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Supreme Court fully independent, **Gavai says in US**

TRUST AND EXCELLENCE

1904-2024

CC is "fully independent" and brooks no political interference, Justice B R Gavai, in line to be CJI, told a US audience. Indian Constitution has a "clearly defined" foundation of separation of powers, he added. P8

MP minister's son thrashes 4, booked

P mantri NS Patel's son was booked for thrashing4people. Four cops were suspended for "manhandling" him after Patel visited the thana with loyalists. P8

IPL fan beaten up in Kolhapur dies

n IPL fan in Kolhapur at-1 tacked by a friend and aide for celebrating the fall of Rohit Sharma's wicket during a match on Wed succumbed to injuries on Sat. P8

MGNREGS numbers hint at rural distress

VI 40 crore persondays of work more than the pre-pandemic (2019-20) level, suggesting a rural distress. P8

Do not miss **Education Times**, a 6-page pullout with today's issue

INDIA bloc demands level playing field, release of arrested leaders

Match-Fixing, Cry Oppn Netas At Show Of Strength

> Ambika.Pandit @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In a show of unity. 'INDIA' bloc leaders came together at 'loktantra bachao' (save democracy) rally here on

▶EDIT: All Together, But... Sunday and attacked the NDA govt for being "dictatorial" and "misusing" ED and other

central agencies to "rig" Lok

Sabha polls by getting its oppo-

nents jailed and bank acco-

At the Ramlila Maidan ral-

Diwakar & Akhilesh Singh | TNN

New Delhi: "This agreement

goes against the interests of

the country since it amounts to

pure surrender of our territo-

ry without going through any

of the norms. This is an unholy

and disgraceful act of states-

manship unworthy of any

govt. Therefore, we do not want

to associate ourselves with the

statement that is going to be

made by the Hon. Minister, and

we want to disassociate oursel-

ves by walking out of the Hou-

se," thundered DMK MP Era

unts of parties sealed.



Sunita Kejriwal interacts with Sonia and Rahul Gandhi at the rally. Kalpana (left), wife of jailed J'khand ex-CM Hemant Soren, looks on

Reacting to TOI article, Modi, Shah, ministers say

Cong weakened India's integrity, can't be trusted

M Modi, home minister Amit Shah and ministers Rajnath

ving in to Sri Lanka's aggression for the control of Katchatheevu

island in 1974 to accuse Congress of "callousness" and "weake-

ning the country's unity and integrity". Reacting to the TOI story

on the island issue, Modi, at a Meerut rally, said country can't trust

a party that gave away an "integral part" of "Mother India". P10

Singh & S Jaishankar seized upon the revelation about India gi-

ly—almost all 'INDIA' parties attended it — held against the backdrop of Arvind Kejriwal's arrest and amid tensions in some states over alliance seat-sharing, leaders demanded immediate release of the Delhi CM and Jharkhand ex-CM

Karunanidhi, taken into confidence by Indira

on Katchatheevu deal, agreed to give SL island

Sezhiyan on July 23, 1974 as the

then foreign minister Swaran

Singh moved to make a state-

ment on India-Sri Lanka Mari-

time Agreement signed by the

Hemant Soren, an SC-monitored SIT probe into BJP's "extortion" through electoral bonds and a "level playing field" for upcoming elections. Rahul Gandhi of Congr-

ess accused PM Modi of trying to engage in electoral

then Indira Gandhi govt by

which India relinquished its

claim on Katchatheevu island.

▶Fumed at Indira govt, P 10

Sunita Kejriwal lists CM's '6 guarantees'

unita Kejriwal read out a message from her husband on "six guarantees" if 'INDIA' wins LS polls. These include granting full statehood to Delhi, free electricity for poor, MSP on all crops and a multispeciality hospital in each district of the country offering free treatment to all. P2

"match-fixing along with three-four billionaires to snatch Constitution from poor". He said, "Who selected umpires (for polls)? Narendra Modi chose the umpires."

▶Still part of INDIA: TMC, P 12

Govt staffer can't cross red line on murder: US envoy

TS envoy Eric Garcetti while talking about the Pannun case, said "no govt or its employee can be involved in the alleged assassination of your citizens. That's an unacceptable red line." CAA: "Sometimes we can agree to disagree on things."

Religious freedom is an important part of any democracy. "Protecting minorities is important," he said.

Indian students must use campus resources for safety awareness, Garcetti said. P12

PM: I can't be scared, action against corrupt will continue

'It Is This War On **Graft That Has** Put Biggies In Jail'

Sandeep.Rai@timesgroup.com

Meerut: PM Narendra Modi said on Sunday that his govt would continue to take action against the corrupt and any attempt to scare him will not succeed, framing once again the LS contest as a battle between the "corrupt" and those making efforts to remove corruption.

Addressing a rally here soon after the 'INDIA' bloc accused him of misusing



PM Modi and UP CM Yogi Adityanath at a rally in Meerut on Sunday

central agencies to fix eleccorrupt are, action will be tations by getting opposition ken. The one who has looted leaders arrested, Modi said: the country will have to re-"The corrupt should know turn the loot, and this is Mothat no matter how viciously di's guarantee." they attack Modi, he is unstoppable. However big the

▶ 'Do you need corrupt?', P 10

6 days on, Dali's 22 Indian crew still tangled in steel

ven from miles away, the destruction of Baltimo re's Francis Scott Key Bridge is a jarring visual: Chunks of steel jut above the water like metallic icebergs and twisted gray beams protrude as 'Dali', the 985-foot-long cargo ship that struck the bridge on March 26 resulting in the death of six people, remains lodged in the wreckage.

Less visible, however, are the 22 crew members from India — their timely alarm saved many more lives — still stuck on the ship. While keeping the vessel operable, they are answering a deluge of questions from officials probing the catastrophe. One thing is



There's enough food and water, and fuel to run ship's generators

certain: they are not going to dock at the port soon as they must wait for enough debris to be cleared to free the ship and reopen the channel to one of the busiest ports in US. NYT

▶No timeline, P 11

'Underfed' teen with a hunger for bowling fast

n his IPL debut Saturday, Delhi lad Mayank Yaday, 21, (in pic) clocked this year's tournament's fastest delivery at 155.8kmph, took 3/27 and was Player of Match as LSG beat Punjab Kings. Deve-

Sharnder ma, his excoach at Sonnet Club, told Arani Basu, "Seven years

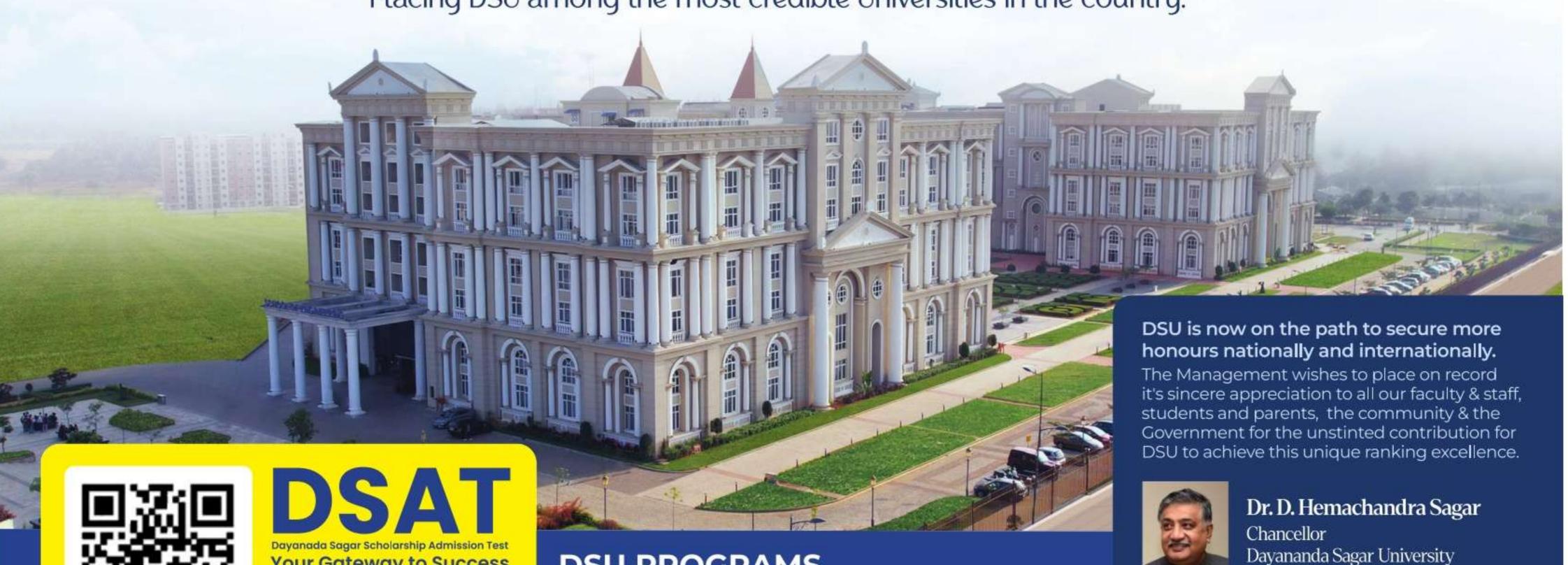
ago, Mayank didn't have proper shoes. He was underfed. But his deliveries hit the nets hard. We felt we had found a natural." P17





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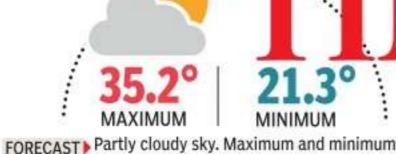
Dr.D. Premachandra Sagar

Dayananda Sagar University

Pro Chancellor



Asola Bhatti sanctuary's 10-year plan to focus on curbing man-animal conflicts | 5



temperatures will be around 34°C and 20°C

MOONRISE 1.28AM (TUE)

MOONSET 10.33AM (MON)

* THE TIMES OF INDIA, NEW DELHI | MONDAY, APRIL 1, 2024

PWD unit to keep track of delayed Barapullah Ph-III | 7

THE CITY 242
ADIIN DELHI With mean min temp of **ON SUNDAY** 14.3 degrees (POOR Celsius, March CATEGORY) nights coolest in 5 years | 4



Sunita Kejriwal Lists No wading through traffic: May date for **CM's 6 'Guarantees'** FOB linking RRTS, Nizamuddin rly stns

Says Jail Won't Be Able To Hold Him For Long

Atul.Mathur@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Referring to her husband as a "sher", chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita, asserted on Sunday that jail wouldn't be able to hold him for long, as she urged people to join hands and fight against "dictatorship" in the country.

In her maiden political speech, Sunita read out a message purportedly written by her husband from Enforcement Directorate's custody and made six promises, including granting full statehood to Delhi, if the opposition alliance was voted to power. Amid a resounding welcome from the crowd, she also questioned whether Kejriwal's arrest was justified and whether he should resign from the post of chief minister of Delhi "under BJP pressure"

Kejriwal was arrested by ED on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to the nowscrapped Delhi excise policy. This was the INDIA bloc's

first rally in the capital ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, with leaders from all political parties gathering at the historic Ramlila Maidan in central Delhi. The rally witnessed a decent turnout of supporters from both AAP and Congress, who began arriving at the venue early in the morning. Many supporters from Punjab either reached Delhi a day before or came directly to the venue on Sunday from their native areas in special buses.

Slogans like 'Modi Hatao Desh Bachao' (Remove Modi, Save Country), 'Mai Bhi Kejriwal' (I am also Kejriwal), and Tanashahi Hatao, Loktantra Bachao (Remove Dictatorship, Save Democracy) echoed as supporters carrying flags of their respective parties and leaders gathered inside the venue and on the surrounding roads.

The venue and nearby areas were adorned with a large number of hoardings and banners put up by both AAP and Congress, On the dais, Sunita was flanked by Kalpana Soren, wife of former Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren, who was arrested in Jan this year by ED in a money laundering case, on her right, and Congress MP and former party president Sonia Gandhi, who arrived at the ve-

nue slightly late, on her left. Kalpana Soren said she was representing the voice of half of the country's female and 9% tribal populations. Urging people to vote for the INDIA bloc parties to "save democracy", she said no

law-and-order issues.

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The rally by the INDIA alliance at

Ramlila Maidan proceeded smoothly with no

the day, things remained peaceful in central Delhi.

ces, were at the helm of security arrange-

ments for the event. Adequate security was in

18,000-19,000 attended the rally. The total per-

mit issued for the event was 20,000. Nearly

A senior police officer said that a crowd of

place to avoid any untoward incident.

Barring a few traffic snarls in the first half of

Delhi Police, along with paramilitary for-



SUNRISE 6.10AM (TUE)

SUNSET 6.39PM (MON)

AT RAMLILA MAIDAN: In her maiden political speech, Sunita read out a message purportedly written by her husband from ED's custody

SUNITA KEJRIWAL SAYS

People of Delhi have endured injustice for over 75 years. They have fewer rights than citizens of other states. Their elected govt is paralysed. To end this injustice, we will ensure that Delhi gets the status of a state

one could prove the allegations against her husband, Hemant Soren, and Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal. "No matter how big one becomes, one cannot be the greatest. The biggest thing is the public. Therefore, you will have to use your vote properly in the coming elections," she said.

During his address, Punjab CM and AAP leader Bhagwant Mann referred to the three women as "women of courage" who, he said, had faced numerous hardships in their lives, adding that people's love was "oxygen" for them.

Sunita was seated almost at the centre of the front row, indicating that the former Indian Revenue Services officer, who had previously refrained from political involvement until her husband was arrested, might soon take center stage in AAP's politics. Poonam, wife of former Delhi minister Satyendar Jain, and Anita, wife of AAP's Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh, also sat on the dais. The wife of former deputy CM Manish Sisodia could not attend the rally due to ill health.

During her address, Sunita presented six "guarantees" that her husband had given to the people of the country on behalf of the INDIA bloc, which, she said, would be fulfilled within five years.

The promises included 24x7 power supply in the country and free electricity for the poor; "excellent" govt schools in every village and block where children from both rich and poor families study together; mo-

Traffic movement largely unaffected

halla clinics in each village and block, as well as one multi-specialty hospital in each district offering free treatment to every citizen; minimum support price to farmers on all crops as per the recommendations of the MS Swaminathan Commission; and full statehood for Delhi.

"People of Delhi have endured injustice for over 75 years. They have fewer rights than citizens of other states. Their elected govt is paralysed. To end this injustice, we will ensure that Delhi gets the status of a state," Sunita said, quoting her husband. She quickly added that as Kejriwal was in ED custody, he could not seek the "permission" of other INDIA bloc partners before making the guarantees, but she believed that the other parties would not object to it.

"I apologise to all INDIA bloc partners because I did not seek their permission before making these announcements," Sunita read from her husband's message and added that plans had already been made on how to fund the proposals.

She also stated that her husband sought the cooperation of the country's 140 crore people to build a "bigger and new" India. Reading out her husband's message, Sunita said, "Mother India feels pain when people do not get two meals a day, uninterrupted power supply, or when someone dies without getting treatment. If you give an opportunity to the INDIA bloc, we will build a great nation," Sunita concluded.

ground to maintain peace during the rally. A

considerable number of visitors were from

Punjab, where Aam Aadmi Party runs the

govt. "Nearly 30-40% attendees were from

hours of the day, especially on the Maharaja

Ranjit Singh Marg, which leads to Ramlila

Maidan. Vehicle movement became smoother

cal parties are situated — was also barricaded

DDU Marg - where offices of major politi-

Traffic moved slowly during the early

Punjab," the senior officer said.

to prevent any spontaneous rallies.

later in the day.

Priyangi.Agarwal

@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The foot overbridge(FOB)connectingSaraiKale Khan RRTS Station and Hazrat Nizamuddin Railway Station is expected to be ready by May.

The 280-metre FOB will feature six travelators for smooth, safe and comfortable passenger movement between the stations.

"The FOB is nearing completion and targeted to be finished by May 2024. "All 11 pillars and pillar caps of the FOB have been completed," an official of National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) that is executing the project, said.

The official added: "The distance between Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station and Hazrat Nizamuddin station is about 300 meters. Due to this distance, the inclusion of a travelator on the FOB was deemed essential.... This addition is anticipated to significantly benefit commuters, including women, the elderly, children and persons with disabilities, especially those carrying heavy luggage.'

The FOB will also provide access to passengers between unpaid areas of both stations. It is designed according to international standards, featuring six travelators — three on each side - capable of accommodating up to 12,000 commuters per hour. Besides, a 3-metre-wide walkway will run parallel to the travelators, catering to commuters who prefer not to use them.

According to an official, all 40 girders required for the 10 spans of the FOB were prefabricated off site using precast concrete technology. The adoption of this technology increased the pace of construction while reducing pollution and minimising traffic disruptions in densely populated areas between the Sarai Kale Khan RRTS and Hazrat Nizamuddin stations.

At present, six spans of 24 girders have been launched. "The launching process for the remaining four spans, consis-



6 travelators | Can accommodate . up to 12,000 commuters per hour

3m-wide walkway parallel to

ABOUT SARAI KALE KHAN

> One of the largest stations on the 82km-long RRTS

corridor > Will serve as the converging station connecting all three corridors-Delhi-Panipat, Delhi-

TARGET |

Likely to be

ready by **May**

2024

SNB-Alwar and Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut-of the first phase > Will facilitate

seamless intermodal integration between different modes of transport

station

Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station's links with other modes of transport

Dedicated footpath after exit from RRTS station to enter ISBT Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station Foot overbridge with travelators

Nizamuddin | City buses metro station Facility Entry/exit bus gate close to interchange

with pedestrian plaza

Veer Hakikat Rai ISBT

Ring Road Entry/exit gate on Ring Road towards Ashram 1=1=4

ABOUT DELHI-GHAZIABAD-MEERUT CORRIDOR

- 34km section between Sahibabad and Modi Nagar North on the RRTS corridor is operational
- Has 8 stations
- Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station likely to be connected to Sahibabad-Meerut South section by 2024-end

ENTIRE 82KM CORRIDOR EXPECTED TO BE OPERATIONAL BY JUNE 2025

ting of 16 girders, will start shortly. Besides, the concrete casting of slabs, which is being done at the location, has started as well," an NCRTC official said.

Apart from providing direct connectivity with Hazrat Nizamuddin station, the Sarai Kale Khan RRTS will be linked to Delhi Metro's pink line and Veer Hakikat Rai ISBT by a footpath. The station will have a facility for city bus interchange with a pedestrian plaza and will have an entry/exit gate on Ring Road towards the Ashram side. It will facilitate seamless intermodal integration between these modes of transport.

"The construction of the Sarai Kale Khan RRTS station, which is going to be the hub of multimodal integration, is also moving swiftly. The construction at the concourse and platform levels has been completed, and pre-cast ballastless track slabs have been laid. At

present, construction of the station's roof is on. Erection of pre-engineered building (PEB) structures has reached 50-60% completion," an official said. The Sarai Kale Khan RRTS

station will be the converging station connecting all three corridors — Delhi-Panipat, Delhi-SNB-Alwar, and Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut — in the first phase.

at present, a 34-km section between Sahibabad and Modi Nagar North of the Delhi-Ghaziabad-Meerut RRTS corridor, which includes eight stations. is operational. TOI had earlier reported

that this station is likely to be connected with the section from Sahibabad to Meerut South by 2024-end. "Construction is advancing swiftly on the remaining stretches, and the entire 82-km corridor is anticipated to become operational ahead of the targeted timeline of June 2025," an official said.

2 cheated women through matrimony apps, arrested came in contact with one Dr

Siddhivi.Singh @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Ranjeet Rajan, 40, appeared to lead an ordinary life as an insurance agent, supporting his family of two children. Similarly, Prashant was a banker by day. However, on the other side they were con masters on matrimony apps where Rajan posed as a doctor, while Prashant portrayed himself as a builder. Together, they deceived over 70 women by swindling large sums of 2,000 security personnel were deployed on the money promising marriage.

> With the arrest of two suspects on Sunday in different cases, cops have busted a racket in Shahdara which used fake images, profiles, and identities to dupe women of money under the false promise of marriage.

> In the first case, the arrest came following a complaint registered on March 29 in Delhi Police's Cyber Cell. The complainant alleged that she

Aman Sharma over an e-matrimonial site who cheated her on the pretext of marriage.

"Rajan, posing as a doctor, introduced himself to the victim, and they exchanged numbers, After establishing trust, he deceitfully claimed his ATM was blocked and persuaded the victim to transfer Rs 1.3 lakh," said Surendra Choudhary, DCP (Shahdara). "During investigation,

technical surveillance was mounted. The call detail records, bank details and internet protocol detail records were analysed which pinpointed our team to Rajan. A raid was conducted at his residence from where he was nabbed," the DCP added.

During interrogation, the suspect confessed that by using fake names and photos he had set up a profile on matrimony apps wherein he had cheated over 50 girls on the pretext of marriage and impersonating himself as a doctor, in order to earn easy money to repay his debts, police said.

Cops said a similar case had cropped up on March 28. "The complainant had alleged she had met one "Rajbir Sharma" on a matrimonial platform who purportedly impersonated as the "owner of a construction company" and expressed matrimonial interest. However, Sharma, operating under false pretences deceived her of Rs 2.17 lakh," said the DCP.

Investigations pointed to the involvement of Prashant, who worked as a banker with a private company. "Following a raid, the accused was nabbed from Dwarka, During interrogation, Prashant admitted to cheating more than 20 girls by creating fake profi-

les," DCP Choudhary added. Both the suspects have been remanded to judicial custody while further investigation is underway to unearth the previous incidences of similar modus operandi, police said.

down hit-and-run suspect Siddhivi.Singh@timesgroup.com

Case at dead end, cops track

New Delhi: After a scooter rider got knocked over by a speeding canter truck on the Dhaula Kuan flyover on March 12, the case seemed like a dead end — with no evewitnesses, statements, or visible registration numbers. Yet a breakthrough came in the form of a combination of seemingly innocuous words spotted on the truck: 'SP Trans', 'Dak Parcel', and 'Arohi'.

Police arrested a 49-year-old truck driver in the case on Sunday.

After scanning over 250 CCTVs across various districts and employing GPS data from the day of the incident, police narrowed down the investigation to a transport company in southwest Delhi. The accused was identified as Laxmi Kant, a native of Uttar Pradesh.

DCP (southwest) Rohit Meena said a PCR call at 11pm on the fateful day reported a truck striking a scooter and absconding from the scene. "The victim was rushed to a hospital for treatment. He was deemed unfit for statement and no

eyewitnesses could be located," said the senior police official The injured victim, identified

as Mohammed Irfan, is a resident of Patel Nagar and works as a hawker at Sarojini Nagar market. An investigation by a team led

by Ravinder Kumar Tyagi, SHO RK Puram police station, began. "CCTV footage revealed the words inscribed on the truck.

'SP Trans' and 'Dak Parcel' directed investigators to several travel agencies displaying similar markings," the DCP said. Further inquiry yielded details of several trucks belonging

to two transport agencies in Mahipalpur, though the elusive 'Arohi' written on the windshield remained a mystery. To piece the puzzle together, police got from the agencies

GPS data of all the trucks passing through the area to identify the specific canter bearing all the identifying words, which led to the breakthrough.

"Subsequently, raids were conducted and the accused was nabbed. Kant has been remanded to judicial custody," police added.

Hues of summer! Delhi dons flaming red foliage as heat rises ripen in time for monsoon.

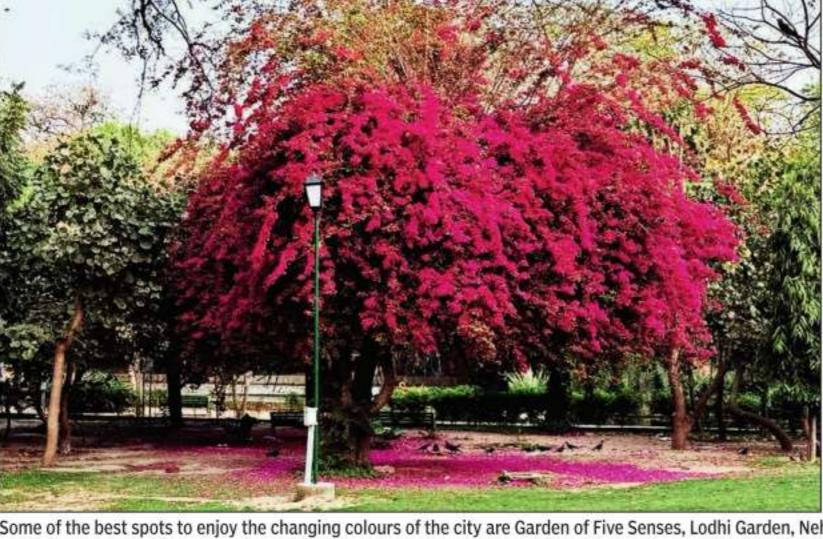
Kushagra.Dixit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: As the summer heat rises, parts of Delhi are turning flaming red because it is the time for the fiery Palash.

For a city that sees several searing dry spells, summer is also about colours of the Palash, Pilkhan, Kusum, Bougainvillea, Jacaranda, Spathodea, Rozia, Gulmohar and many more flowering trees. The city gets a colourful canopy of reds and pinks.

Faiyaz A Khudsar, conservation biologist and head of DDA's biodiversity parks program, summers of Delhi would be incomplete without the fiery mix of the orange and scarlet of Palash or Butea monosperma.

"At this time of the year, in the typical dry season, the Palash trees shed their leaves. What is left behind are its red flowers. The trees seem to be like foliage on fire, hence the Palash's name — Flame of the Forest. The tree grows in tropical and subtropical climes, generally in central India in areas with high grazing impact. In Delhi, it is blooming







Some of the best spots to enjoy the changing colours of the city are Garden of Five Senses, Lodhi Garden, Nehru Park, Talkatora Garden, Sundar Nursery and Buddha Jayanti Park

its beautiful colour. Here at Yamuna Biodiversity Park, we have the rarer Yellow Palash (Butea monosperma Var.lutea)," Khudsar said

"Palash is used in traditional medicines for relief from inflammation and ultic. Earlier, the flowers were used during the festival of Holi. Many tribal people use the resin from the trunk as medicine. They also use its trifoliated leave to make

bowls," Khudsar added "Delhi's canopy has exotic nerations, giving the city a unique colour after winter. There is the Champa, which adds pink, red, white and yellow to the cityscape. There are multi-coloured Bougainvillea, which is a climber and bush. There are also JacaranSpathodea. By mid-April, the Gulmohar and Amaltash will be here as well," Ajay Kaushik, deputy director of Horticulture Delhi Tourism who looks after the Garden of Five Senses, said.

Some of the best spots to

are the Garden of Five Senses, Lodhi Garden, Nehru Park, Talkatora Garden, Sundar Nursery and Buddha Jayanti Park, he said.

Naturalist Pradip Krishen said the trees time their flowering in such a way so now, providing the cityscape cers and is used as an antiseptrees species blooming for gedas, Peltophorums some enjoy the changing colours that their seeds mature and in the monsoon," Krishen said. death due to negligence). This

"It's a very beautiful sight, though days are getting hotter. There are many exotic species in Delhi that flower. The Bougainvillea is South American and came to Delhi some 300 years ago. Jacaranda is Brazilian. Some species have just finished flowering like the Semal. However, there is much to behold. Kachnar is flowering now. Pilkhan or Pakar too now had new foliage which are of copper and pinkish brown in colour. Its colour changes every day as it starts to turn green. Kusum is coming up with beautiful red leaves. There is also a golden flower called Tabebuia Aurea. It is a Brazilian species and can be seen in Sundar Nursery, and Nehru Park.... Things like Gulmohar and Amaltash come late in April or May," Krishen said.

He suggests sighting at Zakir Hussain Marg, Humayun's Tomb, Golf Links and Sunder Nursery.

"Summer is when trees flowers. The flowering of trees depends entirely on how long it takes for flowers to fertilise. The tree needs to drop its seeds

Gas pipeline leak during excavation causes fire, 1 dead New Delhi: A man died and

another was injured after a fire broke out due to a leakage in IGL pipeline during the repair work for a drain at Pradeep Vihar in Burari on Saturday night. According to fire officials.

the incident was reported at 11pm, after which three fire tenders were rushed to the spot. "The area was cordoned off and the blaze was brought under control. However, one labourer died in the pit and another was rescued and rushed to a hospital," an official said.

Cops, along with IGL workers, helped the fire team in containing the leakage. "During investigation it was found that two labourers, Raj Kumar (42) and Parveen, were working at the site for an authorised service provider of IGL, tasked with repairing the pipeline. While Kumar's condition is reportedly stable, Parveen was declared dead on arrival at the hospital,"

said a senior police officer. Police registered a case under sections 285 (acting negligently with fire), 337 (Negligently as to endanger human life) and 304A (

Man batters wife to death with shovel over 'affair'

Avishek.Kumar@timesgroup.com

Ghaziabad: An autorickshaw driver who suspected that his wife was having an affair allegedly killed her with a shovel and then slit her throat with it several times after the couple had a fight in their Loni house on Saturday night.

Police said the driver, Ayub (40), was drunk and also thrashedfour of his children-all teenagers — when they tried to stop him from assaulting their mother. The couple's fifth child, their eldest son Aram (19) wasn't there at the time.

Ayub fled soon after.

Loni ACP Suryabali Maurya said on Sunday that cops were informed about the murder around 10pm. They reached the rented one-storey house and saw 36-year-old Farzana lying on the floor in a pool of blood. The four children had sustained minor injuries too.

The ACP said Ayub was an autorickshaw driver but he was currently working as a labourer in the city. Ties between the couple were strained.

"Ayub and Farzana were fighting for the past three days. The atmosphere in the house was tense because of that. On Saturday night, he returned home after work in a drunken condition. Farzana, who worked as a tailor, was stitching when he came in and started cursing her," the ACP said.

According to cops, the fights began as Ayub suspected Farzana was having an affair.

"Soon, the argument turned into a fight. The couple's eldest son Aram was out of the house. The other children tried to rescue their mother but Ayub beat them up too. Later, he took a shovel and attacked Farzana, and slit her throat. Then he fled from the spot and his mobile number is now switched off," Maurya said.

Police have registered a case at the Loni police station after a complaint by Aram. An FIR was registered against Ayub under Section 302 (punishment for murder) of the Indian Penal Code.

"Farzana's body was sent for a post-mortem examination and the report is awaited. Three police teams have formed to nab the accused," the ACP said, adding that the four minor children are with Aram.

Denied liquor at 2am, three shoot salesperson at outlet

Avishek.Kumar @timesgroup.com

Noida: A 45-year-old salesper- such calls. But they kept bangson in Bisrakh was shot dead by three youths early on Sun-Hariom got frustrated and opeday after he refused to sell them ned the door," said Prithviraj. liquor as the shop was closed.

gate repeatedly around 2am. "We get rogue customers off and on. So, we don't answer ing on the door. At one point,

Hariom, who was from liquor, but Hariom told them Amroha, and his colleague to go as the shop had shut. Prithviraj had downed the "This led to an argument. I shutters of the liquor outlet was jolted out of sleep by the have been informed," a police and were sleeping inside when ruckus and rushed outside. I officer said. Prithviraj lodged the three youths - already saw Hariom and the others a police complaint against drunk - knocked on the back engaged in a scuffle. One of the three youths.

the youths whipped out a gun from his pocket and fired at him. A bullet hit Hariom in the chest and he slumped to the ground. The three youths fled," Prithviraj told police.

Hariom was rushed to ho-The three youths asked for spital, where he died during treatment. "He had been working at the outlet for six months. His family members





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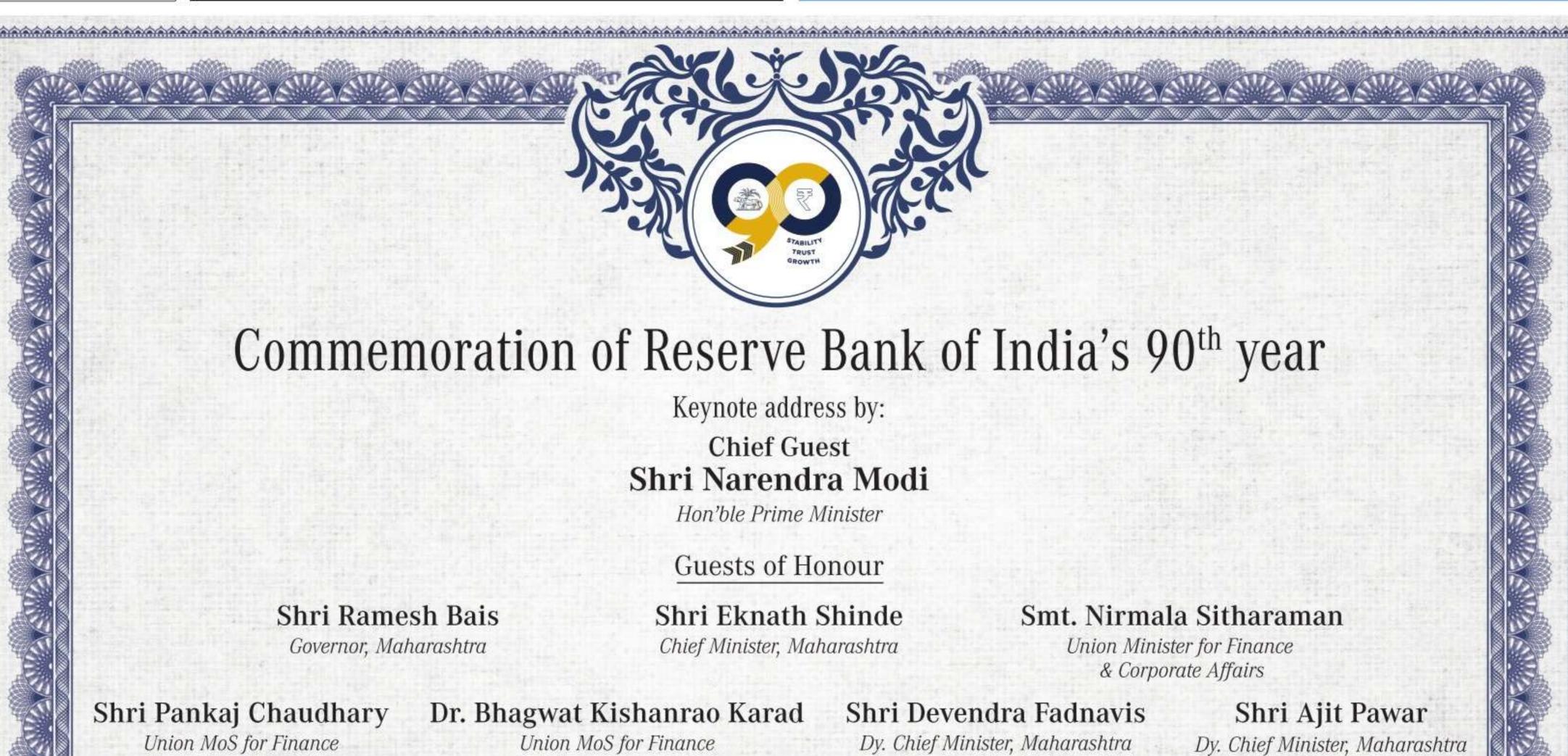




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New Delhi: Delhi Pollution Control Committee(DPCC) will ask five-star hotels in the city to submit a self-declaration on their actual mass water balance to establish the amount of treated water being used by them. DPCC had earlier asked hotels to reuse treated water to the maximum extent possible.

