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At 5.1% in Jan, retail inflation at 3-month low; factory output at 3.8% in Dec

AANCHAL MAGAZINE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

RETAIL INFLATION slipped to a three-month low of 5.1 per cent in January primarily due to lower food prices after having risen to a four-month high in December, data released by the National Statistical Office (NSO) on Monday showed. Separately released data by the NSO showed that the factory output, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), rose to 3.8 per cent in December from 2.4 per cent in the previous month, but was lower than 5.1 per cent in the year-ago period.

The retail inflation rate, based on Consumer Price Index (CPI), slowed in January after having risen for the previous two months. While it marked the 52nd month of retail inflation staying above the 4 per cent mark in the 4+/- 2 per cent band of medium-term inflation target set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), the core inflation — non-food, non-fuel segment — fell to a 50-month low of 3.6 per cent in January.

Economists said the continued fall in core inflation indicated that RBI's monetary policy tightening is having an impact but elevated food inflation continues to be a worry. "This (core inflation) is a 50-month low and suggests that RBI's monetary policy is still tight," said a senior economist. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

IN CUSTODY SINCE AUG 2022; HANDED DEATH PENALTY, LATER COMMUTED

Qatar frees eight former Indian Navy men, PM will go to Doha tomorrow

7 have returned, appreciate Emir's decision to enable release: Govt

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

MORE THAN three months after they were sentenced to death, eight former Indian Navy personnel have been released from custody in Qatar and seven have returned to India.

This was announced by the Ministry of External Affairs in the early hours of Monday. Hours later, Foreign Secretary Vinay Mohan Kwatra said Prime



Some of the former Indian Navy personnel after their arrival in New Delhi early Monday. PTI

Minister Narendra Modi will travel to Qatar on February 14 and meet Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, after completing his visit to the UAE that starts Tuesday.

Relieved families hailed the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Families got news once men had boarded flight home, say 'grateful to PM'

RITIKA CHOPRA & SHAJU PHILIP
NEW DELHI, KOCHI, FEB 12

FAMILY MEMBERS of the eight former Indian Navy personnel, in Qatari custody since August 2022, were informed of their release by the Indian government late Sunday after they had boarded flights to return home. Of the eight, only Commander Purnendu Tiwari, whose **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

EXPLAINED
E. The road via Doha

WHILE THE release of the eight men and the PM's decision to travel to Doha underline the behind-the-scenes effort, it also charts the course for a new chapter in India-Qatar relations, more so because Doha is a key player in the Middle East.



Barricades being put up at Delhi's Ghazipur border on Monday. Praveen Khanna FARM PROTEST 2.0, EXPLAINED, P 17

Talks inconclusive, Punjab farmers to set out for Delhi today

Consensus on some issues, others need permanent resolution: Minister Munda

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, FEBRUARY 12

TWO YEARS after they forced the Centre to repeal three farm laws before ending their year-long protest at Delhi's borders, Punjab farmer unions announced late Monday night that farmers would set out for the Capital at 10 am Tuesday to press their demands, including a legal guaran-

tee of minimum support price (MSP) for crops.

The decision to march to Delhi - 'Dilli Chalo' - was taken after marathon talks in Chandigarh remained inconclusive, the farmer unions said.

Samyukta Kisan Morcha (non-political) convenor Jagjit Singh Dallewal and Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee coordinator Sarwan Singh Pandher were **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Ashok Chavan latest to quit Cong, says no call yet on joining BJP

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 12

IN ANOTHER setback to the Congress in Maharashtra, former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan quit the party on Monday and re-signed as MLA too. Amid speculation that he would join the BJP, Chavan said he had not taken any decision yet.

This is the third big exit from the state Congress unit in less than a month. Last month, former Union minister Milind Deora quit the party to join the Shiv Sena led by Chief Minister Eknath Shinde. Last week, former Congress MLA Baba Siddique joined the NCP led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar. AICC in-charge for Maharashtra Congress, Ramesh



Chavan after resigning from the Congress, in Mumbai on Monday. Sankhadeep Banerjee

Chennithala, has called an urgent meeting of all senior party leaders in Mumbai on Tuesday afternoon. The party fears that a **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

MORE REPORTS
PAGE 8

RLD confirms: Will join NDA, faced injustice in INDIA bloc, pride at stake

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

ENDING SPECULATION, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief and Rajya Sabha MP Jayant Chaudhary on Monday confirmed that his party would join the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

Speaking to reporters at the party office here, after paying tribute to his father and party founder Ajit Singh on his birth anniversary, Chaudhary said: "I have spoken to all my party MLAs and workers, and have taken this decision after speaking to them. There has been no big planning behind the decision, it is not like **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

GOVT & POLITICS

GOVERNOR DELIVERS 'SHORTEST' ADDRESS IN TAMIL NADU PAGE 9

SENTHIL BALAJI RESIGNS AS TN MINISTER PAGE 9

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Easy win for Nitish as 3 RJD MLAs, 'missing' JD(U) MLAs surface on his side

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, FEBRUARY 12

THREE RJD MLAs crossed over to the NDA while five absent JD(U) MLAs turned up with just a few minutes to go for voting, helping Chief Minister Nitish Kumar win the trust vote easily on Monday with 129 votes in his favour. There was no vote against, as the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Bihar CM Nitish Kumar outside the Assembly in Patna on Monday. ANI

Haldwani: Police station to come up at site, accused told to pay Rs 2.44 crore

AVANEESH MISHRA
HALDWANI, FEBRUARY 12

UTTARAKHAND CHIEF Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Monday announced that a police station would be built at the spot in Nainital's Haldwani city where the demolition of a mosque and a madrasa, which authorities said were built on government land, led to violence



Clear message from our govt: CM Dhami

in which five people were killed and several injured.

The main accused in the case, Abdul Malik, was served a notice **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

It's sunny side up when a community of solar physicists unites to help, bust myths

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ANJALI MARAR
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 12

WHILE RELOCATING from Finland's University of Helsinki to NASA's Goddard Space Flight Center (GSFC) for her second post-doctoral studies in January 2023, solar physicist Anshu Kumari, 32, felt the absence of a support group within the scientific community when she




Around 50 INDUS members met recently at the 42nd meet of the Astronomical Society of India in Bengaluru. INDUS

needed help with a software. The challenges she faced sowed the seeds of the Indian Network for Dynamical and Unified Solar (INDUS) Physicists in her mind. Starting with a humble WhatsApp group, team INDUS launched a website on August 15 last year. Their online presence has only grown since then.

The voluntary initiative is led by Indian researchers pursuing PhD, postdoctoral studies and young scientists working in the field of solar and heliospheric **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

A STAR ALLIANCE MEMBER

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● Ashok Chavan latest to quit Cong

few more MLAs will join Chavan — four-five names are already doing the rounds.

"It is my personal decision to quit the party and I am not a person who will make my grievances public. I have been with the Congress since birth and, till yesterday, I worked for the Congress honestly. But now it is time to look for other options," said Chavan, who attended the Maharashtra Congress core committee meeting on Sunday afternoon.

Asked about his next move, amid speculation that he would be fielded by the BJP for the upcoming Rajya Sabha elections, Chavan said he had not taken a decision yet and was not aware about the BJP's working style with regard to giving RS tickets. "I have not spoken to any MLA to join me. I am not going to criticise anyone," he said. Chavan's decision comes days after the BJP-led government tabled a 'white paper' in Parliament on the economy under the Congress-led UPA government, which also mentioned the Adarsh housing society case. "Adarsh housing society scam: This case involved irregularities in allotment of apartments in a defence land project. It is at the trial stage," the white paper said. Chavan stepped down as CM in 2010 for his alleged involvement in the Adarsh case.

On Monday, Chavan said his decision to quit the Congress was not linked to the white paper. There has been speculation

about Chavan's exit from the Congress for a few years now. In July 2022, Chavan and 11 other MLAs did not turn up for the trust vote sought by the Eknath Shinde-led government. They later claimed that they got caught in traffic. In June 2022, when crossing cost the Congress Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council seats, fingers had been pointed at Chavan. Congress sources said Chavan wanted to become the state unit president and had expressed this to the party leadership. "However, the party leadership wanted to stick with an OBC face ahead of general elections," said a senior party leader.

"The Congress has given a lot to many leaders. Today, when the party is fighting to save democracy and the Constitution, it is unfortunate that leaders who have got everything are leaving the party. Who is going where, for what? The public is watching them," Maharashtra Congress president Nana Patole said.

The BJP was cryptic about Chavan joining the party. "Many good leaders from the Congress are in touch with the BJP. The way the Congress is functioning, many of its leaders with mass base are feeling suffocated. Many of them are interested in joining the BJP. A few big leaders will definitely join the BJP in the coming days... Aage aage dekhiye, hota hai kya (wait and watch what happens)," Maharashtra Deputy CM Devendra Fadnis said.

● RLD confirms: Will join NDA

we had decided it much earlier." The RLD is a key player in western Uttar Pradesh politics.

"We had to take this decision in a short period of time, considering the situation... We are overwhelmed that the Bharat Ratna has been conferred (on Chaudhary Charan Singh)," said Chaudhary, who is the grandson of Charan Singh. On February 9, responding to PM Narendra Modi's announcement of the Bharat Ratna for Charan Singh, Chaudhary had posted on X: "Dil jeet liya". Asked then if he was joining hands with the BJP, he had said, "Dekhiye koi kasar rehti hai? Aaj mai kis muh se inkaar karoon apke iss sawal ko?" (Is there anything left? With which face can I deny this question today?).

Confirming his party's decision to join the NDA, RLD national spokesperson Mohammad Islam told *The Indian Express* on Monday: "This is final. A formal announcement will be made in a couple of days because our MLAs too have to decide about their

votes in the RS elections in UP." He said that modalities like seat-sharing were being worked out.

Asked why the RLD was leaving in the INDIA bloc, Islam said: "RLD was involved in the INDIA bloc honestly. But we changed our mind when injustice started and our pride was at stake." He said the SP wanted to field some of its candidates on the RLD symbol. While the SP had said it would give seven seats to the RLD in western UP for the Lok Sabha elections, it reportedly insisted that two of these seats would go to SP candidates to be fielded on the RLD symbol.

Though the BJP had won western UP without RLD's help in 2019, having the party on its side will strengthen its winning prospects in these Jat-dominated seats where its sitting MPs are facing anti-incumbency. "RLD support will also help us in Rajasthan and Haryana. But the biggest advantage will be the psychological blow it will deliver to the Congress and Opposition alliance before the LS elections," said a BJP leader.

● Retail inflation at 3-month low

policy perhaps is working by compressing the demand. But the headline is still higher than the targeted 4% due to higher food inflation and continues to be a worry area for RBI because it has the potential of impacting the core inflation via wage-price spiral," a note by India Ratings' Principal Economist Sunil Kumar Sinha and Senior Analyst Paras Jasrai said.

Food inflation, as measured by the Consumer Food Price Index, eased to 8.3 per cent in January as against 9.53 per cent in December and 6 per cent in the year-ago period. Urban food inflation moderated to 9.02 per cent in January from double-digit 10.42 per cent food inflation in December, while rural areas registered 7.91 per cent food inflation in January as against 8.49 per cent in the previous month. Inflation rate for the food and beverages segment, which carries a weight of 45.86 per cent in the CPI, eased to 7.58 per cent in January from 8.70 per cent in December. Cereals and products inflation marked the sixth consecutive month of decline, dropping to 7.83 per cent in January after remaining in double digits for 15 consecutive months during September 2022 to November 2023. Vegetables inflation inched lower to 27.03 per cent in January from 27.64 per cent in December, while pulses inflation rate eased to 19.54 per cent from 20.73 per cent. Miscellaneous inflation, which broadly indicates price change for services, inched lower to 3.82 per cent in January from 4.07 per cent in December. Fuel and light segment, though in negative territory, showed an uptick at (-)0.6 per cent in January from (-)0.99 per cent in December.

For the future inflation trend, economists projected a cautionary outlook for rabi harvest and thus, expect a shallow rate cut cycle by the RBI. "While rabi sowing has caught up with last year's level, reservoir storage remains well below the year-ago levels in most regions, continuing to imbue caution into the outlook for the rabi harvest... we project the CPI inflation to ease below 5% in February-March 2024, and average at 5.3% in FY2024. Thereafter, we estimate the CPI inflation at

4.6% in FY2025, broadly in line with that of the MPC, based on the assumption of a normal monsoon. The MPC's expectations around the growth outlook and its forecast that the CPI inflation will moderate while remaining above the 4% target, reinforces our view of a likely shallow rate cut cycle," Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, ICRA said. Ten of the 22 major states/UTs registered an inflation rate above the headline inflation rate of 5.10 per cent in January, with the highest rate in Odisha (7.55 per cent), followed by Telangana (6.34 per cent), Haryana (6.24 per cent), Gujarat (6.21 per cent) and Karnataka (6.11 per cent).

Ahead of the industrial output front, manufacturing, which accounts for 77.6 per cent of the weight of the IIP, grew by 3.9 per cent in December as against 1.2 per cent in the previous month and 3.6 per cent in the year-ago period. In absolute terms, it inched up to 150.6 in December from 139.2 in November and 144.9 in the year-ago period. Mining and electricity output recorded growth of 5.1 per cent and 1.2 per cent, respectively as against 10.1 per cent and 10.4 per cent in the year-ago period.

Output of capital goods — an indicator of investment — rose to 3.2 per cent in December from a 13-month low of (-)1.1 per cent in November. It stood at 7.8 per cent in the year-ago period. On the consumption front, consumer durables output, which reflects consumption demand, rose to 4.8 per cent in December from a five-month low of (-)5.5 per cent in November and (-)11.2 per cent in the year-ago period. Consumer non-durables output, which reflects fast-moving consumer goods, also improved to 2.1 per cent in December from a 13-month low of (-)3.3 per cent growth in November. "IIP growth rebounded in December, supported by a sequential uptick in the manufacturing sector. A pick up in capex growth supported infrastructure and construction goods growth. RBI and PMI surveys suggest firms remain optimistic on demand conditions in manufacturing sector," said Rahul Bajoria, MD & Head of EM Asia (ex-China) Economics, Barclays.

FROM PAGE ONE FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Qatar frees eight former Indian Navy men

efforts of the government and the personal intervention of the Prime Minister — Modi met the Qatar Emir on the sidelines of the COP28 summit in Dubai on December 1 — in securing the release of the eight men.

Kwatra too said, "Prime Minister has himself personally, constantly, supervised all the developments in this case and has never shied away from an initiative that would ensure the return of Indian nationals home." He said the Indian government is "gratified" by the decision of the Qatar Emir and the authorities.

The *Indian Express* has learnt that National Security Advisor Ajit Doval also played a big role in the release of the eight men, even making a quiet visit to Doha "to meet the relevant stakeholders". A team of officials in the MEA and PMO in Delhi and the Indian embassy in Doha also worked behind-the-scenes closely under the supervision of External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar who was leading the diplomatic strategy.

Early Monday, the MEA, in a brief statement, said, "The Government of India welcomes the release of eight Indian nationals working for the Dabra Global company who were detained in Qatar. Seven out of the eight of

them have returned to India. We appreciate the decision by the Amir of the State of Qatar to enable the release and home-coming of these nationals."

The Indians had been working in their private capacity with Doha-based Dabra Global to oversee the induction of Italian small stealth submarines U212.

They have been identified as Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasisht, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta and Sailor Ragesh.

Seven of them have returned to India and Commander Tiwari, the eighth person, sources said, will be brought back after some formalities are completed.

The eight men were taken into custody in August 2022. The charges against them were never made public by Qatari authorities. According to a report in the UK daily Financial Times, they were charged with spying for Israel.

They were handed the death sentence in October. India had called it "deeply shocking", and Jaishankar had met their family members and assured them that the government attached "the highest importance" to the case.

In addition to government efforts, the families of the eight had also submitted a mercy plea to the Qatar Emir.

On December 3, for the first time since the death sentences, the Indian ambassador in Doha had met the eight in prison. Before that, Indian officials had got consular access.

The consular access to the Indian envoy and the subsequent commutation of the death sentence followed the December 1 meeting between Prime Minister Modi and the Emir in Dubai. The two leaders had discussed bilateral partnership and the "well-being of the Indian community" living in Qatar — this was read as a euphemism for discussing the situation regarding the eight men on the death row.

On Monday, Kwatra said the Prime Minister will travel to Doha on February 14 afternoon.

During the visit, Kwatra said, "The Prime Minister will hold bilateral meetings with the Emir of His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and other high dignitaries in Qatar."

Modi had last visited Qatar in June 2016 and this will be his second visit.

"The bilateral relationship between India and Qatar that has

been steadily growing includes a comprehensive span, including political ties, trade and investment linkages, our strong energy partnership and ties in the field of culture, education and security," he said. He also recalled that following the recently concluded India Energy Week, Qatar and India signed an agreement for the supply of 7.5 mmtpa (million metric tonne per annum) LNG from Qatar to India for 20 years. He said bilateral trade between India and Qatar currently stands at roughly \$20 billion and Qatar is also a significant investor in India, across a whole range of economies.

"PM's visit to Qatar will provide an opportunity for the top leadership of the two countries to discuss ways to further deepen and strengthen our multifaceted partnership as well as exchange views on different regional and international issues of mutual importance," he said.

Before heading to Qatar, Modi will visit the UAE on Tuesday where he will hold meetings with President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and address the Indian diaspora. He will also speak at the World Government Summit and inaugurate a Hindu temple. He will return home on February 15.

● Families say 'grateful to PM'

death sentence was commuted but received the harshest punishment of a 25-year jail term, hasn't returned yet, *The Indian Express* has learned. All others landed in New Delhi in the early hours of Monday. Commander Tiwari too is expected to be back in India soon.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, a family member of one of the eight men, said, "Our veterans are back. We are immensely grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his personal intervention, and also to the Emir of Qatar for agreeing to their release. We were told about their release and journey back home once they had boarded their flights late last night."

"We don't know the details of how this was made possible, just that the Emir agreed to their release," said a family member of another among the eight men.

The family of sailor Ragesh G Kumar told *The Indian Express* that while they were hopeful the men would be released "one day", the development caught them off guard. The death sentence of Kumar, the only sailor among the eight men, was commuted to three years, the most lenient of the commuted sentences.

His father-in-law K Rajasekharan Nair said, "But for the intervention of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, their release would not have happened so fast. We hoped that one day, they all would come out, but the timing of the release was totally unexpected. We join the entire country in saluting the Prime Minister, who took up our concern with the highest authority in Qatar."

Nair said that when the verdict of the Qatar court came, awarding a three-year sentence to Ragesh, he had already completed a year-and-a-half in prison. "He could have sought bail, but the Embassy wanted to bring out all eight persons together," he said.

Recalling the early days of Ragesh's imprisonment, Nair said that everyone in the family was shattered after the Embassy in-

formed them of the arrest. But following the active involvement of the Ministry of External Affairs, they regained hope.

While in jail, Ragesh could speak with his wife twice in a week, for half-an-hour each time. This, Nair said, kept them going. Besides, she flew to Doha five or six times to meet him. All arrangements were made by the Indian Embassy — from the visa to the ticket. On reaching Doha, the Embassy took family members to the jail where the eight were lodged. "We are really indebted to the country, the External Affairs Ministry and the Prime Minister," he said.

One of the seven men who landed in Delhi told news agency ANI: "Without the intervention of PM Modi, we would not have walked free. We wouldn't be standing before you today had it not been for his untiring efforts and interventions at the highest levels to get us freedom."

One of the veterans also praised the Indian government's intervention in securing their release, saying, "We, as well as our anxious family members back home, had been waiting for this day for a long time. It all worked out because of PM Modi and his personal intervention in the matter. He took up our case with the highest levels of the Qatari government and eventually secured our release. I don't have enough words to express my gratitude to him and the Emir of Qatar."

The Indian nationals, all employees of the Doha-based company Dabra Global, were taken into custody in August 2022. While the charges against them were never made public by Qatari authorities, they were charged with spying for Israel, according to report in the UK daily *Financial Times*. They were identified as Captain Navtej Singh Gill, Captain Birendra Kumar Verma, Captain Saurabh Vasisht, Commander Amit Nagpal, Commander Purnendu Tiwari, Commander Sugunakar Pakala, Commander Sanjeev Gupta, and Sailor Ragesh.

● Easy win for Nitish as 3 RJD MLAs, 'missing' JD(U) MLAs back him

Opposition walked out before the voting.

The NDA's tally stood at 130, if the Deputy Speaker's vote was included. In the House of 243, simple majority is 122. Before the vote, the NDA claimed it had 128 MLAs with it (BJP: 78; JD-U: 45; HAM-S: 4; and Independent: 1), and the Mahagathbandhan cited the support of 114 (RJD: 79; Congress: 19; CPI(M)-Liberation: 12; CPI: 2; CPI-M: 2).

In a speech that sought to make up for the lack of numbers, Tejashwi Yadav led the attack from the Opposition side. He said the fact that the ruling alliance had to make three RJD MLAs "cross over" to the NDA to prove its majority was a "moral victory" for the party.

In his rebuttal, Nitish, among other things, accused the RJD of doing "too much Hindu-Muslim politics".

The government of Nitish Kumar was seen as jittery till just before the trust vote, as the no-confidence motion against Speaker Awadh Bihari Choudhary of the RJD that preceded it saw five JD(U) MLAs absent. But then, three RJD MLAs — Prahlad Yadav, Neelam Devi and Chetan Anand — crossed over to the Treasury Benches, amidst loud cheers from NDA legislators.

Choudhary was eventually voted out, with 125 MLAs of the NDA against, and 112 of the Mahagathbandhan in his favour, including the lone AIMIM MLA.

With this vote showing that the Nitish government was set to win his trust vote, four of the five

missing JD(U) MLAs turned up; the only exception was Dilip Rai.

Having voted as per the party whip, the four JD(U) MLAs escaped disqualification from the House. The three RJD legislators who changed sides, however, may face disqualification proceedings.

Replying to Tejashwi's charge on the NDA wooing RJD MLAs, senior BJP leader and Deputy CM Samrat Choudhary said it was the RJD that had tried to "influence its (the BJP's) five MLAs". "We will bring them to book," he said, "but you (the RJD) tried to hold them back from attending the House." He did not identify who these MLAs were.

The JD(U) earlier alleged that the RJD had tried to influence six of its MLAs.

In veiled barbs against Nitish, Tejashwi said: "I congratulate Nitish Kumar for taking oath as CM for a record ninth time, including three times in his current on-going term. But I want to know what your constraints were... You said, 'Yahan man nahin lag raha tha (You were not comfortable with us)'. But were we with you to just do a song and dance for you?"

Tejashwi claimed that he was against forming a government with Nitish in 2022 — when the JD(U) leader came over to the Mahagathbandhan after quitting the NDA — and wanted at best to lend outside support.

"But there was pressure from national leaders, more so because you announced you would fight Narendra Modi. You led the campaign (against the BJP), and if the BJP was very worried about any

state, it was Bihar. It was because of our coming together and your presence. But now that you are with them, your bhatija (nephew, referring to himself) will take up the job. We have Congress and Left parties with us," the RJD leader said.

Drawing on the Ramayana, Tejashwi added that he still saw Nitish as his Dasherath (or father figure), and it was on the JD(U) chief to identify his Kaikeyi (the one misleading him). Continuing in the same vein, he added: "I am not taking exile as Dasherath gave to Lord Ram, but I am going to the people."

Nitish, who listened attentively to his former deputy, accused RJD leaders of corruption. "Lakhon-laakh kamaa rahe the (They were minting lakhs of rupees). I will institute a probe into it," he said.

Attacking the RJD government led by Lalu Prasad, before he became CM, Nitish said: "I have been working since 2005. Before that, your party had 15 long years to rule. What could you do? People were afraid to even step out of their houses."

Significantly, Nitish also accused the RJD of communal politics. "There used to be issues because of too much of Hindu-Muslim politics from your side. You (the RJD) thought the Muslims would vote for you. It was left to me to control it when I took over as CM."

On Tejashwi's attempt to take credit for measures taken by the Mahagathbandhan government, particularly on filling up govern-

ment posts, Nitish said they were his decisions, and he left the alliance on realising the RJD was messing them up.

"I gave you two chances — Saat Nischay I and Saat Nischay II were my ideas. You endorsed them. You forcibly took the Education Department, but you started doing gadbad (wrong things). The mass appointment of teachers was a decision taken before the RJD was given the ministry. I came to learn later that you people were not doing well and hence parted ways," the CM said.

Another reason for his disenchantment with the INDIA bloc was the realisation that the RJD may "betray" him, Nitish added. "I got to learn that (RJD supremo) Lalu Prasad along with the Congress had started working against me... I held its (INDIA's) first meeting and got several parties together. I was given the job of talking to six parties, which I did. I was also in favour of giving the Congress more ministries in Bihar, as they had 19 MLAs. People used to keep asking me if things were moving (in the INDIA bloc). 'Kuchch hua ji (Is anything happening)?'... When nothing did, I came back to my old place (in the NDA) and will stay here now."

Samrat Choudhary also referred to the corruption charges against Lalu and family, including Tejashwi, asking the latter how he had amassed so much wealth at his age. "I advise you not to blame the CBI. It was during your alliance government at the Centre that the CBI arrested Lalu Prasad in the fodder cases."

● Police station at site of violence

by the Haldwani Municipal Corporation asking him to deposit Rs 2.44 crore to cover damage caused to government property during the violence.

Speaking at an event in Haridwar, Dhama said, "In Banbhoolpura (the locality in Haldwani where the demolition took place), there was a garden that had been encroached upon. That encroachment has been removed, and several acres of land was recovered. On that land, arson and stone-pelting took place, disturbance was caused, all laws were broken, and our journalist brothers were thrown into fire... From this holy bank of Mother Ganga, I announce that a police station will be built at that place."

Posting a clip of his speech on his X account, the CM also said, "This is a clear message from our government to the miscreants and rioters that no one who plays with the peace of Devbhoomi will be spared, there is no place for such miscreants in Uttarakhand."

Violence had erupted last Thursday after the administration conducted a drive during which a mosque and a madrasa were demolished in the Banbhoolpura area of Haldwani. District authorities said both structures stood on Nazool land — government land not officially mentioned in revenue records. As stones were pelted, cars torched and the local police station surrounded by a mob, the CM had issued shoot on sight orders. On Sunday, police said 30 arrests were made in connection with the violence, but the key accused, Abdul Malik, was not among those arrested.

Police have said that Malik was behind the "illegal constructions" at the Nazool land and that he also led the protests against the demolition. On

Monday, the Haldwani Municipal Corporation wrote to Malik, saying: "By attacking the teams of police and administration, your supporters have damaged, destroyed, and looted... properties of the Municipal Corporation and caused loss of government property. The above fact is confirmed by an FIR in which you have been named as an accused... According to the preliminary assessment, you have caused a loss of approximately Rs 2.44 crore by causing the incident in a planned manner."

The letter said Malik was "expected to deposit the said amount in favour of Municipal Corporation Haldwani by February 15". The amount included Rs 2.41 crore for damage to 15 vehicles and Rs 3.52 lakh for damage to equipment.

The district administration has also suspended the arms licences of 120 people in the Banbhoolpura area until further orders. It said that on the day of the violence, miscreants attacked police and administration officials with licensed as well as illegal weapons.

"Residents of Banbhoolpura had violated the conditions of the arms licence by misusing their licensed weapons, and in the future, if we run a campaign to remove encroachment from public properties, they will (again) misuse the licensed weapons. Given this possibility, the District Magistrate has suspended 127 arms licences of a total of 120 arms licence-holders till further orders. The DM has ordered the Senior Superintendent of Police to ensure the possession of the suspended weapons and weapon licences within 24 hours," a statement issued by the administration said.

● Talks inconclusive, Punjab farmers to set out for Delhi today

among those present at the meeting with Union Food and Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal, Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda and officials.

Ahead of the talks, police in Haryana and Delhi barricaded roads leading to the Capital and deployed personnel to stop the march. Emerging from the meeting, Dallewal said, "No decision was taken... Our protest will continue and we will move towards Delhi at 10 am tomorrow." "There was no new proposal. There were only old proposals. We did not want any confrontation this time. We wanted discussion on every point. But the government is not straight. It just wants to waste our time. They asked for more time. We told the government to take the decision today itself. But nothing

was forthcoming," he said.

Pandher said the government kept seeking time. "There is no consensus. They wasted five hours. There was nothing new. The main demands of the farmers were a legislation on assured MSP on 23 crops and debt waiver. But they did not move further."

Agriculture Minister Munda said they came personally to find a solution. "We came here as a representative of the Government of India. There were some issues on which we reached a consensus. There were some issues that needed a permanent resolution. We said there should be a committee," he said. "Still, we believe any issue can be sorted with dialogue. We hope we will be able to find a solution. We will keep protecting the rights of the farmers.

We are hopeful that the farmers organisations will continue with the dialogue and we will work together to find a resolution in the coming days. We still invite them for a dialogue," Munda said.

But Baldev Singh Sirsa, another farmer leader, said the government was not ready to accept any of their demands. "There was no offer. The government did not have any intention to sort out the issue," he said, adding that the meeting was inconclusive. "We put forth our demands. They went away from earlier demands also. They do not want to talk about any legal guarantee on MSP."

Ranjit Singh Raju, a farmer leader from Rajasthan, said they too will march towards Delhi Tuesday. "They offered the constitution of a committee and said

they will engage with us. This dialogue has been going on for quite some time now... Our supporters have reached Fatehgarh Sahib. They will start marching towards Delhi at 10 am tomorrow."

The meeting started at 6 pm and ended shortly before midnight. A farmer leader said they patiently listened to the Central ministers but when they found that there was no solution in sight for the MSP guarantee, they walked out of the meeting. Efforts were made to call them back but they decided not to return.

Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, who had earlier mediated the meeting between the Centre and farmers organisations, was not part of the talks Monday — he was in Ayodhya along with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

● It's sunny side up when a community of solar physicists unites to help, lead, bust myths and do more

studies who share common areas of research interests.

The "open" nature of this space seeks to encourage young researchers to discuss their scientific requirements, look for guidance from domain experts or even request a senior fellow to hold their hand during the initial days of their research. "There are occasions when budding researchers are not comfortable speaking to their guides about, say, a house, a source for scientific data or local logistics support. INDUS is a forum where they can seek help on any issue. Above all, it is a network of Indian solar physicists from around the world," said Kumari.

The solar physicist steers at least six active working groups of INDUS that handle distinct roles, starting from website and graph-

ics designing, newsletter and website content creation, scouting for regular updates from the field to updating the job database, networking, coordinating mentorship activities, organising online seminars and routing help whenever required. INDUS currently has 215 members spread across 21 countries and three continents. As researchers of the Sun who are inspired by the star itself, INDUS is alive round the clock, with its members operating from five different time zones. Team members constantly update and monitor the website content for the community. Though they have mostly been interacting online for the past six months, around 50 team members met recently for the first time at the 42nd meet of the Astronomical Society

of India in Bengaluru.

To smoothen the path for young researchers, the forum also provides mentorship to budding solar physicists. During her post-graduation days, Ketaki Deshpande, now a third-year PhD student at KU Leuven, a research university in Belgium, worked closely with Kumari, who also taught two other undergraduate students online for 1.5 years and introduced them to solar physics.

Her heart fills with pride to see the growing number of women solar physicists since she entered the field a decade ago. "When I started my integrated M.Tech-PhD programme at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics in 2013, I was the only woman researcher in the four institutes working at the Gauribidanur Radio

Observatory in Bengaluru. But now, nearly 60 per cent of INDUS members are women solar physicists," said Kumari, who is currently a postdoctoral programme fellow who works with scientist Nat Gopalswamy at NASA's Solar Physics Laboratory, GSFC.

Once a mentor-mentee pair is registered at INDUS, the team holds virtual discussions on research topics and ways to get research started, among others. Since not all researchers are experienced in public speaking or presenting their works as oral or poster presentations at seminars or conferences, INDUS organises hour-long monthly seminars. "These seminars allow researchers to gain the experience of facing an audience, albeit within their peer group, and build

confidence to answer questions before they face the audience," Kumari told *The Indian Express*.

To give back to society, INDUS fosters collaborations between members on projects and science outreach activities at local schools and educational centres. "I had once gone to a local school near the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research (IISER) in Kolkata to give a talk about my research work. The students were so excited that they left their mid-day meals unfinished and rushed to listen to my talk. That interaction taught me a lot," recalled Chitrapeed Saha, a fourth-year PhD student from the Centre of Excellence for Space Sciences India (CESSI) at IISER, Kolkata.

To publicise latest develop-

ments in the field, team INDUS also publishes two, free-for-access online newsletters every fortnight.

Going ahead, before its first anniversary, team INDUS plans to start podcasts and rope-in young faculties to hand-hold young students take baby steps in research, pass on the baton and remain active, just like the Sun.

However, their most important achievements, according to INDUS members, is busting myths, hoaxes and fake scientific developments related to astronomy, the Sun in particular.

"There is a lot of fake news related to the Sun and solar flares hitting the Earth... that scare people... INDUS aims to bust these myths with scientific facts," said Saha.



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Uttarakhand shifts its transport sector to next gear

From the Char Dham Highway Project and Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Rail Line to expansion of Pantnagar Airport and e-mobility initiatives, the state is working at full speed to improve connectivity



Uttarakhand, the picturesque state nestled in the Himalayan foothills, has embarked on a transformative journey in the realm of transportation. With a focus on improving connectivity, fostering economic growth, and ensuring environmental sustainability, the state government has launched several ambitious transport projects. These initiatives aim to enhance accessibility to remote areas, boost tourism, and create a robust infrastructure network that aligns with the region's topography and ecological considerations.

CHAR DHAM HIGHWAY PROJECT:

One of the flagship projects in Uttarakhand is the Char Dham Highway Project, a massive infrastructure undertaking aimed at improving connectivity to the revered pilgrimage sites of Yamunotri, Gangotri, Kedarnath, and Badrinath. This initiative involves the widening and upgrading of approximately 900 km of roads, providing all-weather access to these sacred destinations. The project not only facilitates smoother travel for pilgrims but also promotes tourism, contributing to the economic development of the region.

RISHIKESH-KARNAPRAYAG RAIL LINE:

Recognising the need for efficient rail connec-

tivity, the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Rail Line project has been initiated. This ambitious endeavour seeks to link the spiritual town of Rishikesh with Karnaprayag, a significant confluence point of the Alaknanda and Pindar rivers. Once completed, this rail line will not only boost tourism but also serve as a crucial transport corridor, connecting remote areas with the broader rail network and facilitating the movement of goods and people.

AERIAL ROPEWAY PROJECTS:

To overcome the geographical challenges posed by the mountainous terrain, the state government is investing in aerial ropeway projects. These projects aim to provide efficient and environmentally friendly transportation solutions, connecting remote villages and tourist destinations. A notable example is the proposed ropeway connecting Dehradun with Mussoorie, a popular hill station. Such initiatives not only reduce travel time but also minimize the environmental impact associated with traditional road construction in ecologically sensitive areas.

E-MOBILITY INITIATIVES:

In alignment with global trends toward sustainable transportation, Uttarakhand is actively

promoting e-mobility initiatives. The state has introduced electric buses in urban and inter-city transport systems, reducing carbon emissions and promoting clean energy. Moreover, the government is incentivising the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) by offering subsidies, charging infrastructure development, and creating awareness campaigns. This shift towards e-mobility not only addresses environmental concerns but also positions Uttarakhand as a pioneer in sustainable transportation.

UTTARAKHAND AVIATION POLICY: Recognising the potential of air connectivity to boost tourism and business, Uttarakhand has formulated a progressive Aviation Policy. The policy aims to develop and upgrade existing airstrips, promote heli-tourism, and facilitate the operation

IN A BID TO OVERCOME GEOGRAPHICAL CHALLENGES POSED BY THE MOUNTAINOUS TERRAIN, THE STATE IS INVESTING IN AERIAL ROPEWAY PROJECTS

of regional airlines. By improving air connectivity to remote areas like Pithoragarh and Chaukhutia, the state is ensuring that even the most secluded regions become accessible, fostering economic development and reducing travel time.

SMART TRANSPORTATION SOLUTIONS:

In an era of rapid technological advancements, Uttarakhand is incorporating smart transportation solutions to enhance efficiency and safety. Intelligent traffic management systems, real-time monitoring, and the integration of digital platforms for ticketing and information dissemination are being implemented. These innovations not only streamline transportation processes but also contribute to the overall mod-

ernization of the state's infrastructure. The Uttarakhand cabinet has approved the expansion of Pantnagar Airport's runway, signalling the state's aspiration to elevate the facility into an international airport. The existing 1,372-metre runway will be extended to 3,000 m to accommodate larger aircraft. The expansion necessitates the acquisition of 804 acres of land, with neighbouring lands belonging to various government departments.

Uttarakhand's commitment to enhancing transportation infrastructure reflects its vision for holistic development, balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability. The ongoing and proposed projects signify a concerted effort to address the unique challenges posed by the state's topography while harnessing growth opportunities. As these initiatives come to fruition, Uttarakhand is poised to emerge as a model for sustainable and inclusive transportation, setting a precedent for other regions facing similar geographical constraints. Through these transformative transport projects, the state is not only connecting its people but also paving the way for a more prosperous and sustainable future.

Delhi-Dehradun e-way to reduce travel time to 2.5 hours

Stretching across a length of 210 km, the expressway has six to 12 lanes and features access-controlled infrastructure

The Delhi Dehradun Expressway (NH 72A) is a currently ongoing express highway project managed by the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Nitin Gadkari initiated the project by laying its foundation stone on February 26, 2021, and the Prime Minister reiterated this act on December 4, 2021. Stretching across a length of 210 km, the expressway is designed with six to 12 lanes and features access-controlled infrastructure. Its primary purpose is to establish a swift connection between Delhi and Dehradun. The estimated cost of construction is approximately Rs 13,000 crore, promising a reduction in both travel distance and time.

The expressway will traverse the states of Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, passing through the cities of Baghpat, Baraut, Shamli, and Saharanpur. To enhance connectivity with nearby cities, two spurs or link roads are planned. The first is the Saharanpur-Roorkee-Haridwar Expressway, spanning 50.7 km with six lanes. The second is the Ambala-Shamli Expressway, covering a length of 121 km with six lanes. The entire project is expected to be completed by December 2024. Commuters anticipate that the Delhi-Dehradun Expressway will significantly reduce the distance between the two cities to 210 km, allowing for a travel time of approximately 2.5-3 hours.

