order of section 144 is required to be issued to save life and property in the area, avoid any untoward incident and maintain law and order, the communication said.

"There are five different points in the order like - prohibit gathering of general public at all borders between Delhi and Uttar Pradesh and nearby areas in the jurisdictional area of northeast District. Prohibit entering of tractors, trolleys, buses, trucks, commercial vehi-

cles, personal vehicles, or horses etc, carrying protestors in Delhi from Uttar Pradesh.

"Order that the northeast district police shall make all efforts to prevent protestors from entering Delhi. Order that no person or protestor shall be allowed to bear arms, including firearms, swords, trishul, spears, lathi, rods and the police shall make all efforts to detain these persons on the spot. Order that any person found to be acting in contravention to this order shall be liable to be punished under section 188 of the IPC," said the DCP.

Bracing for the agitation, police are fortifying Delhi's border with Uttar Pradesh and Haryana with barricades and by deploying more than 5,000 security personnel. On Thursday, farmers from Uttar Pradesh went on a sit-in demonstration on the Noida-Greater Noida Expressway as police blocked their protest march to Delhi, resulting in massive traffic chaos.

Several farmer associations, mostly from UP, Haryana and Punjab, have called for the protest on February 13 to demand a law guaranteeing Minimum Support Price for their produce, one of the conditions they had set when they agreed to withdraw their agitation in 2021.

"We are in contact with our counterparts in Haryana, Punjab, and Uttar Pradesh to know that how many farmers organisations will join the protest and number of expected people. We have proper arrangements to deal with any law and order situation," said a senior Delhi Police officer.

"Proper security plan has already been chalked-out. Borders will have multi-layer security check points.

Vehicles entering the national capital will be checked properly. We had already installed barricades at different border of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh. Police personnel will be in anti-riot gears," said the police officer.

CAPF'S CONSTABLE (GD) RECRUITMENT EXAM TO BE HELD IN 13 LANGUAGES

Prawesh Lama
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: For nearly five million candidates taking the constable (GD) recruitment examination from next week, the written test will be conducted in 13 regional languages apart from Hindi and English, the union home ministry said on Sunday.

The examination will be held across 128 cities for recruitment of constables in the central armed police forces (CAPFs).

This is the first time the constable recruitment examination in the Central Armed Police Forces will be conducted in regional languages.

Until now, the questions were set only in English and Hindi.

"This historic decision has been taken on the initiative of Union home minister and minister of cooperation Amit Shah to increase the participation of local youth in the Central Armed Police Forces and to promote regional languages," an official spokesperson said, adding that 4.8 million candidates are set to take the examination.

The 13 regional languages include - Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Marathi, Malayalam, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Odia, Urdu, Punjabi, Manipuri and Konkani.

AAP to win all LS seats in Delhi on its own: Kejriwal

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

TARN TARAN (PUNJAB): The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is only scared of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and wants to defame and crush it, Delhi chief minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal alleged on Sunday, adding that his party would win all seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi on its own, in what would appear to be the latest dent for the Opposition's INDIA grouping.

Addressing an event here to mark the recent acquisition of a power plant by the Punjab government from a private company, he also accused the Centre of withholding Rs 8,000 crore funds of AAP-ruled Punjab.

"Today the BJP is scared of only one party and that is the AAP. The AAP is not letting it sleep," Kejriwal said.

He said in a span of 10 years, the AAP has formed governments in Delhi and Punjab, and has MLAs in Gujarat and Goa. "Wherever we fight elections, we secure many votes. Today the BJP is in fear that if they (AAP) continue to grow like this then there will be an AAP government at the Centre," he said.



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal with his Punjab counterpart Bhagwant Mann at the unveiling of thermal power plant in Tarn Taran.

Accusing the BJP, he said: "The people of Delhi have resolved to give all 7 Lok Sabha seats to AAP in the upcoming elections."

"We have one strength and that is honesty with clear intentions. We serve the people. We build schools, hospitals, set electricity right, build roads," the AAP leader said and claimed that the BJP cannot do such work. He said the BJP has been running governments for the past many years. "For 30 years, it has been running a government in Gujarat, and for 15 years, in Madhya Pradesh, and

they could not set a single school right. They did nothing," Kejriwal said.

He said works that the AAP can undertake, the BJP cannot. "If you have the courage, then do some work," Kejriwal said.

"They want the AAP to be crushed and finished... arrest them (their leaders), defame the AAP. They make new accusations every day," he alleged.

He also hit out at the BJP government at the Centre on summonses issued to him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate.

{ IN SIKKIM }

3 dead, 16 injured as tanker ploughs into crowd

Press Trust of India
letters@hindustantimes.com

GANGTOK: Three people were killed and 16 injured when a speeding milk tanker ploughed into a crowd at Ranipool in Gangtok district, police said on Sunday.

A crowd had gathered at the mela ground Ranipool, about 11 km from here, to play tombola when the speeding milk tanker ploughed into them around 7.30 pm on Saturday, the police said.

The driver of the tanker has been arrested, they said. All the injured persons were rushed to Central Referral Hospi-

tal where doctors declared two persons were brought dead and one succumbed to injuries at the hospital, they said.

Doctors at the hospital said the condition of the five of the injured was "serious".

Sikkim Chief Minister Prem Singh Tamang said he was deeply saddened by the tragic accident that occurred in Ranipool. He announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh to the next of kin of those who died in the tragic accident.

"We are committed to providing every possible support during this difficult time. My thoughts are with the injured and their families,

and I sincerely pray for their swift recovery. I also extend my deepest condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in this

tragedy, and I pray for the departed souls to rest in eternal peace", the CM said in a post on Facebook.

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

RECRUITMENT FOR THE EX-CADRE POST OF DIRECTOR (LIBRARY)

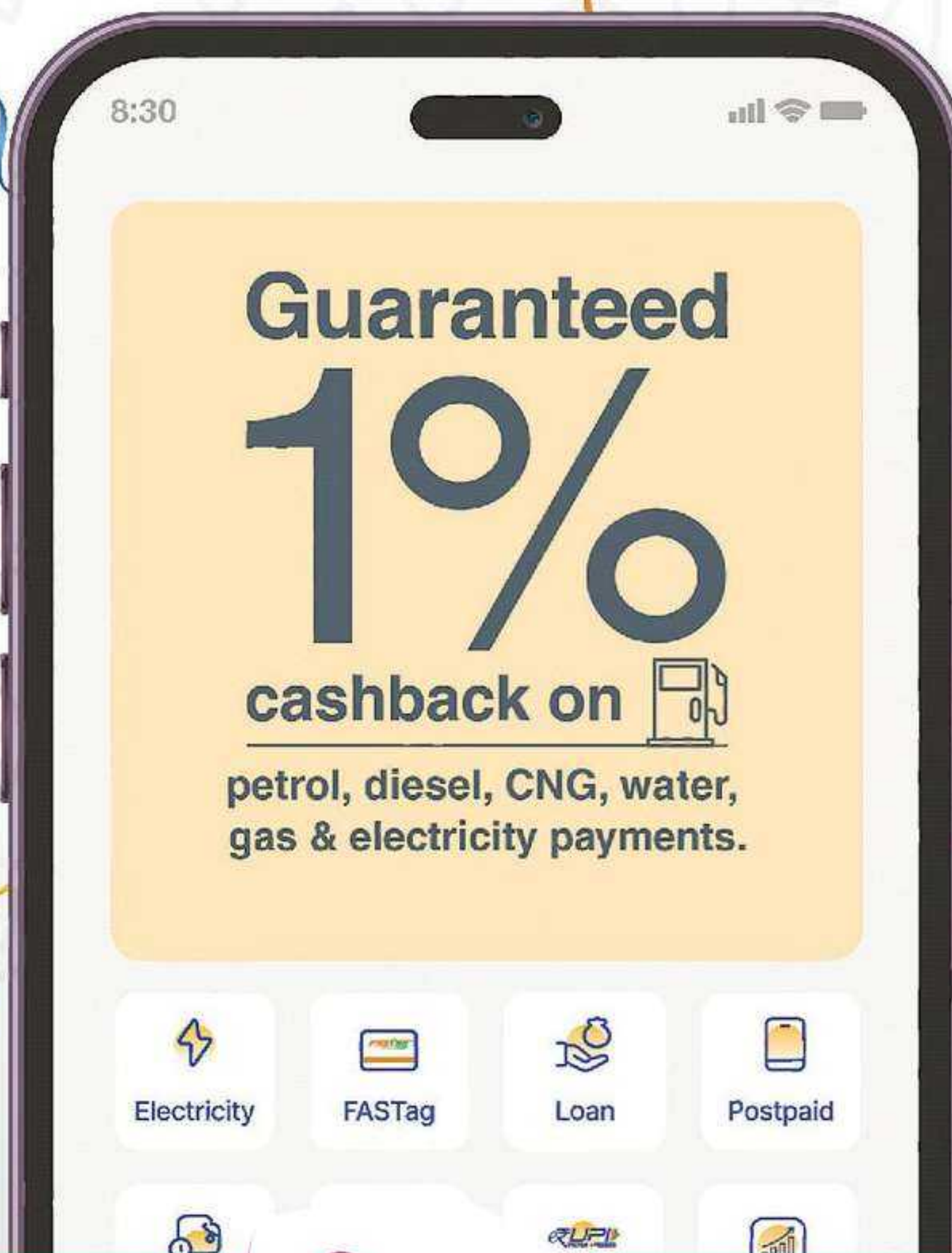
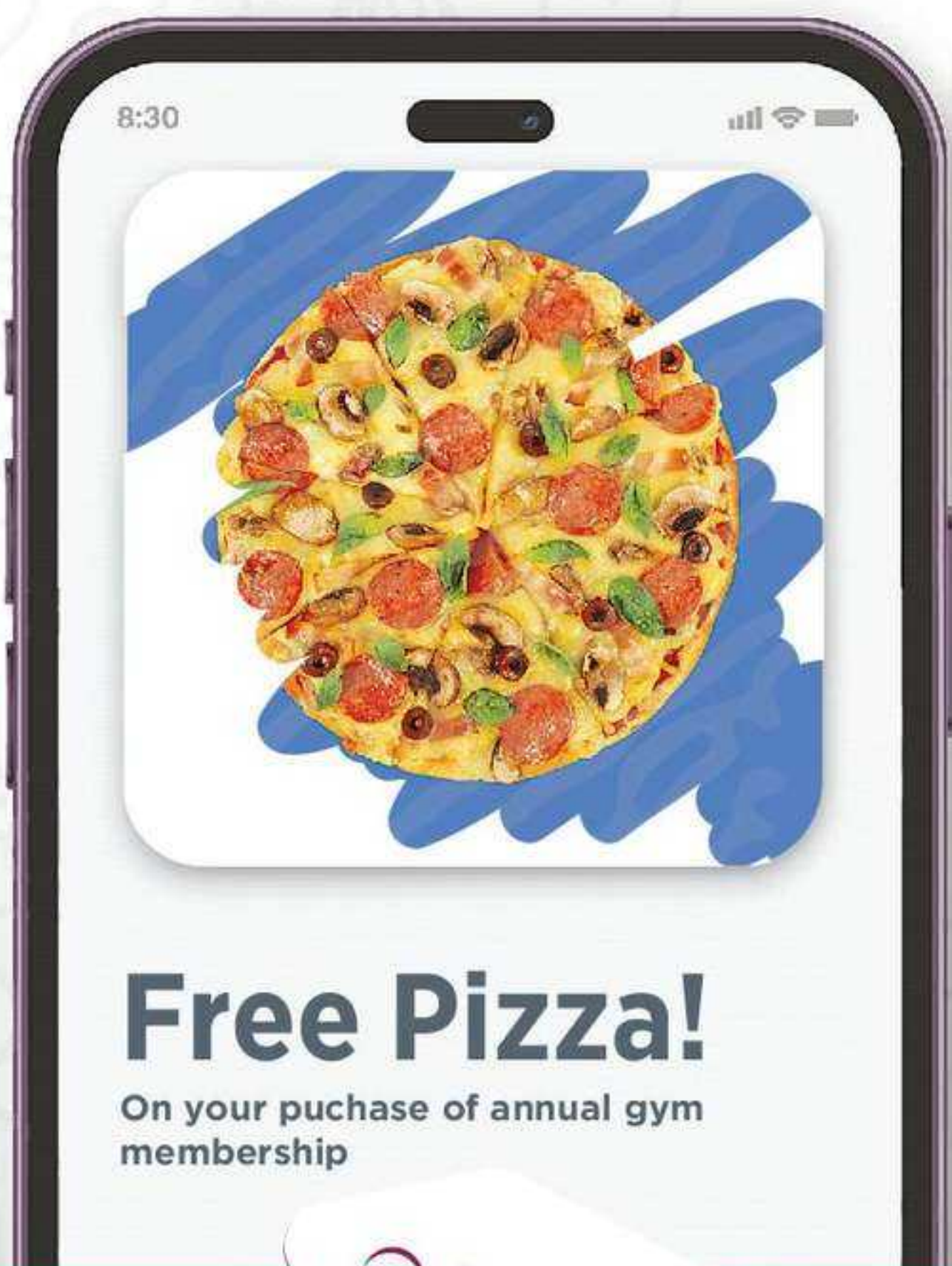
Applications from eligible candidates are invited for selection of a suitable candidate for appointment to the ex-cadre post of **Director (Library)** in Level 13 of Pay Matrix. The details about eligibility conditions etc. can be downloaded from the website of the Supreme Court of India i.e. www.sci.gov.in. The last date for receipt of applications is **11.03.2024**.

Place: New Delhi

Date: 09.02.2024

Registrar (Recruitment)

POWERED BY
NPCI
भारतीय राष्ट्रीय भुगतान निगम
NATIONAL PAYMENTS CORPORATION OF INDIA



Yeh nakli reward hai.

Yeh asli reward hai.



#BHIMPeAsliFaydaHai

*Cashback Period: 15th Jan 2024 to 31st March 2024. | Minimum Transaction: INR 100. Max Cashback: INR 150 per user on Petrol, Diesel, CNG, water, gas & electricity payments.

Fraudulent/suspicious transactions may lead to cashback revocation. | Download the latest version of BHIM 3.7.1 & above app version to avail this offer. | For further details please visit www.bhimupi.org.in

BHIM reserves the right to change terms.

BHIM
BHARAT INTERFACE FOR MONEY

Two held with 25 kg drugs in Champawat

HT Correspondent letters@hindustantimes.com RUDRAPUR: Champawat police recovered over 25kg of charas (cannabis) from two people in the district and both were arrested on Saturday evening, a police officer said on Sunday, adding it is the biggest haul caught by police in the last 10 years.

hidden in a modified cabin under the chassis of the car," said Shivraj Singh Rana, circle officer (CO) of police, Tanakpur on Sunday. After receiving the information about the two accused, identified as Vishal Gupta (30) alias Ranu of Binwar and Viresh Gupta (48) of Dataganj, both in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh, the police formed a joint team of special operation group (SOG) and anti-narcotics task force (ANTF) to nab the two men.

both revealed that they got the contraband from their Nepalese counterparts and they were carrying it to Bareilly and Badaun where they had planned to sell it at higher rates. Rana said, "Both accused informed they developed the modified cabin in Bareilly to dodge the police while carrying the contraband. Both have been arrested under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act."

[IN HARIDWAR]

After 2 yrs of delay, flyover to be inaugurated

HT Correspondent letters@hindustantimes.com HARIDWAR: A 2.8-km-long flyover connecting Haridwar with Dehradun and Rishikesh will be inaugurated on February 13, officials of the National Highway Authorities said on Sunday. According to officials, the flyover was earlier scheduled to be completed before Mahakumbh in 2021, however, it got delayed for over two years.

struction of the flyover at Doodhadhari square-Bhoopatwala stretch on Badrinath-Mana National Highway-58 near Har-ki-Pauri, they said. After modification in the design and elevation, the work was restarted in early April 2022 and after nearly two years the flyover construction has been completed with safety audits underway, officials said. "Flyover construction has been completed with safety audits being done. Union minister for national highways, road transport Nitin Gadkari will inaugurate this flyover in Haridwar next week, and within a few days, entry for general public and commercial vehicles will be

opened," said NHAI official Atul Sinha. With the inauguration of this flyover, the bottleneck stretch on Haridwar-Dehradun highway stretch will get resolved as from Pawan Dham till Sapt Rishi-Shantikunj traffic has been moving at snail's pace for the past three years. "During the Char Dham pilgrimage, summer tourist season, festivals, Kanwar pilgrimage, major traffic congestion was being witnessed, taking additional time to reach either side (Dehradun/Haridwar/Rishikesh). It will also lessen the travel duration by 10 minutes, to reach these three cities," said local ward councillor Anirudh



The flyover was earlier scheduled to be completed before 2021.