"DPCC should pursue with the units to promote reuse of treated effluents. Water is a scarce commodity, and groundwater levels have gone down significantly in some areas. Initially, five-star hotels and other major water consumers may be asked to initiate steps to reuse treated wastewater to the maximum ex-

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

meeting held on Feb 20. The minutes of meet-

ings were shared recently. The board was informed that 26 hotels had already taken steps to reuse treated wastewater. Other hotels have been asked to initiate steps to reuse treated wastewater to the maximum extent possible.

"All five-star hotels (should) be asked to submit the self-declaration about actual water mass balance to check the total water requirement and reuse of treated wastewater specifically indicating the provisioning of flow meters at the outlet of STP and reuse lines. The data so received will be analysed for further verification," said the DPCC.

Hotels to submit report on water reuse tent," said the minutes of DPCC's 72nd board tent, and the minutes March Nights Coolest In 5 Years

Mercury Rises At End Of Second Week, Day Temperatures Cross 30°C Mark

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: With a mean minimum temperature of 14.3 degrees Celsius, this March saw cooler nights than those of the past five years. Even the days were cooler. The average maximum temperature in March was 30.3 degrees Celsius, the lowest in the past four years.

According to India Meteorological Department (IMD) data, a lower mean minimum temperature for March was last recorded in 2019, at 13.8 degrees Celsius. Similarly, a lower mean maximum temperature was recorded in March 2020, at 28.2 degrees Celsius. March 2019 saw the mean maximum temperature settle at 28.2 degrees Celsius.

A Met official said maximum temperatures stayed near normal on most days in the first fortnight of March. Day temperatures saw a rise at the end of the second week, surpassing the 30 degrees Celsius-mark. The last week of March saw the mercury soaring more than usual, with the maximum temperatures staying above 35 degrees Celsius.

The hottest temperatures were recorded consecutively



Temperature (in degrees Celsius) in March Mean max temp 30.9 30.3 17.6 16.8 16.2 2024 2023 2022 2021 2020 2019

from March 27 to 29. The maximum temperature was 37 degrees Celsius on two days and 37.8 degrees Celsius on relargely remained below the the third day. The maximum

temperature on Sunday was

35.2 degrees Celsius, one degree above normal.

The minimum temperatunormal mark for the first 20 days of March. The night tem-

perature also saw a rise in the last week of the month. The highest minimum temperature was recorded on March

30 at 21.8 degrees Celsius. This March logged just 4.3 mm of rainfall as against the long-period average of 17.4 mm. The month saw six rainy days. However, Safdarjung, which is the city's base station, saw only 'trace' rainfall on most days, except March 3 when 4 mm of rainfall was recorded.

The month ended with a rain deficit of 75%. In contrast, March 2023 recorded 53.2 mm of rainfall in seven days of rain activity. No rain was seen in March 2022.

The Met department has predicted that the maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 34 and 20 degrees Celsius, respectively, on Monday. Gusty winds at the speed of 30-40 kmph are likely to prevail on Monday and Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Delhi's air quality deteriorated to the 'poor' category on Sunday due to calm wind conditions on Saturday night. The AQI on Sunday was 242 in the 'poor' range. However, it is likely to improve to 'moderate' on Monday and Tuesday as strong winds are predicted to aid in dispersion.

The AQI is again predicted to enter the 'poor' category on April 3, according to the Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi.

Traffic relief delayed: Key PWD projects languish, lack of approvals among reasons

Siddhanta.Mishra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Several flyover projects of the Public Works Department that were ambitiously planned over two years ago to provide traffic relief to people are delayed.

In 2022, as part of the first phase of Delhi govt's plan to make 77 traffic interventions, PWD took up work in trafficintense areas on 29 corridors.

This included long-term and short-term projects.

While the short-term projects, such as shifting electric poles, removing encroachment on roads and footpaths have been done, bigger projects such as the flyover between Anand Vihar to Apsara border, Punjabi corridor redevelopment and Peeragarhi

junction revamp are incomplete and past deadlines. The Phirni elevated road work has not yet begun.

Sources said factors such as lack of permission from various departments and pending approvals are the reasons for the delays, but projects which have started might be completed this year. Some of the projects were

part of finance minister Atishi's budget speech.

Two long-term projects the Punjabi Bagh flyover and elevated corridor from Anand Vihar to Apsara border - are likely to be completed in the next few months, PWD officials said, if the request to fell trees is approved. These projects were approved by former PWD minister Manish Sisodia.

Two long-term projects - Punjabi Bagh flyover (in pic) and the elevated corridor from Anand Vihar to Apsara border - are likely to be completed in the next few months, if the request to fell trees is approved



Anoop Raja

Those whom we love don't go away, they hard work is in life. Love and miss you.

Arun Raja (Brother) Ph.: 9818073726

At Punjabi Bagh, the project was supposed to be completed in Jan. A portion of the corridor redevelopment work — a half flyover — was recently opened to the public. But traffic congestion in the area is getting worse.

The Anand Vihar project involves construction of a flyover between Anand Vihar railway overbridge and the Apsara border. Work is not complete and people continue to suffer heavy congestion in the area.

PWD officials said the proposal to decongest the Najaf-

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garh-Phirni road was approved by Unified Traffic and Transportation Infrastructure (Planning & Engineering) Centre (UTTIPEC) last year. The PWD has proposed a project which includes a 4.8km elevated corridor to provide a congestion-free commute between Outer Delhi and Haryana.

The East-West corridor is an elevated route from Anand Vihar to Tikri border. a more than 30 km stretch planned by the PWD. It is still under the consideration of

UTTIPEC. The corridor will be completed in three years after approval. The department submitted a revised proposal in July last year to UTTIPEC.

Under the overall decongestion plan, Delhi govt identified 77 corridors in 2018 as traffic hotspots. These are to be decongested through road redesigning and flyovers, underpasses and foot overbridges.

There was no official response from PWD on the exact deadlines for the projects and reasons for the delays.

Two men arrested in connection with gold scam of ₹16.4L

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Two men have been arrested for allegedly duping a resident of Shahdara of Rs 16.4 lakh by promising to smuggle 300 grams of gold from Dubai to India for the price of 250 grams. After analysing bank accounts and call records, police zeroed in on suspects Parveen (27) and Rachin Sharma (33) who were running the racket.

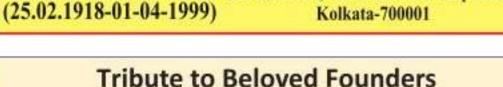
The suspects, who are residents of Panipat, allegedly ran a scam involving the procurement of gold from Dubai at a discounted price, a senior police officer said.

Police said that complainant Manoj Jain, who is an advocate and has a property dealing business, said that he got a call from the suspects in Jan about procuring the gold at a discounted rate. Jain claimed that he did not know the duo personally.

The victim informed Shahdara's cyber police station that he bought 300 grams gold and planned to bring it back from Dubai as the wearable gold which is legally exempted per person. The suspects assured the complainant that a certified bill of gold would be provided.

Police investigated the victim's transaction history and collected bank account numbers and mobile numbers linked to which the money was transferred, and it was revealed that Rs 8 lakh of the cheated amount were transferred to the suspect's account. "An amount of Rs 16 lakh was transferred into AU Small Finasnce Bank, and from there Rs 8 lakh was transferred into Parveen's account," said Surendra Choudhary, DCP (Shahdara).

After zeroed in on the location of the suspects through data analysis, police arrested the duo from Ghaziabad. Two mobile phones and three SIM cards linked to the case were also seized. "The main accused Joginder Singh operates from Dubai and the arrested accused operated from Ghaziabad," added DCP Choudhary.







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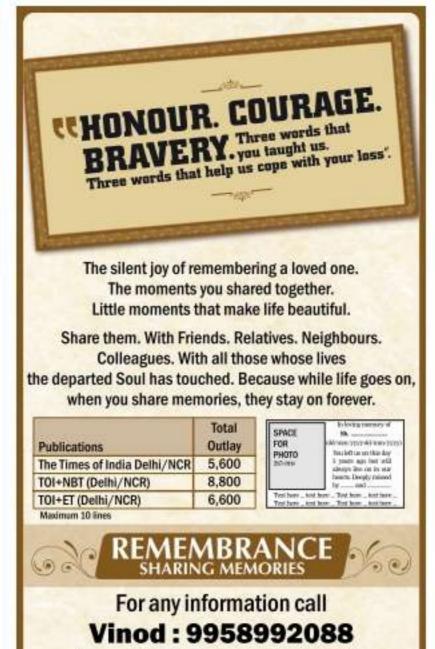
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Man Vs Wild: Asola Bhatti's 10-Year Plan To Focus on Curbing Conflicts

WII, Dehradun To Ready Roadmap In 6 Months, Old One Expires Next March

Kushagra.Dixit @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The next 10-year action plan for Asola Bhatti Wildlife Sanctuary will have among its top priorities the issue of man-animal conflict mitigation to dwell alongside a healthy leopard population inside the city.

The current 10-year Management Plan for Asola Bhatti 2015-16 to 2024-25 was prepared by Forest Research Institute (FRI), Dehradun, and will expire after March 2025. Forest department has got Wildlife Institute of India (WII), Dehradun to draft the next plan.

According to forest officials, a WII team is already here and has started preliminary surveys of the sanctuary, Delhi's only such facility. The plan is likely to be submitted in the next six months and it will draw a roadmap for the next 10 years, 2025-26 to 2035-36, "We have certain priorities as some species like leopards are now residents of the sanctuary while earlier they were only migrants," said chief wildlife warden Suneesh Buxy.

In 2022, a report by Bombay Natural History Society and forest department had confirmed the presence of eight leopards as permanent residents of Asola. In Jan 2023, two newborn cubs were spotted, and biologists called the event the first-ever documented leopard

BALANCE OF NATURE



Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun making a new wildlife management plan for Asola Bhatti Wildlife

- Sanctuary ➤ To be implemented over 10
- years from April 2025 ➤ Likely to be prepared within next 6 months
- Previous 10-year plan prepared by Forest Research Institute, Dehradun set to expire next March Special focus on man-
- animal conflict mitigation Replication of successful models like Sanjay Gandhi
- National Park Peaceful living with leopard

birth in Asola.

Forest department now aims to replicate the success stories of peaceful co-existence re-

population to be promoted Leopard, spotted deer (cheetal) and hog deer are among the new additions to the sanctuary since last management plan



OTHER FOCUS AREAS

Photos: Tarun Rawat, Rajesh Mehta



corded at other national parks. successful models like Sanjay Gandhi National Park will be in "Man-animal conflict mitigation will be in special focus in focus to live fearlessly with the the coming years. Replication of leopard population," said Buxy.

Protection and conservation of wildlife habitat, landscape development for faunal population, water and soil conservation, awareness and publicity through eco-tourism, greening and eco-restoration in the wasteland with indigenous species are among other priorities, officials pointed out.

According to the current plan, based on the surveys done 10 years ago, mining and water requirement remained the major issues. FRI's action plan had pointed out that the sanctuary spread over 2,500 hectares represented a typical seat of transition from a semi-arid zone to the Indo-Gangetic plains, and has a unique physiographic and biogeographic location. The mining activity in the area has stopped now.

The plan had assessed the faunal diversity consisting of 18 species of mammals, 82 of birds, 25 of butterflies, five of amphibians, and three of fish. The major mammal species included blue bull, black buck, porcupine, langur, common hare, jungle cat, hyena, tors recalled how they had foipalm squirrel, civet, mongoo- led an end-stage plan to assasse and Indian pangolin.

not spotted any pangolin recently, but some new species like spotted deer, leopard, hog deer and Indian boar had made the sanctuary their permanent home.

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Delhi cops 'saved' Ansari from being killed in custody in 2015

Rajshekhar.Jha @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Had it not been for Delhi Police's special cell, mafia don-turned-politician Mukhtar Ansari would have perhaps been killed in custody by a "suicide bomber" way back in 2015. Two days after Ansari died allegedly of a heart attack in jail, investigasinate Ansari by arresting a An official said they had dreaded contract killer.

The assassin was Sachidanand aka Lambu Sharma, who currently faces two death sentences in separate cases and is lodged in a jail in Bihar.

Ansari's arch rivals, including Brijesh Singh and Sunil Pandey, had allegedly hired Sharma's services for a supari of Rs 6 crore. A protege of jailed Maoist Bharat Saxena, Sharma was notorious for his bomb-making skills. The plan was apparently to target Ansari in court on trial date. The first issue with the plan was that Sharma was in a jail in Ara, Bihar. The kind of money offered for killing Ansari prompted Sharma to first hatch his own little prison break.

Executing an audacious plan, Sharma managed to convince his then girlfriend, Nagina, to place a "tiffin bomb" in a court in Ara to help him flee from custody.

Interestingly, Sharma had carried out a blast in the same court in 2009 to kill a witness.

Mukhtar Ansari (top) and hitman Lambu Sharma

Mukhtar Ansari's arch rivals, including Brijesh Singh and Sunil Pandey, had allegedly hired Lambu Sharma's services for a supari of ₹6 crore. A follower of jailed Maoist **Bharat Saxena, Sharma** was notorious for his bomb-making skills

On Jan 23, 2015, witnesses saw Nagina talking on phone when Sharma's prison van arrived. She walked toward the van while on her phone. It's

unclear what transpired next but Nagina acted like a suicide bomber and triggered a blast in court in which she and a cop, who tried to stop her, died while several others were injured. It was Jan 23. 2015, and Sharma managed to flee from custody in the melee.

The next few months were spent in arranging explosives and another suicide bomber. besides doing research on Ansari's court appearance schedules. Sharma was paid Rs 50 lakh as advance for the task.

Mid-June, Sharma allegedly gave final shape to his plans. However, Delhi Police's special cell was tipped off by an informer who was aware of procurement of explosives by Sharma.

On June 23, Sharma had set out to execute the plot when the special cell intercepted him near a court in Delhi in nick of time and averted Ansari's killing. Lambu's tryst in crime

started in 2004 when he was 12. He was in love with a girl and killed a man who warned him to stay away from her. The juvenile home proved to be his nursery where he learnt the tricks of the trade. A cop who interrogated him said he appeared to be a "natural killer", who had no remorse for taking a human life. So, he readily accepted a contract that no gangster or killer of UP and other states did, given the clout and the security apparatus that Ansari enjoyed.

HC refuses E-mulakat to jailed gangster involved in Tillu's killing

Abhinav.Garg@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has refused to permit e-mulakat (tele-calling) facilities to a jailed gangster who was part of the squad that stabbed and murdered a rival don, Tillu Tajpuria, in prison last year.

Taking note of the stand of jail authorities and the fact that Deepak Dabas alias Teetar was involved in several crimes, the court declined relief.

"In view of the facts stated in the status report, the number of cases, and the seriousness of the cases in which the petitioner has been involved, this court does not find any reason to interfere and grant the petitioner the prayers at this stage. However, it is always open for him to make re-

presentations indicating the circumstances because of which the emulakat facility should be granted to him, and on such a representation being filed, the superintendent of prisons is directed to consider the same on its own merits, uninfluenced by the fact that this writ petition has been dismissed," Justice Subramoium Prasad noted in a recent order.

Interestingly, Dabas approached the court citing the plea of Pinjra Tod members Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita for extension of the emulakat facility to all prisoners whose relatives reside outside the national capital. He challenged the denial of the five minute-per-day tele-calling facility by the jail administration and urged the court to intervene.

However, a status report by authorities informed HC that Teetar was accused of offences under the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act (MCOCA) and 25 FIRs were registered against him for various offences. These include stringent sections on murder, attempt to murder, robbery, and criminal conspiracy, among others. The court noted that he was "also accused of committing the murder of an undertrial prisoner and gangster Tillu

Tajpuria inside Central Jail No. 8/9". Rejecting the plea, HC cited Rule 631 of the Delhi Prison Rules. The rule says that prisoners involved in serious offences were not eligible for the emulakat facility in the interest of public safety and order. However, the jail superintendent is empowered to take appropriate decisions on a caseby-case basis.

In its status report, jail authorities told the court that this facility is not taken away from any prisoner in case of an emergency, and Teeter would be entitled to such a benefit on request and after considering the nature of the emergency by the concerned superintendent.

The report added that the jail superintendent can take a call on emulakat of inmates lodged in high security wards considering their jail conduct, involvement in criminal cases, and other suitable reasons. This facility will be allowed once a week, and information about conducting e-mulakat for these categories of prisoners shall be shared with investigation agencies.

32,000 flats are awaiting registry

When the package - based

but were not registered.

Of these 57, the builders of

its revenue by Rs 112 crore.

Lokesh M, the Authority CEO, said the builders of the remaining 22 projects who had given their consent to the rehab package were considering depositing the 25% advance in the new financial year. There is a high possibility of a large number of registries being ex-

"We are in constant touch with these builders. We are trying to persuade them to deposit 25% of the revised dues as soon as possible," the CEO said.

expedite the process of registries. On March 1, one such camp was organised at Express Zenith Society in Sector 77. A total of 55 registries

were sealed that day. Similar camps were organised at Indira Gandhi Kala Kendra in Sector 6. A total of 500 flats have been registered in multiple camps so far.

Residents of several condominiums have been raising concern against the pace of registries. In many housing societies, the residents have put up banners and posters declaring they will abstain from voting in the Lok Sabha polls if their flats are not registered before that.

The state govt came out with its rehab plan for stalled projects on Dec 21 last year. Noida Authority subsequently listed 57 such projects and called their developers for a meeting.

Of them, the builders of 47 projects participated in the meeting and 35 said yes to the deal. After only 14 developers deposited the advance, the Authority issued a "final letter" to the others last month, asking them to inform it about their decision on the govt package.

In Greater Noida, 1,365 flats have been registered across 16 projects so far. The builders of these projects have deposited the advance amount, accounting for Rs 73 crore in total.

in Noida, only 500 done so far

Aditya.Dev@timesgroup.com

Noida: Despite efforts by Noida Authority, developers of only 14 of 57 projects in the city have signed up for UP govt's rehabilitation package in the past three months.

on recommendations of a panel headed by former bureaucrat Amitabh Kant - was announced last Dec, the Authority had identified 57 projects that were stuck over dues. These projects had 32,453 flats in total, most of which had been handed over to buyers

35 projects, with 13,639 flats, said yes to the govt deal. But so far, developers of only 14 projects have submitted 25% of their recalculated dues with the Authority-the first step for availing zero period waivers on penal interest incurred during two years of the pandemic.

With the payment of this advance, some 4,000 flats can now be registered in the city. But the Authority has been able to register only 500 so far. This has helped the Authority augment

ecuted in April, he added.

The stamps department has been holding camps at various housing societies to

REGISTRY REPORT CARD

TOTAL

57 Projects where registries stuck 32,453

Homebuyers affected across

these 57 projects **GOVT DEAL ACCEPTED BY**

Projects whose developers agreed to the conditions of the package during a meeting

with Noida Authority

avoid fatal accidents.

13,639 Flat are waiting for registry at these 35 projects across the district

Siddhanta.Mishra@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB) has

directed officials to make borewells in the city safe by following the guidelines

issued by the Supreme Court in 2010 to

well is abandoned at any stage, a certifica-

te from Municipal Corporation of Delhi,

private contractor, groundwater authori-

ty or other concerned agency must be ob-

tained. In the wake of children falling in-

side borewell pits in different parts of the

country, DJB has issued a fresh order re-

abandoned borewells have been repor-

ted in the city. Recently, a person alleged-

ly fell inside an underground pit within

a borewell complex and died while the ef-

DJB has in the past stated that there

forts to rescue him were being made.

Some incidents of people falling into

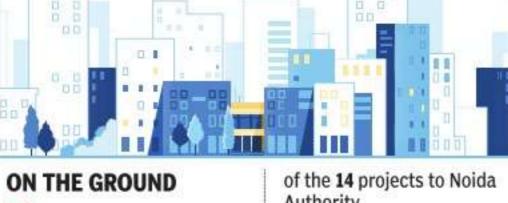
cently to avoid such incidents.

According to the guidelines, if a bore-



Projects whose developers dues as advance

₹112 crore The amount - 25% of dues - paid by developers



paid 25% of their recalculated

Authority 4,000 Number of unregistered flats

at these 14 projects Flat registries

图 executed so far

DJB issues directions to make borewells safe

jor challenges is illegal extraction of groundwater, which is fast depleting in the city. A recent report of Central Ground Wa-As per the rules, all the tube wells should be registered, a

the city, and officials have also accepted that there are many illegal ones which

According to officials, one of the ma-

are not in the radar of the authorities.

signboard with details of the owning agency be displayed, and surrounding area should have barbed wire fencing

ter Board has shown groundwater sources have depleted since 2022, making it critical in terms of extraction. The report said that tube wells remain the major source of extraction, making over 41% of

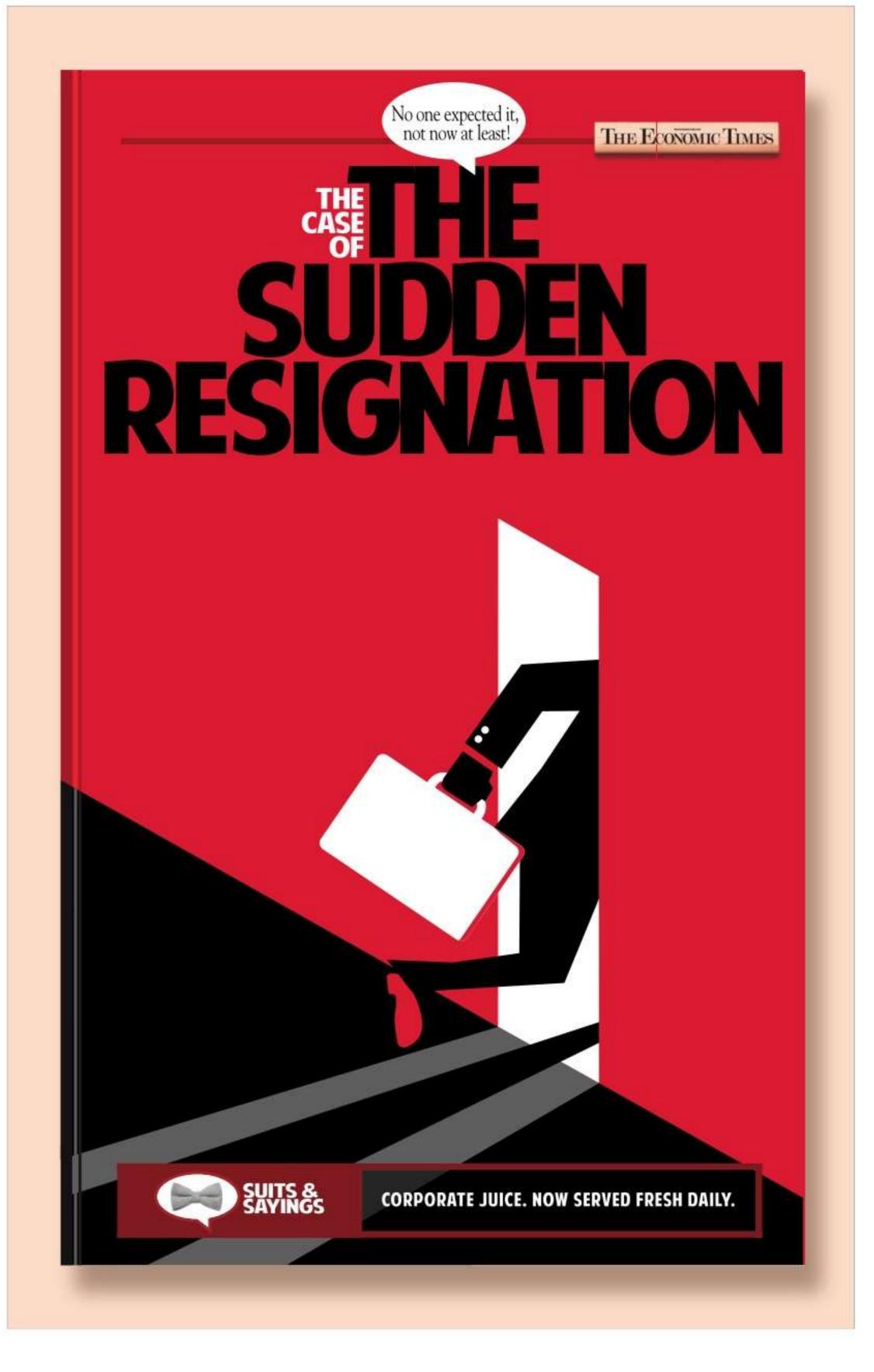
the city's total area 'over-exploited'. As per the rules, all the tube wells are around 5,000 authorised borewells in should be registered, a signboard with ka and Okhla in South Delhi.

details of the owning agency be displayed, and surrounding area should have barbed wire fencing.

"The guidelines are circulated for compliance by all concerned officers. Further, a monthly report shall be submitted to superintendent engineer-civil and chief engineergroundwater by or before 7 of every month," says the DJB's order issued on March 1.

The guidelines for repairing borewells have also been specified so that no fatal incidents occur. In rural areas, the monitoring of the borewells must be done through village sarpanch and the agriculture department official, in urban areas monitoring is to be done by the respective agencies and DJB.

Approximately 10 square yards is the minimum requirement for installation of a borewell in Delhi and it generally takes one-to-three months' time for getting the permission. According to DJB, the areas where borewell is allowed have high water table like -Yamuna belt, Najafgarh, Dwar-



SANTOSH DESAI

CITY CITY BANG BANG

either if they popped out of a birthday

cake and sang Disco Station Disco, and

he is much happier for it. Not caring

about celebrities begins with not know-

ing who they are. It is easy to look down

of involvement, but to the rest of the

world, they are narcissistic freaks, who

are excessively in love with themselves

as they make spectacles of themselves

on some public street while shooting

their latest reel. The power we feel at

being able to dismiss them and think

of them as jokes stems from our indif-

ference. The ability to dismiss as drivel

what one section of society thinks no

end of is priceless. Who, for instance, is

less discussions surrounding the 'big

wedding'. Everyone had a view, and

those were enthusiastically shared,

making it impossible to escape the sub-

ject. There were a lucky few who hadn't

tuned into the event at all and seemed

completely clueless about what hap-

pened, who attended and who didn't,

who wore what, and how it stimulated

the economy or didn't, whether it dis-

played India's clout or highlighted an

abject lack of taste and imagination,

what it said about us, India, our society,

or the post-social media world. It was a

blissful form of ignorance and, more

cricket, particularly on occasions when

our team is doing badly or when it con-

I envy the people who do not follow

importantly, of indifference.

This came to mind during the end-

Elvish Yadav, and why should I care?

Indifference might well

be the best superpower

we can have today. My fa-

ther, for instance, cannot

tell an Anil Kapoor from

the Kapoor called Ran-

bir and wouldn't know

Centre allots 8.8 acres to RML for new hosp block, houses for docs

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Atal Bihari Vajpayee Institute of Medical Sciences and Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital has been allotted 8.8 acres of land between Mandir Marg and Udyan Marg, opposite Birla Mandir, for a new hospital block to be used for patients of specialities such as a geriatric clinic, oncology, radiotherapy, palliative care and chronic illness.

Authorities said the hospital proposes to build a residential facility for doctors, nurses and other supporting staff besides the proposed treatment facilities. The construction of an integrated residential-cum-hospital and teaching institute will start soon after approvals from all agencies.

A week on, 22-yr-old held

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Within a week after the murder of a 22-year-old

man in northeast Delhi's Shastri Park, police has arrested

the suspect and recovered a semi-automatic pistol and 3 live

cartridges from his possession. The killing followed an al-

works at a bar in Kaushambi, four years ago and had an 18-

month-old daughter. The couple got divorced in Nov 2023, af-

Tuesday (March 26) at about 12.45am and found Yaseen and

Ishrat together. Yaseen did not like Ishrat's ex-husband visi-

ting her, leading to an altercation during which Yaseen fired

fire and sustained bullet wounds in his chest, an officer said.

sible hideouts of Yaseen in the national capital region and

While Sohail escaped, Mustakim was caught in the line of

After analysing CCTV footage, police raided several pos-

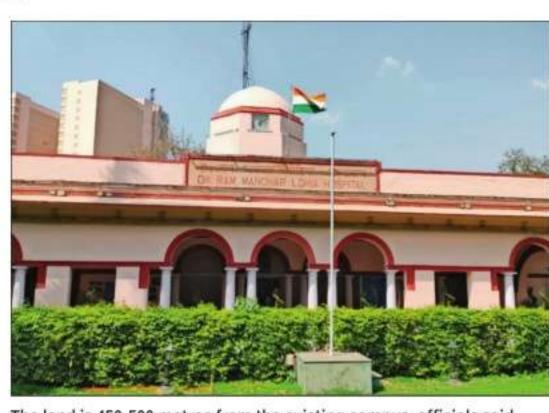
three rounds from a gun and fled from the spot, police said.

Sohail and his friend Mustakim decided to visit Ishrat last

tercation between two men over a woman, police said.

ter which Ishrat wanted to marry Yaseen (22).

for Shastri Park murder



The land is 450-500 metres from the existing campus, officials said

According to a communication from the ministry of housing and urban affairs (MOHUA), the hospital has to get the plan approved from

New Delhi Municipal Council, Delhi Urban Art Commission and Land and Development Office. Hospital director Dr Ajay

Shukla said the plan has been prepared but everything will be started after approval for change in land use. "We are expecting approval from all agencies in 6 months and the project is likely to be completed by 2026-27," he said.

Dr Shukla said nearly 1,000 beds will be increased along with dedicated geriatric and palliative care facilities. Besides, holistic care will be provided to patients.

conformity with architectural surroundings of the area within two years from the date of handing over of land.

the hospital by MOHUA on March5atacost of about Rs 60 crore. The land is 450-500 metres from the existing campus, officials said. The hospital has to construct the building in

upon celebrity culture and to vent about its ubiquity and uselessness, but one is still enmeshed in *Matrix*; one is simply on one side of the fence. But the playground is the same—a world infested by celebrities. In outraging against them, we acknowledge their power. We get a sense of this power when we come across self-important influencers who we have no clue about. They might be extremely well known in their arena

The land was allotted to

CBI Raising Day may hit

New Delhi: Motorists are expected to face traffic disrup-Complainant Sohail Khan (22) married Ishrat (23), who day evening as traffic police plan to curb vehicular movement on Mathura Road for the rat Mandapam.

> The restrictions will be in effect from 4pm to 10pm. Motorists are advised to avoid Mathura Road, Bhairon Marg, Pu-Suspect Yaseen rana Quila Road, Shershah Road, and the India Gate Hexagon.

Police said that a large gathering is expected, which may affect traffic on the surrounding roads of Bharat Mandapam. In view of this, traffic police have said that entry of the general public to Bharat Man-

the matter and fired multiple shots at him, but Sohail ducked and bullets hit Mustakim, claiming his life. Yaseen was previously involved in four crimiat other points. Locations expected to face traffic curbs are Tilak Marg-Bhagwan Dass Road Crossing, Purana Quila Road-Mathura Road Crossing, Shershah Road-Mathura Road Crossing, Dr Zakir Hussain Marg-Subra-

avoid Purana Quila Road, Mathura Road, Bhairon Marg, Shershah Road, and the India Gate Hexagon

mania Bharti Marg Crossing, Road-Subramania Bharti Marg Crossing, Q-Point, Man Singh Road Roundabout, Jaswant Singh Road Roundabout, Kasturba Gandhi Marg-Firozshah Road Crossing, and the

trives to lose a game it should have won. Looking at people who go nonchalantly about their work— not a crease on the forehead nor a burning desire to smash things, but a serene expression on their face that seems to communicate either a divine sense of bliss or musings about their next meal—one is torn with envy.

An Ode To Indifference

Similarly, there are people who are not on social media, and contrary to what most of us would believe, they are able to breathe in and out, have their motor skills intact, and can string out words in a sentence coherently. Perhaps, more so than the rest of us. Opting out, not as a mark of protest, for then one is constantly in awe of one's own nobility, but simply because it seems pointless and uninteresting, is so much more potent a weapon against a phenomenon that takes itself so seriously.

ing technology and, more generally, the modern world. This is one way, of course, but it requires a lot of effort. It is a laboured and self-conscious form of freedom. One is as caught up in one's opposition as one would living 'on the grid'.

Indifference is different. It allows us to shrug our shoulders and refuse to take the world seriously. One follows the pursuits one enjoys but refuses to become part of a larger machine over which one has little control. A life steeped in the everyday, without arrogating to oneself any larger role or taking on responsibilities for the world beyond our immediate circle, might seem escapist, but there may be wisdom in it.

