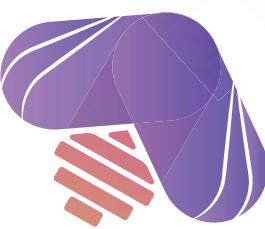


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Classifieds

LIFE MADE SIMPLE

Matrimonial

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification Common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

ASSAMESE

AWADHI

BENGALI

BHOJPURI

BIHARI

CHHATTISGARHI

ENGLISH

GUJARATI

HARYANI

HINDI

KANNADA

KASHMIRI

KONKANI

MALAYALAM

MANIPURI

MARATHI

MARWARI

NEPALI

ORIYA

PARSI

PUNJABI

SAURASHTRA

SINDHI

TAMIL

TELUGU

TULU

URDU

ADVOCATE

BUSINESS

DEFENCE

DOCTOR

ENGINEER

FINANCE/ BANKING

GOVERNMENT/ QUASI-GOVERNMENT

IAS / ALLIED SERVICES

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

MBA / CA / ICWA

NRI

COSMOPOLITAN

DIVORCEE

PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

COSMOPOLITAN

EDUCATED FAIR Kerala girl(33/5')

seeks a boy loyal, educated, settled. Caste no bar. Mt: 9871475878

TELUGU YADAV Chartered Accountant, 31 years, cosmopolitan, based in Bangalore and working for a leading MNC is looking for suitable grooms – ITI/ IIM/ CA/ Doctors – in the 32-35 age group and well settled in the corporate world. Please respond to: sayhellotovenk@gmail.com

DOCTOR

KAMMA NAIDU, 28/168, MDS, BPS, (Prosthetics & Implantology). Certified BPS Specialist. Uthirattai, Meenam, Mesham. Seeks Doctor. Groom. Ph: 98421 31535.

BALIJA NAIDU M.B.B.S Ketai, Viruchikam 26/165 fast good looking girl, Kanchipuram seeks Doctor (or) Professionally settled from Naidu families. Contact: 9443380196, 944202555.

✓ GAVARA NAIDU 24/165 MBBS (Attending PG Coaching).Ketai Upper Middle Class in Comptabores seeking Doctor groom MD/MS/Doing PG or Professionals. Avoid IT, Abroad. Sub sects no bar. 98426 50751, 98653 01920

THIYIA GIRL 31 / 157 Thirketta MBBS MS DNB (OBG). Doctor Government. Seeks Suitable alliance from Malabar Area Kerala. Call : 854365364

MUDHALIYAR: AGE 26, Fair, Cast no. MBBS (DCH). Seeks Doctor or any suitable groom. Ct : 78240 23030

HINDU TAMIL Yadava 26 MS Surgery PG Tall Fair Good Looking, Mother Vellarai/Mukkulathor. Parents Seeks Good habit doctors / doctorsates with good family background.Ct. 7200365364

NADAR HINDU: 27/F, Fair, MBBS (DGO). Seeks Doctor or Any Suitable Groom. Contact: 93635 70731

DOCTOR

Dr. J.Ramya (Nadar) MBBS, M.S Ophthalmology Vitreo Retina Surgeon Doctor from Same Case: Ct. 9840028499/ 8933691888

TAMIL VISWAKARMA, 28/165cm, MBBS, M.D. Own Clinic seeks suitable Doctor Groom. Ct: 9176017049

DOCTOR 37YRS, Unmarried seeks Suitable Unmarried Doctor Groom. Contact: 93620 35292

KANNADA MADHWA Brahmin Girl 25 MD Seeks Professionally Qualified Groom. 994457015, 978978673

EMPLOYED QUALIFIED bridegrooms is wanted for SC/AD/MS/DB 1983/ Vishakam, Dhulam bride 948313625

SC(AD), 24YRS, BE, Well Educated family in Chennai. Seeks Suitable Groom. Contact: 971009399/ 8933691888

PILLAI / MUDALIAR Elite Family 32/ 165 Mirugasam, Raghu in Lagnam PG (HR, MNC) Seeks IIM/PG Groom.

WELL SETTLED Hindu Nadar 27, MBA, Divorcee Seeks Married/Unmarried, CNA, Educated, Chennai Groom

MDAHLIAR / PILLAI 36 fair Hastham MCA Well settled in Chennai Groom

SC/AD, 24/160, CA Seeks Qualified Doctor Working Groom 8202757159

EMPLOYED QUALIFIED bridegrooms is wanted for SC/AD/MS/DB 1983/ Vishakam, Dhulam bride 948313625

HINDU NADAR, Fair Girl MBBS, MD, 24/160, Rich Affluent, Seeks suitable Good looking Doctor Groom with clean habits, from Hindu Nadar only. MN: 9444682353

BRIDEGROOM WANTED

MD Anesthesiology Doctor, 1989 born 165cm fair, beautiful, cultured & homely. Settled in Chennai.

Father Doctor Kerela Nair, Mother Tamil CSI, Doctor or Engineer groom preferred.

98400 50381 / 98409 85383

GROOM WANTED

Reputed Reddy Family in Chennai Invites Alliance for Daughter 32/165, Doctor MBBS, MS, Looking for Tall Educated Groom from affluent family CNB.

Call: 89256 40111

30/YF MBBS; MD, Divorced-no child. Preferred Groom-from TN/early 30's / Doctors / Divorced - no child / Caste no bar. Ph: 9442145470

DOCTOR GIRL 30/153, MBBS, seeks Tamil Hindu Doctor Groom. Contact: 8056325579.

DOCTOR GIRL 30/156, MBBS, General Medicine, Madurai seeks Doctor/SC/MSI grooms 9447493034, 9497168001

KANNADA GIRL 27/BE working Bengaluru/ from well to do family with moral values seeks Hindu Groom with similar background. Ct: 7975421774

HINDU NADAR 35/165cm ME, working in Chennai and Bangalore, 30 Lacs PA own house divorcee no issue Dhanus Podaram-4 seeks suitable Educated 35-39 yrs groom working in Chennai & Bangalore. 19L Pa seeks groom with Similar Educational and Professional background. Contact: 94443511/9444758668.

B.Tech Divorcee, Mudaliyar Good looking Groom born on Aug 93, well settled by Hd wkg in MNC drawing, 12 PA salary seeks Groom Engineer below 34y from decent fmy Ct: 9862269004

HINDU SC AD 35yrs B.E. Sr. Software Engineer TCS Chennai seeks suitable Groom. Ct: 99521 47216

MUDALIAR/26/5'3" BROWN/ MA Engg. Assst professor in Chennai Pvt. College/ Moolam/ Middle class/ seeks Religious/ Atheist bridegroom families of equivalent castes from India/A abroad.

