BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. MDCCCXXXVIII | VOL. 75 NO. 69 | NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024 | PAGES 36 | CAPITAL | **INVITATION PRICE** ₹5.50; *₹9.50 WITH ET OR ₹10.00 (₹9.00 IN FARIDABAD EDITION) WITH NAVBHARAT TIMES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

HAPPY NOWRUZ

INCLUSIVE OF DELHI TIMES (CIRCULATED ONLY IN DELHI NCR) | *APPLICABLE ONLY ON MONTHLY PURCHASE (IN DELHI NCR)

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Bumrah needs an 'off-season' since his bowling action with an 'extensive effort' could result in the ace pacer suffering further injuries, warns Australian cricket legend Glenn McGrath ahead of IPL, P 19

Hong Kong passes nat'l security laws at the behest of Beijing, thwarting decades of public resistance in a move that critics say will strike a lasting blow to the partial autonomy the city has been promised by China, Inside Jacket

Former Brazilian President **Jair Bolsonaro has been formally accused of falsifying his Covid-19 vaccination data,** marking the first indictment of the far-right leader, with more allegations potentially in store, Inside Jacket

UK media publishes new images of Kate a week after furore over edited photo turned into a 'PR disaster'. Prince William & Kate have been filmed at a farm shop — her first footage since abdominal surgery, Inside Jacket

Two workers injured in Rewari factory blast die

Two workers, in their twenties and from UP, on Tuesday succumbed to injuries suffered during an explosion in an auto parts factory in Rewari last Wednesday. Seventy people were working when the blast in a dust collector led to a blaze. Thirty-eight workers were injured. TNN

EC lens on 'Viksit Bharat' bulk texts

Chandigarh chief electoral officer has referred to EC a complaint alleging that a central govt department violated the model code by sending out bulk WhatsApp messages labelled 'Viksit Bharat Sampark' after the polls were announced. P 10

RBI report flags food price spikes

RBI has yet to achieve its target inflation rate of 4% despite bringing down core inflation due to frequent food price hikes, State of the Economy report published by the central bank said. It cited high vegetable, meat and fish prices. P 15

Prakash Ambedkar to back Congress

Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi chief Prakash Ambedkar Tuesday slammed Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) for their "unequal attitude" and offered support to third MVA partner Congress in any seven Lok Sabha seats. P 16

HC to hear Cong plea against ITAT today

Congress Tuesday approached Delhi HC challenging tax reassessment proceedings against it by I-T department. Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet Arora asked the registry to list the matter for hearing on Wednesday. P 16

City officer fired for ₹14cr illegal refunds

Delhi chief secretary Tuesday sacked a goods and service tax officer for allegedly issuing Rs 14cr illegal refund orders in less than three months in 2021. He will lose all pension benefits and be ineligible from future employment in any govt office. P 2

6 Maoists killed in Maha, C'garh

Four Maoists from Telangana were gunned down during a 25-hour combing operation in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli Tuesday. In another encounter with security personnel, two Maoists were shot dead in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. TNN

Sensex falls 736 pts on glocal factors

Sensex fell 736 points to 72,012 while Nifty closed 238 points lower at 21,817 on Tuesday on the back of global and local factors — from Japan's first interest rate hike in 17 years to fears of overvaluation in some stock market segments. P 15

No stay on CAA process, but SC seeks govt's view

Centre Gets 3 Weeks' Time, Hearing April 9

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New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to interrupt fast-tracked grant of citizenship to members of six persecuted minority communities from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, ignoring a chorus of pleas from petitioners who sought a stay of the recently notified Citizenship (Amendment) Act Rules. These 20-odd petitioners have also challenged the validity of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Mishra calmly heard a crowd of counsel, including Kapil Sibal, Indira Jaising, Rajeev Dhavan, Vijay Hansaria, Sidharth Luthra and Mohd Nizamuddin Pasha, but declined to come in the way of the govt.

The court refused to stay the process and sought the Union govt's response in three weeks. It posted the applications seeking stay of operation of CAA Rules for detailed hearing on April 9.

Sibal argued that processing of applications under CAA for grant of citizenship be put on hold during the interregnum. "There should not be any hurry to grant citizenship under CAA as govt itself waited for four years and three months to notify CAA Rules," he said. He requested the court to at least incorporate in the order issuing notice to the Union govt that any grant of citizenship during pendency of the petitions would be subject to the court's final decision.

▶CAA petitioners..., P 16

IN THE COURTS

- SC **initiates proceedings against Baba Ramdev for endorsing misleading ads** of medicinal products of Patanjali Ayurveda, summons him to **appear before it** along with company's MD Acharya Balkrishna on April 2 | P 10
- Relaxing its blanket ban, SC agrees to **free up 67,000 sq km for setting up transmission lines** for solar power generated in Rajasthan & Gujarat; says 13,000 sq km of **Great Indian Bustard's core habitat** to remain undisturbed | P 10
- Centre tells SC **illegal Rohingya migrants have no fundamental right to reside** and settle in India, judiciary cannot create separate category for grant of refugee status | P 10
- **If not death penalty,** what should quantum of jail term be to prevent murder convicts from being released after 14 yrs? SC hands **25-yr term to Kerala man accused of killing 3 women** | P 16
- Delhi HC directs **elections to all bar associations in national capital be held on the same day** for uniform tenure of 2 years. One candidate can contest polls for one association only | P 5

Congress, DMK insult Hinduism, stay mum on other faiths: PM

Modi shares the dais with PMK founder S Ramadoss in Salem. PMK will contest 10 of 39 TN seats

Salem: PM Narendra Modi hit the campaign trail in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday with a double takedown of Congress and DMK, calling them "two sides of the same coin". He wondered why the two parties 'insult' Hinduism at every opportunity but choose not to say anything about other religions.

"INDI alliance is repeatedly and deliberately insulting Hinduism. They are planting thoughts about Hinduism...How can we tolerate this, how can we allow this?" he said, a day after his diatribe against Rahul Gandhi for his 'Shakti' remark.

▶BJP nets TN ally, P 16

India had world's 3rd worst air in '23, Delhi foulest capital

Bihar's Begusarai Most Polluted Globally: Report

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New Delhi: India was ranked the third most polluted country and New Delhi the most polluted capital in the 2023 World Air Quality report by Swiss tech company, IQAir. The latest report by the company that provides live information on major air pollutants globally, found Begusarai in Bihar as the most polluted city globally last year.

The report, released Tuesday, showed Bangladesh and Pakistan were the top two most polluted countries in 2023. India showed a relative decline as the country was ranked 8th in 2022, an improvement from 2021 when it had the 5th rank.

IQAir said 13 of the 15 most polluted cities in the world in 2023 were in India with Begusarai, Guwahati and Delhi being the top three.

▶Silchar, Aizawl..., P 16

WAS 8TH LAST YR

- In 2023, India's air quality was 3rd worst globally after B'desh & Pak. It had **ranked 8th in 2022 & 5th in 2021**

MOST POLLUTED CITIES

- **Begusarai, Guwahati & Delhi** were world's top 3 polluted cities last year

CAPITAL SHAME

- Delhi was most polluted capital with annual PM2.5 at **92.7 µg/m3** — WHO's safe limit is **5 µg/m3** — a **spike of 10%** from 2022

'2023: Heat, climate markers broke record'

Last year was not just the hottest on record by a wide margin, with global mean temperature around 1.45°C above the 1850-1900 average, key climate indicators such as greenhouse gas levels, ocean heat, sea level rise, Antarctica sea ice loss and glacier retreat also were at unprecedented levels, World Meteorological Organisation said, sounding alarm over the critical state of Earth's geophysical systems. P 10

HC to hear CM's challenge to ED summons today

CM Arvind Kejriwal moved Delhi high court on Tuesday, challenging repeated summonses issued to him by Enforcement Directorate in a case related to the now scrapped excise policy. The court will hear his plea Wednesday.

The latest ED notice, the ninth one, asks Kejriwal to appear before the agency on March 21 for questioning under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. The high court bench is likely to first examine the CM's plea questioning the legal validity of the summonses. P 3

Judge hearing excise cases transferred

Special judge M K Nagpal, who was presiding over cases related to Delhi's excise policy, was among 27 judges transferred by Delhi high court on Tuesday in a largescale reshuffle, **reports Abhinav Garg**.

Another 31 judges (mainly metropolitan magistrates) have also been reshuffled among the Delhi Judicial Service cadre. Sources said the transfers were part of a "routine" exercise. Nagpal has been transferred to Tis Hazari courts as district judge; Kaveri Baweja will take his place. P 3

CBI to probe Moitra charges within 6 mths

A three-member Lokpal bench on Tuesday asked CBI to register an FIR and investigate within six months all allegations related to alleged quid pro quo against expelled TMC MP Mahua Moitra for allowing Dubai-based businessman Darshan Hiranandani to use her Parliament portal login to post at least 58 questions, all typed by him from different locations, including UAE, US and Bengaluru.

The bench said it found allegations against Moitra "extremely serious" which needed a deeper probe. P 10

Cong finalises 8-10 candidates for Bengal; hints at Left tie-up

New Delhi: Congress has finalised around 8-10 LS candidates in Bengal, amid indications that there will be a tie-up with Left front in the state.

AICC's central election committee brainstormed for four hours to discuss candidates for Karnataka, Himachal, Chandigarh and some NE states. Discussions on Rae Bareli and Amethi seats in UP were not on the agenda of the party on Tuesday. In coming days, among the key seats that Congress has to decide in UP are these two seats.

The interesting bit was the discussion on Bengal, where Congress has been waiting for an alliance with ruling TMC. While the latter has junked the possibility, declaring all its 42 candidates, Congress has not yet finalised its alliance with Left. TNN

▶CPM to leave 12 seats, P 16

JMM jolted as Sita Soren, sis-in-law of ex-J'khand CM Hemant, joins BJP

New Delhi: Weeks ahead of Lok Sabha polls, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) suffered a serious blow as **Sita Soren**, three-term MLA and sister-in-law of former CM Hemant Soren, quit the party and joined BJP on Tuesday.

Sita, wife of late Durga Soren, son of Shibu Soren, founder of JMM and leader of the movement for creation of a separate state of Jharkhand, said she was being neglected and isolated.

"Since the demise of my husband Durga Soren, who was a leading warrior of the Jharkhand movement and a great revolutionary, me and my family have been victims of continuous neglect," Sita Soren said. TNN

▶Isolated by kin, P 16

PARI-WAR

- After serving as minister in Modi govt for nearly 32 months, **Pashupati Kumar Paras resigns from Union Cabinet** after announcement of Bihar seat-sharing plan, **accuses BJP of meting out 'injustice' to his RLJP** | P 16
- **SC, in an interim order, allows Ajit Pawar to hit the hustings using party name & symbol 'clock'** but directs EC to recognise rival faction as 'NCP-Sharadchandra Pawar' & reserve symbol of 'man blowing turha (trumpet)' for it | P 16
- **MNS chief Raj Thackeray,** accompanied with his son Amit, **meets Amit Shah and later posts photos of it on X.** The meeting triggers speculation of a possible tie-up. Uddhav Thackeray accuses BJP of trying **to 'steal a Thackeray'** | P 16

Bengal gets 3rd DGP in 24 hours as EC names replacements

New Delhi: A day after it removed home secretaries of six states and police chief of West Bengal to "maintain a level-playing field in general elections", Election Commission named their replacements, including Sanjoy Mukherjee, who was named Bengal DGP.

Mukherjee replaced Rajeev Kumar, who was shunted out by EC barely 48 hours after the election was announced, for allegedly being close to the governing dispensation. Bengal govt had on Monday named Vivek Sahay as acting DGP pending a decision on Kumar's successor. Though Sahay also figured in the panel of officers sent by the chief secretary to EC, he was rejected as he will be superannuating midway through the polls in May. TNN

▶Sahay prospects, P 14

In first such conviction, encounter specialist gets life for killing gangster

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Mumbai: Citing a ballistic expert's cogent evidence and holding that former Mumbai police officer Pradeep Sharma headed an "illegal squad", Bombay high court on Tuesday convicted him in the 18-year-old fake encounter killing of Ramnarayan Gupta, alias Lakhan Bhaiya, an alleged Chhota Rajan gang member.

Sentencing Sharma to life imprisonment, HC directed him to surrender in three weeks. It is the first conviction of a police officer in an encounter case in Maharashtra.

"The prosecution on its own steam and merit has also proved that Ramnarayan was killed by police, by trigger-happy cops... It is crystal clear that a fake encounter was given the colour of a genuine one," said the court.

▶Can't let guardians, P 10

BODY COUNT

- Pradeep Sharma claims to have shot 112 criminals in 25 years of service
- Dismissed from police force in 2008 over underworld nexus allegations. Reinstated by tribunal in 2017
- Quit to contest 2019 polls
- In 2021, he was arrested in Antilia security breach case

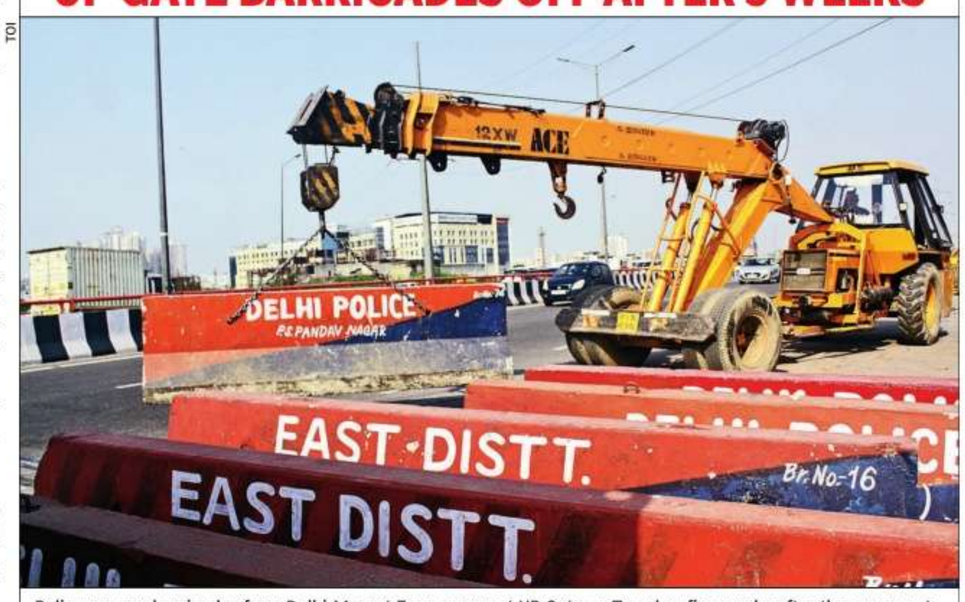
UPSC prelims now on June 16 to avoid clash with LS polls

New Delhi: Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) on Tuesday rescheduled the Civil Services Examinations (Prelims) 2024 to June 16 from May 26 in view of the recent announcement of the schedule for general elections to Lok Sabha and four state assemblies.

The preliminary exam is the first-stage qualifier for selection to IAS, IPS, IFS, Indian Forest Services and other central civil services. Those who clear the prelims must appear for the Civil Services mains exams, which are to be held from Sept 20 this year for five days. TNN

▶Can't hold exam in state, says Manipur, P 10

UP GATE BARRICADES OFF AFTER 5 WEEKS



TOI

Police remove barricades from Delhi-Meerut Expressway at UP Gate on Tuesday, five weeks after they were put up to stop protesting farmers from entering the capital. The farmers never came, but the barricades spelt traffic pain for commuters on one of NCR's busiest roads. Delhi Police said they would clear the lanes — where they installed barbed wires and tyre killers and built concrete walls — by Tuesday evening or Wednesday morning. But normalcy will take a few more days till the road is repaired in places where barricading has damaged it | P 9

One in three CAs in India is a woman

Not only topping different levels of Chartered accountant exams, female aspirants comprise a record 48% of the qualifiers or pass-outs. In the overall pool, women CAs have a 30% share, making a big jump from just 8% in 2000. In the student base of 8.63 lakh too, 43% are females, **reports Manash Gohain.**

Now there are more women toppers — four out of six in the final and intermediate exams in 2020 and all toppers in both old and new course exams in 2021. Notably, 75 women aspirants have topped CA exams at different levels in the last decade. P 10

After 100km chase, city cops rescue abducted 7-yr-old from UP rly stn

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A team of around 24 Delhi cops doggedly went after a kidnapper — poring over CCTV footages, camping in farmlands, temples and dhabas, tapping into local informers and conducting door-to-door searches — before swooping on him at a railway station between Bulandshahr and Sambhal last Sunday. The gripping chase that spanned 100km in west UP for five days ended with 7-year-old victim, son of the kidnapper's neighbour in Northeast Delhi's Dayalpur, being rescued unharmed.

Viresh alias Veeru (46) had abducted the boy on March 13 in a bid to settle an old score with his family and extort money from them. He whisked the boy away to Sambhal and called up his parents for ransom. With the cops tailing him, Viresh panicked and tried to drown him. Trying to shake off police, he took the boy to a railway station where he was finally cornered. Viresh was booked for kidnapping for ransom and attempted murder.

After receiving a call within hours of the boy going missing, a team of cops led by SHO (Dayalpur) Atul Tyagi swung into action. While analysing CCTV footages and conducting technical surveillance, police were able to zero in on the identity of the suspect. Viresh's last location was traced to a temple in Sambhal and soon the team of cops were hot on his trail.

▶Accused held, P 5

24 COPS ON HUNT

- Man, 46, abducts 7-yr-old boy from northeast Delhi's Dayalpur **to settle an old score** with his family
- Takes him to Sambhal in UP & **calls boy's home demanding a ransom**
- With around 24 cops tailing him for 5 days, he panics, **tries to drown boy**
- Later, in an attempt to flee, he **takes the boy to a rly stn** where he is caught

Surrogate ads: Govt seeks info on revenue

In a bid to crack down on surrogate advertising by alcoholic beverage companies, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has sought data on the revenue from brand extensions and the money spent on these ads, **reports Dipak Dash.**

Companies often resort to advertising products such as mineral water, playing cards, soda and music CDs under the same brand name as the liquor. It has also sought details of expenses incurred in promoting such brand extensions through sponsorship of events, award ceremonies, music festivals, payments to celebrities and influencers. P 15

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Hit by type 2 diabetes? Be careful about early muscle loss | 5

TIMES CITY

* THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

31.3° MAXIMUM | 12.2° MINIMUM

FORECAST Mainly clear sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 33°C and 13°C

SUNRISE 6.24AM (THU) MOONRISE 2.15PM (WED)
SUNSET 6.32PM (WED) MOONSET 4.24AM (THU)

221 AQI IN DELHI ON TUESDAY (POOR CATEGORY)

Cops keep tab on snake charmers, peddlers for any possible movement of venoms | 9

Police crack down on random bus halts, Akshardham flyover looks wide again | 5

How Lengthy Poll Will Impact City Projects Lined For Kick-Off

Work Already Under Way, Talks On Schemes, Policies To Continue: Officials

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Several govt schemes and projects ready to be rolled out will now have to wait for more than two months due to the imposition of the model code of conduct (MCC) on March 16 with the announcement of the Lok Sabha elections.

From the Mahila Samman Nidhi Yojana and the second edition of the Electric Vehicles Policy to the redevelopment of Shivaji Stadium bus terminal and inauguration of the city's first hi-tech multimedia library, no new project can take off till the votes are counted on June 4.

Govt officials, however, clarified that the projects that are already under way and deliberations on schemes and policies will continue without any hindrance. "We will largely be engaged in routine work in govt for the next two-and-a-half months. There will be no announcement of new schemes or programmes and no launch or inauguration of a project," said an official.

MCC incorporates guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India on speeches, promises, election manifestos and general conduct. They also restrict the works of the party in power to ensure it does not use its official position for advantages during campaigning and thus creates a level-playing field for all candidates and parties.

"No policy, project or scheme can be announced that can influence the voting behaviour," said an election official. "The ruling dispensation cannot issue advertisements at the cost of the public exchequer or use official publicity mediums on its works and achievements to improve chances of victory in the elections." He added, "The party in power cannot make ad-hoc appointments or transfer officers unless there is a pressing need. Even that will require EC's permission."

MCC will have a direct bearing on several projects in the city, including the revamp of the Minto Road flats, construction or inauguration of multi-level parking lots and inauguration of a pet park at Jangpura, a Municipal Corporation of Delhi official said. "The proposal to revamp Minto Road flats can now be placed in the MCD House only after the election process is completed," said the official.

The proposal to revamp Shivaji Stadium bus terminal was tabled in the last NDMC meeting but could not be finalised.

The transport department's plan to provide last-mile connectivity through smaller buses capable of plying on narrow and congested streets of the city will also have to wait for the election process to get over and MCC to be lifted. Already delayed by a year, Delhi govt had set the revised deadline of March to roll out mohalla buses. MCC has not come in between.

Though Delhi govt has been promoting electric vehicles through a dedicated policy and subsidies, those interested in buying electric cars and two-wheelers will have to wait for a few more months to avail financial benefits. The EV policy expired in Dec 2023 and the govt has yet to come out with a revised one. "We had got a lot of suggestions from people and wanted to incorporate many of them in the revised policy. The draft is ready but it can only be approved and notified after the general elections now," said an official.

The one-time water bill settlement scheme, commissioning of a new sewage plant at Okhla and a fresh survey of street vendors are some other schemes and projects that will have to wait till a new govt is formed at the Centre.

Over the next two months or so, several govt officials will be sent to other states on election duty and little progress will be made on giving final touches to the projects. "Even after MCC is lifted, it will take 2-3 weeks for us to bring the schemes back on track," said an official.

DELHI PROJECTS STUCK BECAUSE OF MCC

Photos for representation

Mohalla Bus Service
Announced in 2023-24 budget, the project is already delayed for a year. The scheme is ready but the service would now be pushed post polls

Premium Bus Policy
Govt's talks with a company to run application-based premium buses with AC, reclining seats, and WiFi have been finalised. Govt now will have to wait till elections are over to roll out the scheme

JPN library
The building of NDMC's first high-tech multimedia library at Mandir Marg is ready. But the inauguration will have to wait

Revamp of Shivaji Stadium Bus Terminal
NDMC made a fresh attempt to invite agencies for implementing the project in Nov 2023. Proposal was placed in council' meeting early this month but could not be approved. A new proposal can only be moved after elections

Mahila Samman Nidhi Yojana
Announced with much fanfare in budget, the scheme to give ₹1,000 to women above 18 years of age can only be notified after elections

Pet Park
The agency to build Delhi's exclusive park for pets in Jangpura with all modern facilities is being finalised. But MCD will issue the work order only after the elections

Okhla STP
The 124 MGD wastewater treatment plant was to be commissioned this month. It has now been delayed due to elections

EV Policy 2.0
First EV policy expired in August 2023 and was extended till Dec. Govt wanted to bring a revised policy to promote electric vehicles with attractive subsidy features, which too will have to wait

Minto Road flats
Proposal to redevelop the area is ready but MCD's approval will only be possible after the model code of conduct is lifted

Business Blasters-Senior
Announced in budget and approved by Cabinet, the scheme of providing seed money to university students to launch their start-ups is also stuck for two months now

TIMES Special

DDA gets tepid response to plan for illegal colonies

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Till March 1, a total of 4.75 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies have applied with Delhi Development Authority (DDA) for ownership rights of their houses under the PM Uday Yojana (Pradhan Mantri – Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Yojana).

While 56,306 cases have been disposed of, conveyance deed and authorisation slips have been issued in 22,034 other cases. The remaining applications are in various stages, according to officials.

While DDA said it had taken various initiatives in the recent past to motivate nearly 40 lakh people living in 12.5 lakh houses and 1,731 unauthorised colonies to participate in the scheme, which was launched four years ago, the numbers haven't been encouraging.

Residents said they face hurdles in fulfilling terms and conditions, such as attaching power of attorney. Moreover, while the scheme provides ownership rights, it has no other benefits, they claim. For instance, a person can't demolish and reconstruct the house and also can't get the building plan approved.

Sushil Chaddha, a resident of Chandra Vihar, Nilothi, said he tried applying under the scheme but the registration fee was very high. "For plots less than 50 sq yards, the fee is Rs 70,000 and for 100 sq yards, it is Rs 1.2 lakh. Though the fee is categorised area-wise, there are unauthorised colonies where no development has happened and the cost of land is cheap. So why would a person pay these charges to get ownership?" he said.

Than Singh Yadav of Delhi Panchayat Sangh said the matter related to unauthorised colonies was raised by them at various platforms. "Even after the first registry, nationalised banks avoid giving loans to people in unauthorised colonies and home loan rates offered by private banks are very high. This is in addition to increased registration fees, which is demotivating people from registering their properties," he said.

Officials said they recently simplified the standard operating procedure as well as the requirements for applying under the scheme.

"There was confusion about the rules governing the scheme. We clarified the conveyance deed would be accepted for applying. Similarly, houses constructed using stone slabs would be accepted too. We also appointed 150 mitras who are going door to door in unauthorised colonies to highlight the scheme's benefits and the procedure for getting ownership," said the official.

DDA officials acknowledged authorisation slips given under the scheme won't help in getting building plans approved immediately, but said it is a step towards providing those benefits and better infrastructure to people in unauthorised colonies.

"Once everything goes as per plan, it would be possible to implement the master plan and building bylaws at these places. We aim to provide a better sewer system, green areas and wide roads where the fire brigade can enter easily. We have coordinated with MCD to prepare and implement the road network plan (RNP) for three unauthorised colonies," said the official.

The RNPs of Khirki Extension in south Delhi, Saroop Nagar Extension in north Delhi and East Azad Nagar in east Delhi have been prepared and uploaded for public feedback. "The plan will be the first step in regularising over 1,700 unauthorised colonies," said an MCD official.

More colonies will be covered under the RNP scheme later, according to the official.

AN OFFICIAL SAYS

Once everything goes as per plan, it would be possible to implement the master plan and building bylaws at these places. We aim to provide a better sewer system, green areas and wide roads where the fire brigade can enter easily.

File photo

Nearly 40 lakh people live in Delhi's 1,731 unauthorised colonies

PWD to take help of DMRC to fix Pragati tunnel

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Public Works Department will take the help of Delhi Metro Rail Corporation to fix the problems plaguing the Pragati Maidan tunnel. An expert committee has been formed comprising a deputy general manager of Delhi Metro and four engineers to study the remedial measures suggested by L&T, the company that executed the tunnel project.

"The group also shall examine the original design and its workmanship," said the order issued by director (works), PWD, on Monday. The committee has to submit a report in 30 days from the order given on March 18. A superintendent engineer from the Central Public Works Department and three PWD engineers are part of the panel.

Delhi Metro has greater experience in managing underground infrastructure than PWD. DMRC has at least 69 underground stations and 102km of underground rail lines in the city.

Dogged by waterlogging and seepage since it opened in June 2022, the tunnel, which connects Mathura Road and India Gate C-Hexagon with Ring Road, has been closed to the public several times for pumping out water and for repairs.

Frustrated by the deficiencies in the construction of the tunnel, PWD sent L&T a legal notice and asked it to deposit a token amount of Rs 500 crore and immediately initiate repairs and rectification as per the construction contract. PWD claimed that "serious technical deficiencies" in the design of the underground tunnel project had come to the fore and unless these were fixed, the problems would continue..

File photo

DMRC has greater experience in managing underground facilities than PWD

According to sources, after the legal notice, the central govt summoned a meeting of all the stakeholders in the project and directed them to solve the problems of the crucial infrastructure project, which was inaugurated by the PM. Built at a cost of Rs 777 crore, the project was funded by the Centre with PWD to execute the project. The latter, in turn, engaged L&T as an EPC (engineering, procurement and construction) contractor.

Preparation of the design, execution and maintenance, and repairs were the sole responsibility of L&T. "The project-related issues mentioned in the present notice have a far-reaching impact not only on public safety but also on the future development and management of vehicular/traffic movement in and around New Delhi and other connecting roads," said the legal notice.

Chief secy sacks tax official for fake GST refund orders

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chief secretary Naresh Kumar on Tuesday dismissed a tax official for allegedly issuing illegal refund orders worth Rs 14 crore in 2021.

A Goods & Services Tax Officer (GSTO) with the trade and taxes department of Delhi govt, the official was accused of "gross misconduct" between July 26 and Oct 13, 2021. Officials said the accused tax officer will not only lose all pensionary benefits, he will also be disqualified from future employment in any govt office or agency.

According to the order, the official issued 122 refund orders worth nearly Rs. 9.7 crore in just two months without verifying the credentials of the dealers. "He approved refund orders worth Rs 2.2 crore on the same date of applying, and the remaining Rs 7.5 crore within five days. Illegal refunds amounting to Rs 4.1 crore were made to non-existent and non-traceable firms," said the order.

It added that the official illegally approved the amended application for migration of firms from one tax ward to another without verifying their credentials.

"After detailed inquiry by Delhi govt's directorate of vigilance, it was proved that the GST officer indulged in misconduct. Accordingly, the disciplinary authority has imposed the penalty of 'dismissal' from services, which shall ordinarily be a disqualification for future employment under the govt," the order read.

Govt to update names of Kashmiri migrants to help them better

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi govt revenue department has started the process of updating the names of Kashmiri migrants, keeping in view the increase in the number of family members over the years.

Officials said application forms in the revised format for the addition, deletion or splitting of migrant cards has been uploaded on the department's website.

Each revenue district has copies of the forms for the convenience of migrant families, an official said.

Officials said that the decision to allow migrants to apply for addition or deletion of names from their cards or splitting the cards was taken by govt in a cabinet meeting chaired by chief minister Arvind Kejriwal in Sept last year. An order was issued after LG VK Saxena's approval in Nov.

The cards would be made for grown up or married children of beneficiary families and recognise them as separate units.

"The registered migrants will now be allowed to declare their families and the splitting of families due to increase in size. A birth to a couple would lead to addition and death of a member would lead to a deletion. Apart from this, a non-migrant girl marrying into a migrant family will be added as a member of the migrant family," an official said.

Officials said the revenue districts have been advised to process the applications and recommend addition or deletion of the members or splitting the family cards for further course of action.

Officials added there would be mandatory seeding of Aadhaar data of all family members eligible for monthly relief.

"Also, the payment of relief will only be through the Aadhaar payment bridge system or public finance management system, which will be as per extant norms," an official in the LG's secretariat said.

The relief and rehabilitation scheme was introduced by the central govt in 1989-90 to support Kashmiri migrants who were uprooted from the valley during militancy.

Delhi govt had started providing financial assistance in 1995 to the families who registered between 1990 and 1993.

While Delhi govt's share is Rs 1,000 per person, the remaining Rs 2,250 is reimbursed by the Union home ministry.

CM Moves HC Against ED Summonses

Hearing Today; Agency Has Called Kejriwal For Questioning On Thursday

Abhinav.Garg@timesgroup.com

Arvind Kejriwal

The plea seeks to quash the summonses issued to him by the probe agency in a money laundering case. AAP's national convener has maintained that the notices are illegal and politically motivated

New Delhi: On Wednesday, Delhi High Court will hear a plea by CM Arvind Kejriwal challenging the repeated summonses issued to him by the Enforcement Directorate in a case related to the now scrapped excise policy.

CM approached court on Tuesday, two days before the date when ED wants him to appear before it. The plea seeks to quash the summonses issued to him by the probe agency in a money laundering case. As per the latest notice issued to him, the ninth one, the national convener of Aam Aadmi Party has been asked to appear before the agency on March 21 for questioning under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act.

However, a bench of justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Manoj Jain is likely to first examine CM's plea questioning the legal validity of the summons. Kejriwal has refused to appear before ED in response to these summonses and maintained that the notices were illegal and politically motivated. Due to his continuous stand of ignoring the notices, ED had earlier moved a Delhi court seeking his prosecution for not complying with the first three summonses issued to him in the same case. Even as the matter remained pending before the magistrate's court and later the sessions court, ED kept issuing fresh summons in the case that relates to alleged corruption in formulating and executing Delhi govt's excise policy for 2021-22, which was later scrapped.

Following a recommendation by lieutenant governor VK Saxena, the Central Bureau of Investigation first registered an FIR on the alleged corruption that subsequently led to ED initiating a probe in the money laundering aspect of the case. Both agencies have claimed irregularities were committed while modifying the excise policy and undue favours were extended to licence holders by the political executive in Delhi.

AAP minister Manish Sisodia and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh were arrested and continue to be in judicial custody. Kejriwal's name was mentioned in the chargesheet filed by ED in the excise policy case where it alleged that the arrested accused in the case were in touch with Kejriwal while formulating the excise policy that resulted in financial benefits for them in return for which they paid kickbacks to AAP.

Last week, a sessions court granted bail to Kejriwal on two complaints filed by ED against him for skipping its summonses in the case.

Case against Jain political conspiracy, no proof so far: AAP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday alleged that the money laundering case against party leader Satyendar Jain was a political conspiracy and claimed the Enforcement Directorate was relying on statements from hawala operators without recovering any proceeds of the crime.

In a statement, AAP leader **Atishi** said, "Yesterday, Supreme Court decided to decline bail to Jain. We respect the apex court and due procedure of law but respectfully disagree with the decision. The case in which he has been incarcerated is completely false."

ED arrested Jain on May 30, 2022 on the charge of laundering money through four companies allegedly linked to him.

Atishi, however, claimed that Jain was neither the director nor the owner during the timeframe for which this case was made out against him while his wife had an insignificant shareholding.

"So, as per the law, if the company had taken any decisions during this time, Jain and any of his family members can't be legally liable. He has been arrested for a decision by a company in which neither was he the director or authorised signatory, nor shareholder. He was not at all responsible for any decision made by the company," she claimed.

The minister added that the allegations against Jain were "solely based on the statements given by a few notorious hawala operators".

"Ironically, ED makes statements through known hawala operators, but without recovering a single rupee of proceeds of crime from Jain. While ED has arrested him, the known hawala operators are still roaming freely," she alleged.

AAP minister Saurabh Bharadwaj said the alleged liquor scam "promoted by BJP", which started with purported thousands of crores, has now come down to Rs 100 crore.

"Supreme Court said that financial transactions in liquor scam are somewhat matter of debate; ED has not presented any evidence so far."

AAP leader Gopal Rai alleged, "BJP is reiterating old tune of alleged 100-crore scam by issuing press releases from ED, despite no evidence."

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said that seeing the case being tightened around Kejriwal, the AAP leaders have forgotten that investigative agencies release press statements on the crucial developments of every high-profile case.

Kejriwal's claims on illegality of summonses by agency fall flat: BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Tuesday said the refusal of a Delhi court to stay the summonses issued by ED to Arvind Kejriwal in connection with its probe in the alleged liquor scam punctured the Delhi CM's claim that these were illegal and it only showed that he has no respect for the Constitution despite holding a constitutional post.

"Sometimes I feel surprised that there are people who change their colour so regularly. They used to say 'summon sammaan hota hai'. Today, they are running away from the summonses. They are afraid of summonses and have become shameless. In the last six months, nine summonses have been delivered to Arvind Kejriwal, but Kejriwal refused to respect even one," said BJP spokesperson **Sambit Patra** at a press conference.

Patra said the court has deemed Kejriwal prima facie accused, debunked his technical excuses, and deemed the summonses lawful. He also cited the arrest of BRS leader K Kavitha as another example of how the AAP leaders were involved in the alleged scam. "Investigative agencies are not established by any political party, they operate solely based on evidence. When a murderer commits a crime, traces of blood are inevitably left behind. Arvind Kejriwal has murdered the trust of thousands of people, he has murdered truth and development, and evidence of his actions is scattered everywhere, on the basis of which summonses have been sent to him," Patra said.

The BJP functionary said nine summonses had been issued to Kejriwal against which he had provided 18 excuses ranging from Diwali (during the first summons) to governance priorities, Vipasana, assembly sessions and campaigning in Madhya Pradesh.

"Now technical excuses are being given by Kejriwal claiming that since the court has dismissed the summonses, there is no basis for the ED to send summons," Patra said and questioned, "The first question to consider is whether the court has rejected these summonses."

"Under Section 174, if an investigation agency summons someone and he do not respect the summons, legal proceedings can take place against that individual. However, Kejriwal requested that no legal proceedings be initiated against him. Nonetheless, the judge addressed him as the accused and has asked Kejriwal to respect the ED summonses."

Sisodia to be in jail custody till April 6

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A Delhi court on Tuesday extended the judicial custody of former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia till April 6, the next date of hearing in the excise policy case.

Sisodia reached Rouse Avenue Court to appear physically before the court of Special Judge MK Nagpal.

Meanwhile, the Enforcement Directorate alleged delay on the part of accused persons by way of filing of different applications.

After hearing the submissions, the court said that no findings are required to be given at this stage on the respective claims or allegations being made on behalf of prosecution as well as the accused regarding the reasons for delay.

Earlier on Monday, Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) told the same court that "some high-profile persons" could be arrested in connection with the alleged excise policy scam. The agency made the submissions while opposing the bail plea of Sisodia before the court.

On March 15, the court allowed early hearing on the bail plea of Sisodia in the case after Supreme Court dismissed his curative petition.

Judge hearing excise policy case among 58 transferred

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday carried out a reshuffle of district judiciary officers, including that of special judge MK Nagpal, who was presiding over cases associated with the Delhi excise policy.

Nagpal is one of 27 judges from Delhi Higher Judicial Service to be transferred by the high court, while another 31 judges (mainly metropolitan magistrates) from the Delhi Judicial Service cadre have also been reshuffled.

The special judge at the Rouse Avenue court complex has been transferred to Tis Hazari courts as district judge, Commercial Court. In his place, the high court has brought in judge Kaveri Baweja as the special judge to hear cases against MPs and MLAs at Rouse Avenue.

Sources in the high court told **TOI** that the transfers were part of a "routine" exercise and included placement of newly appointed metropolitan magistrates who were till now undergoing training and would now take up the role of judges.

When queried specifically on the transfer of special judge Nagpal, the source pointed out that the officer had completed his tenure of three years on the post and was due for a fresh posting, as per norm.