Bhatti. Mahamandeshwar Swami Harichetmanand Maharaj, who whose ashram is near this flyover stretch said that during Kumbh, Kanwar, religious baths seers and pilgrims will easily reach Har-ki-Pauri.

Advertisement for Punjab National Bank Circle Sastra Centre, featuring a sale notice for immovable properties. Includes bank logo and contact information.

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table against the respective properties.

SCHEDULE OF SALE OF THE SECURED ASSETS

A large table with multiple columns containing details of secured assets for auction. Columns include: (A) Name of the Branch, (B) Name of the Account, (C) Description of the Immovable Properties, (D) Date of Demand Notice, (E) Reserve Price, (F) Outstanding Amount, (G) EMD, (H) Date of Deposit, (I) Nature of Possession, (J) Bid Increase amount, (K) Date of Auction, (L) Reserve Price, (M) Outstanding Amount, (N) EMD, (O) Date of Deposit, (P) Nature of Possession, (Q) Bid Increase amount.

Terms & Conditions: The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions: 1. The properties are being sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", "Whatever there is" and without recourse basis. 2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule herein above have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorised Officer, but the Authorised Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation. 3. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the Website https://www.mstcecommerce.com/ Auction/home/ibapi/index.jsp on above mentioned date. 4. For detailed terms & conditions of the sale, please refer www.ibapi.in, www.mstcecommerce.com Date 12-02-2024 Place Sitapur



सत्यमेव जयते

Government Of India

EMPOWERED YOUTH STRENGTHENING THE RESOLVE OF 'VIKSIT BHARAT'



For appointment of youth in Government through **Rozgar Mela**

Distribution of appointment letters to more than **1 lakh**
candidates selected for Government jobs across the country

by
**Prime Minister
Narendra Modi**
on

12 February 2024, 10:30 AM

(via video conferencing)

Government of India, in collaboration
with the Partner State Governments,
creating new job opportunities

Special benefits to women, specially
abled persons and candidates from
Aspirational Districts

Easy, fair and transparent
selection process

All appointments through
agencies like UPSC, SSC, Railway
Recruitment Board and IBPS

Continuous monitoring of vacancies
and recruitment process through
special online system

Online training courses for all new
appointees in various Government
Departments through "Karmayogi
Prarambh" Module



Watch the live telecast of the event on DD News

For more information related to training, visit the KarmaYogi
module website at <https://igotkarmayogi.gov.in/>
or scan the QR code.





Research has revealed that more devastating flood-causing extreme rainfall events will become more frequent in the future. PTI

Climate crisis leads to extreme rainfall over NE, says study

Jayashree Nandi

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Extreme rainfall events of over 15 cm a day have quadrupled in frequency over the Meghalaya plateau in the Garo, Khasi and Jaintia hills and surrounding areas in Assam between 1950 and 2021 as a result of climate change, a new study has found.

Meghalaya has been a high rainfall region, with Cherrapunji and Mawsynram among the wettest places in India and globally. But, India Meteorological Department's data indicates that monsoon rain over the north-east region, including Meghalaya, is seeing a decreasing trend in the past 30 years.

"While the total rainfall in most of these regions is decreasing, our paper shows extreme rains are increasing," said Roxy Mathew Koll, co-author of the paper.

Extreme rainfall events quadrupled over western Meghalaya and northeast Bangladesh and India, and coastal southeast Bangladesh during May to October from 1950 to 2021, compared with the first 30 years between 1950 to 1980, said the paper published last week in the Journal of Royal Meteorological Society.

Warm Bay of Bengal sea surface temperatures intensify the lower tropospheric moisture transport and flux through monsoon flow to inland areas where mountain-forced moisture converges and precipitates as rainfall during extreme events.

These events exacerbate flash floods and landslides, analysis by scientists from the NASA Goddard Space Flight Center, Department of Marine, Earth

and Atmospheric Science, North Carolina State University; and Centre for Climate Change Research, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, among others, found.

"Northeast India and Bangladesh are geographically prone to flooding, and the dense population makes this region more vulnerable. Flood-causing extreme monsoon rains are on the rise over this region," Koll said.

"The intensity of rainfall is rising, and weather models find it difficult to skillfully forecast the extreme rainfall amounts under a changing climate."

"These extreme rains are projected to increase further in these regions in the near future, which means that we should be prepared with a long-term vision," he said.

"We should identify the hot-spots and flood-proof each district that is prone to extreme rains and landslides."

"We find that the monsoon extreme event increase is ongoing and the region of quadrupled events further extends over northeast Bangladesh and India and Southeast Bangladesh in future (2050-2079) compared with historical simulations (1950-1979)," the paper stated.

More devastating flood-causing extreme rainfall events will become more frequent in the future, the research found. The team compared their findings with a couple of other datasets to find similar trends.

M Rajeevan, former secretary, earth sciences ministry said, "Meghalaya gets rain due to strong monsoon southerlies hitting the mountains which is east-west oriented. Heavier precipitation could be due increasing strength of monsoon winds."

Expedite approval to Chennai metro phase 2: Stalin to Modi

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin on Saturday shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to expedite the approval for the phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail project as inordinate delay was causing stress on the state's finances.

Stalin sought Modi's personal intervention in the matter to expedite the approval for the ₹63,246 crore project, as was successfully done for the first phase.

"I would like to draw your kind attention to the inordinate delay in the approval for the Phase-II of the Chennai Metro Rail (CMRL) project and request you to expedite the process," Stalin wrote in his letter to PM.

Recalling that the Phase-I of the project was successfully implemented as a 50:50 joint venture between the Union Government and Tamil Nadu, he said, "we have approved the Phase-II under the same model, having three more corridors covering 119 km, at ₹63,246 crore."

The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA) and NITI Aayog have endorsed the eagerly anticipated Phase II of the Chennai Metro Rail Limited (CMRL) project.

With the MOHUA and NITI Aayog recommendation, Stalin said the funding approvals from Japan International Cooperation Agency, ADB Bank have also been tied up.

"The Union Home Minister (Amit Shah) laid the founda-



MK Stalin has urged PM Narendra Modi to expedite the approval for the ₹63,246 crore project. AFP

tion for Phase-II of CMRL project on November 21, 2020. Our government was eagerly awaiting the approval by the

Union government after the announcement for the counterpart funding made in the Budget for 2021-22 and

upon the project being recommended by the Public Investment Board (PIB) on August 17, 2021 as a Central Sector Project under equity sharing model," he said.

Observing that there was not any progress, despite the issue being taken by him during his meetings with Modi, Stalin said, "I learn that the above proposal is awaiting the approval of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) for more than two years now."

The Tamil Nadu chief minister expresses concerns over the delay in central government approval, impacting the timely execution of Phase II.

Stalin, while anticipating the Centre's approval, said his government commenced the works for taking up phase II of

the project to "ensure completion as per the timelines."

"We have been meeting the expenditure from state funds, due to the Union share being held up in the absence of CCEA approval. This has slowed down the works and has also placed a severe stress on state finances," he said.

Stalin wanted the issue to be addressed immediately so that the dream project of people of Chennai, can be implemented within the targeted time.

"I, therefore, urge you to personally intervene in this matter and expedite the approval of the Phase-II CMRL project under the 50:50 joint venture model, as was successfully done for Phase-I," the letter to Prime Minister Modi added.

The quite return of dance bar in financial capital

Manish K Pathak and Swapnasaurabh Kulkarni

htmbombai@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: More than two decades ago Mumbai's dance bars were a crucial part of its nightlife, expressed in the much-acclaimed 2001 film 'Chandni Bar' by Madhur Bhandarkar. At the time in one of his interviews Bhandarkar had said that he had barely scratched the surface of the grime that infested the lives of women who entered the trade. He had filmed only as much as the audience could stomach. And even that was hard to watch, regardless of stunning performances by Tabu and Atul Kulkarni.

The contemporary history of dance bars changed course in 2005 when then home minister RR Patil ordered a ban on them saying they were exploitative and that efforts should be made to rehabilitate the women who were driven into Mumbai's underbelly due to abject poverty. Patil's move was quashed by courts; and now five years after the Supreme Court in January 2019 re-emphasized that the state cannot take exception to staging dance performances in bars, dance bars have made a comeback, albeit in a new form — orchestra bars.

These hubs of entertainment are less glamorous; they operate surreptitiously and the women who don glitter and step under the bright lights, do so of their own volition. The city now has around 250 licensed (and some

unlicensed) orchestra bars.

Old wine in new bottle

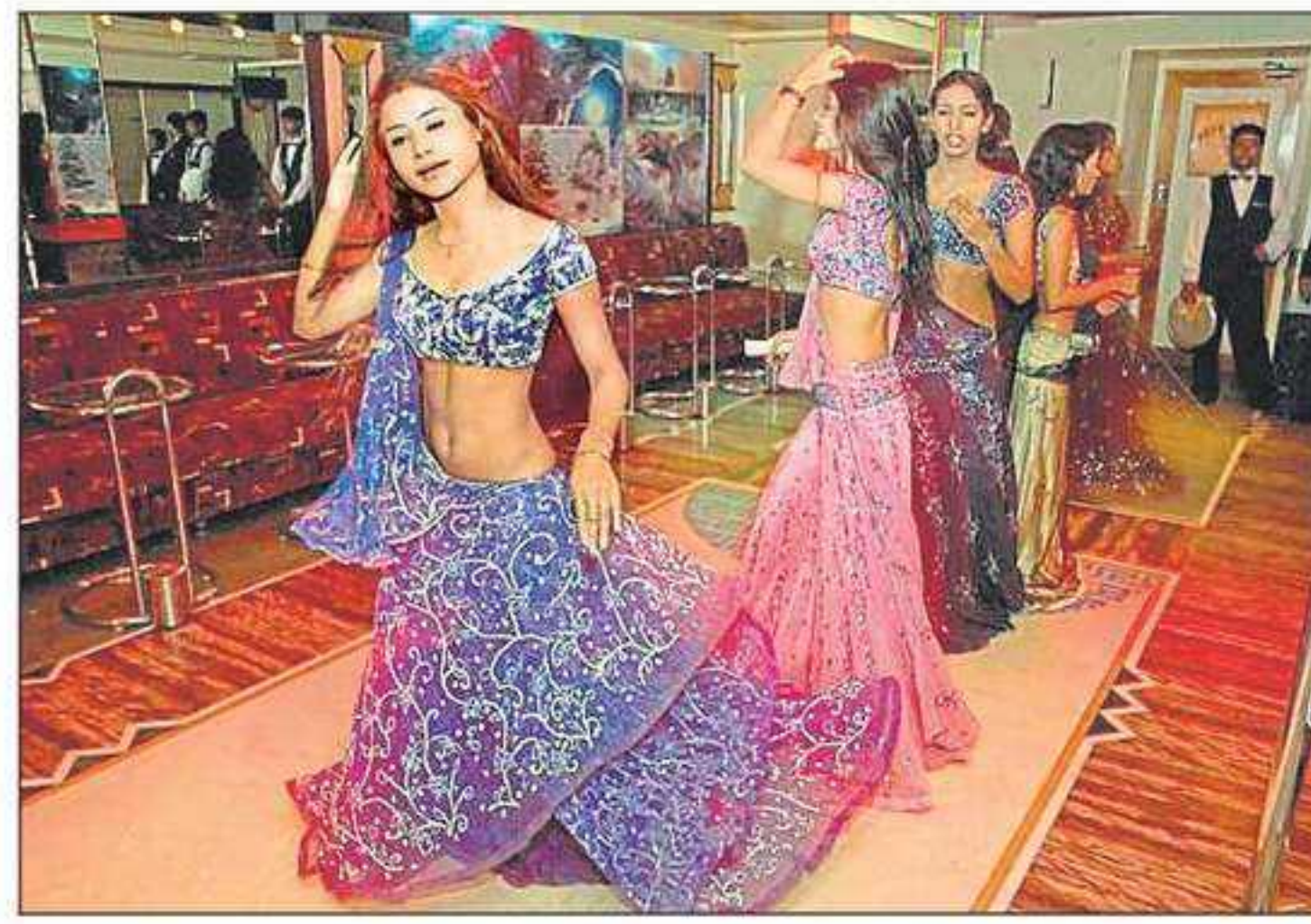
Though under the Maharashtra Prohibition of Obscene Dance in Hotels, Restaurant and Bar Rooms and Protection of Dignity of Women (Working therein) Act, 2016, orchestra bars are supposed to have separate stage for the orchestra and the dancers, in reality these establishments are not dissimilar to the erstwhile dance bars where skimpily clad young women danced in front of patrons, who showered money on them, and had one-to-one conversations with clients.

HT did the rounds of some high-profile orchestra bars and found their functioning reminiscent of the golden era.

All major establishments have a front entry mostly on ground floors, which house a regular bar and restaurant, but the real entertainment that attracts the rich 'dardi' crowd assembles on the first floor. (Dardis are men who root for the fluid moves of dancers). Getting in is not easy — a patron has to undergo major scrutiny at the ground floor, a newbie does not get smooth entry; he has to be accompanied by a regular patron of the bar.

Bouncers guard another entrance — the passage behind this door leads you to the stairs to the first floor. At some bars — in Dadar and parts of South Mumbai — there are separate entrances for regulars.

Inside is a new world — a large room bathed in flickering laser lights fitted along upper



Dance bars were banned in Maharashtra in August 2005 by adding Sec 33A to the Maharashtra Police (Amendment) Act, 2005. HT ARCHIVE

and lower portions of the walls move with '90s Bollywood hits playing in the background. There are two small sofas by the orchestra on the stage for the bar dancers to rest while big, comfortable sofas are lined up along the sides of the walls for patrons. Special patrons are seated at small tables in the middle of the room — they are known to splurge sizable amounts, that go up to lakhs in one evening, on the bar girls.

The bars warm up after 11:30pm. If you enter at any time earlier than that, you will see barely two to three of the 25-odd tables occupied, with a singer belting out Bollywood favourites.

As the evening proceeds, dancers aged between 20 and 30, toggled up in shiny lehenga cholis and sarees, emerge. Most tables become occupied close to midnight. Eventually, patrons

ask for small change and bundles of Rs 20 or Rs 50 currency notes are provided by the staff at the bar.

The stage eventually becomes crowded with a swirl of girls with patrons showering cash on them. At peak hour the floor of the hall is covered with currency notes as young members of the bar staff hurriedly scoop them up to stack them in bundles to be deposited with the manager of the bar. The booty is eventually distributed among the performers.

The bar is never cash-strapped. As patrons run out of their desired denominations of cash, fresh bundles are brought from the bar. Women urge the new patrons to join them on the dance floor as if to break ice. The dancers keep a close watch on the patrons and lure the customers who watch them closely. As the night progresses, alert

men are stationed outside the bar to keep a watch on patrolling cops. As soon as they spot men in khakhi, they send the word inside. The dancers stop their performances and quietly sit on the sofas near the stage. Money strewn on the floor is swept up in bags. Suddenly, the inside of the bar is back to being what it was designed for — an orchestra bar.

The constables take a look around, click a few selfies from different angles, reportedly to send to their bosses as confirmation that no prohibited activity was going on in the bar and everything was according to the rules.

Looks matter

Good looks are a predominant criterion for young women entering this space. They are all within the age of 30 and speak fluent English. One of the dancers at a Central Mumbai bar said she chose to be a bar dancer as her sister needs to undergo a surgery that requires over Rs 6 lakh.

Another 20-year-old, who has been pursuing a course in fashion design, said, "I wanted to pursue a career as a designer, but my family is unable to support my education."

Varsha Kale, president of the Bhartiya Bargirls' Union, said with the restriction of dance time and number of women allowed to perform, many dance bars have refused to get back into business. "The ones that are functional are not the dance bars but orchestra bars or ladies' bars where the girls

sing. I am told that the bar owners prefer hiring good looking girls for singing instead of the professional good singers who may not be good looking. When there is a raid, these girls switch roles to become singers," she said.

What the law says

Dance bars were banned in Maharashtra in August 2005 by adding Section 33A to the Maharashtra Police (Amendment) Act, 2005. This prohibited all kinds of performances in eating houses, permit rooms and beer bars. The objective was "to secure public order, morality, dignity of women, and reduce exploitation of women including trafficking of minor girls."

The state government then shut down all the bars though many of them continued to flourish till as late as 2011, in a clandestine way in the city and its outskirts. When the ban was imposed the city alone had around 700 dance bars at their peak in April 2005, though only 307 of those were legal. In other parts of the state, mostly in Thane, Raigad and Pune districts 650 more dance bars flourished when the amendment to the Maharashtra Police Act came into force. (See box.)

