



THE TIMES OF INDIA

CELEBRATING RAM NAVAMI

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Grandmaster D Gukesh holds on to joint top spot with Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi after they play out an easy draw in 10th round of the Candidates chess tournament. Pragg is joint second with two Americans – Caruana & Nakamura, P 20

US treasury secy Janet Yellen warns of further sanctions on Iran following its attack on Israel over the weekend, saying she expects Washington will take added action 'in the coming days', INSIDE JACKET

More potential jurors were dismissed Tuesday from Trump's hush money case as lawyers worked for a second day to find a panel of New Yorkers to decide whether the Republican will become first ex-prez convicted of a crime, INSIDE JACKET

Royal Challengers Bengaluru all-rounder Glenn Maxwell decides to take an indefinite 'mental and physical' break from IPL, blaming his wretched batting form for the decision, P 21

Step-aunt gets 20 years' jail in Pocso case

A Dehradun Pocso court sentenced a woman, 30, to 20-year rigorous imprisonment Tuesday after finding her guilty of sexually assaulting her step-nephew, 16, for several months in 2022. After she gave birth to a child, a lab test confirmed the boy as the newborn's biological father. **P14**

5 students drown as boat sinks in Jhelum

Six people, five of them children headed to school, drowned when a boat carrying 15 people capsized in Jhelum in Srinagar on Tuesday morning. Six people were rescued. NDRE, SDRF, police and local residents were looking for three missing students when reports last came in. **P9**

Student dies as SUV falls off Ggn away

A college student died and two of his friends were injured when the SUV in which they were travelling crashed into a divider on a flyover on Gurgaon expressway in Jharsa, flipped a couple of times and fell 20ft below. The student's blood samples are being tested to ascertain if he was drunk. **P6**

'Covid-hit dists put away more in gold'

People in districts most affected by Covid-19 invested more in gold than others, a study in the International Review of Economics & Finance found. The share of gold in household savings portfolios in Covid-vulnerable districts is 6.9 percentage points higher than in other districts. **P17**

3 'sr commanders' among 29 Maoists killed in Bastar

MHA Provided Grid Location For Operation

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Raipur: Security forces gunned down at least 29 Maoists in an encounter in Bastar's Kanker district, close to Maharashtra border, on Tuesday. This is the highest casualty

► Centre determined to end Red menace: Shah, P 20

ty Maoists have suffered in a single operation in Chhattisgarh and the second-highest across the country. The dead include "senior commanders" Shankar Rao, Lalita and Vinod Gawde who carried a combined bounty of Rs 24 lakh. The Union home ministry provided the forces with the

HIGHEST NAXAL CASUALTIES IN SINGLE BASTAR OP



- Cops get input about Maoists camping in Binagunda since April 5
- 200 BSF & DRG personnel set out on Monday evening. Encounter begins next noon near Maha border
- Bodies of 29 Maoists found. 3 jawans injured in gunbattle airlifted, out of danger
- Security forces seize 3 LMGs, 7 AK-47s, Insas and SLR rifles, several .303 rifles and explosives
- 72 Maoists killed since BJP govt came to office in C'garh last Dec

Deadliest Days For Ultras

- 34 Naxals neutralised in op in Gadchiroli on April 22, 2018
- 28 killed in Malkangiri near AP border on Oct 24, 2016
- On Nov 13, '21, 26 Maoists, including CPI(Maoist) central committee member Milind Telumbde, killed in Gadchiroli
- 13 ultras killed in C'garh's Bijapur on April 2, 2024. 26 neutralised in 2 ops in Malkangiri & J'khand in 2013

exact grid location of a division of Maoists who had been camping in Binagunda area since April 5, officials said.

A joint force comprising 200 BSF and District Reserve Guard personnel started moving in from Monday evening. The encounter broke out around Tuesday noon on the pe-

riphery of Abujmadh in Binagunda and Koronar forests, south of Chotebethiya, Kanker SP Kalyan Elesela said. This area is about 15 km from Chotebethiya police station, close to Maharashtra border.

Following fierce fighting, the forces recovered three LMGs, seven AK-47s, Insas

and SLR rifles, several .303 rifles and explosives.

SP Elesela told TOI bodies of 29 Maoists were found and that security personnel were still scanning the site. Three jawans were injured and airlifted. All of them are stable.

► 3 jawans injured, P 14

Modi counters oppn: 'I'm indebted to Constitution, it's article of faith for us'

Abhay Singh & Alok Kumar | TNN

Patna/Gaya: In a strong affirmation of the Constitution's primacy amid claims by the opposition that BJP intends to "scrap" it if voted back to office, PM Modi said Tuesday that he was indebted to "Babasaheb Ambedkar's samvidhan" for preserving the country's diversity, facilitating equitable economic growth and enabling someone like him to "rise from humble origins to become PM".

"The Constitution has served its purpose, keeping the country one and united. For us, it is sacred, and a repository of

"I'm indebted to Babasaheb Ambedkar's Constitution which helped me reach where I am... Our opponents... tried to tamper with the Constitution during Emergency. Those who want to confine governance to a family will always treat the Constitution with disdain

— PM Modi

our aasha (faith)," Modi said in Gaya, the first of his campaign stops for the day in Bihar.

► 'Our rivals tried to...' P 15

DANCE OF DEMOCRACY

- BJP urges EC to stop Cong's 'Ghar Ghar Guarantee' outreach, says it amounts to bribery | P 10
- Congress contests fewer than ever, hopes less is more | P 16
- Vizag court sentences YSRC MLC and candidate Thota Trimurthulu to 18 months in jail for tansuring Dalits in 1996 | P 10
- 11 polling stations mark 1st vote in 77 yrs in Maoist 'liberated' corridor | P 15
- EC bars Surjewala from campaign for 48 hours over his remarks; warns Tharoor on cash-for-vote allegations | P 10

AAP names Sunita Gujarat star campaigner

Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday named Sunita Kejriwal, wife of Delhi CM Kejriwal, as a star campaigner in the LS polls in Gujarat, her name coming next only to the CM's in a list of 40 released by the party for the state, reports Ambika Pandit. AAP is fighting from two seats as part of INDIA bloc. The campaign would be a first for Sunita, who took her first political stage at the INDIA bloc rally in Delhi on March 31. **P10**



DAYS BEFORE POLLS, KEY QUESTIONS ON ELECTIONS COME UP

We know flaws of ballot papers, SC tells EVM critics

New Delhi: "We are in our 60s. We all know what happened when there were ballot papers, you may have forgotten but we have not. As far as ballot box or ballot paper is concerned, we all know its drawbacks," a Supreme Court bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta said Tuesday as it responded to pleas for discarding electronic voting machines (EVMs).

The petitioners have demanded 100% verification of EVM votes with VVPAT (voter-verifiable paper audit trail) slips just days before the first phase of Lok Sabha polls, reports Amit Anand Choudhary.

As advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for one of the petitioners, Association for Democratic Reforms, contended that many European countries had returned to paper ballots, Justices Khanna and Datta said a comparison could not be done with nations with tiny populations. The court said holding elections in a country like India with such a large population was a humongous task. "We have to repose faith in the system. Let's not bring it down," the bench said.

► 'Back EVM-tampering claims', P 15

Won't get into action by central agencies, says EC

New Delhi: Making public its report card on enforcement of the model code of conduct in the first month of polls, Election Commission on Tuesday said it had decided against acting on opposition parties' pleas for stopping the alleged "misuse" of central agencies like CBI, ED and NIA to target their leadership, as it did not want to interfere with the legal judicial process, reports Bharti Jain.

► X withholds political posts after poll panel's takedown orders, P 9

"Commission was guided by constitutional wisdom when presented with live situations involving political persons which have been under active consideration and orders of courts based on criminal investigations. While the commission remained unwaveringly committed to protection of level playing field and campaign entitlement of political parties and candidates, it has not found it correct to take any step that could overlap or overrun the legal judicial process," EC said in its MCC report card, a first-of-its-kind exercise "for the larger sake of promised transparency".

► Poll code report card, P 15

Ramdev, aide offer apology to SC with folded hands

New Delhi: Pushed to the wall by the Supreme Court for violating its order, Baba Ramdev and his disciple Bal Krishna on Tuesday admitted to giving misleading advertisements about Patanjali products and sought to apologise to the court with folded hands, reports Amit Anand Choudhary. They also offered to issue a public apology.

At the outset of the hearing, a bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Ahsanuddin Amanullah said it wanted to talk to them in person and asked them to come to the front. Appreciating Ramdev for his contribution in the fi-

WON'T REPEAT ERROR

- Baba Ramdev tells SC he doesn't have an understanding of law and the mistake will not be repeated
- While lauding Ramdev for his contribution to yoga, court says there is a procedure to get his products recognised by a competent authority and it doesn't give him licence to criticise modern medicine

eld of yoga, the court quizzed him on why he violated laws and its orders.

► 'Can't accept...', P 15

Man colludes with son to kill daughter, cousin

A fruit vendor from Delhi's Bhajanpura, aided by his son, allegedly killed his daughter and his cousin Tuesday. Both were arrested and told cops that Shaina, the 22-year-old daughter, had an affair with her uncle, Danish (35), and they didn't end their "relationship" despite being warned. On Tuesday, the father and son again talked to the duo following which they slit Danish's throat with a large fruit knife. They then tied Shaina's hand and feet and slit her throat. The killers showed no remorse, cops said. **P3**

It took this cancer warrior 5 months to trust us.

This is a true story. Only the customer's name and picture have been changed to protect her privacy.

Mrs Asem lived in a remote area in Manipur, and had never bought cancer meds online. Hopeful yet doubtful, she and her daughter would keep calling our helpline to ask if the meds were genuine. Had they been stored properly? Would they come on time in spite of civic unrest in their state?

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MCD ropes in Aga Khan Trust for conservation of printing press building | 6

35.8° MAXIMUM
23.5° MINIMUM
FORECAST: Partly cloudy sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 35°C and 22°C
SUNSET 6:48PM (WED) MOONSET 2:58PM (THU)
SUNRISE 5:53AM (THU) MOONRISE 1:05AM (WED)

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AQI IN DELHI ON TUESDAY (POOR CATEGORY)

Plans in place to boost city's water output, but action just trickles in | 3



Rage, Road, Rounds: Delhi Turns Trigger-Happy

Easy Availability Of Weapons, Rise In Extortion Bids Raise Law & Order Questions

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New Delhi: Whether it be the shooting near Red Fort on Monday or the Tuesday mayhem on the Meet Nagar flyover, guns are being frequently used on the streets in the capital. Last week, a man was shot in the head in the middle of the road in Seelampur for refusing an extortionist. Last month, a thief in south Delhi went on the rampage, shooting people who tried to halt his shenanigans. In Jan, a man was shot at after his vehicle collided with a car in Janakpuri.

Proudly brandishing weapons, conducting brazen hold-ups and robberies and engaging in gunfire in daylight hours, they highlighted the rising phenomena of gun incidents in the city. Easy availability of weapons has resulted in repeated incidents of this sort. "This trend is also evident in the recent snatchings, burglaries, house thefts, kidnappings, extortion bids and even celebratory firing, raising serious questions about the law-and-order situation."

"The illegal gun trade, particularly rampant in outer Delhi, thrives because of convenient connectivity via bus routes," remarked a police officer. "Criminals from neighbouring states like Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Haryana readily supply firearms to their counterparts in Delhi. These illicit arms find

Recent incidents

2024
April 15 | A 36-year-old cab driver lost his life while a 15-year-old beggar was shot at in an alleged road rage case near the Red Fort
April 13 | A 35-year-old man was fatally shot in the head from a close range in Seelampur area after he allegedly refused to pay protection money
March 29 | A 32-year-old restaurant owner died after two assailants fired at him in Usmanpur



over a personal feud
March 26 | A 22-year-old was fatally shot thrice and killed following an argument over a woman in Shastri Park
Jan 27 | A 25-year-old man was attacked by four drunk men with a knife and shot at in

Shastri Park after a brawl
Jan 18 | A 22-year-old man was allegedly shot in the hip by two men after his car accidentally brushed against their bike in Janakpuri
2023
Nov 15 | A 27-year-old man was shot dead by unidentified men while he was driving his car with three coworkers in it at Ghazipur
Nov 12 | Two women were injured after shots were fired at them in northwest Delhi's Khera Khurd village over a property dispute

Where guns are coming from
Madhya Pradesh | Dhar, Khargone, Sendhwa and Burhanpur
Bihar | Khagaria, Munger
Uttar Pradesh | Meerut, Bulandshahr, Rampur, Etah, Aligarh and Mainpuri

New trends in weapon trade
► Social media used in luring targets, advertising to sell weapons
► Guns are even home delivered, ordered accepted on Whatsapp
► Online payments accepted by gunrunners

Average price range
Automatic (7.65/ 9mm)
Price | ₹15,000-20,000
Selling Price | ₹35,000 to ₹50,000
Country-made pistols
Price | ₹5000- 7000 | Selling Price | ₹35,000 to 50,000

their way into the city through various means."

From changing buses several times when delivering arms consignments, the weapons suppliers have been keeping the police on their toes. The gun runners have different modus operandi when couriering these weapons, transporting them either in the cavities in cars, scooters and cars or in milk containers and bags,

among the various innovative measures they adopt. These days they are also using social networking applications to lure customers and contact each other and evade the cops.

On March 29, Delhi Police busted a syndicate and its makeshift gun factory in the northeast Delhi, which manufactures ready-to-use and half-made weapons and allegedly fabricating the weapon of

choice of customers—changing the design as per the buyers' requirements and delivering it to their doorsteps.

Simultaneously, the cops highlight a concerning trend: the allure of weapon culture to young men and boys, who view it as glamorous, a fast track to financial gains and even a means to social media recognition. "Videos showcasing flashy cars, imposing fi-

rearms, threats accompanied by catchy music have gained significant traction, further fuelling the demand for such content," an officer said.

The officer explained that traffickers had adapted to the current situation to evade police detection. "Previously, their communication through regular calls made them traceable. However, they've now shifted to internet calls to ensure heightened secrecy when connecting with consumers or dealers," the officer said.

On top of this, dealers have also adopted cautious measures, refraining from carrying phones while retrieving weapons from regions with loose border controls. "They opt for night travel, swiftly returning the following day to avoid suspicion and detection," the officer elaborated.

The cops said that it cost the illegal weapons manufacturers Rs 1,500 to prepare a single-shot pistol, which is then sold in the market for about Rs 10,000. The prices go up with customisations and the quality of the arms.

Kin mourn death of 'blemishless' cop

Ashresh.Marupaka @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: At Guru Teg Bahadur Hospital on Tuesday, the family of assistant sub-inspector Dinesh Sharma was distraught and inconsolable. The police officer's son was weeping and the scene at the mortuary was heart wrenching. Sharma, who joined Delhi Police in 1990, was shot dead by a man who shot another man and then turned the gun on himself on the Meet Nagar flyover near Nand Nagri.



Sharma was described by relatives and neighbours as a kind and amiable person. "We have been living together for nearly 12 years. He never fought with us or with any other person. And we respected him because he always spoke the truth," said another grieving neighbour.

A relative said, "I saw Dinesh grow up in front of my eyes. He got his joining letter for Delhi Police before me. Nobody can question his commitment to work. He was a straight and honest man."

The family of the deceased cop has been left to fend for itself. Sharma's sons are still young and are in their early 20s. There is nobody to take care of the family now." Police assured the family that they would ensure swift justice to them.

The second victim of the shooting, Amit Kumar, a two-wheeler taxi driver, remains in critical condition in hospital. His relative, Ashwini, said he was to undergo surgery. Kumar worked as a lift mechanic in Gurgaon and did a part-time shift as a bike cabbie.

Killer 'a polite man who kept to himself'



THE SPOT WHERE ALL HELL BROKE LOOSE

Ashresh.Marupaka @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Mukesh, the man who opened fire at a police officer and a motorcycle cabbie before turning the gun on himself at Meet Nagar on Tuesday, mostly kept to himself. After his death, people who knew him reported that he was struggling with family problems.

The news of Mukesh killing a policeman spread like wildfire in the locality and when TOI reached the spot, it saw small groups everywhere discussing the unimaginable tragedy. The shooter's house was locked and his wife was at the police station, summoned there for questioning.

Prashant, a local resident, said, "Mukesh was a gentle person though reserved. He never fought with anyone or caused any problems in the area. Yes, he had some problems in his family, but who doesn't?" Another local said, "We virtually grew up together and I only have good things to tell about Mukesh. He had a permanent govt job with the

Municipal Corporation of Delhi. It is shocking that something like this could happen to him."

Mukesh's immediate neighbour in a Nand Nagri jhuggi said, "He was a very polite man and always greeted us whenever we met. He never indulged in unnecessary conversation."

According to the locals, Mukesh got married to a woman over 15 years ago. The couple also had a daughter, who is currently 12 years old. Mukesh's life took a drastic turn when he met another woman and allegedly started living with her. According to a neighbour, this 'second marriage' took a heavy financial toll on the man.

This could be one of the reasons why, the neighbour suggested, Mukesh possibly had monetary problems with a police officer. "There seems to have been an issue over money between Mukesh and a policeman, and from what I heard, they had a serious argument once," he claimed.

At this point in the investigations, Mukesh doesn't appear to have had a criminal record, said police.

With getaway route blocked, assailant puts pistol to his right temple, presses trigger

► Continued from P1

They had barely reached the top of the flyover when an argument broke out.

Mukesh got down from the bike, pulled out a gun and shot Dinesh twice. He was hit in the chest. Police sources said that they suspect he had planned the killing in advance and procured the weapon, a 7.65mm country-made pistol, from UP.

Even as the cop fell face down on the road, a stray bullet hit a passerby, Amit Kumar, 30, who was driving a bike taxi. The bullet got lodged in his waist and he lost control of his scooter and fell on the flyover a short distance away.

Mukesh, in a bid to escape, tried to commandeer a passing autorickshaw. He allegedly fired at the driver, Mehmood, who ducked and jumped out of the vehicle.

At the end of the flyover, a crowd had gathered around Amit, who was sitting on the road, wincing in pain. Even as the auto veered into the crowd, Mukesh realised that his getaway route was blocked. He put the pistol to his right temple and pressed the trigger.

Mukesh's body was in the sitting posture with his cap intact on his head. His shirt was soaked in blood



ACCUSED | Mukesh (44) from Nand Nagri; worked with MCD
DECEASED | ASI Dinesh Sharma, posted with special branch; joined the force in 1990 and had a blemishless career; he was a native of Bulandshahr, UP
INJURED/ESCAPED | Scooterist Amit Kumar (30) Auto driver Mehmood
MOTIVE | ₹5 lakh loan

PCR TIME | 11.42AM | Mukesh was riding pillion on the policeman's bike; he stopped the bike and shot several rounds at the cop
► Scooterist—later identified as Amit—comes in line of fire, bullet hits his waist

► Mukesh then forcibly gets into an autorickshaw, opens fire. The auto driver, Mehmood, ducks and jumps out
► Mukesh then shoots himself in the head while seated in the rear seat, dies on the spot

GOVERNMENT OF NATIONAL CAPITAL TERRITORY OF DELHI
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION DEPARTMENT
(CO-ORDINATION BRANCH)
DELHI SECRETARIAT, IP ESTATE, NEW DELHI-110002

PUBLIC NOTICE

It is notified for information of the General Public that as per the provisions of Section 135B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, every person employed in any business, trade, industrial undertaking or any other establishment in National Capital Territory Delhi and entitled to vote at an election to the Parliamentary Constituencies of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan, as detailed below, shall be granted a holiday, on the day of poll, so that he/she can cast his/her vote in the election.

S No.	Phase	Date of Poll	Parliamentary Constituencies
UTTAR PRADESH			
1	First	19 April, 2024 (Friday)	Saharanpur, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Meerut, Moradabad, Rampur, Pilibhit and Bareilly.
RAJASTHAN			
2	First	19 April, 2024 (Friday)	Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Jhunjhunu, Sikar, Jaipur Rural, Jaipur, Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli-Dholpur, Dausa, Nagaur.

No deduction or abatement of the wages shall be made on account of above holiday and if any person is employed on the basis that he/she would not ordinarily receive wages for such a day, he/she nonetheless be paid wages he/she would have drawn had not a holiday been granted to him/her on that day.

The daily wage/casual workers are also entitled for a holiday and wages on poll day as provided in section 135 B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. However, this section shall not apply to any elector whose absence may cause danger or substantial loss in respect of the employment in which he is engaged. Any contravention of the above provisions is punishable as per the provisions of Section 135B (3) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951.

Sd/-
(PRADEEP TAYAL)
DY. SECRETARY (GAD/CN)

Wah Jamia! 31 aspirants from academy clear UPSC

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Youngsters from marginalised communities can aspire to become civil servants at Jamia Millia Islamiya's Residential Coaching Academy (RCA) in southeast Delhi. On Tuesday, the coaching academy celebrated the success of 31 of its students in one of the toughest exams in the world—the UPSC Civil Services Exam—with the 2023 result showing an increase of eight over the previous year. Since its inception in 2010, RCA has provided free coaching to students from the SC, ST and minority communities and women.

Of the 71 RCA students who appeared for the UPSC interview, Tuesday's list showed 31 of them had made the final cut, 11 of them women. Nausheen, who secured a high all-India rank of ninth, had the best performance among them. The elated 24-year-old, who hails from UP's Gorakhpur and is a graduate of DU's Khalsa College, said,

"I am overjoyed that in my fourth attempt I cleared the exams. My parents always encouraged me to dream big. I owe a lot to them." Her father is in govt service and her mother, a homemaker.

After her interest in the civil services was spurred at DU, it was at RCA that her aspiration found a firm foundation. "Despite my own doubts, I relied on the free coaching at RCA. Amid rigorous study sessions, the mentoring of seniors at the academy also proved immensely helpful," said Nausheen, who read science fiction as a stress buster.

Jharkhand native Prerna Singh, 28, ranked 271st, attended Delhi Public School and earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Miranda House. She then pursued a postgraduate degree in social work at Jamia. Previously employed as an HR professional at Vedanta, she returned to Ranchi to undertake online coaching. She attempted the UPSC exams three times before finally succeeding in



Of the 71 RCA students who appeared for the UPSC interview, 31 made the final cut. Nausheen (on the right) secured an AIR of ninth

the prelims in the fourth try. She then prepared for the mains and interview at RCA. Singh shared, "The preparation at RCA was unparalleled. Meeting fellow aspirants, access to top-notch facilities and receiving unwavering support of the staff fostered a peer-group learning environment that significantly helped me."

In her childhood, Singh's father, a govt veterinary doctor in Jharkhand, inspired her with tales of civil service. After his premature death, his words lingered in her consciousness. She said resilience was important in cracking the civil services exams. "I was consistent, de-



NAUSHEEN SAYS

I am overjoyed that in my fourth attempt I cleared the exams. My parents always encouraged me to dream big. I owe a lot to them

dicating 7-8 hours daily to studies. I managed stress through meditation and walks and found solace in old Bollywood songs."

Abid Haleem, Jamia professor in charge of RCA, told TOI, "We have an all-India test for admission followed by interviews in 10 cities. We give preference to students

from weaker sections of society and prioritise those who are serious and driven. It is a rigorous process at RCA with classes and regular test series. Senior students mentor the newcomers, and psychologists and counsellors are also available. Our library operates 24/7, and there are seminar rooms where students, especially girls, can study whenever they want."

Haleem said coaching lasted for 16 months. RGC was initially a UGC initiative, but it stopped funding in 2018-2020. "Even now, we don't accept funds from our alumni," said Haleem. "The students only pay for food and accommodation. Preparing for the UPSC exam is not like pursuing a degree and unlike other coaching centres, we provide a comprehensive learning ecosystem."

He asked those who hadn't cleared the civil service exams not to be discouraged. "My advice to them is not to be disheartened and to have a Plan B," said the professor.

Delhi's Water Woes Have Worsened: LG

Writes Open Letter To CM, Slams Atishi Too

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Lieutenant governor VK Saxena on Tuesday wrote an open letter to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, stating that the water woes in the capital, especially in areas where the poor lived, had "exacerbated" over the years.

In his strongly worded letter, Saxena said instead of fixing the "iniquitous water supply", Kejriwal and his ministers had created a "chimera" of free water and had "mastered the deception of people" into an art form.

The letter came days after water minister Atishi wrote to the LG, demanding the suspension of Delhi Jal Board's (DJB) chief executive officer over the killing of a woman in a fight with a neighbour over filling water from a common tap in east Delhi's Farsh Bazar last week.

Atishi had urged Saxena to start an independent inquiry into the "acts of omission and commission" of the chief secretary and officials of DJB, finance and urban development departments.

Calling her communication "insensitive," LG said the minister had chosen the unfortunate death of a woman for her "narrow and partisan political goals". He said: "Her note indeed is a prima facie admission of guilt, inaction and inefficiency over the past almost 10 years." Saxena asserted that many such incidents over water scarcity had happened in the past, primarily due to the failure of govt, and added he was enclosing a snapshot of some news clippings, starting from 2017, for illustration.

"Your minister's hasty missive to me is an admission of these failures and defaults of performance of your govt and amounts to facile attempts at shrugging responsibility off a complex problem," he added.

Kejriwal is in Tihar Jail in a money laundering case related to the now-scrapped excise policy. The LG said: "Solitude sometimes opens a window into the realm of truth."

Saxena also mentioned figures related to production of water, leakage and money spent on capital projects mentioned in the Economic Survey 2023-24. He



SAXENA SAYS

You (Arvind Kejriwal) had repeatedly in your public pronouncements promised to transform Delhi into Singapore. It would be educative to know that in Singapore, 'unaccounted for water' is just 5%

said water treatment capacity grew marginally from 906 MGD to 946 MGD in the last decade, a 4.4% increase, but Delhi's population grew by 15%.

Saxena said the "unaccounted for water" saw a sharp increase from 45% in 2015 to 58% in 2022-23. "By implication, in 2015, of the 906 MGD of water treated, only 498 MGD was accounted for. In 2022-23, of the 946 MGD treated, barely 397 MGD is accounted for. Accordingly, over the last decade, net water availability has decreased by over 100 MGD due to the criminal neglect by your govt," Saxena added.

"You had repeatedly... promised to transform Delhi into Singapore. It would be educative to know that in Singapore, 'unaccounted for water' is just 5%," the LG said.

Saxena also said that of 2.5 crore people in the city, more than 2 crore were deprived of drinking water by varying degrees. "It simply points to the fact that there has been no effort whatsoever during the last ten years for plugging the leaks, and we seem to be spending thousands of crores in pumping water into a leaking bucket," he said.

Atishi: Crisis artificially created, directions by CM, ministers ignored

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Hours after lieutenant governor VK Saxena wrote an open letter to chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on the "water woes" of Delhi, water minister Atishi said the "unfortunate missive" had come as a "beratement for elected govt" after she had urged Saxena to suspend an official who "repeatedly refused and failed" in his duties, and which had led to the current crisis.

Atishi said ministers had requested the LG for his intervention in matters where elementary governance functions had been brought to a "standstill" due to "acts of omissions of the officers".

"In this long period, you have maintained stoic silence and complete apathy towards the water-related woes.... But when the actual culprit of this criminal negligence and misfeasance was brought before you, that was when you decided to speak in his defence, which the whole of Delhi knows, is legally and morally indefensible," she said.

The minister said the water crisis had been created "artificially" and the directives issued by CM and ministers to augment supply were ignored by the official.

To improve supply, Atishi said Kejriwal had repeatedly issued directives to DJB, including completion of tubewell work, utilisation of treated wastewater, installation of RO plants, resolution of complaints and installation of flow meters with specific deadlines. "All these initiatives and actions were brought to a standstill through what seems to be a conspiracy that stopped the release of funds to DJB. It would be remiss of me to

not remind you of the extremely convoluted game of red tape that was played last financial year to starve DJB of funds," Atishi said.

The minister claimed that despite passing a budget of Rs 6,339 crore for Delhi Jal Board for 2023-24, the finance department had released only Rs 3,433 crore, despite sending utilisation certificates. She said the finance department kept returning DJB's proposals for release of funds, raising objections on some pretext and citing unnecessary requirements.

"I wrote a detailed note to you on 21.11.2023, exhaustively laying down the entire report of acts and omissions of certain officials who had actively prevented DJB from receiving any funds, purportedly to prevent any water infrastructure-related projects from being carried out... but there was no action taken by your good self."

Atishi alleged that the DJB CEO did not follow her directions to augment supply. She accused the chief secretary of not sending any action-taken reports to improve supply. Atishi said the officials also cited the model code of conduct for not providing her colony-wise details. "It is easy for any person to see how the MCC was weaponised to deprive citizens of their basic and fundamental rights," she said.

The minister said there was a disconnect between responsibility and authority in the current set-up. "... When I requested you to take action against the erring officers, the response we received was your open letter to the chief minister, but no action," Atishi said, adding that "your letter merely plays to the gallery - it simply provides fodder to political canards, and achieves no tangible result."

Delhi govt had no concrete plans for summer: BJP

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said Delhi govt was responsible for the water shortage as they had no concrete plans for summer.

"They received funds, but where did that go? No one is ready to answer. Delhi needs a full-time water minister. Here, they have ministers who only give statements," Sachdeva said. "No one knows about the summer action plan of Delhi. They (Delhi govt) are not serious about Delhi's people. They just want to loot them," he said.

He also alleged that Kejriwal looted Delhi in the name of bringing an education and health revolution. "Delhi's education model is fake and the health model is also immersed in corruption. Truth will also come out soon," he said.

Hitting back, AAP said in a statement that BJP was again trying to divert the public's attention from the electoral bonds

He said AAP govt was only doing gimmicks to gain sympathy but people had seen the corrupt face of AAP. "People of Delhi have lost sympathy for CM Arvind Kejriwal and howsoever he may try to pretend, people very well know that Delhi's Tihar Jail is under his govt and he is neither facing any harassment nor any torture," he said. "The jail authorities are bound by the Delhi prison manual and the direction of the court concerned are allowing all facilities to the jailed chief minister Arvind Kejriwal," he added.

Hitting back, AAP said the only role BJP plays in Delhi is spreading blatant lies. "The BJP is again trying to divert the public's attention from the electoral bonds," AAP said in a statement. "The public can see through this facade and has lost complete faith in the regressive politics of BJP," the party said.

"We invite the Delhi BJP president to visit our schools and attend a happiness class. It may help him in doing some positive politics for the betterment of the citizens of Delhi," he said.

Man colludes with son to kill daughter, cousin for 'honour'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In a suspected case of honour killing, a 46-year-old man, along with his son, allegedly killed his daughter and cousin at their rented accommodation in northeast Delhi's Bhajanpura on Tuesday. After the murders, one of the killers called police and both accused were arrested.

The victims were identified as Danish, a 35-year-old fruit vendor, and 22-year-old Shaina. Both had deep incised wounds on their necks.

Shahid, also a fruit vendor, has eight children and Shaina was the second eldest. His son, Kudush, a Class XII student, helps him in the business. The family has been living in Bhajanpura's North Gonda since last September.

Kudush called the cops around 4.40pm and allegedly confessed over the phone. "He told us that he had killed his sister and uncle and he wanted to surrender," police said. A team reached the spot, the second floor of their house, and found the father-son duo.

The victims were already dead; their throats were slit with a large fruit-cutting knife. "Shaina's hands and feet were tied with a chunni and

lungi, indicating that she may have been restrained before being killed," police said.

The sequence of events, according to a senior officer, was that they first killed Danish and then Shaina. Kudush made the call 10 minutes later. Other family members, including other children, were present at the time of the murders but fled due to fear.

The accused later claimed that they had found chats between Shaina and Danish, and had also caught Shaina talking to Danish on one occasion. "They told us that at the time of the incident, both were outside. The father called them as they wanted to talk," police said.

Both the father and son asked them to end their "relationship", but they didn't listen, another officer stated. "The duo then attacked Danish and slit his throat. They then attacked the woman," the officer said, adding that both showed no remorse.

The interrogation also revealed frequent arguments were happening in the house due to the "relationship". "The father and son had planned to talk to them for the last time on Tuesday and kill them if they don't listen," he added.

4 arrested for stabbing scrap dealer

New Delhi: Four members of a gang have been nabbed from Old Delhi railway station for allegedly stabbing a scrap dealer in the area after throwing chilli powder into his eyes.

Suspects Danish (23), Intezar (26), Sameer (24), and Zahid (22) were arrested in connection with April 9 incident, a police officer said. "The complainant stated he was accosted by four masked men on motorcycles who attempted to snatch his mobile phone. Subsequently, one assailant hurled chilli powder at him, while another attacked him with a sharp object," he added.

After identifying, the suspects were nabbed following raids on their hideouts, the officer said, adding they confessed to their involvement in the crimes to fund luxurious lifestyle.

The four would commute from UP to Delhi on their motorcycles every Monday to target traders, police added. TNN

Plans in place to boost city's water output, but action just trickles in

Siddhanta Mishra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In Sept last year, Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) recommended several measures to Delhi Jal Board (DJB) to improve the city's groundwater situation. Most of these are yet to be implemented.

The suggestions included identifying areas suitable for safe water extraction to increase Delhi's overall output. The body also identified 15 areas 'overexploited' due to domestic and commercial water extraction. While DJB decided to augment production based on CGWB's recommendations and its own study, se-

veral plans remain on paper. One plan involved setting up 1,000 reverse osmosis plants in JJ clusters, to be linked to water ATMs. However, only five facilities became operational in the past year. CM Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated a water ATM in Khajan Basti in July last year. Other locations included Kalkaji, Jharoda and Shakur Basti.

CGWB also suggested that DJB identify areas like Civil Lines, Defence Colony, Gandhi Nagar, Kalkaji, Najafgarh, Preet Vihar, Punjabi Bagh, Saraswati Vihar and Seelampur for further groundwater development to prevent waterlogging and develop them as freshwater aquifers. How-

ever, there hasn't been much progress in this regard.

The Palla floodplain project, initiated five years ago, aimed to collect excess floodwater from the Yamuna during the monsoon. A 26-acre pond for this and, according to govt, it recharged 740 million gallons of groundwater in FY 2022-23.

However, the plan to install an additional 117 tubewells on the floodplain was stalled due to permission issues for 50 tubewells. For the remaining tubewells, permission was received and boring completed, but no further progress has been made.

The suggestions included "adoption of artificial rechar-

ge measures" in the zone. To reduce dependency on groundwater, the body recommended that the use of treated water should be promoted. In parks and gardens, recharge trenches and shafts were proposed to be constructed. CGWB also recommended rooftop rainwater harvesting structures in 'overexploited' areas that have experienced a continuous decline in water levels.

Another project aimed to operationalise 250 tubewells at five water treatment plants — Sonia Vihar, Bhagirathi, Coronation Pillar, Wazirabad and Palla — to increase production. The plan was to install the tubewells in the excess ground space around the plants and extract water. However, a DJB official said the project has not progressed significantly.

Meanwhile, residents have raised concerns about hard water and flagged issues with supply. Terming the situation alarming, Parul Nagpal, who lives in Maya Enclave, said, "The water is smelly and almost poisonous. At times, there is sewage in it. We approached both DJB and politicians and even got a sample tested. The report showed the water doesn't meet the standards. Authorities need to pay attention to our problem on priority. So far, our efforts have been in vain."

When contacted, DJB did not respond to queries.

TACKLING THE CRISIS

DJB's plan to increase yield of water by around 380 MGD stuck

IN THE WORKS

250 tubewells
200 tubewells at UGRs*
1,000 RO plants in JJ clusters
Several mega RO plants



AREAS HAVING HIGH WATER TABLE

- Alipur
- Model Town
- Civil Lines
- Kalkaji
- Dwarka
- Preet Vihar
- Patel Nagar
- Najafgarh

OVER-EXPLOITED AREAS

- Vasant Vihar
- Saket
- Mehrauli
- Kapashera
- Chanakyapuri
- Rajouri Garden

Guest teachers seek monthly list for schools

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: All India Guest Teachers' Association has approached the director of education in Delhi over their plight due to a significant delay in issuing the monthly school allotment list by the department. The delay has left guest teachers unemployed and most of them are struggling to manage household expenses, it stated.

Union education ministry has a clear directive to release the list monthly to ensure schools are adequately staffed and guest teachers can secure their earnings. However, the most recent list is Delhi was issued in Feb.

The association has highlighted that "thousands of guest teachers of various subjects in government schools of Delhi are being relieved for a long time due to transfer/posting/PFC etc of regular teachers" and urged the director to release the list at the earliest.

Despite repeated attempts, TOI didn't get any response from department on the issue.

Notices to 3 more health officials for 'irregularities' in Covid-19 kits

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The directorate of vigilance of Delhi govt has served show cause notices to three more health officials for the alleged irregularities in procurement of gloves, masks, and rapid test kits worth around Rs 60 crore during Covid pandemic in 2021.

The vigilance department's notices were served to the officials who were part of some of the committees that were involved in floating tenders, shortlisting companies, awarding contracts, and procuring various consumables that were required by Delhi govt during the pandemic.

The department has alleged that the officials were involved in "managing tenders"

vigilance has alleged that a 'conspiracy' was hatched in the backdrop of Covid crisis and it was used as a reason and basis to 'swindle crores of rupees' from the public exchequer.

The directorate of vigilance has alleged that a "conspiracy" was hatched in the backdrop of Covid crisis and in favour of a particular family running different companies.

The notices to three officials were served a day after an OSD to incumbent health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj was also issued a similar show cause notice.

The directorate of vigilance has alleged that a "conspiracy" was hatched in the backdrop of Covid crisis and

it was used as a reason and basis to "swindle crores of rupees" from the public exchequer. "Health department officials have used the context of Covid for enriching these private companies and intentionally allowed cartelization among the companies," the notices read.

The vigilance department has asked the officials to present their defence within seven days failing which it will be presumed that they had nothing to say and the matter would be processed without any further notice as per extant rules.

AAP govt had on Monday claimed that a "consistent witch hunt" was launched against the officials working at the offices of the ministers.

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Day temperature on the rise but western disturbance may bring respite again

New Delhi: Two days of pleasant weather followed a warm and sunny day on Tuesday as the city witnessed a hot day with a rise in temperature. The capital recorded a maximum temperature of 35.8 degrees Celsius, a degree below normal, against 33.2 degrees Celsius a day earlier. IMD has forecast the city's maximum temperature to be around 37 degrees Celsius by Thursday, before another western disturbance begins to influence Delhi-NCR on Friday, possibly bringing light rain and winds up to 40 kmph. **TNN**

TIMES TRIBUTE
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नादन्ति सस्यं खलु वारिवाहः, परोपकाराय सतां विभूतयः॥



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Prayer Meeting
Brijmohan Munjal Vedic Kendra Auditorium,
Arya Samaj, Greater Kailash - I, New Delhi - 48
Date: 19th April 2024, Friday
Time: 3 PM onwards

Fondly Remembered By
Gupta Pariwar

Blame Game Continues Over Drain

DJB Tells NGT That MCD Was Responsible For Pollution In Kushak Nullah

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi Jal Board (DJB), in a submission to National Green Tribunal (NGT), has blamed Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) for the pollution in the Kushak-Barapulla Nullah, south Delhi's stormwater drain, a small portion of which touches some houses in Greater Kailash-1.

The 6.5-km drain flows through several south Delhi's neighbourhoods. The sewage makes the drain stink. On April 12, MCD blamed DJB of failing to treat the sewage that flows through the drain. DJB in its submission, dated April 15, hit back.

MCD in its submission had said that it has regularly

desilted the drain. But, the foul smell will stop once DJB is able to stop sewage from flowing into the drain, it said.

DJB, however, said MCD had failed to check the growth of unauthorised colonies that were adding sewage to the drain. It also said that MCD had covered the drain in large stretches, which was leading to a build-up of toxic gases and causing a foul smell.

Both DJB and MCD were responding to an NGT order issued last week in which the tribunal had sought an explanation from both, asking why interim costs should not be imposed against them for failing to perform their duties.

NGT had said that despite both bodies setting a timeline for trapping most drains dis-

MCD in its submission said that the foul smell would stop once DJB was able to stop sewage from flowing into the drain

charging sewage into the stormwater drain by March 31, it was still polluted.

MCD's submission said it was desilting all drains, including Kushak, in a phased manner using excavators, earthmovers and supersuckers. It said excavators were used about seven times last year to remove silt from the drain. Supersuckers, which extract sewage and silt through pipes, were used six times last year in portions where the drain was partial-

ly open, buckets were used to take out the silt, it said.