FEATURES OF THE PROJECT

Estimated Cost: Rs 13,000 crore
Project's Total Length: 210 km
Lanes: 12 lanes (Phase 1) and 6 lanes (Phases 2, 3 & 4)
Completion Deadline: December 2024
Owner: National Highway Authority of India (NHAI)
Project Model: EPC (Engineering, Procurement and Construction)
Distance to reduce to: 210 km from 235 km

Upon the completion of the highway project, the distance between New Delhi and Dehradun is set to be shortened from 235 km to 210 km, resulting in a reduced travel time of only 2.5-3 hours. A noteworthy aspect of this undertaking is the creation of a wildlife-friendly corridor, featuring a 12 km elevated road, six animal underpasses, two elephant underpasses, two large bridges, and thirteen smaller bridges. This initiative positions it as India's first highway with a wildlife protection corridor and Asia's longest wildlife elevated corridor, facilitating unrestricted movement for wildlife. The corridor will enforce a minimum speed of 100 km/h. To streamline toll payment, a closed toll mechanism will be implemented, ensuring toll fees correspond only to the extent of highway use.



The expressway incorporates 113 VUPs (vehicular underpasses), LVUPs (light vehicular underpasses), SVUPs (small vehicular underpasses), 5 ROB (road over bridges), four major bridges and 62 bus shelters. In addition to the 76-km service road and 29-km elevated road, 16 entry-exit points are

currently under construction.

IMPACT OF THE PROJECT

Impact on People: This initiative aims to significantly reduce travel time between cities, thereby alleviating traffic congestion. It holds particular significance for senior cit-

izens, enabling them to easily visit Dehradun for religious purposes or to explore tourist destinations. Additionally, the project plans to enhance the traveller's experience by incorporating scenic views, including the establishment of a bird sanctuary and tree planting along the road. The improved connectivity

will reduce logistics costs and generate employment opportunities for the local population.

Environmental Implications: The expressway, constructed over the Rajaji National Park, is designed to be wildlife-friendly, marking a pioneering effort in India. This approach aims to minimize the risk of collisions between vehicles and animals, contributing to the conservation of wildlife habitats and regional biodiversity. Reduced interaction between animals and vehicles is expected to lower stress levels among wildlife.

Impact on Real Estate: The expressway is anticipated to end traffic jams in Northeast Delhi, leading to an expansion of real estate in the surrounding areas. Improved connectivity between Delhi and Ghaziabad is poised to boost the local market. Forecasts suggest a surge in residential development projects along the highway, attracting investments. The expected increase in Delhi-Dehradun trips is likely to spur the growth of hotels, restaurants, and cafes in the vicinity.

Current Status: As of April 6, 2023, Nitin Gadkari, the Road Transport Minister, inspected the 212-km, 6-lane Delhi-Dehradun expressway, which is being constructed at Rs 12,000 crore. The project aims to reduce travel time between the two cities from over 5 hours to 2 hours. It is projected to open to the public in 2024.

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UTTARAKHAND

Uttarakhand government to expand Pantnagar Airport

The State Cabinet has approved a substantial extension of the current 1,372-metre runway to 3,000 metres, accommodating larger aircraft

The expansion plan for Pantnagar Airport in Uttarakhand, recently approved by the State Cabinet, signifies a significant stride toward its transformation into a world-class airport. This approval involves a substantial extension of the current 1,372-metre runway to a length of 3,000 metres, accommodating larger aircraft. To facilitate this expansion, the acquisition of an 804-acre land parcel, which includes adjoining lands belonging to various government departments, is imperative.

A committee is tasked with determining compensation for these government departments affected by the acquisition. Upon successful acquisition, the allocated land will be handed over to the Civil Aviation Department, subsequently passing it to the Airports Authority of India. The timeline for this project spans three years and holds promise for enhancing the state's aviation infrastructure.

The Uttarakhand Cabinet has approved the expansion of Pantnagar Airport's runway, signalling the state's aspiration to elevate the facility into a world-class airport. The existing 1,372-metre runway will be extended to 3,000 metres to accommodate larger aircraft. The expansion necessitates the acquisition of 804 acres of land, with neighbouring lands belonging to various government departments.

A compensation framework for these departments will be established by the committee. Once

acquired, the land will be allocated to the Civil Aviation Department, which will subsequently assign it to the Airports Authority of India. The project is set to span three years and contribute to the state's aviation infrastructure enhancement.

Moreover, the Center has given preliminary approval for the construction of an airstrip adjacent to Pantnagar Airport, covering a 3-km area. This strategic move is anticipated to bring forth numerous advantages. The connectivity of this region to Pantnagar Sidcul, Kashipur Sidcul, and Sitarganj Sidcul, where several companies rely on international expertise for technical support, underscores the potential benefits. Given its proximity to Nepal and China, the airport's strategic significance is paramount.

In this context, for the expansion of Pantnagar Airport, the Center has already given in-principle consent to build an airstrip on an area of 3 km adjacent to it. There will be many benefits from the expansion of Pantnagar Airport. This area is connected to Pantnagar Sidcul, Kashipur Sidcul and Sitarganj Sidcul. There are many companies in which experts are called from abroad in case of technical problems.

The state's border is adjacent to Nepal and China. Hence it is important from a strategic point of view. Khurpiya Farm Kichha has been included within the ambit of the Amritsar-Kolkata Industrial Corridor. Its survey has also been done.



The state government has also given information to the Center regarding Jolly Grant Airport.

The Center was also told that the elephant corridor adjacent to the airport would not be removed. Currently, Dehradun, Haridwar and

Rishikesh are close to Jolly Grant Airport. In such a situation, if this airport becomes an international airport, then tourists coming from abroad will get a lot of facilities. The Civil Aviation officials said that positive steps are being taken to es-

tablish an international airport in Pantnagar. The hurdles regarding Jolly Grant are also expected to be removed soon. In August last year, CM Pushkar Singh Dhami met Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia. He had put forward

the issue of developing two airports of the state as international airports before the Union Minister. During this, the Union Civil Aviation Minister had assured positive action.

The Pantnagar Airport in Uttarakhand serves as a crucial infrastructural development for the state. An international airport in Pantnagar would enhance connectivity within Uttarakhand and beyond. It would facilitate easier access for tourists, investors, and businesses, boosting economic growth. Uttarakhand is known for its scenic beauty and religious sites. The airport can significantly increase tourism by making it easier for both domestic and international tourists to visit popular destinations like Nainital, Jim Corbett National Park, and various hill stations. The airport can attract investment and promote trade by providing a more convenient way for businesses to access Uttarakhand. It opens up opportunities for exports, especially for products like horticultural produce, herbs, and handicrafts unique to the region. The development of an airport often generates employment directly and indirectly. It creates jobs in airport operations, tourism, hospitality, transportation, and related sectors, benefiting the local population. The presence of an international airport usually leads to the development of supporting infrastructure like better roads, hotels, restaurants, and other amenities, further enhancing the appeal of the region for visitors and investors. Overall, the Pantnagar Airport has the potential to significantly contribute to the socio-economic development of Uttarakhand by improving connectivity, promoting tourism, attracting investments, and generating employment opportunities.

New Rishikesh-Karnaprayag Rail Line to connect hills to the valley

The new line will be a game-changer for the state as this will be the first time a railway line will go into the hinterland

The proposed Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line in Uttarakhand marks a significant stride in the state's efforts to enhance connectivity and accessibility to remote regions. Uttarakhand, nestled in the Himalayan foothills, has long faced challenges in transportation due to its rugged terrain. The initiation of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail project underscores the commitment to overcoming these challenges, providing a lifeline for residents, promoting tourism, and fostering economic growth. This comprehensive discussion delves into the background, significance, challenges, and anticipated impact of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE: The decision to establish a railway line from Rishikesh to Karnaprayag stems from the necessity to improve transportation infrastructure in Uttarakhand. The region, known for its spiritual significance, pristine landscapes, and challenging topography, often faced connectivity issues due to weather-related disruptions and difficult terrain. The Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line, spanning a distance that covers various towns, addresses this need by providing an alternative and more reliable mode of transportation.

The proposed rail line aims to connect key towns such as Devprayag, Srinagar, Rudraprayag, Gauchar, and Karnaprayag, traversing five districts in Uttarakhand: Dehradun, Tehri Garhwal, Pauri Garhwal, Rudraprayag, and Chamoli. The strategic selection of these towns ensures that the rail line caters to both religious and economic interests, enhancing accessibility for pilgrims and promoting regional development.

PROJECT PHASES AND TIMELINE: The Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line, which is estimated to cost Rs 16,216 crore, is being executed by the Rail Vikas Nigam Limited (RVNL) in multiple phases to ensure systematic development and timely completion. The first milestone was achieved with the commissioning of the initial 5.7 km section, known as the 1st Block, between the existing Virbhadra station and Yog Nagari Rishikesh station (PK-1A) in March 2020. This section serves as a precursor to the larger rail line, showcasing the commitment to progress.

The subsequent phase involves the completion of the remaining railway line from Yog

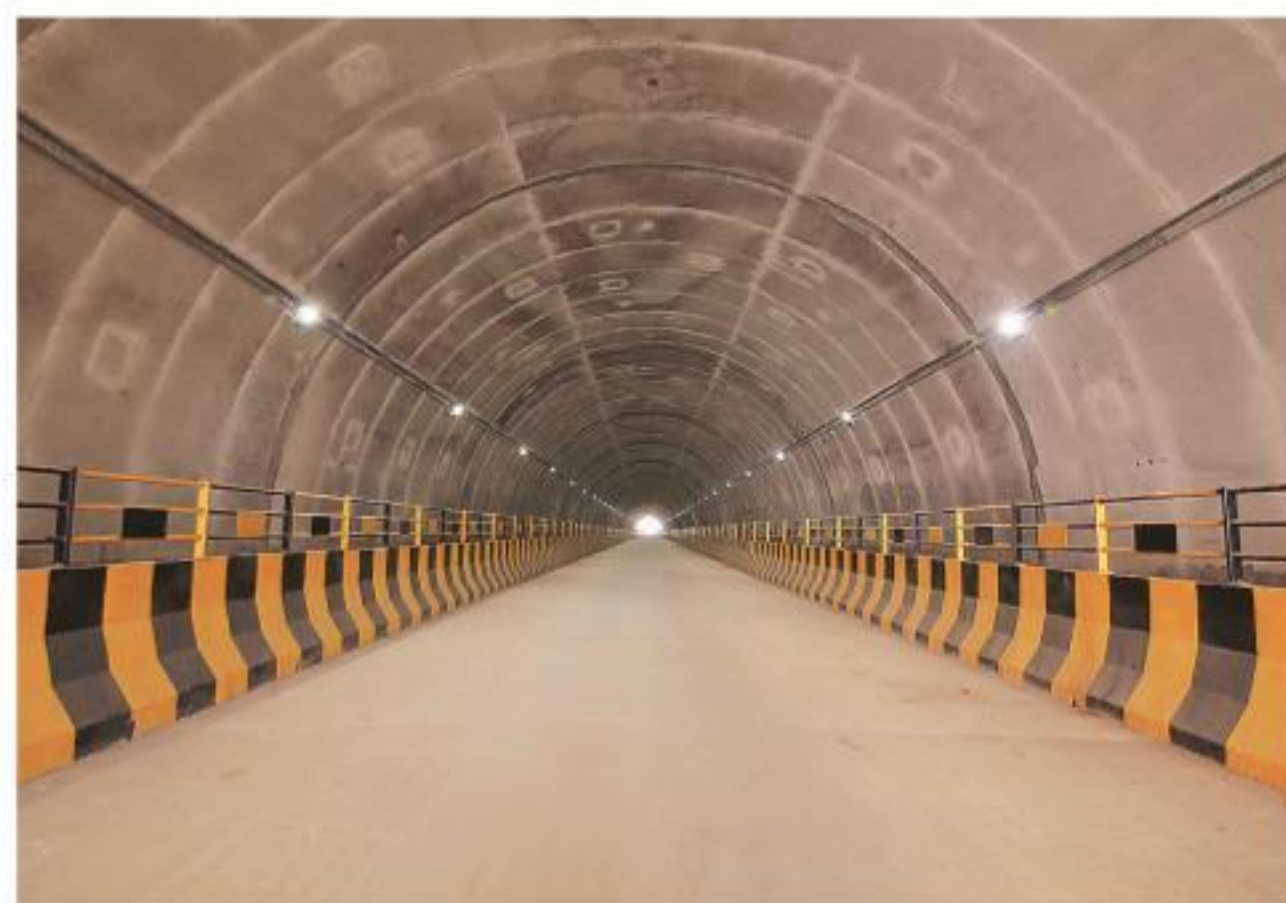


Nagari Rishikesh to Karnaprayag. According to the project timeline, this section is slated for commissioning by December 2024. The phased approach allows for careful planning, efficient execution, and the incorporation of the latest technologies to overcome the engineering challenges posed by the region's challenging terrain.

ENGINEERING MARVELS: TUNNELING WORKS AND CHALLENGES: The terrain of Uttarakhand presents unique engineering challenges, with steep slopes, rocky landscapes, and ecological sensitivities. To overcome these challenges and ensure the timely completion of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line, the project has incorporated tunnelling works as a critical aspect of its execution plan. The total length of the tunnelling works spans a considerable distance, and to manage this effectively, the works have been divided into ten packages, each awarded for execution.

Tunnelling is a complex engineering feat, requiring precision and adherence to safety standards. The division of tunnelling works into packages allows for specialised focus on each section, addressing the unique challenges presented by the varying geological conditions. This approach minimises the environmental impact, ensures the safety of the construction team, and allows for the integration of the latest tunnelling technologies.

ECONOMIC IMPACT AND TOURISM PROMOTION: The Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line holds immense economic potential for Uttarakhand, particularly in the promotion of tourism and regional



development. Improved connectivity translates into increased tourist footfall, benefiting local businesses, hospitality services, and transportation sectors. The rail line not only facilitates religious tourism but also encourages tourists to explore the natural beauty and cultural richness of the region.

The towns connected by the rail line, including Devprayag, Srinagar, Rudraprayag, Gauchar, and Karnaprayag, serve as gateways to various tourist attractions, trekking routes, and adventure sports destinations. The enhanced accessibility provided by the rail line is expected to contribute significantly to the growth of the tourism industry in Uttarakhand, creating job opportunities and promoting economic development in

the surrounding areas.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS: Uttarakhand is renowned for its biodiversity and ecological sensitivity. The Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail project acknowledges the importance of minimising its environmental footprint and preserving the delicate ecosystems of the region. Environmental impact assessments have been conducted to evaluate the potential effects of construction activities on the flora, fauna, and overall ecology.

To mitigate the environmental impact, the project incorporates sustainable practices, including afforestation initiatives, waste management, and the use of eco-friendly construc-

tion materials. The tunnelling works, while challenging, are designed to minimize disruption to natural habitats, allowing wildlife to navigate through the region undisturbed. The emphasis on environmental conservation ensures that the rail line development aligns with Uttarakhand's commitment to sustainable growth.

TECHNOLOGICAL INNOVATIONS: The Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line embraces technological innovations to overcome the engineering challenges posed by the region's topography. Geospatial technology is utilised for precise route planning, ensuring the alignment considers the geological and environmental nuances of the area. Additionally, the project incorporates advanced tunnelling technologies, including tunnel boring machines and specialised excavation methods, to navigate through rocky terrains efficiently.

The rail line also leverages digital platforms for real-time monitoring, ensuring the safety and integrity of the infrastructure. Intelligent traffic management systems and modern signaling systems contribute to the overall efficiency of the rail line, providing a seamless and secure transportation experience for passengers.

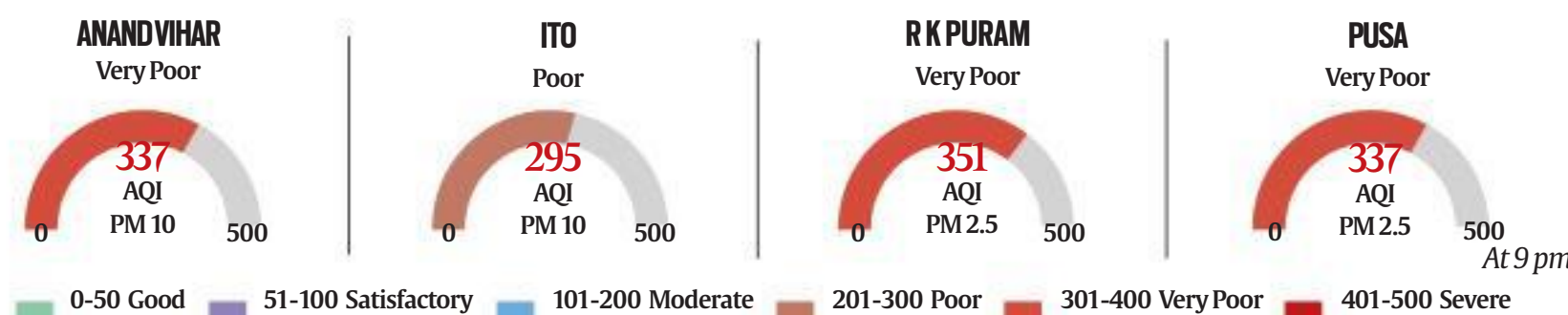
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT: The successful implementation of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line relies on community engagement and collaboration with local residents. Awareness programs are conducted to involve the communities residing along the rail line route, addressing their concerns and garnering support for the project. The rail line is not just a

means of transportation but a catalyst for local development, offering employment opportunities, skill development, and improved access to educational and healthcare facilities.

The rail line serves as a connective thread, fostering a sense of integration and shared progress among the communities it traverses. By involving local residents in the planning and execution phases, the project aims to create a positive impact on their lives and contribute to the overall socio-economic development of the region.

FUTURE CONNECTIVITY AND DEVELOPMENT PROSPECTS: The completion of the Rishikesh-Karnaprayag rail line is poised to open new possibilities for further connectivity and development in Uttarakhand. The success of this project may pave the way for extending the rail network to other remote areas, creating an integrated transportation grid that connects the state more effectively with the rest of the country.

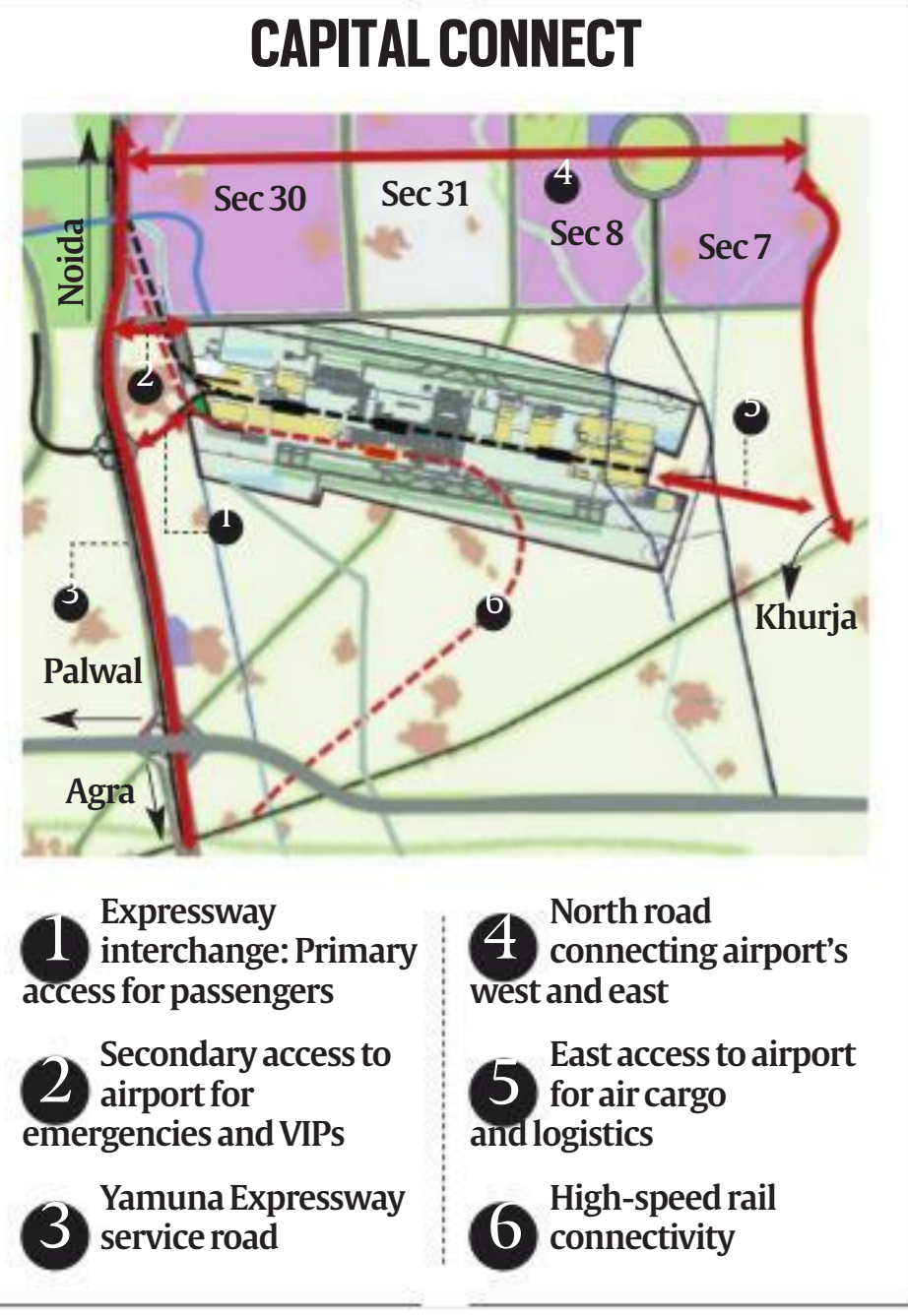
The rail line is anticipated to act as a catalyst for regional development, attracting investments, industries, and business opportunities to the towns along its route. As connectivity improves, the economic landscape is expected to diversify, leading to the creation of new employment opportunities and a more resilient and self-sustaining local economy.



S K Y W A T C H

FORECAST: February 13
Partly cloudy sky. Possibility of very light rain/drizzle. Shallow fog in the morning.

MAX: 24 (0.6°C above normal)
MIN: 9 (0.8°C below normal)



'DILLI CHALO' MARCH: FARMERS SET OUT FOR DELHI TODAY

Month-long ban on public meets, no entry for tractors & trolleys, watch on borders in Capital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI/NOIDA, FEB 12

EVEN AS representatives from the Centre and farmers' unions discussed the way forward regarding the latter's demands, prohibitory orders were clamped across the capital in anticipation of the 'Dilli Chalo' march on Tuesday.

In addition to the massive deployment of security personnel and crowd control measures at Delhi's borders with Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, the Delhi Police on Monday imposed a month-long ban on public meetings, along with the entry of tractors and trolleys and anything "capable of being used as weapons or tools of violence" in the city for a month in response to the proposed agitation. Intensive checking will take place at pickets along routes bordering the capital by the Delhi and Uttar Pradesh Police with the latter advising commuters to utilise the metro to avoid congestion.

In addition to gatherings and agitations at public places, the orders said there would be "an absolute prohibition" on the organisation, convening, or participation in processions, demonstrations, rallies, or march on foot, whether for political, social, or any other purpose, within the geographical limits of Delhi and New Delhi.

A ban was also put in place on the entry of tractor trolleys, trucks, or any other vehicles transporting "individuals or materials" especially "sticks/lathis/dandas, swords, spears", firearms or anything else "capable of being used as weapons or tools of violence", the order said. This, even as barricades with barbed wire had been installed at the Singhu border and drones were being deployed at all border points to keep a close watch on any possible law and order situation in view of the protest.

Several layers of concrete blocks along with road spike barriers and barbed wire had already been installed at border points to prevent any infiltration into the city by farmers by Monday morning. Senior Delhi Police officers, including DCPs of districts along the capital's borders, are mounting surveillance around border areas with security personnel from various police stations of the district being deployed on the ground.

Adding that it had made law and order arrangements in coordination with its counterparts in Delhi, the Gautam Buddha Nagar Police on Monday issued a traffic advisory asking people to use the metro to avoid traffic congestion.

"Intensive checking will be done by the Delhi Police and Gautam Buddha Nagar Police by installing barriers on all the Delhi borders adjacent to Gautam Buddha Nagar," said the Noida Traffic police. "All types of goods vehicles will be restricted on the route from Yamuna Expressway to Delhi via Noida-Greater Noida Expressway and from Sirsa to Surajpur via Pari Chowk."



(Above) Police on guard as a worker installs a concrete barrier at the Ghazipur border, in Delhi on Monday; (below) A worker checks CCTV installation in the area. *Praveen Khanna*

More than 200 farmers' unions were set to begin the 'Dilli Chalo' march from Punjab on Monday which is supposed to culminate in Delhi a day later; in addition to the march, farmers' groups have also announced a "Gramin Bharat Bandh" on February 16. In response to the development, in an order to this effect on Monday, Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora stated that prohibitory orders under Criminal Procedure Code (CrP) Section 144 would be in place in the city from February 12 to March 12, both days included.

The prohibitory order was imposed based on "well-founded apprehension" that those participating in the march may try to enter the city to "hold demonstrations to assert their demand". The order was being put in place "taking into consideration the past experience of farmer agitation organised in 2020" and intel inputs.

Other modes of transportation, however, will take some time to be put in place; but connectivity through buses will be available from the very beginning. "It will take around two to three more years for the Rapid Rail and Pod Taxi, for which feasibility study has been completed and DPR is being prepared. We have also planned for the operation of buses from day one. It is yet to be decided whether this will be through private or UPSRTC buses, but 80 buses will ply from the first day of the operation of the airport," he said.

According to the Master Plan for the airport, a bay providing access to buses, tram, metro line, bullet train from within its premises will be constructed so passengers do not have to exit to travel to further destinations.

"Land for this has already been earmarked and it will provide multimodal connectivity underground... Passengers will not need to come out of the terminal," he said, adding that the DPR for an RRTS from the IGI airport in Delhi to the Jewar Airport was being prepared.



Gurgaon: Monitoring centre to keep tab on all social media posts

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, FEBRUARY 12

THE CYBERCRIME unit of the police has set up a social media monitoring centre in Gurgaon in a bid to track the posts on online platforms over the scheduled farmers' protest in the national capital, said police on Monday.

According to Sidhant Jain, deputy commissioner of police (South and Cyber), the centre has been set up to monitor all the content posted on social media platforms which could spread discord in the society.

"Many posts are being shared on social media regarding the farmers' protest, so there is a need to monitor them. Everyone has the right to freedom of speech, but there are untoward elements that could peddle fake news and spread discord in the society or incite people. Emotionally driven people could fall for posts by rumour mongers. The social media monitoring cell will timely identify and flag such content on the social media, and remove them from the online platforms..." he said.

Posts by the residents of the

epicentres of the farmers' protest — Haryana, Punjab, northern Rajasthan, western Uttar Pradesh, and Delhi — will be in focus, said DCP Jain.

"We will also duly analyse other posts with certain keywords. So far, we have sent 35 notices under Section 69 of the IT Act to social media platforms regarding posts that are likely to spread communal disharmony as well as rumours which could disrupt the law and order situation," he said.

The monitoring cell has eight to 10 staffers along with private experts and state-of-the-art technology. The DCP said that this was set up in the starting of February in a bid to keep a tab on social media content in wake of the farmers' protest.

The equipment includes social media scrolling and algorithm-based searching among others, to scour for inflammatory posts on the stir.

The cell will write to social media platforms to take down such content, and later, the accused will be tracked by their IP addresses, which will then be shared with the local police for the further course of action, said the DCP.

High-speed rail, RRTS, buses: Multi-modal link for Noida airport

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, FEBRUARY 12

AS THE date for the operationalisation of the Jewar Airport inches closer, Noida International Airport Limited (NIAL) has roped in multiple agencies to provide multi-modal connectivity to it through routes across road, trains, rapid rails and the Expressway.

Several agencies are part of the NIAL's bid to connect the project through various modes — such as the North Central Railway, National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC), National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) and Uttar Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) — but there are hiccups, too.

In a meeting with all the agencies concerned held on Friday, NIAL told the North Central Railways that it would not be able to go ahead with its proposed plan of connecting Chola in Bulandshahr and Rundi in Haryana with the Jewar Airport. "Chola is on the Amritsar-Calcutta line and Rundi is on the Mumbai-Delhi line. Jewar airport lies between both these railway lines; so, for connectivity with both the stations, Northern railway has prepared a plan and also done an initial survey. This is not the final alignment," said Dr Arun Vir Singh, CEO of NIAL.

According to Singh, NIAL had suggested that Chola be connected on the east side because of the shorter distance of 16 kilometers which would also open an area for logistics and warehousing and, simultaneously, also help to expand the Chola railway station.

"However, the railways have proposed to connect it through the south side. Because of this, it would affect our aviation hub and upcoming runways. This is not possible to accept. We have suggested that that railway line can pass along the periphery area of the aviation hub; if they want to follow the same alignment, they have to do it underground," he added.

There are, however, positive developments too: connectivity

NIAL ropes in multiple agencies to provide connectivity as operationalisation date for Jewar airport nears

with Ballabhgarh (Delhi-Mumbai Expressway) to the airport will be completed by April 30 April along with other road-way routes.

"It will also be connected to Kundli-Manesar-Palwal (KMP) expressway. Along with this, work has been started to connect it with the Eastern Peripheral Expressway. After this, it will get connected with Manesar on one side and Dehradun on the other side," he said.

Apart from this, Singh said a 75-meter road on the north side of the airport, 750 meters extra VIP road on the west side, which can also be utilised for cargo movement, and another 60-meter road for the airport will be completed before the operationalisation of the airport.

Diversions to tide over possible congestion



Praveen Khanna

- Vehicles from Chilla border to Delhi will be able to reach their destination via Sector 14A flyover via Golchakkar Chowk Sector 15, Sandeep Paper Mill Chowk, and Jhundpura Chowk.
- Vehicles from DND border to Delhi can use the elevated via Filmcity flyover, Sector 18.
- Vehicles from Kalindi border to Delhi will be able to reach their destination via Mahamaya flyover via Sector 37.
- Traffic towards Delhi using the Yamuna Expressway will be able to get down from the Jewar toll towards Khurja, and reach the destination via Jahangirpur.
- Vehicular movement to Delhi via Sirsa, Pari Chowk after getting off the Peripheral Expressway will be able to reach its destination via Dadri, Dasna, instead of getting down at Sirsa.

'Harassing, threatening from prison': Jacqueline complaint against Sukesh

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

ACTOR JACQUELINE Fernandez has filed a complaint with Delhi Police Commissioner Sanjay Arora against alleged conman Sukesh Chandrashekhar, alleging that he was harassing her and threatening her from inside a jail.

In her letter sent a few days ago to the police chief with the subject line: "systemic failure in prosecution witness protection", Jacqueline said, "I am a responsible citizen, who has found herself inadvertently embroiled in a case that has far-reaching implications



Actor Jacqueline Fernandez; Sukesh Chandrashekhar

for the rule of law and the sanctity of our "judicial system". As a prosecution witness in a case registered by the special cell, I write to you amidst a harrowing ordeal of psychological pressure and targeted intimidation campaigns."

In December 2023, Jacqueline moved a Delhi court seeking directions to immediately restrain Sukesh from issuing letters, mes-

Journalist murder case: HC suspends life sentence of 4

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Monday suspended the life sentence awarded by the trial court last year to four men convicted for the murder of journalist Soumya Vishwanathan.

A division bench was hearing applications moved by the four convicts, seeking suspension of their sentence awarded by the trial court in November 2023, until their appeal before the High Court against the conviction for the murder and life sentence is decided.

Vishwanathan, who worked with *India Today*, was found dead in her car on South Delhi's Nelson Mandela Marg on September 30, 2008. **ENS**

ages, or statements addressed to her. She is a witness in the FIR being investigated by the EOW of the Delhi Police in connection with the Rs 200 crore money-laundering and extortion case linked to Sukesh. In a plea dated December 17, she alleged that the threats and intimidation tactics used by Sukesh have caused serious harassment to her. She also alleged that he wanted to threaten her to not reveal the truth to the court.

Jacqueline, who is travelling, sent the letter from her official email ID to the police chief Arora and Special Commissioner of Police (Crime Branch) on their email IDs. One of the units has been asked to initiate an inquiry.

SPLEEN WAS NEVER REMOVED

Nine yrs on, consumer forum awards Rs 9L to kin of patient for 'negligence' by hospital

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

IN 2015, Savitri Sharma (57) approached Sir Gangaram Hospital to get her spleen removed. A procedure was performed on her in February that year, and she was sent home. After five months, while perusing her ultrasound report, the family of the woman, who suffered from cancer in the lymphatic system, found out that her spleen was never removed. She died in June that year.

On Friday, the Delhi State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission awarded Basant Lal Sharma — the husband of the patient — over Rs 9 lakh in compensation, to be paid jointly by the hospital and five of its doctors.

"It is worthwhile to remark here that the opposite parties, being a team of doctors, are dealing with human lives and not guinea pigs. The treating doctors, working in synergy, cannot use the patient as an "experimental site" without adhering to the standard line of medical treatment," noted the Commission while holding the doctors guilty of medical negligence. It said that it was "implausible" how the spleen of the deceased patient was found to be of

normal size in ultrasound reports when it was removed by doctors.

The commission pulled up the doctors for charging for a surgery which was "never performed". "I lost my mother... money can't change that. I wanted to bring out the truth..." Advocate Anil Dutt Sharma, representing his father before the commission, told *The Indian Express*. "The doctors were fighting among themselves... they had told us six months prior to the surgery that it was not needed and could be dangerous for the patient... The doctors didn't give us the medical reports that we had asked for..." Anil said.

The Commission also held that the family was not given the spleen status and bone marrow reports on time by the doctors.

Sharma said his insurance claim was rejected because of the "negligence of some junior doctors", adding that he is still fighting a criminal case against the doctors at Tis Hazari Courts.

Meanwhile, doctors from the hospital submitted that the complainant had made two complaints to the Medical Council of Delhi, which found no medical negligence in this case. Denying negligence, the doctors also submitted that they provided a standard level of care to the patient.

Family, aides, leaders bid adieu to artist Ramachandran

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

ARTISTS, FORMER students, galleries, political leaders, friends, and family members paid their last tributes to late artist A Ramachandran on Monday — remembering the "teacher" for his art, wit and humour.

Congress leader Sonia Gandhi, D Raja and Annie Raja of the CPI, Sitaram Yechury of the CPI(M) and Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan were among those who paid homage to Ramachandran at Travancore House, before his cremation.

Ramachandran, 88, suc-

cumbed to kidney ailments on Saturday. He was born in Kerala, and moved to Delhi later, where he taught art at Jamia Millia Islamia from 1965 till 1992.

The Padma Bhushan awardee has designed a granite sculpture that is at the Rajiv Gandhi Memorial in Sriperumbudur, Tamil Nadu.

Johny ML, art historian and a friend of Ramachandran, said, "He closely followed contemporary artists, and was very appreciative of artists doing new things and experimenting with new material... He had a lot of students. Some of his paintings featured the Lohar people as central characters. This brought



A Ramachandran passed away in Delhi on February 10. He was 88. Credit: Manisha Gera Baswani

subaltern images into mainstream modernist art. This didn't come from a vacuum... he was a student of Ramkinkar Baij, and he upheld the values and ideas propounded by the doyens of Santiniketan."

Artist Manisha Gera Baswani,

who was a student of his at Jamia Millia Islamia, said, "Even when he was ailing, he was smiling till the end. He was an amazing teacher... My work is so different from his that it shows that he never imposed his style on his students. He taught a philosophy not a style. He would say don't take art so seriously..."

Sonia Ballaney at Vadehra Art Gallery said, "He was witty and had a fantastic sense of humour. He was one of the most brilliant artists of his time, and his life's passion was art. We worked with him for 25 years and he was a friend of the gallery. He had a range of interests — he was very well read, and used to sing classical music."

Artist Pooja Iranna, a friend of Ramachandran, who has known him since she was a child, said, "He was an inspiring figure. You did not have to be his pupil to learn from him. He was so full of humour and wit that you would love to sit with him. He inspired our generation to no end... with his commitment to his work, the strokes. You would learn so much from just being in his company."

After paying his respects to Ramachandra, Kerala Governor Khan said, "It is a great loss to the world of art and particularly the family... We can only pray that the family has the strength to bear this irreparable loss..."

Differences over seats in other states cloud AAP-Cong alliance in Delhi

JATIN ANAND & GAYATHRI MANI
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

AFTER THE Congress, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is scheduled to take a call on its candidates for each of the seven Lok Sabha seats in the capital on Tuesday.

While both sides maintain they are "committed" to a seat-sharing agreement to put up a joint front against the BJP in Delhi, sources from the two parties admit that "posturing" from the other on Lok Sabha seats beyond the city is "delaying the matter".

Congress sources said the "AAP's insistence" on getting seats in other states did not bode well for the alliance. AAP sources said the Grand Old Party dragging its feet on these seats was doing more harm than good.

In the meantime, while the Congress has finalised a panel of probables for Delhi's seven seats, the AAP, sources said, is scheduled to discuss names to be fielded in the Capital as well as other states, including Goa and Haryana, at a meeting of its Political Affairs Committee Tuesday.

"Talks around the finalisation of the alliance are stuck at the AAP's demand for the Bharuch Parliamentary seat in Gujarat, the Chandigarh Lok Sabha seat, and one seat in Haryana: why should giving up seats in other states to the AAP dictate a 4-3 seat-sharing agreement far away in Delhi?" a senior Congress leader said, adding that the final call would be taken by the party's high com-

mand "soon".

A senior AAP leader said, "We have proposed a seat-sharing arrangement; yes, it has seats in other states which is best not revealed right now. The Congress was supposed to come back to us with a counter offer, which is yet to arrive. Not just us, alliance partners across the country waited for similar clarity before opting out...time is of essence."

After announcing the AAP's decision to go it alone in Punjab, at a gathering in Ludhiana on Saturday, Kejriwal, a day later in Tarn Taran, triggered speculation by saying that the people of Delhi had decided to allot all the seven LS seats in the Capital to the AAP.

On Monday, AAP Delhi convenor Gopal Rai said, "AAP is part of INDIA alliance...But, we believe that it is getting too late now...there is a need to make decisions fast on seat-sharing..." On Kejriwal's statement, Rai said, "...He meant that BJP is going to lose all the seven seats in Delhi..."

AAP national spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj, at another press conference, said, "I believe the AAP will...win all seven seats even if the polls take place right now..." He further said alliance talks with Congress were still on.

Delhi Congress president Arvinder Singh Lovely said, "We are committed to the alliance but, at the same time, prepared to contest the Lok Sabha elections in the Capital. The Congress is the only party to have conducted large public meetings on five seats already. We are not only firmly with the INDIA alliance but also ready to fight the BJP."

Man strangles wife after scuffle over newborn's death, buries body: Police

ARNABJIT SUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

EARLIER THIS year, a 23-year-old woman, married to a man of around the same age, went missing from her home in Ashok Vihar's Shaheed Sukhdev JJ cluster. Soon after, her husband too went missing. The mother of the woman, who had lost her child at birth only a few months back, grew worried and began frantically searching for her daughter.

A few weeks later, the missing woman's body was found in a pit, around 100 metres away from her marital home, wrapped in a quilt.

