BENNETT, COLEMAN & CO. LTD. | Estd. MDCCCXXXVIII | VOL. 75 NO. 77 | NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024 | PAGES 52 | CAPITAL | INVITATION PRICE ₹7.00; OR *₹11.50 (₹10.50 IN FARIDABAD EDITION) WITH NAVBHARAT TIMES

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

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

Marking first official communication with a Pak PM in years, **US President Joe Biden writes to Shehbaz Sharif** expressing continuous support, says their ties are critical for regional security, P 19

International Court of Justice unanimously orders Israel to take all necessary and effective action **to ensure basic food supplies to Gaza** and halt spreading famine, P 19

Pakistani husband of Seema Haider, who sneaked into India illegally last year and started living with Sachin Meena, **moves Indian court, alleges Seema hasn't divorced him** and her marriage to Sachin is illegal, P 2

Foreign minister S Jaishankar holds talks with his Ukrainian counterpart, Dmytro Kuleba, on efforts for a peaceful resolution of Ukraine's conflict with Russia, reiterates commitment to ramp up cooperation, P 12

Two probes ordered into don-neta Ansari's death

He Had Alleged 'Slow Poison Over 40 Days'

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Lucknow: A day after Mukhtar Ansari died at Banda's Rani Durgavati Medical College, two investigations were ordered on Friday into his sudden death — one by the judiciary and the other by Banda district magistrate — even as the gangster-turned-politician's son Umar repeated his allegation that slow poisoning and medical negligence took his father's life.

Both investigations are standard operating procedure in case of an unusual death of a convict in judicial custody.

Umar's allegation came on a day Ansari's lawyer Randhir Singh Suman filed a plea in Barabanki MP/ MLA court for registration of an FIR, considering Ansari's March 21 petition before the same court as "dying declaration". Ansari had alleged that he had been served food laced with poison in Banda jail. He had filed a similar petition before MP/MLA court in Mau.

Ansari had said he fell critically ill after eating dinner on March 19. He alleged he was being subjected to slow poisoning for 40-odd days, resulting in a precarious health condition and danger to his life.

▶'Autopsy shows...' P 14

DISTS ON ALERT, POLICE CONVOY FOR BODY

- Ansari's **body taken to native Ghazipur from Banda** in long police convoy; **security alert** in Fatehpur, Kaushambi, Prayagraj & Varanasi districts which fall on route
- **Autopsy** done by panel of doctors at Rani Durgavati Medical College in Banda, procedure **videographed**
- SP leader **Akhilesh Yadav** demands **SC-supervised probe; Mayawati** also calls for **high-level inquiry. BJP accuses oppn** of spreading 'communal poison'
- Alka Rai, **wife of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai** who was killed by Ansari in 2005, says **'today feels like Holi for us'**

RAF conducted flag march in Prayagraj on Friday as part of security measures

▶ MUKHTAR'S TOWN IN SHOCK, MARKET SHUT, P 14

Techie, 27, dies in superbike crash in Gurgaon

IIT-Kanpur graduate Rituj Beniwal (27) died on Gurgaon's Golf Course Road early on Friday after his Kawasaki Ninja ZX 10RR bike brushed a divider before colliding with a pole. Such was the impact of the high-speed collision that the body of the IT professional was severed into two parts. P 8

Booze vend opening near school stayed

Delhi HC has stayed opening of a liquor vend close to a girls' school and a gurdwara in Delhi's Mahavir Nagar. HC was surprised to note that authorities granted permission to the vendor to operate from such a "sensitive" location and issued notices to Delhi govt and Delhi civil supplies corporation. P 2

'Harassed' teen ends life in Vizag hostel

A 16-year-old first-year polytechnic diploma student of a private engineering college died by suicide at her hostel in Vizag early Friday, after sending WhatsApp messages in Telugu and English to her sister, claiming she was being sexually harassed by a faculty member and some others. SEE FLAP

Bihar man kills wife, 3 daughters

A labourer, 55, hacked his wife and three minor daughters to death in Bihar's East Champaran late Thursday. A few years ago, he had pushed another daughter to her death from a train in UP. Iddu Mian, who was released about seven months ago from a jail, is on the run. P 13

Elder son may miss funeral due to parole delay

Mau MLA Abbas Ansari, elder son of Mukhtar Ansari, may not be able to attend his father's funeral as parole proceedings in Allahabad high court could not be completed Friday, **reports Deepak Lavania**.

With Supreme Court on holiday due to Good Friday, the 32-year-old's lawyers reached out to the top court's vacation officer for 'urgent hearing'. The last rites are to be conducted Saturday. Abbas is in Kasganj jail in connection with a money laundering case; his brother Umar had earlier claimed a threat to Abbas's life in jail. P 14

6 get life for murder of BSP MLA plotted by Atiq, bro

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: A special CBI court in Lucknow on Friday convicted seven people of the murder of BSP MLA Raju Pal in 2005. The court awarded life terms to six convicts and fined them a total of Rs 11.6 lakh. One convict was not present in court and his sentence will be announced later.

Gangsters Atiq Ahmed and his brother Ashraf, who were murdered in Prayagraj last year, had allegedly planned Pal's murder. Both were named accused in the case.

Pal and two aides were peppered with bullets in Prayagraj in Jan 2005. The murder was the fallout of a political rivalry that began with Pal's 2004 assembly bypoll win from Prayagraj West by defeating Ashraf.

▶'Death for killers', P 14

BYPOLL RIVALRY

- **Raju Pal won assembly bypoll** from Prayagraj West, **defeating Ashraf**, brother of don Atiq Ahmed who had vacated seat on becoming MP
- Pal, along with 2 aides, gunned down on Jan 25, 2005, just **9 days after his wedding**
- **Wife Pooja** contested but defeated by Ashraf. She won in 2007 & 2012 (against Atiq). Now **SP MLA** from Chayal

Ex-IAS named in gurdwara murder FIR

Harbans Singh Chugh, a former IAS officer who heads the Nanakmatta Sahib gurdwara management committee in Uttarakhand, is among five people named in the FIR for the murder of dera kar seva pramukh Baba Tarsem Singh on Thursday, **report Aakash Ahuja and Kalyan Das**.

Sarvjit Singh from Tarn Taran and Amarjeet Singh from UP's Bilaspur have been identified as prime suspects. The other two named are Pritam Singh Sidhu, vice-president of Terai Sikh Mahasabha, and Anoop Singh, chief jathedar of Shri Har Govind Singh Gurdwara at Ratanpura, UP. An SIT member said the assailants have been traced to UP and arrests are in the offing. P 12

DoT issues alert for WA calls from int'l nos.

Alarmed at growing cases of fraud and impersonation directed at mobile phone users, govt has issued an advisory warning citizens against engaging with WhatsApp calls from foreign origin mobile numbers, apart from threats of number disconnection given out in the name of the department of telecom.

The communications ministry said that through such calls, cyber criminals are trying to threaten/steal personal information to carry out cyber-crime and financial fraud. "DoT does not authorise anyone to make such calls on its behalf and has advised people to stay vigilant and not to share any information on receiving such calls." P 13

OPPN CRIES FOUL AS TAX DEPT ISSUES FRESH DEMANDS

'Tax terrorist' govt ignoring flouting of norms by BJP: Cong

Subodh.Ghildiyal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Announcing that it has been slapped with a fresh income tax demand of Rs 1,823 crore, Congress said Modi govt is subjecting it to 'tax terrorism' for minor violations of small amounts and filing formalities to cripple it financially during the Lok Sabha elections, while it has turned a blind eye to identical violations on a large scale by BJP.

AICC treasurer Ajay Maken told a press conference Congress is being made liable for tax on the basis of entries in some 'challaned diaries' allegedly found from Kamal Nath and D K Shivakumar, but govt has not acted on 'Birla-Sahara dairies' which list PM Modi as a purported beneficiary or on 'Yediyurappa diaries' which has names of senior BJP leaders. Dubbing them as "manufactured and planted diaries" through "so-called raids" by "BJP's frontal organisation I-T on third parties", he said many of these parties have got stay orders from courts on account of I-T's vitiated search procedures.

▶'Why is EC mute spectator?', P 15

'Cong had time to respond, chose to stir political row'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The income tax department has completed the reassessment of Congress party's returns for seven years, sources said on Friday, while maintaining that the principal opposition party had been given ample chance to respond and all material related to the exercise was also shared.

"All along they were aware of what was going on, but they chose to move when the deadline was fast approaching and sought to make a political issue out of it," said a source. The reassessment had to be completed by March 31.

The comments came a day after tax authorities issued a demand of over Rs 1,800 crore based on reassessment for four years: 2017-18 to 2020-21.

The entire exercise — based on alleged cash payments which were revealed during searches on entities in Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Gujarat — covered seven financial years starting assessment year 2014-15 (financial year 2013-14).

▶'Principle of natural justice', P 15

▶CPI gets income tax dept notice for ₹11-crore dues, P 15
▶'Disturbed' TMC moves EC over 'selective raids, summons', P 15

RJD gets 26, Cong 9, LF 5 in Bihar MGB seat deal

Patna: RJD-Congress-Left Front Mahagathbandhan (grand alliance) announced on Friday its seat-sharing formula for all 40 Lok Sabha seats in Bihar, with Lalu Prasad's party getting the lion's share of 26, Congress nine and Left parties five, reports **Sheezan Nezami**.

RJD's 26 seats are seven more than it had contested in 2019, when it drew a blank. Congress's nine is unchanged from last time, when it had won just one. Among Left parties, CPI-ML has got three and CPI and CPM one each.

RJD pulled into its kitty much sought-after Purnia seat, which Pappu Yadav had been eyeing ever since he joined Congress recently.

▶Pappu independent, P 17

DANCE of DEMOCRACY

- In a blow to Cong in MP, Kamlesh Shah, sitting MLA and a close aide of ex-CM Kamal Nath, joins BJP
- Miffed with allies, Cong seeks friendly fight in 5 seats in Maharashtra
- Desertions, reluctant candidates hit BRS in T'gana
- Most Kollywood stars shun poll drama

SEE P 17

Exemplary action after BJP ousted: Rahul

Amid Congress's tax woes, Rahul Gandhi issued a stern warning that BJP's ouster from office will be followed by exemplary action that will deter others in future from "disrobing democracy". Rahul tweeted, "And the action will be so strong that no one will again dare to do all this. This is my guarantee." He also posted an old video in which he had warned CBI and ED that they should be mindful of their actions. P 15

Top Oppn Leaders To Join Show Of Strength Against BJP Govt

'Save Democracy' Rally To Protest Against 'Misuse of Agencies', Arrest of CMs

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New Delhi: Top Opposition leaders of the INDIA alliance, including Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, and veterans from 13 parties, are likely to join the Ramlila Maidan rally on Sunday to protest against "misuse of investigative agencies", arrest of chief ministers — the latest being Arvind Kejriwal — and electoral bonds with the slogan, "*Tanashahi hatao, loktantra bachao*" (Remove dictatorship, save democracy)."

Two sitting chief ministers — Punjab's Bhagwant Mann and Jharkhand's Champai Soren — and former chief ministers Akhilesh Yadav from Samajwadi Party; NCP founder Sharad Pawar; Uddhav Thackeray from Shiv Sena (UBT); and Farooq Abdullah from National Conference will also be present at the rally, said AAP Delhi convenor Gopal Rai, briefing the media on Friday.

Kalpana Soren, wife of former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, who was arrested by ED in an alleged land scam case, will also be participating in the rally.

The immediate provocation for the Opposition show of strength and unity has been the arrest of Kejriwal. He was arrested by Enforcement Directorate on March 21 in the money-laundering case linked to the now-scrapped excise policy for Delhi. A court on Thursday extended his ED custody till April 1.

"By participating in the mega rally, people will raise their voice against the dictatorship of the Central govt and arrest of opposition leaders by misusing ED and CBI," said Rai. "Look at the dictatorship! CMs are being sent to jail. First they (BJP) did it in Jharkhand and now a sitting CM in Delhi has been taken to jail," he said.

"This rally is to save democracy and oppose dictatorship which is evident in the way two CMs have been arrested recently, bank accounts of Congress frozen so that our campaign is affected and the issue of electoral bonds," says Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely. His party has tied up with AAP for the Lok Sabha polls in the capital.

Among the other leaders who are likely to turn up for the rally are DMK's Trichy Shiva; TMC MP Derek O'Brien; former deputy CM Tejaswi Yadav of RJD; CPI (M)'s Sitaram Yechury; CPI's D Raja; CPI (ML)'s Dipankar Bhattacharya; and general secretary of All India Forward Bloc G. Devarajan. Mehbooba Mufti of PDP could also join the rally.

AAP has received police permission for the rally. Party functionaries said they were expecting a record turnout as common people have been "hurt" by Kejriwal's arrest. They argued they were expecting a "people's movement" to be sparked by the rally as, irrespective of their ideological beliefs, people were unhappy with the arrest and see it as BJP's vendetta.

To mobilize people, meetings are being held at the ground level and a door-to-door campaign is being carried out. "Invitation letters" are being distributed.

Senior party functionaries said that a message from Kejriwal will be read out at the rally. There is also speculation that the CM's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, who has been active after his arrest and has been holding digital press conferences, will take part in the rally.

BJP pooh-poohed all claims of the rally being a success, saying it will fizzle out just like the party's protests. Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "The AAP-Congress alliance has not been able to take off as workers of both parties are not ready to come together. They had a demonstration scheduled for today (Friday) but it was abruptly called off. The rally will also fizzle out since there is no coordination at the ground level."

Congress has not been able to announce its candidates for three Lok Sabha seats though it has been a month since AAP announced its candidates on the other four, he pointed out.

LIKELY IN ATTENDANCE: (Clockwise from top left) Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Akhilesh Yadav and Sharad Pawar

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'Aashirwad' to CM: Kejriwal's wife seeks support from people

Times News Network

New Delhi: Sunita Kejriwal, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife, launched a WhatsApp campaign, Kejriwal ko Aashirwad, on Friday, urging people to support her husband who is in the Enforcement Directorate custody in a money laundering case linked to the alleged excise policy scam.

Sunita said during a digital media briefing that her husband had challenged the "most powerful, corrupt and dictatorial forces" in the country and appealed to people to send their blessings, prayers or any other message, which she would communicate to Kejriwal. She appealed to the public to send their messages, irrespective of gender, age, financial status and party affiliation.

"Yesterday Arvindji presented his side in the court, the entire country heard it. If you have not, please listen to it once. Whatever he said in front of the court requires a lot of courage. He is a true patriot. This is exactly how our freedom fighters fought the British tyranny," she said. "I have been with him for the last 30 years, patriotism is in his every pore."

Sunita added, "You have called Arvindji your brother, your son, will you not support your brother and your son in this fight? I have full confidence that we will all fight this battle together.

"He will be very happy to read your messages... And to send him a message, you do not need to belong to Aam Aadmi Party, you may be from any party."

Dismissing speculation that Kejriwal's wife could be Delhi chief minister if circumstances arise, a senior AAP leader said, "We have not decided anything like that. Whether CM can continue or not from jail, the Constitution has to decide, not BJP."

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "Instead of apologising to the public for corruption, the party is now trying to portray Arvind Kejriwal's arrest as a sacrifice." He alleged, "By bringing chief minister's wife to the forefront to garner sympathy and holding press conferences devoid of any logic, they are trying to confuse people."

Sachdeva claimed common people were unlikely to message on the WhatsApp numbers, only professionals associated with AAP would. "If Kejriwal is in jail, it is a matter of contemplation how messages will reach him. All this is just a campaign by AAP to stay relevant," he said.

ANI

Sunita Kejriwal said patriotism was in every pore of her husband

Sunita Kejriwal may be eyeing CM's post like Rabri Devi: BJP

Times News Network

New Delhi: Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday likened chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, to former Bihar's chief minister Rabri Devi, and said she was perhaps preparing to hold the post of her husband.

Arvind Kejriwal was arrested by a central probe agency on March 21 in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case.

"The madam you are naming is perhaps preparing to hold the post like Rabri Devi did in Bihar," the senior BJP leader told reporters at the inauguration of the Delhi BJP's election office. He was responding to a question about Sunita Kejriwal's recent press conferences.

With Arvind Kejriwal's wife holding repeated digital press conferences since his arrest, it has led to opposition BJP targeting her as the party's choice for the next CM in case of her husband's resignation. BJP has also been demanding resignation of CM Kejriwal, alleging that he has no moral right left to govern.

Puri alleged, "Arvind Kejriwal has been accusing others of lies and shortcomings from the beginning. When Delhi turned into a gas chamber due to pollution, he blamed it on Punjab, but when his party's govt was formed in Punjab, the situation worsened further."

AAP functionaries did not respond to BJP's allegations.

BJP leader Om Prakash Dhankar also spoke at the event.

HC stays opening of liquor vend close to school & gurdwara

Times News Network

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has stayed the opening of a liquor vend situated close to a girls' school and a religious structure.

HC was surprised to note that authorities granted permission to the vendor to operate from such a sensitive location and issued notices to Delhi govt and Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd.

It sought their stand on granting an L-6 liquor licence to a retail vend located near a local gurdwara and in close proximity to Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya.

Petitioners submitted that the approval for opening the proposed liquor vend had been obtained in gross violation of Delhi Excise Act, 2009, Rule 51 of Delhi Excise Rules, 2010 and Master Plan of Delhi (MPD), 2021.

The court, while issuing notice to all respondents, said, "Till further orders, there shall be a stay on the opening of the liquor vend". The matter was posted for a detailed hearing on May 9. The court's order came after the counsel for govt sought some time to verify the facts and re-inspect the premises.

The petitioner, Gurudwara Guru Arjan Dev Ji, Mahavir Nagar, had moved the court stating that the proposed liquor vend is located at the entrance of the only lane coming to the gurdwara, which is used by devotees and residents of the locality.

The plea said that on various complaints filed by people, Tilak Nagar MLA Jarnail Singh requested Delhi govt not to open a new liquor vend at the proposed shop.

According to the petitioners, taking into consideration the illegal construction and encroachment upon public land allegedly at the proposed liquor vend, MCD has also issued a notice to the vendor over illegal construction, encroachment and opening of the liquor shop at the location. MCD has asked the vendor for all related documents of the property, such as sanctioned building plan/completion plan, regularisation plan, ownership documents and charges deposited by him, including copy of licence or NOCs, etc.

It also highlighted that since the vend is located in close proximity to Sarvodaya Kanya Vidyalaya, local RWA had apprised the principal of the school about the opening of the proposed liquor vend and the principal had also communicated to Delhi govt about the serious safety and security concerns.

Delhi High Court was surprised to note that authorities granted permission to the vendor to operate from such a sensitive location and issued notices to Delhi govt and Delhi State Civil Supplies Corporation Ltd

Atishi claims ED wants to get AAP's poll plan from Kejriwal's phone; BJP says people will not be misled

Times News Network

New Delhi: Enforcement Directorate (ED) is working as BJP's political weapon and wants to get details of AAP's Lok Sabha election strategy by accessing chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's phone, AAP senior leader Atishi alleged on Friday.

Addressing a press conference, Delhi govt minister alleged, "Yesterday at Rouse Avenue Court during the hearing of Arvind Kejriwal's remand, ED's counsel said they need to keep him in custody for a few more days because he hasn't shared his mobile password. This is the same ED that a few days ago said the phone that was with Kejriwal during the implementation of the excise policy in 2021 hasn't been found."

She added, "I want to ask ED why they want to check his recent phone. What do they want to know? What will they find in it? They will find the Lok Sabha strategies, the conversation with INDIA bloc, and the entire campaign plan."

Kejriwal, who is the national convener of Aam Aadmi Party, was arrested by the central probe agency on March 21 in the Delhi excise policy-linked money laundering case and is in its custody till April 1.

ED's insistence to look into Kejriwal's mobile phone that did not exist when the policy was formed and implemented proves that the agency is working as a "political weapon" of BJP, Atishi alleged. The excise policy was implemented in 2021-22 while CM's current phone is just a few months old, she claimed. "They want it because they will find in it details of AAP's Lok Sabha poll strategy, talks with INDIA bloc leaders and information regarding media and social media strategy," she added.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "No matter how hard AAP and its leaders like Atishi try, neither will the people of Delhi be misled nor will there be any misunderstanding about Kejriwal's arrest."

He added, "The public knows well that Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh, Vijay Nayyar, all have been in jail for a long time in the liquor scam, their bail applications have been rejected from trial court to Supreme Court, and now Kejriwal's arrest is the final link in the same scam, not any sacrifice."

Atishi

MHA nod for CBI probe against Jain on extortion complaint by Sukesh

Times News Network

New Delhi: Ministry of home affairs has given approval for a CBI probe against Delhi's former prisons minister Satyendar Jain in a matter under Prevention of Corruption Act. The case pertains to allegations of extortion of Rs 10 crore from Sukesh Chandrashekhar, who is currently lodged in Tihar jail.

Responding to the development, AAP functionary Priyanka Kakkar said, "It should be noted that LG and Centre exercise absolute control over law and order in Delhi. The vindictive and vendetta-filled politics of BJP has now reached such a low that a conman's word is believed and accepted as gospel truth against a person who gave the world-famous mohalla clinic concept to Delhi. Doesn't Sukesh Chandrashekhar know that the law and order of Delhi is completely under Centre?" he said.

There was no response from LG's office on AAP's comments.

CBI had earlier sought sanction of prosecution to probe suspended senior IPS officer Sandeep Goel, IAS officer Mukesh Prasad and some Tihar jail officials, besides Jain. Goel was the then director general, Prisons, and Prasad was his deputy in Tihar jail.

LG Vinai Kumar Saxena had earlier sent CBI's proposal to MHA for granting approval to prosecute Jain under section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act.

The allegations against Jain are of extorting money from "high-profile" prisoners lodged in various city jails during his tenure as jail minister in AAP govt. Jain, a former home minister in Kejriwal govt, was arrested by ED in a money laundering case in May 2022.

Prasad is a promotee IAS and was serving in the rank of an inspector General in jail with Goel as director general. Rajkumar, against whom the sanction was sought earlier, was posted as jail superintendent of central jail number 4 in Tihar prison complex. Kumar reportedly aided the then director general of prisons in extorting money from Chandrashekhar, it has been alleged.

CBI, in its communication, said Jain allegedly "extorted and received Rs 10 crore from Chandrashekar in various tranches between 2018 and 2021, either himself or through his accomplices, as protection money" to help him "live peacefully and comfortably" in jail.

Currently in Mandoli jail, Chandrashekhar was earlier lodged in Tihar and Rohini jail complexes as an undertrial in judicial custody. CBI souces said it was also alleged that a "high-level corruption and extortion racket was being run" by Jain, along with the then director general, the additional inspector general of prisons, and their accomplices.

AAP pointed out that lieutenant governor and Centre exercise 'absolute control' over law and order in Delhi

BJP questions why AAP leaders 'missing' while Kejriwal in jail; party cites health and family reasons

Times News Network

New Delhi: Citing "prolonged absence" of AAP leaders, including Rajya Sabha MPs Raghav Chadha and Swati Maliwal who are said to be abroad, BJP on Friday claimed very few AAP leaders are standing by the chief minister when he is in jail. "After Arvind Kejriwal's remand was extended, the support for him within his own party,seems to be dwindling. Except Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, who fancy themselves as CM of Delhi if Kejriwal continues to be in jail, none of his other acolytes seem to be here, when he needs them the most," BJP IT cell head Amit Malviya claimed in a post on X.

Responding to **TOI** queries, senior AAP functionaries said, "Chadha has undergone an eye surgery to prevent retinal detachment and has been asked to not expose himself to the sun for sometime. He has been in London for sometime now for treatment. It is learnt that the healing process back to normalisaiton may take around three weeks. However, it is not yet known as to how soon he will be returning to India."

Malviya also mentioned reports about the AAP Rajya Sabha MP meeting people inimical to India's interest. "What is interesting is that Parineeti Chopra, who was also in London, has returned (on Thursday), but Chadha hasn't. One would have thought she would have wanted to be around, at a time when he was being operated on. But it looks like she has other important things in mind. Or is the surgery just an excuse to stay away?" he said, while pointing out that Swati Maliwal is also in the US. "Is everyone abandoning the sinking ship?" Malviya questioned.

Maliwal said on X, "Just take some time off IT Cell fake news factory... Sister's treatment is getting completed and I am coming very soon. I will fight against enemies of the country like you from the streets to Parliament... and yes, I have been working with Arvind Kejriwal even before you learnt to say BJP and will continue to do so till my last breath. The boat that you are calling sinking has risen further due to your atrocities. Just like I troubled you for nine years in the women's commission, be ready for the next six years as well! Jai Hind!"

Raghav Chadha

WT.5694.2024

Pak marital battle lands in Indian court

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Noida: Seema Haider's marital discord has followed her from Pakistan to India.

Her Pakistani husband Ghulam Haider moved a city court this week through Momin Malik, an Indian lawyer, accusing Seema and her partner Sachin Meena of cheating and seeking legal proceedings against them. Malik filed the application under the CrPC's Section 156 (3), which allows a magistrate to order an investigation.

Seema, a Karachi resident, sneaked into India illegally with her four children last year to live with Sachin, a grocery store worker in Rabupura. The two claimed to have met while playing PUBG and fallen in love. The two claim to have got married in Kathmandu during an earlier meeting.

Momin alleged Seema had not taken divorce from Ghulam Haider and her marriage with Sachin was not valid. Appearing before additional chief judicial magistrate Pradeep Kumar Kushwaha on Thursday, Momin contended that Seema had mentioned Ghulam Haider as her husband in her bail application after she was arrested for illegally entering India, even though she publicly claimed to have married Sachin. The court, he claimed, has issued a notice to Noida police, asking them to submit a report by April 18.

Seema and Sachin were arrested by Noida police from Haryana's Ballabhgarh on July 3 last year under Section 14 of Foreigners Act and IPC Section 120B (criminal conspiracy). They were granted bail on July 7. Sachin's father was also arrested along with them and granted bail later.

Momin argued Seema, according to the terms and conditions of bail order, should not be involved in any criminal activity. "However, she has been frequently making controversial statements, creating a communal divide. Besides, her second marriage is not valid as she has not taken divorce from Ghulam Haider. When Seema was arrested, she identified herself as Ghulam Haider's wife. She is now claiming she married Sachin on March 13, 2023 in Nepal. If she had married Sachin, why did she use Ghulam Haider's name in the bail plea?" he argued.

Momin reiterated that she cheated her husband, lied to court in the bail application and has been illegally living in India. "Hence, an FIR should be registered against her and her associates on charges of cheating and criminal conspiracy."

AP Singh, counsel for Seema and Sachin, said Momin's application in court was a publicity stunt. "The CrPc does not permit a Pakistani citizen to file a case in India. Seema has adopted Hinduism and married Sachin. In Pakistan, there is a tradition of oral talaq (triple talaq), and she was divorced from her husband," he said.

Asked why she mentioned Ghulam Haider as her husband in the bail plea, Singh said Seema and Sachin were in police custody at the time. "The accused are not solely responsible for the paperwork. Police or clerks may have written something without checking facts," he claimed.

Kislay Panday, a Supreme Court lawyer, said Seema and Sachin are adults and are living together on their own will. "The CrPc does not allow a foreign citizen to file a case in India in normal circumstances. For a trial, the complainant needs to either appear in court in person or appoint an authorised representative other than his lawyer. It is a very complex process. Ghulam Haider's case may not stand ground," he said.

File photo

Seema, a Karachi resident, sneaked into India illegally with her four children last year to live with Sachin, a grocery store worker

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IS calls for massacre by 'lone wolves', agencies on alert

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New Delhi: Intelligence agencies are keeping a close watch on IS-inspired modules after the core Islamic State (IS-Central) called upon "lone wolves" from across the globe to execute massacre of "infidels" to commemorate the 10-year anniversary of declaration of the "Caliphate" by ISIS which apparently happened in Ramadan of 2014.

Calling upon Muhajirin (foreign fighters) from all countries to join their outfit, Islamic State spokesman Abu Hudhayfah al-Ansari released a statement claiming how the establishment of the Caliphate was a turning point in history and how they had expanded globally, up till Mozambique in Africa.

Though the roots of ISIS were founded in 1999 by a Jordanian extremist, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, it was only in 2014 that ISIS renamed itself as Islamic State and declared Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi as their Caliph.

In his latest speech, Ansari praised the Moscow terror attack and asked Muslims to migrate to join Islamic State members in affiliates around the world. "Islam will eventually prevail in the world as foretold by the Prophet," he added. In a 41-minute-long audio speech called "By Allah, this matter will be made possible," he also slammed terror outfit al-Qaeda for straying away from their so-called "path".

Agencies know little about al-Ansari apart from the fact that he took on the post as spokesperson in August last year, replacing Abu Omar al-Muhajir

Agencies know little about al-Ansari apart from the fact that he took on the post as spokesperson in August last year, replacing Abu Omar al-Muhajir following his arrest.

In his previous speech in Jan, Ansari had said: "Monotheism is the goal, and jihad is the path…the war with the Jews will not end in a one-state solution or two-state solution, as nationalists believe. It is a religious ideological war that will continue till we kill their antichrist."

Ansari had gone on to suggest that the infidels may be blown up with explosives, burned with incendiary bombs, shot with bullets, run over with buses and their necks slaughtered with knives. As his speech has particular mentions of Christians and Jews, the agencies have asked the local law enforcement units to step up vigil around Jewish establishments, community centres/Chabad Houses in Delhi and Mumbai.

"Keeping in view the present scenario, adequate arrangements may be made by the local police. Presence of uniformed officers at major gatherings and cultural sites may be boosted to prioritise public safety, exercising an abundance of caution. To enhance security, religious centres may be advised to restrict access to their premises, ensure the functionality of security cameras and alarms, conduct perimeter sweeps and screen mail and packages," an internal note reads.

Return Of Life & Light Near For Mughal-Era Roshanara Bagh

MCD Says Most Of Garden Revamp Work, Started A Year Ago, Is Done

Vibha.Sharma
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New Delhi: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) claims to have completed the majority of beautification and revival of the Mughal-era Roshanara Bagh in north Delhi that it began almost a year ago.

The work included the restoration of 3.8-acre lake after desilting, removal of dry leaves, making embankments and stone pitching. The total area of Roshanara Bagh is 57 acres.

"We have also revived the island in the middle of this waterbody planting many trees and making bamboo huts, giving it the look of an oasis. As of now, filling the lake up with water is on and once it crosses the level of 4 feet, we will put a floating fountain in it to make it more attractive," an official said.

For the irrigation and filling up of the lake, an STP with a capacity to generate 2.25 million litres a day has been provisioned. "The water is supplied through pipelines. Some electrical work to use the water for irrigation of the garden in the future is pending and will be completed soon," the official added.

A walking track of 1.3 km has been laid around the lake with a green belt, sitting area, aesthetic lights and other features. Work related to installing fencing and lamp posts around the lake is on. "People can come for a walk around the waterbody and engage in recreational activities. We aim to plant cherry blossom trees around the lake as suggested by the lieutenant governor and have requested the forest department to provide 100 saplings," the official said.

Photos: Piyal Bhattacharjee

DONNING A FRESH LOOK

MCD claims to have completed most of the beautification and restoration work at Roshanara Bagh

WHAT'S NEW

- Revamp includes **proper revival of a lake over 3.2 acres** after desilting, stone pitching, cleaning green waste, etc
- **Island in the middle of the lake restored,** two bamboo huts developed
- Concrete steps at some places around the lake where **boating facility may be developed in future**
- **Around 1.3km of walking track** around the lake with aesthetic lights, green belt and sitting area
- Placement of **mobile toilets**, installation of **apparatus for children to play with**
- Tree pruning done
- **Provision for parking** 30-40 vehicles created

IN PROGESS

- Process of filling the lake using newly constructed STP of 2.3 MLD capacity
- Uniquely designed gazebo
- A floating fountain to be placed in the lake once the water level reaches 4 feet
- Fencing and lamp posts

IN STORE

- MCD aims to plant cherry blossoms around this lake
- Seasonal saplings will be planted thrice a year

The civic body aims to start boat rides and a cafeteria. The entire project is being implemented using funds received through the Centre's AMRUT scheme.

In 2022, LG VK Saxena asked for the restoration of the lake and diversion of water from neighbouring areas that are prone to flooding and waterlogging such as Roshanara Road, Kamla Nagar, Malkaganj, through pipelines, if the STP water falls short of requirement.

The civic body began work soon, cleaning the lake of weeds. Thereafter, work on the STP started to fill the lake and irrigate the rest of the garden. This was followed by beautification work. MCD planted saplings, flowering plants and shrubs. Now, a decision has been taken to plant seasonal flowering plants thrice in a year.

"Tree pruning has also been done and branches that were obstructing the newly installed lights have been trimmed. At places, old and dried trees have been revived by planting seasonal flowering plants. Similarly, champa trees, which were on footpaths, have been transplanted to other parts of the park," the official said.

"We have even installed a variety of swings for children.... Bamboo huts will also be made in the parks. We have also made provision for washrooms near the kids' playing area. To make sure people can park their vehicles easily, we have created a space near the main entrance where 30-40 four wheelers can be parked at a time," the official added.

How cops played cat & mouse with Mukhtar Ansari

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New Delhi: The winter had almost arrived in 2009 when Delhi Police's Special Cell was ordered to crack down on the criminal empire of UP's mafia don Mukhtar Ansari. In a chilling move, Delhi cops booked Ansari and accomplices under stringent MCOCA.

Delhi Police's move had puzzled many at that time. But there was apparently an interesting rationale behind the action, sources said on Friday, a day after Ansari died of an alleged heart attack at a jail in Uttar Pradesh.

An intelligence agency had at that time flagged the mysterious disappearance of case-related documents, including original FIRs pertaining to Ansari from UP courts' record rooms, suggesting that Ansari, who was in judicial custody at the time, would soon walk out of jail.

Ansari was in prison then in connection with the horrific killing of BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai in 2005. Over 400 bullets were fired by Ansari's men, including Munna Bajrangi, who even cut off a portion of the hair off Rai's head as a mark of their supremacy.

Delhi cops were brought into the picture probably to ensure Ansari remained behind bars. Bail was difficult under MCOCA. But after registration of an FIR in Nov 2009, even Delhi cops took almost six months to get their hands on the gangster. Ansari was arrested and taken on 14 days remand for interrogation only in May 2010, said an official.

Ansari died of an alleged heart attack at a jail in Uttar Pradesh

Five months later, Special Cell tightened its noose around Ansari's Man Friday, Bajrangi, and arrested him in Oct 2010 for extorting money from a south Delhi businessman, Ashok Tebriwal, an officer recalled.

In Nov 2010, Delhi Police chargesheeted Ansari a year after it kicked off its probe against him. Ansari, an MLA from Mau in UP at the time, was accused of running an organised crime syndicate involved in contract killings and extortion. "We had also listed 45 cases pending against him in different parts of the country," an investigator recalled.

In May 2012, charges were framed against Ansari, Bajrangi and others and the trial commenced. However, scenes changed in less than a year later when Ansari's arch rival and another UP-based mafia don Brijesh Singh was booked by Special Cell under MCOCA in Feb 2013.

It's unclear what transpired next but a court dropped MCOCA charges against Singh in Feb 2014. In Feb 2016, a court acquitted Ansari from MCOCA as well, leaving many puzzled.

Kavitha to court: Tihar Jail not allowing home food, mattress

Times News Network

New Delhi: A court on Thursday asked the Tihar Jail authorities to respond to a plea by BRS leader K Kavitha alleging that despite a court order, she is not allowed access to certain items, including home-cooked food and mattress, in prison.

Kavitha, an accused in a money laundering case linked to the alleged Delhi Excise Policy scam, claimed that her request for home-cooked food, medicines, pen, paper, clothes, bed-sheet, books, blanket, jewellery and other items were not adhered to "in complete defiance of the (court) order dated March 26".

The court of special judge Kaveri Baweja scheduled the matter for further hearing on Saturday. On March 26, the same court, while hearing an application of the BRS leader, had directed the jail superintendent to permit her to have these items.

The new application alleged that she was not even allowed to carry spectacles and *japa mala* (prayer beads) to the cell. Kavitha argued that the court had allowed her access to these items as she was suffering from various health ailments.

On March 26, the same court also remanded her in judicial custody till April 9. Enforcement Directorate arrested Kavitha on March 15 and got her custody till March 23. It was extended by three days on March 23.

Claiming that Kavitha was a key conspirator and beneficiary of the scam, the special counsel for ED, Zoheb Hossain, had submitted that Kavitha was "highly influential" and there was every likelihood that she would influence the witnesses and tamper with the evidence, if released.

