

THE TIMES OF INDIA

INCLUSIVE OF DELHI TIMES (CIRCULATED ONLY IN DELHI NCR) | *APPLICABLE ONLY ON MONTHLY PURCHASE (IN DELHI NCR) | INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER | To subscribe call 1800 1200 004 or visit subscribe.timesgroup.com

MARUTI SUZUKI
IT'S UNBELIEVABLE. IT'S STRONG HYBRID.
1200+ km IN ONE FULL TANK
STRONG HYBRID
INTELLIGENT ELECTRIC HYBRID
NEXA

Bomb hoax at 200 Delhi-NCR schools leads to panic, keeps cops on toes

Probe Into Email Threat Indicates Links To China, ISI

Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay | TNN

New Delhi: Delhi-NCR witnessed an unprecedented situation Wednesday morning with at least 200 schools receiving an email warning them about a bomb on their premises, leading to widespread panic.

Responding to messages from schools, parents rushed to pick up their wards even as a massive exercise was launched by multiple agencies, including police, fire units and bomb and dog squads, to comb the premises.

Students were evacuated and a stretched police force

LENS ON HACKER GROUP, CURRENT AND EX-STUDENTS



Scene outside a Delhi school on Wednesday morning

- Cops first alerted about bomb threat by DPS Dwarka at 6.10am, followed by a flood of PCR calls from across Delhi
- Schools send SOS to parents; fire dept, ambulances & bomb squads alerted. Parents asked to pick up children
- 5 Gurgaon, 4 Noida and 3 Gzb schools also get same email. 20 schools in Noida and Gzb as well as 5 in Gurgaon evacuated
- MHA asks police for report after checks yield nothing. Mails declared as hoax
- Sender's name, Sawarim, seems to be taken from a 'nasheed' (propaganda song) of terror group IS
- One line of probe focuses on current & ex-students. Lens also on hacker group

SEE: P 2 & 3 | EDIT: COPS NEED SCHOOLING

searched every nook and corner of the schools. Even school bags were examined.

The mails had been received by around a dozen schools by 9am before the

number slowly rose, forcing virtually all schools to shut for the day. There was all-round relief when nothing was found at any school by noon.

Preliminary findings indicate links leading to China and Pakistan's ISI, with a larger conspiracy for disruption of normal life suspected.

➤ Traffic snarls, P 2

Russian service, VPN & proxy servers used

The counter-intelligence unit of Delhi Police is handling the probe along with several other agencies, including Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre. Investigators suspect the real email address was suppressed in multiple layers of encryption and will use advanced "unmasking programmes" to identify the sender. Russian free email service, 'mail.ru' — it was recently targeted by Ukraine army's IT wing, leading to it being shut down — a virtual private network and proxy servers were used to send the emails, according to initial technical analysis. P 2

GST April mopup soars 12.4%, crosses ₹2L cr for 1st time

New Delhi: Yearend sales and better compliance helped goods and services tax (GST) collections soar past the Rs 2-lakh-crore mark for the first time, with experts suggesting that this could be a tipping point for the nearly seven-year-old indirect tax regime. Based on transactions in March, the latest data released by the finance ministry estimated a 12.4% increase in GST collections, pegged at over Rs 2.1 lakh crore in April, driven largely by domestic demand.

The mopup from domestic transactions was seen to have risen 13.4%, while the figure from imports was up 8.3%. After accounting for refunds, the net GST revenue

US Fed holds rates with eye on inflation

US Federal Reserve held interest rates steady on Wednesday and signalled it is still leaning towards eventual reductions in borrowing costs, but put a red flag on recent disappointing inflation readings and suggested a possible stall in the movement towards more balance in the economy. P 15

went up 15.5% to Rs 1,92,000 crore. The numbers buoyed the mood in govt. Post-Covid, there has been a consistent rise in collections. TNN

➤ Biz compliance, P 15

Prez visits Ram Mandir amid Rahul remark row

Ayodhya: President Droupadi Murmu offered prayers and performed aarti before Ram Lalla's idol amid chanting of mantras Wednesday, a day after Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai denied the allegation made by Congress MP Rahul Gandhi that she was not invited to the consecration of the Ram temple "as she is a tribal", report Arshad Afzal Khan & Shalabh.

Later, the President's official handle on 'X' described the temple as "an embodiment of the cultural values of our society".

➤ Reserved area, P 10

24 die in China highway collapse

At least 24 people died after part of a highway collapsed due to heavy rains in southern China's Guangdong province on Wednesday, state media said. Guangdong, a densely populated industrial powerhouse, has been lashed by rainstorms in recent weeks, causing severe flooding and landslides in some areas. P 14

No more dossiers to Pak on ultras, India kills them on their home turf: PM

Hitting out at the Congress-led UPA govt for going soft on terrorism, PM Modi, during a rally in Gujarat's Sabarkantha on Wednesday, said that despite several bombings and the 26/11 attack, the UPA govt only kept sending

dossiers to Pakistan. "They used to ask Pakistan why they were bombing us. Today, we don't send dossier but give a dose to those harbouring terrorists inside their home," Modi said.

The PM said, "Till Modi is alive, no one will be allowed to indulge in the dirty game of giving out quotas based on religion." P 12

Accused in Salman firing case dies in lock-up; cops say suicide, kin cry foul

Ahmed.Ali@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: In a major embarrassment to the city crime branch, an alleged weapons supplier in the Salman Khan firing case, Anuj Thapan (32), was found dead in the lockup of police headquarters at Crawford Market on Wednesday.

A senior police officer said it is suspected that he died by suicide, but his family alleged foul play. Joint commissioner of police (crime) Lakshmi Gautam said the state CID will conduct an inquiry into the death.

The lockup, split across two floors of an old building on the premises, had 11 inmates, but crime branch officials said two of them — Vikas Gupta and Sagar Pal, who allegedly fired at Khan's residence on April 14 — were taken away for interroga-

tion on Wednesday. They were mum on why Thapan was left behind. The second alleged guns supplier, Subhash Chander, is in judicial custody owing to an old injury.

➤ Death may dilute... P 8

EC bars KCR from campaign for 48 hrs on Congress complaint

Election Commission has barred former Telangana CM and BRS chief K C Rao from holding public meetings, processions, rallies & giving interviews for 48 hours from 8pm on Wednesday. This follows a complaint by Telangana Congress senior vice-president G Niranjan against KCR for allegedly making objectionable remarks against the party. P 8

➤ Binding after saptapadi, P 11

SC: Hindu marriage invalid without customary rituals

New Delhi: Observing that a Hindu marriage is a sacred process and not merely a "song and dance" and "winning and dining" event, Supreme Court has held that customary rituals and ceremonies prescribed under the Hindu Marriage Act must be strictly followed, failing which a marriage would be declared invalid even after it has been registered, reports Amit Anand Choudhary.

➤ Binding after saptapadi, P 11

IN THE COURTS

➤ SC is scheduled to hear on Friday a PIL seeking bar on namesake candidates | P 12

➤ Delhi HC mixes a plea that sought nod for arrested netas to campaign for LS polls through virtual mode, observing that it may result in dreaded criminals like Dawood campaigning | P 5

➤ A Delhi court sentences a man to RI for life for raping his 11-year-old daughter | P 5

Court: Sisodia delaying trial in excise case

Denying bail to former Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia in the excise policy case, a Delhi court has stated that there was a "concerted effort" by him and the other co-accused to delay the trial as they have been filing multiple applications or making oral submissions, some of them "frivolous". The court rejected Sisodia's contention that the case is proceeding at a snail's pace. P 5

Speculation on fatal hit on Goldy Brar

A bar fight and a shooting incident that led to the death of a yet-to-be-identified person in California Tuesday have fuelled reports of the killing of gangster-turned-terrorist Satinderjeet Singh alias Goldy Brar on US soil. P 7

Godrej camps can't compete for 6 yrs

The Godrej family has agreed not to compete among themselves for six years, except in the realty business. After that period, they are free to venture into each other's domain but not under the Godrej brand. P 15

TMC alleges Adhir vote pitch for BJP

Congress Wednesday rubbished allegations by TMC that Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury asked voters to choose BJP if they can't vote for Congress, and underlined that the objective of 2024 elections is to defeat BJP. P 7

Clashes in UCLA; 300 held at univs

Police officers entered US campuses where pro-Palestinian protesters had erected encampments & seized buildings. At least 300 were held at City College of NY & Columbia Univ. At UCLA, cops stopped violent clashes. P 14

Ease of biz? India Inc needs 69k+ compliances

Despite attempts to improve the ease of doing business, India Inc still has to deal with numerous laws and compliances. A research paper by Team Lease RegTech, a regulatory compliance management firm, finds there are 1,536 Acts and rules, 69,233 compliances and 6,618 annual filings to abide by.

However, one company may not have to contend with all of them as that varies depending on business, location and employees. A major part of the compliances is with regard to labour. Govt had sought to streamline labour laws by enacting four labour codes but has failed to implement them. P 7

Revanth says handle used to share doctored Shah video is not his

U.Sudhakarreddy @timesgroup.com

Hyderabad: Denying ownership of the social media handle through which a doctored video of Union home minister Amit Shah was shared, Telangana CM A Revanth Reddy has sought four weeks to respond

➤ Budaun's SP candidate defends pool photos, P 8
 ➤ Prajwal may return from Germany this weekend, P 8

to Delhi Police's summons in the case, citing election work.

Although Revanth isn't an accused, Delhi Police served him notice under sections 91 and 160 of the CrPc, both of which empower an investigating officer to ask for documents and summon a "wit-

ness" for interrogation.

Advocate Sowmya Gupta, who submitted Reddy's response, told reporters Delhi Police had specifically "asked for the device used to share the video on INCTelangana handle".

➤ 'Revanth not owner...', P 11

Half of max term served, bail for PMLA undertrials

Mumbai: Observing that they are deemed to have been convicted without charges being framed or a legitimate trial, thus frustrating their right to be tried as expeditiously as possible, a special PMLA court on Tuesday granted bail to Cox & Kings Group CFO Anil Khandelwal and internal auditor Nareish Jain who were held by the ED in a laundering case related to the Yes Bank case.

➤ ED can't act high & mighty against citizens: Court, P 9

reports Rebecca Sameruel.

It said it was very serious that the duo had been held as undertrials for 3 years and 6 months, surpassing both the minimum and halfway mark of the maximum sentence.

➤ ED's modus operandi, P 10

Tobacco crop failure in Indonesia, Brazil triggers Andhra price surge

Samdani.MN@timesgroup.com

Vijayawada: Tobacco growers in Andhra Pradesh are set to reap the fallout of a substantial drop in crop output in key producing countries like Brazil, Zimbabwe and Indonesia because of weather extremes, such as drought and unseasonable rain.

Prices soared at local auctions to nearly all-time highs and are projected to climb further in the coming weeks. Currently, prices have reached Rs 280 to Rs 290 a kg and are anticipated to exceed Rs 300 a kg, representing a 30% increase from farmers' expectations.

The influx of local and small players offering competitive bids has spurred the sud-

PRICES SET TO GO UP FURTHER

- Trade analysts put expected crop size at 160-170 million kg
- Production up 20%, growers sowed a second time after crop damage in Dec's Michung cyclone
- Prices in local auctions touch ₹280-290/kg, against anticipated ₹220-230/kg, may continue to rise further
- AP stocks fetching better prices than K'taka premium crop due to dip in global production
- Production in Zimbabwe, Indonesia, Brazil down 20-30%, say reports
- China's decision to restrict exports may have also led to triggering of prices

den price surge in auctions. Despite concerns that they might face challenges due to production surpassing Indian Tobacco Board's target of 140m kg, farmers in Andhra are poised to benefit, with the

board anticipating total production to reach 160m-170m kg. Trade analysts attribute the rise in price to crop damage in Brazil and Zimbabwe.

➤ High tobacco prices, P 11

Hearty Congratulations
OUR UPSC CSE 2023 TOPPERS
70 YEARS COMMITMENT ACHIEVEMENT TRUST
RAU'S IAS STUDY CIRCLE

Our Toppers from Foundation & QIP Batch

AIR 4 P K SIDDHARTH RAMKUMAR GSI QIP	AIR 6 SRISHITI DABAS GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 34 ZUFISHAN HAQUE GSI QIP	AIR 37 TEJAS AGNIHOTRI GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 54 KASHISH BAKSHI GSI QIP	AIR 59 BENJO P JOSE GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 60 ABHIMANYU MALIK GSI FOUNDATION
AIR 65 CHHAYA SINGH GSI QIP	AIR 90 YASHI KUMAR SHARMA GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 106 MANI SHARMA GSI QIP	AIR 127 ADITI UPADHYAY GSI QIP	AIR 134 ANJANA DAHYA GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 143 S NITHILA PRITHVITHI ASWIN MANI DEEP KAKUMANI GSI FOUNDATION	AIR 148 GSI QIP
AIR 1 ADITYA SRIVASTAVA IGP	AIR 5 RUHANI IGP	AIR 7 ANMOL RATHORE IGP	AIR 11 KUSH MOTWANI IGP	AIR 15 KUNAL RASTOGI IGP	AIR 18 WARDAH KHAN IGP	AIR 22 ANSHUL BHATT IGP
AIR 23 SAURASH SHARMA IGP	AIR 25 RITIKA VERMA IGP	AIR 27 NANDALA SAIKURAN IGP	AIR 31 YISHNU SASIKUMAR IGP	AIR 35 ASHWANI JAIN IGP	AIR 45 RAMYA R IGP	

➤ Interview Guidance Program (IGP)

➤ Scan QR code for Rau's IAS Toppers' Talk

FOUNDATION COURSE 14 June

Free UPSC MASTERCLASS

Master the UPSC Challenge: A strategic approach and syllabus overview by Rau's IAS teachers.

Delhi Bengaluru
 May 4, SAT 11 AM
 ORN, Delhi & Online

011 - 4078 6050 | 080 - 4142 6050 | www.rauias.com | compass.rauias.com



Jamali-Kamali mosque, tomb adjacent to it set to get fresh lease of life | 3

TIMES CITY
 33.7° MAXIMUM 21.0° MINIMUM
 FORECAST: Mainly clear sky. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be around 37°C and 20°C
 SUNSET 6.57PM (THU) MOONSET 12.45AM (THU)
 SUNRISE 5.39AM (FRI) MOONRISE 02.27AM (FRI)

198
 AQI IN DELHI ON WEDNESDAY (MODERATE CATEGORY)

Partial combustion of fuels makes air worse, finds study | 6



The Kids Are Alright! Relief After Citywide Panic

DISTRESS, CONFUSION: Parents Rush To Schools After Bomb Threats Spark Scare; Many Complain Of Lack Of Proper Alerts

Abhay & Shreya Ghosh | TNN

New Delhi: From those who had to leave ailing relatives at home to others who had to skip work — panic-stricken parents thronged the city's schools on Wednesday morning after receiving the distressing news that their children's school had received bomb threats.

Their faces etched with worry, parents outside Amity International School in Pushp Vihar hurried towards the school gates, desperate to get to their children. Kanta Devi held her grandson's hand in a firm grip. The Class IV student could sense the tension in his grandmother's demeanour. "I was in shock when his mother informed me about the bomb. I left everything and rushed here," said Devi.

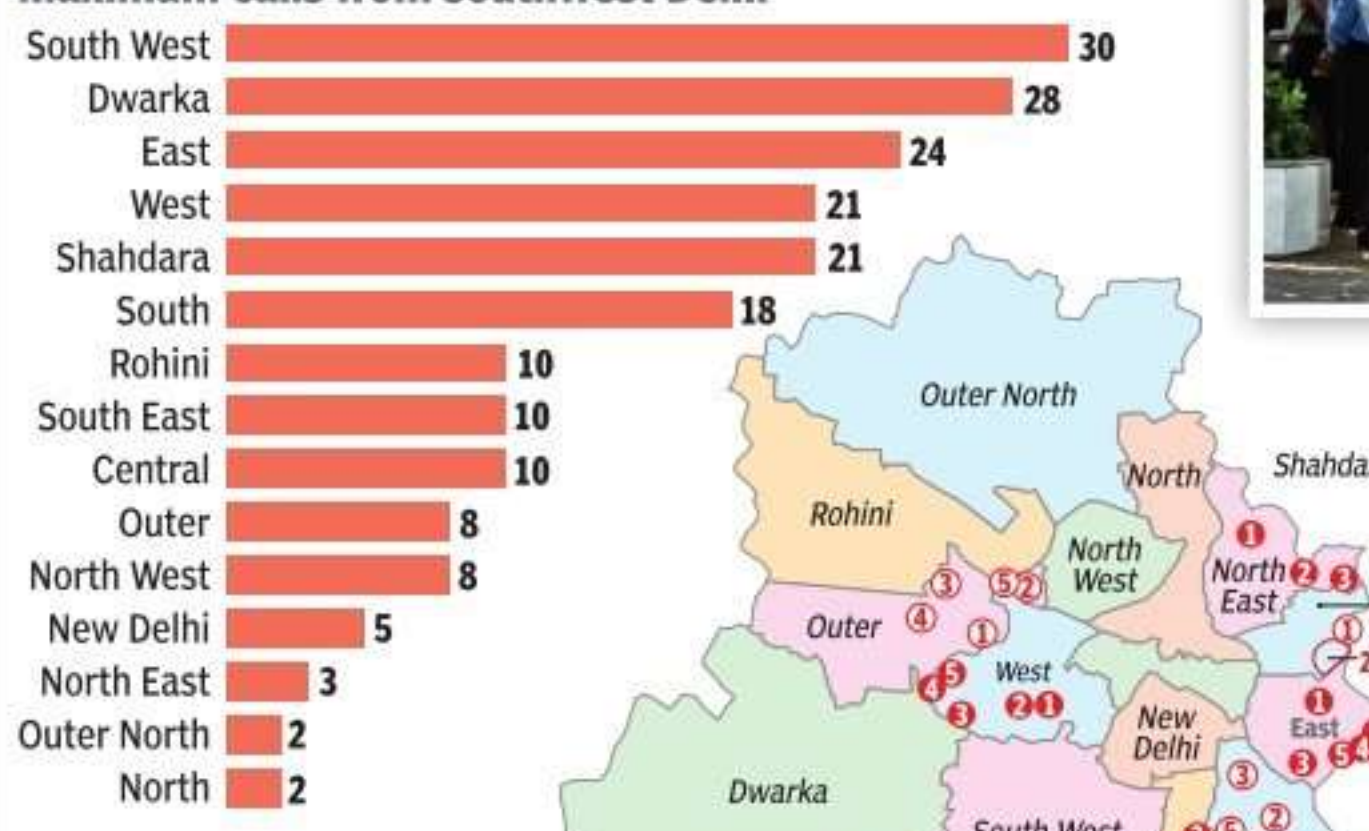
Himani, mother of a Class XII student at Sanskriti School, Chanakypuri, said, "Whether it's a prank or not, this is no way to hold students hostage. The school should have sent us an alert. I found out from a parents' WhatsApp group. The teachers should speak to the students tomorrow and clear their curiosity about the matter." Rajesh rushed to DPS, Mathura Road, after seeing the news on TV, leaving his ill wife at home. "It's unacceptable that these incidents keep happening. Even if it is a hoax, the fear is contagious," he said.

For many parents, it was a repeat experience of the fear, worry and panic. Arjun, who lives in Pushp Vihar, remembered how a similar bomb threat earlier had caused widespread panic among parents, students and teachers. "My morning was entirely disrupted. I was on my way to work at an e-commerce company, but had to turn around and rush to the school. If these incidents become frequent, it will be very difficult to manage work commitments," he said. A Sadiq Nagar resident said this was the third occurrence at Indian School. "Of course, anyone will panic! Kids taking

WILD GOOSE CHASE ACROSS CITY



Maximum calls from southwest Delhi



KEY SCHOOLS TARGETED

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| WEST | SOUTH | EAST DELHI |
| 1. Salwan Junior School, Naraina | 1. Amity, Saket | 1. ABV Public School, IP Extn, Patparganj |
| 2. New Era Public School, Hari Nagar | 2. Apeejay, Saket | |
| 3. St Marks School, Janakpuri | 3. Indian School, Defence Colony | |
| 4. DAV School, Vikaspuri | 4. Gyan Bharati, Saket | |
| 5. KR Manglam World School, Vikaspuri | 5. Don Bosco School, CR Park | |
| | 2. Salwan Public School, Mayur Vihar, Phase-III | |
| | 3. ASN Sr Sec School, Mayur Vihar, Phase-I | |
| | 4. Bal Bharati School, New Kondli | |
| | 5. East Point, Vasundhara Enclave | |



When alarm bells rang at school

HOW IT STARTED

- At 6.10am, DPS in Dwarka Sector-3 alerts cops about bomb threat emails
- Within 10 minutes, a second call is received from a school in Vasant Kunj
- Cops are soon flooded with PCR calls related to bomb threats
- Schools then sent SOS to parents, asking them to take their kids home
- Fire department, ambulances, bomb squads and forensic teams alerted
- Parents rush to schools and start frantic searches for wards
- Fire department receives nearly 109 calls

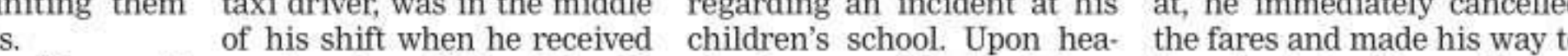
WHAT PROBE HAS REVEALED

- Russian service, mail.ru, used for sending the email
- The sender name is an Arabic term and resembles title of a Nasheed used by IS
- The content of mail randomly quotes Islamic verses and talks about *kufr* and martyrdom
- One line of probe is focused on present and former students
- The other is focused on a hacker group
- Cops ascertaining how the list of schools was obtained

EVACUATION & SANITISATION

- School authorities call students to ground floor
- Cops deployed outside to tackle chaos
- Traffic policemen deployed near schools to manage snarls and to make way for bomb disposal squads
- After confirming identity of parents and relatives, school staff hand over students
- MHA steps in, asks cops for report, tells people not to panic

Normalcy restored | Checks don't yield anything, mails declared hoax



Ahlon Public School, Mayur Vihar

an exam in class and then getting a bomb threat email out of the blue — that's terrifying,"

she said. The cops and school staffers used loudspeakers to announce the names of stu-

dents when reuniting them with their parents. Bobby Kumar, a 43-year-old

taxi driver, was in the middle of his shift when he received an alarming call from his wife

regarding an incident at his children's school. Upon hearing the news of the bomb threat,

he immediately cancelled the fares and made his way to the school to pick up his two

Police probing email ID of Russian origin, sifting through red herrings, smokescreens

Raj Shekhar Jha & Abhay | TNN

New Delhi: An elaborate operation involving multiple agencies has been launched to track down the sender of the email to schools in Delhi-NCR which turned out to be a hoax. With the sender having used an email ID of Russian origin, Delhi Police is writing to VK, the parent firm which owns the email service, via Interpol.

The probe has been handed over to the counter-intelligence unit of Delhi Police which has advanced email analysis software and systems. The unit is working with several agencies, including Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (i4C), to investigate the matter. The investigators suspect the real address to have been suppressed in multiple layers of encryption and will use advanced "unmasking programmes" to identify the sender, said an officer.

The sender has used the Russian free email service, "mail.ru", which was recently targeted by the IT wing of Ukraine's army, leading the servi-



Cops outside a school in Chanakypuri

ce to be shut down. However, the mail could have been sent from anywhere using VPN and darknet. Though mischief by an individual or a group of present and former students, who may have used IP masking techniques, is one of the lines of probe being followed, the agencies are exploring other angles too. The role of a hacker group is also being examined.

The initial technical analysis of the IP address of the email ID — Sawariim@mail.ru — used by the sender

reveals that it was masked using a virtual private network and proxy servers. Cyber experts managed to fish out two addresses but then hit a dead end. "One was A05651C1686****EFC1 and the other was 66.70.xxx.5xx. But these could just be smokescreens erected by the sender. We can be certain only after we get some authentic details from the originating server," said a cyber expert who didn't wish to be named.

The investigation is not focused only on tracing the sender through technical means but also on the content of the email. The content is puzzling as it quotes random Islamic verses and the sender's name, Sawarim, also seems to be stemming from a *Nasheed* (propaganda song) made by Islamic State which discusses bloodshed and war, which finds an echo in the mail.

The large number of schools targeted has made the police think that there was proper planning that required obtaining the email addresses of so many schools. This list could have

been either procured on dark web or obtained through crawlers from open-source data available on the web, said a cyber cell officer.

The cops are also looking into a similar hoax email that was sent to a children's hospital in Shahdara on Tuesday. The analysis of the sender's ID gave out around 20 IP addresses and showed the location to be places like US, South Korea, Netherlands, Luxembourg and other places. A similar threat was made to the airport on Monday. In both incidents, the same email ID was used.

"An email was received at 9.37am on feedback.iGIAirport@gmrgroup.in from 666darktriad666@gmail.com and the sender claimed to have placed three explosive devices on a few aeroplanes and at airport which would detonate in a few hours. The sender claimed that a group named 'Terrorizers111' was behind this," reads the FIR lodged by the airport police. The cops are probing if the same sender was involved in Wednesday's incidents as well.

Hoax threats: HC to review action plan at next hearing

Abhinav.Garg@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi govt and police will have much to answer before the high court later this week, following Wednesday's unprecedented fake bomb threats to several city schools. The court is scheduled to review on Friday the steps taken by them to prevent and deal with such incidents.

Hearing a petition filed last year by a lawyer, the court had on April 11 fixed a deadline for Delhi govt to outline its action plan to deal with such threats. Justice Subramonium Prasad then pointed out that though Delhi Police had submitted its plan, "no reply has been filed on behalf of Delhi govt. The reply of govt is necessary for laying down a proper and detailed action plan to deal with bomb threats and other disasters to ensure the safety of children studying in schools".

It had also ordered that a joint secretary of Directorate of Education would be present on the next hearing if no reply was filed.

Petitioner Arpit Bhargava has said he is aggrieved by the lackadaisical approach of Delhi govt and police in dealing with frequent bomb threat emails received by schools and the consequent failure of authorities to ensure safety and security of children, teachers, staff and other stakeholders. The plea also so-

ught preventive steps from authorities.

Bhargava's petition said such incidents "have become a daily routine leading to major headache not only to the petitioner but also to all stakeholders. The safety and security of children is of prime importance and there does not appear to be any solution in hand". The authorities have failed to prevent recurrence of such threats, leading to extreme trauma, stress, harassment, inconvenience and fear in the mind of all, it stated.

Earlier, police had claimed before HC it had an action plan ready. According to the status report, its bomb disposal squads and teams have a standard operating procedure in place. After assessing a call, the local police will not only reach the location but also engage authorities concerned to deal with the situation while a Special Cell team will investigate the terror angle, and a proper law-and-order situation will be maintained.

Police also plan mock drills to enhance preparedness and school authorities will undertake precautionary measures and plan evacuation of students in consultations with the authorities in case of threats. They will also adequately brief parents and students about legal ramifications that follow hoax calls, the court was informed. However, the plan is yet to be notified.

Unexpected interruption causes traffic snarls in parts of capital

Continued from P1

The special cell has begun an investigation after filing an FIR and is trying to trace the sender. The ministry of home affairs and lieutenant governor have asked the police commissioner for a report. Multiple agencies, including National Informatics Centre (NIC) and Cert-IN, have been roped in for the probe.

The alarming situation began building up as early as 6am with a couple of schools discovering the email and alerting police. "At 6:10am, Delhi Police received the first PCR call from DPS in Dwarka Sector-3, alerting us about the email. Just 10 minutes later, another call came in from a school in Vasant Kunj. Soon, other schools started calling up, one after the other," said a senior officer. Law and order chiefs Ravindra Yadav and Madhup Tiwary were on the ground for hours ensuring the teams responded to the calls in time and sanitized the premises quickly. According to police, the PCR received 131 calls in this regard besides many schools directly calling up SHOs and DCPs. Thirty of these calls were from schools in South-West district followed by those in Dwarka (28), West Delhi (21) and Shahdara (21). Eighteen schools in south Delhi received the email.

Atul Garg, director of Delhi Fire Service (DFS), said that between 9:30 am and 11:30 am, they received the maximum number of calls (109). They had to dispatch 75 fire tenders to various spots.

Even as the cops began to comb the premises, students were asked to leave their classrooms and assemble on the grounds. The authorities informed par-

ents through text messages and phone calls, urging them to pick up their children. The police formed multiple teams. While one coordinated with the bomb squad, the others worked with the management to evacuate the children.

"Every district has one bomb squad consisting of 17-18 cops, and it was a challenging day for them. They had to sanitize multiple places where political leaders were going for campaigning or filing their nominations and then quickly move to the schools," an officer said. "Every single dustbin, bag and even flowerpots were searched. Canine squads were used extensively to sniff out explosives," another officer added. As soon as the operation was completed at one school — in two to three hours — the bomb disposal squad was despatched to another. A traffic vehicle was moving ahead of the teams to clear the road so that they could reach quickly.

There were chaotic scenes at the schools as parents and relatives lined up to take the children home. The unexpected interruption caused traffic congestion in many areas across south, south-east and south-west Delhi and at other places too.

In all, around 8,000 cops and 300 firefighters had to be diverted for the evacuation and search operations.

Finally, the emails were declared a hoax at all the schools by noon. "Today, bomb threats were received at some schools in Delhi through e-mails. Taking action on these threats, Delhi Police has conducted thorough checks of all such schools as per protocol. However, nothing objectionable has been found so far. It appears that these calls were a hoax. Delhi Police requests the public not to panic and maintain peace," said a spokesperson.

How schools handled anxiety and chaos

Shreya.Ghosh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Ironic that on World Principal's Day on Wednesday, the universe played a cruel prank in Delhi-NCR with nearly 100 schools waking up to bomb threats sent through email. The principals had their hands full, frantically alerting parents to the threat, evacuating the classrooms and ensuring the safe dispersal of the students from the schools.

The school authorities have assured a return to normal school hours on Thursday, not allowing the apprehension to disrupt classes. Some of the schools managed the chaos of Wednesday smoothly, though others were forced to close due to parental pressure even when they hadn't received threats.

Some principals suspect the threats to be hoaxes possibly orchestrated by disgruntled parents or troublesome students. "It is almost like I was pressured to close the school because the panic was uncontrollable even after I reassured them that there were no threats to our school," said a principal. "The parents yelled at me saying, 'If the teachers want to stay they can do so, but we want our children to be safe and alive'".

Sudha Acharya, principal, IITL Public School, said, "The prolonged portrayal of the matter on TV news channels caused unnecessary panic, with anxious parents gathering outside schools demanding we shut down even if the school hadn't received a threat email like other schools. This was a deliberate attempt to instil fear among students and parents."

The principal of DPS Dwarka expressed gratitude to the parent-teacher association for assi-



NOT YOUR REGULAR WEDNESDAY!

stance in the orderly dispersal of students. Mother Mary School in Mayur Vihar was among the first to receive a threatening email. The stunning mail led to a swift evacuation and a thorough police search of the premises. The school principal said that regular evacuation drills played a pivotal role in preparing students

to identify their exit routes, contributing to a swift and organised evacuation.

At Mount Abu School principal Jyoti Arora posted on X, "This morning tested the resilience of schools across Delhi, yet thankfully it was only a hoax. Bomb threats rattled nearly every school, but hats off to Delhi Police for their lightning fast and efficient response. They were on site within minutes, equipped and ready."

The Amity International School principal said that the well-trained teachers and clearly defined protocols bolstered the school's ability to handle the emergency.

A relieved Directorate of Education's statement said, "All our students and teachers are safe. We want to reassure all that safety and well-being of our students, teachers and staff remain our utmost priority. Students were allowed to leave the premises when parents arrived, ensuring their comfort and safety. It is reiterated that everything is normal and no one should create any kind of panic."

DoE also issued an advisory for schools on Wednesday asking them to ensure that the emails received on their official school address was checked in time to prevent unwarranted incidents. "In view of the current situation wherein bomb threats were received by a few schools of Delhi in early hours of morning of 01.05.2024, it is advised that school administrators/managers/heads of government and government-aided and unaided recognised schools under the Directorate of Education, govt of Delhi, should ensure that emails/messages received on official email id of the school at any time of the day (before, during or after school hours) are checked timely," read the advisory issued by DoE.

kids. The rushed trip to the school was far from smooth, as heavy traffic congestion on some stretches in Kalkaji and Govindpuri significantly slowed him down. "I was in a panic because traffic snarls in Kalkaji and Govindpuri meant I took some time to reach the school. When I arrived, I saw many parents scurrying around to find their children and escort them back home. There was total chaos," he claimed.

Outside Mother Mary School in Mayur Vihar, worried parents clustered in sober groups exchange worried glances and murmured among themselves as they awaited updates on the unfolding situation. Many of them, adrenaline at a high, paced back and forth, eager to get hold of their children and return to the safety of their homes.

Anita, clutching her younger daughter's hand tightly, said, "I can't believe someone would think it's funny to make these threats to schoolchildren. My kids should feel safe at school, not terrified. I hope the school takes stricter measures to prevent these incidents in the future. It's not just about inconvenience, it's also about the emotional toll it takes on us though it is fun for our children because their exam got postponed."

One of the parents remarked at Dwarka School that police had arrived very quickly. "I saw all the students walking back in groups with gleeful expressions, innocently shouting, 'If there's a bomb, it's a holiday'. I had to leave work to pick up my daughter. The road was congested and frustrated me. It is terrifying for any parent but it was reassuring to see police personnel investigating the matter," she said.

Sunita, whose son studies in Amity International School, expressed exasperation. "This is the third time this year that we've had to deal with such scares. It's disrupting our daily lives and causing unnecessary stress for everyone involved," she grumbled.

Triggers Of Chaos: Fun, Spite And Fear Of Failing In Exams

Reasons For Hoax Calls, Mails Vary; Kids Involved In Many Cases

Siddhivi.Singh@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: From a 16-year-old who sent a bomb hoax and claimed it was "just for fun" to school students driven by grudges or fearful of flunking exams, the unusual suspects of school bomb threats have tried Delhi Police no end.

It all began on April 12 last year when Indian School in Sadiq Nagar received an email about a bomb placed on the premises. A postal letter on April 27 warned Amity International in Saket about the same threat.

Last year, a breakthrough was made in two cases when police identified two students in separate incidents, both attending the same coaching institute in Amar Colony. In one case, an email sent to DPS, Mathura Road, was traced to a student who held a grudge against a senior. After sending the hoax email, the student boasted about his actions, believing his status as a minor would protect him from legal consequences. Following his example, a second student from the same institute allegedly sent an email to Amrita Public School in Saket because he feared he would fail an exam.

In another incident, police reportedly suspected a student of sending a hoax email to DPS Mathura Road. However, they have yet to make progress in the cases involving emails originating in Russia and Germany using encrypted mail services.

This year, two schools received bomb threats in Feb, one was Amity International School in Pushp Vihar and

AT LEAST 3 SUCH INCIDENTS THIS YEAR ALONE

2024	2023	MAY 11
FEB 23 Amity International School in Pushp Vihar, threat via email, ₹1 lakh demanded to avert explosion	APRIL 12 The Indian School in Sadiq Nagar, via email	MAY 11 Delhi Public School in Mathura Road, via email
FEB 12 Amity International School in Pushp Vihar, via email	APRIL 21 Amity International School in Saket, via letter	MAY 16 Amrita School in Pushp Vihar, via email
FEB 2 DPS RK Puram, via email	APRIL 26 Delhi Public School in Mathura Road, via email	SEPT 21 Lal Bahadur Shastri School in RK Puram, via email

NOT MUCH HEADWAY IN INVESTIGATIONS

- In Amity school incidents of Feb 2024, investigators suspect the involvement of the same individual
- Delhi Public School in RK Puram also received a similar threat, with the suspect using Tor browser and VPN for anonymity
- A coaching institute in

Amar Colony has emerged as a connection between incidents in Saket and Mathura Road, with two 16-year-old suspects having met and studied there. Motivation behind the hoax appears to be a grudge against school's vice-principal and fear of failing a test



the other, DPS RK Puram. In the first incident, the school received an email that two explosive devices were planted on the premises.

The following two cases appeared extortionary in nature. The email demanded money and warned of an explosion if the demands were not met. A police officer said, "In two incidents in Pushp Vihar, the email sender demanded Rs 1 lakh to be delivered to a specified location. On Feb 12, another email sent through the same service to a school asked for Rs 50 lakh. This similarity suggests a single individual is responsible for both communications."

In the case of RK Puram, the probe found that the suspect used the Tor browser to access the dark web and employed a virtual private network to send the email. "Al-

though the sender remains unidentified, efforts are ongoing to penetrate the VPNs and trace the email's originating IP address," an officer claimed.

In most threat cases, tools like the dark web and virtual private networks have been used. In many cases, the IP addresses originated overseas. "We are trying to penetrate the two layers of encryption provided by the VPNs. However, obtaining permission from the relevant authorities for access to necessary details is proving an obstacle," an officer said.

Despite the efforts of the cops, there hasn't been much success. In one case, a minor who boasted about not facing legal consequences prompted questions about the effectiveness of deterrence methods. Police agree that the minor suspects present

problems in interrogation. "We have informed the courts and the juvenile justice boards about the findings. In most cases the students are warned and counselled. But since they are under 18 years, no hard action is taken against them," said an officer.

Arpit Bhargava, an advocate whose son studies in DPS, Mathura Road, revealed that he filed a writ petition in Delhi High Court demanding the formulation of an action plan to deal with bomb threats. "From April 2023 till today, there have been seven incidents, with police unable to trace the email origin in five incidents. Though a reply has been filed on behalf of Delhi Police, no reply has been filed on behalf of Delhi govt, which is necessary to lay down a proper, detailed action plan on school student's safety," said Bhargava.

7 schools in Noida & Gzb get threats too, all hoax

Ayantika.Pal & Advitya.Bahl | TNN

Noida: Four schools in Noida and three in Ghaziabad were among scores in Delhi's neighbourhood to receive emails claiming explosives had been planted on campuses, setting off evacuations and sending parents scrambling to get their children to safety.

Roads and streets around campuses were packed with cars while many ended up crowding around entrance and exit gates to take their children back home. Though several schools had sent messages saying they were arranging buses to drop students back home, many parents preferred to pick up their children instead of waiting.

Three branches of Delhi Public School — in Sector 30 (Noida), Sector 122 (Noida) and Knowledge Park V — and Aster Public School in Greater Noida West received threat e-mails around 6.30am on Wednesday. Each has a strength of 3,000-4,000 students apart from staffers.

Schools told TOI they quickly asked teachers and staff members to alert parents and police, but only let the students believe that an evacuation drill was being carried out. "We had to evacuate 3,000 students in a short span of time. So, we told them it was a drill, otherwise it would have been challenging," an official of DPS (Sector 30) said.

As parents of students at four schools were informed about the threat, chaos ensued



Security personnel inspect DPS School, Sector 30, Noida on Wednesday

at other campuses too. Some 20 schools in Gautam Budh Nagar and Ghaziabad called off classes as a precaution. At one and the same time, anxious parents who were aware of threats through WhatsApp messages gathered outside school entrances, demanding to take their children home.

"We received the e-mail around 6.30am, but we could only check it when school started, which was around 8am. We asked class teachers to send notes to parents, evacuate the school and inform the police. But we told students it was just a drill, so that they don't panic," said Rachna Shukla, vice-principal of Aster Public School.

One of the messages sent to parents by a school read: "Dear parent, due to an unforeseen circumstance, the school has to be closed today. You are requested to immediately come and pick up your ward from school. Students traveling by bus are being sent back home

by the bus..." Jhumur Nandi, whose son is a Class 1 student at Cambridge School in Noida, said he "lost his mind" after finding out about the threat.

"I rushed to the school immediately. I was just reaching my office after dropping off my son, but I had to take an urgent leave. I was scared and panicking," Nandi said.

Police said bomb squad and sniffer dogs were dispatched to schools. Preliminary investigation shows the e-mails were hoax, senior cops said, urging schools and parents not to believe or spread rumours.

"In Noida, two DPS branches received bomb threats. As a precaution, several other schools were also evacuated. Checking was done at both schools and no explosive device was found," said DCP (Noida) Vidyasagar Mishra.

Three schools in Ghaziabad received the same e-mails, police said.

Parents show up, vandalise school gate

Ayantika.Pal@timesgroup.com

Noida: Soon after the outbreak of reports about bomb threats being made at NCR schools, panicked parents across GB Nagar reached their children's schools to bring them back home — even at schools which had not received any threats.

A video of one such incident which was widely circulated on social media on Wednesday showcased the panic and chaos which erupted at schools across the city following these threats.

The video, recorded outside the main gate of Pacific World School, located in Techzone-4, Greater Noida West, showcased a small mob of parents trying to force their way onto school premises — even as the school authorities and security personnel pushed them back.

While some parents amongst the crowd cautioned fellow parents to maintain order, others kept on trying to push their way through, even vandalising the gate. "Do not do this, else the children will be more scared," a parent can be heard telling the frantic crowd.

When contacted, the school's media coordinator told TOI that they had not received a bomb threat email and, hence, there had been no reason for them to carry out an evacuation.