The deceased woman's husband was arrested on Saturday. Police said the man, who worked odd jobs at a hotel, had strangled his wife on the night of December 25 last year following a scuffle over the death of their child due to anaemia. Police said the couple had been fighting over the issue since the tragedy in September but this time, things went too far.

Police said the man's 50-year-old mother and teenage brother were present at home when the



The pit where the woman's body was found. Amit Mehra

crime took place, adding the duo helped him get rid of the body.

Said an officer, "With the knowledge of his mother and 16-year-old brother, the accused hid his wife's body inside the house under a bed for one whole day on December 26...after midnight, around 2 am, the trio wrapped her body in a quilt and carried it out of the house towards the open field on the other side of the railway tracks abutting their jhuggi."

With the minor holding the body from one end and the accused from the other, the bro-

thers carried the corpse towards the open field, around 100 metres away from their house, through the narrow lanes of the jhuggi and beyond the railway tracks, said police.

A concrete boundary wall separates the railway tracks from the open field, and, police said, the duo carried the body over this wall and further to a corner of the field.

Said DCP (Northwest) Jitendra Meena, "The accused and his brother then dumped the body in a pit at the spot... they piled mud, plastic garbage bags, and other

waste material on top of the body and fled the spot."

While the brother and mother of the accused stayed back at their house, the man fled to his village in Western UP after a few days.

After a few weeks, exactly a month after she had last heard from her daughter who stayed only a few houses away, the mother of the deceased decided to approach the police. "She got a missing report lodged at the Ashok Vihar Police Station on January 25 regarding the disappearance of both her daughter and her son-in-law, after which several police teams were deployed to look for them around the area," said police.

How the body was discovered

On February 8, a group of children were playing in the open field when they heard a dog howling from another corner - It looked like the animal had got stuck in a pit. "The children rushed to the spot and discovered the woman's body. A PCR call was made," said an officer.

Officers said that due to the

winters, the body had not decomposed severely. The woman's mother was called to identify the body. The elderly woman recognised the quilt the body was wrapped in - she had often seen it on her daughter during her visits to her marital home.

The mother, a widow, told *The Indian Express*, "My daughter got married a year ago against our wishes. She never mentioned any fights with her husband... In December last year, when she disappeared, I kept asking her in-laws about her but they kept ignoring me and made some or the other excuse...eventually, I approached the police and got a missing report lodged...I knew that her in-laws used to treat her badly and not give her enough food which is why I used to cook meals and take them to her."

Senior officers said the accused claimed during interrogation that he had consumed alcohol at the time of the incident. "We cannot verify this...after such a long time... His mother was also arrested later and both were sent to judicial custody," said an official. The brother of the accused was sent to an observation home.

Court grants 3 days' interim bail to Sisodia to attend wedding

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

A DELHI court on Monday granted three days' interim bail to former Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia in the excise policy case after he moved a plea to allow him to attend his niece's wedding in Lucknow on February 14.

Sisodia sought bail for five days arguing that he had to perform certain rituals as the family's only male member and that his niece was very close to him.

When special judge M K Nagpal asked senior advocate Mohit Mathur, representing Sisodia, whether it was alright to send security personnel with him to the function, the latter said, "I (Sisodia) don't want to humiliate my family with cops hovering around me." Mathur added that Sisodia would not be provided with security in a different state in the first place.

While the CBI opposed the bail plea stating that Sisodia was highly influential and could tamper with evidence, the ED took issue with the time period of five days stating that one day was enough to attend the wedding.

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Online tenders in Single Bid system are invited for COMPREHENSIVE ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF FIRE FIGHTING AND FIRE ALARM SYSTEMS AT ICDKANAKPURA, JAIPUR, RAJASTHAN FOR 36 MONTHS only through e-tendering mode. The bid document can only be downloaded after paying ₹1,000.00 through online from the website www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL.

Tender No.	CONJAREA-1/KKU/TECHQ&M FIRE FIGHTING SYSTEM/2023-24
Estimated Cost	₹36,89,198/- (Inclusive of GST)
Period of the contract	36 Months (As per Clause-6 of Section-II)
Earnest Money Deposit	₹73,784 (through e-payment) as per clause 2.1 (a) of Section-I
Cost of Document*	₹1,000/- Inclusive of all taxes and duties through e-payment
Tender Processing Fee*	₹2,177/- (Inclusive of 18% GST) through e-payment which is Non-refundable
Date of Sale (Online)	From 13.02.2024 at 15:00 Hrs. to 04.03.2024 up to 16:00 Hrs.
Date & Time of submission	05.03.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs. (E-Tendering Mode Only)
Date & Time of Opening	06.03.2024 at 15:30 Hrs.

* Through e-Payment
CCICIR reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons thereof. For complete details login to www.tenderwizard.com/CCIL.
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Walk-in interview (Offline & Online) Vacancy Notice
No. RCIL/2024/P&A/01/WR Dated 12.02.2024

RailTel Recruitment 2024 | Engineer & Other Posts | Total Vacancies : 05 Nos.
Walk-in interview: 20.02.2024, 21.02.2024 and 22.02.2024. www.railtelindia.com

RailTel Recruitment 2024: RailTel Corporation of India Limited is looking for dynamic professional purely on Contract basis from Open Market for the following post like Engineer/ Expert. Recently it has issued notice [Vacancy Notice No. RCIL/2024/P&A/01/WR] on 12.02.2024 for above said posts. As per the notification, there are 05 Nos. vacancies to be filled by RailTel and post wise vacancy details are available at www.railtelindia.com. For details kindly visit website.

Western Railway Microwave Complex, Senapati Bapat Marg, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai-400013 Phone: 91 (22) 24923907 Fax: 91 (22) 24923913

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IDBI Bank Ltd.
Advertisement No. 13/2023-24

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For detailed eligibility criteria with respect to age, qualification and related instructions, please visit the 'Careers' section in the Bank's website www.idbibank.in

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Sr. No	Positions on Fixed Term Contract	Vacancies
1	HOD - Maintenance	1
2	HOD - Fire Safety, OHC and Security	1
Sr. No	Positions on Regular Employment	Vacancies
1	Group Manager - Safety	1
2	Group Manager - Electrical	1
3	Senior Officer - Safety	1
4	Senior Officer - HR and Admin	1
5	Senior Officer - Shipping	2

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8 GOVT & POLITICS

Chavan latest blow, unease grows in Congress

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

AS THE Lok Sabha elections draw near, the challenges before the Congress and the INDIA bloc are mounting. The latest setback came Monday, with senior Maharashtra leader Ashok Chavan leaving the party — coming on the heels of the JD(U) and RLD walking out of the INDIA coalition, the Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) announcing that they would go it alone in West Bengal and Punjab; and seat-sharing talks in Delhi coming under severe strain.

Chavan has become the ninth former chief minister of the Congress to leave the party in the past 10 years, joining the ranks of Amarinder Singh (Punjab), Ghulam Nabi Azad (Jammu and Kashmir), Vijay Bahuguna (Uttarakhand), the late Ajit Jogi (Chhattisgarh), S M Krishna (Karnataka), Narayan Rane (Maharashtra) and Giridhar Gamang (Odisha). (Gamang returned to the party recently.)

Chavan's resignation had been coming for a while, as he was known to be sulking. What many in the Congress expressed surprise over was the lack of efforts on the part of the high command to placate him. Sources

said that at least a month ago, AICC in-charge of Maharashtra Ramesh Chennithala flagged to the leadership that some leaders against whom there are cases were "facing pressure" to quit, and that the activities of such leaders should be monitored.

On Monday, as Chavan exited the party, the Congress chose to lay the blame on his and the BJP's doors, suggesting that the cases against him were the motivating factor. But, behind the scenes, the party is bracing for more trouble, with apprehension rife that some MLAs close to the ex-CM (sources put their number at half-a-dozen) could quit and potentially spoil the Congress's chances of winning a Rajya Sabha seat from the state in elections later this month.

Chennithala, who came to Delhi after the weekend in Maharashtra, is rushing back to Mumbai to meet senior leaders. The party has begun reaching out to all its MLAs. "How can we predict what they plan to do? After all, Chavan himself attended a meeting with Chennithala on Sunday," a senior leader said.

Officially, Chennithala maintained: "Chavan's exit will not affect the Congress."

Former Maharashtra CM Prithviraj Chavan said: "I do not think anyone from the Congress will follow Ashok Chavan. The



Ashok Chavan has become the ninth ex-CM of Congress to leave the party in 10 years

party is holding a meeting with all its MLAs in Mumbai on Tuesday to review the situation."

Congress leaders also admitted in private that the BJP design to "systematically" break up the INDIA bloc and force desertions from the party was clear. Chavan's exit came days after two other Congress leaders from Maharashtra — Baba Siddique and Milind Deora — quit, and the apprehension is that the BJP is succeeding in conveying the perception of an INDIA bloc in tatters and a Congress that is isolated.

In what is seen as a conscious strategy, the BJP has toned down its attack against the INDIA bloc, which it once dubbed 'Ghamandiya (arrogant)' and 'INDI' alliance, and is focusing on the Congress. "Mamata Banerjee's announcement that her party would contest on its own came

just before Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra was to enter Bengal. Then came Nitish Kumar's exit from the INDIA alliance, the arrest of JMM leader Hemant Soren and the RLD's decision to walk out in Uttar Pradesh. We are expecting some desertions in Madhya Pradesh as well (where the Yatra is headed)," a senior leader said, adding that the NDA "is not on a strong wicket in Maharashtra" and hence the bid to break the Opposition parties.

Sources also said the BJP was using pressure tactics such as on-going probes by investigating agencies to throttle the INDIA alliance. Chavan is believed to have approached the party leadership over this as recently as Saturday, while a leader pointed to the Enforcement Directorate summons to National Conference president Farooq Abdullah for Tuesday, just when the party and Congress are "in advanced stages of finalising seat-sharing".

Another Congress leader claimed that the BJP was also at work to ensure that the alliance of the party with the AAP in Delhi does not happen.

UP too has not been good going. Even before the RLD shock came, the Congress was taken by surprise at the SP's unilateral decision to announce 11 seats for it, and declare its own candidates in

16 seats. "In the end, we may end up with seat-sharing pacts in only states like Tamil Nadu, Bihar, Maharashtra and Jharkhand, where we were part of alliances even before the formation of the INDIA bloc," one leader said.

More and more Congress leaders now are raising questions about the timing of the Rahul Yatra. "It was ill-advised strategically. Had the party consulted the veterans... we would have said no. Just sit on the laurels of the earlier Yatra, focus on coordination with INDIA parties, organise big joint rallies in state capitals... at least one a week... that would have had far more impact," a leader said.

Another leader countered this, saying: "Rahul's plan to embark on a second yatra came up for discussion at the December 21 CWC meeting and almost every leader asked him to go ahead."

The Yatra is on till next month and the party fears exit of MLAs and allies is all bad optics. On Chavan's exit, Congress communications head Jairam Ramesh said: "When friends and colleagues leave a party that has given them much — perhaps much more than they deserved — it is a matter of anguish. But to those who are vulnerable, THAT Washing Machine will always prove more attractive than ideological commitment or personal loyalties..."

3 cases against Maharashtra ex-CM still pending in courts

Mumbai: Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Ashok Chavan, who quit the Congress on Monday, had been named in three cases in recent years. One of these was filed by the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), while another was filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the Adarsh Cooperative Housing Society case dating back to 2011.

With a Supreme Court stay on the proceedings since 2018, the trial in the CBI case is yet to begin. The ED did not make any arrests in its case, nor has a chargesheet been filed.

The third relates to an alleged land grab case filed against 15 people including Chavan in Yavatmal. Here too, there has been no progress for many years. The ACB had filed an FIR in 2011 on various charges, including cheating, criminal conspiracy and forgery under the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Prevention of Corruption Act. The initial list of suspects in the case were 13 persons including Chavan. **ENS**

PM: We gave 1.5 times more govt jobs in 10 yrs than UPA regime

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12



PM Narendra Modi addresses the Rozgar Mela, Monday. PTI

CRITICISING PREVIOUS governments for taking a long time to conduct recruitment, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the BJP government "has provided almost 1.5 times more government jobs in its 10 years than the previous dispensation during its decade-long rule".

Addressing a Rozgar Mela via videoconferencing, PM Modi said, "Today, more than 1 lakh youths have been given appointment letters for government jobs."

"Previous governments used to keep a very long gap between issuing job advertisements and handing over appointment letters. Taking advantage of this delay, the game of bribery was also rampant during that time. We have now made the recruitment process completely transparent," he said.

"We try to finish the recruitment procedure within a set time frame so that everyone gets an equal opportunity to showcase his capabilities," he said.

The government has allocated Rs 11 lakh crore as capital

expenditure in the Interim Budget 2024-25 to increase the pace of development, he said.

The Prime Minister also spoke about opening of new sectors and creation of opportunities for employment and self-employment for the youth due to the efforts of the government. He mentioned the Budget announcement about one crore rooftop solar plants, which will reduce the power bill of the families and help them earn money by supplying power to the grid. This scheme will create lakhs of new jobs also, he said.

Modi said paramilitary recruitment examination will be conducted in 13 Indian languages apart from Hindi and English.



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



RS SUSPENSE

AS SUSPENSE continues over the Congress's list of candidates for the Rajya Sabha elections, leading to speculation that Sonia Gandhi could take the RS route instead of contesting again from the Raebareilly Lok Sabha seat, sources say it is more or less clear that three leaders — Ajay Maken, Abhishek Singhvi and Syed Nasser Hussain — will get tickets to the Upper House. Sonia was seen attending a meeting at party chief Mallikarjun Kharge's residence on Monday, but according to sources, the discussion was on alliances. Present at the meeting were AICC general secretary (Organisation) K C Venugopal and members of the alliance committee Mukul Wasnik, Maken and Salman Khurshid.

TIES AND TRIBUTES

DAYS AFTER the NDA government announced Bharat Ratna for former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh, several senior BJP leaders on Monday paid tributes to Singh's son and Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) founder late Ajit Singh on his birth anniversary. Among the UP BJP leaders who remembered the late farmer leader were Deputy CM Brajesh Pathak and Union minister Sanjeev Balyan, who had defeated Singh from Muzaffarnagar seat in 2019 Lok Sabha elections with a narrow margin of 6,526 votes. Notably, the tributes for Singh have come at a time when his party has finalised the alliance with the BJP for the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

Facilitate release: Rahul writes to PM over MGNREGS funds

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

WADING INTO the political tussle that is brewing between the BJP-led Centre and the Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal over payment of MGNREGS wages, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking him to facilitate release of funds to clear pending wages.

Rahul's letter comes days after Banerjee announced that the Trinamool Congress would contest the forthcoming Lok Sabha elections in the state alone and not as part of the INDIA bloc. Rahul's letter in a way justifies Banerjee's charge that the Centre was not releasing funds for payment of pending wages to MGNREGS workers. That the BJP government is discriminating against opposition-ruled states is a charge often made by the Congress too.

Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah and his entire Cabinet, along with MLAs and MPs of the Congress, had staged a protest at Jantar Mantar last week, accusing the central government of "injustice" to the state.

In his letter dated February 10 drawing the attention of the Prime Minister to what he called "devastating plight" of MGNREGS workers in Bengal, Rahul said lakhs of people have been denied work and wages under MGNREGS due to the stoppage of central funds to West Bengal since March 2022.

Talking about a meeting he



Rahul Gandhi during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Korba, Chhattisgarh, on Monday. ANI

had with a delegation of MGNREGS workers during his yatra in Bengal last month, he said: "I was informed that many workers have not been paid for work completed in 2021 due to shortfall in funds."

"Moreover, there has been a drastic decline in the number of households availing work from 75 lakh in 2021-22 to under 8,000 households in 2023-24. This massive scale down has been brutal on the most vulnerable — women, and SC & ST households. The lack of MGNREGS work and pending wages have forced many to make hard choices, particularly distress migration," he said.

Earlier this month, Banerjee had staged a dharna in Kolkata against the BJP-led Centre over the alleged non-payment of dues to the state under various welfare schemes. She then announced that her government would pay 21 lakh MGNREGS workers.

'Saw rich at Ram temple on Jan 22'

Korba, Chhattisgarh: People are chanting Jai Shri Ram 24 hours but they are not being able to see that they are being looted every day by rich businessmen, Rahul Gandhi said during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra here, claiming that even during the Ram temple inauguration on January 22, only the rich and celebrities were invited.

Rahul's yatra commenced at 9 am from Korba and moved towards Ambikapur in Surguja. Rahul said he has come to hear people's Mann ki Baat. Addressing the crowd, Rahul asked a colliery worker and a former Army jawan from the crowd to sit next to him in the SUV. "Did you see anyone poor during the Ram Mandir inauguration?... Only billionaires were present," he said. **ENS**

Bengal Gov in Sandeshkhali, CM says those behind violence held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 12

AS WEST Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose on Monday visited Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district following protests in the area against a local TMC leader facing land grabbing and corruption charges, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said those responsible for the violence have been arrested and necessary steps have been taken to maintain law and order situation in the area.

The CM's remark came soon after Governor Bose, who cut short his Kerala trip to visit Sandeshkhali, described the situation as "ghastly, shocking, and shattering to my senses".



West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose with a resident of Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas district, Monday. Express

"Those who have instigated violence (in Sandeshkhali) have been arrested... The situation is being monitored closely and necessary steps are being taken," the chief minister told mediapersons on the sidelines of an event at Dumurjala in Howrah district.

On Sunday, police arrested three political leaders — suspended TMC leader Uttam Sardar, BJP observer for Basirhat Lok Sabha constituency Vikas Singh, and CPI(M) leader and former MLA Nirapada Sardar — on charges of arson, instigating violence among others.

Sandeshkhali has been tense since Wednesday after the violent protests where local villagers accused three local TMC leaders — Shahjahan Sheikh, Uttam Sardar and Shoboprasad Hazra of land grabbing and making vil-

lagers work without pay. During protests, villagers gheraoed the Sandeshkhali police station and allegedly set ablaze three poultry farms owned by Hazra.

TMC functionary Shahjahan Sheikh has been absconding since January 5 following the attack on ED officials during the search at his house in connection with the alleged ration scam.

During his visit to Sandeshkhali on Monday, the Governor met residents who alleged that they were being harassed by Sheikh and his aides.

"What I saw was ghastly, shocking, shattering to my senses. I saw something which I should never have seen. I heard many things which I should never have heard. I cannot believe this could happen in Rabindranath Tagore's land. I

will fight it out under the provisions of the Constitution, as per the law of the land and whatever is within my powers," Bose told mediapersons.

Police rule out communal angle

The police on Sunday maintained that there was no communal angle in the violence at Sandeshkhali and no rape complaint was filed by any woman in the area. The comments came hours after Union Minister Smriti Irani alleged that Hindu women are being raped in the area.

DIG (Barasat range) Sumit Kumar said a 10-member team headed by a DIG-rank woman officer has been formed to look into the complaints of women. The team will visit Sandeshkhali and speak to them.

As Jayant announces NDA switch, a history of RLD's U-turns: BJP to SP & back to BJP

Ajit Singh in 1997 founded RLD that has been part of both Vajpayee, UPA-II govts

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

AFTER DAYS of speculation, on Monday, Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) chief Jayant Chaudhary announced that his party was quitting the INDIA alliance of Opposition parties and joining the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

This partnership will help the BJP consolidate its base among Jats, who are the RLD's core base, and place it ahead in at least seven seats in west UP where its prospects were considered grim as per ground surveys done by the party ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. Over the decades, the RLD, which enjoys significant support among Jats in west UP, has allied with the BJP, the Samajwadi Party (SP), and the Congress for political survival. The alliance with the BJP, thus, was never out of the realm of possibility.

Chaudhary Ajit Singh, who went on to become a seven-time MP, formed the RLD in 1997 to build on the legacy of his father



RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary

and former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh, a stalwart farmer leader. During his tenure as UP Chief Minister, Charan Singh had pushed through major legislation that transformed the state's agricultural economy. These land reform laws helped him develop a strong base among farmers in the region.

Before he started the RLD, Ajit played a role in the Union government as part of various governments. In December 1989, Ajit, then with the Janata Dal, became the Union Cabinet

Minister for Industry in the National Front government of V P Singh. He was re-elected as a Janata Dal MP in 1991. That year, a Congress-led alliance came to power under Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao. Ajit was subsequently appointed Union Cabinet Minister of the Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution in February 1995.

A year later, Ajit switched to the Congress. He contested the 1996 Lok Sabha polls on a Congress ticket and won. He then left the Congress to form the Bharatiya Kisan Kamgar Party (BKPP) to represent farmers' interests. This eventually became the RLD in 1997. Two years later, he contested the Lok Sabha polls on an RLD symbol. In July 2001, he joined the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led NDA government and became the Union Agriculture Minister

The party allied with the BJP in the 2002 UP Assembly polls, winning 14 of the 38 seats it contested. This has been its best performance in the state elections

to date. But in the 2004 Lok Sabha elections, the RLD partnered with the SP to consolidate OBC votes. The RLD won three seats. In 2011, the RLD joined the UPA-II government led by the Congress and Singh became the civil aviation minister. The following year, the RLD contested the 46 seats in the UP Assembly polls in alliance with the Congress but won only nine constituencies. Two years later, in the 2014 parliamentary polls, the RLD contested again in alliance with the Congress. It fought in eight seats but lost all.

The party fought the 2017 UP Assembly polls on its own — the SP and the Congress were in alliance at the time — and won only one seat. In 2019, it partnered with the SP and the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) but lost all the three parliamentary seats it contested. In the 2022 state polls, the SP won 111 seats of the 347 it contested while the RLD won nine seats of the 33 where it fielded candidates. It clinched another seat by winning a bypoll the same year.

BJP bullish on Modi govt 3.0, rhetoric shows Hindutva to remain on agenda

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE 17TH Lok Sabha came to a close last Saturday with the ruling BJP exuding confidence about pulling off a hat-trick in the upcoming general elections. PM Narendra Modi asserted that his party would clinch the Lok Sabha polls with an enhanced majority.

PM Modi also told the House, "Our third term will witness very big decisions, and will lay a strong foundation for the next 1,000 years." His statement foreshadows the bold agenda the "Modi government 3.0" is likely to take up during its tenure.

The 17th Lok Sabha had been no less eventful as it saw some major ideological projects of the BJP reaching conclusion. This started with the abrogation of Article 370 that granted special status to Jammu and Kashmir — which the BJP planned and executed meticulously — criminalisation of triple talaq and the enactment of the Citizenship Amendment Act

(CAA) in 2019 itself, the first year of the Modi government 2.0.

Although the Covid pandemic that broke out in early 2020 slowed down some of its proposed projects, the BJP government stepped up its legislative reform moves in its final year. It passed the constitutional amendment legislation to grant 33% reservation to women in the Lok Sabha and Assemblies

besides passing three Bills aimed at revamping the country's criminal justice system — the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, and Bharatiya Sakshya Bill — which replaced the colonial-era Indian Penal Code, Code of Criminal Procedure, and Indian Evidence Act respectively. The party mixed these legislative measures with political messages.

The BJP faced electoral or political setbacks in Maharashtra, Bihar — in both these states it regained upper hand after ensuring a political realignment — West Bengal, Kerala, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh, Karnataka and Telangana, but they were

overshadowed by its resounding triumphs in Hindi heartland states including Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

The BJP suffered setbacks on the CAA — which had sparked widespread protests across the country, culminating in riots in the national capital — and over the farm Bills, which it had to repeal, but the party has also managed to fight that back by raising its pitch on ideological issues. Its numerical supremacy means the BJP does not have to dilute its hardline stance on this.

The BJP dispensation has also not run into any major judicial roadblock. The Supreme Court Constitution Bench's unanimous judgment in the Ayodhya matter led to the construction of the Ram Temple, which is likely to yield long-term political capital for the party.

Significantly, the BJP has managed to push all its legislative measures through even the Rajya Sabha despite not having a majority in the Upper House.

Now, the party has started rolling out its Uniform Civil Code (UCC) agenda, one of its earliest

core ideological issues along with Article 370, going back to its Jana Sangh days. After the Uttarakhand Assembly recently clearing the UCC Bill, it is set to be introduced by other BJP-ruled states.

The BJP top brass has been claiming that the Modi government 3.0 would focus on major reforms to "lay the foundation for India's glory for a millennium". At the same time, the last session of the 17th Lok Sabha ended with the incumbent party sounding the bugle of Hindutva to set the tone for the elections. The Chairs of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha praised PM Modi for playing an "unparalleled role" in uniting the entire nation on the "auspicious occasion" of the Ram Temple's consecration, which was discussed by both Houses. The PM said the adoption of a resolution on it will give constitutional strength to the future generations to feel proud of the country's values.

Several BJP leaders admit that the party would not slow down on its Hindutva push even if it returns to power with 370 seats — the target set by PM Modi.

BIHAR FLOOR TEST



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav (right), party MLA Tej Pratap Yadav and MP Manoj Jha at the Assembly, in Patna, on Monday. PTI

Tejashwi: Can Modi guarantee Nitish will not do another U-turn

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, FEBRUARY 12

TAKING ON Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) supreme Nitish Kumar in the state Assembly Monday, RJD leader and ex-Deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav made repeated jibes at Nitish for his flip-flops and his switch from the Mahagathbandhan (grand alliance) to the NDA besides his "ideological wavering".

In a spirited speech while participating in the debate on the trust motion moved by the Nitish government in the House, Tejashwi took credit for clearing the decks for mass appointments during the 17-month tenure of the previous Nitish-led Mahagathbandhan government. The RJD leader also took aim at new Deputy CMs and BJP leaders, Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha. He reminded Samrat of his salvos against the JD(U) chief, asking him to take off his pagdi (turban) that he had once vowed to remove only after Nitish ceased to be the CM. He also asked Sinha if he had ever imagined that he could become the Assembly Speaker, Leader of Opposition, and currently Deputy CM — all in a matter of three years in the wake of Nitish's U-turns.

Targeting Nitish without showing any rancour, Tejashwi

said: "I hold you in high esteem and will continue to do the same. I always treat you as my Dasherath. I wish you good health and long life. My advice to you is that you have to identify your Kaikeyi. Dasherath had exiled Ram. But I am not seeking an exile but an opportunity to go to people...I wonder how you would justify your latest switch".

When interrupted by an NDA legislator on what the RJD would tell the people, Tejashwi said: "I would tell them how I had given them a lot of jobs in the departments under the RJD (in the previous Mahagathbandhan government). We proved how one department (education) could give over two lakh jobs in 17 months, a feat not achieved by any government".

Taking a swipe at the BJP over its "Modi ki guarantee" pitch, Tejashwi asked, "Can PM Modi guarantee that Nitish Kumar won't do another U-turn?"

He also reminded Nitish of how he had parted ways with the BJP in August 2022 while alleging that the latter had been trying to "split JD (U)".

"You (Nitish) had also said how you don't want to become PM and just wanted to strengthen the Opposition against BJP", he said, adding the Mahagathbandhan was surprised and dismayed at Nitish's move to dump it "without any valid reason".

In jail for 8 months, Balaji resigns as TN minister

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 12

TAMIL NADU minister V Senthil Balaji tendered his resignation on Monday, eight months after he was arrested and imprisoned by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in a money laundering and job scam case.

The move gains significance as Balaji's prolonged legal battle and multiple bail pleas have largely remained futile, raising questions over why he is still being retained as a minister in the state Cabinet without any portfolio. The office of Chief Minister MK Stalin confirmed the submission of Balaji's resignation and that it was sent to the Governor for approval.

Balaji's resignation has come just days before the Madras High Court is slated to review his bail plea. He was arrested on June 14, 2023, in connection with a purported cash-for-jobs scam that occurred during his tenure as the transport minister, from 2011 to



The Madras HC had recently expressed concern over Balaji's Cabinet position despite prolonged detention

2015, in the Cabinet led by the late Jayalalithaa, the then Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu.

Before his arrest, the DMK leader held significant positions, managing electricity, excise and prohibition portfolios. Despite Balaji's legal troubles, CM Stalin chose to keep him in the Cabinet without specific responsibilities and allocated his duties to other ministers. This move, however, did not quell the controversy surrounding his Cabinet membership while being imprisoned.

Recently, Justice N Anand Venkatesh of the Madras HC, while addressing Balaji's prolonged detention and his status in the Cabinet, expressed concerns over the message this situation conveyed about the state's governance and legal standards. The judge highlighted the anomaly of a minister retaining his Cabinet position despite being jailed for over 230 days on serious charges, pointing out that even lower-grade employees of the state would have been suspended under similar circumstances.

Sources close to Balaji said the decision to resign was made independently, not at the demand of the DMK leadership. "...His bail pleas were repeatedly rejected for two main reasons: his position in the Cabinet and his brother, who has been evading the ED for several months. The issue of his Cabinet position had become prominent, especially with the HV also criticising it. The decision to resign was made by him on his own," the source said.

Soren planned banquet hall on land at centre of case: ED

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) on Monday told a special court in Ranchi that former chief minister Hemant Soren had planned to build a banquet hall in the 8.5-acre land at the centre of the alleged money laundering case against him.

Soren was produced before the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court after the ED's five-day custody came to an end. On Monday, the court extended Soren's ED remand for three more days. The former CM has been under ED custody for the last 10 days, and the agency has previously told the court that it found incrimi-

nating chats on WhatsApp between Soren and a close aide regarding transfer postings and confidential information about properties, and that they shared government records.

The ED particularly cited the chats of one Binod Singh with Soren. In a remand note submitted Monday, the ED stated, "...Another chat has surfaced between these two persons (Soren and Binod Singh), which has been printed in 201 pages... These chats also contain information regarding proposed structures over landed properties, which are required to be investigated for taking proper action under PMLA... The scrutiny of the WhatsApp chat between Binod Singh and Hemant Soren has led to the identification of a plan/map of the

proposed banquet (hall), shared by Binod Singh to Shri Hemant Soren on April 6, 2021."

The ED said the location of the "proposed" banquet hall mentioned in the said plan matches with the said 8.5 acres of land that they alleged was illegally acquired by Soren.

"A survey under PMLA has also been conducted on February 10 in presence of the officials and accused, and it has been corroborated that the locality of the banquet as per the plan shared by Binod Singh and the area of 8.5 acres of land acquired by Hemant Soren, under investigation, are same and there is no such big parcel of land available in the said locality where such big structure can be planned for construction," ED told the court Monday.

In TN Governor's 'shortest' address to House, echo of Kerala counterpart

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 12

IN THE latest round of his show-down with the DMK-led Tamil Nadu government, Governor RN Ravi delivered the "shortest" address to the Assembly on Monday.

Like his move last year, the Governor left the House before the National Anthem could be played. He also refrained from reading out portions of his customary address, citing disagreements with the government-prepared content.

With Ravi refusing to read parts of the speech citing "disagreements on moral and factual

grounds", Speaker M Appavu read its Tamil translation in entirety which highlighted the MK Stalin government's achievements and challenges, a call for a caste census and the lack of financial aid from the Centre during the recent floods.

The Speaker also emphasised on the independence of the Assembly and stressed that it was not inferior "to those who follow the path of Savarkar and Godse".

Ravi's "walkout" was similar to that of his Kerala counterpart Mohammad Arif Khan, whose address to the Assembly there amid his tussle with the Pinarayi Vijayan-led LDF government over a host of issues lasted less

than two minutes. Khan in January had just read out the opening and closing paragraphs of his speech on the state government's policies.

Ravi too has been at loggerheads with the Stalin government, which moved the Supreme Court in October last year over delay in assent to "re-passed Bills". The apex court had come down heavily on the Governor, questioning what he had been doing for three years.

Ravi had also triggered controversy after he ordered the dismissal of a minister, Senthil Balaji, who faced action from the ED. He later put the move on hold.

SC extends interim bail to Ashish Mishra

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Monday extended the interim bail granted to Union minister Ajay Kumar Mishra's son Ashish Mishra in a case related to the 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri violence in which eight people died.

A bench of Justice Surya Kant and Justice K V Viswanathan directed the apex court registry to obtain a report from the trial court on the progress of the case and adjourned the matter.

On September 26 last year, the top court relaxed the bail conditions of Mishra to enable him to visit and stay in the National Capital Region to look after his ailing mother and for the treatment of his daughter.

The case pertains to an incident of violence on October 3, 2021, in which eight people, including four farmers, were killed in Tikunia in Lakhimpur Kheri district of Uttar Pradesh. PTI

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Website: www.cercind.gov.in

Date: 9.2.2024

Petition No. 305/TD/2023
NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003 (the Act)

An application for the grant of a Category-V trading licence for inter-State trading in electricity in all States and Union Territories of India has been made before the Commission by Radiance Green Markets Private Limited, 9th Floor, Godrej One, Pirojshanagar, Opposite Eastern Express Highway, Vikhroli, East Mumbai-400079, Maharashtra.

- A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for grant of inter-State trading licence to Radiance Green Markets Private Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website www.rgmpl.com or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
- On consideration of the material available on record, the Commission is satisfied that prima facie the applicant qualifies for the grant of a licence for inter-State trading in electricity and by order dated 1.2.2024, the Commission has proposed to grant a Category-V licence to the applicant for inter-State trading in electricity all over India.
- Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act to invite suggestions or objections, if any, to the proposal to grant a licence for inter-State trading in electricity as aforesaid by the Commission to be received by the undersigned latest by **23.2.2024** at the above noted address. The objections or suggestions received after the specified date shall not be considered.
- The application shall be taken up for further hearing by the Commission on **27.2.2024**. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA, MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME
STATION CELL (ECHS), AMBALA CANTT
PHONE: 0171 2981162 Email: echsstncellambala@yahoo.in
EMPLOYMENT NOTICE

1. ECHS invites applications to engage following Officer-in-Charge, Medical, Para Medical & Non Medical Staff on contractual basis in ECHS Polyclinics under AOR of Station Cell (ECHS), Ambala Cantt for a period of 12/11 months renewable for additional period of 12/11 months till attaining the maximum age subject to performance of candidates/other conditions according to the criteria as mentioned against each post:-

Appointment	Minimum Qualification	No of Vacancy		Fixed Remuneration
		Against ESM Only	Open (ESM/Civ)	
Officer-in-Charge	Only Retd service offers from Army, Navy & Air Force and should be drawing pension from Defence estimates through CDA except from AMC Graduate & Min 05 Yrs Experience in Health Care Institutes or Managerial Positions	05 (Ambala-01, Kurukshetra - 01, Kharkhoda - 01, Panipat - 01 & Naraingarh-01)		
Medical Officer	MBBS & Min 05 Yrs Experience after Internship Preferable Additional Qualification in Medicine/Surgery	06 (Sonepat-02, Gohana-01, Kurukshetra-01, Kharkhoda-01 & Nahan-01)	07 (Ambala-05, Kamal-01 & Naraingarh-01)	Rs 75,000/-pm each
Dental Officer	BDS & Min 05 Yrs Experience	02 (Sonepat-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	04 (Ambala-01, Panipat-01, Kharkhoda-01 & Nahan-01)	
Medical Specialist/ Gynaecologist	MD/MS in Specialty Converned/DNB & Min 05 yrs Experience in the Specialty after Post Graduation	-	02 (Ambala-01 & Sonepat-01)	Rs 1,00,000/-pm each
Radiologist	PG Degree & Min 03 Yrs Experience after PG Degree	-	01 (Sonepat)	
Dental A/T/H	Diploma Holder in Dental Hyg/Class-1 DH/ DORA Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience in Dental Laboratory	-	03 (Karnal-01 & Kharkhoda-01 Panipat-01)	
Nursing Assistant	GNM Diploma/Class-1 Nursing Assistants Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience	-	04 (Sonepat-01, Kurukshetra-01, Kharkhoda-01 & YamunaNagar-01)	
Pharmacist	B Pharmacy or diploma in pharmacy from Recognised Institute Or 12th with Science stream from Recognised Bd & Min 03 Yrs Experience	06 (Ambala-01, Sonepat-01, Kamal-01, Gohana-01, Kaithal-01 & Kharkhoda-01)		Rs 28,100/-pm each
Physiotherapist	Diploma/Class-1 Physiotherapist Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Work Experience	01 (Panipat)	02 (Ambala-01, Sonepat-01)	
Laboratory Technician	B Sc (Medical lab Technology) Or 10th/12th with Science from Recognized Institute/ Board/ DMLT & Min 03 Yrs Experience in Laboratory Asst in a Medical Lab	02 (Sonepat-01 & Kaithal-01)	03 (Gohana-01, Kamal-01 & Kurukshetra-01)	
Laboratory Assistant	DMLT/ Class-1 Lab Tech Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 yrs Work Experience in Laboratory.	-	01 (Naraingarh)	
Radiographer	Diploma/Class-1 Radiographer Course (Armed Forces) & Min 05 Yrs Experience	-	01 (Kurukshetra)	
Driver	Class 8th Class-1 MT Driver (Armed Forces) Possess a Civil Driving Licence & Min 05 Yrs Experience as Driver	01 (Kharkhoda)		Rs 19,700/-pm
Clerk	Graduate/Class-1 Clerical Trade (Armed Forces), Computer qualified & Min 05 Yrs Experience	-	02 (Sonepat-01 & Panipat-01)	
Data Entry Operator	-	-	01 (Ambala)	
Chowkidar	Education (Class 8th or GD Trade for Armed Forces Personnel)	02 (Kaithal-01 & Kharkhoda-01)	03 (Kurukshetra-01, Naraingarh-01 & Yamuna Nagar-01)	Rs 16,800/-pm each
Safaiwala	Literate & Min 05 Yrs Experience	03 (Sonepat-01, Kurukshetra-01 & Nahan-01)	01 (Kharkhoda)	
Female Attendant	Literate & Min 05 Yrs Experience in Civil/Army Health Institutions	-	03 (Panipat-01, Kamal-01 & Yamunanagar-01)	

2. **For Terms & Conditions, Application Form & Remuneration.** Website www.echs.gov.in. Preference will be given to Ex-Servicemen. Selected candidates in the category of OIC, Medical Officer, Medical Specialist, Radiologist, Gynaecologist & Dental Officer will have to carry out 10 days On Job Training (OJT) and obtain a certificate from OIC Polyclinic before signing the contract. The duration of OJT will remain unpaid and counted as mandatory before assuming charge as a contractual employee.

3. **Last date of receipt of application as per format given at our website.** Application as per format in only physical form alongwith self-attested photocopies in support of Education Qualifications, PAN & Aadhar Cards, Work Experience, Original copies of Latest Medical Certificate signed by SEMO/CMO & Character certificates, NOC from concerned Station Cell (If candidate working with any Army Organisation), Copy of Discharge Book, PPO for ESM and Record of Service as per Appx 'A' to AO 135/78, application duly endorsed the AWPO registration No (for ESM officers Only) will be submitted to OIC, Stn Cell (ECHS), Ambala Cantt by **29 Feb 2024 till 0130 PM**. An application received after **29 Feb 2024 (0130 PM)** will not be accepted.