'Chachu' behind rape and murder of 5-yr-old

Abhay@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The five-year-old girl who was allegedly raped and murdered in Bawana fondly called her assaulter "chachu".

Nine years ago, Totan Lohar came to Delhi looking for work and frequented the tea shop run by the girl's parents. He saw her being born and often played with her.

Police were stunned at the brutality he inflicted upon the child. Having worked in different factories for years, he knew they would all be shut for Holi and thus took the girl to one

Police were stunned at the brutality he inflicted upon the child. Having worked in different factories for years, he knew they would all be shut for Holi and thus took the girl to one.

During interrogation, he blamed alcoholism for his actions.

Police sources said the accused knew the girl for 3-4 years as he used to come to her parents' small tea shop. "The girl used to remain with her parents in the daytime and was known to the accused. On the day of the incident, he took the girl away on some pretext. As the kid knew Lohar, she also went with him. He raped and murdered her," a police source said.

Investigators suspect that the accused had planned the crime as he had kidnapped the child the day before Holi, knowing that factories in the area would be shut for at least two days. So, the movement of people in the area would be less and no one would hear her scream. He had chosen an abandoned factory as the location beforehand.

"He murdered her to hide his identity or because he suspected that the girl would have informed her parents about him," the source said. Police are probing whether the accused had his eyes on the girl for a long time. They are also investigating whether he had been luring her with candies.

After the crime, Lohar remained in the area, then took a train the next morning. "The whole sequence of events looks like it was a planned thing. He knew where to commit the crime, how to escape," an officer said.

When police caught him at Asansol station, he denied committing any crime and claimed that he was going to his native place. However, when police presented him with the evidence of his involvement in the crime, he broke down and confessed. "He initially said he was drunk and lost control but his testimony being probed," the officer said.

So far, police have not found any past criminal record against Lohar, but officers may reach out to West Bengal Police to check his records.

3 gang members held for stealing cash in N Delhi

Times News Network

New Delhi: With the arrest of three suspects, including a woman, Delhi Police claimed to have busted a gang targeting businessmen and collection agents in north Delhi.

While one member of the gang provided information about the businessmen carrying cash, another posed as an e-rickshaw driver, and their accomplice women would steal the money and vanish, a senior police officer said.

On March 6, Sahil Kumar (30) complained that Rs 5 lakh he collected in Chandni Chowk for his employer were stolen after he boarded an e-rickshaw which had three women in the back and two men, including the driver, in the front. Upon exiting at Nishad Raj T-Point, he found that cash in the bag was missing.

A team under SHO (Kotwali) Jatan Singh analysed the footage of over 150 CCTV cameras and identified driver Shyam, who had a prior theft case, said Manoj Meena, DCP (North).

After the driver was traced, he led cops to his associates. Rohit (22) was the first one to be arrested on March 23 from Raghubir Nagar and he confessed to tipping off his associates about the victim carrying money. Based on his information, Pooja (28) and Akshay (27) were nabbed from a rented accommodation in Mangolpuri, the DCP said.

POLICE SAY

Shyam offered the victim a ride in his e-rickshaw, which already had his associates waiting. The women concealed the target's bag and stole the cash before fleeing

On the day of the incident, six gang members, including three women, were present. Rohit informed his accomplices about Sahil carrying money in the bag. Posing as driver, Shyam offered the victim ride in his e-rickshaw, which already had his associates waiting. The women in burqa-like clothes concealed the victim's bag and stole the cash before fleeing, police said.

"Notably, the gang members avoided conversation during the ride to appear as regular passengers," the officer said, adding that Pooja has a criminal history involving similar thefts. "She used to wear a burqa to cover the victims' bags and steal the valuables from them," added the police officer.

Cops have recovered Rs 2 lakh from the accused and investigations continue as police look for the remaining gang members.

Another PIL in HC seeks removal of Kejriwal from CM post

New Delhi: A plea seeking the removal of Arvind Kejriwal from the post of chief minister has been filed in the Delhi high court. Kejriwal was arrested by ED in the liquor policy case.

The plea was moved by Vishnu Gupta, national president of Hindu Sena, who stated that Kejriwal had been arrested in connection with an offense under PMLA and, thus, was guilty of breach of the constitutional trust reposed in him by the Constitution of India.

"The parliamentary democracy is the basis feature of the Indian Constitution, and the chief minister, being the head of the state govt, is the repository of constitutional responsibilities and trust. If the chief minister acts in a manner that offends the rule of law and commits breach of the constitutional trust reposed in him," the plea states.

"In that eventuality, his dismissal from the office of chief minister is inhibited by Article 164 of the Constitution of India. Therefore, Respondent No. 4 is guilty of breach of constitutional trust for the allegation of corruption and consequently his arrest." TNN

WT.5694.2024

In narrow alleys of Old Delhi, one of the last mesaharatis carries on the tradition

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New Delhi: In the stillness of the night, as the clock strikes 3, the narrow alleys of old Delhi's Matia Mahal rouse themselves with each high-pitched wake-up call sounded by Nadeem, one of the last of the city's mesaharatis.

During the holy month of Ramzan, Muslims wake up before dawn to prepare for a day of fast, or roza. The mesaharatis, or as locals of the Walled City call them, sehriwale, go from lane to lane beating a dhol and calling families by their names. Nadeem, however, doesn't use the dhol any longer, saying he feels awkward using the drum.

Nadeem's call to the elders of the homes by name serves as a gentle reminder for the people to rise and have the suhoor (pre-dawn meal), generally called sehri. "*Yeh neki ka kaam hai. Meri wajah se logo ka roza safal ho jaata hai. Isse zyada aur kya chahiye?*" asked a modest Nadeem, whose official name is Kalimuddin.

Nadeem, now 28 years old, has been a dawn caller since he was six. "My grandfather, Imamuddin, used to take me with him. My father, Alimuddin, didn't, but doing this good deed fills me with contentment. I stopped after my grandfather died in 2004, but some years later, the people asked me to start the work again. I thought about it and realised there's much more to it than waking the people up, so I decided to resume the tradition."

The origin of the mesaharati tradition is disputed but historians date it back 600 years to the 15th century. Nadeem notes how things have changed. "People stay up late these days and rely on alarm clocks to wake them up" he murmured.

Being a mesaharati is not an easy task. One has to remember who lives where and on which floor. In the lanes of Matia Mahal, more families live in a building than the number of floors it has. "I go around the streets calling the names twice, first at 3am and then at 4.15am. The first reminder is to wake up and start cooking, the second to be done with eating," said Nadeem. "I also have my job in the daytime, so this allows me only 3-4 hours of sleep during the Ramzan month." He obviously revels in the toil that comes with being a mesaharati.

Himanshu Chauhan

DAWN CALLER: Nadeem is loved by kids who stay up for him at night

Digital clocks and mobile phones have almost rendered the mesaharati tradition obsolete. Today, the dawn caller is so rare that when **TOI** contacted the office of the imam of Jama Masjid, it couldn't confirm the name of even one. So asked about his motivation, Nadeem brightly smiled and said, "I still do it because it makes me happy. Sometimes the neighbourhood kids join me and the smile on their faces makes it worth it. Sometimes people tell me that I helped them wake up and they thank me."

Once popular for his cricketing skills in the neighbourhood, Nadeem is now known for holy work. And his way of making the wakeup call is different from other mesaharatis. "Instead of using dhol, Nadeem uses the names of elders, which is respectful. Children loves him and stay up for him at night," said Mohd Wasim, a local.

Nadeem is unmarried but hopes that his children will carry on the tradition. "No one wants to do this work any longer. The young people feel embarrassed," said Nadeem. "And the work doesn't provide you with a fortune or gives you prestige. It's a good deed one does for others. The new generation sees it as something unnecessary, but what they don't know is that it helps people come closer to Allah."

The mesaharatis has been around for generations. Although the loud noise of speakers and digital alarms is posing a threat to the fading melody of the sehriwale, there is something only mesaharati can do — in the quiet moments before dawn, his voice resonates as he ushers people into a new day, underlining the testament to the spirit of community and faith in the city's historic heart.

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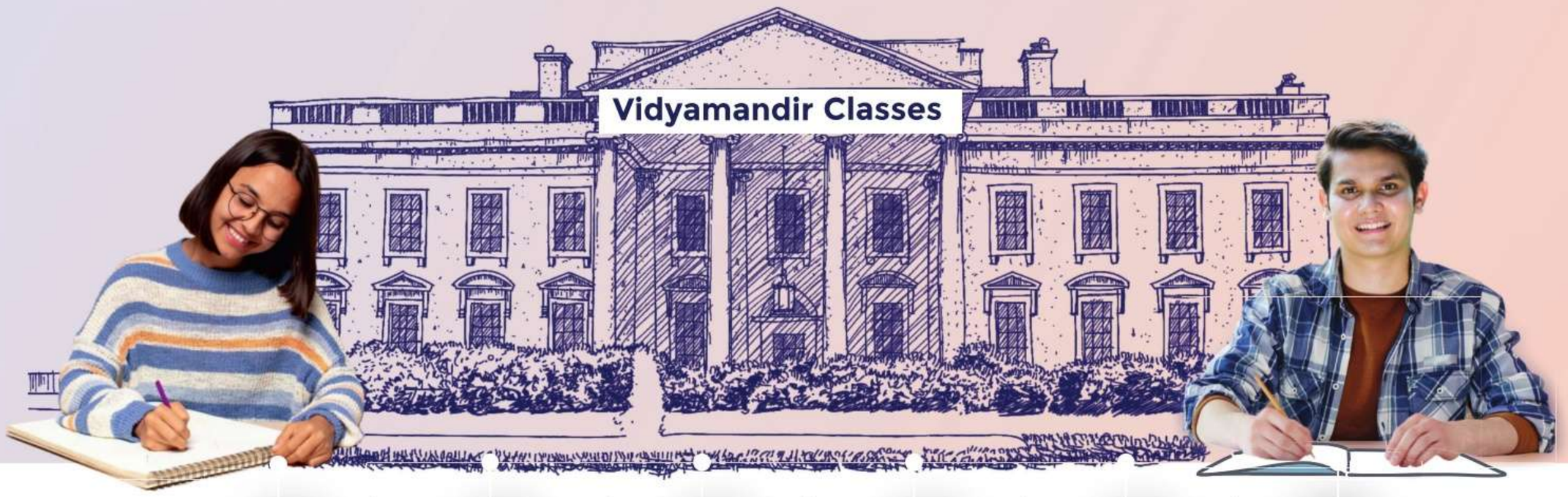

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4 of family from Meerut die in e-way accident

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: Four members of a family from Meerut died in an accident in Nuh's Pingawan on the Gurgaon-Dausa stretch of Delhi-Mumbai Expressway as the driver lost control of the car, which smashed into a divider and overturned, on Thursday morning.

Two of the three other passengers in the Ford Ecosport suffered injuries and are critical.

Police said the family from Meerut was headed to MP's Ujjain on a pilgrimage and had left their home in Behsuma in the early hours of Thursday.

Around 7am, they had reached Jhimravat village near Pingawan on the Gurgaon-Dausa stretch of the expressway when the car's tyre burst.

"Deepanshu who was driving the car lost control over it when the tyre burst. The car overshot the divider and breached the safety railing before overturning a few times and coming to a halt in the open area next to the road. The car was badly damaged," said inspector Kuldeep Singh of Pingawan police station.Passersby rescued those injured and alerted the authorities. All occupants of the car were rushed to SHKM Medical College and Hospital in Nalhar.

"Anita (44), a housewife, died during treatment. Anita's 19-year-old son Sambhav, a student, and his cousins Deepanshu (29), an employee with a private company, and 12-year-old Piyush died on the spot," the inspector said.

He added that Pushpa (34) and Himanshu (24) are in the ICU, and Geetanshi (17) is stable.

Cops said the autopsy was carried out at Al Afia General Hospital in Nuh's Mandikhera, and the bodies were handed over to the family in Meerut. The reports are awaited.

On a complaint by a family member, police on Thursday registered a case under IPC sections 304-A (causing death due to rash or negligent act) and 337 (causing injuries due to rash or negligent act) and 279 (rash driving on a public way).

No one is named in the complaint.

Warmest day yet of season, rain expected this evening

New Delhi: The daytime temperature soared further making Friday this year's warmest day till now. However, under the influence of western disturbance, several parts Delhi saw very light rain to drizzling towards late evening along with gusty winds which bought the temperature down quickly.

Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has issued a yellow alert for very light rain on Saturday evening along with cloudy sky.

On Friday, the maximum temperature was recorded at 37.8 degrees Celsius, five notches above normal – highest this year, against 37 degrees Celsius (second highest) a day earlier.

The minimum temperature was recorded at 20.5 degrees Celsius, two notches above normal against 21.2 degrees Celsius a day earlier.

"Due to a fresh western disturbance, several areas of the capital saw strong gusty winds along with very light rain to drizzling in some areas towards late evening. There are chances of very light rain on Saturday as well," said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist, IMD. TNN

2 motorcycle riders hurt in collision in W Delhi

New Delhi: Two motorcycle riders were injured, one of them critically, on Thursday night when a car driven by a 27-year-old man, allegedly under the influence of alcohol, collided with them on Tilak Nagar flyover in west Delhi. No arrest has been made so far as the results of the errant driver's alcohol test were awaited, police said.

After receiving a PCR call around 11.30 pm about the accident, a police team rushed to the spot where the car was found rammed into the motorcycle and the injured, Paras (19) and Manpreet (21), were taken to a hospital, a senior police officer said.

Prima facie, car driver Harkirat, a resident of Tilak Vihar, was found in a drunk condition due to which he had lost control of his vehicle, the officer said, adding, "The impact of the collision had been such that the two-wheeler was found in a mangled condition with its damaged parts stuck on the car's front".

"While Manpreet is stated to be stable, Paras, the pillion driver, has sustained grievous injuries and is said to be in a critical condition," added the officer. TNN

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7-year-old boy dies after lintel collapses in Shahdara, 2 held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A 7-year-old boy died after the lintel of an under-construction building collapsed on him in Farsh Bazar area of Shahdara. The building owner and the contractor have been arrested, police said.

The minor's family was present at the construction site when the incident took place on Wednesday morning. In his complaint, the victim's father Jagat, who worked as a mason, stated that his family of five had been residing in a tarpaulin shelter within the plot for the past 20 days.

"When we were preparing for laying the lintel, I had alerted the builder regarding the inadequate strength of the setting for any accident that could take place as my family had been living under it. I had requested for a safer arrangement for my family," Jagat said.

> **VICTIM'S FATHER SAYS**
> **When we were preparing for laying the lintel, I had alerted the builder regarding the inadequate strength of the setting for any accident that could take place**

Speaking to **TOI**, the deceased minor's family, who had migrated from Tikamgarh to the city, recounted the harrowing scene of rescuing their child from the debris. "Around 10 am, the lintel setting gave way, causing the debris to collapse on their child, Bunty, who had entered the area. Upon hearing the commotion, I rushed to the scene along with five others and started to dig through the rubble. I saw the lifeless hand of my son and pulled him out," he said.

"The child had been brought in unconscious and was declared dead on arrival. Based on the statement of the family, a case was registered under sections of 304A (negligence) and 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing buildings)," said Surendra Choudhary, DCP (Shahdara)

The body was shifted to the mortuary and handed over to the family after conducting the post-mortem examination, the DCP added.

"We had been working day and night, taking up different construction projects so my child could have a better life in the city. After performing the last rites, our family made the decision to pack up our bags and return to our village. The contractor even offered us money, just because we are poor, how can that compensate for our loss?" said Jyoti, the boy's mother.

IIT grad dies in Ggn accident, high-speed crash severs body

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: A 27-year-old IIT-Kanpur graduate met with a fatal accident on Golf Course Road in the early hours of Friday. His Kawasaki Ninja ZX 10RR bike brushed a divider before colliding with a pole near DLF Phase 2 metro station. Due to the high-speed collision, Rituj Beniwal's body was severed in two parts and his bike mangled, cops said.

Rituj graduated in MTech from IIT-Kanpur in 2020 and was working as a module lead with Logic Fruit Technologies, an IT solutions firm, in Sector 30. He was staying in a rented flat with two friends in Sushant Lok 1.

The accident happened at 6.10am on Friday. "Rituj was an avid biker and loved riding his Kawasaki. He went out on a bike ride every Sunday. He left the flat around 6am on Friday as it was a holiday. We were asleep at the time. We came to know about the accident at 8am when police came to our house," his flatmate Shantam Sharma said.

Shantam and another flatmate, Rijak Khanuja, went with the police team to the accident spot. "We were also shown CCTV footage of the accident, which clearly shows no other vehicle was involved. Rituj's bike went out of control and brushed against the divider on its own, hitting a pole. The impact hurled one part of the bike around 200 metres across the road," Shantam said.

According to police, after the impact with the divider, the bike slanted and skidded on the shrubs of a green belt abutting the road before crashing into the electricity pole. Rituj's body had already been severed by the thick metal cables installed on the divider.

"It appears like Rituj lost control of the bike due to speeding. He died on the spot. There were a few cars on the road at the time of the accident, but the bike or its debris didn't harm other motorists," inspector Shahid Ahmad said.

Police initiated proceedings under CrPc Section 174 (investigation into cause of suspicious or unnatural death) and sent the body for autopsy. No case has been registered yet as Rituj's family didn't file a police complaint. His body was handed over to his family. In the wake of the accident, police issued a statement advising people to strictly adhere to speed limits while driving on city roads.

REMEMBERING THE CRUCIFIXION

Rajesh Mehta

A SOLEMN OCCASION: People offer prayers on Good Friday at Sacred Heart Cathedral

In drugs case, court slams IO, says leaving out big fish

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A court has called for action against an investigation officer (IO) over the release of a drug supplier while framing charges against three accused in a case under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act. The IO is leaving a big fish and catching only small ones, it observed.

"IO, being the law protector, should not be allowed to become a crime promoter, as he is leaving the big fish, i.e. the main culprit who is supplying the contraband, but only catching the small fish, i.e. the delivery boys, who are delivering the contraband," said the court of special judge (NDPS) Ekta Gauba Mann.

The court framed charges against three accused Shahban, Chand Babu and Anita alias Kallo under NDPS Act, noting that there are allegations of recovery of 2kg heroin from Shahban and that of 89 gram heroin from Anita.

The court also sought an action-taken report through the special CP (crime) against the investigating officer within a month from March 27.

The court stated that it was strange that the IO himself had moved an application on Jan 13, 2023 before the predecessor court for release/discharge of accused Farman Ali, who was released from custody by the court. "On the verbal inquiry of the IO in the open court made on March 12, 2024, IO ASI Naresh Kumar has given no justification for arresting some of the accused persons on the basis of disclosure of the co-accused in the present case, of seeking release of main accused Farman Ali, the alleged supplier of the contraband, and of not investigating accused Rahees alias Mufeed, the head racketeer," the judge pointed out.

> **IO, being the law protector, should not be allowed to become a crime promoter, as he is leaving the big fish, i.e. the main culprit who is supplying the contraband, but only catching the small fish, the court said**

According to the prosecution, at the instance of the secret informer on Nov 5, 2022, Shahban was caught on Rani Jhansi Road. Later, Anita alias Kallo was arrested and 89 gram heroin/smack and Rs 1,80,750 were found on her.

The court said there were allegations of criminal conspiracy against Shahban, Anita alias Kallo and Chand Babu about the supply of 500 grams of heroin by Shahban to Anita at the behest of Chand Babu. "Hence, Shahban and Anita alias Kallo be charged for the offences punishable under sections 21 and 29 of NDPS Act and Chand Babu be charged for the offence punishable under Section 29 of the Act," the court concluded.

Cops arrest 33 criminals from birthday party

New Delhi: Delhi Police raided a birthday party thrown by a history sheeter on Thursday at a banquet hall in Ashok Vihar, apprehending 33 criminals.

Police received information that Sunny, a history sheeter with the Bindapur police station, was organising a birthday party at a banquet hall with criminals carrying illegal arms and ammunition, might attend the party.

A officer said multiple teams were formed and conducted a joint raid on the banquet hall. "We held 33 criminals, five of whom were carrying illegal arms and knives. Remaining 28 criminals were apprehended under preventive sections of the CrPC. Additionally, 70 other people were detained at the venue under the provisions of the Delhi Police Act," the officer added. TNN

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तुम रच्छक काहू को डर ना ।।

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A prayer meeting to honour her memory will be held at Chinmaya Mission, 89 Lodhi Road, New Delhi 110003.
Sunday, 31st March 2024 | 11:30 am to 12:30 pm

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Prayer Meeting
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Gauri Mahajan D/o Ashwani Kumar Mahajan on Tuesday, 26th March 2024.

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You were abundance of talent and made us proud of your achievements.
You are in our thoughts every moment and your presence continues to surround us. You are loved beyond measure, you will always be remembered every single moment with silent tears.

Prayer meeting in memory of Loving Gauri Mahajan, will be held on Saturday, 30th March 2024, from 4: 00 PM to 5:00 PM at Sri Sathya Sai International Centre, Pragati Vihar, Bhishma Pitamah Marg, Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110003.

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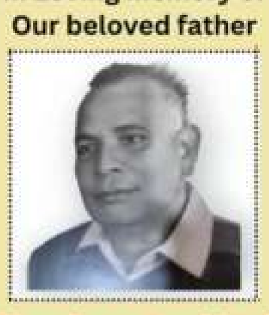

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A delectable crime comedy

CINEMA OF THE WEEK

Crew (Crime, Comedy) ★★★½
Cast: Tabu, Kareena Kapoor Khan, Kriti Sanon, Rajesh Sharma, Pooja Bhamrrah, Saswata Chatterjee
Direction: Rajesh A Krishnan
Duration: 1 hour 58 minutes
Language: Hindi (U/A)

■ *Circumstances lead three hustlers to a gold smuggling racket. It's all fun and games until conscience comes calling.*

Girls gotta have some fun and Bollywood is finally listening.

Co-workers Geeta Sethi (Tabu), Jasmine Kohli (Kareena Kapoor Khan) and Divya Rana (Kriti Sanon) serve looks and then some hospitality to the passengers of Kohinoor airlines. The undisputed drama queens have their own battles to fight and lies to hide. Nothing unites employees more than their collective misery and that forges an unlikely bond between the three air hostesses. When they discover that their debt-ridden airline is on the verge of bankruptcy, the women are compelled to seek desperate measures for survival. Necessity is the mother of invention and sometimes, even crime.

Crew has a smooth take-off boasting of a terrific first half and a bumpy landing. The fast-paced comic thriller entertains at all times even when the climax gets too convenient, ditzy or far-fetched. The heist bit isn't clever and doesn't pretend to be clever either, which works. Humour stems from the characters' unabashed, unapologetic approach to life without thinking it through. Their plans are as effective as Vasco Da Gama ki gun (of *Andaz Apna Apna*) and yet they exude the style and attitude of ramp models. The sheer obliviousness evokes laughter as you submit yourself to their world of ambition, fading vanity, and delusion.

Caught in a crossfire between needs, wants and morals, despite its frothy exterior, *Crew* has an interesting take on the upper middle class and their relationship with money, ethics and a dead-end job that enslaves them for life. '*Adarshon se bill nahi bharte*', Geeta reminds herself.

Speaking of the ladies, *Crew's* leading actresses are in their 30's, 40's and 50's respectively and casting hasn't looked this fun for an Indian all-female heist film in a long time. Beyond the organic age inclusivity, the story doesn't digress from the ladies even with men as entertaining as Diljit Dosanjh and Kapil Sharma around. Kulbhushan Kharbanda also features in a special appearance and none of the male characters are inconsequential despite their brief screen time as seen in most chick flicks.

While all three bring their A game, Tabu and Kareena exude bonafide movie star energy to show how it's done. Diljit was right when he said, '*Hogi Rihanna, hogi Beyonce, sadi ta ae he hai, Kareena*'. Bebo oozes oomph and substance as a hustler who conceals her loneliness. Torn between responsibilities and desires, Tabu is terrific. The two are electrifying on screen with characters distinctly written for each. The two even crack age-related jokes that we are sure resonates with them. Kriti adds to the chutzpah and has great chemistry with Diljit. The latter makes a charming impression. He gives the film its best laugh-out-loud moment when he asks Kriti, "*Tumne mujhe instagram pe follow back kyu nahi kiya?*"

If you are looking for some light-hearted madcap comedy, *Crew* is worth diving into – with all its frivolity, humour and glam.

— **Renuka Vyavahare**

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Bengal 1947 (Drama) ★★½
Cast: Ankur Armam, Devoleena Bhattacharjee, Surabhi Krishna Shrivastava, Sohaila Kapur, Aditya Lakhia, Omkar Das Manikpuri
Direction: Akashaditya Lama
Duration: 2 hours 9 minutes
Language: Hindi (UA)

■ *This historical drama unfolds against the backdrop of Bengal's partition in 1947, narrating the tale of a love affair between a London-educated man from a Zamindar lineage and a woman of a lower caste.*

Bengal 1947 is a historical fiction drama set in Bengal during the tumultuous period of India's partition, with a love story at its core. The film follows the romantic journey of a principled, London-educated man from a Zamindar lineage, now back in India. Against the backdrop of Bengal's partition, the film explores the evolving dynamics of their relationship. While it sheds light on the entrenched class divisions, the film occasionally struggles to maintain its narrative momentum. While adeptly portraying the central romance, peripheral events sometimes feel less cohesive. Despite its earnest intentions, *Bengal 1947* ultimately falls short due to a lack of a tightly woven screenplay.

The story revolves around Mohan (Ankur Armam), a London-educated man from a Zamindar lineage who returns to India. A case of mistaken identity leads him to the low-caste community, where he begins teaching children. Romance sparks when he encounters Shabri (Surabhi Krishna), but their love is hindered by the societal divide between the affluent and the underprivileged. Simultaneously, tensions between Hindus and Muslims escalate, affecting various communities.

Ankur Armam portrays Mohan with sincerity, successfully embodying both the physical demeanour and intellectual depth of the character. Surabhi Krishna brings Shabri to life with her honest portrayal, capturing the character's essence through mannerisms and appearance. However, Devoleena Bhattacharjee's portrayal of Basabdutta in the film is somewhat underwhelming, with her brief appearance leaving a relatively modest impact. Sohaila Kapur's portrayal of Rani Matingini Devi is brief yet impactful.

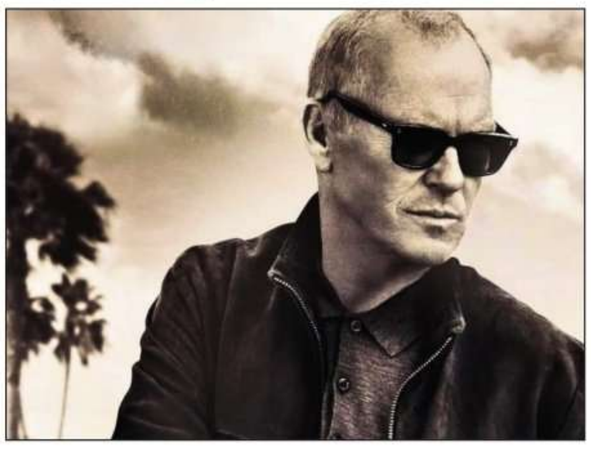
There are scenes involving Mohan, where he draws parallels from *shastras* and Indian mythology to convey his arguments, and this becomes tiresome over time and looks preachy. The film also suffers from a lack of engaging sequences. Moments such as Abdul's loss of his nephew, the Dalits' decision to support Jinnah's call, or Mohan's final conversation with Hasan could have been heightened for greater dramatic impact. This real-incident-inspired-fictional-drama makes a sincere effort but ultimately lacks depth.

— **Abhishek Srivastava**

Knox Goes Away (Drama, Thriller) ★★★½
Cast: Michael Keaton, Al Pacino, Suzy Nakamura, Joanna Kulig
Direction: Michael Keaton
Duration: 1 hour 54 minutes
Language: English (A)

■ *A contract killer is afflicted by rapidly progressing dementia. When his estranged son comes to him, desperate for help, will the killer save him and redeem himself?*

The movie opens with a pair of hands grabbing a wallet, keys, etc., while setting out, and returning a moment later to pick up the wristwatch. You wonder how someone can forget an object placed right before their eyes. It's a nuance you figure out soon, as John Knox (Michael Keaton) discovers he has Creutzfeldt Jakob Disease — rapidly progressing dementia, which gives him just a few weeks of lucidity. The story takes place over seven weeks, as Knox tries to cash out of his job and must save his estranged son, Miles Knox (James Marsden), from a crisis.



Michael Keaton directs himself in this crime drama where he shines in both the roles — director and the main character. He delivers a controlled performance, whether taking in the news of his diagnosis or intermittently slipping away, which has some serious repercussions on his job as an assassin.

Although a crime drama, the narrative is sans the edge-of-the-seat thrill, but the story and Keaton's stellar performance keep you hooked. As the plot thickens and Knox's condition aggravates, there are instances when the viewer is convinced he is losing grip on reality and the situation, but plot twists throw surprises at you. This is where Gregory Poirier's writing and Keaton's direction, as well as performance, shine.

The layered story gives one a glimpse of Knox's past, including his familial relationships and life as an army man. Yet, it does so while avoiding the trappings of a typical tale about a criminal redeeming himself by reuniting with his son to right the wrongs he has done. The narrative stays true to its basic premise throughout.

Besides Keaton Al Pacino as a crook Xavier Crane, Suzy Nakamura as Detective Emily Ikari, James Marsden, Marcia Gay Harden as Knox's ex-wife, and Joanna Kulig as his Polish escort deliver impactful performances.

The narrative has its flaws, especially how things pan out for Knox after a pivotal point in the film that leaves you unconvinced. But this does not take away from the compelling plot.

Don't be fooled by the slow burn. *Knox Goes Away* is a character-driven outing propelled by Michael Keaton's brilliance.

— **Dhaval Roy**

RATING SCALE TRASH ★ | BELOW AVERAGE ★★ | AVERAGE ★★½ | ABOVE AVERAGE ★★★ | GOOD ★★★½ | VERY GOOD ★★★★ | OUTSTANDING ★★★★½ | MASTERPIECE ★★★★★

Police hunt for Insta influencers for disrupting traffic in W Delhi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A day after a video had gone viral showing two Instagram influencers disrupting traffic by parking their vehicle in the middle of Paschim Vihar flyover in west Delhi area during peak hours, police have launched a manhunt to trace those involved.

The video, which has gained traction on social media platforms, showed the men in a golden-coloured pickup truck abruptly halting in the centre of the road, compelling traffic behind them to come to a standstill. Public outcry ensued, with commuters condemning the influencers' actions and demanding stringent measures against them for stopping traffic flow, violating laws, and causing inconvenience to the public.

The video showed the men in a golden-coloured pickup truck abruptly halting in the centre of the road, compelling traffic behind them to come to a standstill

According to a senior police officer, "We are tracking the vehicle and its owner. We are expecting a breakthrough soon and a legal action will be taken accordingly".

Recently, there have been several incidents causing a stir on the internet. Just a few weeks ago, cops seized a vehicle and booked its driver for driving recklessly in Rajouri Garden. Police said that the driver drove the vehicle in a zigzag manner, all for the sake of an Instagram reel. The clip, shared on the social media platform to gain followers, garnered over 500,000 'likes'.

In another incident in west Delhi, five men were arrested for reckless and negligent driving, causing disturbance on Vikaspuri flyover towards Peeragarhi while setting off colour bombs and causing public nuisance.

Dirty picture: Only 38% of mechanised road sweeping target met in city so far

Priyangi.Agarwal
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New Delhi: The city has a total road length of 7,964.69 km identified for mechanised sweeping each day, but only 38.37% of this length is mechanically swept.

On Wednesday, at the 12th meeting of sub-committee on safeguarding and enforcement by the Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) in the national capital region and adjoining areas , the environment department, which compiled the data of all road owning agencies for Feb 2024, said that only 3,055.7 km a day of road length is swept mechanically on average.

To meet the gap, the CAQM has asked agencies to increase mechanised road sweeping and water sprinkling (1 machine per 40 km). Delhi needs an additional 115 mechanised sweeping machines and 75% machines to be procured by Dec this year and 100% by Dec 2026.

Officials have recommended mechanised sweeping of certain roads to control dust pollution. When the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) comes into effect, mechanised sweeping and water sprinkling on roads becomes mandatory.

According to data compiled by the environment department, Delhi should have 200 mechanised road sweeping machines, considering one machine is needed for every 40 km. However, the city has 85 such machines.

Out of the total identified sweeping length of 7,964.69 km/day, the maximum length comes under Municipal Corporation of Delhi.

MCD in Feb mechanically swept 2,000 km/day, against the requirement of 6,731 km/day.

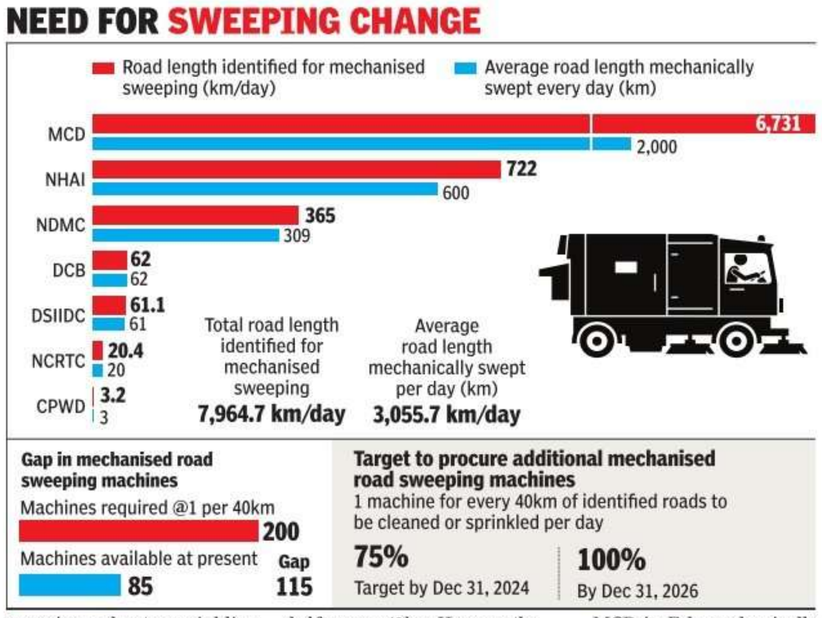
An official said the average quantity of dust collected daily is 116.2 MT in Delhi. The collected dust is disposed of at Okhla, Bhalaswa, Ghazipur, Shastri Park, Begumpur and Burari.

However, 353 water sprinklers, including water tankers, have been deployed so that dust does not fly. A water sprinkler's capacity ranges from 1,000-9,000 litres.

Though anti-smog guns have been installed at 48 govt buildings, the agencies have identified 56 more for the installation of such equipment. The anti-smog guns have also been installed at 50 private buildings. "All govt departments have been directed to identify more high rises for installing anti-smog guns. Besides, the environment department has proposed a funding of Rs 40.84 crore in 2023-24 to PWD for mobile anti-smog guns," an official said.

"The dust control and management cell was constituted by 12 road owning agencies and stakeholder departments under the direction of CAQM. The cell has been monitoring optimum utilisation of road sweeping machines, scientific disposal of dust, water sprinkling, conversion of non-paved roadsides into paved ones, greening of central verges and deployment of anti-smog guns at hotspots. The progress is monitored by CAQM," an official said.

NEED FOR SWEEPING CHANGE



WT.5694.2024

Nearly half of 611 C&D sites in Delhi haven't installed air quality sensors

Priyangi.Agarwal
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New Delhi: Delhi currently has 611 active construction and demolition sites and, of these, 282 have not installed air quality sensors. Environment department has also prepared a colour-coded online framework for web-based monitoring of the C&D sites to take action against those causing dust pollution.

Commission for Air Quality Management in National Capital Region and Adjoining Areas has made it compulsory for construction sites spread over 5,000 sqm to be registered on the portal of Delhi Pollution Control Committee. Large construction sites are required to install air quality sensors that provide real-time data.

Dust is one of the major sources of pollution in summer as well as winter.

According to data shared by environment department during a review meeting with CAQM on March 27, of the total 611 active C&D sites in Delhi, 329 are providing air quality data, while 282 have not installed air quality sensors. Of these 282 sites, Rajouri Garden (63), Greater Kailash I (41), Kalkaji (38), Punjabi Bagh (37) and Vasant Vihar (31) areas have a higher density of active construction sites within a 3km range that do not upload the air quality monitoring data.

The colour-coded web-based mechanism is expected to aid in online monitoring of construction and demolition sites and to ensure that they comply with dust norms. A "yellow" alert will be sounded if there is no air quality data issued in the last 24 hour or if data shows PM10 levels to be 20% higher than the threshold.