However, DJB has refuted such claims and said that MCD. "This drain originates from three hilly nullahs above Devli Bandh in Mehrauli... Capital of India, Delhi, has been experiencing one of the fastest urban expansions in the world. The increased urbanisation with a service economy, has drawn huge (number of) migrants to Delhi. Thus, over the years, a numbers of unauthorised colonies developed in the catchment area of Chirag Delhi Drain, subject matter of the present case, in Chhatarpur, Mehrauli around Saidulla-

jab, Devli, Khanpur, Sangam Vihar, Tigri, Dakshinpur Extn. etc., which Municipal

Corporation of Delhi could not control," DJB said.

It further cited three primary causes behind pollution in the drain.

"The discharge of sewage from unauthorised colonies in Chhatarpur, Mehrauli, around Saidulla, Devli, Khanpur, Sangam Vihar and Dakshinpur Extension into the stormwater drain, the unauthorised construction for which MCD could not control," DJB wrote.

The second reason was the improper desilting due to covering of the drain by MCD, it said. "MCD has constructed concrete chambers which are interconnected, therefore, cleaning or desilting has become difficult," DJB said.

'Crime drops 22% in 8 of 15 police districts in Q1'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: There has been a 22.3% decrease in criminal cases reported from eight of the 15 police districts in the first three months of 2024 compared to the corresponding period last year, according to Delhi Police data. The figures include both heinous and non-heinous cases.

While 35,074 cases were registered between Jan and March this year, 45,155 cases were reported in the same

period in 2023.

Delhi is divided into two zones for law and order management. Zone 1 includes eight districts — North-east, East, Shahdara, Rohini, North-west, Outer North, North and Central.

While the meeting for zone 1 was held on Saturday, the meeting for zone 2 for the remaining seven districts will be held this week.

According to the data, North-west district reported a 30.3% reduction in crime,

followed by East district with 29.9%. Shahdara, however, saw a slight increase of 2.24%.


Central district took the lead in resolving the cases, solving 57%. Shahdara followed closely with a 53% resolution rate, a significant jump from 30% last time. Other districts like East (32%, up from 18%), North-east (40%, up from 28%), Rohini (39%, up from 34%), Outer North (47%, up from 44%) and North (42%, up from 38%) showed substantial improvement in case-solving rates.

However, case resolution in North-west district, despite the overall decrease in crime, was down this year — from 42% to 35%.

The crime review meeting is usually held every fortnight but took place after a gap of four months this time due to events such as the farmers' agitation, according to sources. Besides preparedness for the coming elections, police brass also discussed the crime situation in the city, they added.

Police said they are emphasising on foot patrolling and using technology to monitor crime effectively. The approach helps maintain law and order by allowing for quick response and real-time surveillance, they added.

10th ANNIVERSARY
In loving memory



Lt. Gen. S.G. Mookerjee
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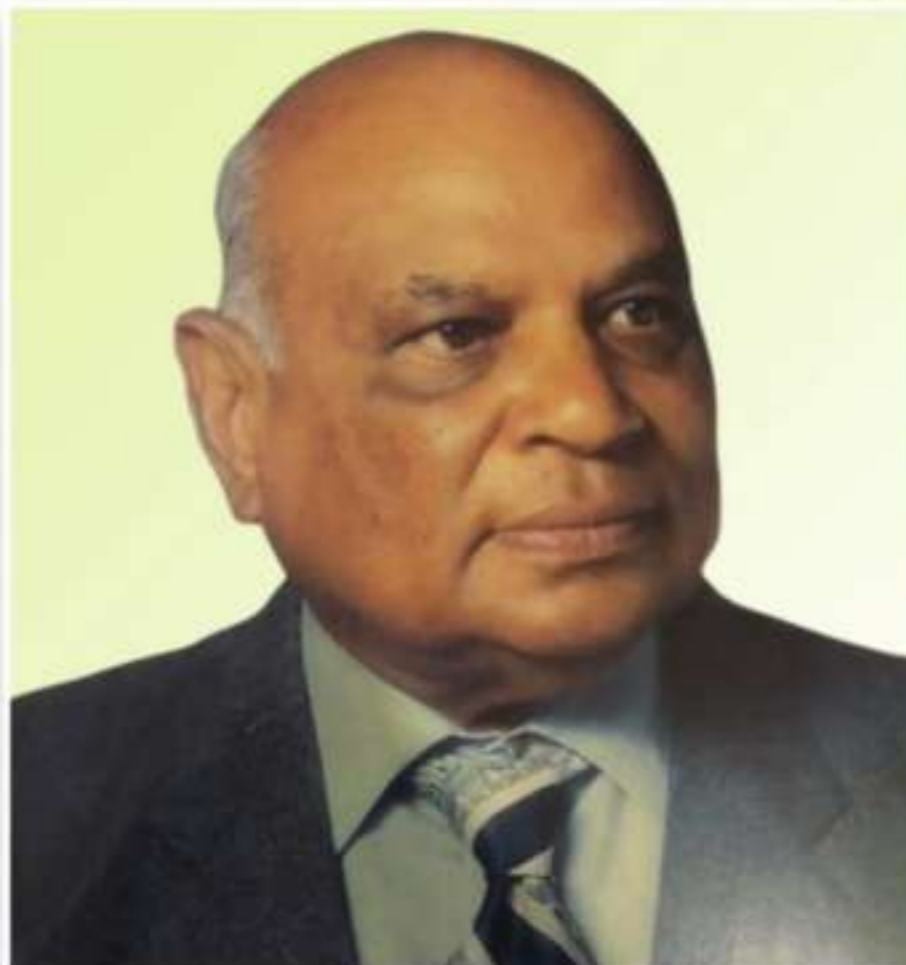
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In Loving Memory



Pankaj Dhandharia
Partner, EY India
3 October 1969 – 15 April 2024

Pankaj Dhandharia, an exceptional leader, a loving husband, a caring father, a mentor and dear friend to many, left us for his heavenly abode.

He will be cherished forever for his compassionate nature, calm leadership, and his remarkable ability to inspire everyone he interacted with. His legacy will undoubtedly endure, not only through the work he has done but through the lives he has touched.


Pankaj, we thank you for your wisdom, compassion, values and leadership.

In grief,
Dhandharia, Saraogi and Khemka family
Wife: Indu
Sons: Nikoony and Sarthak
Parents: Prem Narayan and Lalita
Siblings: Jyoti, Radha, Manish
The EY Family

EY

Prayer meeting on Thursday, 18 April 2024, at Rang Sharda,
Bandra Reclamation, Bandra (West), Mumbai from 4:30 p.m. - 6:00 p.m.

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Jitender Mann (Jimmy)
(23.10.1982 - 17.04.2020)

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CM Moves Court For Regular Check-Ups, Doc Consultation

ED's Response Sought On Kejriwal's Petition By Tomorrow

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has moved an application before a Delhi court seeking permission for regular check-ups of his sugar level and consultation with his doctor through video conference thrice a week.

The court of special judge Rakesh Syal has sought a response from ED by April 18 on Kejriwal's plea. The court is likely to take up the matter that day.

Kejriwal, in judicial custody following his arrest in connection with the Delhi liquor



CM sought video conferencing with doctor thrice a week

policy case, told the court on Tuesday that his sugar level was constantly fluctuating and had once plummeted to 46.

Special public prosecutor Simon Benjamin, appearing for ED, opposed the plea and submitted there were facilities for patients in jail and Kejriwal can be examined there.

"Why is ED opposing if I (Kejriwal) am taking care of my health?" advocate Vivek Jain, Kejriwal's counsel, asked and added that Kejriwal should be allowed to consult his doctor three times a week.

On Monday, a Delhi court extended Kejriwal's judicial custody till April 23 in the money laundering case connected to the now scrapped liquor policy. He was arrested on

March 21.

On April 1, the same court had sent Kejriwal to judicial custody till April 15. On April 1 only, while producing Kejriwal in court, ED did not seek further custody but alleged that Kejriwal had tried to mislead the interrogators.

ED said Kejriwal was highly influential and there was every likelihood that he would influence witnesses and tamper evidence, if released. It told the court that Kejriwal told investigators co-accused Vijay Nair reported to AAP ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj, not him.

Kejriwal under 24-hr surveillance, bid to demoralise & humiliate him: Singh

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Aam Aadmi Party's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh on Tuesday alleged that Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was being treated as a "terrorist" in jail.

Addressing a press conference, Singh alleged that Kejriwal's wife Sunita Kejriwal and Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann were made to speak with the three-time Delhi CM through a glass wall.

"By erecting a glass wall, the BJP and the Prime Minister have shown that their minds are completely filled with hatred, ill will and a feeling of revenge towards Arvind Kejriwal," Singh alleged.

He claimed Kejriwal was under 24-hour CCTV surveillance, attempts are being made to "demoralise" and "humiliate" him, his family and party AAP functionaries.

"Arvind Kejriwal is a per-



SANJAY SINGH SAYS

Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal sent a message from inside the jail to his compatriots: 'My name is Arvind Kejriwal, and I am not a terrorist'

son made of tough material... if you make any attempt to break him, Kejriwal will become stronger and fight against you," Singh said.

Delhi BJP president Vinendra Sachdeva, however, said Tihar Jail was directly controlled by AAP govt and claimed that Kejriwal was neither being harassed nor tortured in incarceration.

"The jail authorities bound by Delhi Prison Rules and court's directions and all facilities as per the manual are being provided to Kejr-

wal. Kejriwal, Mann or Singh may try as hard as they want, they cannot fool Delhiites with their rhetoric and misleading statements," Sachdeva said.

"People know that Kejriwal is an economic offender involved in illegal money laundering and a corrupt chief minister who misused and influenced the liquor policy and funds of other departments to raise kickbacks for his Aam Aadmi Party," Sachdeva added.

Referring to PM Narendra

Modi's statement on electoral bonds on Monday, Singh said the prime minister was justifying them despite the Supreme Court declaring them unconstitutional and illegal.

"Electoral bonds are the biggest scam of independent India and Modi is standing in its favour," the AAP functionary said.

The Rajya Sabha MP said a constitutional bench of five judges of the Supreme Court of India had declared electoral bonds unconstitutional and illegal and by defending them the PM had insulted the apex court.

"The prime minister should apologise to the Supreme Court," Singh added.

He claimed the BJP got 65% of money through electoral bonds. He added that one of the accused in the excise policy case had given Rs 60 crore to the BJP through the bonds.

Cops pull out all stops for LS poll security, cash seizures a priority

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: In the run-up to the Lok Sabha election, Delhi Police brass recently held a key meeting to review its preparedness and strategies regarding deployment, booth identification, and cash seizures. Top cops are learned to have instructed the boots on the ground to immediately rope in other stakeholders like the income-tax department at the spot before seizing any amount of Rs 10 lakh or more being transported illegally ahead of or during the election.

During the review meeting on Saturday, the top cops elaborated on the challenges of conducting free and fair elections, officials said. It was informed that Union home ministry had allocated an additional 36 companies of paramilitary forces to Delhi Police beyond the 10 already deployed. Eight flying squads will be deployed in every district for surveillance.

Also, around 8,000 home guards have been sourced from Rajasthan, 4,000 from Uttarakhand, and some more

2K BOOTHS IDENTIFIED AS 'CRITICAL'

Delhi Police preparation in the run-up to Lok Sabha elections

- ▶ 36 companies of paramilitary forces allocated to Delhi Police
- ▶ Around 8,000 Home Guards sourced from Rajasthan, 4,000 from Uttarakhand
- ▶ 90,000 policemen will be deployed
- ▶ Flying squads will be deployed at every district to keep a tab on illegal activities
- ▶ Approximately 2,000 of 13,500 polling booths in



the city identified as 'critical' where security will be heightened

▶ Officers have been asked to collaborate with the income tax department before seizing any amount of which is equal to or more than ₹10 lakh

have been requested from Haryana, sources said.

Delhi Police personnel capacity exceeds 90,000, and most of them will be deployed on election duty.

At the meeting, the issue of the illegal supply of liquor from Haryana and Punjab was deliberated upon.

Govts there have communicated that they had implemented QR codes on liquor bottles to track the location of liquor sent from these sta-

tes to other places to prevent its illegal use. Delhi Police has also identified approximately 2,000 out of the 13,500 polling booths in the city as "critical" based on past incidents and the likelihood of law-and-order situations deteriorating.

These critical booths will have additional security personnel deployed to ensure smooth voting on May 25, when 1.47 crore eligible voters will cast their ballots

across the seven Lok Sabha constituencies in Delhi. The identification of critical polling booths is a standard procedure carried out by police before every election. Police assess the sensitivity of each booth based on various factors, primarily from a law and order perspective. Election Commission then finalises the list of critical booths prepared by police.

The number of critical polling booths varies across different police districts in Delhi. New Delhi district has the lowest number at five, while southeast and northeast districts have identified 53 and 55 critical booths, respectively. Shahdara and northwest districts have the highest number of critical booths at 146 each, while Dwarka district has marked more than 50 booths as critical. Outer north district has 38 critical booths.

To ensure adequate security at the critical polling premises, each booth will have two head constables and half a section of central paramilitary forces, in addition to the standard deployment plan.

Cash, liquor worth ₹230cr seized, 900 complaints of influencing voters so far

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The election office in Delhi has seized cash, drugs, and valuables worth over Rs 230 crore since the announcement of elections and implementation of model code of conduct.

Officials said C-VIGIL mobile application, which is used by the public to report any kind of election irregularities, had also received over 900 complaints so far of which more than 800 were found correct and action had been taken on them.

The Election Commission of India had announced the dates of general elections to Lok Sabha on March 16. The model of conduct will remain in place till June 4 when the results will be announced. The EC imposes several restrictions on carrying cash and

POLL CHECK

Value of goods seized since model code of conduct kicked in			
Cash ₹11.3 crore	Alcohol ₹1.4 crore	Drugs ₹189.9 crore	Precious metals (gold, silver, etc) ₹32.2 crore
			Gift items ₹1.2 crore

valuables during the election period when the model code of conduct is in place to ensure it is not used by political parties and candidates to influence voters.

According to officials, different teams formed to look for violations seized narcotics worth Rs 189 crore and gold worth Rs 32.2 crore from various parts of the city in the last few weeks. Besides, the poll officials also confiscated Rs 11.3 crore of unaccounted cash, hundreds of lit-

res of alcohol valued at Rs 1.42 crore and other goods intended for free distribution among voters, valued at Rs 1.17 crore, from the capital.

"These special teams comprised officials deployed by the election commission apart from personnel from Delhi Police, income tax department, narcotics department and excise department," said an official.

A senior election official said special teams had been deployed to keep an eye on all

activities that could influence the elections on the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

The official added that since the election's announcement, 912 complaints had been received from 11 districts of Delhi on C-Vigil app, which were disposed of within the prescribed time limit. While 226 complaints were reported from northwest district, 136 from north, 88 from east, 87 from Shahdara, 75 from west, 64 from New Delhi, 54 from central district, 29 from northeast, 28 from south and 26 from southeast district.

"Every big and small election-related event is being closely monitored. Surveillance is also being maintained along Delhi's borders," said an official, adding, "Most complaints were addressed within 24 hours".

AAP and BJP spar over arrest of Goa functionary

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi minister Saurabh Bharadwaj on Tuesday claimed that a person named Charanpreet Singh, who was recently arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in Goa in the excise policy case, was being dubbed the fund manager of AAP but there was no such post in the party.

Bharadwaj said the same person was arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation but was granted bail by the court for lack of concrete evidence against the person.

"This is being made into huge news, as if someone big has been arrested. Why is it being telecast as such breaking news? It is because the ED has no evidence to take the matter further. They can only make noise to convince people that a scam has been done," Bharadwaj claimed.

"The only evidence based on which Charanpreet Singh has been arrested is that there is a hawala operator in Gujarat who has written Charanpreet's name in Gujarati on the notes... If their accusations are right, then what was the money doing in Gujarat? Why was an operator writing about it on notes in Gujarati? And since when did the court start considering handwritten entries as proof?" Bharadwaj questioned.

Delhi BJP president Vinendra Sachdeva said Saurabh Bharadwaj's claim that Goa's AAP functionary Charanpreet Singh was innocent was a concocted statement.

"Bharadwaj makes similar claims after every arrest, but every arrested leader has failed to get bail justifying the grounds for arrest. Charanpreet Singh will prove to be the cause of the long stay of Kejriwal behind bars," Sachdeva said.

26 linked to 18k cyber fraud cases

Gurgaon: As many as 26 online fraudsters arrested since March 1 for their involvement in eight cases in Gurgaon committed 18,163 cyber frauds across the country. The accused have swindled early Rs 65 crore. "We have seized three laptops, 41 mobile phones and eight SIM cards from the 26 accused. Linkage analysis has revealed that the offenders were involved in 18,163 cyber crime complaints, including 865 FIRs," ACP (cybercrime) Priyanshu Dewan said. **TNN**

AAP's refrain: 'Press jhadu button to exact revenge'

Abhinav.Rajput@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The loudspeaker is blaring with patriotic tunes like "Mera Rang De Basanti Chola", overpowering all other noises in the neighbourhood. A small stage has been set up with a yellow poster in the background - CM Arvind Kejriwal, shown behind bars, occupies half the space and Kuldeep Kumar, the AAP candidate from East Delhi who is up against BJP's Harsh Malhotra, appears on the other side.

Flanked on three sides by houses, a park and a govt school, an open area with about 250 chairs is the setting for AAP's 'Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se' Sankalp Sabha, held on Tuesday in east Delhi's Joshi Colony.

As the crowd waits for minister Gopal Rai to arrive, party worker Atul Gupta addresses the gathering. "We want to empower women. For this, we plan to give Rs 1,000 to the women in the city. We made DTC free for them, but BJP wants to stop us from carrying out public welfare programmes," he says.

Soon, Rai and Kumar, the candidate, arrive. Kumar hits out at BJP, accusing it of trying to stop the AAP campaign by arresting the CM. Pointing to a school near the venue, Kumar tells the crowd: "Kejriwal made these schools for you, and they have sent him to jail. If you want to take revenge, then you have to press the jhadu button. Press it so they learn a lesson that next time if they act like this, people will not tolerate it."

He then asks people in the gathering what they feel about the proposed Rs 1,000 scheme for women. "Raise your hands if you want it," he says. The women present respond with a resounding "yes".

Rai addresses the crowd next. Hitting out at BJP, he says, "They say Kejriwal is corrupt, but he is the most honest person in the country."



Gopal Rai takes part in 'Jail Ka Jawab Vote Se' sankalp sabha at IP Extension on Tuesday

People BJP had accused of corruption, like Ajit Pawar and Ashok Chavan, later became deputy CM and Rajya Sabha MP. All corrupt people are travelling in PM Modi's bullet train while honest Kejriwal is in jail."

He then asks people to take an oath with him: "We pledge to make every possible effort to remove the tyranny being imposed by BJP govt and to save Constitution and democracy. We will not tolerate this insult and respond to this imprisonment with our votes on May 25."

Joshi Colony, an unauthorised colony, is a mixed neighbourhood comprising people from various castes, including Brahmins and Dalits. A temple and a mosque stand only 200 metres apart. People from different religions have been living in harmony in the area for decades, say residents.

CM's arrest has irked some locals. For instance, Bindu Kumari says, "We want Kejriwal to be released. Corruption hasn't been proven, so why is he being kept in jail?"

For others like Yogendra, a shopkeeper, there are more pressing issues. "People are not so concerned about who goes to jail and who doesn't. We get dirty water. Those are the issues that matter."

MCD issues fresh admission norms to up student count

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Children will not be denied admission even if their guardians do not have sufficient documents, Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has said in its admission guidelines for primary schools for the 2024-25 academic year.

"No child will be denied admission, they must be enrolled in classes based on their age. If the parents do not have the required documents, they will be asked to give an affidavit and can submit the documents within 90 days. The teachers should help them in obtaining the documents," stated MCD, which seeks to increase enrolment and streamline the admission process.

The guidelines also specify that each student should be screened through the pre-assessment holistic screening tool (PRASHAST) by special educators at the time of admission. The app will help in screening for 21 disability conditions re-

MCD STATES

No child will be denied admission. They must be enrolled in classes based on their age

cognised under Right of Persons with Disability Act 2016.


The number of students at MCD schools was 7,58,000 in 2018-19, which fell to 7,44,000 in 2019-20 and further to 734,000 in 2020-21. In 2021-22, it went up to 854,000 and to 864,000 in 2022-23. However, in 2023-24 (till Oct), the count stood at 780,000, with officials claiming that the status of almost 80,000 students were found to be "dormant" for a long time and their names were removed from the list after verification.

"All school principals or heads will ensure that details related to admission, QR code admission system, and other facilities being provided at


the schools should be displayed at the entrance. The candidates whose information is submitted through the QR code should be considered for enrolment on a regular basis without delay," the civic body stated. The MCD headquarters contact number should also be displayed prominently at the entrance to help guardians deal with any problem.

Pamphlets will be distributed in the neighbourhood and a digital version should be circulated on WhatsApp groups to inform people. "Guardians of students, RWAs should be invited to schools and motivated to bring other children in their neighbourhood for enrolment," the circular stated.

Teachers will verify the details of the candidates on the EDUDEL or UDISE portal of Delhi govt to ensure that a child is not enrolled in any other govt school. Otherwise a guardian should be asked to first get a transfer certificate before enrolling the child.




भारत निर्वाचन आयोग
Election Commission of India



चुनाव का पर्व
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Hear All Sides: HC To Centre Over Dog Ban

Invite Objections From Everyone, Says Court

Abhinav.Garg@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday quashed a circular by the Centre banning sale and breeding of 23 dog breeds that it considered ferocious.

The court set aside the notice after the Centre admitted that except for official entities, no private organisation or stakeholder was consulted before the notification was issued.

The court then asked the Centre to invite and examine objections from all stakeholders, including dog lovers, before taking a call if it wants to issue a fresh notification.

"Since it is not possible to give an oral hearing to each and every dog owner, this court directs the Union of India to issue a public notice on its official website and one national daily inviting objections to the proposed draft notification/amendment to the rules," a bench of acting chief justice Manmohan and justice Manmeet PS Arora said, while disposing of a batch of petitions, challenging the Centre's March 12 notification on the ground that the ban was imposed on 23 dog breeds without consulting or inviting objections and suggestions from stakeholders.

HIGH COURT SAYS

Since it is not possible to give an oral hearing to each and every dog owner, this court directs the Union of India to issue a public notice on its official website and one national daily inviting objections to the proposed draft notification/amendment to the rules

The court specified that the objections filed in response to govt's advertisement/notice published on its website and newspaper shall be considered before finalising the fresh notification.

Appearing for one of the petitioners, a dog trainer, advocate Nikhil Palli pointed out that the circular was perverse and illegal as it was passed in violation of an earlier undertaking given to the court that due opportunity will be given to all stakeholders to present their views. He also highlighted that the circular used generic terms like pitbull terriers and mastiff, ignoring that within these there are 20-30 breeds that vary in weight from 5-20 kg and can't be all clubbed as ferocious breeds.

Last week, Karnataka High Court quashed the Centre's March 12 circular. It said central govt could not have imposed a blanket ban on the

se breeds through a circular in the absence of any such power available under the provisions of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, or the Animal Birth Control (ABC) Rules.

During the hearing before Delhi High Court, the Centre's counsel submitted that stakeholders would mean every dog owner and giving a hearing to each one of them was impossible. However, the bench disagreed and pointed out the example of Delhi Development Authority which invites and deals with objections from people before taking any major step. The court said people can file their objections with govt in writing.

On March 12, the Centre had directed states to ban the sale and breeding of 23 breeds of ferocious dogs, including pitbull terriers, American bulldog, rottweilers and mastiffs, amid rising instances of attacks on kids.

Chaired by Dr SK Sarin, the panel has called for immediate, short-term and long-term steps to improve the situation.

The bench asked the govt officials to focus first on the immediate measures that include redistribution of consultants, extension of tenure/reappointment of specialists and filling 15% of vacant posts to boost manpower. It said hiring of doctors on contract basis as academic faculty/consultants must be permitted at these hospitals and their salary and perks should be at least the same as of regular employees.

For nursing and paramedical staff, outsource agencies can be engaged and immediate deployment should be done at the primary and secondary health facilities at all govt institutions, the committee has said.

Another immediate step concerns use of equipment that's lying unused due to the lack of technical manpower in certain hospitals. Either technical manpower should be deployed or such equipment should be transferred to other institutions where manpower is available, it has been suggested. The instruments requiring repair should also be made operational in 30 days, the court said with specific instructions to related agencies.

The man, identified as Pa-

vertisements have been broadcast on YouTube and other national news channels with the picture of Prime Minister," the bench said.

Noting that the FIR contained cognisable offences, the court said police had a statutory right and duty to investigate the allegations. "The investigation is at a nascent stage and the court, while exercising power under Section 482 of CrPc, ought not to thwart an investigation," the judge added. When the allegations disclose cognisable offence, the matter need not be considered on merits, the bench noted, dismissing the petition.

The man, identified as Pa-

PM's name, pic used to get donations: HC refuses to quash FIR against man

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has refused to quash an FIR lodged against a man who has been accused of fraudulently inducing people into donating to his NGO by using the picture and surname of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The single-judge bench of Justice Amit Mahajan said specific allegations had been made that the petitioner was collecting donations/funds by using the surname of Prime Minister of India. "The picture of Prime Minister has also been used whereas admittedly, the petitioner's surname is not 'MODI'. The ad-

vertisements have been broadcast on YouTube and other national news channels with the picture of Prime Minister," the bench said.

Noting that the FIR contained cognisable offences, the court said police had a statutory right and duty to investigate the allegations. "The investigation is at a nascent stage and the court, while exercising power under Section 482 of CrPc, ought not to thwart an investigation," the judge added. When the allegations disclose cognisable offence, the matter need not be considered on merits, the bench noted, dismissing the petition.

The man, identified as Pa-

HC: Implement steps advised to boost infra in city hosps

Abhinav.Garg@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In the next 30 days, Delhi govt must try and fill 15% of all vacant posts of doctors, non-teaching specialists, nursing and paramedical staff in all govt hospitals and prepare an app to give precise and timely information about emergency health services to patients.

These are some of the measures that require immediate attention of Delhi govt, suggested a committee of senior doctors appointed by Delhi High Court. On Tuesday, the court directed the chief secretary and the principal secretary of health to act on the recommendations and file an action-taken report within a month since the panel has suggested a 30-day timeline to achieve them.

A bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora also made it clear that the model code of conduct "shall not be a hindrance" in implementing the measures while asking the top bureaucrats to file a roadmap indicating how they intend to plug the gaps within the timeframe.

The court was taking stock of an interim report submitted by the six-member committee set up in Feb to recommend a complete revamp of the "woefully inadequate" infrastructure of govt and MCD hospitals in Delhi.

Chaired by Dr SK Sarin, the panel has called for immediate, short-term and long-term steps to improve the situation.

The bench asked the govt officials to focus first on the immediate measures that include redistribution of consultants, extension of tenure/reappointment of specialists and filling 15% of vacant posts to boost manpower. It said hiring of doctors on contract basis as academic faculty/consultants must be permitted at these hospitals and their salary and perks should be at least the same as of regular employees.

For nursing and paramedical staff, outsource agencies can be engaged and immediate deployment should be done at the primary and secondary health facilities at all govt institutions, the committee has said.

Another immediate step concerns use of equipment that's lying unused due to the lack of technical manpower in certain hospitals. Either technical manpower should be deployed or such equipment should be transferred to other institutions where manpower is available, it has been suggested. The instruments requiring repair should also be made operational in 30 days, the court said with specific instructions to related agencies.

MCD ropes in Aga Khan Trust for conservation of printing press bldg

Vibha.Sharma@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD) has assigned the task of providing consultancy for the conservation of Press Building, located next to Town Hall in Chandni Chowk, to the Aga Khan Trust for Culture.

The printing press building, constructed in the 1940s, will be developed into a museum. It will display souvenirs that are over 100 years old, visitors' books signed by dignitaries during their visits to Town Hall, artefacts gifted by visitors and printing machines used at the press, including one purchased in 1926 from England.

The facility is likely to be opened to the public by the end of the year.

"It will take another two weeks to finalise and submit the conservation plan for Press Building to MCD. The principles will be similar to those used for other buildings of its era," said Ratish Nanda, CEO of Aga Khan Trust for Culture India.

A senior MCD official said the civic body will initiate the restoration process as soon as the trust provides the conservation plan. "The task will be implemented by our staff under the trust's guidance. We will use the same materials and processes for conservation that were used when the building was constructed to preserve its herita-



The printing press building will be developed into a museum

Trust for Culture India.

A senior MCD official said the civic body will initiate the restoration process as soon as the trust provides the conservation plan. "The task will be implemented by our staff under the trust's guidance. We will use the same materials and processes for conservation that were used when the building was constructed to preserve its herita-

ge," said the official.

Town Hall served as the seat of MCD from 1866 till 2009, after which the civic body office shifted to Civic Centre on Minto Road.

MCD, which will celebrate 161 years of its foundation with Nigam Mahotsav, a three-day event from May 31 to June 2, has begun the process of transferring decades-old artefacts, documents and records

Four get life term for killing police officer

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A court has sentenced four convicts to life imprisonment for murder of a Delhi Police constable in 2012, stating that the offence was "heinous, diabolical and barbaric".

The court of additional sessions judge Virender Kumar Khartaria said in the April 8 order, "The trauma of the family members of deceased Bijender who was working as a constable in Delhi Police and the trauma of constable Sandeep Kumar and Irshad can be understood."

Additional public prosecutor Pankaj Kumar Ranga told the court that the four accused had fatally stabbed constable Bijender and left Irshad and Kumar, another constable, injured in September 2012 in front of a brothel on Delhi's GB Road.

The court had convicted Ashish Bahuguna alias Ashu, Suraj, Manoj and Akash on March 2, 2024 of the offen-

ces of murder, attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and others. The court also convicted Suraj under Arms Act for possessing a button-actuated knife.

Noting the evidence, the court sentenced the four convicts to life imprisonment under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 34 (common intention), stating that the present case was not within the purview of the "rarest of rare" doctrine.

The four men were also sentenced to rigorous imprisonment (RI) for seven years for their common intention in attempting to murder Kumar and Irshad. Suraj got five years' RI under Arms Act. Another five-year RI was slapped on them for voluntarily causing grievous hurt to public servants, two years' RI for assaulting or using criminal force to deter public servants, and simple imprisonment of three months for obstructing public servants.

All the sentences will run concurrently, the court said.

Student dies as car falls off Ggn flyover

Mahesh.Buddi@timesgroup.com

Gurgaon: A 22-year-old college student died and two of his friends were injured when the SUV in which they were travelling crashed into a divider on an NH-8 flyover in Jharsa, flipped a couple of times and fell 20ft below.

The accident occurred around 10pm when Rishabh — a second-year BA student of KR Mangalam University in Sohna — was going towards Rajiv Chowk with his friends Kamal and Naman. Rishabh was behind the wheel of the KIA Seltos, which was just a month old.

Police said the impact of the accident suggested that the SUV was being driven at high speed. Blood samples of Rishabh are being tested to find out if he was drunk while driving.

Assistant sub-inspector Surender said the car fell through the gap between the two elevated carriageways. "Fortunately, there was nobody on the footpath where the car landed. Otherwise, there could have been more casualties. After the car landed on its roof, its airbags opened. All three occupants suffered injuries," he added.

Passersby were the first rescuers. Before an NHA patrol team reached the accident spot, the three injured

students were pulled out of the car and taken to hospital.

"We removed the car quickly so that it did not cause any traffic congestion. But by the time we reached, the injured persons were already taken to hospital. We came to know that one of them was critically injured," said route patrolling officer Vijay.

Private firm employee Pankaj, who was passing by, stopped after he heard a loud crash. "I was on the service lane when the car fell off the flyover. Other people managed to pull them out of the car and rush them to hospital in an ambulance. One of them was bleeding profusely," he added.

Rishabh, who was admitted at Medanta-The Medicity, succumbed to injuries during treatment.

"The two others suffered multiple fractures. But they are out of danger. They couldn't speak much because of injuries in their face," ASI Surender said.

There are no CCTV cameras in the area where the accident occurred. "The car first hit the divider and flipped. It then fell through the gap between the carriageways. This suggests that the car was cruising at high speed. Blood samples of the driver will be tested to check if he was under the influence of alcohol," the ASI said.

JAPIT
Bharatnagar Agency for Promotion of Information Technology
(An Autonomous body under Department of Information Technology & eGovernance, Govt. of Jharkhand)
Ground Floor, Engineer's Hostel - I, Near Golchakkar, Dhurwa, Ranchi, Jharkhand
Phone: 0651 - 2401044 & 2401067 eMail: japit_doit@rediffmail.com

Corrigendum - II
eTender Ref. No.: JAP-IT/HC/VMS-ePass/01/2024
PR No.: 323583 Information Technology (24-25):D

As per Pre-Bid meeting held on 04.04.2024, corrigendum i.e. "Corrigendum - II" as a Pre-Bid query response in reference of e-Tender Ref. No.: JAP-IT/HC/VMS-ePass/01/2024 regarding "Selection of System Integrator (SI) / System Provider (SP) for Customization & Maintenance of VMS-ePass application and Installation of IoT Based Boom Barrier Solution along-with other IT Support Infrastructure in course of implementation of Visitor's Management System (VMS) i.e. e-Pass at Hon'ble High Court & different courts in the State of Jharkhand" may be downloaded from <https://jarkhandtenders.gov.in> and same is also available on <https://jarkhand.gov.in> & <https://japit.jarkhand.gov.in>.
Other terms & conditions remains same as per published RFP.

Sd/-
Officer on Special Duty, JAP-IT, Ranchi
PR 323586 Information Technology(24-25):D

KERALA MEDICAL SERVICES CORPORATION LTD
(DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & FAMILY WELFARE, GOVT. OF KERALA)
Head Office : Thiruvananthapuram-14,
Village-Vishanpur, 2945484),
(Telephone No. 0471-2945600, 2945484),
E-mail : edrugs.kmscl@kerala.gov.in,
website : www.kmscl.kerala.gov.in, CIN No. U24233KL2007SGC021616

No.KMSCL/ED/12/2024 Date : 15.04.2024

E-TENDER NOTICE

Online bids are invited from manufacturers/direct importers / loan licensees on behalf of Department of Health, Govt of Kerala for the procurement of ART Drugs for the year 2024-25.

Sl. No.	Tender No. and Date	Category	No. of items
1.	KMSCL/ED/ART Drugs/RC/2024/005 dtd. 15.04.2024	ART Drugs	2

The last date and time of online uploading of tenders will be 13.05.2024, 5.00 pm. The date and time of opening of Technical bid will be 16.05.2024 11.30 am. Tenders shall be downloaded and submitted online through the e-tender portal www.etenders.kerala.gov.in.

(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR (Tender Inviting Authority)

OFFICE OF THE COMPETENT AUTHORITY FOR LAND ACQUISITION/ADDITIONAL DISTRICT PAURI GARHWAL
Email: dmgarhwal@gmail.com Phone: 01368-222250 @Fax: 222080
No 226/08-LA (2022-23)/Pauri Dated 06 April, 2024

PUBLIC NOTICE

Announcement of Award for acquisition of land for construction of National Highway for land owners/ persons interested and payment of Compensation Amount.

Kind attention of all landowners/interested persons is invited to the Notification No. S.O. 3789 Dated 12 August 2022 issued under Section 3A of the NH Act, 1956 for acquisition of land for the building/construction of a National Highway and the Notification No. S.O. 405(E) Dated 25 January 2023 issued under Section 3D of the NH Act, 1956 and published in the following newspapers:

Sr. No	Notification	Name of Village	Names of Newspapers in which Published	Date of Newspaper
1	Section 3A	Village-Ratanpur-Saneh, Village-Vishanpur Saneh,	(i) Amar Ujala (ii) Times Of India	23 August 2022 23 August 2022
2	Section 3D	Tehsil Kotdwar District Pauri Garhwal.	(i) Amar Ujala (ii) Times Of India	12 February 2023 12 February 2023

It is informed that the undersigned has announced the Award in respect of the said land under Section 3G of the NH Act, 1956 vide order Dated 08 & 11 August 2023.

The land acquiring agency (NHA) has placed the requisite amount of compensation at the disposal of the undersigned. Notices have also been issued to the concerned landowners/interested persons as required under Section 3E of the NH Act, 1956.

Accordingly all the concerned landowners/interested persons are hereby informed/notified through this additional Public Notice that the Compensation amount is hereby offered to all the landowners. Further, it may be noted that:

The landowners, who have not submitted their Bank Accounts details, may do so immediately in the office of the Tehsil Kotdwar and the amount shall be credited to their accounts such Bank Account details;

All other claimants entitled to receive the compensation amount may collect their amount of compensation from the office of the Tehsil Kotdwar on any working day between 10:00 am to 5:00 p.m within a period of 60 days.

It may further be noted that since the amount of Compensation has been determined and tendered to the concerned landowners/ persons interested therein through this additional public notice, any failure to collect the compensation amount would be to their account and the amount shall be deemed to have been paid on expiry of this period of sixty days from the date of publication of this notice.

The landowners/ persons interested therein are further called upon to surrender or deliver the possession of the subject land to the revenue administration, failing which the possession of subject land will be taken with police assistance on expiry of the period of 60 days.

(Ila Giri)
Competent Authority for Land Acquisition/
Additional District Pauri Garhwal

GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

TENDER NOTICE

Tender Ref No.:

WBPWD/EE/S24PDD/EL/NIT24/24-25,

(Tender ID: 2024_WBPWD_688335_1)

WBPWD/EE/S24PDD/EL/NIT24/24-25,

(Tender ID: 2024_WBPWD_688337_1)

Online Tender is hereby invited by the Executive Engineer, PWD, South 24 Parganas Electrical Division, 57/2, Diamond Harbour Road, Kolkata-700023 from the eligible contractors for the following works: Name of Work: 1. Temporary Electrical Installation and DG Set, on hire basis, for accommodation of CAPF for 15 Nos. locations of Dholahat PS under Sundarban Police District, in connection with ensuring GE to Lok Sabha-2024 (for 37 days). 2. Temporary Electrical Installation and DG Set, on hire basis, for accommodation of CAPF for 15 Nos. locations of Mandirabar PS under Sundarban Police District, in connection with ensuring GE to Lok Sabha-2024 (for 37 days). Bid submission start: 23.04.24 at 09.00 AM. Bid Submission end: 04.05.24 at 01.00 PM. Bid Opening Date: 06.05.24 at 02.00 PM. Details of eNIT, BOQ & tender document may be downloaded from <https://wbtdenders.gov.in>. This Tender/Advertisement is related to the Ensuing General Election to Lok Sabha-2024. Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, South 24 Parganas Electrical Division. ICA-17812(3)/2024

ICA-17812(3)/2024

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GOVERNMENT OF WEST BENGAL

PWD TENDER NOTICE

Executive Engineer, PWD, North 24 Prgs Electrical Division invite online e-Tender for the work of :- "Temporary E.I. Work and DG Set on hire basis for accommodation of CAPF at various locations of Barasat PS under Barasat Police District, i.c.w. ensuring General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 in the District of North 24 Parganas." NIT No: WBPWD/EE/N24/EL/IE-NIQ-33/24-25. Tender ID: 2024_WBPWD_688297_1. Pre Bid Meeting Date: Nil. Bid Submission start date (Online): 16/04/2024. Bid Submission Closing Date (Online): 24/04/2024. Corrigendum if any will be published website only. Details of NIT & tender documents may be downloaded from <http://wbtdenders.gov.in> Sd/- Executive Engineer, PWD, NORTH 24 PARGANAS ELECTRICAL DIVISION. ICA-17805(3)/2024

ICA-17805(3)/2024

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Website: <http://davpvgghaziabad.edu.in>

Managed by DAV College Managing Committee, Chitra Gupta Road, New Delhi -110055

INVITES APPLICATION

Applications are invited from DAV CBT qualified candidates with Provisional Eligibility Card (P.E.C.) for the following posts:

1. PRT : Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Mathematics, Science, Dance
2. TGT: Mathematics, English.
3. Special Educator
4. Nurse

Qualification & Exp as per CBSE Norms. Eligible candidates can apply within 15 days in the prescribed proforma available in the school Reception of Rs.100/- between 08:00am to 1:00PM. Hard copy of complete application with educational certificates and latest photograph may be submitted at the school Reception. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview. Final selection will be made in the basis of Demonstration & Subject Panel Interview, subject to verification of P.E.C.

All posts are transferrable and P.E.C. is mandatory.