Nagpal was the presiding officer hearing the cases filed by the Enforcement Directorate and Central Bureau of Investigation against the accused in the liquor policy case from the beginning. From dealing with chargesheets filed by ED and CBI, he has been also hearing and deciding bail applications filed by several high-profile accused in the case. These include former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia, AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh and BRS MLC from Telangana K Kavitha, who was recently arrested in connection with the case by ED.

While Sisodia and Singh are in judicial custody, Kavitha is under the remand of ED.

On Tuesday itself, while taking cognisance of a chargesheet filed by ED, the special judge summoned Congress MP Karti Chidambaram and others in a money laundering case linked to an alleged Chinese visa scam. The judge directed Chidambaram to appear before the court on April 5.

Cong calls Delhi BJP MPs non-performers

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Congress on Tuesday alleged that BJP MPs had failed to fully utilise the MP Local Area Development fund and said it will soon bring a "chargesheet" against their non-performance in the last 10 years.

At a press conference, Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely said the seven MPs remained "non-existent" in their constituencies, necessitating the replacing of six of them in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls.

He added that the Congress will start reaching out to people and highlight the failures of the BJP MPs. "We will go to every Lok Sabha constituency and highlight the failure of the respective BJP MP," Lovely said.

A day after BJP's seven candidates listed their 100-day "priorities", if elected, Lovely said the voters will be "cautioned" against believing the promises made by the saffron party.

He alleged that despite promises, the BJP could neither give ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies, nor take any step to improve air and water pollution in the capital.

"Criminal cases should be registered against BJP MPs for the high level of pollution in Delhi," Lovely said.

The Congress has forged a seat-sharing arrangement with AAP for the Lok Sabha polls. While it will contest three seats, AAP will field candidates in four. Voting is on May 25.

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor countered the Congress allegations saying that the BJP-led central govt as well as outgoing MPs made "immense contribution" to Delhi's development.

"Urban Extension Road-II, Bharat Mandapam, Yashobhumi, 1,650 electric buses, construction of eastern and western peripheral highways, Eco Park at Badarpur, Rapid Rail and Metro's extended phases are some of the development projects by central govt. It invested over Rs 3 lakh crore in the development of Delhi in the last five years," he said.

"The role of our MPs during Covid was memorable, at a time when the Delhi govt went missing," Kapoor said.

Summons: Kavitha withdraws SC plea

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed, as withdrawn, the plea filed by BRS leader K. Kavitha against the ED summons issued to her in connection with the ongoing probe into the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy case.

Senior advocate Vikram Chaudhry, appearing for the petitioner, apprised a bench headed over by Justice Bela M. Trivedi that the plea had become infructuous since Kavitha had already been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on March 15.

Granting liberty to avail appropriate remedies as may be available under the law, the bench allowed the withdrawal of the plea filed by Kavitha. IANS

Sanjay Singh takes oath as RS member for second time

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Rajya Sabha Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar on Tuesday administered oath to Aam Aadmi Party MP Sanjay Singh after his re-election to the Upper House from Delhi for a second term.

Singh was administered oath in Dhankhar's office in Parliament House in the presence of his parents, wife and children. "Vice-President and Chairman, Rajya Sabha, Jagdeep Dhankhar administered oath to re-elected Member of Rajya Sabha Sanjay Singh in Parliament House today," the vice president's office said in a post on X where pictures from the oath-taking were also shared. Rajya Sabha deputy chairman Harivansh was also present at the oath-taking.

Singh, who is in judicial custody and lodged in Tihar jail, was brought under security cover as per the the order of a local court. He was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case linked to the Delhi excise policy case.

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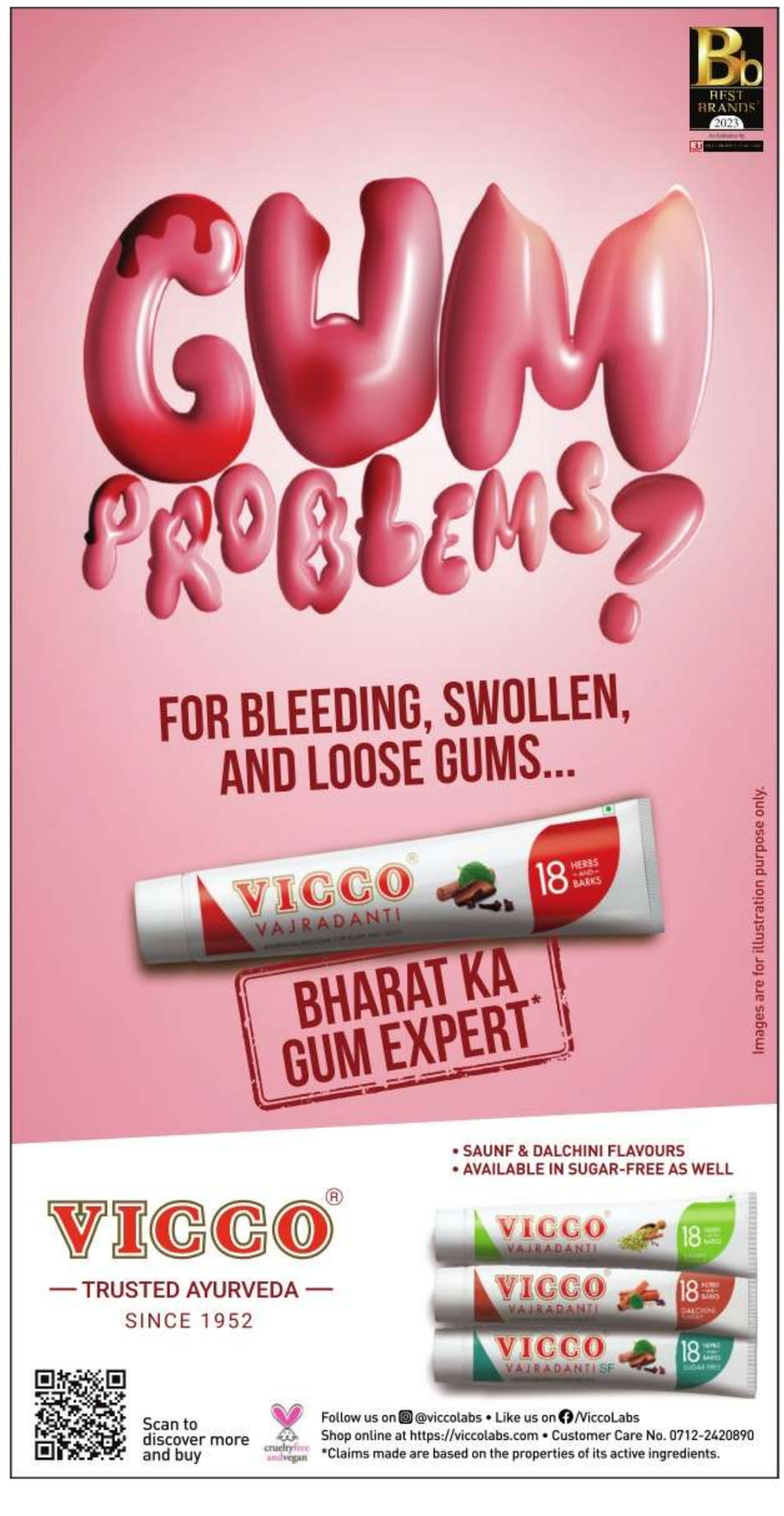

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DOMS

In Loving Memory of

SHRI AMARJEET SHARMA

30/09/1954 - 17/03/2024

It is with heavy heart that we share the sad news of the demise of our Mentor Shri Amarjeet Sharma. With profound sadness, we bid farewell to a remarkable leader who played an instrumental role in shaping DOMS' success story.

Shri Amarjeet Sharma's unwavering dedication, strategic vision, and profound commitment to excellence have left an indelible mark on our company. Shri Amarjeet Sharma was a guiding force, inspiring us with his exemplary leadership and profound insights.

As we mourn this profound loss, let us honour Shri Amarjeet Sharma's memory by continuing to uphold the values and standards he instilled in our organisation. Sending our heartfelt condolences to the entire DOMS family at this moment of grief.

Forever in our hearts

A TRIBUTE TO THE TIMELESS VISIONARY

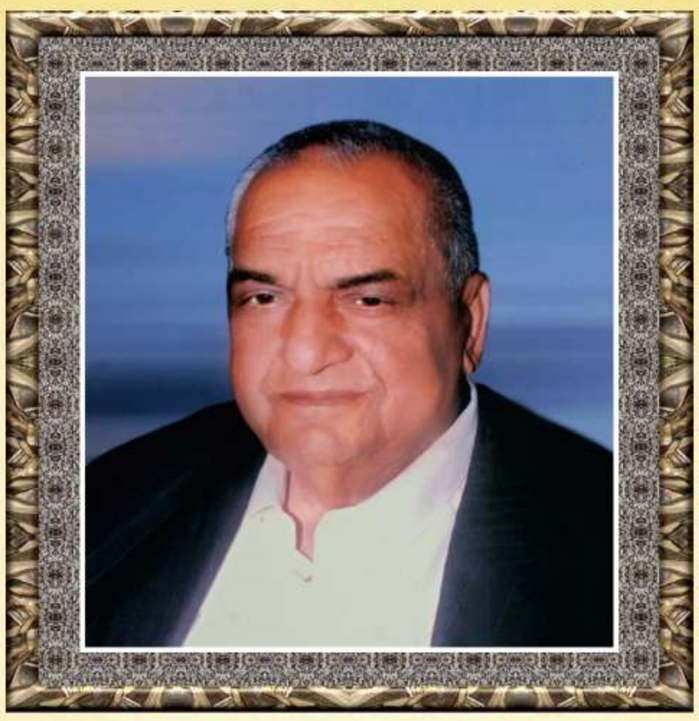
Shri Inder Sen Mittal left for his heavenly abode on Tuesday,19th March 2024.

"A successful pioneer and philanthropist,
who gave nothing but love to the world,
will be deeply missed by all who knew him.
May his soul rest in peace."

With heavy hearts
Mamta and Harshpati Singhania
Sunita and Deepak Gupta
Vaibhav and Romanshi Gupta
Chaitanya, Pranav and Shridhar Singhania

The last rites will be performed on Wednesday, 20th March 2024, at 3:30pm at Chira Shanti Dham, Hebbal, Bangalore.

22वीं पुण्यतिथि



Late Sh. Om Parkash Malhotra

21.7.1926 - 20.3.2002

Founder Chairman-Oasis Group Of Companies

Those we love don't go away, they walk besides us every day.
Unseen unheard but always near & continue to inspire us.

Deep Malhotra ***(Son, Ex-MLA Faridkot, Punjab)***
Chairman, OASIS GROUP OF COMPANIES
Dimpy Malhotra ***(Daughter in Law)***
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MALHOTRA FAMILY

OASIS GROUP OF COMPANIES

OBITUARY

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENTS

You will always be in our hearts & prayers. We will miss you, and will fondly remember you every moment of our lives.

In Loving Memory of
GOVINDANKUTTY WARRIOR
who passed away peacefully on March 8, 2024 after celebrating his 100th birthday on Feb 23, 2024 with friends & family in Bangalore
Fondly remembered by
Sarada, Latha, Mohan, Padma, Sachin, Adya, Karna & Anokhi

REMEMBRANCES

IN LOVING MEMORY OF

MRS. KAUSHLYA DUA
Times keeps on Moving
Wounds will never heal
Tears will never dry
Memories will remain with us.
WE MISS YOU MAA !
Pooja Dua - Vijay Dua, Palak, Akshay & Muskan Dua

SAD DEMISE

SAD DEMISE

Dr. Sunil Solomon
(S/o. Late Mr. Stanley Solomon)
passed away on 19.03.24.
Funeral will be held at Burari Christian Cemetery, New Delhi on 20.03.24 at 4.30 pm.
In grief
Kamal Solomon (Wife)
Sapna & Michelle Aurora
Alka & Arindam Biswas
Amit & Leena Solomon
Phone: 9891295066

In Loving Memory

Krishan Mohan Khanna

27th November, 1938 to 17th March, 2024

A true karmayogi, a lifetime spent
in dedicated service to the nation.
Remember him fondly in your heart!

...Where the mind is led forward by Thee
into ever widening thought and action –
Into that heaven of freedom,
My Father, let my country awake.

RABINDRANATH TAGORE

Bunty Khanna, wife
Madhu Khanna, sister
Devika Khanna & Gayatri Khanna Sabharwal, daughters
Gautam Sachdeva & Amit Sabharwal, sons in law
Annika & Amaaya Sabharwal, granddaughters
Veena Khanna, sister in law
Sandeep & Latika Khanna, nephew & wife
Vinit & Shibani Khanna, nephew & wife
divinemanifest@gmail.com

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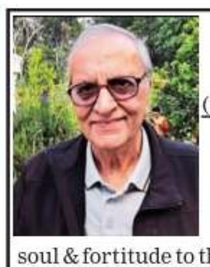
SHARING MEMORIES



(IC-13340F)
Lt Col GS Hora (Retd)
(16Aug 1941 To 18Mar 2024)

DG OS & Sr Col Comdt and all ranks of Army Ordnance Corps pray to the Almighty to grant peace to the departed soul & fortitude to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss. Contact: Mrs Vinoo Hora (Wife) Mob: 9818031745. Address: 9/10, Windser Manson Janpath Lane, New Delhi.

IN LOVING MEMORY
Sh Ram Krishan Sharma
(26.10.1926 to 20.3.2013)
your sublime love, boundless affection, wisdom and patience remain eternally enshrined in our blissful consciousness.

DEEPLY MISSED BY SHARMA FAMILY.

In Loving Memory of
Mrs. Usha Joshi
(06.09.1949 - 20.03.2015)

Never goes a moment when your absence is not felt. We pray to God for your noble soul to rest in peace.

Ever missed by Family Members & Relatives. Ph: 9899423462, 9810624804

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"In the darkness of sorrow, your memory is our guiding light" Fondly remembered &
Deeply missed by All family members

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and Saket Narula,
Shivin Seth.

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Published for the Proprietors, Bennett, Coleman & Co. Ltd., by Rajeev Yadav at Times House, 7,Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, New Delhi -110002 and printed by him at **Times Of India Press, 13, Site IV, Industrial Area, Sahibabad (UP)**, Dainik Jagran Press, Plot NO. C2/2-1, Selaqui Industrial Area, Dehradun(UTTARAKHAND) and Dainik Jagran Press , Biharman Nagla, Pilibhit Bypass Road, Bareilly (UP) and Bennett Coleman & Co. Ltd. Plot No. 7-8, Sector M-11, Transport Hub, Industrial Model Township, Manesar, Haryana-12851. Regd. Office,: Dr. Dadabhai Naoroji Road, Mumbai-400001. Editor (Delhi Market) : Diwakar Asthana – responsible for selection of news under PRB Act. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of Publisher is prohibited
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Triple Rise In Signal Violations In 2024

69k Booked Till March 15 Against 21k Last Year

Ashresh.Marupaka
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Prosecutions for the offence of jumping traffic signals in the city have more than tripled in the first quarter of this year compared to the previous year, shows data released by Delhi Traffic Police.

Between Jan 1 and March 15 this year, police booked 69,296 drivers against 21,089 drivers in 2023 in the corresponding period, an increase of 228%.

Cops have identified 10 hotspots as major contributors. Nairoji Nagar tops the list with over 6,000 violations, followed by Naraina, Moolchand, Bhikaji Cama Place, Moti Bagh, Lajpat Nagar and Andrews Ganj. To combat the life-threatening violations, traffic police have also started installing a 3D radar-based red-light violation detection system on major roads and junctions in the entire city to keep tabs on signal jumping.

The stretches where signal jumping is rampant are Sarai Kale Khan to Moolchand, Dhaula Kuan to Bhikaji Cama Place, Sarai Kale Khan to Moti Bagh, Loha Mandi to Naraina, Sarai Kale Khan to Lajpat Nagar, Chirag Delhi to Moolchand, Sarai Kale Khan to Bhikaji Cama Place, Dhaula Kuan to Moolchand and Dhaula Kuan to Andrews Ganj.

Traffic police are also exploring innovative solutions to enhance enforcement capabilities, including utilisation of CCTV cameras, automated monitoring systems, and digital platforms for streamlined reporting and management of traffic violations.

According to S Velmurugan, road traffic expert and head of traffic engineering and safety division at Central Road Research Institute, "An increase in traffic notices can be attributed to the increasing network of cameras across the city. Before Covid, in 2019, there were only a few locations which had traffic cameras. Now, they are in hundreds of locations, including major junctions and important corridors."

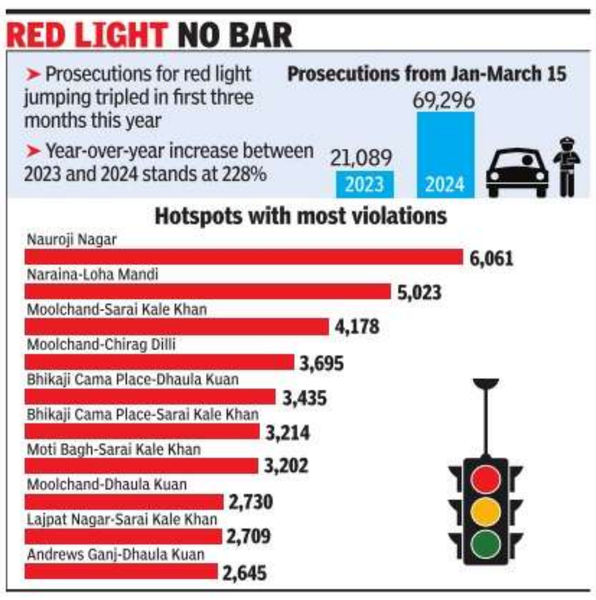
Police have also initiated a response to the issue. Surveillance has been bolstered at key intersections and traffic hotspots to effectively monitor and identify instances of signal jumping. Additional personnel have been deployed at strategic locations to ensure swift response and enforcement of traffic regulations. Officers are equipped with instant challan machines to penalise violators promptly.

Dr Rohit Balucha, president of the Institute of Road Traffic Education, said, "The spike in violations tell us two things. One is that the police were not monitoring violations before, and they are now. The second is that they have installed more cameras to detect violations."

Police are also undertaking extensive public awareness campaigns aimed at educating motorists about the dangers associated with signal jumping.

According to Prince Singhal, a road safety expert and founder of Community Against Drunken Driving (CADD), "Red light jumping is one of the most common road safety offences and is also a common cause of freak accidents in the capital. As our roads become barrier-free, people are forgetting their basic responsibility of following traffic lights. Besides building a world-class road network, we also need to train our citizens in safe road-use behaviour so that our roads become casualty-free."

TIMES VIEW: The data only reaffirms what this newspaper has been saying all along. That there's an epidemic of traffic violations these days. And it isn't just red light jumping. Bikers without helmets, cars being driven on the wrong side of roads, motorbikes on pavements, autos overloading passengers, e-rickshaws ferrying in areas they shouldn't be, overspeeding – it's all happening daily out there. The city needs relentless prosecution drives before traffic discipline is brought back.



Cops crack down on random bus halts, Akshardham flyover looks wide again

Photos: Tarun Rawat

While some commuters still wait on the flyover, buses seem to have shifted their halts to other points

Ashresh.Marupaka
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Days after **TOI** reported about a 'makeshift bus stand' atop the Akshardham flyover, Delhi police and Delhi transport department have begun a crackdown on the illegal stopping and parking of buses.

According to police, about 25-30 challans are being issued every night to buses flouting rules. More than 70 challans have been issued so far. "The good news is that the number of buses stopping on the flyover is reducing with each passing night," a senior traffic police officer said.

Till a few days ago, buses were halting on the flyover, obstructing movement of traffic as well as endangering the lives of passengers. Delhi traffic police have now installed barricades across the left lane of the flyover and are manning the spot to ensure no bus can arbitrarily stop to pick up passengers. Police personnel are also present on the ground to issue challans against those flouting traffic rules.

"We have created a special quick response team to conduct regular patrolling at night in the area to keep tabs on any violation," said a senior traffic police officer.

Police are also sensitising passengers to not come onto the flyover and are actively redirecting them to deboard the road. "We are urging passengers to board their buses directly at their point of origin to avoid any inconvenience," the officer said.

Hawkers and vendors who earlier used to board the flyover to sell water, food and other refreshments are also missing from the scene now.

"We are trying to ensure that no bus stops on the flyover. Barricades have been installed and we are also issuing instant challans to offenders," an officer said.

Earlier, hordes of passengers jaywalked on the flyover to reach private buses which they booked online. Booking aggregators usually issue a 'pillar number' which would often get changed, and passengers would be asked to climb the flyover to catch their bus. Children would often be spotted standing dangerously close to the railing of the flyover, which stands dozens of metres above the ground. Others would cross the flyover at blind spots to catch their buses, risking their lives.

YOU READ IT HERE

HC dismisses man's plea seeking 5-year-old Ukrainian son's custody

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday dismissed a plea moved by a man challenging a family court order which rejected his guardianship petition seeking the custody of his 5-year-old son, a citizen of Ukraine, on the grounds that it was in the "best interest of the child".

The division bench of Justices Rajiv Shakdher and Amit Bansal, upholding the family court judgment, said that after taking a holistic view of the matter it was not inclined to interfere with the judgment.

"Even on merits, we do not think that it would be in the best interest of the minor child, who is currently five years old, to be separated from his mother (respondent no.1) and his elder sister, who are living in Vinnytsia, Ukraine. The family court, while passing the impugned judgment, had interacted with the minor child on November 17, 2023. The boy had expressed his desire to go back to Ukraine with his mum and said that he did not wish to speak to the appellant and his family members," the bench stated in the judgment.

The now separated parents of the boy had got married in 2000 but the marriage was nullified in May 2021 by a court decree in Ukraine. The man was later granted visitation rights.

HC BENCH SAYS

Even on merits, we do not think that it would be in the best interest of the minor child, who is currently five years old, to be separated from his mother

The court, noting that the father had brought the child to India in violation of a Ukraine court's order, said that he cannot be permitted to take advantage of his own wrong.

Further, commenting on the ongoing war in Ukraine, the court said that the Indian govt's advisories asking Indians to leave the country will not be applicable to the mother and her minor son since they are citizens of that country.

"The respondent/mother and the child, who are citizens of Ukraine, wish to return to their country. The appellant has been given rights of visitation by the concerned Ukrainian authorities. Therefore, in our view, it is in the best interest of the child, notwithstanding the hostilities in other parts of the country, to remain in the company of the respondent/mother and his sibling as it provides the child, in the given circumstances, a safe environment," the bench said.

Polls to all bar associations be held on same day: HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Monday directed that elections to all bar associations in the national capital shall be held on a single day for a uniform tenure of two years.

It also laid down that a candidate cannot contest elections to more than one bar association even if they practise in multiple courts.

Giving a raft of directions, a special bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and justices Rajiv Shakdher and Suresh Kumar Kait observed that to "ensure purity in elections and to curb the use of money power, this court prohibits hosting election parties, printing of posters, and erection of hoardings".

It said that candidates could hold physical and virtual meetings and use WhatsApp or other social media to propagate proposals that would bring improvements in the interest of the legal fraternity.

The verdict came on a batch of petitions that explored whether elections to the executive committees of different bar associations should be held simultaneously. The petitions also contended that Identity/ Proximity Cards and Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) Tags/Stickers should be mandatorily issued to all lawyers.

"With the consent of all the district court bar associations, Delhi High Court Bar Association, and all bar associations annexed with the tribunals in Delhi, it is directed that elections to their executive committees shall be held simultaneously i.e. on the same day and the term/ tenure of all such executive committees shall be for a uniform period of two years," the court ruled.

It said that elections shall be held only once ID/ Proximity Cards and RFID for all lawyers are issued to ensure the exercise was fair and transparent.

The court pointed out that since the terms of all bar associations in Delhi were expiring in Sept this year, it would be appropriate to hold the elections on Oct 19.

Cop accused of taking ₹10-lakh bribe, inquiry ordered by DCP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Police has launched an inquiry in connection with an allegation that an inspector from a police station in outer Delhi had taken money from a criminal who was found in possession of drugs.

Police sources said DCP (Outer) had ordered the inquiry into the matter. The inspector was accused of releasing a bad character after taking Rs 10 lakh as bribe.

It was alleged that cops had recovered smack from a person who had claimed he allegedly purchased smack from a 'bad character' of the area. "As per the allegation, the bad character was caught by the beat constable of the area. He was presented in front of the inspector who was acting as an SHO. He ordered his release," sources added.

A senior officer confirmed the probe into the allegation following a complaint. "We don't know yet whether someone was caught. A team is conducting an inquiry and many people are being questioned. We will take further action based on their report," he said.

The officer denied that the inspector was sent on forced leave or to the district line.

Last month, a 23-year-old man was killed in a brawl with the staff of a restobar in northwest Delhi's Pitampura. Following the incident, the SHO of the area was shunted.

HC panel to inspect facilities in shelters before peak summer

Ridhima Gupta & Abhinav Garg | TNN

New Delhi: With the mercury rising, Delhi High Court has ordered inspection of 21 shelter homes in the city to find out if these are suitable to accommodate the homeless. Justice Subramonium Prasad has set up a two-member panel of advocates who will visit and inspect these shelter homes and file a report.

The court acted on a petition that alleged improper functioning of shelter homes. "The committee is requested to visit the following shelter homes and submit a report before the next date of hearing. It is also requested to suggest any other steps that are necessary for better functioning of the shelter homes," it stated. The next date of hearing is in April.

The 21 shelter homes include those operated by Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board at Asaf Ali Road, Shankar Gali, Turkman Gate, Jama Masjid, etc.

The plea, filed by Delhi Shelter Home Workers' Union, sought the court's directions to DUSIB to ensure electricity supply at shelter homes located at Asaf Ali Road, Jama Masjid and Lahori Gate. It said the board must restore the power supply by clearing all pending electricity bills.

The plea further sought directions to provide the sanctioned number of toilets and washrooms in these homes along with beds, beddings, mattresses, pillows and blankets. It also urged for regular cleaning of the beddings and availability of first-aid kits and fire safety equipment at all the shelter homes.

"In view of the allegations made and the prayer sought for, this court is inclined to constitute a committee comprising advocates Sanjay Ghosh and Ankur Chibber," the court stated.

ACTIVIST SAYS

Earlier, we had surveyed several shelter homes in the city and found almost all basic services, including good-quality meals, missing

Nirmal Gorana, an activist who works for homeless people, welcomed the court's intervention. "Time and again, we have highlighted the issue of lack of facilities at shelter homes in the city. Ahead of summers, it is important that a proper check is done. Earlier, we had surveyed several shelter homes and found almost all basic services, including good-quality meals, missing. We also found more inmates than the capacity at these places," Gorana claimed.

There are a total of 190 govt-run shelter homes in Delhi.

Give details of target to plant 3 lakh saplings: HC to PWD

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday asked Public Works Department (PWD) to submit the details of its proposal to plant three lakh trees in the national capital this year.

Justice Jasmeet Singh, who was hearing a case on plantation of trees, asked the department to file an affidavit indicating its plan of action for the next two months. PWD, represented by its lawyer and the special secretary, said bulk plantation of three lakh saplings, including shrubs and trees, would be carried out after identifying the sites. It said contracts would be given for plantation and maintenance, and sought two months' time for this purpose.

"How do shrubs help Delhi? You can have hanging gardens on every flyover (but) how does that help Delhi?" the court asked. The matter would be heard next on May 20. PTI

Accused held while trying to flee

▶Continued from P1

Photos of the child and kidnapper were shown to the locals, but it yielded no leads. The team of cops then scanned dharamshalas and various temples in Sambhal. Announcements about the child were also made at mosques and temples. Later, they received information about the child's location in Rajgarh. The team rushed to the village and contacted the sarpanch. Together with the villagers, they conducted a door-to-door search.

"Based on a tip-off, some cops reached the local railway station and spotted Viresh hiding there. Upon noticing the cops, he abandoned the child and attempted to flee. However, the cops apprehended him after a chase," DCP Joy Tirkey said.

Man tries to break ATM in high-security CP area, flees after alarm blares

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A man on Saturday early morning was caught on CCTV footage while trying to break the cash dispenser machine in an ATM kiosk in a high-security area of Connaught Place.

A bank employee filed a complaint on the matter and a probe is on. Police have caught a suspect and are questioning him.

The bid, captured on the CCTV camera, shows a man trying to break the machine using a stone, then aborting the bid and running away when the system generates an alarm to alert the security.

The bank employee who filed a complaint said the incident happened on March 16 at 5.50am.

"I received a call from the staff of a security agency that someone was attempting to steal cash from the ATM in Outer Circle in Connaught Place. He also showed CCTV footage of the incident to the admin, and the admin showed it through their channel," the complaint said.

The bank employee checked the footage and saw that a man, wearing a yellow T-shirt, was hitting the machine with a stone.

"I reached the ATM at 9 am and found that the ATM dispenser shutter was not closed properly. But no cash was found stolen. Police said there was no security guard at the ATM when the incident took place," the complainant said.

A case under IPC sections 379 (theft) and 511 (punishment for attempting to commit offences punishable with imprisonment for life or other imprisonment) was registered.

The PCR unit has apprehended a suspect. He is being questioned, a source said. "The investigation is on, including looking into the possibility of two perpetrators being involved, with one acting as a lookout," an officer said.

DCP Devesh Mahla said the FIR and arrest were just the complainant's version.

On Saturday, two snatchers had targeted a police inspector in the same area. The police officer fought off the snatchers, who were hardened criminals, and nabbed them.

Hit by type 2 diabetes? Be careful about early muscle loss

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A loss of skeletal muscle mass and strength, or sarcopenia, which was earlier seen in people more than 65 years of age, is now seen in a younger population of over 40 years suffering with type 2 diabetes.

This was revealed in a published study conducted by All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

The principal investigator of the study, Dr Naval K Vikram of the internal medicine department, said that those who suffer from diabetes should also get evaluated for sarcopenia or possible sarcopenia along with other management strategies.

If diagnosed in time, it can be treated and complications related to it can be prevented by intake of high-quality protein and resistance exercises to improve muscle quantity and quality.

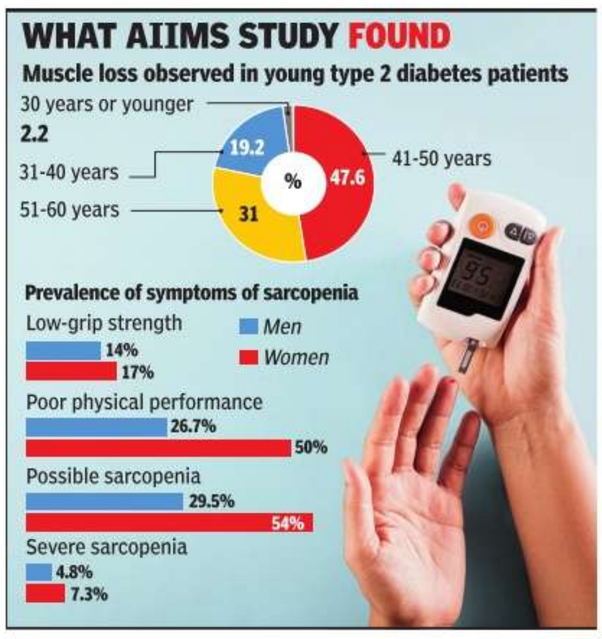
The principal investigator of the study, Dr Naval K Vikram of the internal medicine department at AIIMS, said that those who suffer from diabetes should also get evaluated for sarcopenia or possible sarcopenia along with other management strategies

The study, recently published in the international journal Elsevier, concluded that sarcopenia is increasingly seen as a significant complication among younger individuals with type 2 diabetes and poor physical performance plays a vital role in its development.

The prevalence of sarcopenia rises with advancing age, underscoring the importance of early intervention to address this condition.

At least 229 patients with type 2 diabetes in the age group of 20-60 years were screened for sarcopenia using hand grip strength by a dynamometer, physical performance tests (by short physical and chair stand test), and height adjusted appendicular skeletal muscle index to identify the factors associated with sarcopenia.

The majority of patients were between the age of 41 and 50 years (47.6%), followed by 31% from 51-60 years, 19.21% between 31 and 40 years, and only 2.2% 30 years or younger.



The prevalence of low grip strength was seen in 16.2%, with a comparable occurrence between genders — 14% in men and 17% in women had low grip strength.

Poor physical performance was assessed through the chair-stand test and the short physical performance battery (SPPB) test, which includes walking speed, sitting and getting up from chair. Poor performance based on both tests was present in 90 patients (39%), with a higher occurrence in women compared to men.

Among the participants in the study, 98 patients (43%) were categorised as having probable sarcopenia, indicated by either a low hand grip strength or poor physical performance. About 18.8% patients were diagnosed with sarcopenia, with similar prevalence observed among men and women. Severe sarcopenia was identified in a small proportion of patients, with 14 individuals (6.1%) meeting the criteria.

India had a staggering 74.2 million people with diabetes in 2021.

According to available data from other studies, beyond 40 years, a substantial reduction in muscle mass becomes apparent, decreasing by approximately 8% per decade until the age of 70 years, followed by a more pronounced decline of 15-25% per decade thereafter. Similarly, leg strength deteriorates at a rate of 10–15% every ten years up to 70 years of age.

Vigilance dept seeks 'harassment' report

New Delhi: Taking cognisance of a **TOI** report, Delhi govt's directorate of vigilance has asked health department to send a proposal for initiating action against a professor accused of "harassing" a medical student at a hospital in northwest Delhi.

In a written communication to secretary of health and family welfare department, the vigilance official said that at least two students had also recorded their statements under section 164 of Criminal Procedure Code in the case. "It is requested to send the proposal for initiating necessary disciplinary action against accused professor to the directorate of vigilance, for placing before the competent authority," it added. TNN

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Time : 10 AM - 6 PM

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Interested Candidates may attend the interview along with Bio-data, relevant experience certificates and salary slips of last 3 months. Also, they are advised to send Bio-data on :
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tender & notices

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Monika Jindal (Advocate)
P/1170/2015
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TENDERS

बैंक ऑफ़ बड़ौदा
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South Delhi Region, 11th Floor, Premises and Equipment Department
Bank of Baroda Building,
16 Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001

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Date: 20.03.2024
REGIONAL HEAD
South Delhi Region

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I, Puneet Kumar Yadav, S/o Jairaj Yadav, R/o 744-B, 2nd Floor back side, Gate No. 4, Greenfield Colony, Faridabad, Haryana -121010 has changed my minor son's name from Akshat Yadav to Anuj Yadav for all future purposes.

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Climate Change To Equal Pay, All Part Of Delhi Debate

Winner Gets ₹2.5 Lakh As Prize Money, ₹1.5L For Runner-Up

Shreya.Ghosh
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The hunt for the most dynamic and captivating debater ended on Tuesday as the grand final of the third Delhi edition of 'Speak for India' was held at Mata Sundri College.

The competition saw many of the 4,000-odd participants from Delhi-NCR colleges overcoming their fear of public speaking. Hosted by Federal Bank Hormis Memorial Foundation, in collaboration with The Times of India and Navbharat Times, the debate reaffirmed the talent of youth and the power of informed dialogue.

The competition, which started in January, saw participants going through rigorous district and zonal rounds, finally boiling down to eight finalists. While four of them debated on whether there should be equal pay in sports for men and women, the other four tackled the topic of whether the legal age for internet access in India should be 13 or 18.

The final showdown saw Priyanshu Raj, who studies at Greater Noida's Lloyd Law College, pitted against Cheshtha Malik, a student of Ramjas College. The two debated on whether climate change is a real phenomenon. Ultimately, Cheshtha clinched the coveted title and walked away with Rs 2.5 lakh while Priyanshu won Rs 1.5 lakh.

"I see myself in the field of management. But I have learned conviction and speaking facts with clarity. I am grateful I got this opportunity and I am making the most of it. Credible and reliable sources for research are important, even if we cannot attribute the sources during the speech due to the time limit," said 18-year-old Cheshtha.

Priyanshu (24), who gives law coaching classes, said, "Debating is an art that requires practice. One must value the emotions that words carry and use them with empathy, not loosely. Giving a satirical twist helps in evoking laughs and engaging the audience."

Priya Singh, one of the finalists, said that the "thoughtful conversations" the debate would lead to are the actual markers of the success of the event. Ojasvi Gupta, another finalist, said, "There are two sides to a coin, and the onus is on us to research both sides and then choose a side." Another contender, Pankaj Upadhyay, thanked his college teacher Neeraj for teaching him the art of debate and encouraging him to participate in the event.

The judges included Chandra Bhushan, president, International Forum of Environment, Sustainability and Technology, who pointed out that research is paramount but attributing the sources is crucial sometimes, without which it can be a "slippery slope".

Another judge, Aayush Mohan Gupta, a globally acclaimed sarod player and TEDx speaker, said, "Presentation is very important, and having a graceful conduct amidst the heated verbal exchange is even more important than being factually right throughout." Sahitya Academy awardee Nasera Sharma was also part of the panel.

Harpreet Kaur, principal of Mata Sundri College, which played host to the participants, said, "The debate offered much exposure to my students, and I'm sure they learnt extensively from the contestants."

Kaur added: "We believe in developing women leaders and working on incorporating the Indian knowledge system in our college."

Kapil Bhatia, executive vice president of Federal Bank, said, "I feel enlightened to see the confidence of the participants and their depth of thought, because that's something I didn't have as a kid. Debating is a skill where one needs to speak but also actively listen with an open mind and question the opponents with rational thinking."

Actor-author Tisca Chopra, who was a guest at the event, recalled her school days, saying she won the all-India best debater for two consecutive years back then.

"But nowhere was I close to the level of excellence of these contestants. It makes me hopeful for the future. The topics were quite relevant, and both sides had merit," she added.

Former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit, who was the guest of honour, lauded the organisers for the initiative and "searching good talent". "I have seen several court battles, propositions placed by counsellors and how they counter, but the talent that I saw here in these participants is no less than what I see in courts. Articulating a point backed by facts and presentation, all contestants were equally good."