After the 'yellow' alert is issued, an auto-generated alert SMS or letter will be sent to the builder to take corrective action.

An 'orange' alert will be placed if there are more than four yellow alerts in the last seven days. In this case, the builder will be directed to submit a written response to DPCC. A 'red' alert will come into force when there are more than four orange alerts in the past 30 days. The builder concerned will be issued a warning letter to take corrective action and submit a written report within three days. A 'purple' alert will be sounded when an action report is not submitted within the prescribed time limit. It would lead to physical investigation by DPCC for punitive measures. Such sites will be immediately restricted from carrying out any further pollution-intensive activities.

"After all active construction and demolition sites install air quality sensors, we

we will make this online monitoring system operational. The mechanism will help ensure that all sites comply with dust norms," an official with environment department said.

According to a source apportionment study carried out by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) and Automotive Research Association of India (ARAI) in 2018, dust (soil, road and construction) contributes to 25% of PM10 and 17% of PM2.5 in Delhi's air pollution during winter season. Its contribution in summer, however, is 42% of PM10 and 38% of PM2.5.

SPARSE MONITORING

LARGE C&D SITES REQUIRED TO INSTALL AIR QUALITY SENSORS

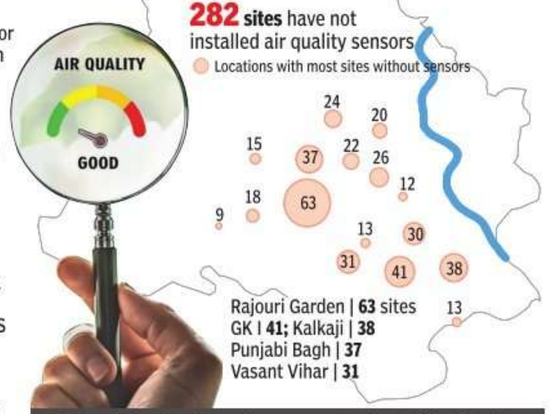
Environment department has prepared a colour-coded online alert mechanism for them that will indicate high pollution levels. This is likely to become operational soon

YELLOW COLOUR
No data in the last 24 hours or **20% higher PM10** levels than the threshold value
Action | Automated alert SMS/letter to builder

ORANGE
More than 4 yellow alerts in the last 7 days
Action | Builders to submit a written response document to DPCC and automated SMS alert to builder

RED
More than 4 orange alerts in last 30 days
Action | Take corrective actions and warning letter from DPCC for written action report within next 3 days

PURPLE
Action report not submitted within the prescribed time limit
Action | Site shall be immediately restricted to do any further pollution-generating activities, root-cause analysis report to DPCC. Physical investigation by DPCC or punitive measures



Dust pollution check on self-assessment web portal for C&D sites

Sites registered (as on March 26, 2024) **1,134**
Active sites **611**
Closed sites **523**
Sites that filled camera details **304**
Sites that uploaded AQI data **329**
Remote inspections of registered projects **356**
Physical inspections of registered projects **399**
Physical inspections of other projects **1,133**

HC Rejects Plea On EWS Entry To School Of Choice

Says Article 21A Only For Free Edu Till 14 Yrs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has stated that Article 21A of the Constitution of India does not confer on any child a constitutional right to be educated in a particular school of his or her choice and it is only for free and compulsory education till the age of 14. In a recent judgment, the single judge bench of Justice C Hari Shankar observed that "the State is only obligated to ensure that every child receives such education free of charge".

The court was hearing a plea moved by a 7-year-old girl through her mother seeking a direction to a school to grant her admission as an EWS student in Class II for the academic session 2023-24. The girl submitted before the court that despite her mother visiting the school on several occasions, the school refused to admit her. The petition also stated that the school could not have refused to grant admission to her after her name was shortlisted for admission following the computerised draw of lots conducted by Directorate of Education (DoE).

The court rejected her prayer but directed DoE to make every endeavour to ensure that the girl is granted admission as an EWS student in Class II in some other school.

Stating that such a right (of admission in a particular school) would arise only if the child applies to DoE as an EWS (economically weaker section) student for admission in the entry level class for that year and is shortlisted in the computerised draw of lots, the court noted, "Absent such application, holding of a computerised draw of lots and shortlisting of a child for admission to a particular class in a particular school, no right to seek such admission enures in favour of the child. The right available under Article 21A of the Constitution or under Section 12 of the RTE Act is only to free and compulsory education till the age of 14, not for being provided such education in a particular school".

The draw of lots was conducted by DoE following which she was shortlisted for admission to Class I in Maharaja Agrasen Model School for the academic session 2022-23. The court noted that there was no dispute that the girl never applied to DoE for admission as an EWS student in Class II for the year 2023-2024 and thus, without such an application, her name was not subjected to any draw of lots for such admission.

JUDGE SAYS

The state is only obligated to ensure that every child receives such education free of charge

More complaints against Elvish as police probe him in 3 cases

Gurgaon: Troubles continue to mount for YouTuber Elvish Yadav, who recently secured bail in Gurgaon and Noida in two different cases — one related to supply of snake venom at parties and the other for assaulting a fellow video creator — but will soon be booked in a third case, this one for using snakes in his videos shot at a mall. The scope of the probe will expand with Gurgaon police receiving around 25 complaints against him in the past two weeks, most of which are about threats and abuse on social media. None of the complaints has been converted into FIRs so far. The complainants have alleged Elvish posted "provocative" and "objectionable" content online, which could disrupt peace and harmony. TNN

DU introduces UG for Russian studies, tweaks subject choice rules

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi University on Friday released an information bulletin detailing the undergraduate admissions process through CUET, the application deadline for which is now March 31.

The National Testing Agency has extended the deadline from March 26 to March 31.

This academic year, an undergraduate program for Russian Honors has been introduced. In a departure from the previous year, students can choose a maximum of six subjects, including languages and the general test. Last year, Delhi University merged categories A and B, offering students the choice of one language and a minimum of three subjects from 27 domain-specific options.

The university will offer admission for 71,000 seats in 68 colleges for 79 undergraduate programs, under which there are 198 BA programs. Students can choose from over 1,550 subject combinations.

Admissions to DU is through the Common Seat Allocation System (CSAS), which kicks in after the conclusion of CUET.

According to the 2024-25 calendar, CUET graduate examinations are scheduled for May 15-31. The examinations are held in four categories spanning languages, domain-specific subjects and a general test. The results will be out on June 30 but can vary because of the Lok Sabha election schedule.

The information bulletin on the DU website provides details regarding admission eligibility, college-wise seat distribution and subject-specific guidelines.

Last year, 69,622 students took admission in DU after multiple merit rounds. There were still 1,000 vacant seats.

Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) has announced CUET-based admissions for 1,123 seats across 19 programs. Besides reservation of 134 seats for foreign students, 18 for single girl children, 18 each for sports quota and co-curricular quota, AUD has added a supernumerary category reserving one seat for orphans in every program.

Indraprastha University (IPU) has extended the last date of online application for all programs from March 31 to April 10, it said in a statement.

The deadline for the submission of the online application has been extended because of the ongoing Class XII board examinations, IPU said.

Students can apply for all the programs, including those that allow admission through national-level tests, university-run entrance tests and merit-based programs till April 10. Any vacant seat will subsequently be filled through CUET. The university is also considering CUET scores for some of UG, PG programs. However, common entrance test (CET) scores will be given preference over the CUET scores.

CUET applicants have been advised by the university to apply for CET for higher chance of admission.

Haryana govt stops ₹500cr sale of land it owns, finds fake cabinet note & letter

Bagish.Jha@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: Two prime plots worth Rs 500 crore that were acquired by the state over a decade ago were almost sold off by some property dealers who allegedly spun an elaborate fraud with the help of govt employees to deceive the buyer with a fake cabinet note and a letter.

The fraud came to light earlier this week after senior govt officials received a tip-off about some individuals trying to 'release' the two govt-owned plots, located in Badshapur and Rajiv Chowk. The sale was stopped just in time.

A govt official aware of the development said on Friday that 2-3 property dealers are under the scanner and four employees of the Haryana secretariat, Gurgaon and Panchkula administrations, and revenue department are being questioned.

"An FIR is yet to be filed. We are probing," the official said.

Sources said the bid to sell the land was flagged to revenue secretary TVS Prasad, the vigilance department, CID chief Alok Mittal and Haryana Police chief Shatrujit Kapoor this week.

On checking the documents, officials found three giveaways that proved the documents were counterfeit.

One, the letter that permitted 'release' of the two plots said that the topic was discussed in cabinet meetings held on December 15 and 21 last year.

No cabinet meetings were chaired that month by then CM Manohar Lal Khattar. The last time Khattar held a cabinet meeting as CM was in November 2023.

The second gap was in the details of the forged cabinet note. A cabinet note is a document that chronicles all discussions and decisions taken at a cabinet meeting.

Officials noticed that the revenue secretary's signature was directly after the CM's in the note. Usually, cabinet notes are signed by officials of every concerned department in a sequence based on seniority.

The revenue secretary does not rank second to the CM in the govt setup and would not have signed the note after the CM. The two who would normally sign after the CM would be the CM's principal secretary and the chief secretary.

Third, the Khattar govt had made it a policy not to acquire land and not to release any acquired land. Instead, govt would directly purchase land at market value and it had introduced a portal – eBhoomi – for landowners to list information about their plots.

"With the help of the fake documents, and involvement of a few property dealers and officials, the accused were planning to sell the two plots," the official said.

Gurgaon deputy commissioner Nishant Yadav said on Friday the administration has initiated an inquiry. "A matter related to release of land with the help of a fake cabinet letter has come to our knowledge. We have initiated an inquiry," said Yadav.

No. A-12024/1/2022-ADM
LAL BAHADUR SHASTRI
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ADMINISTRATION
MUSSOORIE

Dated: 27th March, 2024

The Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration [LBSNAA], Mussoorie under Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances & Pensions (Department of Personnel & Training) is a premier training institute for the civil services in India. For more details about the LBSNAA visit http://www.lbsnaa.gov.in/

The LBSNAA wishes to invites applications for its fellowship Programme. One number each Research Fellowship is open to academicians/professionals interested in areas of Political Theory and Constitutional Law and Economics. **Applicants may note that research in the above areas should have relevance to Public Administration, Public Policy and Governance.** The Research Fellow is engaged on contract basis initially for a period of one year, which may be extended on satisfactory performance and if services required. Details of Guidelines for Research Fellow, remuneration, eligibility conditions, tenure etc. for the post is available on the institute web site https://www.lbsnaa.gov.in

Interested candidates are required to submit their application in the prescribed proforma along with supporting documents to email aoadmn-lbsnaa@gov.in or by post to "The Deputy Director i/c Administration, Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration, Mussoorie, Dehradun, Uttarakhand, PIN code- 248179" on or before 10th April, 2024.

(Shelesh Nawal)
Deputy Director &
In-charge Administration

JNCASR

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Advt No.JNC/AO/R.1376 /04/2024 Dated: March 30, 2024

Call for applications/nominations for appointment to the post of President

The Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research (JNCASR), Bengaluru, is a deemed to be University and a premier research institute, established under the aegis of Department of Science and Technology (DST), Government of India, with the objective to pursue and promote scientific research and training at the highest level in the frontier and interdisciplinary areas of science and engineering. JNCASR invites applications/nominations, from eminent academicians/researchers with substantial experience and achievements in the areas of physical sciences/chemical sciences/life sciences/ any other related interdisciplinary area for the position of President. Applications/Nominations received will be considered by Search-cum-Selection Committee. Based on the recommendations of the Search-cum-Selection Committee, the President will be appointed after obtaining the approval of the Competent Authority.

The incumbent will be appointed on Direct Recruitment/Deputation including short term contract/Re-employment basis for a period of 5 years or on attaining the age of superannuation (65 years at present), whichever is earlier.

Pay scale: Rs.2,25,000/-(fixed) (7th CPC)

The applicant's age should not exceed 60 years on **January 01, 2024.**

Applications/nominations should be sent by post to the **"Administrative Officer, Jawaharlal Nehru Centre for Advanced Scientific Research, Jakkur, Bengaluru 560 064"** in the prescribed format along with self-attested photocopies of certificates in support of age, qualifications and experience so as to reach the above mentioned address as detailed below:

Last date of receipt of applications/nominations:

1) **April 28, 2024** (Other regions)
2) **May 13, 2024** (Assam, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Ladakh (UT), Lahaul and Spiti District and Pangi Sub Division of Chamba District of Himachal Pradesh, Andaman and Nicobar Islands and Lakshadweep)

A copy of the application should be sent to the Chairperson, Council of Management, JNCASR by email to: chaircom@jncasr.ac.in

Detailed Advertisement is available at the JNCASR website: **https://www.jncasr.ac.in/openings/post-of-president**

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TIMES NATION

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024

JD(S) NAMES CANDIDATES FOR 3 KARNATAKA LS SEATS, EX-CM HDK TO CONTEST FROM MANDYA

PIYUSH GOYAL GEARS UP FOR MUMBAI NORTH LS CONTEST, PLEDGES TO MAKE CITY SLUM-FREE

Road to U'khand village on LAC with China by year-end: Govt

Pankul.Sharma@timesgroup.com

Dehradun: The under-construction road connecting Dumak and other villages in Chamoli district along the Indo-China border in Uttarakhand, which has been delayed time and again even 17 years after the project was launched, will be completed before the year ends, authorities promised in a written statement on Thursday.

Taking cognizance of a report published in **TOI** on Thursday, which highlighted how the 250-odd voters in Dumak have decided to boycott LS polls after being fed up of constant delays on the road construction, Uttarakhand Rural Roads Development Agency CEO Kamrendra Singh issued

YOU READ IT HERE

No road, no vote, says village in U'khand bordering China

Present CEC Had Vowed In 2022 To Look Into The Issue

March 28 2023

a statement saying the pending work will be completed in the next eight months. He claimed that the delay was due to "change in alignment because of landslides in the area."

The statement, signed by CEO and the agency's chief engineer Ravi Singh, stated that construction on the first 20.5km stretch & the 23 to 29km stretch have been completed, with work on four connecting lanes ongoing. However, construction of a bridge in the middle of the two has been delayed due to it being in a landslide zone.

Officials added that landslides in 2018 and 2021 necessitated changes in the alignment. However, there was disagreement among villagers over the proposed changes.

Ex-IAS babu among 5 suspects of U'khand gurdwara murder

2 From Punjab & UP Prime Suspects, Killers Traced To UP: Cops

Aakash Ahuja & Kalyan Das | TNN

Rudrapur/Dehradun: Police on Friday filed a case against Sarvjit Singh from Tarn Taran district in Punjab, and Amarjeet Singh from Bilaspur in Uttar Pradesh, who have been identified as prime suspects and booked on charges of murder and criminal conspiracy for the killing of dera kar sewa pramukh of Nanakmatta gurdwara, Baba Tarsem Singh, early on Thursday morning.

Three others have also been named in the FIR including Harbans Singh Chugh, former IAS officer and the head of the gurdwara management commitee of Nanakmatta Sahib. The other two who have been named are Pritam Singh Sidhu, vice-president of Terai Sikh Mahasabha and Anoop Singh, chief jathedar of Shri Har Govind Singh Gurdwara at Ratanpura in Uttar Pradesh.

PTI

Uttarakhand DGP Abhinav Kumar visited Nanakmatta on Friday. He set up 11 teams to expedite the murder case's resolution

The case was filed after a complaint was filed by Jasveer Singh, a jathedar of the dera. Meanwhile, Tarsem Singh's last rites were conducted at the Doodh Wala Kuan in Nanakmatta Friday.

A member of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the case said, "Based on gathered evidence, we have traced the assailants to Uttar Pradesh. They fled the state after the shooting. We are also looking into their criminal backgrounds and are close to making arrests."

Udham Singh Nagar SSP Manjunath T C said the perpetrators would not escape justice. He cautioned against social media claims, including a post allegedly claiming responsibility for the murder.

"While we are exploring all the leads, including this claim, the authenticity of such posts cannot be guaranteed. However, we are focused on identifying and apprehending the perpetrators promptly," the SSP added.

Uttarakhand DGP Abhinav Kumar visited Nanakmatta to survey the crime scene on Friday and extended his condolences to the gurdwara's community members. Subsequently, he convened a meeting with senior officers, forming 11 teams to expedite the case's resolution. The teams have been assigned varied tasks, with three designated to operate in other states where the assailants may be hiding.

Navy rescues hijacked Iranian fishing vessel with Pak crew

Times News Network

New Delhi: Responding to another piracy attack, Indian Navy intercepted and rescued a hijacked Iranian fishing vessel Al-Kambar 786 and its 23-member Pakistani crew in the Arabian Sea on Friday.

"The nine armed pirates, who had boarded the vessel around 90 nautical miles south-west of Socotra (an island in Yemen) late Thursday evening, were forced to surrender after over 12 hours of intense coercive tactical measures," an officer said.

After receiving inputs about the hijacking, the Navy swung into action by first diverting patrol vessel INS Sumedha to intercept Al-Kambar in the early hours of Friday. INS Sumedha was then joined by guided-missile frigate INS Trishul in the maritime security operation.

"The crew of 23 Pakistani nationals has been safely rescued. Indian naval specialist teams are presently undertaking thorough sanitisation and seaworthiness checks of Al-Kambar in order to escort her to a safe area for resuming normal fishing activities," the officer added.

The Navy on March 23 completed 100 days of stepped-up operations under the aegis of 'Operation Sankalp' in the Gulf of Aden and adjoining areas, Arabian Sea, and off the east coast of Somalia amid the continuing attacks by Houthi rebels and Somali pirates that have disrupted sea trade in the region.

Indian Navy on March 23 completed 100 days of stepped-up efforts under the aegis of 'Operation Sankalp' in the Gulf of Aden & adjoining areas, Arabian Sea, and off the coast of Somalia amid continuing attacks by Houthi rebels and Somali pirates that've disrupted sea trade in the region

Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar has said India, as the largest resident naval power in Indian Ocean Region, will continue to take action against the threats posed by piracy and drone attacks to ensure the region remains safe, secure and stable.

The Indian Navy has brought to Mumbai 35 Somalia pirates for legal prosecution after they were apprehended in the 40-hour operation to rescue hijacked Malta-flagged merchant vessel Ruen and its 17-member crew, which also saw marine commandos being paradropped from a C-17 aircraft and exchange of gunfire, around 2,600 km from the Indian coast on March 15-16, as was then reported by **TOI**.

The stepped-up naval deployments since mid-Dec have involved over 5,000 personnel at sea, over 450 "ship days" with 21 warships, and 900 hours of flying by maritime surveillance aircraft to address threats in the region.

Ukraine seeks India's support for initiative to end Russia war

Times News Network

New Delhi: External affairs minister S Jaishankar had a "comprehensive" discussion with his visiting Ukraine counterpart Dmytro Kuleba about efforts to achieve a peaceful resolution of the Russia-Ukraine conflict, while also reiterating India's commitment to ramp up bilateral cooperation with the war-torn country. India expressed its willingness to contribute to any effort for peaceful settlement of the war that has dragged on for over two years and with no end in sight.

As expected, Kuleba sought India's cooperation in efforts to host a proposed peace summit in Switzerland in the summer this year and also support for President Volodymyr Zelenskyy's 10-point peace formula that he had announced before G7 leaders in 2022. The plan seeks, among other things, complete withdrawal of Russian troops from Ukrainian territory. India, which has not yet explicitly condemned Russia's actions in Ukraine, is yet to announce support for Zelenskyy's peace plan.

Dmytro Kuleba and S Jaishankar

"Our discussions focused on the ongoing conflict and its wider ramifications. Exchanged views on various initiatives in that context," said Jaishankar in a post on X after his "open and wide-ranging" talks with Kuleba.

Kuleba said after the meeting that "specific attention" was given to the peace formula and the next steps on the path of its implementation. "We also co-chaired the Ukrainian-Indian intergovernmental commission review meeting and agreed to restore the level of cooperation between our countries that existed prior to the full-scale war launched by Russia," added Kuleba.

Afspa extended in 4 Assam dists by 6 months

Guwahati: Assam govt has extended imposition of Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (Afspa), 1958, in its four districts — Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Charaideo and Sivasagar — for six months from April 1, reports **Prabin Kalita**. These districts continue to be considered as "disturbed areas", a govt notification stated.

According to the state home and political department notification, Assam Police HQ submitted a report showing improvement of law and order situation in Assam, barring the four districts where one militant organisation is still active. The police recommendation to continue imposition of Afspa in the "disturbed area" has been approved by the MHA.

In bid to check wheat hoarding, govt asks traders to declare stock

Times News Network

New Delhi: Centre has asked traders, wholesalers, retailers, processors and large chain stores in all states and UTs for "mandatory declaration" of wheat stock position at a specified portal from April 1, and thereafter every Friday till further orders.

The move is aimed at preventing hoarding to ensure overall food security in the country. It will stop unscrupulous speculation at a time when the central wheat stocks fell to a 16-year low of 7.73 million tonne (as on March 24).

"All respective legal entities ensure stocks are regularly and correctly disclosed on the portal," said the ministry of food and public distribution in a statement on Friday.

A CLOSE WATCH

It said the department of food and public distribution is maintaining a "close watch" over the stock position of wheat and rice to control prices and ensure easy availability across the country.

Rice stock declaration by all categories of entities is already in-place. "Any entity, not registered on the portal, may register themselves and start disclosing wheat and rice stock every Friday," it said.

The last time wheat stocks fell below the present level was way back in 2008 when it had dipped to 5.8 million tonne. Govt has set a conservative procurement target in the range of 30-32 MT for the 2024-25 Rabi marketing season (March-April), as against the actual procurement of 26.2 MT in the previous year.

Agriculture ministry had last month projected wheat production at a record 112 MT for the 2023-24 crop year (July-June) — estimating it to be nearly 1.5 MT higher than the previous record high of 110.5 MT in the 2022-23 crop year.

SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL

Sheetal

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Sheetal** D/o Bijender Kumar R/o H.No-51A/1 Ground Floor, Khyali Ram Gali, Mahipalpur, New Delhi. Age about 17 years, Height 5' Complexion Shallow, Built Medium, Face Round, wearning Cream Colour Suit Salwar & Blue Colour Sleeper in Feet has been missing since 02.05.2023 from her house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this girl but no clue has come to light so far.

In this regard a Case FIR No. 211/2023 dated 20.07.2023 U/S 363 IPC has been Registered at PS Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218
DP/3682/SW/2024

SHO
Vasant Kunj North, New Delhi
Ph. 7065036224, 9810643349

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Ram Kishan S/o Bahadar Singh** R/o VPO Bandaheri, Teh.- Hissar Distt. Hissar, Near Hanuman Mandir Burak Road, Hissar, Haryana have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR No / CC No. 587/2020, U/s 138 NI Act.** has been registered at **P.S. KNK Marg, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Ram Kishan** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the **Ram Kishan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **of FIR No / CC No. 587/2020, U/s 138 NI Act. registered at PS. KNK Marg, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **08.07.2024**

By Order
Sh. Rohit Kumar Ld, MM-04,
Room No. 110, Rohini Courts,
New Delhi

DP/3563/RD/2024

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER GENERATION DIVISION BAGLIHAR HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT-II CHANDERKOTE RAMBAN E-mail:- xenegenbhepii@gmail.com

JKPDC

GEN/BHEP-II/3209-215
Dated : 26-03-2024

Extension Notice-I

Due to poor response, the GEN/BHEP-II/20 of 2023 Dated: 04/03/2024 titled SUPPLY OF ELECTRO MECHANICAL SPARES FOR 450 MW (3X150 MW) BAGLIHAR HYDRO ELECTRIC PROJECT STAGE-II published by this office is here by extended by 07 days.

Description	Previous Date	New Date
Last date for submission of Bid	26-03-2024 at 04:00 PM	02-04-2024 at 04:00 PM
Date of Opening of Bid	27-03-2024 at 06:00 PM	03-04-2024 at 06:00 PM

Executive Engineer
Generation Division BHEP-II
Chanderkote.

DIP No:DIP/J-5909-P/23/28/03/2024

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tendering Notice No: 2024-March-06 **Dated:** 27.03.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering), N.C. Rly Agra for and on behalf of the President of India invites "Open Tender" through on Line only (E-Tendering) for the following works. The details of the tender are as under:-

S.No.: 1	Tender No.: 2024-March-06-01	Approx. Cost (Rs.): ₹ 25355391.28

Description of work : Replacement of OHT of 90KL capacity with pipeline arrangements at Agra Fort, Kuberpur, Chhalesar, Etmadpur & Billochpura stations.

S.No.: 2	Tender No.: 2024-March-06-02	Approx. Cost (Rs.): ₹ 20547534.49

Description of work : Provision of Track Depot at IDH with all infrastructure facilities in place of existing depot at Agra cantt.

For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **"www.ireps.gov.in"**. Tenders can only be submitted through web portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"** up to **15.00 hrs** on **22.04.2024.** **573/24 (A)**

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

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

Satya Kam Sharma

General public is hereby informed that one person namely **Satya Kam Sharma, S/o Ram Dutt Sharma,** R/o H.No. 22, Bhera Eenclave, Paschim Vihar, Delhi. Age 42 years, Height 5'9", Complexion Fair, Long Face, Thin Built, Wearing Mehroom colour T-shirt and black colour pant has been missing since 16.03.2024 from her house. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this person but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a DD No. 148A, dated 22.03.2024 has been lodged at PS Paschim Vihar West, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the following.

Website: http://cbi.nic.in
Email: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218
DP/3597/OD/2024

SHO
PS: Paschim Vihar West, Delhi
Ph.: 011-25268394, 9136408686

SEARCH FOR MISSING

PINKI

General Public is hereby informed that one girl **Namely:** Pinki, **D/o:** Shiv Narayan, **R/o:** Near Tandoor Chowk, Tihar Village, Delhi, **Age:** 15 Years, **Height:** 4'7", **Complexion:** Fair, **Built:** Normal, **Face:** Long, **Hair:** Black, **Wearing:** White Colour Kurta & Salwar, has been missing since 26.03.2024 from her house. In this regard **FIR No. 122/2024, Dated: 26.03.2024, U/s 363 IPC** has been registered at **P.S.: Hari Nagar, Delhi.**

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing girl but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing girl. Please inform to the following.

Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Website : http://cbi.nic.in
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
DP/3677/WD/2024

SHO
P.S.: Hari Nagar, Delhi
Ph.: 8800380128

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Muzzaffar Hussain S/o Lt. Zahid Hussain** R/o Shital Kha near Nirala ka Hotal Pradise Marriage Home Firozabad U.P. have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR No/Case No. 234/2018 U/s 498A/406/509/34 IPC.,** has been registered at **P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said, **Muzzaffar Hussain** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said, **Muzzaffar Hussain** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused of **FIR No/Case No.. 234/2018 U/s 498A/406/509/34 IPC., registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **22.05.2024.**

By Order
Ms. Nidhi Bala, MM, Mahila Court
Room No. 08, KKD Court, Shahdara, Delhi

DP/3077/NE/2024

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Procurement Tender Notice No: E.T.D/C.N.B./2023-24/37 Date:27.03.2024

E-Procurement Tender Notice

On behalf of the President of India, The Senior Materials Manager, E.T.D./ Kanpur invites the following E procurement tender.

Tender No.	Description	Qty.
57245033	GLASS FOR MAIN DOOR OF WAP-5 AND WAP-7 LOCOMOTIVE AS PER SR. DEE/RS/GZB DRG. NO. 98/WAP-5/ABB/2002	45 Nos.
57245034	FRONT LOOK OUT GLASS FOR WAP-7 LOCO AS PER SR.DEE/RS/GZB DRG. NO. 395/3- PHASE/2020.	50 Nos.
57245022	Fixing for Axle Damper as per CLW Drg.No.1209-01.412-050 Alt-1 or latest.	60 Nos.
57245039	CAB WINDOW LH & RH "POSITIVE CATCH" SR NO. 10 AS PER CLW DRG NO. 1209-09-133-05 ALT-5 or latest and 1203-9-133-06 Alt-6 or latest.ACCEPTED MATERIAL NYLON.	600 Nos.

All Tender Opening Date:18.04.2024 | **All EMD :NIL**

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 tenders for this purpose venders are required to get themselves registered with IREPS Website along with **class III** digital signature certificate issued by **CCA and IT act 2000. 3.**Rules entered into financial rate page is duly singed digitally signature shall only be considered rates and any other financial entry in any other form/letter had if attached by vender shall be original straight way ignore and shall not be considered. **572/24(DG)**

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

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

Shanti

General public is hereby informed that girl Namely **Shanti d/o Sanjeet** R/o **F-402/3, gali No.05, West Karawal Nagar Delhi** has been missing from her house.Since **06.03.2024.** In this regard, a case **DD No. 216/24 dated** 22.03.2024 has been registered at **P.S. Khajuri Khas** Delhi.The description of the missing girl is as under.

Age:15 years,**Height**: 5'4",**Complexion**: Shallow, **Face**: Round,**Built**: Strong **Wearing**: Blue color Suit salwar and black color sandal in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing girl then please inform **P.S. Khajuri Khas, Delhi** at following Tel No./ e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in , providing clue about the person.

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DP/3556/NE/2024

Sd/-S.H.O.
Khajuri Khas, Delhi
Tel . 9891536563

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that one male has been found Unconscious Condition at Foot Bridge Azad Pur Mcd Colony Gate Police Station Adarsh Nagar, Delhi on dated 19.03.2024. He was admitted in BJRM Hospital and during treatment he was declared dead by the doctor of BJRM Hospital. In this regard **DD No. 57-A Dated 19.03.2024** has been lodged at **P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.** The dead body has been preserved at BJRM Hospital, Jahangir Puri for

Identification. The description of the dead body is given as under:
Name: Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown **R/o:** Unknown, **Age**: 25 Years, **Height:** 5'4" Feet, **Face:** Oval, **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Built:** Medium, **ID Mark:** Left Hand Cut Mark, **Wearing**: Blue And Yellow Colour Check Shirt Bare Feet.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the information about the dead male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one is having any informatis dead male please inform the undersigned.

S.H.O
P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.
Ph.: 011-28672452, 8750870529

DP/3716/NW/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Pawan, S/o:** Man Singh, **R/o:** VPO Hetampura, Tehsil & District, Bhiwani has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **CC No. 1116/2020, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S.: K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Pawan** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Pawan** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Pawan** accused of **CC No. 1116/2020, U/s 138 NI Act, P.S.: K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **03.06.2024**.

By Order
Shri Rohit Kumar
Metropolitan Magistrate-04
Room No. 110, Rohini Courts, New Delhi

DP/3691/RD/2024-
(Court Matter)

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-Tendering Notice 2024-March-05 Dated: 26.03.2024

E-Tendering Tender Notice

Divisional Railway Manager (Engineering), North Central Railway Agra for and on behalf of the President of India invites **"Open Tender"** through on Line only **(E-Tendering)** for the following works. **The details of the tender are as under:**

SN: 1	Tender No.: 2024-March-05-01	Approx Cost Rs. : 267871640.90

Description of work: Construction of boundary wall at vulnerable locations & on approaches of major cities to prevent encroachment in IDH-BXN section.

SN: 2	Tender No.: 2024-March-05-02	Approx Cost Rs. : 282343150.04

Description of work: Agra Cantt.-Dhaulpur: Construction of RCC boundary wall at various remaining locations to prevent trespassing & encroachment under the jurisdiction of ADEN/DHO

SN: 3	Tender No.: 2024-March-05-03	Approx Cost Rs. : 22516488.32

Description of work: Provision of bore well and Over OHT for PFs with pipeline arrangements PTLI (50KL), MIQ (50KL), KLB (50KL), BR (50KL), & BIQ (50KL) stations in and provision of 04 nos. hand pumps at platform of AED, NGLT, BAMA & SNPR Halt stations in IDH-BXN section.

SN: 4	Tender No.: 2024-March-05-04	Approx Cost Rs. : 28062096.43

Description of work: Provision of bore well and Over OHT for PFs with pipeline arrangements MURD (110KL), IK (50KL), PPEA (50KL) & HK (50KL) stations in IDH-BKI section & FAB (100KL), UDMR (50KL) in BHA-ETW section and provision of 03 nos. hand pumps at platform of NHB, TBL & BUDA Halt stations in IDH-BKI section.

For full details and submission of bid please see the Indian Railways website **"www.ireps.gov.in"** Tenders can only be submitted through web portal **"www.ireps.gov.in"** **up to 15.00 hrs.** on **19.04.2024.** **567/24(K)**

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

Govt issues advisory over fraud DoT calls

'Criminals Are Trying To Steal Personal Info'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Govt has warned against engaging with WhatsApp calls from foreign origin mobile numbers, apart from threats of disconnection given out in the name of the telecom dept

New Delhi: Alarmed at the growing cases of fraud and impersonation directed at mobile phone users, govt has issued an advisory for citizens, warning against engaging with WhatsApp calls from foreign origin mobile numbers, apart from threats of number disconnection given out in the name of department of telecom (DoT).

"DoT has issued an advisory to citizens that calls are being received by the citizens wherein callers, in the name of DoT, are threatening that all of their mobile numbers would be disconnected or their mobile numbers are being misused in some illegal activities. DoT has also issued advisory about WhatsApp calls from foreign origin mobile numbers (like +92-xxxxxxxxxx) impersonating govt officials and duping the people," it said.

The ministry said through such calls, cyber criminals are trying to threaten/steal personal information to carry out cyber-crime and financial frauds. "DoT does not authorise anyone to make such call on its behalf and has advised people to stay vigilant and not to share any information on receiving such calls."

The ministry advised citizens to report such fraudulent communications at 'Chakshu-Report Suspected Fraud Communications' facility of Sanchar Saathi portal (www.sancharsaathi.gov.in). "Such proactive reporting helps DoT in prevention of misuse of telecom resources for cyber-crime, financial frauds, etc."

It also said citizens can check the mobile connections in their name at 'Know Your Mobile Connections' facility of Sanchar Saathi portal and report any connection not taken by them or not required. DoT has asked users to report instance of cyber-crime or financial frauds at helpline number 1930 or www.cybercrime.gov.in.

On March 4, Centre had launched 'Chakshu' facility to enable citizens proactively report suspected fraudulent communications.

Communications minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said govt has been persistently making efforts to check cyber frauds under the Secure India project, at three levels — national, organisational and individual. He said DoT has taken many initiatives to spread awareness so citizens can make use of the tools for addressing their grievances as well as protect themselves from cyber-frauds. This includes Digital Intelligence Platform (DIP), which is a secure and integrated platform for real time intelligence sharing, information exchange and coordination among the stakeholders including Telecom Service Providers, law enforcement agencies, banks and financial institutions, social media platforms, ID document issuing authorities.

RK Mission names Swami Gautamananda as interim chief

Sudipto.Das@timesgroup.com

Kolkata: Swami Gautamananda has been appointed interim president of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission. The Bengaluru-born 95-year-old monk — presently the senior-most vice-president of the Order — had joined the Ramakrishna Movement in 1951 and received his early spiritual training under Swami Ranganathananda. He was ordained as a monk in 1966 by Swami Vireshwarananda, the Order's 10th president.

The monk has worked at the Mission's Mumbai, Kolkata, Raipur and Narayanpur RKM centres. He was appointed a trustee of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission in 1990. In 1995, he took charge of Ramakrishna Math in Chennai as its 'adhyaksha' (head).

On March 26, Swami Smarananda, the 16th president of Ramakrishna Math and Ramakrishna Mission, passed away. A memorial meeting will be held at Belur Math on April 7 in remembrance. A board of trustees meeting will be called later to elect the 17th president.

We were not given food for 15 days, say Karnal cousins

▶Continued from P 1

These agents are paid up to Rs 2 lakh each when they get young men from other countries to join the Russian army and fight in the Ukraine war, the Moscow lawyer said. Their families ended up spending Rs 35 lakh and Rs 25 lakh on failed endeavours to send Mukesh and Sunny, respectively, to Germany.

"We were tortured," said Mukesh as he showed some injury marks on his body. "They burned us with heated wood and matchsticks, made us lie on ice, pointed guns and knives at us," he added.

Displaying a knife injury on his arm, Sunny said, "We were not given food for about 15 days. Around 200 boys like us are still in that hell. I pray for their safe return."

"They forced all the boys to join the Russian army, otherwise they would be sent to jail for illegal crossing of the border and would be imprisoned for 10 years. And if the men join the army, the agents promise they will earn Rs 2.5 lakh per month and get a Russian passport too," said the two cousins.