The bars provided employment to around 1,50,000 people, including about 80,000 bar girls, many of whom moved to Dubai and other Middle Eastern countries, apart from Delhi, Chennai and Hyderabad where dance bars continued to operate illegally.

₹44.6 LAKH PENALTY IMPOSED ON 400 FOR NOT VERIFYING TENANTS: POLICE

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

HARIDWAR: Police levied a cumulative penalty of ₹44.6 lakh on 400 odd landlords for not completing the verification of tenants, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

The development comes under a major tenant verifica-

tion drive in view of several criminal drives found residing in the district, particularly from other states. Under the Police Act 434, challans were issued to landlords for not abiding by the law and complying to the tenant verification rules and procedure duly. From tenants, factory workers, employees to domestic servants, credentials of all such

people were covered in this verification drive.

"The tenant verification drive on Sunday was carried on a larger scale with more than 1,000 police personnel involved in this. Approximately, 6,000 people underwent verification and penalty of ₹44,66,000 was collected from the violators," senior superintendent of police

(SSP) Haridwar district Pramendra Dobhal said.

"We are preparing a database which will prove vital in ensuring one click record of all tenants, domestic servants, workers, labourers and employees residing in the district. From time to time we will carry this tenant verification drive," the police officer said.

Super Bazar: A landmark cries for attention in Delhi

Paras Singh

paras@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: One day in 1970, Chetan Sharma, a Delhi University student at the time, and his friends took a *fatfatiya* (back then, public transport vehicles that could carry six to eight people) built around the body of old Harley Davidson motorbikes) for eight *anna* from Gurdwara Sisganj Sahib in Chandni Chowk to Connaught Place (CP).

The young men were bursting with excitement as they raced towards the bustling Super Bazar, India's first superstore, located near Shankar Market in CP. It was time to spend the ₹70 they had pooled in to buy the coveted, compact transistor, whose handle did the work of an antenna.

"But we knew it would take us hours to hold that transistor in our hands. The queue outside Super Bazar reached the fire station in Connaught Place's outer circle. It's like how people queue up now to buy the latest iPhone. Super Bazar was the place to visit at the time," recalled Sharma (70), a retired businessman.

Super Bazar, a six-storey superstore — Delhi and India's first — which served as a city landmark for decades, now stands lost to time and neglect. It was launched in 1966, months after the 1965 India-Pakistan war, by the Congress-led central government as a measure to keep price rise in check. The supermarket, which was developed by the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC), sold everything from subsidised sugar to palm oil, vegetables to HMT watches, stationery to construction material, even transistors, and, when they eventually became available, computers.

Its glory days were long behind it when it shut in 2002, weighed down by huge losses it incurred since the mid-'90s. As per an April 2018 report by the ministry of consumer affairs, Super Bazar began incurring losses in 1996, due to "overstaffing, failure of management, inadequacy of working capi-



Super Bazar was launched in 1966, months after the 1965 India-Pakistan war. HT ARCHIVE

tal, and a lack of competitive approach on part of the management." For the last two decades, Super Bazar has been locked in a long, messy arbitration with employee unions over the closure and payment of their dues.

An official at NDMC, which owns Super Bazar, and which comes under the Union government, said that following the arbitration, the civic body plans to demolish the existing six-storey structure to make way for a modern, multi-storey mall. "The arbitration is still in its final stages. We are hoping to expedite the proceedings," the NDMC official told HT requesting anonymity.

A forgotten affair

While Super Bazar was grappling with uncertainty about its future, Delhi got its first mall — Ansal Plaza at Khel Gaon Marg in November 1999. A year after Super Bazar shut down, Gurugram (which was Gurgaon at the time) welcomed its first one. DLF City mall; Noida opened doors to the Great India Place mall in 2007. And with an influx of malls, Delhi forgot its beloved Super Bazar.

Next to the dusty, cobwebbed entrance, the signage in faded yellow paint still reads Super Bazar. The bus stop near Shankar Market as well as the signage on pedestrian subways in Connaught Cir-

cus still bear the superstore's name.

A photograph from HT archives, shot in the year 1970, highlights Delhi's affair with Super Bazar. In the photograph, the front walls of the building are covered by billboards — Mohun's New Life Corn Flakes on the third floor, Gold Coin Real Apple Juice on the fourth, Gwalior Suiting & Shirting above the top floor, and others for Trishul cement, Albion plywood. In the centre, below "NDMC Pant Bazar" is a vertical billboard of Parle biscuits. And there are also posters of the Hindi films that released that year: *Yaadgar*, *Pehchan*, *Khilona*, and *The Train*. The walls stand bare and broken now, with two signboards from the "office of the liquidator" on the main porch and fading signage of old stores elsewhere.

The traders along the periphery of Shankar Market recall how the market used to be a hotspot in the '80s and '90s. Rakesh Kumar Shukla, 56, a trader at Shankar Market, told HT, "Super Bazar offered cheaper products as everything was directly supplied by the government, and there were no middlemen."

In his book *Civil Disobedience: Two Freedom Struggles, One Life*, Lakshmi Chand Jain, political activist and the then secretary of India Cooperative Union (which represented the cooperative movement in India) wrote, "To carry the price influence of Super Bazar over retail trade in Delhi, All India Radio would put out a daily price bulletin in the morning comparing market rates versus Super Bazar rates. This had the impact of dampening prices in Delhi. The message got out; 'we were the watchdog'."

The way forward
But it wasn't just Delhi that was charmed by the Super Bazar. There was also a steady trickle of buyers from neighbouring states. "People would take a train to Delhi and get down at Shivaji Bridge to walk to Super Bazar," said an NDMC official.
By the mid '90s, however, it all changed. The cooperative store, which was making profits from the '70s till the mid-'90s, saw its losses rise from ₹68 lakh in 1996-97 to a whopping ₹16 crore in 2000-2001, before it shut. And then the employee unions went into arbitration against the closure. In 2009, there was a feeble attempt to revive the market by Writers & Publishers Pvt. Ltd but that didn't succeed. In 2023, the ground floor of the building was vacated by the official liquidator, and the matter of reusing the space came up. NDMC council member Kuljeet Singh Chahal said, "Super Bazar is closely linked with the growth of Delhi as a city."

SCAN THE CODE TO BOOK YOUR ADS ONLINE →

www.htclassifieds.com

htclassified listings

EDUCATION

B.Sc. NURSING GNM ANM
DUBAGGA, HARDOI ROAD, LKO. 8953056080

GOVT. JOB ASSURANCE
B.Sc. (Ag.) AGRICULTURE
LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY COLLEGE AS PER ICAR SYLLABUS
DUBAGGA, HARDOI ROAD, LUCKNOW 8009942452

B.Ed. B.Sc.(Ag) B.El.Ed. B.P.Ed. D.El.Ed. (BTC)
DUBAGGA, HARDOI ROAD, LKO. 8953056086

D.Pharma
P.C.I., A.I.C.T.E., B.T.E. APPROVED
DUBAGGA, HARDOI ROAD, LKO. 6387777522

FORM G
INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR LOK HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTIONS LIMITED OPERATING IN CONSTRUCTION BUSINESS AT MUMBAI
(Under Regulation 36A(1) of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (Insolvency Resolution Process for Corporate Persons) Regulations, 2016)

RELEVANT PARTICULARS	
1. Name of the corporate debtor along with PAN/ CIN/ LLP No.	LOK HOUSING AND CONSTRUCTIONS LIMITED AAAC1891B L76210MH1985PLC037143
2. Address of the registered office	Shop No.4, Lok Bhawan, Ground, Lok Bharati Complex Marol, Maroshi Road, Andheri, Mumbai - 400059. www.lokhsq.com
3. URL of website	As per Expression of Interest on: www.lokhsq.com/eoi
4. Details of place where majority of fixed assets are located	NA
5. Installed capacity of main products / services	NA
6. Quantity and value of main products / services sold in last financial year	NA
7. Number of employees / workmen	4 (Presently with terms)
8. Further details including last available financial statements (with schedules) of two years, lists of creditors, are available at URL	AI office address of RP: APMH & Associates LLP D-613/614, Neelkanth Business Park, Nathani Road, Opp. Railway Station Vidyavihar West, Mumbai-400086 and URL of Website: https://www.lokhsq.com www.lokhsq.com/eoi
9. Eligibility for resolution applicants under section 25(2)(h) of the Code is available at URL	26 th February, 2024 (original submission date 5 th February, 2024)
10. Last date for receipt of expression of interest	7 th March, 2024
11. Date of issue of provisional list of prospective resolution applicants	12 th March, 2024
12. Last date for submission of objections to provisional list	22 nd March, 2024
13. Date of issue of final list of prospective resolution applicants	27 th March, 2024
14. Date of issue of information memorandum, evaluation matrix and request for resolution plans to prospective resolution applicants	26 th April, 2024
15. Last date for submission of resolution plans	26 th April, 2024
16. Process email id to submit EOI	ip.lokhsq@gmail.com

Sd/-
Hemant Mehta
Resolution Professional for
Lok Housing and Constructions Limited
IBBI/PA-001/IP-P00027/2016-17/10060
AFA Validity till: January 2, 2025

Place: Mumbai
Date : 12th February, 2024

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

MODI IN JHABUA

people have been screened for sickle cell disease under the National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission.

Sickle cell disease is a genetic blood disease that affects the whole life of the affected patient. It is more common in the tribal population of India but occurs in non-tribals too.

The National Sickle Cell Anaemia Elimination Mission was launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 1, 2023, in Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi held a road show in Jhabua.

People gathered on both sides of the road, showered petals on the PM, and chanted slogans as the Prime Minister greeted them on his way to the venue of his public rally in Jhabua.

The visit assumes significance ahead of the Lok Sabha elections just a few months away.

During the roadshow, Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav accompanied the PM.

Before holding the roadshow, PM Modi inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of various developmental projects worth Rs 7,500 crore at Jhabua.

The projects will benefit the significant tribal population of the region, said Prime Minister's Office (PMO) in an official statement.

RLD, BSP, CONGRESS

ments, the legislators led by assembly speaker Satish Mahana arrived in Ayodhya, where they were joined by chief minister Yogi Adityanath who arrived straight from Pune to be part of this unique pre-poll temple get-together. The Samajwadi Party was under attack from the BJP for its decision to abstain from the temple event.

Both deputy chief ministers Keshav Prasad Maurya and Brajesh Pathak felt that the SP's move reeked of minority appeasement. Maurya also added that he prayed to the deity to end the Samajwadi Party politically.

Though the Congress was part of the Ayodhya visit, its lawmaker Aradhana Mishra "Mona" was quick to defend the Samajwadi Party. "I think anyone can visit the temple at the time of their choosing," she said in defence of its alliance partner, whose chief Akhilesh Yadav has agreed to join Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Amethi or Rae Bareilly, soon after the yatra enters Uttar Pradesh on February 16. The SP later hit back at the BJP over its criticism. "Faith is a personal matter. The BJP has always used religion for politics. I will decide when to go where," said SP lawmaker Amitabh Bajpai.

Lawmakers of the RLD, whose leadership had formed up a pre-poll seat-sharing pact with the Samajwadi Party in January, but now is set to join the BJP

since PM Narendra Modi's "dil jeet liya" act for conferring Bharat Ratna on former Prime Minister and RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary's grandfather Chaudhari Charan Singh, admitted that the SP-RLD deal wasn't on.

"Consider the pact between BJP-RLD final. Decision will be announced by Jayantji," said RLD legislature party leader Rajpal Balyan.

Ostensibly on Adityanath's nudge, to ensure that devotion-struck commoners who have been queuing up for darshan of Ram Lalla for hours weren't inconvenienced, the temple administration didn't stop pilgrim darshan during the VIP event.

Yogi Adityanath, his ministers and all lawmakers even decided to forego the tradition of visiting Hanuman garhi temple before Ram temple visit, as the famous Hanuman temple teemed with pilgrims, most of them from different parts of the country and wanting to follow the religious protocol of visiting Lord Hanuman ahead of Lord Ram.

Adityanath visited the Ram temple twice, the second time ostensibly to take stock of the preparedness and pilgrim flow as devotees from across the country, including by Astha special trains, have been visiting the temple regularly.

The media was kept away from the temple premises where, after darshan, the lawmakers also had a simple lunch.

"For darshan, the lawmakers were invited in alphabetical order based on the divisions they came from. So, lawmakers from Agra division had darshan first along with chief minister Yogi Adityanath and assembly speaker Satish Mahana. The first batch of lawmakers spent the maximum time before Ram Lalla, everything was very well coordinated," said Sridhar Agnihotri, media advisor to the speaker.

IMRAN

overnight, and some small protests took place overnight.

Pakistan's interim government says the delay was caused by communication issues due to a mobile internet outage on election day.

The outage, which authorities said was for security reasons, drew concern from rights groups and foreign governments, including the United States.

In a post on social media platform X on Sunday, a PTI party secretary called off general protests, but said there should be demonstrations at certain electoral offices where they were concerned about "forged" results.

Around 93 of the independent candidates who won seats were associated with Khan's PTI party.

Khan's supporters were running as independents because

they had been barred from contesting the polls under his party's electoral symbol by the election commission for not complying with electoral laws.

Despite the ban and Khan's imprisonment for convictions on charges ranging from leaking state secrets to corruption and an unlawful marriage, millions of the former cricketer's supporters came out to vote for him, even though he cannot be part of any government while he remains in prison.

One disadvantage the independents face in trying to form a government is they are not eligible to be allocated any of parliament's 70 reserved seats, which are distributed according to party strength in the final tally. Sharif's party could get up to 20 of these seats.

The election commission previously flagged that results for two seats could not yet be included - one in which a candidate was killed requiring the postponement of polling, and another in which polling would be completed later this month.

Pakistan police meanwhile warned that they would come down hard on illegal gatherings after PTI urged supporters to protest alleged rigging in last week's election.

Authorities warned they would take strict action, saying so-called Section 144 orders were in place - under a colonial-era law banning gatherings of two or more people.

"Some individuals are inciting illegal gatherings around the Election Commission and other government offices," said a statement Sunday from Islamabad's police force.

"Legal action will be taken against unlawful assemblies. It should be noted that soliciting for gatherings is also a crime," it added.

4 OBCS ON BJP LIST OF

full of surprises. But like always the party must have done its homework well. Take RPN Singh for instance. He is a former Congress leader but also notice that his Sainthwar OBC caste is spread out in several districts of east UP like Kushinagar, Gorakhpur, Deoria and Maharajanj, a party leader said.

The BJP has again reposed faith in national spokesman Sudhanshu Trivedi who has been named for a second Rajya Sabha term. "He is a Brahmin from UP and also defends the party excellently so in his case it is a reward of merit," a party leader said. Trivedi is close to defence minister and Lucknow MP Rajnath Singh. "Though there will be 10 Rajya Sabha vacancies, the BJP has fielded just seven just about as much as the party's assembly strength can hold. Unless there are additional names declared, it would seem that BJP won't spring any surprises in this RS poll as it hasn't put up any additional candidate," a BJP leader said.

Litigants, lawyers distressed over e-filing delays, downtime

Bar association, advocates complain to higher authorities about problems; demand hybrid mode of filing

Rutuja Gaidhani

rutuja.gaidhani@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: In September 2023, e-filing was made mandatory in Maharashtra's lower courts with the aim of going paperless and making the judicial process smoother. However stumbling blocks like frequent server downtimes, website malfunctions, challenges in the litigants' oath-taking process and poor bandwidth have been rife, resulting in delays of months before the litigants get their first returnable date.

It's not just the litigants that are stressed and put to financial loss because of the new system. Lawyers too are tearing their hair out. "It is complete madness. One now has to file and forget, not file and fret," said advocate Tanveer Nizam of the Bombay city civil and sessions court (BCC&SC). "The three primary objectives of this exercise were convenience, speed and response but the system had failed to achieve even 50 per cent of what was intended."

On January 2, 2024, the Bar Association of BCC&SC addressed a letter to the principal sessions judge, highlighting the difficulties faced by lawyers in e-filing. The same day, over 200 advocates practising in the family court at Bandra mailed a letter to the e-committees of the Supreme Court and the Bombay High Court and marked a copy to the Chief Justice of India, the Chief Justice of the high court



Advocates said the e-filing website does not allow them to file on weekends, whereas on weekdays, it keeps crashing after 6pm. HT PHOTO

and the principal judge of the family court, outlining the issues encountered in the e-filing process along with a few suggestions for its improvement. But though more than a month has elapsed, there has been no acknowledgment of, or response to, these letters.