4. **Interview Date, Timing & Venue.** Interviews will be held between **0900 hrs to 1400 hrs from 20 Mar 2024** onwards. Specific date/time will be intimated Candidates must bring all the original certificates/mark sheets degree at the time of interview. No TA/DA is admissible Only candidates meeting the Qualitative Requirements may apply & only screened candidates will be called telephonically for interview.

Top court closes PIL on duplicate voter entries in UP electoral rolls

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court Monday took note of the submissions of the Election Commission and closed the proceedings in a PIL related to alleged duplicate voter entries in electoral rolls in Uttar Pradesh.

The top court had on February 5 sought the response of the poll panel on two issues raised by PIL petitioner NGO 'Samvidhan Bachao Trust' which claimed the electoral rolls were faulty.

The petitioner alleged the Chief Electoral Officer of Uttar Pradesh had not issued specific communication to the District Electoral Officers with regard to duplicate entries. The NGO claimed there was a mismatch between the number of electors removed from the rolls on account of death, change of residence and in case of identical entries of people in rolls of different constituencies.

Lawyer Amit Sharma, appearing for the poll panel, said the EC has responded to both the questions raised by the petitioner in its response and referred to the communication of the Chief Electoral Officer to all the District Electoral Officers. PTI

Deputy CM is like any other minister: SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE SUPREME Court Monday turned down a petition challenging the appointment of deputy chief ministers in state governments as unconstitutional, saying a deputy chief minister is like any other minister. While hearing the plea, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said, "It's only a label. Even if they are designated as deputy chief ministers, they are only an MLA."

"They don't draw higher salaries. They are like any other member, maybe they are treated a little more senior than others...", said the CJ, who was presiding over a three-judge bench. The petitioner said before the bench, also comprising Justice J B Pardiwala and Justice Manoj Misra, that the question is not about salary.

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Uttar Pradesh halal ban: Halal India, Jamiat Ulama Maharashtra granted interim protection by SC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE SUPREME Court on Monday granted interim protection from any coercive action to the office-bearers of Halal India Limited and Jamiat Ulama Maharashtra over the Uttar Pradesh ban on halal-certified products.

On January 5, the SC, while issuing notice to the state on petitions filed by the two bodies — challenging the Constitutional validity of the notification “prohibiting the manufacturing, storage, sale, and distribution of food products with halal certi-

fication within the State of Uttar Pradesh, except for items produced for export” — had refused to grant them interim protection from arrest.

However, on January 25, the court granted protection to Jamiat Ulama-e-Hind Halal Trust president Mahmood Madani, who also approached the SC challenging the ban.

On Monday, this was pointed out to a bench of Justice B R Gawai and Sandeep Mehta, which then agreed to extend the relief to Halal India Limited and Jamiat Ulama Maharashtra too.

Halal India Pvt Ltd, which claims to be an “internationally

recognised halal certification provider”, has called the notification “an attack on the followers of Islam religion”.

It argued that the notification issued by the Office of the Commissioner, Food Safety and Drug Administration, Uttar Pradesh, on November 18, 2023, has pan-India ramifications and would impact inter-state commerce.

It contended that a similar position has not been taken for practices of other religions or denominations, and submitted that it will have a significant impact on public health, and on religious practices, affecting the freedom of religion.

4 linked to firm that issued illegal certificates held: STF

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 12

MORE THAN two months after an FIR was registered against three companies for allegedly issuing “illegal halal certificates” for products sold in UP, the Special Task Force (STF) of the UP Police Monday arrested four persons linked to the one of the three firms - Mumbai-based Halal Council of India - named in the FIR.

The UP government had

transferred the investigation from Lucknow Police to the STF.

The STF identified the four as Halal Council of India president, Maulana Habib Yusuf Patel, its vice-president Maulana Moidsher Sapadia, general secretary Mohammad Tahir Zakir Hussain Chauhan and treasurer Mohammad Anwar.

S Anand, DIG, UP STF, said the arrests were made after the four persons were questioned at its office in Lucknow. All four are residents of Mumbai, police said.

Firecracker stock catches fire near Kochi, 2 killed, 15 injured

Thiruvananthapuram: Two persons were killed and 15 others injured when firecrackers stocked for a festival near the Puthiyakavu Devi temple in Tripunithura near Kochi caught fire Monday. Around 45 houses were also

damaged. Police arrested four office-bearers of the temple committee, which did not obtain mandatory permission for the fireworks show slated for Monday night.

SC defers hearing on Uddhav Sena plea against Narwekar's decision

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE SUPREME Court on Monday deferred the hearing on Shiv Sena (Uddhav Bal Thackeray) petition challenging Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar's decision recognising Chief Minister Eknath Shinde-led faction as the “real Shiv Sena” and rejecting petitions seeking disqualification of MLAs siding with him.

A three-judge bench presided by CJI D Y Chandrachud, before whom it was listed Monday, however,

could not take it up due to shortage of time. As the bench was about to rise at the end of the day's proceedings, Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal appearing for Shiv Sena (UBT) raised the issue and pointed out that the matter is pending.

The bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, said it had some time-taking matters on Monday and agreed to hear the Sena (UBT) plea on an early date.

Opposing the plea, Senior Advocate Harish Salve said that the Shinde group had already approached the Bombay HC, which

is seized of the matter. The CJ said the court will first hear the question of maintainability, to which Sibal pointed out that the court had already issued notice in the matter. The SC had on January 22 issued notice on the petition.

Calling the Speaker's order “unlawful and perverse”, the Shiv Sena (UBT) sought a stay on it, and relief to restrain the Shinde faction from issuing any directions to Shiv Sena (UBT) MLAs to avoid being forced to follow Bharat Gogawale (Shinde faction), whom the Speaker recognised as the chief whip.

ED's fresh summons to Farooq in JKCA case

Srinagar, New Delhi: The ED has issued a fresh summons to National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah for questioning in a money laundering case pertaining to the Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association (JKCA), official sources said Monday. He has been asked to depose at the ED office in Srinagar Tuesday.

The 86-year-old politician was last called by the central agency in this case on January 11 but he did not appear before it.

PTI

Canara Bank advertisement with details of Rule 8 (1) POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) [Section 13 (4)]

MP POORV KSHETRA VIDYUT VITARAN CO. LTD. ONLINE TENDER advertisement for Jabalpur, dtd: 06.02.2024

ANDHRA PRADESH POWER GENERATION CORPORATION LIMITED advertisement for Vidyut Soudha - Vijayawada

PDPM Indian Institute of Information Technology, Design & Manufacturing Jabalpur advertisement for Expression of Interest (EOI)

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT BOARD CHATRA advertisement for Expression of Interest (very short)

Table with 3 columns: SI. No., Particulars, Details. Contains details of the District Engineer, District Board, Chatra invitation.

MORADABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION advertisement for Notice For Inviting Tender

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE advertisement for Sports Department Haryana

कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची advertisement for RWD/RANCHI

कार्यालयक अभियंता का कार्यालय ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, राँची advertisement for RWD/RANCHI

MORADABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION advertisement for Notice For Inviting Tender

Bihar State Mining Corporation Ltd. advertisement for Appointment of Advisor

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY advertisement for E-TENDER NOTICE

KERALA STATE DRUGS & PHARMACEUTICALS LTD. advertisement for E-Tender Notice

EXPRESS NETWORK

11

Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay: The Calcutta HC judge at centre of activism vs propriety debate

APURVA VISHWANATH
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 12

LAST WEEK, as the Supreme Court took note of the alleged "political bias" of Calcutta High Court's Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay, lawyers of the Trinamool Congress and BJP legal cells battled it out in what's turning into a high-stakes election for the bar.

On January 25, the politically fraught Calcutta High Court witnessed dramatic scenes as, sitting in his Courtroom Number 17, Justice Gangopadhyay made allegations of impropriety against his senior colleague Justice Soumen Sen, accusing him of working for "some political party".

This, capped with his February 6 apology to the Advocate General for the heated exchange with him a week ago, were all too familiar scenes for those acquainted with the workings of the bar and the bench in the oldest High Court.

But if there's one courtroom that has witnessed more drama than any other in the High Court, it's that of Justice Gangopadhyay — from scuffles to boycotts, charges traded against lawyers and senior colleagues and apologies. Appointed to the High Court in 2018, Justice Gangopadhyay still has six months left before he retires on August 18.

With courtrooms routinely turned into political battlegrounds in high-stakes cases, judges are no strangers to political attacks. But many see in Justice Gangopadhyay's frequent remarks against the ruling TMC and its leader Abhishek Banerjee signs of judicial activism at best and at worst, an open bias.

In a case in which a woman from North Bengal had moved the court seeking a job and compen-

sation after her husband's death due to Covid, Justice Gangopadhyay made an oral remark about a "bhaipo (nephew)" amassing wealth. This led to TMC MP Kunal Ghosh saying the judge should resign and fight an election against Abhishek Banerjee. A month later, at a public event, Justice Gangopadhyay said he met Ghosh in his chambers over a cup of tea and "became friends."

But it's his dogged pursuit of the school recruitment scam in West Bengal that has seen him being called "Aranyadeb (Phantom)" and "crusader" while also being accused of playing into the hands of the BJP.

The alleged school recruitment scam is one of the biggest scandals to have rocked the state government, leading to the arrest of a senior minister in the Mamata Banerjee Cabinet and other senior Trinamool leaders. The case also saw Justice Gangopadhyay ordering CBI investigations and terminating more than 32,000 appointments of teachers. Justice Gangopadhyay's termination order was later stayed by the SC.

"No one has the right to do anything with the Constitution of India. I might have to ask the Election Commission to cancel the recognition of Trinamool Congress as a political party and withdraw its party logo," he had said in the teacher recruitment scam case, threatening to summon the entire state Cabinet to court.

On December 3, at a function to mark World Disability Day, Justice Gangopadhyay shared the dais with CPI(M) leaders Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya and Kanti Ganguly, the former sports minister in the Buddhadeb Bhattacharya government. Incidentally, Bikash Ranjan, a Rajya Sabha MP, is the senior ad-



Justice Gangopadhyay had recently accused a senior judge of working for "some political party". Illustration: Suvajit Dey

vocate appearing before Justice Gangopadhyay on behalf of writ petitioners in the case seeking Enforcement Directorate probe against Abhishek Banerjee. If there were questions of impropriety about him sharing the platform with someone who appears before him in politically sensitive cases, it didn't seem to affect Justice Gangopadhyay.

Among those he has worked with, some swear by Justice Gangopadhyay's honest track record and non-partisanship, even if they question his methods. "He probably has a view that you have to adopt different methods to tackle corruption. But it's not that he has any love for one party. He quit his civil services job after seeing massive corruption under the Left government. But despite his intentions, this may not be the way to do things," said a former judge of the Calcutta High Court.

After the tug of war with the Bar and his senior colleague last month, Justice Gangopadhyay's

roster was changed on February 4 to industrial disputes and labour matters — a relatively non-controversial subject — but the judge still made headlines, reportedly holding court until 10.30 pm on February 9 hearing provident fund cases.

Born on August 19, 1962, Gangopadhyay, a graduate of Calcutta University's Hazra Law College, began his career as a Grade A officer of the West Bengal Civil Services. It is learnt that as a land revenue officer, when the judge acted on local corruption, he faced death threats which prompted him to resign and move back to Kolkata. He began his legal practice and was the panel lawyer for several insurance firms and the insurance regulator.

Some in the bar attribute the judge's overzealousness to populism rather than politics. Since the judge's courtroom is not virtual, journalists occupy the last row, which, lawyers say, Justice Gangopadhyay is "quite aware" of given his propensity for remarks

that are headline-grabbing.

In one heated argument in court with the Calcutta Bar Association President Arunava Ghosh in August 2022, Justice Gangopadhyay looked at the reporters in his courtroom and asked them to start recording the exchange on their phones. When Ghosh pointed out that videography was not allowed inside the court, Justice Gangopadhyay said that he would allow it in his court. "Your lordship is a very honest man, but my lord, don't turn the court into a bazaar.... This is earning a very bad name for you in the Bar," Ghosh said.

Though it was his unprecedented hour-long interview to *ABP Ananda* in September 2022 — when the judge openly questioned the financials of Abhishek Banerjee — that made news and which the SC took exception to, it is not unusual for him to speak to TV reporters outside the court on issues being heard in his court.

Unusually for a judge, TV news cameras swarm around him even during personal outings.

"How much money is the government spending in the Supreme Court to stop the investigation," Justice Gangopadhyay had said to journalists on West Bengal moving SC against a central probe in the school jobs case.

Justice Gangopadhyay is known to extend his "crusader" side beyond politics. Take, for instance, his order in August 2022, when hearing a family case in the Jalpaiguri bench of the Calcutta High Court. To patch up matters between a squabbling couple, Justice Gangopadhyay tried a rather unusual approach — a paid trip to Puri. "... this court should take a different gesture by sending the parties to a tourist spot for 5-6 days through

Kolkata," he ordered, while fixing an itinerary for the couple and directing the court registry to book the train tickets. "This court hopes and expects that the parties will lead a beautiful life hereafter and forever," the judge had recorded at the end of the order and even transferred the case to the Kolkata main bench for a report on whether the trip was successful.

However, on learning that the couple parted ways after spending just a day in Puri, the disappointed judge said that no further orders are required "when I find that my endeavour for settling the dispute has failed".

Justice Gangopadhyay's image has earned him a fair share of visitors to his chambers. Apart from journalists who routinely call on him, a young singer, a participant in reality shows, was invited by the judge and felicitated in his court chambers.

Like with everything else to do with the Calcutta High Court, the legal fraternity has mixed reactions to Justice Gangopadhyay's "judicial activism".

"What is happening is most unfortunate. Every judge has to behave in a dignified way and you are entitled to pass your orders but not publicly defend your orders," Justice Indira Banerjee, former Supreme Court judge whose parent High Court was the Calcutta High Court, told *The Indian Express*.

For BJP, Justice Gangopadhyay is a "people's judge". "It is not that his orders are helping BJP workers. They are for the common people. He is their judge. Justice must not only be done but also seen to be done," said Priyanka Tibrewal, advocate and secretary of the state BJP unit. Tibrewal also dismissed whispers in the Bar of a post-retirement political career for the judge as "baseless rumours."

Report by law panel suggests plan to tackle epidemics

AJOY SINHA KARPURAM
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE 286TH Law Commission Report recommended the creation of an Epidemic Plan and a Standard Operating Procedure to address epidemics, underlining there is no clear demarcation between the powers of the Centre, state, and local authorities during an epidemic, which leads to uncoordinated responses.

Highlighting the limitations of the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 (EDA), the 286th Law Commission Report states "the management, control and prevention of epidemic diseases cannot be restricted to a century-old law."

The report notes that the EDA was not designed to combat modern issues with the spread of infectious diseases. Globalisation and increased connectivity, it states, can result in infectious diseases rapidly turning into epidemics or pandemics.

After the Covid-19 pandemic, the Law Commission suo moto decided to extensively examine the existing legal framework to tackle what it calls "significant deficiencies in addressing the containment and management of future epidemics in the country".

The report claims that as a colonial-era legislation, the EDA has great potential for abuse. Coupled with the lack of guidelines on important subjects, the report seeks to make comprehensive recommendations for the amendment of the EDA or the introduction of a new law altogether.

The most dramatic change suggested is the creation of an Epidemic Plan and a Standard Operating Procedure to address

the spread of infectious diseases. This, the report states, would make sure the powers and obligations of different levels of government are clearly demarcated so that there is a coordinated response to any public health emergency.

The duty to create this Epidemic Plan falls on the Central government and the report recommends doing so in collaboration with state governments and after consulting the ministries concerned, private health institutions, expert bodies and other stakeholders.

The report recommends that the EDA must include provisions to ensure that the Epidemic Plan is prepared, enforced, and revised at regular intervals. The report states that the plan should include provisions on quarantine, isolation, and lockdowns, while ensuring that the measures are implemented fairly, without violating the fundamental rights of citizens.

It should also contain provisions on privacy-friendly disease surveillance, regulating the distribution, availability and transport of medical supplies, proper dissemination of information to the public, medical testing and research for vaccinations and medicines, and the safe disposal of infectious waste among a variety of other subjects.

To enforce this Epidemic Plan without resulting in conflicts between states and the Central government, the report suggests the creation of a Standard Operating Procedure. The SOP defines three stages of the spread of infectious diseases as well as the responses at each stage.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

4 Maoists get life term for 2014 Sukma attack that killed 16

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
RAIPUR, FEBRUARY 12

A NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) court at Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh's Bastar district on Monday sentenced four people to life imprisonment in connection with the 2014 Maoist attack in Sukma, in which 15 security personnel and a civilian were killed.

The attack took place on March 11, just weeks before the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, in Sukma district's Tahakwada village. A team of 45 personnel from the CRPF and state police were patrolling the national highway in the morning when they were ambushed.

"While over 100-150 Maoists were involved in the attack, the local police arrested four of them and registered an FIR," an NIA official said. The NIA took over the case and submitted a chargesheet. The trial began in 2016.

The four Maoists who were sentenced in the case are Mahadev Nag, Dayaram Baghel, Mani Ram and Kawasi Joga. They were convicted for murder and criminal conspiracy.

Maintenance for Muslim woman under personal law or CrPC? SC seeks views of amicus curiae

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

WOULD A Muslim woman be entitled to claim maintenance from her divorced husband under the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 — as was affirmed in the Shah Bano case — or will the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act of 1986, enacted by the Rajiv Gandhi government to nullify the Shah Bano decision, prevail?

The Supreme Court will deal with the question after an amicus curiae appointed by it gives his views on it.

On February 9, a bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih appointed senior advocate Gaurav Agarwal as the amicus curiae for the matter. "We find that this court would benefit by having the views of an amicus curiae... Hence, we request Shri Gaurav Agarwal, learned senior counsel, to be appointed as amicus curiae in this case," the bench said, posting the matter for February 19.

The order said: "In this petition, the challenge is the filing of a petition under Section 125 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC) by the respondent divorced Muslim woman.

Learned senior counsel appearing for the petitioner submitted that in view of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986, a divorced Muslim woman is not entitled to maintain a petition under Section 125 of the CrPC and has to proceed under the provisions of the aforesaid 1986 Act. It is also submitted that the 1986 Act is more beneficial to the Muslim woman as compared to Section 125 of the CrPC."

The court was dealing with an appeal by a man, Mohd. Abdul Samad, who had been ordered to pay ₹20,000 monthly maintenance to his ex-wife by a family

court in Telangana. The woman had moved the family court under Section 125 of the CrPC stating that Samad had given her triple talaq. He appealed to the High Court, which while disposing the plea on December 13, 2023, said that "several questions are raised which need to be adjudicated" but "directed the petitioner to pay 10,000 as interim maintenance".

Challenging this, Samad told the SC that the HC had failed to appreciate that the provisions of the 1986 Act, a special Act, will prevail over the provisions of Section 125 of CrPC, which is a general Act.

He contended that "the provisions of Section 3 and 4" of the

1986 Act "which starts with non-obstante clause, will prevail over the provisions of Section 125 CrPC, which has no non-obstante clause and as such the application for grant of maintenance by Muslim divorced women under Section 125 of CrPC would not be maintainable before the family court when the Special Act gives jurisdiction to First-Class Magistrate to decide the issue of Mahr and payment of other subsistence allowance under Section 3 and 4 of the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Divorce) Act, 1986".

The SC has not issued any notice on Samad's appeal.

AIIMS, UK varsity ink pact for research in head, neck cancer

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

AMID RISING cancer cases, AIIMS, New Delhi, Monday signed a collaboration agreement with the University of Liverpool, UK, for translational research in head and neck cancer.

The collaboration will result in sharing of researchers and knowledge, and allow the insti-

tutes to access high-quality clinical datasets and tissue repositories of the ethnically diverse populations in which the cause of head and neck cancer differ significantly — from tobacco consumption in India to alcohol and HPV infection in the UK.

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya presided over the signing of the collaboration agreement.

"The Prime Minister's dream

is that the country should become Ayushman, where health facilities become affordable, accessible and available to every citizen," Mandaviya said.

So far, the letter of intent has been put together where both the institutes have signed to work together and reduce cancer mortalities.

Dr Alok Thakkar, Professor of otolaryngology & head neck surgery and head of National Cancer

Institute, AIIMS, Jhajjar, said the first thing would be a training exchange and exchanges in terms of our scientists.

"What we would like to work on is the problem of unraveling the genetic makeup of tobacco-induced cancer because our head and neck cancer is entirely tobacco-induced, unlike the developed nations where it is more of a HPV virus-induced cancer. That's why we require our own

research," he said.

The collaboration will build upon the pre-existing collaboration and links between the Liverpool Neck and Head Centre (LNHC), University of Liverpool and the Head and Neck Cancer Unit at AIIMS, New Delhi.

Dr Thakkar said the collaboration is on head and neck cancer, which is the most common cancer in Indian men and on number three in Indian women.

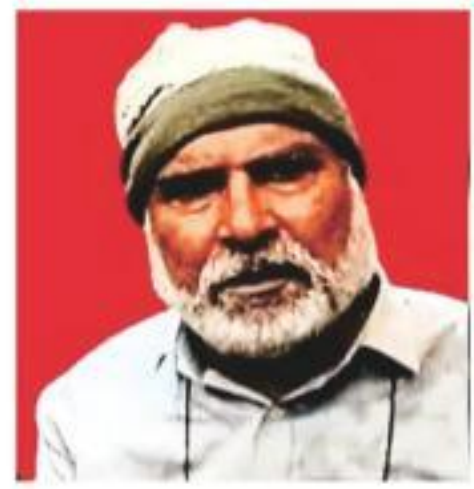
Malik, blamed for Haldwani violence, gave free legal aid to those facing eviction by Rlys

AVANEESH MISHRA
HALDWANI, FEBRUARY 12

A PROMINENT figure within the local community whose family once helped the British, Abdul Malik, who Uttarakhand police say is the mastermind of the Haldwani violence, was also active last year when he provided free legal assistance to families facing eviction during a Railways demolition drive.

The mosque and madrasa, whose demolition spiralled into violence last week, were run by Malik. State police have so far refrained from commenting on his whereabouts.

Nainital Senior Superintendent of Police Prahlad Narayan Meena had earlier said that the "illegal construction" had been carried out by Malik, and he had also led the protests against the demolition. High Court lawyer Ahrar



Malik is a prominent figure in the local community.

In January last year, more than 4,000 families near the Haldwani railway station were served eviction notices following a court order. Tensions escalated when hundreds of people, mostly women, came out on the road asking for the process to be stopped. The protests only came to an end after the Supreme Court put the order on hold.

Islam Hussain, a former journalist who has known the family for years, said Malik often takes up work on private contracts, including government projects.

"His family was once nomadic, with a business related to horses. They have been around for as long as the town. When the British first arrived, they needed a supply chain and the family's horse business came to their aid. Their wood business also granted them prosperity," said Islam. He said the Abdullah building

in Haldwani, which belongs to the family, was once the largest in the locality. The now-demolished Mariyam Mosque, built around 18-20 years ago, was another prominent landmark that emerged as the namaz-sthal for around 100 people.

The case

Earlier this month, in a writ petition filed with the Nainital High Court, Malik's wife Safia asserted that the origins of the case concerning the disputed property — where the mosque and madrasa once stood — can be traced back to a lease of Nazool land for agricultural purposes granted in 1937 by the British government to Mohammad Yasin for an area of 13 bigha 3 biswa located in Company Bagh, Haldwani.

Nazool land is owned by the government, but most often not directly administered as state property.

SCHEME TO HELP ERADICATE CHILD MARRIAGE ANNOUNCED

In ₹2.9 lakh cr Assam budget, aid to girl students, tea garden workers

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 12

PRESENTING THE state's budget for 2024-2025, Assam Finance Minister Ajanta Neog announced a new scheme of financial incentives for girls to enrol in higher secondary, graduation and post-graduation levels of education, calling it a "boost" to the state's punitive drives against child marriage.

Presenting a ₹2.9 lakh crore budget, she said the scheme — Mukhya Mantri Nijut Moina — aims to support 10 lakh girls and ₹240 crore has been set aside for this scheme in the budget.

Under the scheme, the state government has proposed to pay an "admission incentive" of ₹10,000 to each girl student who joins class XI, ₹12,500 to girls who join the first year of graduation-level studies, and ₹15,000 to those who join the first year of post-

graduation courses. Only unmarried girls will be eligible for benefits under the scheme and they will have to study in a government-run educational institution.

"This is to bolster the government's mission to eliminate child marriage. Apart from punitive and regulatory measures, we need to empower the girl child to decide about when to marry. If 10 lakh girl children are encouraged to study till graduation and post-graduation, this would also increase the percentage of girls educated beyond matriculation," said Neog.

More than 4,000 people were arrested by the Assam police last year in two major crackdowns against child marriage. On different occasions, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has stated that the government is working towards "completely eradicating" child marriage in Assam by 2026. The Mukhya

Mantri Nijut Moina scheme is the first major announcement of a step towards this goal.

The state government also announced the expansion of its Mukhya Manti Mahila Adyamtira Abhiyaan, under which women who are part of Self Help Groups in rural parts of the state are eligible for entrepreneurship funds, to SHGs in urban areas as well, which includes around 2.5 lakh women.

Another focus of the budget were tea garden workers. Last year, the government had announced the construction of 1.3 lakh houses under the Mukhyamantri Awaz Yojana. Neog said on Monday that 10 per cent of these houses will be given to eligible beneficiaries from the tea garden communities. She also announced the earmarking of ₹75 crore to pay the electricity bill arrears of tea gardeners living in tea garden lines.

IIT-B project ties up with community radio platform for science lessons

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

THE SPOKEN Tutorial Project based in IIT Bombay has tied up with Community Radio (CR) Connect — a platform of functional and upcoming CR stations in India — to broadcast a series of 35 episodes on the science behind day-to-day observations. The series titled 'Science in Everyday Life' is based on the 6th standard CBSE science syllabus and seeks to make scientific concepts accessible through a dramatised format. It will be broadcast in Hindi three days a week on CR Connect's FM 107.8, which transmits in over 212 villages in Rajasthan and Haryana.

"The idea is to provide high-quality education to children in their mother tongue," said Prof Kannan M. Moudgalya, head of the Spoken Tutorial Project.



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Snapshots of turbulence

There is a bristling Myanmar context to decisions on building a border fence, ending Free Movement Regime



SANJOY HAZARIKA

BREAKTHROUGH

Resolution of Indian navy veterans' case in Qatar highlights Delhi's quiet, patient diplomacy, deepening bilateral ties

FROM THE MOMENT Qatar's Court of First Instance sentenced eight former Indian Navy personnel to death in October 2023, the challenge for India's foreign policy establishment was clear: To bring citizens back home while ensuring that the growing economic and strategic ties between New Delhi and Doha are not derailed in the process. It is to New Delhi's credit that it has risen to the challenge and the seven former officers and one seaman are to be reunited with their families at home. That this was achieved with quiet, patient diplomacy, supervised by the Prime Minister, despite the national and international media spotlight on the prisoners, makes it all the more impressive. The fact is that deep engagement with the monarchies of West Asia requires a different approach. The small ruling class in these countries is nearly all-powerful and runs international engagements directly — personal rapport of the sort PM Modi has with them can tip the scales.

The case against the Navy veterans was sensitive, and, to a large degree, opaque. All eight were employees of a Doha-based private company, Dahra Global, that provided training and support to Qatari armed forces. They were arrested in August 2022. While the charges against the Indian citizens were not made public, reports, including in the Financial Times, claimed that they were accused of spying for Israel. After the initial award of the death penalty, an appellate court commuted their sentences to prison terms in December. Throughout, New Delhi was careful in its tone and words. External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar told Parliament that the issue was "extremely sensitive" and his ministry did not jump the gun while assuring the families of the accused consular and legal support.

The episode — and, of course, its resolution — shows how deep and broad bilateral ties have become. There was a time when New Delhi viewed the Middle East only through the prism of Pakistan and to a lesser extent, Israel-Palestine. The strengthening of bilateral ties with willing partners in the Gulf has opened up the region for trade and provided more options for the country's energy basket: Earlier this month, a multi-billion dollar deal between the two countries has done much to secure the import of LNG from Qatar. In addition, with over 8 lakh Indian workers in the country, there is much that ties the two countries together. Given the fraught geopolitics of the region, especially in the light of the Israel-Hamas conflict growing wider, Delhi has done well to stay above the fray. However, the relationship with Qatar, like most others, has some points of contention. These include the anti-India propaganda from Qatar-based media outlets and support for religious radicals in India. Given the breakthrough moment in ties at the current moment, PM Modi could begin to address these issues when he meets Qatar Emir Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani later this week.

A POLITICAL DOCUMENT

Government's White Paper focuses on mismanagement of economy by UPA, side-steps issues like jobs and wages

WITH NATIONAL ELECTIONS drawing closer, debate over the performance of the Indian economy has moved centrestage. Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled a white paper in Parliament that compares how the Indian economy has fared under the BJP government (2014-15 to 2023-24) and the Congress-led UPA government (2004-05 to 2013-14). The tone of the document is explicitly political — it's an attempt to show how the economy was mismanaged by the UPA government. The white paper begins by saying that in 2014 the Indian economy was in a "fragile state", public finances were in "bad shape", and there was "widespread corruption". It then credits the BJP government for turning around the country's economic prospects and setting the economy on a "recovery and growth path".

Some of the criticism levied against the UPA government is fair. Inflation had surged during the UPA's term, banks were saddled with bad loans because of reckless lending, there was a high degree of policy uncertainty, retrospective taxation had dealt a blow to the country's image as an investment destination, and numerous corruption cases had come to light. At the same time, it is also true that the Indian economy grew at its fastest pace during the UPA government. The UPA government ushered in the MGNREGA and NFSA which form the backbone of the country's social security architecture today. On its part, the BJP government has ushered in far-reaching economic reforms such as IBC and GST. It has utilised the JAM platform (Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and Mobile) to deliver goods and services more efficiently, leading to less leakages. It has undertaken measures to increase the pace of formalisation and stepped up the budgetary allocation for capital expenditure. A greater share of the government's borrowings is now being used to finance capital expenditure.

Even as it seems too one-sided in its assessments, the white paper is also silent on several critical issues. Take, for instance, the matter of jobs. Under both UPA and BJP governments, the Indian economy has been unable to adequately generate more productive employment opportunities for the millions entering the labour force and those looking to move out of agriculture — yet jobs and unemployment find little mention in the report. Nor do the trends in poverty as conventionally measured through the consumption expenditure surveys. The issue of subdued wages is also side-stepped. At this critical juncture, the ruling party needs to break free of the game of one-upmanship and use its platform and opportunity to present a detailed and thought-through roadmap for India. That is necessary to meet the goal of becoming a developed economy by 2047.

THE ARTIST'S NATURE

A Ramachandran's vocabulary was rooted in India, borrowed from its diverse traditions, was inspired by nature

A RAMACHANDRAN NEVER failed to captivate — whether it was urging his viewers to respond to socio-political dependence through his stark oeuvre in the '60s and '70s, or through more vibrant and joyous depictions inspired by nature that became his leitmotif from the '80s. The artist-pedagogue, who died on February 10, followed his heart. He was celebrated as one of India's most politically-conscious artists, when he decided to radically alter his aesthetic.

Witnessing bloodshed on the streets of Delhi during the 1984 anti-Sikh riots might have been the immediate impetus, but Ramachandran also believed that the layers beneath a painted picture mattered as much as the foreground. Responding to criticism from within the art community, in an interview to *The Indian Express* in November 2023, he said, "The problem is we mix politics with art in an awkward manner. You can't sing a protest song and become Bhimsen Joshi. If you want to be Bhimsen Joshi, then you have to sing classical music with its own rhythm and pattern... There is a distinction between propaganda and art and a painting does not become great because of its subject. *Guernica* (Pablo Picasso, 1937) is not a great painting because of its theme of war but because of how it has been painted."

Unlike modernists of his generation, Ramachandran's artistic vocabulary was rooted in India. It borrowed from diverse traditions, from the female figures of the Ajanta murals to the Harappan dancing girl, the Rajput miniatures and Kerala murals that had mesmerised him as a child. The ideals of free expression and the intimate study of nature advocated by teachers at Santiniketan were lifelong lessons. So when he altered his syntax, it reflected his sincere belief that man could be, and ought to be, one with nature. The Bhil tribes of Rajasthan and their lotus ponds that became an integral part of this work in the latter years were also metaphors and means to find beauty in both nature and humanity.

AT LENGPUJ AIRPORT in distant Mizoram, not far from the Myanmar border, a fascinating drama played out recently. On the runway, a large white military transport plane waited, its sides painted with the distinctive Burmese script. Bedraggled Myanmar soldiers, some barefoot, others without knapsacks or full uniforms, none with weapons, sat on the ground outside, looking exhausted. A group of weapon-wielding and fit Assam Rifles soldiers stood guard.

The aircraft was waiting to take them home. The next day, as the transport plane attempted to take off, the aircraft slid off the runway and crashed on a slope, another sad chapter in the lives of those forlorn looking soldiers. No one was killed but the plane was a wreck. That day, the phone lines buzzed furiously between Delhi's top officials and the Mizoram government, the latter stunned by the unexpected turn of events.

The airport was closed for the rest of the day — the plane had to be made safe, the gasoline tanks emptied, the refugee-soldiers treated for injuries and a day later flown out in two military transport planes sent by Yangon. This was not the first lot of soldiers who had fled battles in Myanmar's neighbouring Chin State from a combination of rebel groups, essentially the Chin National Army and the People's Defence Force. Not less than 500 are said to have escaped fighting in three separate events; 45,000 Chin refugees are sheltering in Mizoram after the 2021 coup that ousted Aung San Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy after it won a landslide victory.

Today, the Indian Government faces an unpredictable situation on its 1,640 km eastern border with Myanmar: The Myanmar army and authorities have disappeared from across the white-and-red-coloured bridge that marks the border in Zokhawthar over the river Tiau. Flags of Chin National Front were everywhere and entry was regulated by rebel groups. Large swathes of Chin State and Sagaing Region, which are on the border with Mizoram, Manipur and Nagaland as well as Arunachal Pradesh, have fallen to rebel forces which are describing these as "liberated zones".

The CNF has announced an autonomous Chinland Council. With an eye to Delhi and issues in Manipur, it has promised to block ille-

gal trafficking in drugs and arms and non-interference in India's internal matters. "We were surprised by how quickly the army posts fell", said one opposition leader. He said that rebel advances in different parts of the multi-ethnic country showed a weakness in the army — it was greatly undermanned. But he acknowledged that it was unlikely that the military regime in Yangon would fall as it still had firepower and artillery to take back townships they had lost.

In the town of Paletwa, which fell to a swift campaign by another ethnic armed group — the Arakan Army — the army has hurled a fierce counter attack by ground troops backed by airstrikes and artillery. Paletwa is critical to the rolling out of India's ambitious Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transport Project which seeks to connect Kolkata with the Sittwe port in Rakhine State. It is to be connected to Mizoram by road and the Kaladan river which flows by Paletwa. The Arakan Army is apparently seeking to push further to other strategic targets but may face a conflict with Chin rebel forces, for these are seen as Chin-majority regions.

Home Minister Amit Shah's statements on building a border fence and ending the Free Movement Regime (FMR) need to be viewed in the light of these escalating developments and as an effort to protect Indian security interests. The announcements have drawn fierce opposition from different states saying that it would break bonds between fraternal communities divided by a border drawn up arbitrarily by the British. The FMR permits people to enter 16 km into each other's countries. The idea is to enable families, small traders and others to maintain connections dating back centuries.

Government and even local groups agree that the facility has been misused to enable movement of armed groups and illegal shipments of weapons and narcotics across lightly guarded and tough forest paths as well as the prized areca nut which is in huge demand for making supari, pan masala, gutka. Calls for fencing the border have been strongest from the beleaguered Chief Minister of Manipur, N Biren Singh, whose state remains racked by violence, largely between Kuki and Meitei armed groups. Singh says that Kuki fighters

are moving people and weapons across the border although analysts point out that other insurgent groups from Manipur and Nagaland also have bases in Myanmar's frontiers.

The fence is a different proposition. It is a long-term project, hugely expensive and highly challenging given the difficult terrain. Work parties would have to deal with local resentments over efforts to sever old familial relations.

Meanwhile, China has been active on its southern border, having forced a truce between powerful Shan groups and the junta. Neither the military regime nor rebels are happy because China's main objective is to secure its large investments and infrastructure assets, especially in Myanmar's mineral, oil and gas-rich areas.

This raises an important issue — India too has economic interests in Myanmar, some in rebel-held areas. Recently, the Centre urged all Indians in Rakhine State, as the Arakan Army surged, to leave as it was highly unsafe. India has not retreated from its support to the army dispensation in Myanmar. Yet, Delhi needs to heed conditions on the ground: Rebel armed groups, some of which have been fighting the Myanmar army for over 70 years, are unlikely to be able to march on the capital of Naypyidaw, yet those controlling parts of Chin State are the new reality of the neighbourhood.

A senior security official says that the lack of cohesion among rebel groups also means that the junta is unlikely to collapse until replaced by a more sustainable system. Neither China nor India are likely to change their current policies till such a viable process is in place.

Although it is in this larger context that the Centre's announcement about the FMR has to be seen, yet the decision flies in the face of official policies of Neighbourhood First and Act East. Former Ambassador to Myanmar Gautam Mukhopadhyaya warns against deciding complex issues in haste. He noted that "...the kinship and tribal ties are such that they will not be curbed by the measures. Rather, the same kinship that binds them to their fellow tribals in India could be turned against us."

Hazarika is an author and columnist based in the Northeast

LOVE WITHOUT A NAME

What the Uttarakhand Uniform Civil Code does not get



KAUSHIK DAS GUPTA

HAMNE DEKHI HAI un aankhon ki mehakti khushboo/ Haath se chhoo ke ise rishton ka ilzaam na do/Sirfehseas hai ye, rooh se mehsoos karo/Pyar ko pyar hi rehne do, koi naam na do...

Loosely transliterated, the opening lines of Gulzar's timeless classic from the 1969 film *Khamoshi* mean, "Let love be love. Don't diminish its innocence by giving it the tag of a relationship". It is true that language finds it difficult to do justice to what happens in the parts of the mind and heart that aren't governed by filial obligations, money or law. Words like romantic or platonic love, friendship, soulmate, companion, partner, desire, admiration, attraction, commitment, respect, betrayal, anger, acrimony are inadequate signifiers. Hobbes — Bill Watterson's walking-talking stuffed tiger, not the philosopher he is named after — came close to an apt description when he said, "If you are in a contract with me, you are not my friend". But even he could describe his relation with his spiky-haired six-year-old alter ego only in terms of what it wasn't.

"Honth kuchh kehthe nahin, kaanpte hothon pe magari/ Kitne khamoshi se afsaane ruke rehte hain" — quivering lips hold back innumerable untold stories, Gulzar's song continues. This limitation of language doesn't sit easy on all sections of society. At the best of times, they reluctantly allow these stories space on the margins of their cultural fabric, their anxiety manifesting in laboured coinages such as live-in relationship. The moral police also demands its say, at times in violent ways.