The cousins and two friends — one a Pakistani, the other from Punjab — refused, so they were jailed for entering the country illegally. "Our two friends are still trapped there and their families are very stressed," said Sunny.

The cousins revealed that they stayed in the same camp as Karnal teenager Harsh, who has claimed that he and six other Indian youth were forcibly deployed to the Russia-Ukraine border. "I don't know under what circumstances Harsh and his friends agreed to join the army. They all were taken somewhere else. I didn't see them after that," said Mukesh.

The cousins' families have now complained to police, which has filed an FIR against six immigration agents, including a woman, under IPC Sections 402 (assembling to commit dacoity) and 420 (cheating). Sandeep Kumar, investigation officer at Madhuban police station, said, "An FIR has been filed. We have started our investigation."

Employee accuses Cadila exec of sexual harassment

Ashish.Chauhan
@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: A 40-year-old woman employee of Cadila Pharmaceuticals has lodged a complaint with Mahila Crime police, alleging an executive of the company harassed her sexually. The executive was earlier named as an abettor in an alleged rape case filed by a Bulgarian woman against the company's CMD Rajiv Modi.

A senior officer of the city police said, "A woman, aged 40, who worked with the company for around five to six years, approached Mahila Crime police alleging that she was harassed, and lewd comments were passed on her."

The officer said she took the step after the Bulgarian woman, 27, a former flight attendant with Modi, challenged the police clean chit to him before a local court. The Bulgarian woman Tuesday filed her objection to the police's clean chit, alleging that the police were given Rs 40 crore bribe to overlook the case. A local magisterial court has issued a notice to the investigator.

Cops have initiated an inquiry into the fresh complaint. An FIR is yet to be filed.

Yrs after killing daughter, man murders wife, 3 kids

Chandra Bhushan Pandey | TNN

Motihari: A labourer allegedly hacked his wife and three minor daughters to death after an apparent quarrel in Bihar's East Champaran late Thursday, a few years after having pushed another daughter to her death from a train in UP.

Iddu Mian (55) is on the run after the murders of Asrina Khatun (47), Awrula (12), Shabnam (10) and Shahjadi (9) in Paharpur's Babariya village. Police said he was released about seven months ago from a jail in UP's Sitapur in connection with the train-death case.

COPS ON HUNT

"We have registered an FIR and raids are on to arrest him," said SDPO Ranjan Kumar.

According to police, Iddu had pushed all four daughters off the running train near Sitapur, leaving the three who survived grievously injured.

The daily-wager had married twice. He had two sons with his first wife but she died. Iddu then married Asrina and they had five daughters. Their eldest is married.

RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
Lucknow

Notice inviting Applications for Empanelment of Contractors

Reserve Bank of India, Lucknow invites sealed applications in the prescribed format from eligible applicants to prepare panel of Contractors for Bank's proposed Construction of Residential Flats for Officers (Estimated to cost ₹125.00 crore) on its vacant plot located at Sitapur Road, Lucknow.
For details and downloading the application forms, please visit the website at **www.rbi.org.in** & **www.dgciskol.gov.in** (Click on the link of Indian Trade Journal).
The last date and time of submission of the duly filled in application form is May 13, 2024 up to 17:00 Hrs.
Address for communication: Reserve Bank of India, Estate Department, 8-9, Vipin Khand, Gomti Nagar, Lucknow (U.P.) – 226 010
Contact No: 0522-2307968

Regional Director
Reserve Bank of India
Lucknow

Date: March 30, 2024

POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION OF UTTARAKHAND LTD.
(A Govt. of Uttarakhand Enterprise)
"Vidyut Bhawan" Near ISBT Crossing, Saharanpur Road, Majra, Dehradun-248002
Corporate ID U40101UR2004GOI028675 Tel. No. 0135-2642711

E-TENDER CORRIGENDUM-9

The reply of queries for the E-Tender of "Construction of 132 kV & 66 kV Bays and installation of 3x20 MVA, 132/66 kV Transformers at 132 kV Substation Simli" against tender specification No. PTCUL/E-Tender/C&P-I/SS-08/2023-24 has been uploaded on e-tender website and the last date of submission of E-Tender is hereby extended upto **15.04.2024 15:30 Hrs.** For more details please visit e-tender website www.uktenders.gov.in (tender id no. 2023_PTCU1_62908_1) and for e-tender notice our website www.ptcul.org. All other terms and conditions shall remain same.
For any assistance on E-Tendering, please contact +91-8899890000.

Superintending Engineer (C&P-I)
RO No. 540/HQPU/PTCUL Dated 28.03.2024
"Save Electricity in the Interest of Nation"

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Raju Gupta, S/o. Mohan Lal @ Mangu, R/o.** E-14, 1st Floor, Tagore Garden, Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case **FIR 147/2018 U/s 392/411/34 IPC** registered at P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Raju Gupta** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Raju Gupta** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said **Raju Gupta** accused of **FIR 147/2018 U/s 392/411/34 IPC** P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **08.05.2024**

By Order
Sh. Milan Goel
Metropolitan Magistrate-02, West,
Room No. 356,
Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi
DP/3644/WD/2024

National Highways Authority of India
(Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, Govt. of India)

PUBLIC NOTICE

User Fee Rates for Kurana Fee Plaza at Km. 47.900 for 4-lane of Meerut Bulandshahar Section (NH-235) from Km. 8.800 (Village Shakarpur, Meerut) to Km. 66.482 (Bhur Chauraha, Bulandshahar) Design Chainage 73.512 total length 61.190 Km. excluding existing 3.522 Km. Hapur Bypass section of NH-235 (New NH-334) in the State of Uttar Pradesh w.e.f. 01.04.2024 (00.00 hrs) to 31.03.2025 are applicable as per following revised schedule:-

Category of Vehicles	Fee for Single Journey (in Rs.)	Fee for return Journey within a day (in Rs.)	Fee for Monthly Pass for 50 Single Journeys in a Month (in Rs.)	Fee for Journey for the Commercial Vehicles registered within the district of fee plaza (in Rs.)
Car, Jeep, Van or Light Motor Vehicle	110	165	3640	55
Light Commercial Vehicle, Light Goods Vehicle or Mini Bus	175	265	5880	90
Bus or Truck (Two Axles)	370	555	12320	185
Three-Axle commercial vehicles	405	605	13440	200
Heavy Construction Machinery (HCM) or Earth Moving Equipment (EME) or Multi Axle Vehicle (MAV) (Four to Six Axles)	580	870	19320	290
Oversized Vehicles (Seven or more Axles)	705	1060	23520	355

The rate of monthly pass for Local Non-Commercial Vehicles residing within a distance of 20 Km from the Fee Plaza for the FY 2024-25 shall be Rs. 340/-

PROJECT DIRECTOR
PIU – MEERUT
Building a Nation, Not Just Roads

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण नि0 लि0
ऊर्जा भवन, 220 के.वी. विद्युत उपसंस्थान
बाई- पास रोड, सिकन्दरा, आगरा-282007

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा सूचना

1. ई-निविदा विशिष्टीकरण सं0 डीवीवीएनएल - एमएम / 3539-2024, मात्रा: 33 KV CT 200/100/ 1-1-1 A, मात्रा 1300 नग, धरोहर राशि: रु0 3,87,500.00, निविदा प्रपत्र का मूल्य: रु0 5900.00 (जी0एस0टी0 सहित)। उपरोक्त निविदा ऑनलाईन बिड दिनांक 15.04.2024 को समय 13:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन अपलोड की जा सकेगी एवं निविदा खुलने की दिनांक 16.04.2024 को सायं 16:00 बजे होगी। निविदा प्रपत्र उ0प्र0 शासन के ई-प्रोक्योरमेंट पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर अपलोड की जायेंगी, वहाँ से निविदा प्रपत्र डाउनलोड एवं अपलोड किये जा सकते हैं।

निविदा शुल्क केवल ऑनलाइन, DVVNL, AGRA की वेबसाइट www.dvvnl.org के माध्यम से ही स्वीकार किया जायेगा। विवरण के लिए कृपया निविदा प्रपत्र ध्यानपूर्वक पढ़ लें।

पत्र संख्या:- 912/अधी0अभि0(सा0प्र0-I)/आगरा/विज्ञापन
दिनांक- 28.03.2024 अधीक्षण अभियन्ता (सा0प्र0-1)
"सुनहरा भविष्य बनायें, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएँ"

STORES E-PROCUREMENT

Tender Notice No.: S/44/2023-24, Dtd: 28-03-2024. E-Tender are invited by the undersigned for the following works.

Sl.No.:1; Tender No. : 50/23/0627/OT/320/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 19-04-2024.
Brief Description: Electric point machine, Non- Trailable type with 143 mm throw, as per spec.no.IRS:S-24/2002 (Amd.1) with latest amendments/version. & Drg.No.RDSO/S-10800 with latest amendments/version. AC immunity level shall be 400 V. (Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). i) Qty- 30 Nos for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty- 5 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal), iii) Qty-15 Nos for Katihar GSD, NFR(Bihar). P.L. No- 56480647.

Sl.No.:2; Tender No. : 60/24/5023/OT/321/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 19-04-2024.
Brief Description: 1) Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of EOT Crane of 65/10 TON including DSL with accessories as per specification attached in annexure. (Warranty Period:24 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stages Insp: No, Stages :0). Qty-3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No.-664505720038. 2) Cost of concomitant accessories. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage insp.: No,Stages:0). Qty-3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L No.-66450573. 3) Cost of comprehensive AMC for 5 years (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:0). Qty-3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR(West Bengal). P.L. No-66450572. 4) Cost of DSL (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages:0). Qty- 3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR(West Bengal). P.L.No.-66450574. 5) Cost of spares. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No,Stages:0). Qty- 3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L.No.-66450575. 6) Cost of maintenance tools. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages:0). Qty-3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR(West Bengal). P.L.No.-66450576. 7) Cost of any other accessory treated as concomitant accessory. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages:0). Qty- 3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L.No.-66450577. 8) Cost of installation & commissioning of crance and DSL. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: No, Stages:0). Qty- 3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L.No.- 66450578. 9) Cost of preventive maintenance during 1st & 2nd year of warranty period. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: No,Stages:0). Qty- 3 Nos for SSE/D/MECH./Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal).P.L. No.-66450579.

Sl.No.:3; Tender No. : 79/24/0924/OT/322/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 22-04-2024.
Brief Description: (1) Gold plated Silver Medal with Indian Railway Logo on one side and name of Zonal Railway on the other side. (2) Two aluminium Pillars of height 1.5 inches and diameter 0.75 inches on both sides of the medal. (3) The two stands /pillars are to be fixed suitably on inner plate of 9 mm covered with Velvet cloth so that the Medal may not be displaced due to jerk or capsize condition of the box. (4) Packing in transparent acrylic Velvet box of good quality and good aesthetics view. (5) Design of Medal and Acrylic box as per attached Drg Annexure 'A'. (6) In the Indian Railway logo,17stars should be present. (7) Weight of medal-20 gms. (8) Silver of 0.999 purity. (9) Diameter of the medal should be 1.5 inches. (10) The medal should be hall marked. (11) Thickness of Gold plating on Silver medal minimum 0.5 micron. (12) Tolerance where not indicated shall be as per IDS:2102, Part-I and Part-II medium Tolerance. Sample to be approved before bulk supply. Sample to be approved only for feel, finish and workmanship, rest of the specification to be exactly as per tender schedule. (Warranty Period:30 Months after the date of delivery). (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages :0). Qty- 2000 Nos for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam). P.L. No-79560003.

Sl.No.:4; Tender No. : 60/23/5050A/OT/323/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 15-04-2024.
Brief Description: 1) Supply of Coil Spring Scragging & Load Deflection Testing machine with axial shift for LHB & IRY Coaches 25T machine on T. (Warranty Period:24 Months after the date of delivery). (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.-650304150016. 2) Cost of the Concomitant Accessories as per point no 4.2 of section-IV with break-up of cost as a separate annexure (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Set for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No-65030416. 3) Cost of Any other accessory which in the opinion of supplier is essentially required for making machine fully functional. (Inspection Agency:CONSG, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No-65030417. 4) Spares for two years normal operation and maintenance. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage insp.: No,Stages:0). Qty-1 Set for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). 5) Consumables as per Clause no 6 of section V (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:0). Qty-1 Set for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No.-65030422. 6) Cost of Optional Accessory (Inspection Agency :CONSG, Stage Insp.: No stages: 0),Qty-1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop,NFR (Assam). P.L. No.-65030423. 7) AMC for 5 Years. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage insp.: No, Stage :0. Qty-1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR(Assam). P.L. No.-65030415. 8) Preventive Maintenance for 2 years (1st and 2nd year) as per warrant. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.:No, Stages:0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No- 65030418. 9) Cost of Turnkey charges viz foundation, Installation, commissioning etc. (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:0). Qty- 1 Nos for SSE/MWS/Dibrugarh Workshop, NFR (Assam). P.L. No- 65030419.

Sl.No.:5; Tender No. : 79/24/0847A/OT/324/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 22-04-2024.
Brief Description: Bed sheet, cotton handloom bleached white Size.140 x 229 cms with ship of 1 cm wide to be printed all along the length on both sides of bed sheet with legend "Northeast Frontier Railway" in English & Hindi scripts in attractive sky blue colour. The strip shall be 25 cms from edges. Marking of Manufacturer Name, Month & Year of manufacturing, Batch Number/Lot Number to be Given on every Bed sheet to BIS Specification No IS:745/2021, Rev-4) Varity No 12. (Warranty Period: 12 Months after the date of delivery). i) Qty-280637.00 Nos for Dibrugarh Town/Workshop Depot, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty-73883.00 Nos for Katihar GSD, NFR (Bihar), iii) Qty-37612.00 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal), iv) Qty- 507868.00 for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam). P.L. No-79337806.

Sl.No.:6; Tender No. : 79/23/0849D/OT/325/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 22-04-2024.
Brief Description: Hand towel, Tukish cotton, Handloom superior white. size-60x40cms, with "IR" monogram to be marked with indelible ink in all corner as per IS: 854/2021, varity No.4 (Warranty Period:9 Months after the date of delivery). i)Qty-160000.00 Nos for Dibrugarh Town Workshop Depot, NFR (Assam), ii) Qty-40000.00 Nos for Katihar GSD, NFR (Bihar), iii) Qty-30000.00 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR(West Bengal), iv) Qty-180000.00 for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam). P.L. No-79339025.

Sl.No.:7; Tender No. : 79/24/0983/OT/326/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 22-04-2024.
Brief Description: Pillow cover handloom bleached white superior quality size: 65x38 cms, with screen printing of "Northest Frontier Railway" Month & year of manufacturing in English and Hindi script in strip if size 1cm width to be printed in running length symmetrically at a distance of 10cms. from both ends. screen printing shall be in light blue colour. Each pillow cover should be stitched by cotton thread, the stitches should not be less than 4 numbers per cm. Border of 3.5cms. should be provided with interlocking to BIS specification No. IS: 745/2021, variety No. 12 (Warranty Period: 9 months after the date of delivery). (i) Qty-150000.00 Nos for Dibrugarh Town Workshop Depot, NFR (Assam), (ii) Qty- 50000.00 Nos for Katihar GSD, NFR (Bihar), (iii) Qty-38223.00 Nos for New Jalpaiguri GSD, NFR (West Bengal), (iv) Qty-200000.00 Nos for Pandu GSD, NFR (Assam). P.L.No-79331075.

Sl.No.:8; Tender No. : 60/24/5024/OT/327/2023-24; Closing/Opening Date: 22-04-2024.
Brief Description: (1) Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of 01 no EOT CRANE-50 TON WITH DSL and other accessories mention in annexture -2, as per specification attached (Warranty period:24 Months after the date of delivery) (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp.: No, Stages:- 0). Qty -1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-651007900010. (2) Cost of any other accessory treated as concomitant accessory. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages:-0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L No.-65100794. (3) AMC for 5 Years (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-65100790. (4) Cost of DSL (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stage: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-65100791. (5) Cost of spares as per schedule -IV and additional spares and items viz Slings/lifting tackles as specified in schedule-1 (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-65100792. (6) Cost of maintenance tools as per Schedule-V (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-65100793. (7) Cost of installaton & commissioning of crane & DSL (Inspection Agency: CONSG, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No- 65100795. (8) Cost of preventive maintenance during 1st & 2nd year. (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No-65100796. (9) Cost of any other additional concomitant accessories items (Inspection Agency: TPI, Stage Insp: No, Stages: 0). Qty-1 Nos for SSE/D/MECH/Malda Town, NFR (West Bengal). P.L. No- 65100797.

Note :- For full details of Tender Notice and Tender Documents, Tenderer may log on to the website (**www.ireps.gov.in**) prospective bidder who intend to participate in above tenders are required to log in themselves with the above website and submit their offer electronically, if they are already registered with **IREPS**. In case they are not registered with **IREPS**, they are advised to obtain class-III Digital Signature Certificate from the certifying agencies under Govt. of India IT Act 2000 and participate in the above tenders.

PCMM, Maligaon
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
Serving Customers With A Smile

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY
E-Tender No.- PRYJ-Sig-076-2023-24 Date: 28.03.2024

E-Tender Notice

Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer/Coordination/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite **E-TENDER** on prescribed form for the following works up to **12.00 hrs.** on the opening date of E-tender mentioned therein. **The details of the Tender are as under:-**

Tender No.: 076, **Name of work:** S & T work to facilitate Construction of RCC boundary wall/safety fencing in connection with raising of speed up to 130 KMPH in NYN-MKP section.

Approx. Cost of work : 98229879.96, **Bid Security:** 641200/-, **Cost of Tender Form:** 0.00, **Completion period:** 12 Months, **Date of Opening of tender:** 26.04.2024, **2. Availability of tender form:** Tender forms are available on **www.ireps.gov.in** **3. Bid Security to be deposited:** The prescribed amount of Bid Security as mentioned above must be deposited along with the tender form Online through Internet Banking or Online Payment gateway only. The tenderer(s) should note that, in any case, the Bid Security in any other form than specified in GCC shall be acceptable. If the Bid Security deposited by the bidder is in shape of Bank Guarantee, it should be supported by proper stamp duty, rate prescribed as per section13 & 24 of the UP Stamp Act, 2008 and amended from time to time at the time of submission of Bank Guarantee. Tenders without Bid Security shall be summarily rejected. **4. Time & place of opening of tender:** Tender will be opened through E-tender at office of Divisional Railway Manager, Prayagraj at or after **12.30 hours.** In case tender opening date happens to be holiday, Tenders will be opened on the next working day. **5. Validity of offer:** 60 days from the date of opening. **6. Right of Railway to deal with tender:** Railway administration reserves the rights to postpone/modify or to cancel the tender without assigning any reasons. **575/24(K)**

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

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

SEE SECTION U/S 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused **Sachin, S/o Puran Singh, R/o C-8/65 Sector-5 Rohini New Delhi.** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in **FIR No.17/2018 U/s 186/353/333/307/34 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act, P.S. Naraina, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said accused **Sachin** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Sachin** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Sachin of FIR No.17/2018 U/s 186/353/333/307/34 IPC & 25/54/59 Arms Act, P.S. Naraina, Delhi** is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before **15.05.2024.**

By Order
Sh. Rahul Jain
Ld. Metropolitan Magistrate-08
Room No. 12 Patiala House Court, New Delhi
DP/3530/WD/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
As per u/s 20-I.(1) of Railways Act 1989)

Announcement of Award/ Structure amount for acquisition of land for villages falling in alignment of Special Railway Project namely "Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor (HORC) Project from Palwal to Sonipat via Sohna- Manesar and Kharkhoda"New broad gauge Double line from 12.900 K.M to 37.000K.M.
Kind attention all Structure owners/ Interested persons that Special Railway Project namely "Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor (HORC) Project from Palwal to Sonipat via Sohna- Manesar and Kharkhoda" New broad gauge Double Rail line for villages Bhirawati, Udaka, Atta, Indri, Khanpur, Rewasn, kheri kankar, Dhirdhoka, Rupaheri, Mehrola & Rojkameo of Sub-Tehsil Indri, District Nuh.
Notification 20A No S.0.5302 (E) dated 17th December 2021 and Notification 20E No. S.O.1803 (E) dated 12th April, 2022 and award announce of date 22-12-2022 & 10-02-2023 as per details given below:-

Sr. No	Notification	Name of News paper of Publication	Date of Newspaper	Date of award Announce
1.	20A No S.O. 5302(E) Dated 17.12.2021	"Dainik Jagran" in Hindi Version and "Hindustan Times" in English version	20.12.2021	22.12.2022 & 10.02.2023
2.	20E No. S.O. 1803(E) Dated 12.04.2022	"Dainik Jagran" in Hindi Version and "Hindustan Times" in English version	14.04.2022	

Accordingly all the Concerned Structure owners/interested persons are herby informed that Notification 20E No. S.O.1803 (E) dated 12th April, 2022 that It is informed that the undersigned have to announced tha award of the notified Structure on dated **01.04.2024** at **11:00 AM** in the office of District Revenue officer-Cum-Competent Authority (Land Acquisition) at Mini Secretariat Nuh. Accordingly all the Concerned Structure owners/interested persons are requested to be present on dated **01.04.2024 at 11:00 AM** in the District Revenue officer-Cum-Competent Authority (Land Acquisition) at Mini Secretariat Nuh.

Date: 29.03.2024
District Revenue officer-cum-Competent Authority (LA)
Nuh

राष्ट्रीय परीक्षा एजेंसी
National Testing Agency
Excellence in Assessment
(उच्चतर शिक्षा विभाग, शिक्षा मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार के तहत एक स्वायत्त संगठन
(An Autonomous Organization under the Department of Education, Ministry of Education, Government of India)
IIM BODH GAYA
IIM JAMMU

Public Notice
Dated: 22 March, 2024
Online Applications Form for Joint Integrated Program in Management Admission Test 2024

The National Testing Agency (NTA) will be conducting the JIPMAT 2024 for admission to 5-year Integrated Program in Management at IIM Bodh Gaya and IIM Jammu for the academic year 2024 −25, as per following details:

Submission of Online Applications Form	**22 March 2024 to 21 April 2024 (upto 05:00 P.M)**
Submission of Online Applications Fee	**22 April 2024 (upto 11:50 P.M)**
Correction in Particulars	**23 April 2024 to 25 April 2024 (upto 11:50 P.M.)**
Date of exam	**06 June, 2024 (Thursday)**
Mode of exam	**Computer Based Test CBT)**
Paper pattern	**Multiple Choice questions**

Candidates should have passed 10+2/XII/HSC/PUC examination in arts/commerce/science/diploma or equivalent with 60% (55% for candidates from SC/ST/PwD/Third Gender) or more in the years 2022, 2023 or appearing in 2024. The candidate must have passed Class 10 examination with 60% (55% for candidates from SC/ST/PwD/ Third Gender or more in the year not before 2020.

Scheme/duration/medium/syllabus of examination, eligibility criteria, tentative intake, reservation of seats, exam cities, important dates, etc., are mentioned in the Information Bulletin hosted on **https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/**. Candidates who desire to appear in the exam may read the detailed Information Bulletin for JIPMAT 2024 and apply online only at **https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/**. The exam fee is required to be paid online, by using SBI & HDFC Bank Payment Gateway through Net Banking/Debit Card/Credit Card/UPI.

Candidates are advised to be in touch with the NTA website **https://exams.nta.ac.in/JIPMAT/** candidates can write to NTA at **jipmat@nta.ac.in** or call NTA at 011-4075 9000.

Sd/-
Senior Director (Exams)
CBC 21354/12/0017/2324

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr. P. C.

Whereas a complaint has been made before me that accused person namely **Ali Raja S/o Md. Shareef** R/o B-448, Patel Nagar II Balmiki Kunj (Ghaziabad) U.P. have committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence under **FIR No 79/18 U/s 279/337/338 IPC** has been registered at **P.S. Jyoti Nagar, Delhi** and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said **Ali Raja** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the **Ali Raja** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **of FIR No 79/18 U/s 279/337/338 IPC registered at PS. Jyoti Nagar, Delhi** is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before **28.05.2024**

By Order
Ms Preeti Parewa, LD, CMM,
Karkardoom Courts, Delhi
DP/3562/NE/2024

Oppn attacks UP govt, seeks high-level Ansari death probe

Worst Phase Of Govt Anarchy, Says Akhilesh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav on Friday targeted Uttar Pradesh's Yogi Adityanath-led BJP govt over gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari's death in jail, demanding that all such suspicious fatalities in custody be probed under the supervision of a Supreme Court judge. BSP chief Mayawati also pressed for a high-level probe into Ansari's death.

"UP is passing through its worst phase of govt anarchy. The manner in which govt overlooks the judicial system and adopts a different route is completely unlawful," Akhilesh posted on 'X' amid allegations of foul play by Ansari's relatives.

"It is the primary duty and responsibility of the state to ensure safety and security of the people in every situation and at every place, be it inside a police lock-up, during a dispute with fellow inmates in jail, if an inmate is unwell inside the jail, while inmate is being taken to court or hospital, while in hospital…" Akhilesh added.

In his post, the SP chief also referred to alleged fake encounters "in the garb of accidents and dressed-up suicides". "Failure of the state to provide adequate protection in any of these situations will shake people's confidence in the justice system," the SP chief wrote.

Mayawati alluded to "doubts" raised by Ansari's family. "A high-level inquiry is necessary so that the actual cause of his death is known," she said. The probe calls came as a host of senior leaders, including sitting SP MLAs, trooped to Ansari's native place in Ghazipur district's Mohammadabad. They met Ansari's elder brother Sibghatullah and offered condolences. Afzal Ansari, another of Ansari's brothers who is five-time MLA and two-time Lok Sabha MP, is the SP candidate from Ghazipur seat in this year's general elections.

The SP leaders questioned the haste behind discharging Ansari from Banda hospital after he was found unconscious in his jail barracks a few days ago. "What was the hurry to send him back when he was not well," said Suhaib Ansari, SP MLA from Mohammadabad.

DON'S LAST DAYS

- **March 20** | Mukhtar's lawyer accuses jail authorities of poisoning his food
- **March 25** | Mukhtar collapses in Banda jail at 3.55am
- **March 25** | Around 5.30am, he is taken to Rani Durgavati Medical College in Banda and shifted back to jail the same day
- **March 27** | Family files an application in MP-MLA court alleging conspiracy to kill Mukhtar. Banda MP-MLA court instructs jail authorities to file report
- **March 28: 2.30pm** | Mukhtar complains of pain. Team of doctors examines him at 3.30pm
- **5pm** | ADM Rajesh Kumar reaches jail and informs senior officials about Mukhtar's condition. DM and SP reach jail
- **8.15pm** | Mukhtar is sent to medical college in unconscious state
- **8.30pm** | Treatment begins in ICU
- **9.20pm** | Mukhtar is shifted to CCU
- **10.30pm** | Police announce Mukhtar's death
- **March 29** | Mukhtar's body sent for autopsy at 12.30am

Ex-DSP: Had to quit after recommending Pota against don

Former DSP (STF) Shailendra Singh, who recommended the Prevention of Terrorism Act (Pota) charges against Mukhtar Ansari, claims that he had to bear the brunt of rubbing those in power at the time the wrong way.

"Twenty years ago, in 2004, Ansari's empire was at its peak. I had arrested Ansari after I got to know that he was going to buy an LMG (light machine gun) from an Army deserter. I took a stand and ensured that he went to jail. At that time, I even recommended Pota for him," said Singh, who alleged that he was forced to quit because of Ansari's clout.

Singh claimed that the weapon seized by him was the only LMG that has been ever recovered in UP till date.

Singh said that it had all started in Jan 2004, when a shootout took place between Ansari and the then Mohammadabad MLA Krishnanand Rai. According to Singh, Ansari had told his henchmen that the LMG would be able to penetrate Rai's bulletproof SUV. Singh and his team arrested two peopleand recovered the LMG on Jan 25, 2004, after which Pota case was filed against Ansari. TNN

Autopsy shows heart attack led to death: Cop

Pathikrit.Chakraborty
@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: Gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari will be buried at his native Ghazipur district on Saturday, in the family's Kalibag graveyard in Yusufpur Mohammadabad.

The autopsy on the body of the former five-term MLA revealed that "myocardial infarction (heart attack) was the cause of Ansari's death", said a senior police officer. The viscera has been preserved for further chemical analysis. In repeated pleas in court, Ansari had alleged as recently as March 21 that he was being slow-poisoned in jail. Food he ate on March 19, he said, caused excruciating pain in the veins of his hands and legs, followed by numbness.

Ansari's son Umar, who was the first to arrive at the Banda hospital after his father's death, demanded a postmortem examination by a panel of doctors from AIIMS Delhi as he had "no belief in the doctors of Banda medical college".

However, the autopsy was performed by a panel of five doctors — one from SGPGI Lucknow and four from Banda medical college. The body was handed over to the family in the evening.

The entire proceedings of the postmortem examination were videographed. "All mandatory rules and SOPs for conducting the autopsy in cases of death of convicts and prisoners were followed," said a senior police officer.

A judicial probe was ordered on Friday by Banda chief judicial magistrate (CJM) Bhagwan Das Gupta, and the other by district magistrate Durga Shakti Nagpal, which will be conducted by additional DM, finance, Rajesh Kumar. The judicial probe will be conducted by additional CJM (MP/MLA Court), Garima Singh, who has been asked to submit a report within a month.

Ansari's burial will be held at 10am Saturday, his elder brother Shibgatullah, who is a former MLA, said.

Repeating his allegations of slow poisoning and medical negligence, Umar said: "What is the use of recounting what happened? We have already presented evidence to various courts regarding poisoning."

In the Barabanki court, trial is on in different cases of forgery and Gangsters Act against Ansari and his 12 associates on charges of registering an ambulance with fake documents. Ansari was to appear before Barabanki court in a Gangsters Act case on Friday.

(With inputs from Arshad Afzaal Khan in Ayodhya)

Ansari's elder son may miss funeral due to parole delay

Agra: Abbas Ansari, elder son of gangster-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari and MLA from Mau constituency, may not be able to attend his father's funeral as parole proceedings in Allahabad high court could not be completed on Friday, reports **Deepak Lavania**.

With Supreme Court on a holiday due to Good Friday, the 32-year-old's lawyers reached out to top court's vacation officer for an "urgent hearing".

Meanwhile, after postmortem, Mukhtar's remains were taken from Rani Durgavati Medical College in Banda to his home in Ghazipur. His last rites will be conducted on Saturday, sources said.

Superintendent of Kasganj district jail, Vijay Vikram Singh, said, "Abbas was informed about his father's death late on Thursday. He then offered prayers inside the cell. He is under round-the-clock surveillance and his health is being monitored."

Notably, Abbas was transferred to Kasganj district jail in Feb last year. He was earlier lodged in Chitrakoot jail in connection with a money laundering case by enforcement directorate.

Markets shut in ancestral town of Ansari

Ghazipur: Nearly 400km from Banda, in Yusufpur Mohammadabad in UP's Ghazipur district, the ancestral town of don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari, people awaited his mortal remains with anticipation on Friday, reports **Rajeev Dikshit**.

In contrast, Ghazipur town nearby remained heavily fortified, with men in khaki patrolling the city and neighbouring districts.

Ansari's family left Banda with his remains around 5pm on Friday. By Friday noon, a grave had been dug near the burial place of Ansari's parents in the Kalibagh graveyard. Except for a crowd at his ancestral home, the entire township remained deserted with markets closed.

Several markets along the Ghazipur-Mohammadabad-Ballia road were also shut.

'Feels like Holi': Widow of UP MLA killed by Ansari in 2005

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

PTI

An ambulance carrying the mortal remains of Mukhtar Ansari leaves Banda for his home town amid heavy security on Friday

Varanasi: The widow of UP BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai described the death of Mukhtar Ansari, gangster-turned-politician who had killed her husband in 2005, as a "blessing" from God.

Ansari (63) died after suffering cardiac arrest in Banda jail on Thursday. "It (Ansari's death) is a blessing of Baba (Lord Shiva). We always prayed to Baba for justice and we received it. We haven't celebrated Holi since the incident but today feels like Holi for us," Alka Rai said on Friday after praying at Shri Kashi Vishwanath temple.

An MP/MLA court had convicted and sentenced Ansari to 10 years for Rai's murder in April 2023. Rai and six others were shot dead in Ghazipur in Nov 2005 while returning home after a cricket tournament inauguration.

Following Ansari's death late Thursday, police in Varanasi initiated patrolling to maintain order. Friday prayers passed off peacefully across the city.

Ansari, a five-time MLA from Mau, had been behind bars since 2005 in various jails across Punjab and UP. He faced 65 cases, of which he was convicted in eight. As of March 2024, 21 cases were pending. Earlier this month, on March 13, Ansari received a life sentence for acquiring an arms licence using forged documents in 1990.

In June 2023, a Varanasi MP/MLA court sentenced him to life for the murder of Awadhesh Rai, brother of UP Congress president Ajay Rai.

In Oct 2023, an MP/MLA court sentenced him to 10 years along with a fine for his involvement in the 2009 murder of a teacher, Kapil Dev Singh. In the same month, ED attached his assets worth over Rs 73.43 lakh in a money-laundering investigation.

In Dec 2022, a Ghazipur court convicted him and one of his associates in a 26-year-old Gangster Act case. Before that, in Sept 2022, Allahabad high court convicted him in two separate cases. One involved threatening a jailer in 2003, and the other was a 1999 case.

Killers should have been given death: Raju Pal's wife

▶ Continued from P1

I am satisfied with the court's decision. But these accused should have been given death sentence because an MLA was murdered in broad daylight," Pal's wife Pooja, an SP MLA, told PTI.

CBI had chargesheeted 10 people, including Atiq and Ashraf, in 2019 for the killings.

Those convicted on Friday are Abid, Farhan Ahmad, Javed, Ranjit, Gul Hasan, and Abdul Kavi. A seventh convict, Israr Ahmad, was not present in court. Another accused, Gulphool, alias Rafiq Ahmad, died during trial. A senior lawyer privy to the case said the court will issue a non-bailable warrant against Israr and announce his sentence when he appears before it.

The convicts were held guilty under IPC Sections 302 (murder), 307 (attempt to murder), 120B (criminal conspiracy), 147 (rioting), and 148 (rioting with armed weapons). Farhan was given an additional sentence of four years in connection with a case under the Arms Act.

During the investigation, CBI had recorded the statements of eyewitnesses, including Raju's associates, shopkeepers and bystanders. All had named 10 people, including Ashraf, as accused. Ashraf's cellphone call records had confirmed his presence at the crime scene.

Seven people were given a clean chit by CBI — Ashiq alias Malli, Azaz Akhtar, Akbar, Dinesh Pasi, Guddu Muslim, Gufran Ahmad, and Mutaisan. They had earlier been chargesheeted by Prayagraj police and by UP CB-CID.

According to prosecution, assailants had intercepted Raju's vehicle in Dhoomanganj and opened fire as the MLA was returning home with his associates. The killers came in two cars. Raju and his associates Devilal Pal and Sandeep Yadav were killed in the firing, while three others, Ruksana, Saif alias Saifulla, and Om Prakash Pal, suffered gunshot injuries.

On the same day, Raju's wife, Pooja Pal, had lodged an FIR against Atiq, Ashraf and seven unidentified people at Dhoomanganj police station on charges of rioting, attempt to murder, murder and criminal conspiracy. Raju was killed nine days after marrying Pooja.

Prayagraj police had chargesheeted 11 people, including Atiq and Ashraf, in a local court on April 6, 2005. In Dec 2008, the then state govt transferred the case to UP CB-CID. The investigation was transferred to CBI in Jan 2016 on Supreme Court orders.

Raju had won Prayagraj West bypoll after Atiq vacated the seat on becoming Phulpur MP. He had defeated Atiq's brother, Ashraf, who had contested on a Samajwadi Party ticket.

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BJP: Cong trying to hide fact that latest I-T notice follows HC order

'Instead Of Engaging In Rhetoric, Party Should Fulfil Tax Obligations'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Friday dismissed Congress' angry protests over I-T action against it saying that the opposition party is trying to distract attention from its failure to obey the laws which apply to political parties as well as all tax payers and is trying to obfuscate the fact that the latest notice of income tax department follows an order of Delhi HC.

At a press conference, BJP spokesperson Syed Zafar Islam emphasised that Congress failed to follow the correct procedures for filing taxes or making appeals even as the party had misrepresented its income.

"From commissioner of I-T to income tax appellate tribunal and even Delhi HC, have upheld actions of income tax department while dismissing Congress' arguments," Islam said, adding that instead of engaging in media rhetoric, Congress should adhere to legal processes and fulfil their tax obligations.