The fact is that we are being shaped by the tools we use and find ourselves inextricably tethered to a world without

Being apolitical may not be the answer, however tempting that might be, simply because one cannot escape the consequences of politics. But the ability to focus on other parts of life, to retain the ability to believe but do so with a sense of perspective, and not care about every little atomised bit of provocation that comes our way might ease mental health issues and provide a sense of perspective

Politics, too, is an arena that has engulfed us and miniaturised us into labels that brook no deviation. Once we embrace a label, we are trapped in it and perform our duties as mandated. We must slant our views on all sensitive subjects, shut out evidence to the contrary, celebrate victories on our side with disproportionate glee, and spin our defeats expertly. It is our solemn duty to fight against a contrary opinion and to seek refuge in the banality of like-mindedness. We are convinced we are right, and that can be an exacting burden to carry.

Being apolitical may not be the answer, however tempting that might be, simply because one cannot escape the consequences of politics. But the ability to focus on other parts of life, to retain the ability to believe but do so with a sense of perspective, and not care about every little atomised bit of provocation that comes our way might ease mental health issues and provide a sense of perspective.

There are self-conscious opters out there, those who seek to live 'off the grid'. by staying in remote places and eschew-

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end or relief. Everything seems urgent and important in the world, and even the thought of opting out feels like an act of dereliction, of running away from the real world. But this is not the real world; it is an entirely fabricated universe with its own rules, which we are made to follow without knowing fully what we are signing up for. It has changed us in many fundamental ways and continues to do so. Fighting it from within isn't useful because any participation increases its power.

The problem, of course, is that for most of us, it is too late. We cannot feign indifference, for our thinking now is too deeply affected by the media we consume. We live in a symbolic world generated by electronic simulation and cannot extricate ourselves from its abstractions. We react constantly to stimuli and feel bereft in the absence of constant injections of dopamine. We feel most alive when outraged or angry. And there is always something that feeds our appetite.

santosh365@gmail.com

Uttar Pradesh, and finally nabbed him from Pili Mitti in Welcome. "A sophisticated semi-automatic pistol along with three live cartridges were recovered from the accused's possession," said Joy Tirkey, DCP (northeast).

Online (e-tender) tender in two bid system is hereby invited for erection of Pandal and other Civil Works etc. Tender ID 2024_DMPSB_687681_1/2. Last Date of submission of bids has been extended till 05.04.2024, 16:00 IST. For details visit wbtenders.gov.in and the office Notice Board

> For District Magistrate District Election Officer Paschim Bardhaman

e-tender no. 02/Infra (2nd Call) of 2023-2024

traffic on Mathura Road TIMES NEWS NETWORK

tions in central Delhi on Mon-CBI Raising Day event at Bha-

Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud will address the 20th DP Kohli Memorial Lecture at 5pm on Monday in Auditorium 1 of Bharat Mandapam. Traffic will be diverted to ensure the cavalcades of high dignitaries move smoothly.

dapam is prohibited.

Traffic police said that no vehicle will be allowed to halt or park anywhere on Mathura Road, Bhairon Marg, and Subramania Bharti Marg. Vehicles found parked here will be towed away and prosecuted for

improper parking and disobedience to lawful instructions. Towed vehicles will be parked in the traffic pit in front of Bhairon Mandir on Bhairon Marg.

Traffic will also be diverted

Motorists are advised to

Mandi House Roundabout.

A traffic police officer said, "Mathura Road will not be closed, but movement shall be regulated. Traffic movement is being controlled for VIPs who will be attending the event at Bharat Mandapam. The advisory has been issued keeping in view that Monday is a working day."

Cops crack down on cyber cons, 40 held so far in Nuh raids

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: A total of 40 youths were arrested from various parts of Nuh in the last 48 hours in connection with many cases of cyber fraud registered across the country. Till late on Sunday evening, raids were still being carried out in the district, police said. This is the biggest crackdown on cyb-

massive operation by around 5,000 Haryana cops on 14 villages in April last year. Nuh had then earned notoriety as 'new Jamtara', a reference to the small Jharkhand town that became the epicentre of online frauds.

er cons since the arrest of 66 youths in a

Officers said the latest arrests were carried out with the help of the Integrated Cyber Crime Coordination Centre's (i4C) 'Pratibimb' app, which flags the real-time phone location of a fraudster. State police chief Shatrujeet Kapur

said Pratibimb gave the cops information about the location of 594 cyber frauds from across the state. Of them, 101 (18%) were found to be around Nuh and the bordering Rajasthan town of Alwar.

The raids, which started on Saturday, are still continuing.

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told cops that he wan-

ted to marry Ishrat but

did not like repeated

visits of Sohail to meet

his ex-wife in odd ho-

urs. On the fateful day,

he had a heated argu-

ment with Sohail on

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जाहीर सूचना

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नोटीस विपक्षीगण प्रबन्धक कार्बी स्टोक ब्रोकिंग लि. निकट कुमार प्लाजा विष्णूपुरी रामघाट रोड अलीगढ

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AMRAPALI TECH PARK **WELFARE ASSOCIATION** To whomever it may concern: We the buyers of Units in

Amrapali Tech Park Project, Knowledge Park-V, Greater Noida West, UP were shocked and surprised to see an E-Auction Notice in the newspaper for the sale of Tech Park Project. We would like to state that the entire issue of Amrapali Tech Park is pending consideration before the Hon'ble Supreme Court in W.P. (C) No. 940 of 2017. In fact the Hon'ble Supreme Court have already directed NBCC to float tenders for completion of Project vide its Orders dated 18.06.2020 and 04.03.2021. Therefore, it is not at all comprehensible as to how an E-Auction notice is published. The Unit holders have already moved the Hon'ble Supreme Court for the said anomaly and to protect the interest of the unit holders. Please therefore be informed that the auction would be subject to the final outcome of the Hon'ble

Supreme Court

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purchase entire Ground Floor(without terrace/roof rights),measuring about 88.1 sq.yds., Part of Freehold Property bearing No.4/36, situated at Old Rajinder Vagar, New Delhi-60, from its owner Ms. Ruchi Narang W/o Vikas Narang, D/o Late Kamal Kumar Kataria, and Maternal grand d/o Late Harnam Das Kataria by virtue Relinquishment Deed.Further any body having any sort of interest or lien in the said property or any part thereof can file his or her objections within 30 days of publication. Failing which same shall not be binding upon my client and my client shall proceed to complete her transactions as per the agreed terms.
Chain Singh (Advocate)
E-mail :omsaidocuments@gmail.com

RESPONSE TO PUBLIC NOTICE DATED 20.03.2024 REGARDING PROPERTY 'JAGAT CINEMA'AT DELHI-110006

Lamba S/o Late Shri Ashwani Lamba & Mrs. Kawal Lamba W/o Mr Udit Lamba

both R/o 4/36, First Floor, Old Rajinder

Nagar. New Delhi-110060 is going to

(PUBLISHED IN THE TIMES OF INDIA BY ADV. MONIKA JINDAL) A 'Public Notice' was published at the instance of some unknown person, regarding property i.e., "Jagat Cinema" situated at Municipal No. 3911-12, at Jama Masjid [Municipal Ward-XI], Delhi -

On the instructions from my client Mrs. Reemu Seth Bhambi [Co-owner of "Jagat Cinema"], it s hereby informed to general public that the above referred public notice is misinforming that the property 'Jagat Cinema' is under sale. It is noteworthy that in the said Public Notice, neither the name of socalled purchaser nor of the owners

All are informed by present publication to take note that Hon'ble High Court of Delhi vide order dated 11.10.2022, in the matter titled as "Mrs. Reemu S. Bhambi vs. Mr. Binu Seth (alias Mr. Sangeet Seth) & Ors. bearing CS (OS) No. 620 of 2022" parties are directed to maintain status quo with regard to title and possession of the "Jagat Cinema". Therefore, public may note that property 'Jagat Cinema' is protected by the order of Delhi High

Court. Be notified accordingly. Mr. Aashish Arya (Advocate) Office: 3/7, Near Kashmiri Park, Jangpura, New Delhi-110014 Mobile No. 7424899664

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Shots fired in W Delhi: An

incident of firing was reported

at Bali Nagar in Moti Nagar on

Sunday. Police found empty

cartridges at the spot. After

inspection, cops claimed that

Eye doctor hit by tractor, dies

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: A 24-year-old optometrist from Faridabad died after a tractor rammed her scooter from behind in Sector 55 on Saturday evening. The driver of the tractor was arrested on Sunday, police said.

According to ASI Anil Kumar from the Sector 58 police station, Izma Saifi was on her way home from the hospital. Her father Parvez Saifi had been riding on a bike a few metres behind her when the incident occurred. Saifi alle-

gedly fell off her scooter when she was hit and was run over by the tractor. Parvez, along with local police, rushed her to a nearby hospital where she was declared dead on arrival.

The accused had fled the spot but passers by were able to note down the vehicle registration number and passed it on to the police, the officer said.

"The tractor had been driven in a rash manner. The driver also fled from the spot after the incident. Please initiate stringent legal action against him, Parvez said in his complaint.

ICAR - INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MAIZE RESEARCH, LUDHIANA

INTERVIEW

Online Interview will be held on 15.04.2024 at 10.00 AM onwards and 16.04.2024 at 10.AM onwards for One Position of Resident Consultant (RC), 17 Positions of Young Professional-II and 18 Positions of Young Professional-I under the project titled "Enhancement of maize production in catchment areas of ethanol industries" project at ICAR-IIMR, Pusa Campus, IARI, Delhi. For details, please visit https://iimr.icar.gov.in.

Senior Administrative Officer

the assailants must have fired

provisions of IPC and Arms Act

shots in the air and fled the

area. A case under relevant

has been registered at Moti

Nagar police station. TNN

PWD unit to keep track of delayed Barapullah Ph-III



TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Public Works Department plans to closely monitor the delayed Barapullah Phase-III project and set up a monitoring unit that will submit progress reports to senior govt officials.

Barapullah Phase-III, which has been facing the issue of land acquisition and green clearance issues, is close to becoming a project of passing deadlines.

The project envisages seamless connectivity between Mayur Vihar-1 and Sarai Kale Khan, where the corridor will merge with the existing Barapullah Phase I and provide signal-free connectivity between east Delhi and AIIMS. Phase III of the project, entailing construction of a 3.5kmlong stretch, started in April 2015 and was to be completed in Oct 2017. But it remains incomplete.

According to recent PWD order, a separate monitoring unit, under the chief engineer of the flyover zone, will be set up to update the seniors regularly about the progress made in the construction work of the delayed project, said an officer.

"The scope of work includes - tentative completion date, check if required resources and manpower is deployed and major roadblocks which need the attention of secretariat," says an order issued by special secretary Shas-









8826590518 Noida Sector-18 7303394127 Rohini **5**7303394114

TIMES NATION

'A RED LINE SHOULD NOT BE CROSSED': US ENVOY GARCETTI ON PANNUN 'ASSASSINATION PLOT' | 12

PUBLICISE MODI GOVT'S ACHIEVEMENTS IN PAST 10 YEARS: SHAH TO RAJ BJP NETAS | 13

Ankur.Sirothia@timesgroup.com

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh

minister Narendra Shivaji

Patel's son Abhigyan Patel,

30, was booked in the early

hours of Sunday for alleged-

ly thrashing in public four

persons - including a hote-

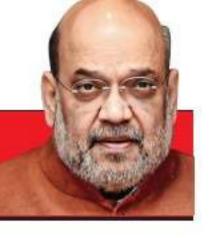
lier couple, one of their em-

ployees and a journalist — in

a prominent locality here.

The accused allegedly at-

past midnight.



Rural job scheme in huge demand, hints at ongoing distress in villages

In 2023-24, MGNREGS Generated 40cr Persondays Of Work More Than In Pre-Covid Yr

However, for MGNREGS,

scheme for the poor, the true

measure of what is in store as

the last resort for unskilled

wage earners, is the financial

'MESSAGE OF RENEWAL & OPTIMISM'

A boy lights a candle on Easter in Purulia, West Bengal, on Sunday. Christians attended special prayers

at churches across the country to mark the resurrection of Jesus Christ. In a post on X, PM Modi said:

appointment system, Justice

Gavai, who would be the Chief

Justice of India next year,

said, "India stands strong on

the three parameters of de-

mocracy: prevalence of the

rule of law, independence of

the judiciary, and non-interfe-

rence of the military in legis-

with its foundation resting on

the 13-judge Constitution

bench judgment in Kesava-

nanda Bharati case on the in-

violability of the basic struc-

principle which guides every

institution in India. He en-

gaged in an absorbing discus-

sion ranging from function-

ing of SC, judicial appoint-

ments, and recent landmark

judgments such as the electo-

ral bond case. Additionally,

ture of the Constitution, a pillars of the State. In a nut-

He emphasised that SC

lative and govt functions.

'On Easter, we hope that the message of renewal and optimism reverberates all over'

SC is fully independent, brooks no political

interference, Justice Gavai tells US audience

Our Constitution has a foundation

of separation of powers, which is

clearly defined, Justice Gavai said

days after the US said it expected

a fair trial in the Kejriwal case

and I-T case against Congress

"Indian Constitution has a

foundation of separation of

powers, which is well estab-

fairness and independence of

the judiciary, as well as politi-

cal interference in the judicial

decision-making and judges'

When questioned about

lished and clearly defined."

as ditch-digging

Subodh.Ghildiyal @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: MGNREGS has generated 40 crore persondays of work more than the pre-pandemic(2019-20)level suggesting a continuing rural distress, and that job opportunities in the cities may not have returned to normal

As 2023-24 completes, the flagship distress scheme clocked 305.2 crore persondays on March 31. It is a figure which is updated till the end of month and the final number will end up higher. It is in sharp contrast to 293.7 crore persondays generated in 2022-23 — roughly 12 crore persondays more.

The number in 2023-24 was expected to go down as 2022-23 was the first year after the country came out of the pandemic,

April 5 last date

of application

for CUET-UG

New Delhi: The application deadline for Common University Entrance Test (CUET)-

UG has been further extended till April 5, the National

Testing Agency (NTA) an-

ed following representa-

tions from candidates regard-

ing Aadhaar-related issues.

NTA said candidates can also

use school ID or any govt ID

with photograph to facilitate

extended to March 31. The ex-

am is scheduled to be conduct-

Dhananjay.Mahapatra

@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: At a time when

Prime Minister Narendra

Modi got involved in high-

lighting alleged pressure be-

ing exerted by certain sec-

tions of activist lawyers on

the courts, Justice Bhushan

R Gavai, one of the most se-

nior judge of SC, on Saturday

said India's apex court is ful-

ly independent and brooks no

of budding lawyers and legal

minds at Kennedy School,

Harvard University, days af-

ter the US govt said it would

expect a fair trial in the case

that led to the arrest of AAP

leader Arvind Kejriwal and

income tax case against Con-

gress, Justice Gavai said,

Speaking to an audience

political interference.

ed from May 15 to 31. TNN

The first deadline was March 26, which was initially

The deadline was extend-

nounced on Sunday.

identification



The number of persondays in 2023-24 was expected to go down as 2022-23 was the first year after India came out of the pandemic. But it has gone up by 12 crore and the final figure could be even higher

and employment avenues were would be even higher. seen as not having returned to normal after the disruption derided caused by the two major corona waves which triggered the shuttering of economy across the rural-urban divide

But instead of dipping, the vear 2019-20. The pre-pandemic

drought, without the unnatural dislocation triggered by the once-in-a-lifetime pandemic. The last two years — 2022-

23 and 2023-24 — provide eviturned to the year 2019-20, when the work generated was 265.3persondays.

Critically, the persondays generated in 2022-23 were 28.4 crore more than 2019-20, and it has shot even higher by almost 40 crore in 2023-24 till date.

work generation zoomed to an all-time record of pandemic hit year of 2020-21, and then barely slipped to 363.2 crore in 2021-22. The two years are seen as aberrations in the days and the final figure tory of work demand under the the closure of traditional work towns and cities.

ethical considerations for the

judiciary within a democratic

society were thoroughly ex-

amined, alongside a discus-

sion on the evolving role of

Artificial Intelligence in the

tant role of judicial review in

Indian democracy, he said,

"The main objective behind

judicial review is to have a

mechanism for observing

checks and balances so that

there is no misuse of the

power conferred to the three

shell, judicial review is an as-

surance of preserving and

upholding constitutional

values... In India, where the

rule of law is paramount, ju-

dicial review remains a road-

block to any abuse of power

by the legislature...'

Explaining the impor-

justice delivery system.

job scheme, encapsulating sea- avenues owing to lockdown. sonal disruptions like rains or and their slow return to normalcy after the virus subsided.

Rajendran Narayanan, faculty at the Azim Premji university and an expert on the job scheme, said, "There is no dence that employment for doubt that it shows a high dethe unskilled poor has not remand for MGNREGS because of high levels of rural unemployment. It has been observed in various surveys."

That the work demand and generation under the job scheme should stay elevated. and higher than the pre-pandemic years, is viewed unanimously by experts as signs of high unemployment and ru-389.9 crore persondays in the ral distress. The unskilled or semi-skilled workers constitute the migrant labour force which mostly finds wages in the construction sector work has gone up by 12 crore year marked the natural trajec- MGNREGS graph because of and similar employment in

IPL fan beaten fall of Rohit's wicket dies

Kolhapur: An IPL fan in Maharashtra's Kolhapur attacked by a friend and the latter's nephew for celebrating the fall of Rohit Sharma's wicket during a Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Mumbai Indians match on Wednesday succumbed to his injuries in hospital on Saturday.

> Tibile, a farmer, and Jhanjge were watching the match at a common friend's house. When Rohit's wicket fell, both got involved in a spat. According to the police, Tibile made certain comments that enraged Jhanjge, a **Rohit fan**

Tibile, a farmer, and

died on Saturday evening. TNN

alleged that he was manhandled by them. The action was taken after the minister visited the thana with a large group of supporters nis Martin, said the couple

MP mantri's son thrashes journo,

Four cops were

minister's son

suspended as the

tacked the victims yet again was standing outside their inside a police station when they went to file a complaint. restaurant around 8pm when However, four policemen, a group of men and women arrived in a white SUV and including two officers, were started beating a biker - a losuspended on Abhigyan's allegation that he was mancal journalist identified as handled by cops. The suspen-Vivek Singh - on the road. sion followed soon after Pa-When Alisha intervened

tel, a first-time minister, vis- and asked why they were beatited the police station with a ing him, two men allegedly large group of supporters hurled abuses at her and hit her on the head with an iron Asked for the reason for rod. Her husband was allegedly beaten too. Staffer Sitaram. the suspension, Bhopal police commissioner Harinawho tried to save his employrayan Chari Mishra told TOI ers, was also thrashed. that the cops faced charges of Alisha alleged that one of

"beating the accused with a the attackers boasted that he belt". In her complaint was "Abhigyan, a minister's rules the state. against Abhigyan, Alisha son", and dared his victims to Saxena, who runs a restau-"do whatever they can". rant with her husband Den-

three others 'in thana', booked tims went to Shahpura police station to file a complaint. The victims alleged that when they were being sent for medical examination by cops, Abhigyan and his aides arrived and attacked them again. Policemen intervened

and tried to restore peace. An FIR against Abhigyan and others was registered under IPC sections 324 (voluntarily causing hurt with dangerous weapons), 294 (obscene song or words), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 34 (common intention).

Abhigyan, however, alleged that police manhandled him and his friends. A counter-FIR was registered by a youth, Prashant, said to be associated with Abhigyan, under IPC sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 294, 506 and 34.

On Sunday, Congress state president Jitu Patwari met the four victims. Condemning the violence, he said: "The behaviour of the power-drunk minister's son with innocent people proves that anarchy

Patwari alleged that Patel's son pressured police not Subsequently, the four vic- to take action.

up for cheering

Bandopant Tibile (63) was beaten repeatedly with a wooden block by Balawant Jhanjge (50) and nephew Sagar. According to police, both were initially arrested on charges of attempt to murder and have now been booked for murder under IPC Section 302.

Jhanjge were watching the match at a common friend's house in Hanmantwadi village of Kolhapur's Karveer tehsil. When Rohit's wicket fell, both got involved in a spat. According to the police, Tibile made certain comments that enraged Jhanjge, a Rohit fan.

Jhanjge left the spot but came back with nephew Sagar and thrashed Tibile. Inspector Kishor Shinde of Karveer police station said that Tibile

4 dead, 360+ in hospital as winds batter north Bengal for 5 minutes

Pinak Priya Bhattacharya TNN

Jalpaiguri: At least four people were killed—crushed under falling trees — at two different places when a nor-'wester, accompanied by a 'mini tornado', lashed Jalpaiguri for five minutes on Sunday afternoon.

Around 367 people had to be hospitalised for injuries, even as initial estimates said there was massive loss to property at Jalpaiguri Sadar and Maynaguri blocks.

Alipore Met office said the Maynaguri storm may have been a "mini tornado" that accompanied a nor'wester in the region. "It generated an estimated wind speed of around 60kmph to 70kmph, though the speed inside the system must have been much more," said Regional Meteorological Centre director GK Das. "Nor-'westers are often accompanied by such mini tornadoes, which cause extensive destruction and loss of life. That seems to have happened in Jalpaiguri on Sunday."

The dead have been identi-

(64). Nearly 200 people had to be admitted to the Maynaguri rural hospital, even as 167 had to be taken to Jalpaiguri Med-

Lightning illuminates the Guwahati sky on Sunday. A portion of the roof

at the city's airport collapsed as Assam and other northeastern states

also witnessed heavy rainfall and severe infrastructural damage

ical College Hospital. Late on Sunday, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee left for Jalpaiguri to tour the affected areas.

fied as Dwijendra Narayan

Sarkar (52), Anima Roy (49),

Jogen Roy (70) and Samar Roy

"Affected people are being shifted to safer places. District administration will provide compensation to the next of kin of those who

died, and to those injured," said Banerjee.

Banerjee indicated that damages could be extensive. "Sad to know that sudden heavy rainfall and stormy winds brought disaster in some areas of Jalpaiguri and Maynaguri, with loss of human life, injuries and damage to homes. I stand with the af-

fected families," she said. "I appeal to EC for immediate compensation to those affected," said Trinamool Congress' Jalpaiguri candidate Nirmal Chandra Roy.

2 held on way to Unnao, 110 being taken for conversion rescued

Faiz.Siddiqui@timesgroup.com

Kanpur: UP Police intercepted on Sunday two buses ferrying 110 people from Kanpur to Unnao for an event where they were to be allegedly converted to Christianity. Two people were arrested and charged under the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance.

ACP Mahesh Kumar said the accused — Simon Williams and Deepak Morris promised Rs 50,000 each to residents of slums in Kanpur's

Nawabganj, Armapur, Kohna and some other places if they converted to Christianity.

A group of Bajrang Dal activists got wind of the plan and alerted Nawabganj police station late on Saturday, sources said. Two buses picked up the group from Nawabganj and were headed to a church in Unnao for the alleged conversion ceremony when police came in the way.

"Apart from cash, they were assured jobs. The unmarried people in the group were promised help in finding

partners," the ACP said. Sunil Balmiki, one of the "rescued" people, later filed a complaint against Williams and Morris.

An official quoted him as saying that his wife was the first one to be lured into agreeing to convert. "Sunil alleged that Deepak and Simon told them their lives would be filled with happiness if they both converted

to Christianity."

Police said some more people involved in forceful conversion were on their radar.

School Buzz

TIMES

Manay Rachna International School, Charmwood, Faridabad organised a literary fest, 'Lit-o-Utopia'. Among the distinguished luminaries in attendance, Charu Shankar, imparted a distinctive allure to the proceedings with her enlightening and captivating interactions.

Nisha Bhalla, school executive director graced the event with her presence along with school principal Divjot Kaur. The festivities commenced with a theatre and ballet. The unveiling of the YAFP (Young Author Felt Pen) book launch, aimed at inspiring and celebrating budding minds and au-



thors, along with the engaging 'Author Talk and Panel Discussion' featuring luminaries such as Dr Ambarish Satwik, Anupama Jain, Simran Dudeja, S P Mittson, and Ms Avanti, kept the audience enthralled. A highlight of the event was the enchanting 'Character Parade', where students breathed life into literary and cinematic personas, including icons like Harry Potter, Marvels, Pied Piper, and Julius Caesar.

Lal Bahadur Shastri School, R K Puram organised a one-day Capacity Building Program on "Happy Classroom" by CBSE. Led by Neera Kohli and Shruti Pandey, the workshop focused on creating a positive learning atmosphere. Head of School Sunita Dogra welcomed the guest and the event began



classrooms through activities and discussions. The programme centered on strategies like "Know Your Child" and Emotional Intelligence. Teachers were motivated to assess and improve their classroom's happiness score, making the workshop a success in equipping educators with practical strategies.

A group of students of classes VI-XI of Holy Child Public School, Sec-29 and Sec-75, Faridabad participated in the 'World's Largest Global Climate Clock Assembly and Display Event 'which was held in the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. The event was organised by the 'Energy Swaraj Foundation' jointly in collaboration with NITI AAYOG-AIM, AICTE, and CSIR. The chief guest of the occasion was Dr Jitendra Singh (Minister of State for Ministry of Science & Technology and Ministry of Earth Sciences. Professor Chetan S Solanki, popularly called 'The Solar Man Of India', was the man be-

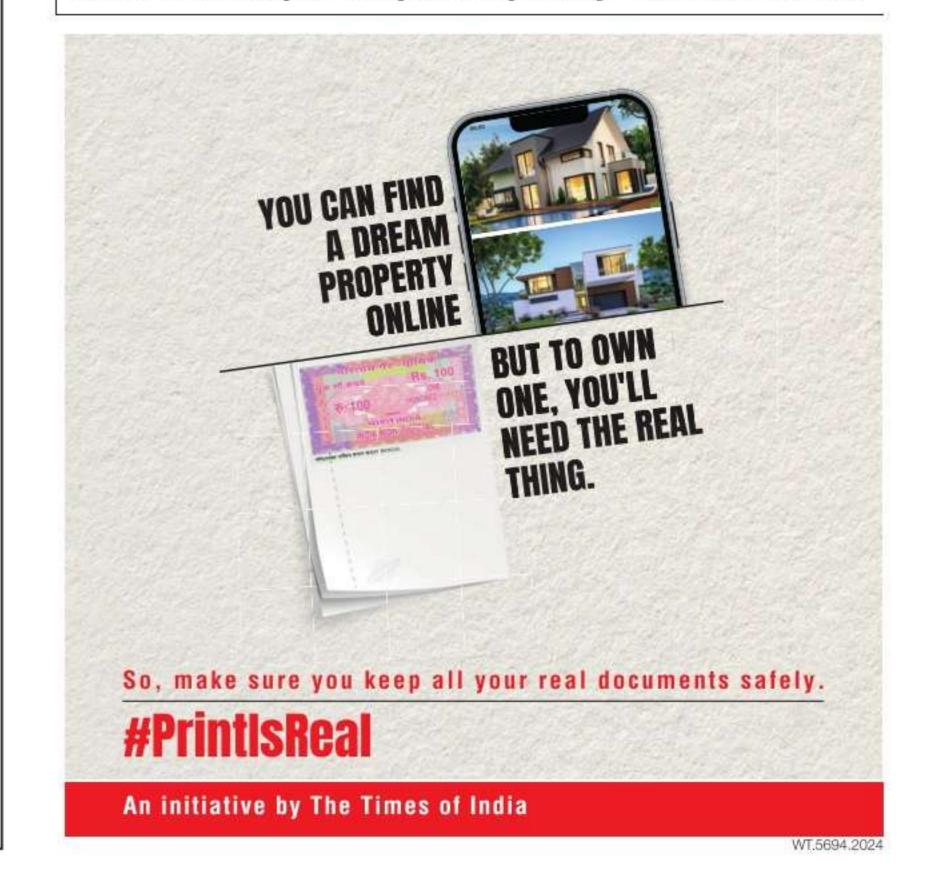


hind the show. The event aimed to create mass awareness about the rising temperature and mitigating climate change issues and inspire action, with over 3,000 people from 2,000 organisations across various sectors participating in person and over 10,000 participating online from all over India and other countries as well. A team of 48 students and four teachers, Manju Goyal and Swati Kala, Archana Choudhary and Jyoti Singh participated in it. Students were given a task of assembling a climate clock.

Kala Hari Kumar, President, Navy Welfare and Wellness Association (NWWA), spearheaded the inauguration ceremony of refurbished facilities at Navy Children School, Chanakyapuri. Other dignitaries included Vice Admiral Gurcharan Singh and Commodore Edwin Jothi Rajan. The event marked the unveiling of the revamped computer lab, 'Param', designed to accommodate 40 students.



Additionally, the conference room, christened 'Mantrana', will offer connectivity to all Navy Children Schools, facilitating faculty development programmes and fostering online academic interactions. A new lift is installed for children with special needs (CWSN). During the visit, President NWWA also took the opportunity to engage with budding authors in the school library. Twenty-eight students, who have authored published books, showcased their literary works and shared their experiences.



खुशहाली फाउंडेशन काप्रसुति विराट कवि सम्मेलन

पावन सान्निध्य - आशीर्वचन परमपूज्य गीतामनीषी महामंडलेश्वर ज्ञानानंद जी महाराज





डीन ऑफ कॉलेजेज दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

अध्यक्षता

प्रो. रजनी अब्बी

कुलानुशासक, (प्रॉक्टर)

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

प्रो बलराम पाणी जस्टिस विजेंदर जैन दिल्ली तथा पंजाब एवं हरियाणा उच्च न्यायालय

स्वागताध्यक्ष

प्रो. रमा

प्राचार्य, हंसराज कॉलेज

विदुषी साहित्यकार

श्री दयाशंकर सिंह माननीय पूर्व मुख्य न्यायधीश माननीय मंत्री परिवहन उत्तर प्रदेश सरकार

प्रोफ़ेसर भीमसेन सिंह

पूर्व प्राचार्य, किरोड़ीमल कॉलेज (गरिमामयी यात्रा के 75 वर्ष)

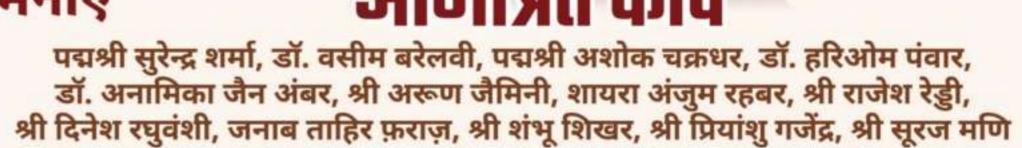
जन्मदिन की हार्दिक शुभकामनाएँ

श्री अनूप लाठर

जनसंपर्क अधिकारी एवं

चेयरपर्सन सांस्कृतिक परिषद,

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय



आयोजक

श्री गजेन्द्र सोलंकी (संयोजन/संचालन)

डॉ. सौरभ जी, मुख्य सलाहकार खशहाली फाउंडेशन

सोनू सिंह , अध्यक्ष अभिषेक सिंह, निदेशक डॉ. प्रभांशु ओझा, महासचिव खुशहाली फाउंडेशन खुशहाली फाउंडेशन खुशहाली फाउंडेशन

3 अप्रैल, 2024 | सायं 4 बजे से

स्थान- मल्टीपर्पज हॉल, दिल्ली यूनिवर्सिटी स्पोर्ट्स स्टेडियम कॉम्प्लेक्स, नॉर्थ कैम्पस , दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

प्रवेश सभी के लिए खुला हुआ है, प्रवेश हेतु एक पहचान पत्र साथ रखें कार्यक्रम से 30 मिनट पूर्व अपना स्थान ग्रहण करने की कृपा करें

प्रो. राजेश सिंह

मुख्य पुस्तकालयाध्यक्ष

दिल्ली विश्वविद्यालय

विशिष्ट अतिथि

संपर्क - अश्वमेघ सिंह 📞 +91 6395-147366

कवि सम्मेलन के पश्चात रात्रिभोज की व्यवस्था



MEERUT DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

PRESENTS

COMMERCIAL and GROUP HOUSING BONANZA

e-Auction:

15-03-2024 to 08-05-2024

As is, Where is Auction of Plots in

SECTOR-2 (COMMERCIAL **CUM GROUP HOUSING)**

SECTOR-8 (GROUP HOUSING)



our website: www.mdaprocure247.com www.mdameerut.in For any query

mdameerut@rediffmail.com

PM: Decide if corrupt need to be saved or graft needs to go

Addressing a rally in Meerut, Modi

said he had started his 2014 and 2019

campaigns too from the same place

nagar and Kairana — Modi

said that in its two terms, his

govt had pulled off feats: from

construction of Ram Mandir

and abrogation of Article 370 to

banning of triple talaq, which

played Holi in Awadh with

great gusto," PM Modi said in

an allusion to the consecra-

tion of Ram Mandir at

Ayodhya, which was applaud-

which emerged as the main

theme of the speech. "You

must have seen on TV that

currency notes are being reco-

vered from beds and walls. Re-

cently, currency packets were

found inside a washing ma-

chine. During Congress rule,

recovered Rs 17,000 crore and

Sharing the stage with RLD

returned to those who lost it."

chief, PM praised his grandfa-

ther and ex-PM Chaudhary

But it was corruption

ed by the audience.

"This year, Ram Lalla also

were considered impossible.

▶ Continued from P1

redismissed opposition's allegations as rants of those feeling jittery over his action against the corrupt and said: "When I'm taking action against corruption, some people are upset and losing their senses. Modi's mantra is 'bhrashtachar hatao' (eradicate corruption). They say 'bhrashtachari bachao' (save the corrupt). This election is a battle between two sides. One is NDA — the arena to remove corruption. Second is the field to save the corrupt. Now you have to decide if the corrupt need to be saved or corruption needs to go."

"When Modi with all his strength started to remove corruption, these people allied to form 'INDIA' bloc. They think Modi is afraid of them, but for me my 'Bharat' is my family. It is because of this fight that the biggest of the corrupt are behind bars and they are not getting respite even from Supreme Court," he further said, working up the crowd to endorse his anticorruption plank.