"We are constantly requesting the authorities to allow a hybrid mode of filing. Often there are cases that require an urgent hearing but filing gets delayed because the server is down most of the time," said advocate Ravi Prakash Jadhav, president of the association. "We are not against e-filing, which we consider a progressive move. However, seamless implementation requires resources that the lower courts currently lack—proper infrastructure, quality servers, a dedicated system, smooth network and trained staff."

Jadhav added that training was given. "However, the hour-long training was not enough to understand the complexity of the process," he said. "Moreover, the people handling the e-filing are neither well trained nor well equipped to solve all the queries."

Advocate Nizam said that e-filing ideally needed to be open 24x7 for a streamlined process. "But the website does not allow advocates to file on weekends while on weekdays, it stops working or begins crashing after 6 pm," he said. "Ideally, we should be able to file in 10 minutes but it often takes hours on end, and the client just sits there the entire day, bearing unnecessary costs."

Advocate Zeeshan Khan pointed out that filing was especially cumbersome when the matter was bulky. "E-filing becomes a Herculean task

because we have to scan all those pages. Annexing the documents also becomes an issue, as there is a cap on the size of the documents being uploaded," he said, adding that despite doing all of this, some courtrooms demanded a physical copy as well.

Advocate Shradha Dalvi called the execution of the idea "a mockery of the system". "Such technology requires the court authorities to outsource to individuals with technical knowledge," she said. "The prerequisite for e-filing is electricity at the court, but courts in Kalyan and Vasai face the problem of load-shedding. We have been trying to communicate these fundamental problems, but there is neither any improvement nor any effort to take feedback from people using the system." According to the advocates,

the concept of e-filing was first introduced in 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic but was scrapped because of the same basic issues that are being encountered today.

Advocate Kavita Durgapal narrated how she was forced to shuttle between courts for one document. "I got my e-filing done through the department at the sessions court in Fort," she said. "E-filing has to reflect across courts, which it does. But when I went to the Vikhroli court, my application did not load because the server was down. The next day, I went back but while my application got uploaded, it did not reflect in the department's computer system because their server was down."

Durgapal said that since the matter was important, she went again the next day and the day after.

"Finally, when the server was aligned, the judicial clerk told me that the application was not acceptable, as one document was missing," she said. "I suggested that I show a physical copy to the judge during the hearing, but the clerk was adamant and asked me to go back to the sessions court in Fort and re-do the entire process. Incidents like these not only waste litigants' time and money but also ruin advocates' reputation and the trust their clients have in them."

Advocate Manoj Gowd pointed out issues with punctuation and special characters, especially in anticipatory bail applications, hindering rapid processing. Litigants waste time as advocates repeatedly upload documents. Court clerks suffer job losses due to the sudden transition to the new process. The principal judge and registrar of the BCC&SC declined to comment when contacted.

25 more held over Haldwani clashes as cops intensify ops

HT Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

DEHRADUN/HALDWANI: Nainital Police on Sunday intensified its crackdown to nab "rioters" involved in violence in Banbhoolpura area of Haldwani, and arrested 25 people in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of arrests in the case to 30, officers familiar with the matter said.

"Twelve people have been arrested for attacking Banbhoolpura police station, six for torching vehicles, and seven for violence during the demolition of the structures," Nainital senior superintendent of police (SSP) Prahlad Narayan Meena said during a press briefing on Sunday.

"We have also recovered seven country-made weapons, 54 live rounds from these accused," he said.

Additional director general of police (law and order) AP Anshuman said police teams are raiding the houses of the suspects in Banbhoolpura to arrest them.

Violent clashes erupted in Banbhoolpura area of Hal-

dwani district on the evening of February 8, when civic authorities razed two structures — Masjid Mariam (mosque) and Abdul Razzaq Zakaria madrasa — alleging they were illegally built on state government ("nazool") land.

As workers from the Haldwani municipal corporation and Nainital administration razed the 22-year-old structures, residents of the area set afire several vehicles, a police station and hurled stones at the demolition team as well as police personnel, according to police.

The violence has left at least five dead, so far, and 150 people were injured.

The five men arrested earlier had been identified as Mahboob Alam, Zeeshan Parvez, Arshad, Javed Siddiqui, and Aslam Chaudhary, all residents of Banbhoolpura.

People aware of the matter said police have also escalated efforts to arrest the occupant of the land Abdul Malik, who is also an accused in the FIRs.

"We are searching for the occupant of the land, Abdul Malik, who is also an accused

in the FIRs. It was he who did the illegal construction and was the biggest opponent of the demolition action. His role is being investigated if he instigated the crowd," senior superintendent of police (SSP) Prahlad Narayan Meena had said on Saturday.

Meena said, "We have been acting as per the procedures established by the law."

The state government on Saturday evening sought more central forces for deployment in Haldwani.

Chief secretary (CS) Radha Raturi wrote a letter to the secretary (home) of the Government of India asking to send four companies of central paramilitary forces to maintain law and order in Haldwani.

Signs of normalcy returned to Haldwani even though curfew remained in force in Banbhoolpura which witnessed arson and violence. The movement of vehicles was normal on

the roads and some shops located on the main roads were opened in Haldwani city.

Internet services were also restored in Haldwani on Saturday evening.

However, it remained suspended in the curfew area of Banbhoolpura.

In a release, the Nainital Police on Sunday said, "Internet services have been restored. If any person spreads communal charged posts, photos, videos or comments on

social media affecting communal harmony and law and order, strict legal action will be taken against the person."

Nainital district magistrate (DM) Vandana Singh said, "Essential services have been resumed in Banbhoolpura. Medical stores, primary health care centres have been allowed to operate. LPG cylinders, vegetables, and milk are reaching the households through vendors."

Dalit meet charts agenda for unity in Mumbai

Sabah Virani

sabah.virani@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: "In the 1970s, caste atrocities were a common phenomenon. Namdeo Dhasal and I were writers, but we felt it was no longer enough to make a difference. So we took to the streets and took matters into our own hands," said Dalit poet-writer J V Pawar, speaking about the time he co-founded the Dalit Panthers with the fiery Dhasal.

Pawar was speaking at the daylong Dalit Agenda conference on Saturday at the Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar Bhavan in Dadar East—the first Mumbai gathering after the formation of the All India Independent Scheduled Castes Association (AIISCA) in October 2023. The conference underscored the absence of a popular Dalit movement like that in Pawar's time and spoke of reviving it. The Dalit Panthers themselves disbanded in 1977 due to internal fissures.

"Such a movement no longer exists because people are scared," continued Pawar, giving the example of the central government imprisoning scholar-writer Anand Telumbde among others. Echoing another symptom of the larger malaise, Rahul Sonpimple, president of AIISCA, said that Dalit politics was in decline in Maharashtra and all over the country. "This is why we felt the need for an autonomous Dalit movement which unites all the scheduled castes under one agenda," he said.

"AIISCA aims to be a pan-Indian social movement—political but not electoral," said Sonpimple. "What we are doing is building a Dalit agenda—by first detailing the need for one, collating the different issues faced by the SC community and discuss-

ing how to go about solving them." Like with the previous conference, a variety of academics, researchers, activists and student leaders, largely from Maharashtra, were called for a series of panel discussions. They talked about their perspectives and experiences, emphasising areas that they considered important in the fight.

"What we envision is a cadre-based grassroots organisation which will unite all scheduled castes across states, genders and ages," said Sonpimple.

The Dalit Agenda, as it stands right now, has several demands. Some of these are equitable land distribution, an end to atrocities on Dalits (Maharashtra saw 2,743 atrocities as per the Crime in India report, 2022) and rehabilitation for workers and their families engaged in manual scavenging. Education was another significant topic, given the poor literacy rates among Dalits—even in Mumbai, school dropout rates among Dalits were high, said Sonpimple. While there were demands to improve these statistics, there emerged a demand for Dalit-led educational institutions too.

The scarce faculty positions given to Dalits was another issue. Abhijit Waghre, AIISCA's Maharashtra treasurer and IIM-B researcher, said that despite talk of diversity within institutions, he had encountered few others from SC communities in them. "Discrimination happens at the level of recruitment too," he said. "Dalits are interviewed but considered inadequate for the job."

A particular focus of the conference was the economic conditions of the SC community. Sonpimple remarked that despite the union budget having a fund allocation for the welfare of SCs and

STs, to be used solely for this agenda, it was being used for general welfare schemes. As this separate allocation is only a scheme, its misuse and misuse is not enforceable by law. "This should change," said Sonpimple.

कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
जौनपुर-गाजीपुर वृत्त, लो.नि.वि., जौनपुर

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना (एरासी/सीटी)
(ई-प्रोक्चरमेंट सूचना)

पत्रांक- 432/एसआई/एम्प्लर/जौनपुर वृत्त/2024 दिनांक- 07/02/2024

महानगरीय नगरपालिका, उत्तर प्रदेश के जौनपुर वृत्त में निम्नलिखित कार्य हेतु ऑन लाइन निविदा <http://etender.up.nic.in> के माध्यम से मांग कार्य में लोडिंग के बंधुकर फर्म/केन्द्र से अद्यतन वर के आधार पर दिनांक 14/02/2024 से दिनांक 22/02/2024 तक दोपहर 12:00 बजे तक अनारिस्ट की जाती है। ई निविदा की प्री-क्वालिफिकेशन/टेंडरिंग दिनांक 22/02/2024 अपरान्ह 12:30 बजे अंतिमतादी के कार्यालय वर में उपस्थित लोडिंग के बंधुकर फर्म/केन्द्र के प्रतिनिधि के समक्ष आहवातकारी द्वारा गतिवृत्त में के सदस्यों द्वारा ऑन लाइन वरदान खोली जायेगी। टेंडरिंग दिनांक के कार्यालय वर में के कार्यालय वर में खोली जायेगी। कार्यालय वर लेने अथवा छुट्टी लेने को दसा में ई-क्वालिफिकेशन/टेंडरिंग दिनांक के कार्यालय वर लेने अथवा छुट्टी लेने को दसा में खोली जायेगी। कार्यालय वर लेने अथवा छुट्टी लेने को दसा में खोली जायेगी। कार्यालय वर लेने अथवा छुट्टी लेने को दसा में खोली जायेगी।

क्र. सं/लॉट नं.	वर्क का नाम	वर्क की अनुमानित लागत (लक्ष में ₹)	वर्क करार की तिथि (लक्ष में ₹)	वर्क पूरा करने की अवधि	निविदा प्रारंभ का मूल्य व जीएसटी/सीटी (लक्ष में ₹)	टेंडरिंग के बंधुकर की शर्तें
1						

सीक्रेटरी की प्रस्तावना में

1	जौनपुर-महली-बुद्धन मार्ग(जिला मार्ग) के किमी 2 से 27 एच 29(150) का सामान्य मरम्मत के साथ नवीनीकरण का कार्य।	520.00	10.40	8 माह	₹ 5590.00	₹
---	---	--------	-------	-------	-----------	---

निविदा से सम्बंधित निम्न/वर्क लेना विकल्प <http://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है।

- विना ऑफ वारंटिटी में लगाई गई दूर जीएसटी/सीटी को ओरेंट हेतु लगाई नहीं है।
- कोविड-19 के संक्रमण को रोकने के सभी उपाय अपनाते हुए ही समस्त कार्य समाप्तित किये जायेंगे।
- निविदा ऑनलाइन दिनांक 14/02/2024 से दिनांक 22/02/2024 अपरान्ह 12:00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है। उक्त निविदा की तकनीकी बिड दिनांक 22/02/2024 को 12:30 बजे खोली जाएगी तथा ई निविदादाताओं की वित्तीय बिड कार्यालय आदेशानुसार निर्धारित समय, दिनांक एवं स्थान पर खोली जाएगी।
- निविदा से सम्बंधित अधिक जानकारी वेब साईट <https://etender.up.nic.in> पर उपलब्ध है।

(राजेंद्र कुमार)
अधीक्षारी अभियन्ता
प्रान्तीय खण्ड, लो.नि.वि.
जौनपुर

(एसकेके सिंह)
अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
जौनपुर-गाजीपुर वृत्त, लो.नि.वि.
जौनपुर

UP-203027, Dt. 11.02.2024
Website : www.upgov.nic.in

MADHYA PRADESH ROAD DEVELOPMENT CORPN. LTD.
(Govt. of M.P. Undertaking)
45-A, Arera Hills, Bhopal-462011, Phone : 0755-2527290/2765205, Fax : 0755-MPRDC 2527643, Website : www.mprdc.gov.in, CIN : U45203MP20045G0016758
NIT No. 14637/641/MPRDC/Procu/2024 Bhopal, Date : 09.02.2024

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

Madhya Pradesh Road Development Corporation Limited (MPRDC) Bhopal invites online tenders for following works.

S. No.	Name of Work	PAC/APC (in Cr.)	Bid Security (EMD) (in Lakh)	Cost of Bid Document (in Rs.)	Period of Completion (including Rainy Season)
1.	Construction of International level Sports Complex (Phase-II) at Nathu Barkheda, Bhopal in the State of Madhya Pradesh	376.93	50.00	50,000/-	24 Months
2.	Construction of 2-Lane Flyover cum ROB at Sagar-Vidisha Road from Buntly Nagar to Ahimsa Vihar Nagar in Vidisha City in the State of Madhya Pradesh on EPC Mode.	43.67	43.67	50,000/-	24 Months
3.	Construction of 2-Lane Road Under Bridge (RUB) Between 1000 Bedded Hospital and J.A.H. on Aamkhokampoo Road in Gwalior City in the State of Madhya Pradesh on EPC Mode.	16.13	16.13	50,000/-	18 Months
4.	User Fee Collection on Bhopal Bypass Road in the State of Madhya Pradesh.	56.00	28.00	50,000/-	12 Months
5.	User Fee Collection on Mhow-Ghatabillod Road in the State of Madhya Pradesh.	28.35	14.18	50,000/-	12 Months
6.	User Fee Collection on Sagar-Damoh Road in the State of Madhya Pradesh.	21.53	10.77	50,000/-	12 Months
7.	User Fee Collection on Asta-Kannod Road in the State of Madhya Pradesh.	5.13	5.13	20,000/-	24 Months

The dates for purchase, submission, etc. are mentioned in the key dates. Tender forms can be purchased online only upto 15:30 hrs. on 14.03.2024 from website www.mptenders.gov.in. The bidders have to submit the Technical bid as well as Financial Bid online only. The Addendum/Corrigendum (if any) shall only be published on the website of www.mptenders.gov.in. If holiday is declared by Govt. of M.P. on the date of opening, the same will automatically be shifted to subsequent working days.

MPRDC reserves the right to accept/reject any/all tenders without assigning any reason thereof. M.P. Madhyam/113734/2024

MANAGING DIRECTOR



OPINION

The
Hindustan Times
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

Fiscal federalism at a crossroads

Centre should engage with southern states' concern over funds allocations

Protests by governments of three southern states — Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu — have brought to the fore the growing tensions in India's fiscal federalism contract. These states are not the first to raise the issue of what they allege is growing discrimination by the Narendra Modi government in the disbursement of central funds to non-BJP-ruled states. The facts of the case are more in shades of grey than black and white.

The share of states in the Centre's gross tax revenues has been lower than what the 15th Finance Commission recommended in its formula. But this is on account of some of central taxes being out of the divisible pool on account of special cesses and duties. Also, overall transfers from the Centre to the states — the data is unambiguous on it — have increased rather than decreased over time including under the Modi government. This is a result of the increase in transfers for other central grants such as centrally sponsored schemes.

Why are the states complaining then? The Centre's tightening of what in essence are political conditionalities on such transfers (in most cases they involve mandatory attribution of these schemes to the Prime Minister) could be one such factor. The anger of the non-BJP state governments on this count is not very difficult to understand.

What is troubling, however, is the fact that some southern (and also richer) states are taking out this anger in a different direction and are beginning to question the well-established principle of giving a bigger share of central taxes to poorer states even if a bigger share is collected from the richer states. Such a sentiment, if it is allowed to gain ground, can create large-scale discord in India's fiscal federalism framework. Whether or not it is justified — one can always argue that the economic prowess of the richer states is more a function of India's overall economic and political stability than a state-specific thing — is beside the point. The more important task at hand is to ensure that such a feeling is not allowed to gain political legitimacy.

Doing this will require a statesman-like approach rather than browbeating the proponents of such demand by using a brute parliamentary majority. In fact, the latter is more likely to alienate them further. This will be one of the biggest challenges facing the newly constituted 16th Finance Commission. Politics must facilitate this process rather than obstruct it.

Bulldozer justice is politically fraught

The local administration has a lot to answer for the violence that killed five in Haldwani in Uttarakhand last week. Violence erupted after authorities demolished a madrasa and mosque, allegedly built on government land. The ownership of the land is disputed, and the high court is set to hear the matter on February 14. The administration should have waited for the court to settle the matter instead of hurriedly carrying out the demolitions.