MUDALIAR/CN 25/160, V. Fair & Beautiful, B.E. MS(USA) Associate Developer, MNC, USA, Elite Family. Seeks groom Abroad/Business-892051976

CHRISTIAN (CNB) 25/160, V. Fair & Beautiful, B.E. MS(USA) Associate Developer, MNC, USA, Elite Family. Seeks groom Abroad/Business-892051976

GROOM WANTED Rich Mudaliar 30yrs BE MBA 35lakhs pa, Well Educated Family. Seeks suitable groom. 971009399/ 8939691888

MUDALIAR GIRL 27/BE working Bengaluru/ from well to do family with moral values seeks Hindu Groom with similar background. Ct: 7975421774

HINDU NADAR 35/165cm ME, working in Chennai and Bangalore, 30 Lacs PA own house divorcee no issue Dhanus Podaram-4 seeks suitable Educated 35-39 yrs groom working in Chennai & Bangalore. 19L Pa seeks groom with Similar Educational and Professional background. Contact: 94443511/9444758668.

B.Tech Divorcee, Mudaliyar Good looking Groom born on Aug 93, well settled by Hd wkg in MNC drawing, 12 PA salary seeks Groom Engineer below 34y from decent fmy Ct: 9862269004

HINDU SC AD 35yrs B.E. Sr. Software Engineer TCS Chennai seeks suitable Groom. Ct: 99521 47216

MUDALIAR AFFLUENT 25/165 CM, BE. Working in MNC. Elite business family in Chennai. Contact: 971009399/ 8939691888

MARUTHUVAR, HINDU 29/162cm Very Fair Good Looking, M.com, CA Seeks well qualified Groom Ct: 9600776871

TELUGU ASARI, 37/5'2, Pooratadi, Kumbam, M.A. Phil, Govt.Job, First marriage, seeks suitable employed Groom. CNB. Ct: 8838352394

Hindu Vanniyakula, Kshatriya, Girl 31/160cm, Dusky, MBA Seeks unmarried Groom below 34years/ Phone: 9176920473

VANNER AFFLUENT 29/165 MBA, Er, Chicago USA, Chennai Native Seeks Suitable Groom USA. CNB. Ct: Geetham 9848485014

BALIJA NAIDU, 31/163 cm. B.Tech. M.S. working in Ireland Seeks suitable groom. Contact: 91 9443564798.

NRI

CHRISTIAN FAMILY settled in USA seeking groom for their daughter (29/160cm IT engineer, never married). Looking for groom settled in USA. Phone: 30540/1865 (India) +1 5104995282 (USA/WhatsApp)

SC PULAYA girl, Revathy 31/147 B.Tech MACL Software Engineer Hyderabad. OBC also considered. Hyderabadi interest preferred.

9446467799

MBA / CA / ICWA

POQM4 BTECH + MBA Manglik Rajput Girl, working MNC, 50 lakhs+ pkg. 5ft. Inch, 8/90-90, 7:39 AM, DELHI, 9993374419

HINDU PILLAI 32/163 cm. B.Tech. M.S. working in Ireland Seeks suitable groom (CNB) 91 9443564798.

TAMIL

TAMIL Muslim 24/157 MD pathology prof qualified groom. Ct: 8220042091 mduhalasi@gmail.com

TAMIL MUSLIM, Doctor, 40yrs, MBBs, MS (OG) Govt Hospital. Madurai seeks suitable Groom (First / Second Marriage). Ct: 98947 88041

SC PR, girl, 49/168, M.E. PhD, Thiruvananthapuram. Good looking, nice personality. Seeks suitable Groom. Ct: 9443974749

GROOM REQUIRED below 41 yrs for Hindu Nadar Divorcee 36 yrs Engineering, getting five digit pay in Govt. Job. Ct: 9443106544

MUDALIAR AFFLUENT 34/160 MBBS Ms Mch Dr Chennai Seeks PG Doctors AE-TNEB Seeks Suitable Groom Ph: 9841103/ 98401 05941

TAMIL MUSLIM Bride, 29/159cm, AVP in a MNC at Bengaluru seeks qualified Tamil Muslim Groom working in Hyderabad or Bengaluru. Ct: 9080501293

RC VELLALAR Innocent divorcee, 38/ 157 fair Comp. Engineer salary. 1 Ct: 9840712010

TAMIL Muslim Female B.E., 23, Tamil seeks qualified, suitable groom, Tamil people only 6382055807.

HINDU MUTHURAJA, 29 / 155 cm. B.E. Software Engineer in UK. Seeks Groom No Bar. 99444 21862.

THIYIA GIRL 31 / 157 Thirketta MBBS MS DNB (OBG). Doctor Government. Seeks Suitable alliance from Malabar Area Kerala. Call : 854365364

HINDU TAMIL Yadava 26 MS Surgery PG Tall Fair Good Looking, Mother Vellarai/Mukkulathor. Parents Seeks Good habit doctors / doctorsates with good family background.Ct. 7200365364

MUDHALIYAR: AGE 26, Fair, Cast no bar. MBBS (DCH). Seeks Doctor or any suitable groom. Ct : 78240 23030

NADAR HINDU: 27/F, Fair, MBBS (DGO). Seeks Doctor or Any Suitable Groom. Contact: 93635 70731

SC,34/RS B.TECH, Manager, Govt Bank, Divorcee, Unconsummated. Contact Mobile: 8395747425



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IN BRIEF



Support our fight against BJP, says Cong. president

NEW DELHI
Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge kicked off the party's Lok Sabha campaign for the seven seats in Delhi on Saturday by exhorting party workers to fight against the BJP and save people from becoming "slaves" of PM Narendra Modi. » Page 2

West Bengal to pay MGNREGS workers: Mamata

KOLKATA
West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee on Saturday said the State government will clear the wages of 21 lakh MGNREGS workers kept pending by the Centre for two years. » Page 8

MAGAZINE » 8 PAGES

40 killed in U.S. air strikes in Iraq, Syria

U.S. retaliates for the attack on its troops in Jordan last weekend by Iran-backed militants; Tehran calls attack a strategic mistake

Reuters
WASHINGTON/BAGHDAD



Fighting ravages: A destroyed building at the site of a U.S. air strike in Al-Qaim of Iraq on Saturday. REUTERS

The United States launched air strikes in Iraq and Syria against more than 85 targets linked to Iran's Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) and militias it backs, reportedly killing nearly 40 people, in retaliation for a deadly attack on U.S. troops.

The strikes, which included the use of long-range B-1 bombers flown from the U.S., were the first in response to the attack last weekend in Jordan by Iran-backed militants, and more U.S. military operations are expected in the coming days.

The strikes intensified a conflict that has spread into the region since war erupted between Israel and Hamas after the military said.

In Syria, the strikes killed 23 people who had been guarding the targeted locations, said Rami Abdul-

tant Palestinian group's deadly assault on Israel on October 7. The strikes hit targets including command and control centres, rockets, missiles and drone storage facilities, as well as logistics and munition supply chain facilities, the U.S. military said.

In Syria, the strikes killed 23 people who had been guarding the targeted locations, said Rami Abdul-

rahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights. In Iraq, residents said several strikes hit Sikak neighbourhood in Al-Qaim, a residential area that local people said was also used by armed groups to store weapons.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7
STRIKES ANGER IRAQ, SYRIA
» PAGE 10

Court permits Hemant Soren to attend vote of confidence

Amit Bhelari

RANCHI

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren will participate in the trust vote in the Jharkhand Legislative Assembly on February 5, after a special PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court granted his request on Saturday.