This was his first rally after the declaration of candidates; also the first one he addressed with the newlyrecruited ally, RLD leader money of the poor and small Jayant Chaudhary, and other investors were looted. I have NDA constituents.

Seeking support for NDA candidates from five constituencies of western UP - Meerut, Baghpat, Bijnor, Muzaffar-



M Modi said on Sunday that Enforcement Directorate functions "independently" and that it seized thousands of crores of black money post-2014.

During an interview to a Tamil news channel Thanthi TV, which was posted by BJP on X, PM Modi said, "We did not establish ED, nor was it our govt that introduced the PMLA law. ED is an institution that operates independently. We don't interfere with its work."

On the seizure of black money by ED in recent years, he said, "In 10 years of Congress" rule, ED seized only Rs 35 lakh. Now, ED has seized black money worth Rs. 2,200 crore." TNN

Charan Singh who was awarded the Bharat Ratna by his govt a day ago. "INDIA bloc, which hates farmers, did not give due respect to Chaudhary sahab. They are anti-farmers," the PM told the gathering which comprised many members of the agrarian community.

The PM then stressed on his "connect" with Meerut. "I launched my campaign in 2014 and 2019 from Meerut. I'm here again to seek your bless ings. The LS election is not only for a new govt but for 'Viksit Bharat' (Developed India). Last 10 years were just a trailer in terms of development."



DMK MP Sezhiyan fumed at Indira

govt for hiding island pact from TN

Was Perhaps Only Person Barring PM & Some Ministers To Know About Deal

Devotees from India and Sri Lanka at Katchatheevu island during the St Antony's annual festival

the contours of the agreement that was in the works. Documents accessed from MEA through RTI by chief of so shows that Karunanidhi

agreement ahead of many in

the Union govt and in the rul-

ing Congress. "He (Karuna-

nidhi) wanted to know wheth-

er the Prime Minister has

sounded the opposition. For-

eign secretary said that, to his

knowledge, the proposal was

known only to one or two se-

nior Cabinet ministers and

that the Prime Minister would

like to have the views of Tamil

Nadu before discussing it

the exchange also brings out

that Karunanidhi anticipat-

ed a public backlash against

the agreement but promised

that he would ensure that it

remained within safe limits.

with opposition leaders."

TN BJP, K Annamalai, show that on June 19, 1974, the then foreign secretary Kewal Singh, accompanied by direc-Basu, called on Karunanidhi at the secretariat conference room in what was then Madras to brief the latter of the deal and returned with his "general acceptance" of it.

▶ Continued from P1

MK MP Era Sezhiyan

the Indira regime had

kept Parliament and the M

Karunanidhi-led DMK govt

in Tamil Nadu in the dark

about the "unholy agree-

ment" and the surrender of

territory. His intervention

was of a piece with the many

by the DMK member that had

already established him as an

something amiss about this

particular one: The usually

alert Sezhiyan was probably

unaware that TNCM M Karu-

nanidhi had given his con-

currence to the agreement

was perhaps the only person

barring the PM and "one or

two senior Cabinet minis-

ters" who may have known

In fact, the DMK leader

more than a month ago.

There was, however,

effective Parliamentarian.

expressed anger that

The official account of the meeting that lasted for over an hour and where Karunanidhi was assisted by chief secretary P Sabanayagam and, later, also home secretary S P Ambrose, thus sums up Karunanidhi's response to the then PM Indira Gandhi's decision to have the deal with Sri Lanka.

"On the substance of the proposal, the CM indicated that he was inclined to accept the suggested solution." It al-

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: As the issue of

giving away Katchatheevu is-

land in the Palk Strait to Sri

Lanka by the Indira Gandhi

govt in 1974 has snowballed

into a major election issue in

Tamil Nadu, with the poten-

tial to become a national poll

plank, Prime Minister Naren-

dra Modi and other senior

BJP leaders cited it as anoth-

er reason why people of the

country should not trust Con-

gress, which has a history of

"weakening India's unity, in-

while reacting to the TOI sto-

ry titled — 'RTI reply shows

how Indira ceded Island to

Sri Lanka'—published in its

Sunday edition. The TOI sto-

ry, uploaded on X and other

social media platforms by

several prominent persons.

was one of the top trending

tling! New facts reveal how

"Eye-opening and star-

posts in the country.

The PM made the remark

tegrity, and interests."

"The chief minister hav- with Sri Lanka." The docuceptance of the suggested solution, said that for obvious political reasons, he could not be expected to take a public stand in favour of it. The chief minister, however, assured foreign secretary that he will help keep the reaction at a low key and would not allow it to be played up."

"Foreign secretary appreciated the gesture and stressed that nothing should be done to embarrass the cen-The official narration of tralgovtorturn the affair into an issue between the Centre and State. In this connection, foreign secretary also recalled that the Tamil Nadu govt had been kept informed throughout the negotiations

Can't trust Cong which callously gave away

tor, historical division, B K may have got to know of the ing signified his general ac-ments also reveal that at one stage Karunanidhi sought to know whether the signing of the agreement could be put did not press the point when the foreign secretary cited "internal" and "external constraints", coming around to appreciate the "urgency and need for a bilaterally negotiated compromise settlement".

Foreign secretary said that India had extracted concessions from Sri Lanka that the latter was not initially willing to concede and explained to Karunanidhi that referring the dispute for international arbitration was

not going to be helpful. Similarly, he also told TN end to come".

The usually alert Sezhiyan was probably unaware that TN CM M Karunanidhi had given his concurrence to the agreement more than a month ago

chief secretary that "strong feelings prevalent in Tamil Nadu" was unlikely to help strengthen India's hand in negotiations with Sri Lanka. Singh also told the chief secretary that Sri Lanka had rejected the suggestion that fishing line be made to pass through Katchatheevu.

Innocent of what had transpired, Sezyan and his DMK colleagues lashed out at foreign minister Swaran Singh who defended the agreement on June 24.

G Viswanathan, member from Wandiwash, accused the PM "of generously surrendering a part of our territory Katchatheevu, to the govt of Sri Lanka", while also complaining "neither the state govt was consulted nor was Parliament taken into confidence before surrendering the island".

DMK members found supoff for another two years, but port from others from TN like P K M Thevar (Ramnathpuram) who belonged to Forward Bloc and IUML's Muhammad Sheriff (Periakulam). They were only taking off from where another DMK member from Mettur S Kandappan had left off in 1968. Angry that India was not resolute to stand up to Sri Lanka's growing aggression over Katchatheevu, he had quoted Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev to say "weak-willed persons will never put an end to anything but will wait for the

NOTIFICATION

Issued as per 6(7) of Adoption Regulations 2022 Name of the Child: Venma Gender : Girl Date of Birth : 30/10/2020 Age: 3 Years 4 Months Name of Child Care Institution where the child is living in Snehanikethan Foundling Home, Pattuvam, Kannur

Date of Admission in the Children Home: 5/11/2020 Welfare Committee placement Order No & Dtae 5/11/2020

CWCKNR/331/2020.

The above said child is staying in Snehanikethan Foundling Home, Pattuvam, Kannur District as per the order of Child Welfare Committee. If anybody has any type of claim over the parent responsibility of the above said child can inform the following address: District Child Protection Officer, District Child Protection Unit, 2nd Floor, Municipal Town Hall Shopping Complex, Thalassery, Kannur, Phone-04902967199, Kerala, Email- dcpuknr@gmail.com with proper documents within 30 days of publication of this notice. Otherwise it will be considered that there is no legal claim over the child. Hence will go forward with adoption process.

Sd/-, District Child Protection Officer, Kannur

70/F4/2024/I&PRD

Tender Notice No: PCMM/CLW/

BEFORE THE NATIONAL COMPANY LAW TRIBUNAL, AHEMDABAD BENCH

COMPANY APPLICATION NO.6 OF 2024 In the matter of Section 66 read with Section 52 of the Companies Act, 2013 and the Rules framed thereunder

In the matter of Reduction of Equity Share Capital of A.Menarini India Private Limited

A.MENARINI INDIA PRIVATE LIMITED

between Monday to Friday

CIN: U74130GJ2001PTC039600 A company incorporated under the provisions of the Companies Act, 1956, having its registered office at No. 101 in Tower A, Shapath-4, Opp. Karnavati Club, S. G. Road, Ahmedabad - 380 015 in the State .. APPLICANT COMPANY of Gujarat, India.)

PUBLICATION OF NOTICE Notice may be taken that an application was presented to the Tribunal at Ahmedabad Bench, on the 7 day of February, 2024 for confirming the reduction of the sharecapital of the above Company from Rs.25,54,67,470/

to Rs. 22,12,28,330/-The notices to individual creditors have been issued. The list of creditors prepared on the 24"day of January,2024 by the company is available at the registered office of the company at No. 101 in Tower A, Shapath- 4 Opp. Karnavati Club, S. G. Road, Ahmedabad -380 015 in the State of Gujarat, India for inspection on all working days during 11 AM to 4 PM

If any creditor of the company has any objection to the application or the details in the list of creditors, the same may be sent (along with supporting documents) and details about his name and address and the name and address of his Authorised Representative, if any, to the undersigned at No. 101 in Tower A, Shapath-4, Opp. Karnavati Club, S. G.Road, Ahmedabad 380 015 in the State of Gujarat, India within three months of date of this notice. If no objection is received within the time stated above, entries in the list of creditors will, in all the proceedings underthe above petition to reduce the share capital of the company, be treated as correct. It may also be noted that a hearing has been fixed for Thursday, 25"April, 2024 on which the Tribunal shall hear the application. In case any creditor intends to attend the hearing he/she should make a request along with his/her objections, if any.

Tushar Vaishnav Dated this 1 day of April, 2024 Place: Ahmedabad Authorized Signatory of the Company

DISTRICT POLICE HEADQUARTERS KATHUA

E- mail: sspkathua@jkpolice.gov.in Fax/Phone No.: 01922-234010

On 24-03-2024, one Nishan Ali S/O Lt Mohd Ali R/O W.No 12 Basohli Tehsii

LOOK OUT NOTICE

Basohli District Kathua lodged a written report at Police Station Basohli stating

therein that on 23-03-2024 his daughter in law namely Shabana Begum W/O

Mohd Saleem, age about 30 years is missing. The complainant tried his best to

search his daughter in law but all in vain. On this, missing report vide DD No. 09

During the course of investigation, best efforts were made to locate missing

As such Description Roll/Photograph of said missing individual is being

shared with the appeal that anybody having clue/information about her

whereabouts may inform us accordingly. The informer will be rewarded suitably:-

Shabana Begum

W.No. 12 Basohli

W.No. 12 Basohli

Mohd Saleem

Basohli

Basohli

30 years

Medium

Oval

DPO Kathua- 01922-234010 (Phone/Fax)

PCR Kathua-01922-234311 (Phone/Fax)

dpokathua@jkpolice.gov.in (Mail ID)

Police Station Basohli - 9103007514

Black

Dogri/Hindi

Any information related to the whereabouts of the subject may be

5 feet 02 Inch

dated 24-03-2024 has been entered at Police Station Basohli

ndividual, whereas she is still un-traced.

DESCRIPTION ROLL

Name

Tehsil

Age

Built

Face

Eyes

Height

Husband

Permanent Address

Present Address

Police Station

Complexion

Languages known

communicated on following contacts:-

This LS poll is about 'family first' versus 'nation first': Yogi

Ittar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath, sharing the stage with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at NDA's rally in Meerut on Sunday, said that "this election is about family first versus nation first, mafia raj versus rule of law, corruption versus zero tolerance, appeasement versus 'sab ka saath sab ka vikas', reports Sandeep Rai. "Now, you have to decide whether you want curfew or

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS E-TENDER NOTICE

kanwar yatra," the chief

minister told the gathering.

HWH/E-Procurement/24/18 Dated: 22/03/2024. PCMM/CLW/HWH on behalf of the President of India invites electronic bids from established reliable manufacturer for supply of the followings. The following E-Tender/s is/are for supply of materials for manufacture of Electric Locomotive. The Prospective/ likely suppliers are requested to look up the website www.ireps.gov.in for detailed instructions. These are E-Tenders only electronic offer bids shall be accepted. Sl. No.; Tender No.; Description of Stores; Quantity; Due On; Tender Cost are as follows: [058]; 25245012; Cordless heat gun. Specification as per annexure-05. Make/Brand- Makita/ Bosch/Hitachi; As per tender/ documents; 11/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [059]; 25245020: Loco Maintenance Booking Record Book (Loco Log Book booklet of 75 pages) printing in 70 GSM A4 size white paper, both sides printing (attached as per content given in pdf), Number of total sheets 75 pages, sheets to be binded with glue pasting & strong threading, proper stapled with strong pins and red binding cloth sticking off, one binding side properly as a book with thick front cover multi colour printed page-1 laminated art paper & page-2 to 7 one side printed white & back, remaining page printed on both side printed. Note: One sample to be got approved before bulk supply as per his printed matter requirement; As per tender/documents; 15/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [060]; 25245032; Brass Collector Shoe For EOT Crane Rating 500 AMP. Suitable For HDBC WIRE, Suitable For Carbon Insert Thickness 20MM and Collector Spindle DIA 15 MM. HSN CODE:-7418 MAKE:- ELECTRO POWER, PAUL, JAICHAMPION DIC; As per tender/ documents; 23/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [061]; 25245004A; Flocculator (Jar test apparatus) with 06 (Six) nos. Stirrer. As per specn, uploaded; As per tender/documents; 19/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [062]; 25245037: PWO Water Oil Cooler, Type - B10TH 30/1P - SC, Brand/Make - OIL TECH/SWEP/ORELL Tec /PARKER As per tender/documents; 30/04/2024 0.00. [063]; 25245034; Master Controller 4 Steps 7 CAM Along With Spring Return Rated 40 AMP with Silver Tips Suitable For Eot Crane HSN CODE 8536 MAKE: SPEEDAGE, ELECTRO POWER, KAKKU; As per tender/ documents; 30/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [064]: 25245036; Casting Roller Hub in Two parts as per Drawing no. 3D/CLW/ 02/2023 for R.G.PLANT Machines. HSN Code: 8483; As per tender/ documents; 23/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [065]; 31242929; LOKTITE 577 or Equivalent to CLW's Drg./Specn. No. CLW/ES 3/0650/A. (SELF LIFE - 18 MONT HS). As per tender/ documents 19/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [066]; 25245033 Shrouded DSL BAR Copper (4 BAR) Suitable For 400 AMP Insulated DSI Line With 4 Colour Red, Yellow, Blue Black Copper BAR, Thickness 1.2 TO 1.3 MM Width 59 to 66 MM With 1 NO. 4 Pole Hanger Clamp Per Meter MAKE: - ELECTROPOWER SPEEDAGE, KAKKU HSN CODE: 8431; As per tender/ documents: 23/04/2024; ₹ 0.00. [067]; 25245005; Supply, Installation and Commissioning of Special Type Induction Heater as per

Specification No. CLW/WS.

09/INDUCTION HEATER/02 Dt.

20.12.2023. (Make offered must be

make in India policy compliant); As

per tender/ documents: 19/04/2024;

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PCMM/CLW/HWH

an integral part of Mother India, says Modi **YOU READ IT HERE**

RTI reply shows how Indira ceded island to Sri Lanka

Katchatheevu BALANCING CLAIM VS BILATERAL TIES' Debate Hots Up Ahead Of Polls talvad opining in 1960 New Delhi: As of Indira Gan March 31 hand over Katcl > In 1974, govt's decision Lanka in 1974 pr to relinquish India's claim antinuously and atedly' from 1875 to conveyed to CM Karunanidhi paign in Tamil N Raja of Ramnad yond, official docus owing oppn pressure in 1968, Indira govt said India's claim had to be balanced with claim while State of Madras how a vacillating India lost the

the **TOI** story based on facts revealed by ministry of external affairs (MEA) in reply to an RTI filed by BJP Tamil Nadu president K Annamalai.

PM Modi, at a rally in the afternoon in Meerut, once again raised the Katchatheevu issue, asserting that the country cannot trust a party that gave away an "integral part" of "Mother India".

Congress callously gave away Katchatheevu. This has an-"Today, another anti-nagered every Indian and reaftional act of Congress has firmed in people's minds come before the country. we can't ever trust Congress! Katchatheevu is an island Weakening India's unity, inoff the coast of India, betegrity, and interests has been tween Sri Lanka and Tamil Congress' way of working for Nadu. When the country be-75 years and counting," the came independent, we had PM remarked as he shared this island, but 4-5 decades

ago, Congress cut off a part of Mother India and separateditfromIndia,"thePMsaid as he asserted that the Island is extremely important from the perspective of national

security. "The fishermen from Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala, and Andhra Pradesh going to Katchatheevu are arrested and face action," he said. India is still paying for the misdoings of the Congress govt, he added.

Home minister Amit Shah reacted with sarcasm, saying, "Slow claps for Congress!"Hefurthersaid, "They willingly gave up Katchatheevu and had no regrets about it

Cong: PM's pre-poll desperation bared ■ itting back at PM Modi over

his charge that Indira Gandhi gave away Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka, Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge on Sunday asked why he did not take steps to get it back and alleged that raising the "sensitive" issue ahead of elections shows his "desperation". Kharge also questioned why the PM gave a "clean chit" to China after 20 bravehearts made supreme sacrifice in eastern Ladakh. PTI

either. Sometimes, an MP of Congress speaks about dividing the nation, and sometimes they denigrate Indian culture and traditions. This shows that they are against the unity and integrity of India. They only want to divide or break our nation."

Shah's reference was to Congress MP DK Suresh, who sparked controversy in Feb this year after he demanded a "separate country" for South India, claiming that Karnataka was not receiving "enough funds" from the Centre.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh said, "How India lost Katchatheevu island under

Lawyer, family assaulted

over prasad, Ujjain admin

bulldozes 15 illegal shops

Congress rule! This news story exposes Congress' apathy towards India's unity and territorial integrity. Congress can never be trusted with our

nation's integrity." Foreign minister S Jaishankar said that it is important that people know the full truth about our past. "The facts brought out by TOI article should concern every citizen," he said.

Annamalai, who played a role in bringing the facts into the public domain, said, "Congress and DMK colluded in the ceding of Katchatheevu. Congress, whenever in power, had the least interest in securing our country's border, territorial integrity, and sovereignty."

Union minister Anurag Thakur said the crafty Congress never allowed the truth to come out about how it ceded and gifted vast territory of India to Pakistan, China, and Sri Lanka. "The new facts reveal that Indira Gandhi deliberately relinquished the strategically important Indian territory of Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka in 1974 following the footprint of Jawaharlal Nehru, who had said that the cession of the Indian island would not hurt national prestige," he said.

THIS WILL Gift Card SOMEONE'S BUT THE REAL GIFT WILL MAKE SOMEONE'S LIFE. WILL

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An initiative by The Times of India

Ujjain turned into a nightmare for a Supreme Court advocate from Mumbai and his family on Sunday when they were brutally attacked by a kiosk owner after a dispute over buying prasad from his shop. The lawyer was hospitalised with head injuries,

jain on Saturday night. Early Sunday morning, they attended Bhasmarti at Mahakal Jyotirlinga temple and then hired a van to visit other temples.

Indore: A visit to temple city

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

and a woman and a minor girl in the family allegedly molested during the confrontation.

Within hours, the Ujjain administration bulldozed 15 illegal shops, including that of the prime accused, near the famed Kal Bhairav temple. Ujjain SP Pradeep Sharma and collector Neeraj Kumar Singh said the accused, Raja Bhati, has been arrested. He, too, is injured.

family members arrived in Uj- with an iron rod.

The driver parked near one of the shops that line the approach road to the Kal Bhai-

ray temple. When the family returned, shop owner Raja Bhati demanded that they buy prasad from him. The family refused, saying they had finished their puja and did not need it. Bhati threw a packet of prasad into the van and demanded Rs 200 from them, says the complaint.

Other kiosk owners joined in and a heated argument ensued. The family says one of the women was dragged out of the car by her hair, her clothes ripped, and she and a minor girl were groped. The The lawyer and eight other lawyer was struck on the head

DIP No:DIP/J-16350/23/30.03.2024

Sr. Superintendent of Police, Kathua.

PHOTOGRAPH

A New Platform For Astronauts To Reach The Launchpad Is Among The Additions Being Made To The Sriharikota Spaceport To Prepare For Mission Gaganyaan

INTO THE

INFINITE: The

high-altitude

mission-1 was

conducted in

Oct 2023

test vehicle

STEPWAY for man, a giant leap for India

A small

GAGANYAAN MISSION

Will demonstrate capability to launch Indian astronauts to an orbit of 400km and bring them back safely to earth

Total cost

TECH NEEDS

- Human-rated launch vehicle
- Crew escape systems Habitable orbital module

management activities

Life support system Crew selection and training and associated crew

MILESTONES

JULY | Vikas engine for core L110 liquid stage of LVM3 undergoes third long-duration hot test

2022

JAN | High thrust Vikas engine underwent hot qualification test MAY | Solid strap-on booster or HS200 underwent first static fire

AUG | Low altitude escape motor for crew escape system test-fired NOV | Integrated main parachute airdrop test conducted

2023

JULY | Gaganyaan service module propulsion system tested AUG | Series of drogue parachute

deployment tests conducted

OCT | High-altitude Test Vehicle Abort Mission-1 (TV-D1) performed

2024

FEB | CE20 cryogenic engine cleared human rating test; names of four Indian astronauts announced

WE ALSO PLAN TO DO A REHEARSAL OF KEEPING THE ASTRONAUTS PSYCHOLOGICALLY IN GOOD CONDITION - A Rajarajan | DIRECTOR OF SDSC

U.Tejonmayam@timesgroup.com

sually, for a few hours before a rocket liftoff, there would be no one in a 4km radius around the launch pads at Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) SHAR, India's spaceport on Sriharikota island. Considered a "danger zone", this area is devoid of human activity during launches. Even the two CISF personnel guarding the launch pads leave their posts two hours before liftoff.

But in 2025, for the first time since Sriharikota became a spaceport in 1971, Indian astronauts donning spacesuits will access the launch pad via an exclusive platform and board a capsule attached to the LVM3 or GSLV Mk3 rocket just minutes before it blasts off, marking a big leap forward in India's space exploration efforts.

As the spindle-shaped 43,360-acre island is set to become the gateway for Indians' entry to space through the Gaganyaan mission, Isro is upgrading the 19-year-old second launch pad and adding facilities at the spaceport to ensure entry to the launch pad, a secure liftoff and the crew's safe return to earth.

The first launchpad, which hosted a test vehicle abort mission in Oct 2023, will also be upgraded. Recently, workers were seen welding and refurbishing the launch pads.

"We are not upgrading but adapting," says SDSC director A Rajarajan. "The Gaganyaan programme aims to put two or more Indians in space and bring them back in a limited time. A separate launchpad takes time. Instead, we have worked out a system to improve the reliability of the existing second launch pad."

There will also be a crew ingress and egress system, access platform, escape mechanism for ejection of the crew module from the launch vehicle in case of anomaly, recovery setup for emergencies during the flight's ascent phase, module preparation facility for assembly and testing, and makeshift sanitised guest houses for the crew for a weeklong stay. All the facilities will be connected to the Gaganyaan control facility, which will monitor the health of the vehicle, the crew module that will carry the astronauts and communicate with those onboard. All systems including the checkout system for the second launch pad will have redundancies.

"It will be a continuous upgrade till the launch because we are doing it for the first time. Each time we experiment, we may make some modifications. All these systems are indigenously made. It's an almost ₹2,000cr investment" says Rajarajan. The GSLV Mk3 or LVM3, the

rocket that will carry the astronauts, will also receive more safety features. "We will not be using the vehicle's full capability but reducing it to improve reliability," says Rajarajan. The project will demonstrate Indian Space Research Organisation's human spaceflight capability by launching a human crew to an orbit of 400km and bringing them back safely to earth by splashing down in Indian waters.

The mission may last from eight hours to a day and astronauts will be in the crew module throughout. A separate service module will be attached to the crew module to provide environmental and life support systems, which includes maintaining temperatures between 25 degrees C and 27 degrees C, removing carbon dioxide, and maintaining the oxygen and nitrogen ratio. The service module will get separated once the crew module deorbits. The astronauts' suits will also be equipped to provide thermal insulation, supply oxygen in emergencies, remain pressurised and facilitate communication with the ground crew.

SHAR officials say a series of tests will be done to identify critical areas in the mission, because if an anomaly arises, it may be required to abort.

"The initial problem could happen in the pad. There could be a fuel leak, in which case the vehicle may explode. We need to be able to predict it and the crew in

the module should be able to fly at least 2km away and return. That's called pad abort. We will do these tests," says Rajarajan.

A series of helicopter-based air drop tests, for which a helipad is built in SDSC, from different altitudes will be conducted to check the functions of the parachutes, damage likely to occur and ways to prevent it. During the test, the velocity of the crew module will be reduced as it splashes down in the sea and the internal emergency system in the astronauts' suit, which supplies oxygen, will get activated.

"We will do a rehearsal of keeping the astronauts psychologically in good condition. In SHAR, we must do all these for which we have to establish the infrastructure," says Rajarajan.

In Jan, Isro chairman S Somanath announced they are targeting two abort mission trials, two unmanned missions, multiple helicopter drop assessments, and various evaluations including environmental control support system trials, crew module assessments, and simulation exercises.

"2024 is going to be a year of Gaganyaan readiness," he said.

President confers Bharat Ratna on Advani at his home



President Droupadi Murmu presents the award to veteran BJP leader LK Advani on Sunday. PM Modi was present on the occasion

Manash.Gohain @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: President Droupadi Murmu conferred Bharat Ratna, the country's highest civilian honor, on BJP stalwart and former deputy Prime Minister L K Advani at his residence on Sunday.

The ceremony was attended by Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar, PM Narendra Modi, defence minister Rajnath mentary traditions, it added. Singh, home minister Amit Shah, and Advani's family members, as per a statement from the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

Modi, seated beside Advani, expressed his sentiments and said, witnessing the con- Ayodhya" in 2024 as a culminaferral of Bharat Ratna on Adtion of his long struggle for Invani was special, recognising dia's cultural regeneration. his enduring contributions to the nation's progress.

role in shaping modern India have left an indelible mark on our history. I am proud to have got the opportunity to work with him very closely over the last several decades.'

The Rashtrapati Bhavan described Advani as a doyen of Indian politics, acknowledging his unwavering dedication and distinction over seven decades. His emphasis on dialogue enriched Parlia-

Advani, noted for prioritising national interest, earned respect across party lines, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said. It lauded his role in the "reconstruction of the Ram temple in

His leadership reshaped the national agenda, steering Modi said: "His dedication it towards development and to public service and his pivotal inclusivity, it noted.

'Govt officials knew Pather Panchali wasn't rural development docu'

Ifilm' published in TOI on March 31, stated the following, "Curiously, the loan records say it was for road improvement, as govt officials thought it was a documentary on rural development. They probably took the 'Pather' in its title literally". Responding to the statement, reader Amit Shanker has written, "This is for a fact, because my real uncle Prakash Swarup Mathur, who was director publicity in the BC Roy govt, was the person responsible for arranging funds for Pather Panchali. And he was the one who went to Cannes, on West Bengal govt's behalf, to receive the award."

Shanker adds, "To put the record straight, Ray had exhausted all his resources and the film had been rejected by both critics and financiers, when Ray's mother approached a friend of BC Roy

n article, 'Going on 70, quire if govt could help with and still India's finest funds. An appointment was promptly granted and the lady was able to convince Roy to say yes to funding the film. Govt didn't have any provision for funding films and Roy called in Mathur, my uncle, to find a way.

Roy and my uncle were both too highly educated for anyone to say they thought it was a documentary on rural absolutely incorrect. I know it development. They knew exactly what they were doing. Like any other bureaucrat would have done, my uncle too was initially reluctant to oblige but just because the CM insisted, he arranged for the funds from his department and put the expenses under the road improvement head.

Despite all the obstacles, my uncle managed to get Ray about Rs 2 lakh, which was the entire cost of the film. My mother remembers vividly, Ray coming to their house regularly and showing my uncle (then West Bengal CM) to en- and his colleagues the rushes.

Vineet Jain gets **ENBA Lifetime Achievement Award 2023**

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Times Group managing director Vineet Jain has been awarded the Lifetime Achievement award 2023 by jury of the exchange4media News Broadcasting Awards (ENBA) in recognition of his "immeasurable contributions to the Indian television news landscape."

Accepting the award at a function here on Saturday, Jain said he dedicated the award to teams across the Times Group and acknowledged "the support of my elder brother, Mr Samir Jain, in my journey to expand and diversify the group". Mentioning that he has "many miles to go", he said he has "always held one unshakeable core belief-- in a free, fair, independent and strong media". "We have to be strong to be free. I am dedicated to strengthening our media industry and institutions in whatever way I can," he added.

The award citation lauded Jain for founding the group's TV platform, Times Network, which includes channels like Times Now, ET Now, Mirror Now, Times Now Navbharat and ET NOW Swadesh that have "shaped the way news is delivered in India." "Your commitment to innovative programming, balanced coverage and catering to a changing India has earned you widespread respect and admiration," the citation read. It added that the jury also recognised his "exceptional ability to foster a dynamic work environment and attract top journalistic talent to the Times Network".

The ENBA jury included former SC judge Justice AK Sikri (retd), Annurag Batra, chairman and editor-in-chief exchange4media and Businessworld, Dhanendra Kumar, chairman, Competition Advisory Services (India) LLP and Alok Mehta, former president, Editors Guild of India, among others.

5 killed in Puducherry wall

collapse: Five workers died and four were injured when a compound wall of a govt building collapsed on them while they were desilting a canal in Puducherry Sun-

Still no timeline for when ship might be extracted from US bridge wreckage

▶ Continued from P1

ittle is publicly known about the 22 Indian crew members other than that they are seafarers who embarked on a journey aboard 'Dali', the cargo ship that was on its way to Sri Lanka carrying 4,700 shipping containers, when it lost power and struck Baltimore's Key Bridge on March 26, causing the structure to collapse.

Since the accident, the crew members have found themselves in an unexpected spotlight. While officials investigate what could have caused the tragedy, a question has emerged this past week: What could the crew, who have limited access to the outside world, be going through right now?

"They must feel this weight of responsibility that they couldn't stop it from happening," said Joshua Messick, the executive director of the Baltimore International Seafarers' Center, a religious nonprofit that seeks to protect the rights of mariners.

Even so, officials have praised the crew's swift mayday message that was trans-

> While officials probe what could have caused the tragedy, a question has emerged: What could the crew, who have limited access to the outside world, be going through right now?

mitted over the radio as the ship lost power Tuesday. Before the Dali struck the bridge, traveling at a rapid 8 knots, the mayday call helped police officers stop traffic from heading onto the bridge, most likely saving many lives, authorities said. A local harbour pilot with more than 10 years of experience was onboard, as well as an apprentice pilot in training.

As the ship remains stuck in the Port of Baltimore, where it may remain for weeks, the lives of the crew members have entered an uncertain phase. But one thing





MANGLED MESS: Cranes stand by as the wreckage of Francis Scott Key Bridge rests on the container ship Dali in Baltimore on Saturday. Workers have lifted out the first, 200-tonne chunk of the bridge, officials said

their destination in Sri Lanka anytime soon.

bers are most likely working a grueling schedule to maintain the ship that is similar to the one they would have had if they were out at sea. The difference, though, is that they are in an immobile state as the eyes of the world fixate

on them, experts said. the ship," said Stephen Frailey, a partner at Pacific Mari- he said, is a 24-hour ordeal time Group, which helps with marine salvage and day, decks are checked for wreck removal.

According to James, who works for a consulting firm assisting the ship's management company, Synergy Marine, the crew members have ample supplies of food and water, as well as plenty of fuel to keep the generators going. Indeed, when Jennifer Homendy, chair of the National Transportation Safety Board, went onboard the ship this past week, she observed the cook cooking. "It smelled very

But there is still no exact timeline for when the ship through the port. might be extracted from the wreckage, James said. Once the NTSB and the Coast Guard finish their investigations, he is certain: They will no long-said, "we'll look at potentially day, reports **Bosco Dominique.** : er cruise through the sea swapping the crewout and get-terview that he feared the re-you," it read. NYT

good," she said.

around South Africa toward tingthem home."

India, the home country of the crew members, is one of So, for now, crew mem- the world's largest hubs for seafarers, according to John A. Konrad, a ship captain and CEO of gCaptain, a maritime and offshore industry news website. Though Indian captains and engineers are paid community have had some less than their American counterparts, Konrad said, they make a decent living when "The captain of the vessel they work for three or more and the crew have a duty to months out of the year at sea.

Working on a cargo ship. with no weekends off: Every been keeping in touch with maintenance and safety, other members, and workers things on track.

Cargo ship crew members counts, they're okay." do have some leisurely activities available to them onboard, though, such as video game breaks in cabins, workouts in gyms, table tennis sessions and movie nights. The Dali crew has at least a TV, magazines and books onboard, said Andrew Middleton, who runs Apostleship of the Sea, a program that ministers to sailors coming

on the Dali but who docked in Baltimore from another cargo ship Friday, said in an in-

percussions that the bridge collapse could have on his industry and his country.

"I'm scared that because this crew is Indian, our international image will suffer." said Sequeira, 31. "Maybe we lose jobs." Some in Baltimore's port

contact with the Dali crew, albeit brief, through third parties or WhatsApp. Messick said he sent the crew two Wi-Fi hot spots Friday because they did not have internet onboard. Middleton said he had

two crew members, reminding them that "we're here for Chris cooks and cleaners serve the them." "When I've asked how they're doing, their answers in the engine room keep range from 'good' to 'great,'" he said. "So, by their own ac-Messick said he had also

sent a care package to the crew through a salvage company helping with operations. In the package were candy, home-baked muffins from a concerned local and thankyou cards from children. With so many questions

still unanswered about the crew members' next steps, Messick said he was eager to provide them with trauma Clistan Joy Sequeira, an care and emotional support. Indian seafarer who was not On Friday, he wrote a letter to the captain, which was delivered by another vessel.

