



Navy chief Admiral R Hari Kumar says the force has opened all its branches & all ranks to women. 'They can be submariners, aviators or marine commandos'

Acknowledging India's decision to ramp up Russian oil purchases in middle of Ukraine war, Russian foreign minister Sergey Lavrov says Jaishankar asked the West to 'mind their own business' in a show of 'national dignity'

Sports ministry revokes suspension imposed on Paralympic Committee of India. Devendra Jhajharia, who won gold in 2004 Athens and 2016 Rio Paralympics in javelin throw, is set to be elected president, P 22

Twitter's former leadership team, including ex-CEO Parag Agrawal & chief legal officer Vijaya Gadde, sues platform's owner Elon Musk, saying he fired them without reason and owes them severance payments worth \$128m, Inside jacket



Global factors drive gold to record high

Gold rose to an all-time high of Rs 65,150 per 10g Tuesday in anticipation of US Federal Reserve cutting rates in June. The surge in the domestic market came after international prices closed at an all-time high of over \$2114 per ounce on Monday night. The price in India marked a hefty jump of Rs 800 per 10g intraday. Insiders pointed to a combination of factors, including US Fed rate cuts, ongoing tension in Middle East, property crisis in China and falling bond yields. **P 19**

RBI bars JM Fin arm from lending against shares

RBI on Tuesday barred JM Financial Products from extending loans against shares, including financing subscriptions to IPOs of shares and debentures, with immediate effect over irregularities and corporate governance issues. JM Financial Group, however, denied that there have been any violations. RBI's action comes just a day after it barred HFL Finance from offering gold loans. **P 19**

State govt nod for revision of 114 textbooks

The state govt has approved revised textbooks for Kannada I language (classes 1 to 10), Kannada III language (classes 9 and 10), and social science (classes 6 to 10) from the academic year 2024-25, fulfilling its poll promise. This follows controversies over alleged saffronization in previous textbook revisions. Govt has approved the adoption, printing and distribution of 114 revised textbooks. **P 3**

Kids told to get own answer scripts

The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has informed schools that students will have to carry their own answer scripts for the common assessments of classes 5, 8 and 9. The common assessments are scheduled from March 11 to 18. **P 7**

Gold bars hidden in plane lavatory roof

Smugglers strung gold bars weighing 4.5kg in the wiring of an Abu Dhabi-Chennai IndiGo aircraft Thursday night by accessing the line through the lavatory roof. The bars were secured with a number lock. It was slated to fly to Hyderabad soon after as a domestic flight. **P 9**

Man falls off train, lands on car, dies

A man from Vellore travelling on a Chennai-Bangalore train died of head injuries after suddenly falling through the door and landing on a car about 40ft below near Windsor Manor around 1.30pm Tuesday. He was declared brought dead at a hospital. **P 2**

22 yrs, 69 funerals later, wedding at Gulbarg Society

From the soul-crushing gloom of 69 funerals to the gaiety of a pre-wedding celebration, it's taken 22 years of healing and waiting for Ahmedabad's Gulbarg Society to embrace the catharsis of new beginnings. Bride Misbah Mansuri wasn't born when the 2002 post-Godhra violence heaped tragedy on this residential block in Chamanpura, reports Saeed Khan. Her extended family lost 19 members in the massacre. Over two decades later, the 19-year-old's father chose the still-desolate neighbourhood and their house at the society's entrance to organise a pre-wedding celebration before the *nikah* in MP. **P 9**

HC acquits Saibaba, others, says no proof of Maoist links

'No Valid Sanction To Invoke UAPA'

Vaihbhav.Ganjapure @timesgroup.com

Nagpur: Bombay high court's Nagpur bench Tuesday acquitted former DU professor GN Saibaba and five others of waging war against the country by aiding and abetting Maoist activity, seven years after a sessions court in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli sentenced him to life imprisonment. This is his second acquittal in the UAPA case in nearly 15 months after the previous verdict by another HC bench was stayed and subsequently overturned by Supreme Court. Like it did earlier, Maharashtra immediately filed a special leave petition in SC for a stay.

Mining Act rules out state tax on minerals: Salve

New Delhi: Mining industry and Tata Group Tuesday opposed in SC the demand made by mineral-rich states that they be allowed to levy tax besides royalty on mineral rights, arguing that minerals being national assets are required to be regulated by the Union govt through Parliament-enacted law to protect inter-generational equity and ensure uniform economic benefits to all. Arguing for a mining association from mineral-rich eastern zone and certain Tata Group companies before a nine-judge bench, lawyer Harish Salve said Mines and Mineral (Development and Regulation) Act, 1957 enacted by Parliament is a complete code relating to mineral rights, which ousts states' jurisdiction to impose tax besides royalty on mineral rights. **TNN**

Royalty as tax, P 10

ACQUITTED IN 2022 AS WELL ON SAME GROUNDS

May 9, 2014 | Gadchiroli police arrest DU prof G N Saibaba from Delhi after 2 co-accused who had been picked up provided info against him. Confined to wheelchair after a polio attack in childhood, he has been in Nagpur Central Jail since

temporary bail to Saibaba till Dec 30 on health grounds

March 3, 2017 | Sessions court convicts Saibaba & others under UAPA, IPC. He's sentenced to life term. One sentenced to 10 years in jail

March 29 | Saibaba, others appeal against conviction & sentence

Oct 14, 2022 | HC Nagpur bench acquits Saibaba & others, says trial proceedings void in absence of valid sanction under UAPA, cites lack of evidence

Oct 15 | SC suspends verdict, sends case back to HC in Apr 2023

March 5, 2024 | HC again acquits all 6 accused, says prosecution vitiated due to invalid sanction. seizure of incriminating material from Saibaba's residence not established, failed to prove electronic evidence

WHAT NEXT?

> All six likely to be released once they pay ₹50,000 surety each at Gadchiroli court and the latter gives go-ahead

> Maharashtra govt has approached SC against the acquittal. Its plea to delay implementation rejected

The division bench of Justices Vinay Joshi and Valmiki Meneses cited technical grounds for the acquittal of all six, one of whom is dead. As in the Oct 2022 acquittal, the bench ruled the prosecution failed to prove beyond doubt charges against 57-year-old Saibaba and his co-accused.

'Failure of justice', P 10

Justice after 10 yrs of struggle, says wife

Thanking lawyers who have been working "tirelessly", GN Saibaba's wife Vasantha said, "After 10 long years of struggle, justice has been delivered. I only hope there are no future obstacles to his very well-deserved freedom." Saibaba, who taught English at Ram Lal Anand College,

was dismissed over allegations of links to Maoists. Narendra Pandey, history professor and Saibaba's one-time colleague, said, "Saibaba was an excellent professor with a literary sensibility, a spokesperson for the downtrodden outside classroom, of course." **P 10**

Top court quashes ED summons to DKS in money laundering case

New Delhi: Supreme Court on Tuesday quashed the ED's summons under PMLA to Karnataka deputy CM DK Shivakumar, which was issued shortly after an income tax raid in 2017 allegedly led to the seizure of Rs 7 crore unaccounted cash from the Congress leader and his aide's premises. The summons under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act was issued by the ED taking conspiracy, punishable under Section 120B (conspiracy to commit an offence), to be a standalone predicate offence. Shivkumar's discharge plea was rejected by a Bengaluru special court and the Karnataka high court, which had ruled that conspiracy was a standalone predicate offence and upheld the summons. The Congress leader had moved the SC and pleaded

I-T RAID IN 2017

> ED summons issued after a raid in 2017 that led to seizure of ₹7 crore unaccounted cash

> PMLA summons issued taking conspiracy to be a standalone predicate offence

> DKS' discharge plea rejected by K'taka HC

> SC says reasons assigned by HC can't be sustained, quashes summons

that in absence of any conspiracy for commission of any 'scheduled offence', no 'proceeds of crime' as defined in Section 2(u) of PMLA can be said to exist. Consequently, Section 3 of PMLA cannot apply, he had said. **TNN**

Legislative intent, P 14

All accused held, Spanish couple head for Nepal

The Spanish biker, who alleged she was gang-raped by seven people in Dumka, continued her trip to Nepal along with her husband even as five more people were arrested Tuesday, reports Rajesh Kumar Pandey. Police escorted the couple to Bihar border. The woman had named seven men in her FIR; police said the eighth helped them. She said she would continue to travel and that "the common Indian" was not to blame for the crime. **P 10**

WATER CRISIS REACHES CM's DOORSTEP



PVT TANKERS PROTEST: CM Siddaramaiah Tuesday experienced firsthand the water scarcity gripping Bengaluru, as his home office 'Krishna' ran out of water, prompting officials to call a BWSSB tanker. Scores of private tankers went off the roads to protest seizure of tankers by the transport department for not having registered with BIMP. The wildcat strike impacted hundreds of apartment complexes | **P 2**

Indian killed in Israel; wasn't allowed to move to safe zone, says dad

CG.Sankar@timesgroup.com

Kollam: On Monday morning, when Pat Nibin Maxwell phoned his family at home in Kollam, he was his usual exuberant self. But his father detected an unusual undercurrent of anxiety. Pat Nibin (31), who was calling from Galilee, northern Israel, chatted with his seven-month-pregnant wife Seyona, joked with his five-year-old daughter, Amiya, and then spoke to his father, admitting that the chicken farm at Margalioth, a moshav (collective agricultural community) where he worked, was no longer safe. Hours later Pat Nibin was dead, killed in a cross-border anti-tank missile attack by the Lebanese Shia militant group Hezbollah. Seven others, including two other Keralites, Joseph George



Pat Nibin Maxwell leaves behind his 5-year-old daughter and a seven-month-pregnant wife

(from Vazathope) and Paul Melvin (from Vagamon), were injured in the attack. Pat Nibin's father, Pathrose Maxwell, revealed there had been a similar cross-border attack two weeks ago in the same locality and he had advised his son to move to a safer zone. "However, he could not as he did not get consent from his sponsor," Pathrose told TOI.

Moved 2 mths ago, P 14

Google will reinstate apps temporarily

Govt has mediated between Google and homegrown app developers over a tussle on commissions charged for in-app payments, reports Pankaj Doval. The tech giant has agreed to reinstate all Indian apps that it had abruptly delisted from its Play Store on Friday. While communications and IT minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said the two sides will now engage to thrash out a long-term solution, Google made clear that it was "temporarily reinstating the apps" as appeals were pending in the Supreme Court. "Google has agreed to re-list the apps with the same status as on Friday, March 1," Vaishnaw said Tuesday, a day after he and MoS Rajeesh Chandrasekhar met the aggrieved Indian app community to sort out the matter. **P 19**

EDIT: Holes In Tech Wall

China boosts def budget 7% to \$230bn, more than thrice India's outlay

Rajat.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: China Tuesday hiked its annual defence budget by 7.2% to cross \$230 billion despite a distinct slowdown in its economic growth, which is more than three times India's military expenditure and comes amid Beijing's fresh refusal to de-

China sets 'tough' growth target of 5%, Inside jacket

escalate heightened tensions along the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC). The main driver behind China's rapid modernisation of its two-million-strong armed forces is to deter the US — which had a \$877 billion defence budget last year — from interfering in its neighbourhood, especially in Taiwan which it considers a breakaway province. India, however, has huge reasons to be concerned. China's actual military expenditure is much more than its declared defence budget.

Deploying troops, P 14

Beijing report drops mention of 'peaceful Taiwan reunification'

China officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released budget figures, dropping the mention of 'peaceful reunification' in a govt report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress Tuesday. Tensions have risen sharply in recent years over Taiwan as regional military deployments rise. **Inside jacket**

vince. India, however, has huge reasons to be concerned. China's actual military expenditure is much more than its declared defence budget.

Deploying troops, P 14

No Indian troops in Maldives even in civvies: Muizzu

Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has said that no Indian military personnel will remain in the country after May 10, be it in uniform or civilian clothing, Maldives-based The Edition reported.

"That these people (Indian military) are not departing, that they are returning after changing their uniforms into civilian clothing. We must not indulge such thoughts that instill doubts in our hearts & spread lies," Muizzu said as reported by The Edition.

Meanwhile, China on Tuesday vowed to work with the Maldives to build a comprehensive strategic cooperative partnership with the island nation and underlined that normal cooperation between the two does not 'target' any third party and will not be disrupted.

Pro-Pak slogan gaffe leads to Mandya BJP worker's arrest

Mandya: There's many a slip between the cup and the lip, but hardly any 'tween the cop and the lip', as this BJP worker realised the hard way! Worse still, not in his wildest dreams could he have imagined that mixing up the words 'zindabad' (long live) and 'murdabad' (death to) would return to haunt him — 15 months later. On Tuesday, Mandya police arrested Danayakapura Ravi, 34, after a complaint was filed against him by Congress worker Kannabadi Kumar, saying the former had shouted "Pakistan Zindabad" during a protest in Dec 2022. A hilarious background story has been shared by BJP Mandya district chief Indresh NS

VIRAL SLIP-UP

> BJP organised a protest in Dec 2022 to protest comments against PM Modi

> During the protest, Ravi inadvertently shouted 'Pakistan Zindabad', instead of 'Pakistan Murdabad'

> Video of Ravi shouting zindabad even as a person attempts to cover his mouth goes viral after his arrest

on Ravi's arrest. On Dec 22, 2022, BJP had organised a protest to condemn then Pakistan foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's derogatory comments against PM Modi. **TNN**

1 more named in FIR, P 4

FB, Insta, Google face outage in several nations

Users of Meta's Facebook, Instagram, Threads and Messenger platforms are experiencing login issues in what appears to be a wide-spread outage, including in India. London-based internet monitoring firm NetBlocks said on X that four Meta platforms are "currently experiencing outages related to login sessions in multiple countries". But the firm said there was no sign of "country-level internet disruptions or filtering". According to outage tracker platform Down Detector, the outage problem across Google and Meta was reported around 9 pm IST, reports PTI. **Inside jacket**

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Water to flow into parched B'luru from adjoining towns via tankers

Govt Will Ensure Supply To City At Any Cost: DKS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: With water crisis across the city worsening by the day, deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar Tuesday assured Bengalureans that the govt would resolve the issue by ensuring sufficient supply of water.

"We'll supply water to Bengaluru at any cost," Shivakumar, who is also minister for water resources, said after taking part in a meeting on drought and water crisis. Admitting that the situation was alarming, he said, "We're facing a severe water crisis in Bengaluru. But no matter what it takes, we'll supply water to the city."

The govt has ordered supply of water in huge tankers to Bengaluru from adjoining towns such as Ramanagara, Hoskote, Magadi, and Channarayana. "The CM and the revenue and RDPR ministers, along with others, discussed the issue. We've directed officials to use water sources (borewells) within a 15-km radius of Bengaluru to supply water to the city. They will ferry water to Bengaluru city from Ramanagara, Magadi, Channarayana and Hoskote," Shivakumar explained.

Recalling the padyatra he had led from Mokedatu two years ago, the Congress leader said, "We



QUENCHING THIRST: Pushed to the brink, a slum dweller and his daughter collect drinking water from a leaking pipe

had conceptualized the Mokedatu project with the sole intention of securing water for Bengaluru. Despite our repeated pleas to approve the project, the Centre hasn't cleared it. The Centre should realise the importance of it and approve it at the earliest."

Tankers from adjoining dists Referring to surging water tanker prices, the deputy CM pointed

out, "While a few operators are offering tankers at Rs 600 per trip, some others are charging Rs 3,000. To regulate the tanker operations, we've directed all the operators to register with the BBMP. After their registration, we'll ensure a system is in place and will decide on the tanker tariff depending on the distance from source."

Referring to TOI's report that the crackdown on water tankers

WATER WOES AT CM'S HOME-OFFICE

Chief minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday got a taste of the water scarcity dogging Bengalureans. As he was taking stock of the crisis across Karnataka from his home-office 'Krishna' on Kumarakrupa Road in Bengaluru, the office ran out of water!

Panicked officials had no alternative but to summon a tanker from Bangalore Water Supply and Sewerage Board (BWSSB) and fill up the tanks.

Holding a video-conference with all deputy commissioners and chief executive officers of zilla panchayats, the CM was reviewing the drought scenario and severe scarcity of potable water. As the home-office ran out of water even as the CM and his cabinet colleagues were around, officials dialled the BWSSB central division and summoned a tanker. Minutes later, a BWSSB tanker with a capacity of more than 6,000 litres arrived at Krishna. While Siddaramaiah and his colleagues didn't comment on the issue, BWSSB engineers clarified that water was supplied in tankers following a disruption in supply. "The CM's home-office has a dedicated pipeline for supply of water. However, there was a leakage and we were repairing it. Because of this, there was disruption in water supply on Monday and Tuesday. We've plugged the leakage and resumed supply of water through pipeline," a BWSSB engineer told TOI.

— Niranjan Kaggere

by RTOs and BWSSB had deprived large apartment societies and gated communities of crucial water supply, Shivakumar said, "We (govt) will help everyone. We'll supply water to apartment societies as well. Be it apartment dwellers or slum dwellers, it is our duty to provide all with potable water."

TOI had reported about the crackdown on tankers scheduled to deliver water to apartment societies and the impounding of 14 tankers in its March 5 edition.

RWAs mull steps like disposable cutlery, fines

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Facing their worst potable water crisis, resident welfare associations across the city have begun rationing water in their localities and have issued a blanket ban on vehicle washing by residents and swimming pool activities with immediate effect.

Going further, a prominent residential enclave in south Bengaluru has proposed to its residents to think of using disposable cutlery and wet wipes for washing hands and face.

Days after communicating to its residents about the disruption of water supply following the crackdown on water tankers by RTO and BWSSB officials, Presti-

ge Falcon City (PFC) Apartments on Kanakapura Road has suggested that if the situation worsens, they should consider using disposable items to avoid water wastage.

Vasanth Kumar, president of the PFC RWA, told TOI that the idea is to reduce the usage of water as much as they can. "We used to source water through private tankers. But as there is scarcity even in tanker services, we're looking for alter-

OFFSIDE

IT'S 3-4 LITRES! WE'VE ROUNDED IT UP FOR OBVIOUS REASONS!



natives. We're aware that there is not enough water at the reservoir (KRS) and we must understand the scenario. I've only suggested using disposable plates, cutlery, wet wipes as this will reduce the usage of water and help us sail through the situation," he said. "Our tenants and residents are coming

to terms with the situation, we're only mentally preparing for them in case the situation turns worse. Our MP DK Suresh has assured us that the scarcity will be resolved

soon. We're eagerly looking forward to it. Nevertheless, the current situation is not alarming as the availability and supply is under control because of our water-saving initiatives."

Similarly, yet another RWA of a prominent gated community in Whitefield has deployed security personnel to monitor the misuse of water by its residents. With no supply of water from BWSSB over the past few days, the RWA is reliant on borewells and they could go dry at any moment. "If the residents don't reduce their water consumption by 20%, such households will be charged an additional Rs 5,000," the RWA is said to have informed residents in its internal message.

WATER ISSUE IN YOUR WARD?

Call these officers



The BBMP and BWSSB have appointed a nodal officer at their head office and 35 wards facing water problems. The name of ward, BBMP/BWSSB asst engineers and their mobile numbers have been released for residents:

BBMP nodal officer: Dharanendra Kumar (918105327337)
Doddabidarakalli & Lingadheeranahalli: Chikkaguli Gowda GJ (9480688040), Ganesh N (98454440680)
Herohalli: Pradeep G (9480688130), Harsha (9986555502)
Ullal: Pradeep G (9480688130), Chandan MN (6361797630)
Hemmigepura: Thimmiah V (9480688198), Shivnand Nimbal/Santhosh SM (8050923938/8139905334)
Uttarahalli & Subramanyapura: Yuva Kumar (9480688184), Dinesh (9845444109)
Vasanthapura: Yuva Kumar (9480688184), Preethi J (9845444034)
Konanakunte, Anjanapura, Gottigere: Shilpa (9480688195), Santhosh SM (8139905334)
Kalena Agrahara: Prem Kumar (9480688192), Santhosh SM (8139905334)
Begur: Prem Kumar (9480688192), S Rajesh (9148793837)
Naganathapura & Kudlu: Yuva Kumar (9480688191), Kamruddin (9449431356)
Chelkere, Horamavu & Kalkere: Ramesh (9739838297), Manjunatha (9590802503)
Kadugodi: Jagadeesh M (9482759492), Naveen S (9535544974)
Hoodi: Venkatesh (9448771709), Naveen S (9535544974)
Byrathi: Jagadeesh M (9482759492), Manjunatha (9590802503)
AECs Layout: Srikanth (9845013283), Naveen S (9535544974)
Whitefield: Venkatesh (9448771709), Naveen S (9535544974)
Varthur & Munnekolala: Venkatesh N (9148446876), Naveen S (9535544974)
Marathahalli: Jagadeesh M (9482759492), Naveen S (9535544974)
Bellandur: Jagadeesh M (9482759492), Gajana Akkamaradi (9845444056)
Kammagondanahalli: Manjogowda (7019520049), Jyothi D (9900934709)
Chikkasandra: Venkateshappa (9901254255), Jyothi D (9900934709)
Mallasandra: Sadashiva (9880651729), Jyothi D (9900934709)
Kempegowda: Narasimhaiah (9448275176/9480688002), Manjunath S Hallur (8971192116)
Attur: Ramakrishnaiah (9972910910/9480688003), Manjunath S Hallur (8971192116)
Kogilu: Mahantesh (9480688005), Nandana CN (7975232080)
Thanisandra & Amruthahalli: Suresh Devatharaj (9480688006), Nandana CN (7975232080)

Man crashes on to car from train, dies

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: A white hatchback moving towards Mehkri Circle on Ballari Road direction was about to emerge from the road underbridge near Windsor Manor around 1.30pm on Tuesday when the driver's vision went blank as the car's windshield was shattered. The driver applied the brakes immediately and it took a while for him to realise that a man had fallen on his car's front windshield from the railway tracks above.

The passenger, Gourishwaran, was a resident of Vellore in Tamil Nadu. He rolled on to the road from the car's bonnet. As passersby began trying to resuscitate him by pouring water into his mouth, High Grounds police reached the spot. They shifted the man on to the pavement even as an ambulance arri-

Eyewitnesses said the man had been standing on the door's edge of the fast-moving train before falling and landing on a car

ved. However, the man had already died of severe head injuries.

High Grounds police, who alerted the railway police, searched the man's pockets and found a mobile phone that was switched off. The passenger's body was later shifted to Victoria Hospital.

An official with South Western Railway told TOI that the man was travelling on Brindavan Express (train number 12639) from Chennai to KSR Bengaluru. The official said a probe is on and the reason for the fall would be revealed in due time.

Online friendship costs woman ₹12L

Chaithanya Swamy @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: A 35-year-old married woman's friendship with another man from her community has proved costly. The friend took Rs 5 lakh cash and 118 grams of gold ornaments worth Rs 7.2 lakh from her by promising to return them but began demanding money by threatening her that he would inform her husband about their secret friendship.

Charmi (name changed), mother of two and wife of a businessman, told police she and the accused Suvesh (name changed) became friends in Jan 2022. The duo used to text each other and talk over phone. After they became close, Suvesh started visiting her home when her husband was away on work. She claimed that despite her opposition, he forced her to be intimate with him. He then borrowed Rs 5 lakh from Charmi, claiming that he owed it to someone.

After a few weeks, he approached her for more money. When she told him that she didn't have cash, he convinced her to give him gold ornaments to clear his loan. Charmi gave him three necklaces, six bangles and a pendant worth Rs 7.2 lakh. When Charmi asked him to return her ornaments and cash, he kept borrowing time. Two weeks ago, Suvesh visited Charmi's house and sexually harassed her, and later demanded Rs 1 lakh. When she refused, he threatened her that he'd inform her husband about their friendship. An alarmed Charmi shared her ordeal with her brother, and with his help, lodged a complaint with police.

A senior police officer said, "We registered a case under IPC Sections 354 C (voyeurism), 384 (extortion) and 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property), and questioned Suvesh.

According to the complainant, she befriended the suspect online and he belonged to her community.



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Restaurant blast injured on road to recovery, say docs

Woman Who Sustained 40% Burns Moved To Ward From ICU

Mini.thomas@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The 47-year-old tech firm employee, Swarnamba Narayanappa, who sustained 40% burns in Friday's bomb explosion at The Rameshwaram Cafe, was on Tuesday shifted from the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) to the ward at Brookefield Hospital, Kundalahalli.

Doctors said the wounds on her hands and legs are healing, and she seems to be in a good frame of mind.

Now that she is in the ward, her family members are also with her. "She is very relieved to be out of the ICU," said Dr Pradeep Kumar TJ, medical director, Brookefield Hospital. The other two blast victims who underwent treatment at Brookefield Hospital — Faruq Hussain, 19, a staff member at The Rameshwaram Cafe, and Deepanshu Kumar, a 23-year-old customer — have been discharged.

Dr Kumar said the blast survivors have made tremendous progress in terms of recovery. "All three of them will be able to lead a normal life without much discomfort," the doctor said.

"Swarnamba blacked out during the blast episode, but she remembers being brought to the hospital. She had received injuries on her face, near her ears, and on the chest wall. These wounds are showing signs of infection because she is diabetic," he explained.

Swarnamba also has protein deficiency, doctors said, adding, "We are trying to address it. However, her blood

BBMP has offered to foot the bill: Hosps

Dr Jnanasekhar, who works with the administration department at Vydehi Hospital, where some of the injured were admitted, told TOI that BBMP has promised to cover medical expenses of the injured individuals admitted to their hospital. "We are following up on that," he said. Meanwhile, Dr Pradeep Kumar TJ, medical director, Brookefield Hospital, where three of the injured were treated told TOI: "We received a letter from the BBMP commissioner's office on Tuesday morning requesting us to submit the bills to him. BBMP will bear all the treatment expenses incurred by the three patients who underwent treatment at our hospital."

pressure is under control.

The six others who suffered injuries were admitted to Vydehi Hospital, Whitefield. Two of them were discharged on Friday itself, whereas one person was sent home on Saturday. A fourth person was discharged Monday.

"Two of the injured — Nagashree 25 and Balamuralikrishna 34 — are undergoing treatment. Both are stable, but that said, Nagashree's eye prognosis is guarded," said Dr Ravi Babu, chief admin officer, Vaidehi Hospital. Nagashree, Swarnamba's colleague, has sustained a severe retinal injury in her right eye.



NO CLUES YET? NIA officials visited The Rameshwaram Cafe on Tuesday for a spot inspection and reconstructed Friday's crime scene

After MHA diktat, NIA begins probe

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: National Investigation Agency on Tuesday began its probe into The Rameshwaram Cafe blast incident. A team of NIA officials, including IGP Santosh Rastogi, visited the cafe on Tuesday for a spot inspection and reconstructed the crime scene.

CCB sleuths are also continuing their probe. NIA registered the case following directions from the ministry of home affairs (MHA) to take up investigation as Karnataka govt did not hand over investigation to the central agency.

However, NIA officials from Bengaluru had visited the spot and collected details of the blast. NIA officials from Telangana, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu have been camping in Bengaluru since March 2 and are coordina-

ting with city police and the intelligence bureau.