Mr. Soren, who represents the Barhait Assembly constituency in Sahibganj district, had appealed to the court earlier in the day, to allow him to vote in the new government's floor test, as a member of the State Assembly. PMLA special judge Dinesh Rai gave the order allowing him to participate.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7
Hemant Soren

BJP veteran Advani to be awarded the Bharat Ratna

Nistula Hebbar

NEW DELHI

Former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, helmsman of the Rath Yatra that catapulted the movement for the Ayodhya Ram Temple to national prominence, will be given the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian honour, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Saturday.

In 2015, he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, India's second highest civilian honour.

The Prime Minister called Mr. Advani after the decision was made and congratulated him.

"One of the most respected statesmen of our times, his contribution to the development of India is monumental. His is a life that started from working at the grassroots to serving the nation as our Deputy Prime Minister," Mr. Modi posted on X.

The announcement comes 10 days after social-



Moment of joy: L.K. Advani's daughter Pratibha shares sweets with him after the award was announced in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

ist leader Karpoori Thakur was accorded the same honour posthumously, completing the circle from the politics of the 1990s, which were dominated by the social justice and Ram Temple movements.

'Honour for principles' Reacting to the award, Mr. Advani released a statement acknowledging that it was an honour, not just personally but also for his "ideals and principles".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7

In the lap of nature



For a cause: The sculptures of elephants, made of invasive plant species *Lantana camara*, displayed at Lalbagh in Bengaluru on Saturday. The display, themed 'Coexistence: the great elephant migration', has travelled around the world promoting the importance of human-wildlife coexistence. Indigenous artists from villages around Mudumalai and the M.M. Hills are behind the craft. K. MURALI KUMAR

ED complaint against Kejriwal in excise case; police serve notice over poaching allegations

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal faced twin challenges on Saturday with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) lodging a complaint in a court here over skipping summons and Delhi Police's Crime Branch serving him a notice regarding his MLA poaching allegations against the BJP.

The ED's complaint comes two days after Mr. Kejriwal skipped the fifth summons issued by the probe agency for questioning in a money laundering case linked to the Delhi liquor "scam".

The complaint was filed before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate



Crime Branch officials of Delhi Police outside the residence of Chief Minister and AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal in New Delhi on Saturday. ANI

Divya Malhotra, who put up the matter for further hearing on February 7.

"Fresh complaint case for non-attendance in compliance of Section 50, PMLA, 2002, received by way of assignment," the judge noted and adjourned

the matter.

Meanwhile, after a five-hour-long drama, Delhi Police Crime Branch officers served a notice on the Delhi Chief Minister.

On January 27, Mr. Kejriwal and AAP Minister Atishi claimed that the BJP

was trying to poach party MLAs by offering ₹25 crore each and a ticket in next year's Assembly election to topple the government. The BJP had dared the CM to furnish evidence to back his claims.

"We have served the notice on him [Kejriwal] today. He can submit a written response within three days," a senior officer said, adding that Mr. Kejriwal has been asked to reveal the names of AAP legislators he claimed were approached by the BJP.

A Crime Branch team had visited the CM's residence in Civil Lines on Friday to serve the notice. However, the notice could not be served as Mr. Kejriwal was not at home.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 7

Big jump by Haryana youth, giant leap for Kalaripayattu

Ashok Kumar
GURUGRAM

When Mohini Dahiya, 14, from Kaimri village in Haryana's Hisar, first told her father about the southern Indian martial arts form Kalaripayattu a year ago, he was doubtful about his daughter pursuing it as a sport. "I couldn't pronounce the word," said Vinod Dahiya, an autorickshaw driver. He agreed because the costs involved in diet were much lower than that required for wrestling, kabaddi, and boxing, the three most popular sports in the State. Ms. Mohini missed winning a medal at the Khelo India Youth Games 2023 in Tamil Nadu, held between



January 19 and 31, but won gold at a State-level event. "I enjoy the jumping and kicking involved," she said.

Second spot

This year at the games, Haryana came second in Kalaripayattu, largely practised in Kerala, after its introduction to the Khelo India Youth Games in 2021, in the boys' category. The

along with gatka, mallakhamb, and thang-ta.

In fact, Mr. Aryan won a silver in thang-ta, a Manjuri form, in 2021. "I have been practising martial arts for four years but took up Kalaripayattu last year after a Panipat camp by the erstwhile Kalaripayattu State Association," he said. His coaching academy has 20 Kalaripayattu players, including six girls. He feels the sport will pick up because "Haryana wale chot lagne se darte nahi (People from Haryana are not scared of getting injured)".

Haryana Kalaripayattu ad hoc committee general secretary Ramachandran P.R. said, "The boys and girls from Haryana have done exceptionally well in

high kick and sword-and-shield events, while the players of south Indian origin representing Haryana have scored over them in the traditional events such as chuvadukal (hand-and-foot movement)."

Growing popularity

Khushiyal Singh, 18, a Class 12 student at a government school in Chandawali village, Faridabad, was also part of Haryana's Kalaripayattu contingent this year. Son of a dhaba owner, Mr. Khushiyal said, "I found it interesting. Also, it is easy to find a place in the State team with it since it is a relatively new sport for Haryana and the competition is not that stiff."

Arjun Chauhan, who

runs Vijay Martial Arts Sports Academy in Faridabad, said he had 20 students, including four girls, at his training centre. "It is a form of self-defence. It is also safer than wrestling and boxing, which makes it popular," he said.

Sawmya M. Pillai, a coach at a training centre run by the Faridabad Malayali Association, said almost half of the 30-odd students at the centre were north Indians. "Many parents send their children to us so that they spend less time on mobile phones," said Ms. Pillai, who also works at a railway track maintenance company in Faridabad. She mentioned that they also have women over 40 coming in to train.



Solar panels to power trains on Delhi-Meerut RRTS route

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Solar panels will be installed on the rooftops of 24 stations on the 82-km-long Delhi-Meerut Regional Rapid Transit System (RRTS) corridor, an official said on Saturday.

According to the official, the National Capital Region Transport Corporation (NCRTC) has already installed solar panels on sheds of platforms at Sahibabad, Gulzar, Duhai, and Duhai Depot stations.

The official added that the panels will generate 11



Solar panels installed atop the Duhai Depot RRTS station.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

MW of power, producing a bulk of the energy required to run trains on the route. "The NCRTC aspires to

meet 70% of the total energy requirement of the entire Delhi-Meerut RRTS corridor through solar energy," he said.

The official said the reliance on solar power will help cut by 11,500 tonnes annually the emission of carbon dioxide, a greenhouse gas emitted by coal-based power plants.

He said 1,620 solar panels installed at the Sahibabad station can produce nearly 729 kW of power, while the Duhai Depot station houses a plant that has a total installed capacity of 585 kW.