"We're here to support

Manipur hills IAS aspirants given exam centre choice

New Delhi: Civil services aspirants from restive Manipur's hill districts can opt to have their exam centre changed from Imphal to any of the available choices in other North-East states, Bengal or Delhi, UPSC has informed Delhi high court. Manipur govt will reim-

burse their travel expenditures — capped at secondclass rail sleeper or notified bus fares — along with Rs 1,000 a day for a maximum of three days by way of food and accommodation costs. The assurances were

given when the bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora was hearing a petition by the Zomi Students' Federation, seeking centres in Churachandpur and Kangpokpi for both the civil services and Indian Forest Service preliminary exams.

The change can be requested through email between April 8 and 19. TNN

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

See Section 82 Cr.P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Satinder Pal Singh @ Prince @ Frody S/o Kuldeep Singh has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence FIR No. 316/2016 Dated 23.07.2016 u/s 506/354(D) IPC P.S. Khyala, New Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Satinder Pal Singh @ Prince @ Frody cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Satinder Pal Singh @ Prince @ Frody has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Satinder Pal Singh @ Prince @ Frody accused of FIR No. 316/2016 Dated 23.07.2016 u/s 506/354(D) IPC P.S. Khyala, New Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 01.05.2024.

By Order : Ms. Shivli Talwar Ld. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Tis Hazari Court, Delhi

WT.5694.2024

DP/3817/WD/24



An initiative by The Times of India

Prison jobs in Maha help rake in funds, smash stigma barrier

Nitasha.Natu@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Inside Kolhapur Central Prison, an inmate stirs a giant cauldron of a sweet concoction while his coworkers, seated cross-legged on mats, meticulously roll a mixture into ladoos. The finished delicacies are packed into paper packets and make their way outside the prison gates to Ambabai temple where they are served as 'prasad'. The prison inmates are not just rolling out 10,000 ladoos a day, they are shattering social stigma and contributing to Maharashtra's flourishing prison economy.

In 2022-23, state prisons produced Rs 18 crore worth of goods, generating a profit of over Rs 76 lakh, a 67% increase from the Rs 45.6 lakh profit made the previous year which saw produce worth Rs 11.1 crore. In 2020-21, Rs 9.4 crore worth of goods were produced, which raked in almost

TIMES Special

Rs 31.7 lakh in profit. Carpentry, tailoring, agriculture, handloom, powerloom, paper products, metalwork, bakery and leatherwork form the core of the prison industry.

While traditional industries like carpentry rank high in terms of sales, innovation is taking root. This month, Dhule District Prison unveiled unique ventures — a restaurant, a motorcycle washing station, a laundry and a salon all to be run by 100 inmates from the prison's Open programme, which is known for relaxed security and fewer restrictions than a closed prison. Dhule residents can access these services at reasonable rates, while the inmates get an opportunity to hone vocational skills and bridge the gap towards social acceptance. Nashik Prison inmates are weaving exquisite Paithani sarees, while Aurangabad prison has partnered with a company to train inmates in manu-

facturing automotive parts. However, launching new initiatives within prisons are not without their challenge. The ladoo prasad project at Kolhapur, for example, faced resistance from some citizens initially. "We had to overcome

GOVT DEPTS EGGED ON TO BUY MADE-IN-JAIL GOODS



Inmates of Kolhapur Central Prison roll out ladoos to be served as prasad Below: Prison-made products for sale at a showroom outside Yerwada Jail

prisons (as on Jan 2024) Convicts **Grand Total** 249 Men 38,857 30,841 **Undertrials** Women 1,606 1,352 Transgender 22 **Externed & others** 40,485

Traditional Vocations Carpentry | Tailoring | Handloom / Powerloom | Agriculture | Paper products | Metalwork | Bakery | Leatherwork

New Innovations

Wire harness Ladoo prasad making LED lights assembly Tractor cable assembly

manufacturing Automotive locks manufacturing Paithani saree making

Products made by prison inmates are high-quality and are available for sale at reasonable prices - Amitabh Gupta | ADDITIONAL DIRECTOR GENERAL OF POLICE, PRISONS

social stigma to give our inmates a fair chance," recalled deputy inspector general, prisons (western region) Swati Sathe. The project's impact proved profound. Upon completing a batch of prasad, a female inmate shared a powerful sentiment that "if god could accept her work, maybe society would too". Convicts who have been

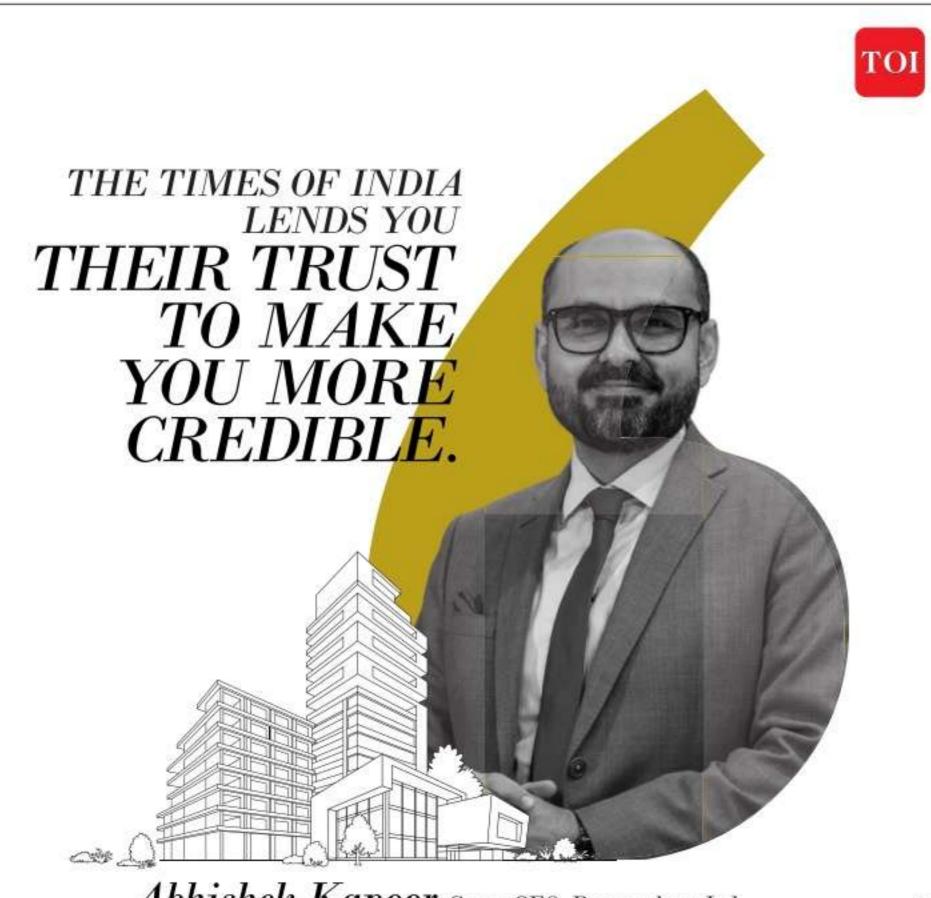
sentenced to rigorous imprisonment by courts are allocated work in prison industries, considering factors like health, education, age and past work experience. On an average, 1,000 to 1,200 convicts are employed in prison industries each year. The other inmates are given essential prison tasks such as cooking, house-

keeping and security. Workers are given a daily wage based on their skills. They can utilise the money for legal purposes, family needs or personal expenses. Skilled workers earn Rs 74 per task a day, which is the highest, from the state. Semi-skilled workers are paid Rs 67, while unskilled workers earn Rs 53. The revenue goes into the state's kitty.

Govt departments are encouraged to prioritise the purchase of prison-made goods, with a written justification required for purchases made elsewhere. The prison department is required to put up a product catalogue on its e-portal every year, which can be viewed only by govt departments. "The biggest

buyers for prison-made products are the judiciary and law enforcement departments," saidajailor. "As our furniture is made with high-quality teak, it gets snapped up quickly for use in courtrooms. Police get custommade uniforms from us."

Revenue generation is not the sole objective of prison industries. "Our goal is to equip inmates with skills for reintegration into society," said additional director general, prisons, Amitabh Gupta. Work also provides a sense of purpose to inmates facing the harsh reality of prolonged incarceration. Besides, inmates have the potential to earn reduced sentences for exceptional work or innovative projects.



Abhishek Kapoor Group CEO, Puravankara Ltd.



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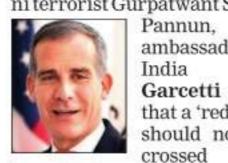
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THE TIMES OF INDIA

No govt staffer should cross 'red line', says US envoy on 'plot to kill' Pannun

New Delhi: Acknowledging that India and the US are working together in the investigation of the alleged foiled assassination plot against Khalistani terrorist Gurpatwant Singh



ambassador to India Eric Garcetti said that a 'red line' should not be

US

tween the two countries. Referring to the Khalistani marches and the threats issued by Pannun, Garcetti said that the American system protects free speech "for better or for worse," while adding that an American citizen can be convicted or deported only according to the country's laws.

Pannun is an India-designated terrorist who holds American and Canadian citizenship. He has repeatedly issued threats against India.

Garcetti said, "When people do step over the line saying something will be bombed as opposed to saying somebody shouldn't fly. The United States

Indian students in **US must take safety** measures: Garcetti

ddressing concerns regarding the safety of Indian students studying in the US, ambassador Eric Garcetti urged students to remain vigilant and take appropriate safety precautions. Garcetti underscored the US govt's commitment to ensuring iustice for victims and holding perpetrators accountable.

Asserting that the US is a safe destination for Indian students, Garcetti added, "We encourage Indian students to come. We love our Indian students." ANI

freedom of speech, we want success for anybody, if there's a criminal accusation to actually reach the threshold that would have a successful outcome."

"Under our law, for an American citizen to be convicted in an American court or to be deported to have a criminal case in another country, it has

'Prez Biden meant it. India-US ties crucial for the whole world'

mphasising US President Joe Biden's assertion on the significance of India-US ties, ambassador Eric Garcetti said the relationship is not only consequential for New Delhi and Washington but for the world.

"(Biden) told that to me. He said, Eric, you know, this is the most important country in the world to me when he was asking me to become ambassador... He meant it because I heard him say it directly in the Oval Office to the Prime Minister, this is the most consequential relationship." ANI

to meet our law," he added.

Garcetti further said, "Each incident is looked at each time. And if the Indian govt ever brings up something, if they gave up something today, we'd be looking at it tomorrow. It's not an ongoing investigation of a person. That's not how our criminal justice sys-

tem works. We believe there's an act. If a friend from another country is saying this is an act that transcends a border, we will always look at that, take that incredibly seriously."

He also emphasised that a 'red line' should not be crossed and no govt employee of any country can be involved in an assassination plot of a foreign citizen. "Ithink that's absolutely critical. For any of us, just abstractly, that has to be a red line. No govt or govt employee can be involved in the alleged assassination of one of your own citizens. That's just an unacceptable red line," Garcetti said. He appreciated that India set up an inquiry commission to look into the matter.

As per the US justice department indictment, an Indian national, Nikhil Gupta, who is in custody, has been charged with the murder-for-hire of Pannun. The indictment claimed an Indian govt employee, who was not identified, recruited Gupta to hire a hitman to assassinate Pannun, which was foiled by US authorities. ANI

Shifting of Kejriwal poster at INDIA rally triggers buzz



AAP sources said the hoarding of the CM behind bars was shifted to the back for better visibility and a 'wrong message' is being spread

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A large hoarding showing Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal standing behind bars, propped in front of the speaker's podium at the centre of the stage was suddenly removed and put away on the side as top leaders started to gather at the INDIA blloc rally, triggering speculation.

AAP sources denied the change of setting was because of reservations expressed by other parties who did not want the rally to appear an AAP-centric show, claiming that the hoarding was shifted to the back for better visibility. A "wrong message is being spread," sources in AAP said.

In Delhi, AAP and Congress are fighting these polls as part of the alliance and both parties were involved with the arrangements for the rally even though the movements on the dais were being handled by senior leaders of AAP.

Oppn bloc may hold more joint rallies during LS poll season

Mohua.Chatterjee @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The INDIA bloc of opposition parties that held a 'Save Democracy' rally here at the Ramlila grounds on Sunday, could hold similar joint rallies during the long, extended election campaign for Lok Sabha polls, according to some of the alliance partners.

With two constituent parties - Jharkhand Mukti Morcha and Aam Aadmi Party going into the campaign with their top leaderships behind bars, "it is possible that the other alliance partners hold joint rallies as a show of strength to take the message of solidarity against the ruling BJP to the voters," according to one of the alliance party leaders.

Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee, who didn't participate in the opposition rally as she was kicking off her party's campaign in West Bengal from Mahua Moitra's Krishnanagar constituency on Sunday, delegated two TMC MPs to represent the party at Ramlila grounds. The TMC MPs asserted that TMC "was, is and will be" part of the INDIA alliance. That emphasis from TMC seemed to signal Banerjee's return to the opposition coalition after a round of distancing herself from the alliance and a public spat over

Oppn rally is about saving family, hiding corruption, says BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP Sunday hit back at Rahul Gandhi over his "match-fixing" accusation against PM Narendra Modi, alleging that Congress govt in the past handed over Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka clinching a "deal" with the neighbouring country to benefit the party's first family. BJP's reaction came after Gandhi accused Modi of trying to do "match-fixing" in Lok Sabha polls and asserted that if BJP succeeds in its endeavours, the country's Constitution will be changed and people's rights taken away.

At a press conference here, BJP national spokesperson Shehzad Poonawalla also slammed Congress over Rahul's claim, saying divisive politics is in the "DNA" of the main opposition.

"Some people are talking about match fixing. In 1974, Indira Gandhi govt, compromising the country's national interest and interest of the people of Tamil Nadu, handed over Katchatheevu island to Sri Lanka to benefit Congress' first family... Rahul Gandhi ji, your family had done a deal-fixing," he said. The spokesperson also accused Congress of letting Aksai Chin into the illegal occupation of China and a portion of Jammu and Kashmir into the ille-

gal occupation of Pakistan. "Today scion of Congress' first family, joined by his party's ally (DMK) in south, talks about dividing the country on the lines of caste and language in their bid to create North-South di-

vide following the divide and rule policy of the British," he charged.

Earlier, BJP slammed INDIA bloc's rally at Ramlila ground, saying it is not a "save democracy" meeting but a "save family" and "hide corruption" rally.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi cited corruption cases of a host of leaders, including those from Congress, DMK and RJD, to assert that all these charges date back to pre-2014 period amid the opposition's accusation that Modi govt is



BJP's Sudhanshu Trivedi

implicating them in graft probes due to political vendetta. Ramlila ground once hosted "India against corruption" movement under the leadership of Anna Hazare, Trivedi said, adding that it is hosting on Sunday a rally for "everybody with corruption". They are all here to hide their old sins and it must be noted that they had been against the construction of the Ram temple and some of them called for the eradication of Hinduism, he alleged.

These parties represent the crisis of credibility in Indian politics while BJP under the leadership of Modi symbolises the politics of credibility and the track record of delivering on its promises, he added.

Told Nadda these polls not fair, Cong funds stolen: Kharge

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: There is no levelplaying field in this election, Congress president Malikarjun Kharge alleged while hitting out at PM Narendra Modi at INDIA block's Loktantra Bachao (save democracy) rally Sunday. Kharge mentioned in his speech that he has told BJP chief J P Nadda at a recent meeting that this election is "not fair" as Congress's funds have already been "stolen".

"BJP and RSS are like poison, don't taste it. They have destroyed the country and they should not be allowed to destroy it further," he said.

Kharge said the upcoming election is to save democracy, the country, and the Constitution, "We need to unite and only then will we be able to fight BJP. We won't succeed if we keep attacking and fighting each other," he said. He also accused Modi of

misusing probe agencies and institutions to threaten opposition parties, and toppling their govts to form BJP govts. Before Kharge, Congress

leader Rahul Gandhi said, "They think the country can be run with the threats and intimidation of police, CBI and ED... No force in this world can suppress this voice of people." Congress leader Priyanka

Gandhi Vadra said, "When Lord Ram fought for truth, he did not have power, resources or even a chariot. Ravan had chariots, resources, army and gold but Lord Ram had truth, hope, belief, love, kindness, modesty, patience, courage and truth. I want to tell those in power and PM Modi that the message of Lord Ram's life is that power is not permanent... and arrogance gets shattered."

We were & are still part of INDIA: TMC's O'Brien

▶ Continued from P1

efore the match (LS polls) began, two players (Hemant Soren and Arvind Kejriwal) from our team were arrested and put inside. What kind of elections are these? Govts are toppled by using money power, leaders are threatened and arrested," Rahul said.

He highlighted his own party's case saying, "Congress is the biggest opposition party and all its accounts have been frozen at a time it has to run a campaign and send leaders to states."

read out Congress's demand charter and said, "EC must stop coercive action by I-T department, ED and CBI to fi- Tiruchi Siva respectively. nancially strangulate opposition parties and manipulate elections."

Congress was represented by the entire Gandhi family (Sonia, Rahul and Priyanka) and party president Malikarjun Kharge and other senior leaders. Other attendees included NCP's Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena (UBT) Uddhav Thackeray, Trinamool Congress's Derek O'Brien, Akhilesh Yadav (SP), Farooq Abdullah (J&K National Confer-Mehbooba Mufti (PDP), Tejaswi Yadav (RJD), Jharkhand CM Champai



Sonia Gandhi with Mallikarjun Kharge at the rally in Delhi on Sunday

want Mann (AAP), among others. Top leaders of left parties Sitaram Yechury, D Raja, Dipankar Bhattacharya were also present. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra CMs of West Bengal and Tamil Nadu, Mamata Banerjee and M K Stalin, were represented by Derek O'Brien and

> O'Brien said, "We were and are still part of INDIA." Significantly, this implies that TMC's decision to go it alone in West Bengal did not mark the party's disassociation with the block. He also highlighted that there were two empty chairs kept on the dais for Kejriwal and Soren and said they are very much with the INDIA bloc members at the rally in spirit.

Kerjiwal's wife Sunita marked a big presence. Seated in the front row, she was flanked by Soren's wife Kalpana who has been increasseat sharing with Congress. Soren and Punjab CM Bhang-ing her public presence since and save our democracy".

the arrest of her spouse, and Sonia Gandhi who rarely comes out for public functions. Sunita read out a message from Kejriwal, while Kalpana delivered an aggressive speech. Wives of two other senior jailed AAP figures, former minister Satyender Jain and RS member Sanjay Singh, were also present.

Conference National president Farooq Abdullah said, "We are here for one objective... to save the Constitution which is under attack".

NCP's Sharad Pawar too condemned the arrest of Kejriwal and Soren and expressed solidarity with the bloc members to counter BJP.

Priyanka concluded by stating on behalf of the alliance that "despite the undemocratic roadblocks created by BJP regime, the INDIA alliance is determined and confident to fight and win

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With poll meet & road show, Shah bid to fire up Raj cadre for hat-trick of sweeps

Issues Complacency Warning, Tells Unit To Hardsell Modi Govt's Feats

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Jaipur: Union home minister Amit Shah directed BJP's core committee members and leaders in Rajasthan on Sunday to aggressively publicise Modi govt's achievements in the past 10 years during the campaign for the April 19 and 26 Lok Sabha elections in the state. BJP is eyeing all 25 LS seats in Rajasthan for the third consecutive time.

two-day visit. After a close-door meeting with senior leaders at a private hotel in Jaipur, Shah held a road show in Sikar and returned to the state capital, where he addressed social organisations and BJP leaders during a late-night meeting.

At his third event, Shah accused Congress of inflicting four wounds on society: corruption, casteism, nepotism, and terrorism. "PM Modi has eradicated these ailments and has ushered in a new era of

governance by consecrating the grand temple of Lord Shri Ram, revoking Article 370, implementing 33% reservation for women, and abolishing triple talaq," he said.

In a direct attack on Congress MP Rahul Gandhi, Shah said: "He has accused PM Modi of neglecting OBCs, yet Modi himself hails from the OBC category. He reads out a taped speech and doesn't even know whose govt was in the country Shah is in Rajasthan on a 30 years ago. Rahul Gandhi forfactionalism," said a leader. does caste politics. This counshould not become the boss."

> BJP leaders that the party Ram of CPM. The Sikar event should not be complacent about also officially marked his being successful in the past, and campaign in Rajasthan. give 100% support to its candidates. "He fixed the responsibiling the major markets of Sikar ity of senior leaders on all 25 to witness a rally, which reseats. He emphasised the push ceived an overwhelming refor 'Abki Baar 400 Paar' by win-sponse. As Shah's convoy ning all the seats in the state. passed through the streets, peo-During his address to the party ple adorned the route with



Shah during a road show on Sunday in support of Sumedhanand Saraswati, BJP's candidate for Sikar, where the party is battling anti-incumbency

workers, he underlined that the party should contest the polls with unity and leave no room

Later, Shah held a road try is no one's grandchild. If a show in Sikar for party candiperson represents society, he date and two-term MP Sumedhanand Saraswati, who is up Earlier in the day, Shah told against INDIA bloc's Amra

A massive crowd gathered

flowers and shouted victory slogans. Accompanying Shah were CM Bhajan Lal Sharma and Saraswati, who rode alongside him in an open car

throughout the rally.

Although Shah did not convene any formal meetings during his visit to Sikar, his presence sent a clear message to party workers to rally behind the chosen candidate. With Ram being an opposition alliance nominee, the mobilisation of support from Congress workers on the ground could potentially pose a formidable challenge to BJP's prospects in the region.

Feel like Maa Ganga has adopted me: PM to Kashi cadre

M Modi connected with BJP's cadre of his parliamentary constituency Varanasi through virtual mode on Sunday, reports Rajeev Dikshit. Interacting with them through the Namo app during 'Modi ka Parivar Tiffin Meet', the PM said: "In 2014, it was my feeling that Maa Ganga had called me here. Now, I feel that Maa Ganga has adopted me. and I am like her son. This feeling should reach every woman of Kashi as I worship them as 'Shakti', while Congress is moving forward with the aim to destroy that Shakti."

"Kashi is the centre of both Shiva and Shakti, including Goddess Annapurna, Vishalakshi and others. We also named the point where Chandrayaan landed on the moon as the Shivshakti point," Modi said. He said that Lord Vishwanath and Maa Ganga are his real strength due to which he "doesn't hesitate in sending the corrupt and dynast politicians behind the bars".

Ex-T'gana dy CM, daughter dump BRS for Congress

Hyderabad: Former Telangana deputy CM Kadiyam Srihari and daughter Kavya joined Congress on Sunday, hours after quitting BRS. BRS had nominated Kavya from Warangal (SC) reserved LS seat for May 13 polls but she opted out. She is now tipped to be Congress nom-

Srihari, an MLA, and Kavya were inducted in the presence of CM A Revanth Reddy and AICC state in-charge Deepa Dasmunsi. Congress said more people from BRS and other parties are likely to cross over. One big name doing the rounds is K Keshava Rao, BRS parliamentary party leader. His daughter Gadwal Vijayalakshmi joined Congress on Saturday.

and B Venkatesh Netha (Pedquit BRS and joined Congress.

party to Cong

BAP has announced its can-

Assam, marking a significant shift in political allegiance from the legacy of Among these emerging mer Assam Pradesh Youth Congress chief and daughter Alongside her is Manash Boveloping my constituency rah, son of two-time MLA with support from govt."

Kin of Cong veterans lead

Assam BJP's youth brigade



Akan Borah, known for his association with former CM Tarun Gogoi, stood by Congress when party members faced public boycotts during the Assam anti-foreigner agitation in the 1980s.

When Angkita and Anuj Sunday: "My father tried to Borkotoky, the son of former convince me, but I decided to minister and Sonari MLA Sarat Borkotoky, made the decision to join the rival BJP, mained loyal to Congress." are different individuals. My their fathers had already father believes Congress will passed away. Angkita, a third-genera-

Sabha elections and similartion Congress leader, exly, in the 2026 assembly polls. disillusionment But I believe BJP is going to with her former party's leadership. "Congress is simply He said the past eight to focusing on promoting Rahul nine years were difficult for Gandhi as a brand... I real- paign in Mahmora assembly him. "I failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people. My Congress to listen to workers constituency against Tarun thinking is different from my like me," said the young lead- Gagoi's son and Congress MP father's. I want to work for de- er, who left her father's party Gaurav Gogoi.

after accusing Youth Congress president Srinivas BV of harassing her.

Angkita expressed the difficulty she faced in considering leaving Congress. Reminiscing about the past when her father endured being tied with a rope in a room for three days by supporters of the Assam agitation, she said: "Despite facing threats from Ulfa, my father re-

She emphasised the allure of BJP's development agenda. "If you have a political aspiration, Congress cannot fulfil it... I won't be surprised if Congress gets a big zero in Assam in these polls," said Angkita, who is leading BJP's camised that there is no one in segment of Jorhat Lok Sabha

PDM: Owaisi-led front may add to INDIA bloc's **UP troubles**

Lucknow: Asaduddin Owaisi-led All India Mailis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) and Pallavi Patel's Apna Dal (Kamerawadi) came together on Sunday to launch PDM Nyay Morcha to jointly contest Lok Sabha polls.

Newly-floated PDM Nyay Morcha is a spin-off on Samajwadi Party's PDA plank which talks of Pichhde (Backwards), Dalit and Alpsankhyak (minorities). 'M' in PDM Nyay Morcha stands for Muslims.

Announcing launch of the Morcha at a joint press conference in Lucknow, Patel and Owaisi said their doors are open for SP rebel Swami Prasad Maurya and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief as well.

Owaisi skirted questions on Swami Prasad Maurya and Mayawati. "Anyone who wants to join us is welcome," he said on possibility of BSP and Maurya joining them.

Announcement of the Morcha — which can add to the troubles of INDIA bloc in UP that primarily comprises SP, Congress and TMC comes close on the heels of Patel being snubbed by SP for unilaterally declaring candidates for Lok Sabha elections in Uttar Pradesh earlier.

Morcha convenor Pallavi Patel said: "This new political alternative is in line with the sentiments of a large number of people of UP who want to establish the presence of PDM in executive, judiciary and legislature. We are confident that people will remove the present govt which is against Pichhde, Dalits and Muslims." TNN

Cal HC ex-judge starts campaign amid Jai Shri Ram' chants

......

Dwaipayan.Ghosh @timesgroup.com

Tamluk/Haldia: Swapping the black gown of a Calcutta HC judge with a crisp white kurta-pyjama and jacket, Abhijit Ganguly kick-started his public campaign in Tamluk, West Bengal, amid chants of 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai'.

What was intended to be a garlanding programme of the bust of Midnapore icon and Gandhian Matangini Hazra at Alinan village quickly turned into the BJP candidate's first roadshow with around 500 locals gathered around him.

Sonamani Patra, a local who had been waiting for over two hours under the scorching sun to catch a glimpse of Ganguly, asked, "Will you be different from others and be there for us when we need you?" Ganguly smiled and said: "That is exactly my promise."

Another woman asked: "Will you bring development?" "Hobe, hobe, sob hobe (It will happen). Let me win once," a confident Ganguly said.

At Nazrul Mancha in Nonakuri Bazar where Ganguly met party workers, he was introduced as an "erudite anticorruption crusader set for a top job in Centre" once he wins elections.

DIDI GREEN-LIGHTS TMC CAMPAIGN



TMC's Krishnanagar candidate Mahua Moitra with Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee in Nadia on Sunday. Mocking BJP's ambition to secure over 400 seats in the Lok Sabha polls, the CM, launching TMC's campaign, challenged the saffron party to win in just 200 constituencies. Mamata reiterated that she will not allow implementation of CAA in the state. The CM also said that Moitra was thrown out of LS because she used to speak against BJP

Women voters pip men in TN but 6 seats to see all-male battles

Vivek.Narayanan @timesgroup.com

Chennai: In a stark reflection of gender disparity, six out of 39 Lok Sabha constituencies in Tamil Nadu are set to witness all-male contests, despite the state boasting a higher number of female voters (3.1 crore) compared to male voters (3 crore).

There are no woman candidates in Central Chennai, Pollachi, Salem, Thanjavur, stituencies.

har Katchi is the only party lag far behind. In most constituencies, women have filed nominations as independent candidates.

@timesgroup.com

on March 19, Prime

Minister Narendra Modi

chose a relatively lesser

known politician on the

stage to give a pat on the

back: Devanathan Yadav

who runs a party called Ind-

hiya Makkal Kalvi Munne-

Three days later, when

BJP announced the party's

list of candidates, Yadav's

name figured as the candi-

date for Sivaganga constitu-

ency. Parties like IMKMK, B

John Pandian's Tamilaga

Makkal Munnetra Kazha-

gam (TMMK), TR Paarivend-

har's Indhiya Jananayaga

Katchi (IJK) and E R Easwa-

ran's Kongunadu Makkal De-

siya Katchi (KMDK) have lim-

ited influence in some pock-

tra Kazhagam (IMKMK).

t a public meeting in

Salem in Tamil Nadu



It is not that we don't have women applicants, but most of them are controlled by men, said BJP's Kushboo Sundar

Vellore, and Villupuram con- controlled by men. It is better to not have such (proxy) Seeman's Naam Tamiz- candidates. We need more capable women like Tamilito have allocated 50% of the sai Soundararajan and Thaseats to women, while others mizhachi Thangapandian to contest. All political parties should work towards that."

pendent women candidates BJP national executive are in the fray. A Surya, a committee member and Na- Class X pass homemaker, is and state assemblies, "If this tional Commission for Wom-contesting from Kancheepuen member Kushboo Sundar ram on the camera symbol. explained, "It is not that we "I want to bring in child wel- women; they will have to do it, don't have women appli- fare schemes and fight drug and women would emerge cants, but most of them are addiction," said Surya, who leaders," she said.

Some parties can't win on their

own, but can make others lose

The spoiler effect

players big in the

larger scheme of

has lined up more

in TN, almost all of

them caste-based

liance. These parties cannot

win if they contest on their

own, but they can dampen

others' winning chances. The

spoiler effect makes these

small players big in the larger

Yadav voters are spread

across several southern con-

stituencies, particularly Mad-

urai, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi

and Sivaganga. "In Sivagan-

ga, I will win with a margin of

ets of Tamil Nadu. Yet, big such smaller parties, almost other constituencies in

two lakh votes," he says.

parties want them in their alal of them caste-based, western Tamil Nadu too.

Devanathan Yadav says

scheme of alliance politics.

alliance politics. BJP

such smaller parties

makes these small

is married to a driver. When asked about her campaign, Surya said: "I have

to consult my husband."

However, not all women candidates have the support of their male family members. Sarah Fathima, contesting on 'sugarcane farmer' symbol from Chennai North, says she is happy to see many women as independent candidates. "I have my friends," she says, "and of course, social media."

Political analyst Vamsi Chandran suggests parties should create more posts for women. "This will ensure the participation of more than half the population in elections," he said.

CPI(M) leader U Vasuki In 33 districts, a few inde- advocated for early implementation of a 33% reservation for women in parliament is done, we don't have to request political parties to field

Their candidates contest on

contesting in Perambalur

Lok Sabha seat for the third

time. The party claims its support base (Udayars) ex-

tends to neighbouring con-

stituencies such as Trichy

and Kallakurichi. In 2019, he

contested in Perambalur as

a DMK ally and won; later he

Needhi Katchi's (PNK). Its

founder and Vellore candi-

date A C Shanmugam is con-

sidered one of the strongest

candidates of BJP front this

time. In 2019 too, Shanmugam

gave a tough fight to DMK's

is contesting on the latter's

'rising sun' symbol in Na-

makkal. The party is expect-

ed to add to DMK's kitty

KMDK, an ally of DMK,

Kathir Anand in Vellore.

BJP has lined up more some Gounder votes from

Also in demand is Puthiya

shifted allegiance to NDA.

IJK's Paarivendhar is

BJP's 'lotus' symbol.

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inee from the same seat.

Recently, sitting MPs G Ranjith Reddy (Chevella), Pasunoori Dayakar (Warangal) dapalli) and Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender have

Don't think tie-up possible now: Raj tribal

Jaipur: Bharat Adivasi People (BAP) president Mohanlal Roat on Sunday said he had demanded five seats from Congress to stitch an alliance with INDIA bloc for Lok Sabha elections. These include Banswara and Udaipur from Rajasthan, Ratlam in Madhya Pradesh, Dahod in Gujarat,

and Dadra and Nagar Haveli. However, Roat said Congress was ready to offer only Dungarpur-Banswara LS seat and Bagidora assembly seat (for bypoll) to BAP. BJP has fielded Congress turncoat Mahendrajeet Singh Malviya from Banswara, who was MLA from Bagidora assembly seat.

didates for Banswara, Udaipur, Chittorgarh, Pali, Jalore-Sirohi and Tonk-Sawaimadhopur seats in Rajasthan.

"I don't think alliance (with Congress) is a possibility anymore. We will not withdraw candidature of those we have already announced," Roat told TOI. "We kept waiting. When Congress failed to decide on our demands, we announced our candidates," he added. TNN

'No issue with CAA': Kerala bishop stresses 'equidistance' in polls

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kangkan.Kalita1 @timesgroup.com

Guwahati: Congress stal-

warts' offspring have crossed

party lines to bolster BJP's

youth brigade in the run-up to the Lok Sabha elections in

leaders is Angkita Dutta, for-

of PCC ex-chief Anjan Dutta.

Akan Borah and Assam PCC

general secretary. Both are

actively involved in mobilis-

ing support for BJP, herald-

ing a generational shift in As-

to switch sides, Manash said

leave Congress. Though we

belong to the same family, we

make a return in the 2024 Lok

govern for a long time."

Reflecting on his decision

sam's political landscape.

their fathers.

Kozhikode: Kozhikode bishop Varghese Chakkalakkal emphasised the Catholic church's "equidistant, issue-based and valuebased" approach to elections with an advice to voters to back "good candidates who can protect democracy, socialism, secularism and country's integrity".

