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VOL. XX NO. 53

MUMBAI/METRO
Saturday, **March 02**, 2024

Hindustan Times
FIRST VOICE. LAST WORD.

TEDx Gateway

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ADITYA BIRLA GROUP

India's *Biggest* Ideas Festival

Scan to watch live
Today, 1PM onwards

Pavan Sukhdev
Environmental Economist

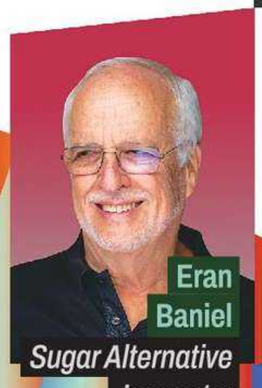
Esha Chhabra
Solutions Journalist & Author

Reema Nanavaty
Padma Shri Awardee & Social Worker

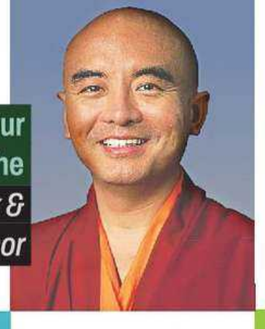
Revant Himatsingka
Health & Food Crusader

Palak Chauhan
Pianist & Child Prodigy

Dyhia Belhabib
Ocean Crime Fighter


Eran Baniel
Sugar Alternative Innovator

Dr. Kalai Ramea
Interdisciplinary & AI Scientist


Yongey Mingyur Rinpoche
Tibetan Monk & Happiness Author

Usha Jey
Choreographer & Movement Director

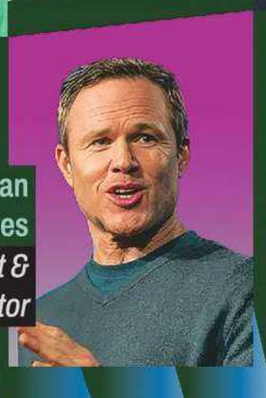
Vinu Daniel
Sustainability Focused Architect

Parmita Sarma
Education Reformer

Dr. Tiffany J. Vora
Longevity Scientist

Piyush Tewari
Road Safety Innovator

Anurag Maloo
Mountaineer & Survivor


Jonathan Rives
Host & Co-curator

Ishita Katyal
Co-host & Author

Ralph Simon
Advisor TEDxGateway

WESTERN RAILWAY

VARIOUS WORKS

Divisional Railway Manager (WA), Western Railway, 6th Floor, Engg. Deptt., Mumbai Central, Mumbai - 400 008 invites E-Tender as per details given as follows.

Sr. No.	Tender Notice No. & Date	Work and Location	Approx. Cost of Work (₹)	EMD (₹)
1	BCT/23-24/308 Dtd. 28/02/2024	Colaba- Badhwarpark - Casual attention contract under the jurisdiction of SSE (W) BP on day to day basis through Outsourcing for two years, i. e 730 days.	2,64,32,916.22	2,82,200/-
2	BCT/23-24/309 Dtd. 28/02/2024	Colaba- Badhwarpark - (i) Provision of fire exit (staircase) in P-Block. (ii) Provision of additional lift in P-block at BP officers' colony. (Monolithic construction).	3,43,37,608.28	3,21,700/-
3	BCT/23-24/310 Dtd. 28/02/2024	Mumbai Central (main) improvement to staff quarter & amenities including structural attention of sky scraper officer's flat, 14 officer's flats and SRH.	2,59,35,021.50	2,79,700/-

Date & Time of Submission and Opening of Tenders: Sr. No. 1 to 3: Till **15.00 hrs.** on **26/03/2024** and will be opened at **15.30 hrs.** on the **same day.** Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non-refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit **www.ireps.gov.in** **Manual offers will not be considered.**

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UTTARAKHAND SAHAKARI CHINI MILLS SANGH LTD. (UTTARAKHAND SUGARS)

Near-Railway Crossing, Badripur Road, Jogiwala, Dehradun-248001 (Uttarakhand)
Telephone No.: (0135) 2974413, E-mail : uksugars@gmail.com
Website : www.uttarakhandsugars.com, **GST No. 05AABFU7713K2Z1**

Letter No. : 1957/PUR/01/E-Tender/2023-24 Date : 01 March, 2024

E-Tender Notice for Rate Contract Items

Online E-Tenders are invited from Manufactures/Authorized distributers (as per details given in the tender documents) for **BRASS TUBE, PACKING & JOINTING, BEARING, MS & GI PIPES, GENERAL PURPOSE ELECTRODES AND STAINLESS STEEL TUBES** to our Co-operative and Corporation sugar mills season 2024-25.

The details for submission of the E-Bids is available on the E-tender portals as per Table No. 01 **www.uktenders.gov.in & www.uttarakhandsugars.com**. The bidders will have to deposit Per Tender fees **(Non Refundable)** of **Rs. 2,360/- (GST INCLUSIVE)** & earnest money in the form of **Demand Draft/RTGS/ NEFT/NET BANKING** in favor of **Uttarakhand Sahkari Chini Mills Sangh Limited, Payable at Dehradun.** Tenders without Tender Fee & Earnest money will not be accepted. The bank details are available inside the tender document.

The Federation reserves the right to cancel any or all bids/annual e-bidding process, without assigning and reason to & decision of Federation will be final & binding.

Table No. 01

Sl. No.	Name of the item	Starting date of loading of E-Tender at 06:00 PM	Last Date & Time for Submission of e-bids at 06:00 PM	Technical & Financial bid opening at 10:30 AM & 03:00 PM	E.M.D. (in Rs.)
RATE CONTRACT FOR THE SUPPLY OF DIFFERENT ITEMS TO OUR SUGAR FACTORIES IN UTTARAKHAND STATE					
1.	Brass Tubes	01-03-2024	11-03-2024	12-03-2024	60,000.00
2.	Packing & Jointing	01-03-2024	11-03-2024	12-03-2024	25,000.00
3.	Bearing	01-03-2024	11-03-2024	12-03-2024	1,50,000.00
4.	MS & GI Pipes	01-03-2024	12-03-2024	13-03-2024	1,00,000.00
5.	General Purpose Electrodes	01-03-2024	12-03-2024	13-03-2024	50,000.00
6.	Stainless Steel Tubes	01-03-2024	12-03-2024	13-03-2024	50,000.00

इस निविदा के सम्बन्ध में सभी संशोधन, स्पष्टीकरण, शुद्धिपत्र, परिशिष्ट, समय वृद्धि आदि को केवल **www.uktenders.gov.in & www.uttarakhandsugars.com** पर ही दिया जायेगा। निविदादाता अद्यतन जानकारी के लिए नियमित रूप से इन वेबसाइटों को पढ़ते रहें।

MANAGING DIRECTOR

HT Classifieds {Saturday}

www.htclassifieds.com

PROPERTY LISTING

ATTENTION

LAND DEVELOPERS/ BUSINESSMEN/ HOME BUYERS/ INVESTORS/ CORPORATES / PROJECT LEADERS/ WAREHOUSE LEADERS

461 SQ. YDS. VACANT PLOT FOR SALE IN CENTRAL DELHI

Best for Residence / Hotel / Guest House / Bank / Office & Retail Complex / Hospital / Convenience Super Mart / Parking Lot / In-City Warehouse

- Construct as per desire for Floor-wise Plan/ Operations
- Freehold / Mixed Land Use/ Wide Front/ 80 Ft Wide Road

Contact Owner - 9971118888 / 9871118888 / 7042000735

EMPLOYMENT

ACADEMIC

REQUIRED TEACHERS in clear Vacancy At Holy Family School, Pestom Sagar, Chembur (Minority Run, Permanently Unaided) Secondary Section:1. Hindi - M.A, B.Ed, MTET preferred.2. English, Social Science - M.A, B.ED, MTET preferred. Primary Section: Two Vacancies HSC, D. Ed. MTET preferred. Applications to be submitted with relevant documents in the school office by 20th March '24.

NOTICES

TENDER NOTICE

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank

Premises & Estate Section,
Circle Office Mumbai
Canara Bank Building
2nd Floor, B-Wing, C-14, G-Block,
Bandra - Kurla Complex,Mumbai - 400051.
Email :premisescomcity@canarabank.com
Ph. : 022-26728407 / 8426

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

SELECTION OF ARCHITECT FOR REDEVLOPMENT OF BANK OWNED PROPERTY AT KASTUR PARK, BORIVALI, MUMBAI

Canara Bank proposed to engage the services of architect for redevelopment of Bank owned property at **Kastur Park, Borivali, Mumbai.**

Tender form can be downloaded from our Bank's website: **www.canarabank.com** and E-procurement portal **www.gerpegov.com/CANARABANK**. Last date of submission of application is **22.03.2024** upto **03:00 PM**. Further communications, corrigendum and amendments, if any, will be hosted in Bank's website only.

Place: Mumbai
Date : 01.03.2024 **Sd/-**
Assistant General Manager

TENDER NOTICES

केनरा बैंक Canara Bank

General Administration Section,
Mumbai Circle Office
Canara Bank Building
2nd Floor, B-Wing, C-14, G-Block, Bandra - Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai - 400051.
Email : premisescomcity@canarabank.com
Ph. : 022-26728407 / 8426

PREMISES REQUIRED

Offers are invited under **TWO-BID SYSTEM** for premises on lease, from the owners of commercial space and ready for occupation with required power load for Branch/Office at the following locations:

Location	Type	Carpet Area In sq. ft.
Marol	Branch (Preferably on ground floor)	2500 sq. ft.
Sewree	Branch (Preferably on ground floor)	2500 sq. ft.
Kharghar	Office	2500 sq. ft.

The details are published in the Bank's website: **http://www.canarabank.com**. The necessary applications may be downloaded from the Bank's website. Last date for submission is on **11.03.2024 upto 3.00 PM. Technical Bid will be opened on 11.03.2024 at 3.30 PM**. Single premises with multiple tenders will not be entertained.

Further communications, corrigendum, amendments if any will be hosted in Banks website only.

Place : Mumbai
Date : 02.03.2024 **Sd/-**
Assistant General Manager
Mumbai Circle

TENDER NOTICE

UCO BANK
A Govt. of India Undertaking
Zonal Office,
Security Department,
UCO Bank Building, 1st Floor, # 359, Dr Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Mumbai – 400001
Tel. No.: 022-40544333
E-mail:- zomumbai.sec@ucobank.co.in

VEHICLE DISPOSAL NOTICE

UCO Bank Zonal Office, Mumbai invites sealed tender for disposal of 04 numbers of old Vehicles (Swift dezire and swift) on "As is where is and as is what is basis". Bids shall be deposit on or before **12.03.2024 at 1500 hrs** at UCO Bank, UCO Bank Building, Zonal Office, 1st floor, security department, D. N. Road Fort, Near fountain Mumbai-400001 Tender documents with detailed terms & conditions are available at our office or can be downloaded from Bank's website **www.ucobank.com.** Tenders in sealed envelope should be submitted to UCO Bank, 1st floor D.N.Road, Fort Zonal Office, Mumbai - 400001 For additional information please contact on 022-40544333. Further updates, if any, shall be notified on this website only. UCO Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason whatsoever. No correspondence shall be entertained in this regard.

Zonal Manager

For Advertisement Call
Manish Shirke 9820748750

HT

Readers are recommended to make all enquiries and seek appropriate advice before acting on any advertisement appearing in this publication. Any subscriber sending money, incurring any expenses or acting on any medical recommendations or entering into any commitment in relation to any advertisement published in this publication, shall do so entirely at his/her discretion, intelligence and risk. The Company, Publisher or any of its employees do not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers of products and services and shall not be held liable for any damages, loss, consequences, suffered by any person on account of relying on such advertisements.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), N.C. Railway, Gwalior for and on behalf of the President of India invites Open on line e-Tenders (Two packets System) for the following work:

Description of work: Construction of FOB at Gwalior Station

e-tender No.: CEN05GWL0424 **Approx. Cost:** ₹17.06 Cr. **Date of closing Tender: 02.04.2024. Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter: 12** months. ● Tender on line can be submitted up to **15.00 hrs.** on **02.04.2024.** ● For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in**

361/24 FA

North central railways @CPRONCR @northcentralrailway www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in

KALYAN DOMBIVLI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

PWD DEPT

TENDER NOTICE NO. 124 (2023-24)

Tenders are invited by the Administrator, Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation in B-1 format through E-tender for 6 works from the Registered Contractors with appropriate class.

The blank tender forms and detailed information will be available on the Maharashtra's, website **www.mahatenders.gov.in** from 02/03/2024 to 09/03/2024 upto 3.00 p.m. The completed tender's are to be uploaded on or before 09/03/2024 upto 3.00 p.m. and the tenders will be opened on 11/03/2024 at 4.00 p.m. if possible.

Right to rejects any or all tenders without assigning any reason there of is reserved by the Administrator, and whose decision will be final and legally binding on all the tenderers.

For more details and information visit Maharashtra's website **www.mahatenders.gov.in**

KDMC/PRO/HQ/1190
Dt. 01/03/2024

Sd/-
City Engineer
Kalyan Dombivli Municipal Corporation
Kalyan

Tip: I am the future of India, I am a voter now

MAHATRANSCO

Maharashtra State Electricity Transmission Co. Ltd.

INVITATION FOR BIDDING (IFB) E-TENDER (RFx) NOTICE

Notice for submission of online bids (RFx) for following

RFx/Tender No. & Description

REx No. 7000029912 (SECOND CALL)

WORK OF 33KV LEVEL CREATION AT 220KV SUBSTATION GEORAI BY PROVIDING 2X25MVA, 220/33KV, POWER TRANSFORMERS ALONG WITH 6 NOS. 33KV OUTLET FEEDERS, 2X33KV PT BAYS, 1X33KV BUS SECTIONALIZER AND 1X5MVAR, 33KV CAPACITOR BANK BAY AT 220KV GEORAI SUBSTATION UNDER EHV O&M DIVISION, BEED. (Second Call)

Estimated Cost: Rs 08,04,63,023-/- Only (Including GST & Labour cess)
EMD- Rs. 08,04,630/
Tender Fees:- Rs 5000/- (Including GST)
Start Date:- 01.03.2024
End Date:- 07.03.2024.

For further details, visit our Website
https://srmetender.mahatransco.in

Chief Engineer EHV PC & O&M Zone MSETCL
Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar.

GUJARAT INDUSTRIES POWER COMPANY LTD.

Tender for Industrial Painting work for structure in LLHS & AHS (Tender ID:51785) for 4 x 125 MW Surat Lignite Power Plant

Interested Bidders may submit their Bids on two parts basis through **www.tender.nprocure.com. Last date for bid submission is 02.04.2024, 17:30 hrs. Tenders can also be viewed from company's website www.gipcl.com.**

Chief General Manager (RE & SLPP)

B-1864

OFFICE OF THE
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER ELECTRICAL CIRCLE (R&B)
NIRMAN SOUDHA BHUBANESWAR
E-mail seec.bbsr2010@gmail.com

Bid Identification No.S.E.E.C (R&B) 34/2023-24
No. 750 / Date 28.02.2024 /

The Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar on behalf of the Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bids for E.I. works which are to be received through online bidding, double cover system as detailed in :https://tendersorissa.gov.in. The details of bid documents will be available in the above website from dt.02.03.2024 at 05.00 P.M. to dt.14.03.2024 up to 05.00 P.M. The bidders must possess compatible Digital Signature Certificate of Class II or III. Bids received online shall be opened dt.15.03.2024 at 11.30 A.M. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, Electrical Circle (R&B) Odisha, Bhubaneswar. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal www.tendersorissa.gov.in.

Addendum / Corrigendum, if required, will be available only in the Website

Superintending Engineer
Electrical Circle, (R & B) Odisha, BBSR

OIPR - 34006/11/0048/2324

A-1641

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER
BARIPADA IRRIGATION CIRCLE
AT/PO:- TAKATPUR, BARIPADA, DIST:-MAYURBHANJ
Mail Id. sebicbpdgmail.com
Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. 18/23-24 of ACE/BIC

1.	Name of work	Construction of Drainage sluice cum V.R Bridge at RD 10.200km of Chudamani Bijaypatna saline embankment near Kasia Market.
2.	Estimated Cost	Rs.3,78,60,204.00
3	Bid Security / E.M.D,	Rs.3,78,602.00
4	Period of Completion	12 (Twelve) Calendar Months
5.	Class of Contractor	"A" Class
6.	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	07.03.2024 at 10.00 AM
7	Last datettime for receipt of bid in the portal	27.03.2024 up to 5.00 PM
8	Date of opening of bid	28.03.2024 at 11:00 A. M.
9.	Name & Address of the O.I. T	Additional Chief Engineer, Baripada Irrigation Circle, AT / PO - Takatpur, Baripada,Dist.- Mayurbhanj

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "**https://tendersodisha.gov.in**".

Additional Chief Engineer
Baripada Irrigation Circle, Baripada

OIPR - 32162/11/0015/2324

A-1638

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER,
SUBARNAREKHA & BUDHABALANGA BASIN,
AT/PO:- LAXMIPOSI, DIST:-MAYURBHANJ
Mail Id. cebmsbb2019@gmail.com

Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. 55/ 23-24 of CEBM, SBB, Laxmiposi

1	Name of Work	A. Chandipur Embankment Extension (Construction of Additional length of 460m Protection work of Panthaniwas.
		B. Construction of Sluice cum VRB over supply channel of OCC R-III and Reconstruction of Lock Gate at Bhograi Block of Balasore District for the Year 2023-24.
		C. Stone Patching at Subarnarekha River side Bishnupur.
2	Estimated Cost	A. Rs. 1702.76 Lakh
		B. Rs. 767.85 Lakh
		C. Rs. 903.03 Lakh
3	Bid Security/ E.M.D.	A. Rs. 17,03,000/-
		B. Rs.7,68, 000/-
		C. Rs. 9,04,000/-
4	Period of Completion	For S.I. No. A,B &C - 12 (Twelve) Calendar Months
5	Class of Contractor	For S.I. No. A, B ,& C.- "A" Class and "Special" Class
6	Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal	04.03.2024 at 10.00 AM
7	Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal	28.03.2024 up to 5.00 PM
8	Date of opening of bid	30.03.24 at 11:00 A.M.
9	Name & Address of the O.I. T	Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, O/O the CE&BM, Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin, Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal https://tendersodisha.gov.in

Chief Engineer & Basin Manager
Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin,
Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj

OIPR - 32429/11/0021/2324

BRIDCUL (ब्रिडकुल)

ब्रिज, रोपवे, टनल एण्ड अदर इन्फास्ट्रक्चर डेवलपमेंट कॉरपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लिमिटेड
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम) पूर्व में उत्तराखण्ड राज्य अवस्थापना विकास निगम लिमिटेड
प्रधान कार्यालय: अवस्थापना भवन, 583–ठ, राजकीय आई0टी0आई0
निरंजनपुर के सामने, माजरा, सहारनपुर रोड़, देहरादून– 248001
CIN No - U45203UR2008SGC032591 टैलीफैक्स– 0135–2522941, ई–मेल – bridcul@gmail.com

Ref : - 378/BRIDCUL- 886/24 Dated: 01/03/2024

E-Tendering (2nd Call)

On behalf of Hon'ble, Governor of Uttarakhand, E-Tender is invited by Managing Director BRIDCUL, from the Contractors registered with BRIDCUL only in Category -II (Rs 02 to 05 Cr.) for the work given as below:-

S. No	Ref No.	Name of Project	Estimated Cost (In Lac Including GST)	Earnest Money (In Lac)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Time Period
1	BRIDCUL/HQ Pith/76/2023-24	Construction of Multi Level Parking at Jakhnai Tiraha Distt. Pithoragarh (Civil work)	453.95	9.08	5000 + 18% GST	12 Month

For above tenders, document download start date is 02.03.2024 and Bid submission end date is 15.03.2024 at 1500 Hrs. The details of e-tender of above work can be obtained directly from website **https://uktenders.gov.in**

Changes, if any will be intimated only through website **https://uktenders.gov.in**

DGM (HQ)

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

S&T Branch
OPEN TENDER

Invitation of E-tender on behalf of the President of India acting through **Sr. Divisional Engineer Signal & Telecom (Co-Ordination), West Central Railway, Jabalpur** for the following works:- **NIT No.:** JBP-N-SIG-TENDER-2024-6. **Name of work with location: S&T Work in connection with enhancement of CSL/CSR of lines of 13 stations of ET-STA section and SCKR yard remodelling for increasing CSL of all lines of yard of Jabalpur Division on West Central Railway. Approx. cost of the work:** ₹ 5,52,95,192.98. **Cost of Tender form:** 00. **Address of the office of Railway:** Divisional Railway Manager (S&T)'s Office, 1st Floor, DRM Building, Jabalpur. **Earnest Money:** ₹ 4,26,500/-. **Completion Period:** 11 Months. **Date & Time for Closing & Opening of Tender:** Closing at 15.00 Hrs. on 28.03.2024 & Opening after 15.00 Hrs. The complete information of the above 'e-tender' is available on website **https://ireps.gov.in** and also placed on notice board of the Divisional Railway Manager (S&T) Office, West Central Railway, Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the form of e-bids shall not be accepted against above tender.

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान
एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

कार्यालय नगर निगम ग्रेटर जयपुर

पण्डित दीनदयाल उपाध्याय भवन, सालकोठी, जयपुर

क्रमांक :- ज.स.अ./2023/403 दिनांक :- 22/02/2024

ई-निविदा सूचना क्रमांक :- 61-62/2023-24

नगर निगम ग्रेटर जयपुर हेतु विभिन्न कार्यों के सम्पादन के लिए पंजीकृत फर्म्स से ई–निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र, विस्तृत सूचना एवं शर्तें आदि सम्पूर्ण विवरण वेबसाइट **www.jaipurmc.org, www.sppp.raj.nic.in** and **www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** पर स्टेट पब्लिक प्रोक्यूरमेन्ट के UBN No. JMC2324SLOB01592 To JMC2324SLOB01593 पर देखी जा सकती है।

उपायुक्त (गैराज)
राज.संवाद/सी/23/13843 नगर निगम, ग्रेटर, जयपुर

MUMBAI RAILWAY VIKAS CORPORATION LIMITED

REQUEST FOR TENDER: MRVC/W/127/Lot-I & Lot-II

(Single Stage Two Envelope e-Procurement Tender Process)

Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation Ltd. (MRVC) having its corporate office on the Second Floor, Churchgate Station Building, Mumbai–400020, invites e-Tenders for **LOT-I: Design, Supply, Fabrication, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 2x25 kV OHE Works Between Virar-Dahanu Road Section (64 RKM and approximate 155 TKM) of Western Railway including EMU Stabling Sidings, along with Supply of OHE Spares and T & P Items. (In connection with Quadrupling of Virar-Dahanu Road Section on Western Railway).**

LOT-II: Design, Supply, Fabrication, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 2x25 kV OHE Works Between Panvel-Karjat Section (30 RKM and Approximate 88 TKM) of Central Railway including EMU Stabling Sidings, along with Supply of OHE Spares and T & P Items. (In connection with New suburban Corridor of Panvel- Karjat Section on Central Railway).

Details of Tenders and Tender documents are available on e-procurement website **https://www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.** The last date for both completed e-Tender submission at website **https://www.eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app is 15.04.2024** up to **15:00 hrs. Corrigendum, if any, will be posted on the website only.**

MAHAGENCO

Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd.

MAHARASHTRA STATE POWER GENERATION CO. LTD.
E-TENDER NOTICE (LOCAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING)

Bids are invited by Chief Engineer (P&P), Maharashtra State Power Generation Co. Ltd., 3rd Floor, Prakashgad, Bandra (East) Mumbai-400 051 for Tender on EPC basis for Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, Inspection, Works, Supply at site, Civil Structural Works, Erection, Testing & Commissioning for Installation of BTG Package for Koradi 2x660 MW Project at Koradi, Nagpur.

Bid Specification No.	RFx No. 3000046202
Cost of Bid Documents	Rs.2,00,000/- (Basic Cost) + Rs.36,000/- (GST @ 18%) = Total cost Rs.2,36,000/- (Rs. Two Lacs Thirty Six Thousand only
Sale of Bid Documents	01.03.2024, 15:00 Hrs to 12.04.2024, 15.00 Hrs.
Pre-bid Conference	21.03.2024, 11:00 Hrs.
Last Date of Acceptance of Tender Fee and Download of Tender Document	12.04.2024, 15:00 Hrs
Last Date for submission of Online bid (Techno-commercial and Price Bids)	15.04.2024 up to 15:00 Hrs.
Last Date for submission of bids (Techno-commercial) in physical form along with original BG for EMD	16.04.2024 up to 13:00 Hrs.
Due Date for opening of Part – 1 Bid (Techno-commercial Bid)	16.04.2024, 15:00 Hrs
Due date for opening Part – 2 bids i.e. Price bids of qualified bidders	Shall be notified later
Contact Office	Chief Engineer (P&P)
Office Telephone No.	022-69852200 (Extn.:3520)
Contact Person(s)	Superintending Engineer (P&P) – 8828502488 Executive Engineer (P&P)- 9167493977
E-mail	cgmgpp@mahagenco.in

Qualifying Requirements and further details / any amendment/corrigendum /updates will be published only on website **https://eprocurement.mahagenco.in**. Interested bidders shall regularly check website for the same

Sd/-
Chief Engineer (P&P)

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■VOL. XX NO. 53 ■PRICE ₹5.00■ 20 PAGES + 4 PAGES OF HT CITY (FOR MUMBAI ONLY). AREA SPECIFIC PAGES EXTRA.

MUMBAI/METRO
Saturday, **March 02**, 2024

Hindustan Times

FIRST VOICE. LAST WORD.

A hot summer ahead for India, predicts IMD

Jayashree Nandi
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The summer months of March to May are likely to be hotter than usual across most of the country, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday, while also predicting El Nino conditions to persist for most of this period, which could in turn result in a higher number of heatwave days.

Some regions, however, including the northwest that includes Delhi, could record normal to below normal night-time lows and daytime peaks, especially over the first 15 days of March when a series of western disturbance are predicted to bring rain in these regions.

IMD customarily puts out a forecast for the summer season in the first week of March every year, with the temperatures in the 12-week period from then having significant implications for public health and agriculture. For instance, unusually hot weather or excessive spells of rain in March could hurt a number of winter crops that are close to harvest in April and May.

"We are expecting maximum temperatures to remain below normal till around March 15 over northwest India. This is mainly because we are expecting cloudy skies and rainfall due to consecutive WDs," said M Mohapatra, director general, IMD.

The rain spells, Mohapatra added, could hurt some crops. "During the next two weeks we expect intense rain and even hailstorm in some regions of northwest India. That can be damaging for the wheat crop. Light to moderate rain will be beneficial in some areas. Farmers have been advised to prepare," he said.

But after that, temperatures are likely to pick up for most parts of the country due to the El Nino phenomenon in the equatorial pacific, which has cascading

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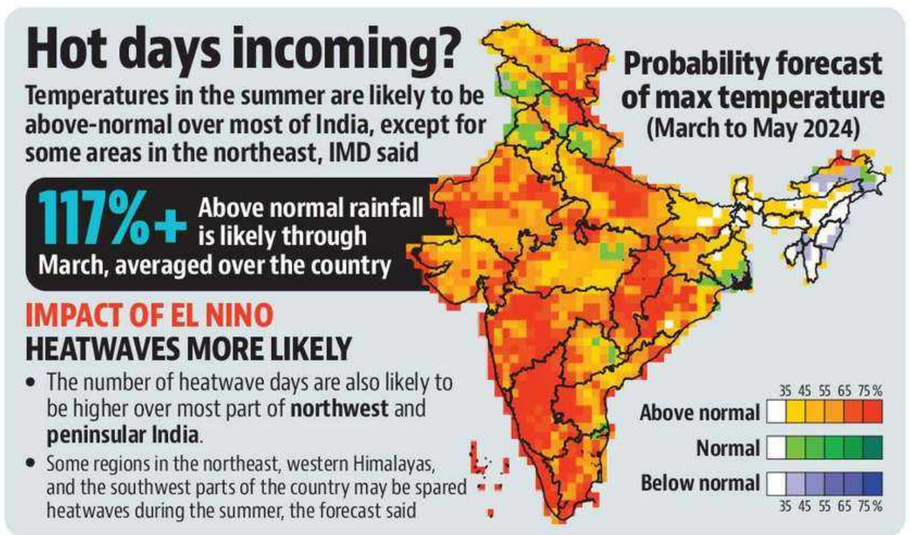

BLAST AT CAFE IN BENGALURU, IED WITH TIMER LIKELY CAUSE

Coovercolly Indresh
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BENGALURU: Nine people were wounded after a low-intensity bomb exploded in a busy restaurant in Bengaluru on Friday afternoon, prompting a multi-agency probe with preliminary investigations zeroing in on a man that left an unidentified bag near the cash counter.

Police officials said that they have recovered a battery and a timer from the blast site, indicating that the explosion was premeditated, but added that no arrests have been made so far.

Visuals from the immediate aftermath of the blast showed panicked people running away from the explosion site, sheltering themselves from shattered glass, strewn furniture, smoke and fire.

Alok Mohan, Karnataka director general of police (DGP) said that the blast left nine people injured. "Forensic teams have collected evidence from the ground and we have also seized CCTV footage from the explosion site. It appears to be a low-intensity crude bomb blast."

A popular eating joint, the cafe records a heavy rush of customers, particularly during the lunch hours.

→P9

Revised NPS for state govt staff

Surendra P Gangan
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MUMBAI: The state government on Friday announced a revised version of the National Pension Scheme (NPS) for those who joined service on or after November 1, 2005, which contains several provisions similar to the old pension scheme (OPS). Beneficiaries of the NPS will be entitled to a pension amounting to 50% of the last drawn basic salary plus the dearness allowance, while 60% of this amount can be drawn as family pension. The government will also bear the losses for market-linked investments in the NPS.

Chief minister Eknath Shinde unveiled the revised version of the NPS on the concluding day of the interim budget session at the state legislature on Friday, saying it would benefit 8.27 lakh out of 13.45 lakh government and semi-government employees.

"The state government has been very sensitive about the issue as it is important for a dignified retired life. By announcing the revised NPS, we have kept our word given to the employees," said Shinde. Government employees in the state had gone on strike during the budget session last year demanding reinstatement of the OPS and their strike was suspended following assurances from authorities.

The latest revisions in the NPS are based on the recommendations of a committee of experts led by retired IAS officer KP Bakshi. In February this

continued on →11

CM Eknath Shinde made the announcement on the last day of the interim budget session on Friday. ANSHUMAN POYREKAR/HT PHOTO

AT ₹1 LAKH CRORE, STATE TOPS IN FDI: DY CM TO COUNCIL

MUMBAI: Maharashtra had secured the top position in foreign direct investment (FDI) with projects worth ₹1,00,112 crore between April and December last year while Gujarat stood at a distant second with ₹48,410 crore, said deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis in the legislative council on Friday.

→P7

SHOPPING MALL INFERNO KILLS 46 IN B'DESH CAPITAL

DHAKA: A six-storey shopping mall that caught fire in the Bangladeshi capital had no fire exits, the country's prime minister said Friday, as the death toll climbed to at least 46 and rescuers continued to search for more victims. The fire started late Thursday in a restaurant on the first floor of the Green Cozy Cottage Shopping Mall in downtown Dhaka.

→P13

GOOGLE REMOVES INDIAN APPS OVER BILLING POLICY

NEW DELHI: Google started delisting apps from Indian developers from its Play Store on Friday for not complying with its payments policy, beginning with Shaadi, TrulyMadly, Bharat Matrimony's Muslim and Christian matrimony, and Alt Balaji's Altt.

→P16

GST COLLECTION IN FEB ₹1.68 LAKH CR, 4TH HIGHEST SO FAR

NEW DELHI: Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues surpassed Rs 1.68 lakh crore in February, a 12.5% year-on-year increase, coming in as the fourth highest in 79 months since the new tax regime was rolled out in July 2017, highlighting robust growth of the economy.

→P16

Another Himachal twist as minister meets rebel MLAs

Gaurav Bisht
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VIKRAMADITYA SINGH'S MEETING WITH THE REBELS RESULTED IN SPECULATION THAT HE HAD BROKEN RANKS AND JOINED UP WITH THEM

SHIMLA: A day after the Congress government in Himachal Pradesh led by Sukhwinder Singh Sukhu appeared to have staved off a crisis, the fragility of his leadership was exposed in a series of dramatic twists as PWD minister Vikramaditya Singh travelled to Panchkula to meet the party's six rebel legislators, and then made his way to New Delhi amid speculation that he may be open to switching sides to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

The speculation was fuelled further with Congress state president Pratibha Singh, the wife of the six-time chief minister Virbhadhra Singh and Vikramaditya Singh's mother, saying that there were a "lot of things that remain to be done in the Congress" and the the BJP was "working better" than the Congress.

Chief minister Sukhu, too, appeared to send mixed messages — he first said that Vikramaditya was acting as a Congress emissary to bring the rebels back into the fold, but then but attacked the six MLAs for "betraying" the party and "selling their souls".

The crisis began on Tuesday after the Congress slumped to an embarrassing defeat in the Rajya Sabha polls, with party candidate Abhishek Singhvi receiving 34 votes after six Congress lawmakers and three independents previously backing the government supported BJP nominee Harsh Mahajan, who also received 34 votes. The tie was then resolved by a draw of lots, which favoured Mahajan.

The defeat fuelled speculation that the Sukhu government was reduced to a minority, sparking calls for his resignation. But speaker Kuldeep Pathania disqualified the six rebel MLAs on Thursday for defying the party whip during a discussion on a finance bill, giving the Congress some breathing room by bringing down the total numbers in the house to 62 members.

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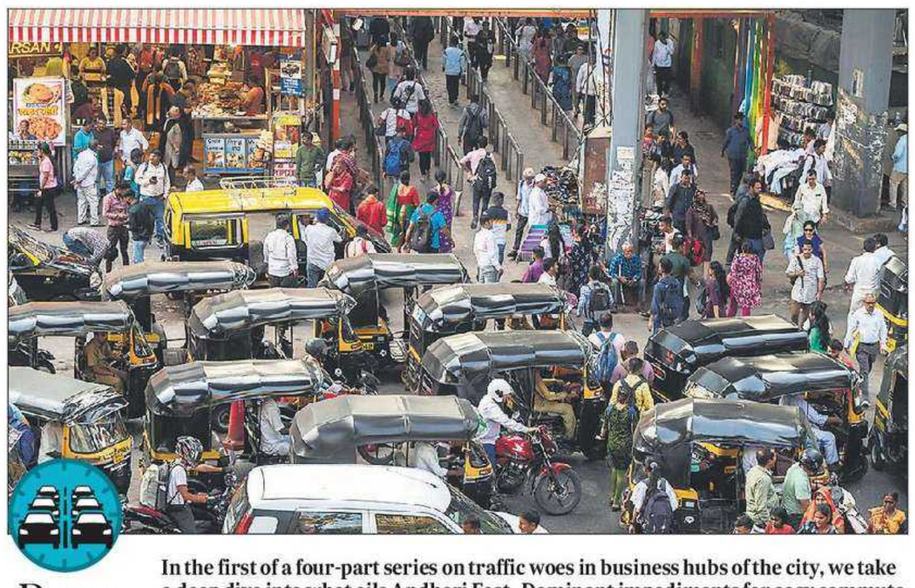
The woes of Andheri East commuters



RUSH HOUR

In the first of a four-part series on traffic woes in business hubs of the city, we take a deep dive into what ails Andheri East. Dominant impediments for easy commute here are lack of last mile connectivity, poor planning leading to traffic snarls and unruly autorickshaw drivers. Related story on page 6 SATISH BATE/HT PHOTO

{ MOB CASE } NATIONWIDE RAIDS

ED freezes assets worth ₹580 crore of hawala operator

Abhishek Sharan
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MUMBAI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen security holdings worth ₹580.78 crore, belonging to a Dubai-based hawala trader, Hari Shankar Tibrewal, who the agency has identified as the third partner of the wanted promoters of Mahadev Online Book (MOB), an illegal online betting platform, the agency said on Friday.

This followed recent country-wide searches at Tibrewal's known premises and at the premises of his associates at 17 locations in cities including Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, Indore, Delhi and Gurugram, as reported by HT on Thursday.

"Security holdings worth ₹580.78 crore in the name of the entities beneficially owned by Hari Shankar Tibrewal have been frozen by ED under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act," ED sources said. As part of the crackdown on the MOB-linked money-laundering networks, the ED has also retrieved cash of ₹1.86 crore and valuables worth ₹1.78 crore.

→P6

Modi takes on West Bengal govt from Mamata's turf over Sandeshkhali

PM Narendra Modi

KOLKATA: The torment of women in Sandeshkhali has shaken the nation, and people in Bengal should use their votes to take revenge against the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC), Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday at a BJP rally at Arambagh in Hooghly district as he set the tone for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections with a scathing attacking on the ruling party in the state.

Modi spoke at length on Sandeshkhali, in North 24 Parganas district, which has been on the boil since February following allegations of harassment, sexual assault and land grab by villagers against local TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan and his aides. Shahjahan was arrested on Thursday after being on the run for 55 days.

Without naming Shahjahan or his associates, Modi said: "The way TMC has treated the sisters of Sandeshkhali has made the nation shiver. People are angry."

→P10

BMC TO MOVE ALL UTILITY LINES TO SIDES OF ROADS

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MUMBAI: To avoid digging up roads repeatedly, the BMC has decided to shift all utility lines including water, drainage, sewerage, storm water drains, internet and optical fibre cables and gas lines to ducts located at the sides of roads.

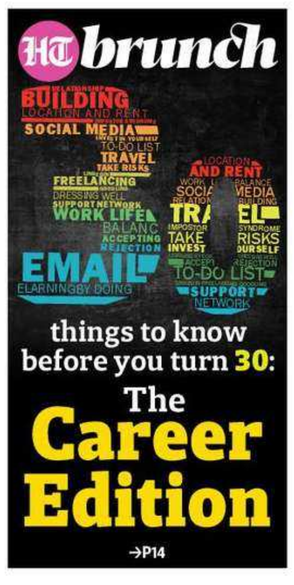
The civic body has issued a set of 16 guidelines to this effect that are applicable from March 1.