NIA hasn't released any official statement yet, they will be raiding the places of the suspects at the earliest.

CCB sleuths have interrogated five suspects to date, who were later released. They also visited a few shops on SP Road with images of the batteries and timer used in the bomb, along with the suspect's image available from CCTV footage.

They enquired with shopkeepers if anyone had purchased the devices from them recently.

As they did not get specific information, police suspect the devices may have been procured online. The sleuths also visited several places of worship and enquired about the person captured on the cafe's CCTV camera.

Narrow escape for 100 as paper mill catches fire

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: It was a close shave for over 100 labourers when a part of the paper industrial unit they were working in caught fire late Tuesday evening in Vasanthnarsapura Industrial Area on the outskirts of Tumakuru, 90km from Bengaluru. The fire in Jodhani Paper Industries at 6.30pm gutted parts of the boiler section. Close to 100 labourers were working on the factory premises at the time.

District fire officer Shashidhar said: "The blaze was

reported from the boiler plant due to overheating. The stacked wood powder, coal caught fire, resulting in an inferno

— SHASHIDHAR
District fire officer

reported from the boiler plant due to overheating. The stacked wood powder and coal caught fire, resulting in an inferno. It soon spread to other parts, damaging equipment and resources."

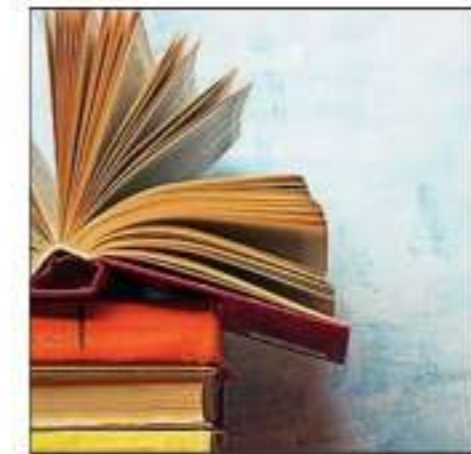
Govt keeps its election promise, approves revision of 114 school textbooks for next yr

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: In line with its election promise, the govt on Tuesday approved a committee report recommending changes in school textbooks.

In a circular, the govt gave approval for revised textbooks for Kannada I language (classes 1 to 10), Kannada III language (classes 9 and 10), and social science (classes 6 to 10) from the academic year 2024-25. The textbook revision ordered by the previous BJP regime, on recommendations of a committee headed by writer Rohith Chakrathir, had come under allegations of saffronisation. When the Congress came to power, it set up an expert committee led by Manjunath G Hegde, a retired professor, for revising the textbooks.

As per the new committee's recommendations, the govt has approved the adoption, printing and distribu-



The govt approved the adoption, printing and distribution of 114 revised textbooks — 44 of Kannada language and 70 of social science in seven languages — for 2024-25, the circular said

tion of 114 revised textbooks — 44 of Kannada language and 70 of social science in seven languages — for 2024-25, the circular stated.

The fresh changes the govt has approved is the re-introduction of writers' works — Girish Karnad's 'Adhikara', P Lankesh's 'Mruga Mattu Sundari', Devanuru Mahadeva's 'Edege Bidda Akshara', Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy's 'Samudra Chumbana', Chandrashekhara Kambara's 'Seemi', Akkamahadevi's Vachanas, Devadasa's Chakragraha, Mariyappa Bhatta's 'Nam-

ma Bhaashe', KV Tirumalesh and VG Bhat's children's poems, and an article by Nagesh Hegde in Kannada language textbooks.

As soon as the Congress govt took over in May last year, it approved 18 of the 40 changes suggested by another committee for immediate implementation. They included the removal of RSS founder KB Hedgewar's Nijavada Adarsha Purusha Yaragabeku in the class 10 Kannada textbook and KT Gatti's Kalavannu Geddavaru on Hindutva ideologue VD Savarkar. However, the Hegde com-

mittee hasn't changed anything about Tipu Sultan and has shifted some of the lessons to higher classes.

The revised textbooks will be made available on the Karnataka Textbook Society website after distribution to block education offices. The costs incurred for revision work will be covered from the grant available to KTBS.

The fresh additions include culture of Vedic period, rise of new religion, women who participated in the making of the Constitution, opportunities granted to sexual minorities, human rights and duties, rewritten chapter on the arrival of Europeans in India, introduction of Vishwaguru Basaveshwara as a cultural leader, addition of Kanaka Dasa, Purandara Dasa and Shishumala Sharif to Bhakti movement lessons, Pocco Act, Niti Aayog, and Bharat Ratna given to MS Swaminathan.

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PAT ON BACK Guarantees Helped Prevent Large-Scale Migration: Siddaramaiah | Man Was Drunk While Shooting Video Targeting PM: Cops

Set up control rooms & helplines to ease water crisis, CM tells DCs

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Amid an acute shortage of drinking water across Karnataka, chief minister Siddaramaiah on Tuesday directed district administrations to float tenders to supply water via tankers in affected areas and called for the establishment of helplines and control rooms to efficiently tackle the issue.

In a video conference with deputy commissioners and zilla panchayat chief executive officers from all districts, Siddaramaiah underscored the urgency of the situation and urged officials to promptly identify villages "at risk of water scarcity" and ensure swift measures to resolve water supply issues.



"Call tenders within a week to supply water at gram panchayat levels and keep tankers on standby to supply water as and when required. You must be able to supply drinking water within 24 hours of a problem being reported," Siddaramaiah said.

He also directed officials to expedite repairs of defunct borewells and explore renting private borewells to alleviate the crisis. Reports submitted by officials revealed 7,408 villages have been identified as 'potentially affected' and agreements are in place to supply water to these areas from 7,340 borewells.



FLUID SITUATION: Siddaramaiah, on Tuesday, at a meeting of ministers and officials to discuss ways to tackle water scarcity in the state

Siddaramaiah was informed that in Bengaluru city and other urban areas in districts, a significant number of borewells have failed, exacerbating the scarcity issue. However, he expressed optimism regarding the impending completion of the Cauvery 5th phase project, which is expected to alleviate the city's drinking water woes.

"The project is nearing completion. Once it becomes operational, the city's drinking water needs will be taken care of," Siddaramaiah said.

Raising concerns on employment generation in drought-hit areas, revenue minister Krishna Byre Gowda, who was present at the meeting, highlighted the potential for migration due to exhaustion of man-days under rural employment guarantee programmes.

While stressing the effectiveness of his govt's elec-

tion guarantees in mitigating the migration situation, Siddaramaiah said: "The issue is mainly because the state has already exhausted man-days under the national rural employment guarantee programme. More than 4.7 crore families have worked for 100 days and now they are not getting work. The Union govt has also not released Rs 1,400 crore of wages. Under our five guarantees, each family gets Rs 4,000-Rs 5000 every month. Otherwise, migration would have been widespread."

Siddaramaiah was presented with live status of water levels in dams and was told that, except for the Tungbhadra reservoir, the levels are likely to remain stable. Officials suggested that there would be no imminent shortage of drinking water until the end of May for areas reliant on these reservoirs.

Water crisis could be key poll issue

Sandeep.Moudgal@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The looming water crisis over Bengaluru is threatening to impact the Lok Sabha elections and both Congress and BJP are grappling with the impending challenge.

Deputy CM DK Shivakumar, who holds the Bengaluru development portfolio, faces a crucial test of leadership and governance as the state confronts one of its worst water crises in recent times.

Of the four seats in Bengaluru, of particular concern for Congress is the defence of the lone seat it holds — Bengaluru Rural — which is represented by DK Suresh, Shivakumar's sibling. Congress has set itself a target of winning 20 of the 28 seats in the state and, therefore, cannot ignore the four in Bengaluru.

In a rare display of unity, BJP and Congress' only MP acknowledged the gravity of the crisis, emphasising the need for long-term solutions and measures beyond supplying water through tankers and drilling borewells.

Former Union minister DV Sadananda Gowda, who represents Bangalore North in the Lok Sabha, while allocating his remaining MPLAD funds to addressing water needs of people in areas like Yeshwantpur, Dasarahalli, and KR Puram, said the re-

quirement of the hour is effective management and sustainable solutions.

However, both parties have a ready narrative on the crisis. BJP has been criticising Congress for its "perceived favouritism towards Tamil Nadu", citing the release of Cauvery river water to the neighbouring state, while Congress has retaliated by highlighting delays in approvals for the Melkattu reservoir project.

PC Mohan, Bangalore Central MP, while lamenting a "lost opportunity" of saving water instead of releasing it to Tamil Nadu, said: "We need to consider the issue on a long-term basis by making use of recycled water, which is critical for Bengaluru's future."

Suresh rebuked BJP for "politicising" the issue and questioned the saffron party's commitment to tackling the city's water woes, particularly regarding the designation of Mokedatu as a national project and approval for a balancing reservoir within Karnataka's borders.

"Today, lakes and tanks are vanishing overnight across Bengaluru," he said. "A lot of detractors believe they can give advice on social media, but none realise ground realities. Saving these tanks and lakes and interlinking them is imperative."

Nadda says Cong govt is lenient towards terrorists

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Belagavi: Highlighting the recent pro-Pakistan sloganeering row involving some of its supporters and the bomb blast at an eatery in Bengaluru as evidence, BJP president JP Nadda lambasted Congress, accusing the party of fostering an environment conducive to terrorism.

During a booth-level party workers meeting in Chikkdoi near here, Nadda wondered whether Congress was "serving the interests of Pakistan" and alleged that the govt's "leniency towards terrorists" was cause for concern.

"The situation has come to such a pass that 'Pakistan zindabad' is shouted in Vidhana Soudha, and the Congress chief minister [Siddaramaiah] and deputy chief minister [DK Shivakumar] are mute spectators," Nadda said. "Isn't it from this very Karnataka that Indian National Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge comes from? The MP [whose supporters allegedly shouted the slogan] is someone who sits next to him [Kharge]."

He took a dig at Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Yatra',



HEAVY WEIGHT: BJP national president JP Nadda and state party functionaries at the rally of party workers in Belagavi on Tuesday

saying: "Is this the way you are uniting India? Your MP wins an election and on his victory 'Pakistan zindabad' slogans are raised."

He questioned the govt for the delay in making the FSL report public despite a private forensic report confirming pro-Pakistan slogans were raised. "Bharat Mata will never forgive you nor will the people of Karnataka if you speak Pakistan's language," Nadda said.

Nadda said there was "peace in Karnataka" when BJP was at the helm and that

there used to be "one or the other blast every day" in the country under UPA rule. He said Congress was soft on terror and its leader Rahul Gandhi stands with the "tukde tukde gang".

He hit out at the govt for putting a kar sevak in jail in connection with a 31-year-old case and claimed it was Congress that "questioned the very existence of Lord Ram" and "at every interval opposed" devotion to Ram. "They did not even attend the consecration ceremony in Ayodhya," he said.

Man arrested for threats to Modi, Yogi

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Yadgir: Police on Tuesday arrested a man who worked as a labourer in Hyderabad, on charges of threatening to kill Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath.

G Sangeeta, superintendent of police, Yadgir, said Mohammed Rasool Kaddare, 45, is a native of Rangampet, Shorapur taluk. "I cannot disclose details of the case at this time since the matter is under investigation," Sangeeta told TOI.

Shorapur police said a case was filed under section 505 (1) (B) (comments made with the intent to incite fear) of IPC and section 25 (1) (B) (converts an imitation firearm into a firearm) of the Arms Act based on a complaint from Bharanu Nayak, district president, Sriram Sene.

Kaddare threatened Modi in a video in an expletive-ridden video which he posted on social media because the PM wasn't "delivering good governance like Atal Bihari Vajpayee". Police sources said: "The accused said he was drunk when he shot the video. We are investigating."

BJP: Add Hussain's name to complaint

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: BJP on Tuesday demanded that the name of newly elected Congress MP Syed Nasir Hussain be included in the first information report (FIR) in the case pertaining to his supporters allegedly shouting pro-Pakistan slogans in Vidhana Soudha.

Karnataka BJP also decided to write to Rajya Sabha chairman Jagdeep Dhanekar, urging him not to allow Hussain to take oath till the conclusion of the investigation.

The demand follows the arrests of three people on Monday for allegedly chanting pro-Pakistan slogans while celebrating Hussain's re-election to the Rajya Sabha on Feb 27.

BY Vijayendra, BJP state president and MLA, claimed the arrests were prompted by the saffron party's release of an investigation report from a private forensic science laboratory. That report, on video evidence of the sloganeering, suggested pro-Pakistan slogans were indeed shouted. Vijayendra accused police of omitting Hussain's name from the FIR and questioned the govt's reluctance to disclose the report from



PATRIOTIC FERVOUR: File picture of Karnataka BJP functionaries protesting the alleged pro-Pakistan sloganeering

the state-run FSL. He called for transparency regarding identities of the alleged "masterminds" behind the purported "conspiracy".

In response to BJP's demands, home minister G Parameshwara asked top brass of the principal opposition party to cooperate with the investigation.

"There were Congress supporters, workers, and officer bearers [present during the alleged incident], but they say no such slogans were shouted. Let the police investigate that. Now that a case has been registered and people have been arrested, the investigation will go on..." he said.

Cong's 1st list of candidates tomorrow

Bengaluru: Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar said a meeting of Congress' central election committee will be held on Thursday (March 7) in New Delhi during which the first list of Karnataka candidates for the Lok Sabha elections will be finalised. Shivakumar, also Karnataka Congress president, said chief minister Siddaramaiah met Randeep Singh Surjewala, Congress general secretary in charge of Karnataka, on Monday and discussed a short-list of candidates.

"Chief minister Siddaramaiah and I will go to Delhi to finalise the [first] list of candidates," Shivakumar said. BJP released an initial list of candidates nationwide last week. **TNN**

DKS thanks SC, says it's a day of great joy

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar expressed his gratitude to the Supreme Court after it dismissed summonses from the Enforcement Directorate, asking him to appear for questioning in a money laundering case registered way back in 2017.

Shivakumar described the day as one of "joy" and a departure from "numerous challenges in his life". Acknowledging the possibility of central agencies filing an appeal against the court's decision, Shivakumar said he was ready to face further legal proceedings.

"I prostrate before the judges of the Supreme Court. I have been saying all along that I did nothing wrong, but I still faced numerous prob-



BIG RELIEF: Deputy chief minister DK Shivakumar speaks to reporters in New Delhi, ahead of the Supreme Court hearing

lems," said Shivakumar, who also serves as president of Congress' Karnataka unit.

He vowed to reveal to the public how the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) had allegedly targeted him during its investigation.

When questioned about

the documents. The income tax people and CRPF came to my house. I had not done anything wrong."

In August 2017, IT sleuths searched properties and offices in Bengaluru and Delhi which allegedly belonged to Shivakumar and several of his associates in an alleged tax evasion case.

Shivakumar's alleged business associate Sachin Narayan, liquor trader Sunil Kumar Sharma, Karnataka Bharu (Delhi) employee A Hanumanthaiah, and former state govt employee Rajendra N were also targeted.

The searches allegedly led to seizure of about Rs 8.6 crore, some of which has been adjusted against Shivakumar's and Sharma's tax liabilities, amounting to more than Rs 41 lakh and Rs 7.6 lakh respectively.

whether he believed the journey ahead would be easier, Shivakumar said, "I never felt the journey was difficult. I went to jail confidently. The more they trouble me, I will only rise politically. I remember the way they arrested me and the way they seized all

Complaint over edited clip targeting Priyank

A formal complaint was lodged with Cyber Economic and Narcotics (CEN) police in Bengaluru following dissemination of an edited video clip featuring derogatory remarks attributed to Priyank Kharge and Yathindra Siddaramaiah. The clip, circulated on the Instagram account of 'Gulam Gang', has sparked outrage among Congress members and supporters. Youth Congress vice-president Amarnath filed the complaint and called for appropriate action against the perpetrator.

Jarkiholi skips BJP core committee meeting

BJP national president JP Nadda led a strategic meeting with the party's core committee, comprising functionaries from Belagavi, Chikkodi, Bagalkot, and Vijayapura Lok Sabha seats. The meeting, at a hotel on the outskirts of Belagavi, was to outline strategies for the polls. While BJP state president BY Vijayendra, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and national secretary Radha Mohandas Agrawal were present, Gokak MLA Ramesh Jarkiholi was conspicuously absent.

SHORT TAKES

Speaker Khader gets demo of sniffer dog's capabilities

In the wake of The Rameswaram Café bomb blast, speaker UT Khader was given a demonstration of the skills of a sniffer dog trained to detect bombs. The plan was to assess the potential of deploying sniffer dogs as a security measure at Vidhana Soudha. Khader acknowledged the capabilities of the sniffer dogs in detecting even minute traces of bomb ingredients but said a decision on establishing a dog squad rests with the home department.

Gowda slams CM on tax devolution accusations

Former Prime Minister and JD(S) national president HD Deve Gowda criticised chief minister Siddaramaiah for accusing the Centre of injustice on tax devolution, saying the CM was disseminating "falsehoods" and urged him to speak truthfully. Gowda emphasised the need for the govt to prioritise addressing drought and resolving drinking water shortages in the state, rather than engaging in political rhetoric against Prime Minister Modi and the Union govt.

Accused sent to police custody

Bengaluru: A city court has remanded three people — Mohammed Shafi Nashipudi from Byadgi in North Karnataka, Itaz Muhammed from Delhi and Munawar Ahmed from RT Nagar, Bengaluru — arrested on charges of shouting pro-Pakistan slogans inside Vidhana Soudha recently, to three days in police custody. The three were produced before a judge at around 10.30pm on Monday and the court, while sending them to police custody, directed police to produce them before it again on Wednesday. The FIR states the three were booked under IPC sections 153B (making or publishing statements that promote disharmony or hatred between different religious) and 505 (1)(B) (inducing a person to commit and offence against the state with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm in the public). **TNN**

Efforts on to arrest 1 more named in FIR, say police

Continued from page 1

According to Indresh, during the protest, Ravi, a farmer, who knows only Kannada, inadvertently shouted "Pakistan Zindabad", when all he meant to say was "Pakistan Murdabad".

In a purported video of the protest that went viral soon after Ravi's arrest, he is seen shouting "Pakistan Zindabad" even as the person behind him attempts to stop him by covering his mouth.

Interestingly, Ravi's arrest comes close on the heels of the arrest of three men by Bengaluru police on Monday for allegedly shouting "Pakistan Zindabad" slogans at the Vidhana Soudha on Feb 27, following the victory of Congress MP

Syed Nasir Hussain in the Rajya Sabha elections.

"It was quite a comedy of errors," Indresh said, adding that Ravi's arrest after so many months clearly shows that the Congress govt is upset with the opposition for questioning the pro-Pakistan sloganeering by its supporters on the Vidhana Soudha premises.

Ravi has been slapped with cases under IPC Sections 153B (statements threatening national integrity) and 505 (statements causing public mischief).

Police said Ravi was produced before the local court on Tuesday and efforts were being made to arrest Aradhya, another person who has also been named in the same FIR, among others.

BMTC tour package

In view of Mahashivaratri, the BMTC has introduced a tour package to Isha Foundation from Friday. Air-conditioned buses will leave from Majestic at 12.30pm and cover popular destinations such as Bhoga Nandeeshwara Temple, Kanive Basavana Temple, Rangasthala Ranganathaswamy Temple and others. The bus will return to Majestic at 9.30pm. The fare per person is Rs 500. **TNN**

IISc MTech course

IISc's Centre for Sustainable Technologies will introduce an MTech programme on sustainable technologies from the next academic year. The programme will be multi-disciplinary, open to science and engineering graduates from a range of academic disciplines. The last date to submit online applications is March 22. Visit <https://iisc.ac.in/admissions/mtech-m-des/>. **TNN**

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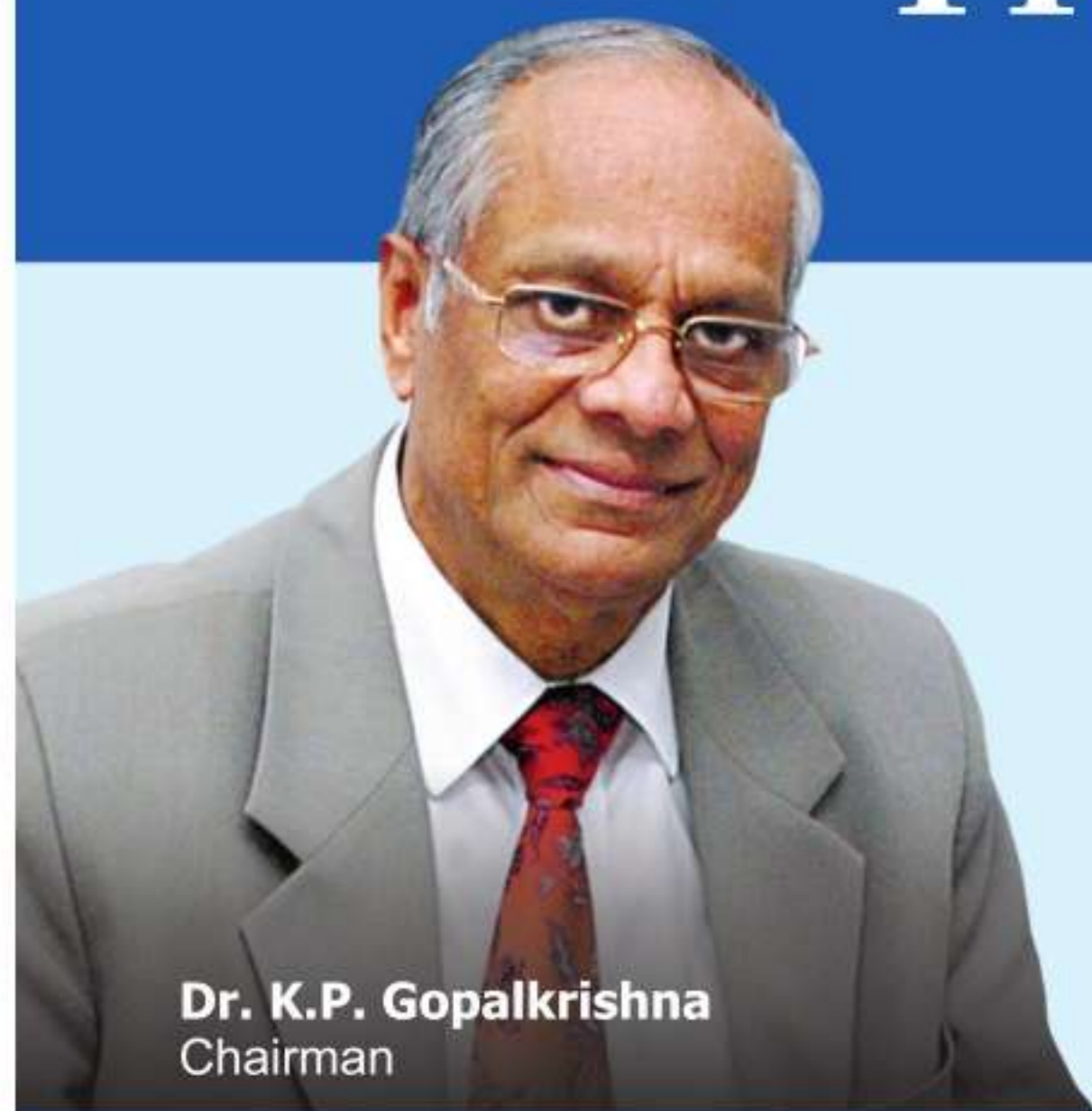
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Bring your own answer scripts for common assessment, pupils told

Only Q-Papers Will Be Distributed To Class 5, 8 & 9 Students

SruthySusan.Ullas
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Photo for representation
PAPER BURDEN ON STUDENTS

Bengaluru: The Karnataka School Examination and Assessment Board (KSEAB) has informed schools that students will have to carry their own answer scripts for common assessments of classes 5, 8 and 9. Schools have to ensure the papers students bring are of uniform nature.

The govt had decided to make exams of classes 5, 8 and 9 a common assessment, with KSEAB distributing question papers. Last year, students had to write the answers on the question paper booklet that provided space for writing.

As per the instructions given by block education officers (BEOs) to schools at recent meetings, only the question papers will be distributed by KSEAB this time. All the children will be given face

sheets where they have to fill in details, which will be stapled to the answer sheets they bring. "It is impossible to make all the children bring the same type of paper. So we have decided to distribute papers from the school," said a school teacher.

Many govt schools will have to scramble for funds to get answer scripts now. "While we were asked to get funds from the school development and monitoring committees

Initially, it was decided to ask DDPIs to print question paper booklets by charging students a nominal amount. But then, the issue of charging Rs 50 for SSLC preparatory exam became a big controversy and even reached the assembly. It was then decided not to charge the students anything

— KSEAB OFFICIAL

or NGOs, we were unable to mobilise funds. So, I'm putting in my own funds to get answer scripts," said the principal of a govt high school in east Bengaluru.

There was a similar controversy last month when students were asked to bring their own answer scripts for the SSLC preparatory exam. That time, Rs 50 was charged on each child. The common assessments are scheduled from March 11 to 18, and evaluation will be conducted at the block level. The school will

have to bundle the answer sheets in the cover of the question papers and send them for evaluation. After evaluation and receipt of results, the headmasters have to enter the kids' grades online.

The All-India Democratic Students' Organisation (AIDSO) condemned the move. "The order is anti-student and anti-education. We demand immediate withdrawal of this order and appeal to the govt not to burden poor students," AIDSO state secretary Ajay Kamath said.

CM gives ₹10L to his school in Mys & KPS

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Chief minister Siddaramaiah has donated Rs 10 lakh to his alma mater — Govt Higher Primary School, Kuppegala — and a Karnataka Public School in Siddaramanahundi, both in Mysuru district.

Speaking at the inauguration of 'Namma Shale, Namma Javabdari' (our school, our responsibility), a programme aimed at collecting funds for developing govt schools, the CM said children should develop knowledge, rationality, and scientific temperament.



CM Siddaramaiah interacts with govt school students, on Tuesday

Interacting with students of these schools, the CM asked them to speak about the Constitution. While many of them reiterated the Preamble, the CM told them merely memorizing it isn't enough; they need to understand its core and act accordingly. "Liberty, equality, fraternity are the core of the Constitution. We should build an egalitarian society. Even

though Buddha, Basava, Ambedkar have said this, inequality hasn't been wiped off from society. Children should study and understand these thoughts and develop humanity," he said.

"Now, govt school students get milk, eggs, chikki, meals and uniforms. We used to get beaten by our teachers; girls didn't get a chance to study much," he said. School education minister Madhu Bangarappa said Rs 6 crore was donated by alumni to their schools in Karnataka.

Trial blasting near KRS stopped after protests

Mandya: The trial blast exercise, to examine the impact of explosions at nearby stone extraction units on Krishnaraja Sagar (KRS) reservoir, was stopped Tuesday following protest by farmers' groups.

Sources said the exercise is proposed to be held in the next four days.