Chakkalakkal covered a range of issues such as CAA, security of minorities and Manipur ahead of the LS polls as he spoke Sunday after meeting BJP leaders, led by Kerala in-charge Prakash Javadekar, who had called on him to convey Easter greetings.

On CAA and opposition allegations that it was targeted against a particular section, the bishop underlined the need to understand the truth. "If anyone is negatively impacted due to CAA, then it should not be proceeded with. But, if it is a law which is not causing harm to anyone and if its aim is to give identity cards to everyone and recognise everyone, then there is no issue," ChakAsked whether minori-

ties were safe under PM Narendra Modi's BJP-led central govt, Chakkalakkal replied that he did not feel they were insecure. He noted the govt's many "progressive" steps but said there were "issues in some areas". "The PM or party president may not be aware of those issues. Govt should take steps to resolve them," he said. On the strife in Manipur,

the bishop was categorical that it should not have taken place in a democratic society. But when such flare-ups occur, govt should intervene immediately and quell it.

Chakkalakkal however, "varied opinions" about what unfolded in Manipur. "Some are saying it is not religious but an issue concerning race or tribe. We have not been able to get full information about the truth behind it," he said. In response to a question, the bishop conceded Manipur "could get reflected" in polls.

Asked about Kerala, Chakkalakkal ruled out any church intervention on voting choices.

Muzaffarnagar **BJP MP Balyan's** convoy attacked during poll meet

Mohammad.Dilshad @timesgroup.com

Muzaffarnagar: parked cars — part of Union minister of state Sanjeev Balyan's convoy — were allegedly vandalised by some miscreants during a poll meeting at a village in Muzaffarnagar district on Saturday night.

Miscreants also pelted the vehicles with stones at Madh Karimpur and a few BJP workers were injured, local party leaders said, adding that "Balyan was at the village and had to be escorted out by his security personnel".

"Around 20 vehicles, including ex-MLA Vikram Saini's car, got damaged due to stone pelting," said senior BJP member Abhishek Gurjar.

Balyan told TOI on Sunday, "It was a pre-planned attack. And it seems they wanted to kill me."

The BJP nominee from Muzaffarnagar LS seat hasn't filed a police complaint in the matter yet.

SP (city) Muzaffarnagar, Satyanarayan Prajapat, said, "Probe is on to identify and arrest the accused, and find motive behind the incident.'

Fielding Sunetra against me BJP ploy to finish Sharad Pawar: Sule

Pune: Baramati MP Supriya Sule on Sunday said nomination of her sister-in-law and Ajit Pawar's wife, Sunetra Pawar, against her in Lok Sabha elections is a BJP conspiracy to "finish" NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar) president Sharad Pawar in politics. "BJP leaders, during

their visit to Baramati, said they wanted to finish (the political career of) Sharad Pawar. In our culture, we consider our elder brother's wife a mother-figure, and she (Sunetra) is like a mother to me," Sule said. "BJP broke the Pawar family as the party does not have any candidate to contest from Baramati."



Supriya Sule and Sunetra Pawar

nounced Sunetra as official candidate of Mahayuti for Baramati seat. Sule and Sunetra have already started their campaigns in Baramati, a bastion of Pawar family.

The three-time MP said BJP has no intention of doing any development or serving the nation, but only wants to make 'Marathi manoos' fight against each other and benefit from it. She termed fielding of On Saturday, NCP had an- Sunetra an attack on Maha-

rashtra's pride by Delhi. Sule said the fight between their the two parties was ideological, but BJP has made it personal.

"She (Sunetra) is a cultured woman and has stayed with us for years after her marriage. She is like a daughter to Sharad Pawar, and we respect her. My fight is not against any individual but against wrong policies of BJP. In Baramati, water crisis is a serious challenge, and the problem is similar in many rural parts of the state," she said.

Reacting to Sule's comments, state BJP's chief spokesperson Keshav Upadhyay said: "If Supriya respects Sunetra like a mother, she should leave the Baramati seat and not contest election this time."

'Marry again' if you want before LS poll or face UCC action: Himanta to Ajmal

Kangkan.Kalita@timesgroup.com

Guwahati: Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma has fired a

The CM was reacting to Ajmal's recent response to com- 70s, responded: "I am not so We will also attend his wedding tic to provoke Muslims and poments by Congress's Dhubri old. I can marry again.



candidate Rakibul Hussain, who referred to him as an "old tiger". Ajmal, who is in his

Sarma seized the opportu- has one wife, but he can have a nity to swipe at Ajmal, who had nounced on Saturday that Assam plans to introduce UCC shortly after the polls, with a potential ban on polygamy, which could result in Ajmal's imprisonment if he marries again.

iterated: "UCC will come into force in Assam soon after the

second or third wife now. Once opposed UCC. The CM an- UCC comes, polygamy will be outlawed in Assam. All the preparations are done." In Feb this year, state cabi-

net approved the repeal of the British-era Assam Muslim Marriages and Divorces Regis-At another event, Sarma retration Act, 1935, aiming to curb child marriage and pave the way for implementing elections...Till now, marrying UCC. Ajmal opposed the reagain is not illegal in Assam. peal, characterising it as a tacif invited. So far as I know, he larise voters in favour of BJP.

shot across AIUDF supremo and Dhubri MP Badruddin Ajmal's bows, suggesting that if he is contemplating a second or third marriage, he should do so before the conclusion of the Lok Sabha elections to avoid legal consequences under a uniform civil code (UCC).





CONTRAPUNTO

I take the debate on the method of promoting democracy seriously -ERDOGAN

All Together, But...

Arrests of Kejriwal, Soren have galvanised oppn. But making that work on ground won't be easy

t Delhi's Ramlila Maidan, opposition bloc INDIA was present in numbers, with most big anti-BJP leaders attending, and Lathose not, like Mamata and Stalin, sending representatives or messages. The speeches were, if not rousing, on point, and sent out a consistent message against this election's favourite, BJP. Arrests of Jharkhand's Soren and Delhi's Kejriwal appear to have galvanised INDIA's campaign. Takeaways:

Common agenda Opposition leaders Rahul, Akhilesh, Tejashwi, Pawar, Yechury, Raja, Bhagwant Mann, all appeared to have found common cause-finally-in spearheading their Lok Sabha campaigns on issues of governance. Speakers focused on jobs crisis, on MSP support, and price rise. Allegations of 'autocratic rule' rang through the air as well, but it was in the articulation of unemployment and

inflation that a common agenda emerged. Voter slumber | Turnout swings poll outcomes. BJP's booth



management is clinical, it piled on votes in 2019, winning over 50% of polled votes on many seats. To give themselves a fighting chance, opposition parties have to ensure their voters turn up. This exhortation to the voter was evident yesterday as leader after leader - from Tejashwi and Akhilesh to

Kharge-all tried to animate their followers to just go out and vote. **Reality bites** | Kharge, visibly annoyed and recounting the freezing of Congress's bank accounts and income tax penalties, also made a pit stop at opposition's bugbear: seat-sharing and working at cross purposes. Don't bicker among yourselves, work together, he said. Remember opposition unity had melted like ice-cream in Delhi summer, the minute seat-sharing talks started. So, sure, TMC's representatives emphasised their party's place in INDIA, but it's to be seen whether Kharge's words are heeded back in Bengal.

Sum of parts? | Even if opposition parties can get their voters out, even if they keep split in anti-BJP votes to the minimum in North, East and West, even if the arrest of Kejriwal and, to a far less extent, Soren induces some sympathy votes outside the two leaders' backyards, opposition still has a formidable job taking on BJP. Modi's party is far better organised, as of now far ahead in poll prep, and led by an absolutely determined politician. Whether central agencies' action passes the smell test is a question opposition leaders will keep asking. But whether that issue has as much voter traction is the question opposition really needs to ask.

Save Our Boys

New Delhi should get Moscow to immediately repatriate citizens caught up in Russia's war against Ukraine

resh revelations by Indian youths duped by agents and taken to → the Ukraine-Russia war frontline are deeply worrying. Two men from Haryana – who were lucky to return home – have claimed more than 200 South Asian men are trapped in camps along the Russia-Belarus border where they are being forced to join Russian army to fight in Ukraine. If they refuse, they are tortured and threatened with dire consequences, including 10 years' imprisonment.

Sinister network | A network of agents is preying on Indian youths. The two Haryana men were promised jobs in Germany but were taken to Thailand and then Belarus where their ordeal began. Putin's regime may be slyly trying to replace the massive number of

Russian soldiers killed in Ukraine by forcibly recruiting foreigners. And agents appear to be on Moscow's payroll.



Evading responsibility? | Serious questions need to be asked of Russia here. It told Nepal - hundreds of whose citizens are reportedly serving in Russian army, and at least 20 of whom have been killed in the war – that many youths had travelled to Russia illegally. If that is indeed the case, Moscow should deport them, not march them to the war front.

Push factors | Of course, these youths are looking for better economic opportunities. With lack of steady jobs at home, they are willing to try their luck in foreign countries. Plus, India's switch to the Agnipath scheme of recruitment of soldiers to the army-which also affects Nepal – has created a pool of youngsters susceptible to being recruited by unscrupulous agents under false promises.

Bring them back | While New Delhi has initiated a crackdown on trafficking networks here, it must directly ask Moscow to provide a list of all Indians recruited by Russian army and militias like Wagner, and facilitate their return. Moscow cannot treat Indians as cannon fodder. Indian blood cannot be forcibly spilt for Russia's war.

Their country, their rules

How US happily gets away with its own CAA

Arnab Ray



in Los Angeles

International media likes to pillory India over CAA, in which govt is, as per the narrative, officially codifying discrimination of asylum seekers on the basis of their religion. But looking at what other countries do to asylum seekers is an un-fun check on where their moral standard is coming from.

First of all, no country treats foreigners as equal to their own citizens or treats foreigners from different countries as equal to one another. Citizens of certain countries enter visa-less; citizens of certain other countries require visas.

Even among those who need a visa, citizens of certain countries face mild questioning at ports of entry, some others face a minor inquisition, and some others get pulled out of line and have their luggage searched in a small side room. This happened to me many years ago in Denmark. I was pulled out of line at the airport immigration office because I had an Indian passport. At the same time, my fellow conference speakers, American and European citizens, were

waved through. But I never batted an eyelid. Their country, their rules. What about America, beacon of individual liberty and fundamental rights? They impose country quotas on employment-based permanent residencies, at most 7% to any one country. Given the volume of

Indian applicants and politics-driven slowing of clearing applications, Cato Institute estimated in 2023 that the most popular Green Card categories, Indians, have to now wait close to 130 years, yes, you read that right, to get a green card.

The ostensible moral defence is that this is to ensure fairness. But why should fairness be imposed on a group level and not at the level of the individual? Why should an Indian face discrimination just because there are so many other Indians in the world? Given that it is the country of origin that is being abandoned in the process of immigration, why is that even a factor? No matter how they structure it, the effect of US's country quota is discrimination based on a parameter - "country of origin" - an individual has absolutely no control over.

But again, it's their country, their rules. Be it Denmark or US, their policies of discriminating, without apology, between non-citizens do not open them to international criticism or a slide down the rankings of free countries. A privilege that India, too, should have.

Reserved Maybe, Effective Certainly

RBI turns 90 today. Writing on the occasion, the governor explains how the central bank successfully protected the national balance sheet from shocks of the last four years

Shaktikanta Das



As Reserve Bank of India enters its 90th year today, April 1, 2024, it's time to reflect upon its journey through the multitude of overlapping shocks over the last few years. The pandemic, followed by continuing geopolitical

of every economy, including that of India. Nevertheless, it is satisfying to note that, as a country, we've navigated through this period of 'great volatility' remarkably well.

crises in several parts of the world tested the resilience

Macroeconomic fundamentals of the Indian economy remain strong. There's been a sea change in global perceptions about India and its potential in the global economy. Often, people ask me what was different in Reserve Bank's recent crisis management that resulted in better outcomes. Here, I outline key contours of our actions, some of which were unique among central banks.

Flexible & prepared

First, our policy responses were agile and decisive without being tied down by existing dogma or stereotypes - some actions were, of course, drawn from past rule books. Even before the nationwide lockdown was announced, we created a bio-bubble facility comprising more than 200 employees and service providers to ensure continued operations of financial markets and payment systems. Our monetary policy committee (MPC) reacted swiftly by reducing the policy repo rate sizably by 115 basis points (bps) in a span of two months (March-May 2020).

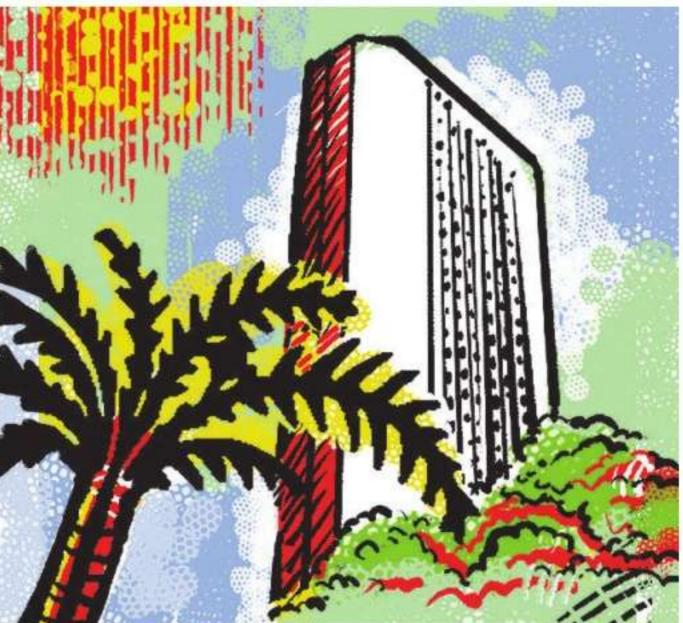
A significant quantum of liquidity was infused through banks by resorting to both conventional and unconventional measures to stimulate the economy, restore confidence and revive market activity. Liquidity was provided against government securities (G-Secs) and, as a result, the quality of RBI's balance sheet was not diluted. Further, by injecting liquidity for pre-specified periods, we didn't let ourselves be trapped in a 'chakravyuh' of liquidity that could have created future vulnerabilities.

Second, during the pandemic's peak, we emphatically stated that orderly evolution of the G-Sec yield curve was a public good, because it acts as a benchmark for prices of financial instruments, bank loans and corporate bonds. This statement was backed up by a govt securities acquisition programme (G-SAP) and various other measures, which ensured

borrowing costs were kept low during Covid's stressful times.

Judgement matters

Third, MPC decided to look through the intermittent bouts of high inflation during the pandemic, as the need of the hour was to support economic revival. but as soon as there were growing indications of a build-up of generalised and persistent inflationary pressures following the Ukraine war and adverse



weather events, MPC quickly changed gears by prioritising inflation over growth, and raised policy rates by 250 bps between May 2022 and Feb 2023.

Stance of monetary policy was also changed from being accommodative, to, withdrawal of accommodation, to anchor inflation expectations. These measures, together with several supply side interventions, helped bring down inflation decisively from heightened levels of summer of 2022 and keep it on a path of disinflation towards the 4% target.

Not just interest

Fourth, to alleviate stress from various segments of the financial sector, including the borrowers', macroprudential measures like moratorium on loan

repayment for six months, followed by Resolution Frameworks for Covid-stressed assets, easing of working capital financing, restructuring of MSME loans, countercyclical regulatory measures like easing of risk weights, and loan to value ratio against certain categories of loans, were also announced.

Most measures were offered for limited periods and weren't open ended. They were subject to achievement of certain financial and operational parameters. Thus, the design of all these measures

was based on principles of prudence and sustainability. In addition, banks were encouraged to raise additional capital which they did - as a buffer against future uncertainties.

Fifth, RBI retained its focus on critical reforms in the regulatory and supervisory architecture. Our supervisory systems have been strengthened significantly in recent years by adopting a unified and harmonised approach for regulated entities. Emphasis is on strengthening governance, early identification of vulnerabilities and taking pre-emptive actions. Some key regulatory measures include issuance of comprehensive governance guidelines for commercial banks, scale-based regulatory framework for NBFCs, revised regulatory framework for urban cooperative banks and digital lending guidelines.

Sixth, monetary and fiscal policies displayed extraordinary coordination during this period of 'great volatility', reinforcing the channels to achieve public policy objectives, and achieve better macroecono-

Seventh, we used effective communication to anchor market expectations, provide confidence to markets and enhance the credibility of our policies. We backed up our communication by credible action and periodic consultations with

Eighth, as a well-considered policy choice, we built up foreign exchange reserve as buffer against external stress and turn of cycle – a strong umbrella for a rainy season. Today, our forex reserves are at an all-time high.

There's never a dull moment in a central bank's life. Challenges and risks may originate from any corner of the world or financial sector. Need of every hour is to remain vigilant.

On this historic occasion of RBI@90, Team RBI rededicates itself to the cause of financial and price stability and economic growth of our country.

'INDIA rally in Delhi was a big show, momentum will continue...BJP-JJP have split to cut votes'

Leader of opposition in Haryana assembly, Congress veteran Bhupinder Hooda tells Subodh Ghildiyal that Sunday's opposition rally showed unity among parties. On Haryana, the former CM says BJP-JJP split is by design, recalls 2019's hung people's verdict, says Haryana is unhappy with its govt's silence on wrestlers' and farmers' protests.

What did you make of BJP changing Haryana's CM weeks ahead of elections?

Haryana govt proved to be a complete failure. It's to camouflage their failures that they replaced the CM. It's a ploy to divert people's attention. But it won't work because people are fed up with both BJP and its ally JJP.

BJP's tended to change CMs before elections. It's worked to their advantage, as in Uttarakhand.

Haryana is different as a state. And here, govt was an alliance of BJP and JJP. As much as a month ago, I had issued statements that there is again an agreement between the allies, and it is to break the alliance. In 2019, their alliance wasn't formed

basis any policy issues. JJP had been campaigning by asking voters to dump BJP in Yamuna river. BJP had claimed it'll get "75 paar" (over 75 seats). There was little convergence or agreement on policies. But after election threw up a hung assembly (90 seats: BJP 40, Cong 31, JJP 10), they turned friends for their vested interest of looting the state.

They did nothing for the people. Haryana was No. 1 in per capita income, per capita investment, in providing services, law and order, and sports. Now, it's No. 1 in unemployment rate, and you can see (from NCRB data) crime rate's gone through the roof. Even GOI's own social progress index reported Harvana as the most unsafe state.

You've seen what sportspersons went through. They sat on dharna at Jantar Mantar in the height of

winter but this govt kept mum. They didn't even visit the protest venue. Farmers sat on protest for one year and 750 farmers lost their lives, but the alliance govt kept mum. Every section, be it farmers, workers, govt servants, whether in cities or villages, is unhappy.

But how does BJP gain with, as you said this 'agree-

ment' with JJP to snap ties, and by changing CM? You'll see over coming weeks the alliance has been broken to divide votes - it is 'vote katu' politics. In a vote of no-confidence, have you ever heard or seen a party issue a whip to its MLAs to not attend the voting, as JJP did after parting ways with BJP? That whip's not valid. The whip is either to vote for or vote against. It proves JJP and BJP are hand in glove.

It's said BJP deepened its OBCs outreach by making Nayab Saini CM. State party spoke about '35 biradari' the last elections.

There's only one MLA from Saini community in the state and he belongs to Congress. As a party, Congress carries every section. BJP does what it does to divert people's attention, but all groups have decided to vote for Congress. I don't know if BJP spoke about '35 biradari' in polls. But Congress is a party of all '36 biradaris' and believes in an inclusive society.

 Congress lost all 10 LS seats in 2019, but came close to an assembly win. Why this divergence?

This is happening every-

where. Haryana's no exception. You saw what happened in MP, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh. For Congress's loss, I cannot blame people. Their will to vote out BJP in Haryana was clear from the voting pattern. There must have been some lacunae in our working, certain things we didn't get right. It sometimes happens in parties, maybe in ticket allocation. But people voted for us.

> How do you see Congress performing? BJP's campaign is centred on Modi. Do local issues matter in LS polls?

Congress is strong. It'll perform better, will get good number of seats. Who and what BJP campaigns on is their prerogative. Our duty is to go to people with our plank of five justices (nyay) and the INDIA bloc. We're taking our

> manifesto and line of action to the people. BJP will claim many things. But we're going by the performance of our UPA govt from 2004-14. You can discern the difference. The gap between rich and poor has increased manifold under BJP. People understand all this. Local issues do matter. Moreover, unemployment, law and order, farmers' problems, MSP – these are big issues. They will play on voters' minds.

What's your reading of the 'Save Democracy' INDIA raily?

It was a big show, which demonstrated the unity of the INDIA bloc parties. Now, we'll have rallies all over the country and candidates of various parties will fight with support of allies. This momentum will continue.

Calvin & Hobbes



I'VE NOTICED THAT COMIC

WHY DON'T SUPERHEROES

GO AFTER MORE SUBTLE,

REALISTIC BAD GUYS?

AND WRITE LETTERS TO THE EDITOR, AND STUFF.



Sacredspace



You may experience anything, but you must never rest content with that whether you experience pleasure or pain, ask yourself the question

who feels the pleasure and carry on the sadhana until pleasure and pain are transcended, till reality alone remains.

Ramana Maharshi

Getting Away From The Emotional Mayhem

Pulkit Sharma

To matter how old, wise, and psychologically sorted we feel, there are times when we get trapped in an emotional mayhem. We feel horrible, ruminate over irrational thoughts and end up engaging in dysfunctional behaviours - the reactions which we regret later. But in that moment, there is no reasoning or intervention that seems to assuage our pain. Although we often believe that negative emotions arise within us in response to painful external stimuli, this is far from truth. In fact, there is a part of our mind that always plays a very active role in creating and

perpetuating these emotions. Neuropsychological research has proven that most emotions are naturally programmed to last no more than 90 seconds. If we feel anger, sadness, grief, or envy for minutes,

hours, days or months, it simply indicates that we are doing something actively to re-stimulate the negative emotional circuit and fall into the mayhem again and again.

Let us imagine that we are driving on the road and a motorist nearly bumps into us. We feel intense anger and this anger stays for a few seconds before automatically dissipating. But before this anger can dissipate, we focus all our attention on our pain and think about it repea-

tedly. We recall our past pain, traumas, and unfortunate experiences and produce new angry feelings and thoughts in the present moment. Our self-dialogue runs on these lines: 'Why i'm destined to receive such nuisance in all spheres of my life? Why do people always trouble me? Why does everyone take bulges out gently as we breathe in and based in Puducherry

advantage of my niceness? Wait, this has to stop and i need to teach everyone a lesson.' And this self-dialogue ensures that our anger is kept alive and simmering.

To transcend this may hem, we need to stop justifying our reactions and

shift our focus from the emotional baggage that we are carrying. We must look for new pathways to deal with our feelings so that we do not create repetitive chaos in our existence. The star-THE SPEAKING TREE ting point can be achieving stability in our breath. Once

we learn to control our breath, we learn to control our sympathetic and parasympathetic nervous system, which in turn help us in regulating our emotional reactions. Practising deep abdominal breathing several times during the day wherein our stomach

contracts peacefully as we breathe out is very helpful in this process. As we master the art of breathing peacefully, we can use it to modulate our sharp emotional reactions.

When we feel overwhelmed by an emotion, we can focus on the body part where the emotion is manifesting as pressure. We keep a gentle focus on the particular body part and breathe mindfully and peacefully. Our deep, rhythmic, and conscious breathing will slowly take away all the intensity from our chain of thoughts until it recedes into the background of our consciousness. By practising this technique regularly, we will attain freedom from the spirals of emotions that we often feel dragged into. Then our latent potential for peace, happiness, and harmony will blossom and manifest in our consciousness.

The writer is a clinical psychologist

IT & Fin Jobs Most Exposed **To Al Disruption: Report**

Large language models (LLMs) and other generative AI tools haven't been around for very long, but they're expected to have a far-reaching impact on the way people do their jobs. World Economic Forum report has estimated that IT & finance sectors will have highest share of tasks exposed to AI disruption

TIMES BUSINESS

Large impact | Tasks are

automated or significantly altered Small impact | Tasks are not fundamentally changed IT No impact (In %)





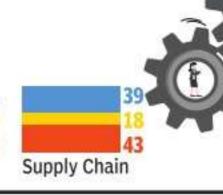














RBI likely to hold rates as GDP grows at steady pace

This Week's Meet To Focus On Inflation, Liquidity: Economists

RBI's Repo Rate (%)

Source: RBI

inter-bank and short-term

borrowing rates for bank

and non-bank entities. In our

view, when RBI eventually

starts the easing cycle, we ex-

pect them to run liquidity

surpluses and let the inter-

bank rate trade below the re-

po rate," said Santanu Seng-

upta, an economist with

Goldman Sachs. The invest-

ment bank expects RBI to cut

interest rates twice by 25 ba-

sis points (100bps = 1 percen-

tage point) in July-Sept and

hawkishness on liquidity

RBI has dialled back its

Oct-Dec of 2024.

March 2024

Mayur.Shetty@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Strong economic growth has given RBI reason to hold interest rates when the monetary policy committee meets this week. The focus is shifting to liquidity, with the market anticipating the central bank to gradually ease liquidity before reducing rates.

In its last policy meeting in Feb, RBI had retained the repo rate at 6.5% for the sixth consecutive meet while retaining the 'withdrawal of accommodation' stance. With Oct-Dec 2023 GDP growth surprising on the upside at 8.4%, RBI's concern is entirely around inflation management.

While core inflation has declined below RBI's target of 4%, periodic supply issues are causing food prices to hike. As a result, inflation is expected to be above 5% for the first half of 2024.

"Banking system liquidity has eased with active interventions by RBI and govt spending over the last month, which has softened

Like Suzuki,

Maruti sets up

10-member

exec panel

Pankaj.Doval

@timesgroup.com

for new launches and invest-

ments in line with its plans to

double sales to four million

units by 2030-31 on investments

out 3.0 strategy where it aims to

increase the number of models

under its fleet to 28 against the

existing 18, which includes a

plan to drive in six electrics by

will have ten members, inclu-

ding Maruti MD & CEO Hisas-

hi Takeuchi, former top ex-

ecutive officers Shashank Sri-

vastava and CV Raman, cor-

porate affairs head Rahul

Bharti, finance head Arnab

Roy, sustainability director

Kenichiro Toyofuku, legal he-

ad Manjaree Chowdhary, eng-

munication with the senior lea-

dership, said that the executive

committee (EC) will also play a

critical role in driving synergi-

es between various verticals

within Maruti and parent Su-

zuki. The verticals include

R&D, production, production

engineering, supply chain, and

pany is not only planning to

transition into electrics, but al-

so setting up two factories — in

Haryana and Gujarat. Both

will have capacities of 10 lakh

each, making them among the

biggest car factories in India.

"The EC will be handy to work

on the large-scale operations as

well as manage potential comp-

lexities," the source said.

The move comes as the com-

marketing & sales.

Takeuchi, in a recent com-

ineering director T Fuji.

The executive committee

2030-31, sources told TOI.

The carmaker has rolled

of over Rs 1.25 lakh crore.

2 Cuts Expected This Yr Key data points to eco's buoyancy: NCAER

New Delhi: Key markers point to the Indian economy remaining buoyant at the end of fiscal year 2023-24 with the Purchasing Manager's Index (PMI) for manufacturing increasing and that of services maintaining a robust trend, according to the monthly economic review for March, released by NCAER on Sunday.

The PMI for manufacturing activity increased to 56.9 in Feb. Growth in the output of eight key infrastructure sectors rose to a three-month high of 6.7% in Feb from 4.1% in Jan 2024. GST collections too remained buoyant, reaching Rs 1.7 lakh crore in Feb. Collections of GST e-way bills marked an equally impressive YOY growth of 18.9%. Bank credit growth remained strong at 20.5%. TNN

management since the Feb meeting, allowing weighted average call rates to drift lower, said Rahul Bajoria, MD & head of emerging Asia economics at Barclays.

"Not much has changed since the last MPC meeting in Feb, with RBI overseeing an economy enjoying high growth and falling core inflation, amid stable macro stability parameters. Against this backdrop, we expect the MPC to keep the reporate on hold at 6.5% and maintain the monetary policy stance at a 'withdrawal of accommodation'," said Bajoria. Kaushik Das, chief econo-

mist, Deutsche Bank India, said there is a slight chance of the monetary policy committee voting for a change in stance. "We expect RBI to maintain a pause yet again in the April 5 policy, holding the repo rate steady at 6.5%. As far as the stance goes, we think there is a small likelihood that it could change to 'neutral' from the current 'withdrawal of accommodation', but if that happens, it will be a positive surprise for the

market," said Das.

Infy to get over ₹6k cr in I-T refund for 11 years Also Faces ₹2.3K Cr Tax Demand For 2022-23

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Infosys will receive a tax refund of Rs 6,329 **New Delhi:** After effecting an organisational reshuffle, Macrore, including interest ruti Suzuki has now created an from the income tax departall-powerful executive comment, for assessment years mittee within the company — 2007-08 to 2018-19. Infosys has also received an assessment just like its Japanese parent Suzuki — as the company order for 2022-23 with a tax demand of Rs 2,763 crore. works out a coherent strategy

> The company, in an exchange filing, said it is in the process of evaluating the implications of these orders on the financial statements for the quarter and year ending March 31. The company's two major tax jurisdictions India and the US, though the company also files tax returns in other over-

seas jurisdictions. For assessment year

Zomato gets GST demand of ₹23cr

New Delhi: Zomato on Sunday said it has received a tax demand, interest, along with penalty, to the tune of Rs 23 crore from the assistant commissioner of commercial taxes (audit), Karnataka. The company said it will appeal against the order. TNN

2011-12, Infosys has a tax demand of Rs 4 crore, including interest. Additionally, Infosys's subsidiaries have received assessment orders with a total tax demand of Rs 145 crore for assessment years 2021-22 and 2018-19, respectively. It has faced two other tax demands of Rs 127

crore and Rs 5 crore respectively for the assessment year 2022-23. "Further, a subsidiary

of the company has received refund orders under Section 254 for assessment years 2007-08 and 2008-09, and under Section 154 for assessment year 2016-17. The refund amount as per these orders is Rs 14 crore. The company is in the process of evaluating the implications of these orders on the financial statements for the quarter and year ending March 31, 2024," Infosys said in its filing. As of March 29, the above orders cumulatively exceed the materiality criteria as prescribed under Regulation 30 of the Listing Regulations, and the disclosure is submitted.

₹5k cr: Torrent's Mehtas join philanthropy club

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Billionaire brothers Sudhir and Samir Mehta pledged to donate Rs 5,000 crore to a slew of social causes on their father and Torrent Group founder's birth centenary on Sunday.

The Mehtas join the ranks of other billionaires who have committed large parts of their wealth for philanthropy. "The contribution will be over and above the statutory CSR contributions of the Torrent Group companies," a release from the pharmaceutical-to-power enterprise said.

The donation will be managed by the UNM Foundation for bolstering healthcare, education, ecology and





BILLIONAIRE BROTHERS: Sudhir and Samir Mehta

arts. The Mehtas draw a chunk of their wealth from Torrent Pharma, the flags-

hip of the \$5-billion group. They will start donating Rs 5,000 crore (nearly \$600 million) to the UNM Foundation from April 1 to five years, the release said. Their father Uttambhai Nathalal Mehta (UNM) founded the group in 1959, the year when Bajaj Auto obtained licence from the

Indian govt to manufacture two and three wheelers and when India saw the launch of Doordarshan.

UNM's journey from be-

ing a medical representative for Swiss pharma giant Sandoz to laying the foundation of the Torrent Group is inspiring. Born in a poor family, he lost his mother at the age of two. He weathered many health challenges such as being diagnosed with mental health issues at the age of 39 due to the side effects of a medicine that was prescribed to him, and being diagnosed with an extremely rare form of cancer at the age of 53. UNM had also failed in his first attempt at setting up a business.

'One Vehicle One Fastag' norm kicks in today

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Vehicle owners who have more than one Fastag for their vehicles won't be able to use the older ones 'anytime' from Monday. NHAI had set March 31, 2024 as the deadline for implementation of 'One Vehicle, One Tag'. Officials said that most of the Fastag users have complied with the KYC norms.

₹500cr e-mobility scheme gets going

New Delhi: The new Rs 500 crore scheme to promote electric mobility in India will come into force from Monday and continue till the end of July. Meanwhile, the second phase of FAME, or Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India March 31, 2024. TNN

"There is hardly any issue with KYC compliance for Fastag according to RBI guidelines. But people who have multiple tags for one vehicle won't be able to use all of them as we are not extending the deadline. Barring the latest tag, all old tags will get deactivated anytime," said an official.

NHAI is implementing the One Vehicle, One Fastag norm after reports of multiple tags being issued for a particular vehicle had surfaced. There have been instances of people deliberately not fixing the tags on their vehicles' windscreen. There were also instances when owners of heavy vehicles crossed toll plazas by paying the user fee of a car or a smaller vehicle.

Robots set foot in your jeweller's workshop

Machines' Precision In Tasks Like Chain-Making, **Polishing Helps Brands Deliver Uniform Quality**

Vipashana Kamble & Reeba Zachariah TNN

obots have entered the arena of artisans, and vour next piece of jewellery may as well have been crafted by a machine.

Jewellery brands like Tanishq and Malabar Gold are integrating robotic arms into their studios, harnessing the machines' agile movement and precision. From chainmaking to polishing to casting, these machines are providing jewellery makers increased productivity levels under decreased supervision.

"Most of the automation systems run in multiple shifts and require lesser maintenance. They have enhanced productivity more than two times in comparison to conventional methods," said a Tanishq spokesperson, which introduced robots into its jewellery-making process in 2020 with a nearly Rs 5-crore investment. Currently, Tanishq's factory in Tamil Nadu's Hosur is equipped with three robots. Malabar Gold and Dia-

monds, too, has introduced robots and automation systems in its manufacturing process, helping it eliminate manual tasks and maintain uniform quality in jewellery production. It implemented the process last year with a nearly Rs 30-crore investment.