Debating is an art that requires practice. One must value the emotions that words carry and use them with empathy, not loosely. Giving a satirical twist helps in evoking laughs and engaging the audience —PRIYANSHU

I see myself in the field of management. But I have learned conviction and speaking facts with clarity. I am grateful I got this opportunity and I am making the most of it. Credible and reliable sources for research are important —CHESHTHA

Former Chief Justice of India U U Lalit was the guest of honour

Actor-author Tisca Chopra

Metro station wall collapse: Cops ask two caretakers to join probe

New Delhi: Over a month after the Gokulpuri metro station wall collapsed, claiming one life and injuring four, Delhi Police has asked two persons to join the investigation.

Police sources said they had earlier written letters to Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and sought details of those involved in constructing and maintaining the Gokulpuri metro station. In reply, DMRC sent the names of two caretakers. "We will check whether they work for DMRC or are employed by a private firm by reviewing the documents," the sources said, adding, "The two persons have been asked to join the probe on March 22."

Cops had earlier sought DMRC's internal inquiry report on the incident, in which a 53-year-old man died and four people were injured. The deceased was identified as Vinod Kumar Pandey. A case was registered at Gokulpuri police station in this connection. TNN

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GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
PUBLIC (S.C.) DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR,
UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) TRIBUNAL,
ROOM No.15, GROUND FLOOR, BLOCK 'A', DELHI HIGH COURT, NEW DELHI - 110 503

RE : Notification No.S.O.354 (E) dated 29th January, 2024 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, under Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, declaring the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an Unlawful Association.

To,

Students Islamic Movement of India

WHEREAS the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") has declared Students Islamic Movement of India (for short 'SIMI') to be an "Unlawful Association" vide Notification No. S.O.354 (E) dated 29th January, 2024 [published in the Gazette of India : Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)].

AND WHEREAS by Gazette Notification No.S.O.722 (E) dated 16th February, 2024 [published in the Gazette of India; Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)], in exercise of powers under sub-section (1) of section 5 read with sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Act, the Central Government has constituted a Tribunal comprising Hon'ble Mr. Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav, Judge of the High Court of Delhi, for adjudicating as to whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an "Unlawful Association" as required by sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the said Act.

NOW THEREFORE, a notice is hereby given under sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act and you are hereby called upon to show cause, within 30 days from the date of service of notice, as to why your Association, declared as unlawful, be not adjudicated to be so and why an order confirming such declaration be not made under Section 4(3) of the Act.

The objections/reply affidavits, if any, may be filed/delivered, before the next date of hearing of the Tribunal, to the undersigned at his office in Room No.15, Ground Floor, 'A' Block, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi - 110 503. In case the objections / reply and documents are in regional language, true English Translation thereof be also attached.

You may appear through a duly authorized person before the Tribunal on 09.04.2024 at 04.30 pm in court Room No.16, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi - 110 503 for further proceedings.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, High Court of Delhi, New Delhi this the 29th February, 2024

JITENDRA PRATAP SINGH
Registrar
Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal,
Delhi High Court Building, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi

DIPR/419/DISPLAY/2024

DMRC's cricket fest begins: Delhi Metro Rail Corporation on Tuesday inaugurated a four-day cricket festival 'Sashakt Bachpan' to encourage sportsmanship among children. Kids from various NGOs across the NCR are participating in it. Anuj Dayal, principal executive director, corporate communications, DMRC, said approximately 150 young talents will showcase their skills. TNN

Medanta flags Dr Trehan's deepfake on obesity drug

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Dr Naresh Trehan

Gurgaon: A representative of Medanta Hospital on Tuesday filed a complaint alleging that a "deepfake" video that features its chairperson and managing director Dr Naresh Trehan endorsing a weight loss drug is circulating on social media.

DCP (cybercrime) Siddhant Jain said an FIR was registered at the Cyber East police station against unidentified accused under sections 419 (impersonation for cheating) and 420 (cheating) of the IPC.

He said the Facebook link of the video, which features Dr Trehan's face and voice, was deactivated after the complaint was filed.

Deepfake refers to content – audio, video and image – that is digitally altered using a type of artificial intelligence called deep learning. It is often used to create fake or hoax online content, mostly to spread misinformation.

According to the complaint by Medanta Health Care's assistant vice-president for marketing, the matter was of "grave concern".

"A fabricated video has surfaced on social media that contains misleading information about a medical treatment. The deep fake video features our CMD Dr Naresh Trehan who can be seen endorsing this particular medication," the complaint said, adding that the clip "damages the reputation" of the hospital and Dr Trehan.

The 35-second clip, the complaint said, has the potential to create panic and confusion by making false claims about a medical breakthrough for obesity.

"I request you to take immediate action to remove the video from social media platforms and bring the perpetrators of this deceitful act to justice," the complainant added.

DCP Jain said preliminary investigation suggests the video had manipulated voice recordings of the doctor and a news anchor.

"The doctor did not prescribe any such medication as mentioned in the deepfake video. We will be able to say what kind of technology was used to create the fake video after investigation. We have registered a case and started the investigation. A special team was formed to arrest the accused and we have already got credible leads regarding the same," Jain said.

In Jan this year, Union minister of state for information technology Rajeev Chandrasekhar said the central govt will notify rules that will mandate social media to tackle deepfakes. The rules were being considered as govt's advisories to the companies weren't enough, he had said.

Delhi Most Polluted Capital In 2023, PM2.5 Spiked By 10%

Burning, Vehicular Pollution To Blame: Study

Kushagra.Dixit
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: New Delhi is the most polluted capital city in the world, according to the World Air Quality report by Swiss firm IQAir.

The annual report, which assessed the particulate pollution for 2023, found that the national capital saw an annual average PM2.5 at 92.7 micrograms per cubic metres (µg/m3), followed by Dhaka (Bangladesh) at 80.2 µg/m3 and Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso) at 46.6 Ouagadougou. Delhi's PM2.5 levels spiked by 10% from 2022, peaking in Nov with a monthly average of 255 µg/m3, the report added.

Of the total 114 countries assessed, only seven capitals, including Helsinki (Finland) and San Juan (Puerto Rico), had annual PM2.5 levels within WHO norms, i.e., 5 micrograms per cubic metres (µg/m3).

"India has an extensive air quality monitoring network, hosting more air quality monitoring stations than all other countries in the region combined. The vast monitoring network has contributed data from 256 cities in 2023, representing 74% of cities in Central and South Asia region... A nearly commensurate proportion of Indian cities has ranked in the region's most polluted cities list, with 13 of the 15 ranked cities located in India," the report stated.

Burning and vehicular pollution were the major challenges for India, especially Delhi, the report said, adding that Indian scientists had been asked to explore cloud seeding to improve air quality.

"Northern India and Delhi struggle with smoke from crop burning, vehicle emissions, coal burning, waste burning and biomass burning for heat and cooking. Annual crop burning in northern India and neighbouring Pakistan regularly results in Delhi experiencing emergency-level air quality days... Vehicle emissions are responsible for 40% of PM2.5 emissions in the nation's capital. In response, older vehicles were banned. The number of cars on the road has dropped by 35% since the ban took effect in late 2018," the report said.

It also stated that despite a ban, National Capital Region (NCR) burns a high amount of coal. "The region burns 1.87 million tonnes of coal annually. Even with the reduction in coal dependency, there are challenges to the region and the country. Natural gas cost and access, as well as emissions from biomass burning, have posed new challenges for NCR. Meanwhile, the national govt's policy remains fixed on increasing coal-fired power plant investment even though it has pledged to shift to 50% non-fossil fuel-based power capacity," the report stated.

It pointed out that the region hosts 2023's four most polluted countries — Bangladesh, India, Tajikistan and Pakistan.

"In addition, this region is home to the top 10 most polluted global cities. Included are highly populated and historically polluted cities such as Delhi and Lahore. A breakdown of annual average PM2.5 concentrations per city indicates 31% of the region's cities reported concentrations more than 10 times the WHO annual average guideline value, a proportion vastly exceeding any other region," the report said.

TIMES VIEW: "Most polluted capital in the world" — Delhi can do without this unchanging title of shame. The disturbing data underscores why tackling pollution should be a non-negotiable priority for governments, civil society, NGOs and the citizenry, and why everyone must join hands to fight the silent killer.

Working on steps, results will be visible soon, says Rai

Times News Network

New Delhi: Delhi govt is working on various schemes to curb pollution and the results will be visible soon, environment minister Gopal Rai said Tuesday, following the publication of a report that identified the city as the capital with the poorest air quality.

"I have not seen the details of the report and I don't know what period it has covered. Since 2014, PM10 and PM2.5 levels have been analysed and they have shown a constant decline. In 2022, the average PM10 was 223 and it declined to 219 in 2023. PM2.5 levels slightly increased from 103 in 2022 to 106 in 2023," Rai said.

The minister said that if the average is seen, then pollution has decreased. "We are working on various schemes and the results will be seen soon," he added.

Delhi's pollution is also linked to NCR but govt is working on decreasing its share, Rai said.

With an average annual PM2.5 concentration of 54.4 micrograms per cubic metre, India had the third worst air quality out of 134 countries in 2023 after Bangladesh (79.9 micrograms per cubic metre) and Pakistan (73.7 micrograms per cubic metre), according to the 2023 World Air Quality Report by Swiss organisation IQAir.

The capital's PM2.5 level worsened from 89.1 micrograms per cubic metre in 2022 to 92.7 micrograms per cubic metre in 2023, said the report.

Election buzz in JNU after 4 years

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: After a four-year hiatus due to the Covid pandemic, politics is in a ferment in Jawaharlal Nehru University as it gears up for polling on March 22. The *daflis* of the leftists, emblazoned with the initials of their organisations, AISA and SFI, are drumming up support. Vibrant posters and discussions on campus concerns such as admission, examinations, results, hostels and scholarships are enlivening life in the university.

It's not only the hostels and classrooms that campaigners are visiting. To the joy of their owners, the canteens and dhabas of JNU have become the prime ground for one-on-one discussions.

The United Left alliance comprising the All India Students' Association (AISA), Democratic Students' Federation (DSF), Students' Federation of India (SFI) and the All India Students' Federation (AISF), will be taking on the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad. While the leftists have fielded PhD scholar Dhananjay of the School of Arts and Aesthetics for president, ABVP has named Umesh Chandra Ajmeera for the post.

Dhananjay said he has been an AISA activist since 2014 when he was in Delhi University. "Theatre and music have been my weapons to fight for social justice," he told **TOI**. Ajmeera joined JNU from Nizam's College in Hyderabad and is currently a research scholar in the School of International Studies.

Since JNU's inception in 1969, left-wing student organisations, particularly the Students' Federation of India, affiliated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist), have held sway over student politics. SFI has won the post of president 22 times, while All India Students' Association (AISA) has won it 11 times.

The political landscape began to diversify in the 1990s with the emergence of other student groups across the ideological spectrum. During this time, ABVP got a toehold in JNU and even won the president's post in 2000. Since then, there has been heightened competition between the left and right. In 2019, the Left Unity alliance, comprising AISA, SFI, DSF and other left groups, had posted a decisive win.

"Our manifesto will focus on campus violence, women's security on campus, fee hikes, scholarship cuts and infrastructure issues," said Dhananjay.

ABVP's Ajmeera said, "My father was a victim of Naxalite attacks when I was still a child and my mother was forced to abandon her religion. She died soon after, unable to cope with the trauma. I strive to meet the expectations of ABVP in all the ways possible and am taking forward our organisation's positive work in the university." On Tuesday ABVP presented a five-point chargesheet against the left-led JNUSU in the previous five years

Other student outfits such as the Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India, Birsa Ambedkar Phule Students' Association (BAPSA), and Samajwadi Chhatra Sangathan are also in the fray. BAPSA's presidential candidate, Biswajit Minji, is the first scholar from his adivasi community in West Bengal. "It is high time that issues of the marginally backward communities are represented by community members who know their struggles," Minji said.

The presidential debate is on March 20. Polling will be held on March 22 and the result will be out on March 23.

Civic bodies launch major drive against defacement of properties

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Acting on the election commission's direction to prevent defacement of properties, civic bodies have launched a mega drive in Delhi.

New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has removed hundreds of posters, banners and hoardings in addition to signboards and flags in the past three days. "In the past 72 hours, we have removed 411 hoardings, 650 posters, 250 signboards and 220 flags from NDMC areas," said an official.

Roads and areas where action was taken included Man Singh Road, APJ Abdul Kalam Road, Akbar Road, Ashoka Road, Nehru Park, Central Secretariat, Udyog Bhawan, Rafi Marg, KK Menon Lane, Chanakyapuri and Sardar Patel Marg. "Posters and banners were also removed from several market areas and commercial complexes. However, no FIR has been registered so far," said the official.

Municipal Corporation of Delhi has also launched the drive in all its 12 zones. So far, 1.5 lakh posters, 22,309 hoardings, 17,082 banners and 11,872 small boards have been removed. "All unauthorised political advertisements displayed at private properties have been removed. The drive will continue till the model code of conduct will be in force," said an official.

Among the zones where maximum posters, banners and hoardings were removed were City Sadar Paharganj zone and Shahdara North zone, the official added.

Constable hurt in snatching attempt

New Delhi: A 23-year-old Delhi Police constable was injured after she was allegedly dragged on the road while resisting a snatching attempt in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura on March 16, police said.

The constable was returning to her home in Geeta Colony when someone on a scooter came from behind and tried to snatch her handbag. She resisted the attempt and held on to the scooter, due to which she was dragged on the road, police said.

She screamed for help. People nearby caught the accused and rushed the constable to a hospital. A case has been registered in this regard, police said. TNN

Discoms urge people to observe Earth Hour

New Delhi: Power discoms in the capital are gearing up to make 'Earth Hour' a success by encouraging consumers to switch off non-essential lights and electric appliances for one hour, from 8.30pm to 9.30pm, on March 23.

BSES discoms have urged its 50 lakh consumers to join the World Wide Fund-promoted event to "send a powerful message about our commitment to a sustainable future". Delhi last year saved 279 MW due to Earth Hour, said a BSES spokesperson.

As part of Earth Hour, Delhiites will join over a billion people from Mumbai and Los Angeles to London, Hong Kong, Sydney, Rome, Manila, Singapore, Dubai, among others.

A Tata Power Delhi Distribution Limited spokesperson said the discom is sending letters to resident welfare associations to elaborating on Earth Hour's significance. TNN

CENTRE FOR RAILWAY INFORMATION SYSTEMS (CRIS)
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021
Tender No.: 01245038A
Subject: Procurement of System Software, Onsite Help desk and OEM Man days for 1 years for Indian Railways Native IoT based Yield Analysis Telemetry, Recording and Control (IR-NIYANTRAC) project.
Date of Closing: 10.04.2024 (Wednesday) at 15:30 hrs. Tender Documents can be downloaded from Website **www.ireps.gov.in**
For future modification/extensions pl.see **www.ireps.gov.in**

NATIONAL COOPERATIVE CONSUMERS' FEDERATION OF INDIA LIMITED
3, SIRI INDTITUTIONAL AREA, AUGUST KRANTI MARG, NEW DELHI-110016
NCCF invites proposal from reputed Chartered Accountant Firms from empanelled list approved by the Central Registrar for conducting Statutory Audit for the FY 2023-24 of the branches & Head Office of the Federation in the country.
The detailed information is available at NCCF Website i.e.www.nccf-india.com under Tender/Notice.
Sd/-
In charge (A&F)
NCCF, 011-41006852

C-3334 GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, PUBLIC HEALTH CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR
e-Mail ID- acephcbam@gmail.com
1st CORRIGENDUM TO INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)THROUGH e-PROCUREMENT to
Identification No. ACEPHCBAM 12/2023-24 Dt. 14.03.2024
The estimated cost (Rs. in lakhs) at serial No.2 column No.4 for the work **"External power supply with pumping arrangements at intake well, WTP & MBRs including 5yrs operation and maintenance in connection with "Improvement to water supply of Rambha NAC under AMRUT 2.0 (Swap-II)"** vide Bid Id No. **ACEPHCBAM 12/2023-24 Dt. 14.03.2024,** may be read as **Rs. 334.26 lakhs** instead of **Rs. 432.12 lakhs.**
All the bidders need to go through this Corrigendum properly.
All other terms & conditions remain unaltered.
The technical bid shall be opened on **dt. 06.04.2024 at 11.00 A.M.**
Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal **http://tendersodisha.gov.in**
Sd/-
Additional Chief Engineer (PH)
OIPR-13004/11/0019/23-24

Office, Principal, Maharshi Devraha Baba Autonomous State Medical College, Deoria, UP-274001
Website:- mdbmc.ac.in Tel.No-05568-297433
email: mdbmc2022@gmail.com
पत्रांक:- मेडकाउ0दे0/विज्ञापन/2023-24/2410 दिनांक- 18.03.2024
GEM BID NOTIFICATION
For the financial year 2023-24, as per the specifications approved by the Government, in the Hospital of the Medical College needs to purchase Health care kitchen & dietary services- general ward; diet; full regular diet, soft diet, liquid diet, pediatric diet, diabetic diet, low protein low sodium diet; breakfast, lunch, dinner. through the GeM by inviting tender (technical/financial bid separately) through bidding process.
In the said tender to ensure more and more participation by supplier this GeM tender information has been published in below format:-

S.No.	Description	EMD Amount
1.	Health care kitchen & dietary services-general ward; diet; full regular diet, soft diet, liquid diet, pediatric diet, diabetic diet, low protein low sodium diet; breakfast, lunch, dinner. Bid number GEM/2024/B/4788741 dated 15-03-2024	10,60,000.00

Note-
1- For the said BID, BID documents can be uploaded on the GeM portal www.gem.gov.in up to 03:00 PM till 05.04.2024.
2- Details mentioned in the bid document will be considered as part of tender information and Bid can be changed/deleted without citing any reason by the undersigned.

Tender Cancellation Notice
Urban Development and Housing Department
1st Floor, Vikas Bhawan,
New Secretariat, patna-800015
Govt. of Bihar (Tel: 0612- 2215580, Fax: 2217059 Email: urbansec-bih@nic.in)
13/नव0/SBM-03/2023 (पार्ट)
Tender Cancellation Notice P.R. No.-008473 (Urban) 2023-24,
Due to some unavoidable reason the Tender No.- 4910, dated 12.09.2023 **"Preparation of Detailed Projects Report for Interception and Diversion and STP cum FSTP Project in ULBs of Bihar" (PR No.- 008473 (Urban) 2023-24)** is being cancelled.
Additional Secretary,
Urban Development and Housing Department
Govt. of Bihar.
PR- 020195 (Urban) 2023-24
नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

Maharshi Devraha Baba Autonomous State Medical College, Deoria-274001
Website:- mdbmc.ac.in
Tel.No.- 05568297433 Email:- mdbmc2021@gmail.com
पत्रांक:- मेडकाउ0दे0/विज्ञापन/2023-24/2411 दिनांक 18.03.2024
GEM BID NOTIFICATION
For the financial year 2023-24, as per the specifications approved by the Government, in the Hospital of the Medical College needs to purchase Microscopes-Pathological & research as per IS 4381, IS 5204, IS 4381, IS 5204 (Q3) through the GeM by inviting tender (technical/financial bid separately) through bidding process.
In the said tender to ensure more and more participation by supplier this GeM tender information has been published in below format:-

S.No.	Description	EMD Amount
1.	Microscopes-Pathological & research as per IS 4381, IS 5204, IS 4381, IS 5204 (Q3) BID number GEM/2024/B/4760380 dated 10-03-2024	135,000.00

Note-
1- For the said BID, BID documents can be uploaded on the GeM portal www.gem.gov.in up to 06:00 PM till 01.04.2024.
2- Details mentioned in the bid document will be considered as part of tender information and Bid can be changed/deleted without citing any reason by the undersigned.

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
PIU
पटना नगर निगम, पटना
शुद्धि–पत्र–1
इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक–160, दिनांक–22.02.2024 द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना 20/PIU-PMC/2023-24, जिसका PR No-018108 (B&C) 2023-24 है। जिसकी तिथियों में अपरिहार्य कारणवश निम्नांकित परिवर्तन किया जाता है। शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

क्र०	विवरणी	पूर्व में निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय	संशोधित तिथि एवं समय
1	निविदा प्रारंभ करने की तिथि एवं समय	16.03.2024 समय 10:00 बजे पूर्वाह्न से ।	01.04.2024 समय 10:00 बजे पूर्वाह्न से।
2	संवेदक द्वारा निविदा अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि	28.03.2024 समय 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	12.04.2024 समय 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
3	Pre-Bid Meeting की तिथि एवं समय	20.03.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से 1:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।	03.04.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से 1:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
4	तकनीकी बीड खोलने की तिथि	28.03.2024 समय 4:00 बजे अपराह्न के बाद।	12.04.2024 समय 4:00 बजे अपराह्न के बाद।

कार्यपालक अभियंता (PIU)
पटना नगर निगम
PR- 020192 (B & C) 2023-24
नशे से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि0
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल
बी-600, कमला नगर, आगरा
सार्वजनिक सूचना
मा0 उ0प्र0 विद्युत नियामक आयोग (उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण) विनियमावली 2022 के अनुपालन मे दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लिमिटेड के अन्तर्गत अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत वितरण मण्डल - प्रथम, बी-690, कमला नगर, आगरा पर गठित उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम के स्वतन्त्र सदस्य हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित किये जा रहे है। निम्नवत् योग्यताओं से अर्ह व्यक्ति आवेदन कर सकते है:-
1. उम्र 65 वर्ष से कम होनी चाहिये ।
2. मौजूदा श्रेणी में स्वयं व पत्नी के नाम विद्युत संयोजन होना चाहिए।
3. विद्युत बिल जमा होना चाहिए।
4. जो सिविल सेवा में हो अथवा रहा हो, जो कि ए0डी0एम0 रैंक से कम नहीं होना चाहिए।
इच्छुक आवेदक दूरभाष सं0- 9193303100, 9193303131 पर सम्पर्क कर सकते है ।
पत्र संख्या:- 1803 / वि0वि0मं0/आ0 राजकुमार
दिनांकः- 19.03.2024 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता
"सुनहरा भविष्य बनायें, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएं"

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of an unknown male **Age:** approx 30-35 years, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Height:** 5'2", **Built:** Medium, **Face:** Round, was wearing Black colour Jeans, was found dead in Drain near Dilshad Garden Metro Station, Delhi. In this regard a **DD No. 89A, dated 16.03.2024 & DD No. 94A, dated 15.03.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi.**
His dead body has been preserved in GTB Hospital Mortuary vide MLC No. BD-089/03/24. Any person having any information or clue about the deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.
SHO
P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi
DP/3244/SHD/2024 Ph.: 7065036030, 9650835606

बिहार सरकार
कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
भवन निर्माण विभाग,भवन प्रमंडल, औरंगाबाद
ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं0–17 / औरंगाबाद / 2023–24
शुद्धि–पत्र
एतद द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक–219 अनु0 दिनांक–03.02.2024 के द्वारा निर्गत ई–निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं0–17 / औरंगाबाद 2023–24 जिसका पी0आर0नं0 016842 (BCD) 2023–24 एवं इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक–394 दिनांक–29.02.2024 के द्वारा निर्गत शुद्धि पत्र जिसका पी0आर0नं0 018646 (BCD) 2023–24 है का अपरिहार्य कारणवश अवधि विस्तार किया जाता है।
कार्य का नाम– राज्य योजना स्कीम के अन्तर्गत औरंगाबाद जिलाअंतर्गत संयुक्त कार्यालय(G+5) एवं कोषागार भवन(G+2) का निर्माण कार्य

क्र0 सं0	विवरण	पूर्व में निर्धारित तिथि	नवसंशोधित तिथि
1	परिमाण विपत्र बिक्री (डाउनलोड करने की) तिथि एवं समय	05.03.2024 से 25.03.2024 तक 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	21.03.2024 से 25.04.2024 तक 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक
2	परिमाण विपत्र बिक्री का स्थान	केवल वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर	केवल वेबसाईट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर
3	निविदा प्राप्ति (अपलोड) करने की तिथि एवं समय	05.03.2024 से 25.03.2024 तक 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक	21.03.2024 से 25.04.2024 तक 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक
4	प्री बीड मीटिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान	(i) दिनांक–13.03.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक मुख्य अभियंता(द0) भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय (ii) दिनांक–12.03.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल गया का कार्यालय	(i) दिनांक–02.04.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक मुख्य अभियंता(द0) भवन निर्माण विभाग, पटना का कार्यालय (ii) दिनांक–01.04.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल गया का कार्यालय
5	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (तकनीकी बीड)	दिनांक 28.03.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक	दिनांक 26.04.2024 को अपराह्न 3:00 बजे तक
6	निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (वितीय बीड)	तकनीकी बीड के उपरांत	तकनीकी बीड के उपरांत
7	निविदा प्राप्ति का स्थान	1 कार्यपालक अभियंता भवन प्रमंडल,औरंगाबाद का कार्यालय। 2. अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल गया का कार्यालय। 3. मुख्य अभियंता(द0) भवन निर्माण विभाग, बिहार पटना का कार्यालय	1 कार्यपालक अभियंता भवन प्रमंडल,औरंगाबाद का कार्यालय। 2. अधीक्षण अभियंता, भवन अंचल गया का कार्यालय। 3. मुख्य अभियंता(द0) भवन निर्माण विभाग, बिहार पटना का कार्यालय

शेष सभी शर्तें पूर्ववत रहेगी।
कार्यपालक अभियंता
भवन प्रमंडल, औरंगाबाद
PR. No. 020197 (BCD) 2023-24
बिहार में शराब का व्यापार, बिक्री एवं सेवन अवैध है।
इससे संबंधित शिकायत इस नंबर पर दर्ज करायें, आपकी जानकारी गुप्त रखी जाएगी।
टॉल फ्री नं– 15545 या 1800 345 6268

अखिल भारतीय आयुर्विज्ञान संस्थान, बिलासपुर
हिमाचल प्रदेश - १७४०३७
All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bilaspur
Himachal Pradesh-174037
https://aiimsbilaspur.edu.in
E-mail :- helpdesk.rec@aiimsbilaspur.edu.in
No. AIIMS-BLS(B-I)(02)(05)(Vol-II)/21-7492 19, March, 2024
ADDENDUM
With reference to the advertisement **No. AIIMS-BLS(B-I)(2)(5)(Vol-II)/21-6303** dated 02.02.2024 and Corrigendum No. **AIIMS-BLS(B-I)(2)(5)(Vol-II)/21-6945** dated 28.02.2024 for the recruitment of faculty Group-'A' posts in various departments, it is informed to all concerned that **the last date of receipt of applications for all the posts of faculty has been extended up to 30.04.2024 (online) and 07.05.2024 (offline).**
The candidates applying for the post(s) in response to this advertisement should satisfy themselves regarding their eligibility as in advertisement **No. AIIMS-BLS(BI)(2)(5)(Vol-II)/21-6303** dated 02.02.2024 and must fulfill all the eligibility criteria **on or before 23.02.2024,** failing which, their application will be rejected. The crucial date for age limit and experience etc. will be **23.02.2024.** Applicants already working in Central Govt./ State Govt./ Union Territory / Autonomous Institutes/ Statutory organization/ PSUs under Central/ State govt need to submit their advance copy of applications forms before the last date of offline application i.e., 07.05.2024.
All other terms and conditions shall remain the same. Detailed advertisement containing terms and conditions along with application proforma may be downloaded from Institute's website **https://www.aiimsbilaspur.edu.in**.
Sd/-
Deputy Director, Admin
AIIMS Bilaspur (H.P.)

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY

Shadan @ Arif
General public is hereby informed that this boy namely Shadan @ Arif S/o Mohd. Akil R/o P-4/177, Sultan Puri, Delhi **Age :** 16 years, **Height :** 4'6", **Face:** Round, **Complexion :** Wheatish, **Build:** Medium, **Identification:** Mentally Weak, wearing white colour shirt and blue colour jeans has been missing since 19.02.2015 from his house. In this regard a FIR No. 182/15 dated 20.02.2015 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Sultan Puri, Delhi.
Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the following.
E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in
Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Fax: 24368639,
Tel.: 24368638/24368641
SHO : P.S. Sultan Puri, Delhi,
Ph. : 011-25472410, 25472166, 08527313830, 07065036134
DP/3034/OD/24

Kiss Of Death: City Cops Gear Up To Curb Entry Of The Dragon

Police Keeping Tab On Snake Charmers, Peddlers For Any Possible Movement

Rajshekhar.Jha
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Euphoria, enhanced sex drive, altered states of consciousness and a headrush better than ecstasy or cocaine in many ways — that's how the users of 'snakebites' aka 'Dragon Drops' or K72 have described its high. While the intoxicant is not completely new to the city's party circuits, the arrest of YouTuber Elvish Yadav has again put the spotlight on the drug.

Cops are wary because of increased chatter on social media about its availability and effects. But even as cautious anti-narcotics units are keeping a tab on snake charmers and active peddlers for any possible movement of venoms, they say they are yet to come across an organised gang or cartel dealing specifically in this trade. They said they have only come across standalone cases pertaining to sale of snake venom in a party.

"The K drug has been on the market for almost a decade with demand growing, particularly around Valentine's Day. However, what began as a powdered concoction to be mixed with vodka or gin has slowly reached the stage of being derived directly from the source i.e., snake," said a senior cop who specialises in NDPS (narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances) cases.

Officials said there have been instances reported a few years ago where they found the numbers of several snake charmers from Faridabad, Gwalpahadi and some areas of western UP on the phones of peddlers dealing in ecstasy and other drugs. "But we are yet to come across an organised cartel engaged just in this trade," said a source.

Cops said there were various reasons for the drug not being taken up by a cartel for distribution on a large scale. "The customer base is very niche and the price is high — much more expensive than cocaine — which makes it difficult for all age groups to get their hands on this drug," said another source.

Unlike other synthetic drugs and chemicals, students don't seem to be the primary clientele of K72/76 but working professionals and businessmen are "more into it", a cop said, citing past questioning of peddlers. "Price is a major deterrent, with a hit costing anything between Rs 35,000-50,000, depending upon the customer and the provider. There have been instances where the users got it for less but those have been of easily available snakes. Cobra and krait venoms are in high demand and difficult to get," said a cop.

A major chunk of users, cops said, were not first-timers but those who have been avid drug users since college or before. "While there have been instances of it being done in peer pressure during raves or parties, most do it as their usual drugs stop exciting them. So, the hunt for a new high brings them to the doorstep of this drug," the source added.

A major reported highlight of this drug has been out-of-body experiences because of which it became very popular in discos in Bangkok and Ibiza between 2010 and 2012. It was branded as the "new love drug" at the time. In no time, it found its way to India, with tourists supposedly being the first introducers of this contraband.

Two throw balloons from car, cops on the lookout

Times News Network

New Delhi: Police have initiated action against the occupants of a car who were caught on camera throwing colour-filled balloons at pedestrians. A video of their act was shot by a passerby and posted on X, sparking outrage.

Police are verifying the location and tracing the boys using the car registration details and CCTV footage of the area. The video shows that the car was bearing a Chandigarh number plate. The location alleged by the user is southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj.

If caught, police will take action under sections of the IPC besides invoking provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, as the suspects were seen protruding out of the sunroof of the SUV, which is an offence. The one-minute, seven-second video shows that two boys were throwing water balloons at people on the footpath. One of the pedestrians tried to dodge and fell.

One of the X users wrote, "Yesterday afternoon, Mar 16, in Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, these two boys were throwing random water balloons at people and ladies too in the street. This is extremely dangerous and could have injured someone badly." A senior officer said they are identifying the people involved in the act. "We have taken cognizance of the video and are trying to identify the suspects. No such rowdy behaviour will go unpunished. We urge people to be responsible while on the roads," the officer said.

Farmer threat off, UP Gate barricades go after a month

Umesh Kumar

FREE MOVEMENT: Barricades were dismantled on Tuesday

Avishek.Kumar
@timesgroup.com

Ghaziabad: More than a month after they were put up, Delhi Police on Tuesday began removing barricades at UP Gate that were meant to stop protesting farmers from entering the capital.

The farmers never came, but commuters had to endure traffic jams they caused morning and evening.

On Tuesday afternoon, a couple of cranes and excavators were seen lifting the concrete barriers and sandbags and dismantling tyre killers and concrete walls built on NH-9 and Delhi-Meerut Expressway. The move comes days after farmers were allowed to hold a mahapanchayat at Delhi's Ramlila Maidan.

Apoorva Gupta, DCP (East Delhi), said they got an order to remove the barricades on Tuesday morning. "We are planning to clear both DME and NH-9 either by Tuesday night or Wednesday morning," she told **TOI**.

On Feb 12, Delhi Police barricaded the border with Ghaziabad, anticipating that farmers demanding a law guaranteeing MSP (minimum support price) would reach the capital. Although farmers' groups from Punjab gave several calls to march to Delhi, they could not advance beyond Shambhu border in Haryana.

But the barricades remained at the Delhi borders. On some mornings, because of checks, talbacks stretched several kilometres till Sector 62. In the evenings, long tailbacks were a regular affair on the other side.

With some highway traffic diverted, the internal roads around UP Gate that are not designed to handle heavy flow of vehicles choked.

On any weekday, around one lakh vehicles pass through UP Gate. Residents of neighbouring Vaishali, Indirapuram, Vasundhara, Kaushambi, Sahibabad and Khoda Colony also use it as the main link with Delhi.

Nimish Patil, DCP (trans-Hindon), said he was happy with Delhi Police's decision. "Cops who were deployed to manage traffic at the border for more than a month can now be stationed in other parts of the city," he added.

Commuters, meanwhile, heaved a sigh of relief and urged police to find effective ways of dealing with potential law and order problems other than blocking roads.

Saurabh Singh of Indirapuram said farmers should also choose a designated spot for protests in future. "See, blocking two roads as important as DME and NH-9 is not the solution. Govt and Delhi Police should come up with better ideas to deal with such situations. Roads are for commuters, not protesters," he added.

Mother slips, disability activist complains to Centre

Ambika.Pandit
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Disability rights advocate and wheelchair user Abha Khetrapal faced a harrowing situation when her 78 - year - old mother fell and sustained injuries while they negotiated a slippery ramp without a railing at a luxury boutique hotel on Rajokri Road in the national capital.

While her mother is still recovering from the injuries sustained last week, Khetarpal has sent a complaint on mail to the chief commissioner of persons with disabilities (CCPD) and secretary of the department of empowerment of persons with disabilities (DEPwD) drawing attention to govt's guidelines on accessibility for disabled and senior citizens which lay down specifications for infrastructure developments at hotels.

She has demanded the CCPD look into whether the luxury hotel's building completion certificate complies with the mandatory accessibility requirements and if they get their internal audits done as laid out by the govt. While seeking action in case of violations, Khetarpal has sought that the CCPD issue a pan India circular to all such facilities and seek compliance. It is learnt from sources that the office of CCPD is looking into the complaint for further action.

Usha Khetarpal sustained injuries trying to negotiate a slippery ramp (right) without a railing

Abha Khetarpal is the president of voluntary organisation 'Cross The Hurdles' that advocates for the rights of persons with disabilities with special focus on women. For her work she was conferred with the national award in the role model category by the ministry of social justice and empowerment in 2016. She is also one of the members of the sexual harassment committee of DEPwD.

In her complaint addressed to the CCPD on mail, Khetarpal said, "On March 12, I had to attend a panel discussion at a hotel - 'The Umrao' in New Delhi. My mother (Usha Khetarpal), 78, went with me as my caregiver. The entrance of the lobby had many stairs without railing so she came through the ramp with me as I was on my wheelchair. The marble ramp too had no railing and had the world's shiniest surface and grooves that were sharp enough to give a bloody cut."

"And my mother slipped! She had nothing to hold on both sides. She got a deep cut on her forehead and bled profusely. She had to be rushed to a nearby hospital. She could not even stand as the shock was so great and remained in trauma due to cerebral concussion. Her spectacles broke and her face was all blue along with numerous bruises on her body. This was a life threatening incident," Khetarpal added.

COMPLAINT SAYS

She had nothing to hold on both sides. She got a deep cut on her forehead and bled profusely. She had to be rushed to a nearby hospital. She could not even stand as the shock was so great and remained in trauma due to cerebral concussion

"Such constructions can prove to be fatal not only to persons with disabilities but even to senior citizens, pregnant women and small children and to anyone!," she added citing the injuries suffered by her mother due to the fall.

Khetarpal in her complaint pointed out that even the ministry of tourism in its guidelines clearly states that the hotels, if unable to comply by the guidelines, can lose their star ratings. They are clearly directed to get the access audits done every five years.

When **TOI** reached out to 'The Umrao' on the phone number given on their website twice, this correspondent was assured that someone will call back to respond to the queries. However, till the time of going to the press the call was awaited.

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA (BHARAT SARKAR)
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAIL MANTRALAYA)
(RAILWAY BOARD)
No. RS(POL)/58/0501/5/2024 New Delhi, dated 19/03/2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Executive Director, Railway Stores (RS), Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India, for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender as per details given hereunder:-

1	E-Tender No.	2024 460RR TC
2	Name of Work: Gear Case Oil for application in HHP Locomotives, Servo Syngear 460 RR of M/s IOCL or Mobil SHC 634 of M/s Exxon Mobil packed on 210//208 ltrs net in new, sound and non-returnable steel drums.	
3	Approx. Quantity in KLs	270632 Litres
4	Earnest Money	Rs. 20 lacs
5	Last date and time for submission of e-tender	09.04.2024 at 14.30 hrs.
6	Website for complete details of e-tendering and further corrigenda, if any in the tender	http://www.ireps.gov.in
7	Allocation Head	Grant 01

881/2024
DIRECTOR, RAILWAY STORES (M)
3rd Floor, Room No. 363,
Rail Bhawan, New Delhi.
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

Central Board of Irrigation and Power & The Committee for International Commission on Large Dams, India (INCOLD)
CBIP Building, Plot No. 4, Institutional Area, Malcha Marg , Chankyapuri, New Delhi-110021 (India)

Expression of Interest (EOI) No: S1/CBIP-INCOLD/2023-24/02 Dated: 20.03.2024

CBIP/INCOLD is seeking Expression of Interest (EOI) from Entities (Firms/Companies/Corporations) for Printing & Supply of two (02) A-4 Size Publications of International Standard for 92nd ICOLD Annual Meeting & International Symposium (ICOLD 2024 Event). Details are available at **www.cbip.org** & **www.incold.co.in.** Interested Entities may visit website and submit their EOI on or before **10.04.2024 (11:30 Hrs.)**
Contact at: directorwr@cbip.org/contact@incold.co.in

DR. RAM MANOHAR LOHIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES
VIBHUTI KHAND, GOMTI NAGAR, LUCKNOW- 226 010 (UP)
Phone: 0522-6692120, 101, Fax No. 0522-4918506,
Website : www.drrmlims.ac.in

Advt. No. 4390/Estd.2/Dr.RMLIMS/2024 Date: 19/03/2024

CORRIGENDUM

Corrigendum regarding qualification and experience requirements and revised no. of posts to be filled for Dietician and Junior Medical Record Officer advertised vide Advt. No.- 40 to 49 & 50 to 59 /Estb. 2/Dr.RMLIMS/2024 dated 05/03/2024 has been issued, For detailed information kindly visit the Institute website **www.drrmlims.ac.in**

DIRECTOR
RMLIMS, Lucknow

Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd
(A Government of India Enterprises - Mini Ratna)
CIN : L74899DL1999GOI101707

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER-SZ/RNP/Machinery NIT/2024 dated 19.03.2024

Rail Neer Plant/Palur: GGM/SZ invites E-Tender (through two parts system) for Machineries Viz., Blowing Machine, Rinsing-Filling- Capping Machine, Labelling Machine and Shrinkpack Machine.