Support our fight against BJP or risk becoming Modi's slaves, says Kharge

Launching his party's campaign for seven Delhi Lok Sabha seats, Congress president says Rahul Gandhi is trying to remove hatred and fear from society through his *yatra* even as the Prime Minister misuses probe agencies to harass Oppn. parties

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge kicked off the party's Lok Sabha campaign for the seven Lok Sabha seats in the Capital on Saturday by exhorting party workers to go door to door to save people from becoming "slaves" of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"This is a fight to save democracy and the Constitution. If you fail to support the Congress in this fight, you will become a slave of Modi," Mr. Kharge is that he has done *Sabka Satyanash* [ruined everyone] and left crores unemployed." Mr. Kharge said.

Referring to Rahul Gandhi's 6,713-km *Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra* from Imphal to Mumbai, the Congress chief said Mr. Gandhi was trying to remove

failed to deliver on his promises and was taking credit for the initiatives started by the Congress government at the Centre. He also said that instead of spreading love and brotherhood in the country, the BJP-led Central government was spreading hatred and fear among people.

"Modi government's *Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas* is a deception. The truth is that he has done *Sabka Satyanash* [ruined everyone] and left crores unemployed." Mr. Kharge said.

"Our fight is against the RSS and the BJP, who want



Kharge said Congress workers must go to every household to create awareness against BJP's divisive policies. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

hatred and fear from society even as the PM was misusing the Central probe agencies to harass and scare the Opposition parties and all those who speak against him.

to finish the country by imposing their views on people. Our workers must go to every house to create awareness against BJP's divisive policies," he said.

Mr. Kharge also said crimes against women were increasing in the na-

tional capital while the Centre, which controls Delhi Police, was looking the other way.

He told the party workers that the Congress would win the general election if it won the seven Lok Sabha seats in Delhi.

'Out of touch'

Delhi BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said, "It was evident from the elderly faces sitting on the stage [at the Congress event] today that the Congress is a party of the past, which is led by people who neither understand the concerns of today's youth nor comprehend the phenomenon of women's empowerment."

Airport runway reopens after repair work

The Hindu Bureau

NEW DELHI

A Delhi airport runway that had been closed since September was made operational on Saturday following the completion of the re-carpeting work.

With only its three runways operational, Indira Gandhi International Airport recently witnessed fog-induced disruptions due to low visibility.

North Eastern Railway

Tender Notice

No. 07 of Year 2023-24

Sealed open tenders are invited by Divisional Railway Manager (S&T), N.E. Railway, Itaznagar for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works:

Description of Works : 1. Signalling & Telecom work in connection with construction of LHS at various LC Gates in the section of DEN/HZ/IZN. Approx. Value : ₹ 1,31,40,343.58, Earnest Money : ₹ 2,15,700.00, Completion Period : 6 Months. Description of Works : 2. Annual Maintenance Contract of IPS systems of stations and LC gates in IZN div. for 3 years (AmaraRaja make). Approx. Value : ₹ 2,83,63,597.56, Earnest Money : ₹ 2,91,800.00, Completion Period : 36 Months. Date & Time of Closing of e-tender : 23.02.2024 at 11:00 Hrs.

The tender can be viewed at website <http://www.nerps.gov.in>. All relevant papers must be uploaded at the time of participating in e-tendering.

Sr. Div. Signal & Telecom. Engineer, CPRO/Sig-96 N.E. Railway/Itaznagar

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MARUTI SUZUKI

Timings		
DELHI		
SUNDAY, FEB. 04		
RISE 07:08	SET 18:03	
RISE 01:44	SET 12:19	
MONDAY, FEB. 05		
RISE 07:08	SET 18:04	
RISE 02:46	SET 13:05	
TUESDAY, FEB. 06		
RISE 07:07	SET 18:04	
RISE 03:51	SET 13:59	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	23	07
Safdarjung	23	07
Palam	21	07

Delhi Palam Today
17°C Dense fog is possible in cold morning. The day will be cool and humid. Chances of rain and thundershower with gusty winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
19°C Morning will be cold with moderate to dense fog. Day will be slight cool with cold breeze. Spell of light rain and thundershower to occur.

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THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

ACB: Mohalla Clinics gave free tests to 65,000 'ghost patients'

Two private labs received ₹4.63 crore for conducting pathology tests over 11 months: probe report; L-G had earlier flagged 'irregularities', sought CBI probe; will take strong action against guilty: govt.

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI



Patients can avail of nearly 450 free medical tests at more than 500 Mohalla Clinics across the city. FILE PHOTO

The Delhi government's Mohalla Clinics prescribed pathology tests for nearly 65,000 "ghost patients" from February to December last year, officials of the Anti-Corruption Branch (ACB) said on Saturday. The tests were conducted by two private labs.

According to an official, a preliminary inquiry by the ACB found that the two labs received ₹4.63 crore from the Delhi government for conducting medical tests during these 11 months, of which nearly 65,000 were allegedly fake.

The probe was initiated following a complaint by Special Secretary (Vigilance) Y.V.V.J. Rajasekhar on January 10.

ogy labs, which are reimbursed by the AAP government.

An official said that according to the ACB probe report, after mobile numbers of patients registered with the two labs were verified at random, nearly 63% of the numbers were found to be either invalid or to belong to people who had never visited a Mohalla Clinic.

"The Mohalla Clinic is a pet project of the ruling Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), with over 500 of these located in the city where patients can avail of nearly 450 medical tests for free. These tests cost between ₹100 and ₹300 and are done by private pathol-

ical tests to ghost, or non-existent, patients at Mohalla Clinics.

These tests cost between ₹100 and ₹300 and are done by private pathol-

CBI not completely exempt from purview of RTI Act, observes HC

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The CBI is not completely exempt from the purview of the RTI Act, and the transparency law permits it to provide information pertaining to corruption and human rights violations, the Delhi High Court has held.

"The proviso to Section

24 permits information pertaining to allegations of corruption and human rights violation to be made available to the applicant and the same cannot be included in the exception provided to organisations mentioned in the Second Schedule of the RTI Act," Justice Subramonium Prasad said in an order on January 30.

The court passed the order on a plea by the CBI challenging a November 2019 decision of the Central Information Commission directing it to provide information to an Indian Forest Service officer, who had sought details about "corruption" in the purchase of disinfectant and fogging solution for a medical store at AIIMS.