Saurabh Pandey, who handles public relations for Pacific World School, said, "Parents' concerns are understandable, but they should have been more patient and logical."

MHA steps in to allay fears, LG seeks report from police chief

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: The Union ministry of home affairs (MHA) on Wednesday stepped in to allay fears after bomb threats were received at schools of Delhi-NCR. It swiftly issued a statement saying the email was a hoax and there was no need to panic. The ministry added that Delhi Police and other security agencies were taking necessary steps as per protocol and that it had assigned the probe to a specialised unit and asked for a report from the police commissioner.

On Wednesday morning, a high-level meeting of all stakeholders was held and the agencies concerned were asked to extend all cooperation to Delhi Police officers. The ministry is learnt to have issued directions to officials to ensure that a standard operating procedure was in place for such scenarios.

Lieutenant governor VK Saxena also sought a report in the matter and said that the culprits would not be spared.

While directing the commissioner to ensure there was no lapse in the probe, Saxena posted on X: "Spoke to the police commissioner and sought a detailed report into the bomb threats at schools in Delhi-NCR. Directed Delhi Police to carry out a thorough search in school premises, identify the culprits & ensure there are no lapses. I request the parents not to panic and co-operate with the administration in ensuring safety of schools and the children. The miscreants & culprits will not be spared."

HC stays DOE order on need for prior sanction for fee hike by private schools

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court has stayed a decision of the Directorate of Education (DoE) asking private unaided schools, allotted land by govt, to seek its prior nod before hiking fee.

Justice C Hari Shankar granted interim relief on a petition by "Action Committee Unaided Recognised Private Schools" challenging the March 27 DoE order and said the decision was "objectionable" and could not be allowed.

Seeking the response of the directorate, the court said that the operation of the impugned circular dated March 27, 2024 issued by the DoE shall stand stayed till the next date of hearing and posted the matter for July 31.

In the circular, DoE had instructed all the heads of schools/managers of private re-

COURT SAYS

The principle that private unaided schools do not have to seek prior approval before enhancing their fees, so long as they do not indulge in profiteering or commercialisation of education by charging capitation fees...remains undisturbed till date

cognised unaided schools, allotted land on the condition of seeking prior sanction for increase in fee, to submit any such proposals for increase in fees for the academic session 2024-25 by April 15. It added that if no proposal was submitted by the school, there would not be an increase in the fee, and any complaint in this regard would be viewed seriously and make the school liable for action according to the statutory provisions.

earlier verdicts to note that an unaided recognised private school was not required to take prior approval of DoE before increasing its fees, irrespective of whether the "land clause" applied to it, and therefore, the "schools cannot be driven to litigation" on this issue. The DoE's order, the court said, was "directly contrary" to the law laid down by it.

"I am constrained, at this stage, to enter a somewhat unhappy comment. The principle that private unaided scho-

ols do not have to seek prior approval before enhancing their fees, so long as they do not indulge in profiteering or commercialisation of education by charging capitation fees...as enunciated in (another case by) Action Committee Unaided Recognised Private Schools, remains undisturbed till date, though the decision is under challenge," the court further noted.

"DoE, howsoever, dissatisfied it may be with the judgment of this court, has to respect it, so long as it stands."

Justice Shankar observed that the "attitude of DoE in continuously issuing circulars threatening recognised unaided schools with action in the event of their increasing their fees without obtaining prior approval of the DoE is objectionable, and cannot be allowed."

Protest at AIIMS over death by suicide of nursing student

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A large number of nursing students took out a protest march at AIIMS on Wednesday to demand justice for a 21-year-old BSc Hons second-year nursing student who died by suicide in her hostel room a day earlier. The students held a sit-in protest in front of the director's office.

One of the students told TOI that the batchmate was "forced" to take the extreme step because she was "humiliated" by a tutor. "We studied together in the first year, and since she could not clear some papers, she was not promoted to second year. Instead of helping her, the tutor humiliated her by saying that she was a failure and would have to study with juniors," the student said.

"Sometimes she shared her frustrations with us," she said. The student added that her friend had even asked which vein should be cut to die. "If we had known what was going on in her mind, we probably would have helped her," she said.

There were other students who have faced similar problems, the student said.

"We demand a thorough investigation into the circumstances leading to our batchmate's death and seek financial compensation for her family. Additionally, we urge accountability and reform within the college to prevent such tragedies in the future," some students said.

In their complaint to the director, the students said the loss was due to academic pressure and mistreatment by certain faculty members. This has left them deeply disturbed, they said.

They alleged that a tutor in the College of Nursing repeatedly humiliated their batchmate in front of the entire batch. Such behaviour was unacceptable and must be addressed promptly, they wrote. The current environment was leading to mental health concerns among students. "We urge for better support systems and psychiatric consultation services," the letter said.

They pointed to a lack of consistent rules within the college, with individual teachers enforcing arbitrary standards. In the past, teachers had resorted to unpro-

fessional behaviour by bringing personal matters and family members into disciplinary action, they said. Additionally, students who have faced academic setbacks were subjected to humiliation and discrimination instead of being supported, they wrote.

According to the complaint, certain faculty members were known to target students personally. Despite attempts to raise concerns through proper channels, the students said, they had faced neglect and their grievances were dismissed. They urged a forensic examination of the suicide note and handwriting to ascertain the circumstances surrounding their batchmate's tragic demise.

AIIMS media cell in-charge, Dr Rima Dada, said: "We will deliberate on the grievances. A committee will be formed, which will include nursing students."

According to police they had found a note in which the student had said she was in depression due to her studies and preparation for the Bihar Public Service Commission exam.

Jamali-Kamali mosque, tomb adjacent to it set to get fresh lease of life

Anuja.Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) is set to start conservation of the 16th-century Jamali-Kamali mosque and tomb in the Mehrauli archaeological village complex.

The site comprises two adjacent monuments that are among the most outstanding examples of Mughal architecture in Delhi.

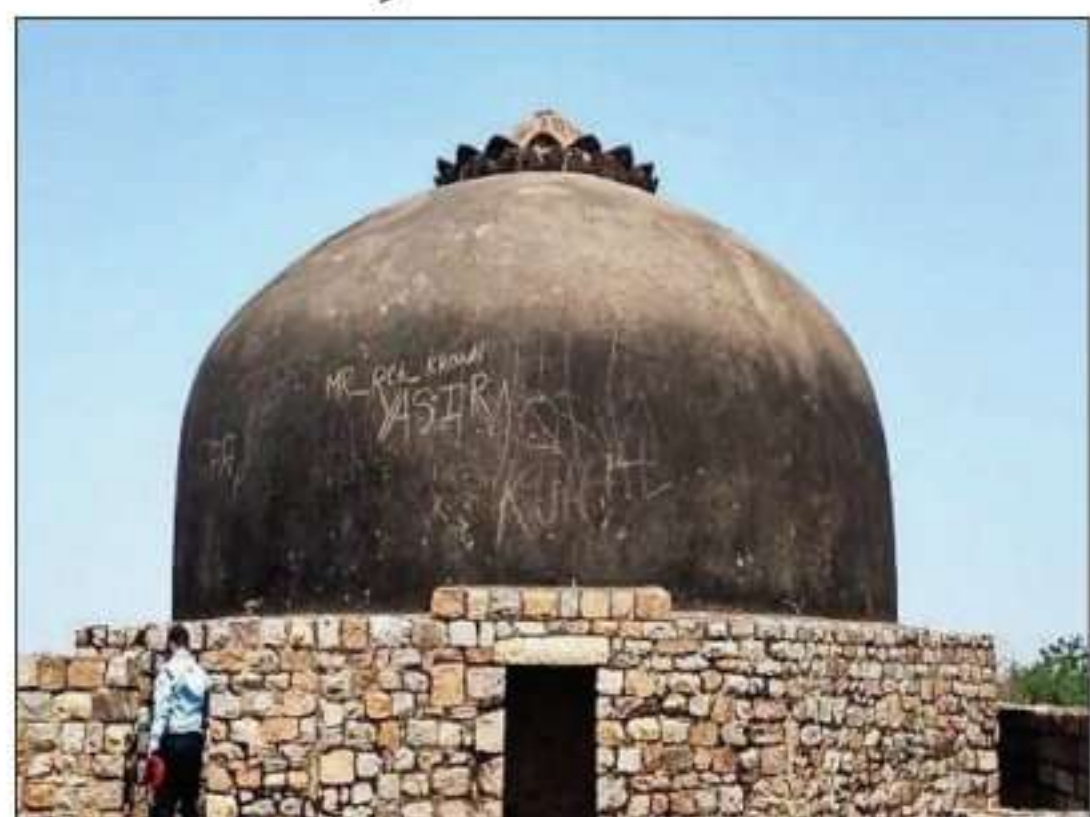
The wall that remains of the Balban tomb complex, which was revealed after removal of vegetation, will also be conserved.

Confirming this, superintendent archaeologist (Delhi Circle) Praveen Singh said that the conservation work is likely to start this month and a tender has been floated for it.

According to a book "Delhi and Its Neighbourhood", Shaikh Fazlullah, also known as Jalal Khan (Jamali), was a saint and poet who lived from the reign of Sikandar Lodhi to



The 16th-century Jamali-Kamali tomb (left) and mosque (centre) in the Mehrauli archaeological village complex; the wall that remains of the Balban's tomb complex (right) will also be conserved



Lime concrete flooring will be done in the mosque.

Additionally, in the Balban tomb complex, the rubble wall that remains will be conserved in all its aspects, and pathways towards the monument will also be created for visitors. "No conservation work has been done here for the past 10 years," an ASI official said.

The original gate to the mosque, which has survived, lies to the south. Its prayer hall is pierced by five arches, inclining towards a four-centred form and ornamented with carved bands and medallions in the spandrels.

The central arch, higher than the others, is more profusely decorated and flanked



by fluted pilasters. The niches in the western wall are also decorated with the central and northern ones featuring Quranic inscriptions.

Two staircases at either end of the prayer hall lead to a narrow gallery running right around the mosque on the second storey, with three oriel windows at the rear, one on

the south, and a small window above the central arch.

The rear corners are occupied by octagonal towers. Below the parapet in front are pendant lotus buds. A single dome covers the central bay.

Architecturally, this mosque marks the transition from the Moth-Masjid to Sher Shah's mosque, with which it

shares certain features. This description was quoted in a book written by an ASI official.

The tomb of Jamali-Kamali is situated immediately to the north of the mosque, enclosed within a boundary. Its chamber, small and flat-roofed, features ceilings and walls that are highly ornamented. Coloured tiles and patterns in incised and painted plaster, including verses composed by Jamali himself, adorn these surfaces.

Though the vegetation growth around Balban's tomb complex was removed by ASI last year, conservation work will commence this month.

Balban, one of the most powerful slave sultans after Iltutmish, was buried within the archaeological park, in a building he had built himself, called the Dar-ul-Amaan (Haven of Safety). Though in ruins and devoid of decorations, the tomb of Balban is unique for its architecture, as it was the first building to be constructed using true arches.

How Fear Of Losing Subsidies And Houses May Affect Voting By Poor

Demolition Action, Free Power And Water Hold Sway, But Liquor Policy Case Figures Too

Ridhima Gupta & Siddhivi Singh | TNN

New Delhi: The Lok Sabha elections in Delhi will see battles on multiple fronts and a particularly intense one will be fought in the city's slums. In these slums — underbelly of a thriving metropolis — inhabitants belonging to the economically weaker sections highlight issues of water scarcity, lack of toilets and streetlights, poor sanitation, women's safety and unemployment.

On the last step of the social ladder, over 20 lakh people living in 675-odd slum clusters spread across the city face a daily struggle to keep themselves afloat. Apart from an array of issues that plague these localities, the slum-dwellers are particularly gripped with anxiety over the uncertainty surrounding the legal status of their hovels.

Last year, ahead of the G20 summit, demolition drives were carried out across the capital in some areas, including Tughlakabad, Govindpuri and Sunder Nagar. TOI visited several slums in the city and spoke to those who had been evicted from their homes and those who live with that fear, asking them about issues ahead of polls.

At Bhoomiheen Camp in south Delhi's Govindpuri, people recalled the arrival of bulldozers in June 2023 that razed 2,000 jhuggis. A few metres away from the demolished portion of the camp, 50-year-old Usha, a widow, lives in a very narrow lane of Govindpuri. After the death of her husband, Usha had to depend on the state-sponsored widow pension to meet her daily expenses. She worries that defeat for AAP will mean the end of her subsidies.

"Half of our slum has been demolished though only a handful got rehabilitation. And if we have to leave to and pay inflated costs for electricity and water, it will be very difficult to survive."

AAP has garnered a lot of goodwill among the voters of Navjeevan Camp because of its free power and water schemes. Ram Nath Bharti (48), who runs a small shop selling brooms and jhados doesn't take the charges against AAP stalwart Arvind Kejriwal seriously. Oblivious to the pervasive stench of garbage, he said, "Jail mein hai toh kya hua? Hamko ration, paani, bijli, aspatal toh diya na? Uske peche wale bhi denge. Vote

AT 65K, SOUTH DELHI HAS MOST JHUGGIS

According to a Lokniti survey conducted on the eve of 2020 assembly elections, 61% of the poorest voters in Delhi voted for AAP. This, however, was a drop from 66% in 2015

In fact, it was BJP that made the most gains among the poorest voters and won 33% of their votes, an increase of 12% compared with 2015

WHY AAP?

A section of Delhi's slum dwellers feels that during the days of AAP govt, electricity bills have come down and free water has become available whereas ration and medicines are also more accessible

Why BJP?

Another section feels BJP will provide their community caste security. Popularity of Narendra Modi and loyalty towards 'Hindu rashtra' are key factors



toh udhar hi jayega." (What's the matter if he is jail! He gave us ration, water, power and hospitals. Those who follow him will also give us those things. Our vote will be for them.)

An auto driver, Shahid, 40, who came to Delhi two decades ago from Bihar in search of a better life, added, "Auto walon ko paisa diya. Jo hamare liye kaam karega usi ko toh dekhenge." (He gave money to autowallahs. We will take care of those who work for us.)

But Manoj Kumar, who runs a small business in the area, brushed aside these assertions. Kumar, a migrant from UP, said, "We will not vote for subsidies but for a leader who can lead the nation." Kumar argued it was a national election and he will vote

for BJP so that national issues like terrorism can be tackled.

A few kilometres away at Delhi's first in-situ redevelopment project, where Delhi Development Authority has given flats to around 2,000 households of the 8,000-odd in the JJ clusters of Nehru Camp, Navjeevan Camp and Bhoomiheen Camp, AAP politicians, or rather the subsidies, are a big factor. However, there are some who claim they will vote for BJP, come what may, for the "Modi factor".

A few kilometres away is the site at Tughlakabad where an illegal colony was razed on court orders to rid the land of encroachments. It is now enclosed by a wall topped with barbed wire. Meanwhile, those affected have rented homes elsewhere.

A daily wage worker, Rekha, 50, who used to live there with her husband, says, "We were not encroachers but had bought the land using all our savings. We had voter ID cards with the house address and electricity and water

BANKING ON THEM SLUMS

connections too, and yet our houses were demolished. Our local leader didn't do anything." Rekha, who now lives in a rented house in the same area, paying Rs 5,000 a month for a small single room, says, "Why will we vote for those

who rendered us homeless?"

Kalipada Poddar, who lives here and makes his ends meet with odd jobs, overheard the conversation about elections and interjected: "I will die but won't vote for any other party but BJP." His shanty has walls fashioned from BJP's campaign banners. Poddar, who migrated to Delhi from Bangladesh a few years ago, asserted: "This government helped me return to my homeland. BJP has given me a sense of identity." A few steps away, Nayan Munda (30), who runs a small eatery in the area, echoed a similar sentiment. A native of West Bengal, Munda observes, "BJP govt has rehabilitated many families in pucca houses. If there is any hope of rehabilitation, only the BJP

can provide it."

The Tughlakabad area is part of South Delhi parliamentary constituency, which till now was represented by BJP leader Ramesh Bidhuri, who won the constituency by defeating AAP's Raghav Chadha by a margin of 3,67,043 votes.

Further north in Delhi, at Shakur Basti, people lament the forgotten promises of politicians. A homemaker and a widow, Sunita, 42, points out lack of public toilets in and around her basti. "We are forced to defecate in the open and are always afraid of someone watching," she says, pointing to the railway tracks. The locals add that the public toilets here lack water.

"BJP's Hindu and Muslim politics doesn't work in our slum. For slum-dwellers, the vote goes to those who work for us," says Vijender Kholi, basti pradhan and president of the Jhuggi Jhopadi Jan Adhikar Samiti. "Slum people shouldn't be taken lightly. We can make or break someone because we are united." Kholi adds, "We will give AAP a chance as it has reduced our water and power bills, but if they also take us for granted, we will teach them a lesson in the next elections."

Do the allegations of a liquor scam find any echo here? Sushila, 65, a homemaker and a resident of the slum, is critical of Kejriwal: "Daaru se bada koi vish nahi samaaj mein. (There is no greater poison than liquor in society.) How can we trust someone who sold poison?"

At Janta Camp in central Delhi, Deepak, 40, laments, "Employment is the biggest issue. We haven't seen BJP making any progress in creating or providing employment. At least the Kejriwal govt has undertaken some initiatives for our welfare." In other slums, too, similar sentiments about rozgar were expressed.

Underlining that the slum vote can be a game changer in this election, Aravind Unni, urban expert and researcher, observes, "Residents of slums will come out in big numbers to vote because of the demolitions in the past one-and-a-half years. Our estimate shows over 50,000 houses were razed in several areas. Losing a house is the biggest fear in the slums." Indu Prakesh, an activist on urban poor rights, agrees: "The urban poor will be the game changers in this election."

2 BJP candidates list their plans if given thumbs up

TIMES NEWS NETWORK



BJP's Praveen Khandelwal is contesting from Chandni Chowk

New Delhi: BJP's two Lok Sabha candidates, Praveen Khandelwal in Chandni Chowk and Yogender Chandoliya in North West Delhi, have laid out the vision for their constituencies if they win the May 25 polls.

Presenting the sankalp patra (vision document) for Chandni Chowk in 2029, Khandelwal said on Wednesday, "I will ensure the reconstruction of Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation within 60 days through the intervention of lieutenant governor and comprehensive development of Matia Mahal, Ballimaran and Chandni Chowk assembly constituencies." He also mentioned that four hours of daily water supply would be ensured from 2025 and Ramliya Maidan would be redeveloped on the lines of Red Fort Ground with greenery along its walls.

From Delhi Gate's Parsi Centre to Eidgah Maidan and Majnu ka Tila, there are places of worship of all religions and Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation, which will have representatives of residents and traders, will focus on their beautification, making them tourist spots, he said. Bara Tooti Chowk, Kamla Nagar Gol Chakkar Market and Model Town Market will be beautified too.

"Roshanara Bagh will be beautified with a lake by 2027," Khandelwal promised. "In Sadar Bazar, Model Town, as well as in Trinarag and Wazirpur assembly constituencies, cleaning of the Najafgarh Drain within two years and beautification of the banks will also be my priority," he stated, adding that Shakur Basti Railway Station would be developed like Anand Vihar.

'Unconstitutional' arrest of CM: AAP holds street play

New Delhi: AAP on Wednesday held a street play in Patel Nagar to showcase that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal was "unconstitutionally" arrested.

On the occasion, Mayor Shelly Oberoi said, "Somnath Bharti is our candidate from the INDIA Alliance for the New Delhi Lok Sabha seat. He has been MLA from Malviya Nagar for three consecutive terms and is also a prominent lawyer in the Supreme Court."

"When the councillor, MLA and MP in Delhi will be from the Aam Aadmi Party,

Chandoliya promised abolition of toll taxes imposed in Bawana by Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation and establishment of an industrial hub. "Water reservoirs in villages will be restored," he said. The issue of railway gate at Kirari and waterlogging problems in the area, Mundka and Begumpur will be addressed, he added. "A sports university, being built near Ghevra, will be completed soon."

He also claimed that the work in Delhi undertaken by central govt was proceeding efficiently, with Sonipat being connected to IGI Airport in 27 minutes.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva said, "Today, I have conducted three roadshows with BJP candidates in different areas. They were from different strata of society, but across the city, people have the same enthusiasm towards BJP candidates."

In east Delhi, he said, people said they wanted to give Narendra Modi a third term. "In North East Delhi, the affection for Manoj Tiwari was visible on every face, and people openly said the Congress candidate won't be able to open his account at several booths."

Meanwhile, AAP minister Atishi also held a campaign 'Jail ka Jawaab Vote Se' at Khirki Extension. "People showed their support to AAP by attending 'Sankalp Sabha' organized in Khirki Extension in large numbers. Inflation has skyrocketed instead of decreasing in 10 years of BJP rule, BJP which promised employment has taken unemployment to its peak," she said. TNN

2 former MLAs quit Cong, cite alliance with AAP as reason

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Days after former Delhi minister Arvind Singh Lovely resigned as Congress state president, two former MLAs — Naseeb Singh and Neeraj Basoya — quit the party on Wednesday.

Both blamed Congress' alliance with AAP as the key reason behind quitting the party. While Singh was currently looking after the North West Delhi parliamentary constituency as AICC observer, Basoya had the responsibility for West Delhi.

Their resignations came days after former Delhi minister Rajkumar Chauhan quit. In his letter addressed to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Singh, who was elected to the Delhi Assembly from Vishwas Nagar segment for three consecutive times between 1998 and

2013, said the party high command disregarded the views of other Delhi unit functionaries and allied with AAP, which grew on a "false publicity and mala fide propaganda" against Congress.

"This will finish of the (Congress) party in Delhi. Majority of Congress workers in Delhi are extremely upset about the alliance," Singh said in his letter.

The former AICC secretary also accused the Congress leadership of giving tickets to "leftist and communist persons" in the North East Delhi (Kanhaiya Kumar) and North West Delhi (Udit Raj) seats "who appear to be in direct contradiction to the party ideology".

Singh said the party didn't respect the local leadership. "No Congress worker or local leader has any respect or standing before the party

high command.... I cannot remain associated with the party anymore.... Tender my resignation from all posts and primary membership of the party," Singh said in his letter.

Basoya, who represented the Kasturba Nagar assembly segment from 2008 to 2013, called the alliance with AAP "extremely humiliating" and claimed that it was bringing "great disrepute and embarrassment" to party workers. "By allying with AAP, it is appearing that the Congress is attempting to give a clean chit to AAP," he said. "I cannot continue to be associated with the party anymore," he said.

No official reaction was available from the Congress leadership. A senior party functionary said the two had been inactive for a long time and their resignation would not impact the party.

Day 3: BJP's Tiwari and Malhotra file papers

Siddhanta Mishra & Atul Mathur | TNN

New Delhi: BJP's Manoj Tiwari filed his nomination papers on Wednesday amid a festive atmosphere and enthusiastic support from party workers. The incumbent North East Delhi MP, who is running for the third time from the same Lok Sabha constituency, was accompanied by defence minister Rajnath Singh and other BJP functionaries, including Kapil Mishra, as he turned the nomination filing process into a roadshow.

Former East Delhi mayor Harsh Deep Malhotra also filed his nomination to contest from East Delhi as a BJP candidate.

Tiwari's roadshow began at the BJP office in Yamuna Vihar and wound its way through the narrow streets of Majlis Park, Gokalpuri and Nand Nagri before culminating at the returning officer's office in Nand Nagri. The cavalcade caused significant traffic congestion in Gokalpuri and surrounding areas until the afternoon.

Kishan Pal Singh, a local party worker, expressed confidence about Tiwari's victory, citing his dedication to the area over the past few years. Many women supporters wore saffron-coloured saris with lotus prints, symbolising BJP's election symbol. Stages were set up along the roadside, where workers eagerly awaited the opportunity to shower petals on Tiwari and Singh.

"A lot of work has been done under the leadership of PM Modi and a lot is to be done. The relationship that we have with our voters is of *vishwas* (trust) and love. I am confident we will once again give one *kamal* from North East Delhi to Modiji," said Tiwari before the start of the show.

Tiwari and Singh travelled on a mini-truck-turned-

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

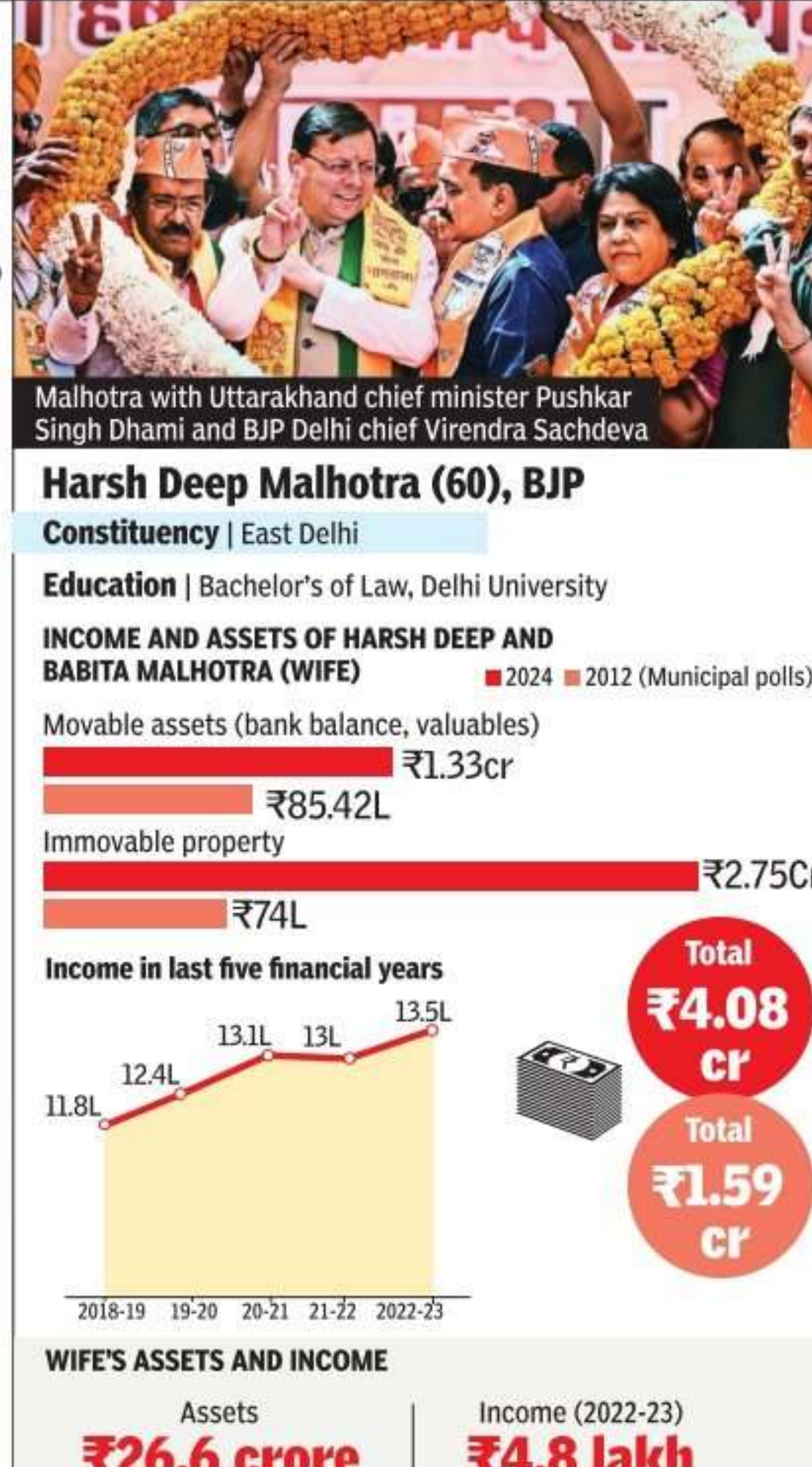
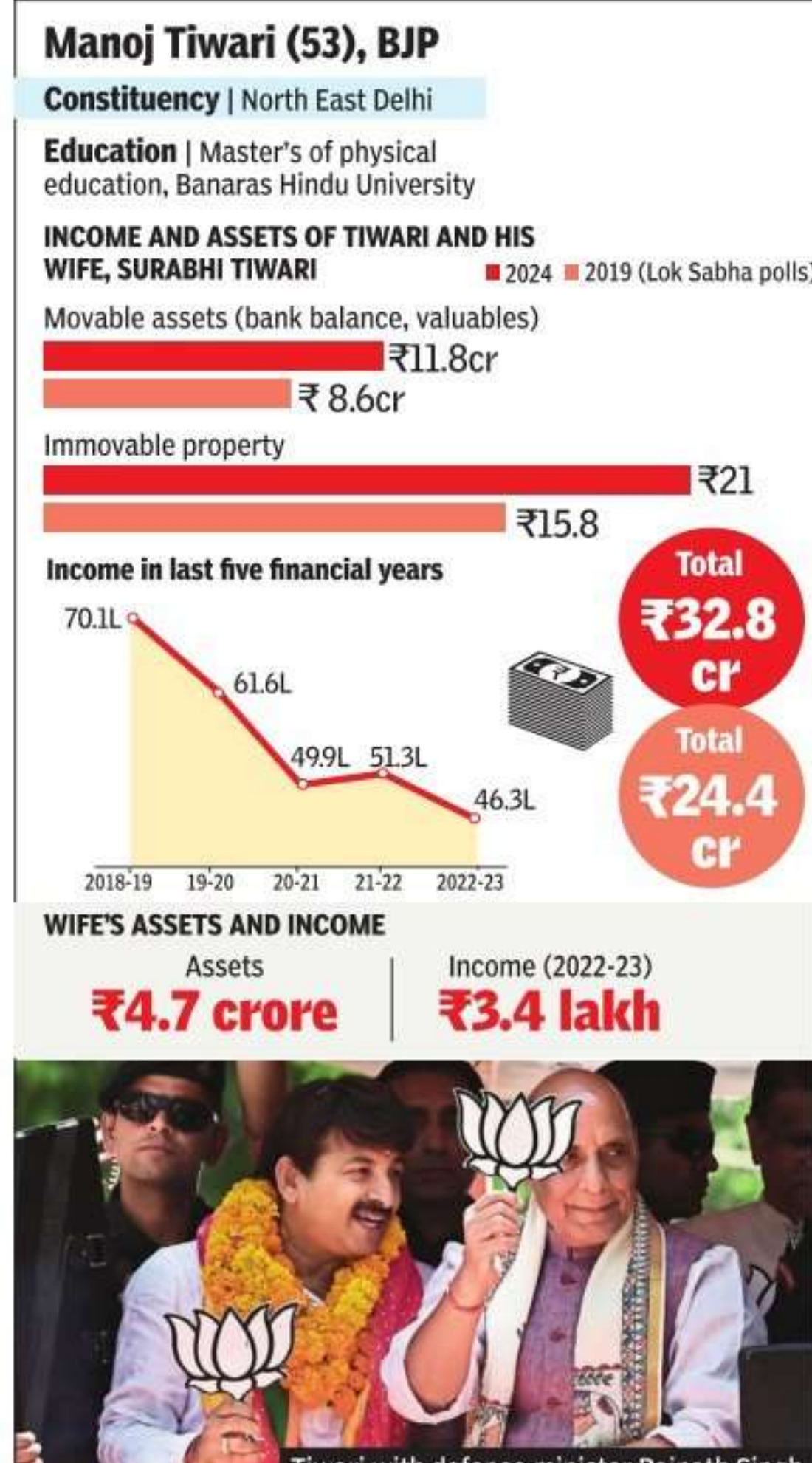
campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their

campaign vehicle while workers danced and raised slogans of 'Abki Baar, 400 Paar' moving in front. Addressing party workers, the union minister emphasised upon Modi govt's "commitment to developing and building a new India" with fresh ideas. "We are moving towards building a glorious nation that will fulfil the imagination of a 'Vishwasguru' India. People of the country have made up their



Common cause: Kanhaiya meets Sunita

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congress' North East Delhi candidate Kanhaiya Kumar met AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal's wife, Sunita Kejriwal, at her residence on Wednesday.

Later, Kanhaiya said it was a "courtesy" meeting to convey that Congress and AAP were "united in this fight against dictatorship" and would "protect democracy and Constitution". "We have been fighting against dictatorship for several years. I met her to convey that we are united in this fight against dictatorship. We will protect the democracy and Constitution of the country," Kanhaiya said after the meeting.

Contesting his first election on a Congress ticket as a candidate of INDIA bloc, Kanhaiya is taking active support of AAP cadres and has Kejri-



Kanhaiya Kumar is Congress' North East Delhi LS candidate

wal's photograph displayed prominently on all his hoardings and posters.

The former JNU Students Union president said dictatorship was prevailing in the country and anyone could be put in jail. "We are not contesting elections on just four seats, but on 543 seats. Even in Delhi, as part of the INDIA bloc, we are contesting elec-

tions on all seven seats. We are fighting for the people of Delhi, not for a party or a candidate," said Kanhaiya, who had contested his first Lok Sabha poll as a Left candidate in 2019 from Begusarai in Bihar.

Congress and AAP have forged a seat-sharing arrangement with the former contesting three of the seven Lok Sabha seats — North East Delhi, North West Delhi and Chandni Chowk. AAP has fielded its candidates in New Delhi, South Delhi, West Delhi and East Delhi. The voting in Delhi is scheduled to take place on May 25.

AAP, meanwhile, said Sunita would participate in roadshows of its candidates in Gujarat on May 2.

The party also said it held a meeting with Congress on Tuesday to develop a joint election strategy and campaigns.

Virtual campaign will allow even Dawood to fight election, says HC

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Wednesday dismissed a petition that sought permission for arrested politicians to campaign for the Lok Sabha polls through virtual mode, observing that it may result in dreaded criminals like Dawood Ibrahim contesting and campaigning.

"You want all the people who are in jail to be allowed to virtually campaign... I'm telling you all the dreaded criminals will register themselves with political parties. And, Dawood Ibrahim who is not convicted will be campaigning. Virtual mode will allow him," a bench of acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora told the petitioner lawyer.

The court said the plea was "highly adventurous" and against the fundamental principles of the law as courts didn't make policy decisions. "We cannot allow someone who is in custody to go on a campaign, otherwise all rapists, murderers will start floating political parties prior to the elections and Model Code of Conduct (MCC) coming into force," it said, just stopping short of slapping a hefty cost on the petitioner since he persisted, but eventually withdrew his petition.

Law student Amarjeet Gupta, who claimed to be aggrieved by the timing of the arrests, particularly of AAP's Arvind Kejriwal, after MCC for the Lok Sabha polls came into force on March 16.

The bench told the petitioner's lawyer that the more courts wanted to stay away from politics, the more they were being dragged into the "political thicket". It said, "Someone says put him (apparently referring to Kejriwal) in custody. Someone says take him out of custody. Courts are applying their minds and the accused is exercising his right. The matter is being heard."

As the lawyer argued that no one could be arrested since MCC was in force, the court shot back that if a candidate committed murder, "because of MCC being in force, does it mean he won't be arrested? People involved in murder and rape will start floating political parties before elections".

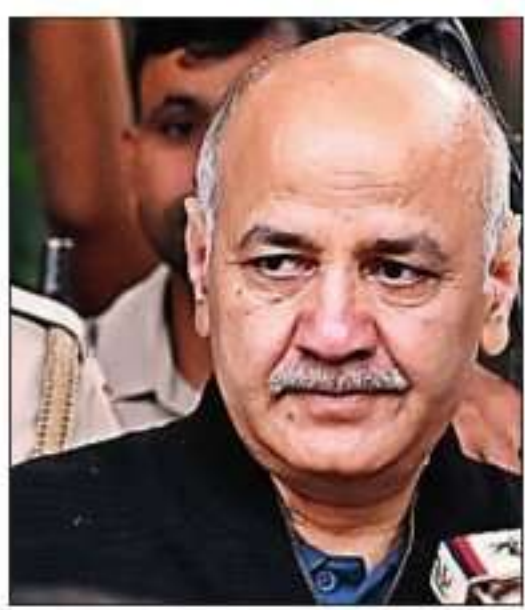
Delay Attributable To Sisodia & Other Accused, Says Court

Rejects 2nd Bail Plea Of Dy CM Amid Claim That Case Going Slow

Vineet Upadhyay
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: While dismissing former deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia's second bail plea, a court rejected his contention that the proceedings in the money laundering case linked to the alleged liquor policy scam have been delayed or that the case is proceeding at a snail's pace. The so-called delay, the court of special judge Kaveri Baweja opined, could clearly be attributable to Sisodia himself.

"It is apparent that the applicant, individually and along with different accused, has been filing one or other application/making oral submissions frequently, some of them frivolous, that too on a piecemeal basis, apparently as a concerted effort for accomplishing the shared purpose of causing delay in the matter," the judge said in the 42-page order issued on Tuesday while pronouncing that "the argument of the applicant that he has not contributed to the delay in proceedings or that the



Manish Sisodia

case has been proceeding at a snail's pace, therefore, cannot be accepted".

Sisodia stated that the prosecution had assured the Supreme Court last year that the trial would conclude in six-eight months, and he was entitled to seek bail as per the apex court's Oct 30, 2023 order if the trial was protracted and proceeded at a snail's pace in the next three months.

The court, however, said the steady progression of the case, despite the apparent attempts to slow down its progress, couldn't by any standard be equated with a snail's

COURT SAYS

The steady progression of the case, despite the apparent attempts to slow down its progress, couldn't by any standard be equated with a snail's pace.

"The so-called delay caused in the progression of the case is also clearly on account of reasons attributable to the applicant," stated the order, which was made available on Wednesday.

The court also rejected Sisodia's argument seeking parity with co-accused Benoy Babu, who was released after 13 months in jail, saying there was a difference in the nature of allegations against them.

Rejecting Sisodia's contention that he should be released on bail because of the health condition of his wife, the court said his plea did not cite any medical emergency or urgent medical condition war-

ranting his release. "The applicant in his application has mentioned that there is nobody in the family except him to support her (wife). However, this is factually incorrect as the applicant has a son who can take care of the applicant's wife," the judge said.

"Even otherwise, from the medical record of the wife of the applicant as annexed with the application under consideration, it appears that she has been suffering from the said ailment for a long time and has also been receiving requisite medical treatment and care for the same. The application discloses no imminent or urgent need or any medical emergency warranting the release of the accused/applicant on bail for this reason," the court noted.

Meanwhile, the court also listed 135 applications filed by different accused since April 2023 for various reasons, including requests to seek documents relied on by the prosecution, CCTV recordings of their custodial interrogation, and a request for interim bail.

2020 riots: Man gets 10-year RI for setting two houses on fire

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A Delhi court has sentenced a man to 10 years' rigorous imprisonment for setting ablaze two houses during the 2020 northeast Delhi riots.

The court of additional sessions judge Pulastya Prama-chala said, "Impact of the crime committed by the convict in this case is not limited to loss caused to the complainant and the other victim only, rather acts of rioters left a deep scar over the social fabric... The alleged acts instilled a sense of insecurity among the people while jeopardising communal harmony."

Jony Kumar was convicted under IPC sections 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant), 148 (rioting, armed with a deadly weapon) and 436 (mischievous fire or explosive substance with intent to destroy house, etc.), read with the offence of unlawful assembly, on Feb 14 this year.

According to the prosecution, Kumar was part of a riotous mob that torched two houses in the Khajuri Khas on Feb 25, 2020.

Special public prosecutor Naresh Kumar Gaur sought maximum punishment for the convict submitting that "it is our duty as a society to protect the safety and security of our communities."

The court awarded five years of rigorous imprisonment each for the two incidents of arson at the houses of Mohammed Safil and Mohammed Daoud along with fines of Rs 50,000 and Rs 40,000, respectively.

The court also sentenced Kumar to one year of simple imprisonment under IPC section 148 and six months of simple imprisonment under IPC section 188.

The offences under sections 148 and 188 would run concurrently with the first five-year sentence for the offence of arson, the court said.

The two five-year sentences for the incidents of arson would run consecutively as in cases where an accused is convicted for two or more charges, the general rule under the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) prescribes for running consecutive sentences unless the court directs that such punishments shall run concurrently.

HC seeks Centre's reply on expansion: Delhi High Court on Wednesday sought response of the Centre on a plea seeking expansion of the court premises. During the hearing, the bench said, "The problem is that the high court is here only. We will need the neighbouring land. We will look into this and see what we can do. We have virtually no land with us. PTI

K.R. MANGALAM UNIVERSITY
(Recognized by UGC & Member of AIU)

Thanks for making us the... **MOST PREFERRED UNIVERSITY**

6 LAKH+ REGISTRATIONS for UG & PG Programmes as per CUET 2023 & 2024

Man gets life term for raping minor daughter

Vineet Upadhyay
@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A Delhi court recently sentenced a 50-year-old man to life imprisonment for raping his 10-year-old daughter soon after her mother's death. The offence does not deserve any leniency, it stated.

The court of the special judge (Pocso), Anu Aggarwal, said that "sexual abuse and exploitation of the children is the violation of human, social and legal rights of the child and if the predator is the own family member of the child, more particularly, the biological father of the child, then it is nothing less than the betrayal of trust and impairment of the social values".