Governments can be even more difficult arbiters. Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) is a case in point. It asks "live-in" couples to register within a stipulated time frame or face the strong arm of the law. The Code's definition of a "live-in relationship" is interesting — "a relationship between a man and woman cohabiting in a shared household through a relationship in the nature of marriage". Strictly speaking, Uttarakhand is not the first in the country to define such a cohabitation arrangement between a man and woman. The Domestic Violence Act of 2005 extends to such relations and in *D Velusamy vs D Patchaimmal* (2010), the Supreme Court used the phrase, "nature of marriage". But these interventions did not require live-in couples to register their relationship in the presence of a government official.

An argument could be — and is being — made that state sanction will remove the stigma attached to such arrangements: Formalisation will end the *khamoshi* and alleviate the tension that stems from society's difficulty in coming to terms with an unwed couple living under the same roof.

But the language of formalisation cannot comprehend the stirrings of the heart. As the *Khamoshi* song goes, "Pyar koi bol nahi, pyar aawaaz nahi/ Ek khamoshi hai, sunti hai kaha karti hai": Love is silence and it follows its own course. Finding meaning in the unsaid is sacred to love — in fact, to all relationships that are more than a formal contract. That's why

people seek privacy or flexibility, that laws like the Uttarakhand's UCC are insensitive to. Perhaps, that's also why the SC's landmark *Puttaswamy* verdict underlined that "the right to privacy is an element of human dignity... Privacy recognises the autonomy of the individual and the right of every person to make essential choices that affect the course of life".

A remake of the 1959 Bengali film *Deep Jwale Jaai*, *Khamoshi* was, at best, an amateurish rendition of mental health issues. Much of the film's drama is set in a psychiatric ward headed by a former army doctor, who advocates a combination of electric shocks and the pretence of romantic love as a revolutionary therapy. But there is no denying love's centrality to one's well-being. Today, women and men often cannot afford to, or choose not to, rely on conventional families for solidarity, affection, understanding, or compassion — the gamut of emotions that language still struggles to express more than half a century after Gulzar wrote this song. It needs hardly any telling that thousands of youngsters make homes away from home — at times crossing boundaries set by faith, community or creed, ignoring threats of violence that brand their rebellion with labels such as "love jihad" — to find kindred spirits. The Uttarakhand government and those who framed the state's UCC should ask themselves if they are making life easy for such women and men.

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FEBRUARY 13, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

DAL TO JOIN TALKS

THE AKALI DAL decided to participate in the tripartite talks scheduled to be held on February 14 to solve the Punjab tangle. The party announced its decision after a meeting of the high command which was summoned urgently to discuss the invitation of Home Minister P C Sethi. The tripartite talks will be resumed after a year since the talks held last year ended in a deadlock.

JKLF BOMB THREAT

THE SO-CALLED KASHMIR Liberation Front announced in a poster issued by it that it had

planted "time bombs" on the Srinagar-Jammu national highway and warned people not to travel on the highway for nine days. The poster said that if anyone died or was injured in the blasts, the front would not be responsible.

SYRIA'S WARNING

SYRIA WARNED THAT it might retaliate against the United States if American naval ships off the Lebanese coast continued to shell its positions and those of Lebanese nationalist forces in the mountains East of Beirut. This warning was given by Syrian Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Farouk Shara. He said Syrian

forces suffered no losses in the shelling but about 50 Lebanese civilians had been killed.

NEXT SOVIET LEADER

TOP SOVIET OFFICIALS held a private meeting, but the Communist Party did not proclaim a leader. Attention is still focused on Konstantin U Chernenko, the Politburo member who has taken the public lead, and other Politburo officials including some of the younger men on the ruling body. These included Grigory V Romanov, head of the party disciplinary body and Mikhail S Gorbachev, a technocrat whose power is said to have increased significantly under Andropov.



13 THE IDEAS PAGE

A science for us

It remains to be seen if SWATI, an initiative to address gender gap in science and technology, manages to break old habits



NANDITA JAYARAJ AND AASHIMA DOGRA

ON FEBRUARY 11, a panel representing India's science academies launched SWATI, a portal to a database that they hope will someday include each and every woman in science in the country. This marks the latest in a list of initiatives by the academies to address the gender gap that began with a hard-hitting report published 20 years ago. It's pertinent to look back at some of these efforts.

The 2004 report by the Indian National Science Academy (INSA) stands out because it was likely the first such report to be supported by the government, and also because of its content. The 66-page document articulated ideas about the gender gap in STEM that were far from mainstream back then. It presented evidence of discrimination in the workplace, not just on the basis of gender but also caste. A full 10 pages were dedicated to solutions.

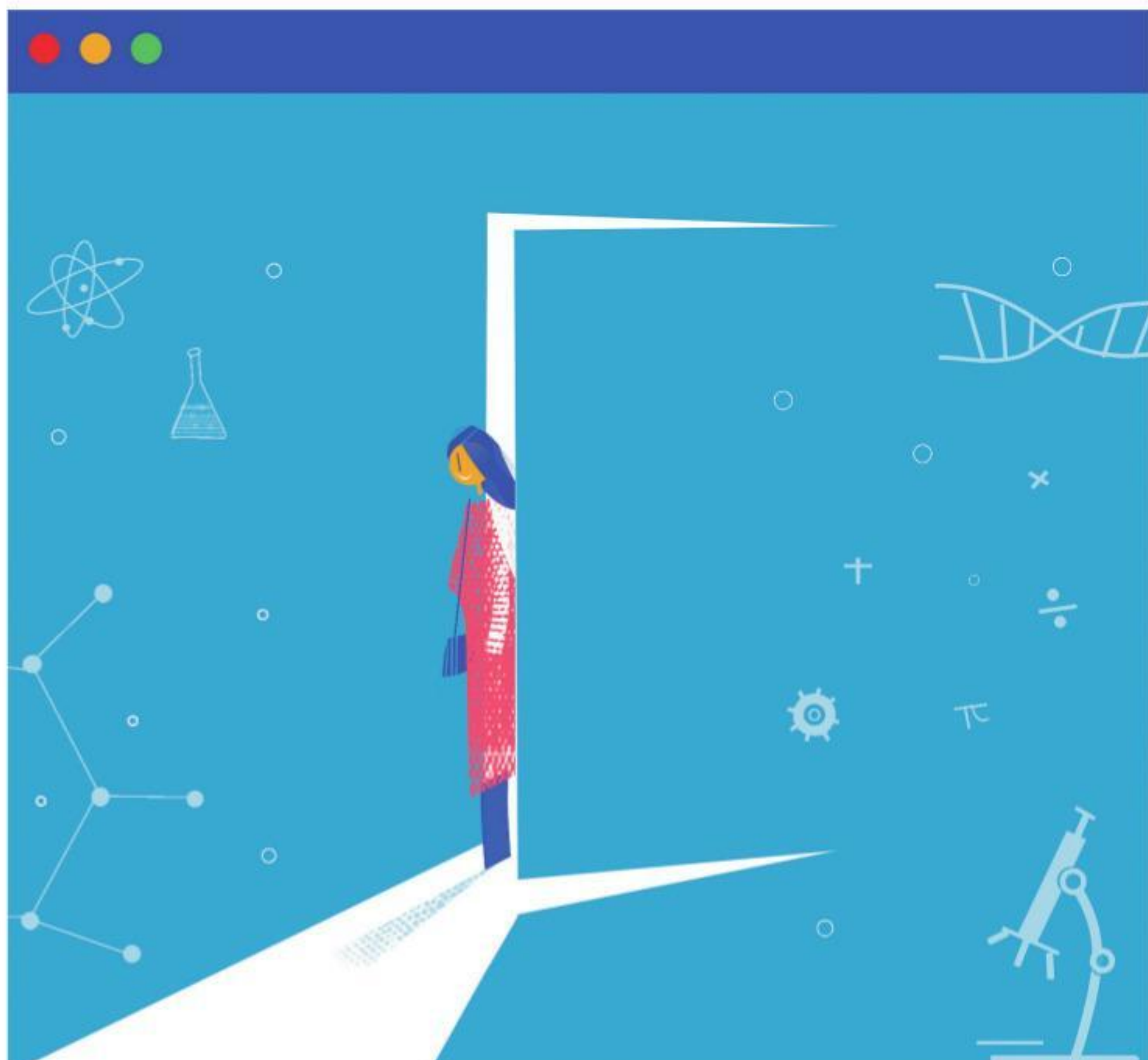
The high level of nuance in this report could be chalked down to it being a product of collaboration between scientists and social scientists. Though a social issue, the Indian scientific community rarely engages with social scientists on the gender gap plaguing it. Consequently, discourse on the topic largely relies on the fallacy that only marriage and motherhood are to blame.

A slew of other initiatives followed that first report by INSA. Highlights include the Indian Academy of Sciences' (IASc) compendium Lilavati's Daughters and a national conference featuring over a thousand women scientists. Both happened in 2008. The latter was organised by a Department of Science and Technology (DST) task force set up in response to the INSA report. The national conference is especially notable because it featured some groundbreaking announcements by then Science and Technology Minister Kapil Sibal: He promised women scientists flexible working hours, in-house creches, work-from-home options, research grants and residential accommodation.

Unfortunately, the standing committee set up to implement Sibal's promises never took off.

In 2010, another team of sociologists and scientists backed by IASc released a report that focused on why women scientists leave academia. A survey of about 800 scientists, both men and women, threw up several revelations. When asked why so many women drop out of science, most men pinned the blame on family and sociocultural factors. The women agreed but a significant proportion pointed out that the lack of opportunities and disabling organisational factors (flexible timings, logistics and infrastructure, discrimination, etc) were also setting them back. Expectedly, these were also the areas that the women felt needed improvement to enable them to stay in science. The men, however, believed that their female peers could also benefit from refresher courses, fellowships, awareness and sensitisation campaigns.

Uncovering gendered perceptions is tremendously helpful in understanding where policies come from and why they look



CR Sasikumar

the way they do. It explains why we see so many initiatives that "help" or "motivate" girls and women to stay in science — mentorship programmes, workshops, books about role models, and women-specific awards/grants. The subtext of this approach is that it is the females who need to be "fixed". This is a sore topic among many women in science, but what else can we expect from a top brass that has always been male-dominated?

While these initiatives may be needed, they're not enough. We also need rules and laws to address the unique challenges faced by women from multiple marginalities of caste, transgender identity and disability. Gender equity policies need to boldly state that discrimination exists, and engage with the idea of placing some accountability on the overrepresented in science — upper caste cis-men.

Newer initiatives like the Gender Advancement for Transforming Institutions (GATI) charter and the draft Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP) 2020 have adopted more progressive language — for instance, they bring up transgender identities and gender-neutral parental leave. Unsurprisingly, as these policies involved a more inclusive group, comprising cis and trans women scientists and sociologists.

February 11 is celebrated worldwide as International Day For Girls and Women in Science. SWATI, or Science For Women: A Technology & Innovation portal, was launched on that day by a panel representing scientists from INSA, IASc and the third acad-

emy National Academy of Sciences India (NASI). An active inter-academy panel offers hope that the three academies' gender gap-related efforts will be more streamlined. Good intentions notwithstanding, it is prudent to be wary, considering how often new initiatives are launched with much hype, only to fizzle out soon after. SWATI itself has been victim to this. It was first announced on International Women's Day in 2021 by then Department of Biotechnology (DBT) chief Renu Swarup as a "portal dedicated to all Women Scientists in DBT and its Autonomous Institutions". There was no word about it after that until recently. Over the past few weeks, the panel has been soliciting women in science to sign up for SWATI's 2024 avatar through a Google form. However, there is no disclosure of how this personal information will be used and what it means to sign up for SWATI. It remains to be seen if the inter-academy panel can break old habits and be more inclusive, transparent and efficient. There are a number of positive signs: The SWATI form is inclusive of all non-male genders, and does not seem to impose criteria such as PhDs. This acknowledges that cis-women are not the only marginalised gender, and that women work in science in various capacities with or without specific degrees. It is also refreshing to see that the panel is composed of men and women scientists — a nod to the fact that equity is not just a women's issue.

Uncovering gendered perceptions is tremendously helpful in understanding where policies come from and why they look the way they do. It explains why we see so many initiatives that 'help' or 'motivate' girls and women to stay in science — mentorship programmes, workshops, books about role models, and women-specific awards/grants. The subtext of this approach is that it is the females who need to be "fixed". This is a sore topic among many women in science, but what else can we expect from a top brass that has always been male-dominated?

Jayaraj and Dogra are independent science journalists and co-authors of Lab Hopping: A Journey to Find India's Women in Science

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Strongmen in foreign nations promise reliability and order. But long-term stability rarely comes through military interference in politics. In the case of Pakistan, the army's unwillingness to cede control to civilians has created a fundamentally broken politics. This election is a reminder." — THE WASHINGTON POST

Ten years on, India and UAE

Boost in bilateral trade, temple are proof of New Delhi's deepening engagement with Abu Dhabi



T P SEETHARAM

INDIAN TRADERS WERE active in the Persian Gulf long before the oil boom, investing in pearl fishery operations, buying pearls and dates and supplying locally needed commodities. When the Iranian port of Lingah declined in importance in 1902 because of a dramatic increase in taxes and Dubai emerged as a dynamic free port under enlightened leadership, Indian entrepreneurs moved in despite harsh living conditions. India was the preferred source for textiles, spices and consumables, furniture and furnishings. A missionary hospital in Miraj in southern Maharashtra was the preferred destination for complex medical care, even for the ruling sheikhs. Boatbuilders from the Malabar coast were much sought after. A young Emirati told me that his grandfather's generation travelled to Bombay to see electricity and good roads. It was an Indian entrepreneur who first introduced electricity to Dubai by using kerosene-driven generator sets.

Ten years ago, when I took up my assignment as Ambassador of India to the UAE, the perception among the top leadership there was that India had not invested adequate political capital in the bilateral relationship. Although 2.5 million Indians lived and worked in the Emirates — constituting around 30 per cent of the population, contributing significantly to the local economy and sending much-needed remittances home — the last prime ministerial visit from India was by Indira Gandhi in 1981. Successful Indian entrepreneurship was evident across a number of sectors in trade, retail, construction, real estate, healthcare, education, IT, services and other areas. It appeared that Indian investment in the UAE exceeded investments in the reverse direction. Indians were the biggest investors in UAE real estate projects while the second place was taken by UK citizens, mostly of Indian origin. Three major investments from UAE by DP World in the ports sector, Etisalat in telecommunications and Emaar in real estate had gone sour and were repeatedly raised with me by every Emirati official and business person. I was told at the highest levels that "India seemed constantly preoccupied with domestic matters with elections taking place in some part or other of the country at any given time" and that "when India reached outwards it overlooked West Asia with its sights set further West and at best considered the Gulf as a transit point." It was also suggested that India should stop looking at the region through the prism of its relationship with Pakistan. When they started the Emirates airline, they had approached India to lease two aircrafts. When the request was not entertained, they turned to Pakistan. The UAE already had a more substantial relationship with India and there was keenness to go beyond existing transactional engagements.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's first visit to the UAE on August 16-17, 2015 set

the stage for transforming the relationship. The warm welcome he received at the airport from the then Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi (now President of UAE) His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan set the tone for what turned out to be a hugely successful visit.

The Joint Statement of August 17, 2015, listed 31 agreed points, the first of which was, "Elevate the India-UAE relationship to a comprehensive strategic partnership". Other points included significant initiatives against terrorism, the launch of a strategic security dialogue mechanism, creation of the Infrastructure Investment Fund of USD 75 billion, an increase in trade by 60 per cent in five years, UAE's participation in the development of India's strategic petroleum reserves, cooperation in space, nuclear energy, education sectors, etc. It is a document that deserves a close reading as it prepared the ground for all the projects and proposals that subsequently emerged.

The Joint Statement issued on July 15, 2023, during the PM's fifth visit to the UAE, indicates progress on various items listed in 2015. The two countries had signed a Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February 2022, which further boosted bilateral trade. UAE has become the fourth largest investor in India. An MoU was signed to promote the use of local currencies for cross-border transactions. Interlinking of payment and messaging systems was initiated. A campus of the Indian Institute of Technology-Delhi is being established in Abu Dhabi, initially offering a Masters program in Energy Transition and Sustainability.

India's G20 presidency and the UAE's COP28 presidency provided additional opportunities for working together on global issues. The excellent personal rapport between the leadership of the two countries and the trust it has engendered over the past ten years, brought India and the UAE into an exemplary bond of mutually beneficial partnership. The Indian diaspora had meanwhile increased to over 3.5 million, cementing ties further.

Paragraph 12 of the August 17, 2015 Joint Statement reads: "The Prime Minister thanked His Highness the Crown Prince for his decision to allot land for construction of a temple in Abu Dhabi". This was in response to a longstanding request of the Indian community in Abu Dhabi. On the eve of the PM's visit, I was informed by Sheikh Nahyan that a positive decision had been taken and that he would himself convey it to the Prime Minister during his visit to the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque. I accordingly briefed the PM. But in all the excitement at the Grand Mosque, Sheikh Nahyan forgot to mention the decision. He, however, conveyed it to the PM as soon as we sat down for the State Banquet later that evening.

During his forthcoming visit to the UAE on February 13-14, besides addressing the Indian community summit 'Ahlan Modi' (Hello Modi) on the first day, the PM is scheduled to attend a dedication ceremony at the BAPS Hindu Temple in Abu Dhabi on February 14. After ten years, one more point mentioned in the 2015 Joint Statement can be considered accomplished. May the relationship continue to flourish in the years ahead!

The writer is former Ambassador of India to the UAE (2013-2016)

A unique modernist

A Ramachandran was open to the possibilities of tradition



R SIVA KUMAR

A RAMACHANDRAN, WHO passed away at 89 in Delhi on February 10, was an artist of great individuality and intellectual independence. As an artist, the range of his skills matched the diversity of his interests, and together, they made him a versatile and unique presence on the Indian art scene.

Born in Kerala in 1935, he began to paint and learn music simultaneously as a child and became an accredited Carnatic singer by the time he was 20 while continuing to paint on the side. Alongside, he also completed an MA in Malayalam literature and became close to the Progressive writers of the 1940s who had heralded a literary and social change in Kerala, and to contemporaries like G Aravindan and C N Sreekantan Nair who, like Ramachandran, would make a big splash in their fields. But a chance encounter with a reproduction of Ramkinkar Baij's monumental sculpture the *Santa Family* — which in his view embodied values similar to that of the Progressive writers — changed the course of his life.

In 1957, giving up his fledgling music career, he shifted to Santiniketan to study art under Baij. Here, he discovered that Baij himself was part of a larger vision of art that had grown under the educational programme for social and cultural change envisioned by Rabindranath Tagore and that Nandalal Bose and Benode Behari Mukherjee, too, were part

of it. Frequent visits to what was then Calcutta exposed him to the tragic aftermath of Partition and the human suffering it caused. An ardent reader of Fyodor Dostoyevsky, it shook him deeply, and he wanted to do in painting what the Russian modernist did in writing.

In 1964, he moved to Delhi, and as a struggling artist living on the edges of the capital alongside subaltern urban dwellers, he recognised their predicament was not significantly different from that of the victims of Partition he encountered in Calcutta. This prompted him to eschew the Western formalist modernism courted by his contemporaries and look towards alternative modernisms, like that of the Mexican muralists, to create hard-hitting images of human suffering, abjection, and angst. While this was largely an exception in art, it had parallels in literature and cinema. Similarly, even as he had his eyes fixed on contemporary social realities, he drew upon myths and ancient literature to forge metaphors to capture them.

In 1984, after berating human insensitivity towards fellow humans for 20 long years, faced with the violence unleashed against fellow citizens in his own city, he felt that his efforts as an artist had been futile. In a world afflicted by hatred and violence, he decided

to use his art to instil beauty, an element that modernist artists, including himself had negated. He found his models in the Bhil villages and landscapes around Udaipur. He was led to them by his study of the miniature paintings of Udaipur in relation to its setting. It led him to realise that the conventions of miniature painting were not arbitrary but based on local realities. They were as logical, inventive, and imaginative as any other tradition and can be repurposed for contemporary use.

Ramachandran approached the Bhil peasant tribals with the humility of an anthropologist, not as a condescending, all-knowing moderniser. Where modernists saw underdevelopment, he saw a lost way of life. The large village lotus ponds, which progress-mongers saw as potential real estate, taught him the basics of ecology and the interdependence of planetary life. Even sympathetic viewers, who noticed his artistic mastery, thought he was a late romantic and missed his message. But that did not perturb Ramachandran, used to ploughing lonely furrows. He kept reiterating the possibilities beyond the modernist model of progress.

The educator's stubbornness noticeable in Ramachandran's approach was not accidental. He taught at Jamia Millia Islamia for

27 years and, as a teacher, played a significant role in transforming the worldviews and life perspectives of his students. His pedagogic vocation also spilled into the brilliant books he wrote and illustrated for children. By using folk styles like Madhubani, Paithani, Warli and miniature paintings to illustrate them, he endeavoured to reconnect a new generation of Indians to their visual traditions.

Nurtured by the Progressive writers and the educational vision of Santiniketan, Ramachandran was an artist with a broad social and artistic vision and a desire to express them in as many ways as possible. He did mural-sized paintings, intricate miniatures, etchings, sculptures, book illustrations, and designed stamps with equal pleasure — nothing was above or below him as an artist. Ramachandran was a modernist, but one open to the unexplored possibilities of tradition. Unlike most artists who addressed social issues, he kept his sense of humour alive, even if it turned black occasionally. Above all, he believed in the continuity of human truths and valued it more than professional success. He also believed in living his life as an artist and worked every day for 65 years. This makes him a rare artist who needs to be remembered and celebrated.

The writer is a critic, art historian and curator

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VISION TO ACTION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Three Ratnas' (IE, February 12). The BJP government has generously awarded the Bharat Ratna to individuals from across parties. These politicians-turned-reformers have significantly contributed to India's progress and prosperity. Chaudhary Charan Singh, a champion of India's peasants, was pivotal in highlighting rural issues. Narasimha Rao's liberalisation policies ended the License Raj and opened up India's economy to the world. The globally acclaimed agricultural scientist, M S Swaminathan, guided India towards food self-sufficiency. But the true impact of the award lies in implementing their ideas at the grassroots level. The country advances by translating visions into tangible actions.

Zaid Wazi, Varanasi

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Three Ratnas' (IE, February 12). The Bharat Ratna to Chaudhary Charan Singh, P V Narasimha Rao, and M S Swaminathan is well-deserved, recognising their contributions to the nation. However, amidst the celebration, it's vital to reflect on their legacies. Narasimha Rao's economic reforms were groundbreaking, but challenges of inequality persist,

necessitating innovative solutions like direct income support. Charan Singh's agricultural policies were transformative, but current challenges demand reevaluation and modernisation. Swaminathan's agricultural research was crucial, yet sustaining his legacy requires revitalising research systems and infrastructure. Honouring these individuals is necessary, but it's more important to address evolving societal needs through innovation and proactive measures.

Ambi Dey, Bangalore

PAKISTAN'S FATE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'After the poll' (IE, February 12). The popularity of Pakistan's erstwhile PM Imran Khan is established with many of his party's candidates, fighting as independents, winning their seats. And this despite charges of rigging by the Pakistan Army to keep Tehreek-e-Insaf's supporters and sympathisers at bay. But now, with no party getting a clear majority, a coalition government is the most probable outcome. While a weak civilian government perfectly suits the Army, it must also be remembered that the fight between Imran Khan and General Munir is far from over.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

ANANDRA PRADASH TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LIMITED
3rd Floor, R & B Building, Opp. Indira Gandhi Municipal Stadium,
MG Road, Lobbipet, Vijayawada - 520 010, Andhra Pradesh, India
AP TS Ref. No. TFCST/1302/16/2023/RUC/AT 10, Dt. 12-02-2024.

Short Tender Notice for Procurement of 28,014 Nos. of 65" Smart TVs for the School Education Department, GoAP (2nd call).
For further details regarding detailed Tender Notification, specifications and digital certificate please visit <https://www.apts.gov.in> and www.approcurement.gov.in
Sd/- Managing Director, A.P. Technology Services Ltd., Vijayawada.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL DELHI CANTT
SADAR BAZAR ROAD, DELHI CANTT-110010
www.apsdelhicantt.com

TENDER NOTICE
Sealed Tenders are invited from interested parties for Procurement of Dual Desk (Qty 380). RFPs with specification can be downloaded from school website www.apsdelhicantt.com. Tender Form duly completed be submitted to APS Delhi Cantt by 28 Feb 2024 by 1000 hrs along with DD (Tender Form Fee & EMD) as per RFP. For any queries contact APS Delhi Cantt on 25693777 or 25692720.
Presiding Officer

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
See Section 82 Cr.P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Rahul, S/o: Tej Pal, R/o: Anangpur Puchhla Mohalla, Police Station Surajkund, Faridabad, Haryana** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 152/2022, U/s 160 IPC, P.S.: Pul Prahladpur, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Rahul** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Rahul** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Rahul** accused of **FIR No. 152/2022, U/s 160 IPC, P.S.: Pul Prahladpur, New Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **27.03.2024**.
By Order
Sh. Himanshu Tanwar
Metropolitan Magistrate-10
Room No. 307, 3rd Floor,
South East District, Saket Court, Delhi

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
See Section U/S 82 Cr. P.C.
Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused (1) **Vinod Sharma (2) Ambika Sharma (3) Vivek Sharma S/o Vinod Sharma all R/o H.No. F-246-B, Upper Ground Floor, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi** have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 30/2011 U/S 498A/406/34 IPC, PS Mansarovar Park, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said (1) **Vinod Sharma (2) Ambika Sharma (3) Vivek Sharma** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said (1) **Vinod Sharma (2) Ambika Sharma (3) Vivek Sharma** have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused (1) **Vinod Sharma (2) Ambika Sharma (3) Vivek Sharma** of case **FIR No. 30/2011 U/S 498A/406/34 IPC, PS Mansarovar Park, Delhi** are required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **16.03.2024**.
By Order
Ms. Nidhi Bala
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate (Mahila Court-03)
Room No. 08, Shahdara District
DP/1610/SHD/2024(Court Matter) Karkardooma Court, Delhi

THE H.P. STATE COOPERATIVE WOOL PROCUREMENT AND MARKETING FEDERATION LTD.,
BLOCK NO. 23, S.D.A. COMPLEX, KASUMPTI, SHIMLA-171009.
Phone No.0177-2622837, Fax: 0177-2620981
Email- gmwoolfed-hp@nic.in, Website - <https://himachal.nic.in/woolfed>

E-TENDER NOTICE
[TENDER No. HPWF/S2/LS/SML/2024]
SUPPLY OF DAY OLD COMMERCIAL BROILER CHICKS
E-tenders under two bid system are invited for the supply of approximately 8,19,000 Day old Commercial Broiler Chicks on F.O.R. basis anywhere in H.P. including Tribal areas and against rate contract to be kept valid for one year from the date of contract. The interested parties may download the Tender Document containing the Technical Specifications, Terms and Conditions, Timelines, Application Form and other details etc. from the official portal <https://tenders.gov.in> w.e.f 12.02.2024 (effective 3.00 PM) to 11.03.2024 (up till 5.00 PM). The cost of the tender document is 5900/- including GST. All the future notifications/corrigendum/s, memorandum/s etc. in connection with this tender, if any, will be published only on the official portal <https://tenders.gov.in> and will not be conveyed individually or published in newspapers etc.
Sd/-
Managing Director
1233/HP

OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MAINPURI CIRCLE, P.W.D MAINPURI INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB) {E-Tender}
Letter No. : 648/7M-Mainpuri Circle/2024 Dated : 08.02.2024
1. The Superintending Engineer, Mainpuri Circle, P.W.D., Mainpuri (U.P.) invites for registered in P.W.D. "A" class contractor, item rate bids, online for the construction of work detailed in the table given below. The bidders are advised to examine carefully all instructions including addendum/amendments to ITB, conditions of contract, contract data, forms, terms, technical specifications, bill of quantities etc. in the Bid Document.

Sl. No	District/ Division	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Bid Security (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of Document (in Rs.)	Time of completion
1	Firozabad / C.D-2	Widening and strengthening work Chandra Kutukpur Tundraswar Road (ODR) in District Firozabad.	1020.00	20.40	6000+300 +414= Rs. 2714.00	12 Months

2. Bid document with detailed terms and conditions will be available online on website <http://tender.up.nic.in> from **14.02.2024 to 20.02.2024 upto 12:00 Hours**. Bids must be submitted online only at e-tendering portal of <http://tender.up.nic.in> on or before **12:00 Hours on 20.02.2024** Technical Bid received online will be opened on **20.02.2024 at 12:30 Hours**.
3. Bid Security of Column No. 5 and Cost of Bid Documents as per column No. 6 will be paid by Internet Banking of E-tender portal Account as per G.O. No.-317/23-2-2018-176 No./2006 T.C-1 dt. 10-04-2019.
4. Other conditions can be seen in Standard Bidding Document (SBD).
5. The tendering process by the bidder will be done through the Uttar Pradesh government Prahari App.
6. Price escalation according to the Government Order No.-13/2020/492/23-7-2020-19 (Sa0)/2019 dated 16.06.2020 and Engineer-in-Chief's letter no.142Camp/Chief Abhi0(Mu0-1)/2020 dated 18.06.2020 will not be payable.
7. The undersigned has full right to cancel the tender without assigning any reason.
(Kamla Kant) Executive Engineer Construction Division-2, P.W.D. Firozabad
(Sunil Kant) Superintending Engineer Mainpuri Circle P.W.D. Mainpuri
UPID No. 202988 Date: 11.02.2024 www.up.gov.nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA COMMISSIONERATE OF HEALTH SERVICE, Mumbai.
e-mail - procurementcell@gmail.com
Procurement Cell, 6th Floor, Arogya Bhavan, St. Georges Hospital Compound, Mumbai - 400 001.

TENDER NOTICE
Ad. No.02 Date :- 12.02.2024
Joint Director of Health Services (Procurement Cell), Mumbai invites tender in two envelope system from the eligible bidders for the Outsourcing of NAT testing services for Health Institutes under Commissionerate of Health Service, Maharashtra.

Sr. No.	Tender No.	Name of Item	Type	Prebid Meeting	Period of sale, download & submission of bid	Bid Opening
1	E-12	Outsourcing of NAT testing services	Sale Period	Dt.15.02.2024 At 14.00 hrs	Dt.12.02.2024 at 10.00 AM to Dt. 27.02.2024 upto 14.00 PM	Dt. 27.02.2024 at 14.30 hrs

1. For detailed information, the interested bidders may visit the website <https://gem.gov.in>
2. The Jt. Director of Health Services, (P.Cell), Mumbai reserves the right to increase or decrease the quantity to be purchased and also reserves the right to cancel all the tenders without giving any reason to.

For e-tendering help/ information, please contact.
Website: - <https://gem.gov.in>
Contact No.- Toll free Number-18020-419-3436;1800-102-3436
Email-procurementcell@gmail.com
Joint Director of Health Services (Procurement Cell) Mumbai.

MORADABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Pili Kothi, Jalkal Compound, Moradabad-244001 (U.P.)
Ref. No : 188/Env.Eng/NNM/2023-24 Date: 12-02-2024

Notice For Inviting Tender
175/Env.Eng/NNM/2023-24 Date: 12-01-2024

Sr. No.	Work No.	Name of the work	Earnest Money Deposit (Rs.)	Tender fee with GST@ 18% (Rs.)
3.	32	एन०सी०ए०पी० निधि से प्रदत्त धनराशि के अन्तर्गत ट्रेनिंग ग्राउण्ड स्थित प्रोसेसिंग साइट में एल०टी०पी० की क्षमता बढ़ाये जाने हेतु 40 KLD क्षमता के एल०टी०पी० के निर्माण का कार्य।	3.00 Lakh	11800.00
7.	36	एन०सी०ए०पी० निधि से प्रदत्त धनराशि के अन्तर्गत नगर वन के संरक्षण हेतु गाटा सं०-46, 47, 48 एवं 308 फ्लिंमिंग एवं नगर वन को जाने वाले सड़क का सी०सी० टाइल्स द्वारा निर्माण कार्य।	1.33 Lakh	11800.00
10.	39	एन०सी०ए०पी० निधि से प्रदत्त धनराशि द्वारा एन०एच०-24 (रामपुर रोड) के किनारे Greening of traffic corridors हेतु एल०टी०पी० के गेट से सड़कई गोदाम तक लीनियर पार्क, प्लान्टेशन व बैंकिंग ट्रेक का निर्माण कार्य।	1.5 Lakh	11800.00
28.	57	एन०सी०ए०पी० निधि से प्रदत्त धनराशि के अन्तर्गत वार्ड न०-45 मुलाबावाडी में एन०एच०-9 से पी०एन०जी० चलिह ह्यूमन कीमेटरियम परिसर की ओर जाने वाली एग्रो रोड का सी०सी० इन्टरलॉकिंग टाइल्स द्वारा सड़क निर्माण तथा ग्रीन बेल्ट निर्माण कार्य।	1.3 Lakh	11800.00

Date of issue of RFP document 13/02/2024
Last date and time for submission of Bids 23/02/2024 at 04:00 PM
Opening of technical Bids 23/02/2024 time 5:00 PM
Place- Office of the Chief Engineer, Nagar Nigam, Moradabad
Authorized Representative Chief Engineer, Nagar Nigam, Moradabad.
Email for correspondence moradabadnagarnigam@gmail.com
Note: After award of contract bidder will have to submit performance security of 5% of contract value. EMD will be returned.

Key Dates:-

S.No.	Description	Date and Time
1.	Start date for Purchase of Tender (Online)	13/02/2024 at 10.00 AM
2.	Last Date for submission of Tender (Online)	23/02/2024 at 04.00 PM
3.	Technical bid opening (Online)	23/02/2024 at 05.00 PM

1. Detailed NIT and bid document shall be available on; Website-<https://tender.up.nic.in>
2. Tender call notice in two bid systems (part-I: general & technical bid and part-II: financial bid/price bid/BOQ) from intending bidders fulfilling the eligibility criteria mentioned in this notice and other qualifying requirements mentioned in this RFP.
3. Amendment to NIT, if any would be published on website only.
4. Note: After award of contract bidder will have to submit performance security of 5% of contract value & 5% will be deducted from the bills.

Note:-
1. Tender Document and other details shall be available on:- Website- <https://tender.up.nic.in>
2. Amendment to NIT, if any would be published only on website <https://tender.up.nic.in>
3. The EMD shall be in the form of FDR/NSC/NEFT/RTGS in favor of "Municipal Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Moradabad"
4. Bank Details for online payment-
A/C Holder Name - NAGAR NIGAM MORADABAD E-TENDERING
A/c No - 27050100020717
Bank Name - Bank of Baroda
Bank IFSC code - BARB0BLYMOR (5th Character is Zero)
5. All eligible/interested consultants are mandated to get enrolled on e-Procurement portal (<https://tender.up.nic.in>)
6. Contractor can contact Help Desk for any clarification of their doubts regarding the process of Electronic Procurement System.
7. Published NIT/tenders can be cancelled anytime without any prior notice/information.
8. All the documents are to be submitted online.
9. Sampling and testing will be done by NABL Accredited Lab / Government Lab and the cost Shall be borne by the Contractor.
10. Third Party Quality Assurance will be carried out for the aforementioned works.
Chief Engineer
Nagar Nigam, Moradabad

कार्यालय अपर सचिव, माध्यमिक शिक्षा परिषद, उ०प्र०, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, बरेली।
पत्रांक:- मा०शि०ण०/व/बि०की/88 /2023-24 दिनांक:- 07.02.24
अल्पकालीन जेम (फारवर्ड आक्शन) नीलामी की सूचना

माध्यमिक शिक्षा परिषद के क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, बरेली की हार्डस्कूल/इंटरमीडिएट परीक्षा वर्ष 2023 की प्रत्यक्ष/अप्रत्यक्ष सारी उत्तर पुस्तक एवं अन्य रद्दी की नीलामी हेतु ऐसी पंजीकृत पेंपर मिलो/फर्मों से निम्नांकित वस्तु के अनुमानित भार के अनुसार नीलामी आमंत्रित की जाती है, जो रद्दी कागज को गलाकर लुगदी बनाने की क्षमता रखती हो। जेम पोर्टल के माध्यम से फारवर्ड आक्शन के अन्तर्गत निम्नवत् जेम बिड आमंत्रित किया जाता है:-

क्रम सं०	सामग्री की नाम	अनुमानित भार (कुन्तल में)	ई०एम०डी०
1	प्रयुक्त उत्तर पुस्तक	1446	
2	अप्रयुक्त सारी उत्तर पुस्तक (रद्दी कागज)	363	₹ 334100=00
3	अन्य मिली-जुली रद्दी	170	
4	ओ०एम०आर० शीट	10	

बिड से संबंधित विस्तृत विवरण, Invitation for Bid, Bid Document, बिड फॉर्म तथा मानक एवं शर्तें आदि भारत सरकार की जेम पोर्टल वेबसाइट www.gem.gov.in पर दिनांक 14.02.2024 से उपलब्ध है, जिन्हें जेम पोर्टल के माध्यम से इच्छुक नीलामीदाता द्वारा डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। नीलामीदाता/फर्म/मिल को अपनी बिड जेम पोर्टल वेबसाइट www.gem.gov.in पर ऑनलाइन ही निष्पत्ति समयावधि (Important Time Line) डाउनलोड किया जा सकेगा।

IMPORTANT TIME LINE
1- The bid document is available at e-procurement system on www.gem.gov.in through Forward Auction. Interested bidders/buyers may view, all bidders will submit all required document and EMD in hard copy with Annexure-1 till 20-02-2024 by hand before starting of Auction to Bikri/Store Cell, Regional Secretary Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Regional Office, Bareilly.