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- JANAKPURI B-1/2, Main Najafgarh Road, Opp. Metro Pillar 543
- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

THE HINDU
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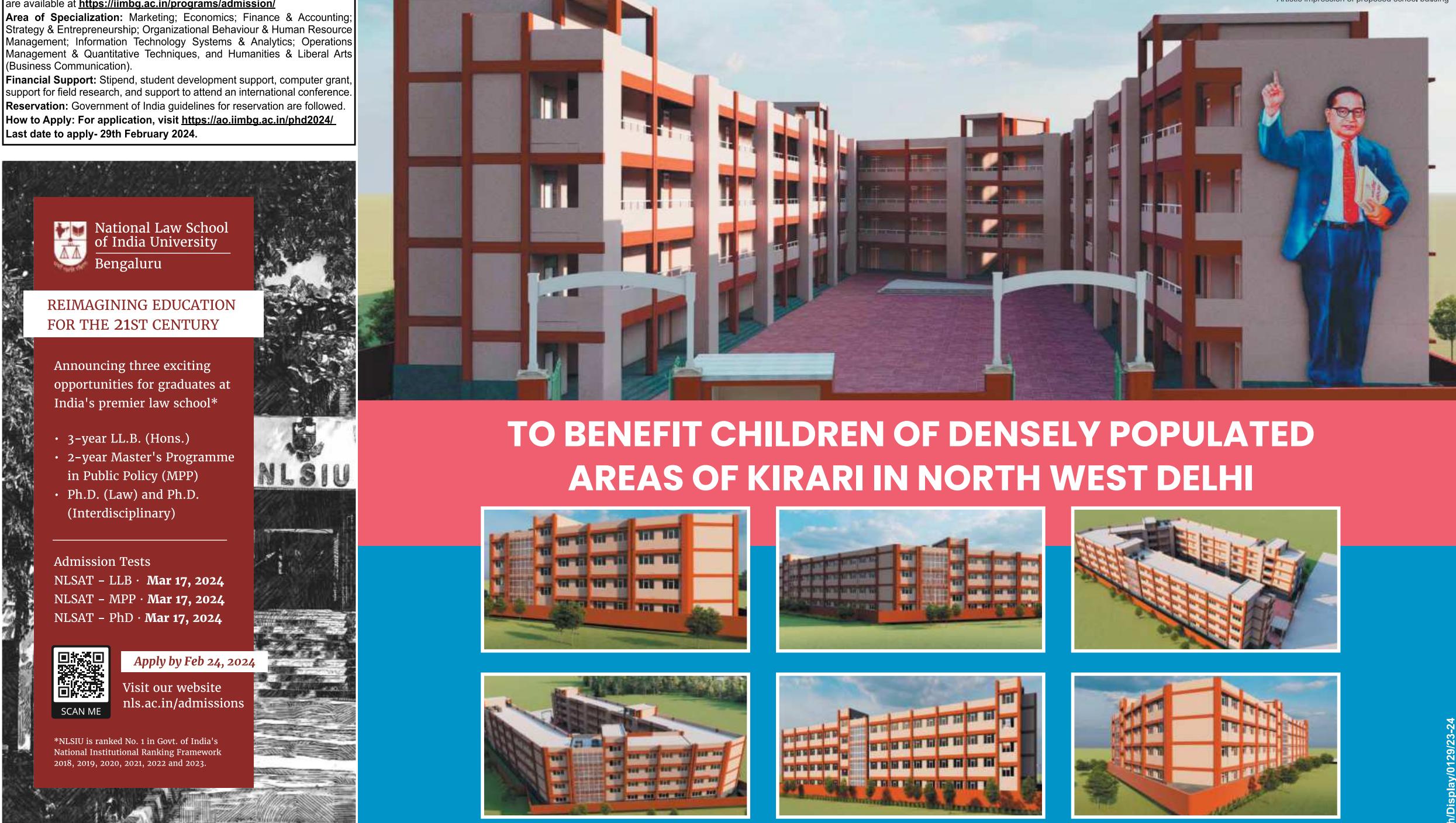
BENGALURU METROPOLITAN TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Central Offices, Mechanical Engg., Dept., K.H. Road,
Shanthinagar, Bengaluru-560027. Tel: 080-22537519
Tender No.: BMTC/2023-24/SE0280 Date: 03.02.2024
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through e-procurement mode only)
(1) BMT invites Tender through E-Procurement Portal for Selection of Service Provider for Procurement, Operation and Maintenance of 10 Nos. AC Double Decker Electric Buses on Gross Cost Contract (GCC) Model.
(2) Last Date for Bid Submission in e-procurement portal is on 04.03.2024 at 17:30 Hours. Further, any addendum/corrigendum in respect of changes in calendar of events, scope, other tender terms & conditions etc., will be uploaded/Published through e-portal only.
NOTE: Interested Bidders need to register in the GoK e-procurement portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> for details. In case of further assistance, the bidders may contact e-procurement Help Desk for support Ph: 080-46010000 or 080-69948777 or email at eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com. Interested suppliers may also contact e-procurement cell for training on bid submission. E-mail to eprocurementhelpdesk@gmail.com for further information if required.
Sd/- CHIEF MECHANICAL ENGINEER (Tender Inviting Authority)

CM YK

Laying the foundation stone of TWO NEW SCHOOLS

of Delhi Government in Sector 41, Rohini

Artistic impression of proposed school building



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Sunday, 4th February 2024

Chief Guest

Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, Delhi

Guest of Honour

Atishi, Education Minister, Delhi



IN BRIEF



Met issues orange warning of heavy snowfall for H.P.

The meteorological department here on Saturday sounded an orange alert for snowfall across Himachal Pradesh for the next two days. It predicted light to moderate snowfall at most places and heavy snowfall at isolated places in mid and high hills. It also predicted thunderstorms, lightning and hailstorm in lower areas and a wet spell till February 6. The State saw moderate to heavy snow in several parts on January 31 and February 1 due to which 504 roads, including four national highways, were closed, officials said. Shimla saw a brief spell of snowfall on Saturday bringing cheer to residents and tourists. Road clearing operations are going on in full swing to clear snow from the roads at the earliest, PWD officials said. PTI

Pitbull bites two-year-old in Gurugram; owner booked

A dog owner was booked after the person's pitbull bit a two-year-old boy and his aunt in Sector 5 area of Gurugram, police said on Saturday. According to the complaint by Naveen Sahu, of Bhimgarh Kheri area, the incident happened on Wednesday in front of his house. "My sister and nephew were standing near the gate of my house when they were bitten by the pet dog of my neighbour," Mr. Sahu said. Following the complaint, an FIR was registered against the neighbour under section 298 (negligent conduct with respect to animal) of IPC at Sector 5 Police Station late Thursday evening, said the police. PTI

Tahsildar in A.P. attacked with rod, dies from injuries

The Hindu Bureau
VISAKHAPATNAM

In a shocking incident, Sanapala Ramanayya, 40, working as a tahsildar, was murdered in the cellar of his apartment at Kommadi Junction in Madhurawada under PM Palem police limits at Visakhapatnam late on Friday night.

According to the police, Mr. Ramanayya was transferred as the tahsildar of Bondapalli in Vizianagaram district recently from the Visakhapatnam Rural office. He took charge on Friday morning and returned to his home near Kommadi Junction in the evening. Around 10 p.m., two persons met him near the apartment gate. After they left, another person met Mr. Ramanayya and they had a discussion for some time. Later, the person allegedly attacked the tahsildar with an iron rod and fled the spot.