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PRT- English, General
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Walk-in-Interview on 19th April 2024 at Sector-15, Vasundhara, Gzb. Timings : 11:00am to 01:00pm
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Apply with Photograph

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- P.R.T. - English, Maths, Science, Social Science, General, French
- NURSER - NTT Trained
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Managed by DAV College Managing Committee, New Delhi

INVITES APPLICATION (SESSION 2024-25)

From DAV CBT (Computer Based Test) qualified having Provisional Eligibility card, trained and experienced candidates with bright academic career, proficiency in co-curricular activities, computer literate, comfortable with the use of technology and having excellent verbal & communication skills for the following posts:

1. PGT: Music/Hindustani (Vocal), Physical Education
2. TGT: English, Hindi, Mathematics, Social Science, Physical Education & Sanskrit
3. PRT: Science, Mathematics, Social Science, English, Hindi, Sanskrit, Physical Education, Music, Arts
4. PRT/NTT as Mother Teacher
5. Special Educator

Eligibility:

- a) Post Graduate/Graduate, B.Ed.(as applicable) or as per CBSE norms
- b) CET qualified candidates for PRT & TGT
- c) Minimum two/three years experience in the similar capacity

Submit your Application on prescribed format which may be obtained from the School Reception from 15th April 2024. Filled-in application along with self-attested copies of certificates/testimonials (in respect of Academic Qualification & Experience) & recent coloured passport size photograph with signature must be submitted at school reception during school hours till 25th April 2024. For more detail regarding qualification, experience and other eligibility conditions, candidates may visit school website: www.davpsahibabad.org. Only shortlisted candidates will be called for interview. No TADA will be permissible for appearing in the interview and demonstration. All the above posts are transferrable.

PRINCIPAL

Somerville School,
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E-mail: somervillegn@gmail.com

1. PGT & TGT English : M.A., B.A., English, B.Ed.
2. TGT Computer Science : MCA/ M.Sc. Computer Science, B.Ed.

COMMON CRITERIA

- Degrees from the UGC recognized Universities / Institutions
- 5 years' experience in a reputed institution
- Proficiency in English for all the posts
- CET qualified for the post of Primary Teachers and TGTs

Apply on the prescribed application form available free of cost at the concerned school office on all working days between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m. along with a passport sized photograph and relevant certificates, to the Principal on or before 22nd April 2024. Salaries as per the recommendations of the 7th Pay Commission for the deserving candidates. Degree certificates from UGC recognized universities only will be entertained. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Sd/- (Thomas T. Roy)
Secretary/Treasurer (Lott Carey Baptist Mission in India)

DAV CENTENARY PUBLIC SCHOOL
Sector-6, Bahadurgarh
Ph: 7206040390, 7206635850
<http://davbahadurgarh.com>
Mail: davbahadurgarh55@yahoo.in

Managed by : DAVCMC, New Delhi-55

Session 2024-25

Applications are invited from 18/04/2024 to 30/04/2024 from DAV CBT qualified candidates with Provisional Eligibility Card for the following posts:

NTT : (Nursery Teacher), PGT (English, Hindi, Maths, Science, Social Scl., Computer Science, PET (Female), Art & Craft, Music, Library)

Final selection will be made on the basis of Demonstration & Subject Panel Interview held in the school, subject to the verification of P.E.C.

Note: Only DAV CBT, CET or HJET qualified, young, energetic, trained teachers with first or high second class & good communication skills need to apply on the prescribed form available at school between 8:30 am to 2:00 pm by paying Rs.300/- Maximum age to apply is 35 years.

Note: Only Shortlisted candidates will be called for interview.

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PGT: Economics (Leave Vacancy)
Western Music Teacher
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thefasvaishali@gmail.com
office@thefasvaishali.org
URL: www.thefasvaishali.org
Ph: 0120-2771010, 2776500

TGT : English, Computer Teacher

Apply/Walk-in-interview at respective school between 08:00am to 12:30pm

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Phone: 011-45911500

Applications are invited from 17.04.2024 to 30.04.2024 from DAV CBT qualified candidates with Provisional Eligibility Card, B.Ed. and CTET (for TGT and Primary Teachers). Candidates, preferably female with good communication and ICT skills with minimum 50% marks from recognised Universities and experience of CBSE/ICSE English medium schools, may apply for the following posts:

- a) Post Graduate Teacher - Biology, Chemistry, Political Science and Commerce - Master Degree with minimum 3 years experience
- b) Trained Graduate Teacher - English, Hindi and Science - Master Degree in respective subject with minimum 2 years experience
- c) Primary Teacher - English, Hindi, Science, Mathematics, Social Science, Sanskrit, Computer Science, ATL, Physical Education, Dance and Music - Graduate/Post Graduate in respective subjects
- d) Nursery Trained Teacher (NTT)
- e) Lab Assistant - Physics and Chemistry
- f) LDC - Accounts
- g) Receptionist

Candidates to apply on prescribed form available on school website (<http://hansrajmodelschool.org>) and School Enquiry Counter. Hard copy of form to be submitted with Rs. 350/- (handling charges) at School Enquiry Counter between 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on all working days till 30.04.2024. Pay and allowances as per D.A.V. College Managing Committee norms. No TADA is admissible. Only shortlisted candidates will be called.

PRINCIPAL

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Requires a Senior Cost Accountant with good knowledge of GST, TDS & Account Payable, reconciliation, Balance Sheet and MIS / complex Financial reports.

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EC BANS SURJEWALA FROM CAMPAIGNING FOR 48 HOURS OVER REMARKS ON HEMA MALINI | 10

LAPTOPS HAVE REPLACED STONES IN THE HANDS OF J&K YOUTH, SAYS AMIT SHAH | 10



NIA: Discrepancy in WB cops' 2022 blast FIR may not be 'accidental'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Kolkata: Bengal Police's FIR on the 2022 blast in Bhupatnagar that killed three people mentions a time that contradicts the statements of multiple witnesses, leading NIA to suspect that the discrepancy may not be "accidental".



The FIR mentions a time (8.30pm) that contradicts statements of multiple witnesses claiming that the explosion took place at 10pm

When NIA started to question witnesses during the court hearing, all of them said the explosion ripped through Rajkumar's house at least an hour and a half after the time mentioned in the police's FIR.

When the central agency matched this with call records that are part of the body of evidence in the case, it transpired that the time specified in the FIR may have been altered, sources said.

When NIA started to question witnesses during the court hearing, all of them said the explosion ripped through Rajkumar's house at least an hour and a half after the time mentioned in the police's FIR.

Pick 6 VCs from list given by state govt: SC to Bengal gov

New Delhi: SC on Tuesday directed West Bengal governor C V Ananda Bose, who is also the chancellor of state-run universities, to appoint six suitable persons as vice-chancellors from a list of candidates provided by the state government. "Let these six be appointed immediately," Attorney general R Venkaramani, appearing for the chancellor, apprised SC that he has approved six names from

the list sent by the state govt. The Trinamool Congress govt in the state is involved in a running feud with Bose over how the state's universities should be run. Hoping for an amicable solution to the tussle, the apex court bench said it may consider setting up a search committee later to shortlist candidates for appointment as vice-chancellors in the remaining state-run universities.



Boat capsizes in Jhelum, 5 schoolkids among 6 dead

Srinagar: Six persons, five of them schoolchildren, drowned when a boat carrying 15 people capsized in the river Jhelum near Batwara in Srinagar on Tuesday morning, reports Saleem Pandit.

The boat was mostly carrying children to school when the tragedy occurred around 8am. While three passengers were still missing, six others were rescued, Srinagar deputy commissioner Bilal Bhat said. The bodies of the deceased, including a mother of two kids, were retrieved.

Bhat said a rescue operation was launched by SDRE, NDRF and police, with local residents aiding them. Searches were underway to find the missing student. J&K lieutenant governor Manoj Sinha expressed grief over the loss of lives.

Man, grandkid run over on way to Maha school

Nashik: A 65-year-old man and his 11-year-old granddaughter died while her elder sister was critically injured when a speeding state transport bus knocked down their two-wheeler at Mungse Phata on Mumbai-Agra highway near Malegaon on Tuesday morning, reports Santosh Sonawane.

Police said the accident occurred when Sitarum Suryawanshi was on his way to drop his grandchildren—Vaishnavi and Manjusha (13)—to their school on his two-wheeler around 7am. Suryawanshi and Vaishnavi died on the spot after the Malegaon-bound ST bus from Saptashrungigad hit the scooter. The police said Manjusha was recuperating in a private hospital in Malegaon.

Villagers blocked traffic on the highway and said authorities should ensure speed breakers and flyover on the highway near the village.

Modi appeals for 'special' Ram Navami, Didi sees BJP riot plot

BJP Using Ram For Its Political Benefit: TMC

Dwaipayan Ghosh & Rohit Khanna | TNN

Kolkata: Ram Navami took centre stage in BJP and Trinamool Congress's election campaigns in Bengal on Tuesday after PM Narendra Modi called for a "special celebration" this year, contrasting with CM Mamata Banerjee sounding a "riot" alert as the state heads to the hustings for the first phase of polling in three days.

In a first for Bengal, the Trinamool govt notified last month that Ram Navami would be an official holiday. "Today is Mahashtami," the PM said in South Dinajpur's Balurghat. "The entire country will celebrate Ram Navami on Wednesday. This



They object to us celebrating, but nobody (in TMC) stops those who pelt Ram Navami and Durga Puja processions with stones, Modi said

Ram Navami is special as it is the first since Ram Lala's idol was installed in Ayodhya's Ram temple."

He accused Trinamool of trying to stop the celebration until a court intervened. "Truth always wins in the end," he said, also harking back to last year's event, which was marred by unrest in pockets of Howrah.

"They object to us celebrating, but nobody (in Trinamool) stops those who pelt Ram Navami and Durga Puja processions with

stones," he said later in North Dinajpur's Raiganj. Mamata, who addressed a campaign rally in Jalpaiguri's Maynaguri, alleged that BJP was planning to "engage in riots" ahead of polling. She appealed "with folded hands to both the minority and the majority (communities) not to fall into the trap".

"Every religion is our religion; every festival is our festival," Mamata said. "We do not want riots, we want peace. They will indulge in

Let's not make it communal: SC on mob violence, lynchings

Amit Anand Choudhary | @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: As a hearing on the issue of mob lynching acquired a Hindu-Muslim complexion, Supreme Court on Tuesday cautioned lawyers and asked them to maintain restraint and discipline inside the court and keep religion and caste out of the proceedings.

"Let's not go by religion or caste," a bench of Justices B R Gavi, Arvind Kumar and Sandeep Mehta told lawyers after the hearing took an unexpected communal turn with Gujarat govt asking why only incidents of lynching of



SC cautioned lawyers & asked them to maintain restraint & discipline inside the court

Muslims had been mentioned in the petition filed by CPI-linked National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), and the petitioner alleging that the "alarming rise" in lynching of Muslims in the country was a "reality".

NFIW sought a direction to state govts to take action against culprits involved in mob lynching.

X withholds political posts on EC orders

Social media platform X said on Tuesday it has withheld some posts in India containing political speeches from elected politicians, political parties, and candidates for office after Election Commission ordered their takedown.



Elon Musk-owned X said it disagreed with the Election Commission's orders. "We call on Election Commission to publish all of its takedown orders going forward," X said.

India, with nearly a billion eligible voters, will set off on the world's largest electoral exercise on Friday, REUTERS

Cong: Axe envoy to Ireland for acting like BJP 'apparatchik'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Alleging that serving diplomats under the Modi govt are behaving like BJP "apparatchiks" and making political attacks on opposition parties, Congress on Tuesday demanded the sacking of Indian ambassador to Ireland Akhilesh Mishra for his "shameful and disgraceful" remarks.

Mishra had triggered a controversy when he, in a rejoinder to an Irish Times editorial critical of Narendra Modi, said the Indian PM is popular and blamed the ills facing the country on past govts run by parties now in opposition, and also dubbed Congress a dynastic party.

Congress spokesperson Jairam Ramesh said, "This is unprofessional and disgraceful behaviour on his part, but is par for the Modi course, I guess." He added: "Defending govt of India is one thing and is to be expected. But to attack opposition parties openly in this manner like a party apparatchik is not expected from an ambassador, even if his is a political appointment."

Ramesh later corrected his remark to say that the ambassador is a career diplomat "which makes his comments even more shameful, disgraceful and completely unacceptable". The Congress functionary added: "He (Mishra) has actually breached service rules and should be sacked right away."

Meanwhile, two young professionals from Bihar joined Congress on Tuesday and extended their support to the party in Lok Sabha elections. While Prem Kumar Choudhary is a leader of Vikasheel Swaraj Party, Manish Yadav is an ophthalmologist. They joined Congress in the presence of the party's Bihar in-charge Mohan Prakash and state Congress president Akhilesh Prasad Singh.

ARMY PUBLIC SCHOOL Sector-37, Arun Vihar, Noida-201303 (U.P.) Ph: 0120-2430430 / 32 / 65, Email: apsnoida@wesindia.edu.in

पावर ट्रांसमिशन कारपोरेशन ऑफ उत्तराखण्ड लि 400 केवीओ परियालन एवं अनुसंधान मण्डल कार्यालय, श्रीनगर द्वारा "SHIFTING OF 66 KV KOTHIYALSAIN-JOSHIMATH TRANSMISSION LINE NEAR NTPC CAMPUS ANIMATH" कार्य हेतु आमंत्रित ई-निविदा सं - 30/SE(O&M)S/2023-24 के जमा करने की तिथि दिनांक 06.05.2024 को 17:00 बजे तक विस्तारित की जाती है जो कि दिनांक 07.05.2024 को 16:00 बजे खोली जायेगी। ई-निविदा सम्बन्धी अन्य नियम व शर्तें यथावत लागू रहेंगी। निविदा से सम्बन्धित विस्तृत जानकारी वेबसाइट www.uktenders.gov.in से प्राप्त की जा सकती है।

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED (See Section 82 Cr.Pc.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Soheli S/o Fariyad R/o 401, Gali No. 13 Khajuri Khas, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 75/2024 U/S 392/397/34 IPC, PS Kotwali, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Soheli can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Soheli has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

By Order Sayesha Chadha Metropolitan Magistrate-08, Central Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

Appeal for Identification General Public is hereby informed that a boy dead body Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o: Unknown Age: Approx. 10-12 years, Height: 3'6", Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, was found dead boy in naked condition in Munak Nahar Near NCC Bhawan Badli Water Head Delhi on 12.04.2024. In this regard, a DD No. 12-A, dated 12.04.2024 has been lodged at PS Samaipur Badli, Delhi.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION General public is hereby informed that one unidentified dead body of male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 25 years, Height: 168cm, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Face: Round, Wearing: Not Known, who was admitted in AIIMS Hospital Delhi during treatment doctor declared brought dead. In this regard a case FIR/DD No. 114/24 dated. 11.04.2024 has been registered at PS: R.K. Puram, Delhi.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Kalyan Kumar S/o Mahesh Mehto R/o H.No. 56, Type-I Flats, Kali Bari Marg, New Delhi-110001 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence vide CC No. 534664/16 u/s 138 N.I. Act. P.S. Rajinder Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said Kalyan Kumar cannot be found and where as it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Kalyan Kumar has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Kalyan Kumar accused of CC No. 534664/16 u/s 138 N.I. Act. P.S. Rajinder Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on 17.05.2024.

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION General public is hereby informed that one male namely Unknown S/o Unknown R/o Unknown. Age about 30 years, Height 5'6" Complexion Shallow, Built thin, Face Oval ID Mark Scorpio (Bichhu) Tattoo on Right hand Wrist. wearing Black Colour Half T-Shirt, Black Colour Lower & Brown Colour Sandal in Feet was found dead at Street No. 6, F Block, Opposite Gauri Shankar Temple, Jaipur Extn Part-2, Khadda Colony, New Delhi on 11.04.2024.

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YSRCP MLC gets 18-month jail in 1996 Dalit youth tansure case

Visakhapatnam/Rajahmundry: An SC/ST court in Visakhapatnam convicted YSRCP MLC Thota Trimurthulu Tuesday in a case of tansuring two Dalit youths on Dec 29, 1996, report Nalla Babu & Samson Raj. He and eight others were sentenced to 18 months of imprisonment and fined Rs 42,000 each for the assault that happened 27 years ago.

Trimurthulu is the party's candidate for Mandapet assembly seat in Konaseema district of Andhra. The state voters in simultaneous Lok Sabha and assembly polls on May 13.

Despite the conviction, Trimurthulu's position as a member of AP legislative council remains unaffected as the court suspended the sentence to allow him to appeal the order in a higher court. This ruling prevents his disqualification, as those convicted for two years or more face disqualification from contesting polls.

Trimurthulu, a former TDP MLA and now a member of YSRCP, said he would appeal the verdict before HC. "Even after the case against me, I was elected MLA thrice," he added.

Shah: Laptops have replaced stones in hands of J&K youth

'Earlier Govts Gave Youth Guns, Killed Them In Encounters'

Sanjay Khajuria & Gaurav Talwar | TNN

Jammu/Dehradun: Union home minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that BJP's lotus would bloom in J&K "on its own" as the Narendra Modi gov't had earned people's love and faith by restoring peace in the UT and initiating the development it sorely lacked for decades. Later in Uttarakhand, he said Modi gov't would implement UCC in its third term.

"Under PM Modi, gov't crushed Pakistan-sponsored terrorism, curbed stone-pelting, and nullified Article 370. Laptops have replaced stones in the hands of J&K youth," Shah said, contrasting it with what Congress, National Conference and PDP did for the erstwhile state.

He alleged that all three parties exploited the youth of J&K. "They did not allow democracy to grow in J&K. Their govts gave guns to



Amit Shah during a public meeting in Jammu on Tuesday

youth and then killed them in fake encounters." Shah, who was campaigning for BJP's Jammu-Reasi candidate Jugal Kishore Sharma in Roop Nagar, said the Modi gov't was more interested in people's welfare than anything else. "J&K slipped into backwardness due to terrorism and agitations over the past 70 years. Modi paved the way for development."

Referring to PDP chief and ex-CM Mehbooba Mufti's remark that nullifica-

tion of Article 370 would trigger a bloodbath in J&K, leaving none to hoist the Tricolour, Shah said the past four-and-a-half years had proved otherwise.

"Article 370 is gone. Now, the Tricolour is touching the skyline across J&K. Modi fulfilled the dream of Syama Prasad Mookerjee, who made the supreme sacrifice on this land for his slogan of 'Ek desh mein do vidhan, do pradhan aur do nishan nahi challenge' (you can't have two sets of laws, two premiers,

and two flags)," he said. Shah said the nullification of Article 370 restored rights to various sections of society, including women, STs, SCs, and OBCs.

He dispelled rumours that the Modi gov't was delaying assembly polls in J&K, declaring that elections would be held before Sept 30, the deadline set by Supreme Court. "Nobody should have any doubt on this," PTI quoted the home minister as saying.

At a rally in Uttarakhand's Kotdwar in support of BJP candidate Anil Baluni, Shah praised CM Pushkar Singh Dhami for implementing UCC in the state. "The PM has now promised to follow Uttarakhand's example in his third term," Shah said.

He attacked Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge for alleging that the PM would end reservation during his third term. "Modiji is the staunchest advocate of reservation," Shah said.

After Kejriwal, wife is No. 2 on AAP list of Guj star campaigners

Ambika.Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Marking her debut in active political campaigning in the upcoming Lok Sabha polls, the Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday announced that Sunita Kejriwal — wife of Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal — will be a star campaigner for the party in the Lok Sabha polls in Gujarat.

Her name figures at the top immediately after Arvind Kejriwal on a list of 40 star campaigners for the state. Kejriwal was arrested by ED on March 21 in a money laundering case linked to the now-scrapped Delhi excise policy and is currently lodged in Tihar jail.

Gujarat goes to polls on May 7. Of the 26 Lok Sabha seats in Gujarat, AAP is fighting two — Bharuch and Bhavnagar — as part of the INDIA bloc, while its ally Congress is contesting the remaining 24 seats. AAP has fielded sitting MLAs Chaitar Vasava from Bharuch and Umesh Makwana from Bhavnagar.

Sunita had marked her first big presence at the INDIA



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Alliance show of unity on March 31 where in her maiden political speech, Sunita read out a message purportedly written by her husband from the ED's custody. Since the Delhi CM and AAP national convenor was arrested, his Sunita has been seen reading out his messages in digital press conferences and conveying it to party leaders and MLAs.

The list of star campaigners submitted to the Election Commission of India also includes name of former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and former health minister Satyendar Jain. They too are currently lodged in Tihar jail. By putting their names on the list, AAP has reiterated its position since the arrest of Kejri-

wal that he remains the face of the party. While Sisodia is in jail in the same case, Jain is lodged in prison in a separate money laundering case.

The list also has names of AAP's senior leaders — Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann, Rajya Sabha MPs Sandeep Pathak, Sanjay Singh and Raghav Chadha who has been out of action for quite some time now as he underwent an emergency eye surgery in London at the end of March and was asked to rest for about three weeks. He is yet to return.

Reacting to the list of star campaigners, Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "In the list released by 'AAP', the name of Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, is second, and the name of the CM of Punjab is on the third place while the party's general secretary Sandeep Pathak is on the fifth. Accusing AAP of indulging in nepotism, Kapoor claimed that the list indicates clearly that Kejriwal's wife "is now more important than the CM of Punjab and the party's general secretary."

After HC relief, BJP fields Ray for Rourkela seat

Bhubaneswar: BJP Tuesday named former Union minister Dilip Ray as its candidate for Rourkela assembly seat, days after Delhi HC stayed his conviction in a 1999 case of alleged irregularities in a coal block allocation, reports Ashok Pradhan.

"There is a clear wave for PM Modi. I am thankful to the PM and home minister Amit Shah for reposing faith in me. We will fight elections with development as the main plank," Ray said. BJP announced a fresh list of 21 candidates for assembly election on Tuesday, which includes five recent turncoats fromBJD.

Shivaji's descendant in BJP's 12th list

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: BJP on Tuesday announced its 12th list of candidates, including Abhijit Das Bobby who will challenge incumbent TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee in West Bengal's Diamond Harbour and Anita Som Prakash who has replaced her spouse and sitting member Som Prakash, also a Union minister, in Punjab's Hoshiarpur.

A prominent name on the list is Chhatrapati Udayanraje Bhosale, the 13th descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, from Satara in Maharashtra. Bhosale, who crossed over from NCP to BJP in 2022, will be aiming for redemption after losing the seat to NCP in a byelection.

Other candidates de-



Chhatrapati Udayanraje Bhosale, the 13th descendant of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, has been nominated from Satara

All in the family: 2 Chautalas face each other in Hisar, another likely to enter fray

Two members of former deputy PM Devi Lal's family will face each other at Hisar in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. JJP on Tuesday nominated his grandson's wife, Naina Chautala, as party candidate from Hisar. BJP has already nominated Devi Lal's son Ranjit Singh Chautala from the seat, reports Ajay Sur.

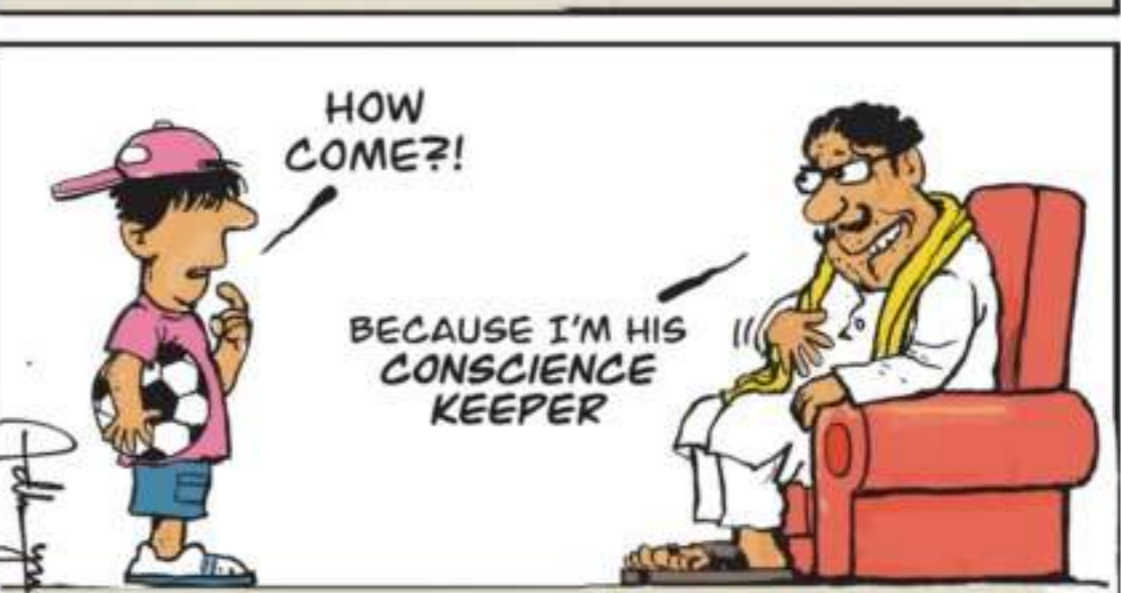
Naina is the mother of former deputy CM Dushyant Chautala and wife of Ajay Chautala. Ajay is Devi Lal's grandson and elder son of former Haryana CM and INLD patriarch O P Chautala.

Ranjit Singh Chautala is the brother of O P Chautala. The contest in Hisar could have another Chautala in the fray if O P Chautala-led INLD fields Sunaina Chautala, the daughter-in-law of Devi Lal's other son Pratap Singh Chautala.

rat Kaur Badal, the 2019 winner, in Bathinda. Manjeet Singh Manna Miawind was named from Khadoor Sahib.

BJP has brought back Abhijit Das Bobby who was routed by Banerjee in Diamond Harbour in 2014. He had garnered around 16% of

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL SANDEEP ADHWARYU



Chhindwara journo held on BJP candidate's 'fake clip' plaint

Bhopal: A journalist was arrested in Chhindwara on Tuesday for allegedly being involved in the circulation of a "fake" video of BJP candidate Vivek Bunty Sahu.

It is in connection with this case that police had gone to Congress stalwart Kamal Nath's house on Monday to question his long-time aide RK Miglani. Police say Miglani has been allowed five days to reply to the notice served to him and present himself at a police station.

The police action is based on Sahu's complaint of April 10 in which he claimed that a fake video, created using artificial intelligence, was being circulated to tarnish his image ahead of the Lok Sabha poll.

Chhindwara goes to polls in the first phase on Friday. Kamal Nath's son, sitting MP Nakul Nath, is Congress's candidate.

On April 13, local journalist Sudesh Nagvanshi lodged an FIR alleging that scribe Sachin Gupta and Miglani tried to involve him in circulating the video and offered Rs 30 lakh. TNN

Cong 'guarantee cards' amount to bribery, stop distribution: BJP to EC

Mohua.Chatterjee@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: BJP approached Election Commission on Tuesday, urging the panel to stop Congress' "Ghar Ghar Guarantee" outreach to people, slamming the opposition party's poll campaign initiative as a corrupt practice amounting to bribery.

BJP said the initiative was unveiled on April 3 by Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge and its workers are distributing "guarantee cards" to households, presenting them application papers for accessing the party's promised benefits. "To further confound the wrong, the cards bear promissory signatures of prominent leaders of Indian National Congress, namely Rahul Gandhi and Mallikarjun Kharge, as an official endorsement," stated BJP's communication to the poll panel.

BJP claimed that such an initiative was akin to manipulation of voters' trust and misrepresentation of guarantee cards as legitimate instruments for accessing promised "freebies, largesse and utopian promises".

"Allowing such practices openly contradicts the principles of free and fair elections, and sets a prece-

My guarantee as trusted as Modi's: Ajit at Baramati

Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar said during a campaign rally in Baramati on Tuesday that people trust his guarantee the way citizens across the country trust Prime Minister Narendra Modi's. He said both these guarantees must be clubbed to get works in Baramati Lok Sabha constituency completed with help from the central gov't.

Pawar said the constituency has not received any funds from the Centre during the last 10 years when his cousin, Supriya Sule, was MP. TNN

dent where only registered political supporters may be entitled to government schemes, and not the remaining ones," the BJP complaint to EC said.

The party told EC to "immediately restrain Congress from publishing, disseminating and distributing 'Guarantee Cards' or any such material aimed to promote electoral bribery and inducement of voters". It also sought registration of criminal cases against Congress members distributing the cards.

No irregularity in dissolution of Maulana Azad Foundation: HC

New Delhi: Delhi high court on Tuesday upheld Centre's decision to dissolve Maulana Azad Education Foundation (MAEF), holding that gov't is already carrying out welfare schemes for minorities.

"The decision to dissolve MAEF has been duly taken by the general body of MAEF and this court finds no impropriety or irregularity in the process. It cannot be said that the interest of the minority communities for their educational and welfare development is being hampered in any manner," said a bench of acting chief justice Manmohan and justice Manmeet PS Arora.

Syeda Saiyidain Hameed, John Dayal, and Daya Singh filed a PIL challenging the closure of MAEF that was set up in 1989 to provide assistance to students belonging to educational backward minorities. TNN

In first campaign ban this poll, EC bars Surjewala for 48 hrs over Hema remark

New Delhi: Election Commission Tuesday reprimanded Congress functionary Randeep Surjewala over his alleged derogatory remarks against BJP MP Hema Malini and barred him from campaigning for 48 hours. This is the first campaign ban imposed by the poll body in this Lok Sabha election cycle.

EC had last Tuesday issued a show-cause notice to Surjewala for his alleged "undignified, uncivilised and vulgar" remarks against Malini.

In his reply to the show-cause notice, the Congress general secretary maintained that the video cited by BJP was "doctored". EC rejected his claim and said the district returning officer of Kaithal had noted that the Congress functionary had made the remarks on March 31 at Faral village under Pundri assembly segment and the entire speech was videographed by the video surveillance team.

The poll watchdog told him that it was convinced that he had made the said statement and thus violated provisions of the model code of conduct.

"The commission without prejudice to any order/notice issued or to be issued subsequently to him in the matter relating to MCC violations, hereby, strongly condemns the impugned statement made by him during the election campaign held in Haryana and reprimands Randeep Surjewala for the misconduct," the EC order stated.

Using its constitutional powers under Article 324, EC barred Surjewala from holding any public meetings, public processions, public rallies, road shows and interviews, public utterances in media (electronic, print, social media) in connection with ongoing elections for 48 hours from 6pm on April 16.

In its notice, EC said that on careful examination, the comments were found to be "highly undignified, vulgar and uncivilised" and to be prima facie violative of the provisions of the MCC and the poll panel's advisory issued to parties last month. TNN

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BY virtue of an affidavit sworn before the Executive Magistrate MALKANGIRI on Dated 21st September 2023, I, Mr. PAWANJEET ROUT, Address : AT- PUSUGUDA Post- KALIMELA DIST- MALKANGIRI ODISHA - declared that I have changed my name from "MUNA RAUTA" to "PAWANJEET ROUT". Henceforth, I shall be known as "PAWANJEET ROUT" for all purposes. PAWANJEET ROUT

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50% of LS candidates of both NCP factions are turncoats

Prarfulla.Marpakwar@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: BJP functionary Dhairyasheel Mohite-Patil leads the list of defectors from Maharashtra who have secured nomination for the LS polls. While Dhairyasheel is among those who quit BJP and there have been defections from Shiv Sena as well, the two groups of NCP have depended on turncoats for 50% of their seats — of 10 seats allotted to Sharad Pawar-led faction, five have gone to defectors, while Ajit Pawar-led NCP, which is contesting four, has given two to those who switched camps.

Once closely associated with Sharad Pawar, the influential Mohite-Patil family from Madha and Solapur

THE DEFECTOR COUNT

NCP (SP) nominees
Dhairyasheel Mohite-Patil | Left BJP, nominated from Madha
Nilesh Lanke | Left NCP, nominated from Ahmednagar
Shriram Patil | Left BJP, nominated from Raver
Bajrang Sonawane | Left NCP, nominated from Beed
Amar Kale | Left Cong, nominated from Wardha
NCP nominees: Shivajirao Adhalaro Patil | Left Shiv Sena, nominated from Shirur
Archana Patil | Left BJP, nominated from Dharashiv
led by former deputy CM Vijaysingh Mohite-Patil became associated with BJP in the run-up to 2019 LS polls. However, they later felt the

family was being sidelined, legislator Ranjeet Singh Mohite-Patil was not included in the cabinet, and none was being considered for a LS nomination from Madha. So Dhairyasheel, nephew of Vijaysingh Mohite-Patil, knocked at the doors of Sharad Pawar and expressed his desire to join NCP (SP). As the catch was going to be a big one, Pawar immediately accepted the proposal and declared Dhairyasheel's nomination from Madha.

Partner legislator Nilesh Lanke was closely associated with Ajit Pawar, but a week ago, he decided to quit his faction of NCP and join NCP (SP). He has been nominated from Ahmednagar against Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil's son and sitting MP Sujay Vikhe Patil.

Gratifications to voters will kill democracy: HC

K.Kaushik | TNN

Madurai: Madras high court on Tuesday sought follow-up details from the state election commission on cases registered for distribution of cash to voters during 2019 Lok Sabha and 2021 state assembly elections.

Justice B Pugalendhi asked how many cases were registered, what stage these were in, and details of cases that ended in conviction, if any. He requested the election commission to explain how it was following up on the cases registered for electoral offences, and to offer suggestions, if any, for effective prevention of gratification to voters.

Court was hearing petitions filed by people seeking to quash final reports filed against them in the alleged distribution of money to voters during 2011 polls. "Democracy is the basic principle in our Constitution. Of late, gratifications are being made to electors in the form of money, food, prizes, etc. Such gratifications would demolish the basic structure of the Constitution and democracy," justice Pugalendhi observed.

He said it appears the legislature has not treated the offence proportionate to its gravity, but as an offence punishable with up to one year of imprisonment. As a result, distribution of cash and gifts to voters has increased, he said. Citing newspaper reports that Rs 4,650 crore has been seized for the upcoming elections, court said it was higher than the amount recovered during the entire poll in 2019.

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How women can overcome professional barriers & walk career talk

With organisations embracing DEI, the Indian woman professional has been getting opportunities to boost her career in the last decade-and-a-half. But was she able to leverage her career to its full potential? The answer is a 'no'. Here are the reasons for the wide gender gap in workforce participation in urban India

By Saundarya Rajesh

The urban female labour force participation rate in the age group 15 to 59 years was 26.5% in 2021-22, while the number for men was 81.2%, according to a report titled 'Female Labour Utilisation in India' released by the ministry of labour and employment.

This is a result of two major barriers women face as they strive for a successful career:

Lack of Clarity: On 'career intentionality', women score much lower than men, shows research by consulting firm Avtar. Career intentionality refers to periodic strategic steps that one must take to progress steadily in his/her career. Men tend to invest time and effort in continuous learning, networking, building good relationships with their managers and developing a long-term career plan. But a lot of women are unclear about their professional priorities and find it difficult to define their career objectives.

Apathy Towards Career: Another contributor to low career intentionality is the inadequacy of hunger for professional growth, shows the research. This results in women either quitting when challenges arise or accepting the status quo and taking no action to grow in their careers. Women face these psychological obstacles as they often view jobs as temporary roles for sustenance or diversion, and do not consider their career holistically. There are multiple reasons for this from conditioning, childhood experiences, career interruptions, managing a heavy



workload (at home and in the workplace) and the resulting burnout, to name a few.

So, how can the Indian woman professional overcome these barriers and optimise her career?

Self-Reflection: As the first step, they need to have a meaningful conversation with themselves. Why do they want to work? What are their core values? What are their aspirations? Are their values and aspirations aligned? Where do they see themselves five years from now? What steps should they take

to achieve their long-term career goals? Getting clarity on these points is important for women to set effective goals & actively pursue them.

Build Allies: As the next step, holding conversations with people around — both at home and in the workplace — is an effective way women can harness their support. Tapping into others' backing is critical for career success for anyone. They should not hesitate to talk to their partner about the 'chore-gap' at home or from initiating conversations with their manager

about the kind of support they need at work. It could be about work flexibility or childcare. Speaking up is key. Boosting women's workforce participation requires everyone's involvement — we need men to take on more household and be solid allies to women in the workplace. We need organisational leaders to make DEI a core foundation of their organisations and offer women suitable enablers to succeed. The Indian woman professional must lead from the front.

(The writer is founder-president, Avtar)

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- * The school reserves the right to treat any post deemed cancelled.
- * Only the short-listed candidates shall be called for the interview.
- * Apply latest by 27th April, 2024, application form is available online at bbpsmn.balbharati.org (School Website) and at school reception on all working days between 8:30 am and 1:30 pm.

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Advt. No. Admn/Rect/2024/25 Dated: 13 Apr 2024

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Adv. No.: 145/VMSB-UTU/2024 Date: 16.04.2024
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In continuation to Adv.No.4503/VMSB-UTU/2024 dated 07.03.2024 the last date for receipt of applications for the Post of Director in two autonomous Institutes of Govt of Uttarakhand (i) Bipin Tripathi Kumaon Institute of Technology, Dwarahat (ii) Govind Ballabh Pant Institute of Engineering and Technology, Pauri-Garhwal in the pay Level-14, Entry pay Rs. 144200/- plus allowances is extended to 20th May 2024. The appointment will be for a period of 3 years or the upper age limit as prescribed by State Govt. whichever is earlier on contractual basis by the Board of Governor of respective Institute with the approval of Uttarakhand State Government. Essential qualifications and experience will be as prescribed by AICTE. The duly filled application on prescribed format along with relevant documents & application fee should be sent by Registered/Speed post to "The Registrar, Veer Madho Singh Bhandari Uttarakhand Technical University, Prem Nagar, Suddhowala, Dehradun-248007 (Uttarakhand)" so as to reach by 20th May 2024, 5:00 PM. Incomplete applications and applications received after the last date will be summarily rejected. For details visit University website www.uktech.ac.in. Registrar

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Interested Candidates may send their resume with required documents as per NMC Norms within 20 days of the publication of this advertisement by Post: "The Principal's Office, Administrative Block, S.G.R.R. Institute of Medical & Health Sciences, Patel Nagar, Dehradun-248001"

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Salman case 'shooters' lured with 'crime world fame' bait

Cops May Seek Bishnoi Custody From Tihar Jail

Continued from P 1

Unit 9 of the crime branch team led by inspector Daya Nayak arrested the accused from Bhuj and produced the accused before the 37th Metropolitan Magistrate and sought their police custody. The duo has been booked under the Indian Penal Code for attempt to murder and criminal conspiracy as well as the Arms Act, and remanded to police custody till April 25. Lawrence and Anmol have been shown as accused in the case.

Police are likely to move court to seek Lawrence's police custody from Tihar jail and open a look out circular (LOC) against Anmol, who is based in Canada and who is a key accused in recruiting the two youths as well as claiming responsibility for the firing and indirectly issuing threats to Khan through social media.

Chief minister Eknath Shinde visited actor Khan's



One of the accused who opened fire outside Salman's residence being produced at Esplanade court in Mumbai on Tuesday

residence on Tuesday and said stringent action will be taken against those involved in the firing and that he has instructed city police commissioner to strengthen security cover for Khan and his family.

Police said Anmol reportedly told the duo if they succeeded in firing two full magazines of bullets into Khan's home, they would not only get fame in the world of crime, but would also be suitably rewarded.

Lakshmi Gautam, joint commissioner of police (crime) said, "While Vicky is Class 10 pass, Sagar is Class 8 pass and we are checking their antecedents if they have any previous cases.

Both hail from Champaran in Bihar. The accused have carried out the firing at the behest of Lawrence Bishnoi for monetary consideration and prima facie investigation suggest that the accused have done three to four reces and were spotted near Taj Land's end at Bandra."

Gautam said they are also exploring whether Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) can be invoked in the case.

"Anmol who was communicating with the two accused had asked them to fire at least two full magazines of bullets (one magazine contains five bullets) into Khan's home and they were told just to frighten him and not to harm anyone. On Saturday and stayed the whole night roaming at Bandstand until 4.51 am when they moved towards Khan's apartment and fired four rounds from a slowly moving bike. While four bullets were fired smoothly, the fifth got stuck and accidentally fell live. They fled from the scene of crime," said a police source.

"We are trying to identify the person who had delivered the weapon and cash to the accused on behalf of Anmol," said an officer.

Mum cops scramble to take credit for 'cracking the case'

The arrests of two suspects from Gujarat on Tuesday for allegedly firing at actor Salman Khan's Bandra residence on Sunday saw different agencies trying to take the credit for "cracking the case", reports **Ahmed Ali**.