According to farmers, a group of five to six experts arrived to mark the location for trial blasting. As the news spread, farmers rushed to the

spot and started to protest. The agitators, who locked the KRS main gate, stopped the experts from marking the location. As the protest intensified, the experts returned without marking the spot. Officials tried to convince the agitating farmers to allow the trial blasting citing the recent high court judgment.

However, farmers pointed out that trial blasting is not part of the operative part of the judgment. TNN

Raichur labourer buys bicycles for students

Chamaraj Savadi | TNN

Raichur: Anjinaiah Yadav, a daily-wage labourer from Malkandinni village in Devadurga taluk of Raichur district, has emerged as a beacon of generosity and compassion. Despite his own financial struggles, Yadav has set an example by donating bicycles to 11 underprivileged students who endure daily treks of 3-4 kilometres to attend school.

Malkandinni village has a school for 1st to 5th standard only. After that, the students



EMPATHETIC ACT: Anjinaiah Yadav toiled to save ₹40k in a year

have to go to neighbouring Hemanur High School for further studies. Anjinaiah, a labourer, used to observe stu-

dents walking from their village to Hemanur every day. He felt that something should be done immediately to help these poor children.

However, Anjinaiah was in a difficult situation himself. He took up odd jobs to make ends meet — be it a mason, driver or a labourer. "Ever since I got the idea to help children, I started saving some money. Besides, I started working a little more every day," says Anjinaiah.

After working for more than a year, he was able to save Rs 40,000. By then summer

had started and exams were nearing. Deciding not to delay any more, he planned to buy bicycles. With the Rs 40,000, Anjinaiah was able to buy 11 bicycles. He distributed them to 11 students who were walking to school from his village, said Basavaraj P, headmaster of Hemanur govt high school.

This selfless act of a daily wage earner has garnered widespread admiration and praise from the public, underscoring the power of kindness and empathy in transforming lives.

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Blood bank manager dies in hit-and-run case

Bengaluru: An elderly man, working as manager in a blood bank, died when a speeding mini-goods vehicle hit his scooter near Bangalore University on Tuesday. The victim is Gopinath Savanth, who worked with Lions Blood Bank and was a resident of Malagala near Nagarabhatti.

Jnanabharathi traffic police said the accident happened at 2.50pm when Savanth was riding his scooter. The goods vehicle hit his two-wheeler from the rear and Savanth's helmet came off when he fell on the road. The goods vehicle driver sped away without helping Savanth. Passersby rushed Savanth to a hospital in an ambulance where he succumbed to injuries. Police are verifying CCTV footage to ascertain clues about the goods vehicle and the absconding driver. TNN

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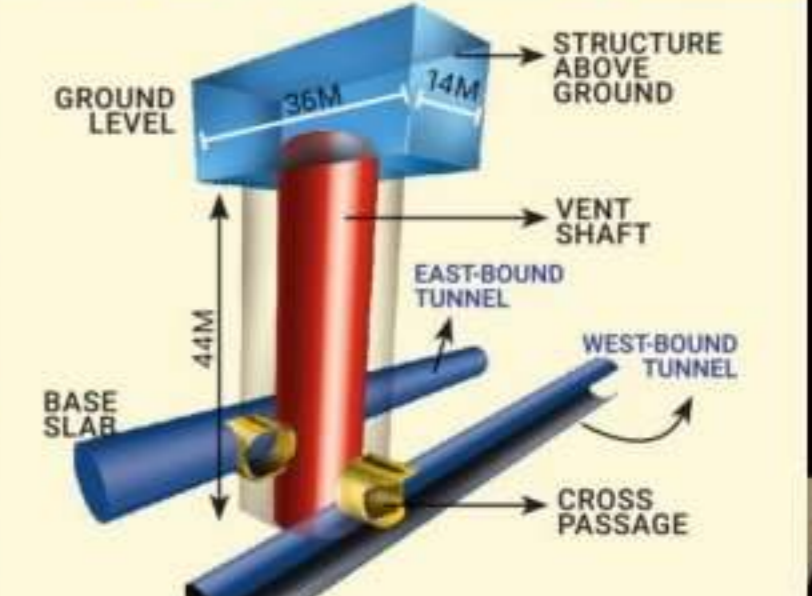
ON MARCH 6, 2024

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SCOPE OF WORK

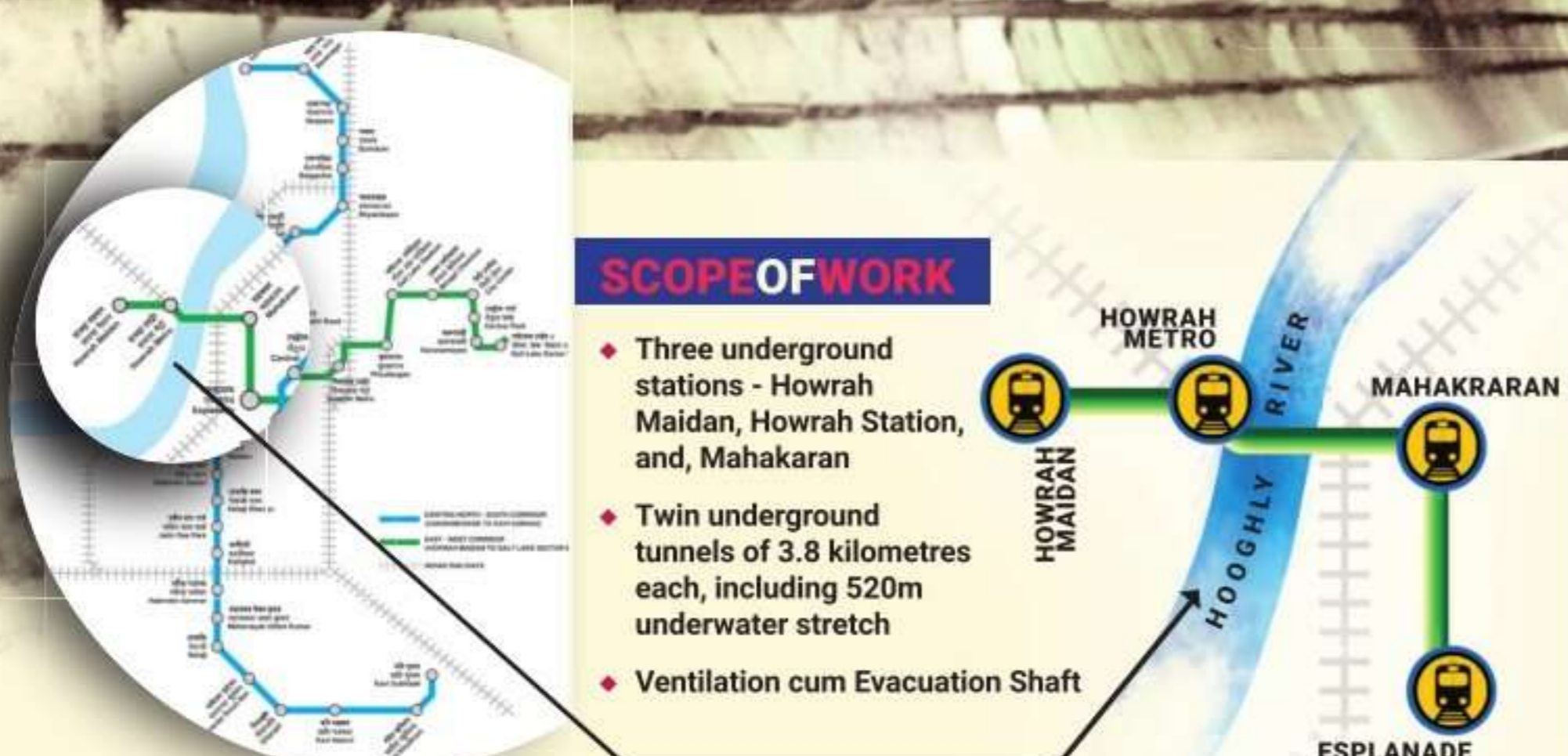
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- Westbound: 2694 rings/3.77km
- Number of rings: 5408
- Number of TBMs: 2 (TBM Make: Herrenknecht, Germany)
- Tunnel depth: Min - 16m, Max - 38m (Up to Invert Level)

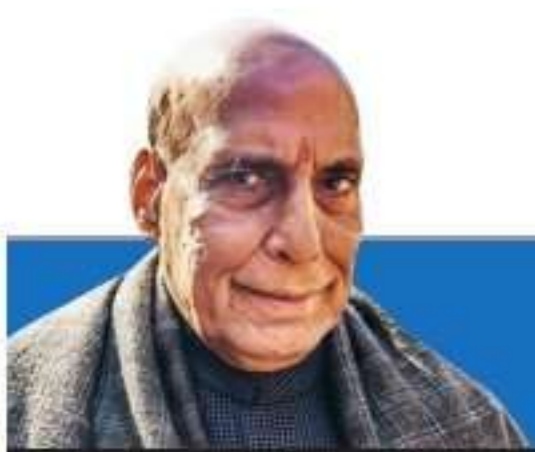


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INDIA ENSURED NO ONE EXERCISES HEGEMONY IN INDIAN OCEAN REGION: DEF MINISTER RAJNATH



ASSAM POLICE TO ISSUE SUMMONS TO RAHUL GANDHI OVER NYAY YATRA VIOLENCE, SAYS CM HIMANTA

69 funerals and 22 yrs later, a wedding at Gulbarg Society

Saeed.Khan@timesgroup.com

Ahmedabad: From the soul-crushing gloom of 69 funerals to the gaiety of a pre-wedding celebration, it's taken 22 years of healing and waiting for Ahmedabad's Gulbarg Society to embrace the catharsis of new beginnings.

Bride Misbah Mansuri wasn't born when the 2002 post-Godhra violence in Gujarat heaped tragedy on this residential block in Chamanpura. Her extended family lost 19 members, six of them children, in the massacre.

Over two decades later, the 19-year-old's father, among the few survivors of the communal violence, chose their still-desolate neighbourhood and their house at the society's entrance to organise a pre-wedding celebration before the nikah takes place in Madhya Pradesh's Barwani district.

On Monday evening, the sounds and smells of an Indian wedding emanating from the Mansuri family's house appeared to lift the shroud en-



TIME TO REJOICE

veloping the neighbourhood for so long.

The chatter of guests assembled for the haldi ceremony and a medley of Bollywood songs filled the air as girls and women in finery danced to the music.

Misbah's father Rafiq Mansuri, who lost his wife and five-month-old son in the 2002 violence, relocated to MP and remarried there.

"Misbah is the eldest among our three children. I decided to return to Gulbarg Society for our daughter's haldi cere-

mony rather than to mourn the past," he said.

For many of those who attended the dinner celebration, it was almost a rite of passage. Until the Mansuris decided to hold the event at Gulbarg Society, former residents would visit it only once a year to pay tribute to their dead.

"The society had practically turned into a parking zone for people living in the neighbourhood. There was no pomp in the pre-wedding celebration but it did change the mood," said a guest.

Brothers Firozkhan and Imtiyazkhan Pathan, neighbours of the Mansuri family, shot video footage of the neighbourhood, hoping that their visits would now extend beyond the death anniversaries of loved ones.

The Mansuris proceeded to Barwani on Tuesday afternoon, leaving behind not just memories of a celebration but also the possibility of a fresh start for Gulbarg Society. A Tricolour fluttered in front of the family's freshly painted house.

BRS, BSP to fight LS polls together

Koride.Mahesh@timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: In a surprise move, BRS and BSP have decided to fight the upcoming Lok Sabha elections together. This will be the first time BRS will be forging an alliance with any political party in the Lok Sabha polls, especially after the formation of Telangana, and with BSP in the state.

BRS supremo K Chandrasekhar Rao and Telangana BSP president RS Praveen Kumar held preliminary discussions on pre-poll alliance at KCR's Banjara Hills residence on Tuesday. Talks on seat-sharing will continue in the next two days as both politicians will talk to BSP chief Mayawati and seal the deal, sources said.

Buzz of BJP-BJD tie-up as PM, Odisha CM pat each other

BJP Is Likely To Contest In More Seats

Ashok.Pradhan@timesgroup.com



Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik had said PM Narendra Modi set a new direction for India and also contributed to state's growth

Bhubaneswar: Talk of a BJP-BJD alliance gained traction Tuesday with PM Narendra Modi calling Odisha's Naveen Patnaik a "popular CM" and the latter lauding him "for transforming India into an economic powerhouse", making this the second instance in a month of the duo displaying camaraderie in public.

Modi, who was at Chan-

naik on his 108th birth anniversary. "Biju Babu's contributions to the development of Odisha and the nation are incomparable," he said. "I feel fortunate to offer tribute on India's behalf from Odisha."

While Modi refrained from criticising the Odisha government, Congress and the rest of the INDIA bloc took the rap for everything he said was wrong with the opposition. "For INDIA, it's family first, while for Modi, it's nation first," he said.

At an official programme in Sambalpur on Feb 3, the PM had described Naveen as "my friend". The bonhomie was for all to see at Tuesday's event, too, days before the expected announcement of da-

tes for Lok Sabha and assembly elections in some states, including Odisha.

Sources said parleys were underway to seal an electoral arrangement that could see BJP contest the lion's share of Lok Sabha seats and BJD getting to field its candidates in the maximum number of assembly constituencies.

Last week, PM's principal secretary P K Mishra was in Odisha from Thursday to Saturday, while Naveen's close associate, V K Pandian, visited Delhi on Sunday. Sources linked these visits from either side to ongoing negotiations.

Naveen said the PM had set a new direction for India and also contributed to Odisha's growth.

Smugglers tamper with aircraft wiring to conceal gold bars

Venkadesan.S@timesgroup.com

Chennai: Taking gold smuggling to a new and dangerous high, trained operators interfered with the wiring of an IndiGo aircraft by accessing the line through the toilet roof and concealing 4.5kg gold, tethering it on the wires and fixing a three-digit number code lock at the end.

The plane had come from Abu Dhabi Thursday night and was scheduled to fly to Hyderabad in a few minutes as a domestic flight.

Customs officials, who seized the gold bars, suspect that

smugglers might have engaged a ground staffer at Chennai airport to extract the consignment and hand it over to them, or it might have been destined for Hyderabad.

The rectangular gold bars, with a hole in the middle, were found secured to a padlock with wire running through it. It had a number-coded lock in the loose end, and only an insider who had access to the code could retrieve consignment at Chennai airport. "The fact that the smuggler(s) opened the aircraft component effortlessly means he knew how the stuff works and had the knack of concealing it using the specific tools,"

said a seasoned pilot. Asked if it endangered the passenger safety, he said aircraft are designed in such a way that no crucial elements could be accessed from the lavatory as that would lead to sabotage. "There will be basic electricity wires for lighting, fan and smoke sensor in the lavatory," said the pilot adding that they cannot be accessed easily and require special tools.

The perilous smuggling bid came to light when workers sanitising the plane found the electrical box in the lavatory tampered with. On information, safety officers prised open the electric box and found the contraband.

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SESSION TIMING	SESSION	SESSION SPEAKERS
07.30 AM - 08.15 AM	Nourish, Sweat, Rekindle. A Talk on Wellness	Inshaa Arora - Health Coach
10.10 AM - 10.15 AM	Inspire Inclusion Introduction	
10.15 AM - 11.00 AM	The InHERitors - A Fireside Chat Women in Family Business	Schauna Chauhan - CEO, Parle Agro Dr. Sangita Reddy - Joint MD, Apollo Hospitals
11.00 AM - 11.45 AM	The POWER in Her Women in Energy	Sulajja Firodia Motwani - CEO, Kinetic Green Purnima Jalihal - Scientist, National Institute of Ocean Technology Sushma Rawat - Director Exploration, ONGC
11.45 AM - 12.30 PM	The Boss Ladies Corporate Leaders	Megha Tata - Immediate Past President, IAA Saakshi Kishnani - Director, EY Madhumati Lele Shrivastava - President, CCI
12.30 PM - 1.30 PM	Guardians of the Galaxy Women in Safety & Security	Dr. Rukmani Krishnamurthy - First Lady Forensic Scientist Seema Samridhi - Advocate, Supreme Court (Nirbhaya Case) Dr. Meeran Borwankar - Retired IPS Officer
2.30 PM - 3.00 PM	Workshop on Mindfulness	Tannaz Irani - COO, Aanya Wellness, Actor
3.00 PM - 3.45 PM	She Unstoppable Women in Entrepreneurship	Madhura DasGupta Sinha - Founder, Aspire For Her Sarla Singh - Founder, QSS Global Meghna Ghai Puri - President, Whistling Woods Neha Arora - Co-Founder, Saffron Strings
3.45 PM - 4.30 PM	The Daughters of Mother Nature Women in Environment & Sustainability	Dr. (Hon) Anusha Srinivasan Iyer - MEGA Foundation Palakh Khanna - Youth Changemaker Dhenuka Srinivasan - AVP, Environment & Sustainability Affairs, ABB Yukta Mookhey - Environmental Activist, Former Miss World

SESSION TIMING	SESSION	SESSION SPEAKERS
4.30 PM - 5.15 PM	Investing in Women's Leadership UN Women	Susan Ferguson - Country Representative, UN Women India Shali Chopra - Founder, She The People TV Namita Vikas - Founder & MD, auctusESG Nikita C - Founder, GeNEX Space
5.15 PM - 6.00 PM	Pride and Prejudice Culture and Society	Brinda Miller - Art Curator Amena Nora Passah - Khasi Historian Aparajita Amar - Founder, Sexual Harassment Law Dr. Nandini Bhowmik - Priestess
6.00 PM - 6.45 PM	STEM the Gap Women in STEM	Dr. Nandita Palshetkar - Scientific Director, Bloom IVF Capt. Shweta Singh - Director General, Civil Aviation Dr. Snita Sinukumar - Surgical Oncologist Anjali Pandey - COO, Cummins
6.45 PM - 7.30 PM	The Game Changers Women in Sports	Mira Erda - F4 Racer Aishwariya Pissay - Motorcycle Racer Sakshi Malik - Wrestler
7.30 PM - 8.15 PM	Echoes of Inclusion Women in Entertainment	Divya Palat - Producer, Theatre Actor Raell Padamsee - CEO, Ace Productions, Theatre Artist Ojas Rajani - Celebrity Make-up & Hair Stylist Vinta Nanda - Film Producer, Writer



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Trial court proceedings a failure of justice: HC

Says Sanction To Prosecute Accused Was Invalid

Continued from P 1

The entire prosecution is vitiated on account of invalid sanction to prosecute accused for want of valid sanction in terms of Section 45 (1) of UAPA... It failed to establish the seizure of incriminating material from the house of accused No 6 Saibaba. It also failed to prove electronic evidence in terms of provisions of the Indian Evidence Act and Information Technology Act, states the verdict.

Noting that various provisions of UAPA weren't complied with, the judges said sanction to prosecute the accused was invalid. "Taking cognisance of the trial court's judgment without valid sanction or no sanction to prosecute Saibaba is at the root of the case, which renders the entire proceedings null and void... The trial court proceedings amount to failure of justice." The prosecution, led by special counsel Prashant Sathianathan and govt pleader Deven Chauhan, made a verbal request to the judges to reserve their order for six weeks so that they could file a special leave petition in SC. The bench directed them to file an application, which was later rejected.

Besides Saibaba, the five people acquitted in the case are Mahesh Kariman Tirki, Hem Keshavdatta Mishra, Prashant Rahi Narayan Sanglikar, Vijay Tirki and Pandu Pora Narote, who died of swine flu during the trial. Lawyers representing Saibaba and the other four in jail couldn't immediately approach the sessions court for their release as the HC verdict hadn't been uploaded online until late Tuesday. They have been in Nagpur's Central Jail since their arrest in 2014. The March 7, 2017 ruling

THE ACCUSED

ACCUSED NO 1

Mahesh Kariman Tirki, resident of Murewada, Etapalli, Gadchiroli. Arrested with Hem Mishra along with a microchip allegedly containing incriminating material, which was to be handed over to dreaded Naxal Narmada Akka in jungles of Gadchiroli. Accused of acting as mediator between Mishra and Maoists in Gadchiroli

ACCUSED NO 2

Pandu Pora Narote, resident of Murewada, Etapalli, Gadchiroli. Thirty three-year-old expired on August 25, 2023 at Government Medical College and Hospital after contracting swine flu. Arrested with Hem Mishra and Mahesh Tirki, and charged with acting as mediator. Three were supposed to meet underground Naxal Ramdar

ACCUSED NO 3

Hem Keshav Mishra, resident of Kunjibargal, Nagarkhan, Uttarakhand. Student of Chinese language at Jawaharalal Nehru University. Claimed he was going to meet Dr Prakash Amte on August 20, 2013 when he was nabbed by Aheri police. After his death, questions were raised on health facilities for jail inmates across Maharashtra. He claimed he never met Saibaba and only attended a couple of lectures at Delhi University

ACCUSED NO 4

Prashant Rahi Narayan Sanglikar, resident of Chandrashekar Nagar, Dehradun, Uttarakhand. Arrested at Deori T-Point in Chichang, Gondia, after interrogation of Mishra, Tirki and Narote, provided key information that led to Saibaba's arrest. He was to meet senior Naxal leaders hiding in Abujhmad

ACCUSED NO 5

Vijay Nan Tirki, resident of Belod, Dharampur, Kanker, Chhattisgarh. Was sentenced to 10 years of imprisonment, acquitted due to lack of evidence, limited role in activities, his first attempt. He was on bail before high court discharged his bail bonds

against Saibaba and five others was the first judgment in Maharashtra in which all the accused were convicted

MAOIST LINK CASE

PUNISHMENT BY GADCHIROLI COURT

Section 13 of UAPA Act | Punishment for unlawful activities

Accused No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 | Seven years' rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI. Accused No 5 - Four years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI

Section 18 of UAPA Act | Punishment for conspiracy

Accused No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 | Life

imprisonment with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI. Accused No 5 - Ten years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI

Section 20 of UAPA Act | Punishment for being member of terrorist gang or organisation

Accused No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 | Life imprisonment with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI. Accused No 5 - Ten years of rigorous

imprisonment (RI) with Rs 1,000 fine, in default six-month RI

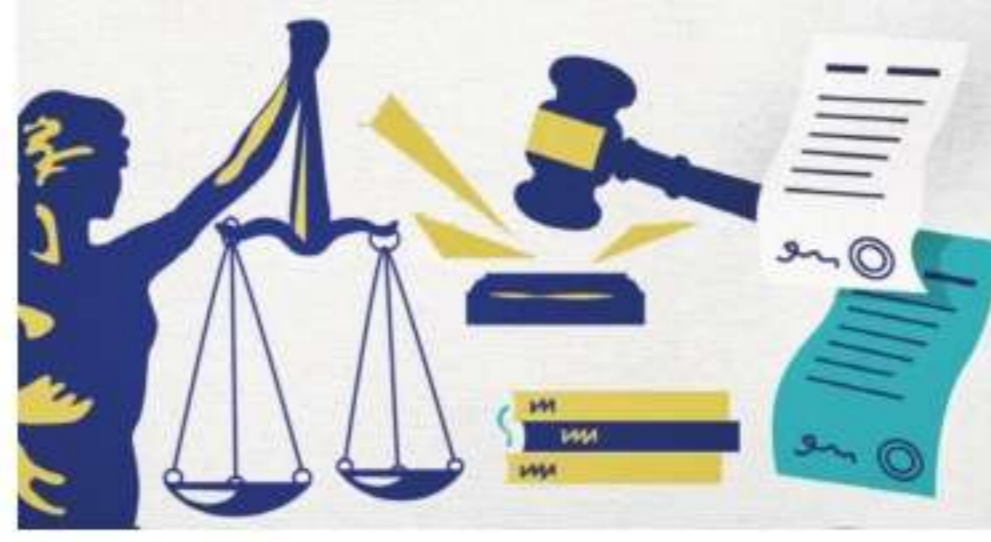
Section 38 of UAPA Act | Offences related to membership of terrorist organisation

Accused No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 | Ten years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI. Accused No 5 - Five years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI

Section 39 of UAPA Act | Offence relating to support given to terrorist organisation

Accused No 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 | Ten years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI. Accused No 5 - Five years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) with ₹1,000 fine, in default six-month RI

Section 120B IPC | Punishment of criminal conspiracy



TIMELINE OF SAIBABA CASE

Aug 22, 2013 | Following a tip-off, accused Mahesh Tirki, Pandu Narote & Hem Mishra apprehended after being under surveillance in Naxal-affected areas of Gadchiroli

Sept 2, 2013 | After interrogation, cops rounded up Prashant Rahi at Deori in Gondia along with Vijay Tirki, who acted as his courier

Sept 4, 2013 | After Mishra & Sanglikar spilled beans, Gadchiroli cops sought warrant from JMFC to conduct search at house of professor GN Saibaba

Sept 7, 2013 | Magistrate court issues search warrant against DU professor

Sept 9, 2013 | Cops conduct search operation at Saibaba's residence in Delhi

Feb 15, 2014 | Sanctioning authority grants approval to prosecute Saibaba & others under UAPA

Feb 16, 2014 | Final report/chargesheet submitted by police before magistrate court

Feb 26, 2014 | JMFC commits case to sessions court, as offences are sessions triable

Feb 26, 2014 | Police obtain arrest warrant against Saibaba but fail to nab him

May 9, 2014 | Saibaba arrested from Delhi, produced in court & remanded to judicial custody

Aug 25, 2014 | Saibaba's bail application rejected by Justice Sunil Shukre at Nagpur bench of Bombay HC

Feb 21, 2015 | Sessions court frames charges against all six accused. They plead not guilty

July 2015 | Bombay HC grants temporary bail to Saibaba till December 30, 2015 on health grounds

Oct 31, 2015 | Supplementary chargesheet filed by police

Dec 14, 2015 | Gadchiroli sessions court orders joint trial in both cases (Saibaba & five accused)

March 3, 2017 | Sessions court convicts Saibaba & others under UAPA & IPC. Sentenced to life imprisonment; one sentenced to 10 years in jail

March 29, 2017 | Saibaba & others appeal against conviction & sentence in HC's Nagpur bench

Aug 2020 | Saibaba applies for parole to attend mother Gokarokonda Suryavathi's last rites, but denied

Oct 14, 2022 | HC Nagpur bench acquits Saibaba & five other convicts in case

Oct 15, 2022 | Supreme Court suspends Nagpur bench's verdict. Sends case back to HC for fresh hearing

June 23, 2023 | HC starts fresh hearing of appeals filed by Saibaba & others

March 5, 2024 | HC again acquits all six accused after hearing both sides

setting up an independent authority to review evidence to prosecute accused under the stringent law.

Son of a farmer & graduation topper

Vaibhav.Ganjapure @timesgroup.com

Nagpur: Born into a poor farmer's family at Amalapuram in Andhra Pradesh in 1967, academic-activist Gokarokonda Naga Saibaba was a professor at Delhi University's Ramlal Anand College. Polio at age five left him wheelchair-bound with 80% disability. After topping graduation from Sree Kona-seema Bhanaji Ramas (SKBR) College in Amalapuram, Saibaba completed MA in English from University of Hyderabad and PhD from Delhi University in 2013. He became active in Maoist-related activities since his youth and was arrested by Andhra police several times. Saibaba was also a founder of All India People's Representation Forum (AIPRF), an NGO that provided legal aid to the jailed poor.