(A)	Payment start date and time	15-02-2024 At 10:00 Hrs (10:00 AM)
(B)	Payment end date and time	19-02-2024 At 17:00 Hrs (05:00 PM)
(C)	Auction start date and time	20-02-2024 At 18:00 Hrs (06:00 PM)
(D)	Auction end date and time	27-02-2024 At 14:00 Hrs (02:00 PM)
(E)	Site of work	Madhyamik Shiksha Parishad, Regional Office, Bareilly

नीलामी निरस्तारण समिति/अपर सचिव को किसी एक नीलामी या सम्पूर्ण नीलामी को बिना कारण बताये अस्वीकार करने का अधिकार सुरक्षित है। सामग्रियों की मात्रा घट-बढ़ सकती है।
डॉ० (नीरज कुमार पाण्डेय) (नीरज पाण्डेय) अपर सचिव, माध्यमिक शिक्षा परिषद, उ०प्र०, क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय, बरेली।
UPID-202959 Date 11/02/2024 www.upgov.nic.in

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA CORRIGENDUM

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP/AUTH	OLD REFERENCE/ NIT NO.	NATURE OF CORRIGENDUM	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1.	THE ROHTAK COOP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	TENDER ID NO 2024_HBC_346051_1	TENDER ID NO 2024_HBC_346051_1 DATE EXTENDED UPTO 17.02.2024 (04.00 PM) AND OPENING ON 19.02.2024 AT 11.00 A.M.	https://tenders.hry.nic.in/http://vitarohkta.org.in	9996577829 vitarohkta@gmail.com
2.	THE ROHTAK COOP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LTD	TENDER ID NO 2024_HBC_2024_346816_1	TENDER ID NO 2024_HBC_2024_346816_1 DATE EXTENDED UPTO 20.02.2024 03 MP AND OPENING ON 21.02.2024 AT 11.00 A.M	https://tenders.hry.nic.in/http://vitarohkta.org.in	9996577829 vitarohkta@gmail.com

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in 24971.HRY

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE

Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD CORP/AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT EMD (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/AUTH	NODAL OFFICER CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	THE ROHTAK CO OP MILK PRODUCERS UNION LIMITED	SUPPLY, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF ID, FD FANS AND DUCTING OF BOILER AT VITA MILK PLANT ROHTAK	14.02.2024 06.03.2024	AS PER DNIT	https://tenders.hry.nic.in	01262-276302 vitarohkta@gmail.com

24958.HRY FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT: www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in or www.etenders.hry.nic.in

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT (INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) (E-Procurement Module)
The Executive Engineer, Tissa Division, HPPWD Tissa H.P. on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the percentage Rate bids, in electronic tendering system, from the eligible class of contractors registered with HPPWD for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Cost of tender form (Rs.)	Class	Completion period
1	C/o Mini Secretariat/Combined office building Tissa at Bhanjara Distt Chamba (HP) (SH: C/o Building portion including water supply and sanitary installation, septic tank, rain water harvesting system and site development and boundary wall etc.)	85813870.00	1716300.00	5000.00	A-Class	24 Months

1. Key Dates:
1. Starting Date for downloading 14-02-2023 at 10:00 AM
2. Deadline for submission of Bid 23-02-2023 at 11:30 AM
3. Date of Technical bid opening 23-02-2023 at 11:30 AM
The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons there-of.
The Bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website www.hptenders.gov.in
Executive Engineer, Tissa Division, HPPWD Tissa Pin-176316, Email-ee-tissa-hp@nic.in
On behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh 5791/HP

झारखण्ड सरकार
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता विभाग
ई-प्रोक्वोरमेंट सूचना
अति अल्पकालिन निविदा सूचना संख्या -CKP-05/2023-24 (द्वितीय कॉल) दिनांक - 12-02-2024

Name of Work:- Construction of 125/115 mm dia with 70m/90m/120m mtrs deep drilled tube well with installation of India mark II (IS 15500 Part - 2/2004) Hand pump with 32 mm dia.GI Medium class riser pipe by Truck mounted DTH RIG machine with 125mm dia blue casing UPVC pipe with drain, platform under D.W.&S. Division, Chakradharpur for the Year 2023-24.

युप संख्या	ड्रिलिंग न० की संख्या	प्राकृतिक राशि (लाख में)	अग्रघन की राशि (लाख में)	परिमाण निष्पन्न का मूल्य (रुपये में)	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
CKP/DT/90mtr-4	95	96.12668	1.93000	10000.00	180 दिन
CKP/DT/120mtr-8	60	71.51931	1.43500	10000.00	160 दिन

2. वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि 15.02.2024 समय 2.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
3. निविदा प्राप्ति (ऑन लाईन बिडिंग) की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय 26.02.2024 समय 5.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
4. सरकार के साथ, सूचना प्रौद्योगिकी एवं ई-गवर्नेंस, झारखण्ड मंत्रालय, के द्वारा 120 दिनांक 03.10.2023 के आलोक में शिष्ट का मूल्य एवं अग्रघन की राशि Online जमा करने की अन्तिम तिथि एवं समय 26.02.2024 समय 5.00 बजे अपराह्न तक
5. तकनीकी बिड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 27.02.2024 समय 05.00 बजे अपराह्न कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, चक्रधरपुर।
6. तकनीकी बिड खोलने का स्थान कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, चक्रधरपुर।
7. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदाधिकारी का नाम/पदनाम :- ई० प्र० दयाल मंडल, कार्यपालक अभियंता, पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, चक्रधरपुर।
8. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले कार्यालय का टेलिफोन नं० 6206535869
9. ई- प्रोक्वोरमेंट सेल का हेल्प लाईन सं० 0651-2480345

नोट - केवल ई निविदा ही स्वीकार किये जायेंगे। अधिक जानकारी के लिए वेबसाइट <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।
कार्यपालक अभियंता
पेयजल एवं स्वच्छता प्रमंडल, चक्रधरपुर।
PR 318686 (West Singhbhum) 23-24 (D)

Bharat Nirman through Rural Roads
Chief Engineer (Shimla Zone) HPPWD Nirman Bhawan Nigam Vihar Shimla H.P., 171002
UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA (PMGSY-III)
Notice Inviting Tender

1. The Superintending Engineer, 11th Circle, HP, PWD., Ramur Bushahr District Shimla HP-172001 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids, in electronic tendering system, for construction of roads under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana - III of 2023-24 for each of the following works including their maintenance for five years from the eligible and approved contractors registered with CPWD, HP PWD, P&T, Railway and other State Govt. or Central Govt. Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

District	Package No.	Name of the work	Estimated Cost (Rs. Lakh)		Total Cost (Rs. Lakh)	Period of completion (in days)	Bid Security (Rs. Lakh)
			Construction	Mainten-ance			
Shimla	HP-09-719	Up-gradation of Rai Babli Khani to Kharashan road Km 0/000 to 10/000	7,80,11,692	60,10,000	8,40,21,692	540	16.80
Shimla	HP-09-724	Up-gradation of Taklech to Khamorta road Km 0/000 to 6/500	5,61,42,901	39,06,500	6,00,49,401	540	12.01
Shimla	HP-09-722	Up-gradation of Mashnoo to Bahilidhar road Km 0/000 to 18/000	24,55,89,640	1,74,29,000	26,30,18,640	540	52.60
Shimla	HP-09-726	Up-gradation of Barkal to Taklech road Km 0/000 to 11/000					
Shimla	HP-09-728	Up-gradation of Sanguri to Brandli road Km 0/000 to 9/000	14,10,61,051	1,02,17,000	15,12,78,051	540	30.26

2. Date of release of Invitation for Bids through e-procurement: 12.02.2024.
3. Cost of Bid Form: Rs. 5000/- only per package (non-refundable) only in form of Demand Draft in favour of Executive Engineer, Outer Serai Division, HP.PWD, Nirmand.
4. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website www.pmgstyenders.gov.in. The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). "Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in PMGSY may obtain the same from the website: www.pmgstyenders.gov.in
Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the valid digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.
* Non-registered bidders may submit bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.
5. Submission of Original Documents: The bidders are required to submit (a) original Demand Draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security in approved form and (c) original affidavit regarding correctness of information furnished with bid document as per provisions of Clause 4.4B (a)(ii) of IT B with Superintending Engineer, 11th Circle, HP.PWD., Rampur Bushahr, on a date not later than three working days after the opening of technical qualification part of the Bid, either by registered post or by hand.
6. Last Date/Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering: 19.02.2024 up-to 1700 hours.
7. The site for the work is available.
8. Only online submission of bids is permitted, therefore, bids must be submitted online on website 20.02.2024 by the authorized officers. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bid as specified, the bids will be opened online on the next working day at the same time.
9. The bidder is not required to quote his rate for routine maintenance. The rates to be paid for routine maintenance are indicated in the Bill of Quantities. Further, the payment for routine maintenance to the contractor shall be regulated based on his performance of maintenance activities.
10. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than ninety days after the deadline date for bid submission.
11. Bidders may bid for any one or more of the works mentioned in the Table above. To qualify for a package of contracts made up of this and other bids for which bids are invited in the same NIT, the bidder must demonstrate having experience and resources sufficient to meet the aggregate of the qualifying criteria for the individual contracts.
12. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender. The undersigned has right to extend or cancel the bids without declaring any reasons therefor.
Signature and Designation of the authority inviting bids for and on behalf of Governor of H.P.
Superintending Engineer
11th Circle HP PWD,
Rampur Bushahr, Distt. Shimla (HP)
Fax: 01782-233167
5776/HP

Classifieds PERSONAL

I, PRASHANT KUMAR S/O MUKESH KUMAR R/O 2927/218, VISHRAM KUMAR, TRINAGAR, DELHI-110035. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRASHANT KUMAR MAHESHWARI. 0040713043-4

I, Bharat Sharma R/o K-14, S.Ext-1, Delhi have changed my son name from Bhavik Sharma to Bhaavik Sharma for all purposes. 0070888458-1

I, Anil Garg S/o Beldi Ram R/o L-135 Upper Ground Floor, Front Position, Galat-17 Vijay Vihar Phase-2 Rohini Delhi-110085 have changed my name from Anil Garg to Anil Kumar permanently 0040713490-1

I, Deepika Rani Chauhan w/o yogendra Kumar Chauhan R/o flat no 1403, tower-D, The hydepark sector-78, Noida Gated budh nagar uttar Pradesh-201301, I have changed my name deepika Rani chauhan to deepika Chauhan for all future purposes 0070888522-1

I, Vijay Prakash alias Vijay Parkash S/o Sh. Hari Ram R/o 24, Gali No.3, Dr. Ambedkar Colony, Khera Khurd, North West Delhi, Delhi-110082 have changed my name to Vijay Parkash for all purposes. 0040713479-3

I, Shafali Mehra alias Shafali Srivastava D/o Sh. Satish Mehra W/o Sh. Saubrah Srivastava R/o 81/709, Tower-13, Silver City, Sector 93, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, Uttar Pradesh-201301 have changed my name to Shafali Srivastava for all purposes. 0040713479-2

I, Sagar S/o Sh. Sanjay R/o L-383, J.J. Colony, Shakurpur, Saraswati Vihar, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Sagar Reedia for all purposes. 0040713479-5

I, Rakesh Sharma S/o Sh. Sat Narayan Sharma R/o Flat No. 4G-301, Kingsbury Tower, G-4, Kundli, T.D. City, Nangal Kalan (43), Sonipat, Haryana-131023 have changed the name of my minor son from Jatin Narayan Vats to Jatin Sharma for all purposes. 0040713479-1

I, Kushal Jain Alias Kushalchand Jain S/o Kunal Jain R/o C-31 Ahinsa Vihar Sector-9, Rohini Delhi-110085, have changed my name to Kushal Raajvardann Jain 0070888509-1

I, KM Sunita Pant D/o Satish Chandra Pant and W/o Anil Joshi R/o Sanjay Colony Avas Vikas, Near Vivekanand School, Haldwani, Nainital, Uttarakhand- 263139, have changed my name to Shakhshi Joshi 0070888507-1

I, Jagdish Kumar Kanaujia S/O Shri J.P Kanaujia R/O H.No.-140, Zamrudpur, GK 1, ND-48. I have to change my daughter's name from Tania Kanaujia to Tania Kanaujia for all future purposes. 0040713555-1

I, IQRA GULWAIZ DAUGHTER OF MR. GULWAIZ & WIFE OF MR DURRAIZ AHMED, RESIDENT OF H.NO-D-93/94, GALI NO-9, VILLAGE, WAZIRABAD DELHI-110084, declare that "IQRA" and "IQRA GULWAIZ" is the same and identical person. That my father name was mistake written in Xth class certificate "MD GULWAIZ" and "GULWAIZ" is belong to one and the same person. 0040713479-6

I, Ekta D/o Raj Kumar Gupta and W/o Dinesh Garg R/O House-87, Sukhdev Nagar, Panipat, PO- Panipat, Dist- Panipat, Haryana- 132103, have changed my name to Karuna Garg 0070888503-1

I, Debu Prasad Sarkar S/o ML Sarkar, Address: I-146 B, Sector-22, Noida, G.B. Nagar, UP-201301. I have changed my name Debu Prasad Sarkar to all future purpose. 0040713329-2

I, Anshul D/o Sh. Tara Chand Sharma R/O A-6, Ashok Nagar Mandoli Road Shahdara Delhi 110093, India have changed My Name to Anshul Sharma as per Voter ID and Adhaar. 0070888492-1

I, Birendra Singh S/O Chander Singh Chauhan, R/O Y-6, 404, Eros Sampoonam, Greater Noida West, 201306 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM Birendra Singh to Birendra Singh Chauhan FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES 0070888486-1

I, SUDESH KUMARI W/O BIJENDER R/O 224-A, SAINIK NAGAR, BAHADURGARH, HAJJAI R, HARYANA-124507, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUDESH. 0040713565-2

I, hitherto known as AADITYA RATHOR alias ADITYA RATHOR, S/O CHHANNU LAL, residing at, House No.1307-B, Gali No. 13, Govind Puri, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019, have changed my name and I shall henceforth be known as AADITYA RATHOR. 0040713570-10

I, ZEESHAN AHMED, S/O, SHAKEEL AHMAD, R/O HOUSE NO-2883, GALI- CAPTAIN WALI, GOLCHA CINEMA, DARVA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110022, HAS CHANGED MY NAME ZEESHAN AHMAD, FOR ALL PURPOSE. 0040713570-6

I, Usha/Usha Kumari/Usha Rani/Usha Sharma, W/o Narender Sharma, R/o Village Pahorot (Faizabad) P.O. Badli, Distt. Jhajjar (Haryana), have changed my name to Usha Sharma. 0040713570-3

I, Tagun Nisha W/O Mohd Fakhruddin R/o H No-16/274/26, Gali No-16, Block-H, Sangam Vihar, Delhi-110062, have changed my name to JAIBUN NISA. Permanently. 0040713573-3

I, Sushil Kumar Jain S/o Shri Mahabir Parshad Jain, R/O RZB-101, Nihal-Vihar, Nangloi, West Delhi, Delhi-110041, have changed my name, from Sushil Jain S/o Shri Mahabir Prashad to Sushil Kumar Jain S/o Shri Mahabir Parshad Jain, for all, future purposes. 0040713597-2

I, Suman Lata Misra, D/o Sh. Chander Prakash Sharma, R/o B-42/2, Ground-Floor, Dilshad-Colony, Jhilmil H.O., East Delhi, Delhi-110095, have declare that Suman Lata and Suman Lata Misra are one and the same person, for, all, future purposes. 0040713565-9

I, Sukhpreet Singh, S/o Surender Singh, R/O Block F-2, House N-7, Sangam Vihar, Deoli, Delhi, have changed my name, from prince, to Sukhpreet Singh, for all, future purposes. 0040713574-11

I, Suhana Parveen W/O Hanif Salmani R/o F-20, 3rd Floor, Jagat Puri, Parwana Road, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to SUHANA SALMANI. Permanently. 0040713573-7

I, Suhana Parveen Begum W/O Hanif Salmani, R/O F-20, 3rd Floor, Jagat Puri, Parwana Road, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to SUHANA SALMANI., Permanently. 0040713573-5

I, Sheetal Gupta, S/o Shri Subhash Chand Gupta, R/O C-9/53, Sector-7, Rohini, Delhi-110085, have changed my name from Sheetal Chand Gupta to Sheetal Gupta. 0040713565-1

I, Shabana w/o Mohammad Arshad Mirza, R/O J-21, Third Floor, J-Extension, Ramesh Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Shabana Mirza. 0040713589-2

I, Satya Narayan Gupta, S/o Late Sh. Hari Shankar Gupta, R/O, B-110, Tigri extension, BSF Camp tigeri, Devli-South, Delhi-110080, Have changed my name to Satya Narain Gupta. 0040713574-6

I, Sakina Begum, W/O Fakira Khan, R/O, Asawari Khakhta Bulanshahr, Uttar Pradesh-202394, have changed my name to Mallo. 0040713565-6

I, SHVETA BHATIA, W/O RAVINDRA KUMAR BHATIA, R/O FLAT, NO.708, TOWER-B, GAUR SPORTS WOOD SECTOR-79, NOIDA, UTTAR PRADESH-201305, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHWETA BHATIA. 0040713574-3

I, Akash Dahiya S/o Sh. Anil Kumar R/o 19/163, Choodan Panna, Jharoda Kalan, South West Delhi, Delhi-110072 have changed my name to Akash Dagar for all purposes. 0040713479-4

I, SHAKEEL AHMED, S/O KHALIL AHMAD, R/O HOUSE NO-2883, GALI CAPTAIN WALI, GOLCHA CINEMA, DARVA GANJ, NEW DELHI-110022, HAS CHANGED MY NAME SHAKEEL AHMAD, FOR ALL PURPOSE. 0040713570-5

I, SHAH MOHAMMAD MUJIB, S/O MUJEEB UR REHMAN, ADD-E-23, OKHLA-VIHAR, SOUTH-EAST DELHI-110025, changed my name to SHAH MOHAMMAD MUJEEB, for all, future purposes. 0040713574-2

I, Sakshi Mahna D/O SUBHASH CHANDER MAHNA W/O MAHENDAR PURI R/O E-166, PHASE-2, VIJAY VIHAR, ROHINI, DELHI-110085. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAKSHI PURI. 0040713565-4

I, SABITRI DEVI, MOTHER OF, MUKESH KUMAR PANDEY, R/O VILL + POST PANDITPUR DISTT-EAST CHAMPARAN BIHAR-845422, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME, FROM SABITRI DEVI TO PAVITRI DEVI, VIDE AFFIDAVIT IN-4247202326520439W, DATED-12/02/2024, BEFORE NCT-DELHI. 0040713565-10

I, Reena D/O Mohammad Maroof, R/O H.No-145, Gali No-03, Babu Nagar, Mustafabad, Delhi-110094, have changed my name to REENA KHAN. Permanently. 0040713573-2

I, RENU KUMARI YADAV W/O SANDEEP GOYAL R/O F-22/150, SEC-3 ROHINI DELHI-110085, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RENU GOYAL. 0040713565-8

I, Neelam Devi W/o Vijay Narayan Singh R/O D-419, Street No.14A/6, Sadh Nagar, Palam Colony, Delhi-110045, have changed the name of my minor son Rakshit Garg Aged-10 Years and he shall hereafter be known as Dhanu Garg. 0040713574-5

I, Akhtar Khan S/O Manzoor Ahmad, R/O F-86, Gali No-11, Jagat Puri, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to AKHTAR KHAN SALMANI. Permanently. 0040713573-6

I, NEELAM PRAKASH CHHABRA, W/O CHANDER PRAKASH CHHABRA, R/O, D-12, FIRST-FLOOR, KIRTI NAGAR, BLOCK-D, RAMESH-NAGAR, DELHI-110015, have changed my name to NEELAM CHHABRA 0040713574-4

I, NEELAM KUMARI SHARMA, W/O VIPIN BHARDWAJ, R/O 1476, BHAGWANPURI, HAPUR, UTTAR PRADESH-245101, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NEELAM BHARDWAJ. 0040713574-4

I, MUZEBAH REHMAN, S/O SABIR ALI, ADD-E-23, OKHLA VIHAR, SOUTH EAST DELHI-110025, changed my name to MUJEEB UR REHMAN, for all, future purposes. 0040713574-1

I, Kumari Manorama Kumari, W/O Late Kulkar Chand R/O RZ-581/313, Gali No.6B, Geetanjali, Park west, Sagarpur New, Delhi-110046, changed my name to Manorama Devi and D.O.B, from 25.12.1950 to 20.05.1951. For General, Public. 0040713578-1

I, Kum Poonam Yadav, W/o Sanjay Kumar R/o Dakshina, Rewari (Haryana)-123411, have changed my name to Poonam. 0050236542-1

I, Shubhangi W/o Raghava Brahmjeet R/O C003, Antariksh Gop View-2, Sec-78, Noida have changed my name to Shubhangi Brahmjeet. 0070888485-1

I, Savita Chaudhary W/o Mohan Satti D/O Sh. Mani Ram R/O 18-21, First Floor, Ramesh Park, Laxmi Nagar, Shakar Pur, Baramad, East Delhi-110092, I Have Changed my name Savita Satti to Savita Chaudhary for all Future Purposes. Savita Satti and Savita Chaudhary are same person 0070888452-1

I, Hasena W/O Akhtar Khan Salmani R/O F-86, Gali No-11, Jagat Puri, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to HASINA BEGUM SALMANI. Permanently. 0040713573-4

I, Jaiprakash s/o- Mool Chand R/o, H.No-326 Railway-Road Ganeshpur Roorkee Haridwar Uttarakhand-247667, have to change my name Jai Prakash, for all, future purposes. 0040713570-7

I, JAGJEET PAL SINGH JUNG S/O SARDAR LALL SINGH NAMDHARI, R/O 85, BLOCK-2, GROUND-FLOOR, ROOP NAGAR, DELHI-110007. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO JAGJEET PAL SINGH. 0040713565-5

I, Hunardeep Kaur Bhatia D/O. Anmol Singh Bhatia R/O. V-296, Rajouri Garden, New Delhi-110072, have changed my name to Hunardeep Kaur for all purposes. 0040713570-9

I, Hazi Hakeem Abdul Kayum, S/O- Hazi Allah Bandi, R/O- H.No.51/9, Main Gali, Banker, Nai Basti, Narela, Delhi-110040, have changed my name to Haji Hakim Abdul Qayyum, for all purposes. 0040713589-1

I, Ganga Parsad Gupta S/O Ramesh Chand Gupta, R/O S-391, School-Block, Shakarpur, Delhi-110092, have changed my name to Ganga Prasad Gupta, for all Purposes. 0040713589-4

I, Deepak Kumar Singh, R/O-Plot No.-12/13, G.F. KH No.966, Sai Enclave, Shyam Vihar, Phase-I, D-BLOCK, Dindar Pur, Delhi-110043, have changed the name of my minor daughter from AVANI SINGH to KAASHVI SINGH for all future purposes. 0040713576-3

I, Chitra Pyvag Singh Answal, W/O Ritesh Yadav, R/O A-1202, Tower-B, The Vasundhara Grand Building, Sector-15, Vasundhara Ghaziabad, U.P.-201012, have changed my name to Chitra Yadav. 0040713565-7

I, Charu Lata aya, W/O Jatinder Gutt, R/O Shivam apartment- A29 Block-D Vikaspur 110018, Have changed my name to Charu 0040713574-7

I, BANDNA KUMARI W/O KUMAR DEEPAK R/O C-5/238-239, FIRST-FLOOR, SECTOR-6, ROHINI, DELHI-110085. HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO BANDNA THAKUR. 0040713481-1

I, Khushbu W/O Vijay Verma R/O Mohakar Pur Sher Khan Shikarpur, Bulandshahr (U.P.)-202395, have changed my name from Khushbu to Khushbu Verma for all future purposes. 0070888506-1

I, Ashok Handuja, S/o Jagdish Chander Handuja, R/O H.No.606, Lane No.-8, Madan Puri, Gurgaon, (Haryana)-122001, have changed my name to Ashok Kumar. 0040713574-9

I, Anwar S/o Rahmat Ali, R/O-R-312, Street No.14, Ramesh Park, Laxmi Nagar, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Anwar Ali. 0040713589-3

I, Anil Kumar Sachdeva, S/o Ramesh Chand Sachdeva, R/O H.No.78/8, Marla Model Town Gurgaon, (Haryana), have changed my name to Anil Sachdeva. 0040713570-1

I, Amit Garg, S/o Sampal Garg, R/O-27/330 Pandarg Road, Jwala- Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-110032, have changed the name of my minor son Rakshit Garg Aged-10 Years and he shall hereafter be known as Dhanu Garg. 0040713574-5

I, Ajay Kumar Sharma, S/o Ramesh Kumar Sharma R/o- H.No.1, Block-B-1, Sewak Park, Uttam Nagar, West, Delhi, Delhi-110059, have changed name to Ajay Sharma for all future purposes. 0040713481-3

I, ARJUN, S/O JUHAR, ADD-2173 BLOCK-G TRANSIT CAMP BACK SIDE ANAND PARBAT, CENTRAL, DELHI-110005, changed my name to ARJUN SINGHWAL, for all, future purposes. 0040713481-3

I, Waqel Ahmad S/o Abdul Rashid R/o. A-263, Gali No.6, Near-InshaAllah-Masjid, Chauhan-Bangar, Delhi-110053 Have changed my name to Wakeel Ahmed. 0040713487-1

I, Umed Singh S/o Jagat Singh residence C-230A, New Ashok Nagar Delhi-110096, my son Bobby Bhandari some documents my name is mentioned as Umed Singh Bhandari and Umed Bhandari. But correct name is Umed Singh for all future purposes. 0040713542-1

I, Sunita Devi W/o Sh. Devender Kumar R/o A-228, Shastrri Nagar, Delhi - 110052 have changed my name to Sunita Gupta. 0050236542-1

I, Shubhangi W/o Raghava Brahmjeet R/O C003, Antariksh Gop View-2, Sec-78, Noida have changed my name to Shubhangi Brahmjeet. 0070888485-1

I, Savita Chaudhary W/o Mohan Satti D/O Sh. Mani Ram R/O 18-21, First Floor, Ramesh Park, Laxmi Nagar, Shakar Pur, Baramad, East Delhi-110092, I Have Changed my name Savita Satti to Savita Chaudhary for all Future Purposes. Savita Satti and Savita Chaudhary are same person 0070888452-1

I, Richa Dhaniya, w/o Yatin Rajwada R/O C-553, Sector-19, Noida- 201301, have changed my name Richa Rajwada to Richa Dhaniya for all Future Purposes. 0070888448-1

I, Puneet Kumar R/O House No. 60, 2nd Floor, Pocket 3, Rohini Sector 21, New Delhi have changed my minor son's name from Roshan to Roshan Dalal. 0040713489-1

I, Pawan Kumar Garg S/O Rajender Prasad R/O 210GA, Hoshiarpur, Sec-51, Noida have changed my name to Pawan Kumar forever. 0070888493-1

I, Nidhi Vasudeva W/o Mudit Kumar R/O I-1635, Saya Zind Appts, Gaur City-1, G.Noida have changed my name to Nidhi Uppal. 0070888450-1

I, Nidhi Mahajan & Nidhi Bhasin Mahajan W/O Arun Mahajan R/O D-258, Raj Nagar, Sec-50 have changed my name to Nidhi B Mahajan. 0070888449-1

I, Nekesh Jain, S/O Atinder Kumar Jain R/O C-34A, Ck-Block, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi-110088, have changed my name to Nikesh Jain for all Purposes. 0040713576-1

I, Mansi Vinodkumar Patel/ Mansiben/ Mansi Patel, W/O Vinod Ranchod Patel, R/O-M-1806, 18th Floor, Tower-M, Pan Oasis, Sector-70, Noida, UP-201301, have changed my name Mansi Vinod Patel, for all future purposes. 0040713481-1

I, Khushbu W/O Vijay Verma R/O Mohakar Pur Sher Khan Shikarpur, Bulandshahr (U.P.)-202395, have changed my name from Khushbu to Khushbu Verma for all future purposes. 0070888506-1

I, Mansi Vinodkumar Patel/ Mansiben/ Mansi Patel, W/O Vinod Ranchod Patel, R/O-M-1806, 18th Floor, Tower-M, Pan Oasis, Sector-70, Noida, UP-201301, have changed my name Mansi Vinod Patel, for all future purposes. 0040713481-1

I, Hitesh Jain S/o Sidhi Parkash Jain R/O House No-41, 2nd Floor, Block-E, Ranjeet Singh Road, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033, have changed my minor daughter's name from Avanya Jain aged 7 years to Devanshi Jain forever 0070888445-1

I, Bhukya Rajendraprasad S/o Venkateswar Rao R/O 3-2-61, Vidyanagar Colony, Chunchupalli, Kothagudem, Khammam, Telangana-507101, have changed my minor son's name from Bhukya Perjith aged 3 years to Bhukya Perjith Viral forever 0070888475-1

I, Hardeep Singh R/O C-9-D-2, Tilak Vihar, near Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Hardeep Singh for all purposes. 0040713570-8

I, Kaushalya Devi, W/o Sh. Dhruv Bhagat Goel, R/o-D-4/41, Vashisht-Park, P.O-Nangal Rai, New Delhi-110018, have lost my original-Partition Deed dated-11-2-2002 of property-NO.C3-41, First-Floors, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110058. An FIR/NCR Lodge vide- LR.NO.1400311/2024, dated-01/02/2024, Further please contact on Mobile- No.9911280833. 0040713481-3

Lost Original-Share Certificate and Allotment Letter. If Found Some One Please Contact- Ajay Kumar DGH, E-406, Satisar CGHS Ltd Plot No.8, SEC-07, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075. An FIR/NCR Lodge vide- LR.No.1433946/2024, dated-11/02/2024, Contact- No.9874185651 0040713481-2

"It is to inform the public at large that Mr. Vivek Kumar & Mrs. Neha Devi has acquired Kharata and Land of 4.88 a. mafia para No. 444, Khata No. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582,

Farmers' protest 2.0: How this agitation differs from 2020-21

RAAKHI JAGGA
 LUDHIANA, FEBRUARY 12

A LITTLE more than two years after they called off their massive protest at the doorstep of Delhi, farmers are once again on the road to the capital. Three union ministers were meeting them in Chandigarh for a second round of talks on Monday evening. The talks were ongoing at press time.

In both its demands and leadership, the protest of 2024 is different from the yearlong agitation of 2020-21, during which the farmers succeeded in their main goal of forcing the central government to roll back its agricultural reforms agenda.

What is this farmers' protest about?
 More than 250 farmers' unions under the banner of the Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM), which claims to have the allegiance of about 100 unions, and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-political), a platform of another 150 unions, have called the protest that is being coordinated from Punjab. The two forums gave a call of "Delhi Chalo" at the end of December 2023 to re-

mind Prime Minister Narendra Modi of the promises to farmers two years previously. The farmers were scheduled to march on Delhi on Tuesday. Tractor trolleys have been on the move, and barricades, nails and heavy equipment have been deployed to thwart them — even as talks have been ongoing, with the Centre claiming an "open mind" on their demands.

Are the leaders of 2020-21 active again?

No. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-political) is a faction that broke away from the original Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) in July 2022. Its coordinator is Jagjit Singh Dallewal, president of the Punjab-based Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) Sidhupur farm union, who broke away from the SKM following differences of opinion with the leadership of the main organisation.

KMM, the other organisation in the current protest, was formed by Sarwan Singh Pandher, convener of the Punjab-based union Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee (KMSC). The KMSC did not join the main protest against the farm laws in 2020-21, and had instead set up a separate stage at the

Delhi border at Kundli. After the protests ended, the KMSC started to expand its base — and at the end of January, announced the formation of the KMM, comprising more than 100 unions from across India.

The SKM, the flagship body of more than 500 farmer unions of India, which led the 2020-21 agitation against the farm laws, is not involved in the ongoing protest. In Punjab, 37 farm unions, including the largest, BKU Ugrahan, are part of the SKM. The SKM has given its own call for a Grameen Bharat *bandh* on February 16. While the SKM is not part of the Delhi Chalo agitation, the Morcha issued a statement on Monday evening saying there must be no repression of farmers who are participating. BKU Ugrahan too issued a statement criticising the Haryana government's efforts to stop the march.

What are the demands of the farmers?

The headline demand in the farmers' 12-point agenda is for a law to guarantee minimum support price (MSP) for all crops, and the determination of crop prices in accordance with the Dr M S Swaminathan Commission's report. The other demands are:



Police place a container on NH44 at Singhu border to prevent farmers from marching to Delhi on Monday. PPT

- Full debt waiver for farmers and labourers;
- Implementation of the Land Acquisition Act of 2013, with provisions for written consent from farmers before acquisition, and compensation at four times the collector rate;
- Punishment for the perpetrators of the October 2021 Lakhimpur Kheri killings;
- India should withdraw from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and freeze all free

- trade agreements;
- Pensions for farmers, farm labourers;
- Compensation for farmers who died during the Delhi protest, including a job for one family member;
- Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 should be scrapped;
- 200 (instead of 100) days' employment under MGNREGA per year, daily wage of Rs 700, and scheme should be linked with farming;
- Strict penalties and fines on companies producing fake seeds, pesticides, fertilisers; improvements in seed quality;
- National commission for spices such as chili and turmeric;
- Ensure rights of indigenous peoples over water, forests, and land.

How has the government responded?

KMM and SKM (Non-political) emailed their demands to the Ministries of Agriculture and Commerce and Industry on February 6. On February 8, Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal, and MoS Home Nityanand Rai met a 10-member farmers' delegation in Chandigarh. The meeting was coordinated by Punjab Chief

Minister Bhagwant Mann.

Mann was not involved in the second meeting (on Monday), where a delegation of 26 farmer leaders met the three ministers. The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and Congress have extended their support to the farmers. The BJP and Shiromani Akali Dal have been silent so far.

Even as the farmers and the ministers were talking, the Haryana government started sealing its borders with Punjab on February 8. As of Monday evening, a massive 12-layer barricade had been erected at the Shambhu Barrier on national highway 1 leading to Delhi, and multiple barricades had been set up at Fatehabad, Khanauri, Dabwali, etc. The Internet had been shut down in several districts.

Rajasthan sealed its borders with Punjab and Haryana on February 11, and imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 CrPC in Sri Ganganagar and Hanumangarh districts.

Haryana's security arrangements this time are very tight compared to 2020. On November 26, 2020, farmers from Punjab had broken through the barricades. Farmers riding hundreds of tractor-trolleys this time are said to be accompanied by cranes and other equipment to remove the barricades.

EXPLAINED CULTURE

HOW 'CHINESE' IS GOBI MANCHURIAN, AND WHY DID A GOAN FAIR BAN IT?

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
 PANAJI, FEBRUARY 12

STIRRING QUITE the pot, North Goa's Mapusa Municipal Council recently passed a unanimous resolution banning the sale of gobi manchurian at roadside stalls during the five-day annual Bodeshwar temple *zatra* (fair).

Why was gobi manchurian banned during the fair?

Councillor Tarak Arolkar, who drafted the resolution, said that the dish poses a serious health hazard as it is prepared under "unhygienic conditions in roadside stalls" during the fair. "Vendors add synthetic colours, Ajinomoto [monosodium glutamate or MSG], and poor-quality sauces...made from a powder which contains *reetha* [Indian soapberry, often used in shampoos and detergents]," he said.

Some believe, however, that behind the dish being targeted may lie prevalent anti-outsider sentiments in Goa.

"A lot of vendors selling gobi manchurian are not natives of Goa... there is often a sentiment that the culture of another place may come in and alter its character," Karan Manavalan, chef-owner of a restaurant in Goa, said. "There is no hygiene issue in the preparation of this dish," he added.

And what is gobi manchurian?

Gobi manchurian — fried cauliflower (*gobi*) florets tossed in a 'Manchurian' red chili sauce — is an Indian-Chinese staple. Vir Sanghvi, writer and food critic, referred to the dish as the vegetarian version of chicken manchurian, which restaurateur Nelson Wang claims to have invented. Till that time, the idea of *teekha* (spicy) Chinese was unknown to Indians. Chicken



Gobi manchurian is especially popular in South India. Getty images

manchurian made waves after reaching Delhi, where it then laid the foundations of the Punjabi-Chinese cuisine — basically spicy masala Chinese food in red sauce.

"Since it was so popular, people tried doing vegetarian variations. In Delhi, paneer manchurian was tried. But, in the South, gobi manchurian was the preferred alternative," Sanghvi said.

Thus, gobi manchurian probably came about sometime in the 1980s.

Is the dish 'Chinese'?

Like much of what Indians consume as 'Chinese' food, gobi manchurian is very much an Indian creation. "I don't know whether they eat *gobi* in Manchuria," food historian Sohail Hashmi said. "They eat a lot of meat, at times cooking vegetables with it, but that does not look or taste like what is served in India... Gobi manchurian can be described as 'Chinjabi' — a mix of Punjabi and Chinese," he said. He suggests that Indian 'Chinese' has drawn more from north and north-east Indian food, than actual Chinese.

Sanghvi said: "Chinese people, when they come here, are freaked out when they learn about this dish."

APURVA VISHWANATH
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

UNDERLINING THAT the oft-quoted phrase, 'bail is rule, jail is the exception', does not find any place in the stringent anti-terror Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), the Supreme Court on February 7 denied bail to Gurwinder Singh, an accused in an alleged "Khalistan module" case.

Singh was arrested when he was found hanging cloth banners with "Khalistan Jindabad" and "Khalistan Referendum 2020" on them in Punjab. He is now accused of being part of a larger conspiracy with Sikhs for Justice, a pro-Khalistan group banned by India.

While the bar for granting bail under the UAPA is higher than ordinary criminal law, there are some cases in which courts have granted bail.

How have courts interpreted Section 43D (5) of the UAPA? Why do courts deny bail in most cases despite some rulings that have raised the bar for the state to argue against the bail?

The law

Section 43D (5) of UAPA reads: "Notwithstanding anything contained in the Code, no person accused of an offence punishable under Chapters IV and VI of this Act shall, if in custody, be released on bail or on his own bond unless the Public Prosecutor has been given an opportunity of being heard on the application for such release.

Provided that such accused person shall not be released on bail or on his own bond if the Court, on a perusal of the case diary or the report made under section 173 of the Code is of the opinion that there are reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against such person is *prima facie* true."

The law essentially says that while relying only on the police version — the case diary and the police report — the accused must show to the court that it is unreasonable to believe that the accusations are *prima facie* true.

In shifting the onus on the accused, the cardinal principle of criminal law that a person is innocent until proven guilty is upended in the framework of the UAPA.



(From left) Student-activists Asif Iqbal Tanha, Devangana Kalita, and Natasha Narwal. They were granted bail in a UAPA case in 2021. Express photo by Gajendra Yadav

Narrowing the room for bail

In 2019, a two-judge Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar ruled in *Zahoor Ahmed Shah Watali v NIA* that for granting bail under UAPA, courts must not examine the evidence but only accept it at face value. The SC in this case was hearing an appeal against a Delhi HC ruling by a Bench headed by Justice S Muralidhar granting bail to a Kashmiri businessman.

"The Court is merely expected to record a finding on the basis of broad probabilities regarding the involvement of the accused in the commission of the stated offence or otherwise," the apex court had said.

Once charges are framed in the case, the court in *Watali* said, effectively an accused "may have to undertake an arduous task to satisfy the court that despite the framing of charge, the materials presented along with the chargesheet do not make out reasonable grounds for believing that the accusation against him is *prima facie* true" in order for the court to grant bail.

Legal scholar Gautam Bhatia wrote in his blog 'Indian Constitutional Law and Philosophy' that for the lawyer of an accused

in a UAPA case, arguing for bail would be "participating in a swimming competition with both arms tied behind their backs; they cannot deploy any part of the arsenal open to the defence team in a regular criminal trial, and they are only permitted to try and point out internal contradictions within the Prosecution's case, or show how even when you assume the Prosecution's case to be true, it does not meet the UAPA threshold." The *Watali* judgement "effectively tied a dumb-bell to the defence's legs in addition to its arms being tied behind its back, when it further restricted what materials the Court could consider in a UAPA bail hearing," he wrote.