Last week's incident did not take place in a vacuum and should not have caught the administration by surprise. Uttarakhand has been restive for some time now. Last year, there were calls for the boycott and expulsion of Muslims from Uttarakhand over an alleged case of love jihad. A mass eviction from railway land in Haldwani following a high court order in 2022, had led to protests by the residents, mostly Muslims. The current demolitions have coincided with the passage of the uniform civil code Bill (UCC) in the Uttarakhand legislative assembly. The UCC is perceived by many as an instrument to target Muslims, who constitute 14% of the state's population.

Besides, demolitions by municipal authorities have acquired a political colour, especially in BJP-ruled states. The demolition of property by state agencies is now perceived by many as a symbol of administrative high-handedness and vindictiveness towards Muslims. In Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and most recently, in Mira Road, Mumbai, the local administration was accused of sending in bulldozers as a response to suspected crises of law and order: Use of bulldozers to demolish property belonging to Muslims involved in protests had earned UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath the moniker of "bulldozer baba". In this context, the administration needs to be careful how it proceeds with municipal actions, however fair and legitimate they may be, especially with general elections around the corner. And, no leniency shown to lawbreakers.

Making sense of the Islamabad mandate

A govt with doubts around its legitimacy makes it difficult to be optimistic about Pakistan in the short-term

What precisely the Pakistan election results mean will long be debated. That Imran Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)-backed candidates who contested as independents would do so well has belied virtually all pre-poll assessments. It should also shock the complacency of analysts who posit linear outcomes based on simplistic principles that the Pakistan military controls everything.

Notwithstanding all the pre-poll pressures on Khan — imprisonment, debarment from politics, convictions — and on the PTI, as well as the numerous credible reports of actual rigging in many constituencies, the fact remains that the overall results broadly reflect the sentiments on the ground. Whether the election was free and fair now appears less important than the fact that it has delivered a generally credible outcome against all odds.

PTI-backed independents are clearly the single largest bloc in the candidates declared successful for the National Assembly. Perhaps, if Khan had not been barred from contesting and his party allowed to campaign, he would have easily been the leading contender to become prime minister again. But

what happens now is less clear. The Pakistan Muslim League (Nawaz) (PML-N) is now technically the single largest party, followed by the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) and they may well form a coalition government with the support of smaller parties and by leaching away some independents. It can reasonably be expected that this will now be the favoured option for the military as it will seek to consolidate its supporters in the face of this setback. Other permutations and combinations are also possible depending on how the independents will behave and the extent of their loyalty to Khan and the PTI.

At the provincial level, the results are a mixed bag. In Sindh, the PPP will form the government again as expected. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the independents backed by the PTI are preponderant and can be expected to form the government in some manner once it is decided how they will act together in the absence of a party to unite them. In Punjab, the picture is similar to, and as confused as, the one at the national level. Here too some kind of coalition will have to be improvised. Perhaps the effort of the PML (N) will be to lure as many PTI-backed independents as possible to its side. But the moral victory rests with the PTI and what this means politically is that a certain chronic instability can be predicted.

Khan and his supporters may well contest the results on the grounds that even with all the pre-poll manipulations against them, the result would have

been a landslide in their favour but for the polling being rigged. There are numerous reports of counts being delayed and results not announced to enable outcomes to be distorted and fixed. Yet, the results — even with their distortions — at their most general level clearly vindicate the view that at the grassroots there is a latent anti-military sentiment and political success comes to those who successfully harvest it as Khan did this time. Sharif's party and his own standing suffered because they had moved away from their quarter-century-long opposition to military position to being in concert with it this time.

Secondly, the view that Khan has nurtured a near cult-like following clearly has substance. The imprisonment and the convictions he has faced have buttressed his reputation. While other PMs, including Sharif, have been treated as cavalierly in the past by the military as they have treated Khan this time, the fact is he has exhibited an intensity of defiance that was qualitatively new and that further burnished his reputation. While instances of dogged but quiet resistance to military inroads into civilian domains exist in Pakistan, examples of public and upfront defiance are much less common. Khan's behaviour after his dismissal resembled, in many ways, the public defiance of the then chief justice Iftikhar Chaudhry in 2007. The protests that then followed had meant the beginning of the end of the General Musharraf era.



TCA Raghavan

Thirdly, the younger generation of voters — and Pakistan has a prominent youth bulge — find Khan's political style a contrast to the tired and time-worn slogans of his opponents. Finally, these results do show how difficult it is getting for Pakistan's military to reorder Pakistan's politics in the way it wants. Perhaps it is easier to deal with a few political leaders than with large public constituencies with charged-up electorates frustrated and agitated at the tailspin they see the country in with its mounting economic, political and security problems. It is a different matter whether Khan's tenure as PM made any real advance in addressing these issues. The point is he has successfully used the downside since his removal in April 2022 to create a strong narrative of domestic and foreign conspiracies targeting him so that Pakistan could be controlled by vested interests. The military's efforts to counter this narrative evidently proved ineffective.



PTI supporters marching in Peshawar.

REUTERS

What of the future? At the conceptual level these results certainly assert the strength of the political sphere in Pakistan, and the capacity of its political class and civil society to assert themselves and to defend and expand their space even in opposition to the military. Such assertion and expansion of the political sphere cannot but be a good thing for Pakistan in the medium- and long-term given the dominance of the

military for long periods and the major negative consequences that have emerged from its highly securitised approaches to a whole host of issues.

In the short-term, the picture is more negative. The results mean another bout of coalition governments that require constant support of the military and which otherwise have diminished credibility. Such governments are not unusual in Pakistan. Khan himself headed such a government after the 2018 election when the PML (N) was forced out. The difference is that at that time the PML (N) saw that the cards were stacked against it and accepted the situation. Khan and his charged-up support base are unlikely to do so now.

At the very least this means further prolonged instability in Pakistan with a heightened possibility of further and intensified civil-military conflicts. The military remains, regardless of this result, a major decision-maker in Pakistan. Yet the impact of this blow to its public credibility will be felt in numerous ways. Most of all, given the myriad problems Pakistan confronts, a government without a clear mandate and with a question mark around its legitimacy means in the short-term it is difficult to be optimistic about Pakistan.

TCA Raghavan is a former high commissioner to Pakistan.

The views expressed are personal

Ramachandran was an artist with an epic vision

A set of small but exquisite etchings were the first works of art I saw of A Ramachandran (1935-2024) way back in the early eighties. In a group show of a few artists at the gallery of Kerala Kala Peetom in Kochi, those works invited me into the world of Ramachandran. They were a set of prints based on the short stories of Saadat Hasan Manto.

Those days, like some of Manto's stories, the works of Ramachandran gripped us due to their grotesque and morbid feel. Ramachandran was shouting all his anger and spitting fire as an artist who could not tolerate the languishing social life through his mural-scale canvases that predominantly featured faceless, wobbling, muscular human bodies. Reds, yellows, and browns dominated the pictorial space of the artist because those are the colours evocative of the strongest effects of the human ordeal. However, from such morbidity and grotesqueness, Ramachandran moved to the lyrical, tender, and smoothening pictorial language developed to delineate age-old Indian narratives and stories.

While modern Indian art was limping after various international movements, Ramachandran has not wavered. He remained true to his strong convictions in his figure-based paintings. While most of the artists in India were struggling to find their personal idioms in pictorial language, Ramachandran stood firm on his ground, looking directly at the people he was fascinated with and delineating them according to a visual language that he forcefully inherited from various mural traditions.

Literature was the premise on which Ramachandran created his entire visual oeuvre, but his training in Carnatic music and art under his teachers Benode Behari Mukherjee and Ramkinker Baij at Shantiniketan miraculously transformed his pictorial imagery into something somewhat idiomatic and integrated. For him, drawing was the forte with which he could easily move from miniature works to large-scale murals. In other words, the extraordinary range of Ramachandran's art begins from postal stamps to large-scale murals several metres long.

However, over the years, the painter in him listened to the sounds of the musician in him, and that allowed him to move away from geometrically designed compositions to organic, swirling, and ornamental lines that decided the mood of his paintings. Slowly, blues and greens started enriching his palette in place of his earlier loud yellows and reds.

When he attempted sculpture, the visual language became totally different. They acquired a stark, solid, iconic imagery despite the meticulous rendering of flora and other designs superimposed on them. His Gandhi sculpture is more of a symbolic representation of Gandhi as a person than a portrait. The elongated human fig-

ures he cast in bronze do not extend themselves into space but impose an iconic presence with their monumental solidity.

Further, his versatility in handling mediums such as drawing, etching, painting, and sculpture enabled him to play with the content and form of his works. Rajasthan, its village life, its people, the bright, myriad colours of the dresses women wear, and its landscapes are the visual sources Ramachandran returned to for developing a language that speaks in epic dimensions. Yes, that is the phrase one has to use to describe Ramachandran's works of art. His works are of epic dimensions. It is only natural that he conceived his works on a mural scale because he had a lot to narrate as if he were a novelist in the world of visual art.

Whether his early works, such as *Kali Puja* (1972), *End of the Yadavas* (1973), or some of the later period works titled *Yayati* (1982-86), *The Birth of Palash Tree* (1993), or *The Ritual Resurrection* (2013), their monumentality in execution, seriousness of the theme, as well as his personal interpretation of myths, elevate them to a grand vision. For such a grand scheme of pictorial narration, he consciously assimilated the figural and structural conventions used by Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Benode Behari Mukherji, and the traditional muralists of Kerala.

The more one looks deep into the works of Ramachandran, the more enchanting and intriguing they become. From the mythical beings, flora and fauna, costumes, ornaments, self-portraits, tools, and figures in various perspectives, birds, bees, dragonflies, monkeys, and various insects invariably appear on his canvases. Thus, the pictorial space becomes a networked arena of forms that take our eyes to every inch of the painted area. Though at a later stage, he had done many paintings devoid of human figures, exploring the idea of a lotus pond and embellishing the painted surface in a decorative vein, he was primarily a figurative painter.

The drawings of human beings, animals, and nature and the realist renderings he tried are academically correct, exposing the dexterity of his hand and a keen eye for natural forms. But when he used them in his works of art, particularly paintings, with the use of brilliant and unusual colour schemes, he transported the realistic or naturalistic undercurrents of his drawings to the level of fantasy. *Yayati*, his best-known painting, for instance, with its bold and bright colours, endured the ordinariness of the illustrative idiom the painter took recourse to. Here, Ramachandran's shrewdness as a painter worked, as he knew the colour scheme of his choice altered the mundane into the otherworldly.

What is left behind by this artist par excellence, who was honoured with innumerable recognitions, is a huge legacy of art and scholarship, which he inherited from his great teachers in Santiniketan and what he could impart to his students as a professor and professor emeritus at the Jamia Millia Islamia University, Delhi, as well as his writings on art and his in-depth research into the mural tradition of Kerala. Moreover, he single-handedly brought Ravi Varma back as an artist of discourse potential in our times with a large exhibition of his works and conducted a seminar on them at the National Museum, New Delhi, while he was chairman of Kerala Lalitha Kala Academy.

M Ramachandran is an art critic.
The views expressed are personal

{ BENJAMIN NETANYAHU } ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER

We're going to do it (invade Rafah city). We're going to do it while providing safe passage for the civilian population so they can leave.

{ STRAIGHTFORWARD }

Shashi Shekhar



In democracy, consensus essential to push agendas

Three major developments from last week have the potential to affect how the country moves forward. The first was the adoption of a Uniform Civil Code (UCC) in Uttarakhand, within three days of which, Union home minister Amit Shah offered a blueprint for pan-India adoption of the code. The second development was that of south Indian states approaching Delhi for a fair share of taxes. The third was Uttar Pradesh chief minister (CM) Yogi Adityanath claiming rights over the sacred sites of Mathura and Kashi. Amid these developments, another development hit the headlines: The Centre released a white paper in Parliament on the so-called economic mistakes committed by the United Progressive Alliance government. Before even the release of this white paper, the Opposition issued a "black paper" on the incumbent government's decisions during its decade-long rule.

Obviously, we have reached the season of the Lok Sabha elections, and many such developments can be expected. Coming back to the UCC, you may recall that when it was proposed during Prime Minister Modi's first term, it took the entire country by storm. Along with it the national register of citizens (NRC) was also proposed. The minorities felt this was a means to ostracise them. A wave of protests followed, with some violent clashes with police at several locations, in which 65 people were killed.

Long sit-ins were staged at Shaheen Bagh in New Delhi and other parts of India, providing the western media with grist for their mills. But Covid-19 quelled these agitations, and the government, too, decided it was best to put the NRC on hold, taking a cue from the failure of the Prafulla Kumar Mahanta government's experiment in Assam in the 1980s with terrible results.

But that doesn't mean NRC has been abandoned. Also, numerous states have shown an interest in adopting the UCC. In Uttarakhand, an innovative method was employed to get the code implemented. Despite the National Law Commission's refusal, Uttarakhand CM Pushkar Singh Dhami formed a committee chaired by former Supreme Court justice Ranjana Prakash Desai, which gave its justifications a legal basis. This will eventually happen in other states as well.

But it would be better if all the parties likely to be affected by the code are taken into confidence

first. This has not been done till now, which is why objections are being raised. In a democracy, consensus is just as crucial as the desire to fulfill one's agenda.

Now we'll look at the demands of southern states. They are not alone in voicing concerns over their fair share of taxes. Many other states have raised such demands. West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee raised the same complaint just a few days earlier. But how right are those who make these demands? They are aware that taxes collected from the public do not go into anyone's pockets. The Centre requires finances to fulfil hundreds of essential tasks, including defence, infrastructure development, and digitisation. The entire country benefits from these services delivered by the Centre, rather than just a state.

The question arises here whether the CMs of the southern states are worried about the Prime Minister's growing popularity and the Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign beyond the Vindhyas. You may recall that Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah raised the issue of Hindi versus Kannada at the end of his previous tenure.

Now, let's talk about Yogi Adityanath's demand. His cabinet colleagues had already raised the demand, but the way Yogi put it in the assembly on Wednesday was notable. He said the Pandavas had requested for five villages, and we are asking for only three sites. Was he reminding us of the dangers of refusing the request of the Pandavas? Yogi is regarded as a tough and capable CM. Uttar Pradesh shed its sick-state status under his leadership. The majority may be pleased with his statement, but some may also be worried. The older generation would recall the 1980s, when a massive crowd had chanted "Ayodhya to bas jhanki hai, Kashi-Mathura baaki hai" (Ayodhya is just a glimpse, Mathura-Kashi will be next). Rashtriya Swamasevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat has stated that we do not aim to initiate a new agitation after Ram Janmabhoomi, but if Yogi has raised this demand afresh, it should be taken seriously.

Finally, coming to the white and black papers, such political dramas have occurred in the past too, particularly when elections are near. The question here is whether the days of consensus in democracy have come to an end.

Shashi Shekhar is editor-in-chief, Hindustan.
The views expressed are personal

Pakistan police warn Khan's party over 'illegal gatherings'

Final results show independents winning 101 seats, PML-N 75, the Pakistan Peoples Party 54, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement 17

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan police warned on Sunday they would come down hard on "illegal gatherings" after the party of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan urged supporters to protest alleged rigging in last week's election.

Independent candidates — most linked to Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party — took the most seats in the polls, scuppering the chances of the army-backed Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to win a ruling majority.

But independents can't form a government, and the country faces weeks of political uncertainty as rival parties negotiate possible coalitions.

PTI leaders claim they would have won even more seats if not for vote rigging. A nationwide election-day mobile telephone blackout and the slow counting of results led to suspicions the military establishment was influencing the process to ensure success for the PML-N.

"Throughout Pakistan elections were manipulated in a subtle way," PTI chairman Gohar Ali Khan told a press conference on Saturday, calling on supporters to "protest peacefully" on Sunday.

Authorities warned they would take strict action, saying so-called Section 144 orders were in place — under a colonial-era law banning gatherings of two or more people. "Some indi-



Supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan's party, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), shout slogans as they block the Peshawar-Islamabad motorway as part of their protest demanding free and fair results of the election, in Peshawar on Sunday. REUTERS

viduals are inciting illegal gatherings around the Election Commission and other government offices," said a statement on Sunday from Islamabad's police force.

"Legal action will be taken against unlawful assemblies. It should be noted that soliciting for gatherings is also a crime."

A similar warning was also issued in Rawalpindi, while AFP correspondents saw dozens of police equipped with riot gear assembling near Liberty Market in Lahore.

Khan's party defied a months-long crackdown that crippled campaigning and forced candidates to run as

independents to emerge as the winners of Thursday's vote.