Police in Maharashtra Maoist den Gadchiroli claim the 57-year-old professor was active in connecting like-minded communist organisations in India and abroad, and his writings spread from the jungles of rebel redoubt Abujhmad to countries like Nepal and Sri Lanka.

Allegedly operating under pseudo names like 'Prakash' and 'Chetan', Saibaba was accused of being the brains behind many attacks on police and was entrusted with the task of recruiting youths in their fight against the democratic system.

He joined Revolutionary Democratic Front (RDF) in 2005 — an outfit banned by Andhra Pradesh govt for subversive activities — and shot into limelight after forming a panel in the name of late Anuradha Dhande, a Maoist Central Committee member. He had also organised a lecture in her memory at Delhi's JNU in 2010, where he invited like-minded individuals.

Prof's wife: Hope there are no future obstacles

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: "After 10 long years of struggle, justice has been delivered. I only hope there are no future obstacles to his very well-deserved freedom," said Vasantha, wife of former Delhi University professor GN Saibaba, who was arrested in 2014 allegedly because he and five others were members of the banned CPI (Maoist) and its front group Revolutionary Democratic Front. The Nagpur bench of Bombay HC set aside the conviction of Saibaba and five others in a case under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act on Tuesday, saying that the conviction of the accused people was 'unsustainable in the hands of the law'.

Vasantha expressed extreme happiness at the acquittal of her husband and the others. "Thank you to the lawyers who

have been working on his case tirelessly," she said. "Thank you to all the human rights defenders, all the people who stood in solidarity with Dr GN Saibaba." Gokarokonda Naga Saibaba, 55, taught at Ram Lal Anand College but was terminated from service by the college in March 2021. The college had suspended him in 2014 for his alleged Maoist links after the activist-academic's arrest in Delhi.

Speaking to TOI, Narendra Pandey, history professor and former colleague of Saibaba Ram Lal Anand College, said, "He was an excellent professor with a literary sensibility, a spokesperson for the down-trodden outside the classroom, of course. No teacher can take a partisan view in classes, cannot indoctrinate students either. He produced a PhD paper we are proud of."

UP shunts police job board chief

Uttar Pradesh govt Tuesday removed UP Police Recruitment and Promotion Board chairperson Renuka Mishra, in response to an alleged paper leak in the hiring exam held across 2,370 test centres in 75 districts on Feb 17 and Feb 18 to fill 60,244 constable positions. TNN

TIMES inter act

personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I, SHAIK AMEER S/o ALLA BAKASH R/a.No.174, 1st Main Road, Padarayapuram Bengaluru-560026. In passport my name mentioned as SHEIKH AMEER ALLAH BAKASH S/o SHEIKH ALLAH BAKASH & in Aadhaar card mentioned as SHAIK AMEER S/o ALLA BAKASH. I here by declare that the above said names belongs to me only. I, SHAIK AMEER S/o ALLA BAKASH. Vide affidavit dated 05-03-2024, sworn before notary V. Rajashekhara.

I, Mr. Nimitth Prabhakar S/o Late Mr. Prabhakar R/o 60, Krishnappa Layout 2nd Cross Arekere, Bangalore South Huttimavu, South Bangalore, Karnataka- 560076 have changed my Name Nimitth Manjeshwar Prabhakar to Nimitth Prabhakar.

I, MENAKA BHENDWAL D/o Late, Sri Ram Kumar, residing at No.51, 1st Cross, 1st Main road, Muninanjappa Garden, Kaval Byrasandra, Near RT Nagar Post, Bengaluru-560032 here by declare that MENUKA BHENDWAL and MENAKA BHENDWAL both the names belongs to me only, affidavit dated 22.02.2024 before notary L. Gopalakrishna, Bangalore.

I, Nisreen Madraswala, W/o, Ali Asgar Madraswala, R/a. No. 11/2, 20th main, J P Nagar 5th Phase, Ramaswamy Layout, Bangalore- 560078. I have changed my name to NISRIN MADRASWALA. Vide affidavit date: 05.03.2024. Sworn bfr notary: Aravind Patil G. W.

I, Manjula D/o Basawarajappa R/o 834, Upar residency, Ulial, Bengaluru - 560091 have changed my name from Manjula Devi to Manjula for all future purposes.

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IT is notified for information that original Sale Deed document No. 2741/2007 dated 28.06.2007 of Site No.64, in "S.N.S. Garden - Phase II", situated at Alur Taraf, A.Samanapalli Village of Hosur Taluk, has been lost or misplaced. Lost Report No.0961894/2024 has been registered online. Finder please contact Mob: 9842287376

Khelo India medallists eligible for central govt jobs, promotions

Bharti.Jain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Medal winners or those finishing at up to third position in different categories of Khelo India games will now be eligible for recruitment, promotion and other incentives meant for sportspersons in Govt of India.

Issuing the revised norms for recognition of meritorious sportspersons through incentives including central govt jobs, the department of personnel and training (DoPT) on Monday announced the addition of medal winners in Khelo India Youth Games (aged above 18 years), Khelo India Winter Games, Khelo India Para Games and Khelo India University Games to the list of eligible candidates. The new list, like earlier, includes sportspersons who have represented the state or the country in a national/international competition; medal winners in junior national championships; and medal winners in School Games Federation of India (SGFI) in any of the games or sports mentioned in the instructions.

Khelo India games were first organised in 2018 as part of the Narendra Modi government's initiative to revive the sports culture in India at the grass-root level. The order of preference for

The DoPT introduces revised norms, extending incentives to medal winners in Khelo India Youth Games, Winter Games, Para Games, and University Games, broadening eligibility criteria for meritorious sportspersons

extending incentives including govt jobs has also been revised, with medal winners or those finishing up to third in Khelo India University Games listed as third preference; and those winning medals or finishing up to third in Khelo India Youth Games, Khelo India Winter Games or Khelo India Para Games listed as fourth preference. Candidates who have represented the country in an international competition will continue to be first preference, followed by those who have represented a state/UT in the senior or junior level national championships organised by national sports federations recognised by sports ministry or in national games organised by Indian Olympics Association.



12-yr-old locks leopard inside office cabin

Santosh.Sonawane1 @timesgroup.com

Nashik: Mohit Ahire, barely 12 years old, held his nerve during a close encounter with a leopard and managed to trap the wildcat inside an office cabin in Malegaon in Maharashtra on Tuesday morning.

The boy's courage and presence of mind is the talk of the town. The son of a security guard at a wedding hall, Ahire said the leopard was about a foot away from him when it walked past him and entered the office, at around 7am at the Sai Celebration wedding hall along the Malegaon-Nampur Road.

At the time, Ahire was sitting on a bench in the wedding hall's booking office and playing on his cellphone when, suddenly, he noticed the leopard walking towards him. The big cat, though, did not seem to have noticed the petrified boy and walked past him into the office. "The leopard was so close. There was hardly any space



TALK OF THE TOWN: Son of a security guard, the boy said the leopard was about a foot away from him when it walked past him and entered the office. (Right) The office cabin becomes the cozy haven for a leisurely catnap

between the leopard and me. I walked into the inner cabin of the office right in front of me. I was scared, but I quietly got off the bench and sneaked out of the office. I closed the door behind me," Ahire told TOI.

Anil Pawar, owner of the wedding hall, said: "The booking office is 22 feet by 10 feet. We have two compartments in the office. Mohit Ahire was seated in the first compartment near the entrance. The leopard headed straight into the inner cabin without noticing the boy.

When the boy saw the animal walk past him, he stayed calm. He sneaked out of the office and pulled the door behind him."

Pawar said earlier in the morning, the leopard was spotted in the nearby housing area and residents, along with police and forest personnel, set upon its tracks. After Ahire informed his father that he trapped a leopard inside the office, police and forest personnel came to the site and pulled down the shutters of the booking office.

Vaibhav Hiray, Malegaon range forest officer, said: "Our personnel were in the neighbourhood when the boy trapped the leopard in the wedding hall's office. We immediately called a team from Nashik city. Later, the five-year-old male leopard was tranquilized and rescued." Hiray said there have been leopard sightings in the past, too, as there are many farm lands around the area and the Mousam river flows just a couple of kilometres away from the locality.

Ex-SG argues on royalty as tax under MMDR Act

Continued from page 1

MMDR Act provides for an action — by way of royalty for the exercise of mineral rights that vest in the State and are leased to the Lessees, and this is at the rate fixed by Parliament and cannot be increased by the State Legislature," the former solicitor general told the bench also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, A S Oka, B V Nagarathna, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, S C Sharma and Augustine G Masih.

The complex issue interwoven with powers of states under Entry 23, 45, 49, 50 of List II and Entry 54 of List I of Seventh Schedule evoked pithy queries from the bench, which wanted to test Salve's propositions on the constitutional avil. Salve said, "The fasciculus of the entries for imposition of tax on mineral rights (Entry 50 of List II) and for the regulation and development of mines (Entry 54 of List I) is that the taxing power of the state is inhibited by any regulatory laws i.e., non-tax laws made by Parliament (MMDR Act)." "The proposition that royalty is like a tax and there cannot be a further tax on mineral rights rests on this scheme of the Constitution. It is not a general proposition that royalty under a mining lease is a tax per se — that cannot be right generally nor even where under the Mineral Concession Rules, 1960, the lease has to be in a statutory form, but the royalty is payable to a private owner of minerals, said the senior lawyer.

Spaniard continues tour, says blame criminals, not all people

Rajesh Kumar Pandey | TNN

Dumka: Five more people were arrested in connection with the gangrape of a Spanish national in Dumka district of Jharkhand even as the survivor left Dumka along with her husband on their bikes amid heavy security. This has taken the total number of those arrested to eight. Talking to reporters for the first time since the crime took place on March 1 at a semi-forested area in Kurumaha locality under Hansdaha police station where the couple were camping for the night, the survivor said the assault left a deep scar but won't change her positive perception about India or its people.

The survivor said the assault left a deep scar on her mind but won't change her positive perception about India or its people

She and her husband (63) were escorted by Jharkhand Police to the Bihar border from Dumka Circuit House. Bihar Police will assist them in reaching Nepal, the original destination of their world bike tour. Dumka district administration, meanwhile, provided Rs 10 lakh as compensation even as Jharkhand high court

took suo moto cognisance of the crime on Monday and will hear the case on March 7.

On March 1, the couple reached Dumka for a brief halt en route to Nepal via Bihar when the seven youths waylaid and assaulted them. The woman was then gangraped, triggering a global outrage.

While speaking to media, the survivor said, "Those who committed the crime are liable to be blamed but not the common Indian, who otherwise, remained courteous and cordial to us all through our journey in this country, so far. In the last six months, we have travelled to different parts of India and we came across many good people."

Scammer who ran tutorials for frauds held

Mahesh.Buddi @timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: College student by day, a teacher in his free time. And quite sought after at that.

A 21-year-old man was arrested on March 1 from a village in Bundi district of Rajasthan for allegedly training around 500 youngsters from his village on ways to defraud people online. Yogesh Meena was apprehended along with three others he had trained — one of them a minor.

Yogesh, police said, is behind at least 50 cases of cyber fraud committed in the past one year. Police recovered Rs 82,000 cash, a gold ring and four cellphones from him. However, when the cops visited the two villages where youths were allegedly being trained in cyber fraud, most of the houses were locked.

According to police, Yogesh picked up youths for training from three villages of Bundi and Sawai Madhopur districts — Rawal, Babai and Chamanganj. A second-year BA student of a college in Sawai Madhopur, he is believed to have learnt the art of conning from another villager. Police said they were looking for his "mentor". He engaged the youths in hour-long classes and taught them how to operate Telegram channels and speak to potential targets so that they were lured to invest," said Sandeep Ahlawat, inspector (cybercrime) in Manesar.

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Another DMK neta stirs row, now with Ram, India remarks

'Supporters Of Bilkis Convicts Said Jai Shri Ram... Don't Accept It'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Coimbatore: DMK MP A Raja is in the news again, this time after his remarks that he doesn't believe in Lord Ram, or the Ramayana, were widely circulated on social media and drew criticism from BJP politicians.

In a speech at a public meeting in Gobichettipalayam town in Tamil Nadu's Erode district on Saturday, Raja referred to chants of "Jai Shri Ram" when convicts in the Bilkis Bano case were released from prison in Aug 2022. Subsequently, on Jan 8, the Supreme Court had quashed Gujarat govt's order granting remission to 11 men sentenced to life imprisonment in the case.

"Bilkis Bano's six-month-old baby was killed and she was gang-raped. But when convicts in the case came out of jail, they were given a rousing reception by a crowd that chanted 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'. If this is what the



BJP's Amit Malviya claimed that Raja (left) also said 'India is not a nation, but a sub-continent. One nation means one language, one tradition and one culture'

chants of 'Jai Sri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' stand for, we will never accept it. Tamil Nadu will not accept it," Raja said. "If you want, you go ahead and say we are enemies of Lord Ram," he added.

Raja then said the "Ramayana" he was taught was all about harmony and brotherhood. "What we have been taught is that Ram accepts Guhan, Sugriva and Vibhishan as brothers. This is what Kamba Ramayana is about — people from all castes are one, a hunter and monkey too are kin," he said. "I

don't believe in Ramayana, I don't believe in Ram — but this is what Ramayana is about, human harmony," Raja said.

BJP politicians tweeted a portion of the video clipping where Raja says he will not accept 'Jai Shri Ram' and alleged that the DMK functionary had "insulted" Lord Ram.

TN BJP president K Annamalai too tweeted the clipping and alleged that "DMK MP A Raja has been constantly insulting Sanatan Dharma & now has gone one step further to hurt feelings of every Indian

who says 'Jai Shri Ram' & 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' through a falsely constructed theory."

According to a PTI report, BJP's IT cell head Amit Malviya posted on X (formerly Twitter) Raja's reported speech saying, "India is not a nation. Understand this well. India was never a nation. One nation means one language, one tradition and one culture. Then only it is one nation. India is not a nation but a subcontinent. What's the reason? Here, Tamil is one nation and one country. Malayalam is one language, one nation and one country. Oriya is a nation, a language and a country. All these nations make up India. So, India is not country, it is a subcontinent. There are so many traditions and cultures. If you come to Tamil Nadu, there's a culture. In Kerala, there's another culture. In Delhi, there's another culture... In Manipur, as RS Bharathi said, they eat dog meat... That's a culture..."

Insulting Indian culture hallmark of oppn: BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Tuesday hit out at parties in INDIA bloc over the statement of DMK's A Raja where he said that his party did not believe in Ramayana or Lord Ram, and that India was not a nation, but a sub-continent. "It is evident that insulting India's ethos, publicly humiliating Hindu Gods and questioning the very idea of India has become the hallmark of the political agenda of the INDI alliance... Is Congress ready to stoop so low for their political gains that they are ready to accept such comments?" questioned senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad at a press conference.

Prasad said that A Raja said that he will never accept 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'... Do Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi, Priyanka Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge agree with this? "Will DMK use such derogatory comments against deities of other religions?", the BJP leader said.



Is Congress ready to stoop so low for their political gains that they are ready to accept such comments? questioned senior BJP leader Ravi Shankar Prasad

Prasad noted that DMK MP Raja, who had earlier attacked Sanatan Dharma, had also said "India is not a nation. Understand this well. India is never a nation. One nation means one language, one tradition, one culture. Then, only it is a nation. India is not a nation but a sub-continent."

"This is Maoist ideology," Prasad charged, reacting sharply to the DMK leader's reported remarks. Prasad further quoted Raja who said in his speech "If this is your Jai Shri Ram, if this is your Bharat Mata Ki Jai, we will never accept that Jai Shri Ram and Bharat Mata. Tamils don't accept. You go and tell (that) we are enemies of Ram". Interestingly, Raja's statement came a day after

Supreme Court rebuked his DMK colleague and TN minister, Udhayanidhi Stalin, for disparaging Sanatan Dharma.

The BJP leader demanded the Congress and other INDIA bloc constituents to come out and say if they agree with the DMK leader's remarks. "We vehemently condemn such remarks... The DMK should not assume they can escape scrutiny for such statements. Listen Raja saheb, this time election results in Tamil Nadu will be very surprising," Prasad said.

"That's the reason why the Supreme Court on Monday had admonished Udhayanidhi Stalin for taking undue liberty with the freedom of speech and then rushing to the court to seek relief," Prasad said.

"Please do not insult Hindu sentiment in such a way, do not embarrass Hindu faith like this," Prasad said, adding, "We respect all faiths. This is the Indian 'sanskrit' from Rig Veda which says that 'truth is one, paths for reaching it may be different.'" Prasad also slammed West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, questioning her silence on the issue and on the reported remarks of TMC leader Ramendu Singh Roy against PM Modi.

"Ramendu Roy said why Modi did 'pran pratishtha' (at Ram temple in Ayodhya) when it is done by a Brahman," the BJP leader said, calling the reported remarks of the TMC leader "sickening". "Why is Mamata Banerjee silent on this issue?" he asked, and said BJP strongly condemns this perspective. "Such comments are not only derogatory to the underprivileged and backward communities but they also perpetuate a feudalistic ideology that bars them from temple worship," the BJP leader charged.

Joined BJP with zero expectations: Modhwadia

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Gandhinagar: Former Gujarat Congress president and three-time MLA Arjun Modhwadia, who joined BJP on Tuesday, asserted that he has joined the saffron party without any expectation, and with the sole aim of strengthening the resolve of PM Narendra Modi to make India a prosperous nation.

Modhwadia (67) stressed the fact that due to its massive majority of 156 seats in the 182-member Gujarat Assembly, BJP has no compulsion in winning over politicians like him, and that his only aim is to work with full commitment to strengthen the resolve of Prime Minister Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah.

Modhwadia along with former Gujarat Congress working president Ambarish De and a number of functionaries from the grand old party, AAP, Karni Sena and other social outfits, was welcomed into BJP by state party president CR Paatil at Kalamal, the state BJP headquarters.

Paatil welcomed them by offering them BJP scarfs and caps, and said: "Today, all of you have joined BJP to strengthen PM Modi's resolve to make India a developed nation. We will all work together wholeheartedly to achieve this goal."

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Uttarakhand will achieve model state status, says CM

Pankul Sharma
@timesgroup.com

Dehradun: Chief minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Tuesday took the stage to lay the foundation for 11 crucial public sector projects that were signed at the Global Investors Summit last December.

The cornerstone-laying ceremony marked the commencement of various key projects, including the Rs 500 crore Commercial AeroCity Project in Ranipokhri, Dehradun, the Rs 650 crore Education City in Chharba, Dehradun, and the Rs 194 crore

Flatted Factory Complex in SIIDCUL Haridwar. Additionally, projects like the Electronic Manufacturing Clusters in Kashipur, hostels for factory workers in Pantnagar and Haridwar, and industrial parks in Khanpur, among others, were set in motion.

"We have witnessed significant progress over the last decade. It is now time to elevate Uttarakhand to a model state," Dhami said, emphasising the need for tangible development. Dhami reiterated the PM's dedication to Uttarakhand's development.

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WPL TROPHY DRIVE

Trophy rides through Bengaluru, grabs eyeballs

The second WPL trophy drive of the TATA Women's Premier League tournament dazzles in Bengaluru. Cricket enthusiasts citywide participate in a variety of activities



Young cricket enthusiasts vibing with the TATA WPL trophy

c.balasubramanyam
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Amidst the charged atmosphere of the TATA Women's Premier League (WPL), where champions from five formidable teams are fiercely vying for the revered trophy from M Chinnaswamy Stadium in Bengaluru, a unique scene unfolded on March 2. A convoy of messengers diligently carried the spirit of the competition to the common people across the significant landmarks of the city, kindling excitement and rallying support for the extraordinary athletes on the field till the dusk fell. The WPL trophy drive, held in association with The Times of India, commenced with women bikers at the forefront, followed by a vehicle adorned with a replica of the prestigious WPL trophy on its



Women bikers who led the WPL trophy drive

roof, and accompanied by a varied procession of vehicles, including a campaign bus, all proudly flaunting TATA WPL branding. Renowned social media influencers Garima Avtar, Sruthi Hariharan, Mythri Iyer, Apoorva Rao, and Suman Modi rode in the vehicle transporting the esteemed WPL trophy.



Visitors of the mall posing with the TATA WPL trophy

Flagger off the WPL trophy drive at Koramangala Nexus Mall, actor Rakul Preet Singh said that she feels extremely elated to be a part of something like this. Describing the energy surrounding TATA WPL as incredible she said, "India loves cricket, which has always been one of the most favour-

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"I am confident that TATA WPL will serve as a strong inspiration for more girls to enter the world of cricket," she declared, concluding her statement with an enthusiastic cheer in support of Royal Challengers Bengaluru. "Ee sala cup namde (This time the cup is ours)," she shouted.
The convoy's itinerary included visits to Jyothi Nivas College Road, Koramangala Junction, Agara Lake viewpoint, HSR BDA Complex Road, National Institute of Fashion Technology (NIFT), Soul Space Central Mall - Bellandur, Marathahalli bridge, Nexus Mall - Whitefield, Hope Farm Junction, Nexus Shantiniketan Mall - Whitefield. The procession culminated at Phoenix Market City - Whitefield.
The campaign bus, however, made several stops along the journey, allowing the public to engage in VR (virtual reality) cricket and AR (augmented reality) photo-booth experiences made available within the vehicle.
Even as the convoy was in transit, Phoenix Market City became a hub of activities, featuring an additional replica of the TATA WPL trophy displayed on a podium. Mall visitors seized the chance to capture selfies and group pictures with the trophy. Additionally, a VR cricket console captivated visitors at the venue, allowing them to bat for an over each and immerse themselves in the virtual experience of world-class stadiums. Besides, the visitors were engaged in a session which saw questions posed on several aspects of the inaugural tournament of the TATA WPL that happened in 2023. The winners received T-shirts and other rewards.
The Women's Premier League (WPL) is a women's Twenty20 cricket franchise league in India. It is owned and operated by the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI). The first season was played in March 2023 and saw Mumbai Indians win the first title. The league's structure is based on the structure same as that of the IPL. Initially there are five teams, with sides playing against each other in a double round robin format, and the three teams finishing with the most points enter the playoff stages of the competition. The board plans to increase the number of matches and franchises in future seasons if the league is a success.
Preet said, "I am sorry Bangalore, I'll have to pick Delhi because I was born there. But the second option would be Bangalore because my first school was in the city."
Taking a question on what more needs to be done to catapult TATA WPL to the level of IPL, she felt that a change can happen with women watching women play. "I think that's very important. We all have always watched men's cricket. So, I think once we as women start supporting women's teams, that will be a very organic process of starting the real push behind cricket when it comes to women. And of course, I think TATA WPL is a great platform anyways doing the same, about creating awareness, about giving an opportunity, a platform for competitive cricket," she opined.
A diverse crowd of young women and cricket enthusiasts participated in the flagging off ceremony, with many of them receiving TATA WPL T-shirts.
Vandana K, a participant, said that she is envisaging TATA WPL soon becoming a bigger tournament including teams from other states, like the Indian Premier League (IPL).

EC: Will act if WB govt fails to prevent violence during LS polls

EC Asks Central Agencies To Improve Their Intelligence Networks

Debanshi.Konar
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Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar (R) during a press meet on poll preparedness for the upcoming Lok Sabha election, in Kolkata, on Tuesday. On Monday, the poll panel held a meeting with DMs and SPs

Kolkata: Stressing that there would be zero tolerance for violence during Lok Sabha polls, Election Commission on Tuesday said it would step in if West Bengal administration failed to prevent it. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar said while the "primary responsibility" to conduct polls lay with the state, it had been cautioned against any "partisan role". Kumar also said Central agencies would work in tandem with those in the state.

CEC along with the entire team, including election commissioner Arun Goel, was in the city from Sunday to check poll preparedness. EC asked all Central agencies to improve their intelligence networks as they might be used in the execution of non-bailable arrest warrants, given several political parties had complained against the state police. The panel also asked

for non-bailable arrest warrants to be executed in a time-bound manner.

ED is likely to give inputs to the EC to curb the use of black money and money transfer through hawala operations; both ED and I-T officials were asked to be proactive in this arena.

On Monday, the poll panel team held a meeting with DMs and SPs. It also met West Bengal chief secretary BPGopalika and DGP Rajeev

Kumar. Both were asked to ensure free and fair polls. EC directed that no civil volunteers and contractual staff be on poll or law and order-related duty. Kumar said EC instructed DMs and SPs to be impartial and accessible to all political parties and called on them to have zero tolerance for violence.

The DGP added that the deployment of CAPF in Bengal in advance was not unusual but a confidence-building measure.

The CEC said that directions were given to work in coordination with all Central agencies against distribution of illicit liquor, cash, fake currency and drugs. He also wanted strict vigil along inter-state and international borders. There will be 151 check posts at different borders, including 15 along international borders, to plug entry of contraband. The check posts will be operated by police, customs, forest and excise departments.

Kumar stressed on checking cargo movement through non-scheduled chartered flights. He wanted identification of goods that could be distributed as freebies and

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Bengal, Abhishek to move SC against Gangopadhyay's court judgments

Kolkata: Bengal govt and TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee are likely to file separate appeals in the Supreme Court saying former Calcutta high court judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay's move to don political colours have "cast a cloud" on all his judgments.

The appeals could allege that Gangopadhyay's directions were not judicial orders but "a targeted attack on a political party, state agencies and its officials" in an attempt to "mar their reputation and embroil them in false and frivolous cases" in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections, sources said.

Legal counsel for the state and Banerjee, Sanjay Basu, said in a statement: "A perusal of the orders (passed by Gangopadhyay as judge) in the last two years, by pawing on the jurisdiction of the state police to investigate matters within its jurisdiction, allowing CBI and ED probes, (shows it) was done to garner mileage to launch his political career." TNN

'BJP is the only party that can fight Trinamool in West Bengal'

Continued from page 1

Gangopadhyay labelled TMC a "drama party" and dismissed CM Mamata Banerjee as "just another politician". "I approached BJP and BJP, too, approached me... That's why I did not adjudicate any case. I decided over this period to join BJP. I think it is the only party that can fight Trinamool here," he said at a press conference in his Kolkata home, two hours after posting his resignation to President Droupadi Murmu. "The party will decide whether I contest this election." "Trinamool would not be there by 2026. Just two more arrests are needed," he said.

He faced immediate political scrutiny, with Trinamool seizing on his statement about being in touch with BJP while serving as a judge. "A sitting Calcutta HC judge says he and BJP were in touch when he was passing judicial orders and

making observations in the courtroom. I leave the rest to the people to decide," Trinamool general secretary Abhishek Banerjee said. Trinamool also ridiculed Gangopadhyay's "shift from Marx to Modi" and accused him of using "corruption" as a ruse for his "political ambitions".

BJP functionaries told TOI that negotiations were on with the former judge about a possible ticket from Tamluk LS seat in East Midnapore — leader of opposition Suwendu Adhikari's home district. Regarding his choice of party, Gangopadhyay dismissed CPM due to religious reasons and criticised Congress for dynastic



Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay

politics. "I believe in God, I am religious. So, CPM is out of the question... There are many able and qualified leaders (in Congress) like Jai Ram Ramesh who do not get any key role in the party, though people like Rahul Gandhi enjoy all the power without doing anything," he said.