Post-Watali rulings

The *Watali* judgement effectively closed the window, especially for trial courts, to look at the prosecution's case critically while granting bail. If the prosecution's case is flimsy, courts cannot question it, raising concerns about the liberty of an individual.

Courts have, however, granted bail in several cases, including in some high-profile ones.

The Delhi High Court in 2021 granted bail

to three student activists — Asif Iqbal Tanha, Devangana Kalita and Natasha Narwal — in the anti-CAA protests in North East Delhi. The HC applied the *Watali* precedent but placed the burden of making out a *prima facie* case on the police, instead of the court itself having to make out a case.

The court said that specific, individual charges must be made out by the prosecution and not broad speculations and inferences. The Court said it did not locate a "specific factual allegation" and said that it was "of the view that the mere use of alarming and hyperbolic verbiage in the subject charge-sheet will not convince us (the Court) otherwise." The SC, however, stayed the operation of this ruling as a precedent.

The Bombay High Court, in granting bail to Dalit rights activist Anand Telumbde, simply referred to the material before it and found no specific link to an overt act by Telumbde. "...prosecution needs to show the nexus and link of Appellant with the present crime or any specific overt act," the court said. The SC dismissed the state's appeal against this ruling.

In February 2021, in *Union of India vs KA Najeelb*, a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court headed by then CJI N V Ramana allowed bail under UAPA when the accused had undergone incarceration for a significant period. This, however, was carved out while acknowledging that bail under UAPA is an exception, but it needs to be balanced with the right to a speedy trial.

The Supreme Court in *Vernon Gonsalves v State of Maharashtra*, in July 2023, differed with the *Watali* ruling on how the "prima facie true" test would apply. "In our opinion, however, it would not satisfy the *prima facie* 'test' unless there is at least surface-analysis of probative value of the evidence, at the stage of examining the question of granting bail and the quality or probative value satisfies the Court of its worth," the Bench said.

However, since both the *Watali* and the *Gonsalves* ruling are by Benches of the same strength, it will have to be seen how future Benches apply the test. If there is substantial disagreement between different two-judge Benches, then a larger Bench will have to settle the law.

In the *Gurwinder Singh* case, the two-judge Bench relied on the *Watali* ruling entirely without considering the *Gonsalves* ruling.

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Death in Wayanad: What is behind Kerala's rising human-animal conflict

SHAJU PHILIP
 THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEBRUARY 12

WAYANAD IS on the boil after a radio-collared wild elephant chased a 47-year-old man and trampled him to death inside a gated property in a residential area. Local people have alleged inaction on the part of forest and revenue officials, and are demanding the capture of the elephant.

Kerala human-animal conflict

The incident underscores the continuing human-animal conflict in Kerala. Of the state's 14 districts, 13 have reported an increased incidence of wild animals — mainly elephants, tigers, bison, and wild boar — attacking humans. Wayanad, Kannur, Palakkad, and Idukki are the worst-hit.

Government data for 2022-23 recorded 8,873 wild animal attacks, 4,193 of which were by elephants, 1,524 by wild boar, 193 by tigers, 244 by leopards, and 32 by bison.

A total 98 deaths were reported in this period, 27 of which were in elephant attacks.

Animals, especially rampaging elephants, have also been responsible for huge agricultural losses. From 2017 to 2023, Kerala saw 20,957 incidents of crop losses due to raids by wild animals, in which 1,559 domestic animals, mainly cattle, were also killed.

Wayanad is worst-affected

In Wayanad, which boasts of a forest cover of 36.48 per cent, 41 people have been killed in elephant attacks, and seven others in attacks by tigers over the last decade.

The geographical location of the district plays a role in this. The forests of Wayanad are a part of a greater forested area comprising the Nagarhole Tiger Reserve, Bandipur National Park, and the BR Tiger Reserve in Karnataka, and the Mudumalai Tiger Reserve and Sathyamangalam forest in Tamil Nadu. Wild animals, especially elephants and tigers, often traverse state borders in search for food.

The elephant involved in the latest death in Wayanad had been captured and radio-collared by the Karnataka forest department in November 2023 before being released into the wild.

Fall in quality of Kerala forests

A 2018 study by Dehradun's Wildlife Institute of India and the Periyar Tiger Conservation Foundation in Kerala found two major drivers of human-animal conflict in the state.

First is the decline in the quality of forest habitats, mainly due to the cultivation of alien plants such as acacia, mangium, and eucalyptus in forest tracts for commercial purposes. With 30,000 hectares of forest land in Kerala being used for cultivation of these species, animals are deprived of their natural habitat and food sources. These water-guzzling species also strain the forest's natural water resources. Elephants are among the

worst-affected species due to this. Invasive species such as lantana, mikania and senna, planted by forest department over decades, have also hindered growth of natural vegetation in forests.

While the Kerala forest department banned the cultivation of acacia and eucalyptus in forest tracts in 2018, the process of regenerating natural forests, such that animals do not face shortage of food and water, will take time.

Agri practices

The study found that changing agricultural practices were also responsible for drawing animals, which do not find enough fodder in their habitats, out of forests.

In recent years, owing to poor returns and high wage costs, more and more farmland is being left unattended. This makes them ideal targets for wildlife looking to snack on bananas and pineapples, among the most cultivated crops in the region.

Also, the increase in wildlife attacks has pushed people to safer settlements far away from their farms. This further entices animals to raid estates neighbouring forests.

The crisis in Kerala's farm sector has also driven many people towards animal husbandry. In Wayanad especially, the dairy sector has emerged as a lifeline for villagers. But domesticated animals are prime targets for tigers and other predators. Older carnivores less capable of hunting in the wild especially seek to prey on domesticated animals.

A number of other human activities, including waste disposal near forested areas, fragmentation of animal habitats due to wanton construction, and increased human presence in and around animal habitats also contribute to the increasing conflict.

How Kerala is addressing issue

The state has several schemes meant to prevent animals from entering human settlements. These include construction of elephant-proof trenches, elephant-proof stone

walls, and solar powered electric fencing. In 2022-23, the state conducted maintenance of 158.4 km of elephant-proof trenches, and constructed 42.6 km of solar fencing and 237 m of compound walls. But these measures are not enough to address the crisis.

To keep animals in forests, Kerala has undertaken eco-restoration programmes. The state is also running a scheme to acquire land from farmers, to be then converted into forestland. So far, only 782 families have been relocated, at a compensation of Rs 95 crore, to convert their farms into forest land.

In areas which see the most human-animal conflict, 15 Rapid Response Teams have also been established — eight permanent, and seven temporary. Twenty-five new RRTs are to be established.

In 2022, Kerala requested the Centre for Rs 620 crore to tackle the crisis. The Centre, however, refused, and asked the state to find its own resources and devise innovative solutions to tackle the problem.

EXPLAINED WILDLIFE



TRINIDAD & TOBAGO

OIL SPILL SPARKS NATIONAL EMERGENCY

A large oil spill near the twin-island nation in eastern Caribbean has caused a "national emergency", coating numerous beaches on Tobago's southwest coast. Divers have not been able to contain the leak after a vessel overturned last week. - AP

TOP OF THE WORLD



Gerard Mestralle is well-connected in the energy industry. File

FRANCE

Energy group ex-chief named envoy for future Asia-EU corridor

FRENCH PRESIDENT Emmanuel Macron named the former head of gas utility Engie as its special envoy to a multinational rail and ports project linking the Middle East and South Asia tipped as an alternative to China's Belt and Road initiative. The India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor (IMEC) was launched on the sidelines of the G20 Summit in New Delhi in September last year and is part of Washington and Brussels's plan to counter China's flagship global infrastructure project. It aims to link West Asia by railway and connect it to India by port, helping the flow of energy and trade from the Gulf to Europe, US and European officials have said, by cutting shipping times and costs. REUTERS

PHILIPPINES

Landslide toll 68, window for survivors closing

THE DEATH toll from a landslide in the southern Philippines has climbed to 68 as officials said on Monday the window of finding more survivors is closing. Rescuers were looking for 51 more people in the wake of the February 6 landslide, which struck outside a gold mine in Maco town in Davao de Oro province and buried homes and vehicles that were supposed to ferry employees of the mining company. Disaster authorities plan to shift their focus from search and rescue to search and retrieval beginning Tuesday. REUTERS

USA

Texas church firing: 2 injured, attacker killed

A WOMAN was killed in Texas' Houston on Sunday after opening fire at a megachurch run by prominent evangelical Christian pastor Joel Osteen, the city's police chief said. Two people were shot during the shooting. Among them, a child aged about five is in critical condition while a man shot in the hip is stable. The shooter, a woman in her early 30s, was killed. The police believe the shooting was an isolated incident. PTI

CANADA

Indian-origin man wanted for father's murder

A 56-YEAR-OLD Indian-origin man was allegedly murdered by his son at their home in the Canadian province of Ontario, police said. Hamilton Police Sunday said Sukhraj Singh Cheema, 22, was wanted for the first-degree murder of his father Saturday night. Witnesses told officers that Cheema fled the residence after an altercation with the victim. Cheema is considered to be armed and dangerous, police said. PTI

OVER 12,300 MINORS KILLED IN GAZA STRIP SINCE OCT 7: MINISTRY

Israeli troops rescue 2 hostages in dramatic raid that killed 67 Gazans

Operation in Rafah threatens Israel's peace deal with Egypt

NAJIB JOBAIN, JOSEF FEDERMAN & SAMY MAGDY
RAFAH, GAZA STRIP, FEB 12

ISRAELI FORCES rescued two hostages early Monday, storming a heavily guarded apartment in Gaza Strip and extracting the captives under fire in a dramatic raid that was a small but symbolically significant success for Israel. Heavy airstrikes that provided cover for the operation killed at least 67 Palestinians, according to health officials in the beleaguered territory.

The operation, in Rafah, near the border with Egypt, unleashed another tragedy in a war that has killed 28,340 Palestinians in Gaza, displaced over 80% of the population and set off a massive humanitarian crisis.

Google pledges €25 mn to boost Europe AI skills

London: Google has pledged €25 million (\$26.98 million) to help people in Europe learn to use artificial intelligence (AI).

Announcing the funding on Monday, the tech giant said it had opened applications for social enterprises and nonprofits that could help reach those most likely to benefit from training.

The firm will also run a series of "growth academies" to support companies using AI to scale their companies and has expanded its free online AI training courses to 18 languages.

Last month, Google announced it would invest \$1 billion into building a data centre just outside of London, as it moves to meet growing demand for internet services in the region.

The data centre, located on a 13-hectare site bought by Google in 2020, will be located in the town of Waltham Cross, the Alphabet-owned company said in a statement. REUTERS



Fernando Simon Marman and Louis Hare, the two freed hostages, reunite with their families in Ramat Gan, Israel; (right) families of those killed in the rescue raid by Israel, in Rafah. Reuters

More than 12,300 Palestinian minors — children and teens — have been killed in the conflict, the Health Ministry in Hamas-run Gaza said Monday. About 8,400 women were also among those killed. That means minors make up about 43% of the dead.

The ministry, which does not distinguish between combatants and civilians, provided the

breakdown at the request of AP. Israel claims to have killed about 10,000 Hamas fighters.

In Hamas' cross-border raid on October 7, an estimated 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed, and militants took 250 people captive, according to Israeli authorities. Israel has made the freeing of over 100 remaining hostages — dozens

were freed during a cease-fire in November, it says — a top aim of its war, along with destroying Hamas' military and governing capabilities.

The Israeli army identified those rescued as Fernando Simon Marman, 60, and Louis Har, 70, abducted by Hamas militants from Kibbutz Nir Yitzhak on October 7. Netanyahu's office

said they also hold Argentinian citizenship. They are just the second and third hostages to be rescued safely; a female soldier was rescued in November.

The airstrikes that backed up the Israeli forces during the raid killed at least 67 people, including women and children, Ashraf al-Qidra, spokesman for the Health Ministry in Gaza, said.

Netanyahu has said sending ground troops into Rafah is essential to meeting Israel's war goals. On Sunday, the White House said President Joe Biden had warned Netanyahu that Israel should not conduct a military operation against Hamas in Rafah without a "credible and executable" plan to protect civilians.

More than half of Gaza's 2.3 million population is now crammed into Rafah, where hundreds of thousands live in sprawling tent camps and overcrowded UN shelters.

Biden and Netanyahu spoke after two Egyptian officials and a Western diplomat said Egypt threatened to suspend its peace treaty with Israel if troops are sent into Rafah. AP



INDONESIANS PROTEST POLL MEDDLING

Protesters hold yellow flags traditionally used to symbolise mourning during a rally demanding fair elections, in Jakarta on Monday. Students and activists have criticised President Joko Widodo over his lack of neutrality after he threw his support behind frontrunner Prabowo Subianto, who has picked Widodo's son Gibran Rakabuming Raka as his running mate. Voting will be held on Wednesday. AP

Nepal PM's 'War Day' snub to SC as 2 pro-monarchy groups unite

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE
KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 12

TROUBLE SEEMS to be on the horizon again in Nepal's political scene. In a snub to the judiciary, Maoist chief and Prime Minister Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' has announced Tuesday as 'People's War Day' to commemorate the day armed insurgency broke out against the monarchy 28 years ago.

Tuesday is also scheduled to witness a "massive rally" in Kathmandu by one of the two pro-monarchy, Hindu nationalist groups who have united to work on a common agenda, including holding Prachanda's government to account for "corruption".



Has also warned ally Deuba of a review in ties. File

Meanwhile, the PM, who's the chairman of the CPN-MC, has warned main ally Nepali Congress that it was time to re-evaluate their 13-month-long collaboration, saying it had not been quite rewarding for his party.

Although Prachanda did not specify a deadline, senior leaders of his party have been pressing him to explore a deal with the main Opposition party, the CPN (UML), after cross-voting allegations against Nepali Congress.

Last year, the Supreme Court quashed the government's decision to observe a holiday on 'People's War Day', saying some tasks of the peace process were yet to be completed.

Although he did not mention the word 'holiday', PM Prachanda, speaking at a party event, said the day will be observed "no matter what the Supreme Court may have said".

Meanwhile, Durga Prasad, who heads a movement to restore monarchy, and is scheduled to hold a "massive rally" in Kathmandu, has joined hands with Rajendra Lingden's Rastriya Prajatantra Party. "We are keen to work with any force that stands for a Hindu Kingdom (of Nepal)," Lingden told *The Indian Express*.

Trump's threat to abandon NATO allies draws scorn, from own party and rivals

RICHARD COWAN
WASHINGTON, FEBRUARY 12

SOME OF former President Donald Trump's fellow Republicans on Sunday lashed out at him for saying he would not want to protect NATO members from a future attack by Russia if those countries' contributions to the defence alliance were lagging.

"This is why I've been saying for a long time that he's unfit to be president of the US," former Republican presidential candidate Chris Christie told NBC.

During a political rally on Saturday in South Carolina, Trump complained about what he called "delinquent" payments



RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

by some NATO countries and re-counted what he said was a past conversation with the head of "a big country" about an attack by Russia on such countries.

"No, I would not protect you. In fact I would encourage them (Russia) to do whatever the hell they want. You gotta pay," Trump said he told the unnamed

EXPLAINED Short of target

THE FAILURE of many of NATO's 31 members to meet a defence spending target of at least 2% of gross domestic product (GDP) has long been a source of tension with the United States. NATO estimates have shown that only 11 members are spending at the target level.

leader.

The remarks prompted rebukes from the White House,

government. Meanwhile, sources said several open and behind-the-scenes meetings have been held between the leaders of PML-N and PPP and other parties.

"The main hurdle is who will lead the government as both parties are pushing forward their candidates but some sort of middle ground may emerge," according to a PMLN leader.

An independent source said a new formula for dividing the five-year tenure between the two parties was being discussed and could be acceptable to both. PTI

Rejected ballots more than win margin in 24 seats

Islamabad: The number of rejected ballots was greater than the margin of victory in at least 24 constituencies, according to an interesting statistical nugget from Pakistan's recent polls.

The difference potentially opens doors for legal battles as several losing candidates have flooded the courts with petitions to review the results.

According to a report in Dawn, 22 constituencies with a greater number of rejected votes than the margin of victory fell in Punjab, with one each in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh province. PTI

OVER A DOZEN PEOPLE INJURED IN WEEKEND BRAWLS BETWEEN ULTRA-ROYALISTS AND MONARCHY-REFORM ACTIVISTS

In row over royal carcade, Thai PM signals a detour: Safe spaces

REUTERS
BANGKOK, FEBRUARY 12

THAILAND'S PRIME minister has called for dialogue in "safe spaces" over the once-taboo issue of royal family motorcades, after more than a dozen people were injured in weekend brawls between ultra-royalists and monarchy-reform activists.

Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin's comments on Monday came amid a public row triggered earlier this month when monarchy-reform activist Tantawan "Tawan" Tuatulanon, 22, did a live broadcast on her

Facebook account showing her arguing with police officers who were blocking cars for a passing royal motorcade.

The monarchy, which many Thais consider sacrosanct, is officially above politics and constitutionally enshrined to be held in "revered worship". Insulting the monarchy carries penalties of up to 15 years in prison under Article 112 of Thailand's criminal code.

Several local media reported that the car Tantawan was riding in, prior to the video, was allegedly honking and trying to overtake the motorcade carrying Princess Sirindhorn, the sister of King Maha Vajiralongkorn,



A royal motorcade drives past a group of anti-government protesters in Bangkok. Reuters file

on an expressway in Bangkok. The police are considering taking legal action against Tantawan and fellow activist over the Feb. 4 motorcade incident, Police Chief Torsak Sukvimol told reporters on Monday.

Tantawan, who already is facing royal insult charges for previously discussing royal motorcade issue, apologising for driving recklessly on Feb. 4 in a Facebook post on Monday, and denied that her car was trying to harass or block the royal convoy.

On Saturday, a group of ultra-royalists angered by the motorcade incident clashed with Tantawan and her fellow activists

at a skytrain station as they were planning to hold a press conference in front of a shopping mall in central Bangkok.

Prime Minister Srettha condemned the violence and urged the activists to seek to discuss the issue in "safe spaces".

"We have parliament, we have academics, we should discuss the issue in appropriate venues," he said. "Not in venues that are confrontational, like malls or public places, those are inappropriate."

Srettha also stressed that the government must prioritise the safety of the royal family and said he had discussed the matter

with the police chief and other security officials.

Just a few years ago, even discussing royal motorcades in public would have been almost unthinkable.

A youth-led political movement that emerged in 2020 and broke traditional taboos by calling for the reform of the powerful monarchy has previously criticised the blocking of traffic for royal motorcades.

The Thai government in late 2020 said the king was concerned and the police had adjusted security protocols to reduce disruption for the public. REUTERS

ONGC arm looks to pay in roubles for Sakhalin 1 project stake

REUTERS NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

INDIAN Oil company ONGC Videsh Ltd (OVL) is in talks with the Russian government to pay its contribution to the Sakhalin-1 abandonment fund in roubles, a company official said on Monday.

The contribution is a requirement for OVL to take a 20% stake in the project, which is operated by a new Russian entity.

"We are at an advance stage of trying to pursue Rosneft to accept the abandonment obligation of OVL for getting back its 20% share (in the Sakhalin 1 project)," Vinod Hallan, a finance executive at OVL, told an analysts' call.

An abandonment fund is used for decommissioning activities to ensure that wells are properly shut in and that the process would not affect the environment in future.

OVL, the overseas investment arm of India's top explorer Oil and Natural Gas Corp, and other state-run Indian companies have not been able to repatriate their dividends for stakes in producing Russian energy assets due to sanctions.

The overall pending dividends of Indian companies

OVL is looking at using pending dividend to pay for its share in the abandonment fund

amount to around \$500-\$600 million.

OVL is looking at using the pending dividend to pay for its share in the abandonment fund in roubles, Hallan said on ONGC's post-earnings call for analysts.

"Our application with Russian authorities is expected to be heard very soon and we hope to close the transaction of meeting the abandonment obligation," he said.

A raft of Western sanctions have made it difficult to transfer funds to Russia in dollars and payment in roubles require approval from the Russian authorities.

Last April ONGC got back its \$600 million contribution made to the previous abandonment fund for Sakhalin 1 from the foreign party administrator after ExxonMobil's exit from the project, ONGC said in May last year.

The Russian government has agreed to grant OVL a 20% stake in the new project operator Sakhalin-1 LLC provided it makes the contribution to the new accumulated fund.

MEETING OF RESERVE BANK'S CENTRAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

No review of action against Paytm Payments Bank: Das

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman with RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das during a meeting with the RBI's Central Board of Directors in New Delhi on Monday. PTI

THERE WILL not be any review of the action against Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) as the central bank takes any decision after much "consideration and deliberation", Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday. Speaking after a meeting of the Central Board of Directors of the RBI, Das said some FAQs (frequently asked questions) for Paytm customers would come out this week.

When asked if there would be an extension for the deadline for customers, Das said: "Wait for the FAQs".

"If you are expecting a review of the decision, let me say very clearly say there is no review of the decision. The FAQs which we are proposing will deal with customer issues with FASTag holders, wallet users, etc. FAQs will address issues faced by the customers and the depositors. There is nothing on the table on the review of the decision (against PPBL)," he told reporters after the 606th meeting of the Central

Board of Directors of RBI, which was addressed by Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

"When a decision is taken, it is taken after much consideration and deliberation. Decisions are not taken in a casual manner. They are taken in a serious manner. When we make a decision we examine all pros and cons. We have given one month's time

so that there are no difficulties for customers," Das said.

For the overall fintech sector, he said, the RBI is not against any fintech but its prime objective is to protect the interest of customers and depositors. "RBI promotes and will continue to promote fintech. But customer interest and financial stability is of prime importance," he said.

Lower borrowings to boost growth, ease inflation: RBI Gov

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

LOWER GOVERNMENT borrowings than street estimates will ensure more space for resources to be available in the banking system to help private sector investments and stabilise inflation, Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Monday.

He also said the RBI is confident of handling the increased foreign inflows into Indian government debt once they are listed on JP Morgan's bond index.

"This year's borrowing is lower than what initially the markets had expected. Lower quantum of borrowing means... it would ensure that much more resources will be available in the banking system to meet the requirements of the private sector," Das said.

Lower government borrowing is a growth-inducing measure as more credit will be available for the private sector to make their investments, he said, adding that "lower quantum will help sort of stabilise inflation". "How much (it will) stabilise I

would not like to quantify. It should help in moderating inflation," he said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in her interim Budget for 2024-25 has proposed to borrow Rs 14.13 lakh crore by issuing dated securities. This is lower than last year's gross borrowing estimate of Rs 15.43 lakh crore, which was the highest ever. The lower borrowing estimate for 2024-25 comes in the backdrop of rising tax revenues and the government's aim to stick to its fiscal consolidation roadmap.

Stating that the quantum of borrowing is important for monetary policy, Das said, "While making monetary policy it is one of the factors which is taken into consideration. I would say it is growth inducing, and it helps in moderating inflation levels."

On the debt-to-GDP ratio, Das said it had touched a high of 88 per cent during the pandemic and has been moderating since then. With the government further lowering its fiscal deficit target to 5.1 per cent of the GDP for the next financial year and 4.5 per cent in the subsequent year, the debt-to-GDP ratio should further come down.

Unemployment rate declines to 6.5% in Oct-Dec

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12

INDIA'S UNEMPLOYMENT rate in urban areas for persons aged 15 years and above decreased during October-December 2023 to 6.5 per cent from 7.2 per cent in the year-ago period, as per government data released on Monday.

"For males, unemployment rate decreased from 6.5 per cent in October-December 2022 to 5.8 per cent in October-December 2023, while for female UR decreased from 9.6 per cent in October-December 2022 to 8.6 per cent in October-December 2023," the Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) quarterly bulletin stated.

PLFS further said the Worker Population Ratio (WPR) for persons aged 15 years and above in urban areas increased from 44.7 per cent in October-December 2022 to 46.6 per cent in October-December 2023.

For male, it increased from 68.6 per cent to 69.8 per cent during this period and for female, it increased from 20.2 per cent to 22.9 per cent during this period.

Labour Force Participation Rate in urban areas increased from 48.2 per cent in October-December 2022 to 49.9 per cent during the period under review for persons aged 15 years and above.

SpiceJet may lay off 1,000 employees to reduce costs

ROHIT VAID NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12



SpiceJet is eyeing ₹100 cr annual savings through the measure

FINANCIALLY TROUBLED low-cost carrier SpiceJet plans to bring down its annual cost by around ₹100 crore, mainly by laying off employees. Though the airline did not reveal the number of employees who will be asked to leave as part of manpower realisation programme, sources said that the number could be around 1,000. SpiceJet currently has around 9,000 employees.

"As part of our turnaround and cost-cutting strategy, following the recent fund infusion, SpiceJet has initiated several measures, including manpower rationalisation, aimed at achieving profitable growth and positioning ourselves to capitalise on the opportunities in the Indian aviation industry. Through this initiative alone, we anticipate an initial saving of up to ₹100 crore," a company spokesperson said on Monday.

Apart from facing financial headwinds, SpiceJet is also facing several legal battles. The company feels that it has excess manpower compared to the number of planes in service. A final decision on the quantum of layoffs is expected this week, sources said.

The layoffs are expected across departments and the final list is being prepared, sources said. People from the management and consultancy are working on chalking out the contours of the layoff plan, and all the departments have been asked to give their inputs, sources added.

Sources also said that SpiceJet has stopped operations on certain RCS (regional connectivity scheme) routes and at those stations, there is excess manpower, especially staff with lower salaries.

Currently, SpiceJet has a fleet of little over 30 aircraft apart from 10 planes that are on wet lease. During a meeting with the airline's senior officials last month, SpiceJet chairman and managing director Ajay Singh emphasised the importance of

judicious spending and that he will personally oversee all major expenditures.

The carrier will prioritise fleet upgrades, enhance on-time performance and cost-cutting measures will be implemented to streamline operations, according to an internal note last month. SpiceJet is also in the process of raising funds from various investors.

On January 26, the carrier said it has received ₹744 crore as the first tranche of the total ₹2,250 crore proposed to be raised through the issuance of securities on a preferential basis.

The airline has also availed funds worth around ₹1,000 crore under the government's emergency credit line guarantee scheme and Singh has committed to infusing ₹500 crore. FE

UPI launched in SL, Mauritius; uniting partners, says PM Modi

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 12



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Sri Lanka President Ranil Wickremesinghe and Mauritius PM Pravinj Jugnauth during the virtual launch of UPI in their countries. PTI

INDIA HAS launched its unified payments interface (UPI) system in Sri Lanka and Mauritius. RuPay card services were also introduced in Mauritius as part of this strategic initiative.

"For the three friends (India, Mauritius and Sri Lanka) in the Indian Ocean region, this is an important day," Prime Minister Narendra Modi said during the launch. "We are connecting our historical ties digitally. With fintech connectivity, not just cross border payments, but cross border connectivity will also strengthen. India's upi is playing a new role - uniting partners with India," he added.

The launch will enable availability of UPI settlement services for Indian nationals travelling to Sri Lanka and Mauritius as well as for Mauritian nationals travelling to India. The extension of RuPay card services in Mauritius will enable Mauritian banks to issue cards based on RuPay mechanism

in Mauritius and facilitate usage of RuPay Card for settlements both in India and Mauritius.

The virtual ceremony witnessed the participation of Mauritius Prime Minister Pravinj Jugnauth, Sri Lanka's President Ranil Wickremesinghe, India's External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and governors of the central banks of the countries.

"Both countries will benefit from UPI as it will increase the speed of digital transformation

and will benefit tourism in our countries. Indian tourists will also prioritise destinations which accept UPI. People from Mauritius coming to India will have to buy fewer hard currencies and we can transact in our own currencies in real-time at a lower cost. Eventually we can also move towards peer-to-peer (P2P) transactions as well," the PM said.

RCap administrator opposes ₹118 cr payout to Reliance General Insurance officials

GEORGE MATHEW MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 12

RELIANCE CAPITAL'S (RCap) central bank-appointed administrator has opposed the decision of Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd (RGIC) board to make a one-time special payment of ₹118.41 crore to key managerial staff and directors of RGIC.

RGIC is a subsidiary of RCap - part of the Anil Ambani Reliance group - which is going through the insolvency process.

"It has now come to our attention that the financial statements of RGIC for the quarter ended December 31, 2023, specifically note 8 of the notes to accounts, state that a provision has been made for an estimated amount of ₹118.41 crore, for RGIC to meet its obligations in relation to the one-time special payments proposed to be paid out to the management team of RGIC," RCap administrator Y Nageswar Rao said in a letter to RGIC.

"This action of yours in provisioning for the same runs contrary to your representations on the solvency ratio post infusion

of the additional funds," the administrator said. "The provisioning in its financial statements is also in express violation to our various email communications with latest being January 12, 2024, issued by RCL to RGIC, wherein we had requested you to refrain from undertaking certain specified actions, inter alia, the one-time payment proposed to be paid to any employee or key managerial person, without the prior written approval of the Administrator," it said.

"In any case, we have not granted any approval under section 197 of the Companies Act 2013 for the payment of such remuneration to the key managerial personnel," the note said.

When contacted, the administrator confirmed his opposition to the payout. "They (RGIC) are yet to reply," he said. RGIC Executive Director and Chief Executive Rakesh Jain and the company's spokesperson did not respond to a request for comment on the issue.

RCap, with the approval of the committee of creditors (CoC) recently made an infusion of ₹200 crore into the company for

strengthening its solvency ratio, as prescribed by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI). The one-time special payment to the directors was approved by the RGIC board prior to the commencement of Reliance Capital's insolvency process.

RCap had pledged its entire equity holding in RGIC in favour of IDBI Trusteeship Services against dues guaranteed by the company. The trustee, on November 19, 2019, invoked the pledge and presently holds the shares of RGIC in their custody.

IRDAI said the shares are being held by the trustee in that capacity and have not been transferred. In 2020, the Securities Appellate Tribunal held that the trustee is holding shares as a trustee/ custodian and will not exercise any control over RGIC and cannot exercise any voting rights on shares of RGIC. Accordingly, RGIC continues to be a subsidiary of RCap.

In 2021, the Reserve Bank of India superseded the board of RCap in the wake of defaults by the company in meeting its payment obligations.

KTM maker, Bajaj to rejig partnership

SWARAJ BAGGONKAR MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 12

THE INDO-AUSTRIAN alliance of Bajaj Auto and Pierer Mobility (formerly known as KTM) will restructure their operations in India. This will be done in tandem with the expansion of its product portfolio and positioning India as the exclusive manufacturer of entry KTM bikes, globally.

Stefan Pierer, CEO, Pierer Mobility said, "Our strong alliance with Bajaj has lasted for 17 years. For the upcoming year, we have agreed to separate the distribution part of the organisation for KTM in India."

Pierer, who was speaking at a post-earnings call, added that the new set up will push new kinds of products into the country including off-road bikes (for example, dirt bikes), which are presently not sold in India.

"We are going to appoint an MD (managing director) with experience (and) with knowledge of the off-road segment because the Indian market is the fastest growing in the premium segment," Pierer added.

India is the third biggest market for KTM in the world after Europe and North America. FE

MALABAR CEMENTS LIMITED (A Government of Kerala Undertaking) Tender Notice for collection and transportation of Bulk Cement from Malabar Cements Limited, Walayar to various locations in Kerala through Bulker.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) CORRIGENDUM FOR PURCHASE OF POWER UNDER MEDIUM TERM PROCUREMENT AGAINST TENDER SPECIFICATION No. 10/CE(COMM)/UPCL-10/MTPP/2023

Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike Executive Engineer (Road Infrastructure-K-100 Division), 1st Floor, Room No. 106 Annexe Building-3, N. R. Square, Bangalore-560002. CANCELLATION NOTIFICATION

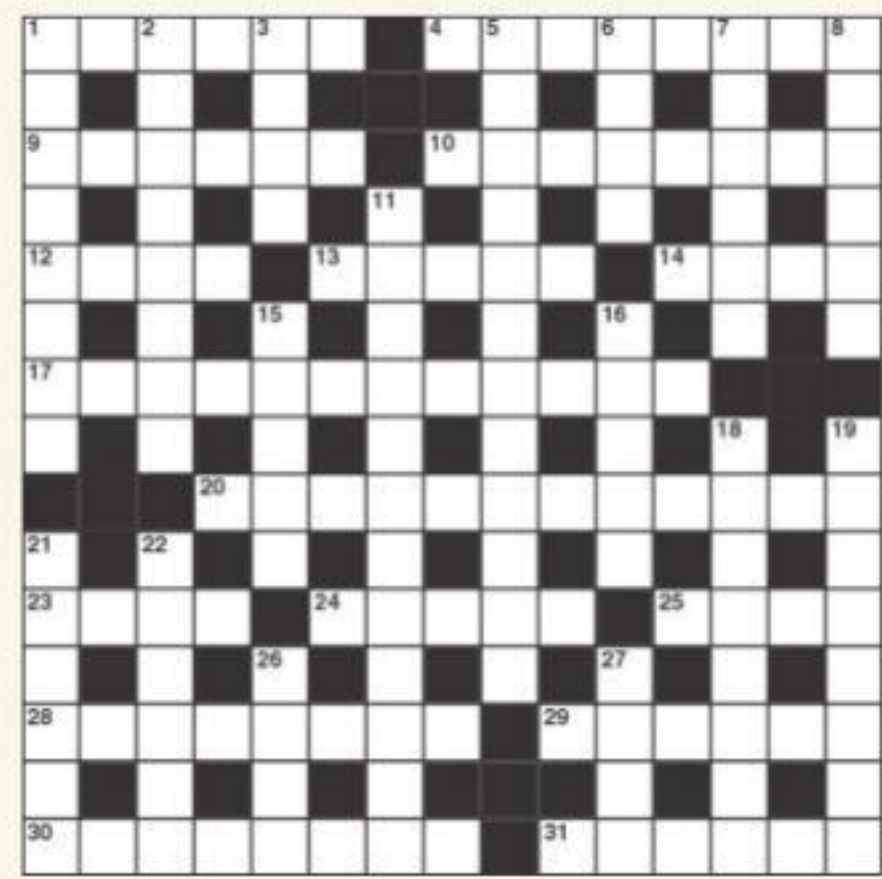
KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice Tender No. SW/2024/01/01/2024-24 Jal Jeevan Mission-Malappuram Dist.- Pipe line works and provision of drinking water connection, road rehabilitation, pumping mines and related works in Peruvallur Panchayath

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking (OF THE BRIHANMUMBAI MAHANAGARPALIKA) TENDER NOTICE E-tender is invited for the supply of following item. (1) 78107 - Cable Protecting System (F&S) and Conduit Barrier System (F&S). (Corrigendum).

GUJARAT METRO RAIL CORPORATION (GMRC) LIMITED (SPV of Govt. of India and Govt. of Gujarat) Block No. 1, First Floor, Karmayogi Bhavan, Sector 10/A, Gandhinagar, 382010, Gujarat. (CIN): U60200GJ2010SG0059407

Bids are invited from reputed and experienced Contractor for the following tender: Tender Name Construction of Multi Modal Integration Works for (i) Line-1 from Motera to Mahatma Mandir - 20 Stations & (ii) Line-2 from GNLU To Gift City - 2 Stations In Connection with Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project, Phase-II And Ahmedabad Metro Rail Project Phase I - 2 Stations

CROSSWORD 5286



ACROSS
 1 Share out the lot (6)
 4 Explain a period on strike (5,3)
 9 Wisely arch about how old one is (6)
 10 Shanties add spice to Gilbert and Sullivan (3,5)
 12 A game lot of typists perhaps (4)
 13 Swiss spa duplicated in Germany (5)
 14 Sicilian hothead (4)
 17 Of the professional section relatively speaking? (2,10)
 20 A relation in retirement (7,5)
 23 Learning a new role (4)
 24 Inclined to sound fast (5)
 25 Their quarters are combed for food (4)
 28 Risk about a grand (8)
 29 A motorist's club (6)
 30 Possibly had a nice estate in South America (8)
 31 He has the skills needed to make a suit (6)

DOWN
 1 Salaried position with stamps provided (4-4)
 2 Gives a party a new constitution perhaps (8)
 3 They may be found in a creel squirming (4)
 5 Now it includes men in anticipation of trouble (12)
 6 Let's make a change just in case (4)
 7 Too many flourishes from a tenor? (6)
 8 Makes you French look Italian (6)
 11 Rule not enforced in the main? (3,2,3,4)
 15 Runner defeated in close race (5)
 16 Write a few words about us in combat (5)
 18 Rome collapsed in excess, may I add (8)
 19 These are irritating for sightseers naturally (8)
 21 Be mischievous, switch the file and remain quiet (6)
 22 Subject about right for a mundane circle (6)
 26 Able to go where one likes for nothing (4)
 27 From the start regret being honest (4)
 22 Inspired piece of music (3)

Solutions Crossword 5285 Across: 1 March, 4 Dusters, 8 Ski, 9 Totem pole, 10 Absolve, 11 Tower, 13 Exacts, 15 Amarat, 18 Crepe, 19 Feather, 21 Beardless, 23 Och, 24 Screech, 25 Tides Down: 1 Message, 2 Reinstated, 3 Hotel, 4 Duties, 5 Symptom, 6 Ego, 7 Spear, 12 Watchword, 14 Treatle, 16 Larches, 17 Afresh, 18 Cubes, 20 Asset, 22 Air

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.

Know most of the rooms of thy _____ before thou goest over the threshold thereof - Thomas Fuller (6,7)

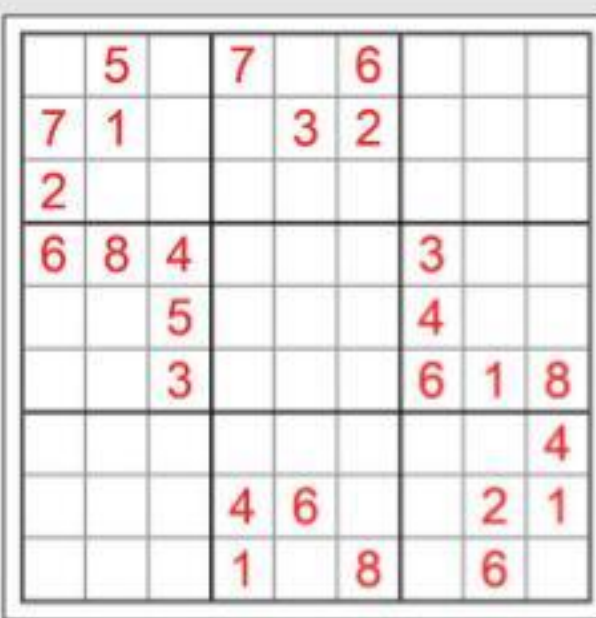
TAEOR **IOSNNU**

TWITS **RSUCVY**

SOLUTION: ORATE, TWIST, UNSURE, CURRY, TWISTED, THRESHOLD

SUDOKU 5471

Difficulty Level 3s Instructions To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.