Currently, all utility lines are laid under roads in a haphazard manner. "This will all change now – it will be made systematic," said an official from the BMC's roads department. The new guidelines, approved by municipal commissioner Iqbal Chahal on February 7, will be applicable for all roads where repair work is underway as well as in the future.

The guidelines also state that all utility lines must be placed when road concretisation or improvement is under way.

The civic body has conducted several meetings with gas companies, power companies and the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay to streamline utility lines under roads, said an official.

→P4



{ HUMAN TRAFFICKING } IN CUSTODY OF CHICAGO POLICE

'Dirty Harry' held two years after family froze on US-Canada border

Maulik Pathak
letters@hindustantimes.com

AHMEDABAD: The Chicago police have apprehended Harshkumar Ramanlal Patel, infamously known as "Dirty Harry", in connection with a disturbing human trafficking case involving four individuals from Dingucha village near Mehsana in Gujarat, who died in a blizzard while being illicitly transported to the US via Canada on January 19, 2022.

The discovery of the frozen corpses of Jagdish Baldevbhai Patel, his wife Vaishaliben, and their children Vihangi and Dharmik, near Emerson, Manitoba sent shockwaves across India and Canada. It highlighted the risks individuals are willing to take in pursuit of the elusive American dream. And it underlined the utter disregard with which human traffickers deal with those who want to illegally enter another country.

"Dirty Harry" was one such.

The United States District Court, northern district of Illinois, has brought grave charges against Patel, accusing him of "transportation of illegal aliens and conspir-

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The deaths highlights the risks people are willing to take in pursuit of the US dream.

ELDERLY BROTHERS BLUDGEONED TO DEATH IN PALGHAR

Pankaj S Raut
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MUMBAI: Two elderly brothers were bludgeoned to death on Thursday in Palghar district allegedly by a 30-year-old man from Bihar who appeared mentally ill. The accused smashed the heads of the two men with a spade-like tool and chased after a third person before escaping into the adjacent creek. He was arrested following a two-hour search by around 400 villagers and policemen.

The incident occurred in Kudan village near Tarapur.

→P5

Govt signs ₹39K-cr of deals for defence buys

Rahul Singh
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NEW DELHI: In a big push for the ongoing self-reliance drive in the defence manufacturing sector, the defence ministry on Friday signed five contracts worth ₹39,125 crore for BrahMos missiles, ship-borne Brahmos systems, close-in weapon systems, high-power radars, and aero engines for MiG-29 fighter planes.

"These deals will further strengthen indigenous capabilities, save foreign exchange and reduce dependency on foreign origin equipment manufacturers," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Two of the deals were signed with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited -- one for around 200 BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles worth ₹19,518.65 crore, and the other for ship-borne BrahMos systems worth ₹988.07 crore. The Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved these deals recently to boost India's naval power. The BrahMos missile has been developed by India and Russia.

→P10

PAGE ONE PLUS

From HT Archives

RAJENDRA PRASAD DIES, 1963

For 12 years, formative and crucial to modern India's development, Dr Rajendra Prasad served the nation with distinction. HT ARCHIVE

The death of first President plunges nation into grief

Thousands of mourners gathered in Patna to pay final respects to Dr Rajendra Prasad

HT Correspondent

"There should be at least one man," Gandhiji once said, "who does not hesitate to take the cup of poison when I hand it to him. He is Dr Rajendra Prasad."

It was in the fitness of things that the man that Gandhiji himself chose as nearest to him should have been offered the highest office in India.

For 12 years, formative and crucial to modern India's development, Dr Rajendra Prasad served the nation with distinction. Bidding him farewell at Ramlila Grounds, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru described him as the true symbol of the India of today.

Prasad died at his Sadaquat Ashram residence in Patna on February 28, 1963. He was 78.

The government announced state mourning for one week, as flags on all government buildings flew at half-mast.

Prasad's funeral was attended by about 200,000 people as his eldest son, Mritunjay Prasad, cremated the former President on the banks of the Ganga at Bans Ghat in West Patna. Those present at the state funeral included President S Radhakrishnan, home minister Lal Bahadur Shastri, communications minister Jagjiwan Ram, health minister Sushila Nayyar, Jayaprakash Narayan, and Bihar chief minister Binodanand Jha.

At the ghat, wreaths were placed on the bier on behalf of the Government of India and PM Nehru by Union cabinet secretary SS Khera, along with wreaths from the three wings of the armed services, and Congress president Damodaram Sanjivayya.

The body of the departed leader was kept on a raised platform in the mango grove under a Tricoloured canopy to enable the people to pay homage. It was under this mango grove that the ashram residents assembled to bid him farewell on his election as president 13 years ago, and it was under his grove that they welcomed him back home after he relinquished his office in May last year.

The funeral procession started from the Ashram at 10am. It was headed by Congress Seva Dal volunteers, followed by 30 officers and men of the Bihar Regiment moving ahead of the cortege.

Thousands of mourners joined the procession. Those aboard the truck carrying the bier included Shastri, Jagjivan Ram, Narayan and his wife Prabhawati Devi, Mritunjay Prasad and Anand Mohan Sahay of the Azad Hind Fouj.

Over 1,000 officers and men of the Bihar Regiment and the Bihar Police wearing black bands flanked the cortege with reversed arms.

Large crowds jammed the Dinapur-Patna road along which the procession moved from the Ashram forcing it to proceed at a snail's pace. The roofs and balconies of all the buildings flanking the road were crowded with men, women and children, who bowed in reverence and showered flowers.

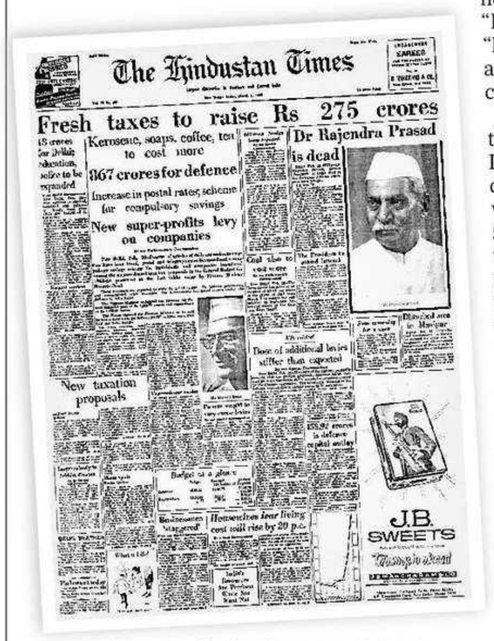
A blazing sun beat mercilessly on the mourners while the flower-bedecked cortege, emitting light clouds of smoke from burning joss-sticks and incense, turned along Boring Road and moved towards the Martyrs' Memorial in front of the Secretariat.

Thousands of people who thronged the route, and crammed housetops and balconies cried "Rajendra Babu Amar Ho", "Rajendra Babu Zindabad", and showered flowers on the cortege.

From the Gandhi Maidan, the procession turned back to Dinapur-Patna Road and proceeded towards Bans Ghat, where a crowd of about 50,000, comprising many who had come from the neighbouring districts by train and boat, was already waiting to have a last "darshan" of the departed leader.

The bier was carried on the shoulders of army men to the pyre made of sandalwood and "kush" (sacred grass) sprinkled with ghee. Platoons of the Bihar Regiment reversed and rested on arms and observed two minutes' silence as buglers sounded the last post. Three volleys were fired by sections of the Bihar Regiment as Mritunjay Prasad lit the funeral pyre.

#LEGACY OF TRUTH


The Hindustan Times

Fresh taxes to raise Rs 275 crores

Kerosene, soaps, coffee, tea to cost more

867 crores for defence

Increase in postal rates; scheme for compulsory savings

New super-profits levy on companies

Dr Rajendra Prasad is dead

New taxation proposals

J.B. SWEETS

HT put the news of Rajendra Prasad's death on its front page in the edition of March 1, 1963.

{ WORLD } RUSSIAN OPPN LEADER

Thousands attend as Navalny laid to rest

Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny was laid to rest on Friday in a Moscow cemetery where thousands of mourners had gathered, two weeks after he died in an Arctic prison. The anti-corruption campaigner, President Vladimir Putin's most prominent opponent, was buried after a brief candle-lit funeral service in a nearby church. At the cemetery, Navalny's coffin was lowered into the grave to the soundtrack of the film "Terminator 2" which his spokeswoman said was the 47-year-old's favourite movie. Thousands then filed past the grave to pay their last respects. →P13

{ MY INDIA } GAZA CITY KILLINGS

India: Loss of civilian lives a cause for 'extreme concern'

India on Friday expressed deep shock at the killing of more than 100 people in firing by Israeli troops on a crowd that gathered near aid trucks in Gaza city, describing the loss of civilian lives as a cause for "extreme concern". The external affairs ministry reiterated India's call for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid as international leaders and aid groups said the latest killings reinforced the need for an immediate halt to Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip. "We are deeply shocked at the loss of lives in Northern Gaza [on Thursday] during delivery of humanitarian assistance," the external affairs ministry said. →P8

{ BUSINESS } MONEY LAUNDERING LAW

FIU slaps ₹5.49-cr penalty on Paytm

In fresh trouble for Paytm Payments Bank, the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU) has slapped a penalty of ₹5.49 crore on the digital bank for violating anti-money laundering law, the finance ministry said on Friday. The Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) has been in trouble after the Reserve Bank directed it to stop accepting fresh deposits from customers with effect from February 29 —a deadline which was later extended to March 15. The finance ministry said FIU-India had initiated a review of Paytm Payments Bank on receipt of specific information from law enforcement agencies. PTI

{ BULL RUN } RECORD STREAK

Stock markets touch new highs

Markets soared to new highs on Friday as it cheered India's strong GDP figures for the quarter. Both major indices – BSE Sensex and NSE Nifty 50 – hit lifetime highs. A look at why markets are upbeat. By Sreedev Krishnakumar

Benchmarks setting new benchmarks

The benchmark BSE Sensex rallied more than 1,245 points to hit its lifetime high of 73,745.35. Similarly, NIFTY50 also went up over 355 points to reach its all-time high of 22,338.75. This rally comes on the top of the release of GDP figures for the third quarter of the current financial year. India's real GDP grew 8.4% year-on-year in the quarter ending December, beating all market estimates.

Soaring sectors

Out of the 13 sectoral market indices, 10 logged major gains on Friday. This includes sectors such as auto, bank, energy, metal, and oil and gas companies. However, media and healthcare stocks saw a dip. In the past year, the biggest five sectors that have seen the most gains in absolute terms are energy, auto, pharma, IT, and public sector enterprises.

Sectoral Indices that have grown the highest this year

	Change	Change %
NIFTYENERGY	6239.05	18.64
NIFTYAUTO	2253.75	12.11
NIFTYIT	2001.05	5.63
NIFTYPHARMA	1990.5	11.83
NIFTYPSE	1492	18.99

Buoyed further by institutional investors

The rally in the markets were aided by foreign and domestic institutional investors, with both turning net buyers with their trade activity crossing ₹3,943 crore during the day. Foreign investors had also bought as much as ₹3568 crore on Thursday, while domestic institutional investors sold ₹230 crore. After aggressively selling Indian stocks in January, foreign investors had once again become net buyers in February, albeit modestly. Historically, foreign investors have mostly been net buyers during March.

{ ON THE GROUND } WHAT KUSHTI MEANS

In Kolhapur's famous mud pits, the art of wrestling continues to enthral

Sharda Ugra

KOLHAPUR: Ever heard a Maharani cheer? Amruta Pujari, locked in combat, may not have been able to, but Sanyogeeta Raje, red silk saree draped over her head, was invested, involved and audible. "Come on, Amruta!" she went , eyes glued to the centre of the maidan where the final rounds of the Swarajya Kesari 2024 were taking place.

There are few sports and places where this could have been possible. But if there is an indigenous Indian sport awash with both royal and commoner support in a region, it has to be kusti/kushti or traditional wrestling in Kolhapur.

North India may have its dangals with mind-boggling prize money, but if it comes to a contest over where mitti (mud) wrestling still matters, the residents of Kolhapur and Maharashtra believe they can take down any rival.

For the past year, the news out of Indian wrestling has been terrible and depressing, but what I watched along with Sanyogeeta Raje and maybe 40,000 to 50,000 people proved that there are many interpretations of Indian wrestling. Swarajya Kesari 2024, a seven-hour wrestling competition featured 144 men's bouts – in seven weight categories from "20 to 30kg" all the way to "100kg plus" – and six women's bouts.

It was watched by a mostly male crowd packed shoulder to shoulder, tens of thousands on an earthen bleachers curving around the vast red-mud circular centre of one of India's truly iconic sporting venues, Kolhapur's Khasbag Maidan. The Maidan was completed more than a hundred years ago in 1915 on orders from a king well ahead of his time, Kolhapur's legendary and loved Shahu Maharaj.

The event this February was held to mark the birthday of Shahu's great grandson Sambhaji Raje, husband of Sanyogeeta Raje, former Rajya Sabha MP and head of the Kolhapur royal family. Large banners and the voluble PA commentators reminded us that 2024 is also 150 years since Shahu's birth and the 350th anniversary of the mighty Shivaji's coronation.

For Kolhapur locals, it was the first time in more than five years that Khasbag was packed, standing room only, the action visible even to the spectator furthest from the centre. The February evening was driven by much of the new – flashing lights, a hovering drone and fireworks – but a sense of something much older than anyone in around the maidan that night stirred just beneath the surface.

This was not wrestling as we understand it off TV, with neat circles on blue mats, regulated draws, sometimes bewildering points scoring and presumptuous medal-worthiness. This was the wrestling of the medieval miniature and the Grecian frieze. The maidan accommodated at least four simultaneous bouts with no time or round constraints. When one wrestler pinned the other to the mud, the round ended, whether it took five seconds or five minutes. Only when Amruta couldn't break through her rival Tannu's defence after 15 minutes did the judges stop the bout, announce a tie and share the prize.

If there's an indigenous sport awash with both royal and commoner support in a region, it has to be kushti in Kolhapur. PHOTO: SHARDA UGRA

Intermittently, a music troupe with dhols and cymbals walked around the periphery of the ring in celebration. Sometimes marking the entry of important dignitaries or when the big star fighters who would soon be competing, sometimes just because. If you were a big cheese, then the distinctive, curved tutari, Maharashtra's trumpet, got involved. All this even as commentators rattled on enthusiastically or called new fighters onto the centre.

On the event poster, each of the 300 wrestlers' name was prefixed with the Devnagari letter Pe. For pehelwan, like a title of honour.

Matin Shaikh a former wrestler who quit the sport after a shoulder injury before working as a journalist was the ideal guide for uninformed visitors like me. Each wrestler from the 20-30kg kids, Matin said, up to the level just below the 100kg plus grandees would receive prize money, in an 80-20 winner-loser split – another Shahu introduction to ensure that everyone went home with something. The top wrestlers would pick up anything between ₹1-1.5 lakh each, the winner being awarded a silver mace. Matin's maternal uncle pehelwan Aslam Kazi, he told me, had 51 of those at home. Two wrestlers from Iran competed with Maharashtra's best, and Asian Games gold medallist Satpal Singh was chief guest, exhorting Kolhapur's wrestlers to win India's first Olympic gold in the sport.

Maharashtra wrestlers come from farmer or farm labourer families. The sport's allure for them, like the wrestling we watched that night, was outside familiar form. Matin, currently Shivaji University PhD scholar in contemporary politics, says, "We have a lot of good wrestlers, a lot of potential but everyone's goal is to win the Maharahstra Kesari and then stop wrestling." Post their wrestling lives , they return to their villages or start small businesses.

If not a government job or the glory, what's the draw? "Wrestling is in our DNA," Matin says. "Our fathers, grandfathers, someone in our gharaana/family has been a wrestler. Every family believes it is mandatory that at least one boy from that house should be a wrestler, even if only for five or six years, but that they should compete." The story about a village with a wrestler in every home he says, is true: Amashi is 20km west of Kolhapur.

The women's wrestling ecosystem in Maharashtra's, much newer, kicked off only post the 2010 CWG. Matin tells of Kaushalya Wagh of Sangli district who wrestled with boys in competition as there was no other women to fight. She opened a wrestling school which was destroyed by a monsoon storm and there's been no news of it since.

Her successors proliferate in wrestling centres around Maharashtra, and unlike the men only train on mats. There's the the non-residential Sadashivrao Mandalik National Wrestling SAI Centre in a town called Murgud. Its coach Dada Lavate then built a hostel for girls on his own initiative where 40 of its 55 female trainees currently live. Lavate's most celebrated female trainee at the moment?

Amruta Pujari, winner of the Maharashtra Kesari women's title in December 2023. The fighter being cheered on Sanyogeetaraje.

In Kolhapur's wrestling, everyone's connected.

PICK OF THE DAY

Staycation a while.
IT MATTERS WHERE YOU STAY.™
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UNSEASONAL RAIN IN PARTS OF CITY; NO RESPITE FROM HEAT

HT Correspondent
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MUMBAI: The city woke up to a bout of short spells of unexpected rain showers on Friday morning in areas like Byculla and Dadar to Borivali, Malad, Kandivali, Santacruz, Andheri, Jogeshwari, and more.

Sunil Kamble, deputy director general, India Meteorological Department, said the reason behind the unseasonal shower was a trough, but no more rain is expected in Mumbai for the next 48 hours. The Colaba observatory recorded 3mm of rain, with Santacruz recording none. "This was due to the ununiform variation of areas where it rained," said Kamble. The rains raised the humidity, reaching 88% in the morning at Colaba and 64% at Santacruz.

"The maximum temperature will continue to be in the range of 34 to 35 degrees Celsius," said Kamble, giving no sign of respite from the heat.

Sena MLAs 'clash' in assembly

Excise min dismisses reports of assault as rumours; claims MLAs Thorave and Bhuse were speaking to each other loudly

Yogesh Naik and Saurabha Kulshrestha
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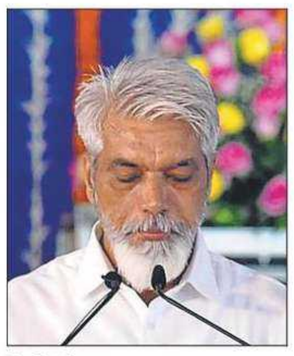
Mumbai: Two legislators of the Eknath Shinde-led Shiv Sena – Karjat MLA Mahendra Thorave and Malegaon Outer MLA and minister Dada Bhuse – had a heated altercation in the outer lobby of the state assembly on Friday before they were pacified by excise minister Shambhuraj Desai, also from the Shiv Sena. Some reports indicated that the two leaders clashed and manhandled each other, but Desai dismissed these as rumours and claimed they were only speaking to each other in loud voices. The legislative council was adjourned for an hour after the incident as opposition members demanded a clarification from the government.

"Thorave charged towards Bhuse, and that too in the lobby of the assembly. This is shameful and we condemn it," state Congress president Nana Patole told reporters. NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) MLA Jitendra Awhad also referred to the incident as shameful while his fellow MLA Jayant Patil wondered if there was 'gangwar' in the state legislature.

Raising the issue in the assembly, Patil said, "We learnt from media reports that there was a skirmish between minister Dada Bhuse and MLA Mahendra Thorave in the lobby of the state assembly. The house should be informed if it is is true or not."

In the upper house, leader of Opposition Ambadas Danve said, "Clash between two members of the Shiv Sena in the lobby is a serious issue and the state government should give a clarification in this matter."



Dada Bhuse

Mahendra Thorave

Leaders from the ruling alliance, however, denied allegations of assault and said the two MLAs were discussing some dispute related to work. Desai from the Shiv Sena) who intervened in the matter said, "What proof does media have on the manhandling? Do they have CCTV grabs? I was there when incident happened. There was a dialogue between a minister and an MLA. They were only speaking loudly and Thorave was only presenting his side."

In similar vein, Shiv Sena MLA from Thane Pratap Sarnaik said, "They did not have a dispute as such. Thorve wanted his work to be done before the code of conduct is enforced and was talking to Bhuse."

Taking cognisance of the matter, deputy chairperson of the legislative council Neelam Gorhe said that she would seek information about the incident. But the opposition was not satisfied and demanded a clarification from government. This led to a verbal fight between Gorhe and the opposition members and the council was adjourned for an hour.

Later, when the house resumed, Dada Bhuse was in attendance. So Danve demanded that he himself should explain the details of incident. But Gorhe denied the plea and said that a detailed statement would be given in house late afternoon.

At 3pm, Desai claimed that there was no clash between the MLAs, but just a heated argument. "Some people want to create a picture that there are disputes among MLAs in the Shinde camp. But this is not true. We are all united and will remain so," said Desai.

Gorhe claimed that CCTV footage of the incident was not available wiring work was underway in the premises as per information shared by the legislative secretariat. deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis said the media should report on incidents in the legislature with more caution.

Currently, all utility lines are laid in a haphazard manner and roads are dug up during repairs and maintenance. HT PHOTO

BMC to shift all utility lines to sides of roads

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MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) has decided to shift all utility lines including water, drainage, sewerage, storm water drains, internet and optical fibre cables and gas lines to ducts located at the sides of roads. The civic body has issued a set of 16 guidelines to this effect that are applicable from March 1. The move is expected to negate the need for continuous and repeated digging of roads for repairing or laying new utility lines.

Currently, all utility lines are laid under roads in a haphazard manner. "This will all change now – it will be made systematic," said an official from the BMC's roads department. The new guidelines, approved by municipal commissioner Iqbal Chahal on February 7, will be applicable for all roads where concretisation work is underway as well as in future.

The guidelines bar the use of reinforced cement concrete (RCC) hume pipes, used for laying water and sewerage lines, under roads. Such pipes sink deep into the ground and cause problems, and they will be replaced by chambers measuring lxl metre at every 50 metres during road improvement works, said an official. This will help club multiple connections with the stub water mains, which will be located at along the boundaries of plots or the edges of the road, he added.

For power and communication lines, a square or rectangular RCC cross duct will be placed alongside roads, depending on where there is space. For roads that are less than 40 metres wide, the duct will have a width of 1 metre, while for wider roads, it will be 1.5 metre. Whenever roads are improved and concretised, all power and communication utility lines will be shifted to the duct. This will allow for inspection and repairs without digging roads, said officials. In case of shortage of space in the ducts, HDPE (high density polyethylene) pipes would be allowed, they said.

Only gas pipelines will be exempted from the duct as they require a cool environment, surrounded by soil, the official explained. While existing lines will continue the way they are, gas lines will be laid in advance in future to prevent excavation of roads for their maintenance.

The guidelines state that all utility lines must be placed when road concretisation or improvement is underway. For this, the building proposals department would send a road-wise list of all proposed buildings and their future potential, so the hydraulic department and sewerage planning department can calculate the size of water and sewerage connections needed. They have been asked to inform the roads department so necessary arrangements can be made on roads.

The civic body as conducted several meetings with gas companies, power companies and the Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay to streamline utility lines under roads, said an official.

Ramesh Deshmukh, vice president of the Municipal Engineers Association, said the guidelines were not new. "They were introduced way back when Sadashiv S Tinaikar was the municipal commissioner between 1986 to 1990, when he first started the concretisation of roads. But the guidelines were not being followed, they were just on paper."

Drug trafficker's ₹5-cr assets attached by ED

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MUMBAI: The Enforcement Directorate's (ED) Mumbai unit has provisionally attached immovable and movable assets valued at ₹5.37 crore linked to alleged narcotics trafficker Aliasgar Shirazi and others as part of its money-laundering investigation against the purported drug syndicate.

The attached assets include seven immovable properties, such as flats, shops, and land plots, worth approximately ₹5 crore, belonging to Shirazi and few others. Movable properties amounting to ₹36.81 lakh, in the form of fixed deposits and bank accounts held by two individuals and M/s Hustlers Hospitality Private Limited, were also seized.

The ED estimated proceeds of crime in the case to be around ₹44.50 crore. Shirazi was arrested on January 5 by the ED in connection with a money laundering probe related to the seizure of synthetic narcotic Ketamine, valued at around ₹7.87 crore, by the Mumbai police in March the previous year. Currently in judicial custody, Shirazi's arrest followed a case registered by the Jogeshwari police station under various sections of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985, and the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940.

ED's probe revealed an alleged drug syndicate operated by Shirazi, involving telecommunication firms, logistics companies, consultancies, and dummy pharmaceutical entities. The syndicate stands accused of trafficking opioids from India to foreign nations and funneling the profits back to India through multiple channels. Indian call centres received opioid orders from the US and UK, sourced from dummy pharmaceutical companies and shipped overseas via logistics firms.

The syndicate employed a network of logistics and consultancy firms to launder proceeds from drug sales. US-based companies set up by the syndicate operated payment gateways utilised for transferring profits from illegal opioid sales in the US to India. Cash deposits in accounts linked to Shirazi and associates were identified as proceeds from illegal drug sales.

BMC takes action against toxic smelters

HT IMPACT

Following an HT report highlighting over 80 illegal gold and silver smelting chimneys in Bhuleshwar emitting toxic fumes, the BMC's S Ward took action on February 29, closing 12 of them. The Bhuleshwar Residents' Association alleged that over 200 such chimneys are operating in rented or sublet establishments without proper clearance. These smelting activities release acids and air pollutants, posing health risks to residents. Regardless of closures, residents claim that furnaces restart as units remain untouched, perpetuating the issue.

Reay Road cable-stayed bridge likely by May

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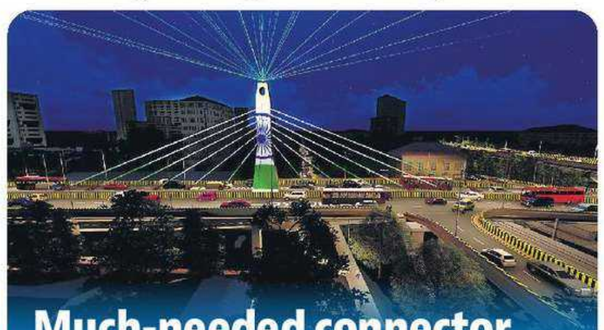
MUMBAI: The Reay Road cable-stayed road over bridge, a crucial east-west connector of the city and the second cable-stayed bridge in Mumbai after the Bandra Worli Sea Link (BWSL), is likely to be ready by May 2024, two months later from its previous deadline of March.

The Maharashtra Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation (MRIDC), also called Maharail, has completed 70% of the work on its construction and is currently in talks with the Central Railway for taking blocks in March.

Maharail officials said foundation work is complete while launching the girder and superstructure work is in progress. "As of date, about 70% of work for this cable-stayed ROB is complete. If all right of way (ROW) is cleared, we will by May finish constructing the bridge, which started in February 2022," said an MRIDC official. Right of way (ROW) is the legal right to go first across a road, before other road users.

Sources said Mumbai Port Trust (MbPT) and Central Railway have to relocate one ticket counter and 15 GI sheds of workshop; 130 huts are cleared.



The Reay Road Cable Stayed ROB has a centre pylon system, wherein stay cables are erected on the central spine girder of the bridge. MahaRail has designed the cable-stayed ROB with limited piers and less foundation, with the help of cable-stayed cables. The individual segments are prefabricated at the fabrication yard and are transported to the site for erection while for the straight alignment, a simple steel girder system is adopted for easy and speedy construction.

"The new cable-stayed ROB with a longer span minimises infringements with underground utilities. It will have six lanes with footpaths for pedestrians and smooth traffic," said an official from MRIDC.

The bridge structures will allow traffic movement through the underpass of Barrister Nath Pai Road and will maintain the required vertical clearance for passing vehicles under the eastern freeway. Additionally, MRIDC has designed architectural LED lighting on the proposed bridge which will enhance the aesthetic appeal.

BMC WITHDRAWS 10% WATER CUT AS STATE GOVT ASSURES SUPPLY

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MUMBAI: The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday announced that the proposal for a 10% water cut in Mumbai has been withdrawn, and the city will continue to receive regular water post-March 5.

This move came after the state assured to fill the deficiency of water from its reserve stock, said the officials.

As of Friday, lake levels supplying water to the city stood at 42.67% of overall useful stock.

Civic officials said the levels were 5.58% less than the required water stock. "Over the last two years, Mumbai has experienced active monsoon until October 15, 2023. However, this year, there was no rain in October resulting in a water stock deficiency of about 5.58% at the source as of today (Friday) as compared to the previous year." (Sic.) said the civic body.

"The Government of Maharashtra has assured the release of deficient water stock from the carryover quantity of the Bhatsa and Vaitarna basins. Hence BMC has decided not to impose any water cut in Mumbai," read the press statement.

Kolivery village reels under severe water shortage despite 'partial' cut

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MUMBAI: Ever since a fire erupted at one of the transformers of Pise water pumping station on February 26, one of the major nodal centres for water supply in the city, hundreds of residents in Kalina's Kolivery Village are living without water supply.

This is despite the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation's (BMC) announcement of a partial water cut in the western suburbs and a 15% water cut till March 5. Civic officials cited 'low water pressure' as the reason for the water cut.

Locals said they have had to rely on some water wells in the area to fetch water or purchase packaged drinking water. Anna Remedios, 61, said she is tired of going around the neighbourhood asking for water for daily usage. "I am using an Indian-style toilet because it uses less water," she said.

Another resident, Gibson Rodrigues, is using all possible means to reach out to the authorities. "From Chief Minister's portal to Aaple Sarkar to BMC, I am writing to everyone possible," he said, explaining that all their complaints ultimately reach the engineers of the ward, who told them there is low pressure and therefore can't do much.

"The problem has been on and off since last September but every time there is even a 10% water cut, our village is out of water. We were told there will be a new pipeline laid down from January but even that work has not started." said Rodrigues.

Residents also explained that even if the water comes, it is anywhere between 2am to 6am, so people keep waiting for the water to arrive. "We are having sleepless nights for water to come and if water doesn't come by 6am, we fetch it from a nearby well," said a resident.

Locals said they had to rely on some wells or purchase packaged drinking water. SATISH BATE/HT PHOTOS

Residents reported staying up all night to fill their share of water as the supply is irregular.

Donald Rodrigues, a resident of the village said he has to go to his relative's or friend's homes to bathe or wash clothes. "We are relying on packaged drinking water. My parents are senior citizens and I have a one-and-half-year-old daughter. How many times do I have to keep going to people for basic needs like using the washroom or taking a bath," said Donald.

An official from the water works department of the western suburbs agreed to the problem and said that he had instructed the engineer from the ward to find a resolution immediately.

"I have received many complaints and I have asked the engineers to tweak the timings or pressure. Areas at the fag end of the pipeline or at the slope are facing the problem. At Kolivery, there is no problem with the slope but water pressure is not enough. We will get this resolved."

On February 26, a transformer at BMC's Pise water pumping station caught fire, leading to no water in the majority of eastern suburbs and parts of Island City.

Western suburbs also faced the brunt with a 30% water cut from Monday night. As of Monday night, 10 of the 25 wards in the city were without water. By Tuesday morning, 50% of the water supply to the city was restored and by evening, 70%. BMC then announced that till March 5, there will be a 15% water cut across the city due to repair works in the transformer.

"The transformer is repaired and brought to the site. Work is going on to restore it. 15% water cut will continue till March 5." said Purushottam Malwade, Hydraulic Engineer, BMC.

{ TENDERS TO BE FINALISED BY JUNE }

17 RTOs to have computerised driving test tracks

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MUMBAI: The practice of manually testing candidates for permanent driving licences will soon be a thing of the past as the transport department is planning to install computerised driving test tracks at 17 regional transport offices (RTOs), including the ones at Tardeo and Andheri.

"We will finalise tenders by June or July after which work orders will be issued," Vivek Bhimanwar, Maharashtra transport commissioner, said on the occasion of Motor Transport Day on Friday. These computerised test tracks will have softwares that will track the vehicle being driven by the candidate, without manual intervention. "The system will be fed with information necessary to conduct an examination of the candidate. Even the minutest of the mistakes will be noted which naked eyes could miss," an RTO official said.

These computerised tracks are likely to be in the shape of an 'eight' that will analyse the driving around turns, speed and braking and other parameters.

By next week, the department will also call tenders for automated vehicle testing centres. These centres will be set up at 24 RTOs and now they are in the last stage of technical scrutiny. The automated centres will test the physical fitness of a vehicle.

There are 51 RTOs and deputy RTOs in Maharashtra.

Designer booked for shoddy ₹19 cr interiors in ₹153-crore flat in Worli

The Aggarwal family had bought a flat in Worli's Oberoi Three Sixty West in December 2020. RAJU SHINDE/HT PHOTO

EOW registers a case against accused who took family to Milan, Amsterdam to check out marble, furniture

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MUMBAI: A well-known interior designer, who allegedly charged a Worli-based businessman ₹19 crore for using marbles and furniture from Milan and Amsterdam in his luxury flat in Oberoi Three Sixty West but instead used low-quality material and left the work midway, was booked on Friday, police said.

According to the police, Madhav Prasad Satyanarayan Aggarwal and Sushma Madhav Prasad Aggarwal, directors of Fujizakura Private Limited in Prabhadevi, had bought the flat in December 2020 for ₹153 crore and Ishita, their daughter, was supposed to stay in it. Initially, it was decided that interior architects and designers, Neterwala and Aibara, would be hired for the job, said an Economic Offences Wing (EOW) officer.

Ishita, through a common friend, met Krish Kothari, who runs Beauvue Stiledivita Private Limited in Prabhadevi. She later met him along with her father when Kothari showed them samples of marble and furniture of foreign brands, the officer said. "He even told them he could give bills for everything. An agreement was signed between them in April 2022."

Later, Kothari took Ishita and her sister Priyanka to Milan and Amsterdam to check out the furniture and marble, and the expenses for the trip were borne by the company. In September 2022, Kothari submitted a bill of quantity of around ₹20 crore, specifying the quality and quantity of material.

> Later, he started asking for more time and claimed everything was customised and the orders were huge.
> **POLICE OFFICER**

"He told the Aggarwal family that work would be completed by June 2023, and if not, he would pay ₹16 lakh per month in fine for the delay. However, later he started asking for more time and claimed that everything was customised and the orders were huge. He even didn't allow them to see the flat," the police officer said.

In June, when the Aggarwals visited the flat they found that the material used was of inferior quality and not imported. The design differed from what was shown to them, and bills for only some of the expenses were submitted, the officer said. "As a lot of work was yet to be completed, Kothari returned around ₹1.28 crore to them."

Ashutosh Sharma, who works as project head in Fujizakura Private Limited, filed a complaint with the EOW of Mumbai police. The complainant claimed ₹19 crore was transferred to Kothari's bank account. While bills for payment of ₹9 crore to vendors, ₹3 crore as GST, and ₹94 lakh towards designing fees had been submitted, he had neither returned around ₹5.19 crore nor produced bills for the amount, the complaint said.

"We have registered a case against Kothari and his mother, Priya, under section 406 (criminal breach of trust) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code at Dadar police station," the EOW officer said.

'Mentally ill' man clubs two elderly brothers to death

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MUMBAI: Two elderly brothers were bludgeoned to death on Thursday evening in Palghar district allegedly by 30-year-old man from Bihar who appeared mentally ill. The accused smashed the heads of the two men with a spade-like tool and chased after a third person before escaping into the adjacent creek. He was arrested following a two-hour search by around 400 villagers and policemen.

The incident occurred in Kudan village near Tarapur, and the victims were identified as Mukund Patil, 92, and his younger brother Bhimrao Patil, 84. Bhimrao was assaulted by the accused in the farm, located around half a kilometre away from their residence. When he did not return even an hour after the farm labourers had gone back home, Mukund stepped out to check on him, only to be assaulted by the accused. The attack was so brutal that both their heads were completely smashed, said police officials.

According to the police, at around 7pm, Jitesh Patil, who was jogging on the road leading to Mothe Kudan, spotted the accused with blood stains on his clothes. When he chased after Patil, the latter ran back to his house. He then tried breaking open the main door with the spade-like tool, while Patil's father took the backdoor route and grabbed the tool from him. The Patils tried to nab him, but he managed to slip away into the barren area around the adjacent Karankhadi creek.

The double murders came to light when villagers gathered and started searching for the accused. As the bodies of the two brothers were found at different spots, police suspect that the accused might have chased the 92-year-old Mukund for some distance and attacked him.

At around 9pm, after news about the incident went viral on social media, hundreds of villagers from Kudan and Mothe Kudan stepped out of their houses and began helping the police in searching for the accused.

Bhimrao Patil (84)

Mukund Patil (92)

Over 300 villagers and 100 policemen, including members of the rapid action force, searched the area around the creek for over two hours, using mobile torches and flashlights. At around 11.15pm, they found the accused about a kilometre away from the place of incident, hiding in the waters of the creek.

Villagers gathered on both sides of the creek once the accused was spotted. He tried to swim and flee the spot but police officer Manoj Ambhire dived in and nabbed him with the help of his colleague Kunal Dhanivare, following which he was taken to the Tarapur police station. In custody, he was seen talking to himself and showed signs of mental instability, said deputy superintendent of police Vikas Naik, who played a key role in the search operation.

Rupesh Patil, an activist from Kudan, said that the accused was spotted in the village at around 5.30am on Thursday. He was talking incoherently and in a language unknown to the villagers and was driven out by them.

The victims were cremated on Friday afternoon.

{ MAHALAXMI RACECOURSE }

No hotel, only park at racecourse: CM

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MUMBAI : Chief minister Eknath Shinde in the state assembly on Friday, said that the proposed theme park at Mahalaxmi racecourse is coming up on 320 acres of land. The CM said that they will use 120 acres from the racecourse and another 200-acres from the land reclaimed for the coastal garden for the central theme park, adding that no development would take place on the racecourse, and it would remain an open space.

This announcement came after the Royal Western India Turf Club (RWITC) decided to hand over 120-acre of 227-acre racecourse land to the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) for developing the theme park. Shinde said the it would come up like central park in New York.