"Such an offence leaves a long-lasting emotional and psychological impact. It leaves a permanent scar on the psychological health and these scars are invisible and cannot be measured by any yardstick. These invisible scars haunt the child throughout life and the child loses trust in the family and friends in particular and in society in general," the court said in the order dated April 27.

BJP claims uptick in dengue cases

New Delhi: Leader of the Opposition in the MCD, Raja Iqbal Singh, on Wednesday said that incidence of mosquito-borne diseases has increased under AAP tenure.

The opposition leader said that "while the municipal corporation is grappling with problems, govt is sitting idle. When BJP govt was in power, preparations to control mosquito-borne diseases would have started early, but no preparations have been made this year. As a result, mosquitoes are more prevalent," Singh said. There was no comment from Mayor office on the allegations made by Singh. TNN

Send bodies for autopsy within 72 hrs: HC

Abhinav Garg@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Wednesday asked the police chief to ensure that all bodies are sent for postmortem within 72 hours, as per its earlier order.

A bench of Acting Chief Justice Manmohan and Justice Manmeet PS Arora also asked Delhi Police to examine the allegations levelled by a doctor posted at a govt mortuary that the local police deliberately delayed presenting a body for postmortem to hush up a murder case, since there was a gap of 28 days from the time it was recovered to requesting postmortem.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Dr Subhash Vijayan posted at Sabzi Mandi mortuary, which is connected to Aruna Asaf Ali Hospital. The petitioner, a qualified doctor, said that he was undergoing a stint at the mortuary while studying MD Forensics at Maulana Azad Medical College.

In his plea, the doctor alleged that the court's earlier ruling, which mandated conducting a postmortem examination within 72 hours, was being flouted routinely by police.

The court was hearing a petition filed by Dr Subhash Vijayan posted at Sabzi Mandi mortuary. He alleged that local cops deliberately delayed presenting a body for postmortem to hush up a 'murder' case

Narrating from his own experience while posted at the mortuary, the doctor said cops posted at the Farsh Bazar police station were allegedly trying to hush up a possible murder case, "by deliberate omissions and commissions, leading to destruction of evidence, by requesting postmortem after 28 days, when the body was substantially decomposed."

Vijayan said that on March 28 an unknown body of a 30-year-old man was recovered from a nullah in Shahdara a few kilometres from Jaffrabad. The body was preserved in the Sabzi Mandi mortuary and fingerprints were taken for

identification which helped in identifying the dead man who had pending criminal cases against him.

The doctor alleged that despite identification, the investigating officer of the case delayed sending the body for postmortem and wanted to close the case as that of an unidentified person, since his parents refused to accept the deceased.

"The only scientific methods available for 100% and definite identification are DNA and fingerprinting, which could identify people even from remains. Further, fingerprints are so unique that even identical twins, who have the same DNA, have different fingerprints. No two individuals in this universe have the same fingerprints," the petition adds, pointing out that the body was substantially decomposed, full of infection, with all the evidence lost when it was sent 28 days after recovery.

The plea also sought a direction to police to ensure that cops get the postmortem of all bodies lying for more than 72 hours at the Sabzi Mandi mortuary conducted without any further delay.

Voter turnout at Noida condos higher than district's average

Shafaque Alam
@timesgroup.com



DOORSTEP VOTING WORKS

Noida: Booths coming closer to the voter did help.

Turnout at polling centres set up by the Election Commission inside housing societies for the second phase of the Lok Sabha polls on April 26 was heartening, data released by the EC on Wednesday shows, though overall turnout for the constituency fell this time compared to 2019.

The 80 polling centres set up in high rises across the constituency — 34 of them in Noida and 46 in the Dadri area, which includes Greater Noida West — recorded an average turnout of 69.5%. The turnout for all of Gautam Budh Nagar, across its five assembly segments, is 53.7%.

A total of 53,242 people cast their votes out of the 76,747 re-

gistered voters in polling centres set up at condominiums.

In Noida, a polling centre set up at Shakti Kunj Apartment in Sector 62 recorded 89.5% voting with 690 of the 771 registered voters turning up to cast their votes — the highest among the 1,851 booths in the district. The overall polling percentage in the Noida assembly segment was

just 46.98%.

An apartment for NTPC employees, Shakti Kunj comprises around 200 flats. RK Uprety, the RWA president of Sector 62, said he requested the administration to set up a booth in Shakti Kunj. "Previously, people were allotted polling centres in neighbouring Nawada village and Sector 56, and many would skip. In this election, the polling booth was set up in the society's club and the result is here for all to see," he said.

Indian Oil Apartments, also in Sector 62, secured 80.6% polling with 982 of the 1,218 voters casting their votes. Among others, a clubhouse in Sector 50 recorded 78.6%, Arun Vihar in Sector 29 recorded 72.6%, NRI Residency in Sector 45 recorded 70.7%, and Amrapali Sapphire in Sector 45 recorded 70.6% polling.

Vax side-effects: Bharadwaj raises questions on Centre's silence

Anuja Jaiswal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Delhi health minister Saurabh Bharadwaj has questioned central govt's silence regarding AstraZeneca's admission that its Covid-19 vaccine, which was circulated in India as Covishield, had some rare side-effects that could cause blood clots and low platelet count.

He called for measures to address any threat to the population.

The vaccine, developed by AstraZeneca in collaboration with University of Oxford, was produced by Serum Institute of India. The pharmaceutical giant has recently admitted that the vaccine can cause Thrombosis with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome (TTS) — a rare syndrome that causes blood clots as well as a low platelet count. It is also known as vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia.

At a press conference, Bharadwaj said: "It has been two days since this news was released, and we waited all day yesterday to see central govt's response. We believe that there should be no politics in this issue because it concerns millions of lives, especially the youth. However, govt remained silent."

Citing reports of sudden deaths of vaccine takers in recent years as well as the bans on Covishield in European countries in 2021, the minister questioned why central govt continued to promote the vaccine despite such risks. He said the blood clots and falling platelet count had led to heart attacks.

Bharadwaj emphasised the magnitude of the situation, urging immediate action from central govt to safeguard crores of Indians. "We have seen thousands of examples in the past couple of years when young people collapsed and died... Since no one records the routine activities, many have breathed their last while living normal lives."

"What should people do? What should govt do? What precautions should they take, and what tests should they get done? What has central govt done so far?" he asked.

Wheelchair-bound woman denied entry into metro stn

Anjali Singh & Ayantika Pal | TNN



MIX-UP? Anju Beniwal

Noida: As bomb threats emailed to schools had the security apparatus in the city and the rest of NCR on its toes on Wednesday morning, a woman using a motorised wheelchair was stopped outside the check-in area of the Blue Line's Sector 16 metro station by a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) personnel and told to switch to a Delhi Metro wheelchair.

When Anju Beniwal (42) asked him what she was supposed to do without her personal wheelchair after she reached her destination, she was told she could not board a train. "If I were to switch from my electric wheelchair to a different one provided by DMRC, I'm not sure what would happen after my metro journey was completed. DMRC would not provide me with a wheelchair outside the station, so how would I travel?" asked Anju, who has polio.

A resident of Mayur Vihar in Delhi and a para archer, Anju said she was taken aback by CISF personnel's refusal to allow her inside be-

cause she has used the same wheelchair in the metro on numerous occasions. "This happened for the first time. I have been taking my electric wheelchair for 2 years into Delhi metro," said Anju, who was headed to Bahadurgarh in Haryana to visit a doctor for a hand injury she sustained in an accident recently.

She eventually had to make a much costlier trip to Bahadurgarh in a cab. "I pleaded with the CISF personnel for almost an hour to let me into the station, but he just wouldn't listen to me," said Anju. "I thought someone would come up and speak up on my

behalf outside the station, but no one did. I even requested other security personnel in the area to help but they refused as well," said Anju.

Pradeep Raj, general secretary of the Association for Disabled People, said they had provided Anju with the wheelchair two years ago. "It is very rare that people with an electrical wheelchair are not allowed to travel in the metro. There have been complaints from some of them about CISF security personnel stopping them because of the wheelchairs, but they have eventually allowed them to travel," Raj said.

A senior CISF officer told TOI the electric wheelchair's design, resembling an e-bike, may have led to a mix-up since there are clear instructions not to allow e-bikes in metro. "However, our security personnel should have checked thoroughly and seen the requirements. We were told to be on high alert as recently, there have been bomb threats, including one at Delhi-NCR schools (on Wednesday)," the officer said.

Balmer Lawrie
Vacations Exotica
THE HOLIDAY BRAND

TIRED OF THE SUMMER HEAT?

escape & explore cool international destinations!

Europe Group Tours Start @ INR 2,07,000* per person (with airfare)

<p>Exotic Europe (14N/15D) Tour cost: INR 3,85,600 p.p (with Flights) Offer Price: INR 3,70,600 p.p (with Flights) Visit Countries: United Kingdom, France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Italy & Vatican City</p>	<p>European Splendours (12N/13D) Tour cost: INR 3,32,650 p.p (with Flights) Offer Price: INR 3,17,650 p.p (with Flights) Visit Countries: France, Belgium, Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, Liechtenstein, Austria, Italy & Vatican City</p>	<p>European Memories (9N/10D) Tour cost: INR 2,49,900 p.p (with Flights) Offer Price: INR 2,37,400 p.p (with Flights) Visit Countries: France, Switzerland, Austria, Italy & Vatican City</p>
<p>Exotic Scandinavia (8N/9D) Tour cost: INR 2,43,950 p.p (Land only) Offer Price: INR 2,34,050 p.p (Land only) Visit Countries: Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland</p>	<p>Exotic Portugal & Spain (10N/11D) Tour cost: INR 2,16,500 p.p (Land only) Offer Price: INR 2,06,600 p.p (Land only) Visit Countries: Portugal, Spain</p>	<p>Best of United Kingdom (5N/6D) Tour cost: INR 1,45,250 p.p (Land only) Offer Price: INR 1,34,750 p.p (Land only) Visit Countries: England, Scotland</p>

More options: East European Wonders (6N/7D) • Enchanting Europe (10N/11D) • Mini Europe (8N/9D)*
Inclusions: Airfare (Unless specified), Visa, Accommodation, Meals and Sightseeing as per itinerary, Travel Insurance (till 60 yrs), Tour Manager, Tips

Australia Group Tours Start @ INR 1,38,875* per person (Land only)

<p>Exotic Australia (9N/10D) Visit Cities: Sydney, Gold Coast, Melbourne</p>	<p>Exotic New Zealand (9N/10D) Visit Cities: Auckland, Rotorua, Queenstown, Christchurch</p>	<p>Exotic Australia & New Zealand (18N/19D) Inclusions: Accommodation, Meals & Sightseeing as per itinerary, Tour Manager</p>
---	---	--

Best Selling Group Tours Start @ INR 68,850* per person (Land only)

<p>American Splendours (12N/13D) Visit Cities: New York, Philadelphia, Washington D.C, Harrisburg, Niagara Falls, Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Fresno, San Francisco</p>	<p>Singapore Malaysia (5N/6D) Visit Cities: Singapore, Kuala Lumpur</p>	<p>Azerbaijan (4N/5D) Visit Cities: Baku</p>
<p>Vietnam & Cambodia (8N/9D) Visit Cities: Hanoi, Halong Bay, Da Nang, Saigon, Siem Reap</p>	<p>Turkish Delights (8N/9D) Visit Cities: Istanbul, Cappadocia, Kusadasi, Pamukkale</p>	<p>EMI Book Now & Pay Later</p>

Domestic Holidays Andaman (5N/6D) • Doty (4N/5D) • Kerata (4N/5D) • Goa (3N/4D) • Manali (4N/5D)
Customized Holidays South Africa/Kenya (13N/14D) • Japan (7N/8D) • Sri Lanka (5N/6D) • Phuket & Bangkok (5N/6D) • Hong Kong (4N/5D)

Price mentioned on twin share basis (Ex-Mumbai/Delhi), ROE is calculated at 1 EUR=INR 90, 1 GBP = INR 105, 1 USD=INR 85, 1 AUD=INR 55, 1 NZD = INR 52 & final ROE will be taken at the prevailing on date of final payment. GST & TCS is additional. Subject to GOI & RBI Regulations. *Conditions apply.

BENGALURU 94494 02596	CHENNAI 044 4211 1900	NEW DELHI 011 4252 4111	HYDERABAD 040 4012 6565	KOLKATA 033 2222 5555	MUMBAI 022 4214 3333	VIZAG 0891 3101 212
---------------------------------	---------------------------------	-----------------------------------	-----------------------------------	---------------------------------	--------------------------------	-------------------------------

Balmer Lawrie & Co. Ltd. Regd. Office: 21, N S Road, Kolkata-700 001 • CIN: L15492WB1924G01004835
(A Government of India Enterprise) www.vacationsexotica.com • Email: holidays@balmerlawrie.com

A legacy of 157 years' trust, reliability & transparency.

1992-batch IPS officer Satish Golcha is new DG (prisons)

Rajshankar.Jha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Satish Golcha, a 1992-batch IPS officer, was appointed the new director general (prisons) after the incumbent Sanjay Baniwal retired on Tuesday. A no-nonsense officer, Golcha is known for his impeccable integrity and being a hard taskmaster. He was earlier posted as the DGP of Arunachal Pradesh and has served in a range of designations in the ranks of DCP, joint commissioner and Special CP in Delhi Police. Golcha, who was earlier the law and order chief in Delhi Police, was serving as the head of the intelligence division in the force.

With high-profile political inmates in jail, previous fiascos involving jail officials up to the rank of DG and the ongoing controversies, govt was cautious in choosing the new man for the job. Golcha will have his job cut out as Bihar has been on the boil for some time now. City gangs being run from jail, mobile use by inmates and other illegal activities ha-



Golcha has earlier served as DGP of Arunachal Pradesh

ve been a challenge for the prison administration and so has violence in jail. 2023 witnessed two sensational killings in jail. In April, gangster Prince Teotia was murdered during a brawl in jail. In May, gangster Sunil Tajpuria was killed in a brazen attack on him which was captured on CCTV cameras. Just a few days ago, two gangs had clashed in jail leading to several injuries.

Due to the model code of conduct in place, his posting had to be authorised by the election commission and thus he was given the posting as additional charge by lieutenant governor Vinai Kumar Saxena. An order issued by the home department on Wednesday read: "Sanjay Baniwal, IPS (AGMUT: 1989) was holding the charge of director general, prisons, and retired on April 30. Whereas, a proposal has already been submitted to the Election Commission of India (ECI) for seeking clearance for the appointment of an officer as director general."

"Whereas clearance is awaited from ECI, therefore the LG is pleased to order that Satish Golcha shall look after the charge of DG (prisons) as an interim measure, till further orders in public interest," it added.

The home department of Delhi govt has issued his formal order of transfer as DG (prisons). Special CP Sagarpreet Hooda was posted to the intelligence unit which Golcha had been holding.

Student attacked with blade at N Delhi school

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: A girl has sustained injuries on her face after being allegedly attacked with a cutter blade at a govt school in north Delhi's Gulabi Bagh area.

An investigation in the alleged cagfight between a group of girls on Monday has started and the juvenile justice board has been notified, a senior police officer said.

"We had received information that a scuffle had broken out between a few girls inside the campus of the school, wherein one of the girls hit the victim with a blade. Taking suo motu cognizance, we have launched an investigation," the officer said.

The action has been taken under the Juvenile Justice Act since all the students involved are minors, the officer added.

A purported video of the altercation surfaced on social media on Wednesday. The viral video shows a girl being allegedly assaulted with a blade on her face within the school premises.

It also shows the girl with a wound on the right side of her face, and blood is flowing down from half of the victim's cheek. The video has garnered significant attention and raised concerns among the viewers.

The incident has sparked fear and anxiety among students and parents alike, highlighting a major lapse in the school's security measures.

How Partial Combustion Fuels Your Bad-Air Woes

New Study Reveals It Adds To Health Problems

Priyangi.Agarwal@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A new study by IIT-Kanpur has revealed that incomplete combustion of various fuels plays a significant role in the poor air quality and associated health risks in north India. The study published in 'Nature Communications' journal stated that incomplete combustion sources, led by biomass burning and vehicles, put secondary organic aerosols in the air and increase oxidative potential in Delhi-NCR.

"Oxidative potential refers to the free radicals that are generated when pollutants interact with certain substances in the environment or in people's bodies. These free radicals can cause damage by reacting with cells, proteins, and DNA and impact our health. Oxidative potential measures how likely air pollution is to cause this reaction, which in turn can lead to health problems like respiratory diseases, heart disease, and accelerated ageing. There is an urgent need to address this issue and reduce emissions through targeted interventions to improve combustion efficiency in various sectors," said Prof Sachchida Nand Tripathi, department of civil engineering and department of sustainable energy engineering, IIT Kanpur, and one of the authors of the study.

Tripathi said that older, poorly maintained vehicles, and the ones that idle can cause incom-



BREATHING IN TOXINS

plete combustion. "...incomplete combustion means when a large quantity of fuel is burnt but the temperature or other factors were not appropriate. It would result in many undesirable products, including carbon monoxide, soot, many polyaromatic hydrocarbons and volatile organic compounds, to come out. It starts reacting in the atmosphere and form secondary organic aerosols, etc," he added.

The study revealed that local sources and processes are the main factors contributing to the widespread air pollution across the region. Ammonium chloride, and organic aerosols from traffic exhaust, residential heating, and oxidation of unsaturated vapours from fossil fuels are the dominant particulate matter sources inside Delhi.

Ammonium sulfate and nitrate, and secondary organic aerosols from biomass burning vapours, are produced outside Delhi.

However, oxidative potential is overwhelmingly driven by organic aerosols from incomplete combustion of biomass and fossil fuels, including traffic. The study's findings suggest that addressing local inefficient combustion processes can effectively mitigate particulate matter health exposure in northern India.

"Ammonium chloride indicates plastic or waste burning or industrial pollution in Delhi. While the source of ammonium sulfate in NCR could be coal burning at power plants and dairies and fertilizers may be leading to ammonium nitrate," said a researcher.

Regardless of location, the study identified organic aerosols from incomplete combustion of biomass and fossil fuels as the major factor driving air pollution's oxidative potential – a key indicator of its ability to cause adverse health effects.

Prof Manindra Agrawal, director, IIT Kanpur, said, "The research underscores the need for comprehensive strategies that address local emission sources and promote cleaner technologies, particularly in the transportation, residential, and industrial sectors. Implementing stricter emission standards, promoting renewable energy sources, and raising public awareness about the health impacts of air pollution will help achieve cleaner air and a healthier future for not just the north but the rest of the country too."

Dust in your eyes – and lungs: AQI nears 200

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Dust has become one of the prominent sources of pollution in Delhi's air. The air quality deteriorated on Wednesday and reached the higher end of 'moderate' category with an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 198, according to Central Pollution Control Board's 4pm bulletin.

However, the air quality worsened to 'poor' category later in the evening. Delhi's AQI was 202 in 'poor' category at 7pm. Ex-

perts said dust laden winds and local dust influence the air quality in summer. PM10 becomes the major pollutant.

A senior official, who wished not to be named, said, "Strong winds up to 50 kmph blew on Wednesday. However, since strong winds help in cleaning the air by dispersion of pollutants, we are expecting that the air quality may improve on Thursday."

Dipankar Saha, former head of CPCB's air laboratory, said, "Rain is only limited to rainy sea-

son and in Indo-Gangetic Plains, the rainfall is only 50 to 52 days in a year. The soil type is Algerian mixed with alluvial dust...The barren land or soil with no vegetation makes the situation vulnerable as far as the dust in ambient air is concerned. Besides, anthropogenic activities on the land cause the release of dust to the open atmosphere."

"The only remedial measure is to maintain land use pattern with more thrust to local plantation," Saha added.

CBI books 2 firms for Bitcoin-mining fraud through apps

Rajshankar.Jha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked two Delhi-based firms in connection with their investigation into a multi-million scam involving cryptocurrencies. The accused directors of the firms allegedly misled the public into investing in non-existent bitcoin mining machines and promised astronomical returns.

The investigation, so far, has revealed that approximately 150 bank accounts were used by the suspects to collect funds from investors. These funds were initially used for payouts to build trust, before being illicitly transferred out of India, often converted into cryptocurrency or moved through hawala transactions, said an officer.

The firms named by the agency are Shigoo Technology and Lillian Technocab – both private limited entities – which are based in south Delhi. The agency conducted searches at several locations through Tuesday and Wednesday. "This was a critical step in the ongoing investigation to dismantle the fraudulent scheme and gather evidence against the accused. During searches, we seized significant digital evidence, including mobile phones, computer hard drives, SIM cards, ATM/debit cards, email accounts, and various incriminating documents," a CBI spokesperson said.

The agency has filed an FIR under IPC sections pertaining to offences of criminal conspiracy, cheating and information besides section 66D of the Information Technology Act against the two private companies, along with their directors, on the allegations that the accused were involved in a fraudulent investment scheme linked to the HPZ token app. The fraudsters allegedly used a modus operandi that enticed victims to invest in the app on the pretext of high returns on their investments in bitcoin mining.

"The scheme involved misleading the public into investing in non-existent cryptocurrency mining machine rentals. The app offers tokens and promises users large gains by investing in mining machines for bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies," the spokesperson added.

Earlier, the Enforcement Directorate had initiated a probe in the matter and had frozen Rs 91.6 crore parked in different bank accounts belonging to the entities controlled by one Bhupesh Arora and his associates who were misusing the app-based tokens. ED had carried out search operations at the premises of three banks and payment gateways as the probe indicated a larger conspiracy and involvement of various entities in money laundering.

Massive fire breaks out in Shahbad Dairy, 1 hurt

New Delhi: A massive fire broke out in the Shahbad Dairy area of outer Delhi, gutting around 200 hutments on Wednesday. Officials reported that one person with minor burns has been found so far. Others were evacuated to safe locations. Police said they had filed a complaint and were trying to ascertain the cause of the blaze. "Thirteen-fourteen fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze. After an operation of about 6 hours, the fire was brought under control," a fire officer said. **TNN**

TIMES TRIBUTE

PAYING HOMAGE TO THE DEPARTED SOUL

To book your ad

Logon to: ads.timesgroup.com
or Call: 18001205474 (Toll Free)



ॐ नमो भगवते वासुदेवाय ॐ
In loving memory of

Smt. Kusum Malhotra

JOIN US FOR A PRAYER MEETING TO CELEBRATE HER LIFE
On
Thursday, 2nd May 2024
4-5 PM

Venue
Chinmaya mission
89, Lodhi road, New Delhi, 110003

— Dearly missed by —
Gp. Capt. (Retd) Rakesh Malhotra & Mrs. Meenakshi Malhotra (Son & Daughter in Law)
Dr. Rajesh Malhotra & Dr. Ruchi Malhotra (Son & Daughter in Law)
Dr. Ranjana Khetarpal & Dr. Sanjay Khetarpal (Daughter & Son in Law)
Dr. Ashna Malhotra Juneja & Mr. Saarang Juneja (Granddaughter and Grandson in Law)
Rhythm, Dr Anirudh & Vrishank (Grandchildren) Bagga family

Heartfelt Tribute on 3rd Death Anniversary

SHRI HARITH BUDHRAJA
(01-08-1978 To 02-05-2021)

His life's journey, marked by love, hard work, and the ability to see good in all, his spirit of gratitude and love continues to inspire us. We must carry his legacy and see the good things in people, neglecting the negatives, for a healthy society.

In Loving Remembrance,
Family, Friends & Associates,
Holy Land Marketing Group

REMEMBRANCE
SHARING MEMORIES

In Loving Memory Of
MRS. (DR.) RAVI KANTA VARMA
Feb 3, 1950-May 2, 2008

You will always live in our hearts, mind & thoughts. We can't see you or touch you but we feel your presence each & every moment. We deeply miss your beautiful smile, generous nature & optimism. Forever in our hearts.
Suresh Varma (husband) & Vinayak Family

"HONOUR. COURAGE. BRAVERY. These words that you taught us. Three words that help us cope with your loss."

The silent joy of remembering a loved one. The moments you shared together. Little moments that make life beautiful. Share them. With Friends. Relatives. Neighbours. Colleagues. With all those whose lives the departed Soul has touched. Because while life goes on, when you share memories, they stay on forever.

Publications	Total Outlay	SPACE FOR YOU
The Times of India Delhi/NCR	5,600	1000 words for 10 days
TOI+NBT (Delhi/NCR)	8,800	1000 words for 15 days
TOI+ET (Delhi/NCR)	6,600	1000 words for 10 days

REMEMBRANCE
SHARING MEMORIES

For any information call
Vinod : 9958992088
Pankaj : 8130604727

To place an
Obituary announcement
or Remembrance ad

Call - Vinod :
9958992088
Pankaj :
8130604727

"And come he slow or come he fast, It is but Death who comes at last."
- Sir Walter Scott

Mahendra Pratap

A pioneering figure in the field of technology, passed away peacefully on 30.04.2024. As a founding member of HCL and team member EPIC, he dedicated his career to advancing innovation. Mahendra Pratap's contributions will continue to inspire generations to come.

Fondly remembered by
Ajai Chowdhry, Arjun Malhotra & The EPIC Family

OBITUARY PRAYER MEETING

REMEMBRANCES SHANTI PATH

3rd Anniversary

Lt Col NS Dadhwal
25 Mar 37-02 May 21
(Army Dental Corps)

"Your life was a blessing, your memories a treasure. You are loved beyond words and missed beyond measure. Your words-And, that's what life is all about remain etched in our hearts and serve as a constant reminder of your unwavering spirit and wisdom."
Aruna Dadhwal, Children and Grand-Children
8800745644

With profound grief and sorrow, we inform the sad demise of our beloved
Smt. Aundhathi Kotru
(Bhabhi Ji)

who left us for heavenly abode on April 30, 2024.
SHANTI PATH will be held on May 3rd, 2024. 5 - 6pm at Arya Samaj Mandir, 3-1, F 10 Marg, Block D, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi.

Grief stricken & fondly remembered by:
Kotru's
Vall's
Kaul's
Ganju's
Popli's
& Watal's

To place an Obituary announcement or Remembrance ad

Call - Vinod :
99589 92088

TIMES TRIBUTES RATE CARD

Publications	Rates per sq. cms
TOID Capital + NBT (Delhi+NCR)	1295
TOID Full Run ### + NBT (Delhi+NCR)	1360
THE TIMES OF INDIA (Delhi+NCR)	780
THE TIMES OF INDIA (Delhi) Full Run##	900
NAVBHARAT TIMES (Delhi+NCR)	595
THE ECONOMIC TIMES (Delhi+NCR)	715
SANDHYA TIMES (Delhi)	100

*Placement on specified obit pages only. *This rate benefit is extended up till the size of 320 sq. cm only. *## Full run includes Delhi City + NCR (Including Gurgaon + Noida) + Chandigarh + Western U.P. + Uttarakhand + TOI Capital (Delhi + NCR) Includes TOI Gurgaon & TOI Noida.

To place an Obituary announcement or Remembrance message please call
Vinod: 9958992088
Pankaj : 8130604727



DIDI RAISES CONCERN OVER SUDDEN SPIKE IN VOTER TURNOUT, QUESTIONS EVM CREDIBILITY

FAROOQ ATTACKS EC OVER POSTPONEMENT OF ELECTION IN ANANTNAG-RAJOURI LS SEAT



Goldy Brar shot? US shooting sets off buzz of gangster death

Rajshekhhar.Jha@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: A bar fight and a shooting incident that led to the death of a yet-to-be-identified person in California on Tuesday have fuelled reports of the killing of gangster-turned-terrorist Satinderjeet Singh alias Goldy Brar on US soil.

Brar, who is accused of orchestrating the killing of Punjabi pop singer Sidhu Moose Wala, is the Man Friday of gangster Lawrence Bishnoi who is lodged in a jail in Gujarat.

The incident which triggered reports of Brar's death took place around 5.25pm (local time) at Fairmont and Holt Avenue in Fresno, California.

The second incident reportedly happened in a club in Fresno where a man named Pavitra Singh, a close aide of Jaggu Bhargwanpuria, clashed with Brar over some issue, a source said.

Brar went to Canada on a student visa in 2017. After his cousin Gural was killed outside a nightclub in Chandigarh in 2020, Brar got involved in the gang's operations aggressively.

May temp likely to be 'above normal' in most parts: IMD

North India, Including Delhi-NCR, Likely To See 5-7 Heatwave Days

Vishwa.Mohan @timesgroup.com

New Delhi: In many states/UTs including Delhi, four of the remaining phases of parliamentary elections this month are likely to be held amid peak of hot weather with India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday predicting 'above normal' maximum (day) temperatures over "most parts of the country".

Though there are certain exceptions such as northeast India, some parts of north-west and central India and adjoining areas of northeast peninsular India where 'normal' to 'below normal' maximum temperatures are likely, a vast area broadly coinciding with nearly 200 parliamentary seats which will vote over the next four phases (May 7, May 13, May 20 and May 25) is most likely to face intense hot weather.

A total of 295 seats will go to polls in the next four phases (third to sixth), whereas elections in the remaining 57 seats will be held in the seventh and last phase on June 1.

Releasing monthly temperature and rainfall outlook for the month of May, the IMD chief Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the number of heatwave days is likely to be 'above normal' by about 5-8 days over south Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Gujarat region.

It means these areas are likely to face 8 to 11 days of heatwaves as normally heatwaves prevail over the region for about three days in May.

SWELTERING OUTLOOK FOR THE MONTH

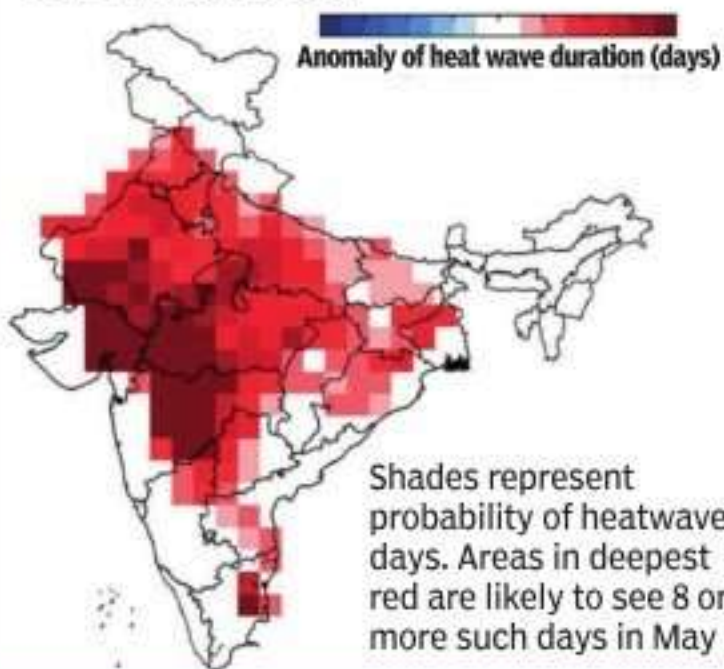
Normally, heatwave prevails over Northern Plains, central India and adjoining areas of peninsular India for about 3 days in May

PREDICTION

Number of heatwave days is likely to be above normal by about

- > 5-8 days over south Rajasthan, west Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, Marathwada and Gujarat region
> 2-4 days over remaining parts of Rajasthan, east Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and some parts of Chhattisgarh, interior Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, north interior Karnataka and Telangana and isolated pockets of north Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh

Map of likely number of heatwave days during May 2024



What is the criterion for declaring heatwave?

Heatwave is considered if max temp of a weather station reaches at least 40°C or more for 'plains' and at least 30°C or more for 'hilly' regions
Based on Departure from Normal Heatwave: Departure from normal is 4.5°C to 6.4°C
Severe Heatwave: Departure from normal is >6.4°C

Although there are some exceptions, where 'normal' to 'below normal' max temperatures are likely, a vast area coinciding with nearly 200 LS seats which will vote over the next 4 phases is likely to face intense hot weather

maining parts of Rajasthan, east Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, UP and some parts of Chhattisgarh, interior Odisha, Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, Bihar, north interior Karnataka and Telangana and isolated pockets of north TN, Andhra Pradesh.

This means these regions, including Delhi-NCR, are likely to face five to seven days of heatwave this month, making campaigns and elections tough in most of the areas as it may coincide with high day temperatures. Except Rajasthan and east Madhya Pradesh, elections remain to be held in

most of the high heat impact states. Though north and central India could escape heatwave days in April due to five western disturbances (WDS), India faced two spells of heatwaves last month - from April 5 to 7 and April 15 to 30 - affecting mainly eastern India and southeast Peninsula.

Mohapatra attributed the prolonged heat wave in April in these two states to the absence of thunderstorms and a persisting anticyclone at lower levels over the west central Bay of Bengal and the adjoining eastern coasts of India.

On the rainfall front, IMD predicted the average precipitation over the country as a whole in May to be normal. "The normal to above-normal rainfall is likely over most parts of northwest India, some parts of central, peninsular and northeast India. The below normal rainfall is likely in remaining parts of the country," it said.

India Inc has to deal with 1,536 Acts, 69,233 compliances: Study

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Despite attempts to improve the ease of doing business, India Inc still has to deal with numerous laws and compliances.

A research paper released by TeamLease RegTech, a regulatory compliance management firm, finds there are 1,536 Acts and rules, 69,233 compliances, and 6,618 annual filings to comply with. However, each company may not have to contend with all the compliances. That varies depending on the nature of business, geographical location and reach, and employee headcount.

It says that a major part of the compliances for corporates is with regard to labour. Labour accounts for 30.1% of the applicable laws and rules, 47% of the compliances, 46% of the filings, and 68% of the provisions that carry clauses for imprisonment.

Govt had sought to streamline several labour

However, each company may not have to contend with all the compliances. That varies depending on the nature of business, geographical location and reach, and employee headcount

laws by enacting four labour codes but, failing to implement them, citing lack of support from some states. Most economists have argued that the new labour codes should be among the first set of key reforms that the new govt should implement.

The current sets of laws and regulations come with their own set of internal processes with labour consultants seen to be heavily reliant on spreadsheets for data storage and sharing, the paper said.

"Currently, the digitalisation of compliance processes is limited to monitoring and administering regulatory obligations. Automation will enable businesses to reduce both the expense of compliance and the cost of poor compliance," the report said.

TeamLease RegTech pointed out that there is a lot of redundancy and overlap in labour laws.

It suggested that companies and govt should start using open APIs so that they can exchange data seamlessly with regulators. "It will allow regulators to publish updates to compliance requirements, which affected businesses can quickly ingest. In addition, using a network of RegTechs, the infrastructure will enable enterprises to complete straight-through filings. Eventually, the grid will eliminate the need to create, maintain, and submit paper documents. It will automatically detect compliance obligation delays, evasions, and leaks," TeamLease RegTech said.

It's better to vote for BJP than TMC in WB, Adhir heard saying in video

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Congress on Wednesday vociferously underlined that the objective of the 2024 polls is to defeat BJP, which leaves no room for any indirect compromise with

the saffron party, moving swiftly to rubbish claims about Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury asking people to vote for BJP if they can't vote for Congress.

An eight-second video clip of Chowdhury's speech at a Murshidabad election rally was shared by TMC, in which he is heard saying,

TMC axes Kunal Ghosh as gen secy after he shares stage with BJP LS nominee, praises him

Hours after TMC general secretary Kunal Ghosh shared a stage with a BJP Lok Sabha candidate and praised him, the party on Wednesday removed him from the post. Declining to spell out his next move, Ghosh said he would like to "continue in the party in future". Ghosh said he had already expressed his desire to resign as party spokesperson and general secretary in March. TMC had then accepted his resignation as spokesperson but asked him to continue as general secretary.

"It's better to vote for BJP than to vote for TMC."

West Bengal Congress termed the clip "doctored" and complained to EC, while TMC's Abhishek Banerjee accused Chowdhury of being a BJP agent. "We wanted INDIA bloc alliance in Bengal, but Chowdhury prevented it

to strengthen BJP," he said.

While refusing to touch upon TMC's allegations, Congress general secretary K C Venugopal said, "Going against party's ideological commitment is unacceptable and all leaders must avoid giving any statement in that direction."

INDIAN RAILWAYS GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF RAILWAY (RAILWAY BOARD) CORRIGENDUM - II Subject: E-Tender No. TM-2306 for procurement of Electro Mechanical Gate System for Ballast Hoppers for Indian Railways - to be opened on 05.06.2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED See Section U/S 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused (1) Kuldeep @ Shivam S/o Sh. Omprakash (2) Akash S/o Prem Chand both R/o Mohalla Shiraji Khani near Pani Ke Tanki Village Bilaspur, P.S. Dankaur, District Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh have Committed (or are suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 44310/2018 U/s 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said (1) Kuldeep @ Shivam (2) Akash cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said (1) Kuldeep @ Shivam (2) Akash have absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).

ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण ग्रेटर नोएडा औद्योगिक विकास प्राधिकरण द्वारा मुख्य कार्यपालक अधिकारी, ग्रेटर नोएडा की ओर से ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना संख्या-स्वावि/2024/428, दिनांक 30.04.2024 के माध्यम से उल्लेखित क्रम सं 01 में अंकित कार्य की ई-निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है। ई-निविदा की समस्त नियम व शर्तें ग्रेटर नोएडा प्राधिकरण की वेबसाइट: www.greaternoidaauthority.in पर ई-निविदा लिंक एवं ई-पोर्टल https://etender.up.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है। किसी परिवर्तन, संशोधन व अतिरिक्त सूचनाओं के लिए उक्त वेबसाइट देखते रहें।

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (See Section 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Lal Bihari, S/o Rajesh R/o H.No.K-92, Shukr Bazar Road, Vijay Vihar, Ph-I, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No.168/2021 u/s 356/379/411 IPC, P.S. Vijay Vihar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Lal Bihari cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Lal Bihari has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON (SEE SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.) Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person(s) Mohd. Imtiyaz @ Bablu S/o Hazi Nazir Hussain R/o Property No. 49, Shardhanand Marg, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 199/2022, U/s 4(C) DPT and MAT Act, PS Kamla Market, New Delhi and it has been returned to a Warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused person(s) Mohd. Imtiyaz @ Bablu can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person(s) Mohd. Imtiyaz @ Bablu has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused person(s) Md. Imtiyaz @ Bablu of FIR No. 199/2022, U/s 4(C) DPT and MAT Act, PS Kamla Market, New Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before dated 16.07.2024 at 10:00 AM.

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON See Section 82 Cr.P.C. Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person namely Kausar Ali, S/o Gazab Ali, R/o. H.No. P-47, Gali No. 18, Braham Puri, Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 352/2018, U/s 25/54/59 A.Act registered at P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there upon issued that the said Kausar Ali cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said Kausar Ali has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said Kausar Ali accused of FIR No. 352/2018, U/s 25/54/59 A.Act P.S. Jafrabad, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 05.06.2024

SEBI SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA SEBI BHAVAN II, PN-C/7, G Block, BKC, BANDRA EAST, MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA 400051, TEL: 02226449800 Tender Notice No: SEBI/ITD/HO/ITD_END/2024/05/01 SEBI invites "Request for Proposal" from reputed agencies/firms for Implementation and Support of Mobile Device Management Solution.

SEBI भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनियम बोर्ड Securities and Exchange Board of India SEBI BHAVAN II, PN-C/7, G Block, BKC, BANDRA EAST, MUMBAI, MAHARASHTRA 400051, TEL: 26449000 Tender Notice No: SEBI/ITD/HO/ITD_COAPPINF/2024/05/01 SEBI invites responses to "GeM Bid"/ "Request for Proposal" from reputed agencies / firms for "Procurement of Biometric Readers for SEBI Attendance System".

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender No. PRYJ-Sig-05-2024-25 Date: 29.04.2024 E-TENDER NOTICE Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer / Coordination / North Central Railway/ Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 12.00 hrs. on 24.05.2024.

UTTARAKHAND POWER CORPORATION LTD. (A Govt. of Uttarakhand Undertaking) Corporate Identity No. U40109UR200515SC02587/2358 Victoria Cross Vijaya Gaba Singh Uja Bhanu, Kamal Road, Dehradun Telephone: (0135)-2763672-76, Fax: (0135)-2760229 E-TENDER DATE EXTENSION NOTICE E-tender Specification No. CCP-1/67/2023-2024 invited by this office for Work of development, implementation and hosting of system for External Agencies, UPNL and SHG contractual employees in UPCL are hereby extended due to unavoidable reasons.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY E-Tender No. PRYJ-Sig-04-2024-25 Dated:29.04.2024 E-TENDER NOTICE Senior Divisional Signal & Telecommunication Engineer / Co-ordination/North Central Railway/Prayagraj, for and on behalf of the President of India, invite E-TENDER on prescribed form for the following works up to 15.00 hrs. on 24.05.2024.