The injured Ramanayya was shifted by his family members to a private hospital, where he died while undergoing treatment. Police inspected the crime scene. They found bloodstains in the cellar. CCTV footage showed the attack but the assailant wore a face mask. Police have registered a case.

The family members of the victim alleged land dispute behind the murder.

Bihar CM gives portfolios; keeps Home for himself, BJP gets Finance, Health

Nitish Kumar has held the Home department since November 2005; two BJP Dy. CMs get nine portfolios each; HAMS leader gets two portfolios; Cabinet expansion expected after budget session

Amaranath Tewary

PATNA

In an apparent replay of the 2020 NDA government in Patna, the new dispensation in Bihar on Saturday allocated portfolios to its six Ministers, along with the Chief Minister and two Deputy Chief Ministers.

Chief Minister Nitish Kumar retained the Home portfolio, while giving away Finance and Health to the BJP.

The two Deputy CMs will hold nine portfolios each, while the CM will hold five, including other unallocated portfolios.

Cabinet expansion

The Cabinet is likely to be expanded after the upcoming budget session of the Assembly, which is scheduled to begin on February 12. The Cabinet is likely to be the same as the one during the NDA's 2020 tenure, a BJP source told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Kumar has held the key Home department since November 2005, and continues to hold it now,



Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar gave his two Deputy CMs — Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha — Finance, Health, Road Construction, Agriculture, Urban Development, and Public Health and Engineering, among others. FILE PHOTO

along with General Administration, Vigilance, and Cabinet Secretariat.

The two Deputy CMs — BJP's Samrat Choudhary and Vijay Kumar Sinha — were given Finance, Health, Road Construction, Agriculture, Urban Development, and Public Health and Engineering, among others. The other senior BJP leader in the Cabinet, Prem Kumar, was given Tourism, Cooperatives, Backward and Extremely Backward Classes, Disaster Management, Environment, Forest & Climate Change departments.

Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) leader Santosh Kumar Suman, son of party chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, was given the Information Technology and Scheduled Castes / Scheduled Tribes Welfare departments. Mr. Manjhi had recently created a stir within the ruling alliance by demanding two Cabinet portfolios for his party.

Sumit Kumar Singh, the only Independent in the Cabinet, will hold the Science, Technology and Education

portfolio.

Senior JD(U) leader Vijay Kumar Chaudhary once again was given the Education department which he had to forgo in the RJD-led *mahagathbandhan* government.

He also has got Water Resources, Parliamentary Affairs, Building Construction, Transport and Information and Public Relation Departments.

Similarly, the other senior JD(U) leaders Bijendra Prasad Yadav and Shrawan Kumar retained their portfolios of Energy and Rural Developments. Besides, they also got Planning & Development, Prohibition and Excise, Minority Welfare and Food & Consumer Protection Departments and others.

"After the Cabinet expansion, the portfolios of the Ministers will be redistributed, but it would largely be the same as it was during the 2020 NDA government," the BJP source said.

Meanwhile, Mr. Choudhary and Mr. Sinha are likely to go to Delhi to meet the party's top leadership.

BJP to launch 'Qaumi Chaupal' for minority outreach in U.P.

The Hindu Bureau
LUCKNOW

The Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) minority wing in Uttar Pradesh will launch its 'Qaumi Chaupal' campaign in roughly 4,100 Muslim-dominated villages across the State with special focus on 23 parliamentary seats which have a sizeable number of Muslim voters.

The outreach will begin on February 10 from Muzaffarnagar, a communally sensitive district in western U.P. which had witnessed Hindu-Muslim riots in 2013.

"Our aim is to initiate a dialogue with the Muslim community and sensitise them about the welfare schemes initiated by the double-engine BJP government," BJP's State Minority Morcha president Kunwar Basit Ali told *The Hindu*.

The party has been reaching out to the Muslims through various initiatives and had recently organised a 'Sufi Samad Maha Abhiyan' in Lucknow. The BJP also doubled the number of its Muslim candidates during last year's local body polls, offering 395 tickets to Muslims in comparison with just 180 tickets in the last local body polls.

It had also nominated former Aligarh Muslim University Vice-Chancellor Tariq Mansoor to the Legislative Council.

Hyderabad resort turned into fortress to 'guard' Jharkhand's JMM-Cong. MLAs

Press Trust of India
HYDERABAD

Separate dining arrangements, police personnel to guard rooms and several other measures are in place at a resort here to "protect" Jharkhand's ruling JMM and Congress MLAs from "poaching efforts" allegedly by the BJP.

Thirty-nine MLAs of the ruling combine had arrived here on Friday in two chartered flights and were taken to the Leonia Holistic Destination at Shamipet, about 25 km from Hyderabad.

Watchful eye
According to Telangana Congress sources, the MLAs would leave for Ranchi on February 5, when the Champai Soren government faces the trust vote.

Mr. Soren had taken oath as the Jharkhand Chief Minister on Friday af-



JMM leader Hemant Soren's brother and party MLA Basant Soren with other MLAs on board a flight to Hyderabad. PTI

ternoon, replacing Hemant Soren, who has been arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

According to the sources, all MLAs have been housed in the "Oh biz block" under the watchful eye of AICC secretary in charge of Telangana, Deepa Dasmunshi.

The entry to the floor where the MLAs are staying is restricted to just one

lift, which can be used only by duly authorised persons besides the legislators. Police officers are guarding the exit and entry points to the lifts round the clock. The rooms are also guarded by the police personnel and "unauthorised" exit or entry is barred.

Separate dining arrangements have been made for the MLAs on the first floor, which is out of bounds for other guests.

A source said "phones are still with the MLAs" and the resort is teeming with police officers in plain clothes.

Road barricaded

The police have put up barricades on an approach road leading to the resort and entry of vehicles has been restricted.

The sprawling facility offers extensive banquet halls, meeting and event facilities.

Earlier, the JMM had released a video "roll call" on social media, in which 43 MLAs counted themselves to prove that the government had the numbers. The JMM-led alliance, which also includes the RJD, said it has the support of 47 MLAs. It said only 43 of them were present at the "roll call" as the rest were unwell.

(With inputs from Telangana Bureau)

Experts stress on Governors' neutral role in federal structure of Constitution

The Hindu Bureau
JAIPUR

Frequent aberrations in the functioning of Governors as the link between the Centre and the States have led to a departure from the federal structure of the Constitution and disturbed the balance in the distribution of powers. Any deviation by the Governors from their defined role will only weaken the democratic system of government.

Govt. advice ignored

These views emerged at a panel discussion on the Centre-State relations in the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF) focusing on the gubernatorial role in governance, the role of the Election Commission, shift in the political power and the federal system being put to test amid battles between Raj Bhavans and State governments.

Margaret Alva, former Governor of four States, including Rajasthan, said the Governors must play their role with neutrality and desist from converting Raj Bhavans into the "offices of [political] parties". Other participants in the session titled "We the people: The Centre and the States" were former Chief Election Commissioner Navin Chawla and Supreme Court's senior advocate Geeta Luthra.