Final results were announced on Sunday, with independents winning 101 seats, PML-N 75, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) 54, and the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) 17.

Ten minor parties mopped up the remaining 17 seats, with two remaining vacant.

"The results have clearly indicated that no single party possesses a simple majority to establish a government," said Zahid Hussain, a political analyst and author.

"The political future of the country from this point onward is highly uncertain."

Still, PTI leaders insist they have been given a "people's mandate" to form the next government. "The people have decided in favour of Imran Khan," chairman Khan told Arab News in an interview.

A coalition between the PML-N and the PPP — who formed the last government after ousting Khan with a no-confidence vote in April 2022 — still seems the most likely outcome.

The country's military chief told feuding politicians to show "maturity and unity". "The nation needs stable hands and a healing touch to move on from the politics of anarchy and

polarisation which does not suit a progressive country of 250 million people," General Syed Asim Munir said in a statement released Saturday.

Meanwhile, the courts in Pakistan have been flooded with petitions as candidates, mostly backed by jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's PTI, challenged the results of Thursday's general elections, alleging rigging. Most of the petitions were filed in the Lahore High Court (LHC), while two PTI-backed candidates moved the Islamabad High Court against the results, and at least three petitions were filed in the Sindh High Court.

Israel warned of disaster if its forces invade Rafah

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

GAZA STRIP: Israel's neighbours and key mediators warned on Saturday of disaster and repercussions if its military launches a ground invasion in Gaza's southern city of Rafah, where Israel says remaining Hamas strongholds are located — along with over half the besieged territory's population.

Egyptian foreign minister Sameh Shoukry said any Israeli ground offensive on Rafah would have "disastrous consequences", and asserted that Israel aims to eventually force the Palestinians out of their land. Egypt has warned that any movement of Palestinians into Egypt would threaten the four-decade-old peace treaty between Israel and Egypt.

Another mediator, Qatar, also warned of disaster, and Saudi Arabia warned of "very serious repercussions". There's even increasing friction between Netanyahu and the United States, whose officials have said a Rafah invasion with no plan for civilians there would lead to disaster.

"The people in Gaza cannot disappear into thin air," German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock said on X, adding that an Israeli offensive on Rafah would be a "humanitarian catastrophe in the making".

Netanyahu has previously



People block a highway during a protest to demand the release of the hostages taken by Hamas militants into the Gaza Strip during the October 7th attack, in Tel Aviv, Israel, on Saturday. AP

said it is impossible to eliminate Hamas while leaving four Hamas battalions in Rafah.

Despite the wave of criticism, he said he was determined to go ahead. "Those who say that under no circumstances should we enter Rafah are basically saying lose the war, keep Hamas there," he told ABC News' "This Week with George Stephanopoulos" in comments that aired on Saturday.

Hamas on Sunday warned that any Israeli offensive in Rafah would threaten talks about the release of hostages seized in the October 7 attacks.

"Any attack by the occupa-

tion army on the city of Rafah would undermine the exchange negotiations," the Palestinian militants said as Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to extend military operations.

The health ministry in the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip on Sunday said that at least 28,176 people have been killed in the besieged territory during the war between Palestinian militants and Israel. The latest toll includes 112 deaths over the past 24 hours, a ministry statement said, while a total of 67,784 have been wounded in Gaza since the start of the war on October 7, it added.



A China Coast Guard vessel manoeuvres near Philippine Coast Guard vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea, Philippines. REUTERS

PHILIPPINES ACCUSES CHINA OF DANGEROUS MANOEUVRES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

Reuters
letters@hindustantimes.com

MANILA: The Philippines' coast guard (PCG) on Sunday accused China of "dangerous and blocking" manoeuvres while its vessel patrolled near Scarborough Shoal in the South China Sea this month.

Manila's coast guard said in a statement that on a nine-day patrol near the shoal by its 97-metre vessel BRP Teresa Magbanua, four Chinese coast guard (CCG) vessels had shadowed the boat more than 40 times.

Four Chinese maritime militia vessels were also present near the shoal, the PCG said.

The Chinese embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment on the accusations. The embassy was shut for the weekend.

Located within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone (EEZ), Scarborough shoal is also claimed by China, making it one of Asia's most contested maritime features and a flashpoint for flare-ups.

The PCG said its vessel was in the area to protect Filipino fishermen "from further harassment" in their traditional fishing ground.

"The CCG vessels performed dangerous and blocking manoeuvres at sea against BRP Teresa Magbanua four times, with the CCG vessels crossing the bow of the PCG vessel twice," it said, adding that the Chinese vessels had "recklessly" disregarded international rules on preventing collisions at sea.

Trump: Would 'encourage' Russia to attack Nato allies who don't pay up

Agence France-Presse
letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: White House hopeful Donald Trump said on Saturday he would "encourage" Russia to attack members of Nato who had not met their financial obligations, his most extreme broadside against the military alliance he has long expressed scepticism about.

With US lawmakers debating new aid for Ukraine ahead of the second anniversary of Russia's invasion, the former president has repeatedly said it was unfair to commit the United States to defending Nato's 30 other member nations.

Speaking at a campaign rally in South Carolina on Saturday, Trump described a conversation with a fellow head of state at an unspecified Nato meeting.

"One of the presidents of a big country stood up and said, 'Well, sir, if we don't pay, and we're attacked by Russia, will you protect us?' I said, 'You didn't pay, you're delinquent?'"

"No, I would not protect you.



Former president Donald Trump speaks at a 'Get Out The Vote' rally in Conway, South Carolina, on Saturday. AP

In fact, I would encourage them to do whatever the hell they want. You got to pay. You got to pay your bills."

Trump's remark comes after Senate Republicans on Wednesday rejected a bipartisan bill that would have included sorely needed new funding for Ukraine, plus aid for ally Israel,

along with reforms to address the US-Mexico border crisis.

The White House hit back at Trump's assertions, touting President Joe Biden's efforts to bolster alliances around the globe.

"Encouraging invasions of our closest allies by murderous regimes is appalling and

unhinged," White House spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement on Saturday night. "Rather than calling for wars and promoting deranged chaos, President Biden will continue to bolster American leadership," Bates added.

'Deportation operation'
The Senate bill's death highlighted Trump's iron grip on the Republican Party, as its lawmakers acceded to the former president's calls to torpedo any deal in order to deny Biden a win on immigration ahead of November's election.

At the rally on Saturday, Trump celebrated the collapse of the legislation, vowing that, if re-elected, he would carry out a massive "deportation operation" on his first day in office.

"Let's not forget that this week we also had another massive victory that every conservative should celebrate. We crushed crooked Joe Biden's disastrous open borders bill," Trump declared at a rally in South Carolina.

Russian drones target nine Ukrainian regions

Associated Press
letters@hindustantimes.com

KYIV, UKRAINE: Russian forces launched 45 drones over Ukraine on Sunday in a five-and-a-half-hour barrage, officials said, as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky continued the reshuffle of his war cabinet as the war enters its third year.

In a statement, the Ukrainian air force said it had shot down 40 of the Iranian-made Shahed drones over nine different regions, including on the outskirts of the country's capital, Kyiv.

The five-and-a-half-hour attack targeted agricultural facilities and coastal infrastructure, officials for Ukraine's southern defence forces wrote on Telegram. They said that a strike in the Mykolaiiv region had injured one person, sparking a fire and damaging nearby residential buildings.

Another person was injured in Ukraine's Dnipropetrovsk region when a blaze broke out

due to falling debris from a destroyed drone, said the head of the region's military administration, Serhiy Lysak.

The strikes come as Zelensky continues his shakeup of military commanders in a bid to maintain momentum against attacking Russian forces.

Kyiv announced on Sunday that former deputy defence minister Lt Gen. Alexander Pavlyuk would become the new commander of Ukraine's ground forces. The post was previously held by Col Gen Oleksandr Syrskyi, who was named on Thursday as the replacement for Ukraine's outgoing military chief, Gen Valerii Zaluzhnyi.

New presidential decrees also named Yurii Sodal, the former head of Ukraine's marine corps, as the new commander of Ukraine's combined forces; Brig Gen Ihor Skibiuk as commander of Ukraine's air assault forces; and Maj Gen. Ihor Plahuta as commander of Ukraine's territorial defense forces.

AL SHABAB CLAIMS ATTACK IN SOMALIA THAT KILLED 4 EMIRATI TROOPS, 1 SAUDI OFFICER

DUBAI: The Al Qaeda-linked militant group Al Shabab claimed an attack that killed four Emirati troops and a Bahraini military officer on a training mission at a military base in the Somali capital, authorities said on Sunday.

The attack on Saturday targeted the troops at the General Gordon Military Base in Mogadishu. Details about the attack and whether it killed others remained scarce on Sunday, though Somali President Hassan Sheikh Mohamud offered his condolences to the UAE for the loss of its troops.

Early on Sunday, the UAE's state-run WAM news agency reported the killing of three of its troops and the Bahraini officer in a "terrorist act", without elaborating. A fourth later died en route back to the Emirates.

Anwar Gargash, a senior Emirati diplomat, offered condolences to those killed and a quick recovery for the wounded.

"No treacherous act will prevent us from continuing the message of security and safety and combating extremism and terrorism in all its forms," Gargash wrote on X, formerly Twitter.

The military of Bahrain, an island nation in the Persian Gulf off the coast of Saudi Arabia, later acknowledged the death of its officer in a statement posted to Instagram.

Al Shabab claimed the attack in a statement online, alleging it killed multiple people involved in the Emirati military effort. It described the UAE as an "enemy" of Islamic Shariah law for backing the Somali government in its efforts to battle Al Shabab. ASSOCIATED PRESS

Russia closes prez race candidate registration with Putin, 3 others

Reuters
letters@hindustantimes.com

MOSCOW: Russia's registration of candidates for the March presidential election has closed, TASS reported on Sunday, with a list including President Vladimir Putin, who is expected to win, and three politicians who all support Moscow's war in Ukraine.

The list did not include the Russian anti-war candidate Boris Nadezhdin after the Central Election Commission (CEC) barred him on Thursday from running, saying it had found flaws in the collection of signatures required for the support of his candidacy.

The CEC registered Vladislav Davankov, deputy chair of the Russian Duma and a member of the New People caucus; Leonid Slutsky, the leader of the Krem-

lin-loyal ultra-nationalist Liberal Democratic Party (LDPR); and the Communist Party nominee, Nikolai Kharitonov.

Putin, 71, who has chosen to run as an independent rather than as the candidate of the ruling United Russia party and who has been Russia's paramount leader since 2000 and controls all the state's levers, is expected to easily win next month's vote.

While nobody has expected the 60-year-old Nadezhdin — who has characterised Putin's war in Ukraine as a "fatal mistake" — to win, his trenchant criticism has surprised some analysts. The Kremlin has said it does not see him as a serious rival to Putin.

Nadezhdin said on Thursday he would challenge the CEC's decision in Russia's Supreme Court.

{ HOLLYWOOD } AHEAD OF OSCAR AWARDS NEXT MONTH

Christopher Nolan wins directors' award for 'Oppenheimer'

Agence France-Presse
letters@hindustantimes.com

LOS ANGELES: *Oppenheimer* was named the best film of the year by Hollywood's directors on Saturday, boosting expectations that Christopher Nolan's long wait for success at the Oscars could soon be over.

The British director — who is renowned for making commercially successful, complex blockbusters, but has not always received love from awards voters — won the top prize at the Directors Guild of America (DGA) Awards in Los Angeles.

"The idea that my peers would think I deserve this means everything to me," said Nolan, of his film about the invention of the atomic bomb. Nolan had been nominated four times previously for the top accolade from the DGA, but had failed to win for *Memento*, *The Dark Knight*, *Inception* or *Dunkirk*.

He will now be hoping he can break a similar losing streak next month at the Oscars, where he has lost all five of his previous nods.

Nolan lavished praise on his filmmaking team for bringing his hugely ambitious visions — including a jaw-dropping replica of the first atomic bomb test — to life over the course of his career.

"People say 'Christopher Nolan destroyed a real plane' and 'Christopher Nolan blew up a building,' or whatever," he said. "Sorry, chaps! It's all down to you and your teams. And you were never more on your game than making *Oppenheimer*."

Eighteen of the past 20 DGA winners have gone on to also win the Oscar for best director that same year. This year's Academy Awards take place on March 10.

The other directors nominated by the DGA for its top prize this year were Martin



British-US director Christopher Nolan poses in the press room during the 76th Directors Guild of America awards at the Beverly Hilton in Beverly Hills, California, on Saturday. AFP

Scorsese (*Killers of the Flower Moon*), Greta Gerwig (*Barbie*), Yorgos Lanthimos (*Poor Things*) and Alexander Payne (*The Holdovers*).

Nolan will go head-to-head with Scorsese and Lanthimos again at the Oscars, but notably not Gerwig, whose apparent snubbing by the Academy as director of blockbuster feminist satire *Barbie* caused outrage.

The DGA prize for best movie went to another Oscar best picture nominee — Celine Song's *Past Lives*.

Best documentary went to *20 Days in Mariupol*, which portrayed in harrowing detail the arrival of war to a Ukrainian city that became one of the Russian invasion's bloodiest battle sites — all captured by video journalists under siege.

"Today, my hometown was bombed and seven people got killed, three of who are children. So it is a sad day," said director Mstyslav Chernov.

"At the same time, I recognise the power of cinema... when those people run from the bombs that are falling on them, they sit in the basements, to cope with their fear, they watch films."

The DGA Awards also honour television. *The Last of Us* won the prize for best drama series episode, and *The Bear* won in comedy.

FPIs bet on debt market

Driven by inclusion of Indian govt bonds in JPMorgan Index and stable economy

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) continued their bullish stance on the country's debt markets with a net infusion of over ₹15,000 crore so far this month, on the back of inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JPMorgan Index along with relatively stable economy.

This followed a net investment of ₹19,836 crore in January, making it the highest monthly inflow in more than six years. This was the highest inflow since June 2017, when they infused ₹25,685 crore.

On the other hand, foreign investors pulled out more than ₹3,000 crore from equities during the period under review. Before this, they withdrew a massive ₹25,743 crore in January, data with the depositories



FPIs net invested ₹19,836 crore in January, the highest monthly inflow in more than six years.

MINT

showed.

"The main trigger for this divergent trend in equity and debt is the high valuation in the Indian equity market and the rising bond yields in the US," V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist, Geojit Financial Services, said.

Himanshu Srivastava, associate director—manager research, Morningstar Investment Research India, attributed the outflow from equities to the uncertainty surrounding the

interest rate environment, both domestically as well as globally.

According to the data, FPIs made a net investment of ₹15,093 crore in the debt markets in this month (till February 9). With this, the total investment by FPIs reached over ₹34,930 crore in 2024. FPIs have been injecting money in the debt markets for the past few months.

FPIs infused ₹18,302 crore in the debt market in December, ₹14,860 crore in November, and ₹6,381 crore in October.

"The Indian debt markets witnessed a reversal in FPI flow trend last year after the announcement of inclusion of Indian government bonds in the JP Morgan Index. This was one of the major drivers for the robust flows from FPIs, along with relatively stable economy," Srivastava said.

JPMorgan Chase & Co. in September last year announced that it will add Indian government bonds to its benchmark emerging market index from June 2024.

This landmark inclusion is anticipated to benefit India by attracting around \$20-40 billion in the subsequent 18 to 24 months.

This inflow is expected to make Indian bonds more accessible to foreign investors and potentially strengthen the rupee, thereby bolstering the economy, he added.

Overall, the total FPI flows in 2023 stood at ₹1.71 lakh crore in equities and ₹68,663 crore in the debt markets. Together, they infused ₹2.4 lakh crore into the capital market.

Govt used 68% of revised budget allocation till Dec

Rhik Kundu

rhik.kundu@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: A large number of Union ministries had utilised only about two-thirds of their revised budgetary allocations for 2023-24 in the first nine months of the financial year.

The actual total expenditure between April and December was ₹30.41 lakh crore, against the revised allocation of ₹44.90 lakh crore for 56 ministries, the Union finance ministry said in a statement in response to questions in the Rajya Sabha last week. Among those with large allocations, the railways, and road transport and highways ministries utilised up to 85% of its allocation.

The ministry of railways, which was allocated ₹2.43 lakh crore for FY24 as per the budget's revised estimate, had spent ₹2.08 lakh crore till 31 December. The ministry of road transport and highways spent ₹2.28 lakh crore of its ₹2.76 lakh crore



The road transport and highways ministry utilised up to 85% of its allocation.

HT

allocation. But other ministries used up far less.

The consumer affairs, food and public distribution ministry till December utilised about 64% of its budgetary allocations for FY24, the education ministry about 46%, and the ministry for micro, small and medium enterprises about 23%.