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR COOPERATIVE TRAINING (NCCCT) (An Autonomous Society Promoted by Ministry of Cooperation, Govt. of India) 3, Sri Institutional Area, August Kranti Marg, Hauz Khas, New Delhi-110016 National Council for Cooperative Training is a society registered under Societies Registration Act, 1860, (Promoted by Ministry of Cooperation) with the objective of facilitating Human Resource Development for Cooperative Societies in India through training interventions.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY Letter No:-DRM/C/AGRA/Parcel/E-AUCTION Dated: 26.04.2024 E-Auction Notice On Behalf of the President of India, The Sr. Divisional Commercial Manager-North Central Railway-Agra invites E-Auction as per categories given as under-

Prajwal may return this week, seeks time to join SIT probe

Many Seen In Videos Go Underground

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Bengaluru: Karnataka MP Prajwal Revanna, suspended from JD(S) following his alleged involvement in a sex scandal, is expected to return to India from Germany on the intervening night of May 3-4 to confront investigations initiated by the state police's SIT.

Prajwal, seeking re-election from Hassan Lok Sabha seat as JD(S) candidate in alliance with BJP, left for Frankfurt on April 27, a day after the first phase of Lok Sabha polls in the state. His departure followed Congress govt's announcement of SIT to probe the allegations against him.

Breaking his silence, Prajwal Wednesday expressed confidence that "truth will prevail". "As I am not in Bangalore to attend the inquiry, I've communicated with CID, through my advocate (about joining the probe)," he said.



A half-burned poster of JD(S) MP Prajwal Revanna during a protest by NSUI members in Bengaluru

On Tuesday, SIT issued summons to Prajwal, grandson of JD(S) chief HD Deve Gowda, to appear before it for questioning, failing which it would declare him an "absconder". The agency has also summoned his father — Holenarasipur

► The story of Gowdas, P12

JD(S) MLA HD Revanna — who will likely appear before the SIT Thursday. "In the notice served to my client (Prajwal), you (SIT) directed him to appear before them on Wednesday (May 1). Since he is out of Bengaluru,

he needs at least seven days of time to appear," Prajwal's counsel G Arun wrote Wednesday to ADG, CID-SIT.

SIT visited Hassan and Holenarasipur Wednesday to speak to a 47-year-old woman, who lodged a complaint alleging sexual harassment by Revanna and Prajwal. Efforts to contact other women seen in the videos to record their statements proved fruitless. "Either their houses were locked or their phones switched off. Their relatives and friends refused to share any details about them," sources added.

Shah: Cong let 'heinous criminal' flee

Hubbali: Home minister Amit Shah on Wednesday sought to insulate BJP from the Prajwal scandal, and said it was the Karnataka govt that allowed a "heinous criminal" to flee the country.

At an election campaign rally in Hubballi, Shah said "BJP will not support such people" and added that it was a law and order issue, which is under the state govt. "The Congress govt was aware of the issue but did not initiate any action till Vokkaligas had voted," Shah said. "They indulged in politics."

Responding to Shah's allegations, Karnataka home minister G Parameshwara insisted there was no question of protecting anyone and said, "No one can be arrested suddenly. Factors such as complaints, evidence etc need to be considered. Action will be initiated in accordance with the law." TNN

On Cong complaint, EC puts 48-hour no-campaign ban on KCR

Hyderabad: EC has barred former Telangana CM and BRS chief, K Chandrashekar Rao, from holding meetings, processions, rallies, shows and giving interviews to media for 48 hours from 8pm on Wednesday, reports U Sudhakarreddy.

The action came on a complaint by Telangana Congress. In a press meet in Sircilla on April 5, KCR had made a number of comments that were seen as derogatory and objectionable by Congress. Telangana's chief electoral officer had filed a report on the issue based on which a notice was issued to KCR on April 16.

KCR had called Congressmen "lath-khors" (a useless, lazy person). He made another comment in Telugu which roughly translates to: "We will bite your heads off if you don't give Rs 500 as bonus (on MSP)." In its complaint, Congress had said KCR had threatened to kill.

EC said KCR had violated the model code in past polls too.

J'khand Cong X handle withheld over Shah video

New Delhi: The official X account of Jharkhand Congress was withheld on Wednesday after a 'deepfake morphed video' of home minister Amit Shah was posted on the social media handle.

"X withheld the account of Jharkhand Congress in response to a legal demand," officials in the know of the development said.

Delhi Police's special cell had earlier issued notice to Jharkhand Congress chief Rajesh Thakur under Section 91 of CrPC, asking him to be present at the cell's office on May 2 in connection with the doctored video of the minister circulating on social media.

Delhi Police on Wednesday showed dissatisfaction over Telangana chief minister Revanth Reddy's reply in connection to the fake video case. Earlier in the day, a reply was filed by the CM of Telangana through his counsel. TNN

Photos of SP's pick for Budaun in pool with girls surface

Kanwardeep Singh
@timesgroup.com

Bareilly: A week before Budaun goes to polls on May 7, photographs of Aditya Yadav, son of Samajwadi Party veteran Shivpal Yadav and the party's candidate from the seat, have emerged on social media showing him surrounded by women in a swimming pool.

While not denying it is him in the pictures, Aditya held a press conference on Wednesday to say that the images were from his college days in 2012. "Some individuals in them are my friends and sisters," he said and expressed concerns regarding the "possibility of AI-generated manipulated obscene videos of his being released next."

Aditya's images were shared by a man called Mahendra Vikram, who claimed to be the BJP's "zonal social media convener". In a social media post, Vikram said, "People of Budaun will identify him (Aditya) soon... These photos are real and are from 2012."

During the press conference, Aditya raised concerns about the violation of his privacy and questioned the BJP's "ethics in using such tactics for political gain". He also alleged that the BJP's IT cell and party workers were involved in spreading these images through various social media platforms.

In response, BJP candidate Durgvijay Singh Shukla commented, "We haven't seen his photos yet, but we saw his interview. Regarding his personal life, I would just like to say that his uncle (Mulayam Singh Yadav) also said 'boys are boys and they make mistakes'. I have nothing more to say... he (Aditya) knows quite well what is the truth."

In Budaun, there is a triangular fight this time — between BJP's Shukla, BSP's Muslim Khan, and SP's Aditya. BJP's Sanghmitra Maurya had won the seat in 2019 by a margin of 18,000 votes.

Gang-raped & thrown into river, 13-yr-old drowns in MP

Bhopal: A 13-year-old girl was gang-raped by three youths so savagely, police said Wednesday, that she lost consciousness due to severe bleeding, after which the three took her for dead and threw her into a river in MP's Sagar. She drowned.

Police have arrested the three men — Deepak Patel (25), Akshay Sen (19) and Shyam Patil — who had befriended the girl three days prior to her death and lured her into a trap.

The girl went missing from Bilhara on April 20. On April 23, her body was found floating in Dehar river in Rangir, around 35km away. Investigators zeroed in on a call received in the night of April 19 from someone.

Cops tracked down the caller, Patil, who after sustained interrogation, broke down and narrated the horror inflicted on the girl. He also named a co-accused, Akshay, police claimed. The autopsy revealed that the girl was raped and then drowned in the river. Police have taken forensic samples of the accused and sent them for DNA tests. TNN

In self-delivery bid, nurse chops off baby's legs

Chennai: A nurse in Chennai, who had been hiding her pregnancy and trying to abort the fetus even though it was too late, tried to self-deliver the baby in her hostel's washroom, but ended up chopping off the baby's two legs, and flushed one limb down the toilet, reports Selvaraj A.

W Vinisha (24) claimed the baby was stillborn, but there was an injury on its neck caused by a sharp object. When her colleagues entered the room on hearing cries, they found the mutilated infant wrapped in a piece of cloth.

Police filed a case against the nurse under IPC sections 315 (intent to prevent a child from being born alive or to cause it to die after birth) and 201 (concealing evidence). "We could not retrieve the leg that was flushed. The child's body was kept at a govt hospital for autopsy. We will add murder charge after receiving the doctors' report," said a policeman.

Who next? Scandal fear stalks netas

Manu Aiyyappa.Kanathanda
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: The sex scandal allegedly featuring Karnataka MP Prajwal Revanna could lead to the potential emergence of more incriminating videos involving politicians and their relatives in the near future as political rivals engage in a murky game of retaliation and one-upmanship.

Close on the heels of the controversy surrounding former PM HD Deve Gowda's 33-year-old grandson Prajwal, who was suspended from JD(S) on Tuesday, fresh footage allegedly involving a Congress MLA from a neighbouring district has surfaced, although it has yet to generate the same level of uproar as the videos purportedly involving the Hassan MP.

Amidst this escalating turmoil, suspended senior BJP functionary KS Eshwarappa's son KE Kantesh has obtained a court-issued re-

Rahul slams PM's silence on Prajwal's crimes

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Wednesday questioned PM Modi about his silence on the controversy surrounding JDS MP Prajwal Revanna's exploitation of women, and why he campaigned for the ally despite being aware of his deeds.

Rahul recalled other cases of rape and women's harassment associated with BJP functionaries and underlined that the PM never spoke a word on those incidents. "As usual, Modi has maintained a shameful silence on the gruesome crimes against women in Karnataka. The PM will have to answer why, just for the sake of votes, he campaigned for the monster who has exploited hundreds of daughters? How did such a big criminal escape from the country with such ease?" Rahul said. TNN

straining order to halt the dissemination of any defamatory material against him.

As the proliferation of sleaze videos continues to unsettle politicians across the state's political spectrum, a senior Congress functionary expressed concern: "It's a dog-eat-dog situation. JD(S) leaders are infuriated, not just because of the alleged videos implicating Prajwal, but also due to the damage caused to the reputation of Deve Gowda.

There could be some retaliatory action against our leaders."

Echoing similar concerns, senior JD(S) MLA GT Deve Gowda commented: "How can they defame Deve Gowda just because his grandson is involved in something? His long career shows who he is. This is nothing, but dirty politics."

The videos have already cast a shadow over the political climate in Karnataka. "Whenever there are polls,

politicians resort to using sex videos as a weapon to defame their opponents, and social media has come in handy. What is worrying is that while mainstream media do bother to morph the pictures of the victims, it's a free-for-all on social media and photo-sharing platforms," said political commentator Vishwas Shetty.

In the past two decades, Karnataka has witnessed several sex scandals involving politicians from various parties. These have led to resignations, investigations, and legal battles, casting a shadow on the political landscape.

In 2019, then water resources minister Ramesh Jarikholi resigned amid allegations of soliciting sexual favours after a video CD allegedly showed him with a survivor, but its authenticity remains unverified. The same year, an alleged sex tape involving then BJP MLA Arvind Limbavali surfaced, but was later deemed fake by forensics.

TIMES interact

Connecting People, Connecting Needs.

To book your ad

Logon to: ads.timesgroup.com
or Call: 18001205474 (Toll Free)



TIMES interact SPECIAL

Sarvamangala Financial Services Pvt Ltd

WE OFFER PRIVATE FINANCE FOR UNSECURED & SECURED LOANS

STARTING @ 10 CRORES & ABOVE

ROI STARTS @ 6% P.A.

- LOAN AGAINST PROPERTY
- CORPORATE & SME LOAN
- NPA TAKEOVER
- Business Expansion Loan

NO PROCESSING CHARGES

8939210707
9363056639

treasure@sarvamangalainvest.in

jobs

SITUATION VACANT

MARKETING, ADVERTISING & SALES

MARKETING

WNTD Salesman to visit clinics, hospitals in NCR. Marketing cleaning products. Shud have 2whr. Sal arnd 15K. Contact 9871138704

tender & notices

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Public at large is hereby informed that Our Client has entered into an Agreement to Sell dt. 29.10.2023 with Mr Kuldeep Singh Verma, son of late Shri K.S. Verma, concerning the sale of property bearing no. B-117, Second Floor, Vasant Vihar, New Delhi 110057, on a plot of land measuring 610 sq. yds., along-with 50% front terrace of the said property and proportionate share in the land underneath. Anyone entering into any kind of agreement or transaction with respect to the said property shall be at his/her own cost and risk and subject to prior rights and interest of Our Client under the said Agreement concerning the said property.

Mohd Ranu (Advocate)
ARIMUS LAW LLP, Ch. No. 155, Delhi High Court, N.Delhi-110003

E-AUCTION NOTICE (E-AUCTION OF VARIOUS PLANT MACHINERY & EQUIPMENT IN GOOD WORKING CONDITION)

E-Auction forms are invited from interested buyers for sale of various plants and machinery on "As is Where is" basis and in working condition. For catalogue visit www.matexnet.com for Auction ID's MATEX 0229, 0330, 0338 of Mittal Energies of India (Seam Industries), Baitbari Nagar.

Machinery & Equipment Details: Various machinery & equipment related to heavy fabrication, Thermal/Hydro power plant, Petro Chemical, pipe fitting mfg. & material handling equipment CNC PLASMA, Seam Welding Line, Plate Bending Machines, Shot Blasting Machine, CNC Tube Bending Machines, Elbow Cold Forming Machine, Overhead Cranes from 3 MT to 30 MT with various Span & other general purpose machines. Lathe, Drill, Milling, Power/Hydraulic Press.

Date of inspection: From 2nd to 20th May 2024 (Contact MatexNet Mumbai Branch Officials Abhijit, Jibin, Sayan at 9962444600 / 9150006755 / 9629865111)

MatexNet Pvt. Ltd.
Exclusively Authorised by Sellers www.matexnet.com

Circle Office: East Delhi Ground Floor, Scope Tower Laxmi Nagar, Delhi - 110092

Punjab National Bank requires suitable ready built and well-constructed hall type building having Carpet Area including space for ATM (APPROX 1200 TO 1500 SQ. FT.) on lease/rental basis at Tamarap - 110054. Premises should be preferably in Ground Floor, in case at first floor, lift facility must be available. Premises offered should have all necessary clearance from statutory authorities. Interested owners / registered Power of attorney Holders of such premises in the desired locality who are ready to lease out their readily available premises on long term lease basis preferably for 15 years or more may send their offers in the prescribed format available on Bank's Web Site www.pnb.in or the same may be obtained from the above address during office hours. The complete, duly sealed & signed offer should reach the undersigned on or before: 08.05.2024 up to 14.00 P.M at the above address. No brokerage will be paid by the Bank. Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons whatsoever. -sd-

Date 02.05.2024 CIRCLE HEAD

To place an ad in

TIMES interact

For Personal ads

Call Pankaj : 8130604727

Circle Office: East Delhi Ground Floor, Scope Tower Laxmi Nagar, Delhi - 110092

Punjab National Bank requires suitable ready built and well-constructed hall type building having Carpet Area including space for ATM (APPROX 3500 TO 4500 SQ. FT.) on lease/rental basis at Kandi Bugh Delhi - 110005. Premises should be preferably in Ground Floor, in case at first floor, lift facility must be available. Premises offered should have all necessary clearance from statutory authorities. Interested owners / registered Power of attorney Holders of such premises in the desired locality who are ready to lease out their readily available premises on long term lease basis preferably for 15 years or more may send their offers in the prescribed format available on Bank's Web Site www.pnb.in or the same may be obtained from the above address during office hours. The complete, duly sealed & signed offer should reach the undersigned on or before: 15.05.2024 up to 14.00 P.M at the above address. No brokerage will be paid by the Bank. Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any or all offers at its sole discretion without assigning any reasons whatsoever. -sd-

Date 02.05.2024 CIRCLE HEAD

personal

CHANGE OF NAME

I Kamlesh Rani and Kamlesh Rani Singla D.O.B. 15-08-1954, W/o. Pawan Kumar Singla are same person for all purposes.

IT is for general information that I was previously known as Girish Sharma, S/o Revati Raman Sharma, R/O C8-F1, South Campus, IIT Mandi, Kamand, Kamand (383) Mandi, Himachal Pradesh-175005, and after undergoing gender transition therapy, have changed my gender as female. I henceforth be known as Gargee Girish Sharma, D/o Revati Raman Sharma. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in the connection.

I, Meena Tandon W/o Shri Subodh Tandon R/o 2845, Gal. No. 5, Raghubarapur No.2, Gandhi Nagar Delhi-31 declare that my name is wrongly mentioned as Meena Tandon in my child's school & Board records. My actual & correct name is Meena Tandon.

Readers are recommended to make appropriate enquires and seek appropriate advice before sending money, incurring any expenses, acting on medical recommendations or entering into any commitment in relation to any advertisement published in this publication. The Times of India Group doesn't vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers of products and services. The Printer, Publisher, Editor, and the owners of The Times of India Group publications shall not be held liable for any consequences, in the event such claims are not honoured by the Advertisers.

Death of Salman case accused may dilute stringent MCOCA charge

► Continued from P1

The building is covered by CCTV cameras. It is the first case of custodial death inside the police headquarters in recent years.

Police said around 12.30pm, an officer in charge of the lockup was conducting routine check on the first floor when another inmate told him that Thapan had gone to the toilet but hadn't returned. The officer found Thapan hanging and rushed him to GT Hospital where doctors declared him dead. His body was later sent to JJ Hospital for an autopsy.

Thapan, who hails from Punjab and was nabbed on April 24, was accused along with Subhash Chander of supplying two country-made pistols and 40 cartridges to Gupta and Pal on behalf of Anmol Bishnoi, the Canada-based cousin of jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. A lookout circular has been issued against Anmol and cops are hoping to gain custody of Lawrence from Gujarat jail.

Police fear Thapan's death could dilute the stringent MCOCA charge that was invoked Monday after the case was transferred from crime branch unit 9 to assistant commissioner of police S Nade. For MCOCA charge to hold, cops need to show that an accused had been named in another chargesheet within last 10 years. Thapan has been named in three unrelated offences in Punjab.

Sources said they suspect Thapan died by suicide because he was afraid that he would never be acquitted in MCOCA case. His relatives rejected the claims. "Why would he kill himself? He was a healthy & hearty youngster working for a transporter. We suspect foul play," one of them told TOI. Another source said Thapan had survived being shot at by Punjab police in 2018 and wouldn't be afraid of a case. The family is likely to claim his body after reaching Mumbai on Thursday.

BJP cites IMF report to hail govt policies

New Delhi: BJP on Wednesday hailed the IMF (International Monetary Fund) Report projecting India's economic growth as the highest among major economies in 2023 (FY 2024). This significant affirmation of India's robust and resilient economic progress underscores the effectiveness of the policies and reforms spearheaded by BJP govt, the party said in a statement.

"This milestone achievement resonates deeply with BJP's overarching vision of 'Viksit Bharat'. It reflects a pivotal moment in India's journey towards economic empowerment and reinforces govt's commitment to fostering an environment conducive to growth and development," said BJP's spokesperson Anil Baluni.

Baluni said BJP acknowledges proudly that under the leadership of PM Modi India's GST collections in April 2024, reached a record high of Rs 2.1 lakh crore, a 12.4% year-on-year increase. "The landmark achievement reflects a promising economic trajectory for the nation," he said. TNN

Maximise Your Reach

Grand Slam package for PAN-INDIA Coverage in English & Vernacular Publications

Advertise in ALL EDITIONS of-

- Times of India
- Economic Times
- Navbharat Times
- Maharashtra Times
- Vijay Karnataka
- E-Samay
- Nav Gujrat Samay

Let your communication reach out to INDIA

For more details please contact-

Aman: 9312633518
Anshul: 9310298131

TIMES interact

BISA

BORLAUG INSTITUTE FOR SOUTH ASIA
Ladhawal, Ludhiana

QUOTATION

Borlaug Institute for South Asia (BISA) invites quotations for the purchase of Jute Gunny Bag-24,500 Pcs for packaging of raw seeds for its research centres at BISA Ludhiana (Punjab) and BISA Jabalpur (MP).

Kindly visit at <https://bisa.org/job/borlaug-institute-for-south-asia-bisa-invites-quotations-for-the-purchase-of-jute-gunny-bag-for-packaging-of-raw-seeds-for-its-research-centres-at-bisa-ludhiana-punjab-and-bisa-jabalpur-mp/> to download the RFQs and more details with terms & conditions. Last date of submission of sealed quotations by hand/Indian post: 15 May 2024.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Country Holidays Travel India Private Limited has changed its office from H-17, Block H, Sector 63, Noida, Uttar Pradesh to A-25, 4th Floor, 404, A Block, Sector - 63, Noida, U.P.-201301. With the inauguration of the new office, they have also announced their expansion in top metro cities including Bangalore, Mumbai, Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kochi, and Pune. The Company has also changed its toll free number from 18003098937 to 9643562752

TIMES interact

Connecting People, Connecting Needs.

TO ADVERTISE IN CLASSIFIEDS PLEASE CALL:

- TENDER / PUBLIC NOTICE:** 9312633518
- PROPERTY:** 9999499496
- MATRIMONIAL:** 9310298131
- BUSINESS:** 9312633518
- CHANGE OF NAME / LOST & FOUND:** 8130604727
- RECRUITMENT & EDUCATION:** 9811790649
- SHOPPING:** 9312633518
- SERVICES / VEHICLES & TRAVEL:** 9999499496

Bengal on same page with Centre, Maha over community resources

State's 2nd Counsel Questions SC Ruling On Same-Sex Union

Dhananjay.Mahapatra@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: West Bengal on Wednesday walked the path taken by Union and Maharashtra govts to argue before a nine-judge Supreme Court bench that Article 39(b) of the Constitution should be interpreted to mean that material resources of the community would in certain circumstances include privately owned property to subserve the common good.

Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for the Trinamool Congress group, argued before a bench of C J D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, B V Nagarathna, S Dhulia, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, R Bindal, S C Sharma and AG Masih that under the West Bengal Land Reforms Act, with its amendment, the state acquired vast tracts of privately held agricultural land and distributed it among landless farmers to ensure the mandate of the directive principles of distribution of material resources of the community to best subserve the common good.

"The distribution may be piecemeal or kept in the control of a govt agency or even a private agency, so long as the benefits percolate through to the people as a common good. To illustrate, large privately owned ponds extending up to 500 acres can be acquired and put in control of a govt agency or a cooperative society so that the pond is preserved so as to subserve the common good," Dwivedi argued.

"Once the property is acquired, it indisputably becomes a material resource of the community. Upon ac-



Appearing for Bengal govt, senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi said Article 39(b) should be interpreted to mean that material resources of the community would in certain cases include privately owned property to subserve common good

quisition, the private property vests in the state. All state property would be a material resource of the community, and upon acquisition, it must be distributed so as to subserve the common good," he added.

The state's second counsel, Gopal Shankaranarayanan, argued in the same vein but suddenly changed tack to ruffle feathers by questioning the validity of SC's five-judge bench judgment, which by three to two majority had last year declined to grant legal status to same-sex marriages.

He said the constitutional court, having been convinced about discrimination faced by LGBTQIA+ community, should have moulded relief under Article 14 (right to equality). He said the majority judgment was 'per incuriam' as it did not heed the settled principle that in the face of discrimination, relief should be provided. He went on to argue that the same-sex marriage issue needed to be referred to a larger bench of seven judges.

This drew objection from solicitor general Tushar Mehta who said this issue was unrelated to the interpretation of Article 39(b) engaging the attention of the nine-judge bench.

Art 39(b) limited by laws framed by Parliament and assemblies: Centre in SC

Dhananjay.Mahapatra@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for Union and Maharashtra govts, told Supreme Court on Wednesday that the application of Article 39(b), which mandates state policies to aim for an egalitarian society by distributing material resources of the community to subserve common good, was limited by the laws framed by Parliament and assemblies to enact appropriate legislations to achieve the goal.

Mehta said Article 39(b) indirectly admitted the limitations of the generation of the day to fully fathom the nature and character of future dynamics of economic situations the country would face and, hence, left it to the legislature to deal with such situations appropriately to enable govt to adopt welfare measures and distribute material resources as best as possible for the common good.

Before the nine-judge bench comprising Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justices Hrishikesh Roy, B V Nagarathna, S Dhulia, J B Pardiwala, Manoj Misra, R Bindal, S C Sharma and AG Masih reserved verdict on the contentious issue, Mehta said the term 'community', used in Article 39(b), must be understood not in the colloquial way but in its wider sense of society in general.

"Article 39(b) envisages a national

goal for the welfare state to strive for an egalitarian society/nation and proposes its use as a tool by the legislature to enact legislations for distribution of 'material resources', whether owned by govt, community or individuals, to subserve the greater common good of citizens, community or even a village," he said.

Mehta argued that since the future dynamics were unfathomable, the provision in directive principles of state policy chapter of the Constitution left it entirely to the legislature to decide what should constitute material resources at a given point of time and the manner of their distribution. Senior advocate Rakesh Dwivedi, appearing for West Bengal, gave examples of land, water, forests and several other resources that could be acquired, even if privately owned, by the state for distribution of their benefits to the community at large.

Dwivedi said, "Various expressions in these clauses of Article 39 have been used in the context of the operation of the economic system and the idea is to ensure that all the material resources are used to best subserve the common good, and to see that they do not cause common detriment.

"These provisions are basically intended to operate with respect to material resources in the hands of private persons so as to ensure common good and not common detriment."

ED can't act 'high & mighty' against aam admi: Court in PMLA case

New Delhi: Pulling up ED, a Delhi court said the investigative agency was bound by the rule of law and could not act "high and mighty" against ordinary citizens who were not even suspects in a case, reports Vineet Upadhyay.

The observation was made by special judge (PC Act) Vishal Gogne of Rouse Avenue Court on April 30, while rejecting a plea by businessman Amit Katyal seeking extension of the interim bail granted to

him in a money laundering case. Katyal is accused of illegal monetary transactions with Lalu Yadav's family members in connection with land-for-railway-jobs scam.

While the court refused to extend Katyal's bail, it reprimanded ED for invoking section 50 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) to record the statements of doctors of two private hospitals consulted by the accused after he was granted interim bail on Feb 5.

Woman shot at, 2 councillors thrashed in Manipur

Guwahati: Unidentified gunmen shot and wounded a 41-year-old woman while two municipal councillors were thrashed unconscious in two separate attacks on Tuesday in Manipur's Bishnupur district.

Until Wednesday evening, no group or organisation has taken responsibility for the attacks, reports Prabin Kalita.

Umarani was found lying on a culvert with a bullet wound in her right leg. The

two councillors from Kwakta Municipal Council were found unconscious with critical wounds, police said. The woman was rushed to an Imphal hospital, while the other two were being treated at district hospital.

जल संसाधन विभाग
क्रय मंडार एवं सामग्री प्रबंधन निदेशालय
राष्ट्रीय प्रतिस्पर्धात्मक निविदा
(बाढ़ 2024 के पहले बाढ़ संघर्षात्मक सामग्रियों के लिए कोटेशन)
संचिका सं 02 क्रय-03-01/2024 पार्ट 1-263
अल्पकालीन पुनर्कोटेशन आमंत्रण सूचना सं-02/2024-25
केवल ई-टेंडर (पंढरति के अनुसार वेबसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)

क्रय सं 02	कार्य का नाम	मात्रा	अवधि की राशि (रु० में) (ऑनलाईन अथवा ऑफलाईन मोड में मुगतेय)	बीड कागजात का मूल्य (रु० में) (केवल ऑनलाईन मोड में मुगतेय)	BELTRON के Online डेय बीड प्रोसेसिंग मोड (रु० में) (अव्यवस्थित मोड में ऑनलाईन मोड में मुगतेय)	कार्य समाप्ति का समय
1	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, समस्तीपुर के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	27,30,000 अदद	6,07,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
2	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, पटना एवं पोखरण के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	19,05,900 अदद	4,24,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
3	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, मुजफ्फरपुर के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	38,02,500 अदद	8,46,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
4	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, कटिहार एवं वैशाली के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	22,50,000 अदद	5,00,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
5	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, समस्तीपुर, वैशाली एवं कटिहार के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	16,8,00,000 अदद	3,74,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
6	जल संसाधन विभाग के मुख्य अभियंता, पटना एवं पोखरण के परिसर में 1.2 घन फीट क्षमता के नये खाती सीमेंट कोरी (पीपीसी सेम बग, Maximum ash content 6%) का आगुर्ति कार्य।	18,82,500 अदद	4,19,000.00	10000.00	5900.00	30 दिन
2	विज्ञान निर्यात करने की तिथि					30.04.2024
3	परिभाषा विकसित प्राप्त करने की तिथि एवं समय (सिर्फ केसाइट www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in पर)					दिनांक 08.05.2024 से 13.05.2024 के अंतराहिन 3:00 बजे तक। (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
4	बीड मॉडिफिकेशन की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान					10.05.2024 को पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे निदेशक, क्रय मंडार एवं सामग्री प्रबंधन निदेशालय, जल संसाधन विभाग, बिहार, पटना का कार्यालय।
5	कोटेशन अपलोड करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय					दिनांक 13.05.2024 समय अंतराहिन 3:00 बजे अंतराहिन तक। (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
6	टेन्डरिंग का बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय					दिनांक 13.05.2024 समय 3:30 बजे अंतराहिन (www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)
7	विशेषी बीड खोलने की तिथि एवं समय					तिथि एवं समय की सूचना तकनीकी बीड पर निर्णय के बाद वेबसाइट पर दी जायेगी।
8	कोटेशन खोलने का स्थान					(www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in) पर
9	कोटेशन की वैधता की अंतिम तिथि					31.10.2024 (बाढ़ जवाबी तक)
10	विज्ञानदाता का पदनाम एवं पता					निदेशक, क्रय मंडार एवं सामग्री प्रबंधन निदेशालय, जल संसाधन विभाग, न्यू बिक संख्या-5 हाईडिन रोड, पटना-800001 दूरभाष संख्या-7463889156

विशेष जानकारी हेतु अपोहस्ताक्षरी के कार्यालय में कार्य अवधि में दूरभाष संख्या-7463889156, 8002112002 एवं 8210805145 पर सम्पर्क किया जा सकता है। ई-टेंडरिंग की प्रक्रिया से संबंधित किसी भी प्रकार की जानकारी/सूचना हेतु ई-टेंडरिंग सेल, सिंघाई भवन पटना (0612-2235241) / e Proc 2.0 Help Desk Address: junction services limited RJ Complex, 2nd Floor, Canara Bank Campus, Khajupara, Ashiana Road, P.S. - Shastri Nagar, Patna 800 0140, Bihar Toll Free Number: 1800 572 6571

विशेष जानकारी के लिए www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in, <https://state.bihar.gov.in> >www.wrd.bihar.gov.in & www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar पर देखा जा सकता है।

निदेशक
क्रय, भण्डार एवं सामग्री प्रबंधन निदेशालय,
जल संसाधन विभाग, बिहार, पटना
PR. No. 000405 (WRD) 2024-25

लोकसभा आम निर्वाचन 2024- कोई मतदाता न छूटे

Petrol bombs thrown at Shillong thanas

Shillong: Unidentified miscreants hurled petrol bombs at Sadar and Rynjah police stations in Shillong early Wednesday, a day after they targeted Meghalaya govt construction company building and torched a private vehicle parked at Jowai police reserve, reports Manosh Das.

"We are devising a plan to secure govt buildings. Officials have been asked to follow security advice," said East Khasi Hills deputy commissioner SC Sadhu.

Police foiled arsonists' attempt to torch a bus of 3rd Meghalaya Police Battalion on Tuesday.

U.P. POWER TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LIMITED
E-TENDER NOTICE
E-Tenders in Two Parts valid for 180 days are invited on behalf of U.P. Power Transmission Corporation Ltd. For Supplies and Works as per details mentioned below: 1. Tender Specification CD-147 for Supply, Erection, Testing & Commissioning of 04 Command Standalone Digital Tele-Protection Coupler & Integration with Existing Fiber Optic Network of UPTCL. Tender Fee Rs. 1770/-, EMD amount Rs. 95090/-. Last Date & Time of bid uploading 27.05.2024 upto 12:00 hrs., Last Date & Time for opening of Bid 12:00 hrs., 29.05.2024. For detailed information E-Tender documents against above bids can be downloaded from www.uptcl.org and e-procurement website of U.P. Govt. www.etender.up.nic.in on payment of a prescribed non-refundable fee. E-Tender shall be submitted only on e-procurement website www.uptcl.org & e-procurement website www.etender.up.nic.in. All bids shall be opened ONLINE in the office of Superintending Engineer, ECDC, UPTCL, 10th floor, Shakti Bhawan Extn, 14-Ashok Marg, Lucknow-226001 in presence of Bidders, if any, Superintending Engineer, ECDC, UPTCL, 10th Floor, Shakti Bhawan Extension, 14-Ashok Marg, Lucknow-226001. Email: seccdciko@uptcl.org UPTCL website - www.uptcl.org E-Procurement website - www.etender.up.nic.in "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF NATION" RO No 213 ECDC/CD-147 Tender: 01.05.2024

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
INFORMATION AND PUBLIC RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU GOVERNMENT M.G.R. FILM AND TELEVISION INSTITUTE
(Affiliated to The Tamil Nadu Dr.J.Jayalalithaa Music and Fine Arts University)
C.I.T. CAMPUS, THARAMANI, CHENNAI 600113.

ADMISSION NOTIFICATION- 2024-2025 FOR BACHELOR OF VISUAL ARTS DEGREE COURSE

Applications are invited for the First Year Admission to the following 4 years duration Degree Courses.

- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Cinematography)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Digital Intermediate)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Audiography)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Direction and Screenplay Writing)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Film Editing)
- Bachelor of Visual Arts (Animation and Visual Effects)

(Separate application should be submitted for each Course)

For Sl.No.1 and 2 Degree Courses - Minimum Qualification is a Pass in Higher Secondary (10+2) examination with physics and chemistry / Vocational Courses with Photography as a special subject / Any equivalent qualification with other specification stated above / Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering / Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and for Sl.No. 3 Degree Course - Minimum Qualification is a Pass in Higher Secondary (10+2) examination with Physics and Chemistry / Vocational Courses with Radio & TV or domestic electronic equipment as a special subject / Any equivalent qualification with other specification stated above / Diploma in Electrical and Electronics Engineering / Diploma in Electronics and Communication Engineering and for Sl. No. 4 to 6 Degree Courses - Minimum Qualification is a Pass in Higher Secondary (10+2) examination in any group. For other details, Please refer to Prospectus available with the Application Form.

Application Form and Prospectus must be downloaded only from the website www.tn.gov.in and must be submitted along with the Demand Draft drawn from any bank payable at Chennai in favour of The Principal, Tamil Nadu Government M.G.R. Film and Television Institute, Chennai-600 113 as mentioned below.

For SC/ST Candidates - Rs. 60/- (Xerox copy of Community Certificate must be attached) (Applicable to the candidates from Tamil Nadu)

For Other Candidates - Rs.200/-

The filled in applications along with all necessary documents must be sent only through Post to the below mentioned address.

The Principal (FAC),
Tamil Nadu Government M.G.R. Film and Television Institute,
C.I.T.Campus Tharamani, Chennai-600 113.

Demand Draft obtained before 02-05-2024 will not be accepted.
Date of commencement of sale of Application is 02-05-2024.
Last date for the downloading the Application is 20-05-2024.
Last date for the submission of Filled up Application is 27-05-2024 before 5.00 P.M.

Principal (FAC),
Tamil Nadu Government M.G.R. Film and Television Institute,
C.I.T.Campus, Tharamani, Chennai-600 113.

DIPR/454/DISPLAY/2024

BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD
INVITATION FOR TENDER (Only through kpp portal)
BWSSB invites tenders in Two Stage Tender system from registered Agencies for the following works.
Office of the Chief Engineer (WWM-West), 6th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-560 009.

Sl. No.	Name of work	Amount put to tender
No.: BWSSB/CE(WWM-W)/ACE(WWM-N-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/84/2024-25 Dt : 30/04/2024		
1	Supplying Treated Water from Kengeri STP to Dubaspalya lake by providing and laying of 250mm dia DI pipeline and connected accessories.	Rs.324.34 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(WWM-W)/ACE(WWM-N-W)/DCE(WWM-E&W)/TA-2/86/2024-25 Dt : 30/04/2024		
2	Providing and Laying 200mm dia DI pipeline from Halagevaderahalli Lake to Pattanagere lake for filling sewage Treated Water.	Rs.127.27 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/70/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024		
3	Sinking of 6½" dia new borewells with necessary accessories at Various locations of RR Nagara assembly constituency (Ward No.73) coming under AEE(BW)-4 sub division. CALL 4	Rs.105.51 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/71/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024		
4	Sinking of 6½" dia new borewells with necessary accessories at Various locations of RR Nagara assembly constituency (Ward No.160) coming under AEE(BW)-4 sub division. CALL 4	Rs.111.62 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/72/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024		
5	Sinking of 6½" dia new borewells with necessary accessories at Various locations of RR Nagara assembly constituency (Ward No.129) coming under AEE(BW)-4 sub division. CALL 4	Rs.112.39 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/73/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024		
6	Real Time Monitoring System (Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things) for Borewells maintained by BWSSB in BBMP Jurisdiction (Excluding 110 Villages)	Rs.317.80 Lakhs
No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/74/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024		

For the above works the Last date and time for Receipt of Tenders will be on : 08.05.2024 upto 17.30 hrs. and the date of opening of the Technical Tender will be opened on : 13.05.2024 at 11.00 hrs.
Sd/- Chief Engineer (WWM-West)
Office of The Chief Engineer (Design & QA), 9th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K.G. Road, Bangalore-560 009.

No.: BWSSB/CE(D&QA)/ACE/TA/70/2024-25 Date: 30.04.2024

For the above works the Last date and time for Receipt of Tenders will be on : 18.05.2024 upto 16.00 hrs. and the date of opening of the Technical Tender will be opened on : 20.05.2024 at 16.00 hrs.
Sd/- Chief Engineer (Design & QA)

The details regarding participation in the tendering process and tender can be obtained by logging on to <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> For further details contact the above signed office during working hours.
ECI Approved No.CS/14/SCM/2024 DTD: 19.04.2024 DIPR/CP/49/AKAR/2024-25

Central Electricity Regulatory Commission
4th Floor, Chandernagore Building, 36 Janpath, New Delhi-110001
Phone: 23353503, FAX: 23753923

Petition No. 76/TL/2024 Dated: 26.4.2024

NOTICE UNDER CLAUSE (a) OF SUB-SECTION (5) OF SECTION 15 OF THE ELECTRICITY ACT, 2003

An application under Sections 14, 15 and 79 (1) (e) of the Electricity Act, 2003 (the Act) has been made by Karera Power Transmission Limited, (A 100% wholly owned subsidiary of Aprava Energy Private Limited), T-15A, Third Floor, Saloon Rasvillas, Saket, New Delhi, 110017, for the establishment of the "Western Region Expansion Scheme XXXIII (WRES - XXXIII): Part B" in Madhya Pradesh (hereinafter referred to as "Project") on a Build, Own, Operate and Transfer basis, consisting of the following elements:

S. No.	Name of the Transmission Element	Scheduled COD in months from Effective Date
1.	Establishment of 2x1500 MVA, 765/400 kV, 2x500 MVA, 400/220 kV S/s at Karera (near Dattiya) along with 1x330 MVAR 765 kV bus reactor & 1x125 MVAR, 420 kV bus reactor 765/400 kV, 1500 MVA ICT - 2 nos. (7x500 MVA single phase units including one spare unit) 400/220 kV, 500 MVA ICT - 2 nos. 765 kV ICT bays - 2 nos. 400 kV ICT bays - 4 nos. 220 kV ICT bays - 2 nos. 765 kV Line bays - 2 nos. 330 MVAR, 765 kV Bus Reactor - 1 no. (4x110 MVAR single phase units including one spare unit) 125 MVAR, 420 kV bus reactor - 1 no. 765 kV Bus reactor bay: 1 no. 400 kV Bus reactor bay: 1 no. 220 kV Bus coupler bay- 2 no. 220 kV Transfer Bus Coupler (TBC) bay - 2 no. 220 kV line bays - 8 nos. (for 220 kV lines to be implemented by MPPTCL#) 220 kV Bus sectionaliser- 1 set. Future provisions: Space for: • 765/400 kV ICT along with bays- 4 Nos. • 765 kV line bays along with switchable line reactors - 8 Nos. • 765 kV Bus Reactor along with bay: 3 Nos. • 765 kV Sectionalizer: 1 set • 400 kV line bays along with switchable line reactor - 10 Nos. • 400/220 kV ICT along with bays- 6 Nos. • 400 kV Bus Reactor along with bays- 3 Nos. • 400 kV Sectionalization bay: 1 set • 220 kV line bays: 10 Nos. • 220 kV Sectionalization bay: 1 set	24 months
2.	LILO of Satna-Gwalior 765 kV S/c line at Karera	
3.	Installation of 1x330 MVAR, switchable line reactor at Karera end of Karera - Satna 765 kV line 765 kV, 330 MVAR SLR along with switching equipment - 1 No. (3 x 110 MVAR) [110 MVAR single phase reactor unit for bus reactor to be used as spare for line reactor too]	

#LILO of both circuits of Bina - Dattiya 220 kV D/c line at Karera, Extension of LILO portion of 220kV Dattiya - Bina line for Pichhore 220 kV upto Karera & Karera - Seonaha 220 kV D/c line

Note:

- Implementation timeframe: 24 months from date of SPV transfer.
- MPPTCL shall execute downstream network in matching time-frame of ISTS system.
- The Central Transmission Utility of India Limited vide its letter dated 5.3.2024 has recommended for the grant of a transmission licence to the applicant to establish the proposed transmission system.
- Based on the material available on the record, the Commission vide order dated 24.4.2024 in Petition No. 76/TL/2024, has proposed to issue a transmission licence to the applicant for establishment of the transmission scheme as noted in para 1 above.
- A copy of the application, along with its annexures and enclosures, made by the applicant for the grant of an inter-State transmission licence to Karera Power Transmission Limited before the Commission can be accessed at the website www.apravac.com or inspected by any person in the Commission's office by following the laid down procedure.
- Notice is hereby given in pursuance of clause (a) of sub-section (5) of Section 15 of the Act that suggestions or objections, if any, to the Commission's proposal to grant a transmission licence to the applicant, as aforesaid, be sent to the undersigned by 17.5.2024 at the above noted address. The suggestions or objections received after the specified date shall not be considered.
- The application shall be taken up for the further hearing by the Commission on 22.5.2024. Any person who files suggestions or objections may in his/her discretion attend the hearing, for which no TA/DA shall be paid by the Commission.