CM Eknath Shinde said that the racecourse will remain an open space. ANSHUMAN POYREKAR/HT

"As much as 120-acre land from the racecourse and another 200-acre land parcel from the coastal highway will be taken for this project. Combined the central theme park will be developed on 320-acre land," he said in his reply to last week's motion brought up by the opposition for discussion in the state assembly on Friday.

> SHINDE SAID THAT THE THEME PARK WOULD COME UP LIKE THE CENTRAL PARK IN NEW YORK

Refuting allegations of land grab under the garb of development, the CM also said that no development will take place at the racecourse. "No hotel or anything of this sort will come up at the place. The racecourse will remain as it is. Mumbaiites will continue to get fresh air as the racecourse is the lungs of the city," Shinde told the Lower House.

Homes for all

The chief minister also said that the Dharavi redevelopment project is the only housing project in the country where everyone will get their homes and the state government supports the project. "All the eligible tenants will be rehabilitated in Dharavi; the ineligible ones will get homes from the state. It is the first project where everyone will get their homes," Shinde claimed. The state government is supporting this project as they want the situation of Dharavi residents to be improved, said Shinde. "See in what condition people are living there? I don't understand why some are unhappy when they are going to get redeveloped homes," he said.

Meanwhile, terming the deep cleaning drive a success, Shinde said that the pollution in Mumbai was brought down, and NGOs and others have started participating in the drive. "It will not stop and will be extended to other parts of the state but in phases. Let them criticize but it will be continued," he said.

He also announced plans to start an emergency response system for women wherein the police will reach them within five minutes. "We are working on a women's response system in which if she sought help the police would reach in within five minutes.

HC STAYS ORDER PUTTING CHARITY COMM'R STAFF ON POLL DUTIES

MUMBAI: The HC on Friday stayed the execution of orders issued by the Electoral Registration Officers requisitioning a significant portion of the staff employed under the Charity Commissioner for election duties. The court has ordered that no action should be taken upon the orders until the next hearing scheduled for March 5.

The bench, after hearing both sides, said that considering the "duty performed by the office of the Charity Commissioner, which is judicial in nature, we provide that till the next date of listing of the petitions, any order passed or notice issued requisitioning staff of the Charity Commissioner shall not be acted upon". HTC

Why it takes 1 hr to travel 7 kms in Andheri E

In 1973 the Maharashtra government pulled out the Modak-Meyer report of 1948 from cold storage. The report had suggested developmental guidelines to connect the western suburbs of Bandra to the eastern suburbs of Kurla. After studies and subsequent developmental plans, a proposal to build a new business centre in what we now know as Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) came about. It took another few decades to develop the area before it became a power-packed suburb in the late 2000s.

In circa 2010, the need to decongest saw the government press for better infrastructure – over 55 flyovers were planned, new roads built and increased number of trains to connect the newly created business districts like BKC, Lower Parel–Worli, MIDC and SEEPZ in Andheri East, Powai and some other suburbs like Malad came about.

RUSH HOUR

While this move to decongest south Mumbai was successful, by creating micro business districts in the suburbs, over time these islands bore the brunt of progress, as authorities failed to include last mile connectivity in their elaborate plans. Over time, it has had a direct impact on the quality of commute in these hubs. A 2021 study by TomTom, a global agency that studies 404 cities across 58 countries, rated Mumbai as the most congested city in India. This conclusion was drawn on the basis of commuters' road travel time – almost double of the intended time taken to cover particular distances.

In a four-part series, HT does a deep-dive into traffic concerns that commuters face in the business districts of BKC, Andheri East, Powai and Malad.

We kick off the series focussing on what ails Andheri East.

Commuters in the booming business hub of Andheri East suffer for want of last mile connectivity and heavy traffic. SATISH BATE/ HT PHOTO

Andheri East

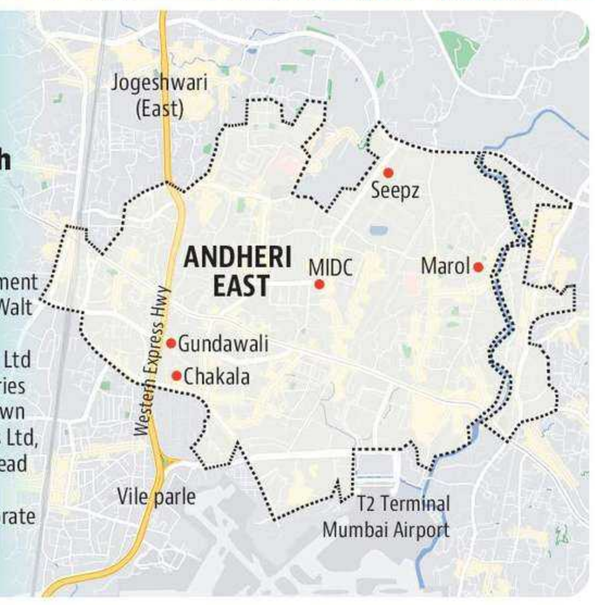
Spread over around **25 square kilometers**

Population: **Around 8.10 lakh**

Commercial hubs: **SEEPZ, MIDC, Gundawali and Chakala**

Corporate majors: Ultratech Cement Ltd (head office), Bwitch.in, The Walt Disney Company India Pvt Ltd (corporate office), Parle Agro Pvt Ltd (head office), Sun Pharma Industries Limited (corporate office), Hubtown Solaris, Tata Consultancy Services Ltd, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd (head office), Hindustan Unilever Ltd (corporate office), Solitaire Corporate Park, MAFFFL Sahar.

(Statistics provided by BMC)



Travel diary

KARAN JOTWANI
owner of printing press and co-founder of Lokhandwala Oshiwara Citizen Association

I face traffic snarls at three junctions while traveling from Andheri West to my printing press in Marol, Andheri East, daily. The junctions at JB Nagar, Kondivita and a new signal next to Marol are major bottlenecks. Traffic is not managed well and wardens posted are never around to solve the issues.

SAMRAT PODDAR, director, Umashi Infine Private Limited

I travel to Sakinaka metro station to reach my office at Samhita Complex which takes 15-20 minutes by an auto-rickshaw. It is a challenge to get a ride from the metro station as most drivers refuse to ply to nearby locations. There are not enough share autos either. I have to spend at least 15-20 minutes every day to convince a driver to drop me to my office.

MILIND SHAH, businessman

I take the metro from Versova to Marol every day. Thereafter, I walk five minutes to my office in Mittal Estate. It is comfortable in the morning. In the evening, hawkers occupy the footpaths. Food trucks put out tables and chairs here to serve customers. People are compelled to walk through heavy traffic on the road, risking their lives.

PRIYAM GANGRADE, manufacturer of bags

I prefer to take the metro from Andheri West to my office in Sakinaka Industrial Estate. Driving through the traffic takes over an hour. However, while the metro is faster, getting to the station by a rickshaw is tough, given the thick traffic. A five-minute drive takes 20 minutes. After I reach the station, getting a rickshaw further is another challenge as drivers refuse short distances.

Megha Sood
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MUMBAI: For close to 50 years – between the 1930s and 1980s -- Andheri East was synonymous with film studios that stood between Telli-Gulli and Chakala junctions on the Andheri-Kurla Road. Bollywood biggies had their offices here, but with time the film studios faded away. For example, Prakash Studio paved the way for a housing complex, M&T Studio which was gutted in a fire in the 1960s paved the way for a pharmaceutical company, while Modern Studio had to shut down when the Western Express Highway (WEH) was constructed right through it in mid-1960s.

The big change however came on May 1,1973, when the Santacruz Electronic Export Processing Zone (SEEPZ) was set up over a 110-acre plot of land to accelerate the progress of electronics manufacturing in India and to take advantage of the growing global electronics market. Later, in 1987-1988, the government decided to permit manufacturing and export of gems and jewellery from the suburb.

These developments changed the landscape, until then defined by some of the oldest settlements of erstwhile East Indian villages at Pump House, Chakala, Gundawali, Sahar and Sakinaka. The narrow Andheri-Kurla Road which ran through the villages could no longer bear the pressure of people and rising number of vehicles. To decongest the area, the government planned a six-lane overhead highway connecting Versova and Ghatkopar, which never saw the light of day.

"By 2005, the condition of Andheri-Kurla Road became such that during peak hours it would take one about an hour to cover seven kilometers from WEH to Marol, which can be covered in 20 minutes. It was a nightmare for passengers getting down on the eastern side of the Andheri railway station, auto-rickshaw drivers understandably refused trips to SEEPZ and other parts of MIDC," said a retired corporate professional, who served as a police officer in the area in the early 2000s.

Around this time, the government decided to widen the Andheri-Kurla Road, "which brought some relief as the traffic congestion on the stretch eased". The retired officer however noted that the government did not address the problem of connectivity to either SEEPZ or MIDC and ignored the narrow lanes that connect the areas from Andheri-Kurla Road or from the Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road.

Historical neglect

Over two decades later, the traffic congestion in the area continues to remain the same evidenced by traffic jams even in the middle of the day.

The metro line conceptualised to decongest the area, also runs along the Andheri Kurla Road and does not address the much-needed last mile connectivity issues. It was designed to ease road congestion, but while the trains travel above the ground, the road below remains congested and difficult to travel on.

The apathy on the Andheri-Kurla Road, an arterial thoroughfare that provides east-west connectivity, poses the toughest challenge for civic officials and corporators in K-East Ward. The traffic on the 3.5-km road from WEH to Andheri MIDC is unpleasant, thanks to the huge craters and illegal parking along the road. The road itself has been rough since the metro work started in 2007, said locals.

"The condition of the road connecting Andheri West and East is fodder for a readymade script for stand-up comedians," said Sudhir Badami, traffic expert who stays near the Jogeshwari-Vikhroli Link Road (JVLR), which is an entry point to MIDC and SEEPZ. The closest railway station to SEEPZ is Andheri which is six kilometers away. "The diversion road from JVLR to MIDC is narrow, as compared to the flyover and the U-turn signal is confusing causing traffic jams," he added.

Hargun Singh, an F&B entrepreneur who lives in Andheri West and travels to his MIDC office every day, said, "Just to cross over from West to East takes over an hour. Since the Gokhale bridge is closed, I have to travel all the way to Vile Parle to get to the other side."

Rough road

Andheri East is known for being busy with many IT service providers and industrial hubs in the proximity. But it is not a place for walkers and the transport system is poor. With low frequency and overcrowding on BEST buses, commuters are left to the mercy of share autos to travel the distance of around six kilometers from the railway station to MIDC.

The nearest metro station to MIDC is Chakala (B Nagar), a mere four kilometers away, "but walking to work is not possible and the crowd at the bus depot at Andheri East seems to be increasing by the day," said Dhawal Ashar, head of Sustainable Cities and Transport programme, at the World Resources Institute, Mumbai. Ashar said while many corporates provide shuttle services to the railway station, maximum number of working-class people travel by BEST buses or autos in Andheri.

Most commuters are at the mercy of unruly and reluctant auto drivers. A cartel of illegal share autos has emerged outside metro stations and their demand is on the rise with Metro lines 2A and 7 taking off.

Mumbai Traffic Police are reluctant to grant permission to share auto stands, although the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Transport Authority (MMRTA) had in mid-September permitted shared autorickshaws outside metro stations on Lines 1, 2A and 7, after traffic police's clearance.

M Ramkumar, additional commissioner of police (traffic) said, "Drivers of shared autorickshaws are unruly and care little for traffic rules. This is one of the reasons for not granting permission to shared autorickshaws. We will allow them to ply only when we see some improvement in the way they function."

Road transport expert Jitendra Gupta considers shared autos a "disadvantage to people". "The drivers outside railway stations form an organised group and harass regular auto drivers who ply on established meter fares. They also bully passengers into sitting next to them on the driver's seat which is illegal," said Gupta.

Vedant Mhatre, programme manager, Walking Project, said, "Most of the corporate neighbourhoods in the suburb are serviced by the Metro Line 1. The recently widened footpaths under this line on the Andheri-Ghatkopar Link Road are an amazing improvement over the earlier arrangement. But they disappear quickly on the internal streets branching out from the main road."

He also drew attention to the surfaces of the footpaths which are either extremely poor or taken over by street vendors. "The intersections lack modern pedestrian safety features and have poor zebra crossing layouts. Bus stops and rickshaw stops are barely organized and lack adequate space to handle the heavy crowds by the bus stops," he said, insisting that feeder buses and rickshaws from SEEPZ and Marol may be considered with dedicated infra for drop-off at the metro stations for quicker last mile journeys to and from the metro stations.

Check this space tomorrow for commuters' travails in BKC

Home guard dies by suicide, 4 society members booked

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THANE: A 33-year-old Central Railway home guard died by suicide on Thursday by jumping in front of a running express between Khadvali and Titwala station due to a parking dispute in his society, said police sources. The cops found a suicide note from his pocket, who worked with the Thane Railway police of Central Railway, which mentioned that four residents of the society were mentally harassing him.

The accused, Sameer Deshmukh, 45, Subhash Shegar, 45, Deepak Shelar, 46, and Anil Salvi, 50, were booked under section 306 (Abetment of suicide) of the Indian Penal Code.

The deceased lived with his parents and brother in Ravindra Galaxy in Nandap village, Titwala East. He was unmarried and was working for the Central Railway as a home guard for at least 12 years. The dispute for the parking space had reached the local Kalyan Taluka police station where both parties filed complaints. However, the parking dispute increased daily, and the four society residents continued to argue over the lot. A few days ago, in anger, he set his bike on fire in the society premises. Because of that, a bike next to his was also burnt and damaged. A case was registered against him.

An officer from the Kalyan Government Railway police station said he started getting more frustrated after the FIR. In this frustration, he wrote a suicide note. The note said "The harassment from four society members has been increasing day by day, and I am getting depressed due to their daily allegations and shouting at my place. I am taking this extreme step." On February 29, he jumped in front of train at 3:51 pm, the officer said. P Kande, senior police inspector, Kalyan railway police station, said, "We have received a suicide note mentioning mental harassment by four society members. All the four accused are absconding, but we will soon arrest them."

If you need support, reach out. Helplines: Aasra: 022 2754 6669; Sneha India Foundation: +914424640050

{ NALASOPARA FAKE ENCOUNTER }

HC slams police over shoddy probe

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MUMBAI: The Bombay high court on Friday rebuked the Maharashtra police over its "unsatisfactory investigation" in the 2018 Nalasopara fake encounter case, wherein Joginder Rana, wanted in some theft cases, was killed.

"We are not at all happy with the manner in which the investigation is coming along", the bench of justices Revati Mohite Dere and Manjusha Deshpande remarked, highlighting the lack of any significant development in the case since the formation of a special investigation unit led by Thane Police commissioner Jaijeet Singh in 2018.

The court criticised the police for not taking any steps that were essential after registration of an FIR under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code. It also questioned the validity of assurances made by the deputy commissioner of police, Ulhasnagar, who said in November 2023 that the probe would be completed within 12 weeks.

> THE COURT SAID IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO MONITOR EVERY SMALL ASPECT OF THE PROBE

The court said that it was not possible for it to monitor every small aspect of the investigation and police officers would have to do their job. It asked the additional public prosecutor PP Shinde to make a detailed statement about developments in the case at the next hearing after inquiring with the deputy commissioner and adjourned the matter to Monday.

The Nalasopara fake encounter case gained traction after Surendra Rana, Joginder Rana's brother, petitioned the court in 2018 seeking a Central Bureau of Investigation probe or a court-monitored probe.

In his petition, Rana alleged that despite ample evidence including videos and photographs indicating the encounter was staged, the police refused to register an FIR and filed an accidental death report instead. The superintendent of police, Palghar, however, contended that the two policemen who shot Joginder Rana did so in retaliation after he attacked them; he also referred to multiple cases against Joginder Rana.

In August 2023, the court, taking note of the discrepancies and allegations, ordered Thane police commissioner Jaijeet Singh to lead the special investigation team, which was to submit a progress report within four weeks.

Two weeks after the court's order, the Tulinj police booked two policemen attached to the local crime branch in Nalasopara, namely head constable Mangesh Chavan and police naik Manoj Sakpal under sections 302 (murder) and 201 (destruction of evidence) of the Indian Penal Code. There was no progress progress in case after this, however, prompting the court to pull up the police.

NMMC OFFERS AMNESTY TO PROPERTY TAX DEFAULTERS

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NAVI MUMBAI: The Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation (NMMC) introduced an amnesty scheme for property tax defaulters in March, aiming to achieve a collection target of ₹800 crore by the end of the financial year. The scheme includes penalty waivers for late payments within specified periods.

The amnesty scheme had been announced for the month of March. It offers a 75% penalty waiver for property tax dues cleared between March 1 and 20. Subsequently, those settling their dues from March 21 to 31 will benefit from a 50% waiver in late payment penalties.

Additional municipal commissioner Sujata Dhole said, "Property tax is the biggest source of revenue for the civic body and hence we are paying special attention to ensure optimum collection. We have constantly been reviewing the status of the collection. Tax default is a major concern and hence we have decided to effectively target it." Dhole highlighted an amnesty scheme directed by municipal commissioner Rajesh Narvekar, offering relief to defaulters and aiding revenue generation for development. With significant reductions in delay payment charges, starting at 25% within 20 days and increasing to 50%, Dhole urged action from major defaulters. Stressing the March 31 deadline, he emphasised full payment for scheme benefits, with no extensions or waivers. Interested individuals can apply through the civic website www.nmmc.gov.in or the NMMC e-connect app. They can do so at the ward offices, tax collection centres, or the NMMC headquarters as well.

MOB case: ED freezes ₹580 crore assets after raids

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MUMBAI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has frozen security holdings worth ₹580.78 crore, belonging to a Dubai-based hawala trader, Hari Shankar Tibrewal, who the agency has identified as the third partner of the wanted promoters of Mahadev Online Book (MOB), an illegal online betting platform, the agency said on Friday.

This followed recent country-wide searches at Tibrewal's known premises and at the premises of his associates at 17 locations in cities including Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur, Indore, Delhi and Gurugram, as reported by HT on Thursday.

"Security holdings worth ₹580.78 crore in the name of the entities beneficially owned by Hari Shankar Tibrewal have been frozen by ED under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act," ED sources said. As part of the crackdown on the MOB-linked money-laundering networks, the ED has also retrieved cash of ₹1.86 crore and valuables worth ₹1.78 crore.

ED has alleged that funds generated by the Mahadev app were used to pay bribes to politicians and bureaucrats in Chhattisgarh, where the case had become a major political issue ahead of the assembly elections in November.

The federal agency, which began probing the matter under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in July 2022, alleged the promoters of the app, identified as Saurabh Chandrakar and Ravi Uppal, are based overseas and remotely ran illegal betting operations. The projected proceeds of the crime are about ₹6,000 crore. The two app promoters were recently detained in Dubai based on Interpol red notices issued at the behest of ED and the agency is trying to have them deported or extradited to India.

Saurabh Chandrakar, one of the wanted MOB promoters.

> SO FAR, THE AGENCY HAS ARRESTED NINE PEOPLE. IT HAS ALSO FILED TWO CHARGE SHEETS, INCLUDING THE ONE AGAINST THE TWO PROMOTERS

So far, the agency has arrested nine people. It has also filed two charge sheets, including the one against the two promoters.

ED's money laundering investigation in the case has revealed that the MOB is an umbrella syndicate arranging online platforms for enabling illegal betting websites to enroll new users, create user IDs and laundering of money through a layered web and Tibrewal allegedly runs one such website in the name of sky-exchange, ED sources said.

"ED has successfully identified another major player involved with the promoters of the Mahadev Online Book," an ED source said. "It was found that Hari Shankar Tibrewal, who hails from Kolkata but currently resides in Dubai, is a major hawala player and has partnered with the MOB promoters," the source added.

The searches also resulted in the seizure of sizable evidence, including digital data and documents pertaining to assets, the sources said. The searches revealed that Tibrewal allegedly used his Dubai-based entities to invest betting proceeds in the Indian stock market via Foreign Portfolio Investment (FPI) route, the sources said.

Tibrewal allegedly also employed many of his associates as directors in various companies that were invested the betting proceeds in the stock market. "He was also involved in large-scale hawala movement of the betting funds," the source claimed.

ED initiated the investigation in 2022 based on cases registered by the Chhattisgarh police against MOB and its promoters. Subsequently, other cases registered by Vishakhapatnam police, Andhra Pradesh and other states were also taken on record. ED's investigation has revealed that the illegal betting platform was being run from Dubai, United Arab Emirates, by franchising panels/branches to their known associates on a 70%-30% profit ratio. "The main promoters of MOB are also partner/promoter in multiple such online betting book like 'Reddy Anna,' 'Fairplay', among others, and large-scale hawala operations are done to siphon off the proceeds of betting proceeds to off-shore accounts," the ED source said.

The ED had earlier seized/frozen movable properties worth ₹572.41 crore during searches conducted in the case. The total attachment/freezing in the case stands at ₹1,296.05 crore. The agency has so far submitted two charge-sheets against 19 accused in the case, including Chandrakar and Uppal.

SHINDE, DyCM DECLINE PAWAR'S LUNCH INVITE

Pawar's invite was seen as a political move ahead of polls.

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PUNE: Maharashtra chief minister Eknath Shinde and his deputy Devendra Fadnavis on Friday declined Nationalist Congress Party (SCP) chief Sharad Pawar's lunch invite at the latter's Baramati residence on Saturday.

The two leaders cited busy schedule as a reason to decline the invite, which had raised eyebrows among political circles as Pawar had invited Shinde, Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar for lunch at his residence, even as he himself was left out of the guests' list of a state government programme in city the same day.

Pawar's invite was seen as a political move ahead of the polls with his daughter Supriya Sule likely to face a tough fight from Ajit's wife Sunetra in Baramati.

The government subsequently issued a revised invitation card on Friday and included Pawar senior's name in it.

Shinde, in his response to Pawar's invitation, wrote a letter to the octogenarian saying, "Received your letter dated February 28, 2024. I thank you for inviting me for lunch at your residence. But due to pre-scheduled events, I apologise for not being able to come this time even if I wanted to."

Shinde further wrote that he will definitely get an opportunity to have a meal at Pawar's residence in future.

Multiple events

In a separate letter, Fadnavis cited multiple events on Saturday saying, after the job fair programme, there is a foundation stone laying ceremony of the memorial of Chhatrapati Sambhaji Maharaj at Vadhu Budruk while another foundation laying ceremony of the memorial of revolutionary Lahuji Vastad Salve has also been organised.

At ₹1 lakh crore, state tops in FDI: Fadnavis

Every police station to get anti-narcotics cell, says DyCM;Ajit Pawar claims state will be a $1trillion economy in the next five years

Saurabha Kulshreshtha and Surendra P Gangan
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Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis at Vidhan Bhavan on the last day of the vote on account session on Friday. ANSHUMAN POYREKAR/HITPHOTO

MUMBAI: Maharashtra secured the top position in foreign direct investment (FDI) with projects worth ₹1,00,112 crore between April and December last year while Gujarat stood at a distant second with ₹48,410 crore, said deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis in the council on Friday.

"I would like to share that the latest report on FDI in the country was out for the period from April 2023 to December 2023 and Maharashtra stood at the first position with ₹1,00,112 crore worth of investments. Gujarat has received ₹48,410 crore while Karnataka received ₹30,219 crore in investments during that period," Fadnavis said while replying to a debate, initiated by the opposition, on projects being shifted to neighbouring states.

Friday was the last day of the vote on account session of the state legislature.

To clamp down on narcotics suppliers and distributors, the BJP leader said, the state government has decided to set up an anti-narcotics cell in every police station. He also informed the house that in the last few days police have seized 1,837 kg of MD, which is valued at ₹3,580 crore.

"We have a zero-tolerance policy for narcotics as it will put the future generation in danger. We have rewarded the police department with a cash prize for seizing the drugs in such a large quantity. At the same time, we have warned that if a police officer is found involved in narcotics business, he will be terminated from service under Article 311 (of the constitution)," he said.

Admitting that the water crisis in the state has worsened and the situation is particularly serious in Marathwada region as it has only 24% water available, Fadnavis said, "To convert the crisis into an opportunity the state government has decided to remove the silt in water bodies which will increase their storage capacity."

In the Assembly, deputy chief minister and finance minister Ajit Pawar said Maharashtra has been the favoured destination for investors. "We are determined to make the state a $1trillion economy in the next five years. To attract more investments, we have been at the forefront in providing the required environment and this in turn will generate jobs and boost growth. We have been focussing on the sectors that drive the gross state domestic product (GSDP)."

The finance minister further said the government has been taking steps to increase tax revenues and the major contributors are GST, stamp duty and registration, and state excise among others. "Our contribution of the GST is 16% or ₹2.60 lakh crore, which is the highest in the country." He also said the state's revenue and fiscal deficit and even the debt is within the parameters laid down by the FRBM Act as well as by the finance commission. Maharashtra's GSDP was at ₹38.79 lakh crore in 2023- 2024, and it is expected to grow by 10% to ₹42.67 lakh crore in 2024-25, Pawar added.

Police recruitment ad with Maratha quota

Fadnavis, who also holds the home portfolio, said his department has started the recruitment of 17,000 personnel in the police department and this will be conducted with 10% reservation for the Maratha community. "I am the home minister. I am happy to share that this is the first advertisement for recruitment by any department with 10% posts reserved for the Maratha candidates."

STATE LAUNCHES INTERNSHIP FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS

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MUMBAI: The Maharashtra government has introduced a state-wide internship programme to offer practical exposure to college students, fostering a connection between academia and governance. The initiative, named 'government-internships,' aligns with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020's mandatory internship clause. Undergraduate (UG) and Post Graduate (PG) students from across Maharashtra can now intern with various administrative departments of the state government, aligning with the requirements for their courses and personal interests.

The Maharashtra government has finalised a comprehensive policy to facilitate the implementation of this system, ensuring internship opportunities are available even in rural areas where government offices are well-distributed.

To streamline the process, each department of the Maharashtra government participating in the program will appoint an internship coordinator. These coordinators will identify government projects suitable for internships, to be listed on a dedicated website by the AICTE. Students can expect responses within 10 days of application and start internships within seven days thereafter. The internship period lasts up to six months, extendable after consultation with the student's college or university. Detailed guidelines were issued by the state's higher and technical education department.

Extensive consultation among state government departments led to the formulation of a policy benefiting college students. Draft guidelines were prepared in November 2023, refined through feedback, and approved by the state cabinet on February 25. The initiative aims to provide valuable exposure to students through government operations, particularly in rural areas with limited private-sector opportunities, while offering manpower support to state departments. This programme represents a significant step in enhancing student engagement with public administration.

{ FIRST PRINCIPLES }
Charles Assisi

Every week, find the best take on stories at the intersection of tech, policy and business here

The inevitable woes of Vijay Shekhar Sharma

In February, this column argued it is too early to write off Vijay Shekhar Sharma, the founder of PayTM. Much water has passed under the bridge since then. The way things are it appears clear Sharma cannot continue that way he has. The latest salvos were fired yesterday (March 1). The RBI compelled PayTM's parent company One97 to say it will terminate relations with PayTM Payments Bank (PPBL). A few hours later, the Financial Intelligence Unit-India (FIU-ID) imposed a penalty of Rs 5.49 crore on PPBL. It stands accused of money laundering.

If Sharma had his way, this isn't how things would have gone. But the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had enough and there was only so much it was willing to tolerate. And Sharma had pushed the boundaries so far such that it could cripple India's financial ecosystem.

RBI's grouse begins with how the company is structured. As a customer, the PayTM wallet is operated by Paytm Payments Bank. Then, there is One97 Communications, a listed entity, which owns the Payments Bank. This is where the confusion begins as well.

When a customer signs up for the wallet operated by the Bank, the financial services company that is One97 Communication does all the hard work. This includes completing the process of onboarding a customer. To do this, it must comple the mandatory Know Your Customer (KYC) formalities. But what was unclear is: How does the data flow? RBI's rules have it that a customer's data must stay with the bank and cannot go out to any other entity. But One97 and Sharma did not adhere to that. Instead, it shared that with PPBL On auditing, the trail points to money laundering at PPBL.

SHARMA HAD PUSHED THE BOUNDARIES SO FAR SUCH THAT IT COULD CRIPPLE THE FINANCIAL ECOSYSTEM

Despite multiple warnings from the regulatory body, and with Sharma promising to clean up his act, he would go back to do the opposite. Those in senior roles at the central bank agreed that Sharma is a "schizophrenic" and that the RBI ought to have acted earlier. There is merit in what they say.

The former head at one of India's largest banks who now sits on the board of NSE said Sharma has been thick-skinned, obdurate, and carried an attitude that smelt of, 'What applies to the world doesn't apply to me.' "It's okay when you're a young fintech. But not the body language a fully grown business can wear." He used to monitor frauds in real time. That is where he could see of the Rs 30,000 crore of fraudulent transactions on UPI in 2023, 90% happened via PayTM. It was inevitable then that the RBI step in.

A former employee at PayTM saw the problem differently. "What most people don't understand is how complex India is." When asked for perspective, he describes how payment frauds happened. People would pretend to pay a merchant by capturing the name on a QR code. Having done that, they would simply share a screen that mimicked the PayTM screen and showed the merchant the amount due has been credited to their account. It would be a while before the merchant figured something is the matter and raise a flag. But the damage would be done and PayTM would have to bear the brunt.

To get around this, the company thought up the audio sound box that merchants now have. This gives a voice confirmation as well if money has been credited to their account. Since then, he claims, the number of frauds of gone down dramatically. While there is merit in this argument, it does not absolve PayTM of breaking rules.

Then there are there are those have worked with Sharma closely and have an altogether different narrative. One agreed to come on the record—the Toronto-based Aditya Mhatre. "I'm at work on my start-up. But if Vijay calls and asks me to join the place, I'll drop everything and join him," he said over the phone. And why would he do that? "The willpower Vijay possesses, the confidence he has and devotion he instills in people is fanatical," says Mhatre.

Is Sharma's confidence cockiness? Yes. And it comes his "proximity to power", a banker said. What's changed now? Sharma can be sacrificed is how the powerful see it. He did not respond to requests for comments. Perhaps, it is time to write Sharma off—for now.

UNRAVEL THE ART DECO MARVELS OF MUMBAI

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MY INDIA

UAPA invoked as IED blast at Bengaluru cafe injures 9

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BENGALURU: Nine people were wounded after a low-intensity bomb exploded in a busy restaurant in Bengaluru on Friday afternoon, prompting a multi-agency probe with preliminary investigations zeroing in on a man who left an unidentified bag near the cash counter.

Police officials familiar with the matter said that they have recovered a battery and a timer from the blast site, indicating that the explosion was premeditated, but added that no arrests have been made so far.

Visuals from the immediate aftermath of the blast showed panicked people running away from the explosion site, sheltering themselves from shattered glass, strewn furniture, smoke and fire.

Alok Mohan, Karnataka director general of police (DGP) said that the blast left nine people injured.

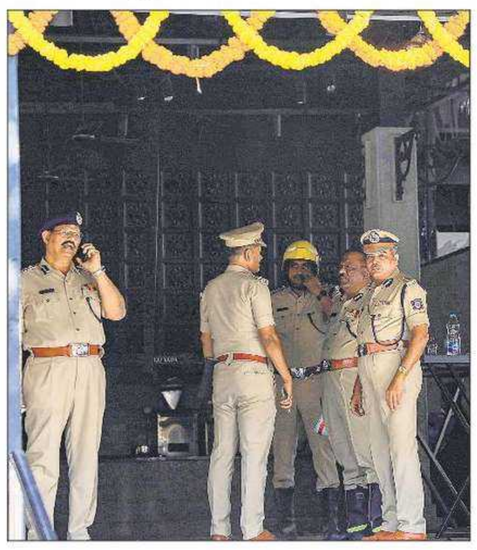
"Forensic teams have collected evidence from the ground and we have also seized CCTV footage from the explosion site. It appears to be a low-intensity crude bomb blast."

A popular eating joint, the cafe records a heavy rush of customers, particularly during the lunch hours.

In the minutes that followed, teams from the fire brigade and the police rushed to the spot and cordoned off the area, even as a team of forensic experts collected evidence from the site of the explosion.

Later in the afternoon, a team of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) also visited the mangled restaurant.

"We have found a battery and a timer at the blast site which shows it could be a timed explosive device. Preliminary findings show that the material used in the bomb was of low quality but more details will emerge once the forensic reports are in," one police inspector, part of the investigation team, told reporters at the site.The police have registered a case under sections of the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities(Prevention) Act and the Explosives Act.



Staff and customers run out after the blast, and (right) police personnel probe the Rameshwaram Cafe, in Bengaluru. PTI PHOTOS

Later in the evening, Karnataka deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar, who visited the site of the blast with home minister G Parameshwara said that investigators had identified a man in his mid-30s who entered the restaurant around noon.

"He took a token and ate some semolina idli," he said, adding that the blast took place at 12:.5pm in a bag that the man had left behind, likely triggered by a timer inside.

Parameshwara said that the police were closely looking at CCTV images to track the suspects movements after 12 pm.

The managing director of Rameshwaram Café, a restaurant that opened in 2021, who identified herself only as Divya, said that there may have been two quick explosions, less than 10 seconds apart.

"The first explosion was near the cash counter and then there was chaos. I don't know where the second explosion took place," she said.

A security guard stationed at the café said that the blast took place at a time when the restaurant is often busy, with many people that go to the offices nearby arriving for lunch.

"I was standing outside the café, and many customers had come to the hotel. Suddenly there was a loud sound and a fire broke out. I saw people that were injured," he said, asking not to be named. Officials said that the nine injured include some staff of the café, but that nobody was in critical condition.

Pradeep Kumar, an official of the Brookfield Hospital where the injured were rushed, said that one woman would require plastic surgery. "Some others have some injuries in their eardrums, but their lives are not at risk," he said.

Chief minister Siddaramaiah said that it was not yet known whether the perpetrators had organised terror links but that teams were working furiously to identify the accused.

"This is a case of an improvised explosive device. Even if it is a low amount, it can be effective," he said. The blast however, set off a political furore, with the BJP demanding that investigations be handed over to the NIA, and that law and order in Karnataka was a matter of concern under the Congress government. BJP state president BY Vijayendra said that the incident was a failure of police intelligence and said, "Law and order is deteriorating day by day under the Congress government.

Leader of Opposition R Ashoka said, "Whenever the Congress comes to power, terrorists and anti-national elements feel emboldened...the Congress should first ensure the guarantee of safety and security to the people of Karnataka."

Chief minister Siddaramaiah however hit back and said there should be no politics around the blast, and that those that carried this out would be brought to book.

'DEEPLY SHOCKED', INDIA ON GAZA DEATHS IN FIRING BY ISRAELI TROOPS

Rezaul H Laskar
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India on Friday expressed deep shock at the killing of more than 100 people in firing by Israeli troops on a crowd that gathered near aid trucks in Gaza city, describing the loss of civilian lives as a cause for "extreme concern".

The external affairs ministry reiterated India's call for the safe delivery of humanitarian aid as international leaders and aid groups said the latest killings reinforced the need for an immediate halt to Israel's bombardment of the Gaza Strip. "We are deeply shocked at the loss of lives in Northern Gaza [on Thursday] during delivery of humanitarian assistance," the external affairs ministry said in a statement.

"Such loss of civilian lives and the larger humanitarian situation in Gaza continues to be a cause for extreme concern," the statement added. Gaza's health ministry said in a statement that Israeli troops killed more than 100 people and injured 700 more in a "massacre" as they waited for food from the convoy of aid trucks.

Reports said the Palestinians were targeted by Israeli tanks and snipers. The Israeli military claimed soldiers fired warning shots in the air before firing at the crowd "only in face of danger".The external affairs ministry emphasised the need for "safe and timely delivery of humanitarian aid and assistance" in the statement that made no direct reference to Israel.

Israeli troops have been bombarding Gaza since the October 7 terror attacks by Hamas. Hamas killed around 1,200 people in Israel. The latest bloodshed by Israeli troops has taken the death toll in Gaza above 30,000, as per Hamas-run authorities.

WTO members unlikely to resolve key issues at meet

Rajeev Jayaswal
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: World Trade Organization (WTO) members were unlikely not resolve major issues at the 13th ministerial conference (MC13) of the intergovernmental body as developed nations continued to push for big tech's agenda for customs duty waiver, but sidestepped concerns of emerging economies related to fisheries and public stockholding for food security, three people privy to negotiations at Abu Dhabi said.

This is like a tug-of-war between few multinational giants on the one hand and millions of farmers, fishermen and the poor on the other, they said, requesting anonymity. "While the developed world is trying to maximise profit for their private firms; for developing countries like India, it is matter of subsistence for over 800 million poor, who are getting free food grains every month since pandemic (2020)," one of them said, referring to India's food security scheme that necessitates public procurement of produce from farmers at government-determined rates.

WTO, however, justified business interests by quoting director-general Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala in a post at X where she stressed the important role businesses played in supporting a functioning multilateral trading system. "It's business that does trade. So it's very important to listen to what they have to say and to try to act on that," the post said.

India as well as other developing countries such as South Africa and Indonesia are against further extension of customs duty moratorium on e-commerce. The developed countries such as the US and European Union (EU) want to perpetuate this privilege they enjoy since 1998, the second person said.

"WTO members had been extending this moratorium since 1998. The last extension was given in June 2022 at the MC12 (Geneva) until the MC13 or March 31, 2024, whichever was earlier," he said. Developed countries gain billions of dollars by this concession while developing countries lose revenues by allowing them duty-free access, he said, adding that any major deal at MC13 was elusive.

At the time of going to the press, ministers at WTO were gathered in the last heads of delegation meeting to wrap up negotiations before the closing ceremony in the last-ditch effort to end the deadlock.

A third person, a negotiator, said, "Developed countries are unwilling to commit anything related to agriculture and fisheries fearing farmers' backlash as Europe is swept by farmers' protests."

NOW, NAGALAND OPPOSES FENCING OF INDIA'S BORDER WITH MYANMAR

Alice Yhoshü
letters@hindustantimes.com

KOHIMA: The Nagaland assembly on Friday adopted a resolution urging the Union government to reconsider its recent decision to fence the Indo-Myanmar border and suspend the Free Movement Regime (FMR) with the neighbouring country, becoming the second state after Mizoram to take such a step.