Immediately after Mumbai crime branch announced a press conference on the arrests on Tuesday, Bandra police, which had initially registered an offence against the accused, were quick to call it a "joint operation".

Bandra police said the crime branch had succeeded in arresting the duo only after they had provided basic information. Crime branch officials rubbish this, saying after home department transferred the case to them, local police held back information. Meanwhile, Bhuj police issued a press note stating, "Based on technical work and activation of private network information received, we arrested them and handed over them to Mumbai crime branch."

Step-aunt gets 20-yr RI in Pocco case for sexually assaulting boy

Dehradun: A special Pocco Act court in Dehradun sentenced a 30-year-old woman to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment (RI) on Tuesday after finding her guilty of sexually assaulting her 16-year-old step-nephew in 2022, reports **Pankul Sharma**.

This conviction under Pocco Act is the first of its kind in Uttarakhand and a rare instance in the country.

Prosecution counsel Alpna Thapa said the convicted woman is married with two children and is the survivor's father's step-sister.

"After a physical relationship with her step-nephew for months, she became pregnant and gave birth to a child. On finding out about her pregnancy, the boy's mother filed an FIR against her at Vasant Vihar police station in Dehradun on July 5, 2022. At that moment, she was eight months pregnant," Thapa added.

The prosecution presented the forensic scientific lab report which confirmed the boy as the "newborn's biological father".

According to the boy's father, the convicted woman was experiencing "discord" with her husband, leading her to shift to his house in 2021.

Centre determined to end Red menace: Shah on C'garh op

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congratulating security forces for the successful operation in which at least 29 Naxals were killed in Chhattisgarh's Kanker district on Tuesday, Union home minister Amit Shah said the Modi gov't was determined to free the country from the scourge of Naxalism.

"Today, a large number of Naxalites have been killed in the operation of security forces in Chhattisgarh. I congratulate all the security personnel who made this operation successful and wish for the speedy recovery of brave policemen who have been injured," Shah wrote on X.

Stating that Naxalism was the biggest enemy of development, peace and the bright future of youth, Shah added, "Under the leadership of PM Modi, we are determined to free the country from the scourge of naxalism."

Shah said due to the offensive policy of gov't and the efforts of security forces, naxalism had been confined to a small area now and soon Chhattisgarh and the entire country would be Naxal-free.

Sources said three security personnel — two BSF inspectors and a DRG trooper — were injured in the gunfight.



An ambulance near the site of the encounter in Kanker on Tuesday

3 jawans injured in encounter

Tuesday's operation was put together after Chhattisgarh police learnt that a large group of Maoists from 'North Bastar' and 'Marh' divisions were camping in Kanker, Bastar Range IG P Sundarraj said, reports **Rashmi Drolia**.

MHA also chipped in, sharing five key intel inputs, including one that specified the exact grid location of where the 'North Bastar' division was camping.

Three jawans suffered gunshot injuries in the fierce encounter and choppers were called in to evacuate them. However, they couldn't initially land at the battlezone. The three were administered first aid before they were flown out in another chopper that had night-landing capability.

Chhattisgarh deputy CM Vijay Sharma, who is also the home minister, said: "It's because of the guiding force of Amit Shah that Maoists have suffered such heavy casualties. Police officers and security forces are highly motivated and have been striking hard." While claiming that Maoists will be eliminated from Bastar, Sharma iterated his offer of dialogue with them, saying: "Be it one person, a small group or a large group of cadres, our gov't is ready to speak with them. By holding talks, we can find solutions to the problem and every village will get to see development. So many villages have no water and basic facilities. This must be addressed."

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1	Ajmer Unit	OP & BD	29.04.2024
2	Ahmedabad Unit		10.05.2024
3	Corporate Office		17.05.2024

For detailed advertisement including place of interview, eligibility criteria, remuneration etc. and Corrigendum/Addendum if any, please see DFCCIL official website - i.e. www.dfccil.com.

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RECRUITMENT NOTICE

EESL invites applications for the position of **Head (HR)**. Details w.r.t eligibility criteria, selection mode, online application etc. shall be made available on EESL website www.eeslindia.org from 17th April, 2024.

EdCIL (India) Limited
(A "MINI RATNA CATEGORY" CPSE UNDER MINISTRY OF EDUCATION)
EdCIL House, 10A, Sector-16A, Noida-201301 (UP)
Tel No.: 9129-4196001-02 (EPABX), Website: www.edcilia.com

Recruitment for various categories/positions for Technical Support Group-Malviya Mission Teacher Training Program (MMTTP)

On behalf of Ministry of Education, EdCIL invites on-line Applications from eligible candidates for **Chief Consultant** (01 position based at IITDM, Kancheepuram, Chennai). Senior Consultant (02 positions, both based at Delhi/NCR), **Consultant Category I** (02 positions- one position based at IITDM, Kancheepuram, Chennai and one position based at Delhi/NCR) and **Consultant Category II** (02 positions, both based at Delhi/NCR).

All positions mentioned above are purely on Contractual basis.

The complete details of vacancies, Educational Qualifications & Eligibility criteria are available on <https://www.edcilia.com/in/TCareers>

Online application form shall be available from 17th April 2024

The last date of receipt of online application is 30th April 2024 at 11:55PM

La Martiniere College, Lucknow - 226001

Advt No. 01/2024-25 Date: 17.04.2024

La Martiniere College, Lucknow is a residential cum day institution for boys. This Anglo-Indian, linguistic minority institution is 179 years old. Appointments to the College include duties for resident scholars. The College invites applications for the following posts:

- Vice Principal
- HOD, Junior School
- Assistant Teacher English, Hindi, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Robotics, Commerce, Accountancy, Economics, Geography, History, Music, Art and Preparatory teachers.
- Housekeeper, Warden, Museum Curator and Librarian.

Information regarding qualifications and requirements etc. may be accessed by clicking on www.lamartinierelucknow.org. All applications and documents must be uploaded via the College Website by clicking on the prescribed link for vacancies.

Apply on or by Saturday 27 April 2024

NTPC Limited
(A Govt. of India Enterprise)

RECRUITMENT ADVERTISEMENT ADDENDUM

Extension in Last Date of Submission of Online Application for the Post of Executive Director (Coal Mining).

This is with reference to Advertisement No. 08/24 published for inviting applications for the post of **Executive Director (Coal Mining)**. The last date of receipt of online application has been extended till **03.05.2024**.

Interested candidates should log on to our website careers.ntpc.co.in or visit careers section at www.ntpc.co.in for viewing the detailed eligibility criteria, full text of the advertisement and for applying. Only online mode of application will be accepted.

Leading India's Power Sector

NARCL
National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited
R. O.: Birla Centurion, Unit no. 01, 8th Floor, Century Mills, Pandurang Budhkar Marg, Worli, Mumbai-400 030
CIN: U67100MH2021GOI363511

Recruitment in the key position of National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL)

Applications are invited from Indian citizens for the following post on a Full-time basis

S. No.	Name of Post	No. of Position(s)	Employment Type
1	Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer	1	Full Time (on fixed term contract for a period of 3 years which may be renewed for an additional term at the discretion of the NARCL Board)

Eligibility criteria (age, qualifications, experience, job profile, etc.) and other details are available under the detailed advertisement in the National Asset Reconstruction Company Limited (NARCL) website www.narcl.co.in. Candidates are advised to go through the detailed advertisement, ensure their eligibility and other requirements, before applying.

Last Date for submitting Application only through e-mail: May 1, 2024

Place: Mumbai
Date: April 17, 2024

Bal Bharati Public School
(An Institution of the Child Education Society Regd.), Delhi
APCL IGSTPP-Jhari, Jhajjar, Haryana - 124141
Ph.: 01251-266590 E-mail: bbpsjharhi@balbharati.org

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Applications are invited from trained and experienced candidates with good academic record, excellent communication skills, proficiency in IT and Co-Curricular activities for the following posts:

- TGT (Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Hindi)**: Master's Degree in the subject with B.Ed from a recognized university.
- PRT (Mathematics, English, SST, Computer)**: Master's Degree with B.Ed from a recognized university
- Montessori Teacher - Assistant**: Bachelor Degree (B.A., NTT, B. Ed)
- PRT (Art & Craft)**: B. A. / M. A. (Fine Arts) & B. Ed or BFA/ MFA
- ATL Teacher**: B.E./ B.Tech (Electrical/ Electronics) with hands on experience.
- Special Educator**: M.A./ M.Sc (Psychology), B.Ed (Special Education), Diploma in ECCE.
- Sport Teacher (Male & Female)**: B.Ped/ M.Ped, Expertise in Basketball, Badminton/ Yoga.
- Part Time Coach**: Swimming, Badminton, Shooting, Chess, Music (Instrumental).

Specific Requirements:

- Experience of 3 to 5 years in a reputed institution.
- Preferably CTET Qualified & Age and eligibility as per CBSE norms.

APPLY TO THE PRINCIPAL, within 15 Days from the date of Advertisement on prescribed application form available on the school website bbpsjharhi.balbharati.org or the same can be collected from School Office w.e.f. 17.04.2024. The duly filled form is to be submitted in the school office between 09.00 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. on all working days.

Note: Accommodation (Post 1-7) in APCL premises, Electricity, Water and Medical benefits at subsidised rates will be provided to selected Candidates. Best Remuneration as per experience.

The school reserves the right to treat any post deemed canceled. **Principal**

NIMS UNIVERSITY
RAJASTHAN, JAIPUR

WALK-IN INTERVIEW FOR

- Process Associate
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Individual having experience of working in BPO/ Teleshopping / any other reputed university in admission team - fluency in English is must / candidate should have minimum graduate degree.

Salary: ₹ 6 Lakhs to 15 Lakhs per annum depending on experience

Preferences will be given to the candidate having experience of working in universities

Salary no bar for deserving candidates

INTERVIEW AT FOLLOWING LOCATION FROM 11:00 AM TILL 6:00 PM

Courtyard Gurugram Downtown
Address: Plot No. 27 B, Sector Road, B-Block, Sushant Lok-1, Sector 27 Gurugram Haryana - 122 002

Friday, 19th April, 2024

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Jaipur-303121 (Rajasthan)
www.nimsuniversity.org

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HC upholds rule to retire below-par judges at 50

Ahmedabad: Gujarat HC has upheld the compulsory retirement rule for non-performing or under-performing district judges at the age of 50, with the observation, "A member of the judicial service must possess the highest standards of rectitude, honesty and integrity."

Some of the judges of district court had challenged the rule in 2016, contending that it was in violation of Article 311 of the Constitution.

Rejecting this contention, the bench of Chief Justice Anirudh Agarwal and Justice Sunirudha Mayee observed, "The judges, at whatever level they may be, represent the State and its authority, unlike the members of the other services of the State. Judicial service is not merely an employment, nor are the judges merely employees. They exercise sovereign judicial power."

The petitioners had challenged the rule on various grounds, one of them being the short tenure to perform. When the petitioner judges based their arguments on job security, HC asserted that judicial service is distinct from any other gov't service.

21 yrs on, HC relief for babu over abusive language

Cuttack: Quashing criminal proceedings initiated against an IAS officer nearly 21 years ago for remarks made against a lawyer, Orissa HC recently observed that "abusive and insulting language, not amounting to defamation, is not actionable", and also expressed concern over a "trivial" case stretching for two decades, reports **Lalmohan Patnaik**.

According to the case records, advocate Gobinda Patra was arguing a case on Aug 5, 2003, before T Wapang Ao, an Odisha cadre IAS officer then posted as Malkangiri sub-divisional magistrate. During the proceedings, when Patra raised objections to a request made by Ao citing procedural norms, the SDM allegedly raised his voice and said, "Shut up and get lost. Who are you to teach me the procedure?" Patra filed a complaint against Ao before the sub-divisional judicial magistrate of Malkangiri.

Justice S K Panigrahi said in his order that "no useful purpose would be served in permitting the trial court to proceed with the complaint, which lacks the basic ingredients and sanction to bring home the charges".

In 1st op as part of CMF, Navy seizes 940kg of drugs in Arabian Sea

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: As part of the multi-nation Combined Task Force-150, an Indian warship intercepted a suspicious dhow and seized 940 kg of illegal drugs in western Arabian Sea under Operation Crimson Barracuda.

Marine commandos of the multi-role frigate INS Talwar, which was mission-deployed for maritime security operations, boarded the dhow and seized 453 kg methamphetamine, 416 kg hash and 71 kg heroin on April 13.

"This is the first such operation conducted by an Indian warship after India joined Combined Maritime Forces (CMF) last Nov. Indian Navy's relentless efforts as a CMF partner reaffirms its commitment towards en-

surging a drug-free neighbourhood," an officer said.

CMF is a 42-nation naval partnership that aims to uphold the international rules-based order by promoting security and stability across 3.2 million square miles of water encompassing some of the world's most important shipping lanes.

"I commend the crew of INS Talwar for their efforts throughout this focused operation and their hard work has paid off with this seizure," CTF-150 commander and Royal Canadian Navy Captain Colin Matthews said.

"This seizure, the fourth of this focused operation, demonstrates the effectiveness of CMF, and of Indian Navy, in deterring and disrupting criminal and terrorist activities at sea," he added.

Manipur shifts Churachandpur SP days before Phase-1 polls

Guwahati: Gunmen positioned on hilltops fired at two fuel tankers near Keimei village on NH-37 in Manipur's Tamenglong district on Tuesday, wounding a driver in the leg. The highway connects Imphal with Silchar. Identity of the driver and the shooters remains unknown, police said.

The gunfire caused oil spillage on the road, prompting authorities to dispatch additional forces to the area.

This happened days before Manipur's first-phase

voting in Lok Sabha elections for its two seats.

On Monday, Manipur gov't transferred Churachandpur SP Shivanand Surve, who had suspended a head constable named Siamlalpai in Feb after he was allegedly seen with armed miscreants in a viral video. The suspension led to mob violence in the hill district, resulting in the death of two people as security forces fired to disperse an aggressive crowd.

Have regulatory powers to tackle exigencies, Centre tells SC

Continued from P 1

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta was responding to a question from the bench, also comprising Justices Hrishikesh Roy, A S Oka, B V Nagarathna, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, Ujjal Bhuyan, Satish C Sharma and Augustine G Masih, which had sharply criticised IDRA, 1951, saying the archaic legislation appeared regressive and reflective of licence raj days.

"Centre retains its regulatory power over industries, though it may not exercise it, to meet unforeseen exigencies arising from situations not within contemplation right now," he added.

Justice Roy asked, "What are the qualifications to be a member of this committee?" As Mehta and others realised it was a light-hearted question and said the members need not be proficient in the taste of alcohol, the CJI said, "They are members of 'The Bar'." Arguments will continue on Thursday.

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Back EVM-tampering claims with data, SC tells petitioners

On Paper Ballot, Says Human Intervention Leads To Problems



MAKING EVERY VOTE COUNT: It is the voters' right to know that their votes had been cast for the party they voted for and for which one had to look at the VVPAT slip, argued the petitioner's counsel

AmitAnand.Choudhary
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Hearing a clutch of petitions for discrediting electronic voting machines (EVMs), with days to go for Lok Sabha elections, Supreme Court said normally, human interventions led to problems and human weakness could be there. It said machines, involving no human intervention, would give proper and accurate results.

The court asked about the hardware and software of EVMs to get an idea whether it could be tampered with. It directed the Election Commission to place before it steps related to handling of EVMs from the start of polling to counting.

The court also asked the petitioners to back their arguments with data to show the possibility of machines being

tampered with. The arguments remained inconclusive and will resume on Thursday. Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for a petitioner, said it was the voters' right to know that their votes had been cast for the party they voted for and for which one had to look at the VVPAT slip. He said voters needed physical interface and verification. "Allow me to pick up the slip and put it in the box," he added.

The EC had earlier opposed the plea for cross-verifying the count in EVMs with VVPATs in all polling booths instead of five randomly selected polling stations in every assembly constituency as of now. In an affidavit, the commission had said it would be a regressive step and amount to going back to the ballot paper system which would be "prone to human error and mischief".

Poll code report card to curb insinuations from 'certain quarters': EC

Continued from P 1

The MCC report was also to ensure "that misgivings and insinuations at times coming from certain quarters, however small or limited, are addressed and stopped", Election Commission said.

Opposition had approached EC seeking restraining of poll-time raids, searches and arrests against rival parties and their leaders, describing them as instances of BJP "misusing central enforcement agencies". As reported by TOI earlier, EC after examining the issue concluded that it had little legal elbow room to intervene and direct the agencies to stop actions carried out as per their legal mandate which followed due legal procedure. It was of the opinion that any aggrieved party was free to go to court to seek legal remedy as was already being done in cases like the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

EC said it had, right at the outset of polling period, removed officers serving dual charge as principal secretary (home) or additional chief secretary to CMs. "Four of the six states where suo motu transfers were ordered by EC are governed by BJP," an EC functionary said. Offi-

cers including DGP West Bengal, non-cadre officers posted as DMs and SPs and those sharing familial relations with candidates were also suo motu replaced.

Taking a tough stand on utterances against dignity of women, EC had condemned such remarks and asked violators like Supriya Shrinate and Dilip Ghosh to be careful in future. It also wrote twice to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, asking him to restrain his party colleagues from making such undignified remarks, and sought details of the action taken.

EC said approximately 200 complaints were filed by various political parties and candidates across states. Of these, action was taken in 169 cases. While action was taken in 38 of 51 complaints received from BJP, 51 of 59 complaints filed by Congress and 80 of 90 complaints by other parties were also acted upon. "The action-taken rate for complaints by other parties is higher than that in complaints received from BJP," a commission functionary said.

EC recalled that it had met 16 delegations from seven parties during the past month. Such delegations also met CEOs at state/UT level. Total 2,68,080 complaints were on eCivil platform meant for citizens.

PM: Our rivals tried to tweak Constitution during Emergency

Continued from P 1

PM's statement came a day after RJD chief Lalu Prasad raked up alleged utterances by BJP and RSS functionaries that the party would change the Constitution if it received a two-thirds majority in Parliament.

PM Modi said neither he nor BJP would consider attempting such an abomination, adding that even Ambedkar couldn't have changed the Constitution

much so that they threaten not to accept the outcome of polls held under its provisions," he said.

In 2015, Lalu played on RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's call for a "review" of the Constitution as a threat to reservation for backward classes. BJP-led NDA lost in the assembly polls that year.

Modi criticised Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge for questioning the need for a Samvidhan Diwas (Constitution Day), saying it was part of the INDIA bloc's strategy of "building a narrative that if Modi comes to office, he would change the Constitution".

The rally in Gaya also served as an opportunity to placate disgruntled faces in NDA. Those on the dais with the PM included Pashupati Kumar Paras, who recently resigned from the Union Cabinet in protest against BJP purportedly favouring his estranged nephew Chirag Paswan. There was also Ashwini Kumar Choubey, who missed out on BJP's ticket for Buxar, which he has represented for two consecutive terms.

Modi said in both Gaya and Purnia that BJP's poll manifesto was an expression of its "vision and roadmap" for a "fully developed India by 2047". (With inputs from agencies)



BJP supporters holding masks of PM Modi at his public meeting in Gaya on Tuesday

he authored.

The PM reminded the gathering that contrary to allegations levelled against BJP, it was RJD's ally Congress that imposed the infamous Emergency decades ago, entailing the suspension of several constitutional rights and provisions.

"Our opponents are those who held the Constitution hostage and tried to tamper with it during Emergency. Those who want to confine governance to a family will always treat the Constitution with disdain—so

Centre sets up panel to address issues of queer community

Ambika Pandit@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Centre has constituted a six-member committee to examine and recommend on various issues affecting queer community. This is in keeping with Supreme Court's judgment in Oct last year in which it examined the issue of same sex marriages. The top court had asked govt to form a committee to address the concerns of the queer community.

The order notified in the gazette on Tuesday by the law and justice ministry lays out a detailed mandate for the committee to make way for measures to ensure queer persons do not face any discrimination, threat of violence and involuntary medical treatment among other concerns.

While the Union cabinet secretary will be chairperson of this committee, secretary of the ministry of social justice and empowerment will be the convener. Secretaries of ministries of home affairs, women and child development, health and family welfare and legislative department of law and justice will be members. The committee has been given the mandate to co-opt experts and other officers if necessary.

Some of the things that the committee has been asked to examine and recommend on include what measures must be taken by the central and state govts to ensure there is no discrimination in access to goods and services and social welfare entitlements to persons from the queer community; steps to ensure that queer community does not face any harassment or coercion; to ensure that they are not subjected to involuntary medical treatments.

SC to Ramdev: Can't accept defence of ignorance of law

Continued from P 1

Ramdev replied that he did not have an understanding of law and it was done in ignorance and it was unbecoming of him to make such statements. He said the mistake would not be repeated. Talking in Hindi with the judges, he said Patanjali had conducted clinical trials of its products, which were very beneficial.

The bench, however, said there was a procedure to get his products recognised by a competent authority and it did not give him licence to criticise modern medicine. The court told him that his behaviour had been irresponsible. Noting that he had a legal team to assist him and the company, the bench said it could not accept his defence of ignorance of law.

"We cannot forget the history of the case. We passed three orders... You are not so innocent that you were not aware about the court orders," the bench said.

Thereafter, the bench interacted with Balkrishna who also apologised with folded hands. Their lawyer, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, told the bench that they would take steps to redeem themselves. He said they wanted to take steps voluntarily,

including issuing a public apology in the media to show contrition. Noting his submission, the court granted them one week and posted the matter for April 23. Ramdev and Balkrishna, who were present in court in the last three hearings, will have to appear before the court on the next date also.

The company and its promoters had to face the court's ire as Ramdev held a press conference just a day after the SC passed an order on Nov 22 in which the company's undertaking was recorded that it would eschew from misleading advertisements.

"Poovayya, learned senior counsel for respondent No.5 (Patanjali), on instructions, assures this court that henceforth there shall not be any violation of any law (s), especially relating to advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no causal statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form. Respondent No.5 is bound down to such assurance," the order had said.

Taking a strong view of violation of the undertaking, the Supreme Court had initiated contempt proceedings against Baba Ramdev and Balkrishna.

Aditya quit well-paying job to aim for a career in civils

Continued from P 1

Ruhani, who ranked 5th, had cleared Civil Services Exam 2022 and was allocated to Indian Police Service. She is also undergoing training at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVPNPA), along with all-India topper Aditya. Fourth-rank holder is P K Sidharth Ramkumar, an architecture graduate of Ernakulam, who had also cleared CSE in 2021.

Aditya quit his well-paying job at Goldman Sachs to aim for a career in the civil services. He told TOI that his decision was based on the realisation that he will be more content working at the grassroots level. "This was my third attempt. While preparing for CSE, rather than studying long hours, I focused on completing my assigned tasks for the day and setting targets," he shared, adding that his first choice will clearly be his home cadre, Uttar Pradesh.

Congratulating the successful candidates, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X that their efforts will shape the future of the nation in times to come. He also reached out to those who

couldn't make the cut, saying they have chances ahead to succeed while noting that India is rich with opportunities where talent can truly shine.

Top 20 candidates recommended by UPSC to various civil services like IAS, IPS, IFS etc based on CSE 2023, come from a cross-section of cities and towns across India. While sixth-rank holder Srishti Dabas hails from Delhi, No. 5 Ruhani is from Gurugram but a graduate from Delhi's St Stephen's College. At No. 18 and 20 are candidates from Noida. Those ranking from seventh to 20th positions belong to Jammu, Jaipur, Gorakhpur, Lucknow, Navi Mumbai, Jhansi, Meerut, Jhajjar, Bhopal, Jamshedpur and Bengaluru.

Total 1,016 candidates, including 664 men (65%) and 352 women (35%), were recommended by UPSC for appointment to civil services based on the 2023 exam.

Speaking to TOI, all-India No 2 Animesh Pradhan said he was working with Indian Oil Corporation since 2021, but decided to aim for a career in civil services. He said his preparation for CSE coincided with his mother's battle with cancer. She was with him right till his interview round, but succumbed a month ago.

Bullet to ballot: Democracy's giant strides in Maha's Maoist heartland

Partha.Maitra@timesgroup.com

Gadchiroli (Bhamragarh): Splinters flew past Vikas Kumbre, of Gardewara village, as multiple IEDs went off at noon along a booby-trapped stretch, just 6km off the Maoist headquarters of Abujmarh. This was during 2019 LS polls.

Fast forward to 2024. Kumbre considers himself lucky to be alive and witness the bustling electoral process at one of the 11 polling stations in a Maoist "liberated" corridor for the first time in 77 years. On Tuesday, helicopters hovered overhead, para-dropping poll officials & C-60 commandos for security measures.

Tucked away in Dandakaranya forests, these polling stations straddle 100km of the "Red corridor" hugging Chhattisgarh border, where villagers lived in fear until now and were denied the right to participate in the dance of democracy. TOI did a recce of four new polling stations on Maharashtra-Chhattisgarh border.

Conducting polls at the mouth of Abujmarh hills was impossible until a fortified police station was established this Jan at Gardewara—the last security frontier of Maharashtra in the Maoist belt. Residents of eight hamlets here were earlier given the option to trek 10km to the nearest booth in the relatively safer zone at Gatta, but many among the 650 voters preferred to stay home rather than be ambushed by insurgents. In 2019, repolling was held after four days at Gatta, after Maoists triggered serial blasts.

"We lost 15 commandos at Jam-bulkheda in 2019. This time, we are targeting zero casualties. Establishing 11 polling booths in the liberated zone is historic and a giant leap for democracy," said Gadchiroli SP Neelotpal. Security measures are



Tucked away in Dandakaranya forests, some polling stations straddle 100km of the 'Red corridor' hugging the Chhattisgarh border, where villagers lived in fear until now and were denied the right to participate in the dance of democracy

being intensified in 428 critical booths in Gadchiroli, located along the Maoist transit route connecting Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

Devaji Mattam, a local resident, highlighted the challenges faced by candidates. "There are no mobile towers and power supply is erratic or non-existent in these villages. Candidates fear to canvass here. They dispatch emissaries who run a silent campaign. We miss the polycophony of the mainland," he said.

Aheri, known for his high sensitivity, will host 10 polling stations for the first time, including locations like Pipri Burgi, Kudri, and Mendri. Gardewara, a particularly sensitive booth located 500m from a new police post, will be heavily guarded by two companies of central armed forces and 100 personnel from local police and reserve forces.

Commandos launched Tuesday an area domination exercise in the hills straddling the inter-state border to plug transit routes, particularly in Hikker, Murewada, and Pushkoti hamlets, which were once impenetrable Maoist zones.

Wangeturi police station, fortified with MAC walls and positioned near Abujmarh, serves as a crucial point to thwart guerrilla activities.

"Conducting polls in Wangeturi and Gardewara would be a challenge, but we will hold it efficiently with strategy, domination, and commando deployment," said Sandip Patil, IG, anti-Naxal operations.

In Kothi village, situated near Parlakota river and serving as a crossing point for voters from Poyarkothi hamlet, security personnel are deployed to ensure safety amid past cases of violence such as killing of a cop in Aug 2020. Around 150 central and state security personnel are stationed here to guard 990 voters from Kothi and 365 from Poyarkothi.

Dhodraj armed outpost in Bhamragarh tehsil presents plentiful challenges for conducting polls, with residents living in fear of Maoist reprisals. Security forces, aided by mine-sweepers, are conducting area domination exercises to neutralise potential threats and ensure safety of voters at Dhodraj.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
(Through e-tendering)
Name of work: Comprehensive Annual maintenance Contract of SSDAC of GG Tronics make for three years.
App. Cost of the work (₹) ₹1,82,68,227.24/- only
Bid Security (₹) ₹2,41,300/- only
Address of the office: Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-C, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi - 110 055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender: Tender uploading 16.04.2024/ closing date & time- 08.05.2024 upto 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.: See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi - 110 055.
Tender No. 558-Sig/16M/Tender/AMC/084/2024-Dated : 16.04.2024 1145/2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON SEE SECTION 82 Cr. PC
Where as complaint has been made before me that accused Ramnaresh Nishaad S/o Sh. Sitaram Nishaad, R/o Village - Gurugatta, PS-Nanpara, Distt- Behraich (UP). Present Address: Awaragard Footpath Ajmeri Gate, New Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case CC No. 19/2021 Date 11.09.2021 U/s 3RP(UP) Act at Railway Protection Force Post, Delhi Lahori Gate which is punishable and a warrant of arrest issued there upon has been returned unexecuted stating that the said accused Ramnaresh Nishaad can not be found and where it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Ramnaresh Nishaad has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Ramnaresh Nishaad is required to appear before this court to answer the complaint on 28.05.2024.
By order
Shri Chatinder Singh
Metropolitan Magistrate
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
1144/2024
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NORTHERN RAILWAY
PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON SEE SECTION 82 Cr. PC
Where as complaint has been made before me that accused Saddam @ Munna S/o Sh. Hafizul Rahmaan, age-32, R/o Village - Jai Nagar, PS-Mathurapur, Post-Nimtip, Ashram, Distt- Dakshin Chaubish pargana (West Bengal), Present Address: Jhuggi Jindal sarab theka ailyaku Masjid ke samne, chaman Vihar, Loni (Ghaziabad) UP has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case CC No. 12/2019 Date 04.11.2019 U/s 3RP(UP) Act at Railway Protection Force Post, Delhi Lahori Gate which is punishable and a warrant of arrest issued there upon has been returned unexecuted stating that the said accused saddam can not be found and where it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused saddam has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said saddam is required to appear before this court to answer the complaint on 02.08.2024.
By order
Shri Chatinder Singh
Metropolitan Magistrate
Tis Hazari Court, Delhi
1144/2024
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ODISHA MINING CORPORATION LIMITED
OMC House, Bhubaneswar-751001, Odisha
CIN: U13100OR1956SGC000313, www.omctd.in
No. 6602 /OMC/Persnl./2024
Date : 15/04/2024
ADDENDUM
In continuation to the Advertisement No. 91/OMC dated 14.03.2024, the last date of receipt of application for the post of Dy. General Manager (Security) in E-5 Grade & Manager (Security) in E-3 Grade, which was on 15.04.2024, is hereby extended up to 30.04.2024.
Candidates already applied against this Advt. need not apply again.
All other terms & conditions of the above advertisement shall remain unchanged.
Sd/-
Executive Director (P & A)

कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय
PIU
पटना नगर निगम, पटना
शुद्धि पत्र - 3
इस कार्यालय के पत्रांक-160, दिनांक-22.02.2024 द्वारा आमंत्रित निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना-20/PIU-PMC/2023-24, जिसका PR No.-018108(B&C)2023-24 है। जिसकी तिथियों में अपरिहार्य कारणवश निम्नांकित परिवर्तन किया जाता है। शेष शर्तें यथावत रहेंगी।
क्र० विवरणी पूर्व में निर्धारित तिथि एवं समय संशोधित तिथि एवं समय
1 निविदा प्रारंभ करने की तिथि एवं समय 15.04.2024 समय 10:00 बजे पूर्वाह्न से। 30.04.2024 समय 10:00 बजे पूर्वाह्न से।
2 संवेदक द्वारा निविदा अपलौड करने की अंतिम तिथि 30.04.2024 समय 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक। 15.05.2024 समय 3:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
3 Pre-Bid Meeting की तिथि एवं समय 18.04.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से 1:00 बजे अपराह्न तक। 04.05.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे से 1:00 बजे अपराह्न तक।
4 तकनीकी बौद्धि खोलने की तिथि 30.04.2024 समय 4:00 बजे अपराह्न। 15.05.2024 समय 4:00 बजे अपराह्न।
उक्त सूचना state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर भी देखी जा सकती है।
कार्यपालक अभियंता
PIU
पटना नगर निगम
लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- मतदान महात्योहार, बिहार है तयार

UNION TERRITORY OF JAMMU & KASHMIR
OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) DIVISION JAMMU EAST
E-MAIL : eastdivisionjammu@gmail.com
SHORT NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Short e-NIT No. 01 of 2024-2025/Jammu East Dated 12-04-2024
For and on behalf of the Lieutenant Governor, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with Union Territory of J&K, CPWD, Railways, MES and other State / Central Governments for each of the following works :-
Sl. No. Name of Work Name of Division Advertised Cost (Rs. Lakh) Earnest Money (in Rs.) Time Allowed for completion Time and date of opening of tender Class of Contractor
1 Regular maintenance of Garden area & Kitchen area at HLG Residence, 7-Akbar Road, J&K House 5-Prithviraj Road and J&K House Chanakypuri New Delhi incl. Maintn. of lawns / garden / kitchen garden and potted plants upto March 2025. PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East 43.84 600 2% of Advertised Cost 7 Upto March 2025 (1300 Hrs) on or after 20-04-2024 A & B
Head of Account : Non Plan
Position of AAA : Under Process
Position of Technical Sanction : Under Process
The Bidding documents Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen / downloaded from the departmental website <http://itktenders.gov.in> as per below schedule :-
1 Date of Issue of Tender Notice 12-04-2024
2 Period of downloading of bidding documents From 12-04-2024 to 19-04-2024 upto 1800 Hrs
3 Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting XXXXXXXX at XXXX Hrs. in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East
4 Bid submission Start Date 12-04-2024
5 Bid Submission End Date 19-04-2024 upto 1800 Hrs
6 Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online) 20-04-2024 on or after 1300 Hrs in the Office of Executive Engineer PWD (R&B) Division Jammu East
7 Date & time of opening of Financial Bids To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed
Sd/-
(Er. Satish Bhagat)
Executive Engineer
PWD (R&B) Division
Jammu East.
No. -254-64
Dated :- 12-04-2024
DIP No:DIPIJ-14524/15.04.2024



BATTLEGROUND INDIA | APRIL 19-JUNE 4, 2024

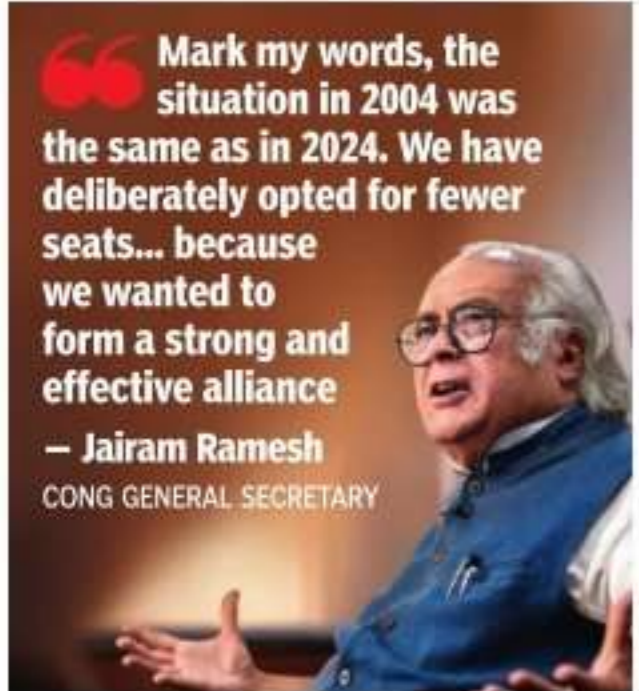
Cong contests fewer than ever, hopes less is more

Says It Formed Govt In 2004 Despite Dip In Seats Fought. List Even Shorter Now

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Reprising the old classic 'bees saal baad', Congress is gearing up to contest its lowest tally of seats ever in Lok Sabha elections. Announcing the fight plan on Monday, the grand old party drew parallels with 2004, when it had cut down on poll contests in favour of allies and gone on to remove the BJP-led NDA from office. It's hoping that the story will repeat itself after 20 years.

Congress is likely to fight around 330 seats in 2024 elections. That's a considerable drop from 2004, when



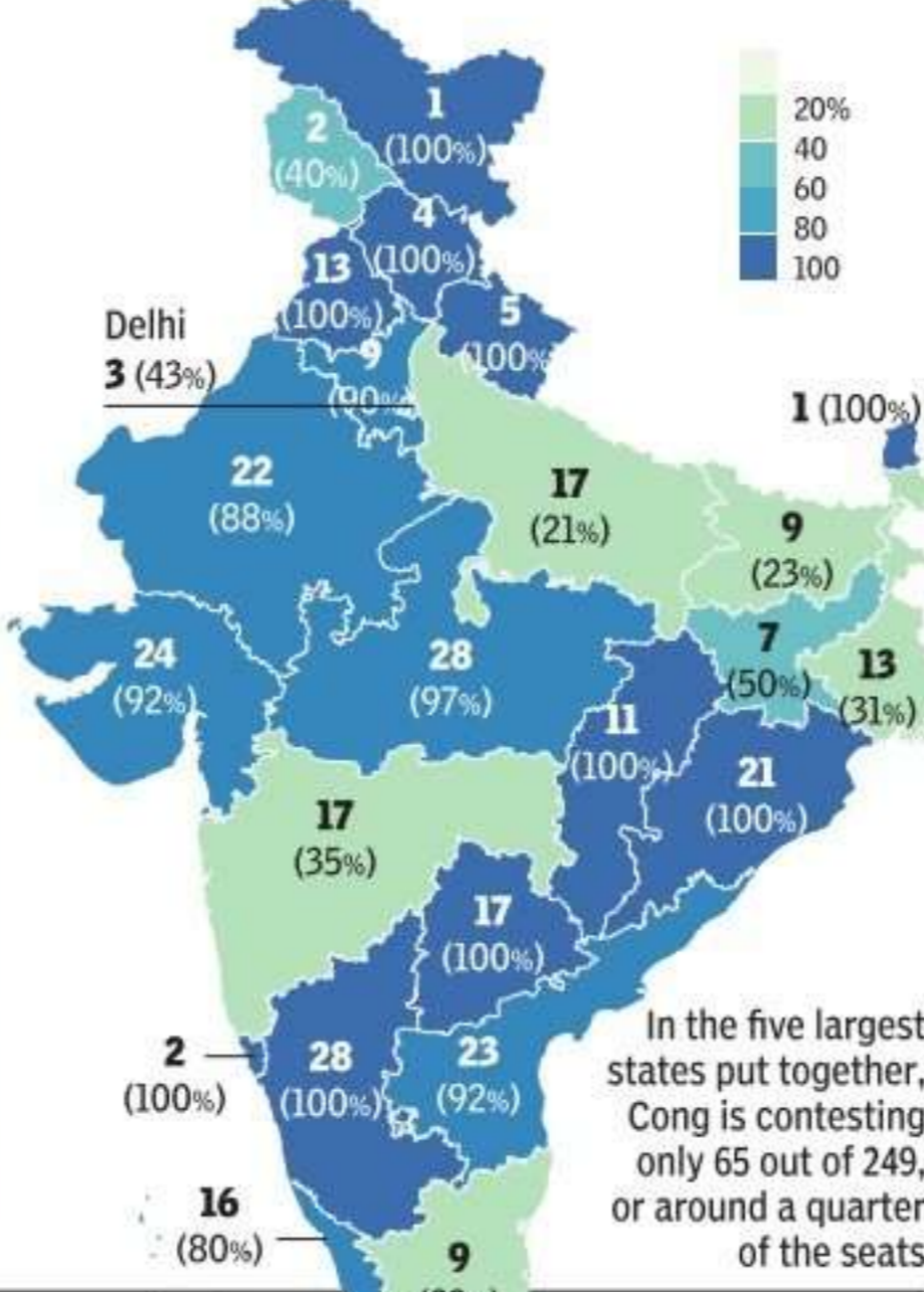
SEATS CONG CONTESTED SINCE 1951

It contested 78% of seats in 2019 and won 12% of them

Year	Contested	Won
1951	479	364 (76%)
1957	490	371 (76%)
1962	488	361 (74%)
1967	516	283 (55%)
1971	441	352 (80%)
1977	492	154 (31%)
1980	492	353 (72%)
1984-85	517	414 (80%)
1989	510	197 (39%)
1991-92	500	244 (49%)
1996	529	140 (26%)
1998	477	141 (30%)
1999	453	114 (25%)
2004	417	145 (35%)
2009	440	206 (47%)
2014	464	44 (9%)
2019	421	52 (12%)

PARTY CANDIDATES IN 2024

No. of seats and share in total seats



er bargaining muscle. This period has also been marked by the emergence of new regional parties and the strengthening of older local outfits, which have further shrunk its choices as it takes on BJP. For instance, Congress is fighting 23 seats in Andhra Pradesh, leaving one each for CPM and CPI.