The former judge's defence of BJP MLA Adhikari, who was earlier with Trinamool, and his criticism of the party escalated tensions. The former judge said the Narada tapes episode was a "conspiracy", referencing the 2016 videos that showed various politicians, including Adhikari, accepting wads of cash during a sting operation. "Was there money in that envelope? Who saw it?" he asked. "It was a conspiracy hatched by a Trinamool leader to implicate seniors of his own party." When asked to name the Trinamool leader, he shot back: "Am I abusing anyone? I consider his name itself to be a slang (sic)."

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Tejashwi defends Lalu over 'Modi's family' remark

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Patna: RJD leader and former Bihar deputy CM Tejashwi Prasad Yadav defended Tuesday his father Lalu Prasad over the latter's "PM's family" remark and claimed the opposition bloc would spring a surprise in the state in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Tejashwi accused BJP of trying to divert the attention of the people by creating a "Modi ka Parivar" rhetoric after Lalu's remarks at opposition's Jan Vishwas Maharally in Patna on Sunday.

"I am glad the words of Laluji have so much impact. He had also raised issues of poverty and unemployment at the rally. Over 80 crore people are below the poverty line in the country. Crores are unemployed and 120 crore are bearing the brunt of price rise. BJP should pay attention to these issues, too," Tejashwi said at a news conference here.

Asked about Lalu's "Modi not a true Hindu as he did not shave his hair and beard after the death of his mother" remark, Tejashwi said: "We are a devout Hindu

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL SANDEEP ADHWARYU



family with a temple at our home where aarti is performed every morning and evening. I had a mundan (tonsure) ceremony for my daughter. Why the PM chose not to follow the well-established tradition is for him to answer."

Claiming Sunday's rally as a big success, Tejashwi said "the enthusiasm of the crowd was there for eve-

ryone to see". "Grand Alliance partners will seal their seat-sharing deal in the state before NDA."

Asked about some NDA leaders' allegation that people were given money to attend the rally, Tejashwi said: "CBI, ED and I-T sleuths can be sent to the houses of the people who had attended the rally to get the answer."

BJP: AI dubbing PM's speeches in 8 regional languages

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi's speeches are available in eight regional languages through different social media accounts. These dubbings are being produced through Artificial Intelligence (AI), a major technological leap, which the BJP claims to have done for the first time in the world.

PM Modi had used AI to translate his speech at an event in Uttar Pradesh's Varanasi in December last year when he addressed the audience at Kashi Tamil Sangamam in Hindi and his speech was translated to Tamil in real time.

"This is a new beginning and hopefully, it makes it easier for me to reach you," the Prime Minister had said. His speeches are now available in Bangla, Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Punjabi, Marathi, Odia, and Malayalam on respective X accounts, which were circulated by the party's IT department. TNN

Cong shortlists candidates for 20 LS seats in Maha

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Mumbai: On the eve of final seat-sharing negotiations with Uddhav Thackeray and Sharad Pawar, the Maharashtra Pradesh Congress Committee (MPCC) on Tuesday shortlisted nominees for 20 Lok Sabha seats. The MPCC meeting presided over by Nana Patole also reviewed the party's preparedness for the 20 seats.

With Shiv Sena (UBT) insisting on 23 seats and Congress demanding 20, talks on seat-sharing are likely to be fractious. Apart from taking into account NCP (Sharad Pawar)'s demands, the MVA alliance has to also accommodate Prakash Ambedkar.

In the Congress scheme of things, Patole himself is keen to contest from Bhandara-Gondia while Kasabpeti MLA Ravindra Dhangekar appears frontrunner for Pune. Vishal Muttemwar and

Dropped by BJP, Scindia-beater KP Yadav meets RSS leaders

Bhopal: BJP MP KP Singh Yadav, who was cast aside in favour of Jyotiraditya Scindia for the Guna Lok Sabha ticket, met RSS leaders in Bhopal on Monday. He said he wouldn't join Congress, though the opposition party is holding the door open for him.

Three days after Yadav found his name missing from BJP's first list, he was seen at Samidha, the residence of RSS leaders in Bhopal, on Monday. Speaking to reporters later, Yadav said, "I respect the party's decision. I have congratulated all those who have been given tickets." Asked if he would join Congress, Yadav said, "No. BJP is a big party. I am a party worker. Let the party decide what work they have for me."

Yadav was the poster boy of the 2019 election after defeating Scindia in Guna by over 1.2 lakh votes. It was the first time that a Scindia had lost their home seat, and Yadav — once a Scindia aide — turned into an overnight sensation. Yadav's stardom was short-lived. A year later, in March 2020, Scindia walked into BJP with 22 loyalist MLAs, creating a new power centre in the saffron camp.

There was much unease between Yadav & Scindia. The latest instance was when Yadav "inaugurated" a passport office in Guna on Feb 25 much before the official event. TNN

Regional parties threat to democracy, says Modi

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Hyderabad: Prime Minister Narendra Modi drew a line separating "Modi ka parivar" from regional parties which, he said, had become fiefdoms of political families. Speaking at a Vijay Sankalp Sabha in Sangareddy on the second day of his Telangana tour, he slammed regional parties and Congress, who "think that they have the right to steal".

"Right from Jammu and Kashmir to the rest of India, the people have not gained anything in the states headed by regional parties even as the parties have become richer," he told a large gathering. "Family-based parties have hidden their black money in foreign banks and kept expensive gifts for themselves. I put up every gift received for public auction. I have used it to clean up the Ganga. I have auctioned all gifts right from my days in Gujarat and donated Rs 150 crore for public service."

Continuing his tirade against RJD patriarch Lalu Prasad's "Modi has no family" remark, he said Congress and its INDIA allies are hurling abuse at him because he raised his voice against their scams. "These family-based



Chief minister Revanth Reddy presents PM Narendra Modi a memento after his two-day Telangana tour at Begumpet airport on Tuesday. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan also seen

parties are a threat to democracy. They don't encourage talent and youth, denying them opportunities to grow," he said. "And I have never made personal attacks against them."

Taking a dig at Congress, he said some parties don't give young leaders an opportunity as they prefer "85-year-olds (politicians). They are insecure about a young politician overshadowing the (Gandhi) family." He stated that for him, the country is the priority as opposed to Congress and other parties which place families ahead of the country. "In some sta-

tes, more than 50 family members of the chief minister occupy important positions in govt, blocking opportunities for others," he said.

Listing welfare schemes rolled out for the poor in the last 10 years of his administration, Modi said, "I am a man who gives guarantees and knows how to fulfil them, like Article 370 was abrogated and Ram temple was built in Ayodhya." He assured the people that his guarantee of making India the third-biggest economy in the next few years would be fulfilled. "No other country is making such rapid strides like India" he stated.

RAHUL GREETED WITH MODI CHANTS IN MP



BUILDING RAPPORT: Rahul Gandhi clinks a selfie with a child during his Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Ujjain on Tuesday. The Congress leader's Nyay Yatra witnessed a surprise encounter at Shajapur city of Madhya Pradesh when BJP supporters cheered "Modi-Modi" as his convoy passed through the area. He halted the procession to engage with the chanting BJP workers, even blowing a kiss in response

Maha was forced to bear with Pawar for 50 yrs: Shah

Abhilash Botekar & Prasad Joshi | TNN

Nashik/Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar: Union home minister Amit Shah on Tuesday targeted NCP (SCP) president Sharad Pawar, saying the people of Maharashtra have been 'bearing' with him for the past five decades. Later, Shah also took a dig at former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray "for siding with those who had opposed all that Balasaheb Thackeray believed in".

Shah, while addressing a youth conclave in Jalgaon, said, "I want to tell Pawar that Narendra Modi has been the PM for the past 10 years and can present his 'bio data of achievements'. Citizens of Maharashtra are bearing with you for five decades. Leave aside 50 years, you spell out accountability for just five years (as a politician)."

He said the INDIA bloc was formed to "promote dynastic politics". He appealed to the youth to vote for parties



Union home minister Amit Shah pays tribute to Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, in Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar (formerly Aurangabad), Tuesday

that "will strengthen democracy and not dynastic politics". "Look at the opposition that is challenging PM Modi. Sonia Gandhi wants to make Rahul Gandhi PM, Uddhav Thackeray wants to make Aadiitya Thackeray CM, Sharad Pawar wants his daughter as CM, Mamata didi wants to make her nephew CM, Stalin wants his son to be CM. Where do you stand?" Shah asked the crowd.

Shah further said Sonia Gandhi was relaunching Rahul Gandhi as PM candidate for the 20th time. "On one

hand, Modi is launching Ganyaan and on the other, Sonia Gandhi is experimenting with Rahul baba for the 20th time. Rahulyan was launched 19 times, but it never reached the destination," Shah said.

Speaking later at Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar, Shah said former Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray betrayed Balasaheb Thackeray's ideologies when he joined hands with those who opposed abrogation of Article

370, changing name of Aurangabad city to Chhatrapati Sambhajnagar and boycotted the pran pratishtha of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. Shah also likened the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) alliance in Maharashtra to an autorickshaw with all three tyres punctured and questioned if such a vehicle could bring development to the state. "Only under the leadership of Eknath Shinde and Devendra Fadnis, the BJP can ensure," Shah said, without naming deputy CM Ajit Pawar of the NCP.

The name of Sir Harley Dalrymple-Hay may not be widely known, but the Birbhum-born engineer, who had dreamt of an underwater railway in Kolkata as far back as 1921, will figure in a presentation on the underwater Metro tunnel made before the PM. Back then, the proposal had been considered too ambitious. Concerns were also raised about challenges of building such a tunnel in Kolkata's "alluvial, clayey, and lazy" soil. The hydrogeological conditions still hold, but the dream of building a tunnel beneath the Hooghly has finally come true.

"The under-river tunnel is 13 metres beneath the riverbed and 37 metres (more than 120ft) below the ground surface. There was a chance of running into things like lost anchors or ship wreckage. To avoid surprises, we did four boreholes in the river to study the soil," said S Paramasivan, MD of Afcons, the firm that has constructed the under-river section of the Metro line. Under-river tunnelling has been performed around the world with varying degrees of success. What makes this project different from the others is the persistent high water-table along the entire stretch. The geology of the region is unpredictable, Paramasivan said.

Sandeshkhali: ED attaches assets of Shahjahan and his associates

Continued from page 1

After evading capture for 55 days, Shahjahan was arrested by a Bengal police team on Feb 29, in compliance with an HC directive, and subsequently expelled from Trinamool for six years.

On Tuesday, ED proceeded to attach assets of Shahjahan and his associates in Sandeshkhali and Kolkata, totalling around Rs 12.7 crore. Sources said 14 immovable properties — including apartments, agriculture land, land for fishery, and two bank accounts — have been attached. The HC order noted that Shahjahan was "no ordinary citizen". "He is an elected representative of the public, holding the highest office in a zilla parishad... Thus, it has become imperative and absolutely necessary for doing complete justice and enforce-



After evading capture for 55 days, Trinamool leader Shahjahan was arrested by a Bengal police team on Feb 29

ing the fundamental rights of the public in general," it said.

The division bench also set aside a single-bench order for a joint SIT probe comprising CBI and Bengal police. The court noted suspicions surrounding the timing and content of the FIR filed against ED officers and highlighted discrepancies, including the delayed addition of Section 307 of IPC (attempt to murder). HC said state police had been "over-zealous for

reasons best known to them".

Additional solicitor general of India SV Raju advocated on Monday for the immediate transfer of the investigation to CBI, highlighting the ticking 15-day period of police custody. He cited an SC order restricting investigating agencies from holding an accused in custody for more than 15 days. However, Bengal advocate general Kishore Datta objected to the transfer.

MVA parties to meet Ambedkar, finalise seat-sharing talks today

Mumbai: A day before the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) meets to finalise its seat-sharing formula for the Lok Sabha polls, Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray on Tuesday and NCP (Sharad Pawar) chief Sharad Pawar were in talks to discuss the broad contours of the plan and find ways to accommodate demands by Congress and Prakash Ambedkar.

"MVA has to accommodate Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), so there was a discussion regarding seats to be given to them. There was a final discussion regarding 2-3 seats for which there was a dispute. Thackeray and Pawar had discussions on allotment of all 48 seats as soon as possible and planning joint campaign meetings," said a Sena (UBT) functionary.

Sources said when Pawar, Thackeray and Congress's Balasaheb Thorat meet on Wednesday, they are expected to include Ambedkar of VBA in final discussions on seat-sharing. Earlier, Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut who was present during the Uddhav-Thackeray meet said there will be no negotiations on seats already held by the three MVA parties. TNN

Nvidia CEO breaks hierarchy barriers, sees stock surge

By Sujaya Banerjee

Goldman Sachs has called chip manufacturer Nvidia "the most important stock on planet earth". And why not? The company's stock has soared 490% since Jan 2023. After its year-end earnings call on Feb 21, Nvidia's value jumped \$277 billion in a single day, topping Meta's \$197 billion. But who is the man leading the \$2-trillion AI darling and what's his management style? Nvidia CEO Jensen Huang is the 20th-richest man in the world. In recent times, Huang's radically different management style has caught the attention of many for the following reasons:

fers sharing the strategic direction of organisation with everyone. He believes that by doing so, he opens doors to feedback from different perspectives.

Collective Intelligence: Believes collective intelligence and co-creation are the best ways to harness expertise within the entire organisation and can lead to well-thought-out strategies.

Adaptability & Empowerment

While 40 'direct reports' may seem too large to manage directly, what Huang is attempting to do is keep the top leadership aligned and focused with high clarity to deliver performance. Non-preference of one-on-ones is to reduce communication confusions and presumptions that exist when conversations are carried out individually.

The Huang Style

Flat Structure: Nvidia CEO believes in maintaining a flat organisation structure with as many as 40 'direct reports' who he prefers not to meet 1:1, choosing group discussions instead.

Strategic Direction: Pre-

(The writer is CEO, Capstone People Consulting)

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El Nino weakening, but will keep global temp above normal: WMO

'Heat-Trapping Greenhouse Gases Are Unequivocally Main Culprit'

Vishwa Mohan@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The 2023-24 El Nino has peaked as "one of the five strongest on record", and though it is now gradually weakening, this weather phenomenon will continue to impact global climate in the coming months, leading to predicted "above normal" temperatures areas between March and May over almost all land, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) said on Tuesday. In India, the El Nino—climate pattern associated with warming of the ocean surface in central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean—impacted the monsoon season that ended up having 'below normal' rainfall last year.

Though its gradual weakening and then turning to a predicted neutral phase later in 2024 may be good news for monsoon this year, it would be premature to say anything on the fate of the sea-



VAGARIES OF NATURE: In India, the El Nino impacted the monsoon season that ended up having 'below normal' rainfall last year

sonal rainfall as it also depends on other climatic phenomena.

"Every month since June 2023 has set a new monthly temperature record, and 2023 was by far the warmest year on record. El Nino has contributed to these record temperatures, but heat-trapping greenhouse gases (GHG) are unequivocally the main culprit," said WMO secretary-general Celeste Saulo.

El Nino (means Little Boy in Spanish) occurs on average every two to seven years, and typically lasts nine to 12 months. It influences weather and storm patterns in different parts of the world. The current El Nino event, which developed in June 2023 and peaked in December, was at its strongest between Nov and Jan. It displayed a peak value of about 2 degree Celsius above the 1991-2020 average sea surface temperature for the eastern and central tropical Pacific Ocean. This made it one of the five strongest El Nino events ever, though it was weaker than the 1997/98 and 2015/2016 events. "El Nino typically has the greatest impact on the global climate in the second year of its development — in this instance 2024," said WMO.

It said there is about a 60% chance of El Nino persisting during March-May and a 80% chance of neutral conditions (neither El Nino or La Nina) in April to June. "There is a chance of La Nina developing later in the year, but the odds are currently uncertain," said WMO. La Nina (means Little Girl in Spanish) is a climate pattern associated with the periodic cooling of ocean surface temperatures in the central and east-central equatorial Pacific.

China continues to forward deploy troops along LAC

Continued from page 1

China continues to strengthen its conventional military and nuclear forces as well as its strategic moves in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), with the latest instance being the free military assistance pact with the Maldives on Monday," a top military officer said.

With the military confrontation in eastern Ladakh approaching the 4-year mark, China continues to forward deploy 50,000 to 60,000 troops in the western (Ladakh) and central sectors (Uttarakhand, Himachal) of the LAC as well as 90,000 soldiers in the east (Sikkim, Arunachal). All its air bases facing India — like Hotan, Kashgar, Gargunsa, Shigatse, Heping, Lingzhi and Lhasa-Gonggar — also now have additional fighters, bombers and AWACS (Airborne Warning & Control System). "They are not going to go back. Additional runways, hardened shelters and fuel dumps have all come up," a senior IAF officer said.

While India has matched the military deployments, and is working overtime to reduce the huge asymmetry in terms of infrastructure, has faltered on several counts.

One, India still does not get the requisite bang for its buck due to



An armoured military vehicle displayed in the Chinese pavilion at the 'World Defense Show 2024'

lack of concrete long-term plans to systematically build military capabilities. The defence budget is hobbled by the ballooning salary and pension bills. The Rs 6.2 lakh crore (\$75 billion) defence budget for 2024-25 allocates just 28% for military modernisation. Consequently, there continues to be operational shortages of fighters, submarines, helicopters, air defence weapons, anti-tank guided missiles and the like.

Two, India is yet to build an effective integrated war-fighting machinery due to the long delay in setting up theatre commands. While China has the Western Theatre Command to handle the entire LAC, India has as many as four Army and three IAF commands for

the northern borders. Three, the Integrated Rocket Force also remains a pipedream despite conflicts like the Russia-Ukraine war reinforcing the need for long-range conventional (non-nuclear) missiles for precision-targeting in depth.

Four, India also lags far behind in fields like space and cyber-warfare. Along with its long-standing thrust on 'informatised' and 'intellectualised' warfare, China has been developing anti-satellite weapons like direct ascent missiles, co-orbital killers, high-powered lasers and electro-magnetic pulse weapons.

Five, India is yet to approve the long-pending cases for a third 45,000-tonne aircraft carrier, let alone a more potent 65,000-tonne one, as well as nuclear-powered attack submarines, which will take several years to build. This when China is rapidly expanding its naval footprint as well as setting up logistical facilities in the IOR.

Then, of course, China continues to bolster Pakistan's military capabilities. Beijing has already delivered four Type 054A/P multi-role frigates to Islamabad, while deliveries of eight Yuan-class diesel-electric submarines are also slated to begin soon. The collusive China-Pakistan threat along the land borders is fast expanding to the maritime domain as well.

K'taka HC stays handing over of Jayalalithaa's gold to TN

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Bengaluru: The Karnataka high court on Tuesday stayed the CBI special court's directive to transfer 27 kgs of gold ornaments, which were seized from the Chennai residence of former chief minister late J Jayalalitha in the year 1997, to Tamil Nadu authorities.

The stay was given after hearing the petition filed by Deepa Jayakumar from Chennai, niece of Jayalalitha. In the petition, she prayed that she and her brother J Deepak are the legal heirs of her property and the orders of the special court should be stayed. "Staying the orders, high court adjourned the hearing to March 26 and I will file my objections by then," said special public prosecutor Kiran S Javali.

Earlier in February, the special court had directed principal secretary, department of home, Tamil Nadu and an IGP from the vigilance and anti corruption wing to present with six trunks on March 7 morning so that they can fill the articles, kept again in six trunks in treasury room of the court, and take them to Chennai.

However, Deepa prayed to set aside the special court orders, saying "Me and my brother are the legal heirs of late J Jayalalitha. At the time of her death (Dec 5, 2016), the appeal against her conviction (along with others) was pending before the Supreme Court and the court had observed that Jayalalitha's charges stayed abated. Therefore, we pray to set aside the orders of the special court to hand over the gold ornaments of Jayalalitha to Tamil Nadu," her petition read. The ornaments were seized from Jayalalitha's Poes garden residence and were moved to Bengaluru following the setting up of a special court to hear the disproportionate case against Jayalalitha and others.

Ex-CM Soren guilty of ignoring ED summonses

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New Delhi: Enforcement Directorate has received a booster from a Jharkhand court, which held former chief minister Hemant Soren prima facie guilty under IPC Section 174 for defying seven summonses issued by the probe agency. The ruling exposes Soren, already in judicial custody, to the risk of a jail term, one month each for the summonses he ignored.

ED has also invoked Section 174 against Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal for not complying with its repeated summonses related to its investigation into the alleged liquor scam. The matter is pending in a Delhi court, which has summoned Kejriwal on March 16 to decide the validity of ED's complaint.

The Jharkhand court has summoned Soren on April 3 when it is expected to pronounce its order on the culpability of the former CM.

During the last hearing on Kejriwal on Feb 7, additional chief metropolitan magistrate Divya Malhotra had said that "in view of the discussions, the complaint filed by the complainant (ED) and accompanied by the supporting documents discloses all the necessary ingredients constituting the offence punishable under Section 174 of IPC. Section 63(4) of PMLA enables prosecution under Section 174 of IPC for disobedience of any direction under Section 50 of the Act."

The judge also noted that people summoned by ED are bound to comply with the same by virtue of Section 50(3) of PMLA. Under Section 174, a court can summon a suspect evading investigation and enforce his/her presence before the enforcement agency. If the court is satisfied about the person's wilful avoidance, it may order imprisonment for one month, or a fine of Rs 500, or both for each violation.

'Legislative intent behind PMLA is not to categorise every offence'

Continued from page 1

In Nov last year, a two-judge SC bench in Pavana Dibbur case had ruled that Section 120B will become a 'scheduled offence' only when it is the collective intention to commit a scheduled offence. Justices A S Oka and Pankaj Mishra had said that the legislative intent behind PMLA is not to categorise every offence as a scheduled one by including 120B along with other charges.

On Tuesday, a bench of Justices Surya Kant and K V Vishwanath relied on the Dibbur judgment and quashed the ED summons, linked to the 2017 I-T raid, against Shivkumar and his aide Anjaneya Hanumanthiah. When the ED, through additional solicitor general S V Raju, pointed out that its plea for review of the Dibbur judgment is pending, the Justice Kant-led bench said if the ED's review plea is accepted, then it will have the liberty to revive the summons.

Radicalisation of B'luru prison inmates: NIA raids in 7 states

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday carried out raids at multiple locations across seven states in connection with the case relating to radicalisation of inmates in a Bengaluru prison.

NIA teams, starting early this morning, searched the premises of several suspects in the case, spread over nearly one-and-a-half dozen locations in Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Kerala, Punjab, Gujarat and West Bengal. The recoveries from the raids include 25 mobile phones, six laptops and four storage devices, incriminating documents, cash and currency of multiple foreign nations.

Though the raids came a day after NIA took over the probe into Friday's IED ex-

plosion at a Bengaluru cafe, sources ruled out any connection with the latest, low-intensity blast.

Among the suspects whose premises were subjected to raids on Tuesday are Naveed r/o Bengaluru, Syed Khail, r/o Bengaluru and Bijju, r/o Dakshina Kannada (all in

ON THE RADAR

Karnataka); Mayur Chakraborty r/o South 24 Parganas (West Bengal); Navjot Singh r/o Gurdaspur (Punjab); Harid Kumar r/o Mehiana (Gujarat); Karan Kumar r/o Ahmedabad, Gujarat; Johnson, r/o Kasargod, Kerala; and Musthaq Ahmed Sathikali and Mubith, both residents of Rannathapuram (Tamil Nadu) and Hassan Al Bassam r/o Chennai (Tamil Nadu). The prison radicalisation

case relates to the radicalisation of inmates of Bengaluru's Parappana Agrahara Central prison by a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist. It was registered by Bengaluru city police following the seizure of arms and ammunition including seven pistols, four hand grenades, one magazine and 45 live rounds, apart from four walkie-talkie sets. Later on October 25, 2023, NIA took over the case.

In a chargesheet filed in the case in January this year, NIA had named eight persons including absconding accused Junaid Ahmed and Salman Khan. NIA investigations revealed that the abductees had established a network of individuals across India to promote the activities of LeT and to route funds to various individuals anonymously.

How to protect NRI wives from fraud, domestic abuse

Mandatory Registration Of Marriages, Linking Of Passports Of Spouses Among Law Commission's Suggestions To Address Issues Affecting NRI Marriages

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Since 2015, more than 11,000 women married to Indians abroad have approached India's foreign missions with complaints of domestic crises. Many cases involve allegations of fraud and abuse. But in most instances, overseas officials are able to do only so much to help. That's because there is little in Indian law that supports an intervention. However, that might change as the Law Commission has thrown its weight behind a proposal to offer legal recourse in such cases.

In its report on 'Law on Matrimonial Issues Relating to NRIs and OCIs' submitted last month, the Commission flags the lack of a central law to deal with NRIs. Sec.498A of IPC (cruelty by husband, in-laws) remains the only means NRI wives have of seeking action against their husbands and in-laws over domestic abuse. But the writ of Indian statutes doesn't run in foreign jurisdictions, which are under no compulsion to deport an accused back home to face charges, the Commission says.

"Problems faced by Indian wives deserted by their NRI husbands", therefore, need a tailor-made fix, it concludes after its analysis of the Registration of Marriage of Non-Resident Indians Bill, 2019. Tabled in Rajya Sabha, the proposed legislation was referred to the Commission in April last year.

Harassment, Fraud Big Issues
If an NRI son-in-law is quite the sought-after match for Indian girls, a wife from back home is seen as the ideal companion for a son settled abroad. But "inter-country marriages" between NRIs or OCIs and Indian citizens have fuelled a "rapid rise in legal issues", the Commission says.

Harassment and abuse by the husband and his



family, husband going incommunicado after moving overseas, failure to obtain maintenance and child support from the spouse, child custody, and request for extradition or deportation of spouse to India.

TOI Explains
The bulk of complaints filed by NRI wives, the govt had told Parliament in 2019. The Commission found that "deceptive practices like false assurances, misrepresentation, and abandonment are commonly associated with these fraudulent unions".

Given the stakes involved in a shift abroad, there is an element of convenience that can sometimes drive such marriages. In Punjab, for instance, it's not uncommon to come across matrimonial ads seeking IELTS-qualified brides with the prospective groom's family promising to foot the bill for her studies abroad; a win-win since the bride gets to earn a foreign degree and her husband hitches a ride on a dependent visa to work abroad. Pragmatic as they are, such arrangements can end in desertion and allegations of fraud. In fact, Canada recently removed dependent visas for spouses of students in undergraduate courses to check the rampant use of this route to landing abroad.

What Law Commission Said
The 2019 Bill deals with the registration of marriages

between NRIs and Indian citizens. And while instances of aggrieved husbands knocking on court's doors for remedy are not unknown, the proposed law and the Commission's suggestions are geared towards addressing the issues faced by Indian wives abroad. Among the provisions discussed are the impounding of passports and the serving of e-summonses and attachment of property of "delinquent husbands".