India shares 1,643km border with Myanmar, running through four northeastern states —Manipur, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh and Nagaland. Of this, Nagaland shares a 215-km border with Myanmar. FMR, established in 2018 as part of the Centre's Act East policy, allows cross-border movement up to 16 km without a visa.

The resolution, moved by deputy chief minister Yanthungo Patton, said Naga people live on either side of the international border and the Centre's decision to suspend the FMR and fence the Indo-Myanmar boundary "will seriously disrupt the age-old historical, social, tribal, and economic ties of the Naga people living". "These measures will cause immense hardship and inconvenience, and also agony to the Naga people living in the Indo-Myanmar border areas due to the fact that the traditional land holding system straddles across the international border in many areas, and people have to cross the border daily..." it added.

Apex court refuses Asaram Bapu's plea in minor's rape case

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Friday declined to entertain a plea by self-proclaimed godman Asaram, who is currently serving a life sentence in a rape case, seeking the suspension of his sentence. The court asked senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi to go to Rajasthan high court for further procedure.

Law ministry increases age of senior citizen voters to above 85

NEW DELHI: The ministry of law and justice has increased the age of voters considered senior citizens from 80 to 85 years under the Conduct of Elections Rules. The amendments were notified by the legislative department of the ministry on Friday. Senior citizens are a category of "notified class of electors" under Rules who are can vote through postal ballot.

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd: Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala)
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in, (Contact Number: 96461-47777)

TENDER ENQUIRY NO: TSQ-1148

Dy. CE/TL(Design), B-1 Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-tender for carrying out survey, design, fabrication, testing, supply, laying of foundation, erection of 66 KV monopole structures along with cross arms on Turnkey basis. Stringing and sagging of conductor and Earthwire (Porcelain insulators, Conductor and Earthwire along with all accessories for conductor and Earthwire will be supplied by PSPCL at its own cost) and commissioning of 66 KV monopole line with 0.4 Sq" ACSR (Zebra) as per detailed scope mentioned in Part-7 of tender specification no. TSQ-1148. For detailed NIT and Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 01.03.2024 from 11.00 AM onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

C180/24 33104

Government of Punjab
RFP/Tender Reference no. 657-658 dt. 29.02.2024

The Department of Municipal Corporation Patiala invites online bidding for the following: -

Sl. No.	Item/Description of works	Qty (No. of works)
1	Supply of sweeping machines 2 no.	1

Closing date & time upto : 04.04.2024 at 1700 hrs
Opening date & time : 05.04.2024 at 11.00 am
Pre-Bid meeting date & time : 26.03.2024 at 11.00 am
For details log onto : www.eproc.punjab.gov.in

Note: Any corrigendum(s) to the Tender/RFP Notice shall he published on the above website only.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Municipal Corporation Patiala

33071

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited
(Regd. Office: PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001)
Corporate Identity Number: U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in
Mobile. No. 96461-07205

E-Tender Enq. No. 519/P-2/EMP-W-12593 Dated: 01.03.2024

Dy. Chief Engineer/Headquarter (Procurement Cell-2) GGSSTP, Roopnagar invites E-Tender ID No. 2024_POWER_119231_1 for Fabrication of Hoppers & Chutes of Wagon Tipplers and removal/reclamation of spilled coal, Coal Handling Plant-Fuel Unloading, GGSSTP, Rupnagar. For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to https://eproc.punjab.gov.in from 01.03.2024 onwards.

Note: Corrigendum & addendum, if any will be published online at https://eproc.punjab.gov.in

RTP-29/24 33136

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY G20
E-TENDERING TENDER NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Works) N.C. Railway, Jhansi for and behalf of President of India invites sealed "Open Tender" through on Line (E-Tendering) for the following work.

E-Tender No : JHS-ENGG-HQ-2024-26
Description of Work : Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi- Provision of floor tiles in toilet, Bathroom and kitchen in West colony Jhansi
Earnest Money : 266100.00, Approx Cost : 23213191.50

E-Tender No : JHS-ENGG-HQ-2024-28
Description of Work : Virangana Lakshmibai Jhansi- Improvement of various staff amenities in East Colony like old damaged doors, windows, boundary wall, and other misc works.
Earnest Money : 265100.00, Approx Cost : 23027953.30

Date of completion/period from issue acceptance letter : 06 Months. Date of closing Tender : 22.03.2024 at 15:00 hrs. • Tender online can be submitted up to 15.00 hrs on 22.03.2024. • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website www.ireps. gov. in. 346/24(AN)

North central railways www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in @northcentralrailway @CPRONCR

पोलीस आयुक्त, ठाणे शहर
पोलीस शिपाई चालक भरती २०२२-२०२३

महाराष्ट्र सहाय्यक पोलीस उपनिरीक्षक चालक, पोलीस हवालदार चालक, पोलीस नाईक चालक व पोलीस शिपाई चालक (सेवाप्रवेश) नियम, २०१९ व त्यानंतर शासनाने वेळोवेळी केलेल्या सुधारणा आणि दिनांक २७/०६/२०२२, दिनांक २३/०९/२०२२ व दिनांक २३/०९/२०२२ अन्वये सेवाप्रवेश नियमात केलेल्या सुधारीत तरतुदींनुसार पोलीस दलातील पोलीस आयुक्त ठाणे शहर यांचे आस्थापनेवरील पोलीस शिपाई चालक यांची २० रिक्त असलेली पदे भरण्यासाठी देखील आवेदनपत्र संगणकीय प्रणालीव्दारे **दिनांक ०५/०३/२०२४ ते दिनांक ३१/०३/२०२४ या कालावधीत** स्विकारण्यात येतील. ह्या बाबत सविस्तर माहीती policerecruitment२०२४.mahait.org आणि www.mahapolice.gov.in या संकेतस्थळावर उमेदवारांच्या माहितीकरिता प्रसिध्द करण्यात आली आहे.

- उमेदवारास पोलीस आयुक्त, ठाणे शहर यांच्या आस्थापनेवरील पोलीस शिपाई चालक या पदांसाठी ऑनलाईन आवेदन अर्ज सादर करता येईल. ऑनलाईन पध्दतीने आवेदन अर्ज सादर करण्याची सुविधा policerecruitment२०२४.mahait.org या संकेतस्थळावर उपलब्ध राहणार आहे.
- उमेदवार एका पदाकरिता संपूर्ण महाराष्ट्र राज्यात फक्त एका घटकात अर्ज करु शकतो.
- उमेदवाराने चुकीची माहीती दिल्यास, उमेदवारी कोणत्याही टप्प्यावर रद्द होईल.
- पोलीस शिपाई चालक या पदांसाठी अर्ज सादर केलेल्या उमेदवाराची प्रथम ५० गुणांची शारिरीक चाचणी घेण्यात येईल. सदर शारिरीक चाचणीत किमान ५० टक्के गुण प्राप्त करणारे उमेदवार, संबधित प्रवर्गामधील जाहिरातीत नमूद केलेल्या रिक्त जागांच्या १:१० या प्रमाणात उमेदवार लेखी परीक्षेसाठी पात्र ठरतील.
- **लेखी चाचणीसाठी पात्र ठरलेल्या उमेदवारांना, हलके मोटार वाहन चालविण्याची चाचणी २५ गुणांची व जीप प्रकारातील वाहन चालविण्याची चाचणी २५ गुणांची अशी एकुण ५० गुणांची कौशल्य चाचणी द्यावी लागेल. सदर दोन्ही चाचण्यांमध्ये एकत्रित किमान ४० टक्के गुण मिळवुन उमेदवारास उत्तीर्ण व्हावे लागेल. कौशल्य चाचणी ही केवळ एक अर्हता चाचणी असून कौशल्य चाचणीत मिळालेले गुण, गुणवत्ता यादी तयार करण्यासाठी विचारात घ्यावयाच्या एकुण गुणात समाविष्ट केले जाणार नाहीत. कौशल्य चाचणीत उत्तीर्ण झालेल्या उमेदवारांची १०० गुणांची लेखी परीक्षा घेण्यात येईल.**
- **सर्व पोलीस घटकांमध्ये लेखी परीक्षा एकाच दिवशी आयोजित करण्यात येईल. त्यासाठी अर्जदाराने ऑनलाईन आवेदन अर्ज भरतेवेळी सदरची बाब विचारात घेऊनच आवेदन अर्ज भरावा.**
- शारिरीक चाचणी व लेखी परीक्षामध्ये प्राप्त केलेल्या एकुण गुणांच्या आधारे उमेदवारांची गुणवत्तेनुसार तात्पुरती निवडसूची तयार करण्यात येईल. तात्पुरत्या निवडसूचीमध्ये समावेश झालेल्या उमेदवारांचीच मूळ कागदपत्रे पडताळणी करण्यात येतील. कागदपत्र पडताळणीत पात्र ठरलेल्या उमेदवारांचा निवडसुचीमध्ये समावेश केला जाईल. निवडसूचीतील उमेदवारांची निवड तात्पुरती (Provisional Selection) असेल. **शारिरीक चाचणी व लेखी चाचणी यामध्ये मिळालेल्या गुणांचे एकत्रिकरण केल्यानंतर, गृहविभाग शासन निर्णय, दिनांक १०/१२/२०२० नुसार अंतिम गुणवत्तायादी तयार करण्यात येईल.**
- पोलीस शिपाई चालक पदासाठी आवश्यक असलेली शैक्षणिक अर्हता, शारिरीक पात्रता, आवश्यक असलेली प्रमाणपत्रे/ कागदपत्रे, सामाजिक व समांतर आरक्षणाबाबची माहिती, परीक्षा शुल्क, आवेदन अर्ज सादर करण्याबाबची माहिती, अर्ज सादर करण्याचा दिनांक व वेळ आणि उमेदवारांसाठी सविस्तर सूचना policerecruitment२०२४.mahait.org या संकेतस्थळावर दिलेल्या सविस्तर जाहिरातीमध्ये उपलब्ध आहेत. **सदरहू जाहिरात उमेदवारांनी काळजीपूर्वक वाचून, समजून घ्यावी. तसेच सामाजिक, समांतर आरक्षण व अनाथाकरिता उपलब्ध पदांच्या १ टक्के आरक्षित जागा विचारात घेऊन रिक्त पदांबाबतची खातरजमा करावी व त्यानंतरच उमेदवारांनी ऑनलाईन पध्दतीने आवेदन अर्ज सादर करावेत.**
- **भरती प्रक्रियेदरम्यान शारिरीक चाचणी व लेखी चाचणीमध्ये निश्चित केलेल्या दिनांकास उमेदवार गैरहजर राहिल्यास, त्यास भरती प्रक्रियेतून बाद ठरविण्यात येईल. कार्यालयाने एकदा निश्चित केलेल्या दिनांकामध्ये कोणत्याही परिस्थितीमध्ये बदल करण्यात येणार नाही.**
- उमेदवारांनी संकेतस्थळावर जावुन आवेदन अर्ज सादर करावयाचा आहे, त्या घटकात रिक्त असलेली पदे विचारात घेऊनच उमेदवाराने अर्ज सादर करावेत. मागासवर्गीय उमेदवार खुल्या प्रवर्गात (Unreserved) अर्ज करु शकतात, परंतू खुल्या प्रवर्गातील (Unreserved) उमेदवार मागासवर्गीय प्रवर्गात अर्ज करु शकणार नाहीत.
- पदोन्नतीवरील आरक्षणासंदर्भात शासनाने मा. सर्वोच्च न्यायालयात दाखल केलेल्या विशेष अनुज्ञा याचिका क्रमांक २८३०६/२०१७ बाबत होणाऱ्या अंतिम निर्णयाच्या आदेशाच्या अधिन राहून व मा. उच्च न्यायालय, मुंबई यांनी जनहित याचिका क्रमांक १७५/२०१८ व इतर संलग्न याचिकांमध्ये दिनांक २७/०६/२०१९ रोजी दिलेल्या निर्णयाविरुध्द मा. सर्वोच्च न्यायालयात दाखल झालेल्या याचिकेबाबत होणाऱ्या अंतिम निर्णयाच्या अधिन राहून रिक्त पदांची गणना केलेली आहे. त्यामुळे जाहीरातीमध्ये नमूद केलेल्य रिक्त पदांच्या संख्येमध्ये बदल होऊ शकतो व त्याची माहिती वेळोवेळी संकेतस्थळावर प्रसिध्द करण्यात येईल. त्यानुसार नियुक्ती अधिकारी यांना पदे भरण्याचा अधिकार आहे.

स्वा/-
(डॉ. ज्ञानेश्वर चव्हाण)
पोलीस सह आयुक्त, ठाणे शहर

ROC-2023-24/No.5/C9083

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER,
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT, DIVISION NO.1, INDORE
Email ID :- eepwd1ind@mp.nic.in Ph. no. 0731-2490978

NIT No. 73/SAC/2023-24 Indore, Dated : 27-02-2024

"NOTICE INVITING TENDER"

Online tender in two envelope system are hereby invited for the following work. Details of works can be seen on the website http://mptenders.gov.in

No.	Portal No.	District	Name of work	Probable amount of contract (in Lacs)	Amount of EMD (In Rs.)	Cost of Tender form (In Rs.)	Time allowed for completion
1	2024 PWDRB_ 338016	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF SHRIKHANDI TO BHATKHEDI ROAD LENGTH 0.50 KM. VISHWAS NAGAR MAHARANAPRATAP CHOUK TO NH-3 ROAD LENGTH 1.14 KM. WITH ELECTRIC WORK, KOLANI TO FHUT TALAW MUKTIDHAM ROAD LENGTH 1.10 KM. WITH ELECTRIC WORK TOTAL LENGTH 3.74 KM.	427.68	427680/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
2	2024 PWDRB_ 338017	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF MENDAL TO PATELPURA ROAD LENGTH 2.50 KM. WITH ELECTRIC WORK KALAKUND LODHIYA INTERNAL ROAD LENGTH 0.50 KM. TOTAL LENGTH 3.00 KM.	277.05	277050/-	15000/-	10 Months I/C Rainy Season
3	2024 PWDRB_ 338018	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF MEN BHURIYASAT TO KHODRA ROAD LENGTH 2.00 KM. MEN TO GRAM CHAK ROAD LENGTH 2.00 KM. MANGLIYA TO KHERIYAKHALI ROAD LENGTH 1.00 KM. TOTAL LENGTH 5.00 KM. WITH ELECTRIC WORK.	399.87	399870/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
4	2024 PWDRB_ 338211	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE ROAD MUNDLA NAYTA TO BIHADIYA LENGTH 1.00 KM. BADIYA KEEMA TO RENUKA TEKRI LENGTH 1.80 KM. & BAWALIYA KHURD TO AADIVASI BASTI APPROACH ROAD LENGTH 1.50 KM. & ENAYATPURA TO PIRPIPLIYA ROAD LENGTH 1.50 KM.	493.62	493620/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
5	2024 PWDRB_ 338213	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE ROAD-SANAWADIYA TO DUDHIYA ROAD LENGTH 2.20 KM.	418.19	418190/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
6	2024 PWDRB_ 338215	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE ROAD LASUDIYA ANAND TO SINDHI BAROD TOTAL LENGTH 3.00 KM. & MORAD HAT TO LASUDIYA ANAND TOTAL LENGTH 3.00 KM. TOTAL 6.00 KM.	384.49	384490/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
7	2024 PWDRB_ 338217	Indore	CONSTRUCTION OF VILLAGE ROAD KADWALI KHURD TO MANDLAVADA TOTAL LENGTH 5.00 KM.	394.58	394580/-	15000/-	12 Months I/C Rainy Season
			TOTAL	2795.48 LAC			

The document can only be purchased online from the above website after making online payment. The last date & time for purchase of Document and Bid Submission online is Dated **07-03-2024 up to 17:30**. Detailed NIT and other details can be viewed on the above mentioned portal.
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Executive Engineer
P.W.D., Division No.1, Indore
G-25213/23

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1. Name of Work: Preparation of Comprehensive Mobility Plan of Navi Mumbai and NAINA Area. 2. C.A. No.: 04/CIDCO/T&C/TE(Airport & NAINA-1)/2023-24 **3. E.M.D.:** ₹3,00,000 (Rupees Three Lacs Only) **4. Completion Period:** 365 Days (12 Months) **5. Method of Selection:** Quality & Cost Based Selection (QCBS) **6. Tender Processing Fee:** ₹12,600/- (Rs. Twelve Thousand Six hundred only) including GST@ 5% Non-refundable, to be paid via online payment gateway mode only.

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Modi takes on TMC govt from Mamata's turf on Sandeshkhali

HT Correspondent
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KOLKATA: The torment of women in Sandeshkhali has shaken the nation, and people in West Bengal should use their votes to take revenge against the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday at a Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) rally at Arambagh in Hooghly district, as he set the tone for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections with a scathing attack on the ruling party in the state.

Modi spoke at length on Sandeshkhali, in North 24 Parganas district, which has been on the boil since February following allegations of harassment, sexual assault and land grab by villagers against local TMC leader Sheikh Shahjahan and his aides. Shahjahan was arrested by the state police on Thursday after being on the run for 55 days, and the BJP has been attacking the Mamata Banerjee-led government for going easy on him despite the charges.

Without naming Shahjahan or his associates, Modi said: "The way TMC has treated the sisters of Sandeshkhali has made the nation shiver. People are angry. The soul of Raja Rammohan Roy must be crying today."

In his speech, Modi paid tribute to Roy, a pioneer in social reforms who ended Sati, the practice of burning Hindu widows alive on the pyres of their husbands. Roy was born in Hooghly's Khanakul area in 1772.

"TMC leaders in Sandeshkhali crossed all limits of desperation. Our sisters sought Mamata Banerjee's help. But Didi tried to save the TMC leaders. She used all her might to save them. But our BJP leaders fought for the sisters and mothers against all odds. Under pressure, Bengal police was finally compelled to arrest him yesterday," Modi said.

Modi accused the state government of protecting Shahjahan. "The TMC leader was absconding for almost two months. Someone must have been protecting him. Will you accept this? Won't you take revenge by using your votes? Are votes of a particular section more important for Mamata Banerjee than the honour of women? This is shameful. I am sure Muslim sisters and daughters, too, will come out in large numbers and oust this government," the Prime Minister said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee during a meeting at Raj Bhavan in Kolkata on Friday. PTI

It was the Modi's first visit to Bengal after two years – he attended some government events in the state in 2022 – and he also met the chief minister at Raj Bhavan later in the day.

"This was a courtesy meeting demanded by protocol. I brought some sweets for the Prime Minister and we chatted for a while on various issues. I am not going to make any political statements here," Banerjee told reporters before leaving Raj Bhavan.

Anticipating that he may target the TMC, the ruling party had launched a hashtag campaign #AayeHoTohBataKeJao (since you have come here, do reply) and raised questions on social media on promises made by the Centre in recent years.

Countering the Prime Minister's allegations, TMC spokesperson Santanu Sen said: "Whatever happened at Sandeshkhali was well-scripted. The writer of the script arrived today. Our government has taken police action and the accused have been arrested. Now, the Prime Minister should tell us what action he has taken against rapists in BJP-ruled states."

At the rally, Modi also targeted the Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) partners for being silent on the Sandeshkhali issue.

"It is shameful to see leaders of the INDIA bloc keeping silent like the three moneys of Gandhi ji. They met in Bengaluru and Patna but did the Left and Congress demand an explanation from this state government? The Congress national president said 'leave it; these things keep happening in Bengal'. Isn't this an insult to Bengal's culture, history and people," Modi said, without naming Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge. "This is the essence of the INDIA coalition. They only protect the corrupt and those who practice dynastic politics," he added.

Modi also inaugurated projects worth ₹7,500 crore at a Union government event held close to the rally ground. He laid the foundation stones of projects related to rail, ports and petroleum sectors, including Indian Oil's 518km Haldia-Barauni crude oil pipeline passing through Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal. The pipeline will supply crude oil to refineries in Barauni, Bongaigaon and Guwahati. The other projects include strengthening of infrastructure at Syama Prasad Mookerjee Port, Kolkata.

Modi also accused the Bengal government of mismanaging central funds. "TMC has set a new model. The state government shields corrupt leaders. They are given huge amounts of money. The employment scam in schools and municipalities are examples. Whether it is chit fund, ration or smuggling of cattle across the border, TMC has left nothing untouched. That's why heaps of money are seized from the homes of TMC leaders. Have you seen such things even in movies?" he asked.

"This government is trying to stop federal agencies from probing corruption. The chief minster sits on dharna with such demands. Modi will not allow this and that's why TMC considers him its enemy no. 1. This is your money. Should I allow others to loot it? I am giving my guarantee today that the looters will have to return this money. Modi will not spare them. Modi is not scared of TMC's insults and threats," he said.

Modi will address another BJP rally at Krishnanagar in Nadia district on Saturday and inaugurate projects worth ₹15,000 crore.

Bengal Congress president Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, who has raised his voice against the state government on the Sandeshkhali issue, said: "Why has the PM come here after one month if he is so concerned? Why didn't he say a word when Shahjahan's men assaulted Enforcement Directorate officials during a raid at his home on January 5. He should not preach us."

CPI(M) central committee member Sujan Chakraborty said: "The Prime Minister is apparently not aware that Sandeshkhali's former CPI(M) MLA Nirapada Sardar was arrested by Mamata Banerjee's police for demanding Shahjahan's arrest. The Calcutta high court ordered his release."

PM INAUGURATES PROJECTS IN J'KHAND, TARGETS JMM-CONG GOVT

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RANCHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Jharkhand government of corruption, as he unveiled a host of infrastructure projects in the state and made a strong pitch for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Addressing the BJP's 'Vijay Sankalp' rally in Dhanbad, Modi said the leaders of the state's ruling Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-Congress coalition government were busy amassing personal wealth by "looting the people". "JMM-Congress leaders are busy filling their vaults. They have created mountains of benami (unnamed) properties. We have seen heaps of coal, but heaps of cash were seen for the first time. This is your money. Don't you think such people should spend their lives in jail? Whatever is looted will have to be returned, this is Modi's guarantee," he said.

The Prime Minister's comments came days after the Enforcement Directorate arrested former chief minister Hemant Soren under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act in connection with its probe into an alleged land scam.

In his address, Modi reiterated that the National Democratic Alliance will win more than 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls. In 2019, the BJP won 11 of the state's 14 Lok Sabha seats.

"For the fast development of Jharkhand and a better law and order situation, an honest government is important. The dynastic and corrupt government of JMM-Congress, which indulges in appeasement politics, has deteriorated the situation," he said. He inaugurated and laid the foundation stone of projects worth ₹35,700 crore, ranging from a fertiliser plant to expansion of railway lines.

Hitting back, JMM general secretary and spokesperson Supriyo Bhattacharya said: "Modi is talking about corruption and law order. Wonder if he remembers where Manipur is."

Three more arrested as Kerala student dies after ragging: Cops

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THE SECOND-YEAR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT WAS FOUND DEAD IN THE BATHROOM OF THE HOSTEL ON FEBRUARY 18

KOCHI: The Kerala Police on Friday arrested three more accused, all members of the Students Federation of India (SFI) — the student wing of the ruling Communist Party of India (Marxist) — in connection with the recent death of a 20-year-old student, who was allegedly ragged and assaulted at a college in Wayanad district, a senior officer said.

"Those arrested today are SFI unit secretary Amal Ehsan, college union chairman K Arun and union member Asif Khan, all of whom are members of the Left student union. While two of them surrendered before the police in Wayanad, the third was apprehended from Varkala in Thiruvananthapuram district," a senior police officer, part of the special investigation team (SIT) probing the incident, said. "The number of arrests has gone up to 10 now."

The second-year undergraduate student at the College of Veterinary and Animal Sciences at Pookode in Wayanad was found dead in the bathroom of the college hostel on February 18. The state police, which had initially registered a case of unnatural death, booked 12 students — the number later increased to 18 — for various offences, following the autopsy report that indicated multiple injuries and a complaint from the deceased's family, alleging assault.

Of the total 18 accused, eight are still absconding. The accused have been charged with abetment to suicide, wrongful restraint and voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons or means among other offences under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) as well as relevant sections of the Kerala Prohibition of Ragging Act, the senior officer.

The parents of the deceased, a resident of Thiruvananthapuram, have alleged that some of his collegemates told them that he was assaulted by some SFI college union leaders and even denied food for three days.

"We don't believe for a second that he killed himself. Maybe they (SFI leaders) assaulted him collectively and he died and they hanged him later. We learned from his batchmates that he was paraded naked and assaulted in front of many other students in the hostel courtyard," the father of the deceased told reporters. "He was denied food for nearly three days which has reflected in the postmortem report."

He also demanded that the college dean, MK Narayanan, be arraigned as an accused in the case, claiming there was no way he could not have known about the assault on his son. While college officials were unavailable for comment, the institution has suspended all the 18 accused students and imposed a three-year ban on further studies on them.

CBI to move top court against acquittal of '93 train blasts key accused

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NEW DELHI: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will challenge before the Supreme Court the acquittal of Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) operative Abdul Karim Tunda in the 1993 serial train blasts case by a special court in Ajmer, people aware of the matter said on Friday.

"We are studying the judgment and will approach the Supreme Court to challenge the acquittal," an officer from the agency said, seeking anonymity.

A special Terrorist and Disruptive Activities (Prevention) Act (TADA) court in Ajmer, Rajasthan, acquitted Tunda (81) on Thursday in connection with the serial blasts that rocked six long-distance trains, including Rajdhani Express in Lucknow, Kanpur, Hyderabad, Surat and Mumbai, on the intervening night of December 5-6, 1993. The court while acquitting Tunda, who was arrested in 2013 from a hamlet near the India-Nepal border, sentenced two other accused — Irfan Ahmed and Hamir-Ul-Uddin — to life imprisonment.

Abdul Karim Tunda

So far, 12 accused have been sentenced to life imprisonment in connection with the serial train blasts that killed two people and injured 22. The matter was probed by CBI.

"The investigation disclosed that the various accused persons entered into a criminal conspiracy with the object to over-awe the Government established by law, spreading terror in public at large and to create disharmony among different communities of the country by committing terrorist acts, like bomb explosions in the running prestigious trains in different parts of the country, on the occasion of first anniversary of demolition of a structure at Ayodhya," a CBI spokesperson said in a statement issued on Friday.

DO NOT SEEK VOTES ON BASIS OF CASTE, RELIGION, EC TELLS POLITICAL PARTIES

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NEW DELHI: Ahead of the Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission on Friday asked political parties and leaders to refrain from seeking votes on the basis of religion, caste and language.

The poll panel warned star campaigners and party candidates of stern action, rather than just "moral censure", as is the practice, for any violation of the Model Code of Conduct.

"No appeal shall be made on the basis of caste/communal feelings of the electors. No activity, which may aggravate existing differences or create mutual hatred or cause tension between different castes/communities/religious/linguistic groups, shall be attempted," the advisory said.

"No temples/mosques/churches/gurudwaras or any places of worship are to be used for election propaganda or electioneering. References which ridicule the relations between devotee and deity or suggestions of divine censure shall not be made," it added.

EC said parties and candidates must restrain from "any deeds/action/utterances that may be construed as being repugnant to the honour and dignity of women".

Raja Bhaiya

HC ALLOWS PLEA BY RAJA BHAIYA TO WITHDRAW '10 CRIMINAL CASE

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LUCKNOW: The Lucknow bench of Allahabad high court on Friday allowed a petition by Kunda MLA Raghuraj Pratap Singh, known as Raja Bhaiya, Member of Legislative Council Akshay Pratap Singh and 18 others for withdrawal of a criminal case lodged against them during the Bahujan Samaj Party government in Uttar Pradesh in 2010.

Justice Subhash Vidyarthi allowed the petition filed by the 20 people, who challenged the rejection order of the special MP/MLA court in Pratapgarh.

The counsel for the petitioners and senior advocate HGS Parihar said that an application for withdrawal of the case was moved before the special MP/MLA court, Pratapgarh, on February 27, 2023, but it was rejected on March 17 last year.

A petition challenging the rejection order was later filed before the Lucknow bench of the high court and allowed on Friday, Parihar said.

The petitioners' counsel contended that the case was a result of political vendetta and it was liable to be withdrawn in the interest of justice.

The petitioners' counsel said an FIR was lodged on December 19, 2010, at Kunda police station in Pratapgarh by one Manoj Kumar Shukla in connection with an election dispute in Babaganj block. The charges invoked against Raja Bhayiya, Akshay Pratap Singh and 18 others were attempt to murder, loot and abduction. A charge sheet was also filed in the case.

On the other hand, the state counsel, along with the counsel for the informant, said the impugned order of the trial court was appropriate.

India inks defence deals worth ₹39.1k cr for missiles, radars

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NEW DELHI: In a big push for the ongoing self-reliance drive in the defence manufacturing sector, the defence ministry on Friday signed five contracts worth ₹39,125 crore for BrahMos missiles, ship-borne Brahmos systems, close-in weapon systems, high-power radars, and aero engines for MiG-29 fighter planes.

"These deals will further strengthen indigenous capabilities, save foreign exchange and reduce dependency on foreign origin equipment manufacturers," the defence ministry said in a statement.

Two of the deals were signed with BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited — one for around 200 BrahMos supersonic cruise missiles worth ₹19,518.65 crore, and the other for ship-borne BrahMos systems worth ₹988.07 crore. The Cabinet Committee on Security, headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, approved these deals recently to boost India's naval power. The BrahMos missile has been developed by India and Russia.

"These missiles would be utilised to meet combat and training requirements of the Indian Navy. This project is likely to generate employment of 9 lakh (900,000) man-days in the joint venture entity and around 135 lakh (13.5 million) man-days in ancillary industries... The ship borne BrahMos system is the Indian Navy's primary weapon for maritime strike operations fitted on board various front-line warships. This project is likely to generate employment of around 60,000 man-days over a period of 7-8 years," the statement said.

These deals will further strengthen indigenous capabilities, the defence ministry said. INDIAN NAVY

It is the fastest cruise missile in the world with a speed of Mach 2.8, nearly three times the speed of sound. BrahMos variants can be launched from land, air and sea, and all three variants are in service in the Indian armed forces. BrahMos missiles can strike targets at 290km and its extended range variant can hit targets at 500km.

Two contracts were signed with Larsen & Toubro Limited for close-in weapon systems (CIWS) worth ₹7,668.82 crore for terminal air defence of select locations in the country, and high-power radars (HPR) with advanced surveillance features for ₹5,700 crore to boost air defence capabilities.

CIWS is planned for deployments at various locations across India to protect vital assets from all types of low-flying, low-signature aerial threats, including unmanned aerial vehicles, L&T said in a statement. It consists of air defence guns, tracking radars and search radars linked to a command and control station.

"The CIWS project will boost and encourage active participation of Indian aerospace, defence and associated industries including MSMEs. The direct and indirect employment generated by this project would be about 2,400 persons/year over five years," the defence ministry statement said.

The HPRs will replace existing long-range radars of the Indian Air Force with modern active aperture phased array radars with advanced surveillance features. "It will significantly enhance the terrestrial air defence capabilities of IAF with integration of sophisticated sensors capable of detection of small radar cross section targets. It would be the first of its kind radar built by the private sector in India.

L&T's defense business head, Arun Ramchandani, highlighted their success in securing high-tech projects for the Indian armed forces, emphasising their expertise in design, development, and manufacturing. The contracts, signed in the presence of defence minister Rajnath Singh, include one with Hindustan Aeronautics Limited (HAL) for RD-33 aero engines for MiG-29 aircraft worth Rs 5,249.72 crore. These engines, to be produced by HAL's Koraput division under Russian technology transfer, aim to sustain the operational capability of the MiG-29 fleet.

Cash, luxury cars seized by I-T

Tax evasions worth more than ₹100 crore by Banshidhar Tobacco Company and its affiliate firms were unearthed during the Income Tax department's across Kanpur, Delhi and Jhansi on Thursday and Friday, according to people aware of the details. Nearly ₹7 crore cash, along with a fleet of luxury cars like Lamborghini, McLaren, Ferrari and Rolls Royce, belonging to Banshidhar Tobacco Company owner KK Mishra, and estimated to be valued at ₹60 crore, were seized during the searches. HT PHOTOS

16 countries, nine organisations agree to join global big cat union

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NEW DELHI: Sixteen countries have agreed to join the International Big Cat Alliance (IBCA) led by India, to establish a global network for conserving big cats and other felines, Union environment ministry officials aware of the details said on Friday.

Besides, nine organisations, including the International Union for Conservation of Nature, have also decided to join the network, the establishment of which was approved by the Union Cabinet on Thursday, the officials added.

"Sixteen countries and nine organisations have agreed to join the IBCA. It is an initiative that will address transboundary conservation matters because saving big cats also means saving ecosystems in the 96 big cat range countries," a senior ministry official said, seeking anonymity.

"It is also a matter of diplomacy and presenting India's soft power, that is why India has initiated this alliance among other climate related alliances that are already doing very well," the official added.

The 16 countries that have agreed to join the network are Armenia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Brazil, Cambodia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ecuador, Kenya, Malaysia, Mongolia, Nepal, Nigeria, Suriname, Uganda and Peru.

The nine organisations include World Wildlife Fund (WWF) – International, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Science and Conservation International Snow Leopard Trust, Amur Tiger Centre.

{ IN MANIPUR } AFTER FOUR MONTHS OF SEARCH

Body of soldier's mother found in mortuary

Press Trust of India
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IMPHAL: After nearly four months of extensive search, the body of the mother of an Indian soldier, alleged to have been abducted by cadres owing allegiance to Arambhai Tenngol in November last year, has been traced and is at present in the mortuary of an Imphal hospital, officials said here on Friday.

The officials said the remains of Rifleman H Hoakip's mother, identified as Nengkim (60), are in the Imphal hospital and the army is making all out efforts to shift it to Leimakhing Military Hospital (LMS) from where it would be shifted to Churachandpur for last rites.

Manipur has been gripped by violence since May last year.

Hoakip, who was posted in Jammu & Kashmir sector, is at present on leave with his father, who escaped the brutal assault that took place on November 7 at Kangchup Chingkhong village in Manipur's Kangpokpi district. The family was going to Leimakhong.

On that day, Manipur police had tweeted that a vehicle carrying five individuals belonging to the Kuki community (two women and three men) en route from Churachandpur to Leimakhong was confronted by an enraged mob at Kangchup Chingkhong.

The mob forcibly took away four of them, while one escaped.

Implement NRC: House to Centre

IMPHAL: The Manipur assembly on Friday passed a resolution urging the Centre to implement the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in the state. Speaker Th Satyabrata said, "The House resolves to reaffirm its previous resolution... and also to urge the Centre to implement NRC in Manipur..." PTI

{ FROM PAGE 1 }

HOT SUMMER AHEAD

impact on weather across the world. "El Nino conditions have weakened but they are still prevailing and expected to continue till May. El Nino is associated with above normal number of heatwave days also. So, we can expect a hot summer," added Mohapatra.

The 12 weeks of the beginning of the summer will also coincide with hectic political activity with large gatherings across the country in campaign rallies as it heads into general elections, which will culminate with the last of the voting roughly around the first week of May. Heatwaves could potentially be a cause for concern in many parts.

The summer season is classified from March to end of May, before the monsoon season officially starts from June.

The IMD director general said that of late, the transition from winter to summer temperatures has been quicker than usual. "We have observed that spring is arriving early. It is because winter is diffusing sooner than before. A milder winter end is nothing but spring. This is being seen globally due to global warming," said Mohapatra.

According to Friday's forecast, above-normal maximum/day temperatures are likely over most parts of the country, except over some isolated areas of northwest, northeast, central and peninsular India. The minimum or night time temperatures are also likely to be above normal over most parts of the country, IMD said on Friday.

Monthly maximum temperatures for March will be likely to be above normal over most areas of peninsular, northeast and west central India. Night time temperatures are likely to be above normal over most parts of the country except some isolated areas along the Himalayas where normal to below normal minimum temperatures are most likely in March, IMD added.

The weather department has also warned that above-normal number of heatwave days are likely over most parts of the country except over northeast India, western himalayan region, southwest peninsula and west coast during March to May.

The IMD forecast went into some detail on the El Nino phenomenon, saying that majority of climate models gave indicated it will persist through March-May 2024 and then transition to ENSO-neutral thereafter. There are high chances of La Nina establishing during July to August period.

El Nino is when the equatorial pacific region becomes warmer than usual, while La Nina is when the opposite happens. The two are cyclical patterns, and send a chain reaction across global weather. In India, El Nino is associated with drier monsoons, while La Nina has correlated with more rainfall during the July-October period, which is crucial for India's heavily rainfed agriculture sector. La Nina also brings about unusual spring and summer dominated by extreme record-breaking heat spells.

Rainfall during March, averaged over the country as whole, is likely to be above normal (>117% of LPA), the forecast said.

Normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over most parts of the country except over extreme southeastern areas of South Peninsula and some areas of Northeast and extreme Northwest India where below-normal rainfall is likely.

The government weather agency also reported that it was the second warmest February since 1901 when it comes to night/minimum temperatures for the country as a whole. For south peninsular India it was the warmest February since 1901 both in terms of day and night temperatures. This is mainly because of extreme rain deficiency recorded in the region in February, scientists said. Minimum temperatures were highest for Central India in February.

During winter season (January and February), there was a 33% deficiency in rainfall. The deficiency improved in February which saw a high number of western disturbances bring rainfall to northwest India.

January had ended with a rain deficiency of 58% with 91% rain deficiency over northwest India. But in February, Peninsular India recorded a 91% rain deficiency-- 15th lowest since 1901 and 4th lowest since 2001.

TWIST IN HIMACHAL

Vikramaditya, who had resigned from the cabinet accusing Sukhu of disrespecting his father's legacy on Wednesday, also backtracked on his resignation on Thursday evening after meeting central observers Karnataka deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar, former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and the Congress's Himachal in-charge Rajeev Shukla. And the Congress created a coordination committee, sending a message that all was well, at least for now.

But it was clear on Friday that it was not so.