But these numbers are notional since Congress has no chance in a state where TDP and the ruling YSRCP are the main players. Congress could not find any allies despite pressure from within to do so. Till even some months back, Congress was hopeful about the number of seats it would contest nationally. It had put off seat-sharing talks with INDIA bloc partners in the run-up to the Nov 2023 assembly polls in MP, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Telangana. Party strategists had hoped that its anticipated good show in the state

polls — where it was pitted in a direct fight with BJP — would increase its bargaining power and allow it to bargain for a higher number of seats with allies. However, that was not to be. The Congress debacle in northern states weakened its position with allies like RJD, NCP, Shiv Sena (UBT), SP, Left, etc., resulting in fewer seats for it to contest in Bihar, Maharashtra, UP and Bengal. The party's also had to join hands with AAP in Delhi, Gujarat and Haryana. Congress though believes that joining hands with allies — which it believes cannot align with BJP — has served to maximise its chances against the saffron brigade. "We have sacrificed very consciously. Because this is a very critical election, not just for the opposition but for the country," a senior office-bearer said.

SURROUND SOUND

For Hindu refugees in Assam, survival hinges on CAA

Rasendra Hajong was four when he, along with his family, fled religious persecution in East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) and entered India through Dalu border in 1965. He is 63 now, lives 55-odd km from Guwahati at Bamunigaon refugee camp, and is enlisted as an Indian voter. But his citizenship is under a cloud. Same is the case with more than 100 families at the camp, which was set up in the mid-1960s for Hindu refugees coming from East Pakistan.

After failing to make it to the National Register of Citizens (NRC) draft that was released in 2019, they have now pinned their hopes on Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). A total of 19.06 lakh people were left out of NRC, which identifies foreigners illegally living in Assam. Most of them had applied for necessary documents by submitting refugee registration certificates. But that proved futile for a large

number of refugees. In south Assam's Barak Valley, Maya Das (45), who was born in Cachar, has been left out of NRC as she has no documents to prove her lineage. "I was born in Digorkhal tea estate. My mother died in 1999, and father in 2007. Who will tell me where we came from?" asked the unlettered housewife. "She is a Hindu without any ancestral link in Assam. It can be assumed her family came from then East Pakistan. Is it possible to search for documents by crossing over to Bangladesh?" asked a local. CAA was implemented with LS polls around the corner and sparked a fresh outcry in Assam, where the issue of illegal foreign settlers is a sensitive one. Opposition parties, including Congress, have made it a major poll plank, saying it goes against the Assam Accord. Signed in 1985, the pact between the Centre and Assam govt was meant to address the foreigner issue.



Students signing a petition against CAA in Guwahati last month. — Kangkan Kalita

it had contested 417 seats, its lowest count till then. AICC spokesman Jairam Ramesh said its fight card had got squeezed this time to accommodate INDIA bloc partners in Maharashtra, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh. The party is not contesting as many seats in these states as it used to in the past due to the alliance with NCP-Shiv Sena, Left and Samajwadi Party.

"Mark my words, the situation in 2004 was the same as in 2024. We have deliberately opted for fewer seats in these three states because we wanted to form a strong and effective alliance. Congress and the INDIA bloc will get a clear verdict in these elections. We will not need any new parties and the flip-flopers of NDA will not have to do a volte-face again," Ramesh said. He

added that that would also lay the ground for all the regional parties of the North-East to ditch BJP and back Congress. Congress claims apart, the sharp fall in the number of seats the party is contesting is a direct result of its political marginalisation post-2014 and the rise of BJP under Narendra Modi. Over the last 10 years, Congress has seen its winnability nose-

dive in states like UP, Bihar, West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra, which together account for over 40% of total Lok Sabha seats. The slide in fortunes has forced Congress to opt for allies for meagre returns. The ceding of important party fiefs in Maharashtra and the failure to corner seats of its choice in Bihar are indicators of its weak-

In Lakshadweep, boats out to catch floating votes

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Tricolour flags flutter on the masts of boats in the backdrop of the bright turquoise sea as candidates try to find vessels to reach out to voters in the 10 inhabited islands of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep, which goes to polls in a single phase on April 19.

Sitting MP Mohammed Faizal PP is seeking re-election but this time he doesn't have the clock symbol that got him elected for the past two terms. In 2019, 46,909 voters cast their votes and Muhammad Hamdullah Sayeed of Congress lost by a mere 823 votes. In 2014, Faizal beat Sayeed by a margin of 1,535 votes. Sayeed is contesting again for Congress. With NCP splitting, Yousuf TP has been fielded by the official faction while Faizal is contesting as a candidate of NCP (Sharadchandra Pawar).

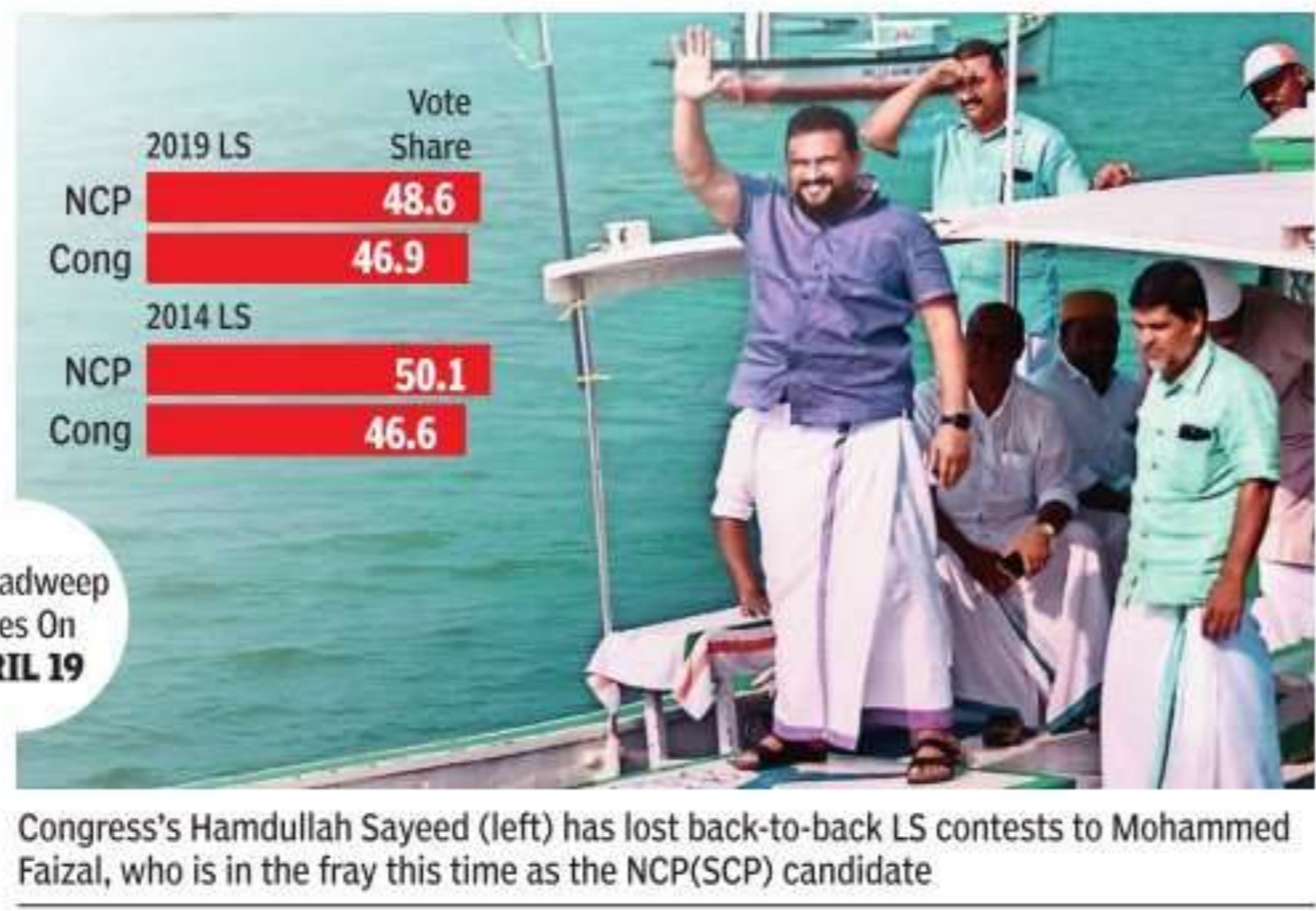
Apart from the two main parties — NCP and Congress — candidates contested under the banner of CPM, CPI, BJP, and JD(U) in 2019. These parties secured a total of 2,030 votes, more than the victory margin. But this year, only three political parties are in the fray, apart from an independent, and these 2,000-odd votes could very well decide the winner.

Faizal says that the voters in Lakshadweep are smart enough to choose the right candidate. "Lakshadweep has a small number of voters, and they are very familiar with the name and photo. Not having the clock sym-



Lakshadweep Votes On APRIL 19

bol wouldn't matter much. BJP contested here in the last two elections, and it is not contesting this year, making it evident that NCP Ajit Pawar faction candidate is an NDA candidate. There is no situation prevailing on the islands that is favourable for BJP," he says. The last few years have been particularly tumultuous for the people of Lakshadweep with protests erupting over an array of administrative changes brought in by the Union Territory administration. From a draft bill proposing a beef ban in 2021 to a circular sparking fear of a hijab ban in educational institutions, the archipelago has been tense. Al-



Congress's Hamdullah Sayeed (left) has lost back-to-back LS contests to Mohammed Faizal, who is in the fray this time as the NCP(SCP) candidate

though there was elation over a spike in tourism initiatives, it also raised ecological concerns and residents claimed that their lands were being taken over without proper compensation. Also, travel woes of islanders to the mainland remain a concern. The islanders still rely on air evacuation to Kochi in case of a serious medical emergency. While Faizal says that the election is about who was at the forefront in the political resistance against the acts of administrator Praful Khoda Patel, Sayeed claims that all sectors in Lakshadweep are in a shambles. "Be it education, health, transport... every sector is in a pathetic condition

now. The rate of unemployment is soaring. Creating jobs for youngsters would be a priority for us. The elected official is supposed to question the administration's acts if it is not in favour of the people. The travel crisis that people face is due to lack of such constructive interventions. Change should come so that the people's lives become easier," says Sayeed. Last year, Faizal was disqualified twice as an MP over his conviction in a 2009 attempt to murder case. The case relates to the murder attempt on Mohammed Salih, a Congress worker and son-in-law of former Union minister PM Sayeed, on April 16, 2009, when Lok Sabha elections were un-

derway. He was first disqualified from Lok Sabha on Jan 13, 2023, two days after a sessions court sentenced him to 10 years in prison. On Jan 25, Kerala HC suspended his conviction and his sentence, following which he moved the Supreme Court against the disqualification. His membership was restored on March 29, but the SC, while hearing the case, found fault with the HC relief for Faizal and directed that the case be heard again. This led to the HC reversing its own order, and Faizal acquiring the unique distinction of being disqualified as Lok Sabha MP for the second time in under a year.

SC, however, intervened again on Oct 9, and Faizal was reinstated to Lok Sabha in Nov last year. The Lok Sabha secretariat's decision to reinstate Faizal was made after the SC suspended his conviction in the case. Meanwhile, NA Muhammad Kutty, NCP national general secretary and Lakshadweep in-charge, who is in the UT campaigning for Yousuf says their candidate is acceptable to everyone. "The candidate is that of NCP, and not that of NDA. Parties are contesting differently in different states. Both the other candidates in the fray have not done anything for the islands. Our candidate is a known scholar, and we believe that we will be able to secure votes from both Congress and the Sharad Pawar faction. The clock symbol would also work in our favour," says Kutty.

1991 | An attack at a polling station in Bihar during the 1991 Lok Sabha elections. Ballot-stuffing, booth capturing, voter intimidation, proxy voting; the menu of electoral malpractices in India is as deep as it is devious. With its stated aim of ensuring free and fair polls, Election Commission has provisions for identifying critical, sensitive and hyper-sensitive polling stations. History of violence is a key consideration but abnormally high voting in favour of a particular candidate in past elections is also a factor behind such designation. In 2024, EC has decided there will be webcasting of at least 50% of polling booths and all critical polling stations. The livestream data will be monitored at integrated control rooms.

Bundi eyes sweet turnout with 'chai pe charcha'

Officials in Rajasthan's Bundi are trying to make elections a talking point at tea stalls. Stickers on paper cups and gas cylinders exhorting people to vote are among the strategies they've adopted to raise electoral awareness and voter turnout. Bundi district mainly forms part of Kota parliamentary constituency with a section under the Bhillwara seat. Both go to polls in the second phase on April 26. Around 1 lakh paper cups bearing awareness messages are being distributed for free at tea stalls, said Bundi district collector Akshaya Godara. "A considerable increase in voting percentage was recorded in Bundi after the 2019 LS elections, which saw 66% polling. The 2023 state elections turnout was 77.6%," he said, adding that the aim is to achieve a similar polling percentage this time. Apart from messages on paper cups and LPG cylinders, Bundi officials have adopted several other measures to raise awareness under the Systematic Voter's Education and Electoral Participation (SVEEP) programme. PTI

Loyalists on the run, Nath's scramble to hold on to family borough

Suchandana.Gupta@timesgroup.com

There's no bigger political contest in saffron-dominated Madhya Pradesh than the one for Chhindwara.

For over 70 years, this constituency in south Madhya Pradesh has been a Congress fortress, identified for the past 45 years with the Naths — Indira Gandhi's 'third son' Kamal Nath, his wife Alka and son Nakul. The mighty poll machinery of BJP has been unable to breach this Congress bastion, not even during the Modi waves of 2019 and 2023.

This time, however, things look different here. BJP has been chipping away at Nath loyalists and long-time Congress workers, leaving Kamal Nath and Nakul to fight a lonely defence of their turf. Ever since the 2023 assembly elections got over, there has been an exodus of Congress functionaries and workers from Chhindwara — foot soldiers, panchayat members, councillors, the local mayor, two former MLAs, several long-time loyalists of Kamal Nath, and even an MLA. The biggest shock for the Naths

was the defection of Kamlesh Shah, MLA from Amarwara, the segment that had given Nakul the all-important lead in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls when Chhindwara gave Congress its lone victory in 29 seats in the state. A shocked Nakul called Shah a "gaddar" (traitor).

Among those who have crossed over to the saffron camp is Deepak Saxena, twice MLA from Chhindwara and a 40-year companion of Nath. It was he who had left his seat for Kamal Nath in 2019 after the veteran leader was elected chief minister. On April 3, Nath paid a surprise visit to Deepak, who had quit Congress but hadn't joined BJP till then. Party sources say Nath asked him "not to become Dhritarashtra" and follow his son into BJP. Two days later, Deepak joined the saffron camp.

Stunned by the desertion of loyalists, the Naths are appealing to voters' emotions. "Chhindwara is my life," Nath says in rally after rally for Nakul. "Till my last breath, I will strive for Chhindwara," he adds, tugging at the heartstrings of those who have been voting for him since 1980. "Vote for my son," he says.



Chhindwara votes on APRIL 19. MP CM Mohan Yadav's road show (left) in Chhindwara, where Vivek Buntty Sahu (inset) is the party candidate. Except for a bypoll in 1997, BJP has never won the seat but, this time, as Nakul Nath (right) takes guard, many Congress functionaries have quit the party. Nakul has been campaigning with Kamal Nath and wife Priya

this year, there was intense speculation that both may switch to BJP. Kamal Nath refuted nothing, blamed the media for starting the "rumours" and said the "media should deny". BJP's Kailash Vijayvargiya bluntly said there was no space for the Naths in the saffron camp. Finally, on Feb 29, Nakul denied he was joining BJP. Earlier, on Feb 6, Nakul had declared himself the Chhindwara

candidate without waiting for AICC. It wasn't until March 12 that Congress made it official. Despite the exodus of Congress functionaries into its camp, BJP still has to overcome the Naths' formidable legacy — one so strong that the saffron camp has never won this seat since 1952, except in the 1997 bypoll when former CM Sunderlal Patwa defeated Kamal Nath by 37,680 votes. Nath stormed back the

next year, defeating Patwa by a margin five times bigger. Chhindwara is just 110km from the RSS headquarters in Nagpur, but BJP has always had a hard time here. Kamal Nath was a nine-time MP from here between 1980 and 2019, until he became CM and passed the baton to his son. Chhindwara has seen Nath rise from a greenhorn politician (Indira personally campaigned for him in 1980) to Union minister and CM. Nath reminds people of this and the development he brought to Chhindwara. "There was a time when in Pataalk (a valley in the constituency), people did not even have atta. Now, the youth of Pataalk roam around in jeans and T-shirts. The youths of today have not seen that old Pataalk. In 1980, there were no roads in Chhindwara and when I visited villages in a jeep, I would return with one-and-a-half kilo of dust on my clothes. Only 400 of 2,000 villages had electricity then. Today, Chhindwara is identified as a model of development," he says. BJP aims to make it 29-0 this time, and has pulled all stops in Chhindwara. CM Mohan Yadav has

made repeated visits here and attacked the Nath family for "enslaving" the place for 45 years. "It's time for the lotus to bloom," he says.

BJP has chosen its district unit president Vivek Buntty Sahu for this Herculean task, though he was defeated twice by Nath in the 2019 bypoll and the 2023 assembly elections. BJP national president J.P. Nadda was in Chhindwara on Friday, seeking votes for Sahu. He attacked the Naths as examples of "parivarwad" (dynastic politics). "Tell me, are Kamal Nath and his son a family party or not?" he asked. Pointing to the leaders on the dais, Nadda said, "Those in the front row, none of them had grandfathers and great grandfathers from a political background. They have reached here because of your love and strength. Don't you want a similar person to represent Chhindwara? Take Buntty Sahu forward. Badal gaya zamana, badal dalo Chhindwara (times have changed, now change Chhindwara)." Nath's "Dhritarashtra" jibe may not be off the mark — Chhindwara is the Mahabharat of Madhya Pradesh in Lok Sabha 2024.

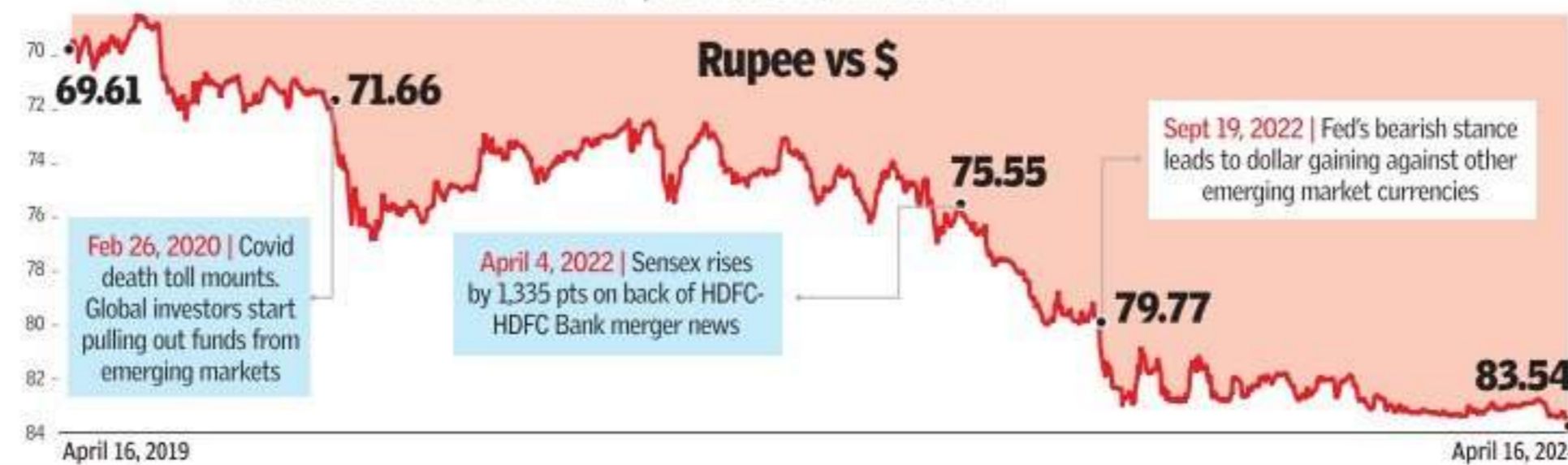
Rupee Plunges Over 20% In Five Years

The rupee has consistently weakened against the dollar after India moved to a market-determined exchange rate post-liberalisation in 1991

- The long-term weakening of the rupee is an interplay of two factors — the **inflation difference** between India and the US and the **current account deficit**. The currency experiences bursts of appreciation because of foreign capital inflows
- Capital flows are determined by the difference in interest rates and the **performance of the economy**

Fuels Inflation...

- The direct impact of rupee weakening is on inflation, which rises because a large part of India's **fuel is imported** and a **weaker rupee makes it costlier**
- A weaker rupee also makes **international travel and foreign education** more expensive for Indians



Gains For IT, Exports

- Most of India's service industry, on the other hand, gains from a weaker rupee as MNCs find it **cheaper to offshore their back office and IT work** to India
- Rupee depreciation **increases competitiveness** of Indian exporters as their input costs are denominated in rupees
- A weaker rupee also benefits Indian manufacturers who produce import substitutes as they **become cheaper vis-a-vis imported goods**

Re hits new low of 83.54/\$ as global tensions mount

Indian Currency's Drop Reflects Firming Up Of Greenback

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The rupee closed at a record low on Tuesday, ending at 83.54 against the dollar, nine paise lower than its previous close of 83.45.

The rupee's decline reflected the firming up of the US dollar, which was seen in the dollar index rising to a six-month high. Most Asian currencies weakened against the dollar, with the Korean won and Indonesian rupiah falling the most. The dollar hit a five-month high against the euro. The yen weakened to its lowest level since 1990 and traded at 155 to the dollar. The dollar index touched 106.43 — the highest since Nov 2, 2023.

"The dollar index exhibited high volatility and extended its gains amid heightened tensions in West Asia. The yen also slipped to record lows and

BIGGER HIT ON OTHER CURRENCIES

- A stable dollar, escalating geopolitical tensions and continuous selling by FIIs may cause the rupee to **remain volatile** and trade in a range of **83.22 to 84.05**
- Due to the rupee's weakening, analysts expect RBI to **delay its rate cuts** to the second half of the financial year

Global currencies in April (% change)



supported the dollar index. Due to gains in the dollar index, the rupee closed at day's low," said Rahul Kalantri of Mehta Equities. He added that given the stable dollar, escalating geopolitical tensions and continuous selling by foreign institutional investors, the rupee is expected to remain volatile and could trade in a wide range of 83.22 to 84.05.

Besides the safe-haven status during geopolitical strife, the dollar has been gaining after better-than-expected retail sales data which reduces the prospects of a rate cut by US Federal Reserve.

Traders are waiting to see the outcome of Israel's war cabinet meeting on Tuesday. The meeting is to decide on a response to Iran's attack,

amid international pressure to avoid further escalation of the conflict. The foreign exchange market will be closed on Wednesday because of a bank holiday.

"I feel that there is a high probability of the rupee touching 83.75 levels. But RBI will not allow the rupee to depreciate much and it will change course. I also expect that the geopolitical risks will fade next week given US pressure and the rupee will gain," said KN Dey, a forex consultant who advises corporates on foreign exchange.

Foreign institutional investors were net sellers in the capital markets on Tuesday, selling shares worth Rs 4,468 crore, according to exchange data. A fallout of rupee's weakening is that more analysts now expect RBI to delay its rate cuts to the second half of the financial year.

Sensex falls for third day over foreign funds' selloff

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Strong selling by foreign funds on Tuesday pulled the Sensex down for the third consecutive session, with the index closing 456 points lower at 72,944 points.

A slew of factors, from escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia to a mixed set of economic numbers from China, spooked investors globally, also affecting the sentiment on Dalal Street, brokers and analysts said.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) led the selling on Tuesday with a net outflow of Rs 4,468 crore. In two sessions, FPIs have net sold Rs 7,736 crore (about \$900 million) worth of stocks, BSE data showed. On the NSE, Nifty closed 125 points lower at 22,148.

According to Siddhartha Khemka of Motilal Oswal Financial Services, a majority of the sectors on Dalal Street ended in the red on Tuesday. "Escalating tension in (West Asia) has turned sentiments sour leading to a rise in crude oil prices. A mixed set of economic data from China further dampened sentiments. Although better-than-expected China's GDP number at 5.3% came in as a surprise, poor March activity data offset any positivity. Thus, global markets continue to remain weak."

In Tuesday's market, after a weak closing in Nasdaq on Monday night, the sentiment for IT stocks in India remained subdued. With Infosys closing 3.7% down and Wipro 2.3%, BSE's IT index closed over 2% down. Although markets are closed for Ram Navami on Wednesday, the near-term sentiment is expected to be volatile with a negative bias until the Iran-Israel tension eases, Khemka said. Outside of India, US Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell's speech late on Tuesday will hold importance with the ongoing uncertain environment, he said.

Higher the Covid toll, greater the faith in gold

Districts With More Prevalence Of Covid See Yellow Metal's Share In Savings Surge: Study

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: People in the districts most affected by Covid put more of their savings in gold than those in other regions. The share of gold in household savings in Covid vulnerable districts — the top third of districts with the highest number of cases per 1,000 population — is 6.9 percentage points higher than in other districts, a study by International Review of Economics & Finance showed.

The increased allocation towards gold was accompanied by a shift away from financial asset holdings by 4.1 percentage points. Poorer households in CVD districts had an even higher allocation of 7.3 percentage points compared to richer households in CVD districts, which had an allocation of 5.4 percentage points.

The study also found that households with higher financial access allocated 5.8 percentage points less to gold, suggesting that households are less likely to resort to gold as a safe haven during the pandemic in the presence of alternative financial instruments.

Household savings in gold

FLIGHT TO SAFETY

- Share of gold in household savings portfolios in Covid vulnerable districts (CVD) is **6.9 percentage points** higher than in other districts
- Poorer households had a higher gold allocation of **7.3 percentage points** compared to richer households in CVDs
- Higher asset allocation to safer assets occurred due to

the pandemic and not due to resizing of portfolios. There was a **flight-to-safety towards gold** for households in CVDs

- Gold has been a safe haven investment because it tends to **retain value** even during times of economic or geopolitical instability when other assets such as currencies and stocks depreciate

were higher by Rs 3,898 in CVD districts compared to non-CVD districts, while savings in financial assets and other assets such as cash were lower by Rs 11,466 and Rs 3,478, respectively, in CVD districts compared to non-CVD districts.

The findings indicate that a higher asset allocation to safer assets occurred due to the Covid crisis and not due to resizing of portfolios. The report supports the argument that there was a 'flight to safety' towards gold for households in Covid-vulnerable Indian districts during the pandemic, observed in both relative and absolute terms.

The International Review of Economics & Finance is a peer-reviewed academic journal that covers research in theoretical and empirical international economics. The study 'Gold in household portfolios during a pandemic: Evidence from India' follows an extensive household survey in 142 districts across 21 states in India conducted during financial year 2020-21.

Earlier, RBI had published a report showing that there was a 'dash to cash' in many markets, leading to a rise in currency in circulation during the pandemic. During Covid, most people increased cash balances to be prepared for any emergency.

Why Re is weak when stocks are strong

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

The rupee's value is close to its all-time low, while stock valuations are still high. In 2024, markets have been characterised by a paradox, with the rupee weakening despite soaring stocks and rising foreign exchange reserves. Moreover, even as the domestic unit falls, the sentiment continues to be positive in respect of the rupee.

Why is the rupee under pressure?

The recent volatility in the forex market is due to geopolitical tensions in West Asia and its impact on crude prices, which are hovering around \$90 for Brent crude, a five-month high. Many analysts now expect the US Federal Reserve to postpone its rate cuts to next year because of the

strengthening dollar. Higher interest rates in the US draw global funds to US treasury markets away from emerging markets. Rising oil prices always hurt a country's trade balance and currency valuation, especially a country like India, which relies on imports. Additionally, foreign investors have been selling shares.

Why are foreign institutions selling?

This is happening because shares in Indian markets are trading at a high multiple or a high valuation. This allows them to book profits when other markets are subdued. In the short-term, the prospects of fewer Fed-rate cuts also make US bonds more attractive.

Is a weaker rupee a sign of a weak economy?

While a weak rupee makes im-

ports costlier and adds to imports, a country with a current account deficit cannot afford significant strengthening as it will increase imports, hurt exports, and worsen the current account balance. Historically, the rupee has consistently weakened, reflecting the difference in inflation between India and the US.

Why is the dollar gaining?

The dollar's strength is attributed to the resilient US economy, which has led investors to reassess their expectations for the Federal Reserve's interest rate cuts. Positive economic indicators, such as a tight labour market, upbeat consumer sentiment, and government subsidies for manufacturing, have contributed to the dollar's gains against virtually every major peer in 2024.

What is the outlook for the dollar and the rupee?

Expectations of higher-for-longer interest rates in the US could support the dollar. Investors are increasingly betting on dollar strength, indicating a prevailing sentiment that the strong greenback is likely to persist.

However, increased foreign investment in India, particularly with the inclusion of Indian government bonds in global bond indices, is set to enhance India's balance of payments. The rupee's positive outlook is underscored by its favourable performance against various currencies, including the euro, amid a stable external environment. Strengthening forex reserves and expectations of a low current account deficit for FY24 further bolster confidence.

China's eco expands 5.3% in first quarter

Beijing: China's economy grew faster than expected in the first quarter, data showed on Tuesday, offering some relief to officials as they try to shore up growth in the face of protracted weakness in the property sector and mounting local govt debt.

However, several March indicators released alongside the GDP data showed that demand at home remains frail, weighing on overall momentum. The world's second-largest economy grew 5.3% in Jan-March from the year earlier, official data showed, comfortably above a 4.6% analysts' forecast in a poll and up from the 5.2% expansion in the previous quarter. On a quarterly basis, growth picked up to 1.6% from 1.4% in the previous three months.

"The strong growth figure goes a long way in achieving China's around 5% target for the year," said Harry Murphy Cruise, economist at Moody's Analytics. REUTERS

Birla eyes top three slots in financial services biz

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: Aditya Birla Group chairman **Kumar Mangalam Birla** has set an ambitious target for the financial services arm of the conglomerate to be among the top three players in each of its primary businesses — lending, asset management, insurance, and payments.



Birla said this during the launch of Aditya Birla Capital Digital's new direct-to-customer app platform. He said that the platform would add three crore new customers in three years, almost doubling the existing customer base from 3.5 crore.

Birla said that the group is now focusing on consumer-facing businesses. "The launch of new consumer-facing ventures marks the group's commitment to const-

ucting a growth platform characterised by a unique confluence of strength and breadth. Just last month, we launched our paints business, with an initial investment of Rs 10,000 crore. In a few months, we will launch our jewellery retail venture with an initial investment of Rs 5,000 crore," he said. Birla added that Aditya Birla Capital has emerged as a growth engine for the group.

These ambitious targets have been set at a time when other corporate groups, such as Reliance's Jio Financial, Bajaj Finance, Tata Capital, and L&T Financial Services, have set similar growth targets.

Vishaka Mulye, MD & CEO, Aditya Birla Capital, said the ABCD D2C platform offers 22 products, including core financial services and

ABCD's own offerings like portfolio consolidator. It also provides payment solutions for consumers and merchants. The platform aims to enhance Aditya Birla Capital's digital presence by acquiring customers digitally, enabling cross-selling and up-selling, and becoming a full-stack financial services provider.

The strategy to rope in three crore customers in three years includes providing value-added services on its payments platform. Users can make one UPI transaction using balances from multiple banks if there is a shortfall in one account. Customers can also complete their UPI transactions in low-network locations by phone call. The app also facilitates cross-border UPI payments enabled by the National Payments Corporation of India.

Nagarro's revenue hits \$1bn mark

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Digital engineering company Nagarro's revenue crossed \$1 billion in FY23, up from \$908 million in the year-ago period. Nagarro follows a Jan to Dec financial year. The company recorded a growth of 9.4% in constant currency in 2023.

Listed on the Frankfurt Stock Exchange in 2020, Nagarro was co-founded by Manas Fuloria along with fellow IITians and began operations in New Delhi in 1996. It employs over 18,000 people of which, over 13,000 employees are based in India.

For Nagarro, industries with robust global growth included automotive, manufacturing and industrial, life sciences and healthcare, energy, utilities and building automation, financial services and insurance, and retail and CPG (consumer packaged goods).

Zee withdraws Sony merger plea at NCLT

Reeba Zachariah @timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Zee Entertainment Enterprises has decided to withdraw its application asking an Indian tribunal to order Sony to honour its obligations to close a \$10-billion merger deal that the local arm of the Japanese firm had terminated.

It had filed the merger implementation application with the NCLT (Mumbai bench) on Jan 24 after Sony India called off the deal with Zee for alleged breaches in the terms of the agreement.

On Tuesday, Zee said it has decided to withdraw the merger implementation application after a consultation with legal experts. However, it added that it will

continue to pursue its claim including the demand for a \$90-million termination fee against Sony India in the ongoing arbitration proceedings in Singapore.

The collapse of the merger, which was in the works for more than two years, was concerning for Zee amid consolidation moves in the media and entertainment industry. It had spent a total of about Rs 367 crore on merger-related expenses.

After the deal's cancellation, it initiated steps to streamline its structure and rationalise its workforce to reduce expenses and improve profits. It also announced that MD Punit Gonenka will take a 20% cut in his remuneration as part of its cost-cutting moves.

RBI diktat to payment cos on merchants

RBI on Tuesday asked online payment firms to monitor transactions-related activities of merchants on their platforms and ensure that they meet its fresh guidelines, in a series of moves aimed at tightening the scrutiny of the sector.

India's burgeoning yet relatively less-regulated online payments industry has come under RBI's cross-hairs given the lax oversight of some of the platforms, which handle billions of rupees in daily transactions.

In its fresh guidelines, RBI has set different levels of due diligence based on merchant size and also asked payment aggregators to maintain details of the merchant-employed agents assisting in the process. The new norms shall be applicable in three months, it said. Separately, it said that no entity in a transaction chain made through cards, except by their issuers and networks, can store data starting Aug 1, 2025. REUTERS

India Inc votes to punch in at polling booths

Reeba Zachariah & Veena Mani | TNN

Mumbai/Bengaluru: Corporate India doesn't want 'work' to be an excuse for you to not vote. Nearly 97 crore people are eligible to vote this year and organisations are doing their bit to boost participation by ensuring that work obligations don't hold employees back from turning up at polling booths.

Several private companies have announced paid time-off on polling days or made such days meeting-free, apart from providing employees with information on travel policies so that those registered at booths outside their work city can vote too. Typically, states declare election day as a public holiday. Accordingly, all commer-

PAID TIME-OFF TO REMOTE WORK

- TCS, Infosys and HCL Tech have informed employees that offices will stay shut in each location on their respective polling day
- Flipkart declared a holiday on polling day in its home city
- Manufacturing cos like Raymond and Godrej & Boyce are designing policies

- Ferrero India is offering employees paid time-off on voting days
- Electricity cos, which fall under essential services, are also supporting employees to fulfil their civic duty but at the same time ensuring there will be steady power supply to customers on election days



cial establishments offer a paid holiday to workers.

IT firms TCS, Infosys and HCL Tech have informed employees that offices will stay shut in each location on their respective polling dates. The three software services companies are among the largest

private employers in India with a combined workforce of over 11 lakh people.

Flipkart has declared a holiday on election day in its home city. "Our office will be shut on polling day in Bengaluru, and all employees will be given paid leave to vote, including

those who may travel to their respective constituency to cast their vote," said Flipkart.

Manufacturing companies like Raymond and Godrej & Boyce (which produced India's first ballot boxes) are designing election-friendly policies. "Given that elections will happen in seven phases and we have offices and manufacturing facilities in different parts of the country, we are planning various options to ensure that all our employees are able to exercise their right," said Raymond HR president K A Narayan.

Packaged sweet company Ferrero India is offering employees paid time-off on voting days so that they don't have to bother about work obligations. It is also promoting voter awareness through internal com-

munications. "In cases where employees cannot take time off, we prioritise flexibility in scheduling work to minimise any barriers to voting," said Ferrero India HR head Rajas Bandekar. "For employees who are registered to vote outside their current city of work, we may offer options such as remote working and flexi working to accommodate travel to their registered polling locations," Bandekar added.

Home Credit too is offering its staff flexible work on voting days. Stock exchanges BSE and NSE too have declared a trading holiday on May 20, when Mumbai goes to polls. "Given that BSE and NSE employ a lot of people who would need the day off to vote, closing the markets helps facilitate this legal requirement," said an analyst.

Cognizant CEO Kumar gets paid nearly \$23mn in FY23

Shilpa Phadnis @timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: Cognizant CEO Ravi Kumar S received \$22.5 million as compensation for FY23, as shown in the company's 2024 proxy statement filing with the US Securities and Exchange Commission. Kumar, who previously served as the president of Infosys, assumed the role of CEO at Cognizant in January of the previous year.

Cognizant's financial performance in 2023 was underwhelming, with the company reporting a 0.3% decline in constant currency re-

venue, amounting to \$19.4 billion. This lackluster performance was partly due to the ongoing weakness in demand that has been affecting the IT sector as a whole.

PAY DISPARITY

The disparity between CEO pay and employee compensation is striking, with the **CEO pay ratio compared to employees based in India standing at 1647:1**, and the worldwide median employee's annual total compensation ratio being 556:1. The median annual employee compensation in India is \$13,735, while the worldwide median annual compensation is \$40,660. This widening

wage gap, along with the recent announcement of Cognizant deferring increments by four months, has not been well-received by the firm's employees.

Kumar's predecessor, Brian Humphries, received a total SEC compensation of approximately \$4.2 million in 2023, which consisted of his base salary through the effective date of his termination on March 15 last year. Kumar's 2023 SEC compensation of \$22.5 million was substantially higher than his target direct compensation due to the inclusion of the one-time awards that he received upon becoming the CEO of the company.



CONTRAPUNTO

Forethought we may have, undoubtedly, but not foresight
-NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

Monsoon Still Matters

2024 promises good rains. But Indian agri is pushing its luck with current water usage practices

IMD's first southwest monsoon forecast on Monday said that in 2024 we are in for an above normal rainfall. It's expected to be 106% of the long period average of 87 cm. It's positive for the kharif crop season, which was affected last year by a below normal monsoon that was also erratic in terms of monthly rainfall.

Monsoon-output link weakens | India's agricultural output is no longer as closely tied to annual rainfall, thanks to widespread irrigation. For example, take a look at water guzzling rice. Data since 2000 shows that it's only in 2002 and 2009 that output dropped sharply because of a large rainfall deficiency. Leave aside those two shocks, output has generally trended upwards even though below normal monsoon years have sometimes led to a modest decline in production.

Groundwater's the reason | The reason for this resilience is largely the surge in groundwater extraction through tube wells for irrigation. Irrigation through tube wells accounts for over 60% of total irrigation.



Rainfall still matters | But even as tube well irrigation may have partially insulated crop output from annual swings in rainfall, the southwest monsoon's influence over agriculture hasn't weakened if we look at it from a longer-term perspective. This is because groundwater extraction for irrigation is sustainable only if it's adequately recharged. And about 75% of annual recharge takes place during the southwest monsoon.

Recharge's the challenge | At the national level, India appears to be using its groundwater sustainably. Only 59% of the annual extractable groundwater is drawn. However, this national average masks worrisome regional variations.

Punjab and Haryana are critical to India's overall food security. In these states, groundwater extraction is way past the point of sustainability. Punjab's ratio of annual groundwater extraction to total annual extractable groundwater in 2022 was 164.15%. Haryana's ratio is around 136%. While UP's ratio is 71%, agriculturally important western UP is hurtling towards unsustainability.

Reminder of unfinished business | IMD's 2024 monsoon forecast is positive for recharge of groundwater. But it's also a reminder that India's agriculture is pushing its luck on climate change. Regional variations in rainfall and groundwater extraction matter greatly for crop output. The story so far is that some of the most productive agri regions in terms of yield have insulated themselves from annual rainfall variations but not their dependence on the monsoon.

Finny Business

How Bengal has taken to a piscine electoral ploy, like maachh to water

In what could aptly be described as a fishy tale in more ways than one, Trinamool Congress's chief, redoubtable Mamata, has updated her earlier rallying cry of Ma, Maati, Manush raised against the setting up of an automobile plant in Singur, in West Bengal's Hooghly district, by appending Maachh to the three-pronged trishul of TMC.

This finny addition that has added a piscine punch to Trinamool's electoral campaign is an emotive response to Modi who, inadvertently, trod on Bengal's taste buds if not toes, by observing that RJD's Tejashwi was seen in a video clip eating fish during Navratri. Tejashwi's clarification that the clip in question had been taken before Navratri, when many eschew non-veg fare, did little to pour mustard oil on the troubled and turbulent waters of Hooghly.