Sd/-
(Harpreet Singh Pruthi)
Secretary

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
(External Publicity and Public Diplomacy Division)

PROCUREMENT OF NON COMMERCIAL SCREENING RIGHTS OF INDIAN FEATURE FILMS

XPD Division has launched an RFP for procurement of non commercial screening rights of Indian Features Film for MEA and Indian Missions/ Posts abroad. The RFP is available on GEM Portal with ID GEM/2024/B/44889597 as well as at MEA website www.mea.gov.in Last date of submission of bids is 17 May, 2024.

CBC 14110/11/0001/2425

'US student protests seeking peace in Gaza are the new anti-Vietnam War movement'

Helen Benedict is Professor of Journalism at Columbia University. Speaking to Srijana Mitra Das at Times Evoke, she explains the wave of student protests for Palestine across US campuses:

Why has peace in Palestine become such a big movement in American universities?

■ I can speak from the context of Columbia which has become a leader in this—the main motivation is the appalling toll on lives in Gaza. Over 34,000 people have been killed, with 20,000 orphans left. This brutal response by Israel to Hamas' horrible attack on October 7 has shocked young people, including many who knew nothing about Palestine or Israel—people simply can't bear the inhumanity of it.

What are these student protesters' demographics?

■ Columbia has a great mix from across the world—we have Muslim students from Arab and non-Arab regions as well as many Jewish and South Asian students. So, this is a very international group. Some protesters are



INSPIRE: Black Lives Matter protests held hope

Palestinian, some are Jewish, some are neither—they're just young people who are concerned about violence, oppose war and support peace.

Are these protests inspired by recent American movements for feminism, against racism, etc.?

■ Certainly. The Black Lives Matter protests of 2020 and 2011's Occupy Wall Street movement are inspirational. While most undergraduates are probably too young to have participated in Occupy, they've heard about it. They are also well-read and know the history and tradition of protests in America. They know of the late 1960s-early 1970s struggles against the Vietnam War and the 1990s' protests against apartheid in South Africa—they've taken pages from those histories.



IMAGINE: Student protests have long roots in the United States—the current ones, starting at Columbia University (L), seeking peace in Palestine, elicit comparisons with demonstrations against America's war in Vietnam in the 1960s-1970s (R) which compelled the US government to rethink

What responses are these protests getting beyond campuses now?

■ It's two-sided. There is a huge wave of protests, not just by students but all over the US against the relentless violence in Gaza. There is a very widespread desire for a ceasefire. However, largely as a result of the punitive actions of the administration at Columbia, this has become a flashpoint for outside protesters representing extremism of all sides. They come to Broadway, stand outside our campus gates and shout hateful things, some against Palestinians and some against Israelis. Unfortunately, public perception in places has mixed up those people with our students. I want to emphasize—also as a professor of journalism—that parts of the press have got this wrong. For the most part, our students have been calm and unaggressive. There's been too much focus on hate-filled extremists and several attempts to paint all students with the same brush. We even have students here who lost family and friends in the Hamas and Gaza attacks—yet, I haven't seen poor behaviour by them.

The protests are being met with extraordinary force by American authorities—how does this reflect on the US promise of freedom of speech and democratic expression?

■ Not well. The Columbia administration has been punitive and suppressive from the start. We know our own students but

Could these protests impact US politics in an election year?

■ It could go either way. There is huge criticism of President Biden's continuation of support to Israel—however, that doesn't mean angered students will necessarily turn to Donald Trump.

Could Gaza become America's new anti-Vietnam War movement?

■ It already has. I haven't seen protests like

instead of consulting faculty, all we've seen are actions which look like brutal suppressions of the freedom of speech—that is a Constitutional right in America, so it looks very bad. This attitude has also come from a narrative spun by far-right Republicans, extremist Christian groups and white nationalists who portray these protests unfairly as being anti-Semitic. That is a ploy to distract from what's happening in Gaza and how the US government is paying for weapons.

On what charges are students being detained?

■ Students here were arrested for trespassing—this is ironic because they are tuition-paying members on their own campus. Also, when the arrests started, they had just penned themselves on a square on campus which is not in anyone's path. They were not blocking the university's functioning. Even the chief of the patrol force who did the arresting said the students presented a danger to no-one. They were peacefully expressing their beliefs—when the police says that, clearly something's wrong.

Could these protests impact US politics in an election year?

■ It could go either way. There is huge criticism of President Biden's continuation of support to Israel—however, that doesn't mean angered students will necessarily turn to Donald Trump.

Could Gaza become America's new anti-Vietnam War movement?

■ It already has. I haven't seen protests like

**TIMES
EVOKE
AMERICANA**



these about anything outside the US for a long time. There were large marches in 2003 against the Iraq War but those didn't sweep campuses to this degree.

What do you say to critics who posit these protests reflect an elite or uninformed 'woke' mentality?

■ That's not my definition of 'woke'—that's a very right-wing understanding. All these words are reductive though and don't really describe human beings. I am heartened by these protests



INSIST: Occupy Wall Street took on inequality

—they show how young people coming up care about justice and lives. They also care about the planet—they know how deeply devastating war is for the environment. There is a heartfelt humanitarian impulse behind these protests which I admire—it bodes well for the future.

Times Evoke Americana is an occasional series on news and views from the USA

Share your thoughts at:
timesevoke@timesgroup.com
Read Times Evoke online at:
www.timesofindia.indiatimes.com/india/times-evoke

Accused of delay, EC clears air on turnout data drill

'Candidates Get Booth-Wise Polling Tally'

Bharti Jain@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: Overall voter turnout data for the first two phases of Lok Sabha polls, which was officially released by Election Commission on Tuesday, is the same as what was collated from constituency-wise polling figures on EC's voter turnout app on April 20 evening for Phase 1 and April 27 evening for Phase 2, according to EC sources.

EC sources told TOI copies of Form 17C—which statutorily records turnout at every polling station in absolute numbers at the end of polling—are shared by presiding officers with all polling agents of the candidates present to ensure transparency. After close of poll, first priority of the presiding officer is to return to the headquarters and deposit the electronic voting machines (EVMs) and all statutory and non-statutory papers.

Due to late arrival of polling parties or difficult geographical or weather conditions, returning officers have time available till midnight to fill up estimated voter turnout in the VTA. Such updation in many cases is not complete even till midnight as some parties from the remote stations may take more time to return.

Thus it is only on the next day after polling (P+1), and in some cases two days (P+2) that the returning officers scrutinise Form 17, including any complaints and concerns, in the presence of candidates and their agents and enter the polling station-wise turnout data.

Even this data may further get updated for any constituency where repoll is being conducted, on conclusion of repoll and arrival of parties.

After complete data entry, the returning officers submit the constituency-wise data which is instantly visible on the voter turnout app.

This time, for both the phases, the station-wise data was submitted on P+1 day. So while the turnout shown by the app at 12 midnight on April 19 and April 26 was 65.4% and 65.37%, respectively, the updated data submitted after all Form 17 records were scrutinised the evening after polling day was 66.14% for Phase 1 and 66.71% for Phase 2.

"There was absolutely no delay in such disclosure on poll day... the narrative about non-disclosure of data is completely unfounded, without proper appreciation of the system in place," a senior EC functionary said. "Leave alone constituency, even booth data of votes polled is available with the candidates and cannot be changed at any stage. Candidates use this data of votes polled station-wise to keep check on counting day," the functionary added.

'Prez got access to area reserved for priests'

Continued from P 1

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai had described Rahul's remark as "completely false, baseless and misleading" and asserted that Prez was indeed invited for the Jan 22 ceremony.

After Murmu's visit—her first to the newly-built Ram temple—the Trust said in a statement that in its own way it had given a "befitting reply" to those alleging that she was not invited for the consecration ceremony. "Under a special arrangement, Prez got the opportunity to be next to the idol inside the sanctum sanctorum, a place reserved only for the priests and where the prime minister was present during the consecration ceremony," the Trust said.

After the Ayodhya visit, a post on the official handle of Prez of India on 'X' quoted her, recalling Lord Ram's encounters with Kewat and Shabri, the two mythological characters in Ramayan belonging to MBC and tribal communities, respectively.

"I am unable to describe my feelings in words after witnessing Ram Lalla in his majestic form at the Ram temple. I recall the deeply touching episodes such as the dialogue between Lord Ram and Kewat, Shabri's jubilee episode among others. Ram temple is an embodiment of the cultural values of our society which encourages all individuals to work for the larger interest of society. In this era and time, we are lucky to be a part of the nation's holistic development and progress," the post quoted Murmu as saying.

Temple trust members presented a miniature replica of Ram temple and a framed photo of the Ram Lalla idol to Murmu. After her arrival around 4pm at the Ayodhya airport, Murmu's first stop was the Hanuman Garhi temple. Next, she visited the banks of the Sarayu and attended the grand evening aarti, offering a garland of flowers to the river. She visited as part of the aarti. After the aarti Prez visited the Ram temple.

Before leaving for Delhi, Murmu also paid obeisance at Kuber Teela and to the statue of celestial bird Jatayu in the temple town.

'ED's modus operandi raised serious concern'

Continued from P 1

The special judge said Cox & Kings Group CFO Anil Khandelwal and internal auditor Naresh Jain had been held as undertrials in a laundering case, surpassing the halfway mark of the maximum sentence. The judge said despite this, ED wanted to continue keeping them behind bars for an uncertain period by putting a clog and creating hurdles by filing a draft charge. The court observed that the agency's modus operandi and the way it opposed their bail pleas raised serious concerns.

"What has been going on is very serious and in utter disregard to the valuable fundamental right of the applicants of getting tried as expeditiously as possible when they are languishing in jail for more than half of the maximum sentence for the given offence," special judge MG Deshpande said. "Considering their prolonged incarceration without trial, there is no justification for denying them the lesser relief of considering their prayer for release on bail...," the judge said, adding that "failure on the part of ED to uphold the constitutional rights of citizens (accused) is glaring".

The accused were arrested in Oct 2020. It is alleged that CKG companies availed themselves of loans from Yes Bank by submitting forged balance sheets and board resolutions.

The report said the court should also provide petitioners with "non-pecuniary assistance" for the rehabilitation of victims.

Justice Thipsay said the biggest challenge to addressing wrongful prosecutions is that society doesn't feel very strongly about the issue. "People simply feel that if someone was wrongly prosecuted, he or she was eventually acquitted or discharged. So, that is enough," he said. "There is no outrage, therefore the system feels that there is no need to do anything more," he said.

Sanjay Hegde, a senior advocate who mostly prac-

There's no provision to claim compensation for those who get acquitted after spending years in jail

Sunil Baghel
[@timesgroup.com](mailto:sunil@timesgroup.com)

What connects three professors—from Delhi, Kolhapur and Nagpur—to 17 residents of a village in Madhya Pradesh? All of them spent time in jail as undertrials or convicts before they were either acquitted or granted bail due to lack of evidence, with the courts questioning the cases against them.

Take the case of former Delhi University professor GN Saibaba. Acquitted by the Bombay high court in March, Saibaba was convicted for Maoist activities under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and spent nearly 10 years behind bars as an undertrial and convict.

In its judgment, the high court observed that the prosecution failed to link Saibaba to any crime. "In fact, there is no evidence brought forth by the prosecution to connect the persons (Saibaba and other accused) with any actual act of terrorism which had taken place in the past or to demonstrate how the persons were directly connected with and responsible for the commission of any other act of terrorism," the court observed.

After his release, Saibaba—who is disabled—said he had developed severe medical conditions in prison, including a heart ailment. The former professor was also denied permission to attend his mother's funeral. "The prison department and government robbed me of fulfilling my mother's wishes in her final days," he said.

There are many other cases, not always in serious offences, where people spend years behind bars waiting to be exonerated. The term used to describe cases where a person is arrested, jailed and denied bail for extended periods of time falls under what can be categorised as "miscarriage of justice".

Experts as well as a Law Commission report point to this problem being very prevalent in the Indian criminal justice system. The price for this is almost entirely borne by the person accused, like losing prime years of one's

10 yrs in jail for nothing Who should pay for it?



life and emerging with health problems acquired during incarceration.

In countries like the US, and the UK, those who face wrongful prosecution are eligible to file claims for compensation, which are then evaluated. In India, courts have pointed to lack of evidence and even malicious or politically-motivated prosecutions. But those who suffer the legal process don't even get an apology, forget compensation.

How bad is the situation? According to National Crime Records Bureau data from all states for 2022, close to 75% of those in India's 1,330 jails are undertrials.

Of the 4.34 lakh undertrials in Indian prisons, almost half are aged between 18 and 30 years, their most productive years economically. A total of 3.26 lakh inmates are facing cases filed under Indian Penal Code offences. The 2022 data indicates that the overall conviction rate for offences under the IPC is about 35%.

Take the case of the 17 people arrested from Mohad in Madhya Pradesh's Burhanpur district in 2017. Their alleged crime was celebrating Pakistan's victory in the

ICC Champions Trophy final against India. Two of those apprehended were minors.

They were initially accused of criminal conspiracy and promoting enmity. During some court hearings, slogans like "Desh ke gaddaron ko, goli maro salon ko" (shoot the traitors) and "atankwadiyon ko phans do" (hang the terrorists) were shouted at them. They



GN Saibaba
Arrested for alleged Maoist activities

Time spent in jail 10 years

What the court said
No evidence linking him to any crime

were in jail for more than six years as undertrials. All of them were acquitted by a district court.

"After going through all the evidence, arguments and eyewitnesses, there was no proof that the accused raised slogans and burnt firecrackers," the trial court's judgment said.

In the case of Kashmiri professor Javed Ahmed Hajam, who was teaching at a college in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, his 'crime' was posting two WhatsApp

statuses in August 2022 that got him charged with promoting enmity.

On August 5, his WhatsApp status said 'Black Day Jammu & Kashmir' to mark the abrogation of the state's special status. On August 14, his WhatsApp status read: 'Happy Independence Day Pakistan'.

Hajam spent about a month behind bars and then

statures in August 2022 that got him charged with promoting enmity.

Justice Abhay Thipsay (retd)—who was in the Allahabad and Bombay high courts—said in many cases undertrials are not being granted bail and judges are shirking bail applications.

"There is no doubt that there should be a process and it can emanate from the trial court's judgment," said Amit Desai, a senior Bombay high court advocate.

According to Desai, the trial court is the best place to decide who can be held liable or responsible in a case where a person has been wrongly persecuted by an investigating agency or the prosecution.

However, he said, some changes can be made to laws. An accused person, according to Desai, should have their rights enhanced just like the victims' in the Criminal Procedure Code. "Balancing the rights of the victim and the accused is absolutely necessary," he said.

Sanjay Hegde, a senior advocate who mostly prac-

To read the full report, scan this QR code



The court also made an observation about the need to educate the police machinery on the fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression.

Worse under special laws

Under the stringent UAPA—where getting bail is even harder than other criminal cases—more than 24,000 people were accused in 5,027 cases registered between 2016 and 2020. Data revealed in response to a question in Rajya Sabha showed that just 212 people had been convicted in these cases, and 386 were acquitted.

Justice Abhay Thipsay (retd)—who was in the Allahabad and Bombay high courts—said in many cases undertrials are not being granted bail and judges are shirking bail applications.

Trial court has key role

"There is no doubt that there should be a process and it can emanate from the trial court's judgment," said Amit Desai, a senior Bombay high court advocate.

According to Desai, the trial court is the best place to decide who can be held liable or responsible in a case where a person has been wrongly persecuted by an investigating agency or the prosecution.

However, he said, some changes can be made to laws. An accused person, according to Desai, should have their rights enhanced just like the victims' in the Criminal Procedure Code. "Balancing the rights of the victim and the accused is absolutely necessary," he said.

Sanjay Hegde, a senior advocate who mostly prac-

5 reasons to be bullish on wheat this year

And it's not just because it will likely be a bumper crop, as Sidhartha and Anindya Chattopadhyay found out during a tour of farms and mandis

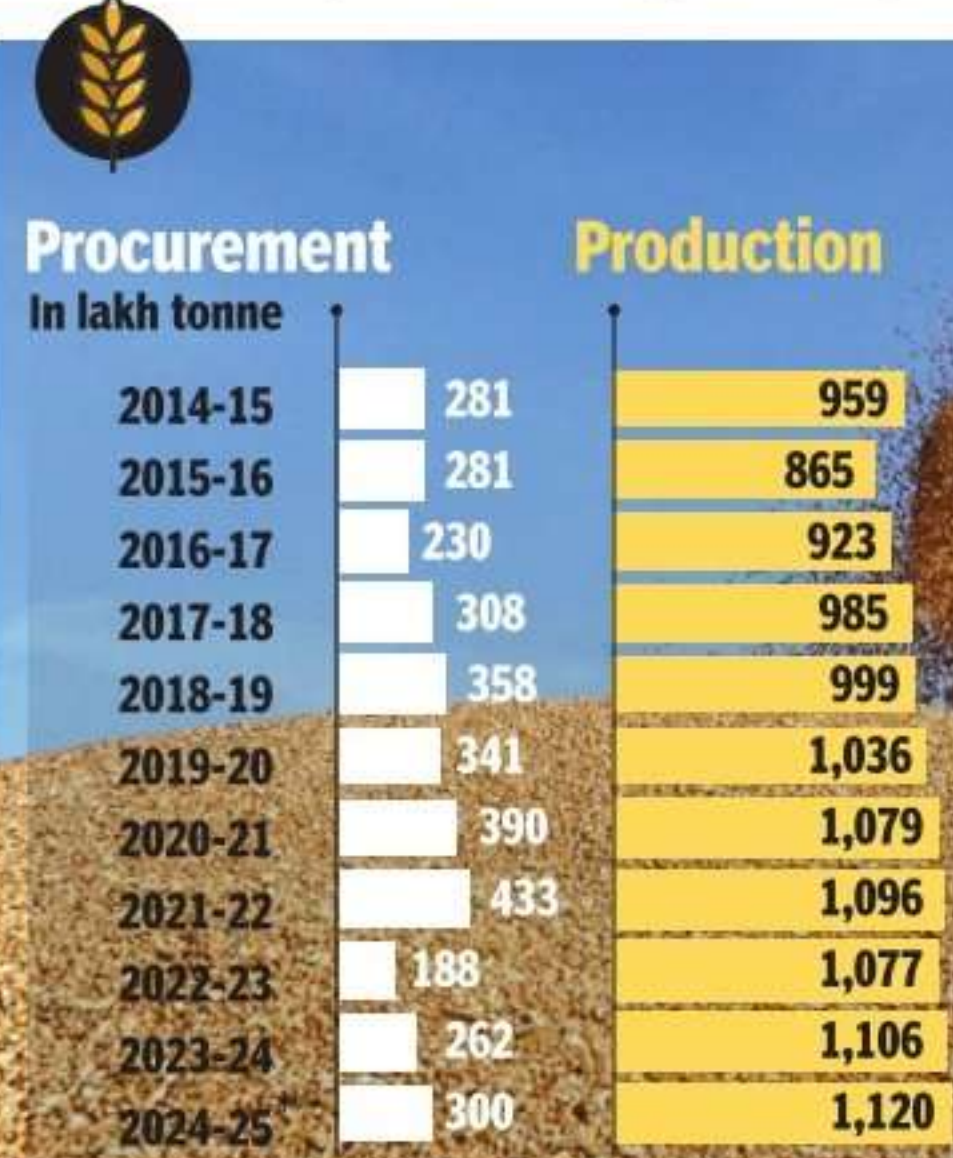
Most of the wheat has arrived in the mandis of Punjab and Haryana, the two states with the highest procurement. And by all accounts it's a good crop, providing much needed comfort to govt and private players. The crop, which comes on the back of a good yield this year – as high as 25-26 quintals an acre in parts of Punjab (against 22 quintals or so last year) – is much watched given that silos emptied out after two years of poor harvest. Govt is grappling with the lowest level of wheat stocks in 16 years – a little over 75 lakh tonnes at the start of April against the buffer requirement of 74.6 lakh tonnes for this time of year – and globally, too, prices are under pressure. So far, govt procurement is estimated at 200 lakh tonnes, compared with 190 lakh tonnes at the same time last year. In Punjab, the prolonged winter has resulted in around 91 lakh tonnes reaching mandis so far, compared with 103 lakh tonnes at this time last year.

"We are seeing the best crop in at least five-six years," says Manjinder Singh Mann, secretary of Khanna Agricultural Produce Market Committee.

New Seed Varieties

In Karnal, Gyanendra Singh, director of ICAR-Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research, lists out multiple reasons for this year's bumper crop, which he argues may beat govt estimates. "The area under cultivation has increased, we had a good winter, which was prolonged and there has been accelerated deployment of climate resistant varieties. Nearly 60% of the varieties were released during the last five years." New varieties are less prone to damage by pests, something that farmers in the two states are reporting.

At the FCI headquarters in Delhi, officials reckon that govt procurement could reach 310 lakh tonnes, against 262 lakh tonnes last year, based on higher purchases in most parts – from Punjab and Haryana to Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan. While Punjab is going to remain on top with purchases of over 130 lakh tonnes (121 lakh tonnes last year), Haryana is estimated to generate 70 lakh tonnes this year (against last year's 63 lakh tonnes). FCI officials are banking on a 10-fold jump from UP to around 20 lakh tonnes as govt purchases currently are estimated at 3.4 lakh tonnes, compared with last year's 5.6 lakh tonnes. They are also estimating a three- to four-fold increase in Rajasthan, from around 4 lakh tonnes to



*Estimates. Wheat procurement for crop year (July to June). Source: Govt



nearly 12-14 lakh tonnes. MP remains a source of bother, although the target is to buy around 80 lakh tonnes, compared with 71 lakh tonnes last year.

Private Purchase Zooms

But it isn't just govt agencies that are buying whatever is reaching the mandis, private players are ramping up their stocks too.

In Khanna, once the largest grain market, around 40% of the purchases may end up in private hands. In neighbouring Rajpura, which also sees robust trading, more than half the stock brought to the mandi has been purchased by flour mills, some of whom sell to big players, such as

ITC, Adani and Nestle.

Davinder Singh, president of the arhtia association in the APMC, estimates that of the 25 lakh bags of 50kg each, private players will this year buy around 10 lakh. Last year, they had bought 4.5 lakh of the 22 lakh bags in the mandi, and in 2022, two lakh of the 14 lakh bags.

In Gharaunda and Karnal, two mandis in Haryana that TOI recently visited, private demand is strong.

While private players have been present in the grain market, and their share of total purchases is rising, this year is different. "The govt does not have too much stock, so we don't know if it will undertake open market sale

this year, something it did actively last year," said Atul Goyal, of Amar Roller Flour Mills, a large buyer from Rajpura.

There is also expectation of prices rising in the coming months. Against a price of Rs 2,280 a quintal for private players at the moment, prices for June are around Rs 2,450 and may rise to Rs 3,000 by Oct, says Singh. Against procurement of just under one lakh tonnes of wheat in Khanna, in 2023, Rajpura reported purchases of over 105 lakh tonnes.

One of the reasons for higher private purchases in Punjab may also have to do with state govts in MP and Rajasthan deciding to pay a bonus of Rs 125 a quintal above the Centre's minimum support

Ram Pal Singh from Shamli is one of the exceptions. He has driven past police barricades at the border to sell his 80 quintals of wheat to arhtias, settling for cash payment. "I have been coming here for more than 30 years. The mandi on our side does not have facilities like here," he says, smoking a bidi at a tea stall as he waits for the grains to be cleaned.

Ramesh Yadav from Madhepura is part of the thousands of workers who travel to Khanna every year. He has already harvested 20 quintals of wheat in his village, selling a part of it at lower than MSP. "The maize (which has also been sold below MSP) will travel to Punjab and fetch 10-15% more," says Yadav

"The water table has gone down, now we find water at 150 feet, compared with 100 feet five years ago. I know there is a problem and it will only increase. I can try other crops such as dal, maize or mustard, provided there is assured procurement," says Harinder Singh from Channi Majra village near Khanna.

When farmers in Punjab hit the streets earlier this year, Centre had suggested it could guarantee procurement of maize, pulses and cotton for five years to farmers who diversified from paddy, a key source of pollution in north India post-Diwali due to stubble burning. The demand was, however, rejected by farmer unions.

Revanth is not the owner of INCTelangana handle: Lawyer

Continued from P 1

We replied that the CM is not the owner of INCTelangana handle. The CM's personal and official X accounts are publicly known, said advocate Sowmya Gupta.

In a separate reply filed through advocate M Ramachandra Reddy to the DCP of Delhi Police's Intelligence Fusion and Strategic Operations unit, Revanth said, "Being the TPCC prez, I have responsibilities to involve myself in the ensuing elections as a star campaigner to ensure the victory of our party. I am not in a position to give a suitable reply to your notice and go through the contents of the URL link furnished by you to reveal facts."

He spoke of the notice served on him at a rally in the state on Wednesday. The doctored video posted on Telangana Congress's official handle purportedly shows Shah advocating abolition of reservation for SCs, STs and OBCs.

In the original video of his speech in Chevella on April 23, he says, "If BJP is voted to office, then unconstitutional Muslim reservations in the state will end. This right belongs to Telangana's SC, ST and OBC communities, and they will get it."

Besides Revanth, Delhi cops issued notices to Congress functionaries Shiva Kumar Ambala, Asma Tasleem, Satish Manne, and Naveen Pettem.

High tobacco prices likely for another year

Continued from P 1

The high prices may benefit Indian growers and they are participating in auctions more, an exporter said

ble for stocks.

According to a leading tobacco exporter, the imbalance between demand and production is likely to sustain price increases for another year.

"This is likely to benefit Indian growers," he said, adding that local players have intensified their participation in auctions, aiming to capitalise on opportunities in the global market.

Hindu marriage becomes binding only after 'saptapadi': SC

Continued from P 1

A bench of Justices B V Nagarathna and Augustine George Masih said Section 7 of the Act lists 'ceremonies of a Hindu marriage', which have to be complied with for validity of the marriage and if it is not done, then the marriage is not deemed valid in the eye of the law. Section 7 says a Hindu marriage may be solemnised in accordance with the customary rites and ceremonies of either party thereto. Where such rites and ceremonies include the 'saptapadi' (the taking of seven steps by the bridegroom and the bride jointly before the sacred fire), the marriage becomes complete and binding when the seventh step is taken.

"Where a Hindu marriage is not performed in accordance with the applicable rites or ceremonies such as saptapadi when included, the marriage will not be construed as a Hindu marriage. In other words, for a valid marriage under the Act, the requisite ceremonies have to be performed and there must be proof of performance of the said ceremony when an issue/controversy arises. Unless the parties have undergone such ceremony, there would be no Hindu marriage according to Section 7 of the Act and a mere issuance of a certificate by an entity in the absence of the requisite ceremonies having been performed would neither confirm any marital status to the parties nor establish a marriage under Hindu law," the bench said.

The court passed the order while adjudicating the matrimonial dispute of a couple who are commercial pilots and they admitted that they did not comply with the ceremonies prescribed in Section 7 before getting their marriage registered. The court declared them not legally married and quashed their marriage certificate.

"The advantage of registration is that it facilitates proof of factum of marriage in a disputed case. But if there has been no marriage in accordance with Section 7, the registration would not confer legitimacy to the marriage. We find that the registration of Hindu marriages under the said provision is only to facilitate the proof of a Hindu marriage but for that, there has to be a Hindu marriage in accordance with Section 7 of the Act inasmuch as there must be a marriage ceremony which has taken place between the parties in accordance with the said provision. In the absence of there being a valid Hindu marriage, the marriage registration officer cannot register such a marriage," the bench said.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE

The Chief Administrative Officer/Const./Northern Railway, Kashmere Gate, Delhi for and on behalf of the President of India invites e-tender under Two Packet System for the under noted work:-

Full Name of work	Raising of existing ROB 145-A, 164-A & 167-A on LDH-JHL section of Ambala Division for facilitating the movement of the double stack container.
App. Cost of the work	₹3009.59 Lakh
Earliest Money to be deposited	₹16,54,800/-
Completion period of the work	24 (Twenty Four) months
Sale/availability of tender document on Rty. Website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 04.05.2024 to 24.05.2024 upto 11:30 hrs.
Last date/Time of upload of tenders	24.05.2024 upto 11:30 hrs. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS website w.e.f. 10.05.2024 to 24.05.2024
Date and Time of opening of tender	24.05.2024 upto 11:30 hrs. (Immediately after close of uploading of tender(D2)). In case of two packet system Financial bids of the eligible tenders will be opened subsequently on the date and time to be notified later on. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.

Tender Notice No.: 74-W-1-1-518-WA-UMB Dated: 01.05.2024 1325/2024
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER/D.C(NE), GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI, DEPUTY COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE COMPLEX, NAND NAGRI, DELHI-110093
F. 61594/DEO(NE)/Nodal Officer /Observers/GELS-2024/4941 Dated 01/05/2024

PUBLIC NOTICE
Regarding appointment of expenditure Observer, General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 to North East Parliamentary Constituency-02, NCT of Delhi

This is for information of political parties and General Public/Voters of General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 of North East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-02 that the Election Commission of India has appointed the following officer as Expenditure Observer for General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 for North East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency-02

Allotted Parliamentary Constituency No. & Name	Name of Observer	Mobile/Tei No. & Email	Time & Date	Office Address
02 North East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency	Sh. Shubhashish Nath, IRAS	expenditureobserver.pc02ne@gmail.com Tel - 011-20824952	Public Meeting Time: Between 11:30 AM to 12:30 PM w.e.f. 06/05/24 to 24/05/24 First Inspection: 13/05/24 10:30 AM onward) Second Inspection: 19/05/24 10:30 AM onward) Third Inspection: 23/05/2024 10:30 AM onward)	Block-C, D.C. Office Complex Nand Nagri, Delhi - 110095

The Expenditure Observer will be available to General Public on all working days as per time/date/venue mentioned in aforesaid table. Any complaint with respect to malpractices in Election and violation of Model Code of Conduct may be reported at the contact number given above.

Either Candidate or their authorized representative are directed to appear before the O/e expenditure observer as per above schedule, along with original copy of expenditure register (duly filled) provided to them at the time of nomination.

Sd/- (VEDITHA REDDY), IAS
Returning Officer PC-02 North East Delhi
DIP/Shabdharth/Classified/0027/24-25

OFFICE OF THE RETURNING OFFICER, 03-EDPC GOVT. OF NCT OF DELHI
L. M. BUNDH, SHASTRI NAGAR, DELHI-110031
TEL. NO. 21210845; E-mail: sdmlectioneast@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for the information of General Public/Voters of East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency 03 as well as Political Parties that the Election Commission of India has designated the Expenditure Observer for the General Election to Lok Sabha 2024 to be held on 25.05.2024, in respect of East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency 03. He will be available to general public on working days as per under mentioned schedule:-

Name of Observer	Contact No.	Time & Date	Office Address
Sh. Prabhakar Kumar, IRS	9810666853	Between 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM w.e.f. 05.05.2024 till completion of poll/re-poll	Room No. 109, 1st Floor, New Building, I&FC Department, L. M. Bandh, Shastri Nagar, Delhi-110031

Any complaint w.r.t malpractices in Election and violation of Model Code of Conduct may be reported to the contact number given above.

Sd/- (AMOL SRIVASTAVA, IAS)
Returning Officer
03-East Delhi Parliamentary Constituency
DIP/Shabdharth/Classified/0028/24-25

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: about 33 years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Build: Thin, ID Mark: Tattoo of "SVETA" on Chest, Wearing: Pink color Shirt and Grey color Pant, found unconscious condition at opposite Gate No. 10, GTB Hospital near Ramilla Ground, Delhi who was taken to GTB Hospital, Delhi where doctor declared him brought dead on 29.04.2024, under area of PS. GTB Enclave, Delhi.

In this regard a DD No. 115A, dated 29.04.2024 has been lodged at PS. GTB Enclave, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

Dead Body has been preserved in GTB Hospital Mortuary, Delhi for 72 Hours if any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
PS.- GTB Enclave, Delhi
DP/5193/SHD/2024 (UIDB) Ph: 011-22137444, 7065036031

SEARCH FOR MISSING MALE

General Public is hereby informed that one male (depicted in the photo) namely Sh. Ramsagar S/o Lt. Anandi Singh R/o B-124, Joshi Colony IP Extension NR Baptist Convent School, Delhi-92 Aged-70 Years has been reported missing since 22.08.2023 at 6 PM from his residence vide DD No.109A Dated 28.08.2023 registered at Police Station Madhu Vihar, Delhi. His physical description is as under:-
Complexion: Fair, Height: 6', Face: Oval, Build: Thin, Clothing: White coloured Vest, half Shorts and Maroon coloured slippers.

Any person having any information/Clue about this missing male, may inform SHO, Madhu Vihar, Delhi at E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in or website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

Sd/-
Tele No. : 011-24368638 or 24368641 SHO, Madhu Vihar, Delhi
FAX No. : 011-24368639 Tel.: 011-22732426, 22732429
DP/4968/ED/2024 Mob.: 8750870624

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that this person (depicted in the photo) Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 70 Years, Sex: Male, Height: 5'6", Face: Oval, Complexion: Shallow, Build: Medium, Wearing: White color Banyan and Half Black Pant found unconscious condition at Office Block-3, In-front of East Kidwai Nagar, New Delhi and admitted in AIIMS Hospital, Delhi where doctor declared him brought dead on 27.04.2024 under area of PS. Kotta Mubarkpur, New Delhi.

In this regard an FIR No. 163/2024, dated 27.04.2024 has been registered at PS. Kotta Mubarkpur, New Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to the light so far.

Dead Body has been preserved in AIIMS Trauma Center Mortuary, Delhi for 72 Hours if any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
PS.- Kotta Mubarkpur, New Delhi
DP/5178/SD/2024 (UIDB) Ph: 011-24620106, 8750870828

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: 60-62 years, Height: 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: striped T-shirt and white color payajama, who was found on footpath under Yudhister Setu Flyover U-Turn, Delhi. In this regard a case FIR/DD No. 28A dt. 27.04.2024 has been registered at PS: Kashmere Gate, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about the above deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned on the following address or telephone nos.

Sd/- SHO
PS: Kashmere Gate, Delhi
DP/5218/N/2024 Ph. 8750870123

PM: Till Modi is alive, none can bring in religion-based quota

'Oppn Must Give In Writing Not To Scrap SC/ST/OBC Reservation'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Ahmedabad: After days of upbraiding Congress for seeking to "snatch" reservations from Dalits, tribals and backward classes and offer these to Muslims, PM Narendra Modi vowed Wednesday that "till Modi is alive, no one will be allowed to indulge in the dirty game of giving out quotas based on religion".

Modi, whose poll caravan hit his native Gujarat ahead of the third phase of Lok Sabha polls on May 7, said at rallies in Deesa town of Banaskantha and Himmatnagar in adjoining Sabarkantha that Congress had been spreading canards about reservation and resorting to scare-mongering by saying the Constitution was under threat from BJP-led NDA. "I challenge them (Congress and INDIA bloc) to give in writing that they will never extend reservation on religious grounds, and that reservations for SC/STs and OBCs won't be taken away. But they won't accept this challenge as something fishy is going on," the PM said in Deesa.

On the opposition's insinuation that NDA would abolish reservations in the long run, Modi said nothing could be farther from the truth. "Are they unaware that NDA has a clear majority (in Lok Sabha)? But we are not born



PM Modi at a campaign rally in Banaskantha, Gujarat, on Wednesday. He accused Congress of spreading canards that the Constitution was under threat from BJP-led NDA

Clear stand on 50% quota cap: Cong to PM

Congress Wednesday asked PM Modi to clear his stand on whether he will support an amendment to the Constitution to remove the 50% cap on reservation for SC/STs and OBCs to give them their rightful due, reports **Ambika Pandit**. Congress's Jairam Ramesh accused the PM of distorting the party's manifesto by trying to give a "communal colour to it". He said the party was categorically clear and said so in its manifesto too that it will do away with the 50% cap on quota for SC/STs and OBCs. He denied Modi's allegation about religion-based reservation saying it was a fake charge.

to commit such a sin (as changing the Constitution)."

The PM said it was Congress that posed a threat to the Constitution by attempting to change the structure of reservation by reducing quotas for Dalits and others as part of its "appeasement" policy.

"They experimented with this in Andhra Pradesh and

Karnataka. In Karnataka, they declared all Muslims as OBCs and took away a portion of OBC reservations. Is this acceptable?" he asked the crowd.

Modi pointed out that despite being in office for so many years, Congress couldn't implement constitutional safeguards for Dalits and OBCs in J&K. "But this is

Modi. I nullified Article 370 and implemented the Constitution in J&K, after which people got their rights."

The PM dubbed Congress MP Rahul Gandhi's "mohabbat ki dukaan" as "a factory for fake videos". "Not just Congress's videos, but their slogans, intentions and promises are all fake. The party that governed for 60 years, giving so many PMs, just can't speak the truth now. Stop this game of fake videos. You can mislead people momentarily, but they will punish you heavily."

In Himmatnagar, Modi said INDIA bloc's strategy was to cause anarchy and instability, and find new ways to insult him. In a riposte to Rahul's charge that India would "burn" if Modi retained the reins, he asked why Congress didn't honour Supreme Court's judgment in the Shah Bano case if it respected the Constitution. "Muslim women were the worst sufferers of Congress's vote-bank politics. We scrapped the triple talaq law that had ruined lakhs of families and gave them protection. Congress never showed the courage to do so."

The PM said Congress clearly hadn't learnt its lessons from the 2014 and 2019 poll defeats. He predicted that the grand old party would suffer its "worst-ever" performance this election.

Lower turnout not a worry; we'll get more seats than last time: Shah

On the campaign trail, Union home minister Amit Shah gave an exclusive interview to Times Now in a helicopter. Excerpts:

A few days back, a big operation took place in which 29 Maoists were killed. You have said that in the coming 3-4 years, Naxalism will be eliminated?

■ We have entirely eliminated Naxalism in Jharkhand, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra. Four cities in Chhattisgarh were left since the previous Congress government supported the Centre. BJP returned to office, and within four months 90 Naxals were apprehended, 123 were arrested, and 250 surrendered themselves. Ten more Naxals were killed only yesterday, and Maoists from Chhattisgarh surrendered in Odisha at 9am today. Along with security, we are increasing and delivering education, health, food, energy, and communication. I would like to urge individuals to lay down their weapons and surrender and get included in the mainstream.

EC has released polling data for the two phases after a delay. The opposition has been saying that EVMs will be manipulated?

■ If you had contested elections, you would not have said this. The machine is sealed from all polling agents. It can't be tampered with. They are just looking for excuses.

This is not Indira Gandhi's era but Narendra Modi's time. Modi ji has freed us from all four diseases - dynastic politics, casteism, corruption and appeasement

People will ask how do you know how many seats you will get?

■ Then how did Rahul Gandhi know that we will get 150 seats? Has Rahul tampered with the EVM? Those who work on ground have their assessments. It's just that our assessments are mostly accurate.

Till now Congress has not declared the candidate for Amethi and Raebareilly...but why is BJP not announcing the candidate



for Raebareilly?

■ In Raebareilly, we have decided that after their candidate is announced, we will do it. We have 3 candidates. As soon as they make their announcement, we will do it. They are finding a candidate who is ready to lose.

This time, on one side there was talk of mangalsutra and infiltrators and on the other side there was talk of vote jihad. Who do you think is doing such a polarising election?

■ What issue you raise is your call, but this time election is on giving house to 3 crore poor people, insurance worth Rs 5 lakh to those who have lived more than 70 years, free foodgrains to the poor for the next 5 years. There is a need to make India the third largest economy, there is 'one nation, one election' and there is also a need to introduce uniform civil code in the country. But the media doesn't like this creative agenda, so it picks up things with controversy. No one can divide this country; BJP has become very strong and whoever tries to divide the country will get a strong answer. This is not Indira Gandhi's era but Narendra Modi's time. Modi ji has freed us from all four diseases - dynastic politics, casteism, corruption and appeasement.

Today Mallikarjun Kharge has said his candidate is Shiva and there will be a fight between Shiva and Ram. What do you think?

■ The Election Commission should take cognizance of this matter.

In Raebareilly, we have decided that after their candidate is announced, we will announce ours. They are finding a candidate who is ready to lose

The opposition says if you come for a third time, there will be one nation but no election. How many seats do you give Congress in this election?