Vikramaditya's meeting with the rebels led to speculation that he had broken ranks and joined up with them. "Vikramaditya met us in Panchkula, and that is all I can say," one rebel lawmaker said about the meeting. Congress leaders close to Vikramaditya said that he was in Delhi by Friday evening, but it was unclear who he planned to meet in the national capital.

Sukhu first attempted to portray his cabinet colleague's trip as a Congress olive branch to the rebel lawmakers, and insisted that he had spoken to him at 7 in the morning, and then again at noon. "After the cabinet meeting (on Thursday evening), he went to Chandigarh and met the other legislators at Lalit hotel. He tried to influence their minds and some of them want to come back to the Congress," he said.

The chief minister also said that one of the rebel MLA's had spoken to him over the phone, expressing a desire to return to the party fold. "But he can only come back when he is within Himachal's boundary. He is at Panchkula's Lalit Hotel. I have just heard that more CRPF personnel have been stationed there," the CM said.

Sukhu also met speaker Kuldeep Pathania, and Congress leaders said this was to explore the possibility of withdrawing the disqualification.

But these notes of reconciliation were a far cry from the aggressive tone Sukhu took at a public rally in Dharampur on Friday afternoon, where he accused the six rebel MLAs of "selling their souls". "Those who betrayed the party and above all played with the sentiments of the people of the state will not be spared even by the almighty," he said.

Sukhu said that the BJP had orchestrated the rebellion within the Congress, and accused leader of opposition Jai Ram Thakur of being "power hungry". "The present government will complete its five-year tenure...my people are my strength and I am bound and committed to serve them till my last breath," Sukhu said.

And while Vikramaditya said nothing on Friday, state Congress president Pratibha Singh laid bare the cracks within. "As an MP, I visit my constituency and try to interact with local people and solve their problems. It is true that the BJP's working is better than ours," the Lok Sabha MP told ANI.

When asked about Shivakumar's comment at a press conference the previous day that current government would last its five year term, the state Congress chief seemed to cast some doubt. "Observer ke bolne se kya hota hai (what relevance does an observer saying it have). They are saying that they want the government to run five years. But it is the people who will decide what will happen in the future."

She also said that she intends to meet Sonia and Rahul Gandhi, and that the party high-command had to come to a resolution at the earliest. But while she said she was not in touch with the BJP, she said she could not predict what would happen in the future. "Let's see. I have spent my entire life in the Congress party. We started in the Congress party and are affiliated to the Congress ideology. I can't say what will happen tomorrow," she said.

BJP leader of opposition Jairam Thakur said that it was increasingly clear that chief minister Sukhu was losing support within his own party. "The political situation in Himachal Pradesh is such that whatever the Congress high command may say, things have not settled yet and there seems to be little possibility of that happening," he said.

'DIRTY HARRY'

acy to bring and attempt to bring an illegal alien to the United States". These charges, following an extensive investigation, led to Patel's arrest on February 21 this year. According to an affidavit by Manuel Jimenez, a special agent with the US Homeland Security, before a United States court on February 22 – he is investigating the matter pertaining to the death of the Patel family – Steve Shand, Florida resident, was found driving a rented 15-passenger van in Minnesota near the US/Canada border on January 19, 2022, attempting to transport two Indian nationals illegally into the US.

The incident took place near Pembina Border Patrol station in North Dakota. Shand was arrested by Border Patrol Agents. A group of five Indian nationals were also found walking near where Shand was arrested and all five were found to be unlawfully present in the United States. The weather on the morning of the smuggling event was extremely cold with blizzard like conditions and one Indian national needed to be hospitalised for cold related injuries, as per the court affidavit. HT has reviewed a copy of the affidavit.

The Indians, all Gujaratis, were interviewed by border patrol agents, Jimenez added, and one, identified only as VD, admitted crossing the border in the early morning, expecting a pickup on the US side to reach his uncle's residence in Chicago. VD said he had paid approximately $87,000 to an Indian organisation to facilitate entry into Canada with a fraudulent student visa, and then illegally entered the United States.

The discovery of a backpack containing children's belongings in VD's possession, despite no children being present, unraveled a deeper tragedy. VD confessed he was carrying it for a family separated from his group. Soon after, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police found four frozen bodies near the US/Canada border. VD's identification of them as the Patels from Dingucha shed light on the tragic fate of the family.

Shand's phone records revealed conversations with an individual known as "Dirty Harry" from December 9, 2021, to January 19, 2022. Investigations showed that the phone number associated with "Dirty Harry" or Haresh Patel did not have a street address. Patel and Shand exchanged approximately 200 calls and texts during this period. On March 9, 2022, Shand identified Patel from a photograph and said the man, whom he knew as "Dirty Harry", recruited him to transport illegal aliens from the US/Canadian border in Minnesota to the Chicago area for money. Shand described five trips he made to the international border in Minnesota in December 2021 and January 2022 to transport Indian nationals. "Dirty Harry" hails from Indrad village in Mehsana.

Patel's arrest is of particular interest because it comes two months after a chartered plane with 303 passengers, including many from Gujarat, was grounded in France by immigration authorities after they discovered it was full of passengers trying to make their way to the US illegally. There is nothing to connect Patel to that case, but Indian authorities said after that incident that there was clearly a large-scale human trafficking operation at work.

REVISED NPS

year, the state government had issued an order awarding OPS to 26,000 government employees who joined service before November 2005. Employees who joined on or after November 1, 2005 will have to choose whether to migrate to the revised NPS or stay with the current NPS within the next six months.

State government employees who had been demanding reinstatement of the OPS expressed satisfaction with the revision. "In the old pension scheme, we would get 40% of the amount as annuity at the time of retirement while the remaining amount would be disbursed in the form of monthly pension. The NPS too has a provision of 60% annuity and the remaining as monthly pension, but this is based on the accumulated amount and not an assured pension amount like in the OPS. The revised version announced today resolves the anomaly," said an official from the finance department.

Beneficiaries of the NPS were thus far short-charged as their pension was linked with market returns, the official added. As an example, he related the case of a woman employee who retired recently and was entitled to a pension of ₹2,517 per month against her eligibility of ₹25,000. "We had brought this to the notice of the chief minister while pressing on our demand for reinstating the OPS," he noted. To address these concerns, the government has decided to bear losses emerging out of marked-linked risks in the NPS. It has also decided to appoint a committee of experts to manage investments along the lines of fund managers appointed by private investment firms.

While deputy chief minister Devendra Fadnavis had claimed in December 2022 that ₹1.10 lakh crore would be required to implement the OPS, which could potentially bankrupt the state, finance department officials said the revised provisions are unlikely to cast a big burden on the state exchequer.

"First of all, the burden would the applicable 2034 onwards as the employees covered under the NPS will start retiring then. If funds are managed well with good returns, the burden will be just a few hundred crore," said an official. Currently, the govenrment spends up to ₹52,689 crore per year on the OPS and ₹7,686 crore per year on the NPS.

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Books
The power of the spoken word
Of building bridges and trials by fire

CENTRAL RAILWAY
MANUFACTURING AND SUPPLY OF HIGH PERFORMANCE RAIL PAD
Tender Notice No. 01/2024
Date: 28.02.2024 for e-Procurement
For & on behalf of President of India, Principal Chief Engineer, Central Railway, G.M. Building, 2nd floor, CSMT Mumbai-400001 invites e-bids at e-Procurement website. **www.ireps.gov.in**. Tender No. **CRHQ0ENGGTEST22024**, Date & Time of closing: **26/03/2024 at 11:00 hrs.**, **Description of Stores:** Manufacturing and Supply of High performance rail pad (HP rail pad) made of EVA (Ethylene Vinyl Acetate) or TPU (Thermoplastic Polyurethane) or PUC polyurethane) to be used on PSC sleepers of IR (i.e. RT-8746 conforming to dimensions of CGRSP as per RT-8747 and to be used with PSC sleeper RT-2496 conforming to dimensions of CGRSP as per RT-6618) for trials on designated stretches of IR **Tender Quantity: 49,800 Numbers, EMD: Rs. 2,90,160 Corrigendum No 1 & 2 is applicable.** The complete information of above E-Procurement Tender notice is available on website **https://www.ireps.gov.in. Bids other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above Tender.** 945
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Office of the Director, State Forensic Science Laboratory, Rajasthan
Nehru Nagar, Jaipur-302016
No. S-10(5) Labo-Store/R.C-2023-24/2169-84 **Dated: 21.02.2024**
NOTICE INVITING BID
NIB No.-17/2023-24
Bids for 2 years Rate contracts of different Consumable Chemicals/Kits/Items of estimated value INR 3200 lakhs are invited from interested bidders up to 5.00 PM on 14.03.2024. Other particulars of the bid may be visited on th e procurement portal (**https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in** or **https://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in**) of the state.
1. UBN: FSL2324GLRC00044, FSL2324GLRC00045, FSL2324GLRC00046, FSL2324GLRC00047, FSL2324GLRC00048, FSL2324GLRC00049, FSL2324GLRC00050, FSL2324GLRC00051, FSL2324GLRC00052, FSL2324GLRC00053, FSL2324GLRC00054, FSL2324GLRC00055, FSL2324GLRC00056, FSL2324GLRC00057, FSL2324GLRC00058, FSL2324GLRC00059
Dipr/c/1507/2024
Head of Office
State Forensic Science Labortary Jaipur

Government of India
Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers
Department of Chemicals and Petrochemical
Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals invites applications for two post of Deputy Industrial Adviser, in Level 11 of pay matrix (Rs. 67,700-2,08,700), on deputation including short-term contract basis.
Detailed requirement is given on the website **www.chemicals.gov.in**. Interested candidates may send their CV in the prescribed format through proper channel with in **60 days** from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News to the following address:
Manju Singh
Under Secretary (Admin),
Department of Chemicals & Petrochemicals
Room No. 434, C-Wing, 2th Floor
Shastri Bhawan, Dr. R.P. Road
New Delhi-110001
CBC 02101/11/0002/2324

WESTERN RAILWAY
CORRIGENDUM
To **Tender Notice No.: EL-TRD-W-118-23-24-13-R Dated 01/03/2024** The Date of Opening has been **Revised from 01/03/2024 (15.30 hrs.) to 08/03/2024 (15.30 hrs.)**. All other conditions of tender remains unchanged. 1237
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WESTERN RAILWAY-AHMEDABAD DIVISION
CONTRACT FOR HIRING OF ATTENDANT IN LIEU
No. ADI-RC-Attendent-2024 Date: 28.02.2024 Divisional office Ahmedabad Tender No. : ADI-RC-Attendent-2024 Name of work : Rate contract for hiring of attendant in lieu of TADK for ADI Division. **Approximate NIT Cost :** ₹ 4,12,55,844.50 **EMD Cost :** ₹ 25,000.00 **Closing Date and Time of e-Tender:** Date : 26.03.2024 Time: 15.00 Hrs. **Office Address :** Sr. Divisional Materials Manager, Divisional Railway Manager's office, Western Railway, Opp. GCS Hospital, Naroda Road, Post: Saijpur Bogha, Ahmedabad-382345. **Website for participating e-tender : www.ireps.gov.in** 288
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CAD-4407
The Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited
D-2, Sahid Nagar, Bhubaneswar-751007
www.omfed.com PH NO.:0674-2546030, 2540273, 2540417, 2540974 / E-mail ID: omfed@yahoo.com
Date: 01.03.2024
TENDER CALL NOTICE
OMFED invites sealed techno-commercial offer in separate envelope from Manufactures/ Authorised Dealers/ Distributors having adequate exposure for Supply, Installation, testing commissioning & trail run of 30MT capacity Road Weigh Bridge at Tirtol Dairy of OMFED on turnkey basis. **Tender documents can be downloaded from OMFED website from dt.01.03.2024 to 03.04.2024. EMD amounting to Rs. 30,000/- and paper cost amounting to Rs.6000+18% GST in shape of DD in favor of Omfed payable at Bhubaneswar drawn on any Nationalised Bank should be submitted with the technical bid.** The filled in sealed offer along with EMD & paper cost shall be received up to 1400 Hrs on dt.03.04.2024 and shall be opened on the same day at 1500 Hrs at the above addressed office in presence of interested bidder. For details please visit our website **www.omfed.com**. The corrigendum if required shall be published only in the omfed website and shall not be published in the new paper once again. OMFED reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders or part thereof without assigning any reason.
Sd/-
Managing Director
OIPR - 06063/11/0068/2324

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS
E-TENDER NOTICE
Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/HWH/E-Procurement/24/12 Dated: 27/02/2024. PCMM/CLW/HWH on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is/are for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/ likely suppliers are requested to look up the website **www.ireps.gov.in** for detailed instructions. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. **Sl.No.; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Quantity; Due On; Tender Cost** are as follows: **[033]; 14242528;** BATTERY, NICKEL CADMIUM to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0030/D; **As per tender/ documents;** 01/04/2024; ₹ **0.00. [034]; 14242527;** SURGE ARRESTER for 3 Phase Loco to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0016/B or latest; **As per tender/ documents;** 29/03/2024; ₹ **0.00. [035]; 14242566;** Primary Current Sensor to CLW Specn. No. CLW/ES/3/0084/A or latest; **As per tender/ documents;** 26/03/2024; ₹ **0.00. [036]; 25235122;** Routine Test Plant for Testing of 3-phase Traction Motors as per CLW Specification no. MT- 2304 Dated: 23.08.2023 (HSN Code-9031); **As per tender/ documents;** 27/03/2024; ₹ **0.00.**
PR2/338 **PCMM/CLW/HWH**
"Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways"

PUBLIC NOTIFICATION
CLOSURE OF THE NORTH WEST SIDE STAIRCASE OF BANDRA NAVPADA FOB
The structural condition of ramp & staircase of Bandra Navpada FOB is in dilapidated condition & required to be rebuilt as per IIT report to achieve safety of structure & public. In order to rebuild the complete ramp at North West side, staircase of the above said FOB, will be closed from **09/03/2024 for 46 days.**
There is alternate ramp at north west side and alternate ramp at south side will available for public use.
Inconvenience to the passengers is highly regretted.
WESTERN RAILWAY
www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in
1239
Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly • Follow us on: twitter.com/WesternRly

S. E. RAILWAY – TENDER
For and on behalf of the President of India, the Dy. Chief Electrical Services Engineer, South Eastern Railway, Garden Reach, Kolkata-700043 invites e-tender for the following work before **15.00 hrs on 25.03.2024**. **Tender No.: ADEEG-RewiringQtr-24-1, Date: 28.02.2024. Description of the work:** Garden Reach–Rewiring of Staff Qtrs. for implementation of revised scale of electrical fittings. **Tender Value:** ₹ 1,35,29,432.20 (including GST as applicable). **Earnest Money:** ₹ 2,17,700. **Cost of Tender documents:** Nil (Due to e-Tender as per GCC-2020). **Date of closing:** At 15.00 hrs. on 25.03.2024. **Completion Period of the work:** 8 months from the date of issue of LOA. Interested tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/ description/specification of the tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for this work will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective bidders may regular visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all tenders. **(PR-1191)**

Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University For Women
(State University under Deptt. of Training & Technical Education, GNCT of Delhi)
Kashmere Gate, Delhi - 110006
ADVERTISEMENT
Applications are hereby invited from eminent scholars for the post of Vice-Chancellor at Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University For Women, Kashmere Gate, Delhi- 110006, which was established under the Delhi Act 09 of 2012.
Essential Qualification & Experience:-
- A person possessing the highest level of competence, integrity, morals and institutional commitment is to be appointed as Vice-Chancellor. The person to be appointed as a Vice-Chancellor should be a distinguished academician, with a minimum of ten Years' of experience as Professor in a University or ten years' of experience in reputed research and/or academic administrative organization with proof of having demonstrated academic leadership;

Desirable Qualification:-
- A Scholar of eminence in one of the areas of engineering, technology, management and allied areas pertinent to the University and having rich administrative and academic experience in an institution of higher learning as per the IGDTUW Act, 2012.

The Act/Statutes of the University, UGC Regulations, 2018, format of application and other details are available on the department website i.e. **https://tte.delhi.gov.in**.
Last date of receipt of Application is 15.04.2024 (by 05.00 P.M.). The application in the prescribed proforma and in a sealed cover should reach by Registered/Speed Post to:-
The Secretary,
Department of Training and Technical Education (DTTE)
Government of NCT of Delhi.
Muni Maya Ram Marg, Pitampura, Delhi- 110034
Application received by E-mail will not be accepted.
(R. Alice Vaz)
Member Secretary (Search - Cum - Selection Committee)
DIP/SHABDARTH/CLASSIFIED/0363/23-24 **IGDTUW & Secretary (TTE)**

UT ADMINISTRATION OF DADRA & NAGAR HAVELI AND DAMAN & DIU
Omnibus Industrial Development Corporation of Daman & Diu and Dadra & Nagar Haveli Limited
NOITCE INVITING TENDER E-TENDER
"Repairing of OIDC's Bus Shelter for IMFL wholesale Liquor godown at Ringanwada Industrial Estate, Daman"

Tender Id No.	2024_DAMAN_3447_1
Tender Notice No.	OIDC/DMN/CD/2024/156
Last date of submission of bid (online)	05/03/2024
Last date to submit Hard copy (offline)	06/03/2024
Bid opening date	06/03/2024

For details please scan www.ddtenders.gov.in
The Executive Engineer, OIDC Ltd., DD&DNH
NO.IP/DMN/2/5/2023-24/245 Dt. 01/03/2024

म.प्र. राज्य सहकारी विपणन संघ मर्यादित
जहांगीराबाद, भोपाल
विपणन संघ
क्र./यां./1556/2024 **भोपाल, दिनांक : 01.03.2024**
निविदा सूचना (चतुर्थ आमंत्रण)
विपणन संघ द्वारा Contract of Rice Mill of Markfed on "As Is Where Is" Basis & Establishment of New Rice Mill of Minimum 08 Tph Capacity With Sortex Plant & on Lease Basis For 15 Years को लीज पर संचालित करने हेतु वैद्य निविदाकारों से E-Tender प्रणाली के अन्तर्गत **www.mptenders.gov.in** पर केवल Online ऑफर 15 वर्ष की लीज के लिए **दिनांक 18.03.2024 को शाम 05:30 बजे तक** आमंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रपत्र एवं कार्य के संबंध में अन्य जानकारी एवं अनिवार्य शर्तें निविदाकारों को मध्यप्रदेश शासन के ई-निविदा के पोर्टल **www.mptenders.gov.in** पर प्राप्त होंगी एवं विपणन संघ की वेबसाइट **www.mpmarkfed.mp.gov.in** पर भी अवलोकनीय होंगी।

क्र.	Tender Ref. No.	कार्य का नाम
1.	1858	Contract of Gangeruva Distt. Seoni Rice Mill of Markfed on "As Is Where Is" Basis & Establishment of New Rice Mill of Minimum 08 Tph Capacity With Sortex Plant & After Possibilities of Renovation/Maintenance/Strengthening on Existing Storage Capacity Then To Create Balance New Storage Capacity By Bidder on Lease Basis For 15 Years **(4Th Call)**
2.	1859	Contract of Garra Distt Balaghat (Old) Rice Mill of Markfed on "As Is Where Is" Basis & Establishment of New Rice Mill of Minimum 08 Tph Capacity With Sortex Plant & After Possibilities of Renovation/Maintenance/Strengthening on Existing Storage Capacity Then To Create Balance New Storage Capacity By Bidder on Lease Basis For 15 Years. **(4Th Call)**

नोट:- आवश्यक होने पर उपरोक्त निविदा सूचना से संबंधित किसी भी प्रकार की सूचना अथवा संशोधन संबंधी जानकारी केवल उपरोक्तानुसार पोर्टल एवं वेबसाइट पर प्रदर्शित की जावेगी।
म.प्र. माध्यम/114062/2024 **मुख्य अभियन्ता (सि.)**

WESTERN RAILWAY TO EXTEND TRIPS OF TWO PAIRS OF WEEKLY SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No.	From	To	Day of Run	Extended upto
09419	Ahmedabad	Tiruchchirappalli	Thursday	28/03/2024
09420	Tiruchchirappalli	Ahmedabad	Sunday	31/03/2024
09520	Okha	Madurai	Monday	25/03/2024
09519	Madurai	Okha	Friday	29/03/2024

There will be no change in Timings, Halts and Composition
For detailed information regarding Timings, Halts and Composition, Passengers may please visit www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in
The booking of **extended trips of Train No. 09419** and **09520** will open from **02/03/2024** at all PRS counters and on IRCTC website.
WESTERN RAILWAY wr.indianrailways.gov.in
Like us on: facebook.com/WesternRly
Follow us on: twitter.com/WesternRly
PLEASE CARRY ORIGINAL ID PROOF FOR ALL RESERVED TICKETS

CENTRAL RAILWAY
EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
Medical Director, Dr. B.A.M. Hospital, Byculla, Central Railway, acting for and on behalf of the President of India, invites Expressions of Interest, quotations in sealed covered for the various SLEEP STUDY INVESTIGATIONS, against **EOI Notice No. 33M/ SLEEP STUDY/2024-26, Dt.27/02/2024,** Closing Date/Time 22/03/2024 / 16.00 hrs. **Particulars:** INVITATION OF EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) QUOTATIONS FOR VARIOUS SLEEP STUDY INVESTIGATIONS FROM REPUTED PRIVATE HOSPITALS/DIAGNOSTIC CENTERS/ INSITUTIONS/ CLINICS OF MUMBAI AREA FOR RECOGNISING THEM FOR TREATMENT OF RAILWAY BENEFICIARIES OF DR.B.A.M. HOSPITAL, BYCULLA, CENTRAL RAILWAY FOR THE PERIOD OF TWO YEARS FROM THE DATE OF EXECUTION OF CONTRACT ON CURRENT CGHS RATES **Contract Period:** 2 years **Earnest Money:** NIL **Tender Form Fee:** NIL **Date of Closing & Time:** 22/03/2024 Time 16.00 hrs. Complete details of EOI are available at IREPS Portal site **www.ireps.gov.in** under Works. It is certified that tender complies with Public procurement policy order '2017, dt.15/06/2017. 948
DOWNLOAD UTS APP FOR TICKETS

ICICI Bank **Branch Office:** ICICI BANK LTD, Ground Floor, Ackruti Centre, MIDC, Near Telephone Exchange, Opp Ackruti Star, Andheri East, Mumbai- 400093.
PUBLIC NOTICE - TENDER CUM E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF SECURED ASSET
[See proviso to rule 8(6)]
Notice for sale of immovable assets
E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.
Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the **physical possession** of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of ICICI Bank Limited will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" basis as per the brief particulars given hereunder;

Sr. No.	Name of Borrower(s)/ Co-Borrowers/ Guarantors/ Loan Account No.	Details of the Secured asset(s) with known encumbrances, if any	Amount Outstanding	Reserve Price / Earnest Money Deposit	Date and Time of Property Inspection	Date & Time of E-Auction
(A)	(B)	(C)	(D)	(E)	(F)	(G)
1.	Panlloyed Logistics Private Limited (Borrower) Kashyap Mukesh Sejpal, Manish Devendra Joshi, Dishant Atul Dhankee, (Co Borrowers) Loan Account No- 623951000859	Office No.806, 8 th Floor, The Landmark, Plot No. 26A, Sector No.7, Kharghar, Navi Mumbai-410210. Admeasuring an area of 601 Sq Feet Carpet Area	Rs. 5,07,27,816/- (As on February 29,2024)	Rs. 1,35,00,000/- / Rs. 13,50,000/-	March 14, 2024 From 02:00 AM To 05:00 PM	March 27, 2024 from 11.00 Am Onward

The online auction will take place on the website of e-auction agency **M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited (URL Link-https://disposalhub.com).** The Mortgagors/ noticee are given a last chance to pay the total dues with further interest till **March 26, 2024** before **05:00 PM** failing which, these secured assets will be sold as per schedule.
The Prospective Bidder(s) must submit the Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) Demand Draft (DD) (Refer Column E) at **ICICI Bank Limited, Level 3-5, 74 Techno Park, Opp SEEPZ Gate No. 02, Marol MIDC, Andheri East, Mumbai 400 093** on or before **March 26, 2024** before **04:00 PM** and thereafter they need to submit their offer through the above mentioned website only on or before **March 26, 2024** before **05:00 PM** along with scan image of Bank acknowledged DD towards proof of payment of EMD. Kindly note, in case prospective bidder(s) are unable to submit their offer through the website then signed copy of tender documents may be submitted at **ICICI Bank Limited, Level 3-5, 74 Techno Park, Opp SEEPZ Gate No. 02, Marol MIDC, Andheri East, Mumbai 400 093** on or before **March 26, 2024** before **05:00 PM.** Earnest Money Deposit DD/PO should be from a Nationalised/Scheduled Bank in favour of **"ICICI Bank Limited"** payable at **Mumbai.**
For any further clarifications with regards to inspection, terms and conditions of the e-auction or submission of tenders, kindly contact **ICICI Bank Limited** on **8879770306/7304915594/ /9004392416.**
Please note that Marketing agencies **1. M/s NexXen Solutions Private Limited 2. Augeo Assets Management Private Limited 3. Matex Net Pvt. Ltd.,** have also been engaged for facilitating the sale of this property.
The Authorised Officer reserves the right to reject any or all the bids without furnishing any further reasons.
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The Hindustan Times
ESTABLISHED IN 1924

{ OUR TAKE }

Making sense of GDP numbers

In the short-term, the uptick will boost sentiment in the economy. But a rejuvenation of private consumption and investment is necessary to sustain economic momentum

The 8.4% Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth print for the quarter ending December 2023 has, expectedly, generated a lot of buzz around the state of the Indian economy. A *Bloomberg* forecast of economists expected this number to be just 6.6%. Has the Indian economy entered a growth trajectory that is way above what was believed earlier? There is an ultra-short-term, short-term and medium-term answer to this question.

Let us take the ultra-short-term part of it first. While the December quarter GDP numbers have really defied expectations, the Gross Value Added (GVA) — it is GDP minus Net Indirect Taxes and measures actual production in the economy — is along expected lines at 6.5%. This basically means that the large positive surprise in December quarter GDP numbers could well be on account of a sharp reduction in subsidies rather than a big jump in actual production or economic momentum. Also, when read with the revised quarterly growth numbers for the first and second quarters, the 7.6% annual print for 2023-24 also means that GDP growth in the quarter ending March 2024 will be just 5.9%.

As far as the short-term, namely, annual growth performance in the fiscal year 2023-24 is concerned, the GDP numbers released on Thursday show an increase of 30 basis points – one basis point is one-hundredth of a percentage point — over the 7.3% print according to the first advance estimates released in January 2024. This will add to India's growth advantage vis-à-vis major economies in the world and make it the fastest-growing economy by a bigger distance. While part of the upward revision in the 2023-24 GDP numbers is also on account of change in 2022-23 GDP data — this is normal practice — it will definitely boost the sentiment as far as prospects of the Indian economy are concerned.

It is the medium-term perspective on the Indian economy, which calls for a more sober look at the current economic situation. A comparison of growth over the period between 2021-22 and 2023-24 — these are the numbers that have been revised between the data released in January and February — shows a lower GVA growth and weaker private consumption in the latest numbers than what the January data showed. The state of Private Final Consumption Expenditure (PFCE) – it accounts for more than half of India's GDP — is particularly worrying with annual growth in 2023-24 being the lowest since 2002-03, which was one of the worst drought years in India. Unless the Private Final Consumption Expenditure engine of GDP starts firing consistently, sustained economic momentum cannot be taken for granted. A broad-based revival in PFCE is also necessary for a rejuvenation of the private investment cycle.

These are important economic policy questions that deserve sustained and serious engagement going forward, irrespective of what happens to growth in a given quarter.

{ THIRD EYE }

Barkha Dutt

Tips for Rahul Gandhi from world of media

Rather than turn bitter about the state of the world, stay agile and be adaptive to change to remain in the game. The alternative is retirement

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has effectively declared the general elections open with a midnight meeting of the BJP's central election committee, working through the night on the first list of candidates.

And Rahul Gandhi?

He is at Cambridge University, slated to deliver two lectures at his old college.

This is when his party's troubleshooters — DK Shivakumar, Bhupinder Hooda, Rajiv Shukla — are deployed to contain the fallout of open rebellion in Himachal Pradesh.

I am all for public figures engaging with the world of ideas. I also agree — and Modi's "*Vishwa Guru*" pitch for India is rooted in this idea —that politics is simultaneously local and global.

But, the timing?

For him to be away a fortnight before the election dates are to be announced is befuddling. Gandhi timed his trip to coincide with the Rajya Sabha polls and also a time when alliances are still being stitched and there is a multitude of issues to debate and decide. Congress supporters say Rahul Gandhi has become the soft target for journalists. And those who don't dare to ask questions of the government criticise the Congress.

Sure, there's plenty to complain about in the news media — sycophancy, polarisation, communal content, political activism and bias – especially, a malaise in broadcast media. Yet, many more reporters do their work daily, and sincerely, to the best of their ability in holding power to account.

Targeting the media, as Rahul Gandhi has begun to consistently do in his speeches, won't change the Congress party's political fortunes much. And if you must make the media an adversary, why not take on promoters and editors instead of publicly humiliating junior employees, as Gandhi did at a recent meeting in Uttar Pradesh.

But while we are on the subject of the media, there's an interesting parallel between the changes that have hit Indian media and the churn in Indian politics today.

As a first-generation television journalist who is now a digital entrepreneur, I am among the many reporters of my vintage, who are trying to adapt to mass disruptions in technology, distribution and consumption patterns.

Why am I talking about this in a political column?

Let me explain.

The Opposition, mostly the Congress, spends a lot of time lamenting and raging. There is much hand-wringing over big money heading to the BJP, the bias of big media and the new behaviour patterns of the voter.

THERE'S PLENTY TO COMPLAIN ABOUT IN THE NEWS MEDIA – SYCOPHANCY, POLARISATION, COMMUNAL CONTENT, POLITICAL ACTIVISM AND BIAS – ESPECIALLY, A MALAISE IN BROADCAST MEDIA. YET, MANY MORE REPORTERS DO THEIR WORK SINCERELY, TO THE BEST OF THEIR ABILITY IN HOLDING THOSE IN POWER TO ACCOUNT

Targeting the media, as Rahul Gandhi has begun to consistently do in his speeches, won't change the Congress party's political fortunes much

You could apply this almost identically to the state of play in news media. Influencers with softball questions and wide-eyed smiles are the flavour of the season. Bias is a more effective clickbait than nuance. The internet loves a slant: Right or left is immaterial. Technology has changed how content is created and watched. Satire and comedy are preferred genres to field reporting. And giant corporations alongside Big Tech platforms have upended the old rules of the game.

This leaves folks like me with two options: To complain every day about the unfairness of the world, its intrinsic shallowness, and the lack of a level playing field or show up every day, embrace technology and stay ahead of it and find a way to remain agile and adaptive without giving up my authentic core.

It hasn't been easy. News media is facing an existential challenge globally. But I opt for the second. I have taught myself the new grammar of digital storytelling, sought younger audiences on Instagram, upskilled on software and cameras and held on to my belief that there are still enough takers for non-partisan content, provided you are steely enough to hold your nerve.

Many other colleagues are working just as hard to do the same. The trick is simple. Show up every day. Work hard. Change, but not so much that you forget who you are. Learn. And most importantly, be willing to unlearn. If you don't like the rules of the game you can't change them without being in the game.

That — if you choose that route — is retirement.

The problem with the Rahul Gandhi-led Congress — with apologies to Mallikarjun Kharge — is precisely this. Enormous bitterness at the state of play combined with a one-foot-in-one-foot-out approach have made the party and its supporters believe that the problem is external, not internal.

"The Congress is not an NGO," Sachin Pilot told me in a recent interview. Pilot, almost the last man standing in a generation of colleagues who have fled for better options, is so right. But many of his colleagues have to internalise that obvious fact. Polemics and self-pity won't cut it.

Politics is ruthless, demanding and unforgiving.

It's also a 24x7 job with no respite.

That's exactly why it's not a profession for everyone.

Modi left for Jharkhand and Bengal after wrapping up a near all-nighter.

Rahul Gandhi needs to at least return to the trenches.

Barkha Dutt is an award-winning journalist and author. The views expressed are personal

Genocide case a test of ICJ's role as world court

For the past few months, the world has been following an incredible, high-stakes international scuffle unfolding at The Hague, in the form of two recent cases filed at the World Court against Israel. On January 26, the International Court of Justice (ICJ), in a genocide case brought by South Africa regarding Israel's military operations in Gaza, directed Tel Aviv to take all measures within its powers to prevent the commission of genocidal acts, to punish direct and public incitement to commit genocide, to take effective measures to enable the provision of urgently needed basic services and humanitarian assistance Gaza, and to submit a compliance report to the Court within one month, which has been submitted by Israel on February 26. In addition, the Court emphasised that all parties to the conflict in Gaza are bound by international humanitarian law, and called for the immediate and unconditional release of hostages abducted by Hamas on October 7, 2023. However, Israel has rejected the ICJ directive. On Thursday, over a hundred Palestinians were killed in an Israeli attack at an aid point. Meanwhile, the toll in Gaza has crossed 30,000, a majority of them women and children.

Jyoti Singh

The ICJ can render a definitive verdict only after hearings on jurisdictional objections and the merits of the claim are concluded, which may take years (in *Bosnia vs Serbia*, the Court took 10 years to conclude that there had been a genocide in Srebrenica).

Undeniably, many of the Court's conclusions in January were predictable. In accordance with Article IX of the Genocide Convention, the Court determined that a legitimate dispute existed. It also ruled that South Africa was entitled to file a case against Israel, in line with its earlier rulings in The *Gambia vs Myanmar*, where the Court had established that all states have standing to sue to enforce all state parties' obligations under the Genocide Convention.

Expectedly, on February 12, 2024, South Africa requested the ICJ to consider exercising its authority under Article 75(1) of the Rules of the Court to indicate additional provisional measures *proprio motu* against Israel. However, the Court declined to issue any additional provisional measure and reiterated the immediate and effective implementation of the provisional measures, as indicated in its earlier order. The Court has only used this power of issuing additional provisional measures *proprio motu* on one occasion — in *LaGrand* case, wherein it acted pro*prio motu* (albeit prompted by a request from Germany) to indicate provisional measures directing the United States not to carry out Walter *LaGrand*'s scheduled execution while the ICJ proceedings were pending. Even though South Africa could have resubmitted its request for temporary measures under Rule 75 (3), which calls for "new facts", or could have requested the Court to modify the existing provisional measures based on a "change in the situation", under the Rule 76(1) of the Statute, it did not choose to do so.

THE ICJ CAN RENDER A DEFINITIVE VERDICT ONLY AFTER HEARINGS ON OBJECTIONS AND THE MERITS OF THE CLAIM ARE CONCLUDED, WHICH MAY TAKE YEARS

The implementation of provisional measures of the ICJ is significantly impacted by the obligation of compliance. In *LaGrand*, the Court confirmed that provisional measures have a mandatory nature and create legal obligations. As far as the compliance of an ICJ order is concerned, States are required to abide by any ruling made by the ICJ, as stated in Article 94(1) of the UN Charter. Article 94 of the United Nations Charter stipulates that decisions rendered by the ICJ are legally binding on all parties involved in the dispute. If the ICJ's rulings are not followed, the Security Council may be consulted to determine what steps should be taken to give effect to the ruling. A State's responsibility under international law may, therefore, be invoked by the obligation of compliance, and non-compliance may result in an internationally wrongful act and its repercussions.

The history of ICJ decisions, however, reveals a nuanced picture of triumphs and disappointments. There are some noteworthy instances of compliance on the one hand, such as the amicable resolution of the 1986 border dispute between Burkina Faso and Mali and the 2004 Avena Case. Even though the ICJ has rendered important decisions over the years, there have been times when those rulings have been disregarded. For example, in the Nicaragua case of 1986, the US refused to acknowledge the jurisdiction of the ICJ. Incidents like these show the challenges faced by the ICJ, especially when major world powers are involved in its rulings.

Though Israel has rejected the ICJ's conclusions, international pressure on Tel Aviv is increasing, Interestingly, Algeria has already asked the UN Security Council to enforce the ICJ decision, while in response to a resolution passed by the UN General Assembly in December 2022, South Africa along with many other countries has filed for an advisory opinion of the ICJ, hearing of which went on till February 26, 2024. The purpose of these proceedings is to obtain an advisory opinion on Israel's policies and control over the occupied Palestinian territories, including the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and occupied East Jerusalem.

This is the first of its kind case since the ICJ's founding in 1945. South Africa claims that Israel's security measures, which include a massive wall, amount to racial segregation and that the country's decades-long occupation of the Palestinian people violates their right to self-determination. While many of the issues surrounding international law violations that constrain Israel's approach to all Palestinian territories are relevant to the case, the hearings may not directly address the war in Gaza. However, the outcome in both cases, undoubtedly, will be used as a yardstick for evaluating the effectiveness of the Court as a UN body, especially in the Global South.

Jyoti Singh is a Delhi-based lawyer. The views expressed are personal

{ ANOTHER DAY }

Namita Bhandare

When there will be no need for a Women's Day

This is for the one who turned up for football practice every day, leaving her *mohalla* with her *dupatta* modestly draped over her *salwar kameez* to avoid neighbourhood gossip.

This is also for the one who walked out of her abusive marriage when her husband hit their daughter for the first time. She washed utensils for her survival while taking driving lessons on the side in the hope that it would lead to a financially secure job.

It's for the mother who had forgotten what the inside of a classroom looked like until she enrolled her daughter in special classes for the Class 10 board exams. When the daughter passed, the mother was inspired and thought, "I can do this too." Giving herself a second chance, she joined the classes and cleared the board exams, nearly 18 years after marriage brought an end to her school days.

Courage does not have a one-size-fits-all. It doesn't have to mean jumping into the river to rescue a drowning child. Sometimes just being a girl and navigating your way through the daily hurdles that someone — a parent, a neighbour, a relative, or classmates — places before you. Heroism is the mother who insists that her daughter will not drop out of school to marry. It is the girl who shows up on the playground to set up a ragtag cricket team.