"They (BJP) will dictate what you eat for lunch and dinner," West Bengal's CM vociferated at an election rally in Cooch Behar.

For the true-blue Bengali, fish is not a comestible but a covenant, a wholly grail to be pursued, and not just a consumption devoutly to be wished but a consumption to be denied only at the jeopardy of the issuer of the denial.

During the 1950s and 1960s when market manipulation or disruption of supplies created a shortage and caused a consequent rise in the price of hilsa, the much-beloved ilish, which is the Divine Being's gift to the Bengali palate, tramcars would be set ablaze, not in a bonfire of the vanities but as a fiery expression of public-spirited ire voiced in the rousing refrain of 'Cholbe na! Cholbe na!' It won't do! It won't do!

However, it remains to be seen if Mamata's piscatorial ploy of casting the net and angling for a big catch at the ballot box will prove successful or end up as maachh ado about nothing.

Woke-up call

To evade being jailed for a hate crime the creator of Harry Potter should move to India

Jug Suraiya

If someone said of me, 'They is Bunny's husband', the description might break the rules of grammar but would abide by the norms of being woke.

Woke means to be awake to, what is politically correct in terms of gender and other potentially divisive issues.

In woke terms gender-specific words like 'he' and 'him', 'she' and 'her', should be replaced by the gender-neutral 'they', Wren & Martin be damned.

According to what is called gender theory sex should not be treated as biological destiny in terms of assigned roles in society, but a matter of choice.

An increasing number of people identify as non-binary, their gender not subsumed under the male/female rubric. As such, they claim the right to be referred to as they, instead of he or she.

Scotland has passed a law by which not being sufficiently woke about gender issues could make you liable to the charge of a 'hate crime', a transgression that can be punished by a fine and up to seven years in prison.

The Scottish legislation has hit international headlines with JK Rowling of Harry Potter megafame facing the prospect of arrest by having said on social media that several notable transgender persons were actually "Men in dresses".

Though remote, the prospect of Rowling's arrest has raised a chorus of outrage among not only the author's myriad fans but among all who believe that freedom of speech is the bedrock of democracy.

But if Scotland is so woke as to be said to be suffering from chronic insomnia, India could be its polar opposite, its wokefulness comparable to that of Rip Van Winkle who slept for 20 years.

While homosexuality has been decriminalised and the LGBT community been accorded legal recognition if not social sanction, the genders remain as semantically separate as Ladies and Gents loos.

If Rowling were to move to India she'd be in no danger of arrest or of being described as 'they', but would remain an unregenerate 'she', gender-neutral political correctness being seen here to be far too much hard work. Or hard woke.



secondopinion

Back To Balasaheb

In Maharashtra, BJP's pluses are its two terms at the Centre & a resource-rich campaign. Its problem is fashioning a state-level Hindutva-nativist narrative

Sumeet Mhaskar



Without invoking Bal Thackeray's name, there is no Hindutva in Maharashtra. And that is exactly where the challenge lies for BJP, which has set its sight on the magic number of 400 seats - a parliamentary supermajority - for 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Maharashtra is key to its 'ab ki baar, 400 paar' calculus, but the task of improving NDA's 2019 score is daunting.

In 2019, BJP-Shiv Sena alliance won a neat 41 of Maharashtra's 48 LS seats - BJP 23, Shiv Sena 18. With Shiv Sena's split, Maharashtra has become an edge-of-the-seat battle, a crucial state that is a must-sweep for BJP, and not just for the numbers alone.

Whose Hindutva? | Maharashtra is the only state where a regional party, and not BJP, has been the torchbearer of militant Hindutva with an organic mass base that could display physical strength and engage effectively in verbal warfare with political opponents. But in Maharashtra Hindutva never worked on its own, only in conjunction with the nativist manoos politics championed by Bal Thackeray.

POLLITICS Special Series on Elections

BJP, which is viewed as a party dominated by Brahmins, and social and economic elites, with no capacity for physical or verbal strength, had to accept Bal Thackeray's leadership. But as it expanded, BJP began to dictate terms of the alliance. After assuming power in 2014, it reduced Shiv Sena to a dependent alliance partner in Maharashtra, which did not even get to appoint the deputy CM.

Maratha model Hindutva | In 2019 assembly elections while emerging as the largest party in Maharashtra, BJP still relied on Shiv Sena to form govt. In a dramatic turn of events, Uddhav Thackeray parted ways with BJP to form a govt in alliance with NCP and Congress - Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA).

To everyone's surprise, and despite the odds, MVA performed exceptionally well during the Covid pandemic, showcasing impressive leadership and resilience. In particular, Uddhav emerged as an efficient administrator, who also gave prominent positions in the party to Bahujan leaders like Sushma Andhare. In recent years,

Uddhav has invoked Prabodhankar Thackeray's legacy - a name with great significance for the non-Brahmin movement - insisting that his Hindutva is not of the shendi and jaanva (a Brahmin's lock and sacred thread) variety, but of Lord Hanuman's gadhadari (macebearer) kind.

BJP's manoos route | To counter Shiv Sena, BJP made Narayan Rane, a Konkani Maratha Sena veteran, its face in the state. The party's desperation to penetrate nativist politics peaked when it made the Hindi-speaking Jyotiraditya Scindia speak in Marathi during the Chipli Airport inauguration. These efforts, however, failed to shake Shiv Sena and its alliance with Congress and NCP.

It was at this juncture that both of Maharashtra's regional parties faced internal turmoil leading to splits in both - under Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar. The widely held belief that BJP engineered the splits, however, has only fed into sympathy for both Uddhav and Sharad Pawar.

Besides, for all its attempts to discredit Uddhav's Sena, BJP still must invoke Bal Thackeray's nativist Hindutva legacy.

Marathas vs Maratha | To build on nativist Hindutva, BJP was also compelled to enlist the support of an electorally irrelevant Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) led by Raj Thackeray. Since its inception in 2006, MNS has

competed with Shiv Sena over the nativist Hindutva space. Raj attracts massive crowds, but not votes, and since 2014 his party has been decimated.

BJP has also co-opted various Maratha caste leaders from Congress and NCP. But recent agitations for reservations have created a rift among Marathas, as protesters - under the leadership of Manoj Jarange-Patil - criticise elite Maratha leaders across political parties.

Face-off | Maratha agitations also brought long-standing tensions between Marathas and Brahmins to the fore. Since deputy CM Devendra Fadnis is BJP's Brahmin face, it has been easy for Maratha protesters to deploy anti-Brahmin rhetoric against BJP. So, despite bringing senior Maratha leaders into the party, BJP will have considerable trouble swaying Maratha votes.

Another significant player is Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) with a Dalit-Bahujan support base. During 2019's general elections, VBA effectively undermined the Congress-NCP alliance, thus indirectly helping the BJP-Shiv Sena combine. MVA has been reluctant to accommodate VBA, which on its part was initially reticent to join the alliance. VBA's decision to contest on its own was not received well by Dalit-Bahujan masses, which are, as a result, likely to express their support for MVA candidates.

BJP's confidence is bolstered by its term in office, and its resource-rich campaign. But in Maharashtra it's grappling with a negative perception of its role in the break-up of NCP and Shiv Sena, and is left to wrestle with Shinde Sena over seats. In 2019, BJP won 23 of the 25 seats. It's difficult to imagine that it will improve on that record this time.

The writer is a professor of sociology



Marathas vote on April 19 for the first (5 seats) of its five-phase elections

Churn In Church As Kerala Goes To Polls

Price of rubber to Manipur violence, control of parishes to 'love jihad', the influential Christian clergy is talking up many issues, in many, competing voices

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Ahead of Lok Sabha elections, the Church in Kerala is at a crossroads. They are trying to talk up the community's concerns as major poll planks - from farmers' issues to attacks on Christians - but at the same time are split into factional feuds.

Christians, who account for 18.4% of the state's population (2011 Census), play a crucial role in its electoral politics - as do the Syro-Malabar and Malankara Churches, and their denominations, all geared up to make their voice reach Delhi.

In March 2023, Syro-Malabar Church's Archbishop of Thalassery, Mar Joseph Pamplany, had positioned the rubber farmers' vote as going to that party which would fix MSP of rubber at ₹300. His message to the Centre was, "If you procure rubber from farmers after fixing MSP of ₹300, we will end your regrets about not having a single MP from the state."

Farmers' faith | Pamplany's declaration stirred the waters like nothing before. Since then, Church functionaries have re-emphasised that "no party is untouchable for the Church, there should not be political slavery to any party." Majority of Christians in the valley regions are farmers, most in crisis over their produce not fetching adequate prices. Many farmer families have run up huge debts against loans. Per Thalassery Church seniors, Centre must restrict import of rubber, and thereby support local farmers.

The charge against them for their so-called pro-BJP stance despite "attacks on Christians" was seen as distorting the statement. The Thalassery body says support is issue-based, that MSP for rubber has nothing to do with attacks in Manipur.

Violence in Manipur | Pamplany's statement to BJP came a few weeks before the violence in Manipur broke out. It made it tough for the Church thereafter to respond openly to BJP's outreach.

Attacks on Christians in north India, the need to protest CAA, and Manipur's violence have been recurring themes in stinging editorials across journals and periodicals published by various Church organs. Senior clergy TOI spoke to say even "those in Church leadership who talked in favour of BJP a year ago are not doing so anymore."



Church daily Deepika wrote a strong editorial on March 18, soon after the election schedule was announced. It said in many states not a day passes without "minorities attacked". It added that corruption and arrogance in states governed by INDIA parties explained the lack of trust in allegations INDIA raised.

Fr Paul Thelakat, former spokesperson for Syro-Malabar Church, dubbed "Manipur's atrocities" as the "fall of dharma". "I love the Hindu religion for its lofty ideals...its hospitality and pluralistic spirit. But there's a voting pattern favourable to Hindutva, which must worry every Indian."

Church Bill | On Manipur, Church speaks in one voice, but on local issues, various notes are in play. The decades-long feud between Malankara Church's two factions, Orthodox Church and Jacobite Church, is over control of parishes.

The global head of Syriac Orthodox Church,

during a historic visit to Kerala in Feb urged Pinarayi to pass the Malankara Church Bill. This is a major dispute. A 2017 Supreme Court verdict effectively granted the Orthodox faction control of all Church properties. But the Jacobite faction, softer towards LDF, has resisted the taking over of many churches in their stronghold.

The Church Bill recommends case to case resolution on right and title by a "majority" as the authority, and for district magistrate to ascertain such a majority. Jacobite Church welcomes this as it effectively helps bypass SC's order. Orthodox Church stiffly opposes the bill, even seeking Kerala Governor Arif Mohammad Khan's support at a Feb event.

'Love jihad' | Syro-Malabar Church has also had to defend screening The Kerala Story in early April, during Idukki diocese's parish-level vacation course for classes 10-12, and the inclusion of 'love jihad' in its 'curriculum'. As counter, opponents organised the screening of a film on Manipur in another diocese.

For Church seniors like Fr Thelakat, the trend of 'love jihad' becoming an issue is disturbing. "Religious fundamentalism is rising in every religion," he told TOI, calling for dialogue to work out "problems between communities". He added it was a pity that a "minority in Syro-Malabar Catholics was becoming communal".

BJP's outreach | As part of a Sneha Yatra last Christmas, BJP workers visited hundreds of Christian homes. Weeks before 2024 elections were announced, Thrissur BJP candidate Suresh Gopi offered a golden crown to the main cathedral in Thrissur, a constituency with significant Christian population. Gopi has increased BJP's vote share here from 11% in 2014 to 28% in 2019.

BJP in Kerala says the party expects "silent voting" from Christians in its favour, that many Christians are relieved by Centre's ban on PFI. The party hopes to exploit uneasiness over political Islam in the state. The Church is reacting.

Kerala (20 LS seats) votes on April 26

Calvin & Hobbes



There Is No Master, No Prabhu Like Ram

Swami Tejomayananda

A deep faith and love for the Divine, in the form of Ram, filled the heart of Goswami Tulsidas. This flowed into the world as the epic poem Ramacharitanas. In this, he has painted a beautiful image of Bhagwan that touches the heart. He describes Ram as sundara sujana. Sundara is most handsome and charming. The Divine is beauty personified, so much so that even ruthless rakshasas like Khara, Dushana, and their ilk had no heart to shoot arrows at him when they saw him. His beauty was so captivating. If rakshasas could melt, what can one say of his devotees?

Somebody may be handsome, but the question arises - is he intelligent as well? Sujana means a wise, intelligent, and understanding person. How often do we hear the complaint: 'Nobody

understands me.' But Bhagwan understands us better than anyone else.

Ram ji is the abode of all these qualities: Sundara, handsome; sujana, intelligent, wise, and witty; rupavana, attractive; buddhimana, brilliant; and kripanidhana, benevolent. Ordinarily, a person with such qualities may, with time, become egoistic and arrogant, but Bhagwan is kripanidhana, the very abode of compassion. He has a heart full of love for all.

He is also capable of minimising our suffering. He loves all selflessly. He helps everyone and serves all and sundry. He is the very embodiment of generosity. He gives first - without any expectation, without awaiting any service in return. There is no Bhagwan so generous as Ram. While he sat at the foot of trees,

monkeys perched themselves high on the boughs. He even elevated such insolent creatures to his own position. Such is the magnanimity and greatness of Bhagwan.

Now, it is possible to find some rare ones in this world, selflessly working and serving too, but are they capable of giving moksha, liberation? Who other than the Divine can give liberation? Moreover, an individual can give moksha to only a few people, but Ram ji's grace liberated armies of rakshasas who fought in the war both at Janasthana and Lanka. Indeed, his nobility is matchless.

Someone once queried, "Goswami, you are praising Bhagwan Ram too much, can you give us some examples of his compassion?" The sage replied, "I don't need to go too far. Just look at me: I am Tulsidas of

dull intellect; with just a fraction of Bhagwan's kripa, this dullard is speaking to you." Goswami's humility is touching indeed. He states that the dullard Tulsidas achieved the highest, ever-abiding peace - payo parama bishramu. This shanti is not like the nap or rest we take before we swing back to our usual state of being. It is that abode of permanent peace, after attaining which there is no return to samsara at all.

Samsara is that which gives restlessness and agitation to the mind. Tulsidas points out, "That samsara has dried up and now. Because of Bhagwan's grace, I have the experience of the highest bliss. Undoubtedly, I am the irrefutable evidence thereof, I don't have to give an example of someone else. Therefore, I can unequivocally state - there is no Master, no Prabhu like Ram." The writer belongs to Chinmaya Mission

Sacredspace



O Ram, in truth I tell thee, I have no other desire and thou who art the inner Self of all knowest it: give me but ardent devotion, O best of the Raghus, and make my mind free from all impurities like passions...

Hymn to Sri Ramchandra

TECH I'D LIKE TO SEE

HAPPINESS-DETECTION CHIP FOR EMPLOYEES

In the realm of aspiring advancements for our workplace, I find myself drawn to an intriguing idea that holds the potential to redefine our approach to employee well-being. Picture this: a happiness-detection chip seamlessly integrated into either our employees' ID cards or wristbands. A discreet technology assessing happiness during work hours, allowing us to proactively address stressors and offer timely support. The impact



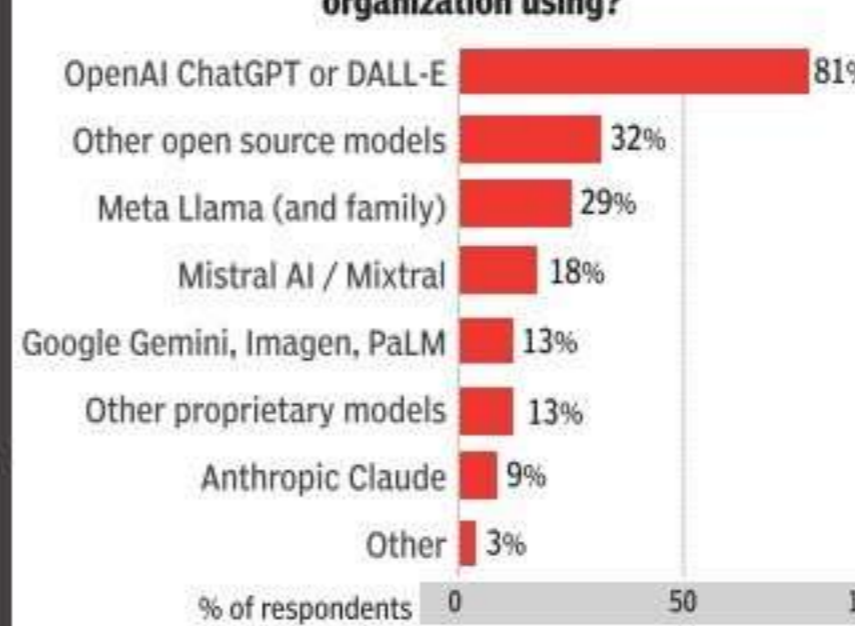
Shridhar Pinnapureddy | FOUNDER & CEO, CTRLS DATACENTERS

could be profound – elevated productivity, reduced burnout, and a culture of well-being. Using this data, we could tailor our initiatives to ensure everyone feels supported and valued. However, as we explore this innovation, ethics and data privacy remain paramount. Collaboration with employees will be pivotal to address concerns and ensure consent. As we look ahead to the modern workplace, let's embrace the potential of technology to not only bolster our professional endeavours but also to foster a workplace where each person's mental well-being is a priority.

GO DEVELOPERS PREFER OPENAI MODELS

The Go Developer Survey 2024 H1 finds that among Go developers working professionally with Gen AI systems, a solid majority reported using OpenAI's ChatGPT or DALL-E models. A collection of open-source models also saw high adoption, with a majority of respondents (53%) using at least one of Llama, Mistral, or another OSS model.

Which of the following generative AI models is your organization using?



Almost Artificial Sunil Agarwal & Ian Baker



We need more women in AI for an inclusive future

AI will likely embrace every part of our lives. It's critical that it avoids biases, benefits everyone

Akhil George & Sujit John | TNN

Science and technology have been a privileged fief of men for centuries, but the present disruption being caused by the rise of AI presents a tantalising moment for women to leapfrog their historical disadvantages. So said a stellar line-up of women tech leaders in the field of AI during our webinar last week.

Sreysha George, MD & Partner at BCG (Boston Consulting Group), says that a global study that BCG undertook even showed that women in senior roles are more represented in AI fields than men, but that the situation reverses itself when more junior roles are compared. "So, we are taking the opportunity to leapfrog and throw away that legacy of men always being ahead, but we're not seeing that consistently across the board."

One of the biggest dangers comes from the data that AI systems are being fed. An AI system's capability is heavily dependent on the data on which it is trained. And, in the case of large language models in particular, a lot of this training is based on publicly available data. This is data that comes with all the biases that are inherent in

THIS IS NEW TECH, SO WOMEN HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY

India needs to focus more on AI R&D. There are aspects of R&D in AI where we are seeing a lot of women globally focused quite deeply on. And I hope that the same trend will happen in India as well. I think women entering that space would be not only important for the country but for the technology itself. R&D topics include things like causality, statistical understanding of large language models, and a fairly deep understanding of computer science.

Rohini Srivathsa | CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, INDIA & SOUTH ASIA, MICROSOFT

If AI is uniquely positioned and poised to shape the advancement of the human race, then I think it's very important that we have a diverse group of professionals who can bring in that broader perspective and prevent biases. R&D organisations like ours need to make sure that we have very diverse teams working on AI.

Sindhu Gangadharan | MD, SAP LABS INDIA, & VICE CHAIRPERSON, NASSCOM

Women, with our innovation and strategic thinking capability, mixed with what we are known for a lot more – our empathy and communication – have a great opportunity to take the leadership role in AI. The best part is that, given this is a new technology and there

our societies.

Rohini Srivathsa, CTO for Microsoft in India & South Asia, says that there are techniques galore to counteract the biases in the data – like grounding the models in specific data and ensuring guardrails are built into the system. But an even surer way of ensuring the rise of progressive AI systems, she says, is to make sure more women are involved in the research and development part of the process.

is no history (where men dominate the field), I believe that we have equal opportunity to advance AI.

Geeta Gurnani | TECHNOLOGY CTO & TECHNICAL SALES LEADER, INDIA & SOUTH ASIA, IBM

Amazon's Alexa doesn't have a gender. If you ask Alexa, it says it's gender neutral. We are also making sure that it is not obedient or apologetic in nature and that it is not too eager to help, because these are things which are associated with women. So you have to be very careful (when designing these systems) because Alexa is being used by small girls and we don't want to reinforce certain behaviours.

Shalini Kapoor | DIRECTOR & CHIEF TECHNOLOGIST FOR PUBLIC SECTOR, INDIA & SOUTH ASIA, AWS

We did a global study and found that more senior women in tech are doing Gen AI work compared to men. Which is excellent. But when it comes to junior women, there's again a huge gap that we see in the market in terms of their participation in Gen AI. And the minute you go non-tech, the gender gaps start widening even further.

Sreysha George | MD & PARTNER, BCG (BOSTON CONSULTING GROUP)

few basis points above how positively men saw it."

Geeta Gurnani, IBM's technology CTO & technical sales leader for India & South Asia, says that beyond bias-free data and workplace inclusion, how women are treated in their homes will also be a major factor that determines the fairness of the AI systems of tomorrow. She says it is imperative that we encourage women to aspire more and to dare to demand their

rights. "I think there is a lot of course correction needed in our social fabric, where we need to challenge and talk more about it (the disparity between men and women in different fields). I think many statistics will shock people."

Simply having role models for other women to look up to can also make a world of a difference. "Women should just remember the impact they have. The other day, somebody in my kid's school bought a new car, and my elder daughter, without missing a beat said, 'Mama, I'm sure that mama got a promotion.' We just never understand the impact all of us women have on children. So, talk about what you do, share your stories, it makes a difference. And although my daughter might never understand the impact that statement she made had, it was very profound for me when I heard it," says Sreysha.

How to keep up with AI

One of the challenges that both men and women will face in the coming years relates to how they can keep track of the constantly changing tech landscape. If AI systems are going to keep getting smarter, where does that leave the average person in the long run?

Sindhu Gangadharan, MD of SAP Labs India, says that when one is confronted with such an ever-evolving landscape, it is only the relentless pursuit of knowledge and a deep-seated commitment to constantly upskill ourselves that will help any of us stay ahead of the curve. "Being stagnant and being this person who says, 'Hey, I know it all, I've been here for quite some time,' that's not going to work. It's all about being agile, it's about staying curious. It's really about cultivating a mindset that thrives on innovation, and not being afraid of challenging the status quo."

Deloitte, Yotta ally for Gen AI apps from India



Sunil Gupta, co-founder & CEO of Yotta Data Services, with crates containing the 4,000 Nvidia H100 GPUs that he received recently. Gupta says a single H100 GPU, with all the associated paraphernalia, costs about \$40,000, and the three-year power, data centre and internet costs together is an additional \$40,000. "So, the three-year TCO (total cost of ownership) becomes almost \$80,000 per GPU. That's far too much for most enterprises and startups to invest in today, given that they are still experimenting with Gen AI use cases and given that they will need the GPUs only for a few hours or days. That's where our per-hour model comes in," he says.

Sujit.John@timesgroup.com

We are seeing the beginnings of the expected Gen AI transformation of India. A few weeks ago, Yotta Data Services received the country's first batch of 4,000 Nvidia H100 GPUs, the chips driving large language models (LLMs) that are producing applications like ChatGPT. Now, Yotta is combining with consulting firm Deloitte to offer the entire suite – from consulting on Gen AI, to the chips required for it – on a per-hour model, which the firms believe will make it extremely affordable for businesses and govt to develop Gen AI applications for India and the world.

Deloitte brings to the alliance its reach into global business, and its expertise in conducting Gen AI experiments. Nitin Mittal, global AI leader for Deloitte, tells us that since June last year, the firm has done over 500 Gen AI engagements for over 120 clients globally. A vast majority have been commissioned by US-based clients and over 50% of the overall engagements are being delivered by Deloitte's India-based teams. Deloitte has over 1 lakh employees in India.

Mittal says many of these engagements are moving from proof-of-concepts (PoCs) to being mainstreamed inside business processes, and Yotta's H100-based data centre is critical for scaling.

Anjali Kumar, the firm's India partner for consulting, says Gen AI applications in marketing & sales, and coding have seen huge traction in India. Sanghamitra Pati, MD in Deloitte who focuses on delivering projects globally out of India, says in her portfolio, there's excitement around Gen AI use in marketing, finance, HR, legal services, efficiency improvement, and most of all in customer experience. Some CEO-sponsored PoCs, she says, are expected to scale this year into multi-million dollar projects, with large Deloitte teams involved.

Yotta, on the other hand, brings to the alliance its GPUs, and experience in running data centres. Co-founder Sunil Gupta has been establishing and running data centres for years, including at Reliance Communications, Netmagic and NTT. In 2020, when he launched Yotta with support from the Mumbai-based real estate

Since June last year, Deloitte has undertaken over 500 Gen AI PoCs (proofs-of-concepts) globally. Of these, over 50% are being done by our India teams – for India and for the world. Now, one-third to 40% of these are going into production – they are being mainstreamed within the business processes, and consequently being scaled up. And as that happens, the partnership with Yotta becomes really important, because scaling up requires that Nvidia cloud infrastructure. Also, for Indian clients, it helps with AI sovereignty concerns.

Nitin Mittal | GLOBAL AI LEADER, DELOITTE

group Hiranandani, he sought to differentiate by also offering GPU-based data centres, to help studios and game creators. These were Nvidia's older GPUs, but it helped establish his Nvidia relationship.

So, when Nvidia started looking around last year for an India partner to build AI infrastructure, Yotta was a natural choice. Gupta says

it's not just about the chip. The enormous processing capacity that

thousands of GPUs provide is of little use if the network and storage cannot cope with the data flows. "The key is to connect all GPUs to each other directly through a specialised high-speed network called InfiniBand which Nvidia supplies, use a special-purpose storage system, and also Nvidia's software stack, including their pre-trained models in containers, and the Nemo suite that allows customisation of open-source LLMs," he says.

Gupta will offer cloud-based AI services at \$2-2.5 per hour, compared to the much higher rates that hyperscalers globally charge. He says he's able to do that because of lower talent costs in India, and lower overheads.

Deloitte and Yotta, in fact, plan to convert their joint offering into a per-hour model, which they call AI-factory-as-a-service. "It's a pioneering move. A client will get everything – infrastructure, GPUs, consulting on use cases, PoCs, and even productionisation – for 6, 7 or 8 dollars per GPU," Mittal says.

After beating cancer, Nidhi returns to work

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Nidhi Joseph had taken a break from PwC in Mumbai, where she had been a senior consultant, with expertise in business intelligence and SAP BusinessObjects, when she was diagnosed with thyroid cancer. This was in 2015, soon after her second child was born.

"I had thought I would take a short break from work to manage my kids, maybe for 2-3 years. I never thought it would last for eight years," Nidhi says.

She first had to undergo a surgery to remove the thyroid gland. Then she had to cope with the side effects of having radioactive iodine. She started gaining weight due to water retention, suffered from muscle loss, and underwent hormone therapy to treat endometriosis. It took her over five years to recover from all this. By then, both her children had grown up. That was when Nidhi thought of getting back to work.

She contemplated becoming a teacher. She had done engineering in electronics & communication, and had then worked at Patni Computer Systems, IBM and PwC. She thought that experience would persuade private schools to consider appointing her. The idea actually came from her daughter, who

CAREER COMEBACK

felt Nidhi simplified even complex topics.

Around this time, she also put her resume on a job portal on an impulse. Her former colleagues at PwC and IBM had helped her keep in touch with the latest technologies. She had worked on SAP technologies from the beginning of her career. SAP's blogs were her major reading material when she began the job hunt.

"Technology comes naturally to me. I knew about the changes happening in these areas; it's just that I did not have practical experience. In the case of one SAP tool, I had worked with a 4.0 version, which was now an 8.0 version, and I understood the difference," she says.

Within two months of her sending out her resume, Accenture approached her for the role of transformation excellence analyst. During her interviews, she was asked only about the work she had already done. She also made it clear to the company that she would have to continue taking tests for any cancer relapse, and that she still goes through side-effects like migraines. Accenture offered her the job. "I accepted it only when the firm

said they understood my condition," Nidhi says.

But she still had a mental block. Would she be able to adjust at work and find the right balance between work and home?

"My daughter had seen me go to the office. But, for my son, I had always been a stay-at-home mother. I was worried about how he would manage without me. But I had made up my mind that I wanted to work and reclaim my life," she says.

Nidhi got a house-help for the children. Accenture's hybrid model of work also helped in getting over her anxieties.

She learned skills like Power BI and ADO. "Initially I relied on my team to hand-hold me," she says. Today, she helps clients identify errors and inconsistencies in their data and assess whether the data fits its intended purpose.

Her team also supports her when she has to take leave to deal with her health, including mental health.

Her team also supports her when she has to take leave to deal with her health, including mental health.

"I have a very positive mindset. When I narrate my story to others, I realise how strong I have been. I just focused on getting through one day at a time."

Nidhi Joseph | TRANSFORMATION EXCELLENCE ANALYST, ACCENTURE

PASSION IS SO IMPORTANT FOR CAREER SUCCESS

THREE ENGINEERS AT MORGAN STANLEY'S GLOBAL CAPABILITY CENTRE IN INDIA TALK ABOUT THEIR LIVES, CHALLENGES AND SUCCESSES

A break & back

I worked in Germany, with Siemens, very early in my career, and then in the Netherlands, US, Poland, and UK. I moved back to India in 2012 for family reasons and spent the next ten years looking after ageing parents and in-laws. I remained passionate about technology and worked with two tech startups. When my personal situation changed, I wanted to get back into full time corporate work but found it difficult to break through recruitment barriers in lateral hiring. That was when Morgan Stanley's Return to Work Programme came to my rescue, offering a non-judgemental path back into the workforce. They saw past my lack of relevant banking knowledge and my years on a break, but instead evaluated me on my potential, aptitude, and skills.

Hema Radhakrishna | EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, INSTITUTIONAL SECURITIES TECH

Family support helped

After completing my engineering degree, I entered the tech world as I had always believed that it would push me to do things differently. When I became a mother, balancing my professional and personal life was a learning curve. However, I learned to stay patient and strong, albeit with a bit of heartache, as I had to sometimes work long hours or leave my young child behind to attend to professional commitments. Strong support from my family helped ease my journey. I am proud of today's young girls entering into STEM careers who dare to dream big and seize the opportunities coming their way.

Gargi Desai | VP, WEALTH MANAGEMENT TECHNOLOGY

First engr in my family

Growing up in Bijapur, a small town in Karnataka, pursuing engineering as a career path was one of the few ways to move to a bigger city and become financially independent. While I graduated to become the first engineer in my family, the real achievement was discovering my passion for technology. My first job at Oracle helped me to broaden my knowledge of technology across platform engineering, automation and devOps. At my next stint with Dell, I was the only female technologist in the R&D server division. In my current role, I lead a global team of developers, focussed on developing solutions to effectively identify insider threats and reduce the risk exposure for the firm.

Shilpa Chikkannavar | VP, CYBER DATA RISK & RESILIENCE

GLOSSARY OF IN-GROUP TERMS USED



ON THIS PAGE

DEVOPS

DevOps is a methodology that blends software development (Dev) and operations (Ops) into a cohesive process aimed at enhancing collaboration, automating tasks, and improving product quality and speed of delivery. At the heart of DevOps is the principle of continuous integration and continuous deployment (CI/CD), where code changes are frequently integrated and tested, leading to efficient and automated deployments. This not only catches

bugs quickly but also accelerates the release cycle. Automation is a critical component of DevOps, helping to streamline processes from coding and testing to deployment and infrastructure management. This reduces the reliance on manual tasks, lowers the chance of errors, and increases efficiency across the board. Many DevOps practices also embrace the use of microservices architecture, which involves breaking down a large application into smaller, more manageable pieces that can be developed, deployed, and scaled independently.

OSS MODEL

The open-source software (OSS) model is a method of developing and distributing software where the source code is made available to the public. This model contrasts sharply with proprietary software where the source code remains under wraps and rights to modify and share are tightly controlled. Open-source

software promotes a culture of transparency, collaboration, and freedom in software development. Despite its many benefits, the open-source model also comes with challenges. There may be a lack of dedicated support which businesses might find insufficient for their needs. Integration with existing systems or third-party applications can sometimes be problematic.

Indian caution, American aggression

Co-Leaders Gukesh, Nepo Play Draw; Caruana, Nakamura Win Rd 10 To Join Pragm In Joint 2nd

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Safety-first was the approach of Indian youngsters on a day dominated by the experienced American grandmasters in the Candidates Chess tournament in Toronto on Monday.

Though the 10th round went in favour of the top-two seeds Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura, tournament co-leaders Gukesh D and Ian Nepomniachtchi (6 points) played out a peaceful draw to maintain their lead going into the third rest day.

Caruana and Nakamura won against out of form Alireza Firouzja and Nijat Abasov respectively. They joined Praggnanandhaa at the joint second position with 5.5 points.

A tactical battle between compatriots Pragm and Vidit Gujrathi ended in a solid draw. After stunning world No. 3 Nakamura in the previous round, Vidit had jumped to the third position.

A draw with Pragm helped him keep his spot in the standings. Vidit is a point behind leaders Gukesh and Nepo.

A decisive result between table toppers Gukesh and Nepo would have made headlines. The expectations were high but they were short-lived as the two-time challenger came out with a strategy of not taking any risks. Gukesh opted for the rare Cozio Defense Deferred in Ruy Lopez opening by moving his king-side knight on the fourth turn.

By the 32nd move, all the minor pieces were exchanged and the position remained equal. In a rook and pawns endgame, the point was split after 40 moves.

Gukesh, 17, told FIDE broadcast, "I just wanted to play a normal game. I wasn't really thinking what his intentions were, but I was prepared in both the cases. I was black and he played a solid game, so it was a fair result. In the last few games I haven't felt anything different from the first games (in terms of the pressure). I am in a good shape and hopefully it will continue."

Vidit, 29, and ten sensation Pragm played out a draw but solid play from both sides. Unlike his third-round loss to Pragm where the Nashik GM made some inaccurate moves, Vidit kept his defense tight with the black pieces. He chose a solid line of Berlin defense and soon an equal position emerged. Both Pragm and Vidit repeated their moves just before the time control

I just wanted to play a normal game. I wasn't really thinking what his intentions were, but I was prepared in both the cases. I was black and he played a solid game, so it was a fair result." —Gukesh D

when rooks, opposite-coloured bishops and seven pawns each were on the board.

With just four rounds remaining in this eight-player 14-round double-round robin meet, Caruana and Nakamura have regrouped themselves and seem to be peaking up at the right.

World No. 2 Caruana made most of his opening advantage with the white pieces to outclass Firouzja in 47 moves. The latter came under time pressure. It was a Freak Attack game in the Sicilian Najdorf in which 20-year-old Firouzja took 13 and 16 minutes to play his sixth and 13th move respectively.

Nakamura made most of his opening advantage but had to sweat hard to win against tournament's lowest seed Nijat Abasov of Azerbaijan. In a topsy-turvy game, Nakamura clinched the issue in 58 moves of French Attack game in Petroff defence. He won rook for bishop on the 38th turn which proved decisive.

Vaishali wins, Humpy holds Tan

In the women's event, Vaishali ended her four-game losing streak with a marathon 88-move, six-hour win over Nurgul Salimova. Koneru Humpy defended well with her black pieces to hold tournament leader Tan Zhongyi of China in 72 moves.

RESULTS (RD 10)

Open: I Nepomniachtchi 6 drew with D Gukesh 6; R Praggnanandhaa 5.5 drew with V Gujrathi 5; H Nakamura 5.5 bt A Abasov 3; F Caruana 5.5 bt A Firouzja 3.5.
Women: N Salimova 4 lost to R Vaishali 3.5; T Zhongyi 6.5 drew with K Humpy 4.5; A Goryachkina 5.5 lost to T Lei 6.5; K Lagno 5.5 drew with A Muzychuk 4.

PAIRINGS (Round 11)

OPEN: Praggnanandhaa R vs Hikaru Nakamura, Vidit Gujrathi vs Ian Nepomniachtchi, Gukesh D vs Fabiano Caruana, Alireza Firouzja vs Nijat Abasov,
WOMEN: Lei Tingjie vs Anna Muzychuk
Tan Zhongyi vs Lagno Kateryna Koneru Humpy vs Nurgul Salimova
Vaishali Rameshbabu vs Aleksandra Goryachkina



Praggnanandhaa (right) shared the point with Vidit Gujrathi on Tuesday

Caruana's Kel move floors Alireza



With the top seeds Fabiano Caruana and Hikaru Nakamura making their presence felt for the first time, the tournament has reached an extremely interesting stage with absolute uncertainty. In the women's section, however, it looks like a straightforward tussle between the two Chinese players.

The battle between the leaders — two-time challenger Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia and the young participant D Gukesh of India did not see much action. Gukesh tried an unusual variation with 5...Nge7 against Nepomniachtchi's Spanish game, the one chosen by R. Praggnanandhaa against Vidit Gujrathi successfully in R3. The Russian took only 34 seconds to choose his option, a much safer one than what Gujrathi had chosen.

Nepomniachtchi's novelty 10.Nd5, keeping the king in centre didn't bring any good to him. Gukesh could have created dangerous initiative by offering his 'c7' pawn with 12...Nxb3 13.axb3, Bb7! but decided to go for the quieter 12...Bd6, leading to a safe equality. Gukesh simplified the position with exchange of all minor pieces

with 20...Nxb3 and 21...Bxd5, thereby reaching a 'dead drawn' major piece ending.

R Praggnanandhaa played the exchange variation against Vidit Gujrathi's Berlin Classical defence of the Spanish game and chose the recommendation of Chess engines 8.Nc3, which had not been tried earlier. However, Gujrathi had no difficulty in playing the right manoeuvre...Bc5-d6, ...Nf6-d7-c5-e6, recommended by former world champion Anatoly Karpov over four decades ago. The game ended in draw without any fireworks.

Caruana won a technical battle against Alireza Firouzja. Though the former tried an unusual variation 6.Rg1 followed by a novelty 7.Bc4 against the Sicilian Najdorf, the Iranian turned Frenchman found a way to equalise with a sham queen sacrifice 11...Qxg5! However, after his inexplicable 23...Kg7?, the Iranian lost a pawn, though it wasn't fatal. The real mistake came when Alireza played the over-ambitious 30...h4, which was refuted elegantly with 31.Re7 and 32.Re5! After Caruana found the correct prophylactic 37.Ke1, there was nothing left in the game.

Nakamura vs Nijat Abasov was a game of changing fortunes. Abasov played the Petroff and the game was transposed to the Alapin variation of the Sicilian defence. Abasov failed to grasp the position when he

chose to follow a bad plan with 13...b7-b5 instead of the 'most principled' continuation 13...g5. Nakamura got a big advantage in the game as Abasov's novelty 14...a5 didn't make much sense. However, the American, who is no longer playing as aggressively before, missed a winning continuation 27.g4-g5! and passed on the initiative to the Azerbaijani. Instead of playing the winning move 36...Bc7!, Abasov blundered with 36...Qe7? allowing Hikaru to trap the black rook with 37.Be5.

R Vaishali (Black) scored her second win in the event — against the same opponent Nurgul Salimova of Bulgaria — after four consecutive losses. Salimova and Vaishali blitzed out the first 11 moves in the exchange variation of the Grunfeld defence in no time. After the Indian blundered with 21...Nh7, the Bulgarian missed winning move 22.Rc7, making the position roughly equal. Vaishali then blundered with 41...Ke7, but she equalised once again when the Bulgarian blundered with 54.e4-e5. However, the Indian blundered back with 58...Nb7 instead of the drawing continuation 58...Rb7.

The very next move by the Bulgarian 59.d8=Q again restored the balance in the position. The final blunder in the game was 67.Kd6??, which led to a losing rook ending for the Bulgarian. (Pravin Thipsay is a Grandmaster and an Arjuna awardee)

Slater collapses after being refused bail

Sydney: Former Test cricketer Michael Slater reportedly collapsed in an Australian court on Tuesday after being refused bail on more than a dozen charges, including some relating to stalking.

The 54-year-old had to be helped to his feet by court staff after falling to the floor when a Queensland magistrate turned down his bail application. The television commentator and former batsman is accused of domestic violence offences as well as common assault and unlawful stalking.