Tender Document Downloading and participation	Last date and time of submission of E-Tender
19.03.2024 onwards	09.04.2024 at 14.30 hrs.

Pre-bid meeting at Rail Neer Plant/Palur on 27.03.2024 at 11:00 hrs. Tender document downloading and participation can be done on website: **< www.tenderwizard.com/IRCTC >**

In case of any corrigendum/addendum issued on the above advertisement, it will be published only on IRCTC's website: **< www.irctc.com >**

T.T.DEVASTHANAMS, TIRUPATI
MARKETING DEPARTMENT

e-Procurement Tender Notice

e-Tenders / e-Reverse tendering are invited for supply the items **(1) 81,200 Nos. Denomination printed Empty Gunny Bags** to the Marketing Department, T.T.Devasthanams. For Tender notice and tender details log on to the website **http://www.tirumala.org** and **https://tender.apeprocurement.gov.in. For further details contact phone numbers: 0877-2264079, 2264555, FAX No: 0877-2264554.**

ROC. NO. PR4 / 13964/ Adv. No. 405/ PRO / 2024, Dated: 19.03.2024 Sd/- Executive Officer

बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग
15, नेहरु पथ, (बेली रोड) पटना - 800001

आवश्यक सूचना

शिक्षा विभाग, बिहार, पटना के अन्तर्गत सिमुलतला आवासीय विद्यालय, जमुई में माध्यमिक शिक्षक के कुल–41 एवं उच्च माध्यमिक शिक्षक के कुल–21 पदों पर नियुक्ति हेतु आयोग द्वारा दिनांक–13.03.2024 को प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या–29/2024 तथा प्राचार्य के कुल–01 एवं उप प्राचार्य के कुल–01 पद पर नियुक्ति हेतु दिनांक–14.03.2024 को प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या–30/2024 में वर्णित अनुबंध के आधार पर अधिभार एवं आयु में छूट का प्रावधान को निम्नरूपेण स्पष्ट किया जाता है:–

विभागीय पत्रांक–74067, दिनांक–22.08.2023 द्वारा सिमुलतला आवासीय विद्यालय, जमुई में पूर्व से अनुबंध के आधार पर कार्यरत प्राचार्य, उप प्राचार्य, उच्च माध्यमिक शिक्षक एवं माध्यमिक शिक्षक को आयोजित होनेवाली परीक्षा में अनुबंध नियोजन के फलस्वरूप किये गये कार्य अवधि के समतुल्य अवधि की छूट अधिकतम उम्र सीमा में दी जायेगी एवं कार्यानुभव के आधार पर अनुमान्य अंक की गणना मेधासूची में जोड़ी जायेगी।

विज्ञापन संख्या–29/2024 एवं 30/2024 की शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।

स्वा/–
परीक्षा नियंत्रक
बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग, पटना

IRCON INTERNATIONAL LIMITED
NAVRATNA COMPANY
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
Website: www.ircon.org, CIN - L45203DL1976GOI008171

e-Procurement Notice

e-Tender No.IRCON/2052/Santragachi/Tender/2024/107 Dated 20.03.2024

e-Tender for and on behalf of South Eastern Railway is invited from bidders meeting qualifying requirements for the work of **"Providing, Installation, Testing & Commissioning of fire-fighting system with Automatic Sprinkler System, Public Addressable System including Civil, Electrical, Mechanical and Instrumentation work in total for proposed Santragachi Station Building of South Eastern Railway in Howrah District of West Bengal".**

Estimated Cost of the Work (including all taxes & GST)	Rs. 8,47,72,486/-
Earnest Money Deposit (EMD)	Rs. 9,48,000/-
Last Date & Time of e-Bid Submission	04.04.2024 up to 15.00 Hrs.

For further details, visit website **https://etenders.gov.in/eprocure/app.** Corrigendum, if any, would be hosted only on the website. Chief General Manager/East, 378 Prantik Pally, Kasba, Kolkata-700107

भारतीय बीमा विनियामक और विकास प्राधिकरण
INSURANCE REGULATORY AND DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY OF INDIA
सर्वे नंबर 115/1, फाइनेंशियल डिस्ट्रिक्ट, नानकरामगुडा, हैदराबाद 500032
Sy. No. 115/1, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Hyderabad 500032

Re: Notification for Issuing a 'Request for Proposal' (RFP) for Empanelment of Media Buying/Advertising Agencies

Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI), Hyderabad invites proposals for empanelment of reputed, accredited Media Agencies. The empaneled agencies would be required to suggest a media strategy to IRDAI and to buy space in various media for releasing the advertisements.
For this purpose, IRDAI has issued an RFP with a Tender reference number IRDAI/PP&GR/TNDR/MISC/52/3/2024 on 16th March, 2024 at 5:00 PM on Central Public Procurement Portal (www.eprocure.gov.in). For more details, Interested Bidders may refer to the CPP Portal or IRDAI website.

Chief General Manager

पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लि0
(उत्तराखण्ड सरकार का उपक्रम)

ई-निविदा संशोधन सूचना द्वितीय

मुख्य अभियन्ता परी0एवंपरि0 पिटकुल, हल्द्वानी द्वारा आमंत्रित ई–निविदा संख्या 05/2023 –24/मु0अभि0 (परी0 एवं परि0)/पिटकुल/हल्द्वानी में निम्नवत् संशोधन किया जाता है :

	ई–निविदा संख्या –05/2023–24/मु0अभि0 (परी0 एवं परि0)/पिटकुल/हल्द्वानी: कार्य का नाम : 220/33 केवी0 सबस्टेशन जाफरपुर, 220/132/33 केवी सबस्टेशन, कमलुआगांजा और 132/33 केवी माजरा में सबस्टेशन ऑटोमेशन सिस्टम (एसएएस) की आपूर्ति निर्माण, परीक्षण और कमीशनिंग का कार्य।
1.	ई–निविदा संख्या 05/2023–24/मु0अभि0 (परी0 एवं परि0)/पिटकुल/हल्द्वानी को ई–निविदा वैबसाईट *www.uktenders.gov.in* से प्राप्त/जमा करने की अवधि दिनांक 06.04.2024 समय 17:00 बजे तक एवं खुलने की तिथि को 12.04.2024 समय 15:00 बजे तक विस्तारित किया जाता है।

ई–निविदायें पंजीकृत डाक के माध्यम से जमा करने की अंतिम तिथि 11.04.2024 समय 17:00 बजे तक है। निविदा प्राप्त/खुलने की तिथि को अवकाश होने की दशा में निविदा अगले कार्य दिवस में प्राप्त/खोली जायेगी। ई–निविदाओं से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत विवरण *www.uktenders.gov.in* एवं *www.ptcul.org* से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है। ई–निविदाओं से सम्बन्धित अन्य सभी नियम एवं शर्तें यथावत् रहेंगी।

Letter No.: 223/CE(T&C)/PTCUL/HLD
Date : 19.03.2024 ''राष्ट्र हित में बिजली बचाये'' मुख्य अभियन्ता
परी0 एव परि0, पिटकुल, हल्द्वानी

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY G20

Tender Notice No. 16620232024-450 Dated : 16-03-2024

E-Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-TENDERS on prescribed from for the following work up to 13.30 hrs. On 18.04.2024, The details of the Tender are as under:–

Name of work : Loading, leading and unloading of Misc. P. Way Materials under ADEN/Track/PRYJ from any station to any station for PRYJ division.

Approx. Cost of work (Rs) : 2,36,50,282.77, Earnest Money : 2,68,300.00, Completion Period : 20 Month, Date of Opening of tender : 18-04-2024, Eligibility Criteria for similar work : Any civil Engineering Work or Transportation Work. **1.** E-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. **2.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-TENDER is available on Website **www.ireps.gov.in** upto 13:30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 18-04-2024. **3.** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **4.** The tenderers shall submit a copy of certificate as given in tender document in standard format, without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. **5.** In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. **5.** The tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part-I) of GCC April 2022 mandatorily, otherwise offer will be considered as Incomplete offer and accordingly shall not be considered. 520/24 (D)

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

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Mohd. Ehsaan S/o Mohd. Ishak R/o H. No. 12, Gali No. 1, Prem Nagar-III, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. **192/14, U/s 498A/406/34 IPC, PS Aman Vihar, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Mohd. Ehsaan** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Mohd. Ehsaan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Mohd. Ehsaan** of Case FIR No. **192/14, U/s 498A/406/34 IPC, PS Aman Vihar, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated **18.05.2024.**

By Order
Ms. Preeti Rajoria
Metropolitan Magistrate (North)
Mahila Court, Room No. 18
Rohini Courts, New Delhi

DP/3172/RD/2024
(Court Matter)

PUBLIC NOTICE

Announcement of land award in village Kharkhari, Dhulawat, Sahsola of Tehsil Tauru Distt. Nuh for special railway project Western Dedicated Freight Corridor.

Whereas, by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Railways, S.O. 397 (E) published on 31-01-2022 in Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub Section (ii) issued under sub section (1) of section 20E of the Railways Act 1989 (24 of 1989) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the central Gazette Government declared to acquire the land specified in the schedule (Already published in "Indian Express" (English) and " Dainik Jagran" (Hindi) newspaper on 08-02-2024) of the said notification for execution, maintenance and operation of the Special Railway Project, namely " Western Dedicated Freight Corridor " in the District Nuh, in the State of Haryana.

Therefore, it is hereby informed to all the interested persons (s) in the said land published under notification number S.O. 397(E) dated 31-01-2024 in the Gazette of India that the land and structure award will be declared on 22-03-2024 at 11:00 AM in the office of District Revenue officer cum competent authority (LA) Nuh situated act first floor mini secretariat Nuh.

District Revenue officer-cum-
Competent Authority (LA)
Nuh

TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

BJP PACIFIES UPENDRA KUSHWAHA, PROMISES HIS PARTY BIHAR MLC BERTH AND 1 LS SEAT

DELHI COURT SUMMONS KARTI FOLLOWING ED CHARGESHEET IN CHINESE VISA SCAM CASE

Probe charges against Moitra in six months, Lokpal tells CBI

Pradeep.Thakur@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A three-member bench of Lokpal on Tuesday asked CBI to register an FIR and investigate within six months all allegations related to quid pro quo against Trinamool Congress leader **Mahua Moitra** for allowing Dubai-based businessman Darshan Hiranandani to use her Parliament portal login to post at least 58 questions, all typed by him from different locations, including the UAE, US and Bengaluru.

The bench, headed by Justice Abhilasha Kumari and comprising Archana Ramasundaram & Mahender Singh, said it found allegations against the former LS MP "extremely serious" which needed a deeper probe. Lokpal has taken cognisance of the preliminary report submitted by CBI and passed the judgment after hearing Moitra's lawyer.

It rejected Moitra's lawyer's submission that Lokpal had no jurisdiction to entertain the complaint in light of Section 14 (2) of the Act. The complaint against Moitra was made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey who cited letters from Moitra's former companion advocate Jai Anant Dehadrai as evidence.

At ₹1,344cr, 66 Mum area cos bought 11% of all poll bonds

Contributions Ranged From ₹2L To ₹410Cr

Vijay V Singh & Sumitra Deb Roy | TNN

Mumbai: Sixty-six companies registered in the Mumbai region collectively purchased electoral bonds totalling Rs 1,344 crore since 2019, accounting for 11% of the total bonds purchased nationally, according to an analysis by **TOI**.

The contributions range from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 410 crore. Among the buyers are builders, pharma companies, path labs, diamond firms, investment and trading firms and tech companies headquartered in Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai. Data from SBI, published by EC, reveals that even small businesses have purchased the bonds. Notably, a lot of them were bought in 2019, with several purchases occurring on a single day.

Major contributions also came from other districts, including Pune, Nashik and Kolhapur, collectively adding up to at least Rs 218 crore and taking total number of purchasing firms in the state to 76. Maharashtra's share in electoral bonds purchased rises to Rs 1,562 crore, amounting to up to 13% of the Rs 12,156 crore worth bonds bought across India. **TOI**'s analysis doesn't include those purchased by individuals based in Mumbai & few companies whose registration details were not readily available.

Shailesh Gandhi, former Central Information Commissioner and an RTI activist, said Mumbai's contribution of 10% seems conservative given the city's status as the financial capital and that its commercial representation could range from 20-30%. "The list points towards two potential interpretations. Firstly, it could indicate lower levels of extortion in Mumbai, leading to potentially lower quid pro quo for businesses. Secondly, there's a strong possibility that companies may have made donations through shell firms," he added. Central data shows the city contributes to a third of the country's I-T collection.

Prominent Mumbai-registered companies listed include Vedanta, Qwik Supply Chain, Cipla, Inorbit Malls, Omkar Realtors, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals, Piramal, Sula. Qwik Supply Chain Private Ltd, a warehouse and storage company registered in Navi Mumbai, was the highest contributor, having bought bonds of Rs 410 crore.

Vedanta Ltd, a mining multinational registered in Andheri that was keen on a foray into the semiconductor business, closely follows as the second highest contributor, with purchases worth over Rs 400 crore. Third highest donor was Piramal Group (Rs 48 crore), followed by Cipla Ltd (bonds worth Rs 39.2 crore bought between July and Oct 2019), around the time of the Maharashtra elections.

Sula, a leading winery with vineyards in Nashik, procured bonds worth Rs 25 lakh.

BIG NAMES INCLUDE TOP BUILDERS, INFRA PLAYERS

Top contributors among companies registered in Mum

- Qwik Supply Chain Private Limited | 410Cr
- Vedanta Limited | 400Cr
- Piramal Group | 48Cr
- Cipla | 39.20Cr
- SWAL Corp Ltd | 35Cr
- IRB MP Expressway Pvt LTD | 25Cr
- Inorbit Malls India Pvt Ltd | 25Cr

City-registered builders who bought electoral bonds

- L7 Hitech Pvt Ltd | ₹22Cr
- K Raheja | ₹21Cr
- BKC Properties | ₹20Cr
- Ray Construction | ₹17.5Cr
- SD Corporation (Associate firm of Shapoorji Pallonji Group) | ₹17Cr

City-registered tech companies

- Aksentt Tech Services Ltd | ₹15Cr
- Real Technical Solutions | ₹11Cr
- Talento Technical, Thane | ₹12Cr
- Jai Bharat Technical Services, Thane | ₹10.50Cr

From just 8% in 2000, share of women CAs now 30%

Manash.Gohain @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Not only topping different levels of Chartered Accountancy exams, female aspirants now comprise a record 48% of the qualifiers or pass-outs. In the overall pool, women CAs now have a 30% share, making a massive jump from just 8% in 2000. In the student base of 8.63 lakh too, 43% are females.

Outsourcing of accounting & auditing to India bringing in new opportunities and average annual salary of Rs 12.5 lakh for a fresher, as well as the flexibility of pursuing the course and affordable cost of study, are big attractions.

Significantly, now there are more women toppers — four of six in the final and intermediate exams in 2020 and all toppers in both old & new course exams in 2021. Women candidates repeated their 2021 feat in next two years too. Notably, 75 women aspirants have topped CA exams at different levels in the last decade.

In 2021, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India introduced a new course in sync with the National Education Policy, 2020. ICAI president Ranjeet Kumar Agarwal told **TOI**, "Participation of women in this profession in accountancy, tax and finance is increasing phenomenally."

"Chartered accountancy and financial sectors are poised for better growth in India than in countries with an aging population. India has emerged as the hub with most countries outsourcing their accounting work to us. If a burger is sold in US or UK, accounting is done in Gurgaon or Kolkata. And the attractive salary package — the average package here is Rs 12.5 lakh the moment you pass. Our highest package in the last campus placement was Rs 28 lakh and international package was Rs 49 lakh," he added.

In 2019, of the 2.91 lakh CAs, 73,807 were women, which rose to 1.2 lakh (out of 3.9 lakh) in 2023. It was 70,047 in 2018 and 64,685 in 2017.

A bigger marker is that increasing number of women are taking one of the toughest professional programmes in India. In 2023, of the total 8.63 lakh aspirants 43% were females, against 30% in 2019.

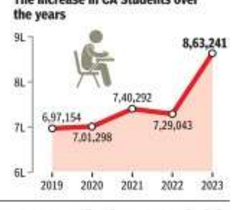
"Growing opportunities in accounting and auditing and return on investment of a five-year course costing Rs 75,000 is seen as biggest draw," Agarwal said. "Young population in India is technologically-empowered, and that's why you can see that 47% of global digital transactions are happening in India, providing ample professional growth opportunities here," he said.

ASPIRANTS' NUMBER UP 23% IN 4 YEARS

Representation of women in the Chartered Accountancy (CA) profession

	Female Members (% of Female Members)	Total Members
2019	73,807 (25.3%)	2,91,698
2020	81,564 (26.5%)	3,07,238
2021	88,983 (27.2%)	3,27,081
2022	93,727 (27.7%)	3,38,374
2023	1,17,149 (29.5%)	3,96,682

The increase in CA Students over the years



Plaint on bulk 'Viksit Bharat' WA messages referred to EC

Times News Network

Chandigarh: The chief electoral officer of Chandigarh has referred to the Election Commission a digital complaint alleging that a central govt department violated the model code of conduct by sending out bulk WhatsApp messages labelled "Viksit Bharat Sampark" after the Lok Sabha elections were announced.

"One particular complaint (on mobile app C-Vigil) regarding the reception of bulk WhatsApp messages...Upon thorough examination in accordance with guidelines and the voluntary code of ethics on use of social media, the district media certification and monitoring committee found prima facie evidence of a violation," says a statement issued by the office of chief electoral officer Vijay Namdeorao Zade.

"It appears a govt department used social media, specifically WhatsApp, to showcase governmental achievements post declaration of elections." Chandigarh returning officer and DC Vinay Pratap Singh said "necessary action" based on EC guidelines would be taken.

'Mockery of voters': SC on rebels getting party name on House tally

Ajit Gets 'Clock' For Now, 'Trumpet' For Pawar Sr

AmitAnand.Choudhary @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: As Ajit Pawar and his political mentor Sharad Pawar are fighting a legal battle for getting control of Nationalist Congress Party and its symbol, SC in an interim order Tuesday allowed the former to hit the hustings using party name and the symbol 'clock' but directed EC to recognise the rival faction as 'NCP- Sharadchandra Pawar' and reserve symbol of 'man blowing turha (trumpet)' for it.

A bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Viswanathan also directed Ajit's faction to give notice in newspapers stating that the matter pertaining to legal fight over the symbol is sub judice and is subject to the final outcome of the case. It said that the faction should mention it in all its pamphlets or audio/video advertisement meant to attract voters.

"The respondents (NCP-Ajit Pawar) are directed to issue a public notice in the newspapers in English, Marathi, Hindi editions notifying that the allocation of the 'clock' symbol is sub judice and the respondents shall be permitted to use the same subject to the final outcome of the proceedings," the SC bench stated.

SC told the Ajit faction to give notice in newspapers saying the matter pertaining to legal fight over the symbol was sub judice

The bench agreed with senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi who, appearing for senior Pawar, pressed for recognition of his faction and also that the 'trumpet' symbol be not alloted to any party or independent candidate. The court, however, did not allow his plea that Ajit faction be not allowed to use the 'clock' symbol which he said was inextricably linked with NCP founder.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi and lawyer Abhikalp Pratap Singh, appearing for Ajit's faction, contended that EC, after hearing both the factions, passed final order to recognise and hold his faction as real NCP and is entitled to use its name and symbol 'clock' and the order should not be interfered at this stage.

The court after hearing both the sides passed the interim order and posted the hearing on the main matter after six weeks. The court was hearing Sharad Pawar's petition challenging the order of EC passed in favor of Ajit Pawar faction.

"In that scenario, when the Election Commission is recognising a faction only on the basis of legislative strength and not organisational strength, is it not recognising a split, which is no longer approved under the tenth schedule? That way, you can split a party and get recognition for EC. Will it not be a mockery of the voters and also the 10th Schedule?," the apex court observed.

Manipur: Allot prelims centres outside state for hill dist students

New Delhi: Manipur govt Tuesday told Delhi HC that in view of the prevailing security situation in the state, UPSC civil services preliminary examination centres for candidates from tribal districts should be assigned outside the state, as was done last year.

Manipur govt counsel submitted a letter by the state chief secretary before SC, which stated that given the precarious law and order situation and ethnic tension, it may not be appropriate to provide centres in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi, and suggested that the candidates be allotted nearest centres outside the state for the May 26 prelims.

The state also gave an undertaking to provide monetary assistance to the aspirants for travel to centres outside the state. The bench prima facie agreed with the suggestion to follow the 2023 pattern, and asked the UPSC counsel to take instructions. The matter was posted for hearing on March 22.

HC was hearing a petition by Zomi Students Federation, which stated that it was not possible for aspirants from tribal districts to travel to Imphal. TNN

SC ready to free GIB non-core habitat to harness solar power

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Helping India keep its international commitment to significantly reduce emission levels by 2030, SC Tuesday agreed to release over 67,000 sq km area for setting up lines for transmission of solar power generated in Rajasthan and Gujarat but said 13,000 sq km area must remain undisturbed as it's the core habitat of the endangered bird, Great Indian Bustard.

Union govt through solicitor general Tushar Mehta and additional solicitor general Aishwarya Bhati said SC's April 19, 2021, order banning overhead power cables for transmission of solar energy plants in 80,000 square km area is unimplementable and suggested a balance between encouraging solar energy generation to reduce emissions from coal-fired thermal power plants and all-out steps to do everything possible to save the GIB from getting extinct.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "Our court has put a blanket ban on potential GIB area, which is not justified. What we do here (in court) may ultimately lead to increasing dependency on coal-fired thermal power plants. Instead of a blanket ban on 80,000 sq kms involving both critical and potential GIB habitat, we can impose heightened restrictions on their critical habitat spread across 13,000 sq km and free the potential area of 67,000 sq km for harnessing solar energy and laying overhead power lines."

When petitioner-conservationist M K Ranjitsinh's counsel Shyam Divan said steps taken by the court would ultimately determine whether India would have any GIB after 20 to 30 years, as conservative estimates have put its present population between 50-100 in natural habitat. Main reason for their death is collision with overhead transmission cables.

The bench accepted Bhati's counter reasoning that very few birds died of collision with transmission cables in the last decade.

iStock

SC said 13,000 sq km area must remain undisturbed as it's the endangered bird's core habitat

SC summons Ramdev over misleading Patanjali ads

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday initiated proceedings against Baba Ramdev for endorsing misleading advertisements of medicinal products of Patanjali Ayurveda claiming to cure diseases permanently in violation of its order and the law, reports **Amit Anand Choudhary**. It summoned him to appear before it along with company's MD Acharya Balkrishna on April 2.

TIMES VIEW: Misleading advertisements of medicinal products are a serious crime, especially in a country where millions are still illiterate. It is akin to making moolah out of people's gullibility and weakness. The apex court has rightly initiated proceedings. Hopefully, the move will also act as a deterrence against other companies that indulge in such dubious activities.

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah, which had on Feb 27 issued notice to the company and its MD, decided to also arraign Ramdev in the proceedings as he, too, addressed the presser along with Balkrishna just a week after SC's last year's order in which he again reiterated the misleading claim.

The bench took strong exception to Balkrishna for not responding to the court's notice despite the hearing date being fixed as sought by him.

OFFICE OF THE REGISTRAR
UNLAWFUL ACTIVITIES (PREVENTION) TRIBUNAL,
ROOM NO. 15, GROUND FLOOR,
BLOCK 'A', DELHI HIGH COURT, NEW DELHI-110503

RE: Notification No. S.O. 354 (A) dated 29th January, 2024 issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs, Government of India, under Section 3(1) of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, declaring the Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an Unlawful Association.

To,

Students Islamic Movement of India

WHEREAS the Central Government in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-sections (1) and (3) of Section 3 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 (37 of 1967) (hereinafter referred to as "the Act") has declared Students Islamic Movement of India (for short 'SIMI') to be an "Unlawful Association" vide Notification No. S.O. 354 (E) dated 29th January, 2024 (published in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (II)].

AND WHEREAS by Gazette Notification No. S.O. 722 (E) dated 16th February, 2024 [published in the Gazette of India: Extraordinary Part II, Section 3 (ii)], in exercise of powers under sub-section (1) of Section 5 read with sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the Act, the Central Government has constituted a Tribunal comprising Hon'ble Mr Justice Purushaindra Kumar Kaurav, Judge of the High Court of Delhi, for adjudicating as to whether or not there is sufficient cause for declaring Students Islamic Movement of India (SIMI) as an "Unlawful Association" as required by sub-section (1) of Section 4 of the said Act.

NOW THEREFORE, a notice is hereby given under sub-section (2) of Section 4 of the Act and you are hereby called upon to show cause, within 30 days from the date of service of notice, as to why your Association, declared as unlawful, be not adjudicated to be so and why an order confirming such declaration be not made under Section 4(3) of the Act.

The objections/reply affidavits, if any, may be filed/delivered, before the next date of hearing of the Tribunal, to the undersigned at his office in Room No. 15, Ground Floor, 'A' Block, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110503. In case the objections / reply and documents are in regional language, true English Translation thereof be also attached.

You may appear through a duly authorized person before the Tribunal on **09.04.2024 at 04:30 pm in Court Room No. 16, Delhi High Court, Sher Shah Road, New Delhi-110503** for further proceedings.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal, High Court of Delhi, New Delhi this the 29th February, 2024.

(Jitendra Pratap Singh)
Registrar,
Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Tribunal

UPID 205656 dt 19.03.2024, www.upgov.nic.in

Can't let guardians of law act as criminals in uniform, says HC

▶ Continued from P1

A division bench of Justices Revati Mohite Dere and Gauri Godse set aside as perverse Pradeep Sharma's 2013 acquittal by the sessions court.

"The guardians of law cannot be permitted to act as criminals in uniform. If this is permitted, it would lead to anarchy." The sessions court failed to see the "overwhelming evidence" against Sharma, said HC, holding the acquittal unsustainable.

On Nov 11, 2006, Ramnarayan (33) and his friend Anil Bheda were abducted from Vashi, five bullets were pumped into the former and the alleged encounter was shown to occur at a park in Versova, Andheri (W), a special investigation team said. Ramnarayan's brother, advocate Ramprasad, said: "Finally justice has prevailed. By using muscle and money power one can delay justice but cannot deny it."

The case and trial against the 22 accusedwere for abduction, murder and criminal conspiracy, among other offences.

HC upheld the conviction of 12 police officers . However, it acquitted six civilians .

While the trial court had termed the ballistic evidence "weak" and accepted the defence poking holes in the expert's testimony that a bullet was fired from Sharma's revolver, high court held that the forensic testimony inspired confidence and "cannot be lightly brushed aside".

The defence had contended that Ramnarayan was a Rajan aide who was wanted in several cases, and argued that he was killed in a genuine police encounter. While the sessions court exonerated Sharma of all charges for want of evidence, it had convicted the remaining 21, including 13 cops.

WMO: '23 hottest yr globally, set climate indicator records

Vishwa.Mohan @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: World Meteorological Organisation Tuesday said 2023 was the hottest year on record, with mean temperature nearing the critical 1.5° Celsius threshold over a 12-month period and the trend continued in the first two months of this year. For India, 2023 was the second warmest year on record in the country since 1901.

Its annual 'State of Climate' Report showed that the global mean near-surface temperature in 2023 was 1.45 ± 0.12 degree Celsius above the 1850–1900 average, turning it the warmest year in the 174-year history of record-keeping. Besides, it broke records on all climate indicators, including greenhouse gas levels, ocean heat, sea level rise, Antarctica sea ice loss and glacier retreat.

Touching the critical 1.5 degree Celsius threshold or temporarily crossing it, however, does not mean that the world will permanently exceed the 1.5° Celsius level, the threshold specified in the Paris Agreement which basically refers to long-term warming over many years.

"Never have we been so close – albeit on a temporary basis at the moment – to the 1.5° C limit of the Paris Agreement on climate change," said WMO secretary-general Celeste Saulo, sounding the red alert to the world, which has been making efforts to keep global average temperature rise within 1.5° C limit by the end of the century.

"Climate change is about much more than temperatures. What we witnessed in 2023, especially with the unprecedented ocean warmth, glacier retreat and Antarctic sea ice loss, is cause for particular concern," she said.

IMD had in January said the annual mean land surface air temperature over India was 0.65° Celsius during 2023, above the long term average (1981-2010 period), making it the second warmest year on record. The highest warming in the country was observed in 2016 when the anomaly was 0.71° Celsius.

WMO's report showed that Antarctic sea ice extent was by far the lowest on record in 2023, with the maximum extent at the end of winter at 1 million sq km below the previous record year — equivalent to the size of France & Germany combined.

KEY MESSAGES FROM WMO REPORT

- 2023 was the warmest year in the 174-year observational record
- Global mean near-surface temperature in 2023 was **1.45 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850–1900** average
- It clearly surpassing the previous joint warmest years, 2016 at **1.29 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850–1900 average and 2020 at 1.27 ± 0.13 degree C**
- The past nine years, 2015–2023, were the nine warmest years on record
- The ten-year average 2014–2023 global temperature is **1.20 ± 0.12 degree C above the 1850–1900** average, the warmest 10-year period on record
- Concentrations of the three main greenhouse gases – carbon dioxide, methane, and nitrous oxide – reached record high observed levels in 2022
- Real-time data from specific locations show that levels of the three greenhouse gases continued to increase in 2023

Modi to visit Bhutan during March 21-22

New Delhi: The govt Tuesday announced PM Narendra Modi's state visit to Bhutan from March 21-22, saying the visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between India and Bhutan and the emphasis on its Neighbourhood First Policy.

During the visit, PM Modi will receive audience with Bhutan King Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck and his predecessor Jigme Singye Wangchuck, said the govt. Modi will also hold talks with his counterpart Tshering Tobgay. TNN

Vinay Kumar named new envoy to Russia

New Delhi: An IFS officer of 1992 batch, Vinay Kumar has been appointed as the next ambassador of India to Russia. Kumar is currently India's ambassador to Myanmar and has also served in the past as ambassador to Afghanistan.

He is expected to take up the assignment shortly, said the government in an official announcement. The post had been lying vacant since the appointment of the earlier ambassador, Pavan Kapoor, as secretary (west) in MEA. TNN

Small Farmers' Agribusiness Consortium (SFAC)

(Society sponsored by Dept. of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare, Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers Welfare, Govt. of India)

Applications are invited for the position of Team Leader (01), IT Expert (01), Project Managers (05) and Project Assistants(02) on contractual basis in SFAC at its Head Office, New Delhi.

For details visit at **http://www.sfacindia.com.**

Deputy Director (PDF)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: 16220232024 **Date : 14.03.2024**

E-Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-TENDERS on prescribed form for the following work up to 13:30 hrs on **26.04.2024** The details of the Tender as are under:–

Tender No.: 434 **Name of Work :** Construction of 50 bedded New Running Room at Manikpur station under ADEN/NYN.

Approx. Cost (Rs) : 59312795.98, Bid Security : 446600.00, Completion Period : 12 Months, **Date of Opening of tender : 26.04.2024, Eligibility Criteria for similar work :** Building Works. **1.** Tender on line can be submitted up to 13:30 hrs. of tender opening date. **2.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website **www.ireps.gov.in** up to 13:30 on the due date of tender opening. **504/24 (D)**

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

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Monu S/o Satish R/o H. No. E-138, Aman Vihar, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. **1494/15, U/s 323/354D/509/34 IPC, PS Aman Vihar, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Monu** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Monu** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Monu** of Case FIR No. **1494/15, U/s 323/354D/509/34 IPC, PS Aman Vihar, Distt. Rohini, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated **24.04.2024.**

By Order
Ms. Preeti Rajoria
Metropolitan Magistrate (North)
Mahila Court, Room No. 02
Rohini Courts, New Delhi

DP/3153/RD/2024
(Court Matter)

SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

CASH & ACCOUNTS-II

NOTICE to nationalized banks for investment of an amount of **Rs. 9,61,90,263/- (Rs. Nine Crore Sixty One Lakh Ninety Thousand Two Hundred Sixty Three only plus** interest accrued thereon) IN FIXED DEPOSIT.

All the Nationalized Banks are informed that the above-mentioned amount is to be invested in Fixed Deposit for a period of **06 MONTHS**. Interested Nationalized Banks are requested to quote in sealed cover, the highest rate of interest valid till **26.03.2024**, for this deposit in accordance with the prescribed format and hand over personally to the undersigned upto **5.00 p.m**. on **21.03.2024**. No offer will be accepted after **5.00 p.m**.

For more details, prescribed format and instructions, log on to **www.supremecourtofindia.nic.in**

Place : New Delhi
Date : 18.03.2024

(TAPAN KISHORE SHARMA)
Drawing & Disbursing Officer,
Supreme Court of India

U.P. RAJYA VIDYUT UTPADAN NIGAM LTD
PARICHHA THERMAL POWER PROJECT, PARICHHA JHANSI

E-Tender Notice

1. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC1/AHD/6000004667 "Erection and commissioning of monorail and chain pulley block in Vacuum Pump area of unit-5 2x250 MW,CTPS, Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 2,54,430.00** EMD **Rs. 5,100.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **01.04.2024 up to 01:00 PM.**

2. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC2/BMD1/6000004578 "Routine/ Preventive/breakdown maintenance of flushing apparatus of Eco ash Pan system and Insulation work over the heating surface of boiler paths steam/feed water/drainpipe lines, IBD tank, boiler drum, APH and duct." Estimated Cost **Rs. 28,41,812.00** EMD **Rs. 35,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **05.04.2024 up to 01:00 PM.**

3. E-Tender- S-PAR/C/MMC2/PD1/6000004823 "Supply of ERW Pipes of Various Sizes for PTPP Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 13,37,500.00** EMD **Rs. 13,400.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **01.04.2024 up to 12:00 PM.**

4. E-Tender- S-PAR/C/MMC2/PD1/6000004781 "Supply of Acid and Alkali Unloading Pups with Motors for OGD. 2x250MW, PTPP, Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 4,06,500.00** EMD **Rs. 4,100.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **01.04.2024 up to 12:00 PM.**

5. E-Tender- T-18/EMD-I/BTPS/PTPP/2023-24 "Salvaging of 6.6KV cables from the source of 2x210 MW CW pump House and laying of same from Ash handling 6.6 KV switchgear to 2x110 MW 6.6 KV Coal handling plant switchgear and Removing of Jack Bus of GT-1 and GT-2 PTPP Parichha Jhansi." Estimated Cost **Rs. 8,70,000.00** EMD **Rs. 18,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **30.03.2024 up to 06:00 PM.**

6. E-Tender- N-PAR/B/OMC1/OGD/6000004974_00 "General housekeeping and cleaning of ash handling area." Estimated Cost **Rs. 2,14,265.00** EMD **Rs. 4,500.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **05.04.2024 up to 11:00 PM.**

7. E-Tender- N-PAR/B/OMC4/EMD2/6000004986 "Erection and commissioning of Aluminum DSL busbars of BOT crane installed in turbine hall of 2x210MW BTPS and 2x250 MW CTPS, PTPP Parichha Jhansi." Estimated Cost **Rs. 19,82,112.00** EMD **Rs. 20,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **18.04.2024 up to 12:00 PM.**

8. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC1/CAD/6000005024 "Providing technical service Round the clock for smooth running of 02 No elevators installed in TG Building Service building 2x250 MW and operation of stack elevator installed in 2x250 MW PTPP Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 14,21,130.00** EMD **Rs. 25,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **04.04.2024 up to 05:00 PM.**

9. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC5/CHD2/6000004983_00 "Overhauling of 01 nos. locomotive (WDS-6) including supply of material at PTPP Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 26,27,120.00** EMD **Rs. 55,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **22.04.2024 up to 01:00 PM.**

10. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC5/CHD1/6000004875 "Routine work of operation of departmental bulldozer in three relay shift for Coal feeding, Coal shifting and other associated work assigned time to time in Coal Handling Plant, Parichha and spraying of water during running dozer PTPP Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 38,94,348.00** EMD **Rs. 75,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **06.04.2024 up to 04:00 PM.**

11. E-Tender- N-PAR/C/OMC5/CHD2/6000005016_00 "Operation, Maintenance, Overhauling and replacement work in fuel oil pump house of PTPP Parichha." Estimated Cost **Rs. 33,90,127.00** EMD **Rs. 60,000.00** e-bid Submission dt.: **19.04.2024 up to 01:00 PM.**

NOTE:- Total Quality of work, tender specification and other terms & conditions is as per tender document available on the e-tender portal our website **www.etender.up.nic.in** & **uprvunl.org.** Bidders are advised to visit the website regularly for updated information from time to time.