But it begins with the need for a clear definition. To cast the net as wide as possible, the Commission says that an NRI should be defined as "a citizen of India, who resides outside India for any purpose whatsoever, save tourism".

Such unions should be registered within 30 days of solemnisation, in India or abroad, with travel details and overseas residential address included in the paperwork. But since storing or updating of such information is not mandated by existing Indian marriage registration laws, the Commission says a separate central NRI marriage registry be created for the purpose. It adds that a photocopy of the passport of the NRI husband "may be pasted in the marriage register... before the marriage certificate is actually issued to the parties".

It also suggests that the Passports Act, 1967, be

SIGNS OF TROUBLE

No. of complaints to external affairs ministry by women married to Indians overseas

Year	Number of Complaints
2015	796
2016	1,510
2017	1,498
2018	1,299
2019*	991
2020	1,165
2021	1,318
2022	1,669
2023*	1,187

*Data till Oct 31. Source: MEA

amended to make it mandatory for holders to declare their marital status and link their passport with that of the spouse.

But what about someone who is an Indian citizen at the time of marriage and then moves abroad? For that, it circles back to the need to ensure the compulsory registration of all marriages in India, whether they are performed under statutory or personal laws.

As for divorce proceedings involving Indian wives abroad, it notes that if an Indian settled abroad marries in India, the marriage is to be governed by the Indian law under which they have married. If the parties have become foreign citizens and obtained a decree from a foreign court then the Indian court would apply rules of international law to decide the matter. The Commission says that the NRI marriage law should also cover aspects like child custody, rehabilitation, etc.

To ensure the appearance of spouses settled abroad during court hearings, the Commission says that the provision for serving of e-summonses included in the yet-to-be-notified Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (BNSS), or the new CrPC, be extended to NRIs. It also wants the provision for attachment of the property of a proclaimed offender laid down in BNSS to cover NRIs.

Muizzu: Indian troops, even in civilian attire, barred after May 10

Male: Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu has said that no Indian military personnel will remain in the country after May 10, be it in uniform or civilian clothing.

While addressing the residential community of Baa Atoll Eydhafushi, Muizzu also said that people who spread false rumours are trying to twist the situation.

Muizzu said, "That these people (Indian military) are not departing, that they are returning after changing their uniforms into civilian clothing. We must not indulge such thoughts that instill doubts in our hearts and spread lies," The Edition reported.

Muizzu made the statement after opposition started criticising govt, asserting that Indian personnel sent to Maldives as civilians are in reality military officials out of uniform and that govt has no way to discover otherwise. Muizzu said that Indian military personnel have started leaving Maldives after discussions held between the two nations. His statement comes as



Muizzu said Indian military personnel have started leaving Maldives after discussions held between the two nations

the two nations have agreed to remove Indian military presence in Maldives by May 10. The first group of Indian troops who have departed from Maldives are Indian military personnel operating helicopters in Addu City.

Indian military personnel present in Haa Dhaalu Atoll Hanimaadhoo and Laamu Atoll Kahdhoo are also expected to depart from Maldives ahead of May 10.

The first batch of Indian technical personnel has arrived in Maldives to replace existing personnel. ANI

India ensuring no one exercises hegemony in Indian Ocean: Rajnath

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Panaji: In a veiled reference to China's expansionist policy, defence minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday said India would not tolerate hegemony or coercion in Indian Ocean Region (IOR), and would stand with allies when their sovereignty is threatened.

Singh, who was in Goa to inaugurate new administrative and training building of Naval War College at Verem, and aircraft carrier piers at Karwar naval base, emphasised that if India was stronger, it would not only allow neighbouring nations to economically grow, but would also strengthen democracy and rule of law in the region.

"India is ensuring that all neighbouring countries and maritime stakeholders of Indian Ocean are helped in protecting their autonomy and sovereignty," he said, adding that Navy was operationally ready to fulfil its responsibility in IOR by providing full assistance to littoral countries. The minister also spoke



Rajnath Singh at the opening of a new wing of Naval War College in Goa's Verem on Tuesday

about Navy playing a role in safeguarding the country's interests in the Indo-Pacific region. "Our Navy ensures that no country, with its overwhelming economic and military power, can suppress our friendly countries or crush their sovereignty in the Indo-Pacific region. The readiness with which Navy stands with our allies provides substantive strength to India's global values," he said.

Singh also witnessed demonstration of "twin aircraft carrier operations" by new indigenous INS Vikrant and older, Russian-origin INS Vikramaditya, on western seaboard, while addressing the commanders' conference.

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		Math/Science	2
		Kannada	2
		Physical Education	1
	Nursery		2
Office Superintendent (Accounts)		1	
Special School	Special Educator		4
	Trained Graduate Teacher	English	1
Hindi		1	
Social Studies		2	
Counsellor		1	
Physical Education		2	
English		3	
Primary Teacher	Hindi	2	
	Kannada	1	
	Maths	4	
	Physical Education	3	
	Dance	1	
	Nursery		2

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Finance & Accounts, Document Verification / Design Verification / Any other related to MI Scheme, MIS - Field Farmer Service Cell, Project, IT-System Purchase & Admin, Secretarial & Legal	Chief Financial Officer Deputy Manager Officers Jr. Officer Assistant

Note: Remuneration will commensurate with industry standard. For more details pertaining to Job Description, interested candidates may kindly visit our website www.ggrc.co.in at Career Section.

HR Department, GGRC

GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY
(Under the Uttar Pradesh Private Universities Act No. 12 of 2019)

NAAC A+
Accreditation in First Cycle

INVITES DISTINGUISHED ACADEMICIANS, RESEARCHERS, SCHOLARS & CORPORATE LEADERS TO BE A PART OF THIS WORLD CLASS UNIVERSITY FOR THE POST OF

DEAN RESEARCH:

- To be responsible to Head R&D ecosystem of the University.
- To make sustainable strategies and efforts for maximizing the tangible research outcomes in alignment with NAAC/NIRF/QS etc.
- To mentor and coordinate Publications, Patents and Funded Projects with a time line based strategic plan and execution
- To create an ecosystem where the creativity of the students and faculty are harnessed to innovative works
- Promoting research funding culture in faculty by mentoring them to get research grants from various national and international funding agencies (Govt. & Non Govt. Agencies).
- IPR policy implementation to commercialization of patents
- Create Industry interface for industry driven research and innovations
- Promote Interdisciplinary research and research collaborations
- To leverage internal peer review mechanisms in research
- To disseminate and implement good research practice and ethics
- To organize & conduct departmental workshops on IPR, Research Methodologies and Skill Development
- Responsible to achieve quarterly /annually targets related to research activities
- Professors/Officials from government institute like DRDO, SERB, DST, CSIR, DBT will be preferred

RESEARCH CO-ORDINATORS:

- To work with the Dean Research and the Heads of Departments of their respective School, to ensure the strongest possible submissions to the Research Excellence Framework
- To promote Research and represent the Faculty at the School level as required
- Responsible for administration of Undergraduate Research Schemes and Opportunities
- To be responsible to achieve research related targets of respective Schools/ Departments

DIRECTOR - ENTREPRENEURSHIPS, START-UP AND INCUBATION CENTRE:

- The candidate should create a strong passion to incubate start-ups /spin-out businesses and build a support network that stimulates entrepreneurial spirit at the Incubation centre at Galgotias campus
- Should create a start-up process lifecycle and act as a key innovation mentor for our students and faculty by building strategic alliances with all stakeholders and deliver support particularly from investors and government bodies
- The candidate should be able to develop a mentor network for the incubator and work to make the incubated venture successful

MANAGER SCHEME:

- Should have sound knowledge of project inviting and start-up incubation.

DEAN SEED MONEY, CONSULTANCY & CORPORATE TRAINING:

- To assess the related SWOT analysis & provide needed intervention, support departments to formulate strategic planning and executing the plan
- To improve research culture in the institute through seed grant schemes
- To formulate strategic planning for consultancy & corporate training and executing the plan using SOP and Documentation
- To provide needed administrative support to all faculty in proposing and executing their seed money, consultancy & corporate training projects including documentation as per SOP
- Collaboration and MoU with industry for faculty members, Corporate training and consultancy, Technology transfer and impact assessment
- To develop an standard operating procedure each process for proper execution
- To develop the facilities & resources in university & conduct Train The Trainer (T3) programs
- To impart corporate training throughout the year & generate funds

The candidates whose credentials match the above mentioned criteria may send their resume/CV within one week of the date of this advertisement to recruitments.dean@galgotiasuniversity.edu.in Deserving candidates may be considered for higher emoluments.

DIRECTOR HR

GALGOTIAS UNIVERSITY
www.galgotiasuniversity.edu.in
Plot No. 2, Sector 17A, Yamuna Expressway
Distt, Gautam Buddha Nagar
Phone No: 0120-4806860

मध्य प्रदेश पावर जनरेटिंग कंपनी लिमिटेड
(मध्य प्रदेश शासन का उपक्रम)

ब्लॉक नं. 09, शक्ति भवन, रामपुर, जबलपुर - 482008

क्र. का.नि.(मा.संसा. एवं प्रशा.)/भर्ती/2023-24/1072 जबलपुर, दि. 04.03.2024

सहायक अभियंता (उत्पा.) के पदों पर (नियमित आधार पर) सीधी भर्ती हेतु विज्ञापन

मध्य प्रदेश पावर जनरेटिंग कंपनी लिमिटेड (म.प्र.पॉ.ज.क.लि.) पूर्ववर्ती म.प्र. राज्य विद्युत माडल की उत्तरवर्ती कंपनी है एवं म.प्र. शासन के पूर्ण स्वामित्व का उपक्रम है तथा प्रदेश में विद्युत उत्पादन के क्षेत्र में कार्यरत है। म.प्र.पॉ.ज.क.लि. अपने ताप एवं जल विद्युत संयंत्रों के संचालन-संभारण, नवीन संयंत्रों के निर्माण एवं अन्य आवश्यकताओं हेतु सहायक अभियंता (उत्पादन) के पद पर, सीधी भर्ती के माध्यम से चयन एवं नियुक्ति हेतु आवेदन आमंत्रित करती है।

स.क्र.	संवर्ग	पद नाम	पद कोड	विज्ञापित पद
1.	सहायक	सहायक अभियंता (उत्पा.) - मैकेनिकल	P01	09
2.	अभियंता	सहायक अभियंता (उत्पा.) - इलेक्ट्रिकल	P02	25
3.	(उत्पादन)	सहायक अभियंता (उत्पा.) - इलेक्ट्रॉनिक्स	P03	08

कुल 42

विज्ञापित पद हेतु विस्तृत नियम एवं शर्तें, चयन प्रक्रिया, आवश्यक शैक्षणिक योग्यता, आयु सीमा एवं अन्य जानकारी हेतु मध्य प्रदेश पावर जनरेटिंग कंपनी लिमिटेड की आधिकारिक वेबसाइट (<https://mppgel.mp.gov.in>) में "Career" लिंक में क्लिक कर विज्ञापित पद हेतु प्रदान की गई नियम पुस्तिका का अवलोकन करें।

महत्वपूर्ण तिथियाँ:
ऑनलाइन आवेदन दिनांक 06.03.2024 (10:30 Hrs.) से दिनांक 31.03.2024 (23:59 Hrs.) तक केवल ऑनलाइन माध्यम से, एम.पी. ऑनलाइन की वेबसाइट (<http://www.mpponline.gov.in>) पर स्वीकार किये जायेंगे। अन्य किसी माध्यम से प्राप्त आवेदन मान्य नहीं किये जायेंगे।

म.प्र. माध्यम/14111/2024 **CHIEF ENGINEER (HR&A)**

Defence Electronics and beyond

BHARAT ELECTRONICS LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Enterprise under the Ministry of Defence)
(CIN: L32309KA1954GOI000787)

Bharat Electronics Limited, a Navratna Company and India's Premier Professional Electronics Company under the Ministry of Defence, requires the following personnel on contract basis for NS (S&CS) SBU:

Post	Post Code	Place of Posting	No of posts	Reservations	Qualification	Post Qualification Experience	Consolidated remuneration per month	
PROJECT ENGINEER-I	PE-TSCSK	Kochi	04	UR - 3 OBC - 2 SC - 1	Full time B.E./B.Tech in the discipline of Electronics Engineering/ Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering/ Electronics & Communication Engineering/ Electronics & Instrumentation/ Electrical and Electronics Engineering with 55% & above for General / EWS / OBC candidates and Pass Class for SC/ST/PwBD Candidates.	Two Years of post-qualified relevant industrial work Experience.	1st year-Rs.40,000/- 2nd year-Rs.45,000/- 3rd year-Rs.50,000/- 4th year-Rs.55,000/- (if extended)	
	PE-TSCSM	Mumbai	02					
PROJECT ENGINEER-I	PE-SSI	PAN India	02	OBC-1 SC-1	Full time B.E./B.Tech in the disciplines of Electronics & Communication/ Electronics & Telecommunication/ Electronics & Instrumentation/ Electrical and Electronics Engineering with 55% & above for General / EWS / OBC candidates and Pass Class for SC/ST/PwBD Candidates			
	PE-SM	Vizag Bangalore	01 01	EWS-1 ST-1				
TRAINEE ENGINEER-I	TE-TSCSK	Kochi	04	UR - 3 EWS -1 OBC -1 SC - 1	Full time B.E./B.Tech in the disciplines of Electronics Engineering/ Electronics & Telecommunication Engineering/ Electronics & Communication Engineering/ Electronics & Instrumentation/ Electrical and Electronics Engineering with 55% & above for General / EWS / OBC candidates and Pass Class for SC/ST/PwBD Candidates	0 to 6 months of post-qualified relevant industrial work Experience.	1st Year-Rs.30,000/- 2nd Year-Rs.35,000/- 3rd Year-Rs.40,000/- (if extended)	
	TE-TSCSM	Mumbai	02					
TRAINEE ENGINEER-I	TE-ICS	Kochi	05	UR - 3 SC - 2 OBC -1 ST-1	Full time B.E./B.Tech in the disciplines of Electronics/ Mechanical/ Information Science /Information Technology/ Computer Science with 55% & above for General / EWS / OBC candidates and Pass Class for SC/ST/PwBD Candidates			Min 06 months of post qualified relevant work experience.

Last date of application is 23.03.2024. For more detailed instructions to apply, please visit CAREERS link on the official website www.bel-india.in.
Dated: 06.03.2024

Sd/-
Manager-HR(NS-S&CS)

'Har Ek Kaam Desh Ke Naam'

COAL INDIA LIMITED
A Maharatna Company

RECRUITMENT OF MEDICAL EXECUTIVES 2024

Senior Medical Specialist (E4 Grade)
Medical Specialist (E3 Grade)
Senior Medical Officer (E3 Grade)
Senior Medical Officer Dental (E3 Grade)

Coal India Limited (CIL), a 'Maharatna' Company is a prominent player in the global energy landscape with operations spanning across eight states of the country. During the year 2022-23, CIL produced 703 Million tons of coal, which is approximately 79% of India's total coal production. This resulted in profit of Rs. 28124 Crores (after Tax). CIL is also diversifying and expanding to other verticals such as solar power, thermal power, fertiliser, surface coal gasification, coal bed methane, critical minerals etc., which will ensure greater value addition; and thereby, improving operational and financial performance for the long-term in sustainable manner.

With a manpower of around 230000, CIL is one of the largest employer and it strive to make medical care accessible to all employees and its stake holders. To ensure access to healthcare, it has strong network of 70 fully equipped Hospitals with 4362 Beds, 366 Dispensaries, 564 Ambulance. To further strengthen these facilities CIL is looking for young energetic doctors who are ready to work in challenging environment of CIL.

If you are ready to be a part of them Mahanadi Coalfields Limited/CIL Please visit www.mahanadicoal.in for details.

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CHANDIGARH INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT LTD.

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION NO.3/2024 & 4/2024
For Engagement of Company Secretary & AM(Fin.) CHIAL

Chandigarh International Airport Limited (CHIAL) invites applications from experienced professionals for the post of Company Secretary & AM(Fin) CHIAL on a fixed term contract basis.

S.No.	NAME OF THE POST	NO. OF POST	Term Duration
1.	Company Secretary	1	3years
2.	Assistant Manager (Finance)	2	4years

For detailed information, please visit Careers Section of CHIAL website i.e. www.chial.org

IMPORTANT DATES
Last date of Submission of Applications for both the above mentioned post is **31.3.2024**

Chief Executive Officer

DELHI METRO RAIL CORPORATION LTD.
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of NCT of Delhi)

INDICATIVE ADVERTISEMENT

Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Limited, The Lifeline of Delhi, invites application for the following post-

Designation	No. of Post(s)	Pay scale/ Remuneration	Mode of Induction	Last Date of Receipt of Application
Software Developer	Three (03)	Rs. 63,112/-	Contractual Basis	12.03.2024

This advertisement is only indicative. The detailed vacancy notifications and particulars regarding the eligibility criterion, qualification, experience, age limit, mode of selection, etc., are available in the career section of the DMRC website www.delhimetrorail.com

Executive Director (HR)
Delhi Metro Rail Corporation Ltd.
Metro Bhawan, Fire Brigade Lane,
Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

Advertisement No.: DMRC/940/2024

Sido Kanhu Murmu University, Dumka

Press Release

In pursuance of letter no. 4/वि.1-135/2016(अंश)- 285 dated- 22.02.2024 of Department of Higher and Technical Education, online applications are invited through Chancellor Portal (<https://jharkhanduniversities.nic.in/home/recruitment>) for appointment of Need Based Assistant Professor (against regular and backlog quota) till regular appointment is made by JPSC.

For detailed information, applicants are requested to visit the university website www.skmu.ac.in

By the order of Vice Chancellor
Sd/-
Registrar

CENTRE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF TELEMATICS
C-DOT Campus, Mehrauli, New Delhi - 110030

Adv.No.CDOT/HR/REC/2024/03/01 Date: 06.03.2024

VACANCY NOTICE FOR THE POST OF DEPUTY REGISTRAR, SR. MANAGER - PURCHASE & FINANCIAL OFFICER ON DEPUTATION BASIS AND MANAGER - PURCHASE & ADMIN ASSOCIATES ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS AND ADVISOR POSTS ON CONTRACT BASIS

C-DOT invites applications on Deputation/Direct Recruitment/Contract basis for the following Posts.

Sl.No.	Name of Post	Pay Matrix & Level	Post
1.	Deputy Registrar - On Deputation	Level 13 of 7 CPC	01
2.	Sr. Manager - Purchase - On Deputation	Level 13 of 7 CPC	01
3.	Hindi Officer - On Deputation	Level 10 of 7 CPC	01
4.	Admin Associates - On Direct Recruitment	Level 6/7 of 7 CPC	04
5.	Manager-Purchase - On Direct Recruitment	Level 12 of 7 CPC	01
6.	Advisor SG	Details are available on website (on Contract)	
7.	Advisor Railways	Details are available on website (on Contract)	

Please visit C-DOT website 'careers' for the detailed advertisement with Job Description and link to apply online for the post through Direct Recruitment (www.cdol.in). Applications for the posts on Deputation and Contract should be submitted offline.

Last date to apply for the above posts is 30 days after publication in Employment News (English). All Government candidates are to route their applications through proper channel as per details given in the website.

Sd/-
Registrar

EdCIL (India) Limited
(A Mini Ratna Category - I (CPSE, Govt. of India)
EdCIL House, 18A, Sector-16A, Noida-201301 (U.P.)
Tel.: (0120) 2970206 & 2970207, Fax No.: (0120) 2970209

RECRUITMENT OF TGT & PGT TEACHER TRAINERS FOR DEPLOYMENT TO SRI LANKA

EdCIL on behalf of Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India, invites applications from experienced Indian TGT and PGT Teacher Trainers for the following subjects:

- English
- Mathematics
- Biology
- Physics and
- Chemistry

Eligibility Criteria & Remuneration: Refer EdCIL's website for detailed advertisement: www.edcilindia.co.in / <https://edciltteacherrecruitment.com>

The candidates should be fluent in English and Tamil both. Apply online from 5th March 2024 to 20th April 2024 on: <https://edciltteacherrecruitment.com>

Dates of interview: The dates of interview will be communicated to the shortlisted candidates on their registered email.

For clarifications e-mail to: Project Manager (Sri Lanka Recruitment) at the above email address.

Advertisement No. 19/2024

Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board

Invites applications for the post of

MANAGING DIRECTOR

In

Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Ltd.

Last date of submission of application by the applicant is **27th March, 2024**

Last date of forwarding of application by the Nodal officers to PESB is **05th April, 2024**

For details login to website
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

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All ACROSS INDIA on the following dates, Candidate can select any one date as per convenience. The Exam will be conducted ONLINE WITH REMOTE PROCTORING. For attempting exam- candidate will require any one device - Laptop/Desktop/Tablets. Additionally a Webcam inbuilt or externally connected is mandatory along with Mic. Applications are open for both Male & Female Candidates.

Exam Dates: 22nd to 29th Apr. 2024
12th PCM marks NOT LESS than 65% & in English 50%.
Both eye sight 6/6 without visual aids (For Deck Cadet)
No color blindness.

Candidates awaiting 12th result can apply. Please apply on our website

Registration starts 06th Mar, 2024
Registration ends 14th Apr, 2024

<http://www.msccs.com/indiacadets/> OR E-mail us at - cadet@msccs.com

UTTAR PRADESH THE GROWTH MANTRA



ODOP: THINK GLOBAL, BE LOCAL.

The ODOP policy in Uttar Pradesh has sparked economic growth by empowering local communities, preserving cultural heritage, and fostering innovation across various sectors, paving the way for inclusive and sustainable development

Mayura Shanbaug

The intricate Chikankari embroidery of Lucknow, the world-renowned carpets of Bhadohi, and a host of products and services have turned into a major export potential for Uttar Pradesh and India. Uttar Pradesh, the state with a geographical expanse of 2.5 lakh sq km and population of nearly 16% of India, has fast turned into an Uttar Pradesh adding to India's export numbers. The culturally vibrant state armed with its 'One District, One Product scheme' has leveraged a crucial scheme to fuel India's economic ambitions. From fertile agricultural lands feeding millions, to the silent industrial



KALANAMAK RICE SIDDHARTHANAGAR



SILK PRODUCTS OF VARANASI



BLACK POTTERY OF AZAMGARH



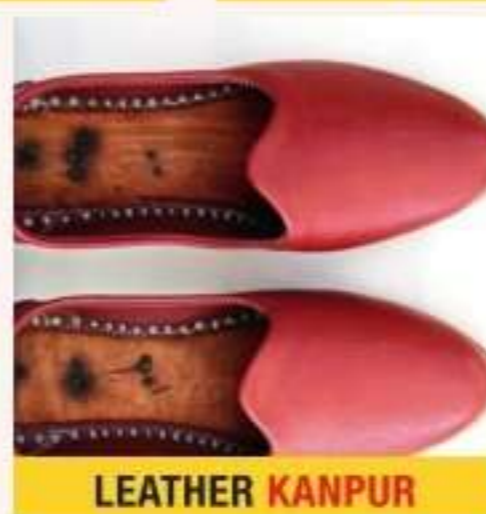
MOONJ AMETHI



PERFUME KANNAUJ



JAGGERY AYODHYA



LEATHER KANPUR



BANGLES FIROZABAD



“One District, One Product” is a commendable initiative of the Uttar Pradesh Government, which will safeguard the well-being of all those associated with MSMEs, especially weaving and handicrafts

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

“ODOP is not only promoting products of each district, but also giving them a new design along with access to the global market

YOGI ADITYANATH
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh



products - Jaggery, Desi Ghee, Amla, Banana, Banana fiber products, Kala-namak Chawal, etc.

UP ENGINEERING A NEW INDIA

Although the ODOP scheme may not be solely responsible for UP's rising popularity among electronic and engineering goods manufacturers, the scheme certainly is a mainstay. Cities such as Ghaziabad, Noida, Kanpur, and Aligarh have succeeded from the ODOP's economic vision. Aligarh's lock industry, for example, has witnessed a rise in exports and increased adoption of automation. Similarly, Moradabad's brassware industry has seen improved product quality and market access due to design interventions and brand promotion schemes.

The success of ODOP in boosting the engineering goods sector hinges on several factors. Streamlining approvals for setting up businesses, providing access to affordable credit, and fostering a culture of innovation has always been crucial.

national and global market.

REINVIGORATING TEXTILE & HANDICRAFTS

The biggest benefactor of ODOP in UP are the state's artisans employed in textile and handicraft sector. The success of the scheme can be gauged from the state government's relentless pursuit of improving productivity for artisans. In 2018 alone, the UP government distributed loans of over Rs 1,000 crores to nearly 12,000 artisans across UP. Sensing the need for a viable eco-system, the state government onboarded e-commerce majors such as Amazon, Wipro, GE Healthcare, Bombay Stock Exchange, National Stock Exchange, as well as the Quality Council of India to encourage partnerships with MSMEs and artists.

Textile products such as Banarasi silk, Zari Silk, Jute products, power-looms, and block printing have witnessed phenomenal return in recent years. This can be understood from the investment made by ODOP under Chikankari artwork renowned in UP. The 'Chikankari Cluster Development Scheme' in Lucknow received an investment of Rs 150 crores. This scheme focuses on promoting the exquisite Chikankari embroidery, a traditional art form synonymous with Lucknow's cultural identity. By providing training to artisans, enhancing infrastructure facilities, and facilitating market linkages, the scheme aims to preserve and propagate this cherished heritage craft while generating employment opportunities for skilled artisans.

Furthermore, the 'Handloom Cluster Development Scheme' in Azamgarh district, with an investment of Rs. 100 crores has rejuvenated the handloom sector by modernizing infrastructure, enhancing design capabilities, and facilitating access to credit and marketing channels for weavers. Similarly, schemes promoting brassware in Moradabad, carpet weaving in Bhadohi, and pottery in Khurja have also received significant investments under the ODOP initiative.

ODOP: ALLIED BENEFITS

ODOP has encouraged investors, innovators, and integrators. Having an umbrella-model has complimented the state's targeted approach of identifying and promoting unique products in each district. By partnering with investors, the

state has also integrated potential sectors with established production, infrastructure, and government support. The ODOP scheme naturally has resulted in an unparalleled ease in doing business what with the reduced timeline in approvals, land acquisition, and swifter access to credit. Also, by prioritizing infrastructure development within designated clusters, the state has cemented its position as an attractive destination to do business.

ODOP fosters collaboration between industry and academia, providing skill development programs and fostering innovation through knowledge sharing and research partnerships. ODOP fosters job creation directly in manufacturing, processing, and allied services, while indirectly impacting tourism, transportation, and logistics. The initiative provides a supportive ecosystem for startups focused on agriculture, handicrafts, and allied sectors, with access to government grants, mentorship, and market linkages.

By unleashing innovation and economic integration, the scheme has also pushed the outlook for growth of other sectors in the state. Sectors such as Tourism, BFSI, technology and trade have not only seen a spurt in investments, but also better value for their buck. The ODOP initiative is not just about promoting specific products; it's about unlocking the immense potential of Uttar Pradesh. As the market matures, the impact of ODOP is expected to snowball, transforming Uttar Pradesh into a vibrant hub of economic activity and opportunity.

revolution, the state's ODOP scheme has fast turned into a success story worth emulating for other Indian states.