Ms. Alva said the Governors who were often ignoring the advice of the State Cabinet should examine their role in the light of the constitutional provisions and act as the "friend, philosopher and guide" for the government.

Ms. Luthra said the Governors deviating from their role envisaged in the



Manmohan Vaidya and Pavan K. Varma during a session at the Jaipur Literature Festival 2024 on Friday. PTI

original constitutional scheme had been reined in through judicial pronouncements. However, the Union government had used Article 356 of the Constitution to dismiss the elected State governments and impose the President's rule for 120 times, beginning as early as in 1951, she said.

Mr. Chawla said the Centre's proposal for "one nation, one election" could not be implemented without some major constitutional amendments. He also said there was no reason to doubt the authenticity of the electronic voting machines.

Former Supreme Court and High Court judges, addressing a session on "Justice: The voices of the voiceless", examined the role of the judiciary in providing relief to the poor and downtrodden and ensuring their access to the higher courts.

In T.N.'s crowded political landscape, easier said than done for 'Thalapathy' Vijay

The Hindu Bureau
CHENNAI

Tamil actor Vijay's much-awaited announcement on Friday about launching a political party, Tamizhaga Vettai Kazhagam, has elicited much speculation about what space his outfit will come to occupy.

In Mr. Vijay's words, his new platform, loosely translating to 'Tamil Nadu Victory Party', promises "politics in tune with the Tamil culture of equality within the framework of the Indian Constitution". He will only enter the race in 2026, during the State Assembly elections, and will sit this year's Lok Sabha polls out, promising not to "extend support to anyone".

The party, he said, will

hit the ground running after the general election, and only then begin to propagate its "Tamil Nadu-centric" ideology to the masses, among whom the actor already enjoys a staunch fan base.

Fondly nicknamed 'Thalapathy' or 'commander', Mr. Vijay is arguably the State's biggest and highest paid star, and has promised that party cadres will soon be "politised" and the party's reach at the grassroots will be strengthened, with office-bearers being appointed "democratically".

Crowded terrain
Besides the two major Dravidian parties - the ruling Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) and primary Opposition All India Anna

Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) - Mr. Vijay will be up against a number of other regional players -- the Naam Tamilar Katchi, the Pattali Makkal Katchi, the Makkal Needhi Maiam, and the Vidyuthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi.

The actor has, in the past, taken aim at the DMK and AIADMK through both outspoken criticism of their policies and the political messaging of his films. After slamming the DMK's "failure" to safeguard Tamil fisherman under attack by the Sri Lankan Navy during the civil war in the island nation, the DMK, ruling the State at the time, reportedly interfered with the release of his film *Kaanaval* (2011).

In 2013, under AIADMK

rule, Mr. Vijay's film *Thalaivaai*, too, ran into trouble for its political dig at the party. A recent film of his, *Mersal*, criticised the Goods and Services Tax, inviting sharp criticism from BJP leaders in the State.

Most major political leaders in the State, however, have welcomed the challenge. "Everyone has the right to start a political

party in Indian democracy. Actor Vijay, too, has taken this decision. I extend my greetings to him," said DMK youth wing secretary and Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Clarifying that politics to him is not a hobby but a "quest", Mr. Vijay has claimed that his party aims to provide an alternative in

the lower classes," said J. Balasubramaniam, a media researcher based in Madurai. However, he added that political parties such as the Naam Tamilar Katchi and some Dalit organisations have worked hard among these communities. "Therefore, those who are ideologically oriented towards the Naam Tamilar Katchi or Dalit outfits may not move," he said.

IT searches
Ramu Manivannan, visiting professor, University of Denver, and former Head, Department of Politics and Public Administration, University of Madras, is critical of Mr. Vijay's decision. According to him, it will only serve to "turn the water murky". His political

entry is going to confuse the younger voters. What is his politics? A party should be launched after demonstrating values and commitment. Let's wait and see who are the people with him," he said. "Why has he announced his party before the Lok Sabha election if he has decided not to contest in it?"

He also pointed to the possibility of the ruling party at the Centre using the vulnerability of Mr. Vijay, who has already been a target of income tax searches. "He is playing the long hand of the BJP to confuse the younger voters," he said. "He is already in the IT net. He is vulnerable; actors are the least transparent. How can they talk about caste and communal politics?"



(Left) Supporters of actor Vijay in Tirunelveli celebrating his entry into politics with Tamizhaga Vettai Kazhagam on Friday; the actor. FILE PHOTOS



party in Indian democracy. Actor Vijay, too, has taken this decision. I extend my greetings to him," said DMK youth wing secretary and Minister for Youth Welfare and Sports Development Udhayanidhi Stalin.

Clarifying that politics to him is not a hobby but a "quest", Mr. Vijay has claimed that his party aims to provide an alternative in



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GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, P.H. DIVISION, KORAPUT
GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA "e" procurement Notice
e-procurement Notice for 2023-24
Bid Identification No.SE,P.H.KPT-11 of 2023-24 Dt.01.02.2024

Name of work	: Procurement of DI Pipes
Total No. of works	: 1 (One work)
Estimated Cost	: Rs.770.03 lakh (Approx.)
Class of Contractor	: Manufacturer
Period of Completion	: 60 days

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of works	Availability of Tender On-line for Bidding		Date & time of opening of Bid
			From	To	
1	2	3	4	5	6
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division, Koraput	SE,P.H.KPT-11 of 01 2023-24 Dt.01.02.2024	01 (One)	11.00 A.M. 07.02.2024	17.02.2024	19.02.2024

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal: <https://www.tendersodisha.gov.in>
(Er. Chiranjibi Mahali),
Superintending Engineer, P.H. Division Koraput.
C-2990: OPR-13008/11/0001/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail : ceworldbankprojects@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P.(O) - 54 / 2023-24

- The Chief Engineer (World Bank Project), Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below:
- Nature of work : **Bridge Work**
- No. of work : 01 No.
- Tender Cost : **Rs.10,000.00 (On-line)**
- Class of Contractor : 'A' / 'Special' Class Contractor
- Available of bid document : From 10.00 A.M. of 06.02.2024 to 5.00 PM of 22.02.2024
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt.23.02.2024 at 11.30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Engineer-in-Chief
(I/C) Chief Engineer (Bridges), WBP,
Odisha, Bhubaneswar.