पत्रांक : 65 / टी0एस0डी0–प्र0 / पीटीपीपी / दिनांक 19.03.2024

"Save Electricity for Nation"

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) **Sh. Santosh Kumar S/o Sh. Saligram R/o 98, Chodhrey Khel-1, Bulandshahar-203393 U.P.** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in CC No. **511/18 U/s 138 NI Act, PS Karol Bagh, Delhi** and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) **Sh. Santosh Kumar** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) **Sh. Santosh Kumar** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) **Sh. Santosh Kumar** of CC No. **511/18 U/s 138 NI Act, PS Karol Bagh, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated **20.04.2024**

By Order
Divya Gupta
Metropolitan Magistrate (NI Act)-05
Room No. 02, Ground Floor
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

DP/3169/CD/2024
(Court Matter)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Procurement Tender Notice 02/2024 dated 14.03.2024

Tender no : 13245148	Qty : 10 Nos	EMD (Rs) : 1,77,000/-

Description : Anti-Smog gun as per attached specifications

Tender Opening Date : 11.04.2024

Note : (1) The complete information of above E-Procurement Tender are available on IREPS website i.e **http://www.ireps.gov.in**. **(2)** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above Tender, For this purpose, Vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with class III digital signature certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **(3)** Rates entered into Financial rate page and duly signed digitally shall only be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendor shall be straight away ignored and shall not be considered. **(4)** Documents being attached should be signed on their body. **(5)** Allocation for "Cost of Drawing" is Z-650 and for "Earnest Money deposit (EMD)" is Deposit Misc, stores- 00844517. In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the IREPS website may be approached. **499/24(AN)**

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Prayagraj Construction Unit

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Planning, North Central Railway, Prayagraj for and on behalf of the President of India invites online open E-Tenders for General Consultancy (GC) **(Single Stage) (Two packets System)** for the following works:-

e-tender No.: 0220232024-GC/PRYJ	Approx. Cost: Rs. 9.85 Crore

Description of work: Request for Proposal (RFP) for Appointment of General Consultant for office support of CAO/Construction Office/North Central Railway/ Prayagraj

Date of closing Tender: 29.04.2024, **Completion period:** 24 months - Tenders on line can be submitted up to **15.00 hrs.** on **29.04.2024.** - For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in** **511/24(K)**

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Deputy Chief Engineer (Construction), Planning, N.C. Railway, Prayagraj for and on behalf of the President of India invites on line open E-Tenders for "Earth work in embankment and cutting including blanketing, construction of minor Bridges, Retaining/Toe wall, RUB/LHS construction/extension, Side Drains and other allied works between Chunar (Incl.) (243.00Km) to Lusa (Excl.) (202.57Km) in connection with Doubling of CAR-CPU section." (Two Stage Reverse Auction) (Two packets System) for the following works:

Description of work: "Earth work in embankment and cutting including blanketing, construction of minor Bridges, Retaining/Toe wall, RUB/LHS construction/extension, Side Drains and other allied works between Chunar (Incl.) (243.00Km) to Lusa (Excl.) (202.57Km) in connection with Doubling of CAR-CPU section."

e-tender No.: eRACAR-CPU-CEN-2023-24-02, **Approx Cost:** ₹ 162.38 Crore, **Date of closing Tender: 22.04.2024, Completion period:** 18 months. • Tender on line can be submitted up to **15.00** hrs. on **22.04.2024** • For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **www.ireps.gov.in** **489/24 FA**

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APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person whose name, residence and family is unknown, died during treatment, on 09.03.2024, at GTB Hospital, Delhi. In this regard **DD No. 49A, U/s 174 Cr.P.C., dated 09.03.2024** has been registered at **P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi**.

The description of the UIDB is as under:

Sex: Male, **Age**: About 40 years, **Height**: 5'2", **Complexion**: Sallow, **Wearing**: Blue and black t-shirt, grey pyjama.

If anyone has any information about this UIDB, kindly inform the SHO/Seemapuri, Delhi.

SHO
P.S. Seemapuri, Delhi
Ph. No.: 7065036030
Email: sho-seemapuri-dl@nic.in

DP/3129/SHD/2024

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

Tender Notice No.: 16120232024 Dated: 14.03.2024

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/ North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-tendering process for the following works up to **13.30** hrs. on **01.05.2024.**

The details of the tender is as under :-

S.N.	Tender No.	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)
1	431	11,47,40,112.51	7,23,700.00

Name of work: Construction of Road Under Bridge using box pushing technique at KM 857/7-9 near Village Mazara Mardanpur in Prayagraj-Kanpur section, in the jurisdiction of Sr. Divisional Engineer-II/ North Central Railway/Prayagaraj.

S.N.	Tender No.	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)
2	432	11,49,46,936.32	7,24,700.00

Name of work: Construction of Road Under Bridge using box pushing technique at Km 870/14-14A near village Nidhiyawan in Prayagraj-Kanpur Section in the jurisdiction of Sr. Divisional Engineer-II/North Central Railway/Prayagraj.

S.N.	Tender No.	Approx Cost of work (₹)	Earnest Money (₹)
3	433	1,51,60,647.50	2,25,800.00

Name of work: Provision of fixed knotted wire fencing boundary wall between Prayagraj-Bamrauli station in section under Asstt. Divisional Engineer/Line/ North Central Railway Prayagraj.

Date of opening for All Tenders is: 01.05.2024. **Completion period: Sr.No.1 & 2-** 12 (Twelve Months.) & **Sr.No.3-** 06 (Six) Months. **Eligibility Criteria for "Similar work": Sr.No.1 & 2-** Bridge using Box- pushing Technique under railway track & **Sr.No.3-** Any civil engineering work. **Note : 1.** E-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. **2.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website **www.ireps.gov.in.** up to **13:30** hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. **01.05.2024. 3.** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **4.** Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form / letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightway ignored and shall not be considered. **5.** The tenderers shall submit a certificate as given in tender document as "Annexure" in standard format without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. **6.** The supplier / contractor of goods and / or services would be subject to GST Act and Rules as applicable from time to time. **7.** Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. **8.** This tender notice has also been uploaded on **www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in. 9.** Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in respect of e-tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only. **10.** In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. **11.** Tender on line can be submitted up to **13.30** hrs. of tender opening date i.e **01.05.2024. 12.** The tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part-I) of GCC–2022 mandatorily, otherwise offer will be considered as Incomplete Offer and accordingly shall not be considered. **521/24 FA**

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: 15920232024 **Dated: 14.03.2024**

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering) / North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites **E-TENDERS** on prescribed form for the following work up to **13:30 hrs.** on **19.04.2024**. The details of the tender are as under:-

Tender No.	Approx. Cost Rs.	Bid Security	Completion Period
418	1,96,89,497.63	2,48,500.00	18 Month

Name of Work: Leading of P.Way material in DDU - PRYJ section under ADEN/MZP.

Date of Opening of tender: 19.04.2024, **Eligibility Criteria for similar work:** Any Civil Engg. Work or Transportation Work. **Note: 1.** Tender on line can be submitted up to **13:30 hrs.** of tender opening date. **2.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website **www.ireps.gov.in** up to **13:30 hrs.** on the due date of tender opening. **503/24(K)**

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: 15820232024 **Dated:** 14.03.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders on prescribed form for the following work up to **13.00 hrs.** on **19.04.2024**. The details of the Tender are as under: -

Tender No.: 416	**Approx Cost of work (Rs.):** ₹ 2,34,96,000.00
Gem Bid Number: GEM/2024/B/4762169 Dated 14.03.2024	
Name of Work: Supply, Installation maintenance up to 5 years of Track Based Gauge Face Lubricator in section of Sr. DEN/I/PRYJ.	
Bid Security : ₹ 2,67,480.00	**Completion Period:** 05 Years
Tender No.: 417	**Approx Cost of work (Rs.):** ₹ 56,38,800.00
Gem Bid Number: GEM/2024/B/4776575 Dated 14.03.2024	
Name of Work: Hiring of 03 nos. Truck having capacity of 09 Tonne for 2 years for SSE/P. Way/MZP under ADEN/MZP and SSE/P. Way/CAR & CUK under ADEN/CAR.	
Bid Security : ₹ 1,12,780.00	**Completion Period:** 02 Years
Date of Opening of Tender: For both Tender **"19.04.2024"**	
Similar work for Eligibility Criteria: For Tender No. 416 **"NIL"** and For Tender No. 417 **"Supply of road vehicles on hiring basis to Central/State Government, Semi Govt. Bodies of Central/State Govt. & Public sector undertakings of Central/State Govt.".**	
Note:- (1) Tender on line can be submitted up to 13:00 Hrs. of tender opening date. **(2)** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders are available on Website **www.gem.gov.in.** upto 13:30 hrs. on the due to date of tender opening. **501/24 (A)**	

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice No.: 15620232024 **Date : 14.03.2024**

E-Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tenders on prescribed form for the following works up to 13:30 hrs. on 24.04.2024. The details of the tenders are as under:

Tender No.: 412 Name of Work : Combined Tender : (A) Turnout Sleeper renewal in RRH-TDL section under Sr. DEN/III/PRYJ. (B) NI work at ETW under ADEN/ETW. (C) CTR (S) under ADEN/FZD.

Approx. Cost of Work (Rs) : 18297958.08, Bid Security (Rs.) : 241500.00, Completion Period : 12 months, Date of Opening of tender : 24.04.2024, Similar work for Eligibility Criteria : P.Way work. **Note– 1.** The complete information along with tender document of above E-Tenders is available on website **www.ireps.gov.in** up to 13:30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 24.04.2024. The tender shall be opened at or after 15:00 hrs. on due date. **2.** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificates issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **3.** Rates entered into Financial Rate page and duly signed digitally shall be considered. Rates and any other financial entity in any other form/letter head if attached by vendors shall be straightaway ignored and shall not be considered. **4.** Tender No. 412 is having advertised value more than 50 Lakhs, therefore, Annexure-V & V (A) (Document Verification Certificate) are required. The supplier/contractor of goods and /or services would be subject to GST Act and Rules as applicable from time to time. **5.** Document being attached should be signed by the tenderer on its body. **6.** This tender notice has also been uploaded on **www.ncr.indianrailways.gov.in**. **7.** Cost of Tender document and Bid Security can be deposited Online through Internet Banking or Payment Gateway or Bank Guarantee Bond as detailed in para 12 of tender document. **8.** In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. **9.** Tender on line can be submitted up to 13:30 hrs. on 24.04.2024. **10.** Along with other instructions given to Tenderers, Tenderers are required to Pay special attention on Para 12.0 fo Tender Document for Bid Security Deposit. **11.** E-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all Tenderers. **12. For tender no. 412 :** The tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part–**I**) of IRGCC-2022 (Works matter) mandatorily, otherwise their offer will be considered as incomplete Offer and accordingly shall not be considered. **496/24 (D)**

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NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

Tender Notice No. 16020232024 **Date: 14.03.2024**

E-Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering)/ North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites the following E-Tenders on prescribed from for the following works up to **13.30 hrs. on 08.05.2024.** The details of the Tenders are as under :-

S. N. :01	**Tender No.:** 419	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 14495675.91
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance work from ALJN To Khurja (excl) and up to Harduaganj Branch Line for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/ALJN.		
S. N. :02	**Tender No.:** 420	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 14691051.68
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance work from Khurja Jn. To Chhipyana Buzurg for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/ALJN.		
S. N. :03	**Tender No.:** 421	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 11098999.02
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance work from PORA to ALJN (excl.) and including HRS-HRF Branch Line for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :04	**Tender No.:** 422	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 11813999.96
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance work from TDL(excl.) to Pora (excl.) including ETH-BRN Branch Line for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :05	**Tender No.:** 423	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 14189989.71
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance zone work for North East Zone in the section of SSE/W/I/TDL for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :06	**Tender No.:** 424	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 14999900.34
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance zone work for North West Zone in the section of SSE/W/I/TDL for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :07	**Tender No.:** 425	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 14001871.30
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance zone work for Service Building including Station Building, Running Room, ORH and other Service Building (Excl.) Branch Line in the section of SSE/W-II/TDL for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :08	**Tender No.:** 426	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 12501875.30
Name of work: Annual Civil Maintenance zone work for South Colony in the section of SSE/W-II/TDL for the P.E.30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :09	**Tender No.:** 427	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 5200000.00
Name of work: Horticulture work at Tundla & TDL to DAQ for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :10	**Tender No.:** 428	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 5500000.00
Name of work: Horticulture work from ALJN to CPYZ for the P.E. 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :11	**Tender No.:** 429	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 7534150.00
Name of work: Annual P.Way Zone for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/TDL.		
S. N. :12	**Tender No.:** 430	**Approx Cost of work (₹) :** ₹ 9050000.00
Name of work: Annual P.Way Zone for period ending 30.06.2025 under ADEN/ALJN		

Earnest Money (₹) : S.N.: 1- ₹ 222500.00, **S.N.:** 2- ₹ 223500.00, **S.N.:** 3- ₹ 205500.00,**S.N.:** 4- ₹ 209100.00, **S.N.:** 5- ₹ 221000.00, **S.N.:** 6- ₹ 225000.00, **S.N.:** 7- ₹ 220000.00, **S.N.:** 8- ₹ 212500.00, **S.N.:** 9- ₹ 104000.00, **S.N.:** 10- ₹ 110000.00, **S.N.:** 11- ₹ 150700.00, **S.N.:** 12- ₹181000.00, **All Completion Period :** 30.06.2025**, Date of Opening of All Tender :** 08.05.2024, **Eligibility Criteria for Similar work : S.N.:** 01 to 08- Any Civil Engineering work, **S.N.:** 09 & 10- Any Horticulture work, **S.N.:** 11 & 12- P.Way work, **(1)** E-Tender Forms shall be issued free of cost to all tenderers. **(2)** The complete information along with tender document of above E-TENDER is available on Website **www.ireps.gov.in** upto 13:30 hrs. on the due date of tender opening i.e. 08-05-2024. **(3)** Bids other than in the form of E-Bids shall not be accepted against above tenders. For this purpose, vendors are required to get themselves registered with IREPS website along with Digital Signature Certificate issued by CCA under IT Act-2000. **(4)** The tenderers shall submit a copy of certificate as given in tender document in standard format, without which their tender may not be considered and shall be summarily rejected. **(5)** In case of any difficulty helpdesk available on the website of IREPS may be approached. **(6)** The tenderer has to submit necessary documents in compliance of clause 10 to 18 (Part-I) of GCC July 2022 mandatorily, otherwise offer will be considered as Incomplete offer and accordingly shall not be considered. **500/24(DG)**

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SUPREME COURT OF INDIA

PUBLIC NOTICE

Disciplinary proceedings under Rule 13 of the Conduct Rules, 1961, have been initiated against **Shri Ravi Shanker Dwevedi**, Senior Court Assistant (Emp. No. 4321) for violation of Rules 24 and 25 on account of his wilful unauthorized absence from duty for the period from **10.10.2022** to **01.11.2022 (23 days)** and **04.11.2022 (01 day)** and continued absence from duty since **22.12.2022**, lack of devotion to duty and indiscipline, etc. Efforts made to serve him with Charge-Sheet on the addresses available on record have failed as reportedly he is evading service.

Shri Ravi Shanker Dwevedi is hereby put to notice and called upon to collect the said official communication from undersigned and submit his Written Statement of Defence within **15 days** of publication of this Notice, failing which departmental enquiry shall proceed ex-parte against him, without any further notice.

Sd/-
(Aparna Ajitsaria)
Registrar (Vigilance)

Date : 14.03.2024

NORTHERN RAILWAY

Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work:-

Name of Work	Repair to catwalk for DLT complex washing lines 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 & 6 including repair of connecting pathways & provision of drain covers overs open drain & Replacement of corroded water supply pipe lines including replacement of leaky hydrants and Repair to catwalk for Rajdhani complex washing lines 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12 including repair of connecting pathways & provision of drain covers over open drain for stabling line 17.18 etc. & Replacement of corroded water supply pipe lines including replacement of leaky hydrants at New Delhi Railway Station in the s/o SSE/W/NDLS under ADEN/NDLS.
Approx. Cost of work	₹4,19,76,719.94 (Rs. Four Crore Nineteen Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Seven Hundred Nineteen and Ninety Four Paise only)
Earnest Money to be deposited	₹3,59,900/- (Rs. Three Lakh Fifty Nine Thousand Nine Hundred Only)

Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of Tender	05.04.2024 at 15:00 Hrs.	**Cost of tender document** ₹0.00
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	**www.ireps.gov.in**	

- The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. **www.ireps.gov.in** for participating in the e-tender system.
- For all terms and conditions please refer tender document.
- No manual offers are acceptable. • Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only.

No.: 128-W/280/e-Tender Notice/NIT/90/2023-24/W-3 Dated : 15.03.2024

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 866/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client intends to purchase the residential Site bearing No. 281, bearing PID No. 72-2-281, measuring 8800 Square Feet (80 x 110), situated at 100 Feet Road, Indiranagar, Bangalore – 560038, more fully described in the Schedule hereunder and hereinafter collectively referred to as **"Schedule Property"**. Details of the land is provided in the Schedule below.

If any person has any right, title, interest, claim or demand in relation to the Schedule Property or any part thereof or, has executed any transactions or documents (whether registered of unregistered) with the owners or predecessors in title of the Schedule Property, having the effect of creating an encumbrance thereon, are called upon to submit their statements, objections or claims in writing, along with documentary evidence in support thereof, with the undersigned, within **14 (Fourteen) days** from the date of publication of this notice. If no objections are received, we would conclusively presume that no person has any right, title, interest, claim, demand, charge or encumbrance whatsoever existing on the Schedule Property or any part thereof and we will issue our opinion confirming that the owners have title in respect of the Schedule Property.

SCHEDULE PROPERTY

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विज्ञप्ति

एतद्द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है दिनांक 03 मार्च, 2024 को आयोजित **उत्तराखण्ड शासन के राज्य सम्पत्ति विभाग के अन्तर्गत व्यवस्थाधिकारी परीक्षा–2023 के अन्तर्गत विषय–होटल मैनेजमेंट एवं कैटरिंग टेक्नोलॉजी तथा सामान्य अध्ययन की स्क्रीनिंग परीक्षा (वस्तुनिष्ठ प्रकार)** की चारों सीरीज (A, B, C & D) की औपबन्धिक उत्तरकुंजी को उत्तराखण्ड लोक सेवा आयोग की वेबसाईट **www.psc.uk.gov.in** पर अभ्यर्थियों के सूचनार्थ प्रसारित कर दिया गया है। यदि किसी अभ्यर्थी को चारों सीरीज के किसी प्रश्न एवं उत्तर विकल्प पर कोई आपत्ति है तो वह आयोग की वेबसाईट पर **Online Answer Key Objection** हेतु दिये गये लिंक पर जाकर अपनी आपत्तियों को आयोग द्वारा जारी दिशा निर्देशों के अनुसार **दिनांक : 20 मार्च, 2024 से 26 मार्च, 2024 (समय रात्रि के 23:59:59 बजे तक)** तक दर्ज करा सकते हैं। अभ्यर्थी द्वारा प्रति–प्रश्न आपत्ति के सापेक्ष निर्धारित शुल्क रू0 50.00 का भुगतान करना होगा।

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Attracting talent isn't enough, learn how to hold on to them

By K Sudarshan

In a competitive business environment, often the difference between winning and losing is defined by the ability of your company to attract and then more importantly retain top talent. Successful businesses have done some of these things right and it has been proven over time that these simple strategies have made all the difference in building a steady pipeline of leadership. Here are some ways companies can get talent retention right:

Grow In Parallel: Growth is a great catalyst for retention. It opens opportunities and offers the twin challenges of scale and complexity to people who can thrive in such an environment. This keeps people motivated and engaged, and inculcates a winning mindset as they see visible progress in whatever they do. In the past couple of decades in India, there has been outstanding talent retention across key players in banking, telecom and a few diversified conglomerates that have grown rapidly. Their people now manage global-scale processes and businesses.

Challenge Vs Opportunity: Companies that are successful in retaining talent have often provided newer challenges to their people in the form of either higher levels of responsibilities, newer geographies, business divisions or different functional opportunities. This helps people learn new skills, keeps them on their toes and adds novelty value to their profile. Such companies also provide continuous learning opportunities to their people and keep them challenged. Globally, GE was a trendsetter and many successful diversified Indian businesses have adopted this strategy and have managed to retain their key talent.

Ram

Devolve Decision-Making: It is important to give people leeway in decision-making. This creates an environment where hierarchy is blurred, and people are empowered to make decisions within their scope of responsibilities. In the Indian context, there have been professional managers who have thrived on taking up ownership of the success of their business units and have built platforms and teams that have stayed on course for a long time.

Build CV Value: People like to be associated with a winning cause and want to serve in companies that have great reputation and an employer brand. Building a pride of association is critical especially in the talent marketplace and helps build CV value for your people. When companies help build CV value for their people, they often have access to great opportunities outside. You want to employ people who are valued outside yet choose not to leave you.

Equal Opportunities: People like to see their employers as fair in their decision-making and providing equal opportunities to everyone. Companies with robust and transparent performance management systems help people trust their careers with the company for the long term.

Fair-Pay Workplace: Fair compensation in line with or better than industry benchmarks helps as long-term wealth-creation opportunities are key. Ring-fencing key performers and creating exit barriers will be an additional moat for top talent. Essentially, if you don't take care of your people, someone else will.

(The writer is MD, EMA Partners India)

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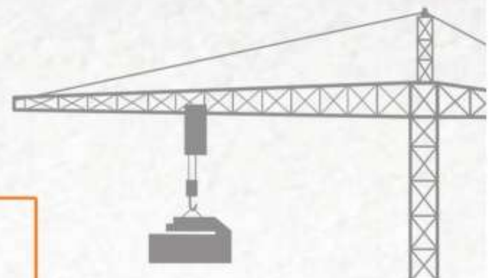

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7 first-timers among 8 new Haryana ministers

Manvir.Saini@timesgroup.com

Chandigarh: Nayab Singh Saini-led Haryana govt on Tuesday carried out its first cabinet expansion, with eight BJP ministers — seven of them first-timers — taking oath at a state-level function.

Induction of Hisar MLA Kamal Gupta as cabinet minister for the second time, Ambala City MLA Aseem Goel, Thanesar (Kurukshetra) MLA Subhash Sudha, Bawani Khera (reserved) MLA Bishambar Balmiki, Nangal Chaudhary MLA Rao Abhay Singh Yadav, Badkhal MLA Seema Trikha, Sohna MLA Sanjay Singh and Panipat (rural) MLA Mahipal Dhanda as ministers of state (MoS) with independent charge took govt's council of ministers to 14.

On March 12, besides Saini, other ministers who took oath included Rania independent MLA Ranjit Singh Chautala, Mool Chand Sharma, Jai Parkash Dalal, Banwari Lal and Kanwar Pal Gujjar, all BJP MLAs. Portfolios will be allocated in next few days.

By ignoring Independent MLAs, ex-home and health minister Anil Vij and Union minister Rao Inderjit Singh, BJP has sent out a clear message of not budging to any pressure, while attempting to get its caste and regional equations correct.

Of the 14 ministers, three (including CM Saini, Gujjar and Rao Abhay Singh) come from OBC category, two (Mool Chand Sharma and Trikha) are Brahmins, three (Ranjit Singh Chautala, Dalal and Dhanda) belong to Jat community, two (Banwari Lal and Balmiki) are from Dalit community, and Goel and Kamal Gupta are from Vaish community.

In the 90-member House, BJP has 41 MLAs, Congress 30, JJP 10, INLD and HLP one each and rest are independent MLAs.

'21 Mamata injury episode dimmed Sahay prospects

▶ Continued from P 1

Vivek Sahay's history of having been suspended by Election Commission in 2021 after a serious security breach left West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee injured also weighed down his prospects.

EC on Tuesday also put its stamp of approval on new home secretaries of Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

Choosing from the panel of senior IPS/IAS officers received from the respective state chief secretaries, EC named IPS officers Pratyaya Amrit of 1991 batch for Bihar, Deepak Kumar of 1990 batch for UP and A K Rakesh of 1989 batch for Gujarat; as well as IAS officers Vandana Dadel of 1996 batch for Jharkhand, Onkar Sharma of 1994 batch for Himachal Pradesh and Dilip Jawalkar of 2003 batch for Uttarakhand.

New appointees in the posts of secretary, general administration department (GAD), in Himachal and Mizoram were also cleared by EC on Tuesday.

The panel of names for replacing Brihanmumbai municipal commissioner Iqbal Singh Chahal as well as additional/deputy commissioners has been received and EC will take a decision on this on Wednesday.

The commissioners of municipal corporations in Thane and Navi Mumbai are also being transferred, said sources.

The incumbent home secretaries and secretary, GAD, across seven states were shunted out by Election Commission on Monday as they were also holding dual charge as principal secretary or additional chief secretary in the respective chief minister's office.

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Post Name	Mode of Recruitment	Vacancies
Deputy Chief Executive Officer (Dy. CEO) – IIFCL Projects Limited	Contract basis	01

For eligibility, complete details, application procedure and application form, please visit our Website **https://www.iifcl.in** under Recruitments tab. The completed application form along with all relevant certified documents by eligible candidates must be sent through e-mail at **recruitment@iifcl.in** on or before16.04.2024.

Sd/-
General Manager- HRD

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY ROORKEE

Roorkee-247667

(March 20, 2024)

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Indian Oil Corporation Ltd.

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Own bike, (Preferably an Electric Bike) as well as **Helmet and Smartphone are mandatory.**

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WhatsApp : 8591 75 38 93

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Bharat Electronics Limited, a Navratna and India's premier professional Electronics Company requires personnel from Indian Navy in the rank of Captain or Commander with minimum Four Years seniority in the rank, retired/serving, for the post of Deputy General Manager (One Post) in the pay scale of Rs. 80,000-3%-2,20,000 for its Naval Systems SBU of Hyderabad Unit. The upper age limit is 50 years as on 01.03.2024. The last date for receipt of applications is 19.04.2024. For more details, please visit our website: www.bel-india.in > Recruitment.

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Advertisement for Engagement of Consultant

Applications are invited from eligible superannuated employees of CPSEs under the administrative control of **Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas, Govt. of India** for engagement of Consultant/Advisors in ONGC Videsh Ltd. purely on contractual basis. For details of the requirement please visit website: www.ongcvidesh.com. Last date for receipt of application is 15 days from date of publication of this advertisement.

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Domain	Position
PDH	CGM & VP/GM/DGM
PP	
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PLL is an Equal Opportunity Employer

For detailed advertisement, eligibility and submission of online application, please visit **"Careers"** section on the Company's website www.petronetlng.in
No other means/mode of application will be accepted.

Apply Online
Registration opens on March 21, 2024 (9:30 AM) and will close on April 4, 2024 (6:00PM)
Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, shall be notified on the Company's website only

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Applications are invited for one position of Senior Project Manager on contract for the Engineering department. Interested candidates may visit the IIMC's website **www.iimcal.ac.in** for necessary details. The candidates may also visit **Naukri.com, Timesjobs.com, NCS portal**, Institute's social media platforms such as **Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram** for the details. The last date for receiving the applications is **17 April, 2024**.

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The ideal candidate should be:

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- Minimum of 10 years experience in senior position in a corporate environment.
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- Digital marketing knowledge will be added advantage.
- Communication skill in English and Hindi.
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- Age below 50 years.
- Salary will not be a limiting factor and will commensurate with qualification and experience.

If you meet the above qualification, forward your CV on following email. (You are requested to mention the post applied on the "subject line")
Email: ekana@ekana.com

Ekana Sportz City (P) Ltd.
2nd floor, Eldeco Corporate Chamber II,
Vibhuti Khand, Gomti Nagar,
Lucknow-226010. UP, India
Contact No.: 0522-4232555
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One of the Leading Consultants in the field of **Plumbing, Fire Fighting, Environmental & PHE Services**, is looking for Professionals with following experience / areas of expertise to achieve the objectives set for the assigned projects:

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Experienced candidates having background in Public Health Engineering / Environmental Engineering may also apply.
Interested candidates may send their CVs to **hr@mkgconsultants.com**

BANK OF INDIA

Head Office: Star House, Plot C-5, 'G' Block, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (E), Mumbai – 400 051.

RECRUITMENT OF SPECIALIST SECURITY OFFICERS PROJECT NO. 2023-24/2

Bank of India, a leading Public Sector Bank, invites online applications for Recruitment of 15 Specialist Security Officers (MMGS-II).

For further details, please visit "Career" Section on our website www.bankofindia.co.in from 19.03.2024 onwards.

General Manager (HR)

राष्ट्रीय प्रौद्योगिकी संस्थान कुरुक्षेत्र
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY

(Under the Ministry of Education, Govt. of India)
KURUKSHETRA-136119

RECRUITMENT OF FACULTY
(Advt. Nos.04/2024 to 63/2024)

National Institute of Technology Kurukshetra invites online applications from the Indian Nationals to fill up the faculty positions in various Departments of the Institute. For further details and submission of application through online mode, please visit Institute website: **www.nitkkr.ac.in**. The last date of submission of online application form is **25.04.2024** upto **11:59 p.m.**

Sd/-
Registrar I/c

Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL)

(A Government of India Enterprise)
1st Floor, 124,Thapar House, Gate No.2, Janpath Lane, New Delhi-110001

Sagarmala Development Company Limited (SDCL) a CPSE under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Water ways, Government of India requires qualified professionals in the following position(s) on contract basis:

Sr. No.	Post	No. of post	Fixed Remuneration per month (in Rs.)
1.	Consultant SDCL Finance	1 (UR)	2,25,000
2.	Consultant SDCL Projects	1 (UR)	2,00,000
3.	Consultant (SM) Projects	1 (UR)	2,00,000
4.	Consultant (SM) Finance	1 (UR)	1,90,000

For complete details regarding positions, qualifications, age limit,experience, last date of application, etc.,the candidates may refer the detailed advertisement posted on the official website of SDCL at **www.sdclindia.com** under vacancies section.

No. SDCL/Recruitment/2024/01 **Managing Director**
Sagarmala Development Company Limited

ऑयल इंडिया लिमिटेड
Oil India Limited

P.O. Duliajan - 786602, Assam, India. CIN: L11101AS1959GOI001148

CORRIGENDUM

ADVERTISEMENT NO: HRAQ/REC-EX-B/2024-06 DATED 27/02/2024

This corrigendum is being issued with reference to the advertisement no: **HRAQ/REC-EX-B/2024-06 dated 27/02/2024** for which applications were invited.

A. The Essential Educational Qualification and Experience for the post of Senior Manager (ERP ABAP Programmer) [post code: ABAP-06] may be read as under:

Post Name & Post Code	Essential Educational Qualification and Experience
Senior Manager (ERP ABAP Programmer) Post Code: ABAP-06	Bachelor's Degree in Engineering AND SAP ABAP **certificate** with 09 years post qualification experience.

B. The following clause under (I) General Information and Instructions stands withdrawn:
Candidates who are shortlisted for CBT, shall receive their Admit Cards for appearing in the CBT by email. Mere issue of Admit Card to the candidates for selection stages will not imply that his/her candidature has been finally accepted by OIL.

IMPORTANT:

1. The candidates who have already applied earlier for the above post against **Advt. No. HRAQ/REC-EX-B/2024-06 dated 27/02/2024** and have submitted their SAP ABAP certificate need not apply again. However, candidates who have not submitted their SAP ABAP certificate need to re-apply within the stipulated timeline.
2. All other terms & conditions of the Detailed Advertisement no. **HRAQ/REC-EX-B/2024-06 dated 27/02/2024** remain unaltered.

VIVEK UNIVERSITY

CAMPUS
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VICE-CHANCELLOR : should possess proven academic and research credentials, leadership quality and administrative capabilities with highest Level of Competence, Integrity, Values and Institutional Commitment. Ideally aged between 55 to 60 years

REGISTRAR : needs to have a thorough knowledge and experience of functioning of various statutory and regulatory bodies dynamic personality with exceptional communication skills.

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"Anticipating the crescendo of care, SUM Ultimate Medicare unveils its forthcoming expansion - an exquisite wing adorned with 150 beds, four state-of-the-art Modular Operating Theaters, dedicated entirely towards robotic surgeries. This opulent extension heralds a new era, where the essence of medical

Openings for SENIOR CONSULTANTS / CONSULTANTS at SUM ULTIMATE MEDICARE

SUM ULTIMATE MEDICARE (A UNIT OF SIKSHA 'O' ANUSANDHAN), BHUBANESWAR

invites applications from experienced professionals in position of Senior Consultants / Consultants, in the following departments:

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5. Medical Oncology	6. General Surgery	7. Neurology	8. Orthopedics
9. Surgical Oncology	10. GI Surgery	11. Paediatrics	12. Urology
13. Nuclear Medicine	14. Cardiology	15. Neonatology	16. Nephrology
17. Critical Care Medicine	18. Emergency Medicine	19. Psychiatry	20. Pulmonology
21. Endocrinology	22. Obstetrics & Gynaecology	23. Rheumatology	24. Dermatology
25. Clinical Haematology	26. Cardiac Electrophysiology		

Qualification:-
• MD/MS/Mch/DM/DNB in the respective specialties

Experience:-
• At least 5-6 years post MD/MS/Mch/DM/DNB

Note: • Preference will be accorded to candidates native to Odisha, currently employed in other states and are seeking to establish themselves in the city of Bhubaneswar.
• Remuneration packages will be aligned with global standards, reflecting our commitment to attracting top-tier talent to SUM Ultimate Medicare.
• Interested candidates shall send their CV to ceo@soahospitals.com

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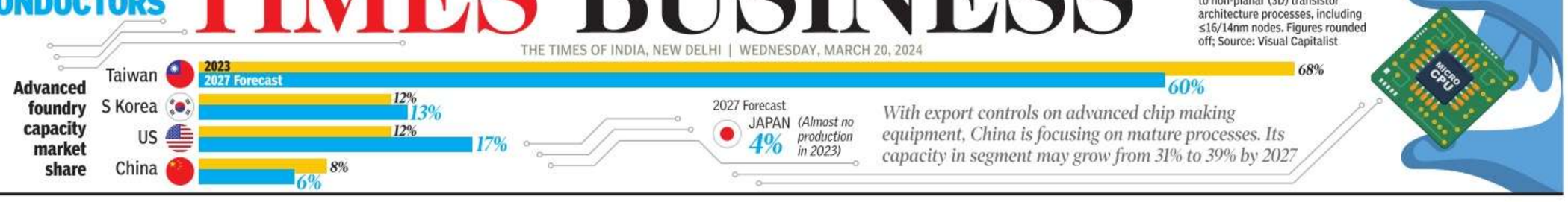
TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

US, JAPAN TO RAISE GAME IN ADVANCED SEMICONDUCTORS

With 68% market share in 2023, Taiwan will continue to lead in advanced semiconductor capacity for foreseeable future, according to TrendForce data. But its share may decline to 60% by 2027 as the US and Japan invest in domestic fabrication



Sensex slips again on global cues, down 2k pts from peak

Ends 736 Pts Lower At 72,012 A Day Before US Fed's Rate Call

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: A host of global and local factors — from Japan's first interest rate hike in 17 years to fears of overvaluation in some stock market segments — pulled the sensex down on Tuesday even though foreign and domestic funds were net buyers.

The sensex and Nifty opened the day's session in the red and lost ground through the session to close near their respective intraday lows. The sensex closed at 72,012 points, down 736 points or 1%, while Nifty was at 21,817 points, down 238 points or 1.1%.

Since its record high close of 74,119 points on March 7, the sensex has dived over 2,000 points. The 736-point loss on Tuesday was the worst since March 13, when the index sunk by over 900 points. Globally too, stocks saw small moves ahead of the highly anticipated US Federal Reserve decision that will help shape the outlook for interest rate cuts this year, Bloomberg reported.

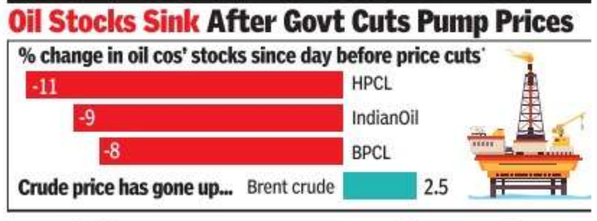
Tuesday's slide in the market came on the back of selling by domestic high networth investors, market players said. End-of-the-session data on BSE showed that while domestic funds were net buyers at Rs 7,449 crore, foreign investors too were net buyers at Rs 1,421 crore. The day's slide left investors poorer by Rs 5.2 lakh crore with BSE's market capitalisation now at Rs 380.6 lakh crore.

According to Vinod Nair of Geojit Financial Services, after Bank of Japan hiked interest rates, the mood in Asian markets turned bearish, which pulled the Indian market to continue with its recent southward movement.

"The correction has also been triggered by concerns over premium valuations and the delay of rate cuts by the US Fed due to hotter than expected inflation, which is evident from the upward trend in the dollar index." Additionally, the gradual increase in crude oil prices is also dampening market sentiment, Nair said.

The rising crude oil prices, along with the decision by oil marketing companies (OMCs) last week to cut prices of petrol and diesel just before the announcement of the dates for the Lok Sabha polls, is weighing heavily on these companies. On Thursday, OMCs cut prices of petrol and diesel by Rs 2 per litre. Incidentally, crude oil prices also started rising from around that time.

Oil Stocks Sink After Govt Cuts Pump Prices



TCS falls 4% as Tata Sons trims stake

Mumbai: TCS stock price fell 4% in Tuesday's weak market after promoter Tata Sons completed the sale of about 2.3 crore shares early in the session that would fetch it about Rs 9,362 crore. Tata Sons, a holding company for most of the Tata Group companies, could use the proceeds from the stake sale to reduce total debt on its books in an attempt to avoid having to list under RBI rules. TNN

Japan ends negative rate era with 1st hike in 17 yrs

The Bank of Japan raised interest rates for the first time since 2007 on Tuesday, pushing them above zero to close a chapter in its aggressive effort to stimulate an economy that has long struggled to grow. The BOJ effectively scrapped the world's last negative interest rate, ending the most aggressive monetary stimulus programme in modern history.

In 2016, the central bank took the unorthodox step of bringing borrowing costs below zero, a bid to kick-start borrowing and lending and spur the country's stagnating economy. Negative interest rates mean depositors pay to leave their money with a bank and borrowers can take out loans very cheaply, an incentive for them to spend.