Among the allegations against him, police said Slater sent unwanted text messages and made intimidating phone calls over the last six months. He is due to appear in



NO RELIEF: Michael Slater

court again at the end of May. The court heard Slater has mental health conditions that can result in "impulsive and reckless" behaviour, ABC News reported. Slater played 74 Test matches from 1993-2001, chalking up more than 5,000 runs for Australia including 14 centuries. He also played 42 one-day internationals before retiring from all cricket in 2004. AFP

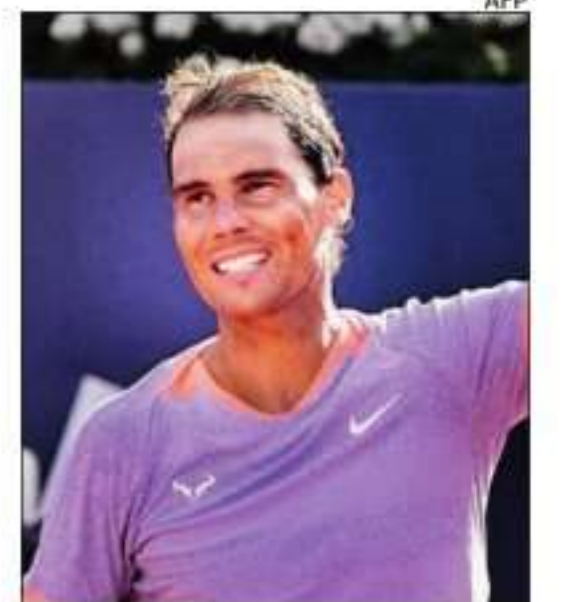
Nadal returns to action with easy win in Barcelona

Barcelona: Rafael Nadal made light work of Flavio Cobolli on a triumphant return from injury at the Barcelona Open on Tuesday. The 22-time Grand Slam champion had not played an ATP Tour match since January but dispatched the Italian 6-2, 6-3 in one hour and 25 minutes to reach the second round.

Nadal, 37, was able to play on clay for the first time since winning the French Open in 2022 and showed flashes of his usual brilliance in a solid display. "It was a good start — when you return you can't get rid of the doubts in one day, above all, on a physical level," Nadal told TVE. "Within what it could be, it was a good first round. He made mistakes and I think I played the game that I had to play."

Nadal who has triumphed at Roland Garros a record 14 times, is hoping to play there in May in what he expects to be the final year of his professional career. The clay court king, who missed most of 2023 injured, will face Alex de Minaur on Wednesday after breezing past Cobolli.

"It will be at a speed that I don't know if I will be able to keep up with, but I'll try," Nadal said of facing the 11th-ranked De Minaur. After a



FIGHTING FIT: Rafael Nadal

double fault to fall 30-0 behind Nadal found his rhythm, with Cobolli intimidated by the fervent support for the Spaniard on the court named after him.

Nadal converted his third break point in the fourth game for a 3-1 lead, with Cobolli surviving four more to hold at 4-2 down. The 12-time Barcelona Open winner broke again to claim the set in 43 minutes, clenching his fist in celebration.

Cobolli handed Nadal a break for 2-0 in the second set with two more unforced errors but finally put some pressure on Nadal's serve in the third game to break back. However Nadal broke again for 3-1 after Cobolli's third double fault and served it out to triumph. AFP

Dahiya enters bronze playoff

Bishkek: India's Rohit Dahiya made it to the bronze-medal round, making him the only Greco-Roman wrestler from the country to be in contention for a podium finish at the Asian Championships here on Tuesday.

On a day when all other Indian Greco-Roman grapplers continued to come up with below-par performances, Dahiya (82kg) set up a bronze-medal match-up with Uzbekistan's Mukhammadkodir Rasulov, ranked 12th in the world.

ASIAN WRESTLING

The other three wrestlers on show, Parvesh (60kg), Vinayak Siddheshwar Patil (67kg) and Ankit Gulia (72kg) got eliminated in the preliminary rounds.

However, Dahiya, who had represented the country in the 2022 World U-20 Championships in Sofia, despite losing his quarterfinal bout to Japan's Yoshida Taizo on points 7-2, made it to the bronze-medal round as the opponent he lost to made it to the final.

In the 60kg category, Parvesh lost his pre-quarterfinal bout by technical superiority to Kazakhstan's Galym Kabanassarov, while Hanjae Chung of South Korea overcame Vinayak Patil 7-1 on points in the 67kg category quarterfinal. PTI

Better passing can counter Oz might

New Delhi: The recent 0-5 drubbing notwithstanding, former drag-flick specialist Rupinder Pal Singh feels the Olympic-bound Indian men's hockey team can counter Australia's aggressive style of play with better defensive coordination and some innovative passing.

"We lost the first match 5-1, after that the team improved and the score-lines were close, we missed some chances, some work needs to be done prior to the Olympics," he said. "Australia's hard press can be countered, high level of coordination is required for that, defender-to-defender ball transfer, quick passes from defenders to the mid-field, overhead passes would be useful in countering such a style." PTI

Haaland Out To Prove Critics Wrong As City Aim To Overcome Real Madrid Challenge

SEQUEL TO THRILLER

Manchester: Manchester City are closing in on a second consecutive treble, yet Erling Haaland is still facing criticism as Real Madrid visit the Etihad on Wednesday aiming to exact revenge for their Champions League exit last season.

The 14-time European champions were humbled 4-0 on their visit to Manchester 11 months ago at the semifinal stage as City went on to win the Champions League for the first time, along with the Premier League and FA Cup.

Pep Guardiola's men are 12 games away from repeating that remarkable feat even without their prolific Norwegian hitting the form he did last season.

Haaland's return of 31 goals in 38 games this season is still impressive, but he has not scored in City's three meetings with Madrid in the past year and failed to find the net in 13 of his last 20 matches for club and country.

The 23-year-old has also been in the firing line for not offering anything other than goals.

The Spanish press has been just as harsh after Haaland failed to fire for a second consecutive year at the Santiago Bernabeu in a thrilling first leg that ended 3-3 last week.

Madrid boss Carlo Ancelotti will not repeat the same mistake of dropping Rudiger for the second leg as he did last season after the German had kept Haaland quiet in the Bernabeu. It is by helping to retain the Champions League that Haaland can make a global statement.

Guardiola also believes the forward's presence did have a telling impact in Madrid as Phil Foden and Josko Gvardiol were allowed space on the edge of the box to smash in stunning strikes as the Real defence tracked Haaland.

"He helps us to make more spaces in the areas and his contribution has been exceptional since the day he arrived last season," added Guardiola. "(He) helped us score some of them (goals) by creating lots of spaces for the other ones to score the goals. I saw in his face, in what he said after the game, in the locker room, he was extremely happy (in Madrid)." AFP



GAME ON: Manchester City's Erling Haaland (top) found Real Madrid defender Antonio Rudiger too hot to handle in the first leg at Bernabeu

FORM GUIDE

MAN CITY

(All competitions, most recent first):

W D W W D

REAL MADRID

(All competitions, most recent first):

W D W W W

HEAD TO HEAD

City	Real
4 Wins	4 Draws 3 Wins

"A DRAW FEELS LIKE LAST YEAR, IT FEELS LIKE A DEFEAT. WE NEED TO BE FUELLED BY A SENSE OF REVENGE AND GO TO MANCHESTER FULL OF HUNGER TO QUALIFY FOR THE SEMIFINALS."
—Valverde, Real midfielder

"YOU FEEL LIKE YOU HAVE CONTROL, AND THEN THEY SCORE TWO GOALS IN A MOMENT. INDIVIDUALLY THEY ARE MAYBE THE BEST TEAM IN THE WORLD. WE HAVE A LOT OF CONFIDENCE AT HOME BUT ALSO MAXIMUM RESPECT."
—Bernardo Silva, City midfielder

Kane has a 'point to prove'

Munich: Harry Kane was released by Arsenal when he was 9 years old. He has been on a revenge mission ever since.

The England captain has scored 15 goals in 20 appearances in all competitions against Arsenal — first as a Tottenham player and now while at Bayern Munich — and will look to add to that record in the second leg of the Champions League quarterfinals.

Bayern held Arsenal to a 2-2 draw in the first leg in London last week, with Kane scoring. He opened up Tuesday about his feelings when playing against Arsenal after being rejected as a kid.

"Up until this year, I've played them at least twice a year for the last 10 years," Kane said ahead of Wednesday's game at the Allianz Arena. "It was always a big occasion. Of course, always maybe it was in the back of my mind, being released from a young age, that there was always a point to prove. I don't feel that ever leaves you. It will always be in my DNA until I'm retired. There will always be a reason to prove someone wrong or prove to myself I can



7 Number of goals Kane has scored in this season's competition, making him the league's top scorer ahead of the QF second leg

FORM GUIDE

BAYERN

(All competitions, most recent first):

W D L L W

ARSENAL

(All competitions, most recent first):

L D W W D

HEAD TO HEAD

Bayern	Arsenal
7 Wins	3 Draws 3 Wins

do something."

Liam Brady, who was Arsenal's academy manager when Kane was at the club, has since said Kane "was a bit chubby, he wasn't very athletic but we made a mistake."

On Tuesday, Kane said there was more to play now that he had joined Bayern.

"I don't think specifically I look back to that and think that because I was released at 9 years old, I really need to make a difference tomorrow," he said. "Of course I have history with (Arsenal) but all I can do is help Bayern Munich qualify for the semifinals of the Champions League."

Arsenal captain Martin Odegaard trained Tuesday after coming off in the second half of the team's 2-0 loss to Aston Villa in the Premier League on Sunday with what manager Mikel Arteta said was an injury.

"This is the Champions League: if you make mistakes, you get punished. We didn't do a lot of the simple things to our normal standards. We allowed them to have spaces to run and they are very dangerous," Arteta said. AGENCIES

Chelsea players behaved like kids, fumes Pochettino

Palmer scores four in 6-0 demolition of dismal Everton

London: An unseemly squabble involving six Chelsea players over who should take a penalty angered manager Mauricio Pochettino because of the message it sent around about his squad's behaviour.

"You cannot behave like kids," Pochettino said in reference to a minute-long series of bizarre confrontations in the second half of Chelsea's 6-0 victory over Everton in the Premier League on Monday.

After Chelsea was awarded a spot kick in the 63rd with the team leading 4-0, Noni Madueke and Nicolas Jackson both attempted to take the ball from Malo Gusto, who was holding it while Cole Palmer — the team's regular penalty taker who had already scored a hat trick in the first half — was on the ground having been fouled.

Madueke lunged to grab the ball off Gusto, and then argued with Jackson as they both walked over to the spot before experienced Brazil defender



SPOT OF BOTHER: Chelsea's Nicolas Jackson (L) clashes with Noni Madueke as Conor Gallagher (No. 23) intervenes and Cole Palmer prepares to take the penalty against Everton on Monday

Thiago Silva got involved and talked to them while putting his arms around their shoulders.

Conor Gallagher, Chelsea's captain, then intervened to tell Madueke that Palmer should be taking the kick, only for Jackson to pile back in and try to snatch the ball off Palmer, who was about to place it on the spot. After pushing away Jackson, Palmer eventually took the penalty and scored his fourth goal of the night, making it 5-0. AP

BERND HOELZENBEIN, WORLD CUP WINNER WITH WEST GERMANY IN 1974, DIES AT 78

Frankfurt: Bernd Hoelzenbein, who won a crucial penalty in West Germany's victory over the Netherlands in the 1974 World Cup final, has died. He was 78. Hoelzenbein's former club Eintracht Frankfurt said in a statement that he died on Monday.

"One of the greatest we have ever had," the club said. Hoelzenbein is best known for his role in the 2-1 comeback victory over the Netherlands to win the World Cup on home soil in 1974. Playing in Munich, Hoelzenbein helped get his team back into the game when he dribbled into the Dutch box and was brought down by Wim Jansen. Paul Breitner converted the penalty to level the score at 1-1. Gerd Mueller scored the winner. AP

BUTTLER CRASHES KKR PARTY!

Impact Player's Century Trumps Narine Special As Royals Pull Off Record Chase

Archiman.Bhaduri@timesgroup.com
Kolkata: In a match where the openers dictated terms, it was Rajasthan Royals' Jos Buttler who spoiled Kolkata Knight Riders and Sunil Narine's party to take his side home in a high-scoring match. While Narine's belligerent 109 off 56 balls helped the hosts post a strong 223/6 after RR captain Sanju Samson won the toss and decided to field first. Buttler got his second century of this IPL in a winning cause to script a two-wicket victory getting 224 losing eight wickets. The Englishman paced his innings nicely and upped the ante after all recognised batters perished to stay undefeated on 107 off 60 balls to keep RR on top of the points table. Earlier, for a change, even Sunil Narine showed some emotion. The occasion was so unique that even the poker-faced Narine had his eyes wet as he jumped in the air to celebrate his first century in any format on Tuesday. The Trinidadian became the first KKR player to hit a century at the Eden Gardens. It was the opener's belligerent 109 off 56 balls that helped the hosts post a strong 223 for six after RR captain Sanju Samson won the toss and decided to field first. However, Narine was not done yet as he re-

turned to become the first player in an IPL match to score a hundred and then picked two wickets by trapping Dhruv Jurel and dangerous Rovman Powell in front and took a catch to dismiss Samson. It was a rather sedate start for the Knights who lost opener Phil Salt while getting 26 runs in the first four overs. But young Angkrish Raghuvanshi and Narine upped the ante, collecting 30 runs in the next two overs. Narine broke loose getting the first six off the match, lifting Kuldeep Sen over deep mid-wicket in the pacer's first over. The opener reached his half-century off 29 balls hitting Ravichandran Ashwin, making a comeback from injury, over long on for a six. Skipper Samson was forced to bring Sen back into the attack after Ashwin (2-21) and Chahal (2-23) went for runs. However, Sen provided the breakthrough by having his Madhya Pradesh teammate Raghuvanshi caught at third man. But that did not prevent Narine from throwing his bat around as he collected 15 runs with one six and two fours in Ashwin's next over. Andre Russell was promoted up the order as he joined his West Indian teammate in the middle in the 14th over after KKR skipper Shreyas Iyer became Chahal's



107*
 Jos Buttler's unbeaten match-winning knock is his 7th IPL and his 2nd vs KKR. His first was a 103 at Brabourne Stadium, Mumbai on April 18, 2022. Only Virat Kohli has scored more IPL hundreds (8) than Buttler.

7 Jos Buttler has set a new record IPL record of scoring 7 hundreds in a winning cause, bettering Chris Gayle's six.

224/8
 Rajasthan Royals' winning total, the joint-highest successful chase in IPL history. Rajasthan had posted 226/6 in response to Punjab's 223/2 in Sharjah on Sept 27, 2020.

109 Runs scored by Sunil Narine, his maiden century in Twenty20s. His previous best was the 85 off 39 balls in an IPL fixture vs Delhi Capitals in Vizag on April 3, 2024.

1 Narine is the only allrounder with both a hundred and a 4-wicket haul (5/19 vs Punjab Kings in Kolkata on April 15, 2012) in the history of the IPL.

1 Sunil Narine has become the first allrounder to score a hundred, take a wicket (he took two) and take a catch in the same IPL match.

223/6
 KKR's total, their highest vs RR, bettering the 210 at Brabourne Stadium in Mumbai on April 18, 2022.

3 Narine is the third Kolkata batter to post an IPL ton. He joins Brendon McCullum (158* vs RCB in Bengaluru on April 18, 2008) and Venkatesh Iyer (104 vs MI in Mumbai (WS) on April 16, 2023).

SCORECARD
KKR: P Salt c & b Avesh 10, S Narine b Boult 109, A Raghuvanshi c Ashwin b Sen 30, S Iyer lbw b Chahal 11, A Russell c Jurel b Avesh 13, R Singh not out 20, V Iyer c Jurel b Sen 8, Ramandeep not out 1; **Extras** (b4, lb4, w13) **21; Total (20 ov): RR: 11.15; 223/6; FoW:** 1-21, 2-106, 3-133, 4-184, 5-195, 6-215; **Bowling:** Boult 4-0-31-1, Avesh 4-0-35-2, Sen 4-0-46-2, Chahal 4-0-54-1, Ashwin, 4-0-49-0
RR: Y aishwal c V yer b Arora 19, J Buttler not out 107, S Samson c Narine b H Rana 12, R Parag c Russell b H Rana 34, D Jurel lbw b Narine 2, R Ashwin c Raghuvanshi b Varun 8, S Hetmyer c S Iyer b Varun 0, R Powell lbw b Narine 26, T Boult run out (S Iyer/Starc) 0, Avesh not out 0; **Extras** (lb 1, nb 1, w 14) **16; Total: (in 20 overs) 224/8; FoW:** 1-22, 2-47, 3-97, 4-100, 5-121, 6-121, 7-178, 8-186; **Bowling:** M Starc 4-0-50-0, V Arora 3-0-45-1, H Rana 4-0-45-2, S Narine 4-0-30-2, V Chakravarthy 4-0-36-2, A Russell 1-0-17-0
Result: RR won by 2 wickets (with 0 balls remaining)

Titans, DC scrap for vital points today

Sabu.Cherian@timesgroup.com
Ahmedabad: Last week's last-gasp victory over Raj Royals injected some much-needed momentum in Gujarat Titans' campaign. Their clash against the Delhi Capitals assumes significance as the two teams look to move out of the lower half of the table. The Capitals, in turn, stroled to a comprehensive six-wicket triumph over LSG in their previous encounter to get their campaign back on track. Various sub-plots add to the intrigue of Wednesday's clash. While Titans captain and opener Shubman Gill has made himself a regular feature of the Indian team across all formats, Capitals opener Prithvi Shaw continues to miss the bus. The Mumbai-ites continue to blow hot and cold with his form while his fitness issues make him a liability on the field. Shaw's opening partner David Warner suffered a blow to his finger and is doubtful for the match. With Mitchell Marsh too returning to Australia to tend to his torn right hamstring, Capitals might be tempted to give Abhishek Porel a chance at the top of the order. The onus, though, will be on Shaw to get the Capitals off to a quick start while Titans' Gill and Sai Sudharsan, who have formed a solid

2 Shubman Gill is the only batter to post two hundreds in Ahmedabad —129 vs Mumbai on May 26, 2023 and 101 vs Hyderabad on May 15, 2023.

84 Shubman Gill's match-winning knock off 46 balls at Pune on April 2, 2022 is the highest individual score for Gujarat vs Delhi.

Smash it in the Powerplay: Head reveals method to madness

Ashim.Sunam@timesgroup.com
Bengaluru: Sunrisers Hyderabad have found a winning template with their heavy hitters. Travis Head and Abhishek Sharma have forged powerful partnerships at the top to create momentum before six-hitting machine Heinrich Klaassen comes in for another onslaught on opposition bowlers. Such tactics have helped SRH to the two highest scores in the league —277/3 vs MI in March and Monday's 287/3 vs RCB. Abhishek and Head, who were involved in a 108-run first-wicket partnership against RCB, have opened the innings in the last three matches. The former, who

opened alongside Mayank Agarwal against KKR in their first match, batted twice at No. 3 before replacing the Karnataka batter at the top. The Abhishek-Head opening pair scored 46 runs in 16 balls against CSK and notched 76/0 in the Powerplay against RCB. "I was pleased with the way I was able to strike the ball in the Powerplay," said Head, who smashed three fours and five sixes in that period en route to the fourth fastest IPL century off 39 balls. "We (Abhishek and Head) have methods and ways around our partnerships. We have different strengths. We want to try and attack the Powerplay and obvi-



“ Depending on the field positions they set, I try to sum up what the bowlers are trying to do. In the Powerplay with just two fielders out, I try to think about hitting the ball 360 around the whole ground, as you only have to go over the infield or through the infielders for boundaries. I try not to think too much or too far ahead.”
 — Travis Head | SRH OPENER

ously we have got a lot of power through the middle order." It has been a collective batting effort from SRH, which has helped them to four victories. Klaassen (253 runs at a SR of 199.21), who has the most sixes (24) in the season, Head (235; 199.15) and Abhishek (211; 197.19) have done the bulk of the

scoring. Things can get even more ominous when Aiden Markram (159; 138.26) comes into his own. Abdul Samad (SR 225.53) and Nitish Kumar Reddy (SR 173.33) have done their bit too. "Everyone is in great form. There have been a few changes in the team since the first game, try-

ing to mirror who is in great form and see who can maximize it for us. We spoke about it in a team meeting. Each player has had his moments in the competition whether it be Abhi (Abhishek), Klaassen and today (Monday) it was me. We are complementing each other very well," said Head.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	7	6	1	0.677	12
KKR	6	4	2	1.399	8
CSK	6	4	2	0.726	8
SRH	6	4	2	0.502	8
LSG	6	3	3	0.038	6
GT	6	3	3	-0.637	6
PBKS	6	2	4	-0.218	4
MI	6	2	4	-0.234	4
DC	6	2	4	-0.975	4
RCB	7	1	6	-1.185	2

Maxwell takes indefinite 'mental and physical' break

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Bengaluru: When Royal Challengers Bengaluru allrounder Glenn Maxwell walked into the conference room after his team's defeat to Sunrisers Hyderabad on Monday night, it seemed intriguing. It was rare to see a player who wasn't in the 15 address the media. For the next 10 minutes, Maxwell had everyone's attention as he revealed that he had approached the management for a "mental and physical break". With RCB's qualification for the play-offs hanging by a thread, it was a bold call. The 35-year-old — who accumulated 513, 301 and 400 runs in the last three seasons respectively — has hit a rough patch this season, scoring only 32 runs in six matches. The poor performance seems to have affected Maxwell, highlighting the pressures that comes with playing in the IPL. "I went to (skipper) Faf (du Plessis) and the coaches after the last game and said I felt it was probably time we tried someone else," Maxwell said.

“ I take a lot of pride in my performance and I put in a lot of hard work behind the scenes to get my body right. It has been a tough struggle, given my body is on the wrong side of 30. I think that physical and mental toll probably just wore me down a little bit.”
 — Glenn Maxwell | RCB ALLROUNDER



"I've been in this situation where you can keep playing and get yourself deeper into a hole. I think now is actually a good time for me to give myself a bit of a mental and physical break, get my body right. If I'm required to get in during the tournament, I can, hopefully, get back into a solid mental and physical space where I can make an impact," said the Australian cricketer, who was initially suspected to have been rested due to a thumb injury. This is not the first instance Maxwell has prioritised mental health, having taken a break in Oct 2019 citing similar issues. With no return date set, a question mark hangs over his par-

ticipation even as RCB lie at the bottom of the table at the halfway mark. His present state of mind also does not augur well for Australia, with the T20 World Cup starting in June. Maxwell, who was one of the stars of Australia's 50-over World Cup-winning team last year, carried his form into the Big Bash League but has been all at sea here. "I don't think I've had a better six months leading into this IPL. It's frustrating when it ends up like this. But there's no reason I can't finish the tournament well," he said.

“ Glenn Maxwell being one of the big dogs along with Virat Kohli in RCB, there's a lot of pressure, and pressure builds up on players. Every individual is different. Some guys would want to get going and push through and get some runs. Some other guys will need to step back and have a break. One needs to be really understanding as a coach now.”
 — Ricky Ponting | DELHI CAPITAL COACH

CRICKET'S MENTAL-HEALTH CHALLENGE

It's not the first time Maxwell has taken such a break — he had done so in Oct 2019 too. Many other big names have taken similar breaks...
ISHAN KISHAN: The most recent example. The wicketkeeper-batter was a regular traveller with the Indian team but would only get sporadic chances in the playing XI. Citing frustration and fatigue, he decided to take a break last year and came back to India midway through the tour of South Africa. He has been out of India's squads ever since.
VIKAS KOHLI: The star batter opened up about his mental-health struggles after returning from a one-month break just before the 2022 Asia Cup. Kohli said that he had been "trying hard to fake his intensity" and was feeling mentally down.
BEN STOKES: England's current Test captain decided to take an indefinite break to prioritize mental well-being back in July 2021. He later revealed he had gone through a series of panic attacks. Stokes made a successful return after six months but continued to be on medication to cope with anxiety.

JONATHAN TROTT: At the height of his career, Trott, a lynchpin in the England batting lineup, struggled to cope with stress and opted out of the 2013 Ashes after playing one Test. He stopped playing cricket altogether for 16 months, eventually attempted to rejoin the team in 2015. However, due to his continuing battles with anxiety, he quit international cricket the same year.
SHAUN TAIT: The Australian fast bowler had taken a break from cricket in 2008 at the age of 24, saying that he needed "a clear mind" to continue playing the sport. He later went on to successfully represent Australia till 2016.
ANDREW FLINTOFF: The England allrounder's struggles with mental-health concerns forced him to end his international career in 2010. He later revealed he had a period in his life when he didn't even want to get out of bed. When England lost the 2006-2007 Ashes, Flintoff progressively gave in to alcoholism and depression.
MARCUS TRESOCHICK: The English opener's career was cut short by mental exhaustion and despair. During the 2006 tour of India, Trescothick, then 32, felt the need to return home. Trescothick revealed he was dealing with depression when he announced his retirement from the game later that year.
 —Compiled by Hindol Basu

GALLERY

Injury forces Jemimah out of squad for Bangla tour

Mumbai: Top-order batter Jemimah Rodrigues has been forced to miss the Indian women's team's upcoming tour of Bangladesh for a five-match T20I series due to a back injury. **TOI** has learnt. "Jemimah suffered a back injury during the senior women's inter-zonal multi-day trophy in Pune, which was held recently. She is currently recuperating at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru," a source in the BCCI informed.

Babar back as captain as Pakistan face NZ

Babar Azam makes his return as Pakistan captain in a five-match Twenty20 series starting Thursday against an under-strength New Zealand. Azam regained the captaincy last time in a shock U-turn that ended the short-lived reign of Shaheen Shah Afridi, raising fears of a rift between the players. The hosts hope that spending time at a fitness camp at an army base would've been good. **AGENCIES**

ACTION TODAY

CRICKET: IPL, Gujarat vs Delhi, 7.30 pm (Star Sports, Jio); **FOOTBALL:** Champions League QF, Leg 2, Bayern Munich vs Arsenal; Man City vs Real Madrid, 12.30 am Wednesday (Sony Sports)

Ex-India marksman Tejas clears civil services

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Bengaluru: The Covid-19 pandemic ended many sportspeople's careers but for Bengaluru shooter Tejas Krishna Prasad, who was among the Tokyo Olympics probables, the disruption came as a blessing in disguise. He pursued his dream to become a civil servant. On Tuesday, the air rifle marksman cleared the UPSC exam, ranked 243. "Being a sportsperson helped me to stay focused and crack the civil services. Based on last year's cut-off, I think I will get IAS — which is my first choice. During the interview, questions revolved mostly around sports," Tejas told **TOI** during an interaction. "I was asked about my shooting career and how we can improve sports in India. One of my hobbies was reading autobiographies of athletes, so the chairperson asked if I had read the book 'Open' — Andre Agassi's autobiography. Then he asked me what three questions I would ask Agassi if I met him on a train, and what answers would I give if I were Agassi. That was an interesting question."



TOP GUN: Tejas Krishna outside UPSC Bhawan (L); while representing India



TOP GUN: Tejas Krishna outside UPSC Bhawan (L); while representing India

"The interview went on for about 25 minutes. The members of the panel headed by Sheel Vardhan Singh were cordial. It was nothing like what you saw in the movie '12th Fail'. I was not nervous going into the interview. There were times when I didn't have answers to some questions and I simply said, 'I don't know' and they moved on." Asked when he turned his attention towards civil services, Tejas said: "When Covid started there were no competitions and

that was when I thought I should give UPSC a try. Thankfully, I was able to clear it in two attempts. After the Indian team for Tokyo was selected, I moved on from shooting and began focusing on my studies. Besides online coaching I also got help from Vinay Kumar, my mentor." Son of T Krishna Prasad, a retired businessman, and Shylaja, Tejas, who chose International Relations and Political Science for CSE, said but for the pandemic he wouldn't have cracked the ex-

am. "My mom used to motivate me to aim for civil services and the Covid-19 break came. If the shooting competitions were still happening, I wouldn't have taken a break," he said.

INSPIRED BY SUHAS' FEATS

An alumnus of Sri Kumaran Public School and RV College, from where he completed his BE, Tejas began shooting inspired by his mother, an excise inspector, who was a hobby shooter. "I started in 2014. I was in the junior India squad in 2016. By 2019, I was India No. 4 and represented the country at both the Beijing and Munich World Cups. I was part of the senior national team from 2018 till 2020," Tejas, who trained under coach Rakesh Manpat, said. Asked whether he would continue shooting as a civil servant, Tejas said: "Of course. After a point, we don't need too much time to prepare. Maybe 2-3 hours. Suhas Yathiraj sir (a Bengaluru who serves in IAS) has won a Paralympic badminton medal. I spoke with him and he told me I can pursue sports even while discharging my official duties."



LANDMARK MOMENT: Greek actress Mary Mina (R), playing the role of high priestess, lights the torch during the flame lighting ceremony for 2024 Paris Olympics at Ancient Olympia archeological site in Greece

Flame for 2024 Olympics lit in a symbolic ceremony

Ancient Olympia: With 100 days to go for the start of the Paris Olympics, the Olympic flame was ignited at the birthplace of the Games in Ancient Olympia, Greece, on Tuesday during a traditional ceremony. It then started its journey that will take it through Greece to France. After arriving in Marseille on May 8, it will travel across France and some French overseas territories before reaching Paris for the opening ceremony on July 26. Actress Mary Mina, in the role of an ancient high priestess, lit the torch using a backup flame instead of a concave mirror due to cloudy skies before the 2,500-year-old Temple of Hera. **AGENCIES**

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US NSA Jake Sullivan postpones his visit to India in view of evolving situation in West Asia following escalating hostilities between Israel & Iran



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- Continuation of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi and Crop Insurance Scheme.
- Timely increase in MSP. Increasing farmers' income in every aspect.
- Establishment of Shri Ann (Millets) as super food, Expansion of PM Matsya Sampada Yojana and dairy cooperative societies.



Women empowerment

- Three crore rural women will become Lakhpati didis.
- Expansion of piped gas connection to households. Ensuring availability of Hostels and Creches for working women.
- Integrate self help groups with the service sector to increase their income.
- Ensuring representation of women in Lok Sabha and State assemblies by implementing Nari Shakti Vandan Act.



Focus on the middle class

- Home ownership for middle class families.
- Ensuring accessible and affordable healthcare at district hospitals, Ayushman Arogya Mandirs and other secondary healthcare centres.
- Expansion of health services, new educational institutes and improvement of infrastructure for ease of life.



Investment to provide better employment opportunities for youth

- Increase in employment opportunities by investing in infrastructure, investment, manufacturing, high value services and start-ups.
- Loan amount under MUDRA Yojna will be doubled to ₹20 Lakh for encouraging employment/ self employment.
- Government recruitment will become more transparent by implementation of law regarding paper leaks and establishment of new institutions of higher education.



Prosperous India through good governance

- Guaranteed strict action against corruption.
- Implementation of Bharatiya Nyay Samhita.
- Introduction of "One Nation, One Election" and "Common Voter List".
- Implementation of Uniform Civil Code according to Article 44 of Constitution.



For labourers

- New scheme to develop modern facilities for truck drivers on the highways.
- Empowerment of gig workers, domestic workers, street workers and other labourers through the e-Shram portal.



Becoming global hub for manufacturing

- Will make India a global hub for manufacturing, this will create lakhs of jobs.
- Guarantee of increasing manufacturing in steel, cement, aluminium, railway, defence, pharmaceutical, electric vehicle, mobile, semi conductor and other sectors.



Priority to the deprived

- Expansion of PM-SVANidhi and Vishwakarma schemes for expanding employment opportunities for OBC, SC, and ST communities.
- Ensuring scholarships for talented students from marginalised sections.
- Special focus on all things related to fishermen such as boat insurance, fish processing unit, timely information through satellite, etc.



Virasat aur Vikas

- All-round development of Ayodhya city and development of other religious places on the lines of Kashi Vishwanath Corridor.
- Providing training in Yoga, Ayurveda, Indian languages, and classical music by establishing Thiruvalluvar Cultural Centres across the world.



Strengthening economy through infrastructure

- Making India the world's third-largest economy.
- Expanding the expressway network to 15,000 kms and enhancing services of new airports, highways, and water metros.
- Build new rail lines, new Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, and Namoo Bharat trains, and world-class stations. Minimising the waiting list of rail tickets.
- Dedicated Purvodaya Masterplan for infrastructure development of Eastern India and its coastal and hilly areas.



Senior citizens

- Free health facilities to senior citizens by including them under Ayushman Bharat.
- Special programme for pilgrimage tours of senior citizens.

Press the lotus button



Make BJP win

Phir Ek Baar



Modi Sarkar



WILL SMITH SURPRISES COACHELLA CROWD BY APPEARING ON STAGE IN 'MEN IN BLACK' ATTIRE, PERFORMS FILM'S THEME SONG

MAN OF STEEL READY TO BE SUPER-DAD! HENRY CAVILL EXPECTING FIRST BABY WITH GIRLFRIEND NATALIE VISCUSO: 'I'M VERY EXCITED'



US eyeing sanctions on Iran that could hit its oil exports

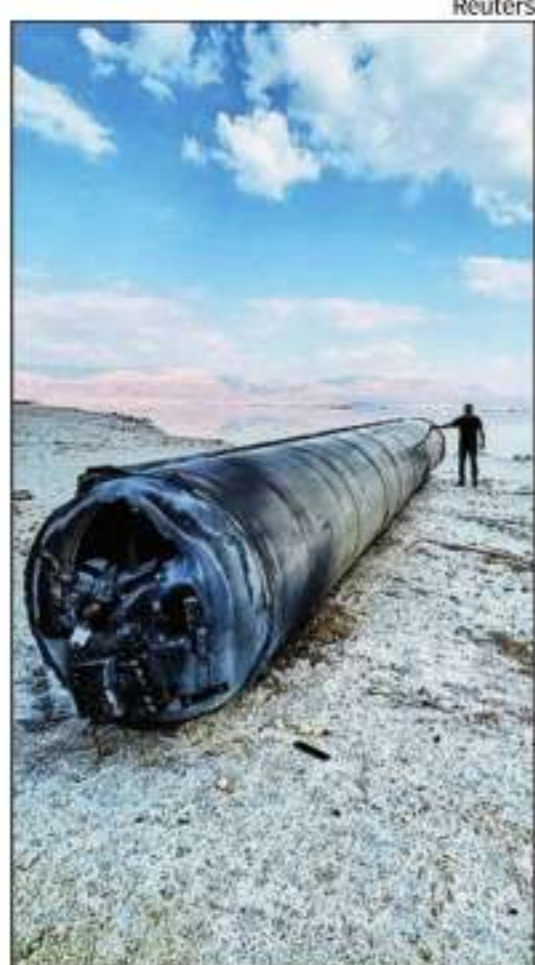
EU Nations Too Mull Curbs To Prevent Violent Israeli Response To Tehran Attack

US treasury secretary Janet Yellen Tuesday warned that the US intends to hit Iran with new sanctions in coming days over its unprecedented attack on Israel, and these actions could seek to reduce Iran's capacity to export oil.

"We don't preview our sanctions tools. But in discussions I've had, all options to disrupt terrorist financing of Iran continue to be on the table," Yellen told a news conference in Washington. She said the treasury and state department have taken previous action to contain Iran's "destabilising" behavior by diminishing its ability to export oil. "Clearly, Iran is continuing to export some oil. There may be more than we could do."

Yellen said Iran's attack on Israel last weekend and its financing of militant groups in Gaza, Lebanon, Yemen and Iraq threatened stability in West Asia and could cause economic spillovers. Her remarks came as Israeli foreign minister Israel Katz said he was "leading a diplomatic attack", writing to 32 countries to ask them to place sanctions on Iran's missile programme and follow the US in proscribing its dominant military force, the Revolutionary Guard Corps, as a terror group.

US Prez Joe Biden has told Israeli PM Netanyahu that the



A ballistic missile lies on the shore of the Dead Sea after Iran launched drones and missiles towards Israel

US, Israel's main protector, would not participate in an Israeli counterstrike. Washington along with EU allies is instead striving to toughen economic and political sanctions against Iran in an attempt to dissuade Israel from violent retaliation.

Some analysts, however, say the Biden administration is unlikely to seek to sharpen sanctions on Iran's oil exports due to worries about a big spike in oil prices and angering top buy-

Israeli tanks push back into N Gaza, warplanes hit Rafah, say residents

Israeli tanks pushed back into parts of the northern Gaza Strip on Tuesday which they had left weeks ago, while warplanes conducted air strikes on Rafah, the Palestinians' last refuge in the south of the territory, killing and wounding several people, medics and residents said. Residents reported an internet outage in the areas of Beit Hanoun and Jabalia in northern Gaza. Tanks advanced into Beit Hanoun and surrounded some schools where displaced families have taken refuge, said the residents and media outlets of Hamas. Beit Hanoun, home to 60,000 people, was one of the first areas targeted by Israel's ground offensive in Gaza last Oct. REUTERS

er China. In a call between the Chinese and Iranian foreign ministers, China said it believed Iran could "handle the situation well and spare the region further turmoil" while safeguarding its sovereignty and dignity, as per Chinese state media. EU foreign ministers scheduled a video meeting on West Asia for Tuesday. Last autumn, Germany campaigned with France and other EU partners to extend the bloc's existing sanc-

tions regime against Iran that targets drone production. German foreign minister Annalena Baerbock said Tuesday that several EU states had now promised to look again at extending those sanctions. UK PM Rishi Sunak said Monday the G7 nations was working on a package of measures against Iran; Italy, which has the G7 presidency, suggested any new sanctions would target individuals.

Meanwhile, Israel's war cabinet was set to meet for the third time in three days on Tuesday, an official said, to decide on a response to Iran's first-ever direct attack, amid international pressure to avoid further escalating West Asia conflicts. Military chief of staff Herzl Halevi had promised that Saturday night's launch of more than 300 missiles, cruise missiles and drones from Iran at Israeli territory "will be met with a response", but gave no details. Iran launched the attack in retaliation for an air strike on its embassy compound in Damascus on April 1 attributed to Israel. Iranian deputy foreign minister Ali Bagheri Kani had told state TV on Monday night that Tehran's response to any Israeli counterattack would come in "a matter of seconds, as Iran will not wait for another 12 days to respond". REUTERS

Fire destroys landmark 1600s building in Denmark, collapsing its dragon-tail spire

Copenhagen: A fire raged through one of Copenhagen's oldest buildings on Tuesday, causing the collapse of the iconic spire of the 17th-century Old Stock Exchange as passersby rushed to help emergency services save priceless paintings and other valuables.

The blaze broke out on the building's copper roof during renovations, and police said it was too early to say what caused it. The building with its distinctive 56-metre (184-foot) spire in the shape of four intertwined dragon tails has been a major tourist attraction next to Denmark's parliament, Christiansborg Palace, in the heart of the capital. "A piece of Danish history is on fire," PM Mette Frederiksen said. Ambulances were at the scene but there were no reports of casualties.

Culture minister Jakob Engel-Schmidt said it was "touching" to see how many people lent their hand "to save art treasures and iconic images from the burning building." One man jumped off his bicycle on his way to work to help during an initial period before firefighters cleared people from the building. Brian Mikkelsen, chief of the Danish chamber of commerce, which is headquartered in the Old Stock Exchange and owns the building, was seen with his staff scrolling through a binder of photos of paintings to be saved. Works were carried



to the nearby parliament and national archive building. The Old Stock Exchange was built in 1615 and considered a leading example of Dutch Renaissance style in Denmark. The chamber of commerce moved into the building after



Copenhagen's Old Stock Exchange building, a 17th century structure that was once the financial centre of Denmark, housed several historical paintings and other artifacts. Brian Mikkelsen, chief of the chamber of commerce, which is headquartered in the building and owns it, was seen with his staff rushing the valued pieces out of the building

red a leading example of Dutch Renaissance style in Denmark. The chamber of commerce moved into the building after Copenhagen's stock exchange left in 1974. Its gilded hall is used for gala dinners, conferences and other events. AP

Report: West could review India ties over 'democratic backsliding' worries

Naomi Canton

London: Thinktank Chatham House has published a research paper ahead of India going to the polls warning that concerns about India's "democratic backsliding" could prompt the West to review its cooperation with Delhi. India has become less liberal over the last decade, but it has arguably become better governed, the paper says. However, the "illiberal turn in India's democracy and its more muscular deployment of Hindutva within its foreign policy" may complicate ties with the West.