"The automated systems are primarily used in chainmaking and polishing opera**FILL SKILL GAP** Robotic arms are providing jewellery makers increased productivity levels under decreased supervision Traditionally, jewellery making has been labourintensive, owing to the artistic precision and creativity required

to varying skill levels, especially in fast-selling dailywear products

6 However,

labour often

inconsistent

productivity

levels due

resulted in

relying on

manual

tions. Ancillary tasks like cleaning and mould-handling have also been automated," said M P Ahammed, chairman of Malabar Gold & Diamonds.

Jewellery making has been labour-intensive traditionally, owing to the artistic precision and creativity required for exquisite products. However, fast-selling dailywear products like plain hoops, wedding bands, diamond engagement rings and bangles have exited the realm involving manual tasks. Coins, which have emerged as a popular investment option, apart from being a convenient gifting item during festivals, too, are being made with retrofitted machines.

"Previously, relying on manual labour often resulted in inconsistent productivity levels due to varying skill levels and the inherent limitations of manual operations. However, automation has ensured error-free processes, doubling our productivity

and maintaining a consistent, fine uniform quality across products," said Ahammed.

At Tanishq, more than 150 employees work along with a team of 30-plus technology experts in the machine-made jewellery section.

The Indian jewellery sector is in for more competition with the Aditya Birla Group planning a foray into the space. It may look at automated jewellery production as well. The Indian jewellery mar-

ket is valued at Rs 8 lakh crore and is expected to grow at the rate of 5-7% annually. Globally, too, luxury

brands like Bulgari and Christian Tse have started using automation systems to make basic jewellery pieces.

While gold prices continue to be dictated upwards by global factors, production costs for jewellers switching to automation systems have resulted in costs dropping by 50% as against the conventional method.

Personal loans make up third of bank credit

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The personal loan portfolio of banks has grown by nearly Rs 11 lakh crore in the first 11 months of FY24 to Rs 52.7 lakh crore, accounting for a third of total bank credit of Rs 162 lakh crore.

According to monthly data released by RBI, the share of personal loans in non-food credit has gone up to 32.6% in Feb 2024 from 30.6% a year earlier. Consequently, loans-to-industry share has declined to 22.7% from 25%. while the share of agriculture and services has remained almost steady at nearly 13% and 28%, respectively. Two years ago, the share of personal loans, services and industry was 29%, 25% and

27%, respectively. of loans-to-industry has beendue to lower borrowing by large corporates. This has been partly because of deleveraging — relying more on internal resources - and partly because of corporates' shift to bond markets.

te borrowing prompted ans. The segment also got a boost from HDFC-HDFC effective this year and added dit—up from 14.6% last year.

RBI considers agency to check illegal loan apps

) Bl is considering establishing a Digital India Trust Agency to stop the mushrooming of illegal lending apps.

The proposed agency will enable verification of digital lending apps and maintain a public register of verified apps, sources said. Apps without the 'verified' signature of DIGITA would be considered unauthorised, sources said. AGENCIES

Rs 4.1 lakh crore to the personal loan segment of the banking sector. The growth in the The decline in the share service segment has flattened due to the slowing down of bank loans to NBFCs in the wake of RBI clamping down on unsecured loans. Bank credit to NBFCs — growing at 32% year-on-year in Feb 2023 — eased to 14.7% in Feb 2024. The portfolio of lo-This absence of corpora- ans to NBFCs, however, is still high at Rs 15.1 lakh crore banks to chase personal lo- or 9% of overall bank credit. The home loan portfolio is now Rs 26.8 lakh crore or Bank merger, which became 16.6% of overall non-food cre-

TOI IN THE CLASSROOM

High Volatility? Go For Systematic Transfers From Debt To Equity

■ ith elections around the corner and volatility in equities likely to be high, money managers believe investors should stagger their investments into equity mutual fund schemes. Fund houses

offer various options for staggered investments such as a daily, weekly or monthly systematic transfer plan (STP) from a debt-oriented scheme like a liquid fund or ultra short-term fund to the chosen equity fund.

When To Opt For A Systematic Transfer Plan?

Investors who believe that the long-term earnings growth story is intact, but fear high volatility in the markets due to events such as elections or valuations being slightly ahead of fundamentals can use STPs. Typically, such investors have lump sum money and want to invest in equity mutual funds, but in a staggered manner, and simultaneously earn a small return by investing in liquid or ultra short-term schemes.

How Does It Work?

An investor looking to invest say ₹1 lakh into an equity fund using STP will have to first choose the liquid or ultra-short-term fund and make an investment there. Once that is done, choose an equity scheme and decide on the amount to be transferred along with the frequency of transfer and set up the STP. Both the source and the destination schemes should be from the same fund house. Most fund houses have a daily, weekly or monthly option to transfer money. For example, an investor can decide to transfer ₹2,500 every week to an equity fund or even something like ₹10,000 every month. Mutual fund investment portals, too, allow you to set these up entirely online.

Invesco Mutual Fund

An investor education and awareness initiative

For Know Your Customer (KYC) guidelines along with the documentary requirements and procedure for change of address, phone number, bank details, etc., please visit the Education and Guidance section on www.invescomutualfund.com. Investor should deal with only SEBI registered Mutual Funds, details of which can be verified under "Intermediaries/Market Infrastructure Institutions" on https://www.sebi.gov.in/index.html. For any grievance / complaint, please call us on 1800-209-0007 or write to us at mfservices@invesco.com. Alternatively, complaints can be registered on the SEBI SCORES Portal at https://scores.gov.in

Mutual Fund investments are subject to market risks, read all scheme related documents carefully.

How Can You Start Your STP?

Once an investor chooses an equity mutual fund scheme to invest in, they can stagger their investment using the systematic transfer plan. To use this method, investors can put in a lump sum amount in the source scheme (typically liquid or ultrashort-term fund) and transfer a predefined amount into the destination equity scheme. Usually when markets run up fast and trade at all-time highs, investors put lump sum amounts into a liquid/ultra-short-term fund and transfer it to an equity fund, over 6-12 months. Investors could even use a daily, weekly or monthly STP depending on their comfort levels.

What Are Its Pros And Cons?

STPs work well when the markets are range-bound or correct over the next year, and they are likely to do well over a 3-5 year period. However, if markets continue to surge, an STP may not be beneficial. The big benefit of using an STP is that till the time the money remains invested in a liquid/ultrashort-term fund, it earns extra returns of 6.5-7%, which is higher than a savings bank account. An STP also helps in averaging out the cost of investment by purchasing fewer units at a higher NAV and more at a lower price. -PRASHANT MAHESH

form JV for batteries

Sanjay.Dutta@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Japanese electronics, white goods and tech solutions giant Panasonic is setting up a joint venture with state-run IndianOil (IOC) for manufacturing lithium-ion (li-ion) batteries and energy storage systems in India to tap the anticipated growth in demand in the wake of energy transition gathering pace in the country.

Panasonic will execute the joint venture through its group arm, Panasonic Energy, which has signed a binding agreement with India's largest oil refiner and fuel retailer for working out the framework by "this summer", Panasonic said on Sunday.

The joint venture will manufacture cylindrical liion batteries that have a wide range of applications from consumer electronics to two- and three-wheelersas well as battery storage systems, the latest buzzword in the renewable power sector. The two- and three-whee-

ler segments have shown a healthy growth in the pace of transition, leading to substantial demand for li-ion batteries. Similarly, battery storage has been identified as a key element in making solar projects a viable source of round-the-clock power.

The JV with Panasonic is IndianOil's latest clean energy initiative to meet its 2046 net-zero target.

telligence as a chatbot, AI is projected to change the way products are manufactured. Gian Paolo Bassi, senior VP of global tech major Dassault Systemes — which provides businesses and people with collaborative 3D virtual environments for pro-

duct conceptualisation and design — speaks to Amit Bhattacharya on his company's vision for AI and why he is bullish about India.

Al has been making news lately. How is it changing the way you design and create products?

A chatbot, which is very popular today, is created around language models. At Dassault Systemes, we want to train AI to create large mo- design and manufacturing. India is exploding. Not only

we have a blacklist of sectors we don't want to go into, such as the arms industry. As for Al, we need to be vigilant... Al has to be constrained to respect privacy, intellectual property etc

-GIAN PAOLO BASSI

SR VP, DASSAULT SYSTEMES

dels in manufacturing and design knowledge. When you create a new line of product, say an electric automobile, you need to transfer a lot of knowledge from previous ICE versions. Large AI design models can solve this problem, giving you the ability to understand, reuse and enhance knowledge specific to ter products faster and in a much more sustainable way. Are there any red lines

you have as a company around AI? The dystopian view of ro-

bots taking over humanity is far-fetched. In terms of red lines, we have a blacklist of sectors we don't want to go into, such as the arms industry. As for AI, we need to be vigilant, but I don't understand the concept of red lines. It's like putting a red line to progress. Of course, AI has to be constrained to respect privacy, intellectual property, etc.

You have a substantial presence in India. What prospects do you see here?

terms of imagination. We-'re expanding our employee base in India by around 60% each year. We've more than 5,500 employees there, 500 of them in R&D. We have the second largest R&D base of Dassault Systemes in India after Paris because India is probably the largest collective university for advanced engineers who are

very competent. We are already helping startups in India in the transportation sector. Emobility is taking shape in India and 90% of vehicles in this sector are designed in association with our products.

(The writer was hosted by Dassault Systemes at its annual meet in Dallas, US)

Panasonic, IndianOil AI will help create better products faster' hough most people This is the key to creating betin industries but also in In terms of red lines, think of artificial in-

The men who killed Mak-

sim Kuzminov wanted to

send a message. This was

obvious to investigators in

Spain even before they discove-

the killers shoot him six times

in a parking garage in sout-

left an important clue to their

identity, according to investi-

gators: shell casings from 9-

"It was a clear message," sa-

id a senior official from Guar-

force overseeing the investiga-

tion into the killing. "I will find

you, I will kill you, I will run

Russia to Ukraine last sum-

mer, flying his Mi-8 military

helicopter into Ukrainian ter-

along with a cache of secret

ligence operatives. In doing so,

he committed the one offence

Russian President Putin has

said again and again he will ne-

sort town of Villajoyosa last

month has raised fears that

Russia's European spy net-

works continue to operate and

are targeting enemies of the

forts to dismantle them after

Putin invaded Ukraine in 2022.

ces have been put on a war foo-

ting and begun operating at a

level of aggressiveness at ho-

me and abroad reminiscent of

the Stalin era, said Andrei Sol-

datov, an author and expert on

Russia's military and security

services. "It's not about con-

Russia's intelligence servi-

Kremlin, despite concerted ef-

His killing in the seaside re-

ver forgive: treachery.

Kuzminov defected from

vou over and humiliate vou."

former Communist bloc.

A Russian defector's killing in Spain

raises spectre of Kremlin hit squads

Maksim Kuzminov's Murder Proves Russia's European Spy Networks Still Active

'I AM STARTING TO FEEL LIKE WORLD DOESN'T WANT ME IN IT'

EXPERIENCE IS THE

TEACHER OF ALL THINGS

— JULIUS CAESAR

'Largest' anti-Bibi stir in Israel since Gaza war

Thousands Demand Fresh Elections, Protest Exemptions To Ultra-Orthodox Jewish Men From Military Service

Jerusalem: Tens of thousands of Israelis gathered outside the parliament building in Jerusalem on Sunday in the largest anti-govt demonstration since the country went to war in Oct. They urged the govt to reach a deal to free dozens of hostages held by Hamas in Gaza and to hold early elections.

PM Netanyahu has vowed to destroy Hamas and bring all the hostages home, yet those goals have been elusive. While Hamas has suffered heavy losses, it remains intact. Protest groups, including some that led the mass demonstrations that rocked Israel in 2023, also demanded a more equal share in the burden of army service that binds most Israelis. Around 600 soldiers have been killed so far since the Hamas attack of Oct 7 and the ensuing war in Gaza, the military's highest casualty toll in years.

Haaretz and Ynet news sites said the protest drew tens of thousands of people, chanting "elections now". Netanyahu has faced widespread criticism over the security failure of the Hamas attack on Israel in which 1,200 people were killed and over 250 taken hostage. "This govt is a complete and utter failure," said a protester. "They will lead us into the abyss."

Israel's war in the Palestinian enclave has aggravated a longstanding source of friction in society that is also unsettling Netanyahu's coalition govt — exemptions granted to ultra-Orthodox Jewish seminary students from service in the country's conscript military.

With a March 31 deadline looming for the govt to come up with legislation to resolve a decades-long standoff over the issue, Netanyahu filed a last-minute application to the Supreme Court last week or a 30-day deferment. The SC gave govt



Anti-govt protesters rally in front of the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem on Sunday calling for PM Benjamin Netanyahu's resignation

Bibi to undergo hernia surgery at crucial moment

sraeli PM Netanyahu will undergo surgery on Sunday for a hernia, his office said, less than a year after he was fitted with a pacemaker. The operation comes at a time wh-



war in Gaza drags on and international calls for a ceasefire grow louder."On Saturday night, during a routine checkup for PM Netanyahu a hernia was found," his office said, adding that the 74-year-old leader will be under general anaesthetic during his surgery. Justice minister Yariv Levin will be standing in for Netanyahu during the operation on Sunday, his office said. Netanyahu said at a presser, "I assure

until April 30 to submit additional arguments. But, in an interim ruling, it also ordered a suspension of state funding for

POPE CALLS FOR GAZA TRUCE IN EASTER ADDRESS

you I will get through this treat-

ment successfully and return to

action very quickly." REUTERS

US to send more

bombs, warplanes

to Israel: Report

The US in recent days authorised the transfer of billions of dollars worth of bombs and fighter jets to Israel, two sources familiar with the effort said on Friday, even as Washington publicly expresses concerns about an anticipated Israeli military offensive in Rafah. The new arms packages include more than 1,800 MK84 2,000-pound bombs and 500 MK82 500-pound bombs, said the sources, who confirmed a report in Washington Post. Washington gives \$3.8 billion in annual military assistance to Israel, its longtime ally. The package comes as Israel faces strong international criticism over its continued bombing campaign and ground offensive in Gaza and as some members of President Joe Biden's party call for him to cut US military aid. REUTERS

Monday. At a presser, Netanyahu said he was confident a solution will be found. He also said that an election at the height seminary students who would of war, would paralyse the cobe liable for conscription from untry for months. Reuters & AP

AT&T notifies users of data breach and resets millions of passcodes

elecommunications giant AT&T announced Saturday that it had reset the passcodes of 7.6 million customers after it determined that compromised customer data was "released on the dark web." "Our internal teams are working with external cybersecurity experts to analyse the situation," AT&T said. "To the best of our knowledge, the compromised data appears to be from 2019 or earlier and does not contain personal financial information or call history."

AT&T is the third-largest US retail wireless carrier, behind Verizon Communications Inc. and T-Mobile US Inc., according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

The company said that "information varied by customer and account," but that it may have included a person's full name, email address, mailing address, phone number, Social Security number, date of birth, AT&T account number and passcode. In addition to those 7.6 million customers, 65.4 million former account holders were also affected.

The company said it would be "reaching out to individuals with compromised sensitive personal information separately and offering complimentary identity theft and credit monitoring services." A company representative did not address how the breach happened or why it went unnoticed for so long. NYT

US senators oppose

Washington: A powerful group of US senators from both the Republican and Democratic parties have vehemently opposed the move to reclassify potato as a grain and asserted that it should be considered as a vegetable, which is the case right now.

American vegetable and grain growers are currently bitterly fighting on the classification of potato as a grain or a vegetable after proposals for stripping the potato of its "vegetable" status appeared in the forthcoming Dietary Guideli

"The scientific justification behind the assertion that potatoes are not vegetables is not strong, and there are documen ted nutritional benefits of potatoes," the bipartisan group of 14 senators wrote in a letter to the agriculture secretary Tom Vilsack. Americans eat more potatoes than any other vegetable— 50 pounds per person per year, as per US department of agri culture figures — although almost half of those come in frozenform, for example as fries. PTI

move to reclassify potato as a grain

nes for Americans 2025-2030.

Bodies of 8 Chinese migrants found on beach in Mexico

Thursday. The shore where the United States. Another migr-

Thousands of undocumented migrants transit through Mexico each year trying to reach the US border. Many are from Central America. Migrants apprehended last year also included citizens of China, India and Uzbekistan and other countries far from the Americas. AFP



The entrance to the parking garage where Russian helicopter pilot Maksim Kuzminov (inset) was murdered in Feb in Villajoyosa, Spain. A expert said Russia's intelligence services have begun operating at a dia Civil, the Spanish police level of aggressiveness at home and abroad reminiscent of the Stalin era

ventional espionage anymore," he said. "It's about operations—and these operations might include assassinations."

In Spain, Kuzminov lived "an indiscreet life," the senior ritory and handing the aircraft went to bars popular with Rusdocuments to Ukrainian intelburning through the money he had received from the Ukrainian state. He drove around Villajovosa in a black Mercedes S-Class. Exactly how the killers found him has not been established, though two senior Ukrainian officials said he had reached out to a former girlfri-

> her to come see him in Spain. "This was a grave mistake," one of the officials said. Senior police officials speaking on the condition of anonymity said the killing bore hallmarks of similar attacks

end, still in Russia, and invited

linked to the Kremlin, including the assassination of a former Chechen rebel commander in Berlin in 2019 and the poisoning of the former Russian military intelligence operative

2018. Skripal survived. The two hooded killers who appeared on surveillance camera footage from the parking garage of Kuzminov's apartment complex we-

"It is not common here in Spain for someone to be shot with a lot of ammunition," said chief Pepe Alvarez of the Villajoyosa police department. "These are indications that point to organized crime, to a criminal organisation, to professionals."

officials said.

While no evidence of direct Kremlin involvement has emerged, Russia had made no secret of its desire to see Kuzminov dead. Weeks after his defection, the Kremlin's signatu-Sunday evening news re programme ran a segment quoting fellow pilots and commandos from Russia's military intelligence service vowing revenge. "We'll find this person and punish him, with all the severity of our country's laws,

his brothers," said one of commandos, who was not identified. "We find everyone eventually. Our arms are long."

The defection of Kuzminov was a coup for Ukraine, orchestrated by a covert unit in the HUR, Ukraine's military's intelligence arm. Kuzminov even went on a media tour, holding a news conference, giving interviews denouncing Russia's war and calling on others to follow his example. The Ukrainian govt Kuzminov \$500,000 and also offered him a chance to join them in fighting Russia.

Instead, Kuzminov left Ukraine in Oct and drove to Villajoyosa, a small town on the Mediterranean coast popular with British and Eastern European tourists. There, he settled at a modest apartment building. It was a curious choice for someone targeted by the Guardia Civil official said. He re clearly professionals who Russian authorities for liquicarried out their mission and dation. The region is a well-knsian and Ukrainian clientele, quickly disappeared, police own base of operation for Russian organized crime figures, the Spanish authorities say.

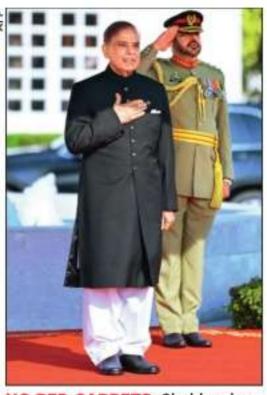
On the morning of Feb 13, a white Hyundai Tucson entered the garage under Kuzminov's apartment building and parked in an empty spot. Two men waited there for several hours, according to the senior Guardia Civil official. Around 4.20pm, Kuzminov drove into the garage, parked and began walking toward the elevators. As he passed in front of the white Hyundai, the two assailants emerged, called out to him and opened fire. Though he was struck by six bullets, most of them in the torso, Kuzminov managed to sprint a short distance before collapsing. The two killers then got back into the car and ran over Kuzminov's Sergei Skripal in England in for treason and for betraying body on their way out. NYT

Sharif conveys to Biden willingness to work with US

Omer Faroog Khan TNN

Islamabad: Pakistan PM Sh ehbaz Sharif assured US President Joe Biden on Sunday that his country was willing to work with the US "on the shared targets of international peace and regional security".

Sharif was responding to Biden's letter on Friday in which the latter, departing from his earlier stance of not engaging with Pakistani leaders, had assured him of Washington's support to Islamabad to tackle "the most pressing global and regional challenges". Biden's suggested that despite allegations of election fraud, the US govt is ready to work with Pakistan's new govt. In the letter, Biden did not congratula- costs in the cash-strapped nation



NO RED CARPETS: Shehbaz has banned the use of red carpets at govt events, reserving them for diplomatic receptions, as part of austerity measures to cut down

ge or winning the election. Interestingly, the US president had not communicated with Imran Khan, the jailed

former prime minister, when he assumed office in Jan 2021. Responding to Biden's letter, Sharif, according to the PM's Office, stated that Pakistan is willing to work with the US towards a common goal of global peace and security and development and prosperity of the region. He said Pakistan attached "key importance" to its relations with the

US, adding that the two count-

ries were jointly working to-

gether on important initiati-

ves regarding energy, climate

change, agriculture, health and education sectors. Shehbaz welcomed coope-

te Sharif for assuming char-ration in the energy sector and Green Alliance Framework initiative between the two countries. In his letter, the US president had specifically mentioned the Green Alliance initiative, saying his administration would continue to work with Pakistan for environmental improvement. Biden had also spoken of sustainable agricultural development, water management and recovery from the devastating effects of the 2022 floods in Pakistan.

> Pakistan, apparently, seems to be no longer a priority for the US following its withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021, but the south Asian nation, according to observers, still remains vital for Washington in terms of regional security and counter-terrorism efforts.

From glassware to pillowcases, rampant theft from press section of Air Force One

Washington: Normally they-'re the ones grilling Washington power players. But the tables have been turned on the White House press corps.

A news report made waves Friday in the US capital with its humorous—but detailed investigation into rampant theft from the press section of Air Force One, the president's official plane. "For years, scores of journalists—and others have quietly stuffed everything from engraved whiskey tumblers to wine glasses to pretty much anything with the Air Force One insignia on it into their bag before stepping off the plane," Politico reported. Last month, the White Hou-

ope Francis called for an immediate ceasefire in

Gaza and the release of all Israeli hostages in an

Easter Sunday address. He presided over Mass in a

'Urbi et Orbi' blessing and message from the central

packed St Peter's Square, and then delivered his

HIGH-FLYING 'LOOT'

se Correspondents' Association sent an email to its members, issuing a stern notice that missing items had not gone unnoticed. When the US president travels, he is accompanied by 13 journalists in the back of his Boeing. The crew distributes as souvenirs small packages of M&M's chocolates bearing the presidential seal. Gl-

asses and other Air Force Onebranded accessories are available for purchase online. But that is not good eno-

balcony of St Peter's Basilica. Francis, 87, has been in

poor health in recent weeks, forcing him on repeated

occasions to limit his public speaking. However, he

took part in Holy Week events leading up to Easter,

and appeared in good spirits on Sunday. REUTERS

ugh, Politico's report noted, describing the sounds of glassware clinking in journalists' backpacks as they disembark. In one instance, a former White House correspondent hosted a dinner party, serving food on a set of gold-rimmed Air Force One plates that had been pilfered over time, the report said. At least one journalist heeded the scolding - culminating in the "discreet return" of an embroidered pillowcase after a meeting was arranged between the reporter and a press officia, Politico said. AFP

Oaxaca: The bodies of eight Chinese migrants were found on a beach in southern Mexico after the boat they were traveling in capsized, officials said Saturday. The seven women and a man were aboard a boat operated by a Mexican that left Tapachula in Chiapas state, on the border with Guatemala, on bodies were discovered on Friday in the state of Oaxaca sits along a route frequently used by people trying to reach the ant survived the ordeal. There was no word on what happened

to the Mexican driving the boat

Turkish oppn set to retain control in Istanbul, Ankara

position party appeared set to ular figure touted as a possible retain its control over key cities in Sunday's local elections, preliminary results showed, in a major upset to helped him to victory in 2019. President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who had set his sights rometer of Erdogan's popon retaking control of

those urban areas. With some 20% of the votes counted, incumbent mayor Ekrem Imamoglu, of the Republican People's

Party, or CHP, was leading in 2019, had shattered Erdogan's Istanbul, Turkey's largest city and economic hub - according to state broadcaster TRT. Mayor Mansur Yavas, the mayor of the capital Ankara, also appeared poised to retain his seat with a comfortable majority, the results indicated.

The CHP appeared to be leading in 35 of Turkey's 81 provinces, according to the preliminary results reported

Ankara: Turkiye's main op- by TRT. Imamoglu — a popfuture challenger to Erdogan ran without the support of some of the parties that

The vote was seen as baularity as he sought to

win back control of key urban areas he lost to the opposition in elections five years ago. The CHP's victory in Ankara and Istanbul in aura of invincibility.

The main battleground for the 70-year-old Turkish president was Istanbul, a city of 16 million people where he was born and raised and where he began his political career as mayor in 1994.

Some 61 million people, including more than a million first-time voters, were eligible to cast ballots in elections. AP

AROUND THE WORLD



SAHARAN DUST SMOTHERS SWITZERLAND: An exceptionally rare haze of Saharan dust cloaked Switzerland and southeastern France on Saturday, sparking health warnings as a yellow hue tinged the sky

Stop using Lego heads in criminal mugshots: Toy firm to US police dept

Southern California police

department has been

handcuffed by Lego after the toy company asked the agency to stop adding Lego heads to cover the faces of suspects in images it shares on social media. The Murrieta police department has been using Lego heads and emojis to cover people's faces in posts on social sites since at least early 2023. But the altered photos went viral last week after the department posted a statement about its policy, prompting several news articles and, later, the request from Lego. "Why the covered faces?" the department wrote March 18 in an Instagram post that featured five people in a lineup, their faces covered by Lego heads

with varying expressions. The

California law that took effect

post went on to reference a

Jan. 1, limiting departments in sharing mugshots on social media. "The Murrieta Police Department prides itself in its transparency with the community, but also honours everyone's rights; even suspects," the department wrote. After Lego's request, Lt. Jeremy Durrant said in a statement: "We are currently exploring other methods to continue publishing our content in a way that is engaging to our followers." Lego did not comment.

King Charles makes first

public appearance since cancer diagnosis: Britain's King Charles greeted wellwishers in an impromptu walkabout after an Easter church service in Windsor on Sunday, his first appearance at a public royal event since his cancer diagnosis was announced in Feb. A smiling Charles, 75, accompanied by Queen Camilla, shook hands with scores of people gathered outside St George's Chapel Charles had postponed all previous public engagements.

A bill aims to make California first in US to give employees 'right to disconnect' San Francisco: Few places ha- their phones when the boss normalise for many workers, wage is \$16 an hour, compared and private employers to estab-

ve done more than the Bay Area — the center of the smartphone industry — to ensure that bosses can call, text or Slack their workers all the time, nights and weekends included.

But a San Francisco lawmaker wants to help curb the constant ringing and pinging that his region helped create. New legislation from Assembly member Matt Haney would make his state the first in the country to give employees the legal calls after hours. Emails, texts and other work communication could also be put off until workers are back on the clock. Haney, a Democrat, got the

idea from Australia's new "right to disconnect" law, to be implemented later this year. It will allow workers to reject "unreasonable" professional communication outside their

regular workday. The idea originated in but didn't adopt it. France and has spread in vario-



Canada, Italy, Belgium and the

Philippines. New York City debated a similar proposal in 2018

Remote work, which the coright to hit the ignore button on us forms to countries including ronavirus pandemic helped to of the country. The minimum spring, would require public ject to fines starting at \$100. NYT

can make it more difficult to put a firm stop to the workday, Haney said, "People now find themselves always on and never off," he said. "There's an availability creep that has reached into many people's lives, and I think it's not a positive thing for people's happiness, for their well-being, or even for work productivity."

California workers already enjoy more generous rights than those in many other parts with the federal minimum wage of \$7.25. California law also requires employers to provide overtime pay, paid family leave, paid sick leave, reimbursement for business expenses, and mandatory meal and rest breaks. It also has broad anti-discrimination and anti-harassment protections that go beyond similar laws in many other states.

Haney's bill, which would probably go to a legislative committee for consideration this

lish a policy granting workers the right to ignore off-hour communication from their bosses except in the case of emergency, or for scheduling changes affecting the next 24 hours. Employers and employees

would have to establish a written agreement defining work hours. Under the proposal, if the boss breaks the deal three times, he or she could be reported to the state's labour commissioner by employees and be subSTAR SPORTS / JIOCINEMA



LOOK WHO'S BACK! Vintage Pant, Khaleel Star In **DC's First Win This Season** Shiva.Gundra@timesgroup.com Visakhapatnam: Like their coach Ricky Ponting had said on the eve of their clash, Delhi Capitals played good cricket throughout 40 overs and recorded their first win of the

season by defeating Chennai Super Kings by 20 runs at the ACA-VDCA Cricket Stadium on Sunday. After posting a challenging 191-5 riding on fine half-centuries by skipper Rishabh Pant and David Warner, Mukesh Kumar (3-

21) and Khaleel Ahmed (2-

21) restricted the defending

champions to 171-6. Super Kings had the worst possible start to their chase. Khaleel Ahmed used the bounce in the wicket to good effect, dismissing Ruturaj Gaikwad (1) in the first over and Rachin Ravindra (2) in the third to reduce them to 7-2 in three overs.

Ajinkya Rahane (45; 30b; 5x4, 2x6) and Daryl Mitchell (34) kept them in the hunt with a 68-run third wicket stand. But Axar Patel foxed the New Zealand batter. Seamer Mukesh Kumar then tilted the match in favour of Capitals with a double strike in the 14th over. He got rid of Rahane and Sameer Rizvi off successive deliveries to reduce them to 102-5.

(37*) entertained the crowd

Earlier, skipper found his touch and his entertaining 51 (32b; 4x4, 3x6) along with Warner's 52 (35b. 5x4, 3x6) helped Delhi Capi-

tals set a daunting target.

Rundhay

Prithvi Shaw (43: 27b), who hosts slumped to 134/4. made the playing XI at the exthe 17th over. Though Dhoni rana at short third to dismiss Warner off Mustafizur. Shaw

Pant but departed next ball, edging to wicketkeeper MS Dhoni.

RISE AFTER THE FALL: Rishabh

Pant's 51 off 32 helped Delhi

Capitals post 191-5

Two quick wickets slowed down the scoring. Pathirana's twin blows in the 15th over knocked out Mitchell Electing to bat, the hosts Marsh's middle stump and got off to a strong start with Tristan Stubbs' off stump as

Back in his elements, Pant pense of local lad Ricky Bhui, cut loose in the 18th over, CSK's hopes rested on and Warner laying the plat- hitting Mustafizur for a six big-hitting Shivam Dube. form with their 93-run open- and a four. He then went af-But Mukesh put paid to their ing stand. It took a brilliant ter Pathirana to reach his chances by dismissing him in catch from Matheesha Pathi- half-century with a 6, 4, 4. But he ballooned the next delivery to Ruturaj Gaikwad. The with some big hits, the match then took his side past the 100- Capitals managed 57 runs in was out of their reach by then. run mark with a six off Jadeja the final five overs.

With Prithvi Shaw's catch, Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the first wicketkeeper to affect 300 dismissals in T20-213 catches and 87 stumpings.

scores is an IPL record-the next best being 59 (seven hundreds and 52 fifties) by Virat Kohli.

Rishabh Pant has posted his 16th fifty in the IPL and his third in 11 innings vs CSK. His last fifty in the IPL was 51 not out vs CSK at Dubai on Oct 10, 2021.

David Warner's 62nd fifty in the IPL is his ninth vs

CSK. With four hundreds, his tally of 66 fifty-plus

Matheesha Pathirana has produced his best bowling performance vs DC-his second best in the IPL behind the 3-15 vs MI at Chennai on May 6, 2023.

SCOREBOARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c Dhoni b Jadeja 43, David Warner c Pathirana b Mustafizur 52, Rishabh Pant c Gaikwad b Pathirana 51, Mitchell Marsh b Pathirana 18, Tristan Stubbs b Pathirana 0, Axar Patel not out 7, Abishek Porel not out 9 Extras: (B2, LB2, NB2, W5) 11; Total: (For 5 wickets, 20 overs) 191; FoW: 1-93, 2-103, 3-134, 4-134, 5-178; Bowling: Deepak Chahar 4-0-42-0, Tushar Deshpande 4-0-24-0. Mustafizur Rahman 4-0-47-1, Ravindra Jadeja 4-0-43-1, Matheesha Pathirana 4-0-31-3 Chennai Super Kings: Ruturaj Gaikwad c Pant b

Ahmed 1, Rachin Ravindra c Stubbs b Ahmed 2, Ajinkya Rahane c Warner b Mukesh 45, Daryl Mitchell c&b Patel 34, Shivam Dube c Stubbs b Mukesh 18, Sameer Rizvi c Ahmed b Mukesh 0, Ravindra Jadeja not out 21, MS Dhoni not out 37

Extras: (LB4, NB1, W8) 13; Total: (For six wickets, in 20 overs) 171; FoW: 3-1, 7-2, 75-3, 102-4, 102-5, 120-6; Bowling: Khaleel Ahmed 4-1-21-2, Ishant Sharma 3-0-23-0, Anrich Nortje 4-0-43-0, Axar Patel 3-0-20-1, Rasikh Salam 2-0-25-0, Mitchell Marsh 1-0-14-0, Mukesh Kumar 3-0-21-3 Result: DC won by 20 runs Player of the Match: Khaleel Ahmed

POINTS TALLY							
KKR	2	2	0	1.047	4		
CSK	3	2	1	0.976	4		
RR	2	2	0	0.800	4		
GT	3	2	1	-0.738	4		
SRH	3	1	2	0.204	2		
LSG	2	1	1	0.025	2		
DC	3	1	2	-0.016	2		
PBKS	3	1	2	-0.337	2		
RCB	3	1	2	-0.711	2		
MI	2	0	2	-0.925	0		

Miller, Sai, Mohit take Titans home

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Ahmedabad: There's a reason why Gujarat Titans (GT) continue to back southpaws Sai Sudharsan (45 off 36b; 4x4, 1x6) and David Miller (44* off 27b; 4x4, 2x6)-because, more often than not, the duo have delivered over the last two seasons. On Sunday too, despite being pegged back in the middle overs by Sunrisers Hyderabad (SRH) bowlers, the pair stitched a crucial 64-run partnership off 42 balls, of which the last 24 runs came off six balls, to guide the Titans to a comfortable seven-wicket win at the Narendra Modi Stadium, in Ahmedabad.