But Japan's economy has begun to show signs of stronger growth: Inflation, after being low for years, has sped up, cemented by larger-than-usual increases in wages. Both are clues that the economy may be on a course for more sustained growth, allowing the central bank to tighten its interest rate policy years after other major central banks. Even after Tuesday's move, rates in Japan are far lower than those in other major developed economies. The Bank of Japan's target policy rate was raised to a range of zero to 0.1% from -0.1%. NYT NEWS SERVICE

Bank of India cuts home loan rates

Mumbai: Bank of India has slashed interest rates for home loans to 8.3% from 8.45% earlier as part of a festival scheme. Union Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra offer home loans at 8.35%, while SBI has rates starting at 8.4%. TN N

Govt seeks to curb liquor cos' surrogate ads

Wants Brand Extension And Alcobev Sales Data

Dipak.Dash @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: After identifying several instances of liquor brands violating regulations of surrogate advertising, Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has asked companies to ensure that there is no violation of the norms and sought a list of products sold under the same brand as alcohol beverages (known as brand extensions) in last three years.

It has also asked for revenue and turnover data related to sale of alcobev as well as on brand extension products (such as mineral water, playing cards, music CD) over last three years. Besides, CCPA wants expenses incurred in promoting brand extensions — including sponsorship of events, award ceremonies, music festivals, payments to celebrities and influencers and TV ads during the last three years.

The agency wants to ascertain the correlation between the actual sales of the brand extension product and the money spent on their promotion. "This assessment is critical for determining whether promoting of brand extension products authentically represents the extended product or functions as a surrogate for alcoholic beverages under the same brand," CCPA chief commissioner Rohit Kumar Singh said in the directive issued on Tuesday.

The missive to all alcobev companies and industry associations comes days ahead of launch of IPL when such advertisements are aired frequently and also pushed on social media. Liquor advertisements are banned and this has resulted in companies using surrogate ad campaigns to sell their products.

"The industry is advised to ensure that all brand extensions follow the broad principles of advertising only genuine extensions (that is, turnover and distribution in proportion to advertising spends), and ensure that advertisements contain no cues of restricted category such as tag lines and layouts and do not unduly suppress the category name and extension being advertised," the two-page direction said. It also said that surrogate advertising posed a threat to consumer rights.

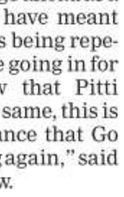
SEEKING DETAILS

- Central Consumer Protection Authority wants details of expenses on promoting brand extensions — sponsorship of events, award ceremonies, music festivals, payments to celebrities and TV ads — for last 3 years
- This assessment is critical to determine whether promoting extension products authentically represents extended products or functions as surrogate for alcoholic beverages under same brand, the agency says

EaseMyTrip's Pitti raises Go First bid by ₹150cr

Saurabh.Sinha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: EaseMyTrip founder **Nishant Pitti** has raised by another Rs 150 crore his joint bid for Go First (earlier Go-Air) along with SpiceJet chairman & MD Ajay Singh. The initial bid, with Pitti providing the funding and Singh operational know-how, is learnt to have been Rs 500-600 crore, say sources.



However, with the erstwhile Wadia group airline owing creditors, including banks, Rs 6,521 crore, the committee of creditors reportedly asked Pitti to relook the same. And now, the combined bid value is Rs 1,650-1,700 crore, say sources. The CoC will examine the bid this month-end.

"Of the Rs 1,700-crore bid, the cash outgo by Pitti is Rs 750 crore. The remaining part is incumbent upon several things like the outcome of the ongoing arbitration case in Singapore with Pratt & Whitney, if revived what kind of slots and flying rights Go First gets," say sources.

Go First, which stopped flying last May, had got two surprise bids after the first round to revive it under India's insolvency law drew a blank. This includes a joint bid by Singh's Busy Bee and Singh and the other by Sharjah-based Sky One. Thanks to these, NCLT had on Feb 13 extended the deadline by another 60 days to complete Go First's resolution process.

"Two bids are necessary for the process to go ahead as a single bid could have meant either the process being repeated or the airline going in for liquidation. Now that Pitti has improved the same, this is the brightest chance that Go First has of flying again," said people in the know.

EXECUTIVE DIGEST

Privacy focus key: Razorpay chief

Mumbai: Fintechs must emphasise on consumer safety and maintain ecosystem integrity while enabling innovation, said Harshil Mathur, co-founder & CEO at Razorpay. As fintech models evolve, having privacy as part of the design process is key, Mathur said at the Startup Mahakumbh event on Tuesday. TNN

FB co-founder's fund gets $750mn

Mumbai: B Capital, a global multi-stage investment firm led by Facebook (now Meta) co-founder Eduardo Saverin, has raised $750 million for its Opportunities Fund II. B Capital has backed Indian startups like Meesho, Byju's, PharmEasy and Khatabook. TNN

AV presentation for IPO-bound cos

Mumbai: Sebi wants IPO-bound companies to disclose details about their offer, including risks, capital structure, and material developments in an audiovisual presentation of not more than an eight-minute duration. The presentation should also have a disclaimer informing investors that they should not rely on "any other content on the internet". TNN

Sustainable NCDs: Grasim gets ₹1.2k cr

Mumbai: Grasim Industries on Tuesday said International Finance Corporation has subscribed to its first sustainability-linked non-convertible debentures worth Rs 1,250 crore. The NCDs will support the company's investment in paint manufacturing, and help accelerate its decarbonisation drive, the company said in a statement. AGENCIES

Inflation isn't down to 4% yet due to food prices: RBI

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: RBI is yet to achieve its target inflation rate of 4% despite bringing down core inflation driven by frequent food price hikes, the central bank's State of the Economy report said.

It said that inflation readings for Jan and Feb show that the easing of vegetable prices in the winter was short-lived. Meanwhile, meat and fish have registered a surge, and cereal prices have maintained their strong momentum.

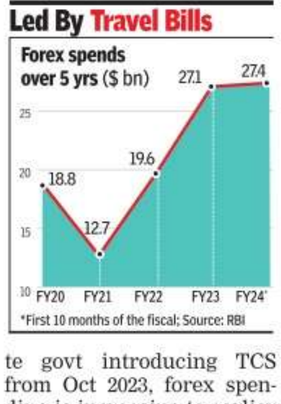
"Fuel prices remain in deflation, and this may get pronounced in March due to reduction in the price of LPG. Overall, headline inflation's momentum turned positive in Feb 2024, offsetting a favourable base effect. Accordingly, monetary policy has to remain in a risk-minimisation mode, guiding inflation towards the target while sustaining the momentum of growth," the report said.

According to the report, inflation is likely to be impacted by changes in per capita consumption patterns. "The share of food items in the monthly per capita consumption expenditure (MPCE) has declined from 52.9% to 47.5% in rural areas and from 42.6% to 39.7% in urban areas between 2011-12 and 2022-23, with cereals recording the most significant decline. Within food, however, there has been a rise in the share of high value food products such as fruits, milk and prepared meals.

"Since the shares of consumption form the weights for calculating CPI (the current CPI derives its weight from the 2011-12 HCES), these changes could impact the measurement of retail inflation," the report said.

"The global economy is losing steam, with growth slowing in some of the most resilient economies and high-frequency indicators pointing to further levelling in the period ahead. In India, real GDP growth was at a six-quarter high in Q3 2023-24, powered by strong momentum, robust indirect taxes, and lower subsidies," the report said.

Staying Stubborn



At $27.4bn, forex spends top FY23 level in Jan despite TCS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Foreign exchange remittances for the first 10 months of FY24 stood at $27.4 billion, crossing the FY23 level of $27.1 billion. This is despite the introduction of tax collection at source (TCS) in the Budget.

With average monthly remittances in FY24 touching $2.7 billion, the total foreign exchange sent abroad under the liberalised remittance scheme (LRS) is set to cross $30 billion during the current financial year, setting a new record.

Outward remittances rose during Jan 2024 to $2.6 billion from $2.4 billion in Dec, owing to a surge in spending on foreign education. Despite govt introducing TCS from Oct 2023, forex spending is increasing to earlier levels. For instance, the Jan forex spending by Indians was 3.5% lower than the $2.7 billion in Jan 2023, before the TCS imposition.

Within total forex remittances, spending on travel in Jan at $1.54 billion was unchanged compared to Dec 2023. The figure was, however, higher than $1.49 billion in the year-ago period. Dealers said the Jan travel was also linked to students travelling overseas for education.

Led By Travel Bills

Direct tax mop-up up 20% at ₹18.9L cr

New Delhi: Net direct tax collection grew nearly 20% to over Rs 18.9 lakh crore till March 17 on higher advance tax mop-up. The CBDT said the net direct tax collection includes personal income tax, including securities transaction tax, at Rs 9.7 lakh crore. AGENCIES

Brace for more 'insignificant' tax disputes

CBDT Expands Scope For Filing Of Appeals By I-T Officials

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Mumbai: The Central Board of Direct Taxes has expanded a list of exceptions for filing of appeals by I-T department with tax tribunals and courts, allowing appeals to be filed even for 'insignificant' sums, according to a recent circular. CBDT has, however, maintained the threshold limits for filing appeals.

The exceptions include matters related to bogus capital gains/loss from penny stocks and cases of accommodation entries, disputes concerning various aspects relating to TDS or TCS, tax assessments based on information from law enforcement and intelligence authorities, regarding tax treaty applicability and equalisation levy (dubbed as Google tax).

PENNY STOCKS TO TDS

Key new exceptions:

- Assessment based on info from law enforcement agencies
- Cases involving bogus capital gains/loss from penny stock trade
- Disputes over applicability of TDS/TCS liability, tax treaties

Tax experts view that a wait-and-watch approach is needed, but the broad list of exceptions could lead to increased litigation for individuals, Indian corporations, and overseas entities.

In August 2019, CBDT had revised the limits to Rs 50 lakh, Rs 1 crore and Rs 2 crore for filing of appeals by the I-T department with the Income-tax Appellate Tribunal, high courts, and the SC, respectively. Barring the now expanded list of exceptions, the I-T department can file appeals at higher judicial forums only if the 'tax effect' exceeds these thresholds.

In simple terms, 'tax effect', means the difference between the tax on the total income assessed by the I-T department and the tax levy without considering the disputed income. Govt officials, that **TOI** spoke with, contend that the existing thresholds are reasonable and that expanding the list of exceptions was necessary.

A taxpayer points out that there is a proliferation of WhatsApp groups that draw innocent investors into buying and selling stocks of certain companies — which may transpire to be penny stocks. The capital gains/loss made by them are genuine and they are not part of any organised tax evasion activity. However, now even for insignificant gains or losses, the I-T department can appeal and prolong the litigation. Matters related to statutes that no longer exist such as wealth tax, fringe benefit tax are included in the exception list, as is equalisation levy.

Gautam Nayak, tax partner at CNK & Associates points out that litigation has a cost for the taxpayer and the department. It also has a bearing on investor sentiment. "Litigation on insignificant sums could send the wrong signal. Perhaps, issue-based limits could have been set." Nayak noted that some exceptions carved out could impact India Inc and its international business partners.

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'Ghar Ghar Guarantee': Cong woos 5 sections with 25 vows

Targets Youth, Women, Workers, Farmers & Underprivileged

Subodh.Ghildiyal @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge exuded confidence that the country is fervently looking for a change and the governing BJP's campaign revolving around Modi's guarantees would meet the same fate as the India Shining of 2004, as Congress Working Committee on Tuesday approved the draft manifesto that spotlights party's 25 'Nyay' guarantees to five key demographies. The party is also planning a separate manifesto announcement about safeguarding the freedom of enforcement agencies and constitutional bodies which it claims have been captured by the governing BJP to target the opposition.

With the polls announced, Congress will run a month-long campaign to disseminate the "guarantees" announced during Rahul Gandhi's just-concluded Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra to the household level, which will involve distribution of "guarantee cards" to families and highlighting them through conventions. The CWC decision followed views among party leaders that promises to youth, women, workers, farmers and social justice vows like caste census and removal of 50% reservation cap carry credibility because Congress has fulfilled the "guarantees" announced in Karnataka and Telangana polls.

Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with senior leaders Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi during CWC meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday

AICC leaders KC Venugopal and Jairam Ramesh, briefing about the CWC deliberations, said, "This is 'nyay patra' to rid the country of 'anyay kaal'. The word 'guarantee' was first used by Rahul Gandhi in Karnataka elections and Modi is copying it now. But people are asking him about the guarantees he gave ten years ago. His guarantees are lies, nobody believes them. What we are promising is not an individual's guarantee like Modi's, but that of Congress party." In a jibe at BJP's slogan revolving around the PM, Ramesh remarked, "It's ghar ghar guarantee".

Sources said P Chidambaram, who heads the manifesto panel, briefed the CWC about the draft document under ten headers. Members felt the "guarantees" won the trust of people in Karnataka and Telangana, and the party should ensure that voters at the smallest rung are made aware of them. Among the attendees were Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, chief ministers Sukhwinder Sukhu and Revanth Reddy, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra and Ajay Maken.

In his remarks, Kharge said, "The country is fervently demanding a change. The guarantees currently being touted by the present government would have the same fate as that of the 'India Shining' slogan of 2004."

He said since 1926, Congress's manifesto has been regarded as "document of trust and commitment".

Among other promises, Congress is vowing effective implementation of Sachar panel's recommendations for welfare of Muslims and of the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 6th Schedule status to Ladakh, restoration of statehood for J&K. Sources said members from the North-East demanded in the CWC meeting that the party should promise extension of some special constitutional safeguards to parts of conflict-hit Manipur, and to Arunachal Pradesh.

In wake of 'shakti' controversy, Rahul wants precise Hindi translation of party manifesto

Call it the "shakti" controversy effect or past experiences, Rahul Gandhi is learnt to have specifically told the CWC meeting on Tuesday that the Hindi translation of party's manifesto promises including the 25 'nyay' vows should be precise and good. It was also warned that BJP would be looking to target the party's promises and would latch on to any openings, reports **Subodh Ghildiyal**. Sources said the caution from Rahul, which was seconded by Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, came after some members felt that certain words in the English to Hindi translation of "nyay" did not capture the essence of the promises, and should be replaced.

Ex-US, SL envoy Sandhu joins BJP, may be fielded from Amritsar

New Delhi: Former Indian diplomat, **Taranjit Singh Sandhu**, who just superannuated as ambassador of India to the US, joined BJP on Tuesday amid speculations of him contesting LS polls from Amritsar.

After joining BJP, Sandhu emphasised on improvement in India-US ties in past few years, particularly in advanced and critical technology like semiconductor industry, underlining the importance of diplomatic successes for country's development. He hoped for the progress to extend to Amritsar.

Sandhu, after joining the party in presence of national general secretaries Vinod Tawde and Tarun Chugh, expressed gratitude to PM Modi, Union home minister Amit Shah, and party president J P Nadda for providing him with the opportunity to start his political journey. "In past 10 years, I worked under PM Modi's leadership, especially in the relationship with US and Sri Lanka. PM is development-focused and that is much needed today. It should reach Amritsar too," Sandhu said

He served as India's ambassador to US from 2020 to 2024, and managed highs and lows in bilateral ties since Modi's state visit last June to rising Sikh extremism abroad in the backdrop of alleged murder plot against Sikh separatist Gurpatwant Singh Pannun. TNN

Raj Thackeray meets Shah, sparks Maha poll tie-up buzz

Clara.Lewis@timesgroup.com

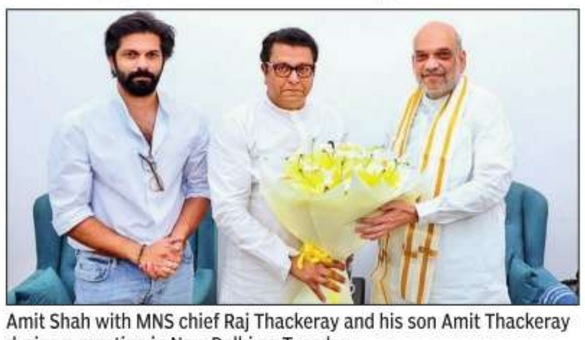
Mumbai: A day after MNS chief Raj Thackeray reached Delhi late on Monday, only saying he had been "called" to explain his sudden presence there, he posted pictures of a meeting with BJP politician Amit Shah on X on Tuesday.

His son, Amit, who was accompanying him, put up a Facebook post: "MNS chief Raj Thackeray met Union home minister Amit Shah in Delhi. I was a witness to this great meeting."

The meeting so close to the Lok Sabha poll triggered speculation of a possible tie-up. Observer Ravikiran Deshmukh said BJP would never have aligned with Raj Thackeray given his stand against north Indians in the state, but it was now becoming increasingly clear that the party was worried about the Marathi vote.

"Bala Nandgaonkar of the MNS contested the Lok Sabha election twice from Mumbai South and successfully split the Marathi votes. Thackeray may insist on two seats, Mumbai South and Kalyan," Deshmukh said. In Mumbai South, Marathi voters are concentrated in Sewri, Worli and Byculla. Deshmukh said the sympathy there lay with Uddhav Thackeray.

Ever since the alliance between BJP and the undivided Shiv Sena led by Uddhav Thackeray came apart in 2019, BJP has been openly wooing Raj Thackeray.


Amit Shah with MNS chief Raj Thackeray and his son Amit Thackeray during a meeting in New Delhi on Tuesday

Chirag uncle cries foul, quits Union Cabinet

Working as a minister in Narendra Modi govt for nearly 32 months, Union minister **Pashupati Kumar Paras** resigned on Tuesday from the Cabinet accusing BJP of meting out "injustice" to his RLJP. This came a day after the NDA's seat sharing deal in Bihar was announced in which RLJP was excluded. Making the announcement, Paras said, "I have served the NDA with great honesty and loyalty. Even today, I am thankful to the PM and he is a big leader. But with our party, and at an individual level with me, injustice has been done. So, I am resigning as a Cabinet minister."

'Absurd claims': India again rejects China's Arunachal arguments

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Govt slammed the Chinese defence ministry Tuesday for making absurd claims over Arunachal Pradesh, saying repeating baseless arguments will not lend such claims any validity.

Carrying forward the war of words over PM Narendra Modi's recent visit to the Indian state, the Chinese defence ministry had said Beijing has never acknowledged and will continue to oppose the "so-called Arunachal Pradesh illegally established by India".

"We have noted the comments made by the spokesperson of the Chinese defence ministry advancing absurd claims over the territory of the Indian state of Arunachal Pradesh. Repeating baseless arguments in this regard does not lend such claims any validity," said ministry of external affairs spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal, responding to the Chinese assertion.

"Arunachal Pradesh was, is and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India. Its people will continue to benefit from our development programmes and infrastructure projects," he added.

> **Arunachal was, is and will always be an integral and inalienable part of India**
> **RANDHIR JAISWAL**
> Foreign ministry spokesperson

The Chinese military had reiterated its claim over Arunachal, calling the area an "inherent part of China's territory", days after India rejected Beijing's objection to Modi's visit to the state.

On March 9, Modi inaugurated the Sela Tunnel built at an altitude of 13,000 feet in Arunachal that will provide all-weather connectivity to Tawang and is expected to ensure better movement of troops along the frontier region.

"The Indian side's actions contradict the efforts made by both sides to ease border situations and are not conducive to maintaining peace and tranquillity in the border areas," China said, referring to Modi's visit.

'CPM to leave 12 seats for Cong in Bengal'

▶ Continued from P 1

Sources said a tie-up is on the cards and in the informal discussions, CPM has agreed to leave 12 seats for Congress. Sources said discussions took place between Congress and Left over last week, and Congress poll body has finalised the seats that are likely to come into the party kitty.

It is a three-cornered contest for the Chandigarh seat as Chandigarh Congress president Harmohinder Singh Lucky is a contender for the seat along with former Union minister Pawan Kumar Bansal and Anandpur Sahib MP Manish Tewari.

HC to hear Cong plea against I-T case order today

New Delhi: Congress Tuesday approached Delhi high court challenging the tax reassessment proceedings initiated against the party by the income tax department.

A bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora directed the HC registry to list the matter for hearing on Wednesday.

Last week, the high court had upheld a March 8 order by the Income Tax Appellate Tribunal (ITAT), which dismissed Congress's application seeking a stay on I-T department's Feb 13 notice initiating the recovery of outstanding tax amount of more than Rs 105 crore. The court had, however, granted liberty to the party to approach ITAT afresh. TNN

SC sets norms for jail terms in murder cases, gives man 25 yrs

New Delhi: Addressing a recurring question — how many years of imprisonment should be awarded to a person convicted of gruesome murders if he/she was not to be given the death penalty — SC has come out with guidelines for quantification of the period of incarceration to prevent such convicts from getting released after 14 years in jail, reports **Dhananjay Mahapatra**.

Addressing the question of "how much is too much and how much is too little", a bench of Justices B R Gavai, K V Vishwanathan and Sandeep Mehta awarded 25 years in prison to Navas aka Mulanavas, lodged in Thrissur Central Jail in Kerala after being convicted for murdering four people, including three women in the age group of 11 years to 80 years, who comprised three generations of a family.

Justice Vishwanathan referred to a series of SC orders in the last three decades where convicts were awarded sentences of 20 years to imprisonment. The bench said this mechanism of fixed jail term was devised to prevent the accused from getting released on remission of sentence after completing the mandatory 14 years of imprisonment.

Providing a guide for computing appropriate jail term for such convicts, who escape death sentence as the case narrowly misses being categorised as rarest of rare, the bench said some relevant factors courts should bear in mind are number, age and gender of people murdered; nature of injuries and whether sexual assault occurred during the crime; motive behind the offence; whether the crime was committed while the accused was on bail in another case; was it preplanned; relationship between the offender and victims and abuse of trust; criminal antecedents of the convict; and whether the convict would be a menace to society on early release.

Illegal Rohingya have no right to settle in India: Govt in SC

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Union govt has told Supreme Court that illegal Rohingya Muslim migrants have no fundamental right to reside and settle in India and that the judiciary cannot enter legislative and policy domains of Parliament and executive to create a separate category for grant of refugee status to those illegally entering India.

Quoting many SC judgments, govt in an affidavit said a foreigner only enjoys right to life and liberty under Article 21 of the Constitution and does not have the right to reside and settle in the country, a right available only to Indian citizens. It said India does not recognise UNHCR refugee cards, which some Rohingya Muslims have secured to use it as the basis to claim refugee status.

A fence is constructed around a Rohingya refugee camp in Bangladesh in Dec 2019. Govt said the judiciary cannot enter legislative and policy domains of Parliament

It said India is already grappling with large-scale illegal migration from a neighbouring country (Bangladesh) which has altered the demographic profile of some border states (Assam and West Bengal). "Continuance of Rohingyas' illegal migration to India and their stay in India, apart from it being absolutely illegal, is fraught with serious security ramifications," it said.

It said there is credible input about a large number of Rohingyas indulging in activities of obtaining fake/fabricated Indian identity documents, human trafficking, subversive activities in different parts of the country, which poses threat to internal and national security.

Countering petitioner Priyali Sur's plea for release of detained Rohingya, govt said those entering illegally would be dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the Foreigners Act. It said India, not being a signatory to 1951 Refugee Convention and to the Protocol relating to Status of Refugees, would deal with Rohingyas as per its own domestic framework.

Isolated by kin, party since hubby's death, says Sita Soren

▶ Continued from P 1

Since the demise of my husband Durga Soren... we have been isolated by the party and family members, which has been extremely painful for me. I had hoped that the situation would improve with time but, unfortunately, it didn't happen," **Sita Soren** said, in what appeared to be a charge against jailed former CM Hemant Soren who stepped into the space opened up by his elder brother's untimely death.

The rift in the Soren family had surfaced after Sita had openly opposed any move to make Hemant's wife Kalpana the CM.

In her resignation letter addressed to JMM supremo Shibu Soren, Sita said, "The tireless efforts of Shibu Soren, who worked hard to keep us all together, unfortunately, also failed. I have become aware of a conspiracy being orchestrated against me and my family. I am left with no choice but to tender my resignation." She also accused JMM of deviating from the party's core values by accommodating people whose principles did not align with its ethos.

For BJP, Sita's induction appears to be part of a strategy to counter JMM's edge among Santhals who have a large presence in parts of Jharkhand. Although BJP's state president and former CM Babulal Marandi is a Santhal himself, the party seems keen to fortify itself further for a battle where Hemant is set to frame his current legal troubles as evidence of BJP's anti-tribal stance.

According to sources, BJP is in touch with at least two more prominent JMM figures who are said to be feeling left out in the political arrangement Hemant stitched together after he was jailed.

Intermittent fasting may raise risk of death due to heart attack, stroke: Study

DurgeshNandan.Jha @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Intermittent fasting, a fad among many in India and abroad, may help shed some extra kilos in short-term but a new study presented at American Heart Association's (AHA) event in Chicago recently claims the practice may actually be counterproductive and increase the risk of death due to heart attack and stroke in long run.

In this study, which is not peer-reviewed or published yet, researchers from Shanghai Jiao Tong University School of Medicine in Shanghai, China, analysed two 24-hour dietary recall questionnaires of approximately 20,000 adults in the US and correlated it with all-cause and cause-specific mortality among them after a median length of eight to maximum 17 years.

They found that those who followed an 8-hour time-restricted eating schedule, a type of intermittent fasting, had a 91% higher risk of death from cardiovascular disease.

The study's limitations included its reliance on self-reported dietary information, which may be affected by participant's memory or recall and may not accurately assess typical eating patterns.

Dr Ashok Seth, chairman, Fortis Escorts Heart Institute said, several studies are available on the short-term impact of intermittent fasting on a person's health, but the one presented at AHA conference is among the first few to assess its long-term impact.

Ambedkar kin to back Cong in any 7 Maha LS seats

Mumbai: Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi chief and BR Ambedkar's grandson Prakash Ambedkar on Tuesday offered the support of his party to Congress candidates in any seven Lok Sabha seats in a letter addressed to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, reports **Priyanka Kakodkar**.

The offer came even as it became apparent that its chances of becoming a part of MVA were unravelling. MVA had offered Ambedkar four seats but he insisted on 12.

CAA petitioners have no locus, won't lose citizenship: SG to SC

Dhananjay.Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Tuesday's hearing in Supreme Court of pleas seeking a stay of the recently notified Citizenship (Amendment) Act Rules saw fiery exchanges between the two sides.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for the petitioners, sought a stay on grant of citizenship while the court heard the matter. "Otherwise, it is very difficult to reverse citizenship granted to a person. Therefore, the process should not start. If they (govt) waited for this long, why can't they wait till July when the petitions can be heard fully and finally? Otherwise, make it subject to the decision of the court," Sibal said. But the court did not incorporate the requested line in its order issuing notice.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta questioned the locus of the petitioners, and said none of them was going to either lose citizenship or be affected by implementation of CAA, which is meant to grant citizenship to Hindus, Sikhs, Jains, Buddhists, Parsis and Christians from the three neighbouring Islamic countries who have entered India before Dec 31, 2014.

If there was a host of senior counsel for those opposing CAA, the SG got support from senior advocates Mukul Rohatgi, Ranjit Kumar and Mahesh Jethmalani. Kumar said he was appearing for a Hindu from Balochistan, who had entered India before Dec 2014. "What harm will it cause to anyone's rights if he is granted citizenship," he asked. Jethmalani said he would file a response on behalf of a Hindu organisation from a neighbouring country.

Indira Jaising appeared to articulate the petitioners' real fear when she raised her voice and said, "If these people are granted citizenship under CAA, they will get voting rights."

CJI D Y Chandrachud asked the SG whether the govt was taking steps to grant citizenship to members of persecuted communities from neighbouring countries. Mehta said there would be a three-tier scrutiny of applications, followed by an evaluation by the govt. "I cannot give a timeline as to how long it will take to grant citizenship under CAA," he said, requesting the court not to grant any stay on the process.

Silchar, Aizawl, Damoh among least polluted

Vishwa.Mohan @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: While many Indian cities figured among the worst polluted in IQAir's 2023 World Air Quality report, some made the list for the right reasons. Silchar in Assam (7th), Aizawl in Mizoram (8th) and Damoh in MP (15th) figured in the list of least polluted cities in central and south Asia region, home to many polluted cities in the world.

In 2023, only 10 out of the reporting 134 countries succeeded in achieving the WHO annual particulate matter PM2.5 standards of 5 micrograms per cubic metre (µg/m3). Exposure to PM2.5, one of the key pollutants, leads to and exacerbates numerous health conditions, including asthma, cancer, stroke and lung disease.

Exposure to PM2.5, one of the key pollutants, leads to numerous health conditions

The report, factoring in hazardous PM2.5 concentrations, found that Delhi's PM2.5 concentration in 2023 had risen by 10% from 2022 with levels peaking in Nov, which saw a monthly average of 255 µg/m3.

The report analysed data from all air pollution monitoring stations in India and underlined that 1.3 billion people in India experience PM2.5 concentrations exceeding the WHO recommended annual guideline level of 5 µg/m3. Overall, India with PM2.5 concentrations of 54.5 µg/m3 reported 10 times higher pollution levels the WHO PM2.5 annual standard.

"Furthermore, 1.3 billion, or 96% of the population, experience PM2.5 levels more than seven times the WHO annual PM2.5 guideline. This trend is reflected in city-level data with more than 66% of the country's cities reporting annual averages greater than 35 µg/m3," said the report.

It noted that India has an extensive air quality monitoring network, hosting more air quality monitoring stations than all other countries in central and south Asian region combined. The vast network has contributed data from 256 cities in 2023, representing 74% of cities in the central and south Asia region.

For the 2023 report, data from more than 30,000 air quality monitoring stations across 7,812 locations in 134 countries, territories and regions were analysed.

"In many parts of the world, lack of air quality data delays decisive action and perpetuates unnecessary suffering. Air quality data saves lives. Where air quality is reported, action is taken, and air quality improves," said Frank Hammes, global CEO, IQAir.

BJP nets TN ally, gives PMK 10 of 39 seats

▶ Continued from P 1

Those who set out to eradicate Shakti (manifestation of the female divine) will get destroyed. Their end will begin on April 19 (polling day in TN), said PM Modi.

He proceeded to highlight everything that he said was fundamentally wrong with the two parties' alliance in TN.

"DMK-Congress means big corruption, DMK-Congress means one-family rule," he said. "Congress being routed at the Centre allowed India to progress to 5G technology. But in Tamil Nadu, DMK is running its own 5G scheme, which is basically one family maintaining its grip on the state for the fifth generation."

'Lost his life for party': Modi breaks down as he recalls TN BJP leader's 2013 hacking

PM Modi took a pause during his speech and turned emotional as he spoke about 'Auditor' Ramesh, a BJP leader from Salem who was hacked to death in 2013. During his address in Salem, Modi began speaking about his friends and BJP leaders from Salem. "When I went to Kailash 40-50 years ago, I met a person from Salem named Rathnavel. He was running a hotel then. He is no more," Modi recalled. He also spoke about late K N Lakshmanan, a former BJP MLA who hailed from Salem. "He worked hard for BJP's growth in early days in TN."

He then mentioned Ramesh, an auditor by profession, who rose up the ranks in BJP and became party state general secretary. "He lost his life for the party. He was murdered by anti-socials. I pay my heartfelt tributes to him," Modi said as his voice choked. An emotional Modi paused his speech for several seconds. TNN

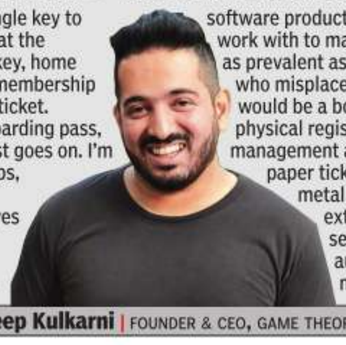
The PM said this was the same '5G family' that once 'sullied India's name' with 2G scam. "If I had to list DMK's misdeeds, it would require an entire day. Our BJP-led govt at the Centre has been sending crores for TN's development, only to see all of it looted by the DMK regime," he said.

Modi's Salem visit saw him share the dais with NDA ally and PMK founder S Ramadoss, his son and party president Anbumani Ramadoss, former AIADMK coordinator O Panneerselvam, AMMK founder T T V Dhinakaran, and Tamil Maanila Congress chief G K Vasan. PMK will contest 10 of 39 Lok Sabha seats in TN as part of a deal finalised on the sidelines of the rally.

Besides Jayalalithaa, he invoked the names of Congress stalwart K Kamaraj and Tamil Maanila Congress founder G K Moopanar. "Moopanar could have become Prime Minister, but Congress's family rule prevented him from reaching the pedestal," Modi said.

TECH I'D LIKE TO SEE

SMARTPHONE - THE UNIVERSAL KEY



Imagine your phone being a single key to every lock and gate. Just look at the number of keys you carry – car key, home key, office cards, fast tag, gym membership card, metro card, parking entry ticket. Occasionally you also carry a boarding pass, movie ticket, event ticket, the list goes on. I'm not speaking about different apps, those are happening to some degree, but a single app that gives you access to every access control point. It requires one company to build a hardware + software product that every company can work with to make access possible and be as prevalent as UPI. For someone like me who misplaces keys all the time, this would be a boon. This eliminates physical registers and guest management at tech parks and societies, paper tickets, plastic cards, and metal keys. This can then be extended to adding layers of security with applications authenticating me to pick up my child from school.

Sudeep Kulkarni | FOUNDER & CEO, GAME THEORY

LIVE ON FACEBOOK ON WEDNESDAY
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Tushar Haralkar
PRINCIPAL PRE-SALES ENGG COUNTRY LEADER, SECURITY SOFTWARE, IBM INDIA

Almost Artificial — Sunil Agarwal & Ian Baker

About this time's promises, it's Regenerating."

Why Devin's such a big buzz among software developers

It can handle the entire software devt lifecycle. Some call it world's first AI software engineer

Akhil.George@timesgroup.com

In October last year, over half a dozen researchers published a joint computer science research paper titled `SWE-bench: Can Language Models Resolve Real-World GitHub Issues?' The paper outlined that large language models, like GPT-4 by OpenAI and Claude by Anthropic, were getting difficult to evaluate, and so a new benchmark was needed to discover the abilities and limitations of these increasingly vital AI models.

Within no time, the new benchmark they created, SWE-bench, became the gold standard to test an LLM's ability to resolve real-world software programming issues – like the ones posted on GitHub by programmers worldwide. After testing, it was discovered that GPT-4 had a success rate of only 1.8%, while Claude-2 was the most effective at 4.8%.

But now we have Devin. Created by a company called Cognition and announced just a few days ago, this autonomous AI software agent has solved a whopping 13.86% of all coding challenges it was given. And it did this without being told which files were important for any given task. Claude-2 was able to achieve 4.8% only after being given additional information.

PROGRAMMERS SHOULD ADAPT TO THE FUTURE

"Devin goes beyond just understanding requirements and context; it can also write code using the same tools as a software engineer, troubleshoot errors, and deploy code. This makes its usage more similar to developing software in autopilot mode, where the engineer can intervene when necessary.
Heena Kothari | SENIOR DIRECTOR, ENGINEERING AND PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT, EXOTEL

Cognition's Devin has yet to be released to the public, so it is hard to ascertain what its impact will be. The demos show a remarkable ability to retain context while solving complex problems, which is one of the primary limiting factors with large language models. While it's far away from replacing software engineers, it shows promise to substantially increase the productivity of a software engineer.
Abhimanyu Saxena | CO-FOUNDER, SCALER & INTERVIEWBIT

While Devin is highly effective in automating many aspects of software development, it's essential to note that it still requires human oversight and review, especially in critical areas like productionised code. Instead of worrying about the future, programmers should focus on adapting to the future by continuously learning and growing their skills.
Nithya Vasudevan | ASSOCIATE MANAGER, SENIOR DATA SCIENTIST, TREDENCE

Devin is enabling programmers to concentrate effectively on intricate challenges and more ambitious goals by increasing their productivity and efficiency. Programmers might welcome this tool as a chance for professional development and adaptation rather than seeing it as a threat in the near future.
Saloni Jain | CORE TEAM, PLUS91LABS

All cognitive jobs will get impacted with GenAI, including software engineering. However, most times, it will be a human using an AI tool like Devin which might replace another human software engineer who continues to go solo. Software pros should experiment with working with Devin and others as copilots and become 10X engineers. The others will lose out.
Jaspreet Bindra | MANAGING DIRECTOR & FOUNDER, THE TECH WHISPERER

Devin can handle entire developmental projects end-to-end, meaning it's capable of planning and carrying out difficult engineering jobs. It can also cooperate with other users in a manner similar to that of real developers. It can collaborate with a person in real time to meet their needs, report on its progress in real time, and accept feedback.
Priyanka Sharma | DIRECTOR, SOFTWARE ENGINEERING, FUJITSU RESEARCH INDIA

This is a giant leap in capability that no one was expecting, and goes to show how rapidly AI systems are evolving.

Jaspreet Bindra, MD & founder of The Tech Whisperer, says software programming was getting impacted with generative AI tools like GitHub Copilot, but Cognition's Devin has taken this to another level. "It has seemingly groundbreaking capabilities in transforming software development. It can handle some development projects independently, from writing code to fixing bugs and executing tasks, therefore mimicking a full-fledged AI worker rather than just a coding assistant."

Its reported effectiveness in software engineering, Jaspreet says, is notable because it can rapidly learn and utilise new technologies, build applications from scratch, identify and rectify bugs, contribute to production repositories, and autonomously train AI models. "This ability to handle complexity is creating a nervous and excited buzz amongst the fraternity," he says.

Devin also works tirelessly 24x7 without fatigue, says Thadikamala Shyla Kumar, head of data engineering & artificial intelligence at Cyient. "Unlike human software engineers who face limitations in memory, expertise variation, and productivity."

While the nervousness over job losses is understandable, Hariom Seth, founder of Tagglabs, says those who are eager to optimise their workflow and produce high-quality software will instead find Devin to be an invaluable tool. "One of its key features is that it has advanced natural language processing capabilities, due to which developers can communicate with the system directly using English, which lowers the learning curve."

The big picture

Heena Kothari, senior director of engineering and product development at Exotel, says Devin represents a big shift in how software is made, and that software development isn't just about writing code or testing it anymore. "While coding is important, there's a lot more to it, like planning how the software will work, making sure it fits with other software, and understanding how it's used in different ways."