Islam said for any registered political party, it is mandatory under Income Tax Act 13 (A) to file their income tax return every year. However, Indian National Congress violated the condition and not only delayed the return but also misrepresented the income. Islam said in such a situation, I-T department was compelled to take action under the law.

"Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and other Congress netas who are making statements in the media are running away from the reality," the BJP functionary said. He said Congress has a history of scams and corruption and the party concealed income and committed tax theft. Zafar Islam underscored that under PM Narendra Modi's leadership there is a rule of law in country and no one is above the law.

"However, one certain family of Congress party feels that they should get exemptions in everything and there should be separate laws for them, which is not possible in this country anymore," he added.

Rahul Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, and other Congress netas who are making statements in the media are running away from reality, said BJP

He said I-T department found unaccounted cash transactions and unfiled tax returns by Congress during its investigation, based on seized documents.

BJP said accusations levelled by Congress leaders against I-T department and court reveal their frustration. "If satisfactory explanations are not provided, necessary actions will follow," he added.

Earlier in the day, BJP said Congress thinks that it is above the Constitution and law of the country. "Congress thinks it can become a tax defaulter, lie and play victim. Common people have to pay taxes but Congress keeps itself in a special VVIP category. While opposing PM Modi and BJP, today Congress has started attacking institutions of the country too," said BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla.

He said this showed frustration levels of Congress. "Rs 350 crore was found on premises of their MP Dhiraj Sahu. Their 50 MPs will collectively have a lot of money. It is not the lack of money, Congress party lacks candidates and intentions," he said.

'I-T dept ensured that principle of natural justice is followed'

▶Continued from P 1

Responding to Congress' claims of govt unleashing 'tax terrorism', an income-tax dept source said, "The department always ensures that the principle of natural justice is followed and provides all material to the taxpayer based on which the department intends to make additions in the hands of the taxpayer. The same process has also been adopted in case of Congress. All the evidence available with the department was given to Congress."

Sources said the entire exercise was done in accordance with laid down legal provisions and involved going through the entire evidence before reassessment proceedings were initiated and even during the exercise.

The reassessment was based on "incriminating material" seized during search operations in April 2019, which pointed to extensive use of cash in the electoral process. Some of the evidence was also presented before Delhi high court, which was hearing writ petitions filed by Congress against income tax department's move.

The court issued two orders and in the first one relied on evidence presented before it in sealed cover, running into 300 pages, which included details of alleged cash transactions, including transfers made to Congress headquarters on Akbar Road and also to certain party functionaries.

The data was allegedly collected from associates of former MP chief minister Kamal Nath as well as evidence found during searches on Megha Engineering, whose name figured prominently in electoral bonds list. Tax department had told the court that at least Rs 524 crore may have escaped assessment.

Delhi HC had dismissed the petitions and held that tax department has substantial and concrete evidence warranting further scrutiny and examination under the law. It also observed that the 'satisfaction note' detailed unaccounted transactions and that Congress failed to establish that the material basis of the 'satisfaction note' is not founded on any material evidence or documentation.

CPI receives I-T dept notice for ₹11cr dues

Communist Party of India (CPI) has received a notice from income tax department, asking it to pay 'dues' of Rs 11 crore for using an old PAN card while filing tax returns during past few years, sources said on Friday.

Sources said 'dues' to be paid to I-T department include penalties and interest due to authorities for 'discrepancies' in use of an old PAN card by the party.

"We are seeking legal assistance and consulting our lawyers," a senior CPI leader said.

Earlier, Congress had said that it received I-T notices, asking the party to pay dues of over Rs 1,823 crore for discrepancies in tax returns filed for previous years.

TMC leader Saket Gokhale has also claimed that he received 11 I-T notices in past 72 hours.

Congress has been alleging that BJP-led Centre is trying to 'cripple' opposition in the run-up to Lok Sabha polls. PTI

Bengal tops states where child marriage FIRs registered

▶Continued from P 1

In 9,551 child marriage cases, legal interventions such as registration of FIR, injunction orders by courts, orders by child welfare committees and undertakings in presence of govt officials have been initiated. Remaining 49,813 child marriages were stopped through counselling of parents and awareness programmes. West Bengal (32%) and Bihar (7%) figured among top five states along with Assam (27%), Odisha (8%) and Maharashtra (6%) where FIRs were registered.

The data is drawn from 'Educate To End Child Marriage', a research paper prepared by coalition calls, for expanding the ambit of Right to Education Act 2009 to provide free and compulsory education from classes 9 to 12. The research paper drives home the point by drawing from National Family Health - 5 (2019-21) to highlight that states with higher female literacy rates tend to have lower prevalence rates of child marriage.

According to the report, in southern zone, Kerala stands out with a high female literacy rate of 96% and a low child marriage prevalence of 6%. Similarly, Mizoram in north-east shows a high female literacy rate of 93% and a relatively low child marriage prevalence of 8%.

Conversely, Bihar in eastern zone have a low female literacy rate of 61% and a high child marriage prevalence of 41%. And, Rajasthan in north zone has a lower female literacy rate of 64% and a relatively high child marriage prevalence of 25%.

PM: For unity in Covid fight, called for clanging utensils, despite ridicule

▶Continued from P 1

The top five cancers among Indian women were found to be those of the breast, cervix, ovary, mouth and colorectum. The top five cancers among men were those of the oral cavity, lung, oesophagus, colorectum and stomach.

Last September, Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonwala had said that the company's cervical cancer vaccine will be available in the range of Rs 200-400. Imported vaccines cost anywhere between Rs 2,000 to Rs 3,500 per dose, which is nearly 10 times the expected price of the indigenously-developed vaccine.

During the interaction that was webcast on news agency ANI's YouTube channel, PM Narendra Modi spoke on a range of issues from artificial intelligence, use of technology, climate change, renewable energy, digital public infrastructure to women empowerment.

On how India's Covid-19 vaccination campaign became successful with people showing little resistance to jabs unlike in several other countries, Modi elaborated on how he led by example and followed all protocols to gain people's trust. "I emphasised that the fight against the virus involves everyone and it was not virus versus govt. I viewed it as a fight of life versus virus from the beginning," he said.

The PM also narrated how he started to communicate openly with people of the nation from day one and personally adhered to all safety protocols to set an example. "I followed all Covid-19 protocols publicly to gain people's trust. I made clarion calls to clap, clang utensils, light lamps despite some ridicule. It was crucial for me to unite everyone in this fight. Once the intent was set on protecting themselves and those around, it turned into a mass movement," he said.

ANI

PM Modi with Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates in New Delhi on Friday

"I also built people's faith by being among the first to get vaccinated along with my 95-year-old mother getting the vaccine publicly. I led by example and gained people's trust that this [vaccine] could save their lives," he added.

"In a democracy, force isn't the answer. In a democracy, people need to be convinced, educated and taken along. In democracy education and collaboration drive progress," Modi said.

Why is EC mute spectator to BJP bid to cripple oppn: Cong

▶Continued from P 1

AICC treasurer Ajay Maken Friday said apart from Congress, two other INDIA bloc parties have received I-T notices, and the parties will forge a common strategy to fight BJP's tax onslaught.

Maken revealed that Congress was served a fresh tax demand of Rs 1,823 crore on Thursday. He said Rs 54 crore penalty is for 1993, Rs 182 crore for 2016, Rs 179 crore for 2017, Rs 918 crore for 2018 and Rs 490 crore for 2019. He said govt has already snatched Congress' Rs 153 crore over 2017-18 filing of Rs 14 lakh contributed by party's own MLAs and MPs.

Party chief Mallikarjun Kharge said, "Why is I-T department being allowed to be used as a weapon to harass Congress?"

Maken said Congress analysed BJP's filings to Election Commission for 2017-18, and found it has violated multiple times the prescribed filing format under Representation of People's Act, with 1,297 donations totalling to Rs 42 crore listed without name or address. "I-T froze Congress accounts for deposits of Rs 14 lakh by its own MPs and MLAs, but it has remained blind to BJP's Rs 42 crore. If we use the same parameters used by I-T department to impose penalty and tax demand on Congress, BJP should face a demand of Rs 4,600 crore," he said, adding that he will soon move a PIL in court to demand that BJP be asked to pay Rs 4,600 crore.

He warned of "threat to democracy", as entries as old as 1993 dating back to AICC tenure of late Sitaram Kesri, and those which go back seven years are being used for "tax terror" against Congress during elections.

Congress spokesman Jairam Ramesh said on the one hand, BJP has indulged in "electoral bonds scam" to collect Rs 8,200 crore through "prepaid, postpaid and post-raid bribes and shell companies", it is also engaged in "tax terrorism" to incapacitate opposition parties like Congress before elections.

Maken asked why is Congress, a tax-exempt political party like others, being 'forced' to pay income tax during 2024 elections.

"Why is EC a mute spectator? Is this not a brazen attempt by BJP to illegally financially cripple opposition? Can 2024 be called a free-and-fair election anymore?" he asked.

After govt change, will take action against those who 'disrobed democracy': Rahul

Amid Congress's tax woes, Rahul Gandhi issued a stern warning that BJP's ouster from power will be followed by exemplary action which will deter others in future from "disrobing democracy".

Rahul posted on X: "When govt changes, action will definitely be taken against those who 'disrobed democracy'! And the action will be so strong that no one will again dare to do all this. This is my guarantee." He also posted an old video featuring him in which he first issued the remark where he had specifically mentioned CBI and ED and warned them saying that "a day will come when there will be no BJP govt and then there will be action and they should be mindful of that".

Congress will hold nationwide protests over the weekend against "tax terrorism" of Modi govt, with Lok Sabha election candidates asked to lead the charge in their constituencies. AICC general secretary K C Venugopal has directed the party units that strong demonstrations should be held across states down to the district level, and all senior leaders should participate to raise the voice against the BJP's "egregious attack on democracy".

The senior AICC leader said, "As is known world over, BJP is out to financially eliminate Congress and has filed multiple frivolous cases against us right on the eve of elections. Against this action, all state units will be protesting across the country. This is not about our party alone, it is a systematic bludgeoning of people's voice. And people will revolt." TNN

Received 11 I-T notices in last 72 hours, says TMC's Saket Gokhale as party moves poll panel

Kolkata: Trinamool Congress moved Election Commission on Friday alleging "selective raids" by all central agencies — CBI, ED, I-T and NIA — against party candidates and leaders to stop them from poll-related work.

TMC spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Saket Gokhale took to social media around noon on Friday to say he has received 11 income-tax notices in past 72 hours for various years, including some that went back seven years. Eight TMC workers were also summoned by NIA during the day in connection with a blast in East Midnapore's Bhupatinagar in Dec 2022.

A five-member TMC delegation reached EC's office in New Delhi on Friday and submitted a memorandum. The poll panel, TMC said, will hear them "in detail" on Monday.

Bengal minister Shashi Panja, who was part of the delegation, said, "TMC is disturbed at the manner in which Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren was arrested just before poll announcement. After model code of conduct kicked in, Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal was arrested. In Bengal, Mahua Moitra's offices was raided to stop her from campaigning. State minister Chandranath Sinha is being issued one summon after another. Even a Kolkata MC councillor's (Jui Biswas) home was raided (by I-T) for three days."

Panja said these "selective raids" by central agencies on opposition leaders are "discriminatory, illegal, and contrary to EC's assertions of free and fair polls", and added that Bengal appears to be the primary target. She pointed out that EC has power under Article 234 of the Constitution to ensure a level playing field.

Shortly after TMC leaders met EC in Delhi, party leader Kunal Ghosh took to X to allege that NIA was acting against TMC at behest of BJP. TMC workers have been summoned by NIA in connection with a Dec 2022 blast that ripped apart a TMC worker's home in East Midnapore and resulted in three deaths.

MEA: India proud of its independent institutions

▶Continued from P 1

On Wednesday, hours after India summoned a senior US diplomat to protest remarks on Kejriwal's arrest, Washington reiterated that it encourages fair, transparent, timely legal processes.

On the US diplomat being summoned in Delhi, state department spokesperson Matthew Miller said, "I'm not going to talk about any private diplomatic conversations. But, of course, what we have said publicly is what I just said from here, that we encourage fair, transparent, timely legal processes. We don't think anyone should object to that, and we'll make the same thing clear privately."

Indian foreign ministry officials summoned acting deputy chief of mission Gloria Berbena to their office in South Block. The meeting lasted for over 30 minutes.

On Thursday, India said US state department's recent remarks on Kejriwal's arrest are "unwarranted" and asserted that the country is "proud of its independent and robust democratic institutions" and committed to protect them from any form of undue external influences.

Any "external imputation" on India's electoral and legal processes is "completely unacceptable", foreign ministry spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal said. PTI

₹10L each for info on B'luru cafe bomber, aide, says NIA

Bengaluru: NIA announced rewards of Rs 10 lakh each for information on March 1 Rameshwaram cafe bombing prime suspect Mussavir Hussain Shazib and his associate Abdul Maheen Ahmed Tasha.

As per NIA, Hussain planted the bomb in the cafe and Taaha assisted him. On Wednesday, NIA had arrested Muzammil Shareef, a co-conspirator in the cafe bombing.

Soon after taking over the case, NIA had announced cash reward of Rs 10 lakh for information on the explosion and people behind it. TNN

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162 Date: 22/03/2024. The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in**. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in→ login → E-Tender Stores/ Supply**. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/CLW/ Chittaranjan, **0341-2525594** or SMM/ CON/HQ, **0341-2535631. Office Address:** Office of the PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.:75243710. Brief Description of Item:** Long Life Loco Side Buffer Assembly (Capacity: 30 KJ Minimum) to RDSO Drg. No: - SK.DL- 4748 Alt-1 or Latest & RDSO Spec. No: - MP-0.41.00.03 (Rev.02) November 2022 or Latest. [Warranty Period: 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 1496.00 Numbers. Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees):** ₹1233930.00. **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):20/04/2024 at 11:00 AM.**

[PR1-361] PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan

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CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN GLOBAL E-TENDER NOTICE

No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162 Date: 22/03/2024. The following **e-Tenders** can be accessed under the link **www.ireps.gov.in.** Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link **www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply.** Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/ CLW/Chittaranjan, **0341-2525594** or SMM/CON/HQ, **0341-2535631. Office Address:** Office of the PCMM/CLW/ Chittaranjan. **Sl. No.: [1]. Tender No.: 81230251C. Brief Description of Item:** SILICON IMPREGNATING RESIN SILRES H62C OR EQUIVALENT Specn. No. 4TMS.096.093 ALT-1 STR NO. CLW/ TM/STR/12100 (REV-1). **[Warranty Period:** 30 Months after the date of delivery]. **Quantity: 31785.00Kg. Earnest Money Deposit (INR/USD):** 0.00 (INR)/ 0.00(USD). **Tender Closing Date & Time (IST):26/04/2024 at 11:00 AM.**

PR7/359 PCMM/CLW/Chittaranjan

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WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN E- Tender Notice
No. BPL/TRD/DRG/WC386RT7
Date- 28/03/2024

Sr. DEE/TRD/WCR. Bhopal acting for and on behalf of the President of India. invites E-Tenders against following works. upto to 11.00 hours on the dates mentioned against each tender. The complete tender documents and detail information regarding tender, is available on the website http://www.ireps.gov.in. Manual offers are not allowed against these tenders. For any correction. in this tender, if necessary. corrigendum will be uploaded on website prior to tender opening date which may be seen up to the date of tender opening. **Tender No.** - BPL/ TRD/ DRG/ WC/ 386RT7, **Description of work** - Shifting of existing IOL an location having distance less than 120 meter from stop signal over Bhopal division., **Completion period** - 18 month, **Estimated Cost Rs.**- 17901970.29, **EMD Rs.**- 239500.00, **Closing Date and Time for submission of Tender** - 19.04.2024 at 11.00 Hrs.

Sr. DEE/TRD
West Central Railway, Bhopal

स्वच्छ भारत अभियान
एक कदम स्वच्छता की ओर

दक्षिणांचल विद्युत वितरण निगम लि०
कार्यालय अधीक्षण अभियन्ता, विद्युत नगरीय वितरण मण्डल
हाइडिल कालोनी, सिविल लाइन्स, झाँसी, 284001

विज्ञप्ति

समस्त सम्मानित विद्युत उपभोक्ताओ को सूचित किया जाता है कि उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम विनियमावली, 2022 के प्रावधानुसार ज्ञाप सं0 5138 दि0 23 फरवरी, 2024 के द्वारा क्षेत्र स्तरीय उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम, झाँसी का गठन किया जा चुका है जिसके पत्राचार का पता एवं दूरभाष संख्या निम्नवत है-

अध्यक्ष,
क्षेत्रीय उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम,
कार्यालय मुख्य अभियन्ता (वितरण)
माताटीला हाईडिल कालोनी,
सिविल लाईन, ईलाइट - सीपरी मार्ग,
झाँसी - 284001
ईमेल- cgrfdvvnljhansi@gmail.com
दूरभाष- 0510-2330553, 0510-2332310

झाँसी क्षेत्र (झाँसी, ललितपुर एवं जालौन जनपद) के समस्त विद्युत उपभोक्ताओ से अनुरोध है कि उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम विनियमावली, 2022 के प्रस्तर 3.12 के अनुसार रुपये 15 लाख व उससे अधिक और रुपये 1 करोड से कम तक के विद्युत बिल और आंकलन से संबंधित विवाद के संबंध मे किसी प्रकार की शिकायत के दृष्टिगत उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम विनियमावली, 2022 के प्रस्तर 3.11 के अनुसार निर्धारित शुल्क जमा कर अपनी शिकायत क्षेत्रीय उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम को प्रस्तुत कर सकते है जिनका उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम विनियमावली, 2022 के प्रावधानुसार निस्तारण किया जायेगा।

पत्र संख्याः- 937/वि0न0वि0मं0/झाँसी अध्यक्ष
दिनाँक- 29.03.2024 क्षेत्रीय उपभोक्ता व्यथा निवारण फोरम झाँसी

"सुनहरा भविष्य बनायें, राष्ट्रहित में बिजली बचाएं"

बिहार सरकार
राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार

शुद्धि–पत्र
(विज्ञापन संख्या 02/2024)

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार द्वारा प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या 02/2024 {PR No. 20113 (Ni.Ni.) 2023-24} के द्वितीय पारा में अंकित Post of Entomologist को Post of "Consultant–CPHC" पढ़ा जाए।

राज्य स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार द्वारा प्रकाशित विज्ञापन संख्या 02/2024 को इस हद तक संशोधित समझा जाए। शेष यथावत् रहेगा।

(राजेश कुमार, बि.प्र.से.)
उप सचिव–सह–प्रभारी,
मानव संसाधन, राज्य
स्वास्थ्य समिति, बिहार

PR. No. 020277 (B & C) 2023-24

लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024– कोई मतदाता न छूटे

SOUTHERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice for the Supply of Stores No E-06/2024

The following e-Tenders are published in IREPS website. Firms are requested to Login to **http://www.ireps.gov.in**-login>E.Tender-goods& services (new) and quote against these tenders. Manual quotations will not be entertained for these tenders. **Closing time for all tenders 14:30 hours**

Sl.No	Tender No	Description	Due Date	Quantity
1.	26231699	CARBON BRUSH	05/04/2024	46528.00 NOS
2.	06232001	DUNGRI CLOTH, COTTON KHADI, BLUE	05/04/2024	244180.00 MTR
3.	15240446	HOT FINISHED SEAMLESS TUBE (HFS)	05/04/2024	14614.00 MTR
4.	11230341A	CARBON BRUSH BG AC EMU	08/04/2024	11970.00 NOS
5.	51245028A	MOTORISED DIGITAL CHARPY IMPACT TESTING MACHINE	08/04/2024	1.00 NO
6.	68245296	HYDRAULIC DAMBER VERTICAL (PRIMARY)	08/04/2024	248.00 NOS
7.	52245309	GEAR 90 TEETH-18440022	09/04/2024	276.00 NOS
8.	68245282	WINDING WIRE FLAT	09/04/2024	2310.00 KG
9.	26240035	HORN AND AXLE BOX LINER	10/04/2024	8299.00 NOS
10.	15240488	SEAMLESS PIPE NOMINAL BORE 32mm	10/04/2024	12421.00 MTR
11.	26242754	SET OF CONTACTS (FIXED AND MOBILE)	10/04/2024	192.00 SET
12.	68245311	PLUG TCC1 XA ZONE T41-18010830	11/04/2024	40.00 NOS
13.	68245316	PLUG TCC2 XC ZONE T46-18010271	11/04/2024	40.00 NOS
14.	68245003A	MOTOR, AIR DISCHARGE-TCC/DUST BIN	11/04/2024	42.00 NOS
15.	02236245A	DISPOSABLE INSULIN SYRINGE	12/04/2024	1133855.00 NOS
16.	25243704	SET OF FILTER PANEL FOR OIL COOLER	12/04/2024	40.00 NOS
17.	26243540	AOH KIT FOR ELGI MAKE	12/04/2024	230.00 SET
18.	15240501	YELLOW ASPECT MAIN LED SIGNAL	12/04/2024	3 ITEMS
19.	68245333	PLUG TCC2 XA ZONE T44-18010866	12/04/2024	40.00 NOS
20.	68245328	PLUG TCC2 XB ZONE T45-18010878	12/04/2024	40.00 NOS
21.	82245004	12C X 1.5 SQ.MM CABLE	12/04/2024	48.56 KM
22.	03245154	SUPPLY, FIXING AND INSTALLATION OF HYDRAULIC OPERATED KNUCKLE	15/04/2024	1.00 NO
23.	26243693	TRACTION BRAKING SWITCH DRUM	15/04/2024	7.00 SET
24.	68245380	LEAD ACID STARTER BATTERIES-8V-290 AH	15/04/2024	30.00 SET
25.	52245292	BEARING ASSEMBLY, ROLLER	15/04/2024	2 ITEMS
26.	68245364	FAN ASSEMBLY RADIATOR	17/04/2024	4.00 NOS
27.	03225198B	10MM THICK COMPOSITE GROOVED RUBBER SOLE PLATES	18/04/2024	1500000.00 NOS
28.	44245004	CTRB ASSEMBLY	18/04/2024	3999.00 NOS
29.	04240188	RUBBER SPRING PACK 1000 KGM	18/04/2024	1175.00 SET
30.	06240083	DENSIFIED THERMAL BONDED POLYESTER BLOCK CUSHION	19/04/2024	18834.00 NOS
31.	52245313	TUBE SUSPENSION: HOUSING BEARING KIT	19/04/2024	2 ITEMS
32.	26242700	SET OF POLYURETHANE SPRING PADS	22/04/2024	103.00 SET
33.	44240595	KIT FOR CONSTANT CONTACT POLYURETHANE	22/04/2024	8567.00 SET
34.	51245022A	EOT CRANE 10 TON CAPACITY	22/04/2024	1.00 SET
35.	51245117A	EOT CRANE 10 TON CAPACITY	22/04/2024	1.00 NO
36.	04240010	THERMOPLASTIC POLYESTER ELASTOMER (HYTREL) UPPER WASHER	23/04/2024	5846.00 NOS
37.	44241001	BOLSTER SPRING OUTER FOR CASNUB	23/04/2024	2601.00 NOS
38.	04240835	DRAFT YOKE FOR DRAW GEAR	25/04/2024	419.00 NOS
39.	02236327A	BIOCOMPOSITE PUSHLOCK FOR ARTHROSCOPIC SURGERY	25/04/2024	8 ITEMS
40.	52245327	HOUSING BEARING COMPLETE KIT, CONSISTING OF 4 ITEMS	25/04/2024	2 ITEMS
41.	02236366A	ABSORBENT GAUZE-COTTON CLOTH	26/04/2024	170380.00 MTR
42.	78236040A	SUPPLY OF ROOF MOUNTED AC PACKAGE UNIT	26/04/2024	15.00 NOS
43.	90237787	TRACTION TRANSFORMER	29/04/2024	1.00 NO
44.	04240160	SILENT BLOCK TYPE 'A'	30/04/2024	14258.00 NOS
45.	44240516	NON-ASBESTOS L TYPE COMPOSITE BRAKE BLOCK	30/04/2024	40319.00 NOS
46.	04240096	EQUALISING STAY FOR LOWER SPRING BEA	30/04/2024	5551.00 NOS
47.	68245343	DYNAMIC BREAKING GRID & ROOF MOUNTED GRID	30/04/2024	2 ITEMS
48.	04240897	HEAD STOCK COMPLETE FOR ICF COACHES	02/05/2024	320.00 NOS
49.	44240594	KIT FOR PU PAD DESIGN"A"	06/05/2024	5960.00 SET
50.	90236428A	CPU Board, N2 Board, N1 Board and ST STATUS CARD	06/05/2024	4 items
51.	04240191	ENHANCED SCREW COUPLING ASSEMBLY	09/05/2024	721.00 NOS

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Delhi Police may file 10,000-page chargesheet under UAPA against NewsClick founder today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Police is likely to file its first chargesheet against Prabir Purkayastha, founder and editor-in-chief of web portal NewsClick in the next few days. A 10,000-page chargesheet under UAPA may be filed on Saturday, police said.

Police have accused Purkayastha of acting in collusion with Nevil Roy Singham, a businessman of Sri Lankan-Cuban descent and an active member of propaganda department of Communist Party of China.

Police had filed an FIR in the case in Aug. It alleged that a funds to the news portal came from China to "disrupt sovereignty of India" and cause disaffection against the country. Cops also alleged that Purkayastha conspired with a group named People's Alliance for Democracy and Secularism to sabotage the electoral process during 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Around 45 days after registration of the FIR, special cell conducted raids at around 100 locations on Oct 2-3. Purkayastha was arrested under UAPA over allegations that the news portal received money to spread pro-China propaganda.

Around 300 electronic gadgets were also seized from NewsClick offices and residences of journalists who were then questioned by the special cell.

"Documentary evidence" collected by police will be corroborated with judicial statement of NewsClick HR head Amit Chakraborty who turned approver in the case in Jan. His statement, recorded under 164 CrPC, is admissible as evidence in court under UAPA.

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b) FARM HOUSE LAND ON SOHNA - BALLABHGARH ROAD.
c) R-ZONE LAND IN GURUGRAM, PATAUDI & SOHNA.
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CONTACT 9050180404, 9811146655

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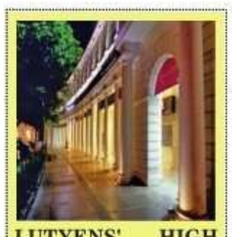
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Winds of change: Pilibhit to Baghpat & elsewhere, legacy seats may be history

Pankaj.Shah@timesgroup.com

Lucknow: When BJP denied the Lok Sabha poll ticket to Varun Gandhi from Pilibhit, the development not just marked a crucial poll decision – the move also underscored cessation of a legacy on a high-profile seat which the Gandhis have been representing since 1989. The trend is not just restricted to Pilibhit but has caught up with other Lok Sabha seats, including Baghpat and Bareilly this time.

In fact, it is for the first time since 1977 that no family member of former PM Chaudhary Charan Singh will be contesting from Baghpat, the axis of Jat politics in UP and beyond. Same is the case with Bareilly which will not see veteran BJP MP Santosh Gangwar who has been contesting and representing the seat since 1989.

The shift has also attained much pertinence amid Congress keeping up the suspense on its pocket borough, Rae Bareli, which has been relinquished by its leader Sonia Gandhi to get routed to Rajya Sabha from Rajasthan. Congress already lost its political backyard of Amethi in 2019 when its sitting MP Rahul Gandhi was defeated by BJP's Smriti Irani.

Pilibhit was traditionally groomed by Varun's mother Maneka Gandhi after she lost to Rajiv Gandhi from Amethi in 1984

Pilibhit was traditionally groomed by Varun's mother Maneka Gandhi after she lost to Rajiv Gandhi from Amethi in 1984 by a massive margin of over 2.7 lakh votes. She won from Pilibhit for the first time in 1989 on a Janata Dal ticket. However, in 1991, she lost the seat to BJP's Parshuram. Maneka wrested the constituency in 1996 while contesting on a Janata Dal ticket.

She won the seat in 1998 and then again in 1999, this time as an independent. In 2004, Maneka joined BJP and won from Pilibhit again. In 2009, however, she shifted to Aonla, making way for her then 29-year-old son Varun from Pilibhit. Varun defeated Congress's VM Singh by a huge margin of over 2.8 lakh votes. In fact, Varun had then cornered more than 50% of the total votes polled.

Maneka returned to Pilibhit and won the seat again in 2014 Lok Sabha elections when BJP stormed to power with an overwhelming majority under the leadership of Narendra Modi. Varun won that election from Sultanpur. Maneka shifted to Sultanpur in 2019, leaving Pilibhit for Varun, who won the seat. This time, however, Varun has been benched by BJP, bringing to an end the long association of the Gandhi family with the seat. Varun has been replaced by UP minister Jitin Prasada, a former Union minister.

So has been the case with Baghpat which was represented thrice by Charan Singh — in 1977 (Janata Party) and then in 1980 and 1984 on a Lok Dal ticket. Charan Singh passed on the legacy to his son Ajit Singh who won the seat in 1989 and 1991 as a Janata Dal candidate. Singh won the seat in 1996 on a Congress ticket but lost to Sompal Shastri of BJP in 1998. Subsequently, Ajit Singh formed RLD and wrested the seat in 1999. He won the seat again in 2004 and 2009, but lost to BJP's Satya Pal Singh in 2014. He relinquished the seat to make way for his son Jayant, who too lost the seat in 2019.

Baghpat seat was represented thrice by ex-PM Chaudhary Charan Singh

This time, Jayant, who got elected to Rajya Sabha with the support of his former ally Samajwadi Party in July 2022, has fielded party national secretary Rajkumar Sangwan, a Jat, from the seat.

The Bareilly seat too has been a bastion of senior BJP leader Santosh Gangwar, a Kurmi, who won the seat for the first time by defeating Begum Abida Ahmad of Congress in 1989. He won the seat on a trot till 2004 Lok Sabha elections. Gangwar, however, lost the seat to Congress's Praveen Singh Aron in 2009. Gangwar wrested the seat in 2014 by cornering over 31% of the votes. Aron was routed completely while managing barely 5% of the votes. Gangwar was inducted in the Narendra Modi cabinet as minister of textiles and parliamentary affairs. He was subsequently shifted to the finance ministry in July 2016 and then in the ministry of labour and employment in September 2017. He won the seat again in 2019 and again became part of the Modi cabinet as junior minister for labour and employment.

This time, Gangwar has been denied a ticket by BJP apparently on account of his advanced age — he is over 75 years old. In his place, BJP has fielded Chhatrapal Singh Gangwar, a former BJP MLA from Baheri assembly seat in Bareilly. Chhatrapal won from Baheri for the first time in 2007 but lost to SP's Ataur Rehman by a wafer thin margin of 18 votes in 2012. He won the seat again in 2017 but lost to Rehman in 2022, this time again by a thin margin of barely 3355 votes.

BRS facing a meltdown as netas refuse to contest polls, jump ship

Some Heavyweights Are Even Refusing To Campaign For Party

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Hyderabad: From a position that looked invincible five years ago, BRS in Telangana is now beset with desertions of senior leaders like K Keshava Rao and Danam Nagender on the one hand and party candidates backing out of the contest on the other. The party is also facing a peculiar problem ahead of the 2024 Lok Sabha elections — seniors' reluctance to enter the poll arena and aggressively campaign for the party.

Even before Congress and BJP ironed out their candidates' lists, BRS boss and former CM K Chandrasekhar Rao was first off the blocks and announced candidates for all the 17 Lok Sabha seats in the state. But the bid to take first-mover advantage backfired with four candidates backing out after their names were announced. The latest was Warangal candidate Kadiyam Kavya, who suddenly withdrew from the race. She is likely to get a Congress ticket.

Earlier, G Ranjith Reddy withdrew from Chevella after KCR declared his candidature. He joined Congress fold, which swiftly named him as its candidate to take on BJP's Konda Vishweshwar Reddy at Chevella.

Former minister Ch Malla Reddy's son Ch Bhadra Reddy too backed out. So did legislative council chairman Gutha Sukender Reddy, who was keen on a party ticket (either Nalgonda or Bhongir) for his son Gutha Amit Reddy, and later showing disinclination to contest the polls himself.

Latest rumours doing the rounds is another party candidate and sitting MP, Maloth Kavitha, who was named from Mahabubabad, is likely to withdraw her candidature. However, Kavitha denied the rumours and said she was in the fray and that she would always be 'loyal' to KCR.

Party sources said an SC Madiga leader is likely to be fielded from Warangal as Madigas enjoy majority in the constituency. KCR spoke to party leaders from Warangal recently and took their opinions. Sources said the party may even poach a senior leader from Congress.

BRS leader K Keshava Rao (centre) joins Congress in the presence of Telangana Congress chief and state chief minister Revanth Reddy and party's state in-charge Deepa Das Munshi in Hyderabad on Friday

There are also speculations that the party may offer the ticket to former deputy CM T Rajaiah, who quit the party two months ago. Rajaiah was upset after he was denied the Station Ghanpur assembly ticket in Nov 2023 assembly elections. He was supposed to join the Congress. KCR had given the Station Ghanpur ticket to senior leader Kadiyam Srihari, father of Kavya, who is also likely to resign from the BRS.

Congress leader Singarapuram Indira, who contested unsuccessfully from Station Ghanpur, and former MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy's wife Swapna are also being considered by BRS, sources said.

Some BRS leaders said former MLA, actor Babu Mohan is also trying for Warangal ticket. Babu Mohan recently quit BJP and joined KA Paul's Praja Shanti Party but is reportedly ready to join BRS if the party gives him the ticket, a source said.

Cong ticket for K'taka netas' kin, Moily out

Bengaluru: Congress on Friday announced candidates for Karnataka's Chikkaballapur, Bellary and Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha constituencies, with two nominees hailing from political families, reports **Anil Gejji**. With this, Congress has given tickets to the kin of six ministers in CM Siddaramaiah's cabinet and relatives of six more senior functionaries.

With only Kolar pending, at least two-thirds of LS candidates owe their candidacy to family legacy.

In Chikkaballapur, Raksha Ramaiah, son of former minister MR Seetharam, got the ticket despite intense lobbying from former CM Verappa Moily and former minister Shivashankar Reddy. Reddy's discontent has led to threats of party defection, with speculation suggesting Siddaramaiah's support for Ramaiah's candidacy. Ramaiah is slated to face BJP's K Sudhakar, a former minister.

For many film stars in TN, politics may have lost allure

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Chennai: EC has issued 684 'star campaigner' passes for LS polls in Tamil Nadu this time, but only a handful of them are filmstars. The few film personalities who figure on the list are also candidates or politicians — like BJP candidate Radika Sarathkumar and AIADMK's joint propaganda secretary Vindhya.

Actor Khushbu, who campaigned in 2019 (for Congress) and 2021 (for BJP), is unlikely to campaign this time as she is a member of National Commission for Women. In 2019, CPM's Madurai candidate Su Venkatesan attracted quite a few campaigners from Kollywood — actor Rohini Molleti, director Samuthirakanni, comedian Vaiyapuri and director Karu Palaniappan. This time, CPM sources said these people are yet to confirm their participation.

Khushbu was a star campaigner when she started her political career with DMK, drawing large crowds wherever she went. She said former DMK president M Karunanidhi groomed her. An AIADMK leader said during the time of J Jayalalithaa, the party used to pay star campaigners handsomely. But Khushbu said it was not about money. "Charismatic leaders like Kalaignar and Jayalalithaa would just call up big stars and none could refuse," she said. "I think actors today want to keep away from political controversies. After the backlash that Vadivel and Simran faced, many want to play it safe."

Actor Khushbu, who campaigned in 2019 (for Congress) and 2021 (for BJP), is unlikely to campaign this time

Khushbu was referring to the virtual boycott from Tamil film industry faced by Vadivel, once the busiest comedian in Kollywood, after he campaigned against Vijayakant, who was part of the AIADMK alliance in 2011. Similarly, Simran found film offers hard to get after campaigning for AIADMK in 2006.

The big star, this time, is also a politician: Makkal Needhi Maiyam leader Kamal Haasan, who has allied with DMK. DMK leaders said they don't need more stars. "Our thalaivar (Stalin) and chinnavar (Udhayanidhi) are our biggest stars," said a DMK leader. Lesser known actor Bose Venket is on the DMK's campaigners list, and so is actor Karunas, whose party Mukulathor Pulipadai is in DMK alliance.