The 16th over, bowled by leg spinner Mayank Markande, saw the pair taking the Punjab bowler to the cleaners. Miller began with boundaries on either side of the ground before Sudharsan lifted Markande for a maximum between longon and deep mid-wicket. The South African then lifted him take SRH to 56 after the first last ball to tilt the chase in Ti- hoick off left-arm wrist spintans' favour.

ter captain Shubman Gill (36, 28b; 2x4, 1xx6) departed. Gill's bid to take on Markande was unsuccessful as he was caught 4 overs). Heinrich Klassen (24 at wide long-on by Abdul Samad. Opener Wriddhiman Saha's 25 (13b; 1x4, 2x6) had given the Titans a swift beginning but he was caught by SRH captain Pat Cummins at

mid-on off Ahmed's bowling. Earlier, cameos from Samad (29 off 14b; 3x4, 1x6) and Ahmed (22 off 20b; 1x4, 1x6) guided SRH to 162-8 after they had slipped to 114-5 in 14.4 Mohit Sharma 3-25) lost to overs. Their openers Mayank Agarwal and Travis Head put on 34 for the opening wicket Shubman Gill 36) by 7 wickets.

How a frail teenager became superfast



KEY STRIKES: Mohit Sharma was adjudged Player of the Match

in four overs. However Agarwal (16 off 17b; 2x4) holed out to deep square-leg off Azmatullah Omarzai's bowling.

Southpaw Abhishek Sharma (29 off 20b; 2x4, 2x6) smashed leg-spinner Rashid Khan for two maximums to powerplay. Head's attempted ner Noor Ahmad's bowling

The duo came together af- saw his stumps get shattered. Abhishek spooned a catch to Gill at extra cover to be sent back by Mohit Sharma (3/25 in off 13b; 1x4, 2x6) joined Aiden Markram (17 off 19b) and though the former smashed Noor for two sixes over the mid-wicket boundary in the 13th over, Khan's quicker one disturbed his stumps in the next over.

> Brief Scores: Sunrisers Hyderabad 162-8 (Abhishek Sharma 29, Abdul Samad 29; Gujarat Titans 168-3 (Sai Sudharsan 45, David Miller 44*,

Will it be happy homecoming for Mumbai Indians, Hardik?

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Mumbai: Almost 22 years ago, a chilling act shocked the sporting world. When Luis Figo showed up in bitter rivals Real Madrid jersey to take a corner kick in an El Clasico clash at Barcelona's famed Camp Nou, a butchered head of a pig was hurled at him.

The severed skull laid near Figo's feet demonstrated the extreme hatred that Catalan team's fans had developed for the former Portuguese captain, who had, two years back, chosen to be a 'Galactico' at a handsome paycheck of 44 million pounds.

While things are unlikely to go that level at the Wankhede here on Monday night, there could be resentment in the hearts of passionate Mumbai Indians fans when Hardik Pandya — having replaced Rohit Sharma — leads them out against Rajasthan Royals in one of most highly-anticipated IPL matches.

Having been booed and heckled in the of late. He wants his team too to be focused on he replaced Rohit, who led MI to a record five booed in stadiums," a source told TOI. titles, Pandya is set to play the toughest match of his career. And what makes it worse for the India allrounder is the fact that despite Pandya taking over, Mumbai Indians have made their trademark slow start, losing both their away games so far, by six runs to the Gujarat Titans, followed by a 32-run loss to Sunrisers Hyderabad in Hyderabad.

the bowling himself and holding back Jasprit Bumrah in Powerplay, coming to bat as late party at his home ground? as No 7 when the chase was getting tighter against GT, giving an IPL debut to South Africa's 17-old left-arm pacer Kwena Maphaka. who went for 0-66 in four overs as SRH's maunder-fire. Despite the barrage of negativity dency to lose his wicket after an initial burst. around him for the last month or so, Pandya, as Steve Smith recommended to him has left-arm pace early on, Rohit needs to be "shut out external noise" and is unflustered. "What's appearing on social media doesn't merchants Trent Boult and new recruit Nanbother him since he has avoided it completely dre Burger, who has been impressive.



UNDER FIRE: Hardik Pandya has faced fans' wrath in Mumbai Indians' opening two games

ground and trolled on social media ever since cricket, rather than worry about him being A match-winning performance with ei-

> ther bat or ball, or both, will help Pandya win back the love of his fans.

It remains to be seen if MI persist with Maphaka or English left-arm pacer Luke Wood comes back in. Will they hand an IPL debut to Sri Lankan import Nuwan Thushara? Additionally, will Mumbai left-A few of Pandya's decisions, like opening arm spinner Shams Mulani, finally getting match-time for Mumbai Indians, come to the

For MI to get back to winning ways, it's vital that Rohit and Ishan Kishan find their mojo again. Like he has done in the last few IPL seasons, Rohit, who scored a 29-ball 43 vs rauding batsmen tore into him, have come GT and 12-ball 26 vs SRH, is showing a ten-

> For someone who can be susceptible to guarded while playing RR's left-arm speed

> > The Pakistan

BOULT, CHAWLA BACK HARDIK TO BLOCK THE **NOISE OUT**

Gaurav.Gupta @timesgroup.com

Mumbai: At a time when he has been the target of abuse in stadiums and on social media after replacing Rohit Sharma as the Mumbai Indians captain, Hardik Pandya has received encouragement from the rival camp.

Ahead of MI's first home game of the season, against the Rajasthan Royals at the Stadium Wankhede on Monday, the Jaipur-based side's speedster Trent Boult went gaga in his praise for the India allrounder, calling him one of his "favourite Indian cricketers".

"He's (Pandya) a quality player, he hits boundaries, and is a match winner. I've played a lot against him in franchise cricket as well as in India vs New Zealand contests. He's a phenomenal player who can take on the best bowlers on any

given day," Boult said. Teammate Piyush Chawla on Sunday said: "He is just focused on the game, he is not worried what the crowd is doing and once we get a win under our belt things will be totally different," Chawla said.

pacer: The story of Mayank Yadav

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New Delhi: Devender Sharma's phone rang, just past midnight Saturday. In most ideas, midnight is the start of a new day, a changeover in the passage of time. The message in the call, too would be signifying that – a new start. But the voice at the other end was betraying no such reaction, remembers Sharma.

"Sir, aaj na mera debut ho gaya." The 'contents' of the call was plain, telegram-like short, but the Sonnet Club coach immediately got the enormity of the meaning. "He spoke as if nothing happened. He just wanted to listen what I had to say," Sharma told TOI the morning after.

from Delhi, had just rattled a ble, no-frills upbringing. "His watching IPL-verse. Fuelled father ran a small-time comby sheer pace, with his 3/27 helping Lucknow Super Giants outbowl Punjab Kings in Lucknow on Saturday, then, was a 'debut' in every sense of the term,"He has always been a simple and humble guy," recalled Sharma, adding how during the 2021-22 winter, Yadav distributed sweets to everyone at Sonnet, because he had just made his debut for Delhi in the Vijay Hazare Trophy. Then he had defended three runs in the final over of a chase, helping Delhi pull off a win. Now 21, the unassuming lad then seemed just happy that he was playing for Delhi



ONE FOR THE FUTURE: Mayank Yadav caught everyone's attention with his fiery spell against Punjab Kings

and wanted to show his gratitude to his club and coaches. late Tarak Sinha and Sharma.

Maybe the aversion to even Mayank Yadav, super-fast where down to Yadav's hummodity business which helped them make ends meet, that collapsed during Covid," Sharma said, adding, "Tarak sir and I always believed that boys from humble backgrounds become better fast bowlers.

> "He was a frail 14-year-old then, and we were looking for bowlers at the club. Seven vears ago, when we found him. he didn't even have proper shoes," the coach recalled. The grounded-ness then, is not a choice but a compulsion.

> There seems to be a constant dark, satirical joke with Yadav and footwear. Supposed to make his IPL debut last sea-

son, he pulled his hamstring ing joint nets session. Suddenduring a practice match because his old spikes didn't grip the damp crease. Even after being with the Lucknow franchise for three seasons now and playing for Delhi, Yadav is still to land a shoe contract. This even after a kind word that time. from the Delhi and District Cricket Association top brass. Sonnet, all this while, has been providing him with playing footwear.

understanding his circumstances, the speedster ordered himself a couple of pairs from Australia. At first glance, few would bet on him to bowl at 156 kmph like he did against Punjab last night. "When he came this season. KL Rahul, his permissible hyperbole is sometous, he was poorly nourished, skipper at LSG, bestows a lot underfed even. But his deliver- of faith in him. He was called ies were hitting the nets hard."

> laughed Yadav. the beefing-up and the education: "He ate with us at the club. He is a vegetarian but always strong enough to effortlessly bowl quick. His deliveries skidded after pitching. But he soon learnt that he couldn't be one-dimensional. The outswing came naturally to him. We helped him develop the in-coming ball," pointed out Sharma.

> Life took a sudden favourable turn for the young bowler at Mohali, Vijay Dahiya too happened to be there as Uttar Pradesh coach. "We were hav-

nets and immediately called up Gautam Gambhir," remembered the former Delhi player. The Delhi connection helped, as both Gambhir and Dahiya had been involved with LSG at "We decided to invest in

ly, I noticed him in the adjacent

him. We were not going to play him in the first season because he wasn't ready mentally and physically. He didn't have So, this IPL season, best miles in his legs since he didn't play junior cricket. But he was an important investment for us," Dahiya revealed, Yadav has been on the na-

tional selectors' radar since the Deodhar Trophy earlier in to bowl to Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Rahul himself The coach then spelt out before the last Test series in South Africa. While he impressed the Indian stalwarts, that was also where he picked up a side-strain which was later diagnosed as a rib fracture, ruling him out of the Ranji season.

LSG is aware of the talent they have on their hands. "Even when he got injured, we didn't release him. We have a facility in Mumbai which is very good for sports medicine. We sent Mayank there and got when during his Delhi debut him ready for the IPL," Dahiya said. The results are beginning to show, as the cricketing world

GALLERY

SL hold 476-run lead over B'desh in 2nd Test

Chattogram: Sri Lanka kept its nose ahead in the second and final cricket Test against Bangladesh by posting a massive 531 on Day 2 Sunday, thanks to six batters getting past half-century marks. In response, Bangladesh reached 55-1 at stumps, still trailing by 476 runs. None of the batters were able to reach the threefigure mark but Sri Lanka ensured it didn't lose wickets in succession. Kamindu Mendis, who scored twin centuries in the first Test that Sri Lanka won by a crushing 328 runs, was stranded on 92 as the 10th wicket fell to a run-out dismissal. AP

ACTION TODAY

BASKETBALL: NBA, 5 am (Jiocinema) CRICKET: IPL, Mumbai vs Rajasthan, 7.30 pm (Star Sports, Jiocinema); Bangladesh Women vs Australia, 2nd T201, 11.30 am (Fan-

FOOTBALL: ISL, Hyderabad FC vs Mumbai

City FC, 7.30 pm (Jiocinema)

Babar back as white-ball captain AIFF member gets bail, denies charge

Islamabad: Cricket Board reappointed Babar Azam as white-ball captain on Sunday, the latest in a series of changes to get the team back on track for this year's Twenty20 World Cup. Azam stepped down as skipper in all formats in November after Pakistan crashed out of the 50-over World Cup in the first round in India.

"Following unanimous recommendation from the PCB's selection committee, chairman PCB (Mohsin) Naqvi has appointed Azam as white-ball (T20Is and ODIs) captain of the Pakistan cricket team," the board announced on social media platform X.

Shah Afridi after the decision by the seven-member selection committee, which was reorganised a week ago.

Shan Masood as Test captain af- World Cup in the United States ter stepping down, as well as by and the West Indies.



Babar Azam

Shaheen in T20Is. Shaheen's only T20I series in charge was the 4-1 loss in New

Zealand in January.

Former head coach Mickey Arthur was also replaced after the World Cup disaster by team director Mohammad Hafeez, under whom Pakistan suffered a 3-0 Test whitewash in Australia Azam replaces Shaheen and the T20I series loss in New

Zealand. Pakistan will play five T20Is against New Zealand at home, followed by two in Ireland and He had been replaced by four in England, before the

'PCB to appoint sepa'rate foreign coaches for different formats'

Lahore: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has decided to appoint separate foreign coaches for red ball and white ball formats, narrowing down to former Australian pacer Jason Gillispie and ex-South African batter Gary Kirsten as probable candidates for the respective positions, according to sources.

The PCB on Saturday officially issued advertisements for the red ball and white ball coaches' positions.

Interested candidates - foreign and local - can apply by April 15 and they must have at least five years of experience of coaching a domestic, international or franchise team besides holding a minimum of level two coaching credentials.

It said candidates with a higher level of coaching credentials would be given preference in the appointments. AGENCIES

Marcus.Mergulhao@timesgroup.com

FC, Himachal Pradesh, when they rimanded. were in Goa for the Indian Women's League (IWL) 2.

evening.

"The offences were bailable, so will have to present himself here, as and when required."

: (sexual harassment) of the IPC. hands, asking them to dispose of lowances.

ma told the police that he scolded Panaji: The Goa police has grant- the players for stepping out at to file a police complaint only afed bail to Deepak Sharma, a se- night but did not physically as- ter the Goa Football Association nior football official who was ac- sault anyone. He said the players (GFA) assured them of legal help cused of physically assaulting had levelled false allegations by providing the services of a lawtwo women footballers of Khad against him since they were rep-yer to fight their case. The GFA al-

tial complaint to the AIFF, Shar- would reach home safely. The executive committee ma barged inside the room where member of the All India Football they were staying in Mapusa and coach Renu Bala, were provided Federation (AIFF) and secretary physically assaulted two players flight tickets by the AIFF to travel of the Himachal Pradesh Foot- when he saw that they were boil- to their respective homes and uniball Association was arrested by ing eggs on Thursday night. The versities in Delhi, Amritsar and the Mapusa police on Saturday girls had missed dinner so were Manali. All of them left on Sunday. cooking on their own.

he was granted bail by the police," tions two separate incidents ached home safely," said a senior a senior officer told TOI. "Sharma where Sharma is alleged to have official. "When there was commohas been warned and told that he physically assaulted the players. tion at the police station on Satur-

According to sources, Shar- the eggs they had got."

The players stepped forward so assured the two complainants According to the players' ini- and three witnesses that they

The five players, along with

"The GFA did whatever it

The police complaint men-could to ensure that the players re-When questioned by the po- day night, we moved the players lice, Sharma denied the assault, from their room at Mapusa to a ho-Mapusa police have registered said he wasn't drunk as alleged by tel near the airport. We also proa case under section 323 (causing the players, but had previously vided train tickets to another simple hurt to a person), 341 told a local fact-finding team that group of players who travelled to (wrongful restraint) and 354 A he had "pulled the players by Jaipur, besides providing them al-

Being India's Olympic flagbearer matter of pride for me: Sharath

Was Told Neeraj, Ath Team Would Reach Paris Later, Reveals Legendary Paddler

Siddharth Saxena@timesgroup.com

easantly surprised to be chosen as India's flag-bearer at the Paris Olympics opening ceremony this July, India's top-ranked table tennis player (world ranking 35) and 10-time National champion, Achanta Sharath Kamal, will be gracing his fifth - and final - Games. At 41, he tells TOI how things stand at this promising juncture. Excerpts:

A table tennis player leading an Indian Olympic contingent is perhaps a first...

It came as a surprise for me too. Neeraj Chopra would be the natural choice but the athletics team will be arriving later in Paris. The main contenders were hockey, probably PR Sreejesh, but Manpreet Singh had done it before at Tokyo along with Sindhu. What PT (Usha) ma'am told me was that several names came up in their internal discussions, and they recommended my name to the PMO after that. Perhaps, with my Khel Ratna this year, the Commonwealth Games medals, this being my fifth Olympic Games, I was chosen.

What does the flag mean to you?

At opening ceremonies, I would look at the flagbearers and think of how proud they would be feeling. Boxer Nikhat Zareen and I were given the flag at the Birmingham Commonwealth Games closing. It was my first time and I felt very proud. But an opening ceremony is always bigger.

Singh Rathore was the flagbearer, stands out. He had a back pain that day and had a strap around his back and the flag rested on that. I was just behind and he turns and tells me, 'Come here and stand next to me'. Maybe for support, I don't know, I don't even know if he knew me or not. I can't describe how happy I was. Standing next to him, I could see the flag flying high as we walked into the stadium. I was just 25 then, my second Olympics. I am 41 now, but that picture just stays in my memory.

You are part of the Athletes Commission of the Indian Olympic Association that heard the protesting wrestlers' plea. We all know how it has turned out. How would you feel, say, if Vinesh Phoghat too is marching out with you, knowing that justice was perhaps not done to

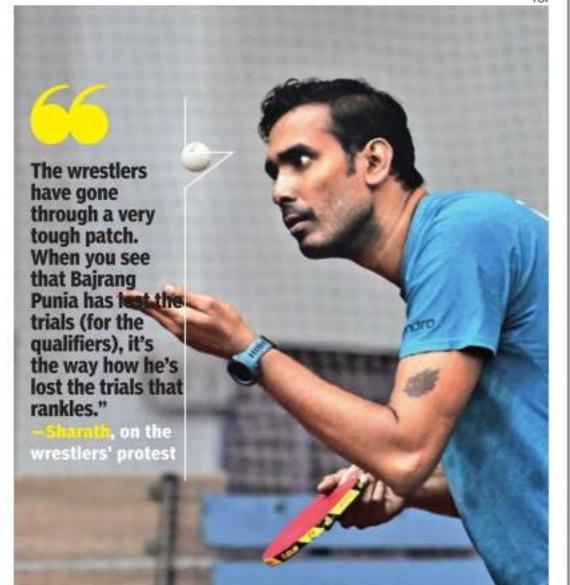
Actually, they've gone through a very tough patch. When you see that Bajrang Punia has lost the trials (for the qualifiers), it's the way how he's lost the trials that rankles. That is where I feel, 'Oh, okay, he's gone through such a difficult time for almost a year and a half.' Expecting him to come back and actually perform and do well is not right.

When I was busy with the administrative part, I really couldn't scale up my game. And that was just for three months. Imagine, these guys have been doing it for a year and fighting their lives for it! It's really quite a sad state of things. On the one hand, you keep hearing about the positives of Indian sport, then there is this side too. That's quite the low of Indian sport, especially when the IOC (International Olympic Committee) is looking at India.

Paris could prove an important juncture for you personally and Indian table tennis too. For the first time, India has qualified for the teams competition where we can be contenders.

When we qualify as a team, it denotes depth and helps us position ourselves as an emerging sport with the SAI (Sporting Authority of India) and the sporting fraternity. And that is important because we still are not priority sport because we don't have medals at the Olympic Games.

Qualifying in teams gives us that opportunity to actually fight for that medal because it's only a 16-team draw. It's the



same with mixed doubles. Both give you the best or the short-The 2008 Beijing Olympics opening, where Rajyavardhan est opportunity to get to the medal. In contrast, in singles the medal is seven rounds away.

Despite the recent achievements by Indian paddlers, it is staggering when you remember that the team still doesn't have a coach...

Yes, it's been six years... I guess it was being delayed so long because we were doing so well (Laughs). As for the natural rhythm, of course, we've done a lot by ourselves. Everybody has their individual coaches, which is helping each of them perform well on their own. But we still need somebody to help us. A coach will always add to the team. There's a lot of responsibilities taken off. I am given to understand that India will have a coach soon, by mid-April. The federation is in final talks with Massimo Constantini. We are keen on Constantini, the Italian is familiar with the Indian players.

The Olympics is almost a final frontier, what different would you tell your mates this time?

More than telling them, I'll have to stand by example. Unlike for Tokyo where I prepared like mad because of the sudden chance that came my way (due to pandemic forcing postponement by a year), where I went through the grind, this time that singular goal-driven plan is not going to work. I have to make sure I am able to enjoy every moment when I'm there on the court. And that can't come with going through the same thing day in and day out. At the end of it, I also get bored.

I don't have to be too hard on myself. I need to enjoy that very moment. I have to understand that it's okay to have an ice cream once in a while. It's just okay not to train one day and spend some time with the family. That gives me the mental sensation I need. At my age, even if recovery takes longer physically, I have also learnt that you can control a lot of things with your body than controlling the mental aspect.

You'll always have Paris, but after that...

I will take it slow. I think I'm done with the playing part. I'm not looking at coaching as such, but more as a sport director of a state-of-the-art planning centre, helping players improve their game. I am in initial talks with the Tamil Nadu government for it.

LIVERPOOL STAY ON TOP

To Beat Brighton Manchester: Arsenal showed their title credentials by holding reigning champions Manchester City to a 0-0 draw on Sunday at the Etihad Stadium, allowing Liverpool to take top spot on a pivotal day in the

Mikel Arteta's Arsenal, in the hunt for their first league title in 20 years, are second in the table on 65 points with nine games remaining, while City are third with 64.

Premier League's three-way

title race.

Liverpool claimed the lead with their 2-1 comeback victory over Brighton & Hove Albion earlier on Sunday. Salah fired Liverpool as the Egypt star's clinical finish

capped a stirring fightback. Jurgen Klopp's side were rocked by Danny Welbeck's blistering strike after just 85 seconds at Anfield.

Luis Diaz restored order with an equaliser later in the first half, before Salah netted after the interval to seal a vital victory.

Salah's third goal in his last three games was his 22nd in all competitions this term.

For the first time in 10 years, the Premier League's top three were separated by only one point after 28 games prior to this weekend's matches. Thanks to Salah, treblechasing Liverpool remain firmly in the hunt for a recordequalling 20th English title in Klopp's final season. Brighton boss Roberto de Zerbi is a reported candidate to replace Klopp when the German steps down at the end of this term.

Man City Held By Arsenal; Salah Helps Reds Rally Liverpool's Mohamed Salah scores his team's second at Anfield on Sunday

United lose more ground with Brentford draw

London: Manchester United were held to a 1-1 draw at lowly Brentford after Kristoffer Ajer's 99th-minute equaliser in their Premier

League clash on Saturday, denting the visitors' hopes of qualifying for next sea-

son's Champions League. Substitute Mason Mount thought he had given United an undeserved and dramatic victory when he slotted home in the 96th minute after Brentford had dominated

the game. But Ajer smashed home Ivan Toney's cut-back from close range three minutes later to deny United the win and leave them in sixth spot, 11 points off fourth-placed As-

They are also eight points off Tottenham Hotspur in fifth, a spot which could be enough

for Champions League football next season. Villa have played a game more than Spurs and United.

"There are still many games to go," United's disappointed boss Erik ten Hag told reporters when asked if his side could still qualify for Europe's elite club competition.

'It's all over': Bayern defeat sends Leverkusen 13 points clear

Leverkusen: Bayern Munich lost 2-0 to Borussia Dortmund on Saturday, their first home "Der Klassiker" loss in a decade, allowing Bayer Leverkusen, who came back to win 2-1 over Hoffenheim, to go 13 points clear with seven games remaining.

The German champions lost at home with Dortmund scoring goals in each half through Munich-born Karim Adeyemi and defender Julian Ryerson.

Bayern coach Thomas Tuchel sent "congratulations to Leverkusen". Asked if the title race was over, Tuchel replied "of course", saying "it's self-evident, clear".

Bayern Munich-bound teen Irankunda sets A-League record

Adelaide: Adelaide United coach Carl Veart lauded the quality of Bayern Munich-bound Nestory Irankunda, after the teenage winger became the youngest player to score a hat-trick in Australia's A-League. Irankunda, 18, netted three times for the Reds in their 4-1 home win over Western United on Friday. The Australian youth international, who was born in a refugee camp in Tanzania, has struggled to find his best form since it was announced last November that he would join Bayern in July.

Raphinha winner helps Barca snip lead

Barcelona: Spanish champions Barcelona cut the gap on Real Madrid at the top of La Liga to five points with a 1-0 win over 10man Las Palmas on Saturday.

EPL: RACE FOR THE TOP

Man City 29 19 7 3

Liverpool

Arsenal

P W D L Pt

30 | 18 | 5 | 7 | 59

29 20 7 2

29 20 5 4

Raphinha headed home in the second half to clinch Barcelona's victory after the

visitors had goalkeeper Alvaro Valles dismissed after 24 minutes for a

rash foul. Barcelona warmed up for their Champions League quarterfinal clash against Paris Saint-Germain, their next match in 11 days' time, with a

a tight scoreline. Xavi Hernandez's side are unbeaten in 11 games since the

straightforward victory, albeit by

coach said he would leave at the end of the season and their recent form has given them some faint hope of retaining their title.

"They're three important points, we know they will be important at the end of the season," Raphinha told Movistar.

Stuani's late strike boosts Girona's European dream Cristhian Stuani's last-gasp strike earned Girona an 3-2 win over Real Betis on Sunday, keeping the minnows on track for Champions League qualification. Two David Lopez errors gifted Betis forward Willian Jose two goals to twice equalise goals from Girona forward Artem Dovbyk but veteran Uruguayan forward

Girona are seven points behind Los Blancos. AGENCIES

Stuani had the final say.

Japanese Rookie Keita Nakajima Wins Title By 4 Strokes; Local Hope Ahlawat Is Tied-2nd

Moushumi.Bora@timesgroup.com

Gurugram: This happens only in India. Golfers were nonchalantly lining up their putts on the 9th green to the blaring noise of Punjabi music from the streets of Gurgaon.

ping three bogeys and one double bogey in the last five holes of DLF G&CC to still emerge the winner at the \$2.25m Hero Indian Open by four strokes with a record total of 17-under. Take it away, Keita Nakajima.

sponsorships for his travel expenses, and most importantly, finding stability through marriage.

Ahlawat got a confidence boost with a top-5 performance at the second-tier European Challenge Tour event in Kolkata a week before, This happens only in India, once. and coming on to his home course, The leader has the luxury of drop- thrived on the familiarity. But playing here also brings pressure, something he learned last year when he finished T-13.

"There were high expectations from me, with my coach also being present. But I managed to put to-

SOAKING IT IN: Veer Ahlawat, who finished second, holds the Leading INDIAN OPEN Indian Golfer award

VEER FINISHES WITH A FLOURISH

When the battle was for second, all eyes were on a home hope called Veer Ahlawat. Will he finish in the top-10? No worries, just shoot a birdie on the par-3 16th and a closing eagle on the 18th for a grandstand finish. Veer did exactly that, catching up with American Johannes Veerman and Swede Sebastian Soderberg in second place. One of four golfers to turn in four sub-par rounds, the 28-year-old found the consistency that his coach Anitya Chand was looking for.

This year had been a page-turner for the DLF golfer. He began his journey having retained his Asian Tour card for the second year, gaining

gether a good week, thanks to some brilliant driving and iron-play," he was rightly proud.

Chand called the weekend a "good test" for the talented golfer. "He has always had the game, but the tournament is won in the head. The more he plays, the more he settles in life, the more he learns to handle the situations he is in, he will mentally be up there with the best," the former Asian Games player said.

It was a chance meeting that brought a young Ahlawat to the DLF Academy. In 2011, teen Veer and his armyman father, who was posted in Shillong, happened to play with Brigadier Gyan Puri, a former national

equestrian champion, who had represented India in the 1994 Hiroshima Asian Games. Puri spotted Veer's talent and directed his father towards "cousin brother Anitya" in Gurgaon. The journey made a big difference.

Another local player Manu Gandas finished just outside the top-10 at 9-under, with a gain of three birdies on the back-9 for a 71. Gandas, who won playing privileges on the European Tour last year by topping the 2022 PGTI Order of Merit, could not make the most of the opportunity in 2023, having started the year with seven injuries. The former ju-

doka made 7 cuts in 25 tournaments, finishing 181st in the race. "Hit a few balls, play the event, return to the hotel and sleep for recovery" was his routine as he ended the season, still ailing from four injuries.

Nakajima had a nine-stroke lead at one point. He could afford a score of 73. "I was a bit nervous coming down the final stretch," the Tour rookie from Saitama admitted.

It hardly mattered. It was a week that the Japanese tamed the course and blew away the rest of the competition for a wire-to-wire triumph. His next goal? "Finish in the top-10

on the European Tour to get a PGA Tour card," said the 23-year-old. Final leading scores: 271 (-17)- Keita Nakajima (Jpn) 65-65-68-73 (354,956.18 euros prize money); 275 (-13)- Veer Ahlawat (Ind) 69-66-69-71 (155,206.33 euros), Sebastian Soderberg (Swe) 71-67-70-67, Johannes Veerman (US) 70-65-73-67; 276 (-12)- Gavin Green (Mas) 72-66-64-74, Jeong weon Ko (Fra) 67-67-69-73, Romain Langasque (Fra) 66-66-70-74, Matteo Manassero 65-68-70-73; Other Indians: Karandeep Kochhar T-13; Shubhankar Sharma T-31: Aman Rai T-51; Jairaj Singh Sandhu, Gaganjeet

Keita held his nerve, is a worthy winner Shiv Kapur

Gurugram: Keita Nakajima's win at the Hero Indian Open and Manu Gandas had a fine was never in doubt, more so af- week. A runner-up finish for ter his superb start of three Veer and T-11 for Manu was inbirdies in the first six holes. He deed laudable. They showed that was nine shots clear of the field, a home course advantage does but then came a touch of nerves, which he admitted later. In hindmanagement and are good striksight, it was natural - first time in India, close to a maiden win and a lot of expectations. resurgence. He was tied fifth, he

He was expected to win, but a 10-year-long slump. it was now a matter of what that margin would be. He gave away a bunch of shots, a double bogey and three other bogeys. The 14th was his major problem - he dropped shots on it each of the first three days and it was a double on the final day. The cushion of four he began held him in good stead.

This is his first win on the DP World Tour after four in Japan, one of them being as an amateur. And to imagine he is just 23. I am very excited to see how far he can go. He could be

ama, though there are a lot of other young Japanese stars.

work. Both showed good course

A word for my friend Matteo

Manassero, who continues his

has already won once and he

could well be eveing one of the

Top-10 spots on the Race to

Dubai, which will catapult him

onto the PGA Tour. That will be

a great reward for Matteo, who

ers of the ball.

The local boys Veer Ahlawat

Yet it seemed uncharacteristic, as he had shown himself to be very calm and composed through the week. However, beginning with 65-65 and then holding a four-shot lead after 54 holes, is a pressure of a different kind.

the successor to Hideki Matsuy-



India's biggest, golf's best!

Bopanna-Ebden duo wins Miami Open title

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

opening set. ohan Bopanna and Mat-

Latirring mental heft in their Miami Open, Masters 1000 triumph late on Saturday. The Indo-Aussie combine, not only reeled off the last six points of the match, com-

ing from behind to win the super tie-breaker against the Croat-American combine of Ivan Dodig and Austin Krajicek, but also did well to put doubles rankings.

behind them the slip in the

Bopanna, 44, and Ebden, thew Ebden displayed 36, had three set points on serve at 6-5 in the opening set. The duo then double-faulted on set point in the first set tiebreak to give their opponents

the early advantage. After an hour and 43 minutes, Bopanna and Ebden rallied for a sparkling 6-7 (3), 6-3, 10-6 win that moved them to joint No. 1 in the individual

COLLINS TOPS RYBAKINA TO CLAIM MIAMI CROWN IN FAREWELL SEASON

Miami: American Danielle Collins overcame fourth seed Elena Rybakina to win the final of the Miami Open 7-5 6-3 on Saturday and claim the title on home

soil in her farewell season. Collins won nearly 75% of her first-serve points while claiming three of her seven break points on the way to victory in just over two hours after a stunning second set that left the crowd, including former Miami champion Andre Agassi breathless. "This is my first WTA 1000 (title) and I worked so hard, it has taken me a bit longer than a lot of the other players," said 30-year-old Collins of her triumph. "This whole week has been tough - I have played against some of the best players in the world, including being out here and sharing the court with Elena in the final," Collins said. "Thank you fans. I've played a lot of tennis and in a few finals, but nothing compares close to this." AGENCIES

Mirabai to return to action after 6-month injury layoff Phuket: Tokyo Olympics silver

Bhullar T-58; Rashid Khan T-65.

medallist lifter Mirabai Chanu will return to competitive action after a six-month injury layoff when she participates at the IWF World Cup to confirm her Paris Games berth here on Monday. The World Cup is not only the final Olympic qualifying event but also a mandatory qualifier for the Paris Games.

Chanu, who has been recuperating from hip tendonitis she suffered during the Asian Games in September last year, has all but qualified for the Paris Olympics. An appearance at the World Cup on Monday will be enough



sage to Paris as the former world champion is ranked second in the women's 49kg Olympic Qualification Ranking (OQR) behind China's Jian Hui Hua.

Under the 2024 Olympics 2023 Worlds and Grand Prix II, the 90kg-mark since 2020. Pti

qualification rules, the 2023 World Championships and the 2024 World Cup are compulsory events. Apart from these two tournaments, a lifter must participate in at least three of the following events — the 2022 World Championships, the 2023 Continental Championships, the 2023 Grand Prix 1, the 2023 Grand Prix II and the 2024 Continental Championships.

Chanu has fulfilled the criteria. She competed at the 2022 World Championship and the 2023 Asian Championships, finishing second and sixth. At the

she did not heave the barbell due to her injury but completed all the necessary formalities to remain eligible for the Paris Games. At the end of the World Cup,

the top 10 lifters, who have met the criteria, will qualify for Paris in their weight category. The best three performances

at the qualifying events will be taken into account for final assessment and Chanu's came at the 2022 Worlds where she lifted a total of 200kg (87kg+113kg).

Chanu, who struggles with a back issue that affects her snatch, has been trying to breach