For large enterprise software, Heena says, coding only comprises 40% of the whole software development process. "The rest involves designing the software, making it work with other software, and understanding how people will use it. That's why Devin could be really helpful for simpler or medium-complexity software projects. It could let engineers focus on solving bigger problems instead of spending too much time on routine tasks."

Abhimanyu Saxena, co-founder of Scaler & InterviewBit, says software engineers need to see these tools as enablers and quickly build expertise in using them efficiently rather than seeing them as competitors. "It is most likely to be a developer companion and may also enable a lot of non-technical people to easily build applications."

Visteon CEO says EVs will become power suppliers

Sachin Lawande, CEO & President, Visteon, looks at the Industry 4.0 manufacturing capabilities at Visteon's Chennai facility, which has a cumulative annual production capacity of 1.5 million display units. The plant caters to all major global and domestic OEMs. Also seen are Joao Paulo Ribeiro, Sr VP - global supply chain, procurement & operations, Kim Francis, VP - global sales, Kristin Trecker, global CHRO, and Prabhu Swaminathan, plant director.

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Electric vehicles are already far cheaper to run than vehicles with internal combustion engines. Now, imagine your electric car making enough electricity to pretty much pay for even that running cost!

Gearheads in autoville are working on the next generation of EV tech, where batteries can supply power to the electricity grid when the vehicle is not in use, and earn money from the grid operator.

Sachin Lawande, global president & CEO of the $3-billion US automotive components supplier Visteon, says the company intends to be a part of the energy storage market in India with such technology. "Auto OEMs will be in that business as well. Their fleets will discharge extra energy into the grid whenever they are idling. So, the sector will be about mobility of not just people but also energy," he tells us on a visit to Chennai, where the company has a state-of-art plant.

The expectation is that grid operators will incentivise those who allow their batteries to provide this service because it will help the operators deal better with demand fluctuations during the day.

Energy storage of the future, Lawande says, will also play with newer chemistries in their batteries. "Besides lithium ion, lithium ferrous and sodium phosphate are among many other cathodes that are being experimented with," says Lawande. Stationary applications for batteries like energy storage, he says, will move to sodium phosphate. "It's a chemistry that's already generating a strong buzz in India," he says.

The country, Lawande believes, will leapfrog in electric cars (moving to the next generation of tech faster than many parts of the world), like it did with mobile phones. "First gen EVs used silicon tech such as the Insulated Gate Bipolar Transistor (IGBT). This allowed batteries to deliver a maximum of 400 volts. But in next-gen EVs, the use of silicon carbide means we can have batteries that deliver up to 1200 volts, which makes the vehicle more efficient and have longer range," he says.

Silicon carbide also enables the integration of battery management systems, DC-DC converter and junction box into one unit, thereby reducing weight and lowering cost. India, Lawande says, does not have the 400-volt architecture legacy, and therefore will jump straight to silicon carbide. "Globally, Porsche and Hyundai have launched 800 volts vehicles. Mahindra is looking at it closely," he says.

Visteon is also focusing on cockpit electronics, both in R&D and sales. The company is planning to invest around $20 million to localise backlight manufacturing in India. Backlights illuminate the display panel so that information becomes visible to the driver and passengers. "India is our first market where we're investing in vertical integration of display manufacturing. Our plan is to make more display content in India," Lawande says.

That ties in with the R&D work currently happening in India. These are in areas like LOCA (liquid optically-clear adhesive) bonded large displays, which help to reduce reflections and enhance the readability of display screens, and Android and Linux based standalone in-vehicle infotainment systems. The cockpit domain controllers with integrated telematics are also designed and developed in India. The controller seamlessly integrates key automotive cockpit system functions, including digital instrument clusters (providing essential vehicle information to the driver), Android-based Infotainment like multi media playback, navigation, and voice smart assistants.

Visteon's development centres in Chennai, Pune, Goa, Coimbatore and Thiruvananthapuram also collaborate with the company's global technology centres to develop software for global markets and support development of technologies in cybersecurity, Android-based infotainment, AUTOSAR, driver awareness systems, and autonomous vehicle solutions.

Once India's EV pool deepens, the country's role in Visteon's R&D is expected to also deepen beyond cockpit electronics. "India is on everyone's radar," says Lawande.

AUTOMOTIVE TRENDS

"India is on everyone's radar, but it is still less than 5% of the global auto mkt, so it will matter more in the future. Our investments in India are focused on future potential.
Sachin Lawande | CEO & PRESIDENT, VISTEON

How Pawan Patel overcame albinism

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Pawan Patel has a rare condition called albinism, where the body produces little or no melanin, the pigment that colours skin, hair, and eyes. It affects vision. So, the Morgan Stanley techie needs a bigger font, a darker computer screen, and a dark room to be able to work.

Pawan realised he had a vision problem when he was in Std 11. That was when his school asked him to go to Delhi to have it checked up. Until then, this boy from a village in Madhya Pradesh did not know he had trouble with his eyes because of albinism.

The IIT effort

Despite his challenges, Pawan was determined to try for admission to an IIT. Dakshina Foundation, a non-profit focusing on poverty alleviation through education, was offering IIT-JEE coaching to the underprivileged. Pawan joined the programme in his final years in school. He practised the test papers extensively.

On the day of the exam, he asked the invigilator to read out questions whenever he faced difficulties.

Pawan's preparations paid off, and he was selected to the BT-MT dual degree programme in computer science at IIT Kanpur.

In college, he says, people were considerate. A professor and a few other classmates too had disabilities. Pawan recalls how he had to seek special printouts from professors to study. He was also allowed to bring his own laptop and view slides on it while the rest of the class viewed presentations on a bigger projector. In one case, his professor helped with notes an hour before the lecture so that Pawan could be prepared for practical applications of those lessons in class.

INSPIRATION

"Things are getting better for those with disabilities. More and more people are becoming aware, so in the future, those who are disabled will feel comfortable in pursuing a career in tech.
Pawan Patel | SECURITIES REFERENCE DATA TECH, MORGAN STANLEY INDIA

But there were some painful encounters too. "Not everyone understood my problem. Some people would get irritated when I asked for notes to be printed with a bigger font. I had to finally get books from the library and ask the photocopy person to print the contents of one page in two," Pawan recalls.

Tackling placement

When he was finishing his course, there came the hurdle of cracking placements. Some of the computer screens on which he had to take the placement tests did not allow him to make any changes in settings. So he couldn't make it more readable, he had to manage with the regular screen.

"In such cases, I requested help from volunteers to read the text for me, especially the subscripts and superscripts. Later, during the interview round, I faced an issue with the lighting conditions in the room, as my eyes are very sensitive to bright light. I discussed this challenge with the interviewers, and they assisted with quick adjustments such as closing the door to reduce the light and allowing me to sit with my back to the window," Pawan recalls.

He was recruited by HSBC. Two years later, in 2021, he moved to Morgan Stanley.

Make colleagues aware

At work, Pawan uses the dark theme option on his laptop. He either sits in a dark spot, or uses a curtain if he's near a window.

Advancements in cursor settings have made things easier. He changes the colour of the cursor to white so that he can spot it on the dark screen, and increases the size of the cursor. If an application doesn't have the zoom facility, he uses Windows Magnifier.

When he spoke to his manager about his problems, the manager sensitised the team. This is also his advice to those with disabilities: "People around you must be made to understand the problem. And give them the solution. In most cases, people will help you. Issues occur due to lack of knowledge."

DISCOVERING NEW WAYS TO LEAD & LEARN

➤ Over 500 women gathered recently for Target Elevate, the annual event organised by US retailer Target's global capability centre (GCC) in India. The event is a platform for women in technology to discover new ways to lead, learn and network in a world that demands new skills, new ways of thinking, and new leadership styles.

➤ **Nity Singh, senior director for global security at Concentrix Corp**, was among 25 inspirational women who presented their stories. Nity traced her serendipitous journey in cybersecurity, a segment where, till today, there are less than 20% women worldwide. She spoke of how, at a time when there were no formal courses in cybersecurity, she invested in continuous self-learning to equip herself with the skills and knowledge required to grow in her role. She highlighted the value of community for women to come together to share their experiences and support each other. **"Do what comes to your heart and be very good at it,"** she said.

➤ **Nidhi Pant, co-founder of S4S (Science for Society) Technologies**, shared her journey of transforming lives and livelihoods of women farmers and of designing and adapting equipment exclusively for women. S4S helps women farmers across 14 villages convert potential food waste into wealth using solar-powered energy, thereby helping them become economically independent. **"We don't need to prove our solution, we need to be married to the problem,"** she said of her entrepreneurial journey.

Andrea Zimmerman, SVP & president of Target in India, with Roopa Acharya, VP of engineering

Participants at Target Elevate

➤ **Teena Paul, co-founder of Giftolexia Solutions**, said she drew inspiration from her own experience of her son who was diagnosed with dysgraphia, to start her venture. Giftolexia is a deep tech-enabled early-screening tool to identify learning disabilities in children and help them realise their true potential. With no background in technology, Teena highlighted the importance of **bringing together the right kind of skill sets and experience to build a startup.**

GLOSSARY OF IN-GROUP TERMS USED ON THIS PAGE

LOCA

Liquid optically-clear adhesive (LOCA) is a type of adhesive commonly used in the electronics industry, especially for bonding the touch screen display panels of devices like smartphones, tablets, and televisions. LOCA is chosen for these applications because it has excellent optical properties, meaning it allows light to pass through without much distortion or loss of clarity. This is crucial for devices that rely on clear and bright displays. LOCA adhesives are designed to be used in very thin layers between the glass or plastic cover and the display elements themselves, helping to improve the screen's response to touch, reduce the number of layers light has to pass through (thus increasing brightness and reducing power consumption), and enhance durability by making the display more shock-resistant.

IGBT

An Insulated Gate Bipolar Transistor (IGBT) is a semiconductor device that combines the characteristics of both a bipolar junction transistor (BJT) and a metal-oxide-semiconductor field-effect transistor (Mosfet) to offer high efficiency and fast switching. It's widely used in power electronics for applications that require high voltage and current, such as electric vehicle drives, power inverters, and high-power industrial systems. The structure of an IGBT includes a gate, collector, and emitter. The gate terminal controls the device, similar to the gate in a Mosfet, which allows for high input impedance and easy control. However, unlike a Mosfet, the IGBT conducts current using both electrons and holes (positive charge carriers), providing it with the high current capability of a BJT.

CONTRAPUNTO

You will not be punished for your anger, you will be punished by your anger

–BUDDHA

Vlad The Therapist

Putin, elected again by huge margin, gave Russia cultural therapy. But is the patient better?

Vladimir Putin won a fifth term as Russia's president with an eye-popping 87% vote share. It was met with scepticism from many in the West. But there's little doubt Putin is popular in Russia. Only Stalin who has been in power longer, which pushed many to search for an ideological peg to hang their analysis.

Putinism | The key to understanding Putin's approach is the backdrop. Following the Soviet collapse, Russia was left adrift in 1990s. Enter Putin, with a heavy emphasis on statism to both provide stability and solve problems.

Digging into the past | Putinism is based on cherry picking cultural memories. It anchors itself in nostalgia based on czarist and Soviet themes. The celebration of the WWII victory is perhaps even more pronounced than the Soviet era. Putin succinctly encapsulated his ideology in 2012 when he wrote: "Our country – where for many people the civil war still isn't over and the past is extremely politicised – needs some careful cultural therapy."

Anxiety around | One nation's cultural therapy could well be a neighbour's nightmare. There's no better example of it than Sweden and Finland joining Nato, something they avoided during the Cold War.

Economic challenges | Russia was the early winner in the economic war unleashed by the West in 2022, after its invasion of Ukraine. It hurt Western economies while Russia didn't crumble thanks to its oil reserves. According to IEA, it remains the world's biggest net exporter even if its revenue from it fell in 2023 on account of G7 price caps and discounts. But two years on, the story is different.

In a mire | Russia's inflation rate in February was 7.7%. Both the euro area and US have done better in bringing their economies under control. Inflation rate in the euro area was 2.6%, while it was 3.2% in US.

Hole in Putinism | False pride propping up ideology has left it with no answers about the future. A chip on the shoulder means Russia's really geared to be a wartime economy where Putin is reportedly transferring firms of erstwhile oligarchs to a new set of favourites. Moreover, Russia faces typical Western problems without an economy that has the same level of sophistication. Fertility rates have dropped and Putin's exhorting Russians to have more children. That's as futile as cherry picking the past. Russia could have been so much more.

Hand In Guv

One governor quitting to fight polls isn't the issue. But it does frame the question about nature of governorships

Telangana governor and LG Puducherry Tamilsai Soundarajan has resigned – to contest in Lok Sabha elections from Tamil Nadu. Buzz is she'll contest from South Chennai, and that BJP's state unit sought her return.

Active netas | Governorship is no longer only a luxury retirement posting for party veterans and favourite officers. Tamilsai's not the first active neta to have become a governor, but she's certainly a rare one in jumping back into the heat 'n dust of poll battle. The long forgotten Sarkaria Commission from 40 years ago, which reviewed Centre-state relations, had suggested minimum requirements to be governor. One of these was the person should not be an active politician.

Centre's person | Since governorship has invariably been bagged by political loyalists for decades, governors could rarely be accused of impartiality or neutrality in their approach to crises in state legislatures. Laws governing governors say they serve at the President's pleasure. In practice, they've always served at the governing party's convenience. Some have sought the post be abolished. Calls for reform in how governors are appointed get little hearing in politics. State govts are seldom consulted before appointing governors – that's another Sarkaria Commission idea that's been ignored.

Court speak | Many states, with opposition parties governing, have had run-ins with governors. Governors are accused of stalling passage of bills, among other things. SC has been clear governors' actions cannot undermine democratic tenets. On Uddhav-led govt's fall in Maharashtra, SC said, "Governor cannot enter into any area by which his action would precipitate the fall of a government."

Tamilsai's return to active politics by itself is not the issue – nothing bars her. But it does frame the question about the nature of governorships.

Learning to bond

A shady organisation might take a tip from politics to create a new business model for itself

Jug Suraiya

Don Senior and Don Junior mulling over business matters.

Don Senior: I'm tired of the bad press we've always got, about how we're anti-social elements. It's not fair.

Don Junior: It *isn't* fair. Far from being an anti-social element I'm a *very* social element. You name a social platform, I'm on it: Facebook, LinkedIn, X. I don't see how *anyone* could be more of a social element than me – not excluding the clan Kardashian.

DS: Stop having a Junior moment. When people call us anti-social elements they mean we're racketeers.

DJ: Racketeers? You mean like Sania and Saina? But I've never played tennis or badminton in my life, and neither have you, so how come they say we use rackets?

DS: Not *those* rackets. The *other* kind of rackets. Like the protection racket we operate.

DJ: You mean our extraction business?

DS: Not *extraction*. Dentists are in the extraction business when they extract teeth. We are in the *extortion* business by which we extort money from people by offering to give them protection, which is an illegit business. So we have to find a way to make it legit. By taking a tip from people who are *also* in the protection business and are called politicians.

secondopinion

DJ: What do politicians protect people from?

DS: From all manner of things, like poverty and unemployment, but mainly from something called opposition.

DJ: Wow. That's a lot of protection to offer. Must cost a lot too.

DS: It does. Especially because before such protection can be given, something called elections have to be contested, which can be a very expensive exercise. That's why politicians get donations by way of bonds, which are legit.

DJ: Can't we also get these bond thingummies and become legit?

DS: That's just what I plan to do.

DJ: Oh, goody! Then we won't be called anti-social elements any more. We'll just be bonded labour…

2024: Vote What You 'Believe' In

Analysts complain how much Indian politics revolves around social relations rather than ideologies. But this time, from Hindi belt to the south, for BJP and for INDIA, it may be different

Anastasia Piliavsky

This year's elections will not be a battle of political parties. These will be a battle of political principles. At the same time, the 18th Lok Sabha will hold few surprises. With BJP facing no national opposition to speak of, we can safely predict that NDA will retain, and most likely expand, its parliamentary supermajority.

Psephologists twiddle their thumbs | The alliance is expected to occupy between 358 and 398 seats out of a total 543 in the House of the People (it now holds 351). In which case, it will have a 66-73% majority, up from the current 65%. These are conservative estimates. With the gains made by BJP in last year's assembly elections, when it wrested Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh away from Congress, the one possible surprise may be the margin of victory.

● To underline, the interest of these elections will lie less in who wins – psephologists have already gone off to nap – and more in the political logics that we will see in action. Unfolding before us will be a struggle between the politics of relations and the politics of ideology.

Modi 'image' becomes a civilisational platform | Analysts of Indian politics have long observed (and complained) that a lot of Indian politics revolves around social relations rather than ideologies; that patronage is rife and political messaging targets particular groups – castes, super-castes, classes, 'vote banks' – not general principles.

● Parties resemble guru cults instead of platform-bound collectives. And elections are popularity contests, in which people vote for colourful personalities, not universal ideals or national policies. BJP is no doubt the world's biggest personality cult focused on 'Modi magic'. But the party is not only about that.

● While working his magic – from holograms to mountain caves – Modi has also laboured hard to construct a mega ideology, a civilisational platform with messages for both India and the world.

Bharat brand grows…Californian | A future-facing, space-bound India, which is also in touch with its ancient roots, is now a big brand, at least inside India.

● While foreigners are still trying to work out how to pronounce 'Bharat', India's streets buzz with patriotic pride in its globally visible achievements – from the moon landing to South Asia's first G20 summit and the economy snatching Britain's fifth place.

● There is also the world's largest new meditation centre in Varanasi, a Guinness World Record yoga session that had almost 1.5L people bending over in unison in Gujarat, and another Guinness World Record with more than 2 million diyas lit in Ayodhya.

● This new Bharat is Hindu, but increasingly in the Californian sense of yoga-vegetarianism-meditation.

Old-fashioned Hindutva is slowly scaling down | In a survey conducted recently across Indian cities, 51% supported the new Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, while 49% thought it an electoral ruse. For the first time last year, this correspondent heard working-class Hindus in northern India describe Ayodhya temple as a distraction from what they want and what India needs.

Ideology: Advantage BJP in UP | As BJP sweeps away regional parties across the north, the politics of ideology will become increasingly important.

● UP, which sends 80 members to Lok Sabha, used to be a fiercely competitive multi-party state, with three or four parties playing political leapfrog for decades. No party won a re-election to the state assembly for decades until BJP did in 2022. In that politically fragmented setting, one could win with 30-35% of the votes using the politics of relations to target particular groups, like Yadavs or Dalits.

● Now that BSP and Congress have virtually vanished from UP (Congress gained 2.5% of votes in 2022), and only two parties remain in play (BJP and SP), victory will require up to 50% of the votes. No social group comprises half of the electorate and parties will need ideology. Something similar is happening across many states in the Hindi belt, where ideology will prove decisive.

Ideology: Advantage Congress in the south | It is precisely ideology – cogent narratives of regional identity shading into sub-nationalisms – that have staved off BJP in the south, so far. In last year's assembly elections, Congress mobilised regional ideology in Karnataka to take the state back from BJP, as it did to hold on to Telangana.

● In the north, while INDIA alliance members are speaking quietly among themselves, releasing no clear public messages, BJP is projecting Bharat's new ideology from the megaphones. On its own, the party actually holds a slim 55% majority in Parliament. To retain this, it will need to sweep the Hindi belt. And it will.

● This politics of ideology, with a coherent political platform, national ideals and global principles may appear more mature and 'modern' than India's bad old personalism, paternalism, and the caste-ism of vote banks. But it is precisely such politics, focused as it is on local relations, affairs and groups that has been the bulwark of India's fragile relative peace. A turn to totalising, doctrinaire ideology threatens this.

The writer is a social anthropologist

Ideal Neighbourship: It's Not About Who's Big, Who's Small

A National Security Advisory Board member explains why Modi began both his terms with a visit to Bhutan, and will close the second term with another visit there

Pankaj Saran

India's PM is scheduled to visit Bhutan soon. Notably, Modi began both his terms with a visit to Bhutan and is now about to end the second term also with a visit to Bhutan. Against a turbulent global landscape, India's relationship with Bhutan has remained one constant in India's foreign policy, of which there is reason to be justifiably proud. This relationship is among the most carefully nurtured by India.

To put it simply, both India and Bhutan have shown how the biggest and the tiniest of countries can peacefully coexist and prosper together. This is a lesson for all small states, especially in our region, who sometimes tilt at windmills when dealing with India, and for large states, including in our region, who are unable to show sensitivity in dealing with small neighbours.

Bhutan has flaunted its good ties with India as a geostrategic asset. It has not shied away from celebrating its partnership with India and acknowledging the benefits it has derived from this. This is extraordinary and a rarity in international affairs. Success was by no means guaranteed and has come with a lot of hard work on both sides.

Bhutan has seen decades of peaceful growth anchored in its own unique realities. Its per capita income is one of the highest in the region. It boasts the largest proportion of forest cover. It has struck a fine balance between preserving its natural resources and yet using them for economic gain.

The model of hydropower cooperation with India, or of regulating tourism, are textbook examples of pragmatism and enlightened self-interest.

On the political side, the Wangchuck dynasty led by former monarch Jigme Singye Wangchuck, has ensured that neither time nor success should stand still. A planned programme of political reform within and gradual emergence from isolation without, speaks of the character of Bhutanese people. Plus of the patriotism, sagacity and integrity of its monarchy, presently led by Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck.

India has played its part in full measure. It has provided a supporting external environment that allows Bhutan to realise its ambitions. To find its own genius and level of comfort with its historical, geographical and cultural realities.

India renegotiated the 1949 Treaty, accepting the reality of a new Bhutan, and its transition to a democratic constitutional monarchy. It has participated in the economic and social development of Bhutan by placing its strengths at the disposal of Bhutan and contributing to its 12 Five Year Plans. All of this has given Bhutan the confidence to continually connect and integrate its economy with India, making such integration a foundational pillar of its development strategy.

India is also aware of the pressure Bhutan faces from its northern neighbour. That is the counter-reality. Where inter-state relations are conducted on the basis of coercion, veiled threats, blandishments and territorial expansionism – exploiting weak and vulnerable states in the pursuit of larger strategic games. Bhutan is acutely conscious of the fate that has befallen Tibet.

It is therefore not surprising that India-Bhutan relations enjoy the personal attention of both countries' leaderships. High-level exchanges are a key element. Modi's visit comes on the heels of the first overseas visit of the newly elected Bhutanese PM, Tshering Tobgay, which was to India.

It is expected that Modi will receive Bhutan's highest civilian award, the Order of the Druk Gyalpo, conferred on him in 2021, and by doing so, become the first foreign national to be so honoured.

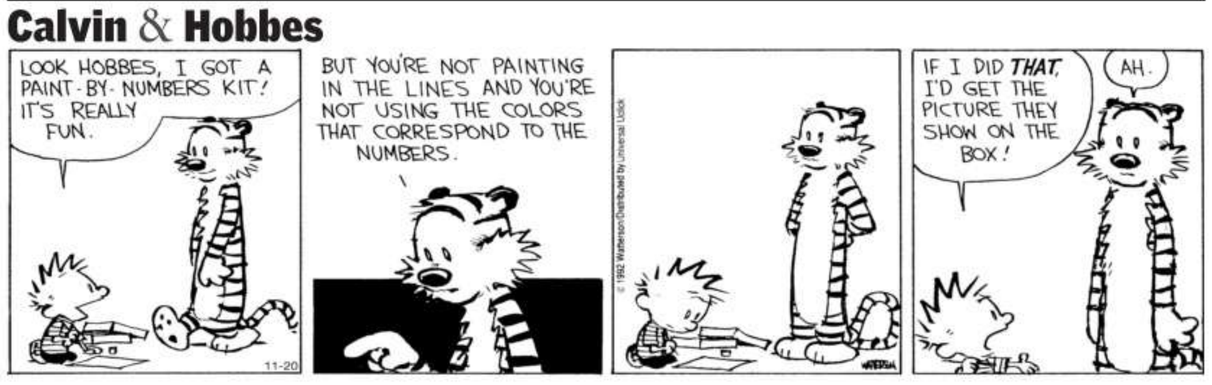
The other item on the agenda is to put the finishing touches on India's assistance for Bhutan's 13th Five Year Plan, which starts this year, along with an economic stimulus package that is likely to be higher than the outlay of ₹5,000 crore for the 12th Plan.

India's cooperation has enabled Bhutan to graduate from LDC status and put it firmly on the path of becoming a high-income nation. The 1020 MW Punatsangchhu II project is slated to be commissioned later this year. This, together with Punatsangchhu I, will add another 2040 MW to the installed capacity of 2136 MW hydropower. Bhutan's surplus generation will be available for export to Bangladesh.

Besides energy, India is Bhutan's partner of choice on all other aspects of nation-building, ranging from skilling to infrastructure to green transition. The new Gelephu Mindfulness City is a transformational initiative that is poised to impact the entire sub-region surrounding southern Bhutan.

Bhutan is a success story of India's Neighbourhood First Policy and of the motto of *sabka saath, sabka vikas, sabka vishvas*. In this, India and Bhutan lead by example.

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace

Fully realising that nothing whatsoever is really done by the SELF, i do whatever presents itself to be done... so i live happily... yogins who are attached to the body insist upon action or inaction. Owing to the absence of association... i live happily.

Ashtavakra Gita

We Are Family, Get Up, Everybody, And Sing

Mona Mehta

When their dog Maxi gobbled a bowl of dumplings in the kitchen and then looked up at them with an innocent expression on her face, she was not behaving simply like a biological eating machine. She was behaving like a shrewd and endearing little rascal she was, writes forester Peter Wohlleben in *The Inner Life of Animals*, illustrating that animals can display what were once thought to be exclusively human emotions. If they can experience emotions similar to us, should they not be treated the same way? Like ourselves? Indic philosophy's concept of Vasudhaiv Kutumbakam, proposes exactly that: treat all living beings, not just humans, as your family.

"Everyone has a song to sing in the symphony of life. And as human beings, it is part of our responsibility to help all people and all creatures to sing their song," says Nayaswami Shivani, co-founder, Yogananda Academy of Europe.

NYT Magazine recently carried a story on ultra luxury hotels exclusively meant for pet dogs and what it feels like to stay in them. Such hotels offer all creature comforts and belly rubs, warm baths and cool face masks, deodorised ambience and even a storytelling session for your canine cutie pie before lights out.

Out in the wild, too, left to their own devices, animals seek comfort. Wohlleben tells us that to beat winter cold and stay safe, squirrels in the forest build dreys out of twigs and line the interiors with soft moss, which helps conserve heat and provides a comfortable place to sleep. Squirrels, too, don't like twigs poking into their backs any more than we would.

THE SPEAKING TREE

High levels of intelligence exist in animal and bird kingdoms. Srimad Bhagavatam talks about Dattatreya who had attained enlightenment by learning from 24 gurus, several of them non-humans – pigeons, a python, honeybee, elephant, deer, fish, squirrel, hawk, snake, spider, and a wasp.

"So, besides helping all creatures and humans reach their potential, we need to be humble enough to see what we can learn from them, because God's wisdom is present throughout Creation," says Nayaswami Shivani.

Egotism means to separate ourselves from others and being self-centred. Speciesism is an expression of ego. It is redundant in the realm of adhyatam, spirituality, which calls upon us to see unity in all things.

Spiritual evolution is a matter of consciousness, of awareness. It is different from intelligence. Evolution is about including a greater spectrum of life in our own identity. At the lower stages of human evolution, there is no awareness of the reality of other people. It's all about 'me'. But as we evolve, we begin to include awareness of others, concern for them, their well-being, service and so forth. So, the law of physics that the universe is constantly expanding, is a symbol of human consciousness that is always expanding.

But the expansion is in self-identity. Do i identify with my physical body? With my work? With the needs of others? Needs of the planet's environment? This is part and parcel of evolution.

So, for the sake of our own spiritual progress, it is essential to be kind to animals and keep company with them. An over-the-top luxury spa for pets could be just one way of showing that we care, for them and ourselves.

TIMES SPORT

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

HASARANGA SUSPENDED FOR BANGLA TEST SERIES, WILL BE AVAILABLE FOR EARLY IPL TIES

BELGIUM STRIKER ROMELU LUKAKU RULED OUT OF IRELAND FRIENDLY DUE TO GROIN PROBLEM

UNEASY LIES THE HEAD...

...that wears the crown, they say. The upcoming IPL season is shrouded in intrigue, with leadership changes sparking questions about team dynamics. MI face an awkward transition from Rohit Sharma to Hardik Pandya while Pat Cummins's demanding workload raises concerns about his ability to lead SRH. Meanwhile, Shubman Gill will take the reins at GT hoping to overcome his lack of experience...

Pix: IPL, MI, Getty Images

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Looking for an emoji to express awkwardness? A look at the faces of Mumbai Indians coach Mark Boucher and captain Hardik Pandya at the MI pre-IPL season press conference in Mumbai on Monday should end that search. Their expressions when asked about captaincy changing hands from Rohit Sharma to Hardik — and the reasons for it — said everything.

Hardik, as a leader, proved doubters wrong when he captained Gujarat Titans to victory in their inaugural season in 2022 and took them to the final next season. He comes back to his alma mater as an achiever. But it is his leadership qualities that will be tested. Cryptic posts on social media by senior MI players after learning about Hardik's trade and elevation to the captaincy have created employment opportunities for those wanting a career in reading between the lines.

Apart from five IPL trophies, Rohit has hand-held young players, giving them chances to show their wares. The younger players rallied around him both at MI and in the Indian team set-up. How the side reacts to a change in leadership styles after 10 years will be interesting to see. If Hardik can convince Rohit to be the 2019 version of himself, rather than the slog and swipe batter, with nine 50s since 2019, at a below-par strike-rate and an embarrassing average, it will be a tick for him.

The scanners will be on Pat Cummins too. With Sunrisers Hyderabad breaking the bank (Rs 20.5 cr) to net the World Cup and World Test Championship-winning Aussie skipper, results are non-negotiable. SRH function like those trigger-happy European football clubs. They have had three different captains and coaches in the last three years and after the circus surrounding the departure of a successful captain in David Warner, they have consistently hugged the bottom half of the table.

This year too they have replaced Aiden Markram, a two-time winning skipper of their franchise in the SAT20 with Sunrisers Eastern Cape. Cummins' first assignment upon landing is nursing a bruised ego there.

PAT CUMMINS

How much does he have left in the tank to go through another high-pressure gig?

Between the last IPL to now, Cummins has bowled 394.4 overs in Tests, 107.3 overs in ODIs and seven overs in T20Is. That's 3055 balls! He has endured a draining Ashes campaign and tasted the high of winning two global trophies. When he hasn't bowled, he has batted under pressure to rescue Australia.

Can he summon the mental reserves to mentor someone like Umran Malik? Can he tell Marco Jansen, Markram, Wanindu Hasaranga and Glenn Phillips, "Sorry, we can play one of you as me, Travis Head and Heinrich Klaasen will play most games." Cummins' IPL record is not great either. In 42 matches, he has an economy of 8.54. If results don't come, Cummins needs to only ask his Aussie teammate Warner and ex-Aussie coaches Tom Moody and Trevor Bayliss what humiliation feels like.

SHUBMAN GILL

GOING FOR GLORY: The new captains this season have to be ready to face intense scrutiny, but they will get the credit for winnability

Brazilian author Paulo Coelho writes in The Alchemist, "It's called the principle of favourability, beginner's luck. Because life wants to achieve your destiny."

From a young age, Shubman Gill was destined to achieve special things. Every coach, talent spotter, selector had an eye out for him. Hence, he was fast-tracked after being in a victorious 2018 Under-19 World Cup team. Now, as the first-time skipper of Gujarat Titans, Gill, who has no prior captaincy experience, will be hoping for some of that beginner's luck. He will first need to make senior pros like David Miller, Wriddhiman Saha, and Rashid Khan comfortable to play under him.

Then, he needs to find three players, two to replace Pandya, who batted at four and bowled briskly with the new ball, and Mohammed Shami, who grabbed 28 wickets last season, but is out injured? Hello, Umesh Yadav. If he can reproduce last year's form (890 runs, average 57.33, three hundreds, four fifties at a strike-rate of 157.80) respect will come knocking.

For tactics, he has Nehra ji on the boundary.

HARDIK PANDYA

Bumrah must regularly take breaks: McGrath

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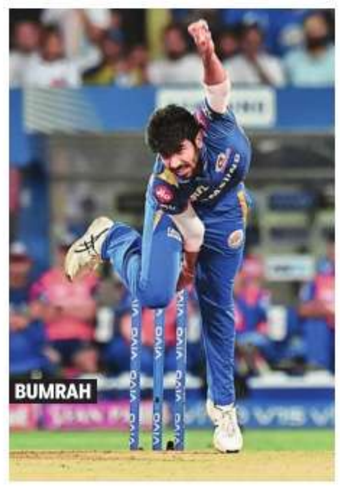

BUMRAH

Chennai: Mumbai Indians pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah missed last season's IPL due to a back injury but that didn't stop him from being India's No. 1 bowler across formats after he returned to action. But Aussie pace legend Glenn McGrath feels Bumrah needs to tread cautiously as he gets ready to shoulder the burden of leading the attack of a hugely-demanding franchise over the next two months.

McGrath, who is serving as the director of cricket at the MRF Pace Foundation, feels a bowler like Bumrah, who has an unconventional action, needs time away from the sport to stay injury-free. *Excerpts from a conversation...*

On Bumrah's workload: I think someone like Bumrah needs an off-season because he puts so much effort into every delivery. You can see there is so much stress and pressure on his body. He needs a break to regain his strength. If he keeps playing non-stop, the strength in his bowling action will diminish and he'll get injured — something that has already happened to him. He's a very experienced player now, he knows how to manage himself, so, it's up to him. But he does need a break to put strength back on.

On how Bumrah generates pace: If you look at his last two strides, he really powers into the crease. So, his momentum increases in his last two strides. I think that's where he gets it. I think there's a little bit of hyper-extension in his elbow. That all adds to it. But it's the last two steps where he just powers in.

On Starc's return to IPL after nine years: I think he's really suited to the short version. If the ball's moving, he bowls such attacking lines and lengths. He's always dangerous when he's on song. When he's got his radar switched on and swinging the ball, he's as good as anyone going around. Earlier, he chose to skip IPL and wanted to focus on other things...It shows he is smart as well.

On ODI World Cup-winning skipper Cummins: I was earlier sceptical about a bowler leading the team because a batter can go out and give 100 per cent in his batting and not worry about what else is happening. When a bowler is a captain and he's bowling, he still has an eye on whose bowling next and where the game's going. So, that's the only reason I thought it's always better for a batter to have it. But Cummins has done an exceptional job. He has taken it to the next level. And he's got a fighting technique when he bats.

On pacers' challenges in T20: Recently, the batters have nearly taken over bowlers again with their new and innovative shots. So, it's time for the bowlers to step up.

HOW THE TEAMS LOOK—PART I

DELHI CAPITALS

In seven seasons under head coach Ricky Ponting, the team has reached the IPL final only once. Captain Rishabh Pant's comeback from a horrific car accident is a definite boost to their push for the trophy this year.

STRENGTH: Powerful top order with David Warner, Rishabh Pant and Mitchell Marsh. If these three get going, they can run away with any match. Then there's the spin partnership of Axar Patel and Kuldeep Yadav, which is as effective as any spin combo in the IPL.

RISHABH PANT

WEAKNESS: Like last year, the scarcity of proven domestic talent in the middle order will put extra pressure on Pant and Axar. Besides Ishant Sharma, the pace-bowling department too relies on foreign recruits.

OPPORTUNITY: Mukesh Kumar could enhance his reputation as an emerging pace bowler. A good IPL here could pave the way for a spot in the subsequent T20 World Cup team. Same goes for Pant.

THREAT: Pant, like always, will be the X-factor. Coming back after a year, his form and fitness will be unknown to opponents. He could exploit that.

LUCKNOW SUPER GIANTS

Having started their IPL journey by qualifying for playoffs in their first two seasons, LSG will turn up this year with a new-look coaching staff that will be headed by Justin Langer.

STRENGTH: LSG boast of having an explosive batting order made up of T20 specialists like Quinton de Kock, Nicholas Pooran and Kyle Mayers along with the stability of captain KL Rahul.

WEAKNESS: The pace attack has suffered a dent with Mark Wood pulling out. The bowling department wears an inexperienced look. Krunal Pandya will have to lead the spin attack.

OPPORTUNITY: This is Ayush Badoni's chance to grow as a player. The franchise backs the young middle-order bat to provide them with a powerful finish. Left-arm seamer Mohsin Khan will look to resurrect his career, which has been hampered by a terrible shoulder injury.

THREAT: Raw West Indies pacer Shamar Joseph will be in focus following his sensational international debut in Australia.

QUINTON DE KOCK

KL RAHUL

PUNJAB KINGS

The forever underachievers of IPL will give it another shot at proving their worth in the tournament. Sanjay Bangar, who triggered a turnaround for the franchise in 2014, is back as the head of cricket development.

STRENGTH: The presence of established international T20 stars like Jonny Bairstow, Liam Livingstone, Kagiso Rabada and Arshdeep Singh lends balance to skipper Shikhar Dhawan's team. Dhawan himself has been one of the most consistent players in IPL history.

JONNY BAIRSTOW

WEAKNESS: Lack of proven allrounders could be a disadvantage. Sam Curran and Chris Woakes are the only to established names but putting them in the XI will be tough.

ARSHDEEP SINGH

OPPORTUNITY: Wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma could push for a spot in India's T20 World Cup team. He has been impressive over the last two seasons but this season could determine his maturity and consistency.

THREAT: Arshdeep Singh's wicket-taking ability with the new ball combined with his expertise in the death overs could tilt a lot of matches PBKS' way.

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

The limelight is on youngsters Yashasvi Jaiswal and Dhruv Jurel. However, the old guard has to step up too.

STRENGTH: Opener Jaiswal is in tremendous form. The 22-year-old finished the 2023 IPL as the fifth-highest run-getter and goes into 2024 as the top scorer in the Tests against England. Jaiswal and Buttler provide the assurance of a solid start.