■ When Indira Gandhi came then Emergency was implemented but BJP has no intention of 'One Nation, No Election'. We don't know about Congress, but we are crossing 400 seats in this Lok Sabha.

How many seats after the second phase of election?

■ We are getting more than 100 Lok Sabha seats.

The turnout reduced after the first phase, which means BJP's support and cadre has reduced?

■ Congress does not know the ground reality. Congress supporters have not come out to vote.

Don't you think there is any problem in the first two phases, especially in UP and Rajasthan?

■ According to me we will get more Lok Sabha seats this time than in the previous election.

'No roads, our miseries can be measured in kilometres'

Kautilya Singh & Abhyudaya Kotnala | TNN

Uttarkashi: Nestled in the lap of the mighty Himalayas, Seku village of Uttarkashi district in Uttarakhand is populated predominantly by Rawats (Thakurs) with a handful of families from Schedule Caste groups. For residents of Seku, which is yet to be connected with a proper road, their miseries, as 64-year-old Bhagwat Singh Rawat, says, "can be measured in kilometres".

One has to trek 3km to reach the nearest motorable road, the Sangamchatti-Gangori road, and the nearest inter-college — at Bhankholi — is 7km away. "The closest PHC at Gajoli village is around 4km, and to meet our daily requirements we have to go to the Cheevan market 5km away," said Bhagwat Singh.

Seku, in the Assi Ganga valley of Bhatwari block, has over the decades witnessed temporary as well as permanent migration. When Uttarakhand went to polls this time, on April 19, the village (which falls in the Tehri Lok Sabha constituency)

put their weight behind the BJP. "Unfortunately, be it the Congress or BJP, no MP has visited our village since the state was created in 2000 (after being carved out of UP)."

While Bhagwat's elder son Manoj is involved in agriculture on their 5-bigha land, his younger son Sunil is a tour guide at Rishikesh who makes it a point to return to the village during the



Sunil Rawat and his family. Sunil comes from Seku village of Uttarkashi but works as a tour guide in Rishikesh. Of the 200 voters in the village, only 11 cast their ballots. The rest stayed away protesting against lack of a connecting road. Villagers have to walk 3km to the nearest motorable road. Sunil's mother complains that the hardships faced by women in the hills never becomes a poll issue

Sangamchatti-Gangori route."

Bhagwat said, "I have always voted but there comes a time when you have to think about your family, future generations and the village. If we succumb to pressure today (to vote), our children will suffer in the absence of a road."

Prior to the 2014 polls, Bhagwat and his family had supported Congress but in the last one decade they have

put their weight behind the BJP. "Unfortunately, be it the Congress or BJP, no MP has visited our village since the state was created in 2000 (after being carved out of UP)."

While Bhagwat's elder son Manoj is involved in agriculture on their 5-bigha land, his younger son Sunil is a tour guide at Rishikesh who makes it a point to return to the village during the



off-season. However, in the absence of a proper school and health facilities at Seku, the families of Manoj and Sunil live in Uttarkashi town.

The key concern for Bhagwat's wife Jayendri Devi, meanwhile, is the "mysterious absence of local issues and matters related to women" during campaigning for the Lok Sabha polls. "Where was the talk around daily problems faced by us? Why are our votes being sought if our opinion and hardships do not matter. Life for women is extremely

tough in the hills but no candidate is willing to discuss it," she said.

"For those who don't move out, life in the mountains is hard," said Manoj. "And to make things harder, travel takes so much of our time and energy. Govts should give infrastructure in the hills some thought — roads, schools, hospitals."

Sunil is quick to agree. "Our village faces a plethora of problems with connectivity being at the centre of all our worries. We are 15km away from the district headquarters. Most youth have migrated to nearby towns as agriculture is our main source of earning but the produce is often damaged by wild animals. Most of our problems can be solved if we get good roads. It will not only lead to tourist arrivals but also help in transportation of agricultural produce to markets elsewhere."

'Mahayagya of development': Television actor Rupali joins BJP

New Delhi: TV actor **Rupali Ganguly**, famous for her roles in TV serials such as Sarabhai vs Sarabhai and Anupama, joined BJP on Wednesday before the third phase of polls.

"When I see this 'mahayagya' of development, I feel that I should also take part in this... I need your blessings and support so that whatever I do, I do it right and good," Ganguly said. Along with Ganguly, Ameiya Joshi, a social worker and astrologer from Maharashtra, also joined BJP in the presence of senior politicians including national general secretary Vinod Tawde and chief spokesperson Anil Baluni. Tawde used the occasion to attack the opposition parties over Samajwadi Party politician Maria Alam's appeal for "vote jihad".

Oh My Gowda: The Story Of A Political Family

Prajwal Revanna's is just the latest in a long list of controversies involving the Gowdas, from threatening ordinary citizens to stymieing careers of opponents to being accused of bigamy

Rakesh Prakash
@timesgroup.com

Bengaluru: There they go — again. The Gowdas, Karnataka's once premier political family, is back in news for wrong reasons. That Prajwal Revanna, Hassan MP, grandson to HD Deve Gowda and son to HD Revanna and Bhavani, stands accused of what prima facie looks like serial sexual harassment has shocked many — except those who have closely followed the family. Various Gowdas have been accused of brutish public displays of power, destruction of private property, and public washing of distinctly unclean family linen.

Just as allegations against Prajwal, who now says he will "prove" his innocence and "join" the probe, involved women with little agency, his mother Bhavani

was recently caught on camera as she browbeat an ordinary citizen. The video makes for instructive viewing. A motorcyclist accidentally brushed Bhavani's clearly expensive looking SUV. Her car received minor scratches. She stormed out of the car, yelling at the man on the bike: "If you wanted to die, you should have crashed into a bus. This car costs Rs 1.5 crore and it is damaged. Burn the bike... someone call the police sub-inspector and ask him to seize the vehicle." Onlookers requested her to let go. She retorted: "The car will cost Rs 50 lakh to repair. You intervene only if you agree to pay."

Patriarch Deve Gowda, when asked about his daughter-in-law, whom he's very fond of, per those who know the family, said her behaviour was an outcome of

post-surgery stress.

Bhavani was reportedly the key reason Prajwal got the Hassan Lok Sabha ticket. Whispers about his conduct have been around for a year. Some in JD(S) were of the view that he should not be nominated. But those who track the family said she was so forceful in her support for her son that HD Kumaraswamy, ex-CM and the second-most important Gowda after HD senior, gave in.

Two of the four Deve Gowda sons active in politics, HD Kumaraswamy and HD Revanna, are in fact two rivals to their father's legacy. For now, Revanna is staying put in Hassan and consolidating the local power base, aided by his wife, say local political observers. The latter pushed for Prajwal's debut in 2019. State political analysts had noted how Deve Gowda had left the

UNDER SPOTLIGHT



Hassan seat for his grandson and shifted to Tumakuru, where he famously lost.

But it has not all been smooth sailing for the Revannas. Prajwal's earlier debut plan was to contest in the 2018 assembly election. He felt his uncle, Kumaraswamy, had scuttled his nomination from the Hunsur constituency. He responded by publicly accusing the JD(S) leader-

ship, meaning Kumaraswamy, of promoting a "suitcase culture" and "ignoring" party workers who are "loyal".

The problem for JD(S) functionaries is that "when they step outside Hassan, they bump into HDK family". Kumaraswamy, whose propensity for tearing up in public made national headlines more than once, is of course no stranger to contro-

versies. In 2011, he found himself in a legal tangle — a petition was filed against him in high court, accusing him of planning a second marriage with a Kannada actress. The petition asked for his disqualification as an MP. The case hit headlines. But the accusation could not be proved.

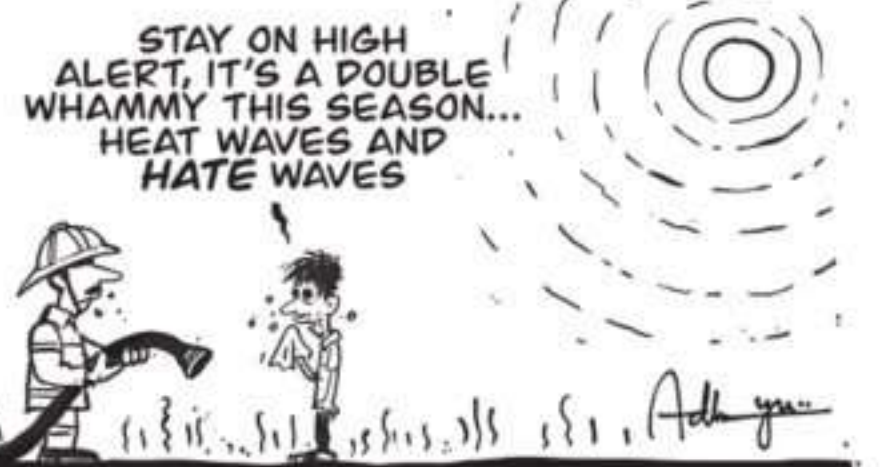
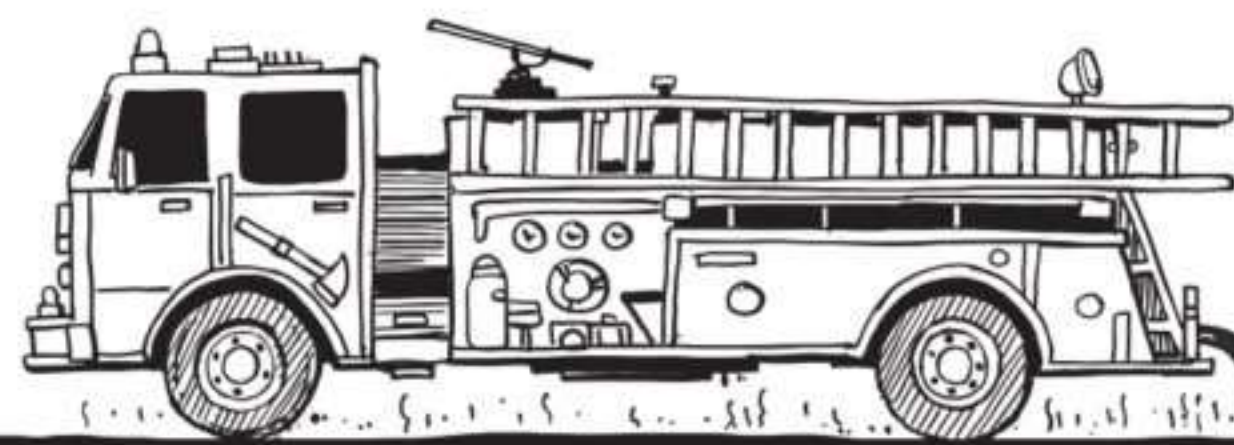
Then there's Nikhil, heir apparent to HDK and, for now, an actor, after his failed bid to become an MP from Mandya in 2019. When just 19, Nikhil, when denied service in a Bengaluru restaurant when he and his friends landed up after midnight, was accused of pretty much ransacking the place. The year was 2006. His father, Kumaraswamy, was then CM.

Those who know the Gowdas well say that the family is known for its long memory for slights directed at them and vindictive behaviour towards perceived enemies. This includes not just politicians but also bureaucrats, especially those posted in the home districts of the Gowdas: Hassan and Ramanagara.

So, what happens after the Prajwal scandal? HD Deve Gowda, who publicly addresses women as 'nanna thayiandiru' (my mothers), is silent. HD Revanna is trying out the trope "these are old allegations". HD Kumaraswamy has quickly distanced his family, his father, and BJP from Prajwal's family, while also charging Congress with attempts to defame the Gowdas.

Right now, things don't look good for the Gowdas. But Karnataka's political veterans say there's very little chance this incident will do any lasting damage to the family. There are two reasons. First, the Gowdas know how to wriggle out of difficult situations. Second, in all the drama that will follow in the wake of the Prajwal tapes, his alleged sexual harassment will become just one another scandal.

Given the gravity of the allegations that may seem strange — and unfair — but that's just how it's been for the Gowdas.



BATTLEGROUNDS INDIA | APRIL 19-JUNE 4, 2024

Can BJP woo Lingayats back? Party's chances in N K'taka hinge on that

Traditionally Saffron Supporters, Community Switched Sides After Strongman Yediyurappa Was Sidelined

ManuAiyappa.Kanathanda
@timesgroup.com

As the political atmosphere heats up in north Karnataka, which encompasses 14 constituencies, ahead of polling on May 7, all eyes are on the Lingayat community, a dominant caste in the region. The Lingayats, constituting the state's largest single community, make up nearly 17% of the 5.3 crore electorate, while the Vokkaligas, another politically significant group, account for approximately 12%.

The Lingayat community had noticed a shift away from BJP in the previous assembly elections, raising questions about whether they would reaffirm their allegiance to the party in Lok Sabha polls. Lingayat politics, deeply entrenched in socio-cultural dynamics, plays an important role in shaping the electoral fortunes of BJP and Congress. In 2019, BJP swept the region by winning all 14 seats.

In last year's state polls, 37 of Congress' 46 Lingayat candidates won, a significant increase from the 13 seats won in 2018. In contrast, only 15 Lingayats from BJP emerged victorious, despite the party fielding 69 candidates from the community. This seismic change was a major contributing factor to Congress's landslide victory.

Lingayats dominate about 90 of the 224 assembly segments in the state, and while there were many reasons why the community switched sides from BJP to Congress, the sidelining of Lingayat strongman Yediyurappa was the prime factor.

"There was a perception that Lingayats were averse to Congress,



Yediyurappa (centre) stepped down as Karnataka CM in 2021. BJP is also manoeuvring an alliance with JD(S) — led nationally by Deve Gowda (L) and in Karnataka by son H D Kumaraswamy (R) — which relies on Vokkaliga backing



but that was proven wrong in the assembly polls last year. Now there is speculation that Lingayats will move back to BJP. We will again prove this wrong," insisted Karnataka minister M B Patil. His claim was endorsed by Eshwar Khandre, also a minister and prominent Lingayat figure in Congress.

The outcome of the 14 seats in north Karnataka holds special significance not only for the overall tally of BJP but also for the future of BSY and his son B Y Vijayendra.

Yediyurappa had to step down as CM in July 2021, during his fourth term, following a series of corruption allegations. His resignation led to a backlash from Lingayats, and

the subsequent appointment of Basavaraj Bommai, a BSY supporter, only fuelled the fire. Protesters, including 500 influential Lingayat sadhus, voiced their discontent, warning of "irreparable" damage. Allegations of corruption extended to claims of malpractices within govt contracts, exacerbated tensions. Additionally, the denial of tickets to other prominent Lingayats, such as Jagdish Shettar and Laxman Savadi, further strained rela-

tions between BJP and the community that has produced nine CMs in the state. Efforts to mend ties by Bommai ahead of the assembly polls, including last-minute enhancement of job and education reservations, proved insufficient.

In an attempt at damage control ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, BJP reinstated Yediyurappa as a member of the BJP parliamentary board, the party's highest decision-making body, and appointed his son Vijayendra as state BJP chief. These manoeuvres were also aimed at fostering an electoral alliance with JD(S), which relies on Vokkaliga support.

For the Lok Sabha polls, BJP has fielded nine Lingayats and three Vokkaligas on the 25 seats it is contesting, while Congress has nominated six Vokkaligas and five Lingayats. JD(S) has allocated tickets to two Vokkaligas on its three seats, with the third seat given to another community.

Shettar, who had earlier left the party, has now made a return, indicating a ghar wapsi (homecoming), while Savadi, though possessing limited influence within the community, is showing inclinations of rejoining BJP despite his current involvement with the grand old party. "The Lingayat support base has already returned to BJP, and we are anticipating a clean sweep once again in north Karnataka," said Aravind Bellad, a prominent Panchamasali Lingayat leader and deputy opposition leader in the assembly.

However, party insiders and Congress members insist that it would be an oversimplification. BJP is grappling with internal dissent, with several senior functionaries, including prominent Lingayat fig-

ures like Basanagouda Patil Yatnal, expressing discontent over the decision to appoint a first-time MLA as party president. Additionally, K S Eshwarappa, a senior party functionary who played a key role in building BJP in Karnataka over four decades alongside Yediyurappa, is also unhappy with the choice of Vijayendra. Eshwarappa is now contesting against Yediyurappa's son, B Y Raghavendra, from Shimoga. "These developments clearly indicate a lack of unity within the party, as there is a recognition that if BJP secures more than 20 seats, the party will likely remain under the control of the Yediyurappa family for the next two decades," a senior RSS functionary said.

Moreover, Congress is leaving no stone unturned to retain its Lingayat support base, which it regained after 3-4 decades. In addition to its Ahinda — a combination of Muslims, OBCs (other than Lingayats and Vokkaligas) and SC/ST/ politics, the party is trying to form an umbrella coalition in the state by appealing to Vokkaligas in the south and Lingayats in the north. Furthermore, Congress is attracting some Lingayat votes with prominent community figures like Patil, Shamur Shivashankarappa, Eshwar Khandre and Vinay Kulkarni, among others.

With Siddaramaiah, a Kuruba leader, occupying the CM's office in both 2013 and 2024, and the growing prominence of Dalit leader Mallikarjun Kharge in national affairs, Congress has reinvigorated Ahinda politics in Karnataka. The party aims to leverage this revitalisation to deal another blow to BJP's longstanding support base in north Karnataka.

Youngest candidate in Gujarat: He rose up chord by chord

Prashant.Rupera
@timesgroup.com

Vadodara: At 33, Hemang Joshi stands out as the youngest contender in Gujarat's upcoming Lok Sabha elections. What's fascinating about Joshi's journey is how music seems to thread through every step, from his days as a student leader to becoming the BJP's candidate for Vadodara Lok Sabha seat.

Joshi's journey to prominence began with a simple 'sanedo', a folk drama form, which he penned during his time as a student at MS University's Faculty of Social Work. This creative endeavour, themed around cleanliness, gained widespread acclaim. It was institutionalised by MSU and received endorsement from the then chief minister, Anandiben Patel, in Oct 2015. Singer Bhoomi Trivedi lent her voice to it, too.

The 'sanedo' then found its way into Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in July 2016, earning Joshi a letter of appreciation from the PMO — a letter that the young candidate has preserved. It was the first time that a university student's initiative was mentioned in the PM's programme.

"That is my creative side," quips Joshi, a physiotherapy graduate and a postgraduate in human resource management. The ABVP leader was elected uncontested as general secretary of the Faculty of Social Work in 2015.

In 2021, Joshi penned lyrics and composed a song titled 'Ame Vadodara na matdar', which the BJP launched ahead of the local body election. A year later, he was appointed vice-chairman of the Nagar Prathmik Shikshan Samiti, the school board of Vadodara Municipal Corporation (VMC).

As it happened, this HR professional and his wife were attending a musical programme at Sursagar Lake on Holi when he started receiving congratulatory calls. That's how he learned that

BJP had fielded him from Vadodara after political twists and turns led to the sitting MP, Ranjan Bhatt, pulling out of the race. "I was certainly surprised," said Joshi, who aims to win the elections by a margin of more than 10 lakh.

As a former student leader, Joshi's activism on campus ranged from advocating for better host hostel buildings to challenging the overnight removal of hostel students. His group also



Hemang Joshi, 33, rose to prominence after a folk drama on cleanliness he wrote as a PG student was praised by PM Modi in his Mann Ki Baat in 2016

made a representation against "anti-national" content that led to the cancellation of a comedy night show of stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra in 2018.

Joshi, who has done a course on leadership in education from IIM Ahmedabad and is currently pursuing PhD in leadership from MSU, is among the last lot of student leaders to have climbed up the ladder of student politics. Following the implementation of Gujarat Public Universities Act last year, there will be no representation of students — the main stakeholders in universities — on the board of management that forms the core of the day-to-day operation of universities like MSU.

40 yrs on, BJP & TMC threaten to breach Ghani fort

For the first time since 1980, a Congress candidate outside the family of Ghani Khan Chowdhury, an 8-time MP, is contesting Malda North seat

Subhro Mitra | TNN

Malda: The Mercedes Benz (WMD-4085) with a red beacon parked in Malda's Kotwali Bhawan garage for the last 18 years serves as a reminder that the legacy of Barkat da or ABA Ghani Khan Chowdhury remains to this day in Malda.

The legend goes that Ghani Khan, five-time MLA, eight-time MP and a state and central minister, never had to step out of his Merc as people went up to him to say that they would vote for him. Even after his death in 2006, there has not been a single election in Malda when votes have not been sought in his name.

But for the first time since 1980, a Congress candidate outside the Ghani Khan family — Mostaque Alam — is contesting the Malda North Lok Sabha seat this time. This comes in the backdrop of Congress not winning even one of the 12 assembly seats in Malda in the 2021 Bengal assembly polls (TMC won eight seats and BJP bagged four).

Even after Ghani Khan's death, his brother Abu Hasem Khan Chowdhury (Dalu) won the undivided Malda Lok Sabha seat in 2006. After

2009, when the seat was split into Malda South and Malda North, Dalu won from Malda South thrice (2009, 2014, and 2019). Mausam Noor, Ghani Khan's niece, won Malda North in 2009 and 2014.

Though Dalu held on to his ground, his 2014 winning margin of 1.6 lakh plummeted to 8,222 in 2019.

In 2019, when Noor defected to Trinamool Congress, BJP stunned poll pundits by securing a win in Malda North.

The saffron surge in Barkat da's bastion in 2019 is attributed to several factors. The tribals and the Rajbanshis of Malda North, who backed CPM even during Ghani Khan's tenure, switched their allegiance to BJP. A hugely polarising campaign and the split caused by Noor contesting on a TMC ticket and Isha, Ghani Khan's nephew and Dalu's son, contesting on a Congress ticket, helped BJP's Khagen Murmu snatch a win.

In 2024, Isha is contesting in Malda South (a seat his father held since 2009). Noor, now a TMC Rajya Sabha MP, has been replaced by TMC with former IPS officer Prasad Banerjee as its Malda North candidate.



So, is the Ghani legacy on the wane? No, says Isha. "In the 2021 assembly polls, it was a clear play between Modi (PM Narendra Modi) and Didi (CM Mamata Banerjee) to unleash the fear of NRC to misguide Muslims. Now, they can understand

the reality and are returning to our fold. Even in the last panchayat election (in 2023), you have seen the shift," he said.

Mostaque Alam, too, invokes Ghani Khan, "It was Ghani Khan who last took care of the erosion

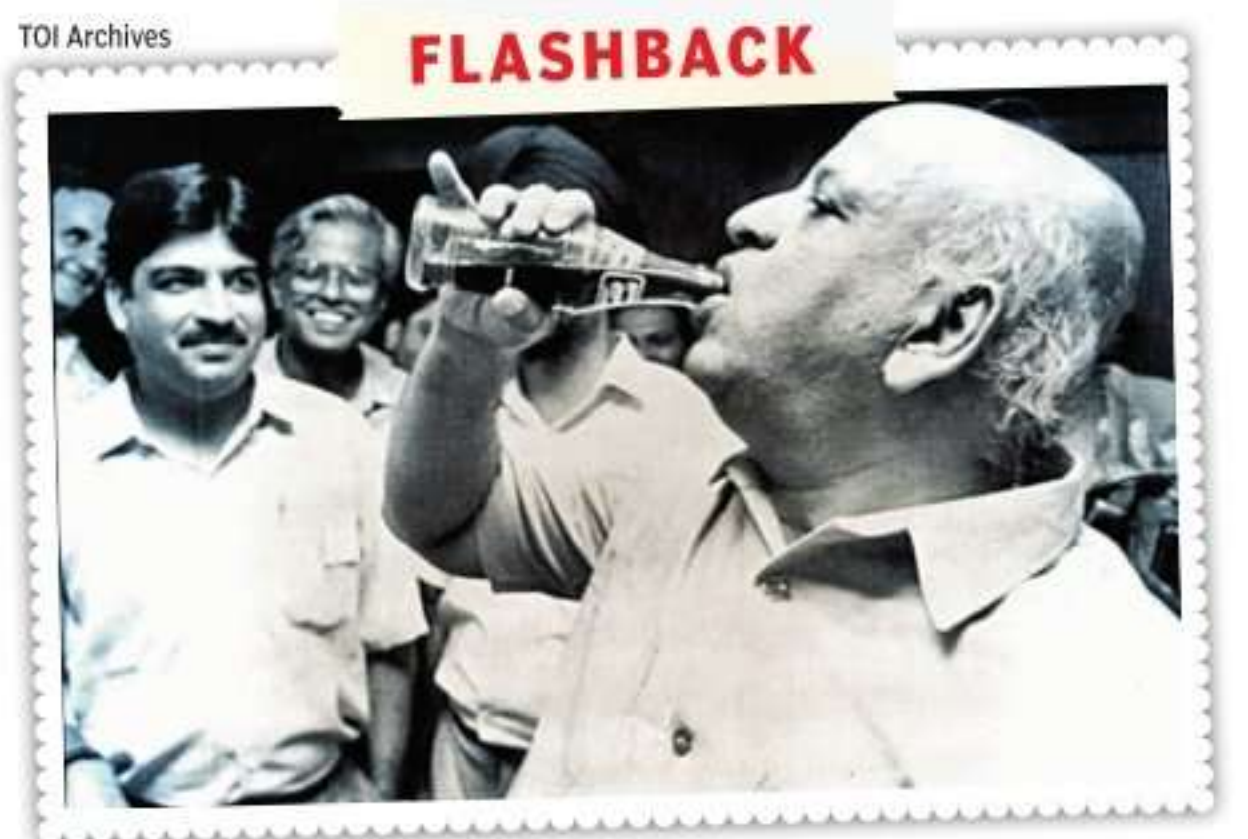
problem. Since then, it has been only about siphoning money and the blame game of TMC and BJP."

Veteran Congress leader Kalisadhan Roy said, "Barkat da never indulged in communal politics. In fact, his family carries the legacy of living above religious identity. Today, it is becoming clear to the people."

If Congress candidates still hold on to the Ghani Khan legacy, the opposition, too, is unable to completely ignore it. While campaigning, CM Mamata Banerjee said, "We respected Barkat da. We made Mausam Noor a Rajya Sabha MP as Barkat da's family should have a representative there."

Veteran TMC leader and Ghani Khan's former confidante, Sabitri Mitra, sees "Barkat da's shadow" in TMC's Malda South candidate Shahnawaj Ali.

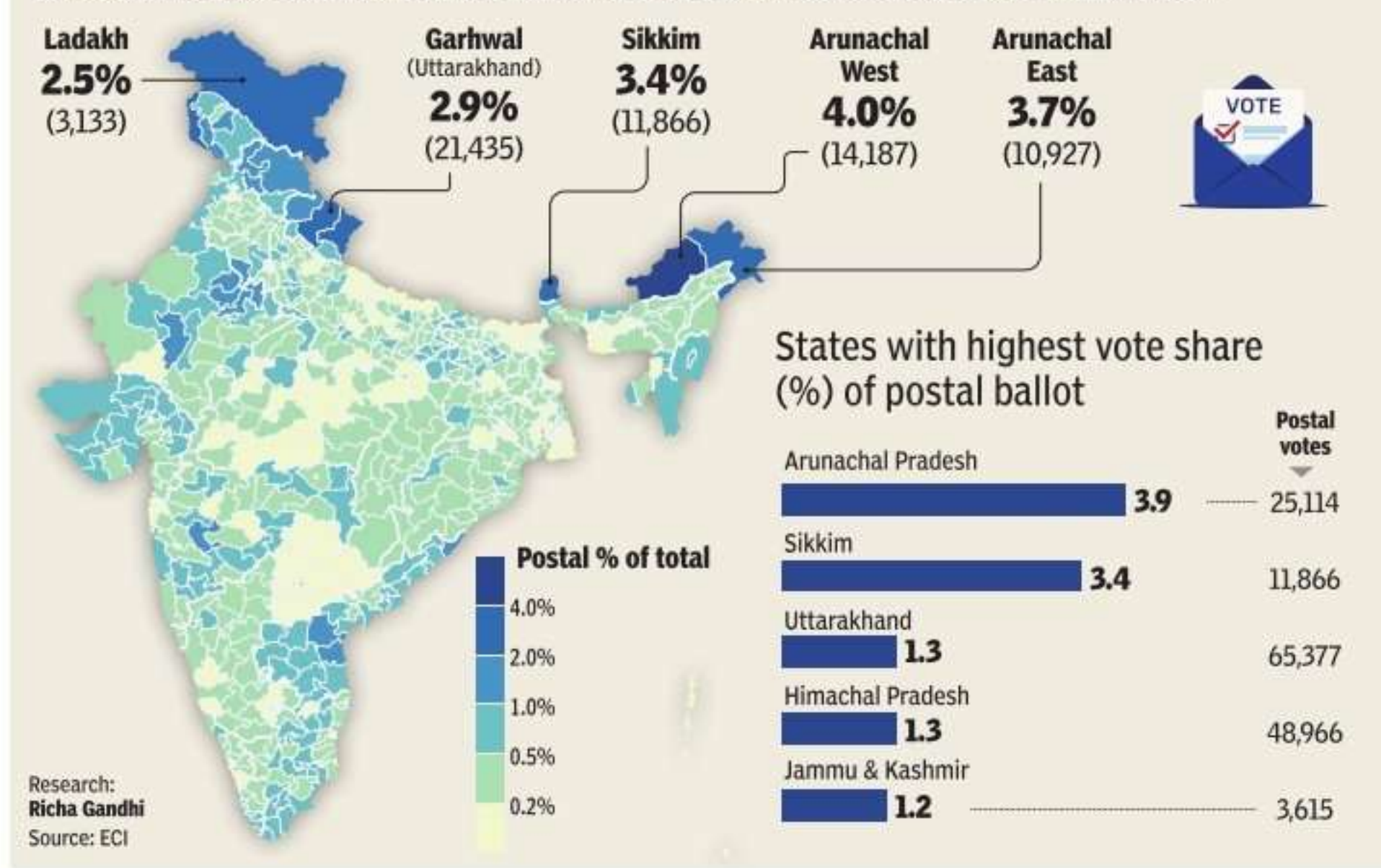
PM Narendra Modi, who addressed an election rally in Malda on April 26, attacked TMC and Congress but maintained silence on Ghani Khan and his family. District BJP leader Amlan Bhaduri said, "We want TMC and Congress to keep fighting over the Ghani Khan legacy. We want to build our own legacy with Modi. His rallies and April 26 road show in Malda have proved people's love for him. He had to stop his speech twice as 'Modi Modi' chants rent the air."



1993 | N Seshan, then Chief Election Commissioner, after a press conference in New Delhi. Known for cleaning up the electoral system, Seshan led ECI from 1990 to 1996. Introduction of voters' photo identity cards and enforcement of model code of conduct were among the reforms he brought in. After retiring as CEC, Seshan contested the 1997 Indian presidential elections and lost to K R Narayanan.

In 2019 LS polls, postal ballots tipped the scales in 11 seats

Postal ballot enables registered voters to submit their votes via mail, bypassing the need to visit a polling station. In the 2019 general elections, the most significant use of postal ballots was observed in Arunachal, Sikkim, Himachal, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir. Given the challenging and remote terrains of these regions, postal ballots played a crucial role in ensuring the inclusion of every vote. Leading the way, Arunachal Pradesh accounted for 3.8% of postal votes (of the total votes polled), with Arunachal East and Arunachal West recording 3.7% and 4% respectively. Sikkim followed with 3.4%, then Uttarakhand's Garhwal at 2.9%, and Ladakh at 2.5% postal votes. Notably, in nearly 11 constituencies, the number of postal ballot votes surpassed the winning margin.



Despite candidate change, it's still an uphill task for BJP in restive Ladakh

Saleem.Pandit@timesgroup.com

Srinagar: The unrest in Ladakh over statehood status and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution (for self-governance and autonomy) may hurt BJP's poll prospects this time.

Reading the mood, BJP on April 23 dropped incumbent MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal and nominated Tashi Gyalson, an advocate who heads the BJP-led Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council-Leh (LAHDC-Leh), as its candidate for the Ladakh Lok Sabha seat.

On Wednesday, the Congress-NC alliance nominated Haji Hanif Jan for the Ladakh seat. According to reports, Hanif Jan may give a tough time to the BJP candidate given the anger of the people in Kargil and Leh districts.

Since early this year, several Muslim and Buddhist organisations under the conglomerates of the Apex Body Leh and Kargil Democratic Alliance had been agitating over statehood status and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution. Their demands were supposedly accepted by the BJP leadership



Activist Sonam Wangchuk (inset) led protests over statehood status for Ladakh and inclusion in Constitution's Sixth Schedule. Ladakh goes to polls on May 20

after the revocation of Article 370 and 35A on August 5, 2019.

People of Ladakh want a legislative assembly like Delhi. However, there was no breakthrough in talks with the BJP leadership since January. Climate activist Sonam Wangchuk, who is their leader, sat on a hunger strike for 21 days with his supporters in early March.

Though the unrest has turned

the BJP-led central government over the region's several demands, including statehood status and inclusion in the Sixth Schedule.

The Ladakh seat, which will go to the polls on May 20, has 1,82,570 voters, of which 90,867 are women. Altogether, 577 polling stations have been set up in the region.

Following the repeal of Article 370 and the subsequent enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, Ladakh was recognised as a separate Union Territory "without legislature". UTs like New Delhi and Pondicherry have their own legislative assemblies.

"After several meetings, the government has backtracked on its promises and it is now talking of a much diluted version of what is already there in the Constitution for this situation. So, why did they change their mind," Wangchuk asked.

The activist added, "When Ladakh was declared a separate Union Territory, people celebrated. But now, they are a disillusioned lot and feel that they have been taken for a ride."



DANIEL RADCLIFFE SAYS RUPTURE WITH JK ROWLING OVER TRANS RIGHTS 'REALLY SAD', BUT HE DOESN'T OWE HER FOR 'THINGS HE TRULY BELIEVES'



FKA TWIGS TELLS US SENATE PANEL THAT SHE'S DEVELOPED HER OWN DEEPLAKE, SAYS AI 'HIGHLY VALUABLE' BUT IT NEEDS TO BE REGULATED

Clashes In UCLA; 300 Held On NY Campuses

Anti-Gaza War Demonstrations: NYPD Clears Occupied Columbia Building, Mayor Blames 'Outside Agitators'

American universities were on edge Wednesday after police officers from New York to Los Angeles entered campuses where pro-Palestinian demonstrators had erected encampments and seized academic buildings.

Mayor Eric Adams of New York said that about 300 protesters had been arrested Tuesday night at City College of New York and at Columbia University, where police officers in riot gear cleared a building that had been occupied for nearly a day to protest Israel's war in Gaza.

At the University of California, Los Angeles, police officers intervened before dawn Wednesday to break up violent clashes between pro-Palestinian demonstrators and counter-protesters, hours after administrators declared an encampment on campus illegal.

At Tulane University in New Orleans, 14 people had been arrested, administrators said, as state and local forces helped campus police disperse protesters. At the University of Arizona, campus police sprayed chemicals as they broke up a demonstration. Other protest encampments around the country were still standing. Some demonstrators have said that they will not back down, posing a challenge for university administrators who want to protect free speech rights while minimising campus disruption.

The clashes at UCLA erupted as counter-protesters tried to pull down parade barricades, plywood and wooden pallets protecting a tent encampment built by pro-Palestinian protesters. Video showed fireworks



Columbia Univ



UCLA



UCLA



Brown Univ



City College Of New York

At Brown & Northwestern univs, rare agreement between administrators and protesters

As pro-Palestinian protests continued to escalate across the country, officials and students at Brown University set a rare example on Tuesday. They made a deal. Demonstrators agreed to dismantle their encampment at Brown, which had been removed by Tuesday evening, and university officials said they would discuss, and later vote on, divesting funds from companies connected to the Israeli military campaign in Gaza. In Northwestern University's suburban Chicago campus, two unoccupied tents remained, surrounded by abandoned folding chairs, cases of bottled water and other supplies. Student organisers and the school announced an agreement late Monday to curb protest activity — in return for a new advisory committee on university investments and other commitments. The agreement lets protests continue through June 1 but bars all tents except one for aid supplies. It also prevents people without ties to Northwestern from participating. **NYT & AP**

exploding over and in the encampment. People threw chairs and other objects. Some screamed pro-Jewish comments as pro-Palestinian protesters tried to fight them off.

After a couple of hours of scuffles between pro-Palestinian

and pro-Israeli demonstrators

at UCLA, police wearing helmets and face shields slowly separated the groups and quelled the violence. The scene was calm as day broke. Authorities have not detailed injuries. Los Angeles Mayor Karen Bass called

the violence "absolutely abhorrent and inexcusable".

At Columbia, New York City police officers entered campus after the university requested help. They cleared a tent encampment, along with Hamilton Hall where a stream

of officers used a ladder to climb through a second-floor window. Protesters had seized the Ivy League school building about 20 hours earlier. Police

loaded dozens of detainees onto a bus, their hands bound behind their backs by zip-ties, the

scene illuminated with the flashing red and blue lights of police vehicles. The police action happened on the 56th anniversary of a similar move to quash the occupation of Hamilton Hall by students protesting racism and Vietnam War.

University Prez Minouche Shafik asked police to stay on campus until at least May 17 — two days after graduation. Shafik said the occupiers had vandalised property. Mayor Adams blamed the Columbia protest on outside agitators. Pressed, however, about identities of the "outside agitators" cited by the mayor, officials repeatedly declined to provide details.

On Wednesday, over 100 people, most identifying themselves as Columbia faculty, marched near the campus, chanting slogans, including "How many kids did you arrest today?"

Blocks away from Columbia, at City College of New York, demonstrators were in a standoff with police outside the public college's main gate. Video posted online by reporters late Tuesday showed officers forcing some people to the ground and shoving others as they cleared the street and sidewalks.

More than 1,300 protesters have been taken into custody on US campuses since 108 were arrested at Columbia on April 18, according to a tally by NYT.

Officials at Portland State University in Oregon urged protesters to leave a library that they had occupied. The police also moved into an encampment at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, arresting 30 people, but protesters returned later in the day. **NYT & AP**

Blinken meets Bibi to stave off Rafah op



A child stands behind barbed-wire in Rafah in the southern Gaza Strip

US secretary of state Antony Blinken met with PM Netanyahu in Israel on Wednesday, his latest stop on a West Asia tour undertaken as President Biden tries to stop Israel from invading Rafah, a city in southern Gaza where Palestinians have sought shelter during the war.

Blinken and other top Biden administration aides are also calling for Hamas to agree to a deal to free some hostages taken in the Oct. 7 attacks in exchange for a six-week ceasefire and the release of some Palestinian prisoners. US officials say they hope a temporary ceasefire would lead to a permanent one. On Tuesday, Netanyahu said that he plans a major assault on Rafah "with or without" a deal.

The ceasefire talks have been stalled for months, and Israeli officials said Monday that they had agreed to lower their demands. They are now asking Hamas to free 33 civilians — women, older people and those who need urgent medical care — rather than 40. The proposed deal was one

of the issues that Blinken discussed with President Isaac Herzog of Israel on Wednesday at a hotel in Tel Aviv.

Before the meeting with Herzog started, Blinken told the president and reporters that discussions must focus on both a ceasefire that "brings the hostages home" and on getting more aid into Gaza. "There is a proposal on the table, and as we've said, no delays, no excuses," Blinken said. Herzog said that the hostages' release should be a priority for the international community. After his talk with Herzog, Blinken met with a few family members of American hostages held in Gaza and then got into a motorcade to head to Jerusalem, where he entered a private meeting with Netanyahu. Blinken and other US officials say Hamas has a narrow window to take the deal since Netanyahu is pressing for the offensive in Rafah. When asked about Netanyahu's statements on Rafah, Blinken said that US efforts were focused on a hostage and ceasefire deal. **NYT**

Foreign and student visa applications to UK fall as tough new curbs kick in

Naomi Canton

London: The UK gov't's plan to cut legal migration appears to be working, new figures published by the home office show. The total number of applications for study, health and care and skilled worker visas, which make up the majority of legal migration, fell by a quarter — from 1,84,000 in first three months of 2023 to 1,39,100 in the same period this year.

The drop has been driven by a sharp fall in the number of student applications. In the first three months of 2024 a total of 40,700 study visa applications were made, a fall of 44% compared to the same period the previous year when there were 72,800. Applications for dependant study visas fell by 80% from 32,900 in the first quarter of 2023 to just 6,700 in the same period in 2024.

From Jan 1, most international students starting courses this year were prevented from bringing family members to Britain. "It is not surprising," said Sanam Arora, chair of National Indian Students and Alumni Union UK. "Students have exercised their choice and decided not to study in the UK... This will be quite a blow to the UK universities."

Foreign students can also no longer switch to a work visa before completing their course. The home office has also commissioned the Migration Advisory Committee to carry out a review of the graduate visa, raising fears even this could get restricted, despite the two-year work opportunity being a major draw to Indians.