BJP media coordinator S R Sekhar expects that some Bollywood stars like Hemamalini would campaign in TN. If actors need to tell their followers something, they do it on social media. One of the viral videos of Vijay Sethupathi shows him saying: "Believe someone who says there's a problem for your friend; don't believe someone who says there's a problem for your religion or caste."

Purnia goes to RJD kitty; Cong's Pappu to fight from home turf as independent

▶Continued from P 1

Pappu protested hours after the deal was announced by RJD secretary-general Abdul Bari Siddiqui amid the presence of other partners' representatives, dropping enough hints about contesting from Purnea, his turf.

RJD has fielded former minister Bima Bharti from Purnia, which goes to the polls in the second phase on April 26. "The people of Purnia have said Pappu is their son, he won't go anywhere... I have to abide by their order," Pappu said.

REBELLION OR FRIENDLY FIGHT?

RJD Rajya Sabha MP Manoj Jha said the GA partners had resolved to defeat BJP-led NDA in the state. Asked why Purnia was not given to Congress, Jha, as well as Congress state president Akhilesh Prasad Singh, had no clear answer.

Former deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav, who was not in Patna when the pact was announced, later claimed the Bihar results would surprise all. "In Mahagathbandhan, all five partners have been adequately accommodated," the RJD leader said.

Some of the new seats in RJD's kitty are Gaya, Munger, Jamui, Valmikinagar, Purvi Champaran, Ujiyarpur, Madhubani, Supaul and Purnia. RJD has spared Bhagalpur and Maharajganj for Congress.

Congress gave up Purnia, Supaul, Munger and Valmikinagar and got Bhagalpur, Muzaffarpur, West Champaran and Maharajganj instead. Pappu's wife Ranjeeta Ranjan had unsuccessfully contested from Supaul on a Congress ticket in 2019.

CPI-ML has been allotted Ara, Karakat and Nalanda, two more than in 2019. CPI and CPI-M got Begusarai and Khagaria, respectively. In 2019, CPI contested Begusarai independently with Kanhaiya Kumar as its candidate. Kanhaiya was pitted against RJD's Tanweer Hasan and BJP's Griraj Singh, who won.

Katihar, another constituency for which a tug-of-war was on between RJD and Congress, has gone to the Grand Old Party. RJD will contest from Siwan, which CPI-ML had been eyeing.

MAKING HER DEBUT, AS A POLITICIAN

PTI

Kicking off her election campaign with a road show at her paternal village of Bhambla in Himachal's Mandi district on Friday, BJP's candidate for Mandi parliamentary seat and Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut said, 'Development is the main poll plank of BJP and we will do whatever our leadership guides us to do.' Switching from Hindi to the local dialect of Mandiali, she asked people not to think of her as an actor or a star but as their daughter and sister

In blow to Cong, Kamal Nath aide joins BJP weeks before LS polls

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Bhopal: In a stunning blow to Congress ahead of Lok Sabha polls, party MLA from Amarwara assembly seat in Madhya Pradesh, Kamlesh Shah, a close aide of former CM Kamal Nath, joined BJP on Friday.

The most important tower of Nath's Chhindwara citadel has now fallen into BJP hands. He now finds himself holding the Chhindwara fort alone as his loyalists desert him.

It's Amarwara assembly segment that gave Nath's son Nakul crucial lead in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, helping Congress retain the Nath bastion despite the saffron wave that swept up 28 of 29 LS seats in the state. Nath made an emotional appeal to the people of Chhindwara: "Support me till my last breath." Chhindwara votes in the first phase on April 19.

After joining BJP, Shah said, "Today, I have taken primary membership of BJP after being influenced by the schemes and developmental works of PM Narendra Modi. We will work for the all-round development of Amarwara and Chhindwara. We will work to get a historic win for BJP candidate Vivek Bunty Sahu."

'Allahu Akbar' slogans at BJP rally as party reaches out to Muslims

Pinak Priya Bhattacharya | TNN

Cooch Behar: A BJP Minority Morcha rally, in support of the party's Cooch Behar candidate Nisith Pramanik, raising "Allahu Akbar" slogans grabbed eyeballs in West Bengal's Dinhata on Thursday.

BJP Cooch Behar president and MLA Sukumar Roy told **TOI** on Friday the rally was held with Muslims from two assembly segments, Sitai and Dinhata. "We will be holding a rally with Muslims from the entire district in Cooch Behar town soon," Roy said.

Roy said this was not unusual in a district where the party had a Muslim panchayat samiti member from Bhetaguri.

According to BJP supporters, a large section of Rajbanshi Muslims from north Bengal, particularly from Suktabari area in Cooch Behar district, had participated in PM Narendra Modi's rally in Siliguri earlier this month.

"The situation here is changing. People are now labelling TMC communal because the party always used Muslims as vote bank," Roy said.

Pramanik had held a meeting two months ago where burqa-clad Muslim women were seen raising "Bharat Mata Ki Jai" slogans with the minister.

The Dinhata rally came a day after BJP's Tamluk candidate, Abhijit Gangopadhyay, offered a chadar at Mahishadal dargah after praying at Gobindo Jiu temple of Mahishadal Rajbari during his campaign.

A rally in Dinhata in support of BJP candidate Nisith Pramanik

Modi had recently said that Muslim women would vote against TMC because of the torture of women in Sandeshkhali. Taking a cue, Bengal BJP leaders curated their election campaigns to exclude anti-Muslim rhetoric that had been used during the 2021 assembly poll rallies, and are making it a point to assert that the party is in favour of "Bharatiya Muslims".

3-time ex-Cong MLA Surendra Bhoi joins BJD in Odisha

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Bhubaneswar: Three-time former Odisha Congress MLA and former minister Surendra Singh Bhoi joined BJD on Friday, a day after he resigned from the grand old party. The 63-year-old is likely to become the BJD candidate from Balangir Lok Sabha seat scheduled to go to poll on May 20.

BJP has fielded MP Sangeeta Singhdeo from the constituency. Kalikesh Singhdeo who had unsuccessfully fought from Balangir Lok Sabha seat on a BJD ticket has entered the fray for Balangir assembly segment this time.

Bhoi was elected MLA from Saintala twice in 1995 and 2000 and from Titilagarh in 2009 on a Congress ticket. He served as minister of state for rural development and forest, environment and climate change in the council of ministers of Hemanand Biswal-led govt from 1999 to 2000. Bhoi cited personal reasons behind severing ties with Congress. He said he joined BJD after being impressed by CM Naveen Patnaik's leadership and welfare activities.

Bihar bahubalis eye proxy run, hand poll mantle to better halves

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Patna: Shorn of full poll freedom, many muscle-flexing Bihar leaders have turned to their better halves, just like Lalu Prasad did nearly 27 years ago.

These strongmen — or Bahubalis — have fielded their wives in the LS polls in a bid to control "fiefdoms" by proxy. Many others already enjoy such power by getting their wives elected as mukhiyas (village heads), earning the moniker of "Mukhiya Patis (mukhiya husbands)".

Just before being sent to jail in the fodder scam in July 1997, Lalu had installed wife Rabri as CM. That way, he ruled Bihar indirectly for eight years until voters dethroned Rabri in the 2005 assembly elections, leading to formation of the Nitish Kumar-led NDA govt.

The current crop of Bahubalis also believes that life partners can be potential power pathways. A notable example is don-turned-politician Anand Mohan whose wife Lovely Anand, a former MP, is contesting from Sheohar on a JD(U) ticket.

Mohan, who represented Sheohar in 1996 and 1998, was released in April last year after over 16 years in jail in connection with the 1994 murder of then Gopalganj DM G Krishnaiah. Mohan cannot fight elections himself as rules prohibit convicts jailed for over two years from contesting polls until six years after their release.

POWER WIVES

The next is Awadhesh Mandal, a strongman from Purnia. His wife Bima Bharti, a five-time MLA and former minister, is tipped to contest from the Purnia LS seat this time on an RJD ticket.

Mukesh Yadav, an RJD leader, has got a Jamui ticket for wife Archna Ravidas.

Last, but not the least, is Nawada don Ashok Mahto who has fielded wife Kumari Anita from Munger on an RJD ticket. Mahto tied the knot with Anita recently. He cannot contest himself as he was released last year after 17 years in jail in a jailbreak case.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL SANDEEP ADHWARYU

Maha Congress wants 'friendly fights' in seats claimed by allies

Prafulla Marpakwar

Mumbai: The state Congress has asked its national leadership to allow it to put up friendly fights in five Lok Sabha constituencies claimed by its MVA partners.

In an online meeting, state Congress politicians complained about the Shiv Sena (UBT) unilaterally declaring candidates for Sangli, Mumbai North West, Mumbai North East and Mumbai South Central, and the NCP claiming Bhiwandi.

MPCC president Nana Patole, former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan, Congress legislature party leader Balasaheb Thorat and MPCC working president Nasim Khan conveyed their disappointment to AICC general secretary Mukul Wasnik over the manner in which Shiv Sena (UBT) and NCP (SP) rejected the Congress claim on the five seats.

"We have urged the Congress leadership that even if these five seats have been allotted to NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT), Congress should be allowed to contest on these seats. It may be called a friendly contest. Despite discussions on the seat-sharing formula, a decision on the five disputed seats was taken unilaterally," Khan said.

Sharad Pawar rejects call to contest polls

NCP (SCP) chief Sharad Pawar rejected on Friday his party workers' request that he contest Lok Sabha polls from Satara after his classmate, sitting MP Shriniwas Patil, refused to enter the election arena to retain the seat, reports **Abhijeet Patil**. In 2019, Pawar had braved the weather to campaign for Patil, who defeated BJP candidate Udayanraje Bhonsle. This time, too, BJP was set to nominate Rajya Sabha MP Bhonsle, a descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. During the meeting with Pawar on Friday, party workers in Satara suggested he contest. "I will be occupied with campaigning for the party and INDIA bloc in Maharashtra and other states. Hence, I will not be able to fulfil your wish. I will not contest the LS polls from Satara or anywhere else," Pawar said.

TIMES EVOKE

BEING AVANT-GARDEN

It's the time of year when around the world, many of us look to gardens to derive delight. After all, with spring comes the vivid blossoming of flowers, the soft, new fabric of velveteen grass, the fragrance of verdant shrubs and herbs, literally, the fruits of many a gardener's labours. Indulging in these is no passing fad — indeed, gardens are human beings' most ancient evolutionary transition, the first act of settling down and planting roots. The exercise of gardening reaffirms our primordial bond with nature. Some posit it even reflects a human desire to control the elements. What is certain is the transformative effect gardens have on people as they temporarily leave behind the banal carnival of society for a place of uplifting peace, finding tranquility amidst orderly tangle, being suddenly elevated as a garden is bathed in bewitching twilight, filtering through pink clouds and green leaves.

But are gardens entirely harmonious? Strands of social science now argue these are unfairly enclosed urban spaces, welcoming largely to elites, using but also disregarding the skilled labour of the less privileged — when was the last time we thanked a park gardener for their hard work? Gardens are challenging beings also for the making of these idylls involves taking away the habitation of others — numerous non-human species lose their ground and trees as we uproot grass and plant turf, seed non-native plants and privilege decorative flowers which offer no nurture to insects, birds and bees. Perhaps the garden, seen in this light, is symptomatic of the environmental crisis which typifies the Anthropocene — this is caused by human desire fusing with our short-sightedness, seeking an eternal summer but managing to instead create a paradise that's poised precariously on a cliff.

It is time for us to rethink gardens, as Times Evoke's global experts emphasise. It is important to acknowledge that gardens serve much more than our individual delight. It is still possible to devote such areas in large part to native plants, sustainable systems and the well-being of other species. We need to recognise the need for green escapes is universal — during the pandemic's lockdowns, starting exactly five years ago, spreading rapidly worldwide, visits to gardens by Indians seeking respite rose from 1.8% to 72% — and ensure our gardens embed inclusion and respect. Join Times Evoke in exploring the roots of gardens great and small — and grow an avant-garden yourself.

'History, war and leaders are not humanity's whole story — gardens are our imaginative delight'

***Robert P. Harrison** is the Rosina Pierotti Professor of Italian Literature at Stanford University. Speaking to **Srijana Mitra Das** at **Times Evoke**, he discusses the importance of gardens in human life:*

What is the core of your work?

■ I consider myself a cultural historian whose primary vocation is to think through certain problems and phenomenon that have to do with our human sojourn on Earth.

You write about nature. Many people live and work in high-rises far from the natural world — yet, why do gardens remain so important for humans?

■ My answer takes the form of a word I coined — this is 'chlorophilia'. There is the concept of biophilia introduced by Edward Wilson and others. Chlorophilia is a kind of biophilia which means human beings having a natural affinity for life forms, including animals, birds, etc. Chlorophilia means the natural and irrevocable human need to be surrounded by green or chlorophyll — in other words, plant life.

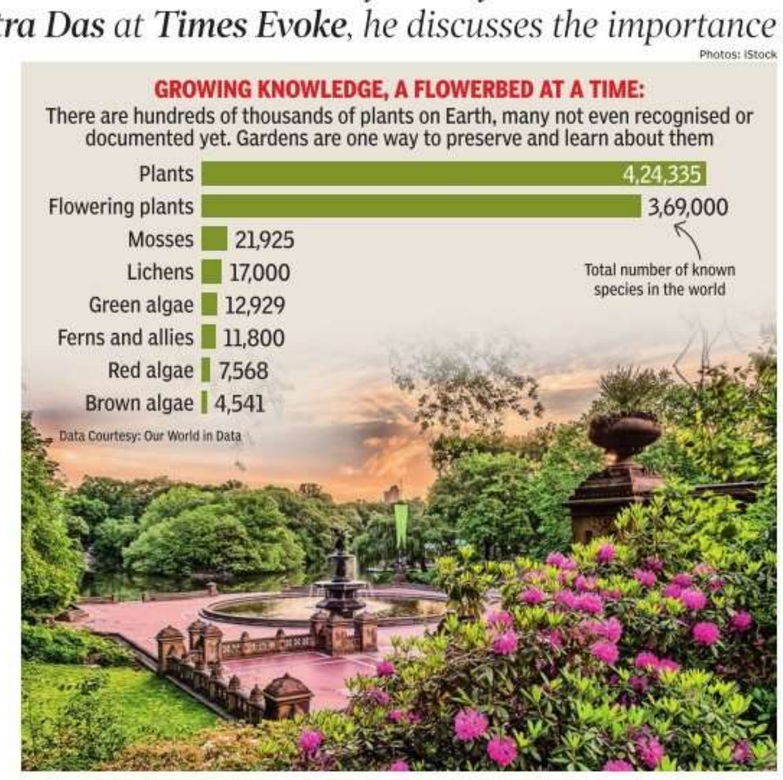
Worldwide, everyone manages to make a window box with plants or a tiny terrace garden. Chlorophilia explains our persistent need for gardens, which are a way of organising our chlorophiliac desires in enclosed, delimited spaces within the larger urban world we live in. Perhaps on a block of Wall Street, you'd find people who don't need any green around them — but, once they make enough money, they will move to suburbs which are green and wooded. This idea of the verdant is inbuilt into our human nature. I won't say 'It's in our genes' because I don't believe in genetic reductionism but plenty of evidence confirms our chlorophilia. Gardens are both a manifestation and continuation of that — they are a certain kind of aesthetic transfiguration of this human tendency.

People imagine history as wars, vaccines and politics — why do you write 'History without gardens would be a wasteland'?

■ That is in part related to chlorophilia.

TAJ LTD: These gardens were once private

Photos: iStock



History is a story we are thrown into — but it's not the whole story of who we are. As TS Eliot wrote, humankind can't bear very much reality. That is not a fault in us — reality is only one of the dimensions within which we carry on our lives. We have a public sphere, which is where most history, with wars and leaders, takes place. But if we didn't have a private sphere, we would collapse. Gardens represent sanctuaries from the harsh light of reality. They are refuges where one can reconnect with one's aesthetic pleasures, imaginative needs and the fantastical. They are islands where one can dream a reverie in a reconnection with the natural world. I do think history would be a wasteland if we were to lose gardens — I also believe New York City would go insane if it did not have Central Park within it.

MAGIC SEEDS

Don't grand gardens also reflect the appropriation, sometimes violently, of people's land, labour, even the area other species inhabited?

■ No doubt. The history of gardens shows they are almost invariably associated with elitism and the aristocratic classes. This is true of the West but there are many instances — the Taj Mahal and its gardens were meant for an aristocracy. With that sort of wealth came the luxury of being able to create gardens of delight for the pleasure of royalty or nobility. However, what is so remarkable about the age we live in now is the democratisation of what used to be the exclusive privilege of the rich and powerful — one of the blessings of the modern city is how many of these older, exclusive gardens have become public spaces. The Jardin du Luxembourg in Paris is now open to all citizens. People jog there, play tennis or visit cafes. The same is true for the English Garden in Munich, a vast place where people congregate in the summer, walk around the greens or swim in its rivers — all that used to be private, belonging to exalted families. The Villa Borghese in Rome, once a huge private garden of the Borghese family, is now open to the public.

In the broader context of the environmental crisis, did gardens also lull humans into imagining they could control nature?

■ I would say to the contrary. Gardens — even though there is a certain imposition of order on nature within them — have always kept alive this idea that our planet and biosphere were, or should be, a kind of garden of Eden. I've written about how Earth as a whole is a prodigious garden — the ecological lesson gardens teach us is that the gardener has a vocation of care which is behind the cultivation and constant nourishing of a garden. The more we understand Earth as a garden that calls for our curation and efforts, the better off we'll be.

Can you tell us about the gardens made by homeless people in America?

■ Where you have this large urban wilderness, to find these little pockets of order created by homeless people raises questions. You ask, why would a homeless person, who needs things for biological survival, create what would appear to be a superfluous aesthetic pocket? I speculate this has to do with providing a kind of orientation within the disorientation of the urban sprawl. Such a garden also makes a statement — 'This space has been made by someone'. That homeless garden becomes a speech act, a silent one, expressing how this is something that's been made by a human being with a spiritual need for sanctuary and to be heard, to not be completely silenced in the public world, to be able to say, 'I am here'. Their creators converse with the world through these gardens. They maintain a voice in the public sphere. Having this is as important as it is to eat, survive and find shelter.

Is there a contemporary garden that particularly interests you?

■ I recently visited Houston, the huge metropolis. There is an immense Memorial Park there which is larger than Central Park. It had been extremely degraded but a landscape architecture firm were commissioned to rehabilitate Eastern Glades, one part of it. This visit made a profound impression on me. I learnt of all the disfigurations that had been visited upon this area — it was paved to make parking lots, buildings were constructed there and so on. The firm had quietly removed all these overlays of urban forces and planted native species, designed waterways using sustainable irrigation, etc. Visiting this park gave me hope that in the Anthropocene, this geological era where humans have left their imprint on everything in nature, it could still be possible to undo the damage and devastation wreaked on our environments. I saw an area full of harmony, with sustainable systems of plantation, native trees, etc. This was a living proof of how, if we give ourselves over to the vocation of care with seriousness, we can actually heal and rehabilitate our lived environments — it was almost like a little resurrection.

I EXIST: 'Homeless gardens' reflect being

PAINTING A PARK...

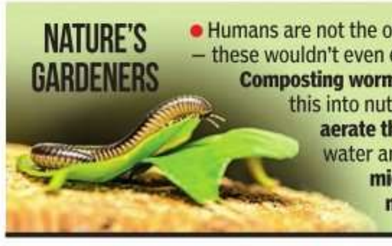
● Impressionist painter **Claude Monet**'s art lay embedded in gardens. While he painted soft dahlias, antirrhinums, sweet peas, pansies and irises, all **in perfect harmony**, he also passionately tended his own garden in Giverny, France. **Monet grew a flower garden and a Japanese water garden**, both echoing in his 19th century paintings, tranquil pastels with a sudden surprise of shimmering water, crowned by a philosophical bridge

● **Salvador Dali**'s surrealist art was famous for its heretical view of the world, expressed in melting clocks, elongated eggs and blurry keys. Dali painted in turbulent times, drawing from violent **World Wars, nuclear weapons, the human subconscious and new technologies.** His drawings of **gardens were his most tranquil**, showing humans bowing before towering roses, lilies growing out of gramophone records and **sunflowers — bearing breakfasts** in trademark Dali style

● The modern Indian artist **Amrita Sher-Gill** painted **meticulous scenes of an unseen India**, spanning lively peasant women in the hills to quiet, saintly figures in the south. However, **her painting of a garden echoes purity** — a white table sits in an olive-green background, with red apples on it, a small house behind. Perhaps she pointed to **the peace nature offers** those content to stay simple

Research: Smithsonian Magazine, Encyclopaedia Britannica, Sothebys, National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA)

NATURE'S GARDENERS



● Humans are not the only species interested in making gardens — these wouldn't even exist without the effort of **the little worm. Composting worms process organic matter in soil**, turning this into nutrients for plants, while **earthmoving worms aerate the ground**, creating tunnels that transport water and air through solid earth to plants. **You might not like the looks of a worm — but they make the most beautiful places possible**

● **Leaf-cutter ants** are perhaps **the world's oldest gardeners** — dating 12 million evolutionary years (humans are only 6 million years old), they live in underground nests which extend over 6,500 square feet. **They forage and cut off bits of leaves, haul these to their nest, giving these to minims** — specialists who turn these into mulch to nourish fungi in a green space. That is eaten by **the queen ant**, who also lives inside this extraordinary garden

● **Butterflies** are loved universally for their beauty — but they are also brainy gardeners. Flitting from flower to flower, **they get coated in pollen and help carry this across plants, aiding proliferation.** This produces abundant fields — pollinators like butterflies **generate one out of every three bites of food we eat** — and wondrous gardens, further protected by butterflies. These **may look placid but many eat aphids which damage plants**

Research: National Geographic, BBC Wildlife Magazine, Nature.com

'Gardens reflected a human desire to dominate nature and the vulnerable — many parks move away from that today'

***Chandra Mukerji** is Professor Emerita of Communication and Science Studies at the University of California, San Diego. Speaking to **Times Evoke**, she outlines the power dynamics often embedded in great gardens:*

Chandra Mukerji sits against a backdrop of floor-to-ceiling wooden bookshelves, crammed with volumes. That itself is not unusual these days — every television debate features undoubtedly erudite speakers framed against heaving libraries. But what gives away her constant use of the books is their untidy stacking, evidence of being reached for, read and put back frequently and haphazardly, near a French window from where light — and perhaps the green of a garden — streams in.

Describing her work, Mukerji says, 'I'm interested in the built environment, in how humans changing and reconstructing the landscape creates relations of power and the material memory embedded in landscapes when people use them.' Her writing on the great gardens of Versailles, created by Louis XIV, the 'Sun King' who ruled France for over 70 years until 1715, thus delves not into the aesthetics of this vast expanse but its often brutal power relations.

The economics of the times were one such equation. 'A trade in luxury flowers came about before capitalism emerged. There was the famous tulip trade, with these flowers becoming a very important object of desire across Europe, indeed, a great fad — people would spend huge sums to possess rare bulbs and blooms from faraway places. This became part of a collector's culture which grew within a consumer society for luxury goods. But,' Mukerji highlights, 'In the 17th century, you also begin to get landscapes which are places for displaying the kinds of global reach and forms of power that hadn't existed previously. These were driven partly by a European impulse for botany and to collect bulbs and seeds. This stemmed from a religious view too that all the scattered plants of the Garden of Eden had to be collected again. So, there was this confluence of a moral justification for collecting plants and an economic opportunity to create profit which intersected in the 17th century — French and English gardens thus became these all-encompassing environments that were celebrations of wealth and religious passion.'

Photos: iStock

FROM IMPERIAL TO NATURAL: The Versailles garden (L), with its geometry and military motifs, reflected a desire to dominate land, labour and the environment — India's national parks, like Ranthambore (R), devoted to the welfare of non-human species, pose a remarkable contrast

ROOTS OF POWER

Alongside, seemingly tranquil gardens and violent militarism grew intertwined. 'French gardens were displays of military capacity and power, more than anything else — they were engineered with the techniques of fortress engineering, their topiary across the walls resembling guards atop a fort. Even the statues in Versailles, which represented the rivers of France, were displays of cannon-making finesse, made by the famous cannon-making Keller brothers and signed by them and not an artist.'

Military prowess was meant to dominate land and hence, as Mukerji says, 'One of the characteristics of these gardens is the formality, the geometrical structure of its different parts. This reflected the capacity for land control and the ability to govern. This claim was very important to Louis XIV because he wanted to express his sovereignty as king over the people of France and French territory. Making a very well-controlled garden was a way of showing his ability.'

Alongside the regal, the imperial and the military was also the need for tranquility. 'Making the Versailles gardens beautiful, abundant with flowers and full of peace was very important,' Mukerji emphasises. Louis XIV took power after many bitter wars were fought over religion and so, a peaceful place was an expression of the use of military force to end conflicts and create serenity. But the theme of control ran relentlessly across Versailles. 'The kitchen garden was designed by Jean-Baptiste de La Quintinie. He was an intellectual who argued great men in history always took an interest in gardens because they understood that to manage their lands, they had to understand both botany and court culture. This became typical of great leaders.'

Importantly, another hallmark of a 'great leader' became the ability to twist and turn botany itself. As Mukerji remarks, 'Louis XIV was actually allergic to many plants. So, Versailles specialised in citrus trees and its curators forced these to bloom at different times of the year — that was another expression of control, the ability to decide when plants would fruit and flower and have a continuous amount of fresh produce and blooms in northern Europe's ecology.'

The 'Sun King' also knew the importance of dominating people — Versailles embodied this. Mukerji outlines, 'There is also the exploitation of people embedded in these great European gardens. These were products of peasant culture and labour that created beauty and wonder. Kings and princes didn't know how to garden' — she smiles wryly, 'Peasants did this for them. These systems of control pre-existed the garden but were implicit in the ways they developed. There is this very interesting pattern at the beginning of state formation and capitalism where this knowledge, which was rural and treated otherwise as 'worthless', became central to the production of luxury, the creation of great gardens, palaces and regal infrastructure, all of which helped regimes of power control their landscapes. There was an inversion in which the most powerful knowledge belonged to the least powerful people — in some ways, the history of that period is of trying to extract that knowledge without allowing the people who had it to gain any power that came out of those extractions.'

These tendencies mirrored both the strengths — and weaknesses — of human beings, Mukerji says. 'One of the characteristics of humans is that we try to control nature to our advantage — we are good with tools and can do a certain amount of reasoning. So, there's a capacity within the human species to change the environment to make it work for us rather than be subject to it since we are basically very vulnerable creatures. But that impulse has had all these consequences for the environment because we don't leave things alone. We change them for better or worse, often to benefit not all humans but a few. These impulses have had magnificent effects in gardens and terrible effects manifest in pollution, damaged ecosystems and the relentless exploitation of resources.'

Today, however, Mukerji finds changes taking place in the idea of gardens, once reflecting the human will to dominate nature. 'I am very interested in parks now — the effort to protect nature and create wild landscapes is a very important turn in history. It moves away from a world where people and labour were exploited and controlled. Of course, there are fears about technology controlling the world now but for me, parks and wild nature become a counterpart to a surveillance society, displaying our yearning still for a natural foundation for the human spirit. That takes on a very different meaning from the old great gardens. The idea of a human being is diminished here. Although humans still control the landscape, they become a small spot in this vast expanse, rather than a big fancy king in a garden. Studying the natural park movement — particularly in the Global South today — would be fascinating.'

ATTENTION! Trees in Versailles stand to order

BY COMMAND: Can blooming be controlled?

READERS WRITE

Dear Times Evoke,

TE's article about signalling among animals (23rd March) was such a refreshing read! A truly absorbing interview with Professor Stephen Nowicki from Duke University. It's a joy to hear all the diverse bird calls around us and see peacocks spread their resplendent trains to impress peahens! This article was truly fascinating!

— **Dr Monisha Thomas**, Delhi

It was very good to read about animal signalling in TE. Our biodiversity is so unique that it almost seems ethereal. So many birds in my vicinity make different sounds at different times. I wonder what they are communicating. It is also heart-breaking to see how our human actions have impacted these creatures. These beautiful, sentient beings make our surroundings flourish. Yet, we care so little about them. Thank you, TE, for bringing awareness to us — that is the first step to widen our limited perceptions of nature.

— **Ramsha Ali**, Kolkata

What a wonderful article about animal signalling, TE! This was beautifully presented and every example, peacocks to white-crowned sparrows, was fascinating. I never knew the train of peacocks signified so much information — nature also provides its own unique ID!

— **Amit Khandelwal**, Mumbai

Thanks, TE, for a truly riveting discussion with Stephen Nowicki on animal communication. Through their signalling, animals remain honest and reliable about their health, upbringing, potential parental care abilities, etc. We humans would do well to learn from them because it is how nature intended all species to exist. Thank you for an excellent article, TE.

— **V. Mohan Raghunathan**, Chennai

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TIMES GLOBAL

THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024

IT'S KIND OF FUN TO DO THE IMPOSSIBLE — WALT DISNEY

BEYONCE COVERS BEATLES' 1968 TRACK 'BLACKBIRD' IN NEW ALBUM; SONG WAS PENNED BY PAUL McCARTNEY AS TRIBUTE TO CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT

UK GOVT: 'OPPENHEIMER' DIRECTOR CHRISTOPHER NOLAN, WIFE EMMA THOMAS TO GET KNIGHTHOOD & DAMEHOOD

Biden writes to Shehbaz, making his first contact with a Pak PM

Move Comes As US-Pakistan Ties Remain Strained

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

NYT

Biden never called former PM Imran Khan. Similarly, he did not speak with Shehbaz Sharif when he succeeded Imran in April 2022

Islamabad: US President Joe Biden wrote a letter to Pakistan PM Shehbaz Sharif on Friday assuring him that his administration will fully back his govt in addressing critical global and regional challenges.

This was the first direct communication between a US president and Pakistani leader since former Republican president Donald Trump. After taking over from Trump, Biden did not bother to call the then PM Imran Khan, currently incarcerated. Similarly, he did not speak with Shehbaz when he succeeded Imran in April 2022.

The letter holds significance as Islamabad's ties with the White House remain strained following the withdrawal of international forces from Afghanistan and subsequent allegations levelled by Imran Khan blaming Washington for conspiring, in collaboration with Pakistan's military and the then opposition, to remove him from office through a vote of no-confidence.

The letter, moreover, underscores a potential recalibration of bilateral ties, with the US president describing the partnership between the people of the two countries as "crucial for global and local security".

"The enduring partnership between our nations remains critical to ensuring the security of our people — and people around the world— and the US will continue to stand with Pakistan to tackle the most pressing global and regional challenges of our time," Biden wrote to Sharif, adding that public health protection, economic growth and education for all are shared visions that will continue to be promoted together.

The US president also highlighted various areas where the two countries have been working together while promising to strengthen their joint efforts. He specifically mentioned the US-Pakistan Green Alliance Framework, saying his administration would continue to work with Pakistan to improve the environment. Biden also spoke of sustainable agricultural development, water management and recovery from the devastating effects of the 2022 floods in Pakistan.

He also expressed dedication to protecting human rights and promoting development together with Islamabad amid previous US concerns over freedom of speech and expression in the wake of a period of social media disruptions in Pakistan. "The strong partnership established between the two nations will be strengthened," he said in the letter.

Earlier this month, US lawmakers had urged Biden and secretary of state Antony Blinken to refrain from recognising Pakistan's new govt until allegations of election rigging were thoroughly investigated.

Pak official: Chinese contractors have halted work on 2 projects after attack

Chinese contractors halted construction on two major dam projects in Pakistan as Chinese investigators arrived in the country to join a probe into the suicide bombing that killed five Chinese engineers and a Pakistani driver this week, an official said on Friday. A senior official from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa interior department told AFP that since Wednesday, China Gezhouba Group Company has halted work on the Dasu dam in the province and Power China has stopped work on Diamer Bhasha dam, which straddles two provinces. The companies have demanded that Pakistan authorities come up with new security plans before reopening the sites where around 1,250 Chinese are working, it said. China has not commented yet. AGENCIES

Amid turmoil, Harvard's applications dip

Getty Images

5% DROP: Harvard received 54,008 applications, compared with 56,937 last year, a drop of about 5%

Applications to Harvard College were down this year, even as many other highly selective schools hit record highs. The drop suggests that a year of turmoil — which went into overdrive with a student letter that said Israel was "entirely responsible" for the Oct 7 Hamas attacks — may've dented Harvard's reputation.

Harvard's announcement on Thursday came as all eight Ivy League schools sent out their notices of admission or rejection, known as Ivy Day. While Brown University also saw a drop in applications, applications rose at many other elite colleges, including the University of Pennsylvania, Dartmouth, Columbia, the MIT, Bowdoin, Amherst and the University of Virginia. Harvard focused on the positive. "We are delighted by the stunning array of talents and lived experiences the class of 2028 will bring with them from throughout the US and around the world," William Fitzsimmons, dean of admissions and financial aid, said.

College counsellors and admissions experts said it was difficult to pin down the factors behind the decline in Harvard's numbers, but that the scrutiny has been intense. It began with a historic Supreme Court decision June 29, striking down decades of affirmative action policy at Harvard that had become a model for higher education. It culminated in the resignation on Jan. 2 of Claudine Gay, who was Harvard's first black president. At that point, she faced accusations of plagiarism in her scholarly work, on top of complaints about her evasive testimony on antisemitism in Dec before a House panel.

A private college admissions coach said the anxiety over campus climate was particularly acute in the fall. "Students were terrified about the doxxing trucks, the CEOs calling for protester names, students losing job offers for speaking up about Israel-Palestine," he said. "That drove some applicants to less-spotlight schools." But some families, even Jewish families, were not deterred by the bad publicity. "Getting accepted to Harvard is still getting accepted to Harvard," said Rivka Scheinfeld, whose daughter was accepted.

Overall, Harvard got 54,008 undergraduate applications in this admissions cycle, compared with 56,937 last year, a drop of 5%. That continues a trend that began with early applications, which were down 17%. Regular applications were down by 3%, to 46,087 from 47,384. Harvard said despite the decline, this was the fourth year in a row that the college had got over 50,000 applications.

Pennsylvania saw record applications — 65,230 — a nearly 10% rise from the year before, despite criticism of its then-president, Elizabeth Magill, for her legalistic testimony on antisemitism in the House hearing. One big difference between Harvard and Penn: Magill resigned swiftly — on Dec. 9, four days after her testimony. Gay, who testified the same day, remained president until Jan 2.

Among the Ivies, applications to Brown were down almost 5% from last year, still the third-largest applicant pool it has ever had. A Brown spokesman said some students were put off by a longer application with more essay questions. Yale and Dartmouth said they had got a record number of applications, both up 10% from last year. At Columbia and MIT, which also were in the news because of student protests, applications rose about 5%. NYT

8-year-old survives bus plunge off bridge in SA that left 45 people dead

Johannesburg: An 8-year-old girl was the sole survivor after a bus carrying 46 people on their way to an Easter weekend pilgrimage in South Africa on Thursday plunged 165 feet from a bridge into a ravine and burst into flames, according to a local department of transportation.

The bus was travelling from Botswana to Moria when it careered off a bridge winding through a mountain pass after the driver "lost control", the department said. Forty-five people, including the driver, were killed.

The girl, who was in a serious condition, was receiving medical attention at a nearby hospital. "Rescue operations had continued until the late hours of Thursday," officials said. The nationalities of the victims have not yet been determined.

The crash occurred in a scenic, mountainous area about 3 1/2 hours north of Johannesburg. The area attracts a lot of traffic on Easter weekend for a pilgrimage to Moria, the headquarters of the Zion Christian Church. President Ramaphosa visited last year's pilgrimage.

Africa has had among the highest road fatality rates globally. South Africa had over 12,400 road fatalities in 2022. NYT

'Deadliest day' for Iran proxies in Syria since Oct 7: War monitor

'44 Die In Israel Strikes That Targeted Missile, Military Units'

AFP

Palestinians inspect a damaged building in Maghazi camp, central Gaza

Israel carried out its "deadliest" strikes in months on northern Syria's Aleppo province early on Friday and said that it killed a senior Hezbollah commander in Lebanon, stepping up its campaign against Iran's proxies in parallel with its war in Gaza.

In Syria, the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights — a war monitor — said Israeli strikes hit missile depots for Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group in Jibreen, near the Aleppo International Airport, and the nearby town of Safira, home to a sprawling military facility.

The observatory said the strikes killed 44, most of them Syrian troops. "Thirty-six Syrian troops, seven Hezbollah fighters and a Syrian member of an Iran-backed group died, and dozens of people were wounded," it said, adding that it represented the single highest death toll in Israel strikes on Syria since Oct. 7. Israel has ramped up air strikes in Syria against both Hezbollah and the Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps since the Iranian-backed Palestinian faction Hamas's attack on Israel.