"Western govts' concerns over the direction of India's democracy have so far been secondary to those about China's one-party state. But an erosion of India's democratic credentials would have implications for how the country is perceived globally, and may prompt the West to review the nature and limits of its cooperation with India," the paper by Chatham House senior research fellow for South Asia Chietig Bajpaee says. The paper says the US is more likely to overlook concerns about the status of India's polity than European nations, which are more influenced by human rights considerations.

Giving examples of what it terms "democratic backsliding", the paper alleges the Indian gov't is pursuing authoritarianism via controlling "levers of power" such as tax authorities, security services and media, by conducting tax raids of NGOs and media houses, and arresting opposition politicians. It says that if PM Modi wins a third term and introduces a uniform civil code, this "will continue to raise concerns in the West about India's democratic and secular credentials".

Nevertheless, the paper points out the "downward trajectory of Indian democracy" is not as bad as in 1975 when PM Indira Gandhi declared a state of emergency and suspended democratic rule. Indian democracy is more robust than perceived, Bajpaee writes, citing as evidence the fact that BJP has struggled to gain a foothold in the south.

Dubai Flooded, Flights Diverted

Dubai: Dubai's major international airport began diverting all incoming flights on Tuesday as heavy rains lashed the city, causing widespread flooding. The world's busiest air hub for international passengers, which had been expecting more than 100 flights on Tuesday evening, earlier briefly halted its operations.

Dubai has been paralysed by the torrential rain that caused floods around the UAE and Bahrain, and left 18 dead in Oman on Sunday and Monday.

"Due to the continued exceptional weather event currently being experienced in the UAE, Dubai International is temporarily diverting inbound flights due to arrive this evening... until the inclement situation improves," a Dubai airport spokesperson said.

Departures will continue, said the spokesperson, who earlier warned that roads around the airport have suffered major flooding and urged passengers to use public transport. Airport operations were earlier suspended for 25 minutes before resuming. Unconfirmed images on social media showed planes taxiing across an apron flooded with standing water.

Similar scenes were repeated across Dubai and elsewhere in the UAE as the desert country, better known for its arid climate and intense summer heat, reeled from the storm. Flagship shopping centres Dubai Mall and Mall of the Emirates both suffered flooding and water was ankle-deep in at



Cars drive through a flooded street in Dubai on Tuesday. Some inland areas of the UAE recorded more than 3.2 inches of rain in over 24 hours, approaching the annual average of about 100mm

least one Dubai Metro station, according to images posted online. Roads and residential communities also suffered heavy flooding and many residents reported leaks from roofs, doors and windows.

Schools were shut across the UAE and were expected to remain closed on Wednesday, when further storms are forecast. Dubai's gov't also extended remote working for its employees into Wednesday. AP

Australia says church stabbing terrorist act

Sydney: Australian police on Tuesday said a knife attack on an Assyrian church bishop and some followers in Sydney was a terrorist act motivated by suspected religious extremism. At least four people were wounded in the attack, including Bishop Mar Mari Emmanuel, when a teenager lunged at him with a knife during a service Monday.

Police said there was premeditation as the 15-year-old male attacker travelled to the church, far from his home, with a knife. Ten Network reported the boy had told churchgoers who restrained him, in Arabic: "If they didn't insult my Prophet, I wouldn't have come here."

Police stood guard around mosques in parts of Sydney after reports that text messages were circulating urging the Assyrian Christian community to retaliate against Muslims. Sydney's Lakemba Mosque, Australia's largest, has hired additional private security for the next week after receiving fire bomb threats. AGENCIES

UN reports on Covid origins edited to cut lab leak mentions: Whistleblower

Continued from P1

In her written evidence, published Tuesday, whistleblower Emma Reilly exposes how Beijing influences the OHCHR to not raise certain issues and "exerts significant pressure" on senior UN officials and staff to modify their reports to remove negative references to China.

"Reports of both the WHO and the UNEP (UN Environment Programme) on origins of Covid were edited to reduce references to the possibility of a lab leak," she claimed. She said an OHCHR report on the treatment of Uighurs contained significant edits from the Chinese gov't and claimed that UN staff were secretly giving China the names of human rights activists who planned to attend the Human Rights Council to talk about China's

human rights abuses. She said these people then found their family members in China were visited by police, arbitrarily arrested, placed under house arrest, tortured, disappeared or put in concentration camps. "Beijing's consistent demand for meetings and apologies following even the mildest criticism have served to ensure even relatively independent UN officials to not publicly criticise China, or even raise human rights concerns privately. This results in a perverse situation where democracies that permit dissent are much more regularly criticised by the UN's human rights and humanitarian agencies than autocratic regimes," she said.

Reilly, who was dismissed from her job for blowing the whistle, said Beijing, through development assistance, was influencing votes at the UN to, for example, shut down discussions on Xinjiang. She said, "During the two-year negotiation of the Sustainable Deve-

lopment Goals (2013-2015), Beijing paid bribes to two successive presidents of the General Assembly which had significant influence over the final texts put to the Assembly... such that the content of the final goals and indicators closely aligns with Beijing's approach—devoid of civil and political rights and freedoms."

In recent years, China has successfully campaigned for its nationals to lead or obtain very senior management posts on a significant number of UN department programmes and agencies. "No other member state has a strong presence across the most senior management of almost every UN agency," she said. The evidence also includes a submission from the foreign, commonwealth and development office, which says that China is working to "shape the multilateral system to align more with a state-centric, authoritarian world view, and to robustly defend itself against criticism."

More than a million highly skilled Indians are waiting endlessly for a green card

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The statistics are no longer a surprise, the trend continues — more than one million Indians continue to wait in the employment-based green card backlogs.

Over 1.2 million (or 12.6 lakh) Indians, including their dependents, are waiting in the first, second and third employment-based green card categories, according to a National Foundation for American Policy (NFAAP). The thinktank analysed data released by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) by taking into cognisance the approved I-140 immigrant petitions as of Nov 2, 2023. This approval is the first step in the entire green card process. The thinktank then calculated the dependents to arrive at an estimated backlog in the top three employment-based categories.

Indians in employment-based green card backlog			
Employment-Based Category	Principal applicant	Dependents (Estimated)	Total
1st Preference (EB-1)	51,249	92,248	143,497
2nd Preference (EB-2)	419,392	419,392	838,784
3rd Preference (EB-3)	138,581	138,581	277,162
Total	609,222	650,221	1,259,443

Source: NFAAP's analysis of USCIS data

An annual limit for employment-based green cards pegged at 1.4 lakh, plus any unused family-sponsored green cards that are passed on to this category and a per-country limit of 7% has led to this backlog.

Based on USCIS data, the NFAAP points out that 51,249 principal applicants are waiting in the first preference category, also known as EB-1. The applicants are those with extraordinary ability, outstanding professors, researchers, multinational executives or managers fall in this group. If the number of dependents is in-

cluded, over 1.4 lakh Indians are caught in the EB-1 backlog. EB-2 (or second preference) category comprises professionals holding an advanced degree and persons with exceptional ability in sciences, arts or business. If dependents are also included 8.3 lakh Indians are caught up in the backlog. Lastly, skilled workers or those whose jobs require at least a bachelor's degree, fall in EB-3 (or third preference) category. Here the estimated backlog with dependents is 2.7 lakh.

Stuart Andersen, executive director at NFAAP, told TOI: "The lengthy green card wait-times exact a great personal toll on Indian-born individuals and families and make the US less competitive in attracting and retaining talent." The hashtag #greencardbacklog is a perennial feature on X. One user, Dr Raj Karnatak, posted: "I am ashamed how high-skilled immigrants are being tortured with decades of inhumane green card backlog, with no desire to fix this issue. Even frontline workers, those who risked their own lives during the pandemic are being rewarded with a visa nightmare." Without Congressional action, the backlog will continue to increase. In 2020, the Congressional Research Service estimated that the backlog for Indians in the top three employment-based green card categories would reach nearly 22 lakh by fiscal 2030 and it will take 195 years to eliminate the backlog.

Biggest stellar black hole in Milky Way found 'by chance'

Surendra.Singh@timesgroup.com

Astronomers at the European Space Agency have identified the biggest stellar black hole discovered in the Milky Way, with a mass 33 times that of the Sun. The black hole, named Gaia BH3, was detected "by chance" during data collection from ESA's Gaia mission. "This black hole is extremely close to us — at a mere 2000 light-years away in the constellation Aquila, it is the second-closest known black hole to Earth," a statement from ESA said. "No one was expecting to find a high-mass black hole lurking nearby, undetected so far," says Gaia collaboration member Pasquale Panuzzo, an astronomer from the National Centre for Scientific Research at the Observatoire de Paris. "This is the kind of discovery you make once in your research life."

Data from the European Southern Observatory's Very Large Telescope and other ground-based observatories were used to verify the mass of the black hole. The research study was published in the peer-reviewed journal Astronomy & Astrophysics. Stellar black holes are formed from the collapse of massive stars. The ones previously identified in the Milky Way are on average about 10 times as massive as the Sun. The next most massive stellar black hole, Cygnus X-1, only reaches 21 solar masses.

AROUND THE WORLD



MAKING A STATEMENT: The artist and curators representing Israel at this year's Venice Biennale announced Tuesday they wouldn't open the Israeli exhibit until there is a ceasefire in Gaza and an agreement to release hostages. The art can wait, but the women, children and people living through hell cannot, the curators said in a statement

No weed, just beer: Bavaria bans smoking cannabis at Oktoberfest

You can get drunk at Bavaria's world-famous Oktoberfest, but don't get high. The southern German state will ban smoking cannabis at public festivals, inside beer gardens, and even at the Oktoberfest, the world's most popular beer festival, the state's gov't announced Tuesday. Local authorities in Bavaria will also be allowed to prohibit cannabis consumption in public areas such as outdoor swimming pools and leisure parks such as Munich's Englischer Garten, German news agency dpa reported. "Our aim is to limit cannabis consumption in public spaces," said Bavarian health minister Judith Gerlach. "That is important for health protection and especially for

protecting children and young people." Bavaria's move comes after Germany legalised possession of small amounts of cannabis for recreational use.

Historian calls Italian PM neo-Nazi at heart, she sues An Italian court gave the green light Tuesday to a fresh defamation case brought by PM Giorgia Meloni, this time against a historian who called the far-right leader a "neo-Nazi at heart". Left-wing classicist Luciano Canfora, 81, made the comments during a school debate in Bari, southern Italy, in April '22 — six months before the Brothers of Italy leader took office. The trial is set to open Oct 7, with Meloni seeking 20,000 euros (\$21,260) in damages. The PM last year successfully sued journalist Roberto Saviano for criticising her stance against migrants in Dec 2020. She has also sued frontman of British rock band Placebo, after he called her 'racist' and 'fascist'.



Barcelona has removed a bus route popular with tourists from Google and Apple maps to try to make more room for locals. Residents have complained for years that the number 116 bus was always crammed with tourists visiting Antoni Gaudi's Park Güell (above), the city's second most popular attraction

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SUNIL NARINE BECOMES FIRST MAN TO HIT IPL TON AND TAKE 100+ WICKETS BUT JOS BUTTLER'S CENTURY HELPS RR PULL OFF RECORD CHASE AGAINST KKR 21

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What made these girls fall in love with maths?

Almost all dropouts, girls studying at UP's Kasturba Gandhi residential schools have seen a remarkable turnaround in their maths and science performance after the introduction of computer-based learning modules put together by a global foundation. And that's unlocking dreams these kids never dared to see



Understanding maths and doing well in class have given me confidence. My father beats up my mother. I want to become an IPS officer to stop this

—Laxmi | 13



Maths wasn't my favourite subject till Class V but I've discovered an easier way to learn it. Maths' biggest lesson for me is that every problem has a solution

—Bhumi | 11



Maths, science and English have become my favourite subjects since I took admission at KGBV because of the way they are taught and revisions in the computer lab

—Kavita | 12



We were told maths is not our cup of tea and it's a subject for boys. We were also told that going to school is optional. Today, I feel only education can liberate us from poverty

—Jasmine | 14

Isha Jain & Ayantika Pal

Doing well in the maths exam was a eureka moment. The final frontier was conquered, but it meant much more.

Laxmi (13), who barely went to school because she wanted to protect her mother from her father's beatings after he got drunk, saw it as validation of her desire to become a cop and stop domestic violence.

Jasmine, who couldn't recite numbers fluently during her entrance for the sixth standard, is the school head girl in the eighth. The reticent girl is helping her classmates not just with their denominators and square roots but also walking them through MS Word.

Bhumi, put to test early in life when her father passed away, sees herself as a problem solver. She wants to become a maths teacher because "maths teaches us every problem has a solution, both in academics and in life".

Kavita, fascinated by epaulettes, believes she can wear one too – from barely getting a chance to study till the fifth. She has three favourite subjects – maths, English and computers.

Sanya, who lost her mother in a train accident, wants to become a lawyer to help untangle complex legalities and paperwork that she has seen people around her being troubled by.

The turnaround

For many girls in UP's Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBV) – residential schools from classes 6 to 8 for youngsters from the poorest of families – a love for maths and science has unfolded in recent years. For these schools, UP gov't has introduced computer-based academic modules that supplement classroom teaching.

These modules, on a par with teaching methodology at any frontline school, were easy to understand. For someone like the Gautam sisters – Jas-



erly. In the initial days, we wrote numbers and tables on walls and boards, which she learnt to read and recite fluently. Today, as head girl, she takes charge of the assembly and computer class and helps other students with difficult concepts. She even monitors their assignments," says Singh.

The KGBV course module, put together by Khan Academy in a project that Tata Trusts is also collaborating

from 60-65 to 90-95. "We started computer-based maths modules in 2021 and science assessments in 2023. Performance in science has also improved," she adds.

Often, in villages, she says, even going to school is difficult for girls because campuses are far away and there's no transport. "Families consider it unsafe for girls to travel to school. That's why Kasturba schools are so convenient," Rathi explains.

“My family thought science wasn't a subject for girls. Seeing girls at KGBV get an opportunity to explore maths and science is heart-warming

—Diviya, a KGBV teacher

We have been trying to inculcate science and maths interest in girls and enhance their options for STEM

—Kanchan Verma, DG, school education

What are KGBVs?

KGBVs are residential schools meant for girls from weak and disadvantaged sections from rural areas, particularly dropouts, orphans, and those with single or working parents.

They were started in 2004-05 to bridge gender and social gaps in educationally backward blocks. Among their key objectives are to enhancing the female literacy rate and retaining girls in school. Admission happens through an enrolment camp where applicants take tests of Hindi, English and maths. Based on performance, they are categorised into two levels – the higher-ranked ones in A and the others in B. After admission, KGBVs conduct a 3-6-month bridge course to bring these girls on a par with Class VI curriculum. Girls who still lag are given remedial classes. KGBVs are now being upgraded to Class XII. There are 746 such schools across the state. Computer-based learning modules have been introduced in all of them.

Diviya, the teacher-in-charge at KGBV Jewar, and Madhurima Srivastava, mentor teacher for the programme for Lucknow, have the same answer to what the biggest change has been – proficiency in maths, yes, but even better, a mindset change.

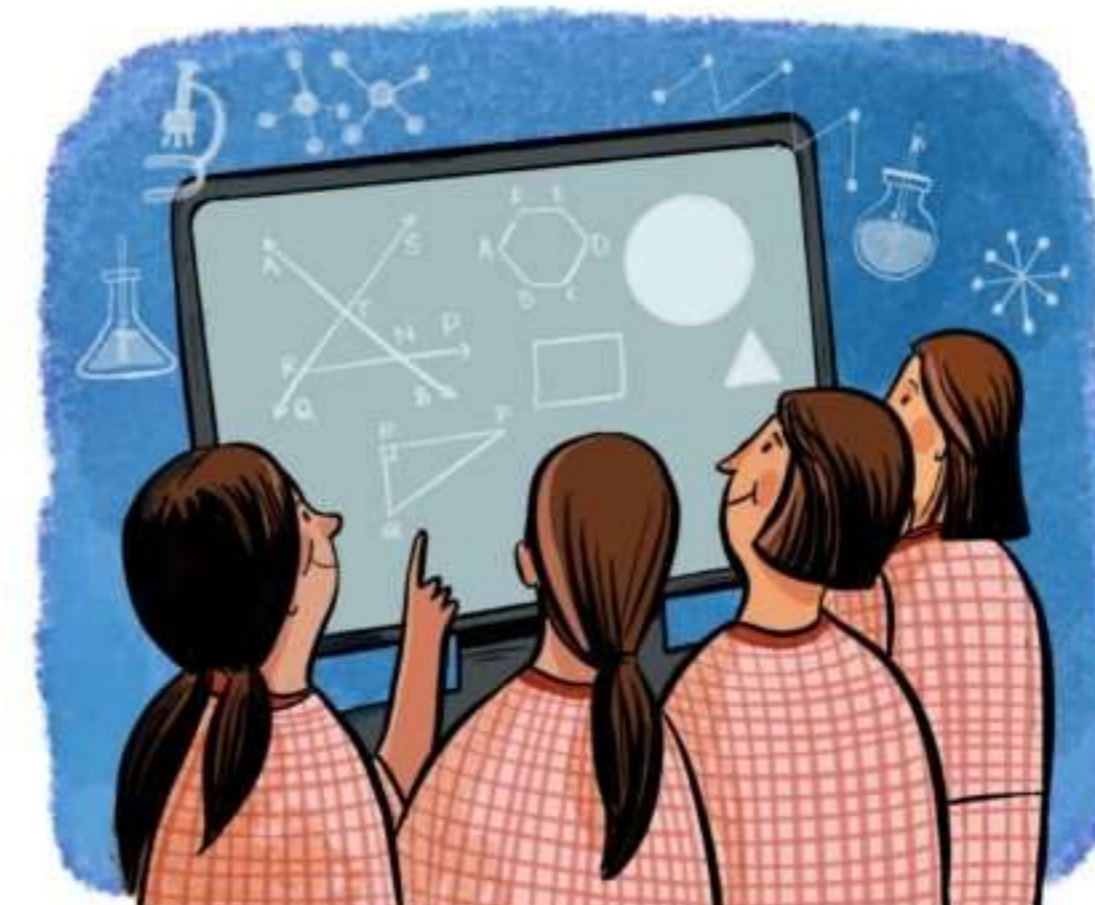
Diviya cites her own example. "Science always fascinated me, especially biology. In 2007, when I cleared high school, there was only one BSc college nearby. My family was against my admission because it was a co-ed college and they thought science wasn't a subject for girls. They allowed me to attend classes regularly only during exams. The rest of the year, I prepared on my own," she says. "Seeing girls at KGBV get an opportunity to explore maths and science this way is heart-warming."

Srivastava hopes the gender gap seen in STEM courses in higher education will narrow and KGBVs will help play a role in it. "For these marginalised girls, this programme is a ray of hope because the predominant belief still in the socio-economic background they come from is that maths is not for a subject for girls," says Sarita Singh, senior professional at the basic education department who has witnessed the KGBV programme since its inception.

Beyond KGBVs

UP is expanding the computer-based teaching modules in maths and science to senior secondary schools (Classes IX-XII) – 1,000 to begin with. From the 2024-25 session, it will also start rolling these modules out for students in upper primary schools (Classes VI to VIII).

Rajandini (13), daughter of a bike mechanic in Mau, proudly declares she is the topper at her KGBV. "It has changed my life," says the teenager, who has her eyes set on college. The subject she wants to study: "Engineering".



mine (14) and Akansha (13) – who faltered at basic questions because they had never been taught any subject properly, learning went from something to fear to something to have fun with.

At many KGBVs, there has been an improvement in students' annual exam scores. For example, the pass percentage of girls in maths at KGBV Malihabad (Lucknow) went from 25% in 2021 to 80% in 2022 and 100% in 2023.

The transition rate to class 9 shows that many girls remain in the education system after clearing KGBV. In 2020-21 and 2021-22, the transition rate was 84%. In the 2022-23 session, it rose to 97%.

2+2 is many things

"We were told maths is not our cup of tea and it's a subject for boys. We were also told that going to school is optional," says Jasmine, who begins her day at the Malihabad school at 5am in the computer lab, where she and her sister get cracking on the day's worksheet. "Today, I feel only education can liberate us from poverty," she adds.

Akansha says all she could properly do in maths till the fifth was to count from 1-100. "Now, I know rational numbers and multiplication of monomials," she adds. The sisters are from a village 4km from the school and were selected for admission after a screening, the process gov't follows for all KGBVs.

Warden Neelima Singh says Jasmine had no confidence and barely spoke when she took admission in the sixth. "She couldn't even recite numbers prop-

with, is broken down into 70-120 skills (topics) that students can learn and practise through lessons, exercises and quizzes. Aligned with the UP-state curriculum, the maths content is generated in Hindi. According to assessment data, 24.5% girls have gained proficiency in at least 36 skills while 19% girls have mastered more than 18 and less than 36 skills.

Kanchan Verma, director general of school education (UP), says, "We have been trying to inculcate science and mathematics

interest in girls and enhance their options for STEM courses through the simple and digital course module, which clarifies basic concepts."

Neha Yadav, a class VIII student of KGBV Banki in Barabanki, is looking forward to her ninth standard. "I was hesitant about maths. But I have mastered square and cube roots now. I enjoy solving sums. There's no fear."

Mindset change

Laxmi, who is from Nagla in Dadri block of Gautam Budh Nagar, has started thinking about public service commission exams, encouraged not just by improved maths scores but also her grasp of English. "I used to be afraid of English and maths," she says. "I want to become a police or Army officer so that I can bring my mother out of there. I want to give her a better life."

Tanu (14), who studies at KGBV Dankaur, is determined to ensure both her younger sisters make it to the school too. "I want to become a police officer," she says, "so that nobody in my village dares to harm or harass my sisters."

Swati Rathi, who is in charge of KGBV Dankaur in Gautam Budh Nagar (Noida), says in the last three years, highest scores in math have increased



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BRITAIN'S UPPER HOUSE DEFEATS PM RISHI SUNAK'S PLAN TO SEND ASYLUM SEEKERS TO RWANDA, PROPOSING CHANGES THAT WILL DELAY PROGRAMME

LG writes to CM on water, Atishi says crisis 'created'

Delhi LG V K Saxena on Tuesday wrote an open letter to CM Arvind Kejriwal, stating that the city's water woes had "exacerbated" over the years. Saxena said instead of fixing the "iniquitous water supply", Kejriwal and his ministers had created a "chimera" of free water and had "mastered the deception of people" into an art form.

The letter came days after water minister Atishi wrote to the LG demanding the DJB CEO's suspension over the killing of a woman in a fight with a neighbour over filling water from a common tap. LG said she had chosen the unfortunate death of a woman for her "narrow political goals".

Atishi said the LG's "unfortunate missive" had come as a "beratement for the elected govt" after she had urged him to suspend an official who "repeatedly refused and failed" in his duties, and which had led to the crisis. She said the crisis has been created "artificially". P 3

Mayhem on flyover: Man shoots cop, kills himself

Biker Injured, Narrow Escape For Auto Driver

Abhay & Ashresh Marupaka

New Delhi: It took a little less than 10 minutes on Tuesday morning for a bizarre sequence of events and a bloodbath to unfold on a busy flyover in northeast Delhi, at the end of which two people had died an untimely death. It started with a 44-year-old man going on the rampage just half an hour before noon and shooting at least two people, one of them a police officer, before putting the pistol to his own head. One person survived with a gunshot wound and another had a narrow escape.

Behind the random shootings, police said, could be an unpaid loan of Rs 5 lakh. The cop, Dinesh Sharma, an ASI with the special branch of Delhi Police, had been asking Mukesh, who worked on a contract basis with

₹5L LOAN LIKELY BEHIND RAMPAGE

MCD contract employee Mukesh Kumar shoots ASI Dinesh Sharma twice with a countrymade pistol

A stray bullet hits Amit Kumar (30), who was riding a bike taxi. Kumar loses control of his 2-wheeler and falls

In a bid to escape, Mukesh tries to commandeer a passing autorickshaw. He fires at the

driver, Mehmood, who ducks and jumps out of vehicle

As a crowd gathers around injured biker, Mukesh finds his exit blocked. He shoots himself in the head

Mukesh owed ASI Sharma ₹5L, which the cop was pestering him to return. Mukesh had asked Sharma to meet him to discuss repayment



Assailants who killed cabbie near Red Fort may have been looking for a target

The three men who shot a cab driver dead near Red Fort on Monday may have been lying in wait for a potential target and looking to commit a robbery or snatching when the accident involving the cab and an e-rickshaw occurred, according to cops. No arrests have been made yet. Cops are also probing if the e-rickshaw driver has any connection with the three. P 2

MCD and lived in the nearby Nand Nagri slums, to return the amount borrowed from him a year ago. This had led to frequent arguments.

According to police, Mukesh had called Dinesh to

meet him near Meet Nagar flyover on Tuesday, presumably to discuss repayment of the loan. He got on to the cop's bike around 11.25am.

Put pistol to temple, P 2

Sensex falls for 3rd day; ₹ hits new low of 83.5

Strong selling by foreign funds on Tuesday pulled the sensex down for the third consecutive session, with the index closing 456 points lower at 72,944 points. A slew of factors, from escalating geopolitical tensions in West Asia to a mixed set of economic

IMF ups India's GDP forecast to 6.8%, P 17
China's eco expands 5.3% in first quarter, P 17

mic numbers from China, spooked investors globally, also affecting sentiment on Dalal Street, analysts said.

The rupee closed at a record low on Tuesday, ending at 83.54 against the dollar, nine paise lower than its previous close of 83.45. The rupee's decline reflected the firming up of the US dollar, which was seen in the dollar index rising to a six-month high. P 17

In SC, govt praises PV, Manmohan for ending 'licence raj', opening economy

Dhananjay Mahapatra @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: BJP-led NDA govt on Tuesday praised former PM Narasimha Rao and his then finance minister Manmohan Singh in Supreme Court for pioneering economic liberalisation in 1991 to end 'licence raj' while taking care to ensure that overarching control over any industry remained with the govt in order to deal with exigencies.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta told a nine-judge bench led by CJI D Y Chandrachud that while post-economic reforms ushered in by Rao and Singh liberalised many laws, including company law and MRTP Act, govt headed by different political dispensations over the next three decades did not consider it necessary to amend the Industry (Development and Regula-

Cong wants India's Ireland envoy sacked for deriding past oppn govts in rejoinder

Alleging that serving diplomats under the Modi govt are behaving like BJP "apparatchiks" and making political attacks on opposition parties, Congress on Tuesday demanded the sacking of the Indian ambassador to Ireland, Akhilesh Mishra, for his

remarks. Mishra, in a rejoinder to an Irish Times editorial critical of Modi, said the PM is popular and blamed the ills facing India on past govts run by parties now in the opposition, and also dubbed Congress a dynastic party. P 9

national interest and to meet exigencies like the Covid pandemic. If the Union govt did not have the power to regulate industrial alcohol and direct most of it to be used to produce hand sanitisers during Covid and had to wait for permission from states, the robust response to the pandemic would have suffered, Mehta said.

This regulating control was retained by the Centre in

tion) Act, 1951. Mehta said winds of change did not touch IDRA, giving the Centre overarching control over the entire spectrum of industries, even though with passage of time, the Union govt gave up regulating most of them. But the Centre relinquishing control over industries did not mean it did not have the power to regulate them, he added.

Regulatory powers, P 15

IN THE COURTS

As a hearing on the issue of mob lynching acquired a Hindu vs Muslim complexion, SC asks lawyers to maintain restraint and discipline inside court and keep religion and caste out of proceedings | P 9

SC directs Bengal governor C V Ananda Bose, who is also chancellor of state-run universities, to immediately appoint 6 suitable persons as VCs from a list of candidates provided by state govt | P 9

Quashing criminal proceedings against an IAS officer that began two decades ago for remarks made against a lawyer, Orissa HC observes that 'abusive and insulting language, not amounting to defamation, is not actionable' | P 14

Gujarat HC upholds compulsory retirement rule for non-performing or under-performing district judges at the age of 50 | P 14

IITian Aditya Srivastava tops civils exam; two women among top 5

New Delhi: Aditya Srivastava from Lucknow, an IIT Kanpur alumnus who is currently undergoing training for the IPS, aced the Civil Services Examination (CSE) 2023, even as NIT Rourkela graduate Animesh Pradhan from Talcher cleared the elite exam in his first attempt, barely a month after his mother succumbed to cancer, reports Bharti Jain.

There are two women in the top 5 and 10 among the top 25 candidates. Donuru Ananya Reddy, a BA (Hons) graduate from Miranda House who hails from Mahabubnagar

Ex-India marksman Tejas clears UPSC, P 21

district of Telangana, was the topper among women with overall third rank. Ruhani, who ranked 5th, had cleared the Civil Services Exam 2022

FROM 236TH RANKED IPS TO IAS TOPPER

Lucknow boy Aditya Srivastava, 26, an alumnus of City Montessori School, Aliganj campus, topped in his school

Did BTEch (electrical) & MTEch from IIT-Kanpur

Worked with Goldman Sachs in B'luru for 15 mths after doing his masters

This was Aditya's third UPSC attempt. In 2022, he secured AIR 236 & joined IPS. He was undergoing training at National Police Academy



and was allocated to IPS and is undergoing training at National Police Academy.

Quit well-paying job, P 15

31 from Jamia academy, 11 of them women

Youngsters from marginalised communities can aspire to become civil servants at Jamia Millia Islamiya's Residential Coaching Academy (RCA) in southeast Delhi, reports Shreya Ghosh. On Tuesday, the academy celebrated the success of 31 of its 71 students in the top UPSC exam — with the 2023 result showing an increase of eight over the previous year. Since its inception in 2010, RCA has provided free coaching to students from the SC, ST and minorities communities and women. Out of the 31 aspirants who made the final cut, 11 of them are women. P 2

Two Bihar men held for firing at Salman's home

Ahmed Ali @timesgroup.com

Mumbai: City crime branch early Tuesday arrested two men, identified as Vicky alias Vikas Gupta (24) and Sagar Pal (21), in Gujarat, for allegedly firing four rounds at the Bandra home of actor Salman Khan early on Sunday.

Police said the two, who hail from Bihar's West Champaran district, were looking for refuge among devotees gathered for Navratri celebration at Matanamadh temple about 95km from Bhuj.

They reportedly told police that jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi's brother Anmol had told them that the actor should be punished for hunting a black buck in



CM Shinde (C) with Salman and his father Salim Khan at their Mumbai residence on Monday

Bawad in Mathania near Jodhpur in 1998.

The two told police they were specifically asked to fire at and frighten the actor for which they received around Rs 1 lakh; Rs 3 lakh more was promised after the job.

Crime world fame, P 14

China bribed senior UN officials: Whistleblower

Naomi Canton

London: China is aiming to reshape the rules-based international order to reflect its own priorities by taking over multilateral institutions such as the UN, evidence submitted by a whistleblower claims. The evidence presented claims Beijing was influencing votes at the UN to squelch discussion on topics sensitive to it and that it even bribed two General Assembly presidents.

In doing so, Beijing seeks to de-prioritise the rule of law, democracy and human rights, a former employee of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, British citizen Emma Reilly,

'LEAKED NAMES'

Reports of WHO and UNEP on Covid origins were edited to reduce references to possibility of lab leak, OHCHR ex-employee Emma Reilly tells panel of UK MPs

Also claims an OHCHR report on Uighurs contained significant edits, and alleges UN staff gave China names of human rights activists, whose relatives were then arrested or tortured, or disappeared

has alleged in written evidence submitted to the foreign affairs committee, a panel of MPs which scrutinises the foreign office.

See INSIDE JACKET

Trump On Trial: Why It's Gonna Get Stormy

No ex-prez has faced criminal prosecution in America. So, why's Trump in court? Why has a case based on hush-money paid to an adult movie actress assumed such a large profile? What are legal pundits saying? And how's Trump taking it?

Donald Trump's criminal trial started Monday. It made history immediately. Trump is America's first ex-president being tried on criminal charges. It will likely remake American politics this election cycle – because trials in the US, unlike in India, wrap up in weeks, not years or decades.

American court cases are decided by juries. Per US media reports, picking 12 jurors for Trump's trial will take a week. The trial itself should start next week, and, per the judge, Juan Merchan, finish in six to eight weeks.

Details of the case may read like tabloid journalism's fever dream. But the strategy of the prosecutor – Manhattan district attorney – has provoked heavy-duty legal debates.

So, why will a man who may again be America's president sit in a courtroom four days a week for the next month or so? And how may it all pan out?

Here's a quick lowdown.

The Story Behind The Case

"Twas a clear and Stormy day, at a golf course. Trump met adult movie actress Stormy Daniels during a celebrity golf tournament in 2006. Per Daniels's later disclosures, they had sex. That likely would have been that.

But 10 years later, Trump was the Republican presidential nominee in 2016 elections, hitting headlines every hour for saying stuff nobody's said before. He was also bang in the middle of a scandal created by the release of a tape in which Trump could be heard bragging about grabbing women by their genitals.

Had Stormy gone public – Trump had sex with her while married to Melania, his third wife – at that time, would it have been a perfect storm of sex scandals, too much for Trump to handle, as prosecutors now argue? As it happened, she didn't go public. Her silence was bought.

All of the above are now established facts. The man who fixed the problem, Micheal Cohen, a lawyer/fixer for Trump at one time, was convicted earlier. The court case is about something else – falsifying business records to cover up hush-money payments in 2016. Prosecutors are charging Trump with 34 counts of felony.

This is where legal experts have weighed in. The whole thing is sleazy, no doubt, but are prosecutors overstating their case? Or is Trump fairly charged with "lying his way to office", as a New Yorker report put it?

The Prosecution Case

Under New York law, paying hush-money is a misdemeanour. Prosecutors will argue that the misdemeanour turns into multiple felony counts because Trump was "conceal(ing) damaging information and unlawful activity from American voters before and after the 2016 election."

So, the prosecution case is that by buying Daniels's silence, and then, allegedly cooking the books to hide the payment, Trump did damage to America's "election democracy", as some legal experts have put it. That's the "underlying crime" prosecutors are hoping to prove.



Donald Trump and Stormy Daniels addressing the press on different occasions



Judge Juan Merchan



Michael Cohen

Some legal heavyweights agree with the prosecution. They reckon Trump could get convicted by the jury. Not everyone agrees, though.

Questions On Prosecution Case:

There are a few.

■ Conservative commentators are asking why a "simple" case of paying hush-money is getting bumped up to serious criminal charges against the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, that too, just months before the November election. They have also said getting Trump to sit in court four days a week for six or eight weeks robs him of precious campaign time. Most rightwing pundits in America are sniffing a "conspiracy".

■ For some legal eagles, the prosecution's case seems a "stretch". It has invoked a federal law, on election conduct, for charges framed under New York state law – an unusual strategy.

■ Ultimately, the prosecution's argument rests on proving, to the jury's unanimous satisfaction, that buying off the Daniels story was a potent subversion of the 2016 presidential election. Some commentators have questioned whether this can really be demonstrated.

What's Trump Saying?

Mostly Trump-like things. His accusation that Judge Merchan is biased (the judge's daughter has worked with Democrats) at least has the appearance of a legal argument. His defence team's motions asking the judge to recuse himself have been denied – by the judge.

The former president has called the trial "political persecution" and "an assault on America".

But Trump has also described judicial officials as "racist," and "deranged" used adjectives like "slob" and

"radical-left lunatic" called Alvin Bragg, the lead prosecutor, who's a Black American, an "animal" who "doesn't care about right or wrong."

■ described Stormy Daniels and Michael Cohen as "two sleaze bags who have, with their lies and misrepresentations, cost our Country dearly!"

A good summary of how Team Trump is going to play this came in an email sent by the Trump campaign on Monday.

The "fact sheet" had this point: "President Trump did nothing wrong. These charges are entirely fabricated in order to interfere in the election and distract from the failed presidency of Crooked Joe Biden".

Trump is widely expected to carry on in this vein. But he will have to reckon with a gag order imposed by Judge Merchan that forbids him from speaking out about the trial during hearings.

What'll Happen If Trump Is Convicted?

Under American law, it won't stop him from either contesting elections or, if he wins, becoming president.

Plus, Trump will appeal, likely take the case right up to US Supreme Court, if the appellate court also finds him guilty. During this process, he can be out on bail if the judge hearing the case decides he's not a flight risk. In white collar crimes in the US, those convicted by lower courts often get bail while appealing the sentence.

■ Judge Merchan may even decide, per some US legal experts, not to impose a jail sentence on Trump after conviction, since he will be a "first-time" offender in such a crime.

It's likely, therefore, Trump will be free to campaign. And if he loses the case and wins the election, while the appeal process is on, he will be America's first president who's a convicted felon. **Meanwhile...** Trump's wealth is taking a hit. Shares of Trump Media & Technology Group, which runs Truth Social, an online platform, tanked 15% on Monday. Since March 26, when the company went public, shares have fallen almost 60%. Peak share price was \$70.90. Now, it's \$27.56.

Trump is surely hoping jurors will be kinder to him than markets are.

Text: Saubhik Chakrabarti

Was praying for rank in top 70, No. 1 a surprise: UPSC topper

IIT Grad, Who Once Worked With Goldman Sachs & Was Picked For IPS In 2022, Is A Dinosaur Junkie

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Lucknow: Aditya Srivastava had to sacrifice his passion for cricket and give up a high-paying job, before his years of hard work paid off, securing him the top rank in UPSC civil services examinations in his third attempt.

Talking exclusively to TOI from Hyderabad, Aditya, an electrical engineering graduate from IIT-Kanpur, exclaimed it was "unbelievable" for him. "I was praying to secure a rank in the top 70 so that I get IAS, but bagging the top slot in the coveted exams is a sheer surprise. But, definitely a lot to rejoice all my life (sic)," he said.

Already undergoing training at Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy in Hyderabad, after having secured rank 216 in 2022 and joined the Indian Police Service, Aditya was on cloud nine after the UPSC announced the results for the 2023 exams on Tuesday. A small video of his celebration with his batchmates at the academy went viral.

"I missed my parents on this special occasion. I celebrated by cutting two cakes with my friends, but the feeling of being an all-India topper

is yet to sink in," he told TOI.

Aditya's parents in Lucknow were "speechless" when he broke the news to them over the phone. "We were sure he would make it to the IAS, but topping the civil services exams was beyond imagination," said his proud father Ajay Srivastava, an assistant audit officer in the CAG office.



An alumnus of City Montessori School in Lucknow, Aditya was a school topper. He did his B.Tech and M.Tech from IIT-Kanpur and then worked with Goldman Sachs, the world's second largest investment bank, in Bengaluru for 15 months.

"He was earning good money but wanted to serve the country. With the job, he was unable to focus on his preparations. So in 2020, just a month before the prelims, he quit the job and returned home," said Ajay.

On his strategy to crack civils, Aditya said, "My strategy centred more on smart than hard work. Analysing previous years' papers apart from basic books was helpful. I also identified patterns and framing of statements in the question papers, apart from utilising all resources like PT 365 (a compilation of current

“ My strategy centred more on smart work than hard work. I identified patterns and framing of statements in previous years' question papers... I also made optimum use of Google & ChatGPT ADITYA SRIVASTAVA

affairs). I made optimum use of Google and ChatGPT." Apart from academics, Aditya loves studying about dinosaurs. Asked about this fascination, he said, "This came quite early in my life (sic). And when I saw movies like Jurassic Park, I was awed by their magnificence and read a lot of books on them." He is a foodie, and his mother Abha said throughout the exam preparations, "his only demand was to get delicious food, his favourite being mutton delicacies".

Sarika first Keralite with cerebral palsy to clear UPSC

Krishnachand K | TNN

Thiruvananthapuram: Sarika A K, a 23-year-old from Keezhariyur in Kozhikode, made history by becoming the first person from Kerala with cerebral palsy to clear UPSC civil services examinations. Despite being confined to a wheelchair and having limited mobility in her left hand, Sarika secured 922nd rank.

Speaking to TOI, she said it's a dream come true for her, and she hopes to secure a position in IAS under differently-abled category. "It was my school teacher at Koyilandy, Abdurahiman, who persuaded me to try for the exam. Since then, I've been striving towards that goal. One day, Abdurahiman sir forwarded me a pamphlet of 'Project Chitrashalabham' started by civil services trainer Jobin S Kottaram. It was a turning point for me, and I learned through the online class," Sarika said.

She started the class in 2022 and cleared the examination on her second attempt. If selected for IAS, she would prefer Kerala cadre, with Tamil Nadu as her second option.