There has been a 28% drop in the number of applications for health and care visas, falling from 82,900 in the first



TACKLING IMMIGRATION

Migrant voluntarily flies to Rwanda

An unsuccessful asylum-seeker in the UK has voluntarily arrived in Rwanda as the British gov't rounded up the first group of migrants it expects to fly to Kigali this summer. The man, whose nationality was not disclosed, did not arrive under a controversial deal to deport to Rwanda migrants who enter the UK illegally, the deputy spokesman for the gov't said. Last week, UK parliament approved legislation allowing deportations to Rwanda despite criticism from human rights groups that the plan is inhumane. Kemi Badenoch, the UK trade secretary, said the asylum-seeker who chose to leave shows that Rwanda is safe for deportees. The deportee was reportedly paid £3,000 pounds to leave. Badenoch said there is no "cost-free option" for border control. **AP**

arter of 2023 to 59,500 in the same period in 2024. New steps to restrict care workers from bringing dependants came into force on March 11. This doesn't apply to doctors and nurses.

The gov't has repeatedly said it wants to cut net immigration levels, estimated to be 6,72,000. Home secretary James Cleverly said: "This does not mark the end of the road in our plan to cut migration, there is more still to come."

Pak to block SIMs of 500k people for non-submission of tax returns

Omer Farooq Khan | TNN

Islamabad: In a bid to enhance tax compliance, PM Shehbaz Sharif-led gov't has directed the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and other telecom companies to block the mobile phone SIMs of over 500,000 people who have not submitted their tax returns.

The development came a day after Shehbaz pledged at the closing plenary session of the World Economic Forum special conference in Riyadh to enact significant austerity measures and implement long-lasting reforms in order to steer his country out of its current economic crisis.

On Tuesday, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) had directed the PTA and all telecom operators to ensure compliance with the Income Tax General Order (ITGO) with immediate effect. "The FBR has taken decisive action by issuing an order to disable mobile phone SIMs associated with 506,671 individuals... who are not appearing on the active taxpayer list but are obligated to file income tax returns," the FBR said in a statement, adding that telecom operators are mandated to furnish a compliance report to the FBR by May 15 to provide transparency and accountability in the enforcement process. "Until the FBR or the Commissioner of Inland Revenue, whichever has jurisdiction over the individual, restores the SIMs for the aforementioned individuals, they will remain blocked," it added. For 2023, so far only 4.5 million people have filed their annual returns as against 5.9 million in 2022. The gov't had also launched a compulsory tax registration scheme to bring in about 3.2 million retailers who remain outside the tax net.

24 DIE IN CHINA ROAD COLLAPSE



At least 24 people died after part of a highway collapsed due to heavy rains in southern China's Guangdong province on Wednesday, state media said. Guangdong, a densely populated industrial powerhouse, has been lashed by rainstorms in recent weeks, causing severe flooding and landslides in some areas. The downpours have been much heavier than normal and have been linked to accelerating climate change. State news agency Xinhua said that a stretch of road between Meizhou city and Dabu county caved in at around 2.10am (local time), causing 20 vehicles to become trapped and involved a total of 54 people, according to Xinhua. As of 3pm, 24 people have been confirmed dead, and 30 are in hospital, Xinhua said. An aerial photo published by state broadcaster CCTV showed wrecked vehicles lying in a deep muddy pit where the highway once ran. **AP**

Maldives foreign min likely in India next wk in 1st high-level visit since Muizzu took office

Sachin Parashar | @timesgroup.com

Maldives foreign minister Moosa Zameer is likely to visit India this month, TOI has learnt. Both sides are in touch diplomatically to finalise the dates for Zameer's visit but official sources suggested it could happen as early as next week.

If it happens, it will be the first high-level visit by either side since the Maldives' pro-China prez, Mohamed Muizzu, took office last year, defeating his India-friendly predecessor Ibrahim Solih. India's ties with the Indian Ocean neighbour have taken repeated hits since then with Muizzu working to limit defence and security cooperation with India, most notably by asking New Delhi to pull out troops operating Indian choppers in the archipelago and walking out of a bilateral agreement that allowed Indian Navy to carry out hydrographic surveys in Maldivian waters.

The visit will take place in the middle of the Indian parliamentary elections, making Zameer likely the last high-profile foreign dignitary India will host during PM Modi's second term. The visit will also come around the May 10 deadline that Male had set for India to withdraw its troops and replace them with civilians. India reluctantly acquiesced to the demand, keeping in mind the geopolitical importance of the country which is where most of the major Indian Ocean shipping routes pass through and where China has made a dramatic comeback since Muizzu took office.

Muizzu chose China for his first state visit in Jan, becoming the first democratically elected Maldivian prez to travel to the country before visiting India. He signed a number of agreements with Beijing during his visit and another later for free defence assistance from China. The visit will follow the Maldivian parliamentary elections that saw Muizzu's party winning a supermajority in parliament.

Zameer may discuss with his counterpart S Jaishankar the possibility of a visit by Muizzu to India later this year. Maldivian officials had earlier claimed they had proposed a visit by Muizzu to India in Nov, shortly after his oath-taking.

He's also likely to seek leniency from India in the repayment of loans taken by successive Maldivian govts. Muizzu, who wants to "restore" ties with India on the basis of respect for sovereignty, had earlier urged debt relief measures from India for the repayment of "hefty" loans. The two countries are also likely to discuss ways to carry forward defence and security cooperation.

Under new mechanism, no. of H-1B lottery registrations for FY '25 falls by 38% to 4.7L

Lubna Kably | @timesgroup.com

The recently concluded H-1B cap lottery season for fiscal 2025 (year ending Sept 30, 2025) saw the number of eligible registrations plunging to 4.7 lakh, as against 7.6 lakh in the previous season, a decline of 38%.

This decline does not denote lack of interest in the H-1B visas but reflects that beneficiary-centric system of registration — implemented for the first time in the fiscal 2025 random selection process — has helped mitigate misuse via multiple registrations by sponsoring employers acting in concert with each other. The count

of eligible registrations excludes duplicate registrations, those deleted by the prospective employer prior to the close of the registration period, and those with failed payments.

In the recently concluded selection process, US Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) selected 1.14 lakh beneficiaries (individuals sponsored for the H-1B visa by American employers), in order to meet annual H-1B quota of 85,000.

Mitch Wexler, partner at Fragonome, a global immigration law firm, explains, "The record 7.6 lakh registrations last year had raised concerns about abuse of the H-1B cap registration system and prompted intro-

duction of the beneficiary-centric mechanism. The fiscal 2025 numbers also show a significant decline in the number of multiple registrations, which was also a factor of concern last year."

Post a change in the lottery selection process, all beneficiaries were entered into the lottery just once, based on their passport or travel document number, thus giving each beneficiary an equal chance in the lottery, regardless of the number of registrations submitted on their behalf. Data shows that among the eligible registrations, the number of beneficiaries with multiple registrations was only 47,314 as against 4.08 lakh in last year's cap season.

Paul Auster, 'literary superstar' behind 'The New York Trilogy', dies

New York: Paul Auster, a prolific novelist, memoirist, screenwriter and filmmaker who rose to fame in 1980s with his postmodern reanimation of the noir novel and who endured to become one of the signature New York writers of his generation, died of complications from lung cancer at his home on Tuesday. He was 77.

With his hooded eyes, soulful air and leading-man looks, Auster was often described as a "literary superstar". Times Literary Supplement of Britain once called him "one of America's most spectacularly inventive writers." Though a New Jersey native, he became indelibly linked with the rhythms

of his adopted city, which was a character of sorts in much of his work — particularly Brooklyn, where he settled in 1980.

His reputation was anything but local, however. He took home several literary prizes in France alone. Auster, who had lived in Paris as a young man, became one of those rare American imports to be embraced by the French as a native son. "Merely a bestselling author in these parts, Auster is a rock star in Paris," New York magazine observed in 2007. In Britain, his 2017 novel, "4321", which examined four parallel versions of the early life of its protagonist — as Auster was, a Jewish boy born in Newark in



LIFE FROM PAPER TO SCREEN

Auster also wrote screenplays, some of which he even directed. He co-directed 1995 'Blue in the Face', which had a cameo by Madonna

1947 — was shortlisted for the Man Booker Prize.

His career began to take flight in 1982, with his memoir "The Invention of Solitude", a haunting rumination on his distant relationship with his

recently deceased father. His first novel, "City of Glass", was rejected by 17 publishers before it was published by a small press in California in 1985. The book became the first installment in his most celebrated work, "The New York Trilogy", three novels later packaged in a single volume. It was listed as one of the 25 most significant New York City novels of the last 100 years in T. NYT's style magazine. The trilogy, which included "City of Glass", "Ghosts" and "The Locked Room", was a postmodern detective saga in which names and identities blur and one protagonist is a private eye named Paul Auster.

Writing six hours a day, often seven days a week, he pumped out a new book nearly annually for years. He ultimately published 34 books, accounting for shorter works that were later incorporated into larger books, including 18 novels and several acclaimed memoirs and assorted autobiographical works, along with plays, screenplays and collections of stories, essays and poems.

By the 1990s, Auster had set his sights on Hollywood. He wrote several screenplays, some of which he directed. Auster co-directed 1995 "Blue in the Face", sprinkled with cameos by a host of stars, including Lou Reed musing on cigarette

and Madonna delivering a saucy singing telegram. Auster would go on to write and direct "Lulu on the Bridge" (1998), about a jazz saxophonist whose life takes a turn when he's hit by a stray bullet at a New York club; and "The Inner Life of Martin Frost" (2007), about an author who retreats to a friend's country house for solitude, only to become entranced by a woman there.

Auster at times expressed irritation that much of his career had been assessed in relation to "The New York Trilogy". "Even so... I don't think in terms of 'best' or 'worst.' Making art isn't like competing in the Olympics, after all." **NYT, AP**

AROUND THE WORLD



200 MAY DAY PROTESTERS HELD IN TURKIYE: Turkish police detained 210 people on Wednesday, interior minister Ali Yerlikaya said, after using tear gas and rubber bullets to stop the protesters from reaching Taksim Square, the traditional focal point of May Day rallies in Istanbul. International Labour Day is observed on May 1

Trudeau's oppn rival calls him 'wacko', ejected from parliament

Canada's main opposition politician Pierre Poilievre was ejected from the House of Commons Tuesday after he called Justin Trudeau a "wacko prime minister".



Poilievre called Trudeau an extremist and a radical over his liberal gov't's support for the decriminalisation of the possession of small amounts of cocaine, heroin, fentanyl and other hard drugs in British Columbia. The province said last week it would dial back the

pilot project after an outcry over soaring drug use. "When will we put an end to this wacko policy by this wacko prime minister?" Poilievre asked. Speaker Greg Fergus urged the Conservative Party member several times to withdraw the question, reminding MPs "to carry themselves in a way that is dignified in this House". Poilievre refused and in a rare move was ordered out of the Commons. He was followed out the door by his entire caucus. Later on social media, he used the term wacko another 6 times to describe Trudeau and his policies. Poilievre was elected in 2022 by railing against inflation and Covid vaccine mandates, as well as backing a trucker-led protest convoy that occupied Ottawa in Feb of that year. With only one year until the next scheduled election, Poilievre leads Trudeau in public opinion polls. **AFP**

India Pips China To Become Biggest Market For Electric 2 & 3-Wheelers

India became the biggest seller of electric three-wheelers last year. Previously, China — a quick adopter of electric mobility in general — had seen higher annual three-wheeler EV sales

Three-wheeler EV sales picked up in India in 2023, rising almost two-thirds in just a year to 0.6mn units

The market for electric two-wheelers is bigger globally, with almost 8mn units sold last year

TIMES BUSINESS



Godrej camps can't compete for 6 yrs, except in realty biz

Both Family Groups Can Use Godrej Brand In New Ventures

Reeba.Zachariah
@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: The Godrej family has agreed not to compete among themselves for six years except in the real estate business, following a split in the 127-year-old locks-to-land development group. After the non-compete period, they are free to venture into each other's domain but not under the Godrej brand.

Adi Godrej and his younger brother Nadir, as part of the family settlement agreement, will have exclusive rights to use the Godrej brand in FMCG (cosmetics, cleaning supplies, toiletries, foods, beverages), financial services, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, and chemicals businesses.

Their cousin Jamshyd and his sister Smrita Crishna will have exclusive rights to use the Godrej brand in defence, consumer durables, medical devices, construction materials, interior design, electric mobility,

LOOKS & LOCKS: BRAND RIGHTS SPLIT

- Adi & Nadir Godrej family group**
FMCG, agri biz, foods, oils & fats, chemicals & fertilisers
- Jamshyd Godrej & Smrita Crishna group**
Aerospace, defence, furniture, heavy engineering, appliances & locks

After a six-year non-compete period, a family group can enter into exclusive biz of other group, provided 'Godrej' brand isn't used

From promoters to public shareholders

Mumbai: Siblings Jamshyd Godrej and Smrita Crishna will be classified as public shareholders once the ownership realignment in Godrej group's listed entities is completed.

Currently, they are part of the promoter group in listed Godrej entities. According to Sebi rules, if a promoter wants to be classified as a public shareholder, they cannot own more than 15% in a listed entity. According to the family settlement agreement, Jamshyd and Smrita, who are classified as promoters of listed Godrej companies, will become eligible to be classified as public shareholders after the completion of the realignment and will make an application for the same. — Reeba Zachariah

software services and security products businesses. However, both groups can use the brand name in the real estate develop-

control the listed Godrej Properties.

None of the Godrej group companies will have to pay royalty for the brand. The non-compete period came into play on April 30. According to the agreement, after the six-year period, "a family group can enter into the exclusive business of the other family group, without the use of the Godrej brand including in their corporate names".

Both the groups, however, can venture into areas where neither has a presence, using the Godrej brand with group-level differentiators, as these have been agreed upon as shared spaces for business. For instance, medical services, hospitals, hospitality and education.

Non-compete covenants are standard in family settlement agreements. In March, the TVS family executed a memorandum of understanding to avoid competition among themselves for a defined period.

Jamshyd, Smrita keep construction rights on 3,000-acre Godrej land

Reeba.Zachariah@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: As part of a family settlement, siblings Jamshyd Godrej and Smrita Crishna will hold exclusive construction rights over 3,000-odd acres of land holdings under Godrej & Boyce Manufacturing Company in Mumbai's eastern suburbs, making G&B the biggest private landowner in Mumbai.

The land was an issue of contention as Godrej Properties Ltd (GPL), which will be fully controlled by Jamshyd and Smrita's cousins Adi and Nadir Godrej, has benefited from G&B's holdings.

In a statement on Wednesday, G&B and GPL said the two will continue their association for development of land in Vikhroli owned by the former, as and when they desire to do so. While G&B will design and construct projects on the land,

YOU READ IT HERE

Godrej clan split over group's biz roadmap

Godrej fourth gen looks to chart separate paths

GPL will market them, a source said, adding "GPL will earn 10% of the net sales of the development on the land".

A significant part of the 3,000-acre sprawl is covered with mangroves which are protected, but nearly 1,000 acres of it can be developed. The family has held these land parcels since the early 1940s after winning them in a government auction and acquiring adjoining plots over the decades. This developable land is estimated to be worth Rs 1 lakh crore.

A 2015 survey by the state's Slum Rehabilitation Authority showed that nine private landowners and private trusts control around 6,600 acres in Mumbai, whose limits stretch from Colaba to Dahisar in the western suburbs and up to Mulund in the eastern suburbs.

The F E Dinshaw Trust (controlled by Wadia Group chairman Nusli Wadia) owns 683 acres of land in Malad while the Pratap Singh Surji Vallabhdas family controls 647 acres in Bhan-

dup, showed the survey, which is the last available findings by a state authority.

According to the Godrej family settlement pact, both branches of the family can use the Godrej brand across the spectrum of real estate businesses—from design to development to marketing of projects and for facilities management services.

However, the agreement restricts G&B from buying additional land for developing residential projects though it can buy land for its in-house requirements like setting up a manufacturing facility. In other words, G&B can only use its existing land banks to develop residential projects. This existing land bank would include holdings outside Vikhroli, for which G&B will control everything—from development to sales of projects, the source added.

No cancellation of gilt auction in FY24

Partha.Sinha@timesgroup.com

Mumbai: Strong demand for India's sovereign bonds and good coordination between govt and RBI ensured that for the first time in nearly 20 years, there was neither devolvement nor any cancellation of bond auctions during FY24. According to bond market players, this could play as a positive kicker for Indian gilts once they are included in bond indices by JP Morgan and Bloomberg, starting next month.

The devolvement of an auction happens when, due to lack of interest from buyers of gilts, primary dealers (authorised brokers in govt securities market) are obligated to buy the unsold part of the auction from RBI. The last time this happened was in FY06, RBI said in its recent monetary policy document.

In FY24, the absence of devolvement or cancellations came against the backdrop of he-



and proactive management of food supply in the economy not only supported growth through investment demand but also helped in containing inflation, along with a relatively stable currency, they added.

RBI's proactive liquidity management, lower-than-expected domestic consumer inflation and the proposed inclusion of Indian govt bonds in JP Morgan and Bloomberg global indices elevated the demand for G-Secs. This has helped the benchmark yield on 10-year papers within a relatively narrow range of 6.95% to 7.35%. In comparison, the yield on US 10-year govt papers fluctuated between 3.3% to 5%.

In FY24, the yield on Indian 10-year paper also exhibited a softening bias. Also, there was no devolvement or cancellation of auctions despite record high gross borrowing of around Rs 15.4 lakh crore, RBI data showed. In compari-

son, in FY23, about Rs 10,000 crore worth of sovereign bonds had devolved while it was nearly Rs 1 lakh crore in FY22 and Rs 1.3 lakh crore in FY21, data from RBI showed.

Bond market players expect govt and the central bank to continue to maintain the high quality of coordination during the current fiscal. This is expected to boost growth and come in as a positive factor for foreign and domestic fixed income investors.

"Govt's intention towards credible and sustainable fiscal management with continued thrust on infrastructure and RBI's vigilance on domestic price stability while ensuring proactive liquidity and exchange rate management are likely to provide strong foundation for sustainable growth over medium term," said Ram Kamal Samanta, senior VP (investment), Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance.

'GST mop-up reflective of better biz compliance'

From P 1

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman tweeted, "GST collection crosses Rs 2 lakh crore benchmark, thanks to the strong momentum in the economy and efficient tax collections. Congratulations to the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs, dept of revenue, all officers at the state and central levels. Their sincere and collaborative efforts have achieved this landmark".

It started with the crackdown on bogus registration and fake invoices along with tightening of norms, with data analytics playing a key role.

"These collections got to the tipping point in the GST collection trajectory. While some part of the increased collections are attributable to the financial year-end upswing, it is also reflective of significant im-



provements in compliance by businesses. The relentless focus on audits by central and state GST authorities together with periodic drives to stamp out evasion has led to this," said MS Mani, partner at Deloitte India.

Among states, Mizoram led the growth charts with a 52% jump in April, while Sikkim (down 5%), Nagaland (3% lower) and Meghalaya and J&K (2% fall) lagged. Among the bigger states, UP recorded a 19% increase, followed by Maharashtra and Gujarat (13% each), Karnataka (9%) and Tamil Nadu (6%).

"With the next wave of GST reforms expected after the formation of a new govt, growth may be further accelerated. It may also enable the govt to take bolder decisions, such as rate rationalisation or bringing products such as ATF and natural gas under GST ambit," said Parthik Jain, partner at PwC India.

Flush with funds, VCs scout for startup deals

With \$25Bn Of India-Focused Capital Sitting Unallocated, Pressure On Investors To Deploy

Asmita Dey & Yogesh Kabirdoss | TNN

Mumbai/Chennai: After a brief period of lull, investors seem to have actively started scouting for deals and cutting cheques for Indian startups.

Of late, both global and domestic venture capital (VC) and private equity (PE) investors including the likes of US-based Norwest Venture Partners have raised new funds. A sizeable amount of this capital is earmarked for India and there is pressure on investors to deploy.

LVMH-backed PE fund L Catterton, for instance, is launching a new investment vehicle which will fund consumer-focused Indian firms. In fact, an estimated \$25 billion of India-focused capital is sitting unallocated, according to industry executives. Moreover, with China facing a slow-down, India has become more palatable for investors within the broader Asia market.

PE-VC funding sure still lags—data sourced from market research firm Venture Intelligence showed that investments in the January-April period stood at \$8.1 billion, lower than \$12.3 billion during the year-ago period. However, with enough capital, new fund launches by investors and ecosystem stability setting in, second half is expected to see significant deal momentum. Last week, Norwest Venture Partners closed a \$3 billion fund, a portion of which will be used to make investments in India alongside US and Israel. The company which has been operational in India since 2005 and has backed unicorns like Swiggy and OxBusiness typically invests \$250-\$300 million in the country annually. Earlier this year, Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin's B Capital raised a \$750mn fund to bet on late stage tech cos with focus on Asia and North America

Homegrown VC fund IvyCap Ventures made final close of its

lion fund to bet on late stage tech companies with focus on Asia and North America. Indian startups Meesho, PharmEasy and Khatabook are among its portfolio firms.

"The general sense is that we will start seeing a sustained recovery on a YoY basis starting in the second half of 2024. In the VC segment, home

GAIN AMID CHINA SLOWDOWN

Norwest Venture Partners raised \$3bn fund — to be deployed in India alongside the US and Israel

Facebook co-founder Eduardo Saverin's B Capital raised a \$750mn fund to bet on late stage tech cos with focus on Asia and North America

Homegrown VC fund IvyCap Ventures made final close of its

Startup funding during Jan-April	No. of deals	Amount (\$ bn)
2023	302	12
2024	294	8

In 2023, 810 deals worth \$32bn took place

fund III, raising ₹2,100cr

L Catterton's new investment vehicle will fund consumer-focused Indian firms

grown firms like Blume Ventures, Fireside Ventures and Anicut Capital, are taking new bets in recent months," said Arun Natarajan, founder at Venture Intelligence.

For L Catterton, there has never been a better time to deepen its India commitment given the country's huge population and high GDP growth, said global co-CEO Michael Chu. The company's Asia platform has formed a joint venture partnership with former Hindustan Unilever chief Sanjiv Mehta to drive its India strategy. Gurgaon-based institutional investor Oister Global has recently launched a Rs 440 crore fund, a significant part of which will fund tech startups. The company will not directly invest in a startup but instead route its funding through investments in VC and PE funds.

Petrol demand up 12% in April, diesel sales dip 2%

Sanjay.Dutta@timesgroup.com

New Delhi: The elections have failed to propel diesel consumption out of the slow lane but boosted demand for petrol, jet fuel and cooking gas in April. Heat wave conditions sweeping through large tracts of the country also jacked up electricity use by double digits, govt data showed.

Preliminary sales data of state-run fuel retailers, which serve 90% of the market, put diesel demand—a key indicator of economic activities—as falling 2.3% in April from a year ago. This is the second

consecutive month of sales falling annually. Sequentially, however, sales were 7.2% higher than March.

In contrast, petrol consumption shot up 12.3% compared to the year-ago period, while demand for jet fuel rose 7% and LPG, supplied to households as cooking fuel, jumped 12% over the same time.

Power consumption shot up by over 11% to push peak power demand to 224 gigawatts (GW) against 215.8 GW in April 2023, as people switched on cooling equipment to beat the heat.

Contrary to expecta-

tions, diesel sales did not pick up due to electioneering by parties, large-scale movement of security forces and polling personnel. Industry watchers blamed it on poor traction from the agriculture sector after harvesting, spaced out polling and people's preference for personal transport—the latter also boosting petrol sales, particularly from people driving to cooler climes to escape the heat.

Aviation fuel also got a boost from early start of holiday season at the end of school exams, the heat wave and marriages.

Daily average UPI payments at new high in April

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

Mumbai: The volume and value of UPI transactions slightly decreased in April from their all-time high level in March. However, the average daily transactions reached a new high, indicating that the switchover of UPI services from Paytm Payments Bank to its parent did not cause any significant disruption.

According to data from the National Payments Corporation of India (NPCI), the number of UPI transactions in April equaled 1,330 crore — a 50% increase from the previous year. The value of transactions stood at Rs 19.6 lakh crore, a 40% increase year-on-year.

Compared to March, however, transactions dipped marginally from 1,344 crore (Rs 19.8 lakh crore). However, average daily transactions were marginally higher, reaching a new record

of 44.3 crore transactions a day, and averaging a value of Rs 65,933 crore.

NPCI has said that its systems can support 100 crore daily transactions, and that the number is expected to be reached by 2026 due to increased awareness, deeper penetration, and the over one crore Indians reaching adulthood every year.

In contrast, FASTag transactions—seen as a reflection of activity in the real economy—grew at a much slower pace. For the month of April, FASTag transactions stood at 32.8 crore (Rs 5,592 crore), an increase of 8% in volume and 9% in value over the year-ago period.

Meanwhile, IMPS (Immediate Payment System) transactions have also grown. In April, there were 55 crore transactions totaling a value of Rs 5.9 lakh crore—a year-on-year increase of 14% in volume and 11% in value.

Car sales growth flat on high base

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Passenger vehicle sales kicked off new fiscal on a flat note with around 3.4 lakh units sold in April, impacted by the high base effect and muted demand due to the ongoing general elections.

Dispatches of passenger vehicles from manufacturers to dealers were at 3.4 lakh units in April as compared to 3.3 lakh units in the year-ago period, an increase of nearly 3%. Major players Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai and Tata Motors reported marginal growth in their domestic wholesales.

The flat growth witnessed in April is due to the high base that the industry had last year, coupled with the impact of ongoing general elections, Maruti Suzuki India senior executive officer, marketing & sales, Partho Banerjee said.

"We have started on a very high base this year... Right now, the country is going through elections and there is a model code of conduct. During elections, the markets are a little muted," he said.

Google CEO Pichai nears billionaire status

Alphabet CEO Sundar Pichai is on the cusp of achieving a rare milestone for a non-founder tech executive: a 10-figure fortune.

Since Pichai, 51, became CEO of Google in 2015, the stock has surged more than 400%, significantly outperforming the S&P 500 and Nasdaq over the same period. It hit a fresh record on Friday after the company's first-quarter earnings beat expectations, boosted by AI-driven growth in its cloud computing unit. It also introduced a dividend for the first time in its history.

That rally, alongside hefty stock awards that have

\$1 Billion: Rare Milestone For A Non-Founder Tech CEO

Since Sundar Pichai (51) became CEO of Google in 2015, the stock has surged over 400%, outperforming S&P 500 (140%) and Nasdaq (280%)

Alphabet stock hit a new record after earnings beat expectations, boosted by AI-driven growth in cloud biz

That rally, alongside hefty stock awards that have made Pichai one of the world's highest-paid execs, has boosted his fortune to

nearly \$1bn, according to Bloomberg

While Alphabet has been criticised for its AI offerings and some investors have questioned its ability to compete with ChatGPT-maker OpenAI, last week's earnings provided reassurance that its spending is starting to pay off

With a \$2bn net worth (Forbes), Apple CEO Tim Cook is another rare non-founder tech billionaire. Google co-founders Larry Page & Sergey Brin, who have a combined net worth of about \$300bn, are among the 10 richest people in the world

Pichai was selected in 2015 by co-founder Larry Page to be Google's CEO, while





A thought for today

Raising awareness vs raising alarm – the public can't be better informed if the information isn't better

TK NALIKA

Sweating The Turnout

Above-normal heatwave days were forecast in advance. Poll logistics can't escape changing climate

It's been a scorching summer so far in south India. April heat, as measured by average maximum temperatures, was the second highest since 1901. This seems to have had an effect on voter turnout in the ongoing LS polls.

Dip in states | In the seven-phase polls two states, TN and Kerala, finished voting for all seats in the first two phases. EC data shows that the turnout in both states has dipped in relation to 2019, with the fall in Kerala exceeding six percentage points. It's not possible to attribute turnouts to the influence of a single factor, but EC's media statements have identified heatwaves as an aspect that can influence enthusiasm.

Forewarned | By March 1, IMD's forecast for the summer said that India would experience above-normal number of heatwave days and maximum temperatures in most parts. The decision to spread polling over an unusually long duration of six weeks seems puzzling in this context, as even back in March it was almost certain that heatwaves would influence turnouts in some regions.

Future view | Sizzling summers are here to stay on account of climate change. A GOI monograph on heatwaves published in 2023 said that mortality due to heatwaves is higher than any natural hazard in different parts of the world. It estimated that a severe heatwave over southeastern India in May 2015 claimed over 2,500 lives.

Mitigation measures | By the second phase, EC held a meeting with IMD to gauge the likelihood of heatwaves and also set up a task-force to deal with these. It was a proactive step. But EC's measures are constrained by the limited physical space, such as polling booths, in which it can take mitigation measures. Voters need to get there and also wait, which exposes them to harsh conditions. Moreover, none of these mitigation measures can help the mass of political party workers, who keep having to campaign in testing conditions.

India's climatic patterns are undergoing a change. Peak power demands are surging and health risks increasing. Institutions such as EC should adapt better to the new reality.



Cops Need Schooling

Bomb hoaxes are cybercrimes that need cross border police action. India needs to catch up

Yesterday, schools in Delhi received emails about bombs on their premises. Delhi Police contacted all schools who were told to check emails. Close to 200 schools in Delhi-NCR reportedly received such mail. Obviously, there was prompt dismissal of class, parents told to pick up their wards. Schoolbags in some cases had to be left behind for police audits.

Parents' trauma | Schools telling parents there may be a bomb in school is heart-stopping news. Telling them not to panic is moot, till it's known for sure the mail is a hoax. Within hours, news was indeed out that it was a 'bomb hoax'. Still, parents across Delhi raced mid-morning to ferry kids back, as schools had dispersed.



Keeping your head | Not all panicked. Some assured parents no such mail/ call was received, school was safe but parents could take wards home if they so desired. Bomb hoaxes are not new – schools are routinely targeted by delinquents. But mass bomb hoaxes are a different beast and here to stay.

Third in 3 months, 3 cities | The Delhi hoax came within three weeks of a similar one in Kolkata early April, and a Chennai hoax early Feb. Around 200 govt and private schools in Kolkata were warned about bombs on premises via email. In Chennai, 13 schools received such mails. Investigations are underway but there are issues. It is near-impossible to trace such mails to their origin, given the cascade of VPNs that jump country to country the sender(s) used.

Transborder crime? | Investigations should not peter out over absence of cooperation mechanisms for cross-border probes and sharing of electronic evidence, a challenge in the best of times. India has MLATs with just about 42 countries, and not necessarily for cybercrime investigations. Tracing such offenders, in the shortest possible time is key. India is also not a signatory to the Budapest Convention on Cybercrime whereby countries can investigate jointly and share e-evidence. Mass bomb hoaxes in schools and hospitals are a new scourge, wherever the origin. GOI needs to step up on enabling transborder cybercrime investigations to nip this in the bud.

Meta-Worse

Forget fractured vote. Pity ditto voter

Bachi Karkaria



My metaverse is currently less Zuckerberg, more Iyengar. What began with Zubin Sir culminated with Birjoo Sir. In the early '90s, I signed up with Zubin Zarthoshtimaneh. The unlikely name was attached to an appropriately yogenic figure complete with tilak stretching across a glowing, high brow.

Some 30 years on, the Iyengar school hasn't much succeeded in taking the 'I' out of me. But in the first fortnight itself I learnt more anatomy than asana. Metatarsals, along with deltoids, triceps, rotator cuff, even 'eye of the elbow'. It was a bit of a stretch: not only did I discover (painfully) the location of all these guys lurking within me, I discovered (embarrassingly) that they were all as uncoordinated as a hippie wardrobe. They would certainly not fit in today's fashion trend of 'coords' – which actually look like you've stepped out in your pyjama-suit.

When Mumbai's rapacious real estate forced Zubin Sir's classes into *savasana*, I'd signed up at another Iyengar centre. Last week on the way there, I rediscovered my metatarsal even more painfully – I fractured it. On a cratered road, where I usually concentrate body-mind-soul, I tripped, took a 180-degree toss, and came down in, uhhm, a *thudasana*.

erratica | With help, I limped to my class. Fortunately, it was that of Birjoo Sir, who has taught me as much about quantum physics, knows every nerve and neuron, and has brought a truant tendon to heel with one rightly tightly tied belt. Serving me hand over foot, he figured out the problem, banded it and had me driven home. So it was back to old familiar ortho and OT. Kicking myself for this expensive stupidity was highly inadvisable.

Fractured metatarsal is mega-pain in gluteus maximus aka butt. That it's the extreme right one of my right foot is definitely no reflection of my political views. However, my hobble does mirror the increasingly one-legged race, where everyone has slipped into dog pose and indulged in *barkasana* – if not already exulting with *ujjayi pranayama*, the victorious breath. But, I can still put my foot down, flex rightful indignation over the *bakwasana*, even jump recklessly into controversies – meta-phorically.

Alec Smart said, "Doctoring is no surprise when the whole campaigning is so sick."

Not Just Patanjali In The Dock

It has taken continual SC push for the company to apologise. But misleading ads are rampant across the pharma industry. Commercial interests widely prevail over public health interests

Kishor Patwardhan



The concept of evidence-based medicine is built upon three pillars: patient's choice, physician's experience, and available recent evidence. Misinformation undermines all three and this is what makes the Patanjali case ongoing in Supreme Court, critical.

SC impact | In an affidavit filed before SC this week, the Uttarakhand state licensing authority said it has suspended the manufacturing licences of 14 products of Patanjali Ayurved Ltd and its sister concern Divya Pharmacy. What is of note is that this action was only initiated after SC criticised the state authority sharply, for its inaction against Patanjali.

Backstory | In Nov 2023, Patanjali assured SC it would "henceforth" not violate any law "relating to advertising or branding of products manufactured and marketed by it and, further, that no casual statements claiming medicinal efficacy or against any system of medicine will be released to the media in any form." But the company kept publishing misleading ads – falsely promising cures for many health conditions, including hypertension and diabetes, while also criticising Western medicine for its failures.

In Feb this year, SC issued a contempt notice against Patanjali for continuing to publish ads of products in violation of the Drugs and Magic Remedies (Objectionable Advertisements) Act, 1954 and its Rules, despite the Nov undertaking given to court. Subsequently, Patanjali was also required to publish an unconditional apology in major newspapers.

Going beyond Patanjali | Its ads also claimed to have demonstrated the efficacy of their formulations through research. The problem with many such research citations is that the studies lack the required rigour, and are insufficient to substantiate their claims of 'curing' various diseases and ailments.

A specifically ayurveda challenge | This particular pharma industry has an issue related to patents and proprietary medicines. These formulations are not documented in classical ayurveda textbooks but contain ingredients mentioned therein, in varying doses and

combinations. Nor are the safety and efficacy standards set by various state authorities for granting licences to proprietary formulations very stringent.

With the safety of formulations directly documented in classical ayurveda textbooks already a subject of debate due to heavy metal and other potentially toxic ingredients, newer formulations require reliable data before they are marketed. Tellingly, when UP recently banned over 30 ayurveda products, it was after many were found to be adulterated with steroids, painkillers, and oral hypoglycemic agents. Ayurveda establishment needs to

clots that can lead to deep vein thrombosis, heart attacks and strokes. This side-effect is known for all adenovirus vector-based vaccines and many countries either stopped or age-restricted these vaccines as soon as this adverse effect became known.

Similarly, the Prescription Medicines Code of Practice Authority of UK recently ruled that Pfizer had promoted its unlicensed Covid vaccine on Twitter, without disclosing anything about adverse events associated with it. The company was fined and its UK spokesperson said, "The company is deeply sorry" and that it "fully recognises and accepts the issues highlighted by this PMCPA ruling".

In the third example that should draw our attention to public health concerns, EU food safety authorities have flagged the presence of cancer-causing ethylene oxide in more than 500 food products exported from India.

Taming the titan | While industry contributes to a nation's economy, striking a balance between commercial interests and public health is crucial. Health cannot be taken for a ride at any cost by industry. Electoral bond data further points to a possible nexus between the pharma industry and political parties. And it is certainly the case that simple non-pharma interventions like lifestyle changes, physical activity, and dietary modifications often fail to capture public attention because there is no one to advertise them!

Educate, educate, educate | Back to the concept of evidence-based medicine. In India, this is undermined because a patient's choice regarding healthcare is usually uninformed. It is often driven by misinformation, which is rampant over social media, or by other compulsions imposed by circumstances such as poverty and illiteracy. Ayush and modern medicine sectors operating in silos makes this 'informed choice' virtually impossible. Promoting Ayush as having 'no side effects' or offering 'absolute cure' while its practitioners deny its limitations, has misled and harmed the public. Ayush establishment must prioritise 'evidence generation' over 'popularisation' to ensure informed decision-making and improve healthcare outcomes. Making authentic info about health easily accessible to all citizens is a challenging task. However, that is the only way out.

The writer is Professor of Ayurveda, Banaras Hindu University. Views are personal



undertake a serious relook at the issue of spurious and adulterated products, to avoid further risk to public health.

Going beyond ayurveda | This problem is hardly limited to the Ayush sector. Actions that undermine public health in favour of commercial interests have been seen across the pharma industry in recent years. This is the debate that needs to be prioritised, instead of solely focusing on Patanjali.

Recent scares | Consider some recent cases that highlight the conflict between industry and public health. British-Swedish multinational pharma company AstraZeneca recently admitted in court papers that its Covid vaccine can lead to a "rare" side-effect: Thrombosis with thrombocytopenia syndrome. TTS can form blood

US Universities Look Like Battlezones. Here's Why

Students got mad when the first protests led to suspensions. Police action made it worse. Now, politicians have joined in, given this is a presidential election year

Ananya Khera

The Israel-Palestine question, charges of anti-Semitism and Islamophobia, and fights over free speech are tearing US universities at the seams. The latest escalation began at Columbia University, where president Minouche Shafik called the police – rather than campus security – on students. The students had been protesting the Gaza violence, and for their universities to divest from companies that profit from Israeli occupation. The last time the university called the police on protesting students was in 1968, at the peak of protests against the Vietnam War.

How did protests spread across American campuses? | This drastic action at Columbia sparked demonstrations of solidarity across the country by student groups and some faculty members, with encampments at NYU, Yale, MIT, Brown, UT Austin, Emory, USC and many others. More than 1,000 protesters have been arrested. Graduation ceremonies have been cancelled at some institutions, classes have moved online in others.

Universities have taken a dim view of the demonstrations. Powerful pro-Israel voices, right-wing politicians and media have smeared the protests as displaying violent intent towards Israel, support to Hamas, and anti-Semitism. The pro-Palestine student groups have explicitly distanced themselves from all forms of hate and bigotry; they also include many Jewish students and teachers.

What has been the reaction of authorities? | This confrontation began building right after the Oct 7 attack by Hamas. Student groups in support of Palestine were suspended at many universities, including Harvard. USC prohibited valedictorian Asna Tabassum from delivering her commencement speech because she had linked to a page criticising Zionism. Students have been arrested for staging sit-ins, for occupying campus buildings.

In Dec, members of a congressional committee grilled the presidents of Harvard, MIT and UPenn, asking them whether calling for an intifada, and using the slogan 'from the river to the sea' – which they

interpreted as a call for genocide of Jews – violated campus policies. The presidents of Harvard and Yale resigned after their cautious answers prompted condemnation. Republican member Elise Stefanik declared her intention to "expose the rot in our most prestigious higher education institutions". Even the White House weighed in, calling the protests anti-Semitic.

Is American politics involved? | This is the latest flashpoint in an ongoing war over higher education. Progressive students have called for more diversity, equity and inclusion in admissions and campus policy. They are alert



to race, gender and power differentials. They call out the complicity of their own institutions. Conservatives call this woke indoctrination. They blame an increasingly diverse faculty for being overwhelmingly liberal. They say universities are diluting the prestige of degrees by trying to create equal opportunity echo-chambers.

Most leading universities in US are private, substantially run by philanthropic donations. Twenty elite institutions get nearly half of the total endowments. These endowments are invested in large companies. Protesting students are seeking transparency about their universities' portfolios, and asking them to divest from businesses aiding injustice in Israel, including weapons and tech firms.

Alumni and donors, who tend to be wealthy and

conservative, are waging their own campaigns against anti-Semitism. Prominent billionaires have cancelled their gifts, with one declaring the whole project of diversity and inclusion 'racist and illegal'. Some finance and law firms have blacklisted protesting students and taken back job offers. Universities are pressured to comply with their mega-donors.

Democratic Party is also caught in a pincer, with Republicans using the campus unrest to polarise, and young progressives rejecting the justifications of the US military-industrial complex and its bond with Israel. Biden lamenting the violence in Gaza, even as he supplies arms to Israel, does not compute for this set of voters.

Will the protests impact American universities in the long term? | US universities have been struggling for a while, as their credibility and worth are questioned from the left and right. Undergraduate enrolment is falling, with a 15% drop between 2010 and 2021. Americans who express confidence in higher education slid from 57% in 2015 to 36% even before this latest face-off. US Supreme Court has banned affirmative action in admissions. Tenure system for faculty is under strain, with much of the teaching load falling on poorly paid adjunct instructors.

The university's traditional commitment to free speech is cracking. Arrests, suspensions and recruitment boycotts have been wielded against the students protesting the merciless assault in Gaza, where 35,000 people have been killed, most of them women and children, where hospitals have been destroyed and aid workers attacked.