The Israeli military declined comment. In a post on X, Iranian foreign ministry spokesman said Israel's attacks were a "blatant and desperate attempt" to expand the war.

In Lebanon, the Israeli military said that it had killed Ali Abed Akhsan Naim, deputy commander of Hezbollah's rocket and missiles unit, in an air raid in area of Bazouriye. REUTERS & AP

Israel to return to table for talks with Hamas

PM Netanyahu said on Friday that Israel will return to the table for ceasefire talks with Hamas. The announcement marks yet another attempt to reach a deal with the militant group that would pause Israel's military offensive in Gaza in exchange for the release of Israeli hostages. Several rounds of negotiations have faltered and Netanyahu has previously called Hamas' demands delusional. The PM said he has spoken with Israel's lead negotiators and authorised delegations to join talks in Qatar and Egypt over the coming days. Hamas is believed to be holding roughly 100 hostages. AP

After UK & France, FB News tab to be unavailable in US and Australia

Los Angeles: Meta will be sunsetting Facebook News in early April for users in the US and Australia as the platform further deemphasises news and politics. The feature was shut down in the UK, France and Germany last year. Launched in 2019, the News tab curated headlines from national and international news organisations, as well as smaller, local publications.

Meta says users will still be able to view links to news articles, and news organisations will still be able to post and promote their stories and websites, as any other individual or organisation can on Facebook. The change comes as Meta tries to scale back news and political content on its platforms following years of criticism about how it handles misinformation and whether it contributes to political polarisation.

"This change does not impact posts from accounts people choose to follow; it impacts what the system recommends, and people can control if they want more," said Dani Lever, a Meta spokesperson. "This announcement expands on years of work on how we approach and treat political content based on what people have told us they wanted." Meta said the change to the News tab does not affect its fact-checking network and review of misinformation. AP

Anti-Gaza war protesters interrupt Biden, Obama, Clinton at NY fundraiser

NYT

US President Biden with his predecessors Barack Obama & Bill Clinton

New York: President Joe Biden and his Democratic predecessor, Barack Obama, headlined a star-studded fundraiser with former President Bill Clinton on Thursday, offering a robust defence of the White House's handling of the Gaza crisis as protesters interrupted the event.

Biden, who travelled with Obama on Air Force One to New York, took part in a discussion with Clinton moderated by "The Late Show" host Stephen Colbert at the iconic Radio City Music Hall in front of thousands of guests. Organisers say the event raised over $25 million for Biden's US re-election campaign.

But the fundraiser was punctuated by several protests inside the massive auditorium, with attendees rising at several different moments to shout over the discussion, referencing Biden's backing of Israel in the Hamas war in Gaza. "Shame on you, Joe Biden!" one yelled.

Obama and Clinton offered a presidential perspective of the Gaza crisis that stressed the political realities of being in the White House. A president needs to be able to support Israel at the same time as fighting for Palestinians to have more access to food, medical supplies and a future state, they said. "It's a lonely seat," Obama said. When a protester inside the theatre interrupted Obama, he snapped back: "You can't just talk and not listen ...That's what the other side does."

Before the event, the leaders' motorcade passed hundreds of protesters demonstrating against Israel's war with Hamas in Gaza, another sign that some young voters and other progressives who voted for Biden in 2020 are furious about his staunch backing of Israel. REUTERS

Solih operated on orders from 'foreign ambassador', says Maldives president

Male: Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has alleged that his predecessor, President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, operated on orders from "a foreign ambassador." Muizzu, however, neither named any country nor any diplomat. The president made the allegation when he was asked about criticism from the opposition regarding the recent procurement of military drones during an interview with Public Service Media (PSM). The interview was aired on Thursday night local time.

Ahead of the parliamentary elections, the main opposition, the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), has scaled up the attacks on Muizzu on various issues. Earlier in the month, it was announced that Maldives has, for the first time, acquired surveillance drones from Turkey for patrolling its vast exclusive economic zone and efforts have begun by the state to establish a drone base in Noonu atoll Maafaru to operate the military drones. Responding to the question about criticism about drones, Muizzu noted that the main opposition MDP, when it held office from 2018-2023, also held a supermajority in the Parliament. "However, the party failed to protect Maldives' independence, leaving it in the hands of a foreign country," Muizzu was quoted as saying by Sun.mv, a news portal. However, he did not specify which foreign country he was referring to, it said .PTI

A bill threatens Germany's beloved dachshund breed

Getty/Pic for representation

The dachshund, often called 'dackel', has long been a national symbol. The restrictions could be applied to leg length of the dogs

Dachshunds, the German dog breed known for their distinctive long bodies and short legs, face an uncertain future if proposed changes to an animal protection law are approved, Germany's kennel club said.

A draft of the bill, from German ministry of food and agriculture, was published in Feb and aims to combat "torture breeding," or breeding to produce animals with characteristics that will cause them to suffer, and to regulate the online trade of animals. However, the draft contains requirements that could end the breeding of certain dogs, such as the dachshund, according to VDH, Germany's kennel club.

The bill lists various disease characteristics, like anomalies of the skeletal system, that would be outlawed. That could be interpreted as a ban on breeding animals with any significant size deviation from the "original wolf type", VDH said.

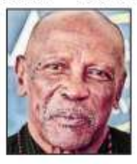
The restrictions could be applied to the leg length of dachshunds. The breeding of beagles, Jack Russell terriers and miniature schnauzers could also be affected, as well as of dogs with short noses, such as the English bulldog, French bulldog and pug.

Much of the discussion around the proposed changes, however, has focused on Germany's beloved dachshund, often called "dackel", which has long been a national symbol. NYT

Louis Gossett, 1st black to win supporting actor Oscar, dies

Los Angeles: Louis Gossett Jr., the first Black man to win a supporting actor Oscar and an Emmy winner for his role in the seminal TV miniseries "Roots," has died. He was 87.

Gossett's cousin Neal L. Gossett told AP the actor died in Santa Monica, California. A statement from the family said Gossett died Friday morning. No cause of death was revealed.



Louis Gossett Jr

Gossett's cousin remembered a man who walked with Nelson Mandela and who also was a great joke teller, a relative who faced and fought racism with dignity and humour. "Never mind the awards, never mind the glitz and glamour, the Rolls-Royces and the big houses in Malibu. It's about the humanity of the people he stood for," he said.

Louis Gossett always thought of his early career as a reverse Cinderella story, with success finding him from an early age and propelling him forward, toward his Academy Award for "An Officer and a Gentleman." Gossett broke through on the small screen as Fiddler in the groundbreaking 1977 miniseries "Roots," which depicted the atrocities of slavery on TV. The sprawling cast included Ben Vereen, LeVar Burton and John Amos.

Gossett became the third Black Oscar nominee in the supporting actor category in 1983. He won for his performance as the intimidating Marine drill instructor in "An Officer and a Gentleman" opposite Richard Gere and Debra Winger. He won a Golden Globe for the same role. "More than anything, it was a huge affirmation of my position as a Black actor," he wrote in his 2010 memoir, "An Actor and a Gentleman." AP

Disinformation on wife of French prez spreads to US

Paris: Years after false posts began circulating on social media purporting **Brigitte Macron** is a transgender woman, the French first lady remains the target of fake claims with the transphobic disinformation spreading to the US. President Emmanuel Macron, 46, has in recent weeks lashed out at the false information spread about his wife, 70, who is taking legal action against those behind the allegations.

Prominent US conservative commentator Candace Owens vehemently attacked the first lady in a now-deleted YouTube video posted on March 11, propagating a false claim that first exploded in France weeks before the 2022 presidential election.

Brigitte Macron is falsely accused of being born as a man called Jean-Michel Trogneux, her maiden surname, with that name going viral as a hashtag. Macron is among a group of women, including Michelle Obama and Jacinda Ardern, who have fallen victim to a growing trend: disinformation about their gender or sexuality to mock them.

In her video, Owens cites a "thorough investigation" by so-called independent journalist Natacha Rey, published in 2021 in French newsletter Faits et Documents, which is now headed by Xavier Poussard. "But what is new is that Xavier Poussard started translating his articles at the end of 2023," journalist Emmanuelle Anizon said, adding that he claims to have sent an English version to those close to Donald Trump.

And it worked, spreading like wildfire after Owens posted her video with two hashtags shared tens of thousands of times on X. AFP

AROUND THE WORLD

Getty Images via AFP

CLEANUP BEGINS: With search efforts over, cranes started arriving for cleanup in the aftermath of the collapse of the Francis Scott Key Bridge in Baltimore. Clearing the debris which is blocking a vital shipping lane into the Port of Baltimore is likely to be completed in a matter of weeks. But reconstructing the bridge will be a long process: It could take anywhere from 18 months to several years, experts say, while the cost could be at least $400m — or more than twice that

Musk's X is testing 'adult content' groups for users

X is testing a feature that lets users create or join communities focused on "adult content" or other "not safe for work" material. Users who create a community within the app can specify in the settings that their group "contains adult-sensitive content", according to screenshots uncovered by an analyst at Watchful, which tracks apps' development testing. The X groups will then feature an "adult content" label. Users who fail to label their community could see the content being filtered out or removed. Communities on X can be private, and it appears that the social media network will require age verification for groups that feature adult content. Owner Elon Musk has been open about his belief that X should carry almost all content that isn't illegal. It's not clear when the test will go live, and the feature could still be scrapped.

Flyer 'scolded' for being bra-less, demands meet with airline's top boss

A woman who says she was threatened with being kicked off a US Delta Air Lines flight because she was not wearing a bra has demanded a meeting with the company's top boss over what she says is a discriminatory policy. Lisa Archbold said she had on baggy jeans and a loose white t-shirt — with no bra — and claimed she was temporarily escorted off a flight by a female gate agent who demanded she cover up, even though her breasts were not visible. Archbold's attorney, in a letter to Delta, said: "Last I checked, the Taliban are not in charge of Delta." There were currently no plans for a lawsuit. A company spokesperson told AFP: "Delta contacted this customer with an apology."

In bid to protect whales, Polynesian indigenous groups give them 'personhood'

For many indigenous groups across Polynesia, whales hold an ancient sacredness and spirit that connects all life. Whales — or tohora, as Maori call them — guided their ancestors across the Pacific Ocean. Today, those groups consider themselves to be guardians for the largest animals under the sea.

But as of Wednesday, whales are not simply animals in this region. Indigenous leaders of New Zealand, Tahiti and the Cook Islands signed a historic treaty that recognises whales as legal persons in a move conservationists believe will apply pressure to national govts to offer greater protections for the large mammals. "It's fitting that the traditional guardians are initiating this," said Mere Takoko, a Maori conservationist who leads Hinemoana Halo Ocean Initiative, the group that spearheaded the treaty.

Conservationists have good reason to believe they will succeed: In 2017, New Zealand passed a groundbreaking law that granted personhood status to the Whanganui River because of its importance to Maori, New Zealand's indigenous people. The treaty, or He Whakaputanga Moana (declaration for the ocean), was signed on Rarotonga, the largest of the Cook Islands, in a ceremony attended by Tuheitia Potatau te Wherowhero VII, the Maori king, and 15 paramount chiefs of Tahiti and the Cook Islands. The Maori king said as "the songs of our ancestor" grow fainter, the treaty "is not merely words on paper". "It's a Hinemoana Halo, a woven cloak of protection for our taonga, our treasures — the magnificent whales," he said.

AP

Indigenous groups believe they can trace their ancestry directly back to whales, and that whales were key to developing the Maori system of navigation

The significance of whales to indigenous groups is twofold. First, they believe they can trace their ancestry directly back to whales, and second, whales were key to developing the Maori system of navigation as people followed whale migrations from island to island. "Without the whale, we would have never found all of these various islands," Takoko said.

While climate change is considered a significant threat to whales, encounters with large vessels can be fatal. About 10,000 whales are killed every year because of ship strikes. NYT

A thought for today

I do not wish women to have power over men; but over themselves

MARY SHELLEY

Love & Politics

This poll season, pay attention to Indian Lovers Party

The odd political pundit describes LS 2024 as a battle over the idea of India. What would be welcome is a battle over the idea of the right of women to choose a partner. There's a maverick in the fray who's standing up for it. The president of Indian Lovers Party is contesting in Chennai South constituency, with a unique promise of protecting those in love.

What's love got to do with marriage? | PMK's election manifesto has drawn interest. The party wants to make parental consent mandatory for girls who marry before the age of 21. Legal threshold for marriage is 18. For a party that's been associated with campaigns against inter-caste marriage, justifying its demand with medical reasons won't wash. Girls falling in love is the stuff of nightmares for many Indians.

One nation, one attitude | PMK is not an outlier. It articulates an attitude common to political parties. For example, Uttarakhand's law on uniform civil code brought even live-in relationships within its purview. It was justified by the state assembly's speaker saying "we are trying to safeguard the interests of the girl." An idea that started off as a way to bring about gender equality, ended up reinforcing social prejudices.

Eye of the beholder | It's not just love that upsets equilibrium. It can be a regular public performance, and some reactions would make one think our cultural foundations have suffered seismic shocks. Jatin Chakraborty, a minister in West Bengal's Left Front govt, once described Usha Uthup's programmes as *apasanskriti* (decadent) and even joined his party colleagues to disrupt some of them.

If there's one idea in India that could do with a change, it's our idea of women. They do not need deification, they need freedom to choose.

Six Appeal

IPL is clobbering the idea of beautiful cricket

It's hardly surprising that IPL has become synonymous with 'slam-bam' cricket. After all, the 20-over format is designed for high-octane boundary hitting. A whopping 170 maximums have been hit in this edition so far (till March 28) and we are not even at the half-way mark of the tournament.

Big boys, big hits | Gone are the days of the classic leg glance off a fast blower, or a Tendulkar-esque straight drive. Today one gets to see the whole unconventional range from helicopter shots to SKY's outrageous scoops. This 'results-justify-the-means' approach is crowd-pleasing and good for filling up modern stadiums.

Tumbling records | It shatters records too. The recent Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Mumbai Indians IPL clash saw a total of 523 runs being scored by both teams – a record. A total of 38 sixes were hit – another IPL record. Is this enough? No way. They want more! Bowlers are just cannon fodder. No wonder then cricket clubs across the country are ditching batting technique for IPL dreams.

Wait... what about Tests? | Who watches them anyway? Besides, the latest cricket punditry views the longest format in sessions. Sessions are broken into mini-sessions. So Tests are multiple IPL matches clubbed together. Forward defence you say? That's for fuddy-duddies. ODIs? Two balls per innings have taken care of those. Let's face the sad truth. Cricket's subtle beauty is dying, and few care.

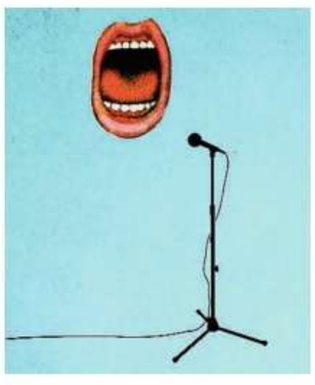
How Language Became Humans' Superpower

How were words formed? How did we learn to talk?

We use about 16,000 words a day. A two-year-old learns an average of nine words a day. But the origin of language is one of the most contested problems in science. Linguistics, neuroscience, anthropology, paleoarchaeology have all claimed pieces of the jigsaw, but the picture is only clarifying now, says ***The Language Puzzle: How We Talked Our Way Out of the Stone Age*** by ***Steven Mithen.***

Some argue that language emerged out of a genetic mutation 10,000 years ago, some suggest slow evolution from a protolanguage, others say it evolved from singing or gesture and so on. This book traces the steps from early vocalisations of our ancestors to words, metaphor, and writing, leading to cognitive and social change.

mindfield
SHORT TAKES ON BIG IDEAS



Words are sounds we make that have a meaning as agreed by our community. The shape of the vocal tract and ability to control the passage of air shapes the range of sound, and therefore, our words. Apart from a few onomatopoeic words that sound like the thing being expressed, words are usually arbitrary conventions – walking in English is gangadi in Icelandic, and there's no reason for either. Prosody, pitch, stress and so on, also change the meaning of an utterance. Tone and gesture are essential to some languages.

More than 400 languages in the world are derived out of a single extinct language from the Bronze Age, proto-Indo-European. As people dispersed east and west, their languages changed through mistakes and contact with other people, forming into Bengali, French, Farsi and Kurdish. Other language families are the Uralic (Finnish, Hungarian etc), the Austronesian and Niger-Congo family.

Languages sound different depending on climate; warmer climes have more vowels, colder places more consonants. Culture creates finer distinctions in words, like the Inuit words for snow and the Filipino words for rice and the Scottish for rain. Words change meaning and multiply with time. The words we use influence how we perceive the world, even emotions like shame, anger, disgust are not universal, but culturally filtered – as are abstractions like democracy, freedom and justice.

One big question: are words purely arbitrary conventions or is there an underlying sense, are they 'iconic'? Our senses may have shaped our language acquisition – words from sound-impressions might have begun speech. However, as research in the last two decades suggests, there were only so many iconic words, so humans needed arbitrary words to expand our lexicon and express abstractions.

The book sketches a picture of how language began with iconic words in the African savannah 1.6 million years ago, then evolved in the Fertile Crescent of West Asia about 12,500 years ago. With clement climatic conditions, modern humans started to care for and depend on plants and animals. New concepts, words and tools bootstrapped each other into existence.

When we began to use metaphor, it released new capacities for symbolic thought and complexity. Our changing teeth changed our language, our words reflected the needs of farming and craft. As settlements became more complex, words became shorter and rules more consistent, to enable trade and contact with other groups.

This multilingualism intensified creativity and intelligence. Metallurgy developed, and writing was invented in Mesopotamia, China and Mesomerica. And through this long period of evolution, we became a species entirely dependent on words.

The Science Of Our Biases & Choices

Daniel Kahneman showed why people, including powerful ones, make the same mistake repeatedly. An insight that explains why big decisions often produce negative results

Devangshu Datta

Economists used to theorise that human beings are rational creatures who process available information and act in such a way as to optimise expected returns. But in the 1970s, two Israeli-Americans proved (cynics would say it is hardly necessary to prove humans are irrational!) that this was often demonstrably untrue.

Risk aversion | They ran some simple thought experiments. Try one. Suppose you are given ₹1,000, and offered two choices. Either, you can play a game where you have a 50% chance to win another ₹1,000, or you lose nothing. Or, you can accept an extra ₹450, with no obligations. What would you choose to do?

Most people grab the extra ₹450. But the math indicates you would come out ahead if you played the game. Play the game, and you will emerge with ₹2,000, half the time, and with ₹1,000 in the other cases. Put it together and you're likely to get a return of ₹1500 – the extra ₹500 is ₹50 more than just taking the ₹450.

That's a specific cognitive bias – risk aversion. Daniel Kahneman (1934-2024), who passed away this week, won the Economics Nobel in 2002 for the work he had done in this area, in collaboration with Amos Tversky (1937-1996). These two cognitive scientists (and their followers) transformed economic theory, creating a new branch, even though neither of them had studied economics.

Loss aversion | This was another powerful bias they documented. Most people feel the hurt of a financial loss more acutely than they feel the joy of a commensurate gain. Indeed, if an average human is offered the chance to play a game, where they toss a fair coin with the prospect of winning ₹60, or losing ₹50, many will decline because they fear the loss of ₹50 more strongly than they welcome the prospect of winning ₹60. Some behavioural scientists even theorise the pain of a loss is felt twice as acutely as the joy from a gain.

Disposition effect | Those two did a series of experiments asking such "playful" questions and analysing the empirical data they generated, to tease out the cognitive biases we carry. They discovered many and some of those discoveries were revelatory. The disposition effect for example is why investors frequently sell profits in stocks that are going up, while hanging onto stocks that are going down.

Cognitive biases have effects that go well beyond having an impact on individual net worth. Biases carried by individuals can reinforce each other and lead to powerful network effects, if multiple members of a group have the same, or similar biases.

Individuals to institutions | One of the interesting implications is that cognitive biases embedded within us as individuals end up influencing institutional decisions, and thus have massive financial and geopolitical effects. Be it investing, making consumption choices, crafting corporate strategy, mapping a political or military campaign, or negotiating an economic treaty, humans taking critical decisions have biases, which feed into decisions. Even in areas like trading where AI is taking over and making decisions, algorithms are likely to have biases of programmers and of the training data baked in.

Prospect theory | This is what the associated branch of behavioural science is called. It is one of the few areas of economics where experimental results can be replicated to some degree. Human beings tend to behave in the same, often irrational ways, over and over again. Indeed, iconoclastic trader and best-selling author, Nassim Nicholas Taleb, once pointed out that Kahneman may be the only economics Nobel winner whose results can be replicated.

Kahneman himself, rather surprisingly, also ended up being a bestselling author. His book *Thinking, Fast and Slow* became a cult classic, discussed in circles well outside the ambit of nerds who trade stocks, or play poker. He called fast intuitive thinking "System 1", and slow, logical step-by-step thinking "System 2" and showed there's a place for both systems in decision-making. However, when we use the inappropriate system (usually the fast intuitive System 1 when we need to use the slow System 2), we make mistakes.

Deep insight | Kahneman's early years saw his family move from Israel (then Palestine) where he was born, to France where he lived as a child during WWII. His father survived a Nazi concentration camp, before they went to Israel again. Kahneman related an incident where he, a Jewish 8-year-old, was caught on the street after curfew by an SS infantryman. Instead of sending him to a concentration camp, the trooper showed him a picture of his own son who was about the same age, and gave him some money and sent him home. That's when he realised people are complicated.

Later, during his military service in the Israeli army, he was supposed to evaluate other soldiers for courage, leadership qualities etc. He discovered that standardised tests were nonsense and started looking for more insights.

His lifelong fascination with deciphering thought processes led to a series of deep insights explaining many types of individual and collective behaviour. More than that, he actually changed the ways in which people think, and made us more self-aware as a species.

Some Big Fat Truths About Obesity

Intermittent fasting is the latest in weight loss fads that get debunked as swiftly as they go viral. So much about our rising fatness is confusing. But its key lies in the changing nature of the Indian economy

One day you're told the great secret of weight loss, the next day you're informed it'll kill you. Intermittent fasting, a popular way to burn fat and control type 2 diabetes, is now under scrutiny, with a new study linking it to heart disease.

India is in a peculiar phase of growth, as under-nutrition and obesity are both public health emergencies. A Lancet study this year found that 12.5 million children and teens were obese in 2022, up from 0.4 million in 1990. Female obesity has risen more sharply than that of men. Obesity across rural India has doubled in the last decade, and the risk is greater for the poor.

Obesity is linked to heart attacks, strokes and Type 2 diabetes, and places new burdens on our skimpy healthcare system. There is a South Asian phenotype, we are famously skinny-fat, even those who look slender might have less lean tissue and tend to put on weight around our bellies. This visceral fat puts us at greater risk of metabolic disease.

Why obesity is rising in India | Obesity is a complex multifactorial condition, caused by many things, and we can only control some of them. Obviously, genetics can't be helped. But bodies are also shaped by what they do. Diet and exercise are huge factors. The changing nature of the Indian economy – food, jobs, lifestyles – has caused obesity to grow.

- A Tata-Cornell Institute for Agriculture and Nutrition study found how gender, age and location affect it. Urbanisation and sedentary living play a part and access to motorised transport, for instance, is linked with weight gain in men. So is time spent watching screens, for women, men and children. Post-menopausal women tend to gain weight.
- Plus, crucially, diets have changed across India. While desi meals were carb-heavy to begin with, industrial packaged food has swept across India in the last two decades, filling bodies with empty calories and little nutrition.

How fat is far from a personal failing | Overweight people are often advised self-control, calorie deficits, cardio and strength training. But fat-shaming them misses the point that excess weight is not an individual problem. There are biological dispositions and stubborn social determinants at work.

- For instance, women and men gain fat differently, and this affects their overall health in different ways. There are gendered reasons for bad nutrition too, women's mobility and physical activity is restricted, they earn less, and are likely to be discriminated against when good food is scarce.
- There are other invisible factors that drive weight gain. Our gut microbiota regulate dietary absorption and fat accumulation, and this plays a critical role in obesity and related disorders. Our specific microbiomes, and disturbances to them, affect our tendency to pile on kilos. Sleep deprivation and circadian misalignment might also be linked with obesity, possibly because they spike appetite hormones.
- But most obviously, obesity is a political economy problem. While urban India has better diet diversity, rural India is intensely grain-focused, and overall we eat only a fraction of the recommended intake of protein, vegetables and fruit. India has long focused on cereals for basic food security, on calories rather than nutrition.
- An IFPRI paper in 2020 analysed the affordability of eating well, pitting the 'cost of a recommended diet' against rural price and wage data, to show why a nutritious diet is out of reach for 45-64% of the rural poor.
- Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2022-23) also reflects a decline in the nutritional value of our plates. Shares of processed foods and beverages loaded with sugar, salt and chemical additives have risen.

What Western mistakes Indians must not repeat | In the West, working-class people who have no option but to eat unhealthy industrial food are then stigmatised for getting fat. India must actively avoid that path, even though it is currently the hottest market for global packaged food companies.

- To tackle obesity, policy must be geared towards diversifying agriculture, reducing the price of nutrient-dense food and encouraging their consumption, boosting rural incomes, and limiting the advertising of unhealthy processed food.
- The precise mechanisms at work with obesity, the relationships between calorie intake, exercise, fat acclimation, insulin storage and disease, have not been mapped. New studies on food groups and workouts contradict each other, as do hype cycles around new diets.
- But despite that quibbling, we have an incontrovertible basic picture of what works: vegetables, fruit, whole grains, legumes, nuts and seeds should be the mainstay of our diets. Optional food, to be eaten in limited quantities, are meat, dairy and seafood, fats extracted from vegetables, nuts, seeds and fruit, and eggs. In the undesirable category: ultra-processed food including chemically extracted oils, sugars and flours, industrially produced animal products, sweetened beverages and other junk.
- There is little to argue on this front. If you care about your health and well-being, this is how you try to eat.

Text by Ananya Khera

Calvin & Hobbes

Sacred*space*

We fill our lives with activities. Many of them are good activities but if we are not careful, they can just be an escape... we need time to just be with ourselves, and to become centred, when the mind can just be quiet.

Tenzin Palmo

Raising Children Of The Light

Sant Rajinder Singh

The process of childbirth is a miracle of Nature, and a child's arrival into a family is a blessing from God. Still untainted by the material world, the purity and innocence of a newborn captivate the parents, enveloping the whole family in newfound heights of joy and happiness and rendering them oblivious to life's problems. The child is loved by all as they see God's divine attributes reflected in him. Whether it be a girl or a boy, when a child comes into our lives, it is because God has selected their soul to receive a human form, wherein they can be dyed in divine love, attain self-knowledge, and merge back into the Source. Parents of a newborn should recognise their good fortune and the opportunity that God has given them to raise the embodied soul and help them fulfil their life's purpose.

Children can be described as a blank paper for parents to write on. Parents must mould the child into a loving, caring person. For this, it is important that they love the child and create an atmosphere of peace, love, and harmony at home, striving to settle any differences away from the child. If disciplining is required, it must be done lovingly without any verbal or physical violence. It will enrich the lives of the child as well as parents.

It is the responsibility of the parents to focus on their children's upbringing with love and not regard it as an obligation. In addition to ensuring their physical health and well-being, it is paramount that parents help the child understand his true SELF – the Soul. Rather than asking the child to meditate, it is advised that parents teach by example and meditate regularly themselves. Children will naturally emulate their parents and start meditating, too. When these children grow up, they will not be enamoured by the attractions of the physical world but will be fully conscious of the true purpose of human life.

THE SPEAKING TREE

People are happy on their birthdays; their faces beam with joy on their special day. We should consider every day as our birthday. When we go to sleep at night, we do not know if we will awaken the next morning, when we do get up the next morning, we should consider that new day to be our birthday. This means living each day as if it were the most special day of our lives. Thus, every morning is a new birth and a fresh opportunity to know ourselves and to realise God. We should celebrate our physical birthdays by thanking the divine and spreading the fragrance of His love. Apart from embracing guests at our birthday parties, we need to embrace the Supreme within through meditation.

Children are our future; we should nurture them lovingly. As parents, we must do so in the right manner so that children are equipped to lead spiritually enriched lives and fulfil their highest purpose. We should show them the path of meditation and spirituality early so they can reach the goal of self-knowledge and God-realisation in this very lifetime. The better the lives of the children, the more loving and peaceful this world will become.

TIMES BUSINESS
THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | SATURDAY, MARCH 30, 2024

Philippines, US See Highest Rise In Deepfake-Related Frauds

Deepfakes of videos, photos and audio recordings have become widespread on various internet platforms, aided by technological advances of large language models like Midjourney, Google's Gemini or OpenAI's ChatGPT and others. At 4,500%, Philippines witnessed highest increase in deepfake-specific fraud cases in 2023 compared to 2022, followed by the US and Vietnam

Tax dept detects HRA fraud with illegal usage of PANs

Finds 8-10K Cases Of ₹10L Or More, Employees Face Action

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New Delhi: The income tax department has detected a fraud involving unauthorised use of permanent account numbers (PAN) by individuals to claim house rent allowance when they were not even tenants. So far, at least 8,000-10,000 high value cases have been detected with amounts running into Rs 10 lakh or more.

The cases first came to light when authorities found alleged rent receipts of around Rs 1 crore by an individual. When confronted, the individual whose PAN reflected the "rental income" denied any knowledge. Further probe revealed that the individual indeed did not receive the rent that was shown against his name.

The case prompted the income tax department to further investigate the matter and it turned out that there was rampant misuse of PANs by unscrupulous individuals to claim tax deduction from their employers. So much so that officials have now come across cases where employees of certain companies have used the same PAN to claim tax deduction.

Tax officials said the department is now going after those employees, who have made bogus claims to recover the tax. It is unclear if legal action is also planned against them. The case reflects another instance of PAN being misused without the holder actually knowing about it. In this case, what has complicated the matter is that currently TDS (tax deducted at source) is applicable only for monthly rent of over Rs 50,000 or annual payment in excess of Rs 6 lakh. So, a lot of employees have been misusing the benefit to avoid paying tax on rental income.

"Most of the financial transactions are linked to PAN. With use of latest technology and automated processes and data analytics, it is not very difficult for tax authorities to track fake claims. This may not only entail tax payments later but also will result in levy of penal interest, penalty and even lead to prosecution in extreme cases. Where rent is paid to the parent, the rent should be paid through cheque or by way of electronic transfer (and not through cash) to demonstrate the genuineness of the transaction and that parent too needs to report that rental income in his or her return," said Kuldip Kumar, partner at Mainstay Tax Advisors.

Tax officials said the fault entirely lies with the employee and the employer cannot be held liable even if multiple individuals quote the same PAN for rent payment. "Employers are not expected to make a deep investigation, but the onus is also on them to have reasonable checks and balances, while obtaining the proof of rent paid to allow HRA exemption. In fact, in some of the cases, employers have their policy that where any employee is caught having submitted a fake claim for HRA or LTA etc, such employee may be terminated from employment," said Kumar.

HOW CASE CAME TO LIGHT

- Authorities found alleged rent receipts of around **₹1 crore** by an individual
- The individual, whose PAN reflected the "rental income", denied any knowledge
- Probe revealed individual did not receive rent shown against his name
- Further investigation showed rampant misuse of PANs by unscrupulous individuals to claim tax deduction from their employers
- Employees of certain companies have used same PAN to claim tax deduction
- Fault entirely lies with employee and employer cannot be held liable even if multiple individuals quote same PAN for rent payment, say tax officials

Byju's invites shareholders to invest in rights issue

Times News Network

Mumbai: Troubled edtech startup Byju's offered its disgruntled investors another chance to participate in the company's $200 million rights issue to protect their shareholding.

In a letter to shareholders on Friday, founder and group CEO Byju Raveendran claimed that the firm has already secured over 50% shareholder votes to increase authorised share capital for the issue. The company held an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) during the day to seek shareholder approval for the same.

"Despite the animosity shown by some of the investors in pursuing uncalled-for legal actions, we continue to show good faith towards all our shareholders and would like all of you to be part of our turnaround story… the board is considering making an offer of renounced shares to existing shareholders to ensure there is no more dilution to their shareholding," Raveendran said in the letter which was reviewed by **TOI**. The process of securing votes for raising the authorised share capital started on March 7 through postal ballot and will close on April 6.

The rights issue is crucial for the cash-starved company which has delayed disbursement of full salaries for the month of Feb to a section of its employees. Once valued at $22 billion, Byju's has launched its rights issue at a valuation of $225-230 million — a 99% drop from its peak valuation.

Some of the startup's investors including Prosus, Peak XV Partners, General Atlantic, Sofina and Chan Zuckerberg Initiative have not participated in the rights issue. Meanwhile, Raveendran and family are investing around $45 million in the issue, sources said.

Shapoorji co Afcons plans ₹7,000cr IPO

Eyes ₹19,000Cr Valuation | Group Looks To Pare Debt

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Mumbai: Shapoorji Pallonji Group's Afcons Infrastructure plans to launch an IPO aiming for a valuation of over Rs 19,000 crore, making it the country's largest infra construction IPO in at least a decade. The company, which the construction-to real-estate group acquired from ICICI Bank in the early 2000s, hopes to raise Rs 7,000 crore from the share sale.

This will be the second company from the group to tap the primary market after Sterling and Wilson Renewable Energy. Sterling debuted on the domestic bourses in August 2019 but is now majority owned by Reliance Industries after SP sold shares to pare debt.

Currently, only two SP entities are listed on the stock exchanges, Forbes & Company (which has a market cap of Rs 558 crore) and Gokak Textiles (Rs 77 crore). Both the companies were acquired from the Tata Group. SP will garner Rs 5,750 crore by selling a part of its stake in the Afcons IPO, while the infrastructure construction company will raise Rs 1,250 crore by issuing fresh shares to investors.

The company, in its IPO documents filed with markets regulator Sebi, said Goswami Infratech, which owns about 72%, will only participate in the IPO and none of the other promoters, Shapoorji Pallonji and Company (which owns about 17%), Floreat Investments (8%), Hermes Commerce (1.19%) and Renaissance Commerce (1.18%) will sell any shares to investors.

It further said 97% of the company's equity (representing 33.1 crore shares) is pledged with lenders. Of this, 7.5 crore shares have been released before the filing of the IPO documents. Another "unspecified number of shares" will be released prior to the filing of the updated offer documents.

Afcons added it may consider a pre-IPO placement of Rs 250 crore and if that happens, the fresh issue size will be reduced.

SP will use the IPO proceeds to pare debt of Rs 20,000 crore. So far it has sold assets worth Rs 11,000 crore to strength its balance sheet. Earlier this week, SP inked a Rs 3,350 crore sale agreement with Adani Ports for its Gopalpur port in Odisha. SP also owns about 18% in Tata Sons, the holding company of the Tata Group, but all of its shares are pledged against loans.

Where It Would Stand

Afcons' listed peers

(In ₹ crore)	Market cap	FY23 revenue
L&T	5.2L	1.1L
Afcons	**19k***	**12.6k**
KEC Int'l	17.8k	15.4k
Kalpataru Projects	17.3k	14.3k
Dilip Buildcon	6.7k	10.1k

Source: BSE; *Estimate

Startup woes: Funding drops by $1.2bn from last March

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Chennai: Investments by private equity and venture capital firms fell by $1.2 billion in March 2024 to $1.8 billion across 64 deals, as against $3 billion in March 2023. The drop has bucked the trend of increase in investments by PE-VC firms in Jan-Feb this year as compared with the year-ago periods, Venture Intelligence data showed.

Singapore-based sovereign wealth fund GIC's $500-million funding for a JV with Sterlite Power Transmission topped the list of investments, followed by Advent International & Multiples' $233-million bet on microlender Svatantra Microfin.

Singapore-based GIC's $500-million funding for a JV with Sterlite Power Transmission topped the investment list in March

The number of deals between Jan and March this year stand at 205 — a decrease from 242 in the same period in 2023. Collective investments by PE-VC firms during Jan-March 2024 were at $6.3 billion — a decline of $500 million — over the year-ago period at $6.8 billion.

Venture Intelligence founder Arun Natarajan said the number of mega deals ($100 million and above) was just four in March 2024 compared to six in March last year.

"While sovereign wealth funds and pension funds from Singapore and Canada continue to dominate the large ticket PE deals, it is good to see that well-established large Indian PE firms such as Multiples PE and Kedaara Capital as well as experienced mid-market investors like Lighthouse Funds making newer bets during the month," he told **TOI**.