Sometimes the simple act of falling in love can be heroic, especially if it's someone who happens to be born in a faith, caste, gender, *gotra* or bank balance deemed inappropriate.

Every day, women and girls fight infinitesimal battles that will never be recognised. There are no medals for them. You will never know their names. And yet, they are both changing India and are a reflection of a changed India. An India where aspiration is no longer a bad word for women, an India where more girls than ever are enrolled in schools and colleges.

It's easy to lose sight of this, given the challenges that remain. As the World Economic Forum reminds us, gender parity at its current rate is still 131 years away.

So, what are we celebrating on March 8, International Women's Day? After all, shouldn't every day be Women's Day? Or maybe no day should be Women's Day because we no longer need one.

But beyond the token speeches, we need them to remind ourselves that there are battles yet to be won and those that haven't even begun. Above all, it is to pay tribute to our everyday heroes, even if we don't know their names or their stories.

That football player I spoke about in the first paragraph? She's now a coach, mentoring other girls. The one who was learning to drive has a job as a bus driver in Delhi and the mom who cleared her Class 10 board exams in the second chance programme? She dreams of graduating, just because she can.

Namita Bhandare writes on gender. The views expressed are personal

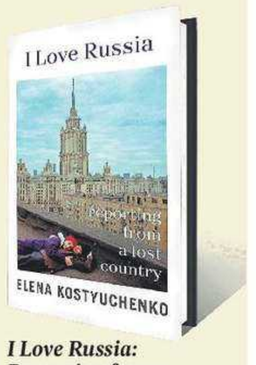
{ EDITOR'S PICK }

HT's editors offer a book recommendation every Saturday, which provides history, context, and helps understand recent news events

ALEXEI NAVALNY'S RUSSIA

Russian Opposition leader Alexei Navalny, 47, was laid to rest in Moscow on Friday, days after his death in an Arctic penal colony. He was the face of the pro-democracy movement in Russia.

This week, we recommend *I Love Russia: Reporting from a Lost Country*, a book of reportage by journalist Elena Kostyuchenko. A critic of the Vladimir Putin regime, Kostyuchenko, 36, worked with *Novaya Gazeta*, a Moscow newspaper edited by Nobel laureate Dmitry Muratov, until the regime shut it down in 2022. Kostyuchenko's dispatches reveal a nation in thrall of an authoritarian leader who has been peddling muscular nationalism to a proud but gullible people, and a land wreaked by environmental disasters, where dissidents and journalists are shadowed by Putin's secret police. Kostyuchenko was lucky to survive an assassination attempt; six other *Novaya Gazeta* journalists, including the celebrated Anna Politkovskaya, did not.



I Love Russia: Reporting from a Lost Country: Elena Kostyuchenko
Year: 2023

RNI No. MAHENG/2005/15186, AIR SURCHARGE : Ahmedabad, Nagpur and beyond by Rail or Road - Rs. 2 /-.

PRINTED AND PUBLISHED BY MANHAR KAPOOR for and on behalf of HT Media Ltd., 9th Floor, Tower 3, Indiabulls Finance Centre, Senapati Bapat Marg, Elphinstone Road (West), Mumbai-400013 at HT Media Ltd. Press at Plot No. 6, TTC Industrial Area, Thane - Belapur Road, Navi Mumbai - 400 708.
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Firefighters work to contain a fire that broke out at a commercial complex in Dhaka, Bangladesh on Thursday. AP

Safety lapses blamed for fire in Bangladesh as toll hits 46

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DHAKA: Bangladesh firefighters said Friday that glaring safety lapses were responsible for a Dhaka restaurant blaze that killed 46 people, with more deaths likely among those rushed to hospital in critical condition.

Thursday night's fire began at a popular biryani restaurant at the bottom of a seven-floor commercial property in the capital's upscale Bailey Road neighbourhood.

The entire building, home to several other eateries, was soon engulfed by flames that took fire crews two hours to bring under control.

Fire service operations director Rezaul Karim told AFP the blaze had been made worse by numerous cooking gas cylinders stored haphazardly in stairwells and restaurant kitchens.

"People heard the explosions of several gas cylinders during the fire," he said.

Main Uddin, the national fire services chief, said the building lacked safety measures.

"It did not have at least two staircases or a fire exit," he told AFP. "Most of the people died from suffocation."

Fire officials earlier told reporters they suspected the inferno began when one of the gas cylinders accidentally caught fire.

Police inspector Bacchu Mia told AFP that two more people had succumbed to their wounds on Friday while being treated in hospital.

"The death toll is now 46. Two people have died from injuries -- one at the Dhaka Medical College Hospital and another at the Police Hospital," he told AFP.

Health minister Samanta Lal Sen said the toll could rise as at least a dozen critically injured people were being treated in two state-run hospitals.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina expressed her shock at the loss of lives and said that it was a result of negligence.

"What could be more painful than this?" she said, speaking at an unrelated event in Dhaka.

"We always request our architects, at least when they design homes or buildings, (to) keep a small open balcony, a fire exit or ventilation. But architects ... will not design that properly and also the owners do not want to leave an inch of space," she said.

Other violations were also reported. The Capital Development Authority, the official regulator, said the building was not permitted to open restaurants but it had at least eight food shops.

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"Most of the people died from suffocation."

Fire officials earlier told reporters they suspected the inferno began when one of the gas cylinders accidentally caught fire.

Members of the public helped fire crews carry hoses and rescue survivors who clambered down the outside walls to safety as firefighters fought to bring the blaze under control.

At one point at least 50 people were on the rooftop waiting to be rescued by fire cranes, Kamruzzaman Majumdar, an environmental science professor who was among the stranded, wrote in a Facebook post.

Police investigators were seen walking inside the gutted building and documenting the wreckage on Friday morning, hours after the government ordered an investigation into the fire's origins.

"We were at the sixth floor when we first saw smoke racing through the staircase. A lot of people rushed upstairs," Sohel, a restaurant manager who gave only his first name, told AFP.

Five members of one family were among the dead, while the toll also included students, teachers and two reporters. The fire broke out at the beginning of the country's weekend and many people were dining.

Explosions and fires are frequent in buildings and factories across Bangladesh, where safety standards are lax and corruption often allows them to be ignored.

Probe, truce calls after gunfire at Gaza aid site

Agencies
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GAZA STRIP: World leaders called on Friday for an investigation and a ceasefire nearly five months into the Gaza war, a day after dozens of desperate Palestinians were killed rushing an aid convoy.

Israeli troops opened fire as Palestinian civilians scrambled for food supplies during a chaotic melee on Thursday which the Hamas-run territory's health ministry said killed more than 100 people in Gaza City.

The deaths came after a World Food Programme official had warned: "If nothing changes, a famine is imminent in northern Gaza."

The Israeli military said a "stampede" occurred when thousands of desperate Gazans surrounded a convoy of 38 aid trucks, leading to dozens of deaths and injuries, including some who were run over by the lorries.

An Israeli source acknowledged troops had opened fire on the crowd, believing it "posed a threat".

Gaza's health ministry called it a "massacre" and said 112 people were killed and more than 750 others wounded.

French President Emmanuel Macron, in a post on social media platform X, expressed his "strongest condemnation of these shootings and call for truth, justice, and respect for international law".

Iran denounced "the barbaric attack by the Zionist regime", China said it was "shocked", and the head of the Arab League said the "brutal" act showed "total contempt for human life".

US President Joe Biden said Washington was checking "two competing versions" of the incident which occurred early Thursday in northern Gaza, where famine threatens after nearly five months of war between Israel and Hamas militants.

A US State Department spokesman said aerial footage of the incident made clear "just how desperate the situation on the ground is". Washington was pushing Israel to allow in more aid, he said.

The deaths came after the World Food Programme's deputy executive director Carl Skau told the UN Security Council on Tuesday: "If nothing changes, a famine is imminent in northern Gaza."

The war began on October 7 with a Hamas attack on southern Israel that resulted in the deaths of about 1,160 people, Israeli figures show.

Israel's retaliatory military campaign has killed more than 30,000 people, according to the health ministry, which reported early Friday another 83 people killed in strikes overnight.

The White House said he spoke with Qatari and Egyptian leaders -- fellow mediators -- in separate phone calls to discuss both the ceasefire and the "tragic and alarming" incident.

Qatar warned that Israel's "disregard for Palestinian blood... (will) pave the way for an expanding cycle of violence".

Turkey said the incident "is evidence that (Israel) aims consciously and collectively to destroy the Palestinian people".

Further afield, in South America, Colombian President Gustavo Petro announced the suspension of arms purchases from Israel after the "genocide" in Gaza City.

Palestinians transport casualties following Israeli fire on people waiting for aid, in Gaza City, on Thursday. REUTERS

People walk towards the Borisovskoye cemetery during the funeral of Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny in Moscow, Russia, on Friday. REUTERS

Musk sues OpenAI over 'betrayal' of mission

PARIS: Elon Musk has launched a legal case against OpenAI, the AI firm he helped to set up in 2015, accusing its leaders of a "betrayal" of its founding mission. The tycoon, who left OpenAI in 2018, argued in documents filed in a San Francisco court late on Thursday that firm was always intended as a non-profit entity. But he said recent boardroom changes meant OpenAI was now effectively a subsidiary of software giant Microsoft, arguing that this was breach of contract. AFP

Texas firefighters battle blaze before wind gusts return

CANADIAN: Fire crews in the Texas Panhandle on Friday were dousing lingering hot spots after the state's largest wildfire on record raced through the cattle-ranching region, aiming to prevent an expected bout of wind gusts from fanning the blaze again. The deadly wildfire, dubbed the Smokehouse Creek Fire, has scorched more than 1 million acres, according to the latest figures from the Texas A&M Forest Service, provided on Thursday. The blaze, which has spread eastward across the state's border with Oklahoma, has killed two people, torched dozens of homes and turned once-fertile cattle-grazing land into ash. REUTERS

Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei casts his ballot during elections in Tehran on March 1, 2024. AFP

Iran elections, first since 2022 protests, sees a low turnout

Agencies
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DUBAI: Iran on Friday held the country's first parliamentary election since the mass 2022 protests over mandatory hijab laws following the death of Mahsa Amini, apparently drawing a low turnout amid calls for a boycott.

It wasn't immediately clear if voter apathy or an active desire to send a message to Iran's theocracy depressed the number of voters coming to polling stations across the Islamic Republic.

While state-controlled television broadcast images of lines of voters, others across the capital of Tehran saw largely empty polling stations.

Officials including Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei sought to link turnout directly to taking a stand against Iran's enemies. Others, including imprisoned Nobel Peace Prize laureate Narges Mohammadi, urged a boycott of a vote they derided as a "sham."

Authorities broadly barred politicians calling for any change within the country's government, known broadly as reformists, from running in the election.

Of about 15,000 candidates vying for seats in the 290-member parliament, formally known as the Islamic Consultative Assembly, only 116 are considered to be relatively moderate or pro-reform candidates.

Khamenei, who has called voting a religious duty, was the first to cast his vote in Iran.

"Vote as soon as possible ... today the eyes of Iran's friends and ill-wishers are on the results. Make friends happy and disappoint enemies," Khamenei said on state television.

"I am not voting for a regime that has restricted my social freedoms. Voting is meaningless," said teacher Reza, 35, in the northern city of Sari.

The election comes at a time of huge tension in the Middle East, as Israel fights the Iranian-backed Palestinian Islamist group Hamas in Gaza, and other groups backed by Tehran attacking ships in the Red Sea and Israeli and US targets in the region.

Khamenei has accused Iran's "enemies" — a term he normally uses for the United States and Israel — of trying to create despair among Iranian voters.

Meta to stop paying for news in Australia

Reuters
letters@hindustantimes.com

SYDNEY: Meta Platforms said it will stop paying Australian news publishers for content that appears on Facebook, setting up a fresh battle with Canberra which had led the world with a law that forces internet giants to strike licencing deals.

News publishers and governments like Australia have argued that Facebook and Google unfairly benefit in terms of advertising revenue when links to news articles appear on their platforms. Meta has been scaling back its promotion of news and political content to drive traffic and says news links are now a fraction of users' feeds.

Meta will discontinue a tab on Facebook which promotes news in Australia and the United States, it said in a statement, adding that it cancelled the news tab last year in the UK, France and Germany.

The decision pits Meta against the Australian government and its 2021 law.

"The idea that one company can profit from others' investment, not just investment in capital but investment in people, investment in journalism, is unfair," Prime Minister Anthony Albanese told reporters.

"That's not the Australian way," he added.

The government is seeking advice from the Treasury Department and the Australian Competition and Consumer Commission (ACCC) about its next steps.

Under the 2021 law, the country's government must decide whether it will appoint a mediator to set Meta's fees and potentially fine Meta if it fails to cooperate. Most of Meta's deals with Australian media ran for three years and are set to expire in 2024.

Russians gather in defiance to lay Putin critic Navalny to rest

Agencies
letters@hindustantimes.com

MOSCOW: Under a heavy police presence, thousands of people bade farewell Friday to opposition leader Alexei Navalny at his funeral in Moscow after his still-unexplained death two weeks ago in an Arctic penal colony.

Navalny was buried at a cemetery in the snowy southeastern outskirts of the capital after a short Russian Orthodox ceremony, with vast crowds waiting outside the church and then streaming to the fresh grave of President Vladimir Putin's fiercest critic with flowers and anti-government chants.

Navalny's widow, Yulia, who was not seen at the funeral, thanked him for "26 years of absolute happiness."

The service followed a battle with authorities over the release of his body. His team said several Moscow churches refused to hold the funeral for the man who crusaded against official corruption and organised massive protests. Many Western leaders blamed the death on the Russian leader, an accusation the Kremlin angrily rejected.

Navalny's team eventually got permission from the Church of the Icon of the Mother of God Soothe My Sorrows, which was surrounded by crowd-control barriers.

By the time the coffin was being driven to a cemetery on the opposite bank of the Moskva River, thousands had gathered, chanting Navalny's name. Some called President Vladimir Putin, who Navalny's allies accuse of ordering his death, a murderer.

The Kremlin said any unsanctioned gatherings in support of Navalny would violate the law, and police had deployed hours before the funeral, erecting metal barriers.

As Navalny's body was transferred from the church to the cemetery in a black van with tinted windows, mourners hugged his mother and father and said: "Thank you for your son."

Thousands followed the hearse across the bridge to the cemetery, where Navalny was buried in a grave decorated with green pine branches to Frank Sinatra's song My Way and music from *Terminator 2*, one of his favourite films.

Russian police on Friday detained at least 45 people across the country at tributes to late opposition leader Alexei Navalny on the day of his funeral, according to rights monitoring group OVD-Info.

Pondering Russia's future without Navalny, the most determined challenger to Putin's rule, some supporters who attended the day's events said they held onto hope, and others that his death had erased it.

{ CANADA }

Former PM Mulroney, driver of US free trade deal, dies at 84

Former Canadian Prime Minister Brian Mulroney gestures in the House of Commons on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Ontario, Canada, November 6, 2017. REUTERS

Anirudh Bhattacharyya
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TORONTO: Canada's 18th Prime Minister Brian Mulroney, considered one of the most popular leaders the country had in recent history, passed away on Thursday at the age of 84.

Mulroney, who first became PM in a landslide victory in 1984, was also the country's leader when its suffered its worst-ever terror attack, the bombing of Air India flight 182, the Kanishka, by Khalistani extremists on June 23, 1985, leading to the loss of 329 lives, while two baggage handlers in Tokyo's Narita airport died from a blast from another bomb on a different airplane.

Mulroney's death was announced in a post on X by his daughter Caroline Mulroney, who is also a provincial Cabinet Minister in Ontario. "He died peacefully, surrounded by family," she posted.

"As we mourn his passing and keep his family and friends in our thoughts, let us also acknowledge – and celebrate – Mr Mulroney's role in building the modern, dynamic, and prosperous country we all know today," Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in a statement.

Mulroney, who was a Conservative, led his party to a sweeping win in the 1984 Federal elections, capturing 211 out of 282 seats in the House of Commons. He bested then-PM Pierre Eliot Trudeau, the late father of the current incumbent.

Born on March 20, 1939, in the town of Baie-Comeau in Quebec, Mulroney was PM for nearly nine years, after assuming the office in on September 17, 1984 and demitting it in June 25, 1993.

He was hailed for his work in crafting the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) and for being among the first Western leaders to challenge the apartheid regime in South Africa, for which he was thanked by Nelson Mandela.

He was in office for just over nine months when the Kanishka terrorist bombing occurred, with the victims mainly Canadian citizens.

HT brunch
RELAX. THE WEEKEND'S HERE

Get there faster

Our viral special issue, 30 things to know before you turn 30, is back, with a twist. Grown-ups offer the career advice they wish they've received before they crossed the big three-oh

Urvee Modwel

urvee.modwel@hindustantimes.com

Last year, we thought it might be fun to ask 30 successful (and cool) people to each tell us one thing that we should know before we turn 30. The recommendations came pouring in: By 30 you should know how to order wine like a pro, have investments that make money while you party, learn to take a break without guilt. The article went viral. We sneakily used it as our personal checklist. Then, in September, we put together a sequel. More must-dos, more ways to grow up, more examples of what it really means to hold your own in the world, more reminders that no two people are on the same journey.

Is it March again? Time for Round 3! Think of it not as a sequel, but a spin-off – It's the Career Edition. Our 30 grown-ups draw from their experiences on the job and off it. There's advice on getting hired, getting noticed, jumping ship, staying put, building trust, staying sceptical, handling defeat, holding your own, and logging out on time. Let's go.

Anubhuti Raikwar, 38, Brand manager.

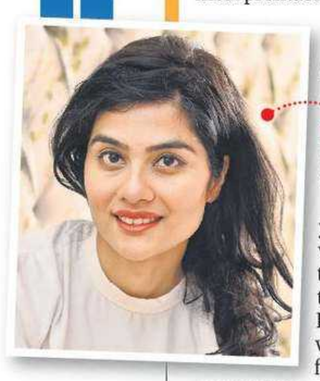
Don't be afraid to kiss ass. If sucking up to the boss, showing up early for no reason, and being the last to leave is helping your career, or helping to make office life more bearable, don't worry about what anyone else will say. You do you.

Apoorv Mohan Shrivastava, 31, founder, Plush Affairs.

The secret to success is hidden in your daily routine. And to have a day full of small accomplishments, learn to organise your day well. With my wedding photography company, I started making to-do lists early on, giving priority to the important tasks, not the noisy ones. Lean on Google Tasks and Apple Reminders to keep track of everything, even a break, a thank-you note, and a last-minute fact check.

Aditi Handa, 39, co-founder & head chef, The Baker's Dozen.

Perfection is the enemy of the good. When we were looking to open in Bandra, Mumbai, in 2013, we were fixated on the ideal store, location, and rent. It never materialised. We set up an average-looking store in a good location, with reasonable rent. It turned out to be our most profitable spot, and it's stood for over a decade. Hard work, creativity, and a willingness to take a chance are often more valuable than perfection.



Mehak Shahani, 35, co-founder, WedMeGood.

Long before you turn 30, you'll realise that 70% of all work is boring. Only if you do the grunt work can you get to the 30% that's truly exciting. Be open to different kinds of work at a younger age so you find your Aha! moment earlier. Don't turn down opportunities because they don't fit into your ideal "role". It's naïve to assume that you know exactly what you want to do at 23.

Arushi Verma, 34, co-founder, Fitpass.

Pay attention; observation is a powerful skill. It's something I learnt from The Face on the Wall, a short story by EV Lucas we read in school. It's about a man who searched tirelessly for a person whose face matched the face of a damp patch on his wall. It showed me how much one can observe if they start looking, and how one can uncover opportunities if they continuously seek to understand the world around them.

Dhruv Visvanath, 32, musician.

Ideas need a home. Find a system that works. I use a service called DISCO, which allows me to make private playlists of my musical ideas, according to theme, specific sound, and purpose. It allows me to send my music to people who are a part of projects I'm currently working on or want to be on. It's a more professional tool for musical collaboration than WhatsApp or Google Drive. People love to work with someone who is organised and can share ideas in a way that's easy to digest. It's unbelievable, that as a musician, I picked the least creative thing, but it's true.

And ask as many questions as you can to understand someone's process of doing things: how someone recorded something, how they assembled a piece of music, what tools or software they use. There are no stupid questions. You'd be surprised by how many questions I've been asked for the first time!

Dharan Shah, 36, founder, Tradonomy.

In every domain, no matter what field you're in, there's always sub-domain expertise you can pick up. For me, as an investor, technical and algo research was a sub-domain that helped me create greater value for myself. Identify what expertise you can capture and go real deep into it; that's how you make yourself irreplaceable.

Anand Bhaskar, 42, musician, producer and composer.

Switching careers is okay. Switching back is also okay. You're also allowed to realise that you were better off in your previous job. There's no one-size-fits-all. When I wanted to switch from advertising to music, I made a list of clients and individuals whom I could offer my skills to. I did this in my notice period. Also, the moment you have income coming in, start investing. It's easier to switch careers when there are savings to fall back on.

Akanksha Bhandari, 30, singer.

Bravado won't get you anywhere. Showing up to work is important, but not at the expense of your well-being. Reach out to workmates if you're overwhelmed or struggling with your health. Seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Christina Furtado, 30, illustrator and animator.

You can't do it alone, but apps can help. When I started out as a freelance artist and a full-time content creator, I was all over the place with planning my videos and projects. The Notion app helped. It lets you create content buckets to fill in your ideas, organise your upload schedule, manage multiple projects. You can colour code tasks so they feel less like chores. It gave me the liberty to personalise how I want my workday to unfold. Jobs and life get complicated over time, and not all of us can afford a persona assistant. Track everything in one place -- even if it's an old-fashioned notebook.

Rasika Kajaria, 44, Gallerist, Exhibit 320.

Investment isn't only monetary. I've worked with many artists over the last 15 years. You don't need the most expensive paints to create a masterpiece; some of the most revered contemporary works today are created out of plastic waste, X-rays and textiles. As an artist, you can use what speaks to you to make a statement.

Rahul Bajaj, 37, Asian Games medallist, & founder, Golf Garage.

Being passionate isn't enough to make it to the finish line. Couple it with long-term vision, break it down into clear, actionable, attainable mini goals. I think of who I want to be 30-40 years from now. It helps me plan those mini goals along the way. It also helps me take calculated risks to make the ride more fun. Just remember to wear the helmet!

Khushnaz Ashdin Turner, 47, personal stylist.

Dress well, people are always watching. A well-fitted suit in a simple colour shows you mean business. Showing up to work, day after day, neatly dressed, sends the message that you pay attention to detail. Looking sharp makes you appear reliable and capable. Those ready to go the extra mile are often the ones that leave a lasting impact. And never turn down a task outright; there's always a solution.

Apoorv Agarwal, 33, founder, The Simple Brew.

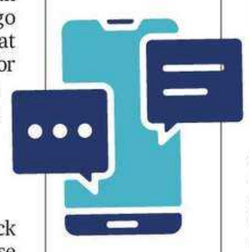
Be nice to yourself. Work will get more stressful, the boss will get more insufferable, diets will get harder to follow, people will come and go, and you will fail every now and then. Through all this, taking care of yourself might take a backseat. Don't ignore yourself. You'll thank yourself once you turn 30.

Niyati Singh, 32, communications associate, Migration and Asylum Project.

Not all who wander are lost...some are just trying to figure out what they truly love doing. Finding a fulfilling job can be overwhelming, stressful, and challenging, especially when there's so much pressure, both externally and internally. I recommend making a F**K It list, checking off the things you've realised you don't want to do, after you've given them a shot. No work experience is a waste of time. Understand your interests, build on your strengths and take on internships, short-term courses, part-time work and consultancies. You'll eventually narrow it down.

Shubhashree Banerjee, 32, media professional.

Get your hands dirty. You never know which new skill you unexpectedly learn. Something as simple as ordering food for the crew might seem beneath you, but when you have to do it on a budget, on deadline, and keeping people's choices in mind, you learn time, money and people management all at once. Also, if you believe in an original idea, explain it well, with words, drawings, anything. That's how new ideas are born.



Gagandeep Makker, 33, co-founder, Pilgrim.

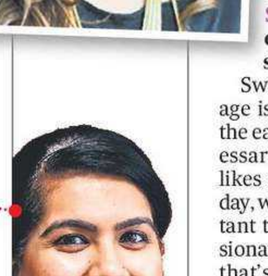
Networking isn't all LinkedIn. That's just one piece of the puzzle. When Anurag Kedia, my co-founder, approached me with the idea for a beauty and wellness brand, we didn't rely only on virtual connections. The real magic happened through the depth of our offline relationships, our shared experiences at IIT Bombay and our social circles. Our makeupline was born out of direct customer feedback calls. Some things you can't do virtually.

Aaina Mahajan, 35, founder, Mellowdrama.

When you find yourself wearing too many hats, make it a game. When we were gearing up to open our first flagship store in Dhan Mill, Delhi last year, I found myself juggling tasks I had never imagined, from sketching out a retail plan to overseeing the store construction. At one point. I was also the impromptu interior designer, desperately trying to decide between paint shades. Amidst the craziness, I realised that this was just a huge DIY party. See the fun side of a challenge. It not only adds fun to your daily grind but also unlocks your superpowers.

Shahin Manan, 40, fashion designer and founder, Shahin Manan.

Squeeze in small breaks. In August 2022, work felt like a rollercoaster. There were deadlines everywhere. I decided to take a mini break and go for a hike in Manali. It helped put so much of the madness into perspective and fuelled me for the ride ahead. Don't wait for a whole two weeks off. Take joy breaks when you can and dive into something that makes you happy, even if it's mastering pancake flipping (seriously, it's a thing). They're like magic for your creativity and productivity.



Sayantan Ghosh, 37, executive editor, Simon & Schuster India.

Switching careers at any age is all right, the earlier the easier it is, but not necessarily better. Nobody likes going to work every day, which is why it's important to intrinsically be passionate about what you do. If that's not the case, and if you think there's somewhere else where you'd be happier, it's never too late to take that leap of faith. I quit two lucrative careers to start in publishing when I was 26. With no experience, the hours I had to put in initially were more than those around me but if you're willing to learn on the job and sweat it out a little bit, it's always good to take a chance on yourself.

Mohit Bhatia, 31, co-founder, Malaki.

The world is always changing, but people remain the same. So focus on core fundamental skills, they'll last a lifetime. When I was younger, I began reading books that taught me skills such as persuasion and negotiation; these are all great to help you go just that little bit further. I'd recommend reading Influence by Robert Cialdini; Never Split the Difference by former FBI agent Chris Voss and Fooled by Randomness by Nassim Nicholas Taleb.

Kamakshi Khanna, 30, singer.

Don't waste the potential of a passing thought. So many brilliant ones are lost before they reach the point of execution. If you have a killer pitch, break down every boring part of the process and set deadlines for yourself. Don't be afraid to express an idea that is different or feels like it may be too much. For my latest song, Love Is Not A F***g Game, I had the concept locked in years ago and was just struggling with ways to execute it. It's one of my favourite things I've ever created.

Itchha Talreja, 37, founder, Itchha Talreja Designs.

As a graphic designer, I often see self-taught designers diving straight into freelancing, missing out on basics and eventually burning out. For any skill, start by learning the basics, and consider taking up a job. The hands-on training makes the textbook make sense and goes beyond it. And learn every aspect of a job, not just the creative side. In an emergency, you can do it all by yourself, or guide others on how to do it correctly.

Jayant Chhabra, 36, founder, Cupcake Productions.

Set goals for yourself every six months. This could be learning a new skill, completing a project, or developing new contacts. Track your progress and aim to beat your previous score. It is your story, after all!

Ishan Saluja, 31, restauranteur, Baby Dragon Noida.

Work with what you have, rather than against it. Young people must let go of the assumption that working for their family is less glamorous than working as a corporate employee. In my early 20s I got it into my head that working for family would mean compromising my own ambitions for an easy way out. It took a good decade of stumbling around to realise my error.

Akshay Sharma, 34, lawyer.

Pick up a sport, any sport. Or work out at least three times a week. If nothing else, take the time to meditate for 10-15 minutes each morning every single day. Anything to let off steam and boost your emotional intelligence. The better you understand how to manage your emotions, the easier it will be for you to manage the emotions of others. As you climb the ladder, this will help you more and more.

Mohona Bhattacharjee, 33, recruitment consultant.

Everything is a job platform if you want a job hard enough. Matched with someone on Tinder who works in a great company? Don't leave that date without scoring at least an HR email ID, if not a phone number.

Navni Kumar, 34, writer and editor.

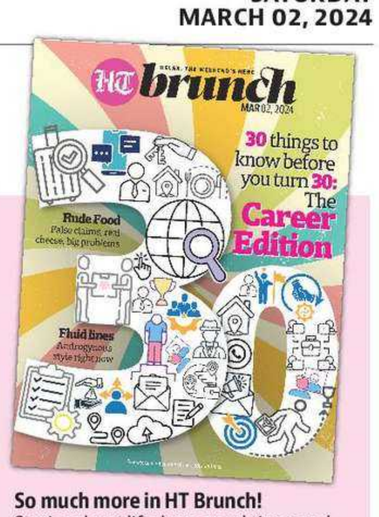
Working from home is a blessing in many ways but it's very easy to drop the ball. To sustain it long-term, set boundaries for yourself so work and life goals are met. Wake up at least an hour before that first morning meeting. Work from a spot other than the bed. Have a rough to-do list for the day. Reward yourself with a snack only when you check a significant task off it. The routine will help keep you as productive as you were when you commuted to the office. And if you do need a quick power nap post lunch, who's to know?

Naina Redhu, 43, luxury photographer at Naina.co

Document your work. Case studies. Visual portfolios. Writing assignments. Projects. Actually being able to look at your work over the years, will show you how far you've come and will give you a sense of accomplishment that few other things can. If it's available to view publicly, like a blog, it's easy marketing too.

Nimit Jain, 43, associate general manager, Sony India.

All in all, in whatever field you're in, there are probably no more than a total of 10-15 common interview questions. Learn what they are, figure out what the average interviewer expects from each answer, and you'll most likely never have to worry about bombing an interview ever again.



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{ HOW ARE WE FEELING? }

This week, we're...

Glowing up the racetrack

Darlings, British brand Charlotte Tilbury Beauty is now the official partner of Formula One Academy for 2024. It's the first time a female-founded beauty brand is partnering with F1. Alia Bhatt wore CT's Pillow Talk lipstick on her wedding day. Here's to air-brushing stereotypes out of sport.

Angsty about Aang

The live-action series, Avatar: The Last Airbender, treads the same ground (or air) as the 2005-2008 animated series and the 2010 film, The Last Airbender. The fight scenes are much more impressive, the VFX is cooler. But it's shiny deja vu, lacking heart. How many more remakes to get it right?

Shaking it up, baby

Enough Beatles documentaries. Skyfall director Sam Mendes is planning four biopics, one for each member of the band. But who's he going to cast? We're voting for Timothee Chalamet as George Harrison; Leo Woodall or Tom Holland as Paul McCartney; Isaac Hempstead Wright (yes, Bran from GoT) as John Lennon and Joe Keery as Ringo Starr. Imagine there's no audition, I wonder if you can...

Getting separation anxiety

Why are so many songs about breakups, all of a sudden? Nisa Shetty sings "So, you wanna be friends now, after all the shit that went down?" on her new song, Drama. Kamakshi Khanna, on Love is Not a F<3cking Game, sings "Gave you my trust and precious time but only when you wanted it". Even Selena Gomez is on it. Love On, her new release, has these lyrics: "Wait 'til I turn my love on, I'm no cheap thrill I'm a roller coaster ride." Fight on, ladies!

Taking a licking

The hippest new accessory in fashion is... a lollipop-holder for your designer leather bag. The Fendi x Chupa Chups collab is as tongue-in-cheek as a lolly brand should be. The holders dangle like charms from the bags, and come with a lollipop inside. They'd better. Fendi bags cost $2,000 and up. And there's a sucker born every minute.

{ PLAYBOOK }

One vibe fits all

Androgynous style is finally for every shape, every colour of the rainbow and every occasion (almost). Here's the 2024 update

Noor Anand Chawla
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It might take a bit of searching, but YouTube still has them – grainy videos from 2007, featuring not-yet-influencers offering tips on, "how to dress androgynous, you guys!". The inspiration is clear: Cate Blanchett, playing a young Bob Dylan in I'm Not There, which released that year. It's a hard style to pull off. Dylan and Blanchett are both bony. The look is all hard angles, dark glasses, scowl, slim cigarette and unkempt hair.

But the times, they are a-changin'. Modern androgynous fashion is no longer confined to making lanky women look like lanky men. Gender-fluid dressing is about men, women and non-binary folks across diverse body types finding common fashion ground. There's room for colour, curves, a bit of flounce.

Pranav Misra, co-founder and CEO of Huemn; Shweta Kapur, founder and creative director of 431-88; and Abhishek Paatni, principal aggregator at online fashion store NoughtOne break down what androgynous dressing looks like today. Don't think twice, it's all right.

The mood. "The scope of androgynous fashion has definitely changed to become more inclusive," says Misra. He attributes this positive change to the role of content creators. "A decade ago, conversations around fashion were limited to editors, brands and tastemakers. Now it's become more democratic, with people voicing their opinions directly," he says. "But it's just the tip of the iceberg."

Paatni believes that the definition of androgynous fashion remains the same, but fashionable folks have changed and embraced it more fully only recently. "People are now more self-aware, confident and fearlessly expressive," he says.

The essentials. The traditional understanding of androgynous fashion was "power suits worn by women", says Kapur. Now there are interesting variations on this idea. She describes her favourites as a "bit slouchy with lots of layering, borrowed from the boy's aesthetic, but made feminine by half tuckins." Most stylish wardrobes already include oversized blazers, white button-down shirts and straight tailored pants. They're the basics for anyone who wants to try androgynous fashion.

Paatni's key pieces include a suit with an oversized double-breasted jacket, paired with anti-fit pleated pants. "The looks also includes men in skirts and people wearing anti-fit cargos and oversized jackets," he says.

Androgynous fashion has moved past the idea of lanky bodies dressed in sharp male cuts. (Above) Cate Blanchett, playing Bob Dylan in I'm Not There (2007) could pull it off. Modern styles (left) are more casual and size-inclusive.
ALL IMAGES COURTESY: HUEMN, NOUGHTONE, 431-88

The hacks. Because androgyny is about breaking free of gender norms, venturing into new design territory and rethinking the idea of sexy, it won't work if you don't own your look. Stylists can only do so much. "If you don't know the person you are styling, you won't do it well," says Misra.

What works is playing with sharp contrasts in terms of silhouettes, fabrics and concepts. Think voluminous pieces paired with fitted clothing, and bright accessories offsetting pale-hued ensembles. Think of Billy Porter at the 2019 Oscars, his sharp tux flaring out into a full-on skirt.

For those who want it a little toned down, Paatni recommends a sharply tailored suit with a loose button-down shirt and an eye-catching tie. "Or wear a man skirt with an oversized hoodie and some boots. It will look great!"

The inclusion. Yes, androgynous dressing honours body positivity. "Things have changed!" says Kapur. "It's so refreshing to now see the same clothes on all body types. I love when the same fit is worn by two different body shapes. It adds character and life to the garment."

Misra, however, acknowledges that fashion is cyclical. Whether the clothes are worn boxy or closer to the body (highlighting or covering up curves) depends on the trend of the moment. "What's different from 10 years ago is the impact that the gaze of the outsider has on someone. Earlier, people were influenced by what others said but now we dress for ourselves," he says.

The quick fix. "Layer everything," says Kapur. The technique makes it easy to make a dramatic impact without trying too hard. She recommends accessorising with chunky shoes or brogues, a vintage belt, and aviators. "For the Indian summer, I would wear an oversized button-down shirt and open it halfway while tucking it into pants."

And give the world something to focus on, says Paatni. "A great androgynous look should include a key silhouette, such as a man skirt, which should be accessorised with silver rings, boots and lots of kajal to play up the eyes."

{ PERSONAL AGENDA }

Rithvik Dhanjani

Actor, @rithvikk_dhanjani

Purnima Goswami Sharma
letters@hindustantimes.com

One thing I would never buy: A submarine. I don't think I'll need it.

Currently, I am:
Hosting the 11th season of Jhalak Dikhhla Jaa on Sony TV.

High point in life:
Shows that made me popular: Pavitra Rishta, Nach Baliye.

Low point in life:
It is either success or learning, never a low point.

On my playlist:
Ruk Jana Nahin, by Kishore Kumar; Cold Mess by Prateek Kuhad; Kisi Ki Muskurahaton Pe Ho Nisaar, by Mukesh.

Today I am craving:
Almond croissants.

Last thing I ordered online:
A co-ord set.

App I check before bed:
Chess. I play online before sleeping.

Advice I'd give my 18-year-old self:
Keep going. You're on the right track.

My favourite subject in school:
Maths.

I'd swipe right on:
Jennifer Lawrence.

A superpower I wish I had:
To be able to time-travel.

My favourite Sunday memory:
Playing cricket with my friends.

My most star-struck moment:
Meeting the famous magicians Penn Jillette and Raymond Joseph Teller in Las Vegas at their show.

My favourite bad habit:
I can't resist sweets.

If I could travel back or forward in time, I would...:
Go to the future and see what I can alter in the present for a better tomorrow for everyone.

The best thing about fame:
I can bring a smile to many unknown faces and make their day special.

Worst thing about fame:
I love being famous, so nothing.

My secret skill is:
Mind reading, and close-up magic with cards and coins.

PHOTOS: ADOBE STOCK

column { *rude food* }

Know chalk from cheese

The crackdown on non-dairy cheese is all over the news. But McDonald's is hardly the only brand passing off a substitute for the real thing. Have you noticed?

VIR SANGHVI

The cheeseburger is one of America's greatest gastronomic achievements. It has a simple filling: A patty made from minced beef and a slice of processed cheese. It is a dish that has been taken around the world by such chains as McDonald's.

It is impossible to make an American-style cheeseburger in India. Even before the current campaign against beef started, McDonald's had decided not to use beef in India out of respect for Hindu sentiments.