Experts, however, say a large chunk of expenditure of central government ministries and departments happens in the final

quarter of a fiscal year, with payments for various projects and schemes cleared during the period.

"The payment or funding for a lot of projects usually happens in the last quarter of the fiscal year," said N.R. Bhanumurthy, vice-chancellor at Dr B.R. Ambedkar School of Economics University, Bengaluru. "There could also be savings (from) better utilisation of schemes and projects."

Other ministries with high allocations, such as finance and rural development, also have been measured in their spending.

According to the expenditure profile for 2024-25 in the latest budget, the expenditure of various central government ministries and departments under budget estimates stands at ₹47.66 lakh crore for the next fiscal year, up from the revised estimate of ₹44.90 lakh crore for FY24. The estimated revenue expenditure for FY25 is ₹36.55 lakh crore, and for capital expenditure ₹11.11 lakh crore.



Direct tax collections till February 10 stand at ₹15.60 lakh crore.

NET DIRECT TAX COLLECTION HITS 80% OF REVISED FY24 TARGET

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Net direct tax collection so far in current fiscal year 20% year-on-year (y-o-y) to ₹15.60 lakh crore, which is 80% of revised budget estimates for full fiscal year.

"The provisional figures of direct tax collections continue to register steady growth. Direct tax collections up to February 10, 2024 show that gross collections are at ₹18.38 lakh crore, which is 17.30% higher than the gross collections for the corresponding period of last year," Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement.

Direct tax collection, net of refunds, till February 10 of FY24 stands at ₹15.60 lakh crore, which is 20.25% higher than the net collections in the corresponding period last year.

This collection is 80.23% of the total revised estimates of direct taxes for 2023-24.

Refunds amounting to ₹2.77 lakh crore have been issued during April 1, 2023 to February 10, 2024.

Gross revenue collections for corporate income tax (CIT) and personal income tax (PIT) also showed a steady growth.

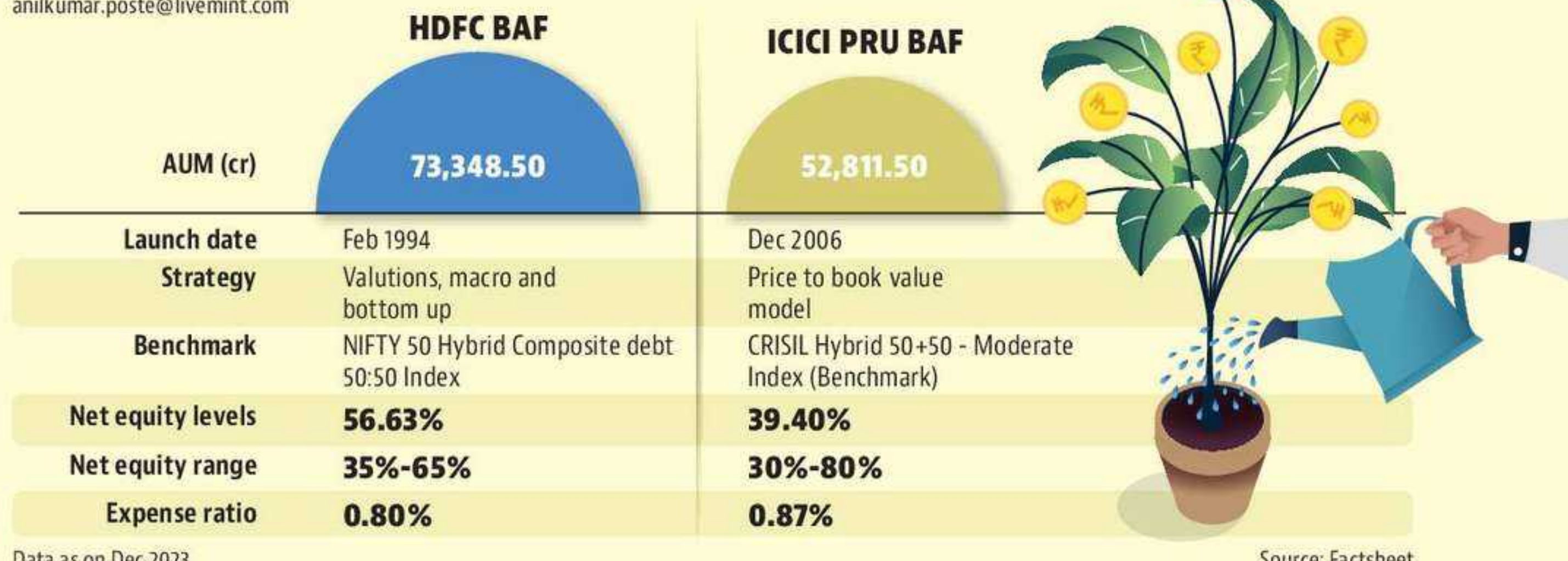
Growth rate for CIT was 9.16% while for PIT, it was 25.67% (PIT only).

After adjustment of refunds, the net growth in CIT collections was 13.57% and that in PIT was 26.91% (PIT only), it added.

ICICI Pru BAF vs HDFC BAF

Navigating the complex landscape of mutual funds, investors often seek stability coupled with growth potential. Balanced Advantage Funds (BAFs) offer a compelling blend of equity and debt exposure, adapting to market dynamics. Examining two major players, HDFC BAF and ICICI Pru BAF, unveils distinct strategies and performance metrics. HDFC BAF demonstrates higher returns, particularly during bullish phases, while ICICI Pru BAF excels in managing risks, historically delivering smoother performance. Choosing between them hinges on individual risk tolerance and market outlook, where data-driven insights guide investment decisions.

Compiled by Anil Poste
anilkumar.poste@livemint.com



Data as on Dec 2023

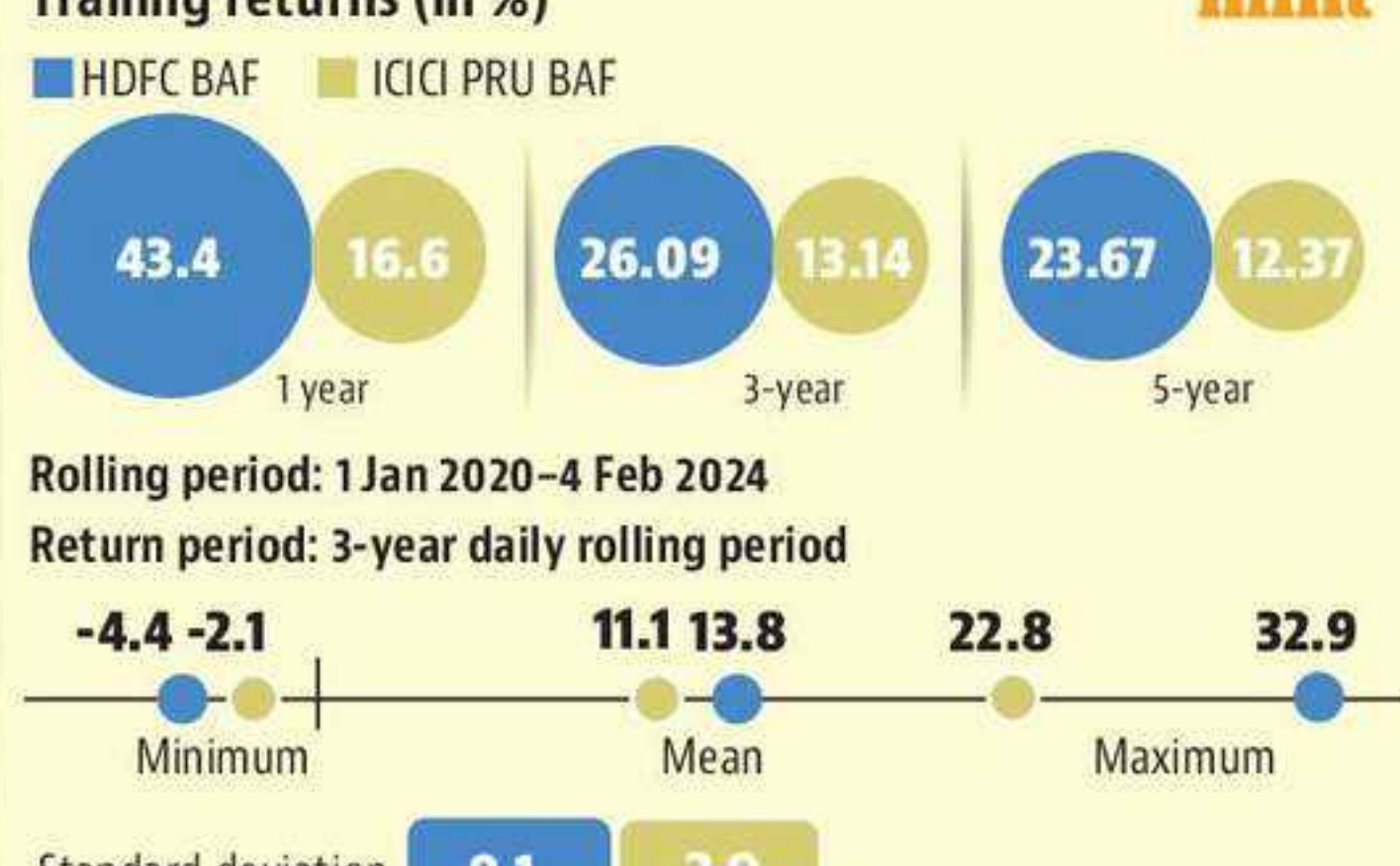
P2P returns (in %)



*Less than 1 year absolute returns, greater than 1 year compound annualized returns

Quants	HDFC BAF	ICICI PRU BAF
Equity component		
Sharpe ratio	0.4	1.1
Standard deviation	3.3	5.1
Beta	1.2	0.6
Portfolio turnover ratio	0.13	0.28

Trailing returns (in %)



Source: Fisdrom Research as on 4 Feb 2024

ICICI PRU BAF net equity levels vs Sensex



Data as on 31 December 2023

HDFC BAF net equity levels vs Sensex



Source: AMC Product Presentation
Graphic: Paras Jain/Mint

Red Sea crisis may impact costs: Maruti Suzuki

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Maruti Suzuki may see some increase in costs due to the rerouting of vessels amid the ongoing Red Sea crisis, according to a senior company official.

The auto major, which exported around 2.7 lakh cars last calendar year, however, noted that it does not expect the issue to have a very big impact on the company's overseas shipments.

"We are seeing some logistical challenges because of the Red Sea issue. And there may be some increase in costs because of risk or because of rerouting of vessels but it should not be significant," Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) executive officer (corporate affairs) Rahul Bharti said in



Maruti Suzuki aims to export at least 7.5 lakh units by the end of this decade.

REUTERS

an analyst call.

The lead time of dispatches might change, and there may be some uncertainty in vessels coming and picking up their consignments, among others, he noted.

That is a small issue, which is quite common in the export business, Bharti said.

Red Sea strait is crucial for 30% of global container traffic and 12% of global trade. About 80% of India's merchandise

trade with Europe passes through this route.

The situation around the Babel-Mandeb Strait, a crucial shipping route for traders connecting the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to the Indian Ocean, has escalated due to attacks by Yemen-based Houthi militants since December 2023.

Because of this, the shipping costs have jumped, and the consignments are taking more time to reach Europe and the US, as the ships are taking the Cape of Good Hope route, encircling Africa. Maruti Suzuki has set an aim to export at least 7.5 lakh units by the end of this decade, Bharti said.

Africa is turning out to be a good market, and for several reasons, the Middle East region has picked up quite well recently, he

noted.

The government is also signing some FTAs, where the company might get some relief in duty, Bharti said.

He noted that the automaker is also gearing up to commence production of battery electric vehicles (BEV) this year.

The first model, a mid-sized SUV, would be exported to Japan and Europe while catering to the domestic market.

"In addition to serving the domestic market, this mid-SUV segment product will be exported to developed markets, such as Japan and Europe," Bharti said. Elaborating on the model, he noted that the mid-sized SUV would be bigger in size than the Grand Vitara and come with a range of around 550 kilometres.

'COMMISSIONING OF INDIA-ASSISTED REFINERY BY 2026 IN MONGOLIA'

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Mongolia's ambassador to India Dambajav Ganbold has said the India-funded greenfield oil refinery project in South Gobi is on track and will be operational by 2026.

However, he acknowledged some delays from the Indian side in delivering products for the refinery plant.

"Of course, there are some delays from the Indian side in delivering the products, but overall, the project is progressing well," he told PTL. "It is crucial for our relations, and we eagerly look forward to its completion."

With a \$1.2 billion line of credit announced by India during PM Narendra Modi's visit to Mongolia in 2015, the refinery's construction has been delayed by 1.5 years due to covid-19.

"The work on the refinery project is going well. Because of covid, it has been delayed by one and a half years. We believe that it will be operational by 2026," Ganbold said.

The refinery aims to reduce Mongolia's reliance on Russian oil imports. Upon completion, it will have a capacity of 30,000 barrels per day or 1.5 million tonnes annually.

IBA pitches investing ₹30,000 cr for compressed biogas plants

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Indian Biogas Association (IBA) has recommended an investment of ₹30,000 crore for machinery and equipment required for biomass supply to compressed biogas (CBG) plants to ensure 12 million tonne per annum (mtpa) of LNG import reduction.

"Utilising agricultural residues like paddy straw for bioenergy production and soil enrichment instead of burning those offers a dual benefit as it provides renewable energy sources while enhancing soil health," said IBA chairman Gaurav Kedia. However, he pointed out that there are obstacles to procurement, such as unappealing economics, which makes farmers prefer to burn rather than sell off the field straw promptly.

Due to the low density of straw, which increases the



India's crops generate 754 mt of total biomass.

HT

expenses associated with its collection, storage, and transportation, he stated, "Improving logistics is not a feasible solution. Government intervention is essential to encourage the adoption of necessary equipment, such as subsidising combine harvesters capable of efficiently gathering straw." Additional support for balers and storage units will make efficient transportation and storage possible, Kedia noted.

He suggested that the govern-

ment should also release the operational guidelines for crop residue management to provide financial assistance for the procurement of crop residue management machinery, establish custom hiring centres, create a supply chain for crop residue/paddy straw and promote awareness on crop residue management.

As per the ASCI (Administrative Staff College of India) study on the assessment of biomass potential in India, India has a total crop production area of 198 million hectare (MHa) with a total crop production of 775 million tonnes, generating 754 million tonnes of total biomass and 230 million tonnes of surplus agricultural residue.

With this investment, the government will be able to ensure a smooth substrate supply for CBG plants, which would attract an investment of ₹170 thousand crore.

Nearly ₹750 crore stuck in Qatar projects, says Voltas

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: Tata Group firm Voltas is facing a major headwind in Qatar as around ₹750 crore has been stuck due to delays in the realisation of overdue receivables and execution timelines, said its managing director (MD) and CEO Pradeep Bakshi.

In some projects, bank guarantees were "unethically" encashed by some contractors, which was an "uncalled" action to make quick money, derailing the international project business of Tata Group firm in the December quarter, he added.

"Unprecedented things are happening in that area, especially in Qatar, wherein, unfortunately, our dues are not being paid to us timely, and inordinate delays are happening. We have completed the project and handed it over, and despite that, payments are not made," Bakshi told PTL.

Voltas has already approached the Indian govern-



Delays in realisation of overdue receivables and execution timelines led to this.

HT

ment for help on the issue and also approached the Embassy in Qatar.

MEP (mechanical, electrical, and plumbing) contractor Voltas has completed the projects in Qatar and handed them over as per the contract. However, its bills are not getting certified and paid. "There has to be some basic ethics when you do business with your partners... Unfortunately, our payments are not coming.

"The total gross outstanding is close to ₹750 crore. There is an additional exposure of ₹375 crore in bank guarantees," Bakshi said.

Most of the projects are getting over in the last six to seven quarters, and Voltas is incurring huge losses because of this, which is uncalled for, he noted.

In the December quarter, Voltas reported a net loss of ₹27.60 crore, which was on account of the Electro-Mechanical Projects and Service segment, which reported a loss of ₹120 crore. In FY23, Voltas had to make a provisioning of ₹106.43 crore over the cancellation of the contract and encashment of bank guarantee. "Voltas is having this with multiple customers, including Sidra Medical and Research Centre, North Gate Mall, Commercial Boulevard Development etc," said Bakshi.

Voltas has a long history of more than four decades in project business, and this is the first time in the last few quarters (around 1.5 years) that it is facing such headwinds, mainly on account of Qatar, he added.