'Angel tax aimed at hawala-like deals'

Times News Network

Mumbai: Commerce and industry minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said that the angel tax was introduced because fly-by-night entities were using this route to inflate value and create capital. The minister said he would like to see more domestic funding for startups as foreign investors pick up ideas of bright young people and end up owning most of the companies.

Goyal also ruled out tax relief for startups that registered overseas and now wanted to return to India. "If someone wants to come back to India, they will have to pay the tax, as discrimination would be very difficult to justify. They (startups) did not go out because of pressure or any reason. They went out for better tax planning. If they pay some tax here, it will help us give some more scholarships to poor children, it will help us make a few houses for the poor, it will help us replace slums with proper housing," he told newspersons during his visit to the **TOI** office on Friday.

Goyal dismissed suggestions that govt was at a standstill due to the general elections. Instead, he said, it's super active in leveraging the foundation laid over the last 10 years to ensure that India is a developed nation by 2047.

The minister said that while he has not been apprised of any recent income tax notices to startups under Section 68 of the Income Tax Act and they were likely linked to the issue of valuation, he would seek an explanation from the department. Goyal said that India had over 100 unicorns — the third-largest number in any country worldwide. "The startup ecosystem is working very smoothly, and govt is supportive through various funds. I wish to see more private sector investment from domestic funds and domestic industry."

"Our young men and women come up with brilliant ideas. Foreign investors are super savvy. They picked up that idea and almost start owning all our brilliant companies and startups," said Goyal.

There was a time when fly-by-night companies were being used for Hawala transactions or for creating capital. "They created a company and issued shares at inflated values and created capital. That was the reason that (angel) tax was brought in to ensure valuation norms," said Goyal, who is also in charge of textiles and food and consumer affairs ministries.

He said that the tax had a fallout on startups. "We have to balance the two. If it is totally opened up, the startup issue should be resolved but the other problem will start..," said Goyal.

'No backdoor imports of Chinese goods'

Commerce & industry minister **Piyush Goyal** said that the country's move to link lower duties to foreign direct investment included a consultation mechanism that allowed the government to claw back benefits to those countries if promised investments were not made. Goyal also ruled out any backdoor imports of Chinese goods through bilateral treaties that have trade agreements with China. "We bring elements into agreements so that such circumvention cannot take place," said Goyal. TNN

Procurement through GeM tops ₹4L cr

New Delhi: The procurement of goods and services through Govt e-Market portal GeM has crossed Rs 4 lakh crore so far this fiscal due to higher buying activities by various ministries and departments, a senior government official said.

GeM was launched on August 9, 2016, for online purchases of goods and services by all central govt ministries and departments. "As of March 28, procurement has crossed Rs 4 lakh crore. It is historic," GeM CEO P K Singh said. In 2021-22 procurement value stood at Rs 1.1 lakh crore and it crossed Rs 2 lakh crore last fiscal. He said procurement of services from the portal has jumped from Rs 66,000 crore in 2022-23 to Rs 2.1 lakh crore. AGENCIES

Gold hits a new record, best month in over 3 yrs

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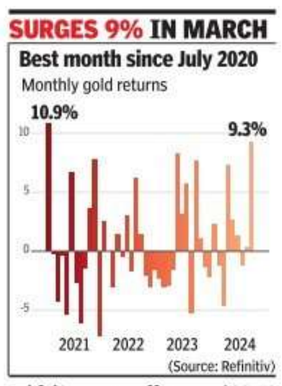
Hyderabad: A week after it vaulted over the $2,200/oz mark in international markets for the first time, gold touched yet another life-high of $2,236 in the wee hours of Friday. In March, it has gained 9.3%, logging its best month since July 2020 *(see graphic)*.

Though MCX remained closed on account of Good Friday, prices of 24k gold were quoting above Rs 70,000 per 10gm (including import duty & GST) in the local market. With the yellow metal closing at an all-time high of $2,233, Indian Bullion and Jewellers Association national secretary Surendra Mehta said it may well open $30-40 higher on Monday.

"Gold has gone off the charts. If it keeps growing at this rate, it will become more of an investment commodity than a consumer item. Once that happens, it will only go up higher," said Mehta, pointing out that the latest jump could be attributed to heavy buying by China in addition to buying by central banks of other countries.

Avinash Gupta, former director of All India Gems & Jewellery Domestic Council, said prices are moving on technicals only as there is no change in fundamentals except for increased buying by central banks. "The technical support is so strong that now, we are looking at $2,350." But the more gold dazzles, the more it loses its sheen for jewellery consumers. "Jewellery business is down everywhere to just 30% of normal levels due to rising prices," Gupta said.

SURGES 9% IN MARCH



Fired Americans say TCS gave their jobs to Indians on H-1B visa: Report

Times News Network

Bengaluru: A group of experienced American professionals has accused TCS of firing them on short notice and filling many of their roles with workers from India on H1-B visas, the Wall Street Journal reported on Friday.

The American workers alleged that TCS illegally discriminated against them based on their race and age, firing them and shifting some of their work to lower-paid Indian immigrants on temporary work visas. At least 22 workers have filed complaints with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) against TCS since late Dec, alleging preferential treatment towards those on H-1B visas. The EEOC is responsible for enforcing federal laws that prohibit discrimination against a job applicant or an employee because of the person's race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, or genetic information.

When **TOI** reached out to TCS to inquire whether American professionals were discriminated against, its spokesperson said, "Allegations that TCS engages in unlawful discrimination are meritless and misleading. TCS has a strong track record of being an equal opportunity employer in the US, embodying the highest levels of integrity and values in our operations."

"While companies often conduct layoffs that affect workers with more seniority, the American professionals say TCS broke the law by targeting them based on protected characteristics of age & race. They argue that the company's actions demonstrated preferential treatment toward Indian workers in the US on the coveted visas," the WSJ report said.

Another frequently repeated accusation has been that Indian firms abuse the H-1B visa process to bring workers of Indian descent to the US rather than hiring locals. However, data shows an increase in US hiring for most IT players as part of the effort to overcome visa hurdles. In 2018, TCS won an employment discrimination case after a court in California acquitted the company of charges that it had shown bias toward Indian employees over US residents.

TCS DENIES ALLEGATIONS

> Allegations... are meritless and misleading. TCS has a strong track record of being an equal opportunity employer in the US, embodying the highest levels of integrity and values in our ops
> — **TCS spokesperson**

- At least 22 workers have filed complaints with Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. EEOC is responsible for enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination against a job applicant

TODAY'S FACE-OFF
LSG VS PBKS
TV TIME 7.30 PM
STAR SPORTS / JIOCINEMA

PLAYED 3
Won by LSG 2 (66.67%) | Won by PBKS 1 (33.33%)

LAST FIVE MATCHES
LSG L L W W W
PBKS L W L L W
VENUE: LUCKNOW
ODDS LSG 7/10 | PBKS 11/10

IPL 2024

"IT IS NOT THE FIRST TIME I BOWLED THE LAST OVER. LAST YEAR I DEFENDED AGAINST RAJASTHAN. WHEN I PLAYED FOR DELHI, I BOWLED THE LAST OVER THERE TOO. BUT IN TERMS OF EXECUTION, THIS WAS MY BEST OVER."
—Avesh Khan | RR bowler

'IT'S ALL ABOUT DRIVING THE TEAM FORWARD'

Kiwi Southpaw Rachin Ravindra Talks About His Role In CSK, Desire To Contribute In Wins & Coping With His Quick Rise Up The Ranks...

Neha.Surana@timesgroup.com

ANI

SOAKING IN THE IPL EXPERIENCE: CSK's Rachin Ravindra

Chennai: When Chennai Super Kings' reliable opener Devon Conway was ruled out due to a thumb injury, the title-holders turned to another Kiwi player, Rachin Ravindra, to step in. Conway's absence was expected to leave a huge hole but the flamboyant 24-year-old allrounder has put all the worry to rest. *Excerpts from an interaction...*

From the ODI World Cup to the IPL, how has the past six to seven months been for you?

Things have happened relatively quickly. Very lucky to be able to play in different environments around the world, experience different opportunities and soak it all in. I guess in every role I get, I just try to do what I can for the team. And luckily enough, I found a little bit of success, but I think it's still important to understand that I'm still very early in my career.

How were your preparations coming into IPL, knowing you would take Devon Conway's place?

In terms of my prep, we sort of just finished playing a Test match. So, it's quite hard to find that balance between playing a lot of white-ball cricket and red-ball cricket. I just adjust slightly between formats in terms of my intent, whereas my positions and the balls I'm trying to access are quite similar. I guess with Devon going down it's sort of big shoes to fill. He was the third or fourth top runscorer last year in the whole competition. So, it shows how special that guy is and if I can do half of what he does, it'll be really good for the team.

What are your goals for the tournament?

The tournament is long, and Devon will come back at some point. I guess for me it's not necessarily about runs or a strike rate target. It's driving the team forward, trying to contribute with as many wins as possible in little ways I can. But I think it's just about trying to get better day by day and learning from the guys around me. You always have the end goal of wanting to win a tournament, but the whole process of it is making sure I'm in my bubble and I'm staying consistent with my preparation, because that's the stuff I can control. I can't control the result, so I just let it be.

Did you get role clarity from CSK?

For a lot of my T20 career, I haven't always opened the batting or been in the top three. I've kind of been seven or six, especially for NZ. So, it is a different role. But I think the role clarity comes from just playing your game and I think that's important for all of us as a team. The freedom to go out and play your own game, not trying to be someone else, probably helps a lot in that role clarity.

Are you ready to bowl for CSK, have you been practising?

I'm always ready to bowl. I want to continue being a genuine allrounder for years to come in terms of helping the team because I feel like if you have someone in the top three who can bowl a little bit, it probably helps a bit. I just keep trying to work on my bowling, trying to be at it in the nets.

What kind of upskilling have you done for the T20 format?

It was more about how I could get better against playing spin and put a little bit more pressure on the bowlers. It was just like a development thing, being in the nets and hitting specific shots that I wanted to work on. It took a long time. I practised these shots for several years, and it was nice to get that in the middle. You have a nice wicket to play on and all of a sudden it all falls into place. It was just the volume of practising certain shots that I wanted to play.

What do you think of the CSK culture of treating the team like a family?

Accurate, it's like a family. It's more about players being able to be comfortable, players knowing their roles in a relaxed environment which makes everyone feel a bit more chill and doesn't feel like it's a hierarchy. Because you can always have a nice conversation with Flem (Stephen Fleming), (Michael) Hussey, Dhoni and Rutu (Ruturaj Gaikwad). It's all pretty chill, which helps me a lot. I can come in and just be myself in that environment. ■

LSG eye season's first win on home ground

Fazal Khan | TNN

Lucknow: After facing a setback in their opening game against Rajasthan Royals in Jaipur, Lucknow Super Giants (LSG) will aim to register their first victory in the ongoing season when they face Punjab Kings at the Ekana international cricket stadium on Saturday.

With zero points, LSG are at the bottom of the points table, having lost the only match that they played. Punjab Kings hold fifth position after winning one of their two matches. LSG will play their first home match of this IPL season.

Opening batter Quinton de Kock had faltered against Rajasthan Royals in his first match and LSG need some explosive batting from him in Saturday's match. Top-order batter Devdutt Padikkal failed to open his account against Rajasthan while Marcus Stoinis could not make his mark either. Barring KL Rahul and Nicholas Pooran, who scored 50 in their first match, LSG batters failed miserably in their first outing.

On the bowling front, LSG pacer Yash Thakur proved to be very expensive. In the absence of Mark Wood and David Willey, LSG's pace battery looks thin with Mohsin Khan, Naveen-ul-Haq and Yash Thakur expected to do all the heavy lifting.

As for the pitch, after the last IPL season, the square was relaid. After that there were good matches in the World Cup last year and the pitches performed well in the ICC ODI World Cup. In the current scenario, the wickets are likely to be batter friendly.

Punjab Kings, on the other hand, appear to be on a sound footing. Punjab won against Delhi in their inaugural match but lost their second match to Bengaluru.

For them, allrounder Sam Curran and skipper Shikhar Dhawan are in tremendous form. Their bowling unit has also done well in the first two games. They come into this match with confidence.

While Sam Curran has shown his prowess with the bat in the two matches, the left-arm seamer has been wayward with the ball. Lead pacer Kagiso Rabada will look for more support from Curran, Arshdeep Singh and Harshal Patel.

52 runs needed by KL Rahul (948 at 45.14 in 25 innings) to become the first Lucknow batter to complete 1,000 IPL runs. He remains the team's only batter to hit 2 tons — both against Mumbai in April 2022.

3.85 Harpreet Brar's economy rate while claiming three wickets at 9 runs apiece with a strike rate of 14 in two matches, the best by a bowler this season. In fact, he remains the only bowler to register an economy rate of less than 4.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

'NORTJE WILL TAKE TIME TO GET BETTER AFTER INJURY'

Jaipur: Delhi Capitals bowling coach James Hopes feels that the team's under-fire pace spearhead Anrich Nortje will get better with time, having recently made a comeback to competitive cricket after six months. Nortje was taken to the cleaners by Rajasthan Royals' Riyan Parag at the death as he went for 48 in his four overs.

Nortje had been out of cricket since September and came into IPL having played just three domestic T20 games earlier this month. He failed to nail the yorkers or bowl the hard lengths that he is known for. Hopes, a former Australia medium pacer, said, "It's the first time that Nortje has been at this level in a while. He had a fair time out of the game, but if you look at all the numbers, he is one of the premier death bowlers in the game. We trust that he is going to keep getting better."

Hopes also felt that just like bowling, the team's batting also came apart in the back-10 after a positive start. "With the bat, we started really well and then fell away," he said. PTI

Finally, Riyan Parag walks the talk

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Jaipur: When Riyan Parag raised his bat to celebrate his half-century after hitting a six off Delhi Capitals pacer Mukesh Kumar, it marked a moment of great personal triumph for the young batter.

Having struggled for the last couple of seasons despite dominating the domestic circuit, Riyan had a point to prove to those who were questioning his place in the Rajasthan Royals playing XI.

The 22-year-old had a forgettable last season as he managed to score just 78 runs (7, 20, 7, 5, 15*, 4, 20) in seven matches batting in the lower middle order. However, Riyan seems to be on a mission this year. He launched the 2024 IPL by slamming a crucial 43 runs during Royals' 20-run victory over Lucknow Super Giants in the first outing on March 24.

The No. 4 batter continued from where he had left last Sunday with an unbeaten 84 which helped RR to snatch a narrow 12-run win over Delhi. Interestingly, Riyan, the man of the match, almost missed the fixture because of an upset stomach. He was on a high dose of antibiotics and severe dehydration and fever made him an unsure starter.

He could hardly connect the ball during training on match eve and was cramping. "I've had to work very hard. For the last three days, I was in bed, sick. I just got up with painkillers and could manage today. I'm happy for myself," said Riyan at the post-match presentation.

RIYAN PARAG

Unlike the opening outing where he consolidated the solid start in the company of Sanju Samson, against DC, Riyan had to steady a rocking ship. Coming into bat with RR 30/2 in the sixth over, Riyan was kept quiet by DC bowlers early on in his innings. At one point, Riyan was on a run-a-ball 26.

The fact that RR ended up reaching the strong total of 185/5 — after struggling to 36/3 in eight overs — was only because Riyan changed gears in the death overs. An unbeaten 45-ball 84 not only justified his promotion to the all-important No. 4 slot but also gave the Assam youngster's career a strong boost.

"I know what my opinion is about myself. That does not change regardless of whether I get a zero or not. That's a lot to do with the type of season as well.

"I had a great domestic season and that helped. Someone in the top four must play the 20 overs. The wicket was keeping low and stopping. In the first game Sanju *bhaiya* (Samson) did it," he said.

Avesh Khan also praised the match-winning knock from Riyan. "It was a very important innings for us. The pitch was two-paced. Riyan hung in there and gave the innings a perfect finish," he said.

GALLERY

Am staying with Leverkusen, says Alonso

Leverkusen: Xabi Alonso will stay as coach of Bayer Leverkusen, ending speculation linking him with the soon-to-be vacant Liverpool and Bayern Munich jobs. "This is the right place for me to be, to develop as a coach," Alonso said.

Sindhu loses; Sikki-Sumeeth in semis of Spain Masters: India's PV Sindhu fought her heart out before losing 24-26 21-17 22-20 to Thailand's Supanida Katethong in the women's singles quarters of the Spain Masters Super 300 tournament in Madrid on Friday. Husband-wife duo of N Sikki Reddy and B Sumeeth notched up a 14-21 21-11 21-17 win over Indonesia's Rehan Kusharjanto and Lisa Ayu Kusumawati to enter the mixed doubles semis. AGENCIES

ACTION TODAY

BADMINTON: Spain Masters, Semis, 4.30 pm (Jiocinema); **CRICKET:** IPL, Lucknow vs Punjab, 7.30 pm (Star Sports, Jiocinema); Bangladesh vs Sri Lanka, 2nd Test, Day 1, 9.30 am (Fancode); **BASKETBALL:** NBA, 7.30 am (Jiocinema); **FOOTBALL:** ISL, Bengaluru FC vs Odisha, 5 pm; Jamshedpur vs Kerala, 7.30 pm (Jiocinema); ILeague, Real Kashmir vs NEROCA, 2 pm; Mohammedan SC vs Inter Kashi, 6.30 pm (Fancode, Eurosport); EPL, Chelsea vs Burnley; Tottenham vs Luton; Everton vs Bournemouth; Nottingham Forest vs Crystal Palace, 8.30 pm; Aston Villa vs Wolves, 11 pm; Brentford vs Man United, 1.30 am Sunday (Star Sports); German League, Bayern Munich vs Borussia Dortmund, 11 pm (Sony Sports); **GOLF:** Indian Open, 1 pm (Eurosport, Fancode)

Manassero stays in the mix

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Gurugram: If you think too far ahead on this golf course, you can make up a story that can go any way." That's Matteo Manassero for you. The youngest winner on the European Tour won three titles in his teenage years; the fourth came after he blew the candles on his 20th birthday. But the icing soon became sour for the gifted golfer who slipped on the spiral staircase.

Climbing up again was quite a task, steps full of self-doubt, but the present is all that matters.

The overnight co-leader at the Hero Indian Open found himself in third place after a rollercoaster round of 4-under 68 but he is still hanging on to the coattails of Japan's Keita Nakajima, who carded his second consecutive 65.

While conditions are softer, wind low and the players getting better at understanding the DLF G&CC course, according to Matteo, "it's two bad tee shots and you can lose four shots in 20 minutes".

Nakajima was at one point six ahead on the leaderboard, now down to a manageable two in front of France's Romain Langasque who took route 66 again. "Two days to go is so long, so so long," emphasized the Italian. "On this course, a lot of things can happen."

All of 30 now, Manassero's mental age must be much more because of his journey. "Golf is a bit of guesswork so I'm just happy I played two good rounds of golf. I don't really make many plans. I just want the attitude to be good."

INDIAN OPEN

Getty Images

Veer Ahlawat is the highest-placed Indian at 6th spot after Day 2. He shot a 6-under 66 for a 9-under total

After losing his card at the end of 2018, and making only one cut in 2019 on conditional status, the disillusioned golfer briefly stepped away from the game only to charter his course slowly back.

Unlike other golfers who struggled with loneliness and disease during the Covid-19 pandemic, Manassero found the time to reset and relax at his home in picturesque Lake Garda. "Honestly, I had a really good time during Covid. It's not the right thing to say because people struggled. But I was with my girlfriend Francesca, who is my wife now, and dog Milka and we were together, no stress, I had time to reflect."

He credits his mental coach Alessandra Averna, a former pro herself, for playing a big part in his revival. "We have connected really well. The player must be open to address the tough things he faces. Now we talk once a week and I take it as something that needs to be done consistently."

It wasn't only Alessandra who entered his coterie. "I changed my whole team. I felt I needed to rebuild something to last, with a structure. It was slow progress because it took me four-and-a-half years to get back on Tour," said Manassero, who has former Ryder Cup player Soren Hansen as his coach now.

Two European Challenge Tour wins last year were the stepping stones to real success.

March 10, 2024 was the day he climbed to the top again — a fifth European Tour victory after a gap of 11 years — and it was pure joy and relief when he found paradise at Edenvale, South Africa. "Although it wasn't my biggest win as in the importance of the event, for me it was the one with the more emotional value because there have been a lot of bad times," he glanced back to the near past.

After an 81, a round of 62

Norwegian Espen Kofstad broke the course record by two shots, carding a 10-under 62. He shot a 9-over 81 in the first round.

2nd round scores: 130 (14-under)- Keita Nakajima (Jpn) 65-65; 132-Romain Langasque (Fra) 66-66; 133-Matteo Manassero (Ita) 65-68; 134-Jeong weon Ko (Fra) 67-67, Joost Luiten 65 and -3 in 15 holes; 135-Veer Ahlawat 69-66. (46 players yet to finish as play was suspended due to lightning; Cut projected: 1-under.)

Women footballers accuse AIFF ex co member of assaulting them physically

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Panaji: Two women footballers of Khad FC have complained that Deepak Sharma, executive committee member of the All India Football Federation (AIFF), physically assaulted them in the hotel room during the ongoing Indian Women's League (IWL) 2 in Goa. The two players complained to the AIFF's competitions committee on Friday. The assault is reported to have happened on Thursday night.

"Yesterday (Thursday), as the dinner was over, we went to our rooms to boil eggs. Due to this reason, Deepak Sharma got offended and stormed into our room. He slapped us, assaulted us physically," the two players wrote in their complaint, backed by three witnesses. The Himachal Pradesh-based club is in Goa to take part in IWL 2. Sharma is general secretary of the Himachal Pradesh Football Association and deputy chairman of the AIFF's competitions committee.

The players said the senior official was always in an "inebriated (drunken) state" and carried alcohol with him when the team travelled from Himachal to Delhi before the league. "He was drinking in front of us," the players complained. The players said they were scared for their lives. This prompted the Goa Football Association (GFA) to act. GFA officials went to the team hotel where the team manager provided a written assurance, guaranteeing the safety of the players.

"I take responsibility for all the girls and will drop the players safely at their homes. Nothing will go wrong," manager Nanalita Sharma told GFA. Late on Friday night, GFA submitted a written intimation to the Mapusa police, informing them that "some girls were assaulted by Deepak Sharma, one of the accompanying members of the team, who was allegedly in an inebriated condition."

AIFF officials confirmed receipt of the complaint and said it has already been sent to its safety and safeguarding officer for necessary action.

"I have just seen the complaint copy and am rushing to see the team at the hotel. Such things cannot be tolerated. The AIFF will deal with this accordingly," said Valanka Alemao, chairperson of the AIFF women's football committee.

Five teams are in Goa to take part in IWL 2 with the concluding matches being scheduled for Saturday. Khad have lost all three games so far and will play their final game against City Bahadurgarh FC, who will be forced to field just eight players since 12 of them suddenly left to take part in the Haryana State Senior Women's Championship. FC Tuem (Goa) and SAG Football Academy (Gujarat) have both qualified for the next stage.

Missing clause puts Stimac exit on hold

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New Delhi: Has a missing clause in Igor Stimac's new contract earned him an unlikely reprieve from the pink slip that the All India Football Federation (AIFF) had all but decided to hand him after their senior committee meeting on Friday?

Apparently missing from Stimac's extension contract, which he signed on Oct 3, 2023 up until 2026, is the sub-clause 9.1 under Termination and related aspects, which essentially stated that the coach would be reimbursed up to three months as compensation in the event of a termination.

"As per the earlier contract, we knew we would be required to pay him Rs 25 lakh per month for the three months," an AIFF official told **TOI**. "Sacking him now can prove very costly for the federation, we could even be required to pay him his entire salary till 2026 (amounting to Rs 6 crore). We want to avoid this, cash-strapped already as we are. And this also gives him the opportunity to approach Fifa, which is something the AIFF would want to avoid," he added.

The clause in the earlier contract, drawn up by the previous regime under Praful Patel states: "If the AIFF terminates this Agreement for any reason or circumstance ... then it may do so by giving written notice of at least 3 (three) months to the Head Coach. If the AIFF terminates this agreement for any reason or circumstance ... it shall be required to pay the Head Coach an amount equal to the balance monthly fees or three months' salary (whichever amount is larger) as compensation."

UNDER FIRE: Igor Stimac

"We did not know that this was missing in the extension contract. It is usually regular practice that it exists in the contract but we are not aware how this was omitted," the official said. Stimac's contract extension was signed in Oct 2023 when Shaji Prabhakaran was the AIFF secretary general. It was further approved by the core committee. This peculiar discovery on Friday has probably led to the AIFF hastily constituting a five-member committee to hold discussions with the India head coach and seek further clarification on the matter.

Stimac has reportedly returned to Zagreb and with the AIFF realizing that time is of essence, the committee will have to arrive at a decision — or a middle ground — regarding an amicable parting with the Croatian coach, the federation is hoping, by next week.

Seeking a quick window to set up a meeting with the coach, the AIFF is banking on recent comments by Stimac in the media ahead of the home fixture against Afghanistan in Guwahati on Mar 26, 2023, that he would relinquish the India charge if he failed to guide the team to an unprecedented third round of the 2026 World Cup Asian qualifers. "We need to get a sense of what he wants too. Settling this issue amicably is best for both sides.

Asked whether the final decision to sack Stimac was more or less taken at Friday's meeting, the AIFF insider confirmed that it was all but done till they discovered the missing clause. "Once the Technical Committee had recommended that he (and two others from his core team) should be replaced, it was a done decision. Only the legal and financial details remained to be ironed out, as is the normal practice in such cases," he said.

Veer has the game and talent to do well

Shiv Kapur

Gurugram: I needed a fast start and instead I had a rough one with an early triple bogey on the third. Thereafter I shot three under over the remaining 15 holes, but it was not enough.

So, though the second round is yet to be completed, for me the Hero Indian Open 2024, has very likely ended early. A weekend off is a nightmare for any professional and even more for me since it is my National Open and an event I love so much. Yet, if you ask me about my game, I will say I am improving slowly but steadily after a series of injuries. I had my chances but I was not able to take them.

But there was a lot of good news for the Indian camp, as Veer Ahlawat shot a superb 66 after a first round 69.

I know Veer well and played with him a bit on the Asian Tour. I think he has the game and talent to do well. Hopefully Aman Raj, who has had a great domestic season, can capitalise on a good start and contend over the weekend as well. It was also heartening to see Manu Gandas do well.

Finally, a word about my friend, Matteo Manassero, who has been trending well. He could be the man to watch out along with Nakajima and Langasque.

I may not be in the middle of the action over the weekend, but I will be rooting for the Indian boys. The weekend promises to be exciting for the fans.

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After 9 Wins On The Trot For Home Teams In 2024 IPL, Kolkata Knight Riders Stem The Tide With 7-Wicket Win Over RCB In Bengaluru

Chetan Shivakumar

NO STOPPING HIM: Sunil Narine smashes one to the fence during his quickfire 47-run innings

85-0 Runs by KKR in the first 6 overs are the most in Powerplay in this IPL, eclipsing the 81-1 by SRH vs MI.

SCOREBOARD

RCB: V Kohli 83 not out, F du Plessis c Starc b Rana 8, C Green b Russell 33, G Maxwell c Singh b Narine 28, R Patidar c Singh b Russell 3, A Rawat c Salt b Rana 3, D Karthik run out 20; **Extras:** (b 1, w 3) 4; **Total: In 20 overs (RR: 9.10) 182/6; FoW:** 1-17, 2-82, 3-124, 4-144, 5-151, 6-182; **Bowling:** Starc 4-0-47-0, Rana 4-0-39-2, Roy 2-0-6-0, Narine 4-0-40-1, Russell 4-0-29-2, Varun 2-0-20-0.

KKR: P Salt c Green b Vyshak 30, S Narine b Dagar 47, V Iyer c Kohli b Dayal 50, S Iyer 39 not out, R Singh 5 not out; **Extras:** (lb 7, w 8) 15; **Total: In 16.5 overs (RR: 11.04) 186/3; FoW:** 1-86, 2-92, 3-167; **Bowling:** Siraj 3-0-46-0, Dayal 4-0-46-1, Joseph 2-0-34-0, Dagar 2.5-0-23-1, Vyshak 4-0-23-1, Green 1-0-7-0.

Result: KKR won by 7 wickets.

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Bengaluru: The last time Royal Challengers Bengaluru safeguarded their citadel against Kolkata Knight Riders, they still had Bangalore in their name. Virat Kohli and Gautam Gambhir were home and away skippers. The likes of Chris Gayle, AB de Villiers and Robin Uthappa were in their prime T20 form.

Many superstars from that rain-affected match in 2015 have since turned commentators and were probably analysing the game from studios as the Knight Riders thumped the home team in a brutal display of attacking cricket to stretch their dominance at the M Chinnaswamy stadium. Chasing RCB's 182/6, KKR cruised to a seven-wicket win with 19 balls to spare.

RCB, paid a heavy price for a less-than-ordinary bowling performance in the Powerplay, which ensured the opening pair of Phil Salt (30) and Sunil Narine (47; 22b; 2x4; 5x6) blazed to 85/0 in six overs, their second highest score during the duration.

Salt started the assault, showing disdain towards Mohammed Siraj. In the first over he whacked Siraj over midwicket for six and followed it up with a delectable dispatch to the covers. The Englishman wasn't done yet as he upped his muscular display with a six over long-on. The 18-run opening over was only the trailer. Venkatesh Iyer (50, 30b, 3x4; 4x6) tore into the RCB attack and ensured near pin-drop silence in the stadium. Such was KKR top-order's dominance that they did not need their showstopper Andre Russell to pad up.

Fittingly, skipper Shreyas Iyer (39; 24b; 2x4; 2x6) signalled the victory with a maximum.

THE KOHLI SHOW

Success, they say, is peace of mind, a result of self-satisfaction. RCB opener Kohli seems to be in that zone. There aren't many milestones left for Kohli to chase. Nothing to prove to anybody either. Yet, with critics around him and a T20 World Cup berth at stake, Kohli cut out the noise and deleted the drama and focused on his batting. The man, who has never been shy of playing to the gallery, barely raised his bat as spectators celebrated his half-century and later a stroke-filled unbeaten 59-ball 82 (4x4; 4x6).

Kohli was well on his way to a well-deserved century but his innings was slowed down by some quick wickets at the other end.

Following the dismissal of skipper Faf du Plessis, Cameron Green (33; 21b) joined forces with Kohli.

500 Sunil Narine has become the fourth player after Kieron Pollard (660), Dwayne Bravo (573) and Shoaib Malik (542) to appear in 500 or more matches in Twenty20.

944 Run-aggregate (avg 39.33) in 30 innings registered by Virat Kohli to become the fourth batter after David Warner (1075), Rohit Sharma (1040) and Shikhar Dhawan (907) to complete 900 runs or more vs Kolkata in IPL.

241 Virat Kohli's tally of sixes in 232 innings for RCB is a record by any batter for a particular team in the IPL, eclipsing the 239 in 84 innings by Chris Gayle for RCB.

–Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Hardik needs to block out the noise: Smith

Times News Network

AFP

DESPONDENT: Hardik Pandya has been booed by spectators in Ahmedabad and Hyderabad

New Delhi: For With Mumbai Indians beginning the IPL season with bak-to-back losses, new captain Hardik Pandya is surely feeling the pressure, more so with a number of fans turning against him. It's important for the franchise that the captain plays and leads well for them to succeed. In this scenario, former Australia captain Steven Smith's advice to Hardik is to simply "block out" the boos and the abuse he has been copping from fans at the IPL so far.

"I'd try and just say, to block it out, it's all irrelevant," Smith said in ESPNcricinfo's TimeOut show. "No one outside knows what you are going through. No one (from outside) is in that change room," he said, adding he had treated the heckling he had experienced as "white noise".

Smith, in the report, felt that Hardik might have been surprised at the reception because it is not often that India's top players are booed by fans. "It doesn't bother me. I don't care. I don't pay any attention," Smith said. "You know it's all white noise, but certainly players do hear things and everyone's entitled to their own emotions and how they respond to those. So is it affecting him? Maybe. It's possible. He probably hasn't experienced that before in, in any walk of life. So it's natural, I suppose, and particularly being in India and a star Indian player, to be in that position where some fans are booing you, it's certainly something he wouldn't have experienced."

Smith said that while he could understand the Ahmedabad crowd coming down heavily on Hardik as he left Titans to rejoin Mumbai Indians. However, he failed to get the "context" of why fans in Hyderabad joined in.

"Hardik is in the middle of a challenging time, losing the first two games. It's a big season for him. He's filling big shoes (of Rohit Sharma). So he's under a little bit of pressure at the moment and it'll be interesting to see what the reception's like in their first home game at Wankhede in a few days time," Smith said.

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AIFF wants men's national coach Igor Stimac out, but balks at cost of it: ₹6crore, with no termination clause in his contract, **P 22**

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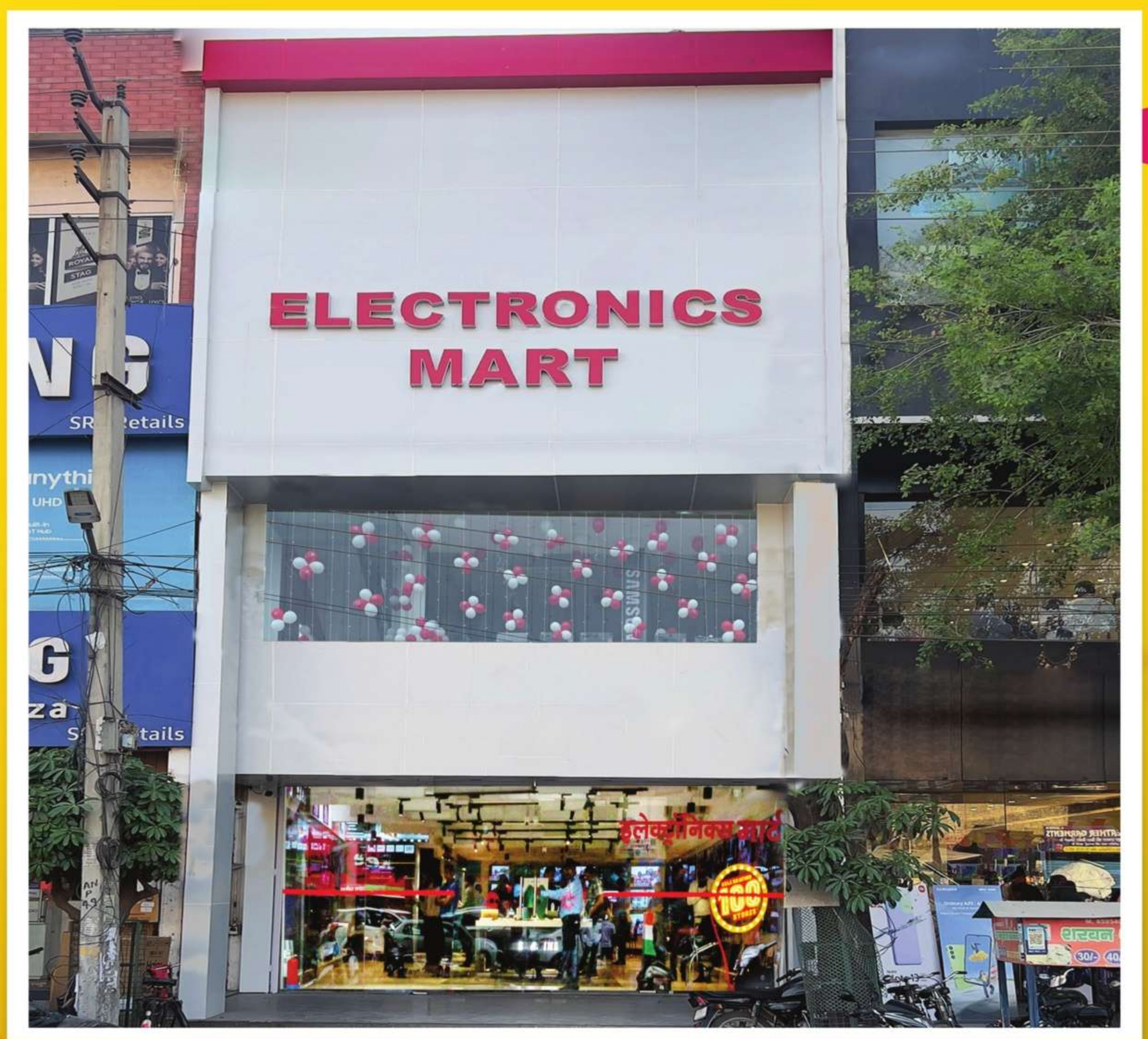

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