Difficulty Level 1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5470



घेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण
 प्लाट संख्या-01, सेक्टर-नौलेज पार्क-4, घेटर नौएडा सिटी, गौचम बुद्ध नगर (03030)

सार्वजनिक सूचना

घेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण के अंतर्गत M/s Rudra Buildwell Infra Pvt. Ltd. मूखण्ड संख्या-GH-05C, सेक्टर-16, घेटर नौएडा को दिनांक 31.12.2015 को मानचित्र स्वीकृति प्रदान की गयी थी। तदोपरान्त विकासकर्ता द्वारा (Group Housing project) का पुनरीक्षित मानचित्र हेतु दिनांक 28.03.2023 के माध्यम से आवेदन किया गया है, जिसका आवेदन संख्या-87268 है। तत्कम में U.P. Apartment Act-2010, Amendment 2016 in Section-4 Sub Section-B के अन्तर्गत परियोजना के आवंटियों से आपत्ति/सुझाव आमंत्रित किये जाने का प्रबन्धान है। इस संबंध में विकासकर्ता द्वारा प्रस्तुत स्वीकृति मानचित्र एवं प्रबन्धान पर UP Apartment Act-2010 परीक्षण किस्ती नौ कार्यदिवस में सुबह 9:30 से सांय 6:00 बजे के मध्य नियोजन विभाग में तथा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट पर किया जा सकता है।

अतः उपरोक्त परियोजना के आवंटियों द्वारा Sanction Map एवं Declarations as per U.P. Apartment Act - 2010 के संबंध में सूचना प्रकाशित करने के 30 दिनों के अन्दर आपत्तियां/सुझाव आमंत्रित की जाती है। उपरोक्त के निहितार्थ अपनी आपत्तियां लिखित रूप में अपने आवेदन पत्र, नाम, पता एवं दूरभाष नम्बर के साथ कार्यालय समय व कार्यदिवस में घेटर नौएडा प्राधिकरण के मुख्य प्रशासनिक कार्यालय, मूखण्ड संख्या-1, नौलेज पार्क-4, घेटर नौएडा में स्थित महाप्रबन्धक (नियोजन/वास्तु) को सम्बोधित करते हुए सूचना प्रकाशित होने के 30 दिवसों के अन्दर जमा करायी जा सकती है।

महाप्रबन्धक (नियो/वास्तु)
 घेटर नौएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male has been found dead at Safdarjung Hospital on dated 03.01.2024. In this regard a DD No. 60-A Dated 03.01.2024 has been lodged at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under:

Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 50 Years, **Height:** 5'5" Feet, **Complexion:** Shallow, **ID Mark:** Multiple Mole on right face and forearm, **Wearing:** Unknown.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
 P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi.
 Ph: 8750938971

DP/1697/SW/2024

NORTHERN RAILWAY
Tender Notice
 Invitation of tender through E-tendering (e-Procurement Systems)

NIT No. : 6-SEFile-166192RT2Tender

Name of Work and its location : Tender for "Works contract for Provision for supply, fixing & commissioning of Aluminum partitions work for providing chambers inside office space in main shop, Shot Blast shop, paint shop, body repair shop, wheel shop, bogie shop, power car shop and miscellaneous shop at RCNK Sonipat".

Approx. Cost of work : Rs. 47,38,234.23/- including GST (Rs. Forty-Seven Lakh Thirty-Eight Thousand Two-Hundred Thirty-Four and Paisa Twenty-Three Only)

Earnest Money : Rs. 94,800/-

Completion period of work : 03 months of date of execution of work.

Cost of Tender document on cash/by post : NIL

Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender : Upto 11:00 hrs. on 04.03.2024 Opening of Tender at 11:00 hrs.

Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen : Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

No. : 6-SEFile-166192RT2Tender Dated: 10.02.2024 462/2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice

Sr. DEE-TRS-GZB acting for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender against Tender No. 230-TRS-GZB-2023-24-31 The details are as under:

Name of the Work	Disconnection, Removal and Fitting of Auxiliary Motors in 3-phase locomotives for a period of 24 months at Electric Loco Shed, Ghaziabad.
Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 19,67,468.27
Earnest Money to be Deposit	Rs. 39,300.00
Last Date & Time of Submission of tender bid of tender	04.03.2024 (11:00 Hrs.)
Date & Time of opening of tender document	04.03.2024 (After 11:00 Hrs.)
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in

The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for participating in the e-tender system.

*For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.
 *No manual offers are acceptable.
 *Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.
 *No. 230-TRS-GZB-2023-24-31 Dated : 10.02.2024 458/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER
 RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, KENDRAPARA- JAJPUR.
 AT-CHANDIKHOL, PO-SUNGUDA, JAJPUR -754276,
 Tel No. 0671-244488, Email-serw kpd@yahoo.com

Letter No.-1017 Date:- 09/02/24

1st Corrigendum Notice

1st Corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online RCK-03/24 invited this office Letter No.-964, Dt. 05.02.2024. The changes as detailed below are hereby made in the above NIT. :-

1 Clause no-06 of NIT modified below:-

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of tender online for bidding		Last Date & Time of seeking Tender Clarification		Date & Time of opening of tender	
		Previously fixed on	Presently Modified on	Previously fixed on	Presently Modified on	Previously fixed on	Presently Modified on
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara- Jajpur	Tender Online RCK- 03/24	From- 13.02.2024 At 11.30 A.M To 04.03.2024 Up to 05.00 P.M	From- 13.02.2024 At 11.30 A.M To 27.02.2024 Up to 05.00 P.M	04.03.2024 up to 02.00 P.M	06.03.2024 up to 11.30 A.M	28.02.2024 at 11.30 A.M	Will be intimated later

All other conditions of NIT remain unaltered.

Sd/-
 Chief Construction Engineer
 Rural Works Circle, Kendrapara-Jajpur

OIPR-25129/11/0062/2324

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON
(See Section 82 Cr.PC)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Rekha, W/o Naresh R/o A-1751/52, Second Floor, Jahangirpuri Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No.973/23 Dt. 30.09.2023 u/s 376/506/120B/323 IPC, P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Rekha** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Rekha** has absconded (or is concealing herself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Rekha** of **FIR No.973/23 Dt. 30.09.2023 u/s 376/506/120B/323 IPC, P.S. Mahendra Park, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **20.03.2024**.

By Order,
 Niharika Kumar Sharma
 Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate North
 Room No.117, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/1555/NW/2024

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male has been found dead at forest land, Near High Tension Line, Rjokari Pahari, Rajokari Village, New Delhi 27.01.2024. In this regard a DD No.55A Dated 27.01.2024 has been lodged at P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi. The description of the dead body is given as under: **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** Around 50 **Decomposed Body** **Years, Height:** 5'7" Feet, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Thin, **ID Mark:** Face of deceased has been decomposed **Wearing:** Blue Colour Sweater, White Colour Socks.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any information about this dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
 P.S. Vasant Kunj South, New Delhi
 Ph: 011-26139361, 7065036225

DP/1671/SW/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED
SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Vinod Kumar S/O Onkar Sharma R/o A-258, Nehru Camp Vinodpuri New Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR No. 211/2009 Dated 18.08.2009, U/s 186/353/332 IPC, PS C.R. Park, New Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Vinod Kumar** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Vinod Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Vinod Kumar** of **Case FIR No. 211/2009 Dated 18.08.2009, U/s 186/353/332 IPC, PS C.R. Park, New Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **13.03.2024**.

By Order
 Ms. Devanshi Janmeja
 Metropolitan Magistrate-04,
 South East District, Court No.10,
 Saket Court Complex, New Delhi,

DP/1710/SD/2024

ODISHA RENEWABLE ENERGY DEVELOPMENT AGENCY
 S-3/59, MANCHESWAR INDUSTRIAL ESTATE, BHUBANESWAR-751010
 Phone: (0674) 2588260,2586398,2580554, Fax:2586368
 Website: www.oredaorissa.com, Email: ceoreda@oredaorissa.com

CAD-4121 e-Tender Call Notice Date: 09.02.2024

Tender is invited through e-tender portal from eligible bidders Request for Proposal (RFP) for design, engineering, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 24 Solar Water Kiosks and 22 Solar Trees with 88 Street Lights along with Comprehensive Maintenance for Five (5) years at Bhubaneswar, Odisha.

The Schedule of Events is given below:

Sl No.	Event	Schedule
1.	Date of publication of NIT on E-procurement Website and OREDA Website	09.02.2024
2.	Due date of submission of pre-bid queries as per the OREDA format	13.02.2024, Time: 5:30 PM
3.	Date and time of Pre-bid Meeting through virtual mode [meet.google.com/axd-nbpe-ker]	15.02.2024, Time: 03:30 PM
4.	Due date and time for submission of online copies of Technical Bid and Price Bid	29.02.2024, Time: 5:30 PM
5.	Due date and time for submission of hard copies of Technical Bid for select Bid Forms only	04.03.2024, Time: 5:30 PM
6.	Due date and time for the opening of Technical Bid for both online copies and hard copies, except Price Bid	06.03.2024, Time: 4:00 PM
7.	Due date and time for the opening of online Price Bid, applicable only for the Bidders whose Technical Bids shall be responsive	To be intimated later

The RFP providing requisite details about the bidding process shall be made available on the E-procurement Website (<http://www.tenderwizard.com/OREDA>) on or before the due date mentioned above. The RFP will also be made available on the OREDA Website (<http://www.oredaodisha.com>) for viewing purposes only. The Bidders may write to OREDA at the email id- ceoreda@oredaorissa.com, for any additional information, if needed.

Note: OREDA reserves all the right to annul the bidding process and invite fresh Bids without liability or obligation for such invitation and without assigning any reasons.

Sd/-
 Chief Executive

OIPR-04065/11/0028/2324

NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT) NO: 17/EE/Divn.III/PWD(R&B)/2023-24
Tripura PWD Form - 6

The Executive Engineer, Agartala Division No.III, PWD(R&B), Agartala, West Tripura on behalf of the "Governor of Tripura", invites online percentage rate e-tender in Two bids system from the eligible Central & State public sector undertaking enterprise and eligible Contractors/Firms/ Private Ltd. Firm /Agencies of **Appropriate Class** registered with PWD/TTAAD/CE/CPWD/Railway/Gov't Organization of other State & Central for the following work:-

SL NO	DNIT NO. OF THE WORK	ESTIMATED COST	EARNEST MONEY	TIME FOR COMPLETION	LAST DATE AND TIME FOR DOCUMENT DOWNLOADING AND	TIME AND DATE OF OPENING OF BID
1	CE(Buildings)/PWD/D NIT/ACE/Project Unit /60 /2023-24	₹ 48,65,85,213.00	₹ 97,31,704.00 (Offline mode)	900 (Nine hundred) Days	Up to 3.00 P.M. on 12.03.2024	At 4.00 P.M. on 12.03.2024

Notes:-

- All the above-mentioned online activities should be done in the e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>
- All the above-mentioned date & time are as per server clock date & time of e-procurement portal <https://tripuratenders.gov.in>

For and on behalf of the Governor of Tripura.
 Sd/-
 (Er. M. Debnath)
 Executive Engineer
 Agartala Division No.III, PWD(R&B)
 Agartala, West Tripura

ICAC/4511/24

OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
 E-mail ID: cebuidings_orissa@yahoo.co.in
 Tel. (0674)- 2391523

INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)
 File No-No-B-III-Sports-34/2023(Pt-II) No.- 5993 Dt. 8th Feb.2024

Invitation for Bids
Bid Identification No. C.E. (RD&QP)(B)-61/2023-24

- The Chief Engineer (RD&QP), Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of Works Deptt., Govt. of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the work "Supply, Installation, Testing and commissioning of 250KVA three phase DG set with AMP Panel, Armoured cable and 630 amp Main Panel and stadium lighting system (Stadium Mast & Flood Light) at Nehru Stadium, Bhadrak " amounting to Rs.2,06,17,856/- as detailed below"
- Nature of work** : Electrical Installation Work
- No. of work** : 01 No.
- Bid Cost** : ₹10,000/-
- Class of Contractor** : Contractor possessing valid MV / HT license from ELBO.
- Availability of Bid Documents in the website** : From dt. 13.02.2024 to 17:00 hours of dt. 27.02.2024.
- Date of Opening of bid** : Dt. 28.02.2024 at 11:00 AM.
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website: <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website. The authority reserves the right to reject any or all bids without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
 Chief Engineer, (RD&QP)
 Odisha, Bhubaneswar

OIPR- 34117/11/0108/2324

21 SPORT

HOSTS IVORY COAST WIN AFCON
Abidjan: Sébastien Haller scored late to lead host nation Ivory Coast to a remarkable Africa Cup of Nations title with a 2-1 victory over Nigeria in the final on Sunday. **AP**

BRIEFLY

Hockey: India women suffer 1-2 loss to China

Rourkela: The Indian women hockey team's disappointing run in the FIH Pro League continued as it lost 1-2 to China here on Monday. India took the lead in the seventh minute through Sangita Kumari's field goal but China equalised in the 14th minute through Gu Bingfeng (penalty corner), who then scored his second goal of the match in the 53rd minute through a penalty stroke. India had lost to China by the same 1-2 margin in their earlier match on February 3 in Bhubaneswar. India earned five penalty corners in the match -- as against four by China -- but as is their wont, they could not convert a single one. **PTI**

Deshwal takes Jaipur to PKL semis

Kolkata: Arjun Deshwal put up a magnificent performance as Jaipur Pink Panthers secured a Pro Kabaddi League semi-finals spot after a 67-30 victory over U.P. Yoddhas here on Monday. Deshwal top-scored with 20 raid points and defenders Sunil Kumar and Ankush contributed with High 5s. Mahipal picked up a couple of raid points as the Yoddhas inched 3-2 ahead in the fourth minute. Sumit tackled V Ajith Kumar and reduced the Panthers to just two members on the mat. However, Abhishek KS pulled off a super tackle on Gagana Gowda as the Jaipur side levelled the scores at 7-7 in the eighth minute. **PTI**

Gokulam Kerala FC win 3 in a row

Kozhikode: Gokulam Kerala FC eked out a hard-fought 2-0 win over Shillong Lajong FC in a crucial I-League match at the EMS Stadium here on Monday. For Gokulam Kerala, Sourav K (45+4) and Matija Babovic (72nd) were the scorers. This was the Malabarians' third victory on the trot after two big wins over Sreenidi Deccan FC and Inter Kashi on the either side of their Kalinga Super Cup campaign. The win helped Gokulam climb to the third spot in the I-League standings with 23 points from 13 matches. They have six wins, five draws and two losses. Lajong remained in the sixth spot with 19 points from 13 games, including five wins, four draws and losses each. **PTI**

Shanto named Bangladesh captain

Dhaka: Najmul Hossain Shanto has been appointed captain of the Bangladesh cricket team in all three formats for one year, the Bangladesh Cricket Board said Monday. Shanto replaces Shakib Al Hasan, who has been suffering from a vision problem caused by an issue with the retina of his left eye. "We discussed about captaincy at length...after the lengthy discussion we reached in consensus to appoint Najmul Hossain Shanto as the captain of Bangladesh in all three formats for this year," BCB president Nazmul Hassan said. **AP**

RAJKOT TEST

Hometown awaits Jadeja's turn

All-rounder has been enduring a relatively tough time, both on and off the field, but match at his home ground could offer revival

SRIRAM VEERA
 RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 12

"RAVINDRA JADEJA, *lekin voh idhar nahi pada* (but he didn't study here)" the sentry at the gate of the famous The Rajkumar College in Rajkot, the alumni includes Ranjitsinhji, Duleepsinhji, Ajay Jadeja, five other Test cricketers and several first-class players, announces grandly about his favourite player in the Indian team.

The sun has begun to sink, the college has just shut for the day, and the man who will guard nothingness in the nights perks up: "Voh humare jaisey hain. (He is like us)." Not from the clan of rajas and the royals who once dotted the college, that is.

Jadeja, born in a one-room government flat to a nurse and a security guard, has risen in stature to being called 'Bapu', endearment for kings and mass leaders these days. The few around the guard bristle when it is put to them that Axar Patel is also called Bapu by some of his IPL teammates. "Jadeja is Bapu, not Axar".

But their Bapu, who hails from the Jamnagar, is in a spot of bother now. On and off the field. He usually shuts critics with grand performances when talks swirls against him, and his faithful seem pretty confident.

Jadeja's father recently gave a bruising interview, dragging mud all over. Jadeja responded against the interview in support of his wife, who incidentally is a rising politician from the ruling party BJP. "His father might have said stuff, but he is doing well - wife is in BJP, he is playing for India, he is loved here ... what else is needed?" says a young man at the college gate. The conversation drifts to suggestions on where the best Kathiawadi cuisine in the city is.

Lot on the plate

The big-picture view from the young man is right. But Jadeja, though, does have a lot on his plate. Especially on the field. His left-arm hasn't been as deadly with the ball and bat as before. He has even been involved in the unthinkable, run-out, jogging diagonally across, treading the longest way to the other end and found short by an under-arm flick from Ben Stokes.

The batting dip is a touch curious and involves his greater ambition of becoming a proper Test batsman that he achieved and is the reason he is played as the sole spinner in overseas conditions.

In 2018, in the turn-around tour of his career in England, he stunned everyone with his batting. He was more compact than before, better shot-selection, awareness of his off stump, greater knack in art of building an innings.

All those elements now seem to have curiously hindered him at home where possibly the younger Jadeja-like flamboyance could help more. Especially against England. Especially in the absence of Rishabh Pant. India's lower order is stellar and the main reason behind their success at home against Australia in the last series was Axar, Ashwin, and Jadeja soaking up the middle order's failures.

But that was Australia; against this



Rajkumar College in Rajkot, where the alumni include Ranjitsinhji, Duleepsinhji, Ajay Jadeja. *Express*

Bazball England, Jadeja probably needs a different approach. Axar tried in both games, got runs too and fell to soft dismissals. Ashwin, one susses, is trying to get more positive in his brief stays thus far. Jadeja too probably can try, but has seen so much success with his more patient style that he is perhaps confident he can still pull it off in that vein.

Missing bite

It's his bowling that India will need more to fire. This isn't the old England where they could seemingly roll their arm over and trigger chaos.

India's lack of trust in their own batting too has led them to sweat over their pitches ever so carefully: Rahul Dravid standing with his arms on his hip peering at the pitch will go down as the most recurrent visual of the two Tests.

At the end of every session, he walks past his incoming troop and rushes to have a look at the track before the groundsman's brooms sweep the surface. The likes of Jadeja haven't got an akhada, a rank-turner yet.

"I am not the type of individual who feels the need to tell people daily how hard I am working. Rather, I would, as I do on social media, keep showing my horse riding! Because no one knows how to do it. *Koi kar hi nahi saktha!* [in his farmhouse, Jadeja likes to ride on unsaddled horses at night]," he once told this newspaper.

It's time, then, for Jadeja to ride his return to bowling form and luckily for him, it can start at his home track where he has conjured bucketful of wickets in domestic cricket.

Whenever he was out of the Indian team, it's here he would roar back to form with five-fors.

Once in 2015, the former curator Rasik Makvana, potbellied magician with a rake, produced sandpits where Jadeja grabbed 38 wickets in four games to storm back into the national team.

He knows the ideal length, trajectory, pace, and trickery needed. It's a series in India, but the best bowler has been Jasprit Bumrah. It's time a spinner rose to stop Bazball. Perhaps, it's Bapu's turn.



Patience has yielded rich dividends abroad for Ravindra Jadeja, but a more aggressive batting approach may help at home. *Reuters*

Rahul ruled out; Sarfaraz, Jurel expected to make debuts

DEVENDRA PANDEY
 MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 12

ONE OF India's batting mainstays KL Rahul has been ruled out for the third Test match against England in Rajkot.

The senior selection committee, while naming the Karnataka batsman for the last three Test matches, had added a rider. On Saturday, while announcing the team, the BCCI statement had said that "the participation of Ravindra Jadeja and KL Rahul is subject to fitness clearance from the BCCI medical team".

The *Indian Express* understands that while Rahul wasn't found to be fully fit yet, Jadeja was given the green signal to take the field for the crucial third Test in the series which is tied 1-1. The medical team, it is learnt, has told the selectors that they would observe Rahul for one more week to take a call on his availability. Rahul was earlier ruled out for the second Test at Vizag after he had complained of right quadriceps pain during the first Test match in Hyderabad. Injuries and withdrawals have impacted the Indian team in the ongoing series. The biggest blow for the Rohit Sharma team was the absence of team's superstar, Virat Kohli, who has informed the Indian board that he was sitting out of the series because of personal reasons. This was followed by India's big batting hope, Shreyas Iyer, losing his place in the side because of lack of runs.

Replacing Rahul in the Test squad will be another Karnataka batsman Devdutt Padikkal. In his latest Ranji Trophy match, Padikkal had scored 151 with the chairman of selectors Ajit



KL Rahul also missed the 2nd Test. *AP*

Agarkar watching the Karnataka vs Tamil Nadu game from the stands. The left-hander has been in sparkling form this season. After his 193 against Punjab in the opening Ranji game, he scored 103 against Goa. Padikkal also scored 105, 65 & 21 in his three innings for India A in the two unofficial Tests against England Lions.

Speaking after his innings against TN, the opener spoke about bouncing back from health issues to now scoring runs consistently and that he was flexible when it came to batting order. "I don't mind batting at No.3 and I don't mind opening either. So that doesn't really make a huge difference. As you play more and more cricket and as you gain experience, at this level you will naturally be able to play more shots because you will be more confident about your areas," he had said.

Sarfaraz gets his chance

After averaging over 100 for three successive seasons, Sarfaraz Khan is all set to get a Test cap. With middle-order batsman KL Rahul failing to clear the fitness test, the Mumbai batsman is expected to be in the playing XI for the third Test at Rajkot.

"Sarfaraz will be making their debut. As KL has been ruled out for this Test, Sarfaraz will be getting his first game," a source confirmed. Sarfaraz has been toiling hard since the past few years. Even though selectors picked Rajat Patidar ahead of him after Virat Kohli's withdrawal from the first two Tests, Sarfaraz didn't lose hope. A day after the selection day snub, he scored 161 against England Lions.

"I would get emotional about my wait to get into the team. My father always told me that keep working hard and you'll be unstoppable. Having self belief and patience is very important," he told the *bcci.tv* on his Test call.

"More than myself, I am happy for my father. In a country that boasts such a huge population, it is a proud feeling to be part of the Indian team," he added. The 26-year-old also delved further into the day when he found out about his call up. "I didn't believe it at first. Then I informed everyone at home but my father was not there. I called him at his native place and he also became emotional. My only dream has been to fulfil his (father) desire to see me playing for the country," he said.

Also making his debut for the Test starting on February 15 will be wicket-keeper batsman Dhruv Jurel. The 23-year-old Uttar Pradesh gloveman will replace KS Bharat, who was far from his best so far in the series.

RANJI ROUND-UP

Delhi get memorable win

DELHI'S ROLLER-COASTER of a domestic season continued as they secured a come-from-behind victory over hosts Himachal Pradesh in Dharamsala on Monday. After conceding a first-innings deficit, Delhi came back into the game through a solid second-innings batting performance to set a challenging target of 327 for their opponents. It was right-arm medium pacer Himanshu Chauhan who was the wrecker-in-chief in the fourth innings, returning figures of 5/63.

Fellow seamer Pranshu Vijayran provided the finishing touch after opening bowler Siddhant Sharma had scalped two important wickets. For Himachal Pradesh, only all-rounder Rishi Dhawan put up any significant resistance with a knock of 65.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi 264 & 381/6 declared beat Himachal Pradesh 319 & 250 (Rishi Dhawan 65; Himanshu Chauhan 5/63, Pranshu Vijayran 3/44) by 76 runs

Dream outing for Jalaj

IT WAS a match that veteran all-rounder Jalaj Saxena will remember for a long time as he starred with both ball and bat to fashion a 109-run win for Kerala over Bengal at Thumba. Saxena had scalped nine wickets in the first innings and contributed 40 and 37 opening the batting as the visitors were set a target 449 runs to win in the fourth innings. Saxena added four more wickets, taking his match tally to 13 as Bengal fell well short, despite the efforts of Shabbaz Ahmed and Abhimanyu Easwaran.

BRIEF SCORES: Kerala 363 & 265/6 declared beat Bengal 180 & 339 (Shabbaz Ahmed 80, Abhimanyu Easwaran 65; Jalaj Saxena 4/104) by 109 runs

(The other) Jadeja wins it for Saurashtra

LEFT-ARM spinner Dharmendrasinh Jadeja spun a web as Rajasthan were bundled out for a mere 87 in pursuit of 306, fashioning a comprehensive win for visitors Saurashtra in Jaipur. Jadeja returned figures of 7/32 while off-spinner Yuvraj Singh Dodiya scalped the other three as Rajasthan were dismissed inside 29 overs, with only Sumit Godara and Mahipal Lomror getting into double figures.

BRIEF SCORES: Saurashtra 328 & 234/6 declared (Arpit Vasavada 74 not out) beat Rajasthan 257 & 87 (Dharmendrasinh Jadeja 7/32, Yuvraj Singh Dodiya 3/25) by 218 runs

Time runs out

IT WAS a thrilling end to the game between Tamil Nadu and Karnataka in Chennai as the hosts ended proceedings eight wickets down in the fourth innings, 17 short of the victory target of 355. It was a 125-run partnership between Baba Indrajith and Vijay Shankar that brought Tamil Nadu back in the reckoning after they had lost half their side for just 199. But once that partnership was broken, via a run-out, they lost three wickets for six runs, including the two set batsmen. Karnataka would have fancied their chances but skipper Sai Kishore and Ajith Ram negotiated the remaining 11 deliveries.

BRIEF SCORES: Karnataka 366 & 139 drew

Vidarbha earn bonus point

MEDIUM PACER Aditya Thakare took five second-innings wickets as Vidarbha thrashed Maharashtra by 10 wickets in Pune, thereby securing seven points from the game. Having taken a huge first-innings lead, Vidarbha dismissed the hosts for 371 before knocking off the 28 runs needed for victory without the loss of a wicket. It was a decent second-innings batting performance by Maharashtra, but they were so far behind in the game for it to make much of a difference.

BRIEF SCORES: Maharashtra 208 & 371 (Murtaza Trunkwala 86, Ankit Bawne 84, Digvijay Patil 68; Aditya Thakare 5/54) lost to Vidarbha 552 & 28 for no loss by 10 wickets

Khejroliya gets four in four

Not only did Madhya Pradesh seamer Kulwant Khejroliya bag a hat-trick against Baroda, he took four wickets in as many balls as the hosts romped to an innings victory and seven points in Indore. The left-arm medium-fast bowler, who cut his teeth at the first-class level at Delhi before switching teams, not only dismissed centurion Shashwat Rawat, but also ran through the lower order to end the Baroda resistance, as the visitors made a better fist of their innings while following on.

BRIEF SCORES: Madhya Pradesh 454 beat Baroda 132 & 270 (Shashwat Rawat 105, Jyotsnil Singh 83; Kulwant Khejroliya 5/34, Kumar Kartikeya 3/77) by an innings and 52 runs

Kiptum, marathon world record-holder from Kenya, dies in car crash at 24

REUTERS
 NAIROBI, FEBRUARY 12

KENYA'S MARATHON world record holder Kelvin Kiptum and his coach were killed in a traffic accident in the Rift Valley on Sunday, cutting short the career of the only man to have run the endurance classic in less than two hours and one minute.

The 24-year-old set the world record at the Chicago Marathon in October with a time of two hours and 35 seconds to surpass the mark of 2:01:09 run by compatriot Eliud Kipchoge in Berlin in 2022.

Kiptum, who clocked three of the seven fastest marathon times in history, had been hoping to become the first man to run the marathon in under two hours in race conditions at Rotterdam in April as well as make his Olympic debut in Paris in July.

"We are shocked and deeply saddened to learn of the devastating loss of Kelvin Kiptum and his coach, Gervais Hakizimana," World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said in a statement.

"On behalf of all World Athletics, we send our deepest condolences to their families, friends, team mates and the Kenyan nation. "An incredible athlete leaving an incredible legacy, we will miss him dearly."

According to the police report, Kiptum was driving his Rwandan coach and a woman in a car near the Rift Valley village where he was born when the accident occurred. The athlete lost control of the vehicle and



Kelvin Kiptum died in car crash alongside his coach on Monday. *USA TODAY/Reuters*

veered off the road into a ditch, travelling for about 60 metres along it before crashing into a large tree.

Kiptum and Hakizimana died at the scene but the woman, 24-year-old Sharon Chepkurui Kosgei Keiyo, survived with serious injuries and was treated at a local hospital.

Tributes poured in from senior Kenyan politicians and fellow athletes.

"His mental strength and discipline were unmatched. Kiptum was our future," Kenya's President William Ruto said on social media platform X.

Kipchoge, who had been expected to race Kiptum at the Paris Olympics, said he was "deeply saddened" by the death of "rising star" Kiptum.

Writing on X, the 39-year-old said Kiptum was an "athlete who had a whole life ahead of him to achieve incredible greatness".

Kiptum, a product of the high altitude region of Kenya which has produced most of the country's world renowned distance runners, started his international career on the half-marathon circuit in 2019.

He made an explosive entry into the full 42.195km distance by running the then fourth fastest time on record (2:01:53) to win the 2022 Valencia Marathon on debut.

That race revealed his trademark approach to marathons, running with the pack for the first 30kms and then upping the pace and racing off alone for the remainder of the race.

Harmanpreet's prolific 200

With a goal-scoring record second to none, skipper key for Paris but team needs another quality drag-flicker

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
FEBRUARY 12

THE WORDS of Dutch head coach Jeroen Delmee before the India vs Netherlands FIH Pro League match in Bhubaneswar and Hardik Singh after it had one sentiment in common: Harmanpreet Singh is pretty good at what he does.

Delmee said that for his side to keep India at bay, they needed to avoid conceding penalty corners. Hardik said he was always confident of his team making a big play if they could just get a penalty corner in time... which he did with two minutes left for Harmanpreet to fire a rocket to equalise at 2-2 against the world No.1 side.

The Indian captain had a weekend to remember at the Kalinga Stadium as he marked his 200th senior appearance with a game-saving goal against the Dutch, after a brace against Spain. "It's always a privilege to wear the Indian jersey and whenever I wear this, it feels like I'm wearing it first time," he posted on social media later.

'I'm a Harman fan'

Someone who has seen Harmanpreet develop from close quarters is Rupinder Pal Singh, himself one of India's star drag-flick-

ers. "I have seen him from the time he began his career, in the junior team, in the Hockey India League, and so on. Honestly, I am a fan of Harmanpreet, the way he has remained consistent and how he is there for the team every match 100 percent," Rupinder tells The Indian Express. "These days, if you see, international teams' penalty corner defence has become strong. But even that hasn't made it difficult for him to score regularly."

At the start of an Olympic year, it augurs well for India that their talisman appears to be in good form. "More than 170 goals in 200 matches is just a phenomenal record," Siddharth Pandey, hockey commentator and FIH Level 2 certified coach, tells this daily.

The two drag-flicks he scored with over the weekend in Bhubaneswar also highlighted the variety he brings to the table. He has the wrists to go high or low, left or right. Beyond immense self-confidence, Rupinder adds a technical aspect. "His belief in his abilities sets him apart. The way he trains, and the rhythm he has, is one of the best. He has superb variety in drag-flicks, he knows how to use them. But also the way he is picking up the ball when it is being trapped is exemplary, he is barely taking any time to do that and the millise-



Harmanpreet marked his 200th appearance with a game-saving goal against the Dutch.

conds he saves there because of his speed, is helping him beat the defence."

While India have had some good flickers in the past, Harmanpreet stands out for being a complete package. "He has got a fantastic range of passes, whether it's aerial balls, 40m slap shots, or a deceptive slap pass, he's got it all," Siddharth adds.

Dependency on skipper

Even as India rightly celebrate his milestone, a concern remains that Harmanpreet has been India's top scorer by some distance in the last few years. In 2023, he scored 42 goals from 33 matches and that was followed by Mandeep Singh (18 in 31), Abhishek (16 in 27). In 2022, the corresponding numbers were 38 goals in 31 matches for Harmanpreet, followed by 13 in 28 for Mandeep and 11 in 28 for Abhishek.

Of course, Harmanpreet and India had a forgettable World Cup at home in 2023, and by his high standards, the captain didn't find his scoring touch often enough as his team would have liked.

"We are very dependent on Harmanpreet, yes, and that was exposed at the World Cup," Siddharth says. "He had a tough tournament, and India went on to have a bad tournament. And that experience will surely come in handy for him in Paris. But it is worrying because of what's coming behind him, there's not a lot. A few options going around but we genuinely lack a second world-class flicker, which is what I think got us the bronze in Tokyo."

Gulf in class

The lack of a reliable Plan B remains a con-

cern. Jugraj Singh's flicks are pacy and he is good when a plan is presented to him but as a defender, he seems to have mistakes in him. Sanjay is an upcoming young player, a solid defender but he may not quite be a world-class flicker in six months. India unleashed Amit Rohidas as a surprise drag-flick weapon at the Hangzhou Asian Games to good effect and perhaps that remains the best second bet.

In addition to that, India's forwards are rather skillful but not quite prolific. Mandeep is a master at manipulating space, Lalit Upadhyay scores some memorable goals, Akashdeep Singh and Gurjant Singh offer flexibility, and there are others too who are sharp with their stick skills like Sukhjeet Singh. Their overall goal-scoring output, though, needs to go up.

"It will take a few months, but Abhishek could be a prolific goal-scoring forward. He has everything in his skillset to be one," Siddharth adds.

There are areas to work on before Paris for Craig Fulton and Co. For now, though, India can remain confident that they have one of the world's best goal-scorers in their ranks, leading the way. As Siddharth says, "It is no coincidence that India's most successful decade in the modern era has coincided with Harmanpreet Singh being an integral part of the team."

Mahomes leads Chiefs to comeback win over for Super Bowl title

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAS VEGAS, FEBRUARY 12

PATRICK MAHOMES, Travis Kelce and Andy Reid have made the Kansas City Chiefs a dynasty. They're already thinking three-peat.

First, they had to become the first back-to-back Super Bowl champions in 19 years.

Mahomes made sure of it, leading another super comeback on the NFL's biggest stage in America's showcase capital.

Mahomes threw a 3-yard touchdown pass to Mecole Hardman in overtime, and the Chiefs rallied to beat the San Francisco 49ers 25-22 on Sunday, becoming the NFL's ninth repeat Super Bowl champs.

With pop star Taylor Swift watching boyfriend Kelce from a suite, the Chiefs captured their third title in five years, a run that puts them among the league's greatest franchises. "Well, you know the goal has always been to get three," Kelce screamed on stage after sharing a kiss with Swift. "But we couldn't get here without getting that two, and having that target on our back all year... How about that. We get a chance to do it three times in a row." The NFL's first Super Bowl in Las Vegas was a sloppy, mistake-filled affair that was mostly boring until the back-and-forth fourth quarter and OT. It was the second of 58 Super Bowls to be tied after regulation, and the first played under new overtime rules that ensured both teams got the ball.

Thomas Cup team reunites, Sindhu returns at BATC

SHIVANI NAIK
FEBRUARY 12

INDIA'S THOMAS Cup-winning squad from 2022 gets to flaunt their prowess and fix the odd chink in their armour at the Badminton Asia Team Championships starting on Wednesday.

At Shah Alam in Malaysia - where the men's team stocked up on groceries shopping together, posed poolside donning funky glares and matching hotel towels for Instagram shots, and were flanked by a strong, united coaching staff - the successful team seemed happy. The legacy of that Thomas Cup, which India will defend this May, was also a bunch of elite shuttlers, confident of themselves and happy for their teammates. Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty, HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen and K Srikanth are formidable names over a 3 singles-2 doubles format; but they are also fun-spreading folk in team situations.

As such, with only Korea and Malaysia at almost full strength amongst men, India will back themselves as one of the favourites. But grouped with Hong Kong and China, with only two of the three making the quarterfinals, they must hit the ground running straightaway against the former on Wednesday.

India's enviable fist at the Thomas Cup packed a punch due to three formidable singles players in Lakshya, Srikanth and Prannoy. They will need an encore, with Prannoy tasked with playing the first men's singles (MS1) this time.

Hong Kong are no pushovers and their MS 1 & 2 are World No.14 Lee Cheuk Yiu and No.22 Ng Ka Long Angus, the most improved and most stubborn opponents on the circuit with a proclivity to annoy Indians. Chan Yin Chak, No.89, is their third singles player. Law Cheuk Him-Yeung Shing Choi (No.107) and Chow Hin Long-Lui Chun Wai (No.157) are their best doubles combines, and Indians hold a certain edge there.

Against China on Thursday, India will face their second string in Lu Guang Zu and Weng Hong Yang, no pushovers. Prannoy, ranked No.7 will likely be up against No.16 Weng in MS1. While Lakshya can be backed to nail down No.17 Lu in MS2, Srikanth will need to be on his toes against Lei Lanxi, who's far better than his No.35 rank suggests.

China have landed without their top two singles players, Shi Yuqi and Li Shifeng, as well as their top two doubles pairings. But their doubles pairings are always dangerous, and will need careful screening by India's doubles pairs.

Sindhu's return

India's women's team isn't particularly fear-inspiring beyond PV Sindhu and the energetic doubles of Treasa Jolly-Gayatri Gopichand and Ashwini Ponnappa-Tanisha Crasto. Yet, assured of a quarter-final spot by default and playing a group tie without the pressure of qualification, these five women can set the tone against China-lite.

Of greatest interest will be Sindhu's return from knee trouble that saw her freeze her ranking (No.11) for three months. She's back after training at Prakash Padukone's academy in Bengaluru, and will likely be thrust into attack against Chinese Han Yue, World No.8.

Sindhu first came to prominence as a 17-year-old running roughshod over mighty Chinese names, and the young Indian singles guns Ashmita Chaliha and Anmol Kharb will have no one better to inspire them. China haven't pulled their punches in the women's doubles, sending current World No.4, Sheng Shu Liu-Ning Tan, and the Indians will need to be at their best.

Japan, Thailand, Indonesia and Malaysia have landed with their top women's pairings, and it's a tricky few knockout days for both Indian pairs.

Korean women have skipped the event altogether which means no An SeYoung. Many other top women's singles names - Chen Yufei, Tai Tzu-Ying, Ratchanok Intanon, Akane Yamaguchi - aren't in Shah Alam so Sindhu can perhaps ease her way back. Even as she takes her gingery first few steps on a comeback, the former world champ will be looked up to shoulder India's burden and make the last four for Uber Cup qualification.



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