SPORT

Shooter Divyansh dismantles, reassembles to find his mark

Shantanu Srivastava

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Watching a shooter go through his drills can be boring and bemusing. The subtle tilts of the neck, the super slow motion in which the arm comes down in perfect alignment with feet apart precisely for balance—the nuances can be hard to follow for non-experts watching. Divyansh Singh Panwar would be fooling around with fellow shooters, but when it is time to shoot, the transformation to begin the meditative process is immediate.

Days before the Indian squad's departure for the Grenada World Cup, Divyansh was all poise and perfection at Delhi's Karni Singh Shooting Range. He positions himself ten feet away from the firing station and does dry shooting—aligning his arm with the target without holding the weapon. He slips into the puffed costume, strapping on his jacket, fixing the eyepiece and tightening the shoelaces. All the shenanigans are worth it when one looks at the series the 10m air rifle shooter achieves: 10.6, 10.7, 10.8. This gradual progression towards perfection is, in a way, indicative of Divyansh's redemption story that's still growing. Three years back, Divyansh went to the Tokyo Olympics as a long-haired 18-year-old world No.1, world record holder and a top medal contender. He finished 32nd at the Akasa Shooting Range, a shock that required him to retreat for a two-week vipasana course in Rishikesh.

In the period leading up to last month's World Cup in Cairo where Divyansh won his first senior World Cup gold medal with a world record score, the now

Divyansh's career highs

AGE: 21 | DISCIPLINE: 10M AIR RIFLE | CURRENT WORLD RANK 1

Events since Tokyo Olympics (INDIVIDUAL EVENTS ONLY)



*Note: India have already won a maximum of two Olympic quotas in 10m air rifle through Rudranksh Patil and Arjun Babuta. The two Paris bound shooters will be identified following a selection trial.

21-year-old has worked on various aspects of his game. A pronounced arched back in his stance is a lot straighter, he shoots with a new rifle and has worked on his timing. And that's just the technical part.

With no wins post Tokyo, retaining belief in his abilities was the biggest challenge, says national coach Suma Shirur.

"We can't teach shooters to shoot at this stage. It is all about little, often invisible, changes that make all the difference," she says.

For Divyansh, the changes stand out. His stance with an arched back worked very well in his early years, but the Indian coaching staff felt it affected his shooting in close competitions.

"The arched stance worked very well for him at domestic level but in pressure situations when your body begins to get tense, it puts extra stress on the lower back, which begins to affect concentration," she says. The process to tweak his stance began soon after Shirur took charge of the

senior rifle team in 2022.

"At times, it is tough to convince a shooter that whatever has been working for him till that point needs to change. It helped that Divyansh was all ears." The work began with 1mm change every month. The muscle memory honed over years of practice takes time to undo. In Divyansh's case, it is an ongoing process.

The next step was his weapon. A year back, the Indian rifle contingent tried out Austrian-made Steyr rifles. All but Divyansh

reverted to their previous rifles. "It's a lot about feel. He felt the weight distribution and trigger feel were better. Remember, he was not doing too well at that stage, so persisting with a new weapon needed courage."

Divyansh then went to the Hangzhou Asian Games in a star-studded squad and guided India to a men's team gold. The individual medal still eluded him. He finished eighth in qualification after coming back from a poor start but with compatriots Rudranksh

Patil and Aishwary Prapat Singh Tomar having made the final ahead of him, he had to sit out. A maximum of two shooters from a country shoot in the final.

"It was disappointing, but I guess I need to get better. All I can say is I will come back stronger," a crestfallen Divyansh had told HT in Hangzhou as he watched China's Sheng Lihao take gold with a then world record score of 253.3.

"It is easy to compare his performance pre- and post-Tokyo, but he was a teenager then and is an adult now. The physical growth should also be taken into account," Shirur says. Divyansh now stands taller and broader, and in a sport decided by millimetres, every tiny change counts. "The results in pre-21 age-group and post-21 may vary a lot simply because your body changes so much. Also, there are a lot of emotional changes that affect your breathing pattern."

Indian coaches worked on his timing—the time a shooter takes from completing a shot to exhaling and shooting again. Coaches reckoned that Divyansh was taking too long and that gap allowed doubts to creep in during tense finals. "We started working on his body language, which is why you'll see him strutting around confidently, irrespective of the results."

The shooting team now heads to Grenada, Spain where Divyansh's new approach will again be put to test. Having made a successful return to form in the Olympic year, the stage is set for a contest between Divyansh, Patil, Arjun Babuta and Tomar for the two Paris tickets.

Ravi Ashwin lauds Jasprit Bumrah's Himalayan feat

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

CHENNAI: Lavishing praise on teammate Jasprit Bumrah, senior India off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin said "Boomball" stole the show in the second Test against England and the pacer reaching top of the ICC rankings across three formats is a "Himalayan feat".

Bumrah displayed brilliance with the ball to play a key role in the team's series-leveling 106-run win in the second Test in Visakhapatnam. He put up a reverse swing master-class in England's first innings that yielded him six wickets (6/45), following it up with a three-wicket haul in their second essay for match figures of 9 for 91.

His performance enabled him to jump to number one in the Test rankings list, becoming the first Indian pacer to achieve the feat. Bumrah has also held the top spot in the ODI and T20 rankings previously.

"The real show stealer was Boomball. Jasprit Bumrah has bowled extraordinarily," Ashwin said on his YouTube channel. "He is the leading wicket-taker with 15 wickets and also the No.1 ranked Test bowler. The first India fast bowler to achieve number one across all formats. I am a big fan of his and this is a Himalayan feat." Ashwin said that the extraordinary win and

energy on the fourth day of the second Test helped India secure a favourable result.

"We came into the fourth day with it all being even-stevens. But our extraordinary vibe, energy and team performance helped us level the series 1-1. The five-match series will be played across Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Rajkot, Ranchi and Dharamsala and Ashwin noted that most Indian players have not played Test cricket at these venues.

"There's never been a marquee Test series like this in five such venues before. In 2017, we played Australia in Dharamsala and Ranchi and then Pune and Bengaluru.

Usually, if there is a 4-5 match Test series at least one or two happen in metro cities. Unlike that, this time it's happening in venues that weren't part of World Cup matches."

For most of the Indian players, these venues are new. There are a lot of players playing in our team who haven't played a first-class or Test match in Vizag stadium.

"I'm not sure that is possible in any other country. But possible in India as there are so many Test venues.

"So the home familiarity goes missing in these cases. Of course, they would have played IPL, T20 or ODI but in red ball, the familiarity surely makes a difference."



He is the leading wicket-taker with 15 wickets and also the No.1 ranked Test bowler. The first India fast bowler to achieve number one across all formats. I am a big fan of his

R ASHWIN, India spinner



Priyanshu Rajawat is currently ranked world No.28.

Rajawat's success mantra: Full focus, half smashes

Sandip Sikdar

sandip.sikdar@htlive.com

NEW DELHI: Since Priyanshu Rajawat versus HS Prannoy was an all-India affair, no coach sat courtside during the Round 2 match at the BWF India Open here last month. In the stands, coaches Parupalli Kashyap and RMV Gurusaidutt sat together, keenly observing the action unfold.

Though the senior Prannoy won, it wasn't before Rajawat had pushed his fellow Thomas Cup champion the distance in a 76-minute battle. "He really is a star of the future," said Kashyap, former world No.1 K Srikanth's coach.

Rajawat, 22, is being hailed as the next big thing in Indian badminton, likely to take on the mantle once Prannoy and Srikanth retire.

Hailing from Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, Rajawat picked up the sport aged five following his elder brother Kunal. Both were sent to the Pulella Gopichand Badminton Academy in Gwalior where Gopichand identified Rajawat's talent and took him to the main centre in Hyderabad.

After winning titles in juniors and lower-tier senior events, the son of a photocopy shop owner got a huge fillip as part of the 2022 Thomas Cup winning team. Though he had a minor role—Rajawat played and won one match—the learnings watching his seniors win the historic title went a long way in grooming him. "The exposure was immense," said 2014 Com-

monwealth Games champion Kashyap, who also coaches Rajawat at the academy.

The outcome was that Rajawat reached his first final on the BWF Tour at the Odisha Open in Cuttack before losing to compatriot Kiran George. But he didn't have to wait long for his first BWF World Tour title when he won the 2023 Orleans Masters.

Though a back injury through the latter half of 2023 stopped him from showing his true potential, the Gopichand protege has done enough to overtake most of his compatriots to break into the top 30 in the world. He is currently No.28, behind No.7 Prannoy, No.19 Lakshya Sen and No.24 Srikanth.

"My speed is my strength. Everyone cannot play at such high speed. My attacking game gives me an advantage too. The combination gives me the belief to earn points in any situation against anyone. I am also improving my defence," says Rajawat.

A facet in Rajawat's game that marks him out from others is his half-smash. Unlike many who hammer down bullets or jump smashes Rajawat saves his energy by largely employing deceiving half-smashes, good enough to win a number of points.

"I don't smash that much. My half-smash is strong enough. Everyone cannot do it. Only the half-smash of a few like (Olympic champion) Viktor Axelsen is very strong. Most players use the full smash to win points," he

added. While Rajawat is aware of his strengths, he must conquer a few weaknesses too to progress.

"He has the speed and quality of strokes, which is impressive. But he needs to be consistent. With a game like that, it is not very easy. If he gets consistent, he could be there (at the top) for a long time as he has the weapons. He's had some big wins but has been up and down quite a bit. The quicker he stabilises, the better it'll be for him," said India chief coach Gopichand.

Rajawat humbly accepts his flaws. "Sir is right. I am focusing on my mindset. Many a time, after winning I think that the next round will be easier and take things lightly. I have to fix that. Gopi sir tells me that consistency will come with focus," he says.

To improve his focus, which Rajawat hopes will also improve his consistency, he has been doing meditation for the last two years. Rajawat performs breathing exercises and regularly practices yoga nidra—a state of consciousness between waking and sleeping, taught to him by Gopichand.

A fan of Lin Dan, Rajawat yearns to control games like the Chinese master by increasing his patience level to win the big games. The youngster also has a realistic chance of qualifying for the Paris Olympics. "It is not too far away. I want to qualify for the Olympics," said Rajawat, who likes to watch movies or play cricket on Sundays.

Jude Bellingham brace helps leaders Real Madrid crush title second-placed Girona

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

MADRID: Jude Bellingham struck twice as leaders Real Madrid took control of La Liga with a punishing 4-0 win over second-placed Girona on Saturday, opening up a five-point cushion.

Vinicius Junior drove home the opener and then set up Bellingham for the second as Carlo Ancelotti's side dominated the Catalan minnows, leaving the surprise title contenders reeling.

Bellingham tapped in the third after the break from close range but limped off with an ankle problem early in the second half.

Rodrygo kept the goals flowing with a fine individual effort as the record 35-time Spanish champions taught Girona, in the top flight for only the fourth year in their history, a compelling lesson.

Victory leaves Madrid 11 points clear of champions Barcelona, third, who host Granada on Sunday.

"Jude is a star, he scores a lot of goals and I hope he can keep going," Vinicius told Real Madrid TV.

"Jude has been the best this season, we're doing things well and we're happy because we're a family."

Real Madrid coach Ancelotti reserved high praise for Vinicius, a constant thorn in



Real Madrid's Jude Bellingham celebrates after scoring against Girona at the Santiago Bernabeu. AFP

Girona's side.

"When he plays like this and with this attitude, he's the best in the world, in my personal opinion," said the Italian.

Madrid's triumph was convincing, with swagger but also sweat to keep the league's top goalscoring side quiet, despite significant injury absences.

Ancelotti started with a makeshift central defensive

pairing of Dani Carvajal and Aurelien Tchouameni, with all four of the club's specialists in the position out.

"Today we beat the world record for centre-back injuries," joked Ancelotti.

Girona were without the suspended Daley Blind and Yangel Herrera, as well as coach Michel Sanchez, watching on helplessly from a high vantage point as his

team were dismantled.

"When you face opponents of such a level, it lets you see what your reality is, a bit," admitted Michel, who said his team were still having an "incredible" season despite the result.

They started well against Madrid but conceded early in a thorough 3-0 home defeat in September, and committed the same mistake again at the Santi-

ago Bernabeu. This time Vinicius broke the deadlock in only the sixth minute, cutting in from the left and bending a vicious strike beyond Paulo Gazzaniga and in at the far post.

Bellingham, who started the match level with Girona's Artem Dovbyk on 14 goals as the league's joint top scorer, doubled Madrid's lead.

The England international rounded Gazzaniga and then stroked home from a tight angle after a superb Vinicius pass sent him hurtling in on goal.

Bellingham tapped in his 16th of the season in La Liga early in the second half after Gazzaniga could only tip Vinicius' shot into his path.

It was his last contribution, Ancelotti quickly withdrawing him afterwards for an ankle injury which he iced.

Madrid face RB Leipzig in the Champions League on Tuesday and will hope he is fit, after Bellingham reached 20 goals in 29 games across all competitions.

However Los Blancos have plenty of other firepower if he needs to rest.

Rodrygo rattled in the fourth after darting into the area as Girona collapsed—and perhaps their unlikely title bid has too.

"All games are (important), but this one was a bit more so," Rodrygo told Real Madrid TV.

"I'm very happy, it was a special moment for me, my 50th goal... it was a perfect game for us."

Liverpool leapfrog City to reclaim top spot

Agencies

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

LONDON: Liverpool returned to the Premier League summit with a hard-fought 3-1 win against relegation-threatened Burnley on Saturday after champions Manchester City briefly replaced them at the top.

The Anfield side are hunting a record-equalling 20th English top-flight title in Jurgen Klopp's final season in charge but once again have relentless City snapping at their heels.

Liverpool were not at their fluent best against Vincent Kompany's men but did enough to get over the line on what Klopp called a "super difficult" day.

City, who had earlier beaten Everton 2-0, are two points behind Liverpool with a game in



Man City's Erling Haaland celebrates after scoring against Everton at the Etihad stadium on Saturday. AP

hand as they chase an unprecedented fourth consecutive English top-flight title.

The Reds were gifted the lead when Burnley goalkeeper James

Trafford failed to claim the ball from a Trent Alexander-Arnold corner and Diogo Jota headed home his ninth Premier League goal of the season.

But they were pegged back just before half-time when Dara O'Shea powered a bullet header past Liverpool goalkeeper Caoimhin Kelleher, replacing Alisson Becker, who was missing with an illness.

Liverpool, playing in front of a record league crowd at Anfield of nearly 60,000 after a ground expansion, were a different proposition after the break and got their reward when Luis Diaz headed them back in front in the 52nd minute.

The visitors had several inviting chances to equalise before Darwin Nunez's header from Harvey Elliott's cross secured the vital win.

"It's not only the three points," Klopp told the BBC. "You cannot have momentum guaranteed all the time."

"Nine days ago we played incredible against Chelsea then we lost to Arsenal. It's always a different challenge. If it's not clicking straight away, fight through it."

"It was really tough today but the boys fought through and got three points."

Earlier, Erling Haaland scored his first goals since November as Manchester City topped the table for the first time since November.

Pep Guardiola's team laboured to break down the stubborn visitors at a nervous Etihad Stadium but Haaland struck twice late in the second half.

They are his first goals since returning from an absence of nearly two months due to a foot injury.



Honda BigWing
PRESENTS

CB350

**BOLD
ALONE
BOLDER
TOGETHER**



Range starts @ **1.99*** Lakh

To know more scan the QR code or give a missed call at: **+91 9958223388**



*Terms and Conditions are applicable. Special price in select states only. *Applicable on selected cards. Limited Period Offer. Creative visualisation, actual product may vary from the image shown. All features and colours may not be a part of all variants.

Get an instant bonus upto ₹12,800*/- on Ex-showroom (Including Taxes)

Cashback upto ₹5,000*/- through pinelab machine#

WELCOME TO THE WORLD OF CB LEGACY

Honda BigWing
—EXCITES THE WORLD—

For more details: **Agra:** Honda BigWing Agra Central: 9837091982, 8192800075; **Ayodhya:** Geeta Honda: 9721153131, 9792313131; **Azamgarh:** Honda BigWing Azamgarh South: 9151824502, 9151824501, 8188054966; **Bareilly:** Honda BigWing Bareilly East: 8979712268; **Ghaziabad:** Honda BigWing Ghaziabad Central: 8826427979, 8826417979; **Kanpur:** Honda BigWing Kanpur South: 6389010555, 6389036555; **Meerut:** Honda BigWing Meerut South: 9520971338, 9520893425; **Noida:** Honda BigWing Noida Central: 8448443076, 9871555737; **Saharanpur:** Honda BigWing Saharanpur Central: 9927700015, 9927700069; **Varanasi:** Honda BigWing Varanasi Central: 8052081666, 7068335505, 9369128242.