What will these protests achieve? | They have certainly wrenched attention to the violence in Gaza and its links to the US establishment. They are a cry of the conscience, much like the student protests against racial segregation or against the Vietnam War. As Berkeley student activist Mario Savio famously said in 1964: "There's a time when the operation of the machine becomes so odious, makes you so sick at heart that you can't take part! You can't even passively take part! And you've got to put your bodies upon the gears and upon the wheels, upon the levers, upon all the apparatus – and you've got to make it stop!"

Calvin & Hobbes



Sacredspace

Your right is to work only and never to the fruit thereof. Do not be the cause of the fruit of action; nor let your attachment be to inaction

Bhagwad Gita, 2:47

Vasuki Indicus And The Divine Serpent

Narayani Ganesh

Vasuki indicus is the name given to the 47 million-year-old, 15m-long fossilised vertebrae of the now extinct longest snake that ever lived, found in a Gujarat coal mine in 2004. Study and research over the years have led scientists to conclude in 2024, that it is a new genus and species of *madtsoiid* snake, 'a relic lineage that originated in India'.

Vasuki is the divine serpent coiled around the neck of Shiva. Moved by his devotion, Shiva chose to wear Vasuki as an ornament. Vasuki's brother Sheshnag, coils himself into the shape of a bed on which Vishnu reclines, protected by a hood-canopy. When devas and asuras planned to churn the ocean of milk to obtain amrit, elixir, Vasuki let them use him as the rope, wound himself around the Mandara mountain, and with devas holding onto one end

and asuras the other, Samudra Manthan – churning of the ocean – became possible.

In different contexts in varied cultures and mythologies, the serpent has been portrayed as good and at other times, as evil. In Biblical and other Abrahamic references, a serpent, believed to be Satan, lured and tempted Eve to eat the forbidden apple in the Garden of Eden, thereby unleashing suffering on Adam and Eve and their descendants, starting from their having to leave their idyllic home.

The serpent is seen as protector and guardian. Many depictions of Gautam Buddha and Mahavir in meditative pose with eyes closed, show them guarded by a snake that forms a canopy with its hood to shelter them from the elements. Many temples have snake carvings as

protectors of the treasures within.

As fertility symbols, snakes are invoked as gods in cultures across the world, with shrines dedicated to them. The Native American Hopi tribe performs snake dance in a fertility festival. In Kerala, Parasuram is believed to have invoked the snake god to convert saline soil into fertile soil. Some see the snake as the umbilical cord that connects us to Mother Earth.

World Health Organisation (WHO)'s symbol is a world map superimposed with a staff that has one snake entwined around it. Whereas a staff with two snakes coiled around it is the symbol for nursing. Asclepius was the ancient god of healing, belonging to a cult in which snakes figured as healing agents. He was so effective as healer that it was feared he would render humans as immortals; therefore, Zeus got him

killed. Hence the snake has been part of medical symbols, as enabler of healing and new life. This belief also stems from the snake's ritual of shedding its old skin and growing a new one, akin to a kind of rebirth.

Circles and spirals are symbols of infinity. Hence the portrayal of a snake with its tail in its mouth, the cosmic ouroboros, denotes birth, death and rebirth, in an infinite circle, a combination of protection, fertility, fear, healing, rejuvenation and new life. Curiously, the double-helix DNA, too, lends itself to this kind of snake symbolism as it coils upward in a spiral, carrying within the blueprint of life. So, too, the Kundalini, Sanskrit for coiled serpent, located at the base of the spine, seat of immense female energy that could be awakened with practices like yoga, mantra chanting and meditation, leading to spiritual awakening.

ganeshnarayani@yahoo.com



THE SPEAKING TREE



At Turn-Friendly Home Bastion, Chennai Batters Falter Against Punjab Spin Duo Of Brar, Chahar

ALWAYS A FIRST TIME! MS Dhoni of CSK is run out by Punjab wicketkeeper Jitesh Sharma at the Chepauk on Wednesday. This is the first time the former captain has been dismissed this season

SCOREBOARD

CSK: A Rahane c Rossouw b Brar 29, R Gaikwad b Arshdeep 62, S Dube lbw b Brar 0, R Jadeja lbw b Chahar 2, S Rizvi c Harshal b Rabada 21, M Ali b Chahar 15, MS Dhoni run out 14, D Mitchell not out 1; **Extras** (lb5, nb1, w12): **18; Total (20 ov; RR: 8.10): 162/7; FoW:** 1-64, 2-65, 3-70, 4-107, 5-145, 6-147, 7-162; **Bowling:** Rabada 4-0-23-1, Arshdeep 4-0-52-1, Curran 3-0-37-0, Brar 4-0-17-2, Chahar 4-0-16-2, Harshal 1-0-12-0

PBKS: P Singh c Gaikwad b Gleeson 13, J Bairstow c Dhoni b Dube 46, R Rossouw b Thakur 43, S Singh not out 25, S Curran not out 26; **Extras** (lb1, nb2, w7): **10; Total (17.5 ov; RR: 9.14): 163/3; FoW:** 1-19, 2-83, 3-113; **Bowling:** Chahar 0.2-0-4-0, Thakur 3.4-0-48-1, Gleeson 3.5-0-30-1, Rahman 4-1-22-0, Jadeja 3-0-22-0, Moeen 2-0-22-0, Dube 1-0-14-1

Result: PBKS won by 7 wickets (with 13 balls remaining)

Mayank may miss rest of IPL



INJURY MISMANAGEMENT? The BCCI may give Mayank a pace-bowling contract and take over the pacer's injury management from LSG

New Delhi: Pace sensation Mayank Yadav's participation in the remainder of the IPL round-robin stage is doubtful after he sustained a suspected abdominal muscle tear during the game against Mumbai Indians, making it his second injury breakdown in the past four weeks. The likes of Aussie pace great Brett Lee have criticised the Lucknow Super Giants team management over the handling of Mayank's injury and the timing of his return. However, there is a silver lining for the 21-year-old Delhi bowler as he is all set to be given a pace-bowling contract by the BCCI alongside Umran Malik, Vidwath Kaverappa, Yashraj Vijaykumar, Yash Dyal and Akshay Deep. The contract will place Mayank under the supervision of NCA's sports science and medical team, which will take over injury management from LSG.

Times View

A world-class fast bowler in his playing days, Brett Lee knows what he is talking about. Express pacers like Mayank Yadav are the rarest breed in a cricket-obsessed country like India. He is a potential national treasure and the BCCI should protect and nourish him. It would be indeed unfortunate if he was rushed to club. Club interest and national interest should synergise, not be in conflict with each other, to elevate Indian cricket.

CSK get taste of own medicine

Chennai: Chennai Super Kings have built a home bastion at the Chepauk on the strength of their spin attack. On Wednesday, though, the defending champions ran into the Punjab Kings spin duo of Harpreet Brar (2-17 off 4 overs) and Rahul Chahar (2-16 off 4 overs) as they spun a web around the home-team batters with their guile. On a red-soil surface that had something in it for both spinners and pacers — the pitch was used for the first time this IPL season — left-arm Brar and leggie Chahar bowled with immaculate consistency to restrict Super Kings to a below-par 162-7. It was never going to be enough,

4.12 Economy rate of Punjab's spinners while taking 4 wickets and conceding 33 runs off 8 overs at a strike rate of 12, the least by spinners in any innings this season.

more so with the dew coming in, as Punjab ran away with a seven-wicket win in 17.5 overs. The fact that CSK were missing their Sri Lankan slinger Matheesha Pathirana (out with a niggle) and medium-pace Deepak Chahar — who limped off after bowling two balls — made things all the more difficult. Spinners Ravindra Jadeja and Moeen Ali couldn't make much of an impact with the wet ball as Punjab batters had a party. Jonny Bairstow (46 off 30 balls) and Rilee Rossouw (43 off 23 balls) took on the bowlers to set up the win that leaves CSK in a tricky corner in their chase for a top-four berth.

Earlier, after CSK finished the Powerplay on a high, scoring 32 runs off the last two overs, spinners Brar and Chahar combined to inflict a triple blow on the hosts. While Brar removed Ajinkya Rahane and dangerman Shivam Dube in the ninth over, Chahar sent Ravindra Jadeja packing. What made their partnership special was the fact that they did not concede a boundary in the seven overs which they bowled in tandem. Brought into the attack in the seventh over, Brar delivered a dou-

ble strike, with Dube's dismissal being the highlight. Two balls after the out-of-form Rahane holed out to Rossouw at deep mid-wicket, Dube, on what was a rare off day, was trapped LBW while attempting an ambitious sweep. Piling more misery on CSK, Chahar, who was back in his element, bamboozled Jadeja with a sumptuous leg-break after the southpaw tried to fend it. Chahar later bravely took up the responsibility of bowling the penultimate over and passed the test with flying colours. Besides being economical against MS Dhoni and Moeen Ali, he rattled the Englishman's stumps with another leg-break special. If not for a late charge, Super Kings would have posted an even lower score.

HOW THEY STAND

TEAM	M	W	L	NRR	PTS
RR	9	8	1	0.694	16
KKR	9	6	3	1.096	12
LSG	10	6	4	0.094	12
CSK	10	5	5	0.627	10
SRH	9	5	4	0.075	10
DC	11	5	6	-0.442	10
PBKS	10	4	6	-0.062	8
GT	10	4	6	-1.113	8
MI	10	3	7	-0.272	6
RCB	10	3	7	-0.415	6

'If you go under 10 an over, it feels like a good day'

SRH Skipper Pat Cummins Talks To TOI About The Tectonic Shift In The IPL In Favour Of Batters, How It Isn't A Good Time To Be A Bowler Or Captain & Why The Trend Of High Scores Won't Affect The Upcoming T20 World Cup...

Hyderabad: Sunrisers Hyderabad finished last in 2023 but skipper Pat Cummins, acquired by the franchise for Rs 20.5 cr, and coach Daniel Vettori have effected a remarkable turnaround. Power-hitting like a raging storm, they have posted three 260-plus totals, including the highest IPL total of 287/3. In an exclusive chat with TOI, Cummins says giving their batters the license to express themselves has helped revive the team's fortunes. *Excerpts...*

Having never led in T20s, how did it feel to be asked to lead SRH? What was your first impression of the dressing room?

I was excited. I have not captained in T20 cricket or IPL. I was excited to work alongside Daniel Vettori as coach. I didn't know many of the Sunrisers players or staff but they've been amazing. I didn't have any baggage because I wasn't here for the last two years. For us, it was about committing to a style — about how we wanted to play, a style we thought would give us the best chance of winning. And that has been to be really aggressive with the bat. Travis Heads epitomises how we want to play and that is to go and play with freedom. So, don't overthink it. Don't overcomplicate it. Just go out, play with freedom. That's pretty powerful. Plus, we have variety with the ball.

Please talk about opener Abhishek Sharma's performance...

He's loving batting with Travis Head. Just going out, playing shots. He's naturally aggressive. We've given him the freedom to go and do it his way and take the game on. He's doing really well.

How is it working with Vettori?

I can concentrate on my own game, knowing that as coach he's got everything sorted. He's good strategically. And he's a great people manager. Very hands-on. The team's responding really well to Dan.

With scores over 200 being the norm this season, is it a bad time to be a bowler or captain in the IPL?

Yeah, it feels like a bit of a shift in T20 cricket now. Even five years ago, under eight an over was the aim. Now, if you're bowling some death overs or in the Powerplay, if you go under 10 an over, that feels like a good day. So, it's just readjusting your own expectations and knowing that even if you bowl an over for eight or nine, that could be a



match-winning at the right time. It feels like you've got to have a few more options as a bowler.

What are the options to survive such batting onslaught?

If it's a one-odd game, the sample size isn't big enough. But you look at trends. If you're getting hit the same way over a few games, then maybe you always try and fall back on what makes you a really good bowler. Try and highlight that rather than thinking too much about the bad.

How different is leading in T20s from Tests and ODIs?

Very different. Test cricket is a bit more gradual. In T20 cricket, it can all happen in five minutes. It can be a big over and suddenly the game's changed. So, every ball, you've got to think on your feet. You've got to be really clear on what you want to achieve with that ball or else it can get away from you quickly.

What is your take on the unique 'impact player' rule?

It feels like the batting order is longer now. Obviously, you can play the extra batter. So, you can take a bit more risk being aggressive up top. But as a captain, it feels like you've got five really good bowling options. Sometimes without the impact player rule, it feels like you're trying to find four overs out of all-rounders. I'm 50-50 on it.

Will the trend of high scores in IPL affect the T20 World Cup?

I don't know. The best players in this competition are still the ones that are placed to succeed. I don't think it will affect the World Cup too much.

SRH have struggled while chasing down totals...

Yeah, maybe. We haven't chased a big total yet. It's something we need to get better at.

Sunrisers seek return to swashbuckling ways

Hyderabad: Stung by back-to-back losses, Sunrisers Hyderabad will be keen to get back to winning ways against table-toppers Rajasthan Royals at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium on Thursday. The 2016 champions went down to RCB by 35 runs and suffered an embarrassing 78-run loss to Chennai Super Kings.

As the race for the playoffs intensifies, the Pat Cummins-led side, which now has 10 points, needs to bring their 'A' game against the Royals.

While setting up totals has been their strong suit, Sunrisers seem to come unstuck batting second. Skipper Pat Cummins wants his team to polish their skills in that aspect. Opener Travis Head has not fired in the last two games and a big score from the Australian opener, who tops the batting charts for his side with 338 runs, will help. Abhishek Sharma also needs to be more consistent as a lot depends on the start.

The fragile middle order consisting of Aiden Markram, Heinrich Klaasen, Nitish Reddy and Abdul Samad stood exposed in the last two games. The dip in Klaasen's form (20, 7, 15 in last three outings) compounded their woes.

T Natarajan (13 wickets) has been the pick of the bowlers but the rest have all gone over nine runs per over. In contrast, the

3 SRH won the first three matches vs RR in Hyderabad — by 23 runs on May 17, 2013, 9 wickets on April 9, 2018 and 5 wickets on March 29, 2019 before losing the previous game at this venue by 72 runs on April 2, 2023.

10 wickets taken at 54.6 in 9 games by SRH's opening bowlers this season, the least for any team. In contrast, RR's opening bowlers have bagged 27 wickets at 20.03 in as many matches, the most.

166.01 Batting strike rate of SRH opens this season, the highest for any team.

—Stats: Rajesh Kumar

Royals have been on a roll. With 16 points in their kitty, they are better placed for the playoffs than the other teams. Captain Sanju Samson (385) has led from the front while Riyan Parag (332), Jos Buttler (319) and Yashasvi Jaiswal (249) have all struck form. Jaiswal, who struggled initially, slammed a century against MI.

Spinner Yuzvendra Chahal, who recently became the first to enter the 200-wicket club, has been impressive with 13 scalps.

'BUTTLER WANTS T20 WC-BOUND ENGLAND PLAYERS TO WITHDRAW FROM IPL PLAYOFFS'

London: England captain Jos Buttler has pushed for withdrawal of English players from the IPL playoffs ahead of the T20 World Cup, the team's managing director Rob Key has revealed. The IPL playoffs are scheduled from May 21-26, clashing directly with England's four-match T20I series against Pakistan.

The Buttler-led think tank wants the players to be available for the final phase of preparation before defending champion England take on Ireland at Barbados on June 4. "I asked him (Buttler) very early on in the piece and said, 'Look, as England captain, you're obviously going to have this series against Pakistan. How do you see it?' And straightaway, he said, 'No, no, I want to come back and start getting ready for the World Cup in that series that's just before it,'" Key was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

Buttler, who has hit two centuries for IPL table toppers Rajasthan Royals, will look for an encore with England after having captained them in their second T20 World Cup title win in 2022.

According to Key, he had told the IPL-bound England players to be prepared for the scenario of leaving IPL early in order to be available for the Pakistan series.



JOS BUTTLER

GALLERY

Four Indian boxers march in semis of Asian meet

Astana: Indian pugilists Aryan, Yashwardhan Singh, Priyanshu and Sahil marched into the semifinals with confident wins at the ASBC Asian U-22 & Youth boxing championships here on Wednesday. Aryan gave India a perfect start with a 5-0 unanimous decision win against Uzbekistan's Juraev Shakarboy in the 51kg category. His win was followed by a good show by Yashwardhan (63.5kg), who made a remarkable comeback to grab a 4-1 victory over Iran's Mirahmadi Babaheidari.

Refugee Olympian Lohalith banned after failing dope test: Anjelina Nadai Lohalith, who ran as a refugee athlete in the 1,500 metres at the 2016 and 2021 Olympics, has been suspended after testing positive for the banned drug Trimetazidine (TMZ), the Athletics Integrity Unit said on Tuesday. Lohalith faces a four-year ban from competition.

PCB wants ICC to schedule India's CT qualifying round games in one city: Pakistan cricket authorities have suggested the International Cricket Council to schedule India's qualifying round matches only in one city during the Champions Trophy next year. India could play its initial qualifying round games at Karachi. AGENCIES

Smith, Fraser-McGurk miss out on T20 WC squad

Melbourne: Australia selectors have dropped veteran campaigner Steve Smith for the T20 World Cup and ignored calls to include Jake Fraser-McGurk in their squad despite the young batsman's sensational form in the Indian Premier League (IPL). Smith, a member of Australia's title-winning squad at the 2021 tournament in the United Arab Emirates, played T20s against New Zealand in February but was unable to push his claims further after missing out on an IPL contract.

With more than 16,000 runs in international cricket, Smith has been one of Australia's finest all-format servants and his omission will be a bitter pill for the 34-year-old. Selectors chief George Bailey said there was no room for Smith in a settled top order featuring David Warner, Travis Head and Mitchell Marsh, who was confirmed as captain. "It's probably for Steve to answer what his goals or challenges are going forward and what he wants to achieve in the game," Bailey told reporters in a video call on Wednesday. "I know he still loves playing T20 cricket."

Though uncapped in T20 internationals, 22-year-old Fraser-



BIG RESPONSIBILITY: Mitch Marsh

McGurk had made a strong case for inclusion, scoring 247 runs in five matches for the Delhi Capitals at an astonishing strike rate of 237.50. Bailey said Fraser-McGurk was among players who were part of "long conversations" for the June 1-29 showpiece in the United States and the Caribbean.

But his only hope of playing now rests with injuries occurring in the 15-man squad. Selectors opted for a second spinner in Ashton Agar and picked Cameron Green as a back-up all-rounder while remaining loyal to the core of players

who helped Australia win an unprecedented sixth 50-over World Cup in India last November.

Josh Inglis was included as a reserve wicketkeeper along with the seasoned Matt Wade. Several players have struggled for form in the IPL, while Warner has missed cricket with bone bruising in his hand and all-rounder Glenn Maxwell took a mental and physical break from the game. Bailey shrugged off the concerns, saying he expected everyone to be fit and ready when Australia start their World Cup campaign against cricketing minnow Oman in Barbados on June 5.

Australia have also been grouped with defending champions England along with Namibia and Scotland. The Australians will bid to become the first nation to hold all three major global titles, having also won the World Test Championship last year.

SQUAD: David Warner, Travis Head, Mitchell Marsh (captain), Glenn Maxwell, Tim David, Marcus Stoinis, Matthew Wade, Mitchell Starc, Pat Cummins, Adam Zampa, Josh Hazlewood, Josh Inglis, Ashton Agar, Cameron Green, and Nathan Ellis.

Symonds' kids join 2007 ODI WC champs in naming Aus squad:

Australia honoured the memory of their late all-rounder Andrew Symonds as his children joined prominent members of the 2007 ODI World Cup-winning squad to announce the 15-strong lineup for the T20 World Cup in June, on Wednesday. Symonds was 46 when he lost his life in a car crash in 2022.

On Wednesday, his son Will and daughter Chloe joined the likes of Ricky Ponting, Adam Gilchrist, Michael Clarke and Glenn McGrath in a video announcement of the Australian squad for the upcoming showpiece in the USA and the Caribbean.

Will announced the name of Ashton Agar and made a comment about new skipper Mitchell Marsh, whose name was announced by Ponting, the man who guided Australia to successive world titles in 2003 and 2007.

"I wouldn't like to see the bowlers' average after being whacked by Mitch," Will said cheekily. Chloe joined in to name Mitchell Starc in the squad. "I would hate to be facing your bowling," she said with a wide grin on her face. AGENCIES

Rinku has been made a scapegoat: Srikanth

New Delhi: Former India cricketer Krishnamachari Srikanth hit out at the Indian selection committee for not keeping Rinku Singh in the 15-member squad for the upcoming World Cup 2024 and said that the 26-year-old batter was made the "scapegoat".

Rinku made his T20 debut in 2023 against Ireland, following that he has played 15 matches and 11 innings in which he scored 356 runs at a strike rate of 176.24. The left-handed batter played his last 20-over match for India against Afghanistan in January 2024.

India will begin their T20 World Cup campaign against Ireland on June 05, 2024, at the Nassau County International Cricket Stadium, New York, followed by the marquee clash against Pakistan on June 9 at the same venue. India will then play the USA and Canada on June 12 and 15 respectively.

While speaking on his offi-

cial YouTube channel, Srikanth pointed out Rinku's unbeaten 69-run knock against the Afghan side in the 3rd T20I. He also slammed the Indian selectors and called it a "rubbish" selection.

"He has played match-winning knocks in South Africa. Remember the game against Afghanistan in which Rohit scored a hundred? India were 22 for 4, from there, they scored 212. Rinku played a crucial knock. He has given his all whenever he played for India. This is rubbish, rubbish selection. Why do you need four spinners? You have made the selection to please a few people and you have made Rinku a scapegoat," Srikanth said.

"I am not at all happy. Come on all of you. Rinku has been spoken about all over the world. He has performed in each and every opportunity he has got. How can you drop Rinku?" he added. ANI



SRIKANTH

Vinicius Hits Two As Real Madrid Eye Final After Snatching Draw At Bayern

Munich: Real Madrid have made an art form of striking when least expected. Bayern Munich were so dominant in the Champions League semifinal on Tuesday that it seemed only a matter of time before they scored. But Real Madrid pounced instead.

Vinicius Junior ran onto a brilliant Toni Kroos pass and fired the visitors ahead in the 24th minute with their first chance. "I know that Vini prefers the ball in space than at his feet," Kroos said. "Then he makes his move. He makes the pass easy for me with his run." Real Madrid's knack for scoring goals out of nothing is a trait that plays on rivals' minds as Bayern midfielder Leon Goretzka acknowledged after the teams' 2-2 draw.

"We let Vinicius out our eye for a bit and then there was a huge hole," Goretzka said.

Bayern dominated possession and goal attempts (14-8) but the two-leg series remains wide open ahead of the return semifinal match in Madrid next week. "It's extremely dangerous when they're up front. You always have to have a top defence and of course you can't march forward blindly, no question."

Real Madrid should arguably have gone on to score more after Vinicius opened the scoring. Manuel Neuer made a fine save to deny Kroos and Madrid was in the ascendancy when Leroy Sane equalized with a fierce strike inside the right post and Harry Kane converted a penalty for Bayern. Vinicius scored again after coolly converting a late penalty to level the match. "Real Madrid always makes moves," Vinicius said. "Now we have to concentrate for the 90 minutes, or 120 if needed, at the Bernabeu."

Madrid stars keen on Kroos stay

Toni Kroos has not decided where his future lies but his teammates are hoping he chooses to stay at Real Madrid. Kroos's contract expires in summer after a decade with Real Madrid.

"We train together so much, I know Kroos very well and he knows me very well," explained Vinicius. Vinicius' strike-partner Rodrigo said he would love Kroos to stay. "We always tell him (Kroos) to stay, not just one but many years more, age doesn't matter," Rodrigo told Movistar. "He's so masterful, with such class, I love playing with him, I hope he keeps going." AGENCIES

MATCH STATS

Bayern		R Madrid
52	Possession %	48
14	Shots	10
5	On Target	4
6	Corners	5
11	Fouls	10

VINI MAKES A REAL CASE



5 Vinicius has scored five goals in his past eight matches for Real Madrid

3 Vinicius has now scored in the opening leg of each of Madrid's last three Champions League semifinals

GAME ON: Vinicius Junior celebrates converting a penalty against Bayern Munich

BAYERN (Sane 53, Kane 57-pen)	2
REAL MADRID (Vinicius 24, 83-pen)	2

“I think he can play there (striker) because he has learned to move without the ball and attack the back. Obviously, you have to have a midfielder who gives you the ball like Kroos.”

— Ancelotti, ON VINICIUS PLAYING AS A STRIKER

10 Carlo Ancelotti took charge of his tenth semifinal tie in this competition, equalling Pep Guardiola's competition record.

1 Leroy Sane's strike was his 22nd in the competition — but his first from the round of 16 onwards.

8 Harry Kane's successful penalty ensured he became the first English player to score eight goals in a Champions League campaign.

Kane reveals Bellingham's pre-penalty mind games

Munich: Bayern Munich striker Harry Kane revealed England teammate and Real Madrid midfielder Jude Bellingham tried to upset his penalty routine before taking a crucial spot-kick in Tuesday's 2-2 Champions League semifinal draw.

With England captain Kane standing over the penalty spot, Bellingham walked up to him and whispered in his ear. Kane scored the penalty, sending goalkeeper Andriy Lunin the wrong way, to give Bayern a 2-1 lead, with a late spot-kick from Vinicius Junior levelling the scores.

"In the moment I didn't know what he said. I spoke to him afterwards and he said he told me 'I know you're going to go left'. He was trying to tell the 'keeper. On the pitch I didn't know (what he said). I knew he was there, but I just kind of didn't know what he said."

Kane, who did send the ball left, said he "saw the 'keeper go a bit early and I was able to put it away. Obviously the penalty was nice for me."

The 30-year-old English striker, who joined Bayern from Tottenham Hotspur for around £87 million (\$108.52 million) in August last year, scored his 43rd goal in 43 games for the German side this season.

"It's amazing. We'll play Real Madrid in the semifinal of the Champions League. This is the experience I came here for. It's 0-0. There's one game to take you to Wembley."

Bayern captain Manuel Neuer said: "It's good. We still have everything in our hands."

"We would have liked to have won. Looking at the run of the match, we deserved to leave the field as winners." AGENCIES



TOP NOTCH: Toni Kroos of Real Madrid (L) and Bayern's Leroy Sane interact after full-time

Bayern ready for winner-takes-all tie at Real: Tuchel

Munich: Bayern Munich were victims of Real Madrid's lethal efficiency in Tuesday's 2-2 draw but the Germans are ready to beat them in next week's Champions League semifinal return leg in Madrid, coach Thomas Tuchel said. "Real have done it before, to score twice with two chances. They have the quality to do that. We go to Madrid and the winner takes it all. It is 50-50."

“Jude Bellingham had a cramp, Toni Kroos played a spectacular game but the plan was to try to recover the control of the game by putting fresh legs in. It's an even tie against a great team. It will be another 90 minutes of suffering but in an atmosphere that we know quite well. The fans are going to help us.”

— Carlo Ancelotti, REAL COACH

KEY MOMENTS

- 1st:** Lunin keeps out low Sane strike
- 6th:** Real Madrid goalkeeper denies Kane
- 24th:** Vinicius slots past Neuer from a Kroos pass
- 53rd:** Sane powers in a brilliant goal inside near post
- 57th:** Kane sends Lunin the wrong way with penalty
- 83rd:** Vinicius coolly converts spot-kick

Roma coach has plan to defeat Leverkusen in Europa semifinal

Rome: The Bundesliga title. The record 46-match unbeaten run. The 3-0 shutout of Bayern Munich. Forget about all of that for now. Bayer Leverkusen has been thinking about its next opponent for an entire year.

The German club will be seeking revenge when it visits Roma in the first leg of the Europa League semifinals on Thursday — a rematch from last season at the same stage when Jose Mourinho's Giallorossi advanced to the final.

"We were so close to go to the final last season and we didn't like the way we went out," Leverkusen defender Jonathan Tah said. "So I was actually hoping to play against them again."

Last May, Roma beat Leverkusen 1-0 at the Stadio Olimpico in the first leg before a scoreless draw in Leverkusen. The loss in Rome was Leverkusen's last defeat in Europe and penultimate loss across all competitions before a 3-0 defeat to Bochum in the final round of last season's Bundesliga.

"From the first Europa League game against (Swedish team) Hacken, we spoke about our experience in Rome and now we're back in the same situation, semifinal vs. Roma," Leverkusen coach Xabi Alonso said. "Hopefully we can use this experience well."



CONFIDENT: Daniele De Rossi

In Thursday's other semifinal, Atalanta will go to Marseille. Atalanta had stunned Liverpool in the quarters.

Leverkusen's streak of 46 games without a loss is a record across Europe's "big five" leagues.

But that hasn't stopped Daniele De Rossi — who replaced Mourinho in January as Roma's coach — from believing Leverkusen can be beaten again. "We need to stretch them and move them out of position when they don't have the ball," De Rossi said.

"They have very good players who pass the ball well and they have a lot of dangerous forwards. If you take the ball away from them, they get nervous, they lose balance and they lose their shape. We'll have to play both phases perfectly because if they never lose, and, above all, have the heart to draw (many) games in the final few minutes then they have something special." AGENCIES

Senna remembered on Imola track 30 years after his death

Imola: The 30th anniversary of three-time F1 champion Ayrton Senna's death was commemorated with a memorial on the Imola track, where he crashed during the 1994 San Marino Grand Prix.

Formula One CEO Stefano Domenicali will be joined on Wednesday by politicians from Brazil and Italy, plus a representative from Austria to also recall fellow Formula One driver Roland Ratzenberger, who died a day earlier during qualifying.

At 2:17 pm (12:17 GMT), a minute of silence will be held and flowers laid down at the

Tamburello curve to observe the exact time and place that the 34-year-old Senna crashed into a concrete wall at about 300 kmph (185 mph).

Then, flowers will also be laid down at the Villeneuve corner only slightly further down the track where the 33-year-old Ratzenberger crashed. Ratzenberger's father is among the announced attendees.

Senna, the Brazilian driver who won F1 titles in 1988, 1990 and 1991, was leading the race in Imola when he crashed. Ratzenberger was an F1 rookie from Austria. AP

Fitness issues delay Pak's WC squad announcement

Karachi: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has delayed the announcement of its World Cup squad until late May due to fitness and performance issues with some players. A PCB source said Pakistan would announce its World T20 Cup squad either on May 23 or May 24 — which is the deadline set by the ICC for participating teams to make changes to their squads without seeking permission from the WC Technical Committee.

The management and selectors are concerned over injuries to Muhammad Rizwan, Azam Khan, Irfan Khan Niazi and Haris Rauf.

The selectors will announce the squad for Pakistan's tours of Ireland and England on Thursday.

India, Australia, England, South Africa, New Zealand have all announced their WC squads until now. "It (delay) doesn't matter because all these teams can change their entire squad by 24th May after that changes can only be allowed on fitness or injury basis with approval of the technical committee," he said. "That is why the PCB and selectors have decided to hold off until after the first match in England."

“For the time being we have sent a provisional squad to the ICC for public relations purposes.”

— PCB SOURCE

The source also added that the selectors also wanted to give more time to Babar Azam and other players to settle down and recapture the old bonding in the dressing room before the WC squad is announced. "For the time being we have sent a provisional squad to the ICC for public relations and promotion purposes," the source said. PTI

Probable squad for Ireland & England series: Babar Azam (captain), Muhammad Rizwan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Ifthikhar Ahmed, Azam Khan, Irfan Khan Niazi, Usman Khan, Shadab Khan, Imad Wasim, Usama Mir, Abrar Ahmed, Muhammad Amir, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Haris Rauf, Naseem Shah, Abbas Afridi and Aamir Jamal.

Nadal gets emotional after loss in last Madrid Open appearance

Alcaraz Suffers Defeat In Quarters

Madrid: Rafael Nadal had to pause for a few moments, visibly emotional, while addressing the crowd after his loss in the fourth round at the Madrid Open.

As chants of "Rafa, Rafa, Rafa" echoed around, the five-time champion in Madrid made a farewell speech following a 7-5, 6-4 loss to the 31st-ranked Jiri Lehecka. It was likely his last official match at the tournament in the Spanish capital.

"This is a difficult day when it arrives, but it's a reality. My body and my life had been sending me signs for some time," Nadal said. "I was able to say goodbye playing on this court, one of the most emotional ones for me. Madrid at times has been more important to me than a Slam."

Carlos Alcaraz's bid to win a third straight Madrid Open title ended with a loss to Andrey Rublev in the quarterfinals. The second-seeded Spaniard got off to a good start but then was outplayed by the seventh-seeded



Nadal leaves court after losing his Round of 16 match vs Jiri Lehecka

Rublev, losing 4-6, 6-3, 6-2. World No. 2 Jannik Sinner withdrew from the Madrid Open due to a hip injury, handing a walkover into the semifinals to last-eight opponent Felix Auger-Aliassime.

Bopanna-Ebden pair knocked out: Top-seeded Indo-Australian pair of Rohan Bopanna and Mathew Ebden bowed out of the Madrid Open after a shocking first-round loss to the unheralded duo of Sebastian Korda and Jordan Thompson.

Bopanna and Ebden, who are the reigning Australian Open men's doubles champions, went down 7-6 (4) 7-5.

Happy to finally get the GM title: Vaishali

Chennai: A Grandmaster much before the title was officially bestowed on her by FIDE recently, Indian chess player R Vaishali has revealed that there was a time she was unsure of being able to achieve the feat but managed to pull through owing to a good support structure.

Vaishali completed the requisite 2500 ELO points at Llobregat Open tournament in Spain to become only the third Indian woman after Koneru Humpy and Harika Dronavalli to become a GM.

However, the title was officially given to her only recently following the FIDE Council meeting during the Candidates Tournament in Toronto last month.

"After completing the (Women's GM) title, I knew it would be changed to GM someday. I did not think about the title so much," she told PTI in an interview. "Yeah, it took some time to get it official, but I'm happy that the title is finally out. I was okay with it (the delay)."

The 22-year-old is basking in the glory of her solid performance in the Candidates tournament, where she won five consecutive games to finish joint second.



GREAT GOING: Vaishali R

She became a Woman Grandmaster in 2018 after completing her final norm during the Riga Technical University Open in Riga, Latvia. Having had to wait six years to finally earn the GM tag, Vaishali said she became a bit unsure of the GM tag after her ratings stagnated due to lack of competition during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"In between, I could not play any tournament for two years due to the (Covid-19) pandemic. But, I was working throughout, trying to improve my game. I completed my International Master (IM) cycle post-pandemic (in 2021)," she recalled. "Although I was improving my game slowly, my rating became stagnant. There were some low moments when I felt I might not get the title, but people believed in me and helped me to attain it." PTI

Thomas Cup: India lose last group game, to face China in quarters

Manne.Ratnakar @timesgroup.com

Indonesia beat India 4-1 to top Group C in the Thomas Cup in Chengdu, China on Wednesday. Despite the loss, India and Indonesia qualified for the quarterfinals for the group. India have drawn China in the quarterfinals. China topped Group A and have world No. 2 Shi Yu Qi and the world No. 1 doubles outfit of Lian Wei Keng and Wang Chang in their ranks.

HS Prannoy gave India a winning start but the rest of the Indian squad including Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty failed to deliver.

Prannoy fought back after losing the first game to beat world No. 7 Anthony Sinisuka 13-21, 21-12, 21-12. But Muhammad Shohibul Fikri and Bagas Maulana upset Satwik-Chirag 24-22, 22-24, 21-19 to make it 1-1.

Meanwhile, Indian women were drawn vs Japan in the Uber Cup quarterfinals. China will face Denmark, Indonesia play Thailand and Chinese Taipei are up against Korea. Japan boast of a formidable line up with Akane Yamaguchi, Aya Ogori, and Nami Matsuyama-Chiharu Shida among others.

Not trusting my intuition cost me some wins at Candidates: Vidit

29-Year-Old GM Says He Needs To Work On Non-Chess Aspects Of His Game

Amit.Karmarkar @timesgroup.com

Pune: Vidit Gujrathi is disappointed but not crestfallen.

"I have no regrets," he told TOI after finishing sixth in the eight-player Candidates field that found the World Championship Challenger in D Gukesh in Toronto 10 days ago. The 29-year-old Nashik lad won three games — as many games as Ian Nepomniachtchi and R Praggnanandhaa and just one less than Fabiano Caruana. But his five defeats meant he fell out of the race with three rounds to go. He also played the most number of decisive games (8/14). "From the spec-

tators' point of view, my games were fun being dramatic," Vidit said on Tuesday.

"But it took a toll on me... there were a lot of emotions due to this fighting chess. It's like when you play with fire, you can burn yourself. And that's what happened at times. But it's much better to play like this and try real hard rather than play safe and not get out of your comfort zone. I was disappointed after losing some games but overall I'm not disappointed with the effort that I put in. I really gave it all. There are still some shortcomings which I need to work on," he said.

Vidit indicated there was not much wrong with his strat-

egy but the execution was not top class. "My intuition was very good, but the problem was I was not trusting it (laughs)," he said. "I saw most of the things in the game, but there was still a little bit of hesitation or doubt, and that was the reason I took slightly more time on the board. And in the critical moments that hesitation cost me some wins. I was spotting things (the right continuations). I was in good shape, but the belief in my intuition was lacking. I have to work on those lines."

Vidit, world No. 28 and India No. 5 as per live ratings, was candid enough to reflect on what he could have done better in terms of preparation. V Anand's former second Surya Sekhar Ganguly was in his corner.

"I would train a bit differently," he said. "Let's say what-



Vidit Gujrathi during the 2024 Candidates chess tournament in Toronto

ever I trained only 5-10% of it comes on the board and probably I would do more of a holistic training rather than just technical training. If I had to go back and change, I would really work more on my nerves

and time management." He felt he should have won his games against Fabiano Caruana and Nijat Abasov in the first half of the tournament (which ended in draws) and also the 11th round game

“From the point of view of the spectators, my games were fun as they were quite dramatic.”

Vidit Gujrathi | CHESS PLAYER

against Ian Nepomniachtchi which he lost. He claimed that he outplayed Hikaru Nakamura in the opening in the second round.

Despite making the Candidates cut by winning last November's FIDE Swiss League GP at Isle of Man — ahead of Gukesh, Caruana, Nakamura, Giri, Praggnanandhaa, Abdusattor and other stalwarts — Vidit said the qualification cycle is a bit messed up.

"It doesn't necessarily reward tournament wins or fighting chess. The rating system is a bit broken, the circuit events had a lot of controversy. It's strange that if you have a good rating and you don't play, you are rewarded for it. Somebody plays five events and wins two events on the way and does average in the others. The other guy, who doesn't play at all, maintains his rating and can be ahead of the race against this 'active' player. He can play just one tournament and maintain that rating. Inactivity in any sport should not be rewarded. In tennis, if you don't play, you lose your ranking. It makes more sense to me, logically."

Vidit is a rare breed in modern chess in terms of fulfilling his potential a tad late in his career. He was a GM at 19, Elo 2700 player at 23 and a Candi-

date at 29. "Players reach Elo 2600 at 20 like me but they don't touch Elo 2750 at 29. So I don't have a parallel to compare," he said.

For instance, Nepo was Elo 2600 at 18 and Elo 2750 at 26. "I feel I am in the best shape of my career and I will see where it goes. I know I can qualify for the next Candidates. I have to take stock. And changing your personality is one of the hardest things to do. But I really have to change as a person and that's the major challenge. I have to work on non-chess aspects including nerves and off the board activities. These things are tough and not tangible. There are not many experts in this area, so getting the right guidance is not easy," said Vidit, who is not a part of Westbridge Anand Chess Academy (WACA) like Gukesh and Praggnanandhaa.



THE TIMES OF INDIA

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

INDIA'S LARGEST ENGLISH NEWSPAPER | To subscribe call 1800 1200 004 or visit subscribe.timesgroup.com

TV actor Rupali Ganguly, famous for her roles in TV serials like Sarabhai vs Sarabhai & Anupamaa, joins BJP ahead of 3rd phase of LS elections, P 12


Who doesn't love solving a little mystery?

📞 7838066001

Flipkart 



SALE STARTS
2nd May, 12 Noon

Powered by
Galaxy AI 

SAMSUNG

Flipkart 



SALE STARTS
2nd May, 12 Noon

Powered by
Galaxy AI 

May 2. Page 2. Deals 2 on Products 2.

Features + Deals. Tooooo Good.

Galaxy AI is here



Live Translate



Circle to Search



Photo Assist

SAMSUNG



Galaxy S23 FE

~~₹79,999~~ ₹33,999*



Galaxy S23

~~₹89,999~~ ₹44,999*

10% INSTANT DISCOUNT*

 SBI card

*Min txn: ₹5000. Max Dicount: Up to ₹6,250 per card Validity: 9th May 2024. T&C apply



Instant Credit
Easy EMIs*



Instant Discount
on 1st txn*

All the prices of the products/Offer(s)/Promotion(s) are provided by the participating sellers and/or partners on the Flipkart platform. Flipkart shall not be liable towards the fulfilment/liabilities/claims arising out of any Offer(s)/Promotion(s). Any claim or dispute in relation to the same must be directed towards the respective seller and/or partner only. All copyrights in the images, logos and products belong to the respective copyright holders. Offer available for limited time period only during Big Saving Days. *T&C Applied.