Launched in 2018, ODOP empowers each of Uttar Pradesh's 75 districts to focus on a unique product, leveraging local specialties and fostering grass-root innovation. ODOP celebrates local heritage while propelling it towards global markets. ODOP's economic impact to the state economy goes beyond the export potential of billions. The scheme has infused a spark in its local artisans, thereby creating a wave of self-reliance and economic mobility. This is not just a story of economic growth; rather it's a testament to the power of empowering local communities. This UP model is a classic case study for inclusive and sustainable development across India and beyond.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT WITH ODOP

The success of ODOP can be gauged from how it has emerged as role model worth emulating in adjacent states such as Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Manipur and Telangana. Within one year of announcing the scheme, the UP government showed an increase in exports by 28%. The scheme also channelised new employment avenues and opportunities for the MSME sector. Between 2017-20, an additional 28,000 jobs were created and financial assistance worth Rs 2,600 crores was channelised.

The broad impact beyond numbers with ODOP has been the revival and preservation of cultural heritage, creating sustainable livelihoods, empowerment local communities, and showcasing Uttar Pradesh's unique identity on the global stage. The scheme succeeded, thanks to the scheme touching across various industries and departments as an over-arching umbrella initiative. The initial budget for this scheme was Rs 500 crore.

What set apart UP's approach was its continual reinvestment in the scheme. As of 2018-19 state budget, a provision of Rs 250 crores was earmarked towards the ODOP scheme. In 2021-22, and despite the pandemic impact, the state reserved Rs 112 crores towards the scheme. Encouragingly, UP reserved

Rs 100 crores of this towards skill development alone. Rather than targeting individual sectors, the state categorized schemes broadly dividing them into - market development assistance, branding scheme, financial assistance scheme, CFC (Common facility center) scheme, and skill development scheme. UP also integrated access to other departments such as Commerce, Finance, Industries, and MSME for swifter approvals.

NEW FARM REVOLUTION

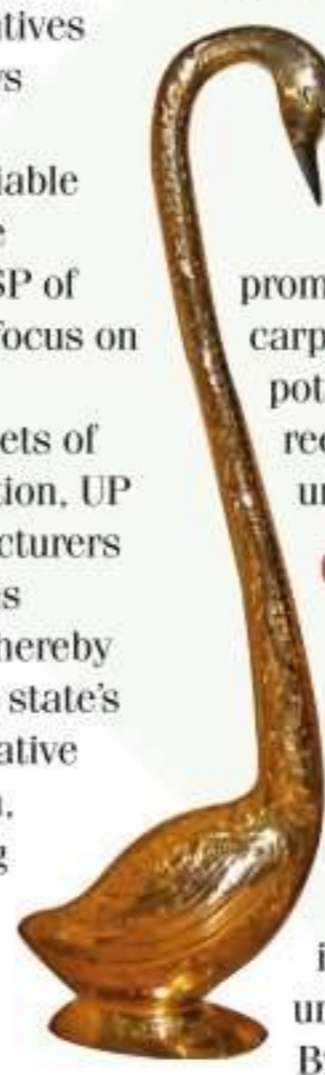
Since ODOP identifies and promotes unique products specific to each district, the biggest benefactor has been the farming sector. A targeted approach allows for tailored interventions, addressing the distinct challenges and needs of each region. For example, Malihabad, renowned for its mangoes, the ODOP facilitates improved farming practices, high-yielding varieties, and even cold storage facilities to minimize post-harvest losses.

Besides encouraging MSMEs and innovators with funding, the ODOP Cluster Development Scheme provides financial assistance to a host of agro-processing centers such as establishing common processing facilities, storage units, and even transportation networks. This streamlines operations, reduces costs, and improves product quality, making farmers more competitive. By connecting farmers with organized retailers, exporters, and e-commerce platforms, ODOP has improved the market reach and offered fair prices to cultivators. Additionally, branding initiatives such as Geographical Indications (GIs) have orbited Brand-UP to the next level.

By addressing key bottlenecks and enhancing quality, ODOP has led to a significant increase in the volume and variety of agricultural exports from Uttar Pradesh. For example, exports of Banarasi silk sarees and Agra Petha have witnessed a notable rise. The scheme has also encouraged the widening of India's export basket by infusing previously unheard

Additionally, the UP-government's focus on provisioning effective marketing and branding initiatives such as organizing tradeshows have established UP-made engineering products as a reliable and competitive avenue in the global market. The biggest USP of ODOP, however has been its focus on skilling initiatives.

By focusing on the core tenets of skill development and innovation, UP has empowered local manufacturers as well as new players such as Samsung to create jobs and thereby contribute significantly to the state's industrial growth. As the initiative evolves and expands its reach, the impact on the engineering goods sector is likely to become even more pronounced, positioning UP as a formidable player in the



PICS: DIPR



“One District One Product (ODOP) is an initiative which has a great potential for inclusion of grassroot artisans, MSMEs, agro processors in the India growth story. Uttar Pradesh has taken a lead in the ODOP scheme which can be emulated by other states as well. Fiscal incentives, accompanied by technology upgradation and ease of doing business can really integrate the ODOP scheme into global supply chain with signature regional features of the products. Hand holding by different state and central agencies and credit support by banks can make the scheme a big success

DEEPAK SOOD
Secretary General, ASSOCHAM

The One District One Product Scheme (ODOP) stands as a transformative stride towards elevating Uttar Pradesh and India into manufacturing powerhouses. Rooted in the ethos of indigenisation, self-reliance, creativity, and fostering an efficient rural economy, ODOP perfectly aligns with the government's vision of Make in India and Vocal for Local, extending its impact globally. The Government of Uttar Pradesh aims to establish product-specific traditional industrial hubs in all districts of UP, encouraging indigenous specialties like Bhadohi carpets, Kannauj perfumes, etc. ODOP is set to not only enhance exports but also strengthen rural and semi-urban manufacturing, turning each district into a thriving export hub and propelling traditional businesses towards exponential growth. As ODOP paves the way, it exemplifies how the right policy framework can transform local gems into global phenomena, fostering a sustainable and inclusive economic ecosystem

AKASH GOENKA
Chairman, CII UP State and Director, Goldie Group

TECH I'D LIKE TO SEE

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Sanjay Jain CHIEF TECHNOLOGY & PRODUCT OFFICER - DBAT, FREECHARGE



Sora gives another glimpse into AI's astonishing abilities

Video-based industries will immediately benefit; eventually, it could help solve bigger problems

Akhil.George@timesgroup.com

OpenAI recently gave us all a peek into its latest generative AI offering Sora, and it was mind-blowing.

Sora can generate complex scenes with multiple characters, specific types of motion, and accurate details of the subject and background—all in videos with different resolutions and aspect ratios.

Unlike traditional AI models that rely on static representations, Sora introduces dynamic simulations. This allows it to simulate complex scenarios with a level of detail and realism previously unattainable.

While Sora uses a transformer architecture similar to the ones used in GPT models, Rahul Agarwalla, co-founder of SenseAI Ventures,

PRODUCT DEVT, TESTING WILL BECOME MUCH EASIER



This image is a still from a 1-minute video created by Sora. The prompt was: A stylish woman walks down a Tokyo street filled with warm glowing neon and animated city signage.

With text-to-video, designers and animators clearly have a new tool at their disposal. The advertising industry, filmmaking, gaming, and media & entertainment more generally have already been looking at these emerging technologies



Arun 'Rak' Ramchandran | PRESIDENT & GLOBAL HEAD - CONSULTING & GENAI PRACTICE, HI-TECH & PROFESSIONAL SERVICES, HEXAWARE

scenarios or even fantastical realms for games, Sora tries to bridge the gap between language and visual content.

OpenAI's Sora, which still not available fully in the public domain, is certainly an exciting development. For the first time we can actually create up to a minute long video with vivid details and hi-definition quality.

What arguably sets Sora apart is its ability to simulate the physical world quite closely. It has been trained on scientific principles and physics and can create scenes that mimic real-world interactions.

says that interestingly it ditched the standard diffusion model construct used by most video generators like Stable Diffusion and has a new diffusion plus transformer architecture which OpenAI claims gives it a gain in performance.

gets a lot of scenarios wrong, but the sheer breadth of complex scenarios that the model does get right is what has impressed fans and critics alike.

How sabbatical helped Aarathi refresh herself

Sree.Mani@timesgroup.com

Aarathi Panikker went on a sabbatical because she wanted to set right her health which she had neglected because of long hours at work at EY GDS (Global Delivery Service) where she was a technology consultant.

After a year, when Aarathi figured she was fully fit, physically and mentally, she joined back. This time, she was put on a project different from the one she had worked on before going on a break.

"I was a front-end developer before going on my sabbatical. The project I got when I returned was to work at the back end. It involved dealing with data, and it was more on the business-side of things, it was about experience design, development, and testing till the stage of deployment.

CAREER COMEBACK

Keep doing your courses regularly even when you're on a sabbatical. That will help you when you return to work.

Aarathi Panikker | MANAGER, TECHNOLOGY CONSULTING, EY

between clients and the technical team, one who understands the business requirements and passes them on to the design, development, and testing teams," she says.

Aarathi first hit the gym, went for physiotherapy. She loved autocross racing, and spent a good amount of time in her car doing those competitions.

In fact, that is her advice to anyone who



MIQ HACKATHON - TECHIES DEVELOP GEN-AI TOOLS



Winning Team Standing (L-R): Anish P B, Srijan Mehrotra, Akash Srivastava, Biddappa Muthappa; Sitting (L-R): Ritwik Kulkarni, Divya Prabha M, Manish Pathak

HackIQ, the annual hackathon hosted by MIQ's Centre of Excellence in India, attracted 24 internal teams. Teams had to use generative AI to revolutionise product and solution development, and they had 24 hours to do it.

WINNING TEAM BUILDS CAMPAIGN VIRTUAL ASSISTANT

The winner was team 'We are Groot'. They developed a campaign virtual assistant called Rocket Responder. The team began by researching the full campaign lifecycle in order to understand the pain points of different teams at MIQ, the UK-based technology company that's into programmatic advertising and marketing.

"We broke the general norm that LLMs

are only good for processing textual data and created a stellar virtual assistant for traders by doing operations on structured numerical data," says Manish Pathak, who was part of the team.

SECOND PLACED TEAM BUILDS AGI-BASED ASSISTANT

The second placed team developed an application they called Neuron, an artificial general intelligence or AGI-based assistant for MIQers that can answer their questions on anything work-related, such as, company policies, campaign performance or optimisation recommendations.

Why robotics is becoming key to metalworking



3M execs (L-R) Hari Parthasarathi, Terry Ceulemans, Raghavendra Koneri, Kunal Vakil, Tamoghna Poddar, Shoichi Masuda, and Taichi Ando, at the Robotics Lab launch in India

Sujit.John@timesgroup.com

The other day we had the opportunity to watch a robot using an abrasive to thin a piece of metal to the appropriate size. It could even turn the object around to grind on another side.

This was at 3M's recently launched abrasive robotics lab. We were shown a variety of abrasives, each to be used for a different purpose - metal grinding, deburring (removing small imperfections from machined metal products), sanding (smoothing or polishing a surface).

The time it took the robot to finish the job, a human worker would have taken about twice or more the time. And even then, it may not have come out with the consistency the robot could achieve.

Raghavendra Koneri, application engineer for robotics & automation, at 3M India says robots have been used in manufacturing primarily for material handling, and occasionally for welding.

ROBOTICS TRENDS

are doing, documenting it, and identifying clear needs. While 3M develops abrasives that robots can use, robotics & automation players in India like DiFacto, Dolphin, Future, and Nexgen integrate the systems.

Taichi Ando, Asia portfolio leader for robotics & automation, says those involved in system integration excel at using tools for painting, welding and material handling. But for more complex processes, he says, even they are still in learning mode.

Industries driving the change towards robotics are primarily transportation related - automobiles, aerospace, metro rail. Industrial equipment manufacturers are also increasingly using it.

Metalworking? Sorry, can't do

A few months ago, I was travelling to Eastern Europe. In my mind, there seemed to be enough skilled individuals in Eastern Europe, people willing to take up jobs such as welding or weld grinding, or sanding.

Terry Ceulemans | GLOBAL APPLICATION ENGINEERING LEADER, 3M

GLOSSARY OF IN-GROUP TERMS USED



LangChain

LangChain is an open-source framework designed for developing applications powered by large language models (LLMs). It offers tools and APIs to simplify the building of LLM-driven applications, such as chatbots, virtual agents, and more.

Few-shot learning

Few-shot learning is a technique in machine learning where the model learns to perform a task proficiently with a very limited amount of training data. Traditional machine learning algorithms often require large datasets to learn effectively.

In-context learning

In-context learning refers to a method of machine learning, particularly evident in some types of large language models (LLMs) like GPT-3 and its successors, where the model uses the information provided in a prompt to "understand" and generate responses without the need for explicit retraining or fine-tuning on specific datasets for each new task.



THE MOONWATCH IN WHITE

Inspired by its history of space exploration, the most iconic chronograph on Earth now has a white dial. The Speedmaster Moonwatch has borrowed its latest look from the colours of astronaut spacesuits, while adding a glossy lacquered finish for the very first time. The white dial and red touches are also a tribute to the heat-reflective ALASKA I prototype that OMEGA produced in 1969, creating an authentic link to the Speedmaster's pioneering past. Worn on a comfortable and vintage-style bracelet, this stainless steel Moonwatch shines the spotlight on a new era of adventure.


OMEGA



THE TIMES OF INDIA

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER

Akshata Murty says she hates making the bed and is happy to leave it unmade; but husband, UK PM Rishi Sunak, often goes back to the Downing Street flat to make it as "it bugs him"

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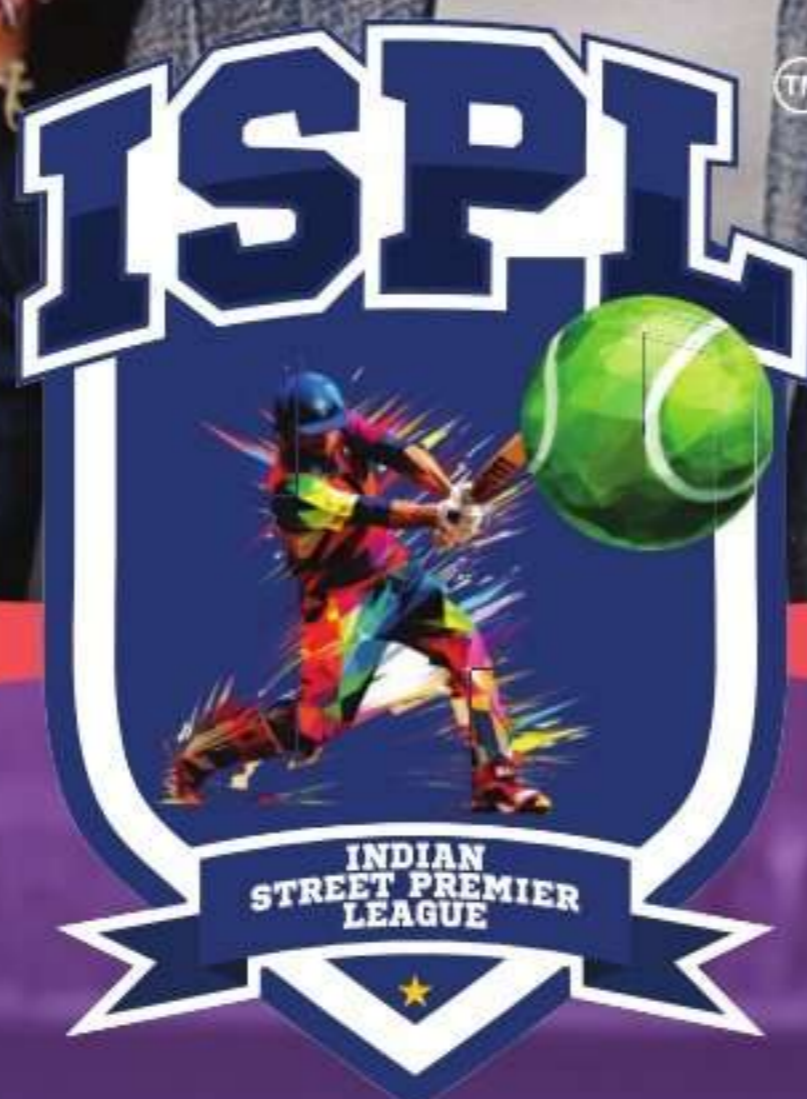


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LINDSAY LOHAN SAYS SHE AND JAMIE LEE CURTIS ARE RETURNING FOR SEQUEL OF THEIR 2003 HIT 'FREAKY FRIDAY': 'WE ARE BOTH EXCITED'

Tough talk: China drops 'peaceful reunification' reference to Taiwan

Beijing Emphasises On It Wanting To 'Be Firm' In Doing So

Beijing: China will boost its defence spending by 7.2% this year, fuelling a military budget that has more than doubled under President Xi Jinping's 11 years in office as Beijing hardens its stance on Taiwan, according to official reports Tuesday. The increase mirrors the rate presented in last year's budget and again comes in well above gov't's economic growth forecast for this year.



A video frame shows a Chinese Coast Guard ship (R) deploying water cannon at the Philippine military-chartered civilian boat Unaizah May 4 during its supply mission near Second Thomas Shoal in the disputed South China Sea

China also officially adopted tougher language against Taiwan as it released the budget figures, dropping the mention of "peaceful reunification" in a gov't report delivered by Premier Li Qiang at the opening of the National People's Congress, China's rubber-stamp parliament. Tensions have risen sharply in recent years over Taiwan, the democratically ruled island China claims as its own, and elsewhere across East Asia as regional military deployments rise.

Since Xi became president and commander-in-chief more than a decade ago, the defence budget has ballooned to 1.67 trillion yuan (\$230 billion) this year from 720 billion yuan in 2013. The percentage rise in military spending has consistently outpaced the annual domestic economic growth target during his time in office. The target for 2024 is about 5%, similar to last year's goal.

The defence budget is closely watched by China's neighbours and the US, who are wary of Beijing's strategic intentions and the development of its armed forces.

Based on International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) data, this year's budget marks the 30th consecutive year of Chinese defence spending increases.

The purchase of new equipment is likely to take up the largest single chunk of the budget as the military works to meet Xi's goal of full modernisation by 2035, IISS said in research published last month.

Beijing uses water cannons on Manila boats, 4 injured

Manila: The Philippines said Tuesday that China Coast Guard vessels caused two collisions with Philippine boats and water cannoned one of them, leaving four crew injured during a resupply mission in South China Sea.

Manila summoned a Chinese representative over the incidents, which happened in waters around Second Thomas Shoal in Spratly Islands where the countries have contesting maritime claims.

The China Coast Guard said it "took control measures" against Philippine ships "illegal intrusion" in waters around the shoal.

BRP Sindangan, along with a sister ship, had been deployed to support the military chartered Unaizah May 4

and Unaizah May 1 boats carrying replacement soldiers and supplies to Second Thomas Shoal, where Filipino troops are stationed on a grounded Philippine navy vessel, BRP Sierra Madre. Four crew on board Unaizah May 4 were injured when two China Coast Guard ships simultaneously fired water cannon at it, shattering the windshield, the National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea said. It said a China Coast Guard vessel also caused a "minor collision" with Unaizah May 4, which turned back to shore without delivering its cargo.

Unaizah May 1 was able to unload its provisions, which the troops on the rusty BRP Sierra Madre depend on for their survival. AP

China has reiterated a call for "reunification" with Taiwan, but added emphasis it wants to "be firm" in doing so and dropped the descriptor

"peaceful", which had been used in previous reports. Although it is not the first time China omitted the word "peaceful", the change in language is closely watched as a possible sign of more assertive stance

China sets growth target of 5%, but says will be tough

Beijing: China aims to achieve 5% economic growth this year, Premier Li Qiang said Tuesday, acknowledging that it will be a challenging goal in difficult times.

In his address to the National People's Congress, Li outlined plans to boost spending on developing advanced technology, fortifying China's military and supporting the economy, among many other goals. But there was no big package of stimulus to help boost markets and reassure worried investors.

Li said gov't would continue with a "pro-active fiscal policy and prudent monetary policy," suggesting no major change in the leadership's approach to the economy.

He unveiled a plan to boost growth by issuing long-term bonds over several years, starting with 1 trillion yuan (about \$139 billion) this year. The money would be spent to implement "major national strategies" and fortify security "in key areas," he said.

"Achieving this year's targets will not be easy," Li said, referring to economic growth and other goals including raising incomes, creating 12 million jobs and making the economy more energy efficient in pursuit of climate goals. But he reiterated calls for greater confidence despite China's challenges, noting the country's vast market of about 1.4 billion people, its advanced manufacturing capacity and its massive workforce. AP

Biden, Trump poised to sweep Super Tuesday polls

Washington: President Joe Biden and former President Donald Trump are poised to move much closer to winning their party's nominations during the biggest day of the primary campaign Tuesday, setting up a historic rematch that many voters would rather not endure. Super Tuesday elections are being held in 16 states and one territory. Hundreds of delegates are at stake, the biggest haul for either party on any single day.



Biden and Trump have easily repelled challengers in the opening rounds of the campaign and are in full command of their bids

instinct. The governor's race will take shape in North Carolina, a state that both parties are fiercely contesting ahead of Nov. And in Los Angeles, a progressive prosecutor is attempting to fend off an intense reelection challenge in a race that could serve as a barometer of the politics of crime.

But the premier races centre on Biden and Trump. And in a dramatic departure from past Super Tuesdays, both the Democratic and Republican contests are effectively sealed

this year. The two men have easily repelled challengers in the opening rounds of the campaign and are in full command of their bids — despite polls making it clear voters don't want this year's election to be identical to the 2020 race.

Neither Trump nor Biden will be able to formally clinch their party's nominations on Super Tuesday. The earliest either can become his party's presumptive nominee is March 12 for Trump and March 19 for Biden. AP

While much of the focus is

Ex-Twitter execs sue Musk over firings, seek severance

Washington: Former senior executives of Twitter are suing Elon Musk and X Corp., saying they are entitled to a total of over \$128 million in unpaid severance payments.

Twitter's former CEO Parag Agrawal, Chief Financial Officer Ned Segal, Chief Legal Counsel Vijaya Gadde and General Counsel Sean Edgett claim in the lawsuit filed Monday that they were fired without a reason on the day in Oct 2022 that Musk completed his acquisition of Twitter, which he later rebranded X. Because he didn't want to pay their severance, the executives say Musk "made up fake cause and appointed employees of his various companies to uphold his decision."

The lawsuit says not paying severance and bills is part

of a pattern for Musk, who's been sued by "droves" of former rank-and-file Twitter employees who didn't receive severance after Musk terminated them by the thousands.

"Under Musk's control, Twitter has become a scofflaw, stifling employees, landlords, vendors, and others," says the lawsuit. "Musk doesn't pay his bills, believes the rules don't apply to him, and uses his wealth and power to run roughshod over anyone who disagrees with him." Representatives for Musk and X did not immediately respond to messages for comment.

The former executives claim their severance plans entitled them to one year's salary plus unvested stock awards valued at the acquisition price of Twitter. AP

Tesla Germany halts work after suspected arson

Berlin/Frankfurt: Tesla's European Gigafactory near Berlin halted production and was left without power after what CEO Elon Musk called an "extremely dumb" suspected arson attack that set an electricity pylon ablaze close to the site Tuesday. The blaze, which did not spread to the Tesla site, was put out by the fire brigade.

Local media published a letter purportedly from a far-left activist group called Volcano Group that claimed responsibility for the incident, in a 2,500-word attack on Tesla and Musk.

"These are either the dumbest eco-terrorists on Earth or they're puppets of those who don't have good environmental goals... Stopping production of electric vehicles, rather than fossil fuel vehicles, is not extreme dumb," Musk said, using the German words for "extremely dumb". REUTERS

Hate making the bed and it bugs Rishi, admits Akshata

Naomi Canton

London: Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy's daughter, Akshata Murthy, hates making the bed and is happy to leave it unmade whilst her husband, UK PM Rishi Sunak, often has to go back to the Downing Street flat from office to make it as "it bugs him". "I will be irritated if it is not made," Sunak said in an interview with Grazia, as his wife admitted she is not a morning person and "not the most organised."

When they were in Stanford, Murthy used to eat in bed and Sunak would find plates in her bed. "That is disgusting — not anymore" Sunak said, as the No. 10 power couple revealed their differences over domestic chores. Whilst Murthy loathes stacking the dish-

washer, Sunak likes to take charge of it. After Murthy has stacked it, he always has to rearrange it. Sunak said he is the better cook but only has time to make scrambled eggs on Saturdays. He wants the family to eat vegetables, carbohydrates and protein but "there is not a single meal when I come home and they are eating those things."

"I get the children to set the table and clean up after meals which is what I did growing up," Murthy said, adding she doesn't believe in giving them incentives to do chores. Sunak interjected: "It would be nice if they walked the dog, that they wanted to get, more often." Murthy exercises more than Sunak. She is the bookworm, while Sunak just watches "Friends" before he sleeps. "It never gets old."

S'pore has Taylor Swift to itself this week, and neighbours are complaining

Taylor Swift has descended on Southeast Asia, or one small part of it at least: All of her six sold-out shows are in Singapore, the region's wealthiest nation. Many of her fans in this part of the world are disappointed. But the Singapore leg of Swift's popular Eras Tour, which began last weekend and ends on Saturday, is a soft power coup and a boost for the country's post-pandemic economic recovery.

The shows — and the undisclosed price that Singapore paid to host them — have also generated diplomatic tension

with two of its neighbours, Thailand and the Philippines. Last month, Thailand PM Srettha Thavisin said publicly that Singapore had paid Swift up to \$3 million per show on the condition that she play nowhere else in Southeast Asia. A lawmaker in the Philippines later said that was not "what good neighbours do."

Singapore pushed back. First its culture minister said the actual value of the exclusivity deal was "nowhere as high." The its former ambassador at large called the criticism "sour grapes." And on



Taylor Swift's six concerts in Singapore, for which over 300,000 tickets have been sold, will likely 'generate significant benefits' for the economy, gov't has said

Tuesday, PM Lee Hsien Loong said he did not see the deal as diplomatically "unfriendly."

But that was not source to dejected fans. "I sometimes think 'When will I get to experience this?'" said Sherin Nya Tamara, 26, a Swift fan in Jakarta, Indonesia, who has liked the singer since 2011 but never seen her perform live. "I hoped there would be additional dates and Jakarta would be included."

At a time when Southeast Asian gov'ts are dealing with tensions over South China Sea and the fallout from a brutal war in Myanmar, among other serious issues, the controversy over Swift's Singapore shows is "kind of refreshing," said Su-

san Harris Rimmer, a law professor who has studied soft power in the region. "It's nice to see them arguing about something this fun. I guess, instead of really, deeply difficult things," added Professor Harris Rimmer, who teaches at Griffith University in Australia. "But it does show there is tension and jealousy and rivalry."