But is it also impossible to get a non-beef cheeseburger made with real cheese in India? Over the last week, as the Maharashtra government's regulators have acted against McDonald's for allegedly passing off cheese-less cheese substitutes as the real thing, the suspicion has grown that even the cheese in the Indian version of the cheeseburger is not cheese.

As the news of the action against McDonald's hit the media, the company moved to assert its cheesy credentials. "Myth Busted" it declared on its Instagram handle. "The cheese slice in your favourite burger is milk-based real cheese." And: "We use only real, quality cheese in all our products containing cheese."

This was good news for McDonald's fans. But some people worried about a curious construction in the post: "in all our products containing cheese". What about McDonald's Cheese Fries?

According to industry gossip, in common with other fast-food chains, the cheese flavour in those fries came from cheese that was not 100 per cent dairy. That was what the fuss was about.

McDonald's made no mention of this dish in its myth-busting post, so it is hard to be sure. Certainly, the Maharashtra FDA had little doubt that all the cheese flavours at McDonald's were not 100 per cent dairy.

I imagine that the state FDA might have had even more luck if they had started on pizza places. Many of them use real mozzarella. But not everyone does. It is not unusual to see non-dairy cheese used in some cheaper pizzas. (That's how they can keep them cheap. Cheese is the most expensive ingredient in a pizza. Stop using the real thing and the cost drops drastically.)

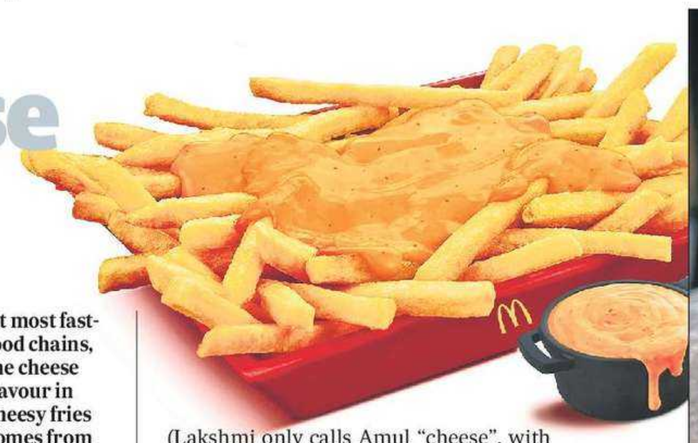
If your head is reeling from this cheesiness, then a few distinctions may help.

Real cheese is made from milk: From cows, buffaloes, goats, sheep etc. It can be an artisanal product and is prized. Unfortunately we don't see much of it in India.

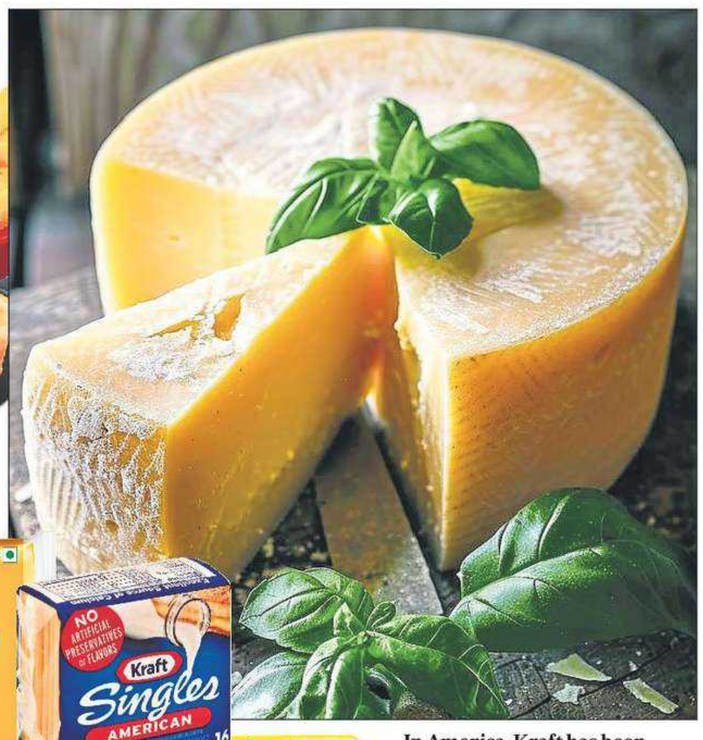
Processed cheese is what most of us think of as cheese. This is a 20th century American product invented by a man called Kraft who gave his name to the brand that produces the world's most famous processed cheese. Americans liked it because a) it had a longer shelf-life, b) it was easier to melt c) it could be cut into pieces for fast food dishes and sandwiches and d) it was bland.

Kraft's processed cheese swept the world in the 1950s and was popular in India. It was replaced in Indian affections by Amul, which is now the dominant brand in India, much loved by street vendors, though strangely enough not necessarily by the fast food industry (which may well have something to do with this controversy).

Europeans are sniffy about processed cheese, and even in the US, processed cheese is less popular with the younger generation, which wants real cheese. The food writer and TV personality Padma Lakshmi writes in her memoir about Amul cheese, calling it a "processed cheese-like product.....with all the quality of Laughing Cow wedges left out too long without the wrapper."



At most fast-food chains, the cheese flavour in cheesy fries comes from cheese that is not 100 per cent dairy. In Maharashtra, regulators have acted against McDonald's for allegedly passing off cheese-less cheese substitutes as the real thing.
MCDONALD'S



(Lakshmi only calls Amul "cheese", with inverted commas: Laughing Cow is a cheap, Swiss cheese popular with children, and processed so that it lasts longer unrefrigerated.)

Whatever your views on processed cheese, it is usually made from dairy milk. But there are cheese substitutes that have never been near a bottle of milk. They are usually made from vegetable fat, (what the Maharashtra FDA calls "Dalda" in its comments on McDonald's). Sometimes to confuse the public, a tiny amount of real cheese is mixed with the vegetable fat so that they can list cheese among the ingredients.

Phoney "mozzarella" turns up on cheap pizzas. You can get sauces made from processed cheese (Amul makes one) but you can also get fake ones made with say, sunflower oil with a little cheese powder thrown in.

In many countries, they have regulations about what you can call cheese. In America, Kraft has been forced to call its inexpensive Velveeta a "pasteurized prepared cheese product." Until 2002, Kraft sold it as a "pasteurized processed cheese spread." The US FDA stopped Kraft from pretending it was cheese. In India, however, many so-called cheese spreads that would not be allowed to be described as "cheese" in the West can get away with that labelling.

Should all this disturb us? Well, yes and no. And it depends on who you ask.

Chefs and cheese purists are horrified. The chef Suvir Saran says that fake "cheese, with aspirational nomenclature is chemical laced, bereft of goodness and comes with assured problems for one's health."

Others make the more limited point that we should have regulations that force manufacturers to be more transparent in their labelling and a lot of the stuff sold as cheese should be relabelled.

On the other hand, why focus only on cheese? Many, if not most, five-star hotel bakeries still use synthetic non-dairy cream not only because it is cheaper, but also because it lasts longer and is easier to handle. Nobody forces the hotels to declare whether they are using real cream or not.

Even so-called "farm paneer" is non-dairy. No regulator seems to object. And as for ice-cream, much of the stuff made by multinationals in India is made from vegetable fat.

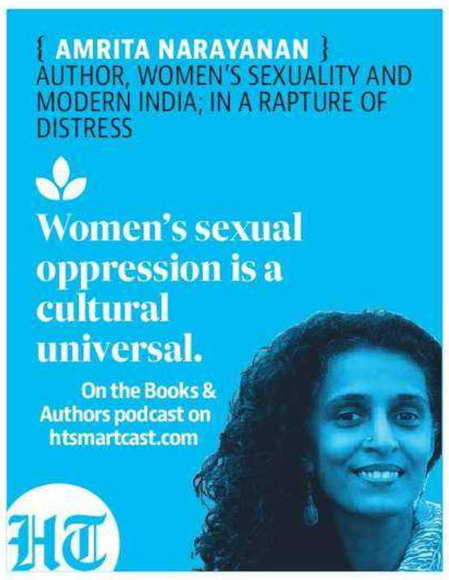
That is one side of the story. Then, there is the food industry's position. It argues that no Indian consumer objects to a non-dairy cheese sauce because frankly, we can't tell the difference. You could argue that vegetable fat is healthier than the dairy fat in real cheese because it is less likely to contribute to heart disease. If a product that costs less and does no harm is likely to benefit a consumer who might not otherwise be able to afford a pizza, then why get so agitated about it?

I am not a man who eats much processed (Amul/Kraft type) cheese, so I have no strong views on the subject. But I do believe that it is important to tell the truth. If the cream used in an expensive patisserie is not really cream, then consumers have a right to know. And if the cheese fries don't really have much cheese in them, then yes, you are lying to your customers.

The views expressed by the columnist are personal

TV show host Padma Lakshmi wrote about Amul cheese in her memoir, calling it a "processed cheese-like product... with all the quality of Laughing Cow wedges left out too long without the wrapper."
SHUTTER STOCK

In America, Kraft has been forced to call Velveeta a "pasteurized prepared cheese product".
ADOBE STOCK; SHUTTERSTOCK



58 years since the release of The Sound of Music

Based on Maria von Trapp's memoir, The Story of the Trapp Family Singers (1949) and the Broadway musical that grew out of it, The Sound of Music, starring Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer, continues to impress with its classic Rodgers and Hammerstein soundtrack and story of a family fleeing Austria as it is being annexed by Nazi Germany. Playlist favourites like Maria, Sixteen Going on Seventeen, Do-Re-Mi and So Long, Farewell have transcended cultural barriers. The film has been enormously influential, even playing a pivotal cameo role in a book as far removed from Hollywood as Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things. In the picture, Julie Andrews as Maria, the governess of the von Trapp children, who eventually marries their father. BETTMANN ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES

{ INTERVIEW } MANJU KAPUR, AUTHOR, THE GALLERY

"You cannot create if you are censored"

On setting her new novel within the Indian art world, apologising to MF Husain, and examining, once again, the constraints placed on women

Chintan Girish Modi
letters@hindustantimes.com

1 How did the art world become your focus for this novel? Did the characters Minal, Ellora and Tashi come to you first, or did you start out with the setting?

The characters came first. It was important for me to illustrate the class divide that we in India encounter daily in so many different ways. Delhi is where I live, and the city I know the best. It is a city that offers a chance for many to advance, offers a chance for the children of economically weaker sections of society to jump into a higher-class category through talent and education. So far as Minal's interest in the art world is concerned, this grew from my own interest and from observations of the many women who run galleries. I have been reading about them for years.

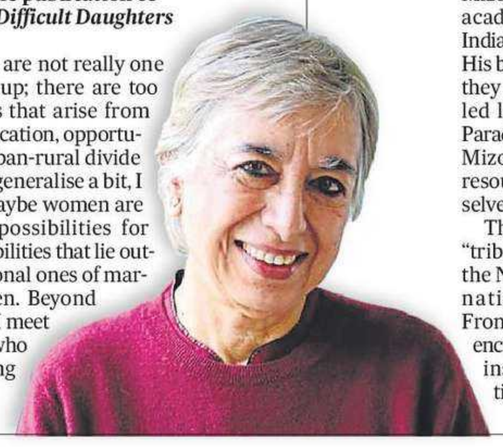
2 What aspects of the art world were most entertaining and enjoyable for you to capture on the page? Which details did you find challenging?

Next to literature, art is a major interest of mine. I like describing paintings. The description of the MF Husain sketch on the first page comes from my staring long and hard at a small Husain that I own. The interest in galleries came later. It was for the galleries that I had to do research – How do they run? What are the challenges? How profitable are they? How are new artists discovered? Who is considered worth exhibiting? I had no idea about any of this in the beginning.

3 The book opens with an apology to MF Husain for being "forced out" of his "motherland". What made you include it? Had you met him?

I had seen Husain around but not met him. I admire his work tremendously, I find it vigorous, inventive and lively. The particular reference in *The Gallery* came from a belief that artists cannot really create meaningful works if they are not free. You cannot create if you are censoring yourself, or if you are censored by others. A society that does this moral policing, whichever society and wherever, might be seen as an immature one; to hit out at something you don't like or doesn't meet with your approval. Let us not forget that non-violence was how we won our independence, so it is useful even in practical terms.

4 The constraints placed on women is a recurring theme in your work. What has changed for Indian women between the publication of your first novel *Difficult Daughters* (1998) and now?



Indian women are not really one homogenous group; there are too many differences that arise from class, locality, education, opportunity, caste, the urban-rural divide etc. But if I could generalise a bit, I would say that maybe women are more aware of possibilities for themselves, possibilities that lie outside the conventional ones of marriage and children. Beyond that I don't know, I meet plenty of women who assure me nothing has changed.

The power of the spoken word

A look at the insurgency in Mizoram, that lasted for two decades until 1986, and how the oral culture of the Mizos played a positive role in their emergence as a people

Thangkhanlal Ngaihte
letters@hindustantimes.com

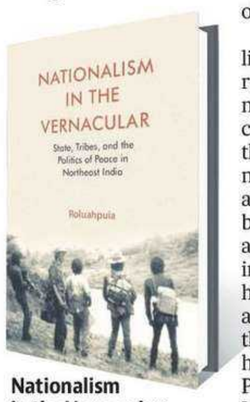
It is conventional wisdom that the lack of textual culture among the tribes of the North east puts them at a serious disadvantage not only in terms of their own development, but also in relation to other groups. The Naga nationalist AZ Phizo, in his so-called plebiscite speech of 1951, rued the Nagas' many missed opportunities due to the absence of a written record as evidence and vowed that "...from now on, we shall put everything into writing. We shall see to it that our talks do not end in mere words."

The Nagas, under Phizo's leadership, went on to fight for independence from India. The Mizos followed suit 15 years or so later. There were numerous insurgencies in the North east, but these two remained the only mass-based armed movements for independence. Both failed, but it's no accident that Nagaland and Mizoram came to be endowed with the most extensive autonomy rights among states in India, barring pre-2019 Jammu & Kashmir.

There is now a relatively large body of literature on the Naga insurgency. Whether Phizo's entreaties have anything to do with this is unclear. As for the Mizos, not as much. Hence, Roluahpuia's new book, *Nationalism in the Vernacular: State, Tribes, and the Politics of Peace in Northeast India* is a much-welcome addition to the sparse literature on the Mizo movement. The author is a young Mizo academic, who teaches sociology at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Roorkee. His book is a testament to Mizo resilience as they endured the *rambuai* (Mizo for "troubled land") insurgency period (1966-1986). Paradoxically, the book argues that it was the Mizo's creative use of their oral cultural resources which helped them sustain themselves as a people through that dark time.

The book's seven chapters look at the "tribal question" in India with reference to the North east, the formative years of Mizo nationalism, the Mizo National Front(MNF)-led movement for independence and state repression in response to the insurgency. They also present the collective punishment meted to the population, the Mizo counter-response, and critiques the idea of a peaceful Mizoram in the post-accord period. The book rues the absence of ideas of restitution and reconciliation, and points to the neglect of the common people's contribution to the movement. The main thrust is on the oral tradition and culture of the Mizos and the positive role this played. Numerous patriotic and nationalistic songs emerged. These resonated with the common people and were communicated and learned orally, rather than in written form. As a close-knit Christian community, church congregations are part of the daily routine and community singing engenders fellow-feeling. The author classifies these songs into *hnam lha* or nationalist songs, party *lha* (songs composed and sung as tribute to political parties) and *rambuai lha* (songs that gave expression to anguish and suffering during the troubled insurgency period).

Reading this book, I'm reminded of Bertolt Brecht's ever-popular verse published in 1939 as Europe braced for war: *"In the dark times / will there also be singing / Yes, there will also be singing / about the dark times."* The Mizos sang through their *rambuai* years, which helped them cope with their suffering. The medium of songs, transmitted by word of mouth rather than text, was also ideal as it helped them dodge censorship.



Nationalism in the Vernacular; State, Tribes, and the Politics of Peace in Northeast India
Roluahpuia
260pp, ₹1550, Cambridge University Press

Secondly, Mizo elites succeeded in reframing and reconstructing the idea and appeal of the nation in the local idiom. Terms like *zalenna* and *ram leh hnam* domesticate universal ideas of freedom and nationalism and make them distinctively Mizo. This is what vernacularisation of nationalism and politics is all about.

This vernacularisation accounts for what may be called the Mizo exception in terms of growing nationalist consciousness among the people. Scholars of nationalism have long thought that for nationalist ideas to gain traction, certain criteria, like print culture, literacy, industrialisation and a level of material prosperity need to be present. These factors were more or less absent in the 1950s when the Mizo people transcended narrow clan and village solidarities to embrace an inclusive Mizo, or Zo nationalism. Zo is the self-ascribed root identity of the tribes, who were called Lushai in present-day Mizoram, Kuki in Manipur, and Chin in the Chin Hills area of Burma during the colonial period. Nomenclature remains a contentious issue amongst these people even as they all agree that they are of the same ethnic stock.

As the author points out, it was in 1954 that, in response to a vibrant popular movement, the Lushai Hills were renamed as Mizo Hills and the traditional institution of chieftainship was abolished in favour of grassroots democracy. The lively contest that played out between the two dominant parties at that time, namely, the Mizo Union (MU) and the United Mizo Freedom Organisation (UMFO) made for a delightful read. The MU stood for the abolition of chieftainship and the integration of all Zo-inhabited lands under Indian democracy while UMFO favoured integration with Burma and a retention of chieftainship. The contest played out lyrically through the medium of songs and counter songs and was the perfect dance of democracy.

The book critiques existing literature, which focuses narrowly on the MNF-led movement. The chapter that discusses the pre-MNF period in the Mizo nationalist movement forms the most insightful and informative part of the book. Many people believe the aspiration for the territorial integration of all Mizo/Zo-inhabited lands in India, Burma and Bangladesh, a demand that the Mizoram CM Lalduhoma recently broached to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has its origins in the MNF movement. In fact, the book points out, it was in 1947 itself that the Mizo Union submitted a memorandum to the Bordoloi Committee setting out a precondition for the Mizos' integration with India: political autonomy and the ethnic and territorial unity of all Mizo-inhabited areas under one administrative unit.

This is a valuable addition to the literature – and the most comprehensive accounting yet – on the Mizo movement. Having said that, there are quite a few repetitions which could have been edited out. But that's a minor grouse about a book that's insightful and enjoyable. If you are one of those wondering how Mizoram came to be so invested in the ongoing civil conflict in Manipur between the majority Meiteis and the Kuki/Zos, this book provides a good background.

Thangkhanlal Ngaihte is assistant professor of Political Science at Churachandpur College, Manipur and PhD candidate at Mizoram University, Aizawl.

{ HT PICKS } NEW READS

AN ANCIENT GUIDE FOR MODERN LOVERS

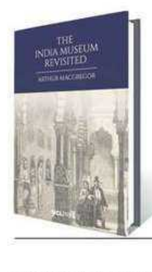
Sanskrit has too often been regarded as the sacred language of the gods, yet it is love that has been the overwhelming obsession of Sanskrit writers for over 3,000 years. *How to Love in Sanskrit* is an invitation to Sanskrit love poetry, bringing together verses and short prose pieces by celebrated writers like Kalidasa and Banabhatta, Buddhist and Jain monks, scholars, emperors, and even some modern-day poets. How do you brew a love potion? Turn someone crimson with a compliment? How do you make love? How do you quarrel and make up? Nurse a broken heart? And how do you let go? There's something for everyone in this brilliantly translated ancient guide to love for modern readers.

How to Love in Sanskrit: Poems
Anusha Rao, Suhas Mahesh
328pp, ₹599, HarperCollins

THE EAST INDIA COMPANY'S COLLECTIONS

The museum of the East India Company formed, for a large part of the nineteenth century, one of the sights of London. At its dispersal in 1879, around 20,000 objects went to other institutions. In recent years, little has been remembered of it beyond its mere existence, while an assumed negative role has been widely attributed to it on the basis of its position at the heart of one of Britain's arch-colonialist enterprises.

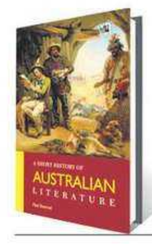
Extensively illustrated, *The India Museum Revisited* provides a full examination of the museum's founding manifesto and evolving ambitions. It surveys the contents of its multifaceted collections – with respect to materials, their manufacture and original functions on the Indian subcontinent – as well as the collectors who gathered them and the manner in which they were mobilised to various ends within the museum. From this integrated treatment of documentary and material sources, a more accurate, rounded and nuanced picture emerges of an institution that contributed in major ways, over a period of 80 years, to the representation of India for a European audience, not only in Britain but through the museum's involvement in the international exposition movement to audiences on the continent and beyond.



The India Museum Revisited
Arthur MacGregor
464pp, ₹6568. UCL Press

THE CREATIVE SPIRIT OF OZ

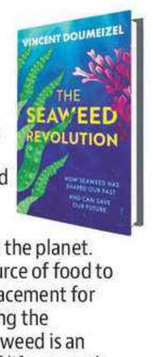
A Short History of Australian Literature fills a gap in study materials for Indian readers interested in a country that shares a lot of colonial history, many sporting ties, and increasing diasporic connections. Much produce, many colonial officers, architectural styles and even fragments of language migrated from India to the southern colonies. Australia is, however, a unique land that has developed its own idioms, cultural mix, and literature. This book introduces the major writers across two centuries, places them in historical contexts, and provides a glossary of local usages and a list of reference materials. It blends comprehensive coverage with selective attention to works so readers can "get the feel" of a nation's creative spirit. *A Short History of Australian Literature* will be an indispensable companion to anyone interested in Australian studies.



A Short History of Australian Literature
Paul Sharrad
342pp, ₹845, Orient BlackSwan

ontheweb

READ: The Seaweed Revolution by Vincent Doumeizel dives deep into the marine world and lays out the potential of seaweed to save the planet. From being a source of food to becoming a replacement for plastic and cooling the atmosphere, seaweed is an essential pillar of life on earth.



Scan the QR code to read the review by Arunima Mazumdar

{ FICTION } EPIC INSPIRATION

Of building bridges and trials by fire

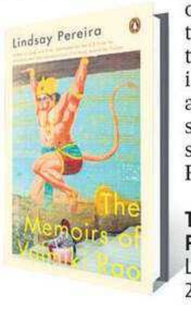
Syed Saad Ahmed
letters@hindustantimes.com

The *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* can be rather unidimensional in the popular imagination — a triumphalist account of good over evil almost verging on a "happily-ever-after"-style fairy-tale ending. I have always found the epics' amenability to interpretation fascinating, even if it means that people use them to jump to all sorts of conclusions. When I was 10, a classmate told me that the key message of both texts is that women are the root of all evil and wars. However, it is to this offering up of multiple meanings that we owe the profusion of the epics' adaptations across millennia, nations, and languages, and also their enduring relevance.

There are numerous contemporary novels, movies, and television series that reference the *Ramayana*, but how Lindsay Pereira's *The Memoirs of Valmiki Rao* draws upon the text is spectacular. In the novel's prologue, we meet Valmiki Rao, "unshaven, crabby, and smelling like a wet dog". When the 72-year-old retired postman sees Ramu lying torpid under a staircase in their chawl, Ganga Niwas, in Mumbai, he is reminded of events from the early 1990s that brought Ramu to this state. His recollections of that time form the crux of his memoir, which languishes in his trunk unknown and unpublished.

As Valmiki narrates the story of Ramu and other denizens of the building, we get a glimpse of life in Mumbai's tenements. Even as they eke out an existence in cramped rooms, their way of life is increasingly under threat from real-estate development. Chawls, built largely from the 19th century onwards to house migrants working in the city's mills and factories, have often been romanticised in Bollywood films as communitarian havens. Valmiki does not subscribe to these rosy visions. He talks about community life but also the lack of running water, shared stinking toilets, petty quarrels, and thin walls that do not afford privacy. For him, Mumbai is a cutthroat and callous place rather than a "city of dreams".

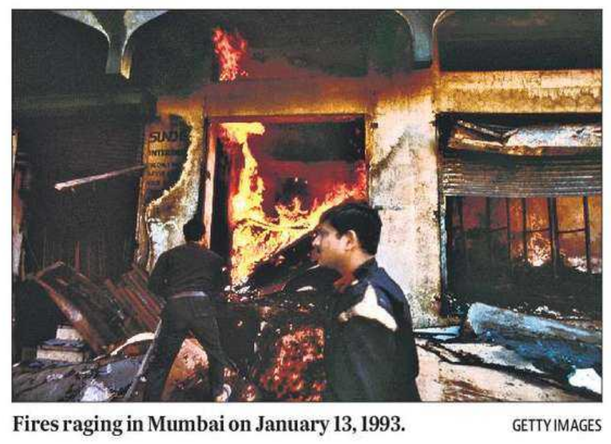
Against this backdrop, Valmiki finds the Ram Janmabhoomi movement of the early 1990s baffling. He cannot understand why people in the city are so riled up about Ayodhya, a place most have never been to, and are raring to build a temple over a mosque there. But the triumphalism over the mosque's destruction is short-lived. Rumours and riots engulf the city, setting off a disastrous sequence of events for Ramu, his love Janaki, his arch enemy Ravi Anna, Ganga Niwas, and its neighbouring chawl, Sri Niwas. As their world collapses, the Shiv Sena cadres, who had vowed to protect them, are nowhere to be found. Even as several lives came undone, others quickly moved on. For as Valmiki reminisces, "What had nostalgia done for any of them when the past was as dismal as the present and as devoid of hope as the future?"



The Memoirs of Valmiki Rao
Lindsay Pereira
269pp, ₹599, Penguin

Valmiki, as the omniscient narrator, ties the story together. He is amusingly cranky, yet perceptive and compassionate. The transitions between the narration to dialogues and the interiority of the sundry characters are seamless. Despite his laments about the sectarian violence and the injustices the characters suffer, the novel does not come across as preachy. In the retelling, the author includes major and minor characters from the *Ramayana*, enmeshing their personalities and motivations in Mumbai's socio-political milieu. Pivotal plot points, such as Hanuman building a bridge to Lanka, Sita's trial by fire, and her crossing the enclosure meant to protect her, have striking analogues. In these respects, I found it similar to Shashi Tharoor's *The Great Indian Novel* (1989), which takes inspiration from the *Mahabharata* to narrate a satirical tale of political scheming spanning key events from the Indian independence struggle to the Emergency of the 1970s.

Many contemporary adaptations of the epics either experiment with formats or perspectives, focus on one character or incident, or craft a gargantuan series to encompass their formidable length. Pereira, however, sweeps the whole text and its primary concerns while packaging it as a crisp, almost pacy novel.



Fires raging in Mumbai on January 13, 1993. GETTY IMAGES

Where I wish it had significantly departed from the *Ramayana* is in its depiction of female characters. They mostly come across as receptacles of men's actions and affections, devoid of any agency, except when inflicting miseries upon people. We get to know more of Janaki in comparison to the other women, but it is still nowhere close to the attention lavished on the men. This, however, is easier said than done, considering the constraints an adaptation imposes.

All in all, the novel artfully translates an ancient tale to tell the story of contemporary India.

Syed Saad Ahmed is a writer and communications professional.

Google removes 23 Indian apps

Google delisted these apps for not complying with its payments policy

Aditi Agrawal
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NEW DELHI: Google delisted at least 23 apps from nine Indian developers from its Play Store on Friday for not complying with its payments policy. These include all thirteen apps from Matrimony.com — such as Bharat Matrimony, Kerala Matrimony and Jodii — three apps from InfoEdge — Naukri.com, Naukri Recruiter, and 99Acres — People Interactive's Shaadi.com, Alt Balaji's streaming service ALTT, and streaming services aha and Stage.

Delisting them means that users of Android — the mobile operating system that accounts for almost 95% of India's smartphone market — will not be able to search for and download these apps from Google's official Play Store. Many of the affected apps do not even have apps for iOS.

In a blog post on Friday morning, Google had said that it could remove apps that do not comply with its payments policy and throughout the day, apps kept disappearing. In the post, the company said, "[F]or an extended period of time, 10 companies, including many well-established

The founders who have been affected by the Google's delisting called it a "dark day for Indian internet". AFP

ones, have chosen to not pay for the immense value they receive on Google Play".

But the founders who have been affected called it a "dark day for Indian internet". "Unlike 20 years ago when government's laws determined what is going to be on the internet, now two companies — Apple and Google — determine what people will have access to," said Matrimony.com's founder and CEO Murugavel Janakiraman.

TrulyMadly's Snehil Khanor echoed Janakiraman. "It's a dark day for Digital India Dream. These Big Techs have become the digital landlords of the digital ecosystem and want us to pay them 'lagaan' (rent). Hardly any business in India even makes 30% PAT, but they want to earn 30% of our revenue so they can keep getting bigger at expense of our demise."

The impact on businesses is immense. Ravi Mittal, CEO and co-founder of QuackQuack, a dating app, said, "95% of our traffic is from Android. We get 25,000 downloads a day via Play Store. 90% of our revenue is going to take a hit. Many developers have no choice but to succumb to survive. Things might change if the CCI or the government intervene."

At the heart of this tussle is the Google Play Billing System (GPBS) and Google's payment policies for Android apps. It applies to sale of all digital goods and services sold via in-app billing system and initially required all developers to use only GPBS.

In the notice sent to the developers on Friday, which HT has seen, Google said that the app does not comply with the Payments policy as it "uses a non-Google Play billing system to accept payment for access to in-app features or services".

On using GPBS, developers would have to pay Google 15% service fee for the first $1 million revenue earned by the developer and 30% of earnings over $1 million. For "automatically renewing subscription products", this service fee is 15%. After blowback in India, including an adverse order from the Competition Commission of India in October 2022 that said this practice was anticompetitive, Google started allowing developers in India to offer alternative billing systems. Developers choosing to do so had their service to Google reduced by 4%.

To comply with the policy, Google has given developers three options: opt for GPBS, have an alternative billing system, or "operate on a consumption-only basis without paying a service fee". But app developers in India are not satisfied for two main reasons — first, despite opting for an alternative billing system, they were still obligated to pay Google an 11% or a 26% fee, which they say is unfair; and second, this, they argue, violates, the CCI's order.

In the October 2022 order, CCI had ordered Google to allow and not restrict app developers from using any third-party billing/ payment processing services.

Eventually, 14 companies, including those whose apps were delisted on Friday, challenged GPBS in Madras High Court. Two additional lawsuits by Disney+Hotstar and Test Book followed. The Madras HC granted interim protection to all of them, but 12 of the original 14 companies filed a special leave petition in the Supreme Court. On February 9, the apex court did not grant these 14 companies protection from getting delisted but Disney+Hotstar and Test Book's protection continued. Unacademy is one of the two companies from Madras HC that did not approach the apex court.

Google argues that the service fee that it charges allows it to invest resources in its platforms, tools and safeguards that help developers and users. Only 3% of developers of the 200,000 Indian developers sell digital goods or services and thus need to pay a service fee, Google has said. "[A]llowing this small group of developers to get differential treatment from the vast majority of developers who are paying their fair share creates an uneven playing field across the ecosystem and puts all other apps and games at a competitive disadvantage," Google said in the post on Friday.

But developers want the government to intervene. "Indian companies will comply – for now. But what India needs is an App Store / Play Store that is a part of Digital Public Infrastructure – like UPI and ONDC..," Sanjeev Bikhchandani, the founder of Info Edge, said in a post on X.

PMI hits 5-month high in February

Ashokamithran T
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India's manufacturing activity, as measured by the HSBC Purchasing Managers Index, was up to 56.9 in February 2024, a five-month high, as growth in production fuelled increase in sales, according to a statement from S&P Global. The January PMI manufacturing reading was at 56.5.

A value above 50 implies an expansion in the sector. The index has been in the expansion zone for 32 months straight. The February reading was slightly higher than the manufacturing flash PMI of 56.7 released last week. "The HSBC final India Manufacturing PMI indicates that production growth continued to be strong, supported by both domestic and external demand" said Ines Lam, Economist at HSBC in the statement.

The output PMI rose one point to 60.7 and export orders rose three points to 56.7 in February, said Rahul Bajoria, MD & Head of EM Asia (ex-China) Economics, Barclays in a research note, which includes data of all the subindices. "However, capacity pressures were still modest, as backlogs declined m/m, and the employment PMI was unchanged"

Production levels were raised following a steep increase in inflows of new orders.

Bajoria added.

Another reason behind the expansion in February was the sharp decline in input costs, to 50.2, which was 1.4 points lower than the previous month ago value. This led to a marginal 0.2 point drop in the output price PMI to 52.1 in February.

"The latest reversal in price PMI trends (compared with January when both rose sequentially) suggests inflation remains in check. On a level basis, the input price PMI remains lower than the output price PMI, suggesting firms retain pricing power," said Bajoria.

Services PMI data for February will be released on March 5.

RBI SAYS 97.62% OF ₹2,000 CURRENCY RETURNED TO BANKING SYSTEM

Press Trust of India
feedback@livemint.com

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday said nearly 97.62% of the ₹2,000 bank notes have returned to the banking system, and only about ₹8,470 crore worth of the withdrawn notes are still with the public.

On May 19, 2023, the RBI announced the withdrawal of ₹2,000 denomination bank notes from circulation.

"The total value of ₹2000 banknotes in circulation, which was ₹3.56 lakh crore at the close of business on May 19, 2023, when the withdrawal of ₹2000 banknotes was announced, has declined to ₹8,470 crore at the close of business on February 29, 2024," the RBI said in a statement.

Thus, 97.62% of the ₹2,000 banknotes in circulation as of May 19, 2023, have since been returned, it added.

"The ₹2,000 banknotes continue to be legal tender," the RBI added. People can deposit and/ or exchange ₹2,000 bank notes at the 19 RBI offices across the country. People can also send ₹2,000 bank notes through India Post from any post office to any of the RBI Issue Offices for credit to their bank accounts in India.

Public and entities holding such notes were initially asked to either exchange or deposit them in bank accounts by September 30, 2023. The deadline was later extended to October 7, 2023. Deposit and exchange services at bank branches were discontinued on October 7, 2023.

Starting October 8, 2023, individuals have been provided with the choice of either exchanging the currency or having the equivalent sum credited to their bank accounts at the 19 offices of the RBI.

The 19 RBI offices depositing/ exchanging the bank notes are in Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Belapur, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Guwahati, Hyderabad, Jaipur, Jammu, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Nagpur, New Delhi, Patna and Thiruvananthapuram.

Benchmark indices rocket to new peak on impressive GDP data

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MUMBAI: Benchmark indices vaulted to record highs on Friday, a momentum expected to continue led by large-cap stocks, after India's economy surprised the markets with a faster-than-anticipated pace in the December quarter.

The Nifty ended Friday's trading 1.6% higher at 22,338.75 points, its highest percentage rise in six months.

The Sensex climbed 1.72%, the most in over a month, to 73,745.35 points.

Banks, capital goods, and oil and gas stocks catapulted the Nifty and Sensex to record intraday highs of 22,353.30 and 73,819.21 points on Friday. This was driven by provisional domestic institutional investors buying of ₹3,814.53 crore and proprietary trader purchases of ₹618.58 crore, BSE data show. Foreign portfolio investors purchased shares worth a net ₹128.94 crore.

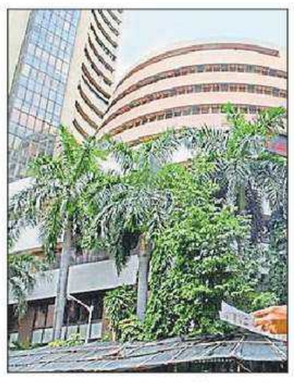
Investor wealth, in effect, increased by ₹4.37 lakh crore.

"The impressive GDP numbers provide the ammunition to the bulls to catapult Indian indices to all-time highs," said Devarsh Vakil, deputy head, retail research, at HDFC Securities, underscoring the bullishness on the Street. "The next upside targets to be watched are around 22,500-22,600 levels. Immediate support is at 22,200 levels."

The top five stocks that contributed almost three-fifths of the Nifty's 355.95-point rally were ICICI Bank Ltd, Reliance Industries Ltd, HDFC Bank Ltd, Larsen & Toubro Ltd, and State Bank of India.

Stocks that surged to fresh life-highs included Reliance Industries (₹3,000 per share), ICICI Bank (₹1,089.95), Tata Motors (₹980.4), and Adani Ports (₹1,349).

The broad-based nature of


Investor wealth, in effect, rose by ₹4.37 lakh crore. MINT

Friday's rally was reflected by the Nifty Midcap 150 and the Nifty Smallcap 250 indices rising 0.8% and 0.64%.

The biggest sectoral gainers were the Nifty Metal index, which rallied 3.62%, and the Bank Nifty, which gained 2.53%. While metals gained because of the growth in the manufacturing sector, banks rose on hopes of an earlier-than-expected cut in interest rates by the Reserve Bank of India to address the tepid growth in private consumption.

A cut in rates would mean that banks wouldn't have to raise deposit rates in a hurry, which could consequently improve their net interest margins–a measure of profitability for lenders.

"The momentum in the market could continue, led by large private banks which have been lagging since the past few months," said Andrew Holland, chief executive officer, Avendus Capital Public Markets Alternate Strategies.

Holland said India's robust GDP growth was attributable to impressive tax growth and fewer subsidies. But weak growth in private consumption expenditure, at just 3.5% in Q3, warranted a rate cut by RBI before the US Federal Reserve cuts its interest rates.

All single-lane NHs to be converted to double lanes

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THE PLAN IS TO CONVERT AS MANY OF THESE TO MINIMUM TWO-LANE STRETCHES

NEW DELHI: All existing single-lane national highways will be converted to double lanes, and having two lanes with paved shoulders will be mandatory to get an NH tag in future, two people aware of the road ministry's plans said. The new criterion will be defined in the rules governing construction of national highways.

A paved shoulder is part of a highway adjacent to the regularly travelled portion on the same level.

However, single-lane national highways may be continued in hilly regions. Broadening them would be considered only after an environmental impact assessment, and only if the project can be executed with limited damage to fragile mountain ecosystems, the officials said on condition of anonymity.

Road ministry secretary Anurag Jain had earlier told Mint that the changes in the highway criterion were being worked out to ensure that such alignments conform to today's mobility requirements.