WEAKNESS: The Royals fast-bowling department lacks spark. A lot will ride on how their aging spearhead Trent Boult responds. The Indians in the pack — Avesh Khan, Navdeep Saini, Kuldeep Sen, Sandeep Sharma — need to step up. It will be interesting to see where Nandre Burger fits in this setup.

JOS BUTTLER

OPPORTUNITY: Sanju Samson is one of the most experienced T20 players but he has not been able to get rid of the tag of being inconsistent. It's time he makes this opportunity count and makes the national selectors take notice when they sit down to pick the squad for T20 World Cup.

THREAT: On paper, Rovman Powell's inclusion in the squad makes it appear that Royals have fixed their middle-order woes. The West Indies skipper has not set the IPL on fire so far. But if he and his teammate from the Caribbean, Shimron Hetymer, get going, Rajasthan Royals will have a lot to smile about.

—Team TOI

IPL to introduce Smart Replay System: Report

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

A THING OF THE PAST? The Smart Replay System is intended to speed up decision making in matches

New Delhi: The Indian cricket board (BCCI) is set to introduce the Smart Replay System in the upcoming IPL, according to a report in ESPNcricinfo. The move is aimed at increasing the accuracy and speed of decision making.

The report stated that under the Smart Replay System, the TV umpire will receive inputs directly from two Hawk Eye operators who will be sitting in the same room as the umpire and provide him with images captured by Hawk Eye's eight hi-speed cameras spread across the ground. The TV broadcast director, who used to be a channel between the third umpire and the Hawk Eye operators until now, will no longer be involved.

The Smart Replay System will allow the TV umpire to refer to more visuals than they previously had access to, including split-screen images. The report also highlights that BCCI conducted a two-day workshop on the new system in Mumbai on Sunday and Monday for select umpires.

It is learned that about 15 umpires, both Indian and overseas, will work with the system during the IPL, which starts on March 22.

The eight Hawk Eye cameras present at every match are two on each side of the square leg and two on each side of the pitch along the straight boundaries. Before the 2023 IPL, Hawk Eye cameras were mainly used for ball tracking and the Ultra Edge, which detetcts the slightest of snicks.

For any on-field referral, the broadcaster mostly used footage from their own cameras, except for reviewing leg-before and edges. Under the new system, referrals will now be used for stumpings, run-outs, catches and overthrows. When a stumping referral occurs, the TV umpire can request to see the split screen from the Hawk Eye operators via the Smart Review System.

The new technology will display tri-vision for stumpings, which is effectively a single frame of film from both side-on and front-on cameras. The conversations between the TV umpire and the Hawk Eye operator are likely to be aired live, which will allow the viewer to understand the process behind the decision-making.

The system has been trialled in the 'The Hundred' in England.

GALLERY

Lakshya jumps 5 places, becomes world No. 13

New Delhi: Lakshya Sen on Tuesday jumped five places to reach world No. 13 in the latest BWF rankings, following an impressive run at the All England badminton Championships. The top-16 in the world by April-end will make the cut for the Olympics. HS Prannoy is at No. 9 in the Paris race.

In the women's singles, PV Sindhu is in the 11th position. The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty was at the top position. PTI

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: NBA, 6.30 am (Jiocinema)
HOCKEY: Women's Nationals, 2 pm to 8 pm (Fancode)
FOOTBALL: Euro 2024 Qualifying, San Marino vs St Kitts and Nevis, 1.15 am Thursday (Sony Sports).

TN coach Sulakshan quits

...Days After Controversy Involving Skipper Sai Kishore

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Chennai: Sulakshan Kulkarni has informed the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association (TNCA) that he doesn't want to continue next season as the coach of the state team.

Kulkarni had signed a multi-season deal with the TNCA last year, but it was learnt that the Mumbai man has informed the state association about his unavailability. "Kulkarni has sent his resignation letter to TNCA via mail, saying that he is unavailable for the coming season due to personal reasons," a source told **TOI** on Tuesday. When contacted, the TNCA did not respond.

Cracks developed in the relationship between Kulkarni and the playing group after the coach criticized the Tamil Nadu red-ball captain R Sai Kishore in the post-semifinal media interaction. After losing to Mumbai, Kulkarni said that opting to bat first on a pace-friendly pitch at the BKC Ground lost the game for the team that had reached its first Ranji Trophy semi-final after seven years.

After his outburst, TN stalwarts, including K Srikkanth, Hemang Badani and Dinesh Karthik, expressed disappointment and came down heavily on Kulkarni. Srikkanth went to the extent of saying that TNCA should not appoint such a coach who does not stand by his captain publicly.

While TN, to a degree, were able to turn things around in Ranji Trophy under Kulkarni, making the knock-out stage for the first time since 2016-17, he had his share of differences with the selection committee and team members right from the word go. While his decision to rope in an outstation pacer (Kuldeep Sen) faced tough opposition from sections in the TNCA, senior players like N Jagadeesan were not too happy with his coaching style. Jagadeesan had gone on record saying that he was put under too much pressure and that it was captain Sai Kishore's confidence in him that resurrected his season. Kulkarni, on his part, told **TOI** that the occasional strong word was necessary to get the team performing.

To Kulkarni's credit, he handed debuts to players like R Vimal Khumar, Boopathi Vaishna Kumar and S Mohamed Ali, among others. TN reached the semifinals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy and crashed out in the first round of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy.

Now, it will be interesting to see if L Balaji, who is the current bowling coach, gets a promotion.

Perth to host 1st Test in Nov

Melbourne: Perth is set to host the opening Test of the five-match series during India's tour of Australia later this year. According to a report in 'Sydney Morning Herald', Adelaide, Brisbane, Melbourne and Sydney have also been picked as the venues.

INDIA VS AUS SERIES

"Adelaide will host the second Test and Brisbane the third, with the Boxing Day and New Year's Tests keeping their traditional time slots in Melbourne and Sydney," the report said. The Adelaide Test will be a Day-Night affair.

Cricket Australia is yet to come out with its schedule for the next season but a final announcement is expected by the end of this month. The series is likely to start in late November this year.

It will be the first time India will play a five-match series in Australia since the 1991-92 tour, which the hosts won 4-0. In the past four series between the two teams, India have won on all four occasions, including back-to-back Test series wins in 2018-19 and 2020-21. In the 2018-19 series, Perth had hosted the second Test, which the hosts won by 146 runs. PTI

Oz call off Afghanistan T20 series

Melbourne: Australia have called off a T20 series against Afghanistan citing a deteriorating human rights situation for women and girls in the Taliban-ruled country, Cricket Australia (CA) said on Tuesday.

Australia withdrew from a One-day series scheduled for March last year in the United Arab Emirates after the Taliban imposed restrictions on girls attending high schools,

WOMEN'S RIGHTS

barred women from universities and stopped female Afghan aid staff from working.

The teams were scheduled to play three T20 matches in the UAE in August this year but CA said that after consultations with the Australian government it had decided to call off the series. "The govt's advice is that conditions for women and girls in Afghanistan are getting worse," the cricket board said in a statement. "For this reason, we have maintained our previous position and will postpone the bilateral series against Afghanistan."

The Afghanistan Cricket Board was not available to comment but a spokesperson for the Taliban administration defended the regime's human rights record. AGENCIES

CELEBRATION TIME

Chetan Shivakumar

Fans thronged the M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru on Tuesday for the unveiling of RCB's new name, logo and jersey. The team will now be known as Royal Challengers Bengaluru. RCB Women were also felicitated for winning the WPL. In the pic, Shreyanka Patil poses with the WPL trophy

‘Wouldn’t be where I am today without Oly bronze’

Uma Kadam

“I WAS A VERY INTELLIGENT FIGHTER. I WAS A DEFENSIVE FIGHTER. BOXING WAS ALL ABOUT OFFENCE, BUT IT IS MAINLY ABOUT DEFENCE. THE LESS YOU GET HIT, THE LONGER YOU’RE ABLE TO LAST.”
—**Floyd Mayweather,** who was in Mumbai on Monday

Boxing Legend Mayweather Urges IOC To Retain Sport In Future Olympic Games

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Mumbai: “I always knew I was going to be huge.” Floyd Mayweather was, kind of, stating the obvious in Mumbai on Monday.

From an extremely rough upbringing, he would rise to become one of the greatest boxers in history. If there were ever any doubters along the way, clearly the American wasn’t one of them. Mayweather, nevertheless, stressed on how his decorated career may well have turned out differently had it not been for a less-than-perfect start at the 1996 Olympic Games. At Atlanta, the Centennial Games, he had to be content with a bronze medal in the featherweight division. Hard to believe for a fighter who would go on to become world champion in five divisions and eventually retire with a flawless record – winning 50 out of 50 professional bouts.

“I was just talking about this the other day when I was in Athens because the modern-day Olympics started in Athens,” the 47-year-old Mayweather continued, “I was able to travel with my daughter and we went to where the first Olympics was held.

“I saw there, they had different levels for the gold medal, the silver medal and the bronze medal. I stood on the third one. I didn’t stand on (the levels for) first or second.

“Now when I look back on my career, I’m happy that I got a bronze medal because if I didn’t get a bronze medal I probably wouldn’t be where I’m at today, so everything happens for a reason.

“Congratulations to the guy who got the gold medal, congratulations to the guy who got the silver medal. I’m happy with how my career went,” he declared.

Yet, despite the sports’ undeniable legacy and draw at the Olympics, uncertainty hangs over its future after the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had, last year, said that boxing’s place at the 2028 Los Angeles Games was “on hold”.

In the city to promote Limitless X, the health and wellness collaboration with business partner Jas Mathur, Mayweather made a strong plea to retain one of the Games’ showpiece events at the Olympics. “I appreciate the Olympic committee. Please, I’m asking, don’t do this to these young fighters. These fighters should be able to display their skills and their talent. It puts them in a position to become professionals and it puts them in a position to feed their families. So, the Olympics for boxing is very, very important,” he said.

“I don’t want to say, ‘without the Olympics, I wouldn’t be where I’m at’. I really wouldn’t be where I’m at if it weren’t for my father (Floyd Mayweather senior) and my uncle (Roger Mayweather) and my team, but the Olympics played a major role because the Olympics put me in a position to be on TV, to televise my skills and my talent to the world,” he added.

As he reflected on the darker days of his childhood, which notably included a time when his father was forced to use him as a human shield while being threatened by a maternal uncle at gun point, Mayweather said none of those struggles were ever going to stop him from achieving greatness.

“I’ve been through a lot. Everyone has heard my story. About my mom, about my dad. About my dad being shot, my dad holding me when he got shot, my mother being on drugs.

“Seven of us living in New Brunswick in New Jersey in a one-bedroom apartment, sometimes with no heat, no hot water, but those challenges couldn’t stop me. I was destined to be where I was at. I was destined to be a champion, I was destined to be a billionaire. No one can stop me. Even then, when I was faced with those different obstacles, I always knew I was going to be super successful,” Mayweather held forth.

“I always knew I was going to be rich and famous. But my journey didn’t stop with making money. My journey didn’t stop with making my first million, my first 100 million, my first billion. The journey has to continue to give back to the people from all walks of life and all around the world who have embraced me with open arms.”

Despite the two sharing a troubled relationship, Mayweather, regarded by many as the best defensive boxer in history, said a philosophy his father had taught him early on had been instrumental in shaping his style as well as contributing to a career that stretched over two decades. “I was a very intelligent fighter. I was a defensive fighter. Boxing was (said to be) all about offence, but (is) mainly about defence. The less you get hit, the longer you’re able to last. That’s the first thing my dad instilled in me,” he said.

Although he considered winning world titles in multiple divisions “very important”, the man who was the highest paid athlete in the world according to Forbes in 2018 (total earnings worth $285 million), said his perspective changed as he aged.

“As I got older, I looked at things differently. I choose currency over legacy. If I got into the sport of boxing, and they say ‘you can win 10 world titles but only make $ 10 million, or you can win no titles but make 500 million’, I’d rather make 500 million. Because I know that I’m able to make smart investments, and my kids are able to make smart investments. And I may make a few mistakes along the way, but with that type of money you can make a few mistakes,” Mayweather said.

FLOYD FILES

Nickname: Money, Pretty Boy
Amateur high: Bronze in featherweight division (1996 Oympics)
Pro record: 50 fights, 50 wins, 27 wins by KO; Won 12 world titles & the lineal championship in four different weight classes (twice in the welterweight division); Holds a record of 26 straight wins in world title fights (10 by KO)

5 Weight divisions in which Mayweather has won a world boxing title

SC SEEKS AIFF RESPONSE TO CORRUPTION CHARGES

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New Delhi: The Supreme Court took cognisance of amicus curiae Gopal Shankaranarayanan’s application collating corruption charges flying thick and fast against the interim governing body of All India Football Federation (AIFF) and said it would soon finalise its constitution to pave way for fresh elections for office bearers.

A bench of Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud, and Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra took note of the amicus’ application bringing to court’s notice a series of corruption charges against the AIFF. The amicus said, “The current management of AIFF, despite being an interim body, has gone well beyond their mandate and recent developments highlighting the serious mismanagement taking place in AIFF has come to light.”

“The AIFF corpus is being frittered away,” Shankaranarayanan told the bench. To buttress its stand, he cited a **TOI** report, “AIFF terminates services of its legal head after he accused president Kalyan Chaubey of corruption”, and also other reports about India giving up hosting bid for 2027 AFC Asia Cup despite incurring a pre-bid expense of Rs 72 lakh, commercially skewed agreement between Indigo and AIFF, as well as irregular personal expenses incurred by Chaubey. Appearing for AIFF, senior advocate Atmaram S Nadkarni said the football body will respond to each charge within a week. However, the bench was of the opinion that it would be prudent to simultaneously finalise the draft constitution prepared by former SC judge L Nageswara Rao. Nadkarni said AIFF would file its objections to the draft constitution and the court permitted it.

CJI Chandrachud said once the AIFF constitution is finalised, fresh elections will be held to elect office bearers and the interim elected management body will step down. “We cannot keep the issue alive forever here in the court,” the bench said.

The bench said it would not permit state bodies to file their objections afresh but agreed to hear Guruswamy during the proceedings for finalisation of the AIFF constitution.

‘Sabalenka’s boyfriend’s death apparent suicide’

Instagram

Koltsov with Sabalenka

The death of former NHL ice hockey player Konstantin Koltsov, the boyfriend of tennis star Aryna Sabalenka is being treated as an “apparent suicide”, Miami-Dade Police said on Tuesday. Police spokesman Argemis Colome said in an email that on Monday at 12:39 am (0439 GMT) police “were dispatched to the St. Regis Bal Harbour Resort, in reference to a male that jumped from a balcony.”

“The Miami-Dade Police Department, Homicide Bureau, responded and has taken over the investigation of the apparent suicide of Mr. Konstantin Koltsov. No foul play is suspected,” he added. Two-times grand slam champion Sabalenka of Belarus is scheduled to take part in the Miami Open later this week.

There was no immediate indication of whether the 25-year-old, who won the Australian Open in 2023 and retained her Melbourne title earlier this year, will continue with her schedule or withdraw from the tournament. The death of Koltsov, 42, had earlier been confirmed by the Belarusian hockey federation said on Tuesday. “We are in mourning,” the federation said on its website. “The Belarusian Hockey Federation expresses its deepest condolences to the family, friends, and everyone who knew and worked with Konstantin.” Koltsov’s playing career included a stint with the Pittsburgh Penguins in the NHL, where he made 144 appearances between 2003 and 2006.

“The Penguins extend their deepest condolences to the family and friends of former Penguins forward, Konstantin Koltsov,” the team said in a statement. He also played for Belarus at two Olympic Games -- Salt Lake City in 2002 and Vancouver in 2010 -- as well as nine world championships. He had three children with his wife Julia whom he divorced in 2020. AFP

Olympic glory is what shooter Ria is aiming at

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Mumbai: It’s never easy to walk in the footsteps of your father or grandfather in any walk of life. However, if you are a sportsperson, the burden to excel and emulate them seems heavier.

Ria Rajeshwari Kumari, the Asian Games medallist in women’s team trap seems to be on the right path to doing that. Daughter of Randhir Singh, India’s first gold medallist in shooting in the 1978 Asiad in Bangkok, Ria is one of the 19 Indian shooters to win a quota place. The 31-year-old will be hoping that she is selected by the NRAI and IOA to be on that plane to Paris and is training hard for that to happen.

“Olympic trials are done, and I have been going through a lot of training and seeing how can I be a better shooter than the previous day,” Ria told reporters on the sidelines of an event where Yes Bank was announced as the official banking partner of the Indian Olympic Association in Mumbai on Monday in the presence of IOA president and legendary athlete PT Usha, pistol shooter Manu Bhaker, 57 kg boxer Parveen Hooda, six-time boxing world champion MC Mary Kom and archer Dhiraj Bommadevara.

The last year was a good one for Ria. Apart from the Asian Games medal, she also bettered the women’s trap National record twice.

Ria revealed that for the past two years, she has been training under David Kostelecky, the two-time Olympic medallist and termed the association as fantastic.

Kostelecky had clinched the Olympic gold in the 2008 Beijing games in men’s trap. In Tokyo 2020, he won silver.

“My father Randhir Singh presented him with the gold in Beijing,” Ria reveals. Randhir was also a former IOA chief and is currently the president of the Olympic Council of Asia. Ria’s grandfather, Bhalindra Singh was also into sport, having played First-Class cricket for Cambridge and he too led the IOA and was instrumental in India hosting the 1982 Asian Games.

“I have grown up looking at a picture of my grandfather presenting my father with his Olympic medal and that is how the inspiration began. And for all the talk about shooting being a man’s sport, besides that picture is a picture of my maasi (Mother’s sister) with a gun and in a sari and taking my father to the shooting range,” Ria, who is also a fashion designer and has her own label called Saurab Rajeshwari, a brand co-founded with her childhood friend Saurab Aggarwal, revealed.

“I could not shoot from home during the covid pandemic, and I had to do something and the fashion designing idea came then. It was more passion than business. Now, my mom takes care of it as I am busy shooting,” says Ria apart from revealing that the Phulkaris (embroidered shawls and dupattas) are her favourite as it represents the culture of her region.

Of India’s 35 medals at the Games, shooting has fetched them four. Rajyavardhan Rathore (silver, Athens, 2004), Abhinav Bindra (gold, Beijing 2004), Gagan Narang (bronze, London 2012), Vijay Kumar (silver, London 2012), however, Indian shooters returned empty-handed from Rio in 2016 and Tokyo.

But if India are to better their historic haul of seven medals in Tokyo and enter the double-digit mark, one feels the shooters will have to contribute generously towards that goal.

RIA WITH FATHER RANDHIR

‘Friendship Games’ are politically motivated: IOC

Berlin: Russia’s plan to hold the ‘Friendship Games’ is a political action that violates the Olympic Charter, and countries should not take part in them, the International Olympic Committee said Tuesday. Russia said last year it planned to relaunch the multi-sport ‘Friendship Games’ in 2024, 40 years after its inception.

“The IOC notes that, contrary to the Fundamental Principles of the Olympic Charter and the resolutions by the UN General Assembly, the Russian government intends to organise purely politically motivated sports events in Russia,” the IOC said in a statement.

“The Russian government created and funded the ‘International Friendship Association’ (IFA), in order to host the summer and winter ‘Friendship Games’,” it said. Russia’s announcement last year came with their athletes and those of ally Belarus having been largely frozen out of international competition by federations in the wake of the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

The IOC, which banned the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC) in October for recognising regional Olympic councils for Russian-occupied regions of Ukraine, has allowed athletes from Russia and Belarus to qualify for and compete at the Paris Olympics. REUTERS

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Mitchell Marsh-led Aus T20 team's series against Af postponed as Cricket Australia cites deteriorating human rights situation for women in the country, **P 19**

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TIMES GLOBAL

THE TRUTH IS RARELY PURE AND NEVER SIMPLE — OSCAR WILDE

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | WEDNESDAY, MARCH 20, 2024

IS HE NEXT JAMES BOND? AARON TAYLOR-JOHNSON 'FORMALLY OFFERED JOB' TO REPLACE DANIEL CRAIG AS 007, SAYS REPORT

SELENA GOMEZ CONSIDERS SELLING HER $2BN-WORTH COSMETIC BRAND 'RARE BEAUTY', HIRES ADVISERS TO WEIGH OFFERS: REPORT

Hamas No. 3, group's 'defence minister', killed in Israel strike

Marwan Issa, Dubbed 'Shadow Man' For Ability To Stay Off Enemy's Radar, Is Top-Most Militant Eliminated: US

Marwan Issa, the deputy commander of Hamas' military wing in Gaza and a presumed mastermind of the Oct 7 assault on Israel, was confirmed dead on Monday by US national security adviser Jake Sullivan.

Issa, nicknamed "shadow man" for his ability to stay off the enemy's radar, had risen to No. 3 within the group. With his death, Issa who had been among Israel's most wanted men, became the senior-most Hamas leader to be killed in Gaza since the start of the war.

Daniel Hagari said on March 11 that Israeli military warplanes had targeted Issa and another senior Hamas official in an underground compound in central Gaza. Israeli officials have characterised the strike as a breakthrough.

Issa, who was 58 or 59 at the time of his death, had served since 2012 as a deputy to Mohammed Deif, the elusive leader of the Qassam Brigades, Hamas' military wing. Issa assumed the role after the assassination of another top commander, Ahmed al-Jabari. Issa served both on Hamas' military council and in its Gaza political office, overseen by Yehia Sinwar, the group's highest-ranking official in the enclave.

Tamir Hayman, a former Israeli military intelligence chief, said Issa was simultaneously Hamas' "defence minister", its deputy military commander and its "strategic mind". Michael Milshtein, an ex-Israeli military intelligence officer, said Issa's death was a significant blow, although he conceded it wasn't "the end of the world" for Hamas. NYT

AFP

Israeli policemen try to stop Ultra-orthodox Jewish members from protesting against conscription into the armed forces in Jerusalem

Houthis 'target' fuel tanker with missiles

Yemen's Houthis have targeted a fuel tanker, MADO, in the Red Sea with naval missiles and Israel's Eilat port and resort region with winged missiles, the group's military spokesman Yahya Sarea said Tuesday. MADO is a Marshall-Islands flagged liquefied petroleum gas tanker heading to Singapore from Saudi Arabia. The Houthis described it as American, but Equasis' shipping database indicates that it is owned by Naftomar Shipping & Trading Co Ltd of Greece. AP

Bibi rebuffs Biden, vows to go ahead with Rafah assault

Israeli PM Netanyahu spurned a plea from Joe Biden to call off a planned ground assault of Rafah, the last refuge in Gaza for more than a million displaced people, where Israel believes Hamas fighters are holed up. Netanyahu told lawmakers Tuesday he had made it "supremely clear" to the US president "that we are determined to complete the elimination of these battalions in Rafah, and there's no way to do that except by going in on the ground". The two leaders spoke by phone Monday.

US national security adviser Jake Sullivan said Washington believed an assault on Rafah would be a "mistake" and that Israel could achieve its aims by other means. US and Israeli officials will likely meet early next week in Washington to discuss Israel's military operation in Rafah, White House spokesperson said. Washington has launched a new push for a ceasefire. Secretary of state Antony Blinken announced a trip to West Asia. Unusually, Blinken made no mention of a stop in Israel itself. REUTERS

Bolsonaro charged with falsification of Covid vax data, his 1st indictment

Sao Paulo: Former Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was formally accused Tuesday of falsifying his Covid-19 vaccination data, marking the first indictment for the embattled far-right leader, with more allegations potentially in store.

The federal police indictment released by Supreme Court alleged Bolsonaro and 16 others inserted false information into a public health database to make it appear as though the then-president, his 12-year-old daughter and several others in his circle had received the Covid-19 vaccine.

Police detective Fabio Alvarez Shor, who signed the indictment, said Bolsonaro and his aides changed their vaccination records to "cheat current health restrictions."

Bolsonaro was one of the few world leaders who railed against the vaccine, openly flouting health restrictions and encouraging other Brazilians to follow his example.

Bolsonaro's lawyer called his client's indictment "absurd". "When he was president, he was exonerated from showing any kind of certificate on his trips. This is a political persecution," he said. AP

In Red Square spectacle, Putin hails conquests in Ukraine

Calls On 'KGB's Heirs' To Bust West Sanctions

His most beloved crooner sang a nationalistic ballad with an appeal to Russians: "The Motherland is calling. Don't let her down." His favourite band belted out a moody song about wartime sacrifice. And then he took the stage, under a banner celebrating the 10th anniversary of Crimea's seizure from Ukraine, to remind thousands of Russians gathered on Red Square that his fight to add territory to Russia wasn't over.

President Putin, a day after a three-day election swiftly declared that he had won more than 87% of the vote, signalled Monday that the war against Ukraine would continue to dominate his rule and called for unity in bringing the people of eastern Ukraine "back to their home family." "We will move on together, hand in hand," he told the crowd, boasting of a restored railroad line that he said would soon connect to Crimea through territory taken from Ukraine.

Conducting business as usual on Tuesday, Putin told the Federal Security Service, the main successor to the Soviet-era KGB, to help Russian companies bust Western sanctions and expand their clout into new markets around the world. He also addressed border assaults, which have marred his re-election week. He claimed Russian troops inflicted "heavy losses" on units that he said where made up of regular Ukrainian soldiers, foreign mercenaries and pro-Ukrainian Russian fighters. "About these traitors... we must not forget who they are, we must identify them by name. We will punish them without statute of limitations, wherever they are." NYT & REUTERS

'Putin to visit China in May for talks with Xi'

President Putin will travel to China in May for talks with Xi Jinping, in what could be the Kremlin chief's first overseas trip of his new term, according to five sources. When asked, the Kremlin said information on Putin's visits would be released closer to the date. REUTERS

Ukraine's survival in danger: Pentagon

US defence secretary Lloyd Austin on Tuesday warned that Ukraine's survival was in danger and sought to convince allies that the US was committed to Kyiv. Speaker Mike Johnson has refused to call a vote on a bill that would provide $60 billion in aid for Ukraine. REUTERS

Bowing to Beijing, Hong Kong passes security law that gives govt more power to curb dissent

Hong Kong: Hong Kong Tuesday passed national security laws at the behest of Beijing, thwarting decades of public resistance in a move critics say will strike a lasting blow to the partial autonomy the city had been promised by China.

The legislation, which was passed with extraordinary speed, grants authorities even more powers to crack down on opposition to Beijing and the Hong Kong govt, establishing penalties — including life imprisonment — for crimes such as treason and insurrection, which are vaguely defined. It also targets offenses such as "external interference" and the theft of state secrets, creating potential risks for multinational companies and international groups operating in the Asian financial centre.

Analysts say the legislation, which takes effect March 23, could have a chilling effect on a wide range of people, including entrepreneurs, civil servants, lawyers, diplomats, journalists and academics, raising questions over Hong Kong's status as an international city. Many of the opposition figures who might have challenged the legislation have either been jailed or have gone into exile since China's ruling Communist Party, under Xi Jinping, imposed the first national security law, in 2020. That law gave authorities a powerful tool to quash dissent after months of anti-govt demonstrations in 2019.

Hong Kong's Beijing-backed leader, John Lee, has said the package of new laws is needed to root out unrest and to fight what he described as Western spying. Once the laws are passed, he has said, the govt can focus on the economy.

"A rapid passage is meant to show people the govt's resolve and ability to enforce it," said Steve Tsang, director of SOAS China Institute in London. "The new bill is as much about intimidation as it is about enforcement." For Lee, "the first concern is not how people in Hong Kong or in the rest of the world see this," Tsang said. "He is performing for the audience of one — Xi himself."

When Hong Kong, a former British colony, was returned to Chinese rule in 1997, it was given a mini-constitution designed to protect civil liberties unknown in mainland China. But China insisted on a provision called Article 23, which required Hong Kong to draft security laws to replace colonial-era sedition laws. The first attempts at such laws in 2003 set off mass protests.

But in recent months, Communist Party has urged the Hong Kong govt to enact Article 23 laws. There was little chance China's will would not be heeded: Hong Kong's legislature is stacked with pro-Beijing lawmakers since China overhauled the system to exclude candidates who aren't considered "patriots." NYT

Getty Images

The security law, Article 23, punishes offences including treason, sabotage, sedition, theft of state secrets, external interference and espionage with sentences ranging from several years to life imprisonment

Support to Manila 'iron-clad': Blinken amid SCS row

Manila: US secretary of state Antony Blinken underscored Washington's "ironclad commitment" on Tuesday to help defend the Philippines in case of an armed attack against its forces after clashes between Chinese and Filipino coast guards in the disputed South China Sea recently turned more hostile. Blinken, the latest high-level official to visit the US treaty ally, met his Philippine counterpart Enrique Manalo Tuesday before separately meeting President Ferdinand Marcos Jr in Manila. Biden will host Marcos and Japanese PM Fumio Kishida in a White House summit in April. The three are likely to discuss growing concerns over aggressive Chinese actions in the South China Sea. "We have a shared concern about the PRC's actions that threaten our common vision for a free, open Indo-Pacific," Blinken said. AP

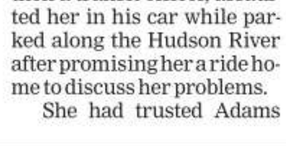
Punjab's 'de-facto CM'? Nawaz chairs Maryam's govt meetings

Lahore: Nawaz Sharif, the supreme leader of PML-N, assumed a "de-facto" role of Punjab chief minister, a post officially held by his daughter Maryam Nawaz, and presided over three administrative meetings of the provincial govt, raising many eyebrows.

Maryam took over as the first woman CM of Pakistan's Punjab province last month.

Sharif, 74, assumed a "de-facto CM role" and issued directions to ministers and officials regarding several infrastructure projects in the province, including the underground train and metro bus, farmers' plight, electric bikes for students and a Ramzan relief package.

However, Nawaz chairing the meetings raised many questions since he holds no official position in either the provincial or federal govt and is officially only a National Assembly member. Presiding over govt meetings as a member of the National Assembly is unprecedented. PTI



Nawaz Sharif issued directions to officials regarding projects in Punjab province, where his daughter Maryam is the CM

Arrest warrants for Imran party leaders

An anti-terrorism court in Pakistan Tuesday issued non-bailable arrest warrants against Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa CM Ali Amin Gandapur and others of Imran Khan's party in a case related to the violence last year. The court sought their appearance on April 2. PTI

Trump ex-aide begins jail time for poll subversion

Peter Navarro, a trade adviser to former President Donald Trump, reported to federal prison in Miami on Tuesday, becoming the first senior Trump administration official to serve time over his role in the effort to subvert the results of the 2020 election.

Navarro, 74, who helped engineer Trump's plans to stay in power after his electoral defeat in Nov 2020, was sentenced to four months in prison in Jan for contempt of Congress after defying a subpoena from the House select committee investigating the Jan 6 riot.

At a news conference, Navarro reprised familiar denunciations of the justice department and the Biden administration. "I'm afraid of only one thing," he told reporters. "I'm afraid for my country, because this — what they are doing — will have a chilling effect on every American, regardless of their party."

Navarro had argued that his case presented novel legal questions about the separation of powers and the scope of executive privilege. But judges were unswayed. NYT

Musk defends drug use, dismisses investor worries

It was raw and occasionally tense. Former TV anchor Don Lemon's wide-ranging, testy interview with Elon Musk was released online on Monday, touching upon topics including politics, particularly the billionaire's recent meeting with Donald Trump; Musk's reported drug use; hate speech on X; and more.

The interview was intended to be the debut episode of a new talk show in a partnership between Lemon and X, but Musk called off the deal a day after filming. The first episode of "The Don Lemon Show" was streamed on YouTube and posted to Lemon's X account.

In the interview, Musk said earlier this month he was having breakfast at a friend's home in Florida when Trump came by. Musk said Trump did most of the talking and that the former president did not ask for money or a donation toward his campaign. Musk also said he would not lend Trump money to pay his legal bills.

AP

Musk's interview was intended to be a debut episode of a talk show in a partnership between Don Lemon and X, but the billionaire called off the deal after filming it

While Musk said he would not donate to any candidate, he said he would consider endorsing one in the final stretches of the race. "I don't know yet; I want to make a considered decision before the election," he said, and noted he was leaning away from President Biden.

Elsewhere in the interview, Musk was adamant he does not abuse drugs and spoke about his prescription for ketamine for a "negative chemical state." He said, "If you've used too much ketamine, you can't really get work done, and I have a lot of work." Asked if his ketamine use could impact investors' perceptions, Musk said: "We had the best-selling car on Earth last year. So from investors' standpoint, if there is something I'm taking, I should keep taking it."

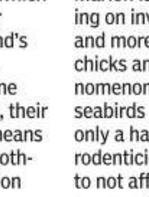
Musk also seemed to skirt questions on whether he had a responsibility to moderate hate speech on X and why certain posts had not been removed. "If something is illegal, we're going to take it down," Musk said. "If it's not illegal, we're putting our thumb on the scale, and we're being censors."

Before the interview was released, the men were at odds over how it went. Lemon said his questions were respectful and covered many subjects.

Musk said Lemon's show lacked originality. "His approach was basically 'CNN, but on social media,' which doesn't work, as evidenced by the fact that CNN is dying." AGENCIES

Sexual assault case filed against New York mayor

A former New York City employee filed suit on Monday accusing Mayor Eric Adams of sexually assaulting her in 1993, when both worked for the municipal transit police bureau, after she went to him seeking help in navigating a hostile office environment. In a 26-page civil complaint, Lorna Beach-Mathura alleged Adams, then a transit officer, assaulted her in his car while parked along the Hudson River after promising her a ride home to discuss her problems.



She had trusted Adams and sought his help because of his role at the time as both a police department officer and leader in the NYPD Guardians Association, a fraternal group advocating equality and fair treatment for Black employees, the suit said.

Adams flatly denied the allegations.

Beach-Mathura said she refused his advances and pulled away her hand when Adams forcibly placed it on his exposed genitals before he masturbated himself to climax and ejaculated on her. He then dropped her off at a subway station. REUTERS

Is that Kate? New blurry video fails to halt royal rumour mill

London: Kate, Britain's Princess of Wales, has been shown looking fit and healthy in the first video taken of her since she underwent surgery two months ago in footage published by the Sun newspaper on its website Monday. Kate, 42, spent two weeks in hospital in Jan after having what her office said was successful, planned surgery for a non-cancerous but unspecified condition.

"Great to see you Kate," said the Sun, alongside images of the princess wearing leggings and a black top. The Sun — a usually pro-royal family publication — said that experts had decried the video as a "perfect answer to trolls". Another newspaper often supportive of the royals, Daily Mail, lauded an "image that will silence the conspiracy theorists".

Social media users, however, remained suspicious of the footage, claiming they were either Kate's body double or were digitally altered.

Getty Images

CLEARING AFFAIR ALLEGATIONS: Rose Hanbury (L), a notable part of William-Kate's social circle, has addressed the swirling rumours regarding an alleged affair with the British prince. Speaking to 'Business Insider', her legal representatives asserted that allegations are 'completely false'

Other than a couple of blurry pictures, she has not been seen in public since appearing with the other members of the royal family on Christmas Day, and in recent weeks social media has been awash with speculation about her health, generating global headlines and rumours.

In the video, which the Sun said was filmed on Saturday, a smiling Kate is seen, casually dressed, walking and carrying shopping bags alongside her husband, heir to the throne Prince William, at a farm shop in Windsor, near to their home.

"I didn't feel like they were hiding who they were. But they didn't quite know how people would react because there has been this build-up about their whereabouts and I got the sense they just wanted to be swift in there," Nelson Silva, 40, who took the video told the Sun. "Kate looked happy and relaxed. They look happy just to be able to go to a shop and mingle. Kate looked relieved like it was a success going to a shop. It felt natural."

The couple's office Kensington Palace had no comment on the video. The palace has said Kate will return to official duties after Easter.

The video comes after Kate issued her first statement earlier this month to thank the public for their messages of support. However, the next day she apologised for causing confusion by editing an accompanying photo of her and the couple's three children, taken by William, after several news organisations withdrew it saying it did not meet their editorial standards. AGENCIES

2ND PHOTO CLICKED BY CATHERINE UNDER SCANNER FOR 'EDITING'

On Monday, Getty Images placed an editorial advisory on a second photo taken by Princess Catherine of Queen Elizabeth II surrounded by her grandchildren and great-grandkids, saying the image had been altered before it was released by the palace. The 2022 picture of the queen flanked by 10 children appears to have multiple inconsistencies: There is a mismatch in the vertical line on the queen's tartan skirt; Prince Louis has been moved back with his head highly lit; digital repetition of Mia Tindall's hair; blurriness near the arm of the settee. Kate confessed last week to digitally altering a photo of her with her children after several agencies recalled the image saying it had been manipulated. Kensington Palace declined to comment

AROUND THE WORLD

Mice are taking over a warming island. Mass pest control is planned

Mice accidentally introduced to a remote island near Antarctica 200 years ago are breeding out of control due to climate change, and they are eating seabirds and causing major harm in a special nature reserve with "unique biodiversity." Now conservationists are planning a mass extermination using helicopters and hundreds of tonnes of rodent poison, which needs to be dropped over every part of Marion Island's 297 square kilometres to ensure success. If even one pregnant mouse survives, their prolific breeding ability means it may have all been for nothing. The Mouse-Free Marion project — pest control on a grand scale — is seen as critical for the ecology of the uninhabited South African territory and the wider Southern Ocean. It would be the largest eradication of its kind if it succeeds. The island is home to globally significant populations of nearly 30 bird species and a rare undisturbed habitat for wandering albatrosses. Anton Wolfaardt, the Mouse-Free Marion project manager, said their numbers have increased hugely, mainly due to rising temperatures from climate change, which has turned a cold, windswept island into a warmer, drier, more hospitable home. Rough estimates indicate there are more than a million mice on Marion Island. They are feeding on invertebrates and, more and more, on seabirds — both chicks and adults. The phenomenon of mice eating seabirds has been recorded on only a handful of islands. The rodenticide has been designed to not affect the soil or water sources. Some animals will be affected at an individual level, but those species will recover.

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INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Elon Musk suggests his use of drugs benefits Tesla investors, saying he takes prescribed ketamine to treat 'negative frame of mind', **INSIDE JACKET**

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