Asked Tuesday how much the grant was worth, Singaporean gov't did not directly address the question. But tourism board and culture ministry said in a joint statement that Swift's concerts, for which

Users report Facebook, Instagram and Google services are down

Many users of Gmail, YouTube and social networks Facebook and Instagram faced problems in logging into their accounts in several parts of the world, including India on Tuesday evening. Users turned to other social network X, WhatsApp and other online portals to report network outages faced by them while connecting to Google and Meta-owned platforms.

The network outage problem across Google and Meta apps was reported around 9 PM IST, according to social media network outage tracker platform Down Detector.

Internet monitoring firm Netbloss said on X that four Meta platforms — Facebook, Instagram, Messenger and



CONNECTION INTERRUPTED

Threads — are "currently experiencing outages related to login sessions in multiple countries." But the firm, which advocates for internet freedom, said there was no sign of "country-level internet disruptions or filtering," which are typically imposed by gov'ts.

"I tried it several times. But I was unable to log in to my Instagram and Facebook accounts. I doubt if it's a global cyber attack," Roboz Dotin Tech CEO Milind Raj told PTL.

Users complained that they have been logged out of Facebook, Instagram, Gmail, YouTube accounts.

"We're aware people are having trouble accessing our services. We are working on this now." Meta communications director Andy Stone said. Team YouTube in a post on X said: "Thanks to everyone who sent notes about loading issues with YouTube: we're on it!"

Tesla and SpaceX CEO Elon Musk, who is a majority shareholder of X, took a post-hoc on the service outage at peer social networks. "If you're reading this post, it's because our servers are working," Musk said in his post. PTL & AP

UN team finds grounds to support reports of sex violence in Hamas attack

Israel Accuses UN Chief Of Trying To Bury Report, Recalls Ambassador

In the latest sign of rising tensions with the UN, Israel has recalled its ambassador, claiming on Tuesday that the UN chief was failing to take steps to address a new report finding signs that sexual violence was committed during the Hamas-led Oct 7 attack on Israel.

The UN report released on Monday, which was largely welcomed in Israel, found "reasonable grounds" to believe that sexual violence occurred in at least three locations, and "clear and convincing information" that returned hostages had experienced sexual violence, including rape, while in captivity. Noting the array of fighters who took part in the attack from Hamas and other groups, the UN report said its experts could not determine who was responsible for the sexual assaults. In a post on Telegram, Hamas rejected the report, calling the findings false.

In a social media post, Israel Katz, Israel's foreign minister, criticised the UN chief Antonio Guterres for not immediately convening the Security Council to discuss the report and to declare Hamas a terrorist organisation. He said that he had recalled the UN ambassador, Gilad Erdan, for consultation in protest of what he said was a concerted effort by Guterres to "forget the report and avoid making the necessary decisions." Erdan was on a plane back to Is-



Children wait to receive food at a shelter in Rafah on Tuesday

rael on Tuesday, he said. A UN spokesman, Stephanie Dujarric, rejected the claim, saying that the work on the report was done "thoroughly and expeditiously" and that "in no way, shape or form did the secretary general do anything to 'bury' the report". The authority to convene the Security Council does not lie with Guterres but with the president and members of the Council, according to UN bylaws. NPT

Three days of negotiations with Hamas over a ceasefire in Gaza and the release of Israeli hostages ended Tuesday without a breakthrough, Egyptian officials said, less than a week before the start of Ramadan, the informal deadline for a deal. Two Egyptian officials said the latest round of discussions had ended. They said Hamas presented a proposal that mediators would discuss with Israel in the coming days. REUTERS

Truce talks end, no breakthrough: Egypt

Ukraine: Sunk another Russian warship using sea drones

Kyiv: Ukraine claimed Tuesday it has sunk another Russian warship in the Black Sea using high-tech sea drones as Kyiv's forces continue to take aim at targets deep behind the war's front line. Russian authorities did not confirm the claim. The Ukrainian military intelligence agency said a special operations unit destroyed the large patrol ship Sergey Kotov overnight. The ship, which Ukraine said was commissioned in 2021 and was hit near the Kerch Strait, reportedly can carry cruise missiles and around 60 crew. The sinking of such a modern ship would be a significant loss and an embarrassing blow for Moscow. Patrol boats such as the Sergey Kotov are part of Russia's countermeasures against drone attacks, according to an article published last month by the Foreign Policy Research Institute, a US think tank. The vessels use radar and a helicopter to detect and destroy drones using grenade launchers and heavy machine guns, it said. The Ukraine defence ministry posted on X a video of what it said was the night-time attack on the Sergey Kotov using Magura V5 uncrewed vessels that are designed and built in Ukraine and laden with explosives. Seven Russian crew members were killed and six were injured in the strike, while 52 crew were rescued, the military intelligence agency said. The Ukrainian claims could not be independently verified. Last month, Ukraine claimed it twice sank Russian warships. AP

AROUND THE WORLD



STAYING FIGHTING FIT: Finnish and Swedish troops participate in Nato's Nordic Response 24 exercise near Hetta, Finland, on Tuesday

Library fees? No problem. Just show your cat photos

Finally, there is something cats can do for humans. The Worcester Public Library in Massachusetts announced that through the end of March, people who have lost or damaged a book or other borrowed items can bring a photograph, drawing or magazine clipping of a cat, and get their library cards reactivated. The library calls the programme "March Meowness", a way for the system of seven branches to forgive (or is that fur-give?) members of the community who misplaced a book or damaged a borrowed item, and then never went back to avoid paying for it. In just a few days, the programme generated hundreds of returns, multiple postings of random cat photographs on the library's Facebook page, and photographs and drawings pinned on a growing "cat wall" in the main building. Jason Homer, the executive director of the

library said about 400 people have had their library accounts unblocked and borrowing privileges restored so far.

Find My iPhone app leads cops to woman's house. She sues, wins \$3.8m case

A 78-year-old woman who sued two police officers after her home was wrongly searched by a SWAT team looking for a stolen truck has won a nearly \$3.8 million jury verdict under a new Colorado law that allows people to sue police over violations of their state constitutional rights. The lawsuit alleged police got a search warrant for the home after the owner of a stolen truck, which had four semi-automatic handguns, a rifle, a revolver, two drones, \$4,000 cash and an iPhone inside, tracked the phone to Johnson's home using the Find My app, and passed that information on to police. The team wrongly obtained the warrant to search Johnson's home as they did not point out that the app's information is not precise and provides only a general location where a phone could be, the lawsuit said.

Haiti violence spirals; gangs try to seize airport

Port Au Prince: Armed gangs tried to seize control of Haiti's main international airport on Monday, exchanging gunfire with police and soldiers in the latest attack on key gov't sites in an explosion of violence that includes mass escapes from prisons. Toussaint Louverture International Airport was closed when the attack occurred, with no planes operating and no passengers on site.

The attack occurred hours after authorities ordered a nighttime curfew following violence in which gang members overran the two biggest prisons and freed thousands of inmates over the weekend. A 72-hour state of emergency began Sunday. Gangs, estimated to control up to 80% of the capital, are coordinating actions and choosing targets like Central Bank. AP



THE TIMES

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ED RECEIVES A BOOSTER AS J'KHAND COURT SAYS FORMER CM HEMANT SOREN PRIMA FACIE GUILTY OF IGNORING ED SUMMONSES 14

HC hands over Shahjahan, Sandeshkhali case to CBI

But State Moves SC & CID Doesn't Cede His Custody

Subrata Chattoraj | TNN

Kolkata: Calcutta high court directed Bengal CID on Tuesday morning to transfer custody of Trinamool's suspended Sandeshkhali strongman Sheikh Shahjahan to CBI by 4.30pm.

However, CBI officers left empty-handed after a more than two-and-a-half-hour wait as Bengal govt moved Supreme Court against the HC's order, delaying the handover until apex court decided the matter.

A high court division bench, comprising Chief Justice TS Sivagnanam and Justice Hiranmay Bhatta-

BENGAL COPS 'TOTALLY BIASED': HC

> HC says every attempt is being made to delay probe to 'protect' Sheikh Shahjahan (in pic). Dubs Bengal Police 'totally biased', calls for 'fair, honest, and complete investigation'. Says, 'There can be no better case than this that requires to be transferred to be investigated by CBI'



> BJP spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla says 'satyamev jayate', HC order vindicates party's stand. Claims TMC strongman has been under 'secular protection'

> CBI promptly takes over probe into attack on ED officials in Sandeshkhali on Jan 5, files FIR. Reaches CID office in Kolkata with paramilitary forces to take custody of Shahjahan

> 'We haven't handed him over (to CBI) as state govt has moved SC (against HC order)', a Bengal official says. But SC refuses urgent listing of plea

> ED issues provisional order under PMLA and attaches 14 properties of Shahjahan in Kol & Sandeshkhali worth ₹12.7cr

charyya, also instructed state police to transfer to CBI all FIRs related to Jan 5 assault on ED officers.

A mob had attacked and wounded three ED officers when they went to Shahja-

han's home at Sandeshkhali in Bengal's North 24 Parganas district as part of an investigation into an alleged Rs 550-crore ration scam.

▶ ED attaches assets, P 12

'Won't tolerate poll violence': CEC to Bengal babus, police

In Kolkata on Tuesday along with his entire team to check poll preparedness, CEC Rajiv Kumar said there would be zero tolerance for violence during LS elections and that EC would step in if Bengal administration failed to prevent it. Kumar said while "primary responsibility" to conduct polls lies with state, Bengal govt, DMs and SPs have been instructed to be impartial and accessible to all political parties, reports Debashis Konar. EC said no civil volunteers and contractual staff should be on poll or law and order-related duty. P 12

Cal HC judge quits, to join BJP tomorrow

Kolkata: Calcutta HC judge Abhijit Gangopadhyay resigned on Tuesday and announced his intention to join BJP on Thursday, stating that he had been in touch

with the party for a week and would be with them "for now", regardless of whether he receives a LS ticket or not.

Gangopadhyay praised PM Modi, describing him as "hardworking and a very good man" and striving for India's progress. TNN

▶ 'Only BJP can fight', P 12

Mails to CM, DKS warn of more blasts in K'taka

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Close on the heels of Friday's bomb blast at a café in Whitefield, Bengaluru, that left nine persons injured, two emails sent to the chief minister, his deputy, the home minister and the city commissioner of police have warned of "more explosions" targeting VVIPs and crowded areas in Karnataka. One of the mails demanded \$2.5 million "to stop similar blasts".

While the first email was sent at 2.48pm Saturday, a day after the café blast, the second mail was sent on

B'LURU ON ALERT

> Emails warn of more blasts targeting VVIPs, crowded areas

> First email sent Saturday, 2.48pm, by a person identifying himself as Shahid Khan

> Calls blast at B'luru café a 'movie trailer', warns of 'large explosions' across Karnataka

> Senior police officer says threats appear to be hoax, but Bengaluru will be on high alert

Monday. Unverified reports claimed that more such mails have been received by govt and police.

▶ 'Can't be ignored', P 6

Raja remark on 'Jai Shri Ram' kicks up row

DMK MP A Raja said Tamil Nadu will never accept the chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' which were used to welcome Bilkis Bano gang rape convicts when they walked out of jail.

Raja made the remarks in TN's Erode district Saturday. TN BJP president K Annamalai said Raja has been constantly insulting Sanatan Dharma and has now "hurt the feelings of every Indian who says 'Jai Shri Ram' & 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'". P 11



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TOI Explains HOW GETTING A GREEN CARD BECAME MISSION IMPOSSIBLE

A century ago, almost anyone who came to America was accepted. Now, just 3% of applicants for permanent residency see their wish materialise. In some categories, the wait for a green card can stretch beyond 100 years!

Abhilash.Gaur@timesgroup.com

On St Patrick's Day last March, President Biden introduced himself as a descendant of Irish immigrants "who boarded coffin ships to cross the Atlantic more than 165 years ago". Donald Trump's grandfather Frederick arrived in New York from Kallstadt, Germany, even later, in 1885. Today, they would have been turned away from the US shore.

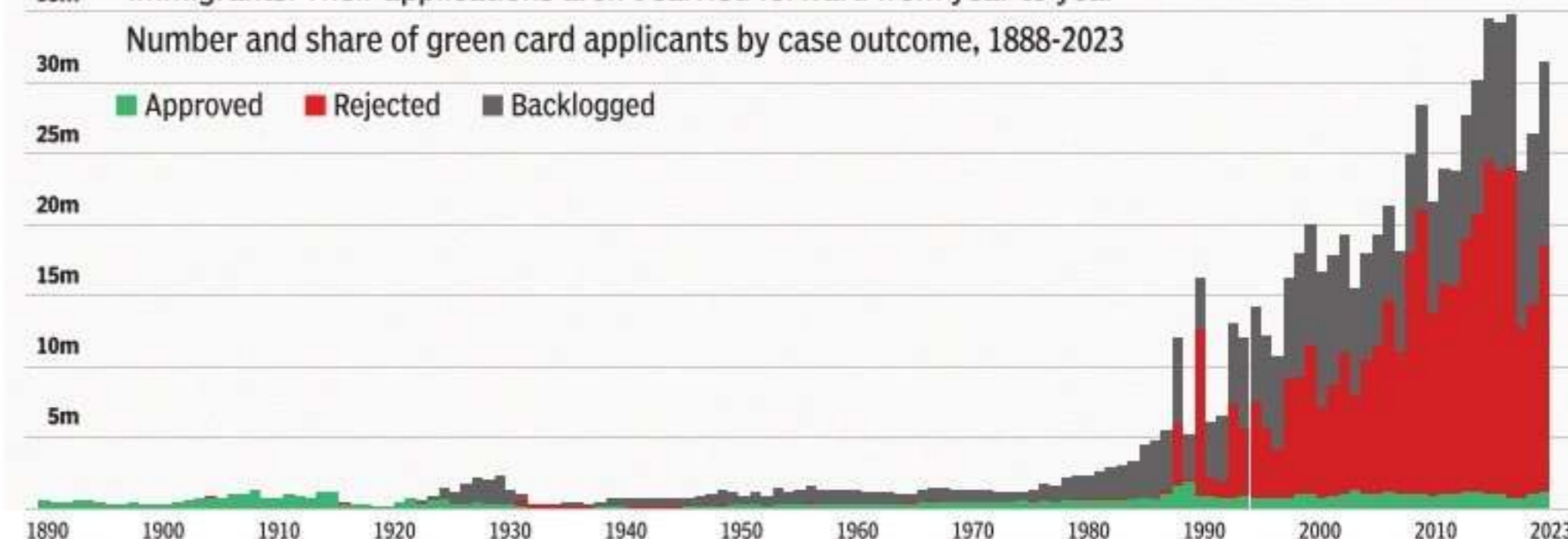
Although it still beckons as a land of opportunity, the United States no longer welcomes immigrants with open arms. In a new report for American think tank Cato Institute, David J Bier says pending green card applications have increased from about 10 million in 1996 to almost 35 million now. In the same period, approvals have fallen from 7.6% to under 4%.



Immigrants on deck of Atlantic liner SS Patricia in Dec 1906

LAND OF REJECTION

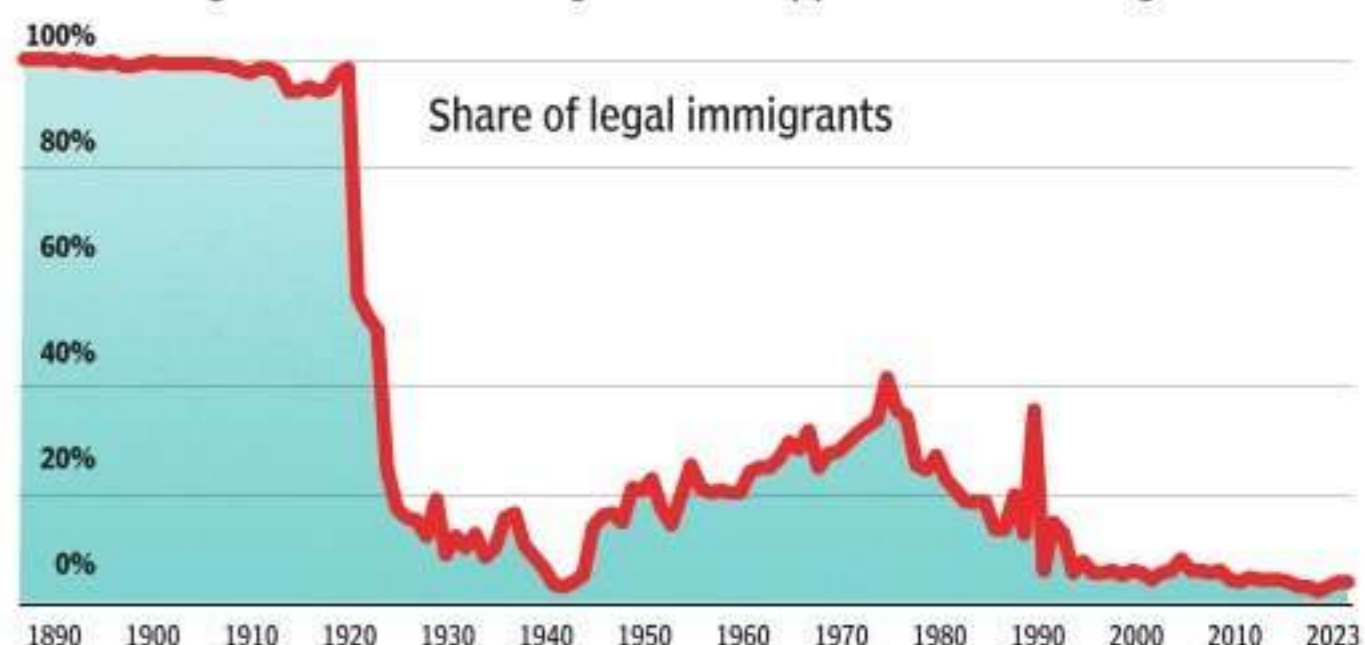
Green card rejections shot up from 1990 as a lottery system was introduced for 'non-preference' immigrants. Their applications aren't carried forward from year to year



An Italian immigrant family on a ferry in 1905

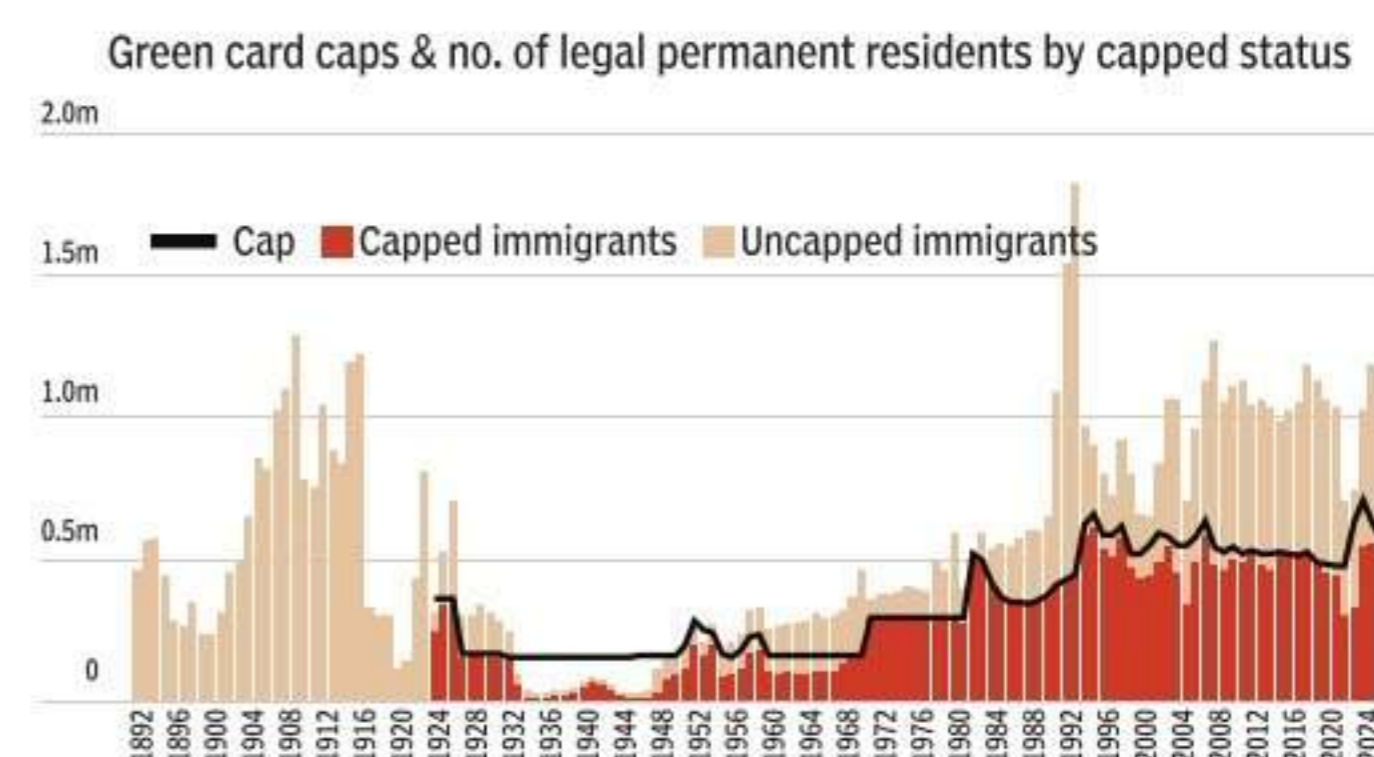
GREEN LIGHT TURNS RED

Until 1921, you could alight in a US port and expect to get permanent resident status. Between 1888 and 1921, 98% of immigrants were admitted. This changed from 1922. Now green card approvals are nearing all-time low




MILLIONS OF GREEN CARD SLOTS WASTED

Immigration was capped for different categories and nationalities in 1921, but Bier says some 6.3 million spots under different caps have not been filled. "Administrative processing delays" after 1990 are the main culprit. So, categories without caps - spouses, minor children, and parents of US citizens - have become "primary drivers" of immigration.



“We cannot have too much immigration of the right sort and we should have none whatever of the wrong sort...”

To try to draw a distinction between the man whose parents came to this country and the man whose ancestors came to it several generations back is a mere absurdity

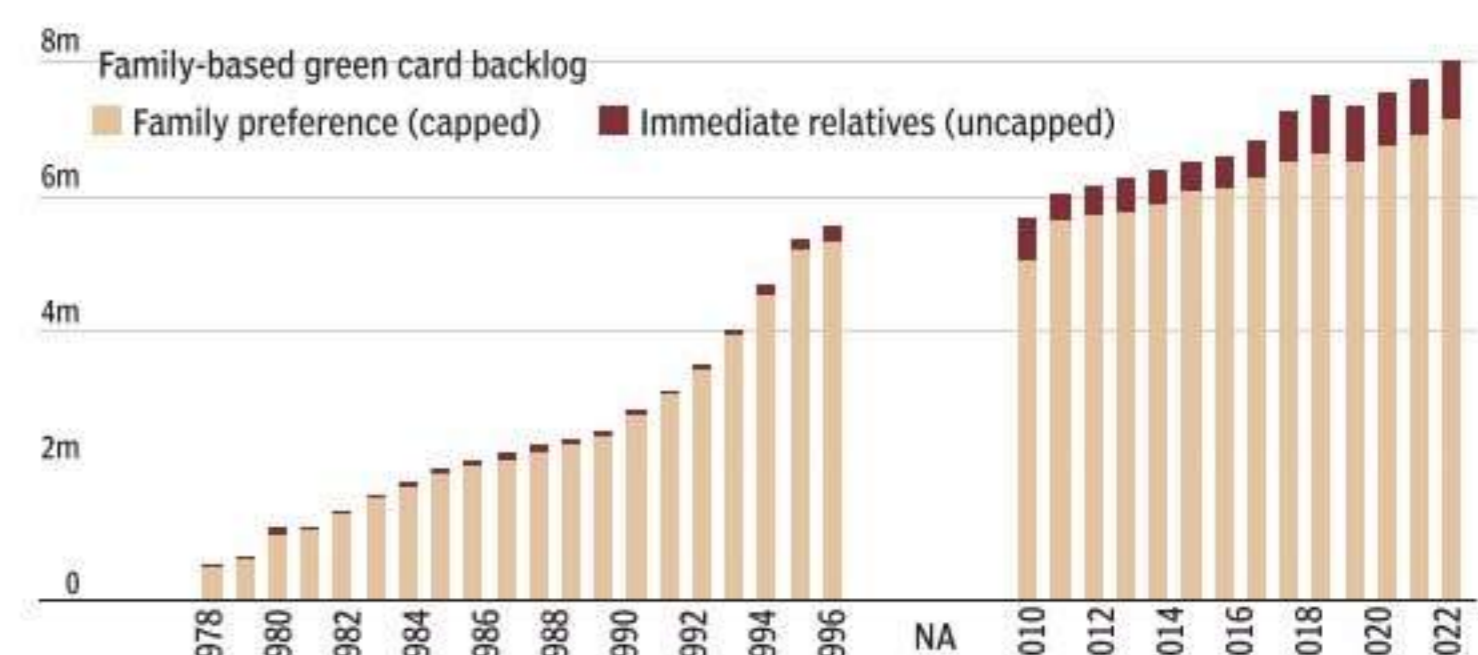


— Theodore Roosevelt | US President 1901-1909

NOT EASY TO BRING FAMILY

Family-sponsored green cards have the second highest number of applicants, but citizens have an advantage over green card holders here. While only 226,000 spouses and minor children of green card holders, and adult children and siblings of citizens, will get green cards this year, there's no cap on green cards for spouses, minor children and parents of citizens

Lifetime Wait: Backlog in 'capped' - mostly family of green card holders - section has crossed 7.1 million. With a 3% approval rate, applicants will have to wait for years. But in the uncapped category for citizens, 36% of applicants get green cards every year



134-YEAR WAIT FOR INDIAN WORKERS

Indians are most interested in employment-based (EB) green cards, but there's bad news: majority in the most popular EB-2/EB-3 categories will die or retire before getting a card. Backlog of over 1 million Indian EB-2/EB-3 applications, and annual country cap of 7,956 green cards, could theoretically stretch the wait to 134 years. A more likely scenario is that 414,363 Indian applicants will die before they get a green card, 134,429 will be aged out of the market, and only 429,470 or 40% will become permanent US residents. Bier wrote in another report last year

Category	Country	If everyone could stay in line forever			With deaths and abandonment				
		Backlog	Annual Green Cards	Years to Process	Deaths	Receive Green Cards	Share with Green Card	Years to Process	Ageing Out
EB-1	India	53,879	9,008	6	220	47,192	88%	5	1,809
	China	27,610	5,284	5	23	14,311	52%	3	463
	Other	34,546	25,800	1	0	34,546	52%	1	0
EB-2/ EB-3	India	10,69,349	7,956	134	4,14,363	4,29,470	40%	54	1,34,429
	China	1,19,126	7,012	17	1,827	91,108	76%	13	7,825
	Philippines	8,127	4,773	2	10	4,773	59%	1	0
	Other	1,01,621	56,877	0	0	0	100%	0	1,025

For more on the story, scan code