The changes assume significance given that India is implementing one of the world's largest highway building programmes, with about 50,000 km of highways to be constructed over the next 15 years.

As on November-end 2023, India had a national highway network of 146,145 km, with just around 10% being less than two lanes as of December 2023. The plan is to convert as many of these to minimum two-lane stretches. Going forward, no highway will be made of less than two lanes barring a few exceptions, the officials quoted above said.

A query sent to road ministry on details of the proposed changes remained unanswered.

"The above has been in discussions for some time now; it would be a step towards maintaining a basic minimum standard for national highways and would be instrumental in bringing a minimum uniformity, safety and traffic carrying capacity. From another viewpoint, width of a road is also a function of traffic (current and future projections) plying on it and, therefore, only those roads that have sufficient traffic would be taken up as national highways," said Kushal Kumar Singh, partner, Deloitte India.

About 90% of the current highway network comprises two lanes, two lanes with paved shoulder, four lanes and more than four lanes.

The length of four lane and above highways stood at 46,179 km (about 32% of total highway length) while that of two-lane and two-lane highways with paved shoulders stood at 85,096 km (about 58%).

FIU imposes ₹5.5 crore fine on Paytm for PMLA violation

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NEW DELHI/MUMBAI: Paytm's trouble escalated further with the Financial Intelligence Unit-India slapping a ₹5.49 crore penalty on Paytm Payments Bank Ltd (PPBL) for violating Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) obligations.

The penalty comes after Reserve Bank of India's action against PPBL on 31 January where it directed the payments bank to stop accepting deposits or top-ups in any customer accounts, wallets, FASTTags and other instruments after 29 February citing large scale non-compliance of regulations and supervisory concerns. The deadline was later extended till 15 March.

Meanwhile, Payments firm Paytm on Friday cut some ties with its payments bank unit, which India's banking regulator has ordered to be wound down, in its latest attempt to address compliance concerns that triggered a meltdown in its shares last month.

Paytm and its banking unit mutually agreed to end various inter-company agreements, the company said. It did not specify

The penalty comes after RBI's action against PPBL on 31 January . MINT

what agreements were being terminated.

The FIU-IND action against PPBL follows leads given by law enforcement agencies over movement of money by entities for illegal acts using the payments bank's channel. The FIU found that the charges against Paytm were substantiated and hence imposed the penalty as per provisions of PMLA.

"FIU-IND initiated a review of the Paytm Payments Bank Ltd on receipt of specific information from law enforcement agencies in respect of few entities and their network of businesses engaged in a number of illegal acts, including organising and facilitating online gambling," finance ministry said in statement. "Further, the money generated from these illegal operations, i.e. proceeds of crime were routed and channelled through bank accounts maintained by these entities with the Paytm Payments Bank Ltd," the statement added.

The finance ministry said that with charges brought out by law enforcement agencies and after scrutiny of documents on record, a show cause notice was issue to PPBL.

After considering written and oral submissions of the Paytm Payments Bank Ltd, director FIU-IND, based on the voluminous material available on record, found that charges against Paytm were substantiated and thus vide order dated 1 March under PMLA, it was found to be appropriate to impose a penalty of ₹5.49 crore, the ministry said.

Reacting to the development, a spokesperson said: "The penalty pertains to issues within a business segment that was discontinued two years ago. Following that period, we have enhanced our monitoring systems and reporting mechanisms to the Financial Intelligence Unit (FIU)."

GST revenues cross ₹1.68 L cr in Feb

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NEW DELHI: Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenues surpassed ₹1.68 lakh crore in February, a 12.5% year-on-year increase, coming in as the fourth highest in 79 months since the new tax regime was rolled out in July 2017, highlighting robust growth of the Indian economy, and better tax compliance.

"This growth was driven by a 13.9% rise in GST from domestic transactions and 8.5% increase in GST from import of goods," the Union finance ministry said in a statement on Friday. Gross revenues in the month of February reflects business transactions of January.

Gross GST revenues for February was ₹1,68,337 crore. GST revenue net of refunds for the month was ₹1.51 lakh crore, a 13.6% growth on an annualised basis, it added.

The data released on Friday upwardly revised gross revenue

Gross GST revenues for Feb was ₹1,68,337 crore. AFP

of previous month (January) to ₹1,74,106 crore from ₹1,72,129 crore.

GST revenues in 2023-24 have seen a consistent performance with average monthly collection of ₹1.67 lakh crore, significantly higher than ₹1.50 lakh crore in 2022-23 .

Deloitte India partner MS Mani said that coming on the back of robust gross domestic product (GDP) numbers for the third quarter (8.4%), the impressive the GST collections reflect the broad based consumption increase across sectors as GST is a consumption tax. "The impressive collections for February 2024 will provide further comfort to the government that the tax collection targets for the year will be exceeded by a good margin."

According to the second advance estimates data released on Thursday by National Statistical Office (NSO), the Indian economy saw a robust 8.4% growth the third quarter of 2023-24, driven by investment push, increased manufacturing and services activities and an upside in tax revenue.

The economy is projected to expand by 7.6% in the current fiscal, faster than the 7.3% forecast made by the first advance estimates on January 5, 2024.

Total GST revenues in the first 11 months of the current financial year have crossed ₹18.40 lakh crore, 11.7% up from the same period in FY23.

AI gets basic work at law firms, to boost efficiency

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MUMBAI: The AI prosecutor or defence attorney isn't on the horizon, but large Indian law firms are moving rapidly to adopt artificial intelligence to carry out a string of 'simple' tasks including research, drafting and client presentations, helping them achieve efficiency and leaving the lawyers to focus on litigation.

Those entering the legal profession, however, need not fear for their jobs, law firms insisted, saying that AI technology would take over basic functions only. New joiners and interns at law firms—typically at the forefront of such work as part of their learning curve—would be able to cut down on efforts that include trawling voluminous data to summarize and analyze

AI technology would take over basic functions only, say law firms. ISTOCKPHOTO

information.

Law firm Khaitan & Co. has introduced an AI-powered virtual assistant KAI that was developed using ChatGPT. It is customized to Khaitan's work environment and helps the firm draft emails, summarize documents and prepare client presentations, among others, a move it believes will boost efficiency.

The new virtual assistant was developed based on specific use-cases within the firm, with prompts specifically developed for its needs.

"We have created a ChatGPT model, we call it 'Ask.Kai' for Khaitan. It works in our environment, inside of our networks, and uses the outside learning, which ChatGPT and models like that provide," said Rohit Shukla, chief digital officer at Khaitan & Co.

Shukla sees a significant opportunity for Khaitan's clients to leverage this tech tool, subject to regulatory and compliance requirements. Khaitan has partnered with Microsoft Azure and OpenAI for this initiative. Following the introduction of AI in its work, Shukla said, interns can now spend a significant amount of time learning and advocating on the increasing number of legal matters.

Experts believe law firms are usually receptive to such innovations, viewing new technologies as strategic tools to augment capabilities rather than replace human expertise. Collaborating with AI solution providers is a viable strategy to stay competitive and meet evolving client demands, they said.

"In the realm of legal tech, many prominent law firms are actively exploring and adopting AI-powered solutions to enhance their operational efficiency and client services," said Komal Gupta, chief innovation officer, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, a Mumbai-based law firm.

According to Gupta, while specific initiatives vary, many firms are investing in AI for contract analysis, due diligence, legal research, drafting and document automation, as they look to streamline workflows and reduce manual tasks.

INDIA AUTO SALES SUSTAIN GROWTH IN FEBRUARY

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BENGALURU: Indian automakers continued to report a steady rise in sales in February, helped by demand for two-wheelers and utility vehicles, monthly sales data from companies showed.

Each month, automobile makers in India release wholesale numbers - or vehicle sales to dealers. Tata Motors reported a 19% year-on-year rise in its passenger vehicle (PV) sales for the month, higher than the 12% rise in January, while Toyota's Indian unit posted record sales for the second consecutive month at 25,220 units, up almost 61% from last year. Its sports utility vehicles (SUV) and multi-utility vehicle models were "at the forefront of this demand surge", said Toyota. Analysts have noted that volume rise in PVs such as sedans, SUVs and others was due to high inventory and a rise in discounts. Mahindra and Mahindra, one of India's largest SUV makers by revenue, said its SUV sales rose 40% in February, pushing total sales up 24%.

India predicts hotter temp in risk to crops, exports

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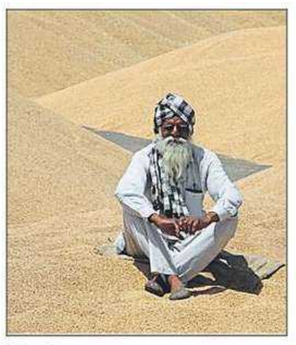
India forecast hotter-than-normal temperatures until May, posing a threat to crops and increasing the risk that the country's curbs on grain exports will remain.

Maximum temperatures are expected to be above normal in most parts of the country, Mrutyunjay Mohapatra, director general of the India Meteorological Department, said in an online briefing Friday. In March, temperatures may be higher than average over many areas of southern, northeast, central and northwest regions, he said.

The prediction poses fresh challenges to the government, which is trying to keep food prices under check before general elections by restricting shipments of wheat, rice and sugar, and selling grains from state reserves in the local market.

It's another example of climate change making India vulnerable to extreme weather events. The frequency and intensity of floods, heat waves and


Maximum temperatures are expected to be above normal in most parts of the country. HT

droughts have been increasing and hundreds of people are getting killed every year. Crop damages in the past years have forced the South Asian nation to turn to protectionist measures. Local supplies have improved but food prices stay elevated.

An early onset of the summer season can also test the government's ability to ensure power supplies ahead of the polls in the coming months, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will seek a third five-year term.

SPORT

On the UP: The heartland making a mark by producing India players

From Kuldeep to Rinku, players from Uttar Pradesh are showing the skill and hunger to succeed

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NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW: When India won a Test series in England for the first time in 1971, six of the playing eleven were from Bombay. Their hegemony in Indian cricket went unchallenged till the late 1970s and 1980s when a cluster of players from north India began making their presence felt. The changing dynamics were apparent at the 1983 World Cup, when as many as five players in the team, including skipper Kapil Dev, were from the northern belt.

It was followed by a period in the 1990s when India's bowling attack featured three engineers from Bangalore — Javagal Srinath, Venkatesh Prasad and Anil Kumble. At around the same time, Rahul Dravid, another Bangalore boy, was beginning to establish himself as a vital cog in the batting unit.

As we moved into the mid-2000s, MS Dhoni exploded into national consciousness from Ranchi and emboldened the small-town cricketer, democratising the game like perhaps never before. And with it seemed to dwindle the dominance of any one region in the make-up of the Indian team as players made their way from varied milieus and backgrounds.

At the moment, there's a sudden influx of talent from Uttar Pradesh meriting our attention.

Just consider the ongoing series against England and the Ranchi Test where the two chief architects of India's victory were Kuldeep Yadav and Dhruv Jurel. Yadav belongs to Kanpur, his wrist spin embodying the deception and street-smartness that the bustling city is known for. Jurel has risen through the ranks from Agra, overcoming the reluctance of his father — a Kargil war veteran — who wanted his son to follow in his footsteps and join the defence forces. Jurel's hometown is renowned for the Taj Mahal and Agra Fort, but has little going for it in terms of cricketing infrastructure. Which is why Jurel, having learned the basics of the game in Agra under coach Parvendra Yadav, moved to Noida for better opportunities and facilities.

"Dhruv is so sincere, and I found him open to gaining knowledge and putting it into practice," says Sunil Joshi, the coach of Uttar Pradesh in domestic cricket. "That shows his hunger. Even though he didn't play the first two Tests, we were chatting that he should be prepared to grab the opportunity with both hands."

Garnering plenty of eyeballs in white-ball cricket is Rinku Singh. After a breakthrough IPL season for Kolkata Knight Riders in 2023, the 26-year-old has taken to international cricket with the same swagger, exceeding expectations particularly in the white-ball leg of the tour of South Africa in December. Rinku's tough childhood and battle with poverty are familiar struggles for many youngsters in Uttar Pradesh, one of India's poorest states. "When I was just starting out and had yet to play proper cricket, I was asked to join my brother for a job. I got a job of sweeping and mopping in a coaching centre. I refused because I didn't like the work," Rinku had said in a video shared by KKR.

The search for a better life amid financial constraints also prompts many to move to other places. Yashasvi Jaiswal, a breakout performer in the Test series against England with more than 600 runs, is a case in point. Born in Bhadohi district in 2001, Jaiswal's cricketing dreams were fuelled only when he made the bold move to Mumbai at the age of 10. Sarfaraz Khan is also originally from UP. In Mohammed Shami's case, his skills with the ball did not get the recognition in UP that they eventually did in Bengal. Beneath the top tier, Saurabh Kumar, Shivam Mavi, Yash Dayal, Priyam Garg, Sameer Rizvi and Mohsin Khan are among the pool of UP players vying to reach the highest level. "They are all from humble backgrounds and have a tremendous amount of hunger," Joshi says.

If sheer numbers were a barometer, UP should always be a strong contributor to Indian cricket. The state, after all, makes up 16.5 percent of India's population. It also helps that they now have a team, Lucknow Super Giants, that they can truly call their own in the Indian Premier League.

"*Hamare ladko main bhook hai kuch karne ka bus inko mauka chaiye* (Our boys have that hunger to do something, and they only need an opportunity)," says Mohammad Kaif, who played 125 ODIs and 13 Tests for India and scored most of his 10,000-plus first-class runs for UP.

Besides Kaif, RP Singh, Suresh Raina, Piyush Chawla and Bhuvneshwar Kumar are the other players from the heartland to leave a mark for India since the turn of the century. That they all come from different areas suggests that, unlike most other states, talent isn't confined to only one or two centres.

"There are good coaches in UP now and a lot of good academies have also opened up. There was a system of sports hostels earlier," says Kuldeep's coach, Kapil Pandey. "Players in UP are produced from Kanpur, Allahabad, Lucknow, Meerut, Moradabad and everywhere else. And they are recognised more than ever."

Raina feels more can be done though. "All our talents come from modest backgrounds, so we need to have someone who can understand their hardships to guide them. That system is lacking right now," says Raina.

Despite the vast number of players in the region, UP's output hasn't been very robust, evident from their lone Ranji Trophy triumph in 2005/06. Joshi wants to put that right as coach. "I am hoping that UP can win the Ranji Trophy in my tenure. We are scouting for more talent as an association. With five of our players representing India or India A now, the core of the team wasn't there. I have to rely on the next bunch of players."

The RR template that helped Jurel, Jaiswal prosper

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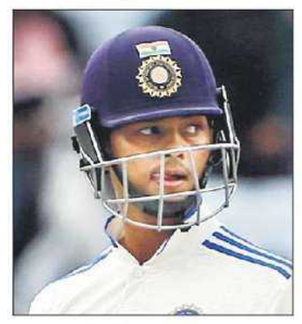
Yashasvi Jaiswal. ANI

MUMBAI: The Indian Premier League has long become a great platform for players to make their mark and a pathway to the Indian team. Now, we have started to see the direct benefits of the infrastructure and training that the IPL franchises provide for players when they turn up for the national team.

The Royals' High Performance Centre in Talegaon, near Nagpur, under their Director of High Performance, Zubin Bharucha, is proving to be a finishing school for RR's talented players. Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel are shinning examples of it. The left-hand opener has been the best batter (655 runs at an average of 93.57) on both sides in the ongoing India versus England series while the keeper-batter has made a brilliant start to his career in the two Tests he has played.

These days, players prefer being specialists in one format. But in the RR model, we are seeing that the T20 set-up is helping players in their Test game as well. "The goals came from the players themselves, the hunger, desperation, the dream to play for India was always theirs. That is not the franchise's dream, not my dream, that came from the player," says Bharucha.

What they are doing is picking talented, hungry cricketers and helping them reach the next level. Jaiswal has been working at the RR High Performance Centre for the last three years with Bharucha and Jurel for the last two.

It's the execution of their training that has made the difference and transformed them into all-format players.

"How do we execute to get them to where they need to be and be the best version of themselves? Both (Yashasvi and Jurel) are so different, different characters, different types of players, but there is a template to how we are preparing each of these guys which is similar," explains Bharucha.

The former Mumbai batter says that they are not considering the format during preparation. "We are focusing on the quality of the output, the quality of how you hit the shot, where you hit the shot and where you pierce the gap."

The vision of the franchise is to produce world-class players and along the way the players will also help them win (IPL) titles.

"It has to come from the top management in terms of wanting to do all of this, then it comes to the cricket department, headed by Kumar Sangakkara. My job then becomes to execute that vision and then to link the dream of these individuals to that vision and execute it in the way that we have been doing," says Bharucha.

Basically, the training imparted by the RR academy coach is aimed to get the player to play at a very high level "where the run rate is very high with reduced risks". The idea is to get the balance between the two. "And we are doing that through quality of shot making, with that comes power, control, placement, everything."

The process

Various training methods are used to prepare the players. One of the toughest is the 'variable net session'. It's about trying to practice different strokes on different deliveries. It is how Jaiswal took down pace great James Anderson in the second innings at Rajkot when he hit him for three sixes to different corners of the ground — first on the leg-side, second over covers and third down the ground. It was his T20 prowess helping in Test cricket. RR plan training sessions in a way that a variety of bowlers and throw-down specialists bowl at batters.

"In one round there are 16 guys. When you have 16 guys in one round and it is repeated again and again, that is why he can get through 140 overs in four hours," says Bharucha.

During the break between the second and third Test, Jurel was put through this session at Talegaon, playing 140 overs in four hours.

"What we are doing is bringing in the variability. Earlier how it used to be, 'I will play only this bowler, I want only four bowlers for practice.' We are flipping the side and saying if we can give you 16 guys and give you 16 different variables in one round of practice, why not test you out everywhere, off, leg, straight ball, bouncer, yorker everything, outswing, inswing. You can't do this without the whole ecosystem fully immersed in it."

{ RANJI TROPHY } SEMI-FINALS

Mumbai, Tamil Nadu set for a heavyweight battle

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Mumbai captain Ajinkya Rahane trains ahead of the semi-final against Tamil Nadu on Friday. PRAKASH PARSEKAR/HT

MUMBAI: The focus will be all on Shreyas Iyer when hosts Mumbai take on Tamil Nadu in the semi-final of Ranji Trophy from Saturday at the MCA Sharad Pawar Cricket Academy ground, Bandra Kurla Complex.

Following the tough stance taken by the Indian cricket board, all the fit players are available for the marquee domestic championship and it will be a star-studded affair. Mumbai's line-up boasts of Ajinkya Rahane, Iyer, Shardul Thakur, Prithvi Shaw and rising star Musheer Khan while Tamil Nadu has been bolstered by the return of all-rounder Washington Sundar and top-order batter B Sai Sudharsan to add to their already strong line-up of R Sai Kishore, Baba Indrajith and Sandeep Warrier.

To add needle to the contest, Tamil Nadu is being coached by former Mumbai coach Sulakshan Kulkarni who will be pitted against his former trainee Omkar Salvi. Earlier this season, the two sides had met in the Vijay Hazare quarter-final where Kulkarni had masterminded a seven-wicket triumph with his spin attack.

On the eve of the game, he again threw down the gauntlet. "I've told my team that Mumbai cricket is on my fingertips. I know each and every (player's) positives and negatives. Yes, we respect our opponents a lot because they've a big legacy, but we'll have a good game. They're playing well, which is why they've reached here," said Kulkarni on Friday.

> We are thrilled to have him (Iyer) for the semis. I don't think he needs any encouragement or advice.
> **AJINKYA RAHANE**

The manner in which the Mumbai batters cope against the double left-arm spin combination of Sai Kishore and Ajith Ram is going to be crucial. The two are on top of the wicket-takers' charts with 47 and 41 scalps respectively and for all their results, Mumbai's batting has looked vulnerable.

Rahane's lack of runs has been the main cause for worry. The captain has scored just 115 runs from six matches at an average of 12.77, and the team will be hoping the adage that "big players reserve their best for big matches" comes true in the semi-final.

Mumbai will be banking on Iyer and Shaw to lead the batting. Shaw has been in brilliant touch and Iyer has a point to prove. Rahane backed his senior batter and said he wouldn't need any extra motivation to perform. "He's an experienced player. His contribution has been amazing whenever he has turned up for Mumbai. We are thrilled to have him in our team for the semi-final," Rahane said. "I don't think he needs any encouragement or advice. He has always contributed with the bat for Mumbai, and him being around other players in the dressing room will also help the team's cause."

The pitch is expected to have something for the pace bowlers and Mumbai should have the edge in that department with an incisive pace arsenal that includes Thakur, Tushar Deshpande and Mohit Avasthi.

Vidarbha bank on home advantage in clash versus MP

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MUMBAI: Nagpur may be the geographical centre of India and host venue Civil Lines stadium is located at the heart of the city, but it's not the Vidarbha-Madhya Pradesh Ranji Trophy semi-final that will hold center-stage. There will be much greater focus on the Mumbai-Tamil Nadu clash, featuring Shreyas Iyer in his first domestic outing since losing his India contract. However, that will not discourage either Vidarbha or Madhya Pradesh, who have made a habit of finding success without stars or attention. In the past five years, three Ranji titles have been won between these two teams — Vidarbha won back-to-back in 2017-18 and 18-19 and MP in 2021-22. Behind each of these victories, there was one master mind — Chandrakant Pandit, the most successful head coach on the Ranji circuit.

"Any team in the knockout round has to be a good team. I only have to remind my players of the change in mindset and that there are no second chances here. It will be a good battle," said Pandit, sitting in the MP corner.

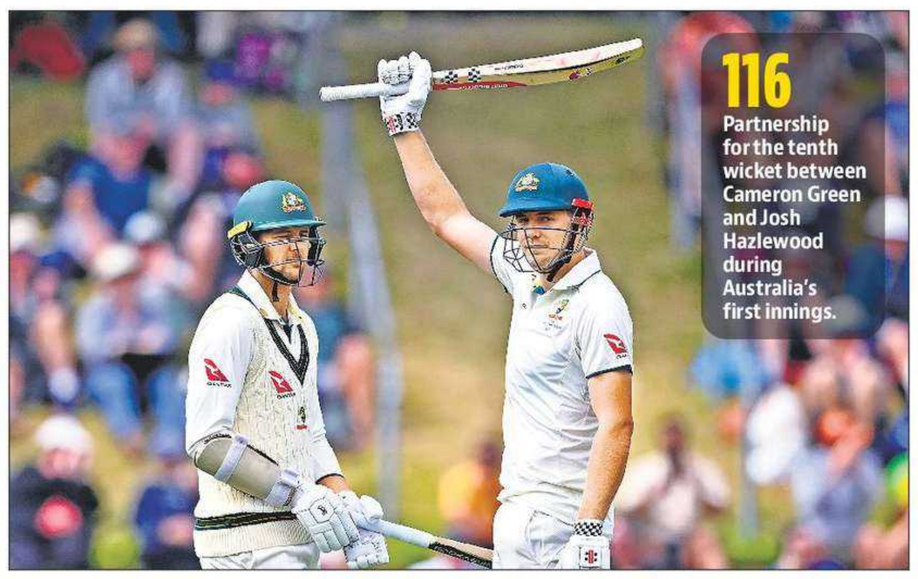
All the four semi-finalists being table toppers of the league phase is a fair reflection of the strength of the competing pool. While Vidarbha had a more comfortable win in the quarter-final against Karnataka — they bowled the opposition out on the final day and won by 127 runs, MP came through against Andhra by the barest of margins — four runs.

In MP's close win, pacer Anubhav Agarwal, who claimed six wickets in the final innings, came out an unlikely hero among other bowlers who had India, India A and IPL experience. Identifying heroes for pressure moments has been one of Pandit's strong suits.

Vidarbha haven't had flashy performances this year, but the batting workload has been shared by their outstation imports — Karun Nair (515 runs) and Dhruv Shorey (496 runs) as well as local boy Atharva Taide (488 runs). With the ball, the bulk of the damage has been done by left-arm spinner Aditya Sarwate (37 wkts).

For MP too, there's no one topping the season's run-scoring charts or wicket-takers' list — Venkatesh Iyer has top-scored for MP with 528 runs, while left-arm wrist-spinner Kumar Kartikeya has picked up most of their wickets (38).

At the best of times, Ranji knockout matches are short on promotion. But for individual players, at different stages of their careers, these matches mean the world. Those like Taide, Kartikeya and Saransh Jain (off-spin all-rounder) are pushing for higher honours. Avesh Khan would be yearning for a heroic performance, so that he can rejoin his state-mate Rajat Patidar in the Indian dressing room. For the likes of Karun Nair and Umesh Yadav, it may be a case of playing for pride. Or, who knows, at this late stage of their careers, they may still carry the belief to take centre stage again.



Cameron Green (right) celebrates reaching 150 against New Zealand in Wellington on Friday. AP

Australia take charge of opener after NZ collapse

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WELLINGTON: Australia seized control of the opening Test on Friday after a miserable day for New Zealand left the hosts 217 runs adrift in Wellington and with a mountain to climb to stay in the match. The visitors finished on 13/2 in their second innings with nightwatchman Nathan Lyon not out on six and opener Usman Khawaja on five after Steve Smith and Marnus Labuschagne departed cheaply.

Tim Southee bowled Smith with his third ball, then had the out-of-form Labuschagne caught behind by Tom Blundell.

However, Southee dropped Lyon in the slips late on from Matt Henry to cap a frustrating day for New Zealand at the Basin Reserve.

Earlier, Cameron Green smashed an unbeaten 174 to claim only his second Test century, backing up the 114 he scored in India a year ago, as Australia raced to an imposing first-innings 383 before bowling out New Zealand for 179.

Green, 24, lit up the morning session in a superb 116-run last-wicket partnership with plucky Josh Hazlewood, who survived 62 balls for his 22.

"It was good to be at the other end and watch that sort of innings," Hazlewood said of Green's performance.

"For his career, this could be huge. To get his second hundred for Australia was outstanding."

The Australian bowlers struck early, dismissing Tom Latham (5) before Kane Williamson and Rachin Ravindra fell for ducks within the space of five balls to leave them tottering at 12/3. Glenn Phillips offered the most resistance before he was dismissed for 71, caught by Mitchell Starc off Hazlewood. Australia then quickly picked off New Zealand's tail. Phillips' sixth-wicket partnership of 84 with Tom Blundell (33) was the meagre highlight. "The pitch was moving around a little bit and they were hitting really good areas so it was up to us to get the pressure back on them," said Phillips. "Obviously the way Green played with Hazlewood, they did really well and put up a massive partnership. It's not ideal for us but that's what Test cricket is like."

The Black Caps never recovered after the horror start by their top order.

Brief scores: Australia 383 (C Green 174*; M Henry 5/70) and 13/2 vs **New Zealand** 179 (G Phillips 71; N Lyon 4/43) at stumps on Day 2.

Pragg blunders, loses to Rapport

PRAGUE: Grandmaster R Praggnanandhaa blundered for the second day running and lost to Richard Rapport of Romania in the third round of the Prague Masters Chess tournament here. After briefly going ahead of Viswanthan Anand and attaining the top Indian status in the live rating list, this double blow cost the Indian dearly, and now a lot of hard work remains in the last six rounds.

Rublev defaulted for tirade in Dubai

DUBAI: Russia's Andrey Rublev was defaulted from the Dubai ATP tournament for allegedly using obscene language in Russian in an angry tirade at a line umpire on Friday, gifting Alexander Bublik a place in the final. Rublev insisted he was speaking in English and that he did not use any foul language but the line umpire stuck to his story and the 26-year-old was defaulted from the match.

Ankita in semis of ITF Women's Open

GURUGRAM: Ankita Raina scripted a 4-6, 6-2, 6-4 comeback win over Sweden's Jacqueline Cabaj Awad to make the singles semi-finals of the ITF Women's Open here on Friday. The second-seeded Ankita will face Lithuanian third seed Justina Mikulskyte in the first semi-final.

Puneri Paltan win maiden PKL title

HYDERABAD: Puneri Paltan beat Haryana Steelers to lift their first-ever Pro Kabaddi League trophy here on Friday. Paltan kept their calm to eke out a 28-25 victory in a keenly-contested final.

'Pep, Xavi similar in their handling of youngsters'

Barca's Gundogan speaks about how Foden was eased into Man City while the experience has been different for Yamal

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KOLKATA: When Ilkay Gundogan arrived at Manchester City as Pep Guardiola's first signing in 2016, Phil Foden was over one year away from his Premier League debut. Before that happened in November 2017, Foden, having lit up the under-17 World Cup where won the Golden Ball and scored a goal off either foot in the final, had got a packed Salt Lake stadium to chant his name. In seven seasons with City, Gundogan saw the blossoming of a generational talent.

In Foden he trusted, Guardiola said explaining why City would not go to the "market" when David Silva left. Yes, given the wealth of talent at his disposal it still meant Foden not starting the FA Cup and the Champions League final last season but that he was brought as Kevin de Bruyne's replacement tells you something. As does Guardiola shifting Foden to the centre following De Bruyne's injury in 2023-24.

In 2023, Gundogan moved to Barcelona where Lamine Yamal has been a midfield partner. Yamal is 16, Foden was 17 when he debuted in the Premier League.

Apart from adding to his sense of déjà vu, it made Gundogan well placed to take HT's question on comparing the development of the attacking midfielders.

In the way Guardiola and Xavi deflect pressure off young players without denying them time on the pitch, they are similar, said Gundogan.

"For Lamine it is maybe a bit more difficult because he already takes a lot more responsibility at the age of 16. He is playing a lot more games, lot more 90 minute games than when Phil was 16."

The big squad, the stiff competition meant Foden could be eased into the first team, said the midfielder. Not so Yamal, the youngest player to represent Spain breaking a record that belonged to Barcelona teammate Gavi.

Yamal is also Spain's youngest scorer. He has played 25 of Barcelona's 26 games (3 goals and 6 assists as per Transfermarkt) in La Liga this term and featured in all Champions League fixtures. Add to that four games for Spain where he has two goals after making his debut last September against Georgia.

"But as I know Lamine, this (the games) will help him because he has a great attitude, great character and is down to earth. With Raphina being fit, this will be good competition for him. And it is what you need at the end of the day. Even though he is 16, he needs to have the feeling that he has to compete."

Yamal is among the dozen on Barcelona's roster who were born on or after 2004. There are three — Alejandro Balde, Fermin Lopez and Marc Casado born in 2003.

It is just as well that Gundogan said he wanted to pass on things "that were important to me" through actions because his "Spanish is not perfect." But he said he saw a good future for the club.

Ready for bumps

Training over in Barcelona on Friday, Gundogan was speaking to a group of journalists from the Asia-Pacific region on a Teams call. His first year at City and 2023-24 have been similar because they were start of new projects, said the Germany midfielder.

Pep started "near zero and that is the starting point for myself here."

So he is prepared for the "bumps on the road". Gundogan said "things are better (at Barcelona) than when I joined City" who finished third in the league that season. "Consistency is missing," said the man who knows all about being serially successful.

"It is much more difficult to do that at the start than when you are at a more developed stage of the project."

Gundogan accepted there is a "gap in the league" where defending champions Barcelona, who play Athletic away on Sunday, are third on 57 points eight points behind leaders Real Madrid and two behind Girona the season's surprise package.

But a Champions League quarter-final is possible. And that is why Gundogan said he didn't want to look ahead to the time when Xavi, who was the "main reason" he joined Barcelona, won't be there.

Instead, he would like to make the farewell happy for the Barcelona legend.

Ecclestone, Harris guide UP Warriorz to big win

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Sophie Ecclestone celebrates UP Warriorz's win. BCCI

NEW DELHI: Having started the 2024 Women's Premier League (WPL) with two losses, the UP Warriorz are finally finding their feet with their big names clicking as the tournament heads into the midway stage.

Sophie Ecclestone spun a web with the ball and Grace Harris went hammer and tongs with the bat as the Alyssa Healy-led outfit clinched its second successive win, beating Gujarat Giants by six wickets at the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Friday.

Chasing 143, the Warriorz reached the target with 4.2 overs to spare as the Giants, who finished bottom in 2023, failed yet again to get off the mark in this edition.

Put in by Warriorz, Laura Wolvaardt (28 off 26) and skipper Beth Mooney (16 off 16) gave the Giants a steady start as spinner Chamari Athapaththu (4-0-19-0) kept them from scoring quickly with the first six overs yielding only 41 runs.

Warriorz bowlers put up a brilliant display, not allowing Giants to accelerate with left-arm orthodox bowler Ecclestone (3/20) coming out as the star performer.

She further put the brakes on Giants with two crucial wickets, removing both openers.

Harleen Deol (18 off 24) took time to settle down but the 27 minutes spent at the crease never translated into a big score as she perished getting caught.

WPL 2024

Phoebe Litchfield (35 off 26) and Ashleigh Gardner (30 off 17) provided the impetus towards the end. The duo was able to stitch together a fourth-wicket partnership of 52 (off 31) before Ecclestone once again showed why she is the world No.1 bowler in both ODIs and T20Is as she removed Gardner. Litchfield too departed soon thanks to a brilliant direct hit from Saima Thakor.

Ecclestone would have bagged her fourth had Deepti Sharma not dropped Gardner at short third but that partnership was good enough to take Giants to 142/5 — their highest total in WPL 2024.

In response, skipper Alyssa Healy (33 off 21) provided the Warriorz a rapid start. Though they lost Kiran Navgire (12 off 8), Healy, Athapaththu (17 off 11) and Shweta Sehrawat (2 off 7), Australian Grace Harris (60 not out off 33) gave Warriorz the solidity they needed in the middle order with a fine knock.

Harris struck an unbeaten 53-run fifth-wicket partnership with Deepti Sharma (17 off 14) which took them over the line.

Brief scores: GG 142/5 in 20 overs (P Litchfield 35; S Ecclestone 3/20) lost to **UPW** 143/4 in 15.4 overs (G Harris 60*) by 6 wickets.

Dhawan, Karthik guide DY Patil Blue to victory

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Shikhar Dhawan scored 45* HT

MUMBAI: The experienced Shikhar Dhawan and Dinesh Karthik starred with the bat to guide DY Patil Blue to a nine-wicket victory against RBI in their Group B match of the 18th DY Patil T20 Cup at the DY Patil Stadium on Friday.

Opting to bat, RBI were bowled out for 112 with Pariskshit Valsangkar (4/15) and Karsh Kothari (3/12) inflicting maximum damage. In response, Blue rode to victory in the 11th over thanks to an unbroken second-wicket stand between Dhawan (45*, 29b, 7x4, 1x6) and Karthik (36*, 21b, 6x4).

Brief scores: Mumbai Customs 142/8 in 20 overs (Parag Khanapurkar 31; Rohan Raje 2/12, M Siddharth 2/21, Vaibhav Arora 2/42) lost to **Indian Oil** 143/4 in 19.4 overs (Ankush Bains 50, Aditya Tare 32; Parag Khanapurkar 2/24) by 6 wickets; **RBI** 112 in 19.4 overs (Pranay Sharma 33; Parikshit Valsangkar 4/15, Karsh Kothari 3/12) lost to **DY Patil Blue** 113 1 in 10.5 overs (Shikhar Dhawan 45*, Dinesh Karthik 36*) by 9 wickets; **BPCL** 168/9 in 20 overs (Akhil Herwadkar 37, Anukul Roy 34; Mayank Yadav 4/26) lost to **Jain Irrigation** 172/3 in 19 overs (Arshin Kulkarni 84*, Sachin Dhas 37; Sakib Hussain 2/36) by 7 wickets; **Nirlon SC** 98 in 15.5 overs (Jayesh Pokhar 38*; Sanveer Singh 4/25, Writwick Chatterjee 3/25) lost to **CAG** 99/3 in 8.3 overs (Subhrangshu Senapati 27, R Sanjay 26, Varun Lavande 24) by 7 wickets.

ADVANI, RAWAT TO CLASH IN CCI SNOOKER SEMIS

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MUMBAI: Pankaj Advani registered a fighting 6-4 win against Mumbai's Nitesh Madaan in a best-of-11-frame quarter-final of the CCI Snooker Classic 2024.

In the semi-finals, Advani will meet Bombay Gymkhana's ace cueist Laxman Rawat, who beat Pushinder Singh 6-5.

4th Ajitkumar Ghosh Trophy Women's T20 brief scores (QF): Sporting Union 66 in 16.5 ov (Srushti Pande 4/10) lost to **National CC** 67/2 in 11.3 ov (Akshara Singh 35*); **Dashing SC** 147/5 (Khushi Nijai 64) beat **Oriental CC** 86/8 (Kshitija Sawant 36; Tisha Nair 3/14); **National CC** 184/4 (Gauri Zende 45, Dhruvi Trivedi 31) beat **Matunga Gymkhana** 86/8 (Anisha Kamble 40); **Oriental CC** 126/9 (Divya Verma 33, Siddhi Kamte 37; Khyati Swain 3/11) lost to **MIG CC** 127/5 (Anisha Raut 54, Heer Kothari 33*).

Verstappen on pole for season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix

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SAKHIR: Max Verstappen's quest for a fourth consecutive Formula One world championship began in style on Friday with the Red Bull ace claiming pole for the season-opening Bahrain Grand Prix.

Charles Leclerc's Ferrari will start alongside Verstappen on the front row for Saturday's first of a record 24 races this year.

Verstappen will be favourite to emulate last year's result when he won the first of 19 races as he swept to his third title. "That was a lot of fun, very happy to be on pole, to be honest a little bit unexpected" said the Dutch driver.

Horner under scanner after leaked messages

Red Bull team principal Christian Horner was under renewed pressure on Friday after private messages allegedly between him and a female staff member were leaked to Formula One officials and journalists.

Horner, 50, was cleared by the team on Wednesday after an internal investigation into his behaviour towards a female colleague and has denied the accusations against him.

On Thursday, a file of messages and pictures was emailed to leading figures in Formula One and dozens of international news organisations, including AFP, from an anonymous source.

It is not known if the contents of the file, which cannot be revealed for legal reasons, formed part of the accusations against him.