B-1734: OPR-34174/11/0001/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA Tel.06766-258301(O); email: se_nerwkr@rediffmail.com
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, RURAL WORKS CIRCLE: KEONJHAR
e Procurement Notice for Road Work under MMSY-TRIP
Identification No. Road with Bridge Online NCB No.418
No. 484 // Date : 31.01.2024

- Name of the Work : Construction and Maintenance of roads under MMSY-TRIP in the District of Keonjhar.
- No. of Work : 01 (One) No.
- Estimated Cost : As per Annexure in NIT.
- Class of Contractor (Eligible) : As per Annexure in NIT
- Period of Completion : As per Annexure in NIT
- Other details:

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender Online for bidding	Last Date & Time of Seeking of Tender	Date & Time of Opening of Tender in OIO S.E.N.E.R.W.Circle, Keonjhar
		From To	Tender Clarification	Technical Bid Financial Bid
1	2	3 4	5	6 7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Keonjhar	Road with Bridge Online NCB No.418	Dt.06.02.24 at 11:00 A.M. up to 5:00 P.M.	Dt.19.02.24 up to 5:00 P.M.	Dt.21.02.24 at 11:00 A.M. Will be intimated later

● Further details can be seen from the website www.tendersorissa.gov.in
Q-2411: Chief Construction Engineer, R.W.Circle, Keonjhar.
OPR-25177/11/0001/2324

Government of Odisha
Handlooms, Textiles and Handicrafts Department
DIRECTORATE OF TEXTILES & HANDLOOM, ODISHA,
AT/PO- Satyanagar, Bhubaneswar-751007
Phone No. 0674- 2575783 ; e-mail- textiles.odisha@gov.in

NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

For selection of Transaction Advisor (TA) for conducting a feasibility study, structuring project, assisting in the entire bid process including preparation of transaction documents for selection of a developer for the establishment of a Silk Spinning Unit through Public Private Partnership (PPP) on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) mode.

No.897 / Tex/2024-25
The Directorate of Textiles & Handloom, Odisha, Bhubaneswar intends to invite Technical and Financial Proposals from eligible, reputed and qualified Agencies/ Firms/ Companies of National Repute (also referred to as 'Bidders') with sound technical and financial capabilities for providing Transaction Advisory services for conducting a feasibility study, structuring project, assisting in the entire bid process including preparation of transaction documents for selection of a developer for the establishment of a Silk Spinning Unit through Public Private Partnership (PPP) on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) mode. Bidders may view and study the RFP document containing the detailed terms and conditions from the website www.tendersodisha.gov.in & Directorate website textiles.odisha.gov.in available from dt. 05.02.2024 at 05:00 PM onwards. The bids are to be submitted as per the procedure given in the RFP document. Any addendum/corrigendum (if required) will be uploaded at the websites mentioned above.

Director of Textiles & Handloom, Odisha
OPR-31003/11/0019/2324

E-mail ID: cebuidings_orissa@yahoo.co.in; cebuidings@rediffmail.com; Tel. - (0674)-2391523
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF (CIVIL), ODISHA
NIRMAN SOUDHA, UNIT-V, BHUBANESWAR
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

File No-BI-(ES)/02/2023 Lr. No.- 4629 31st Jan., 2024
Invitation For Bids

Bid Identification No. C.E. (Civil) - 60 / 2023-24

- The Chief Engineer (Civil), Odisha, Bhubaneswar, on behalf of Governor of Odisha, invites percentage rate bids in double cover system in ONLINE MODE only, for the work "Construction of Academic-cum-Workshop Buildings (G+2) having foundation to (G+3) Works at OSME Campus in the District of Keonjhar for the year 2023-24 amounting to Rs.11,22,39,000/- (Approximate) as detailed below.
- Nature of work : Building Work
- No. of work : 1 No.
- Bid Cost : ₹.10,000/-
- Class of Contractor : 'A' / Special Class
- Availability of Bid Document in the website : From dt.05.02.2024 to 17:00 Hours of Documents in the website
- Date of Opening of Bids : Dt. 20.02.2024 at 11:30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tendersodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website only.

Chief Engineer (Civil), Odisha, Bhubaneswar
B-1729: OPR-34117/11/0101/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER,
RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, CUTTACK

AT/PO-NAYABAZAR, DIST-CUTTACK-753004, Tel.06712443399, Email-Id-serv_ctc@yahoo.com
1st corrigendum to Bid Identification No. Tender Online RWC/02/24 vide T.O. It. No.144 dt. 12.01.2024
L.No.402 dt. 31.1.24

The Tender invited in the above Tender Call Notice No. Tender Online RWC/02/24 Invited by the Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack vide letter no. 144, dt.12.01.2024 for the work "Construction of road Gopalpur Kalimardih Chhak to Padanpur" under MMSY-TRIP in the District of Cuttack for the year 2023-24 (Road & Bridge) is hereby rescheduled.

(i) Clause no. 06 of NIT is modified as below:-

Procurement Officer	Availability of Tender On-line for bidding		Last date & time of seeking tender clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender	
Bid Identification No.	From	To	Technical Bid	Financial Bid	
1	2	3	4	5	6 7
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack	Tender Online RWC-02/24	Previously fixed on 19.01.24 at 11:30 A.M.	Presently modified to 03.02.24 at 11:30 A.M.	Previously fixed on 17.01.24 upto 02.00 P.M.	Presently modified to 03.02.24 at 11:30 A.M. Will be intimated later on

All other terms & conditions remain unaltered.

Sd/- Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Cuttack
OPR-25097/11/0047/2324

O-2403

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
WORKS DEPARTMENT
E-mail : ceworldbankprojects@gmail.com

Bid Identification No. CE-W.B.P.(O) - 53 / 2023-24

- The Chief Engineer (Bridges), World Bank Project, Odisha on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Construction of Road & Bridge work as detailed below:
- Nature of work : **Bridge Works**
- No. of work : 02 Nos.
- Tender Cost : **Rs.10,000.00 (On-line)**
- Class of Contractor : 'Special' / 'Super' Class Contractor
- Available of bid document : From 10.00 A.M. of 06.02.2024 to 5.00 PM of 22.02.2024
- Date of opening of Bid : Dt.23.02.2024 at 11.30 AM
- The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the website : <https://tenderodisha.gov.in>. Any addendum / corrigendum / cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

Engineer-in-Chief
(I/C) Chief Engineer (Bridges), WBP,
Odisha, Bhubaneswar.

B-1735: OPR-34174/11/0002/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER,
PUBLIC HEALTH CIRCLE, SAMBALPUR, ODISHA.

E-mail id: - sephsbp@yahoo.in; sephsbp@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Bid Identification No. ACEPHSBP-08/2022-23 Dt. 02.02.2024

- Number of Work : 05 nos
- Type of Bid : Two Bid System
- Estimated Cost : Rs.132.88 to Rs.371.11 lakhs
- Period of Completion : 9 (Nine) Calendar Months
- Class of Contractor : 'B' & 'A' Class
- Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : From 11.00 Hrs. of Dt.09.02.2024 to 17.00 Hrs. of 23.02.2024
- Last date / time of seeking clarification : 17.00 Hrs of 15.02.2024
- Last date / time of receipt of bids in the portal : 17.00 Hrs. of 23.02.2024
- Date & Time of opening of Technical bids : At 11.30 Hrs. of 26.02.2024
- Name and Address of the Officer Inviting Bid. : Additional Chief Engineer, P.H. Circle, Sambalpur, Brooks' Hill, Near Stadium, At/Po- Motijharan, Dist- Sambalpur-768 001.

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement portal "<http://www.tendersorissa.gov.in>"

C-2992: Additional Chief Engineer, P.H. Circle, Sambalpur.
OPR-13018/11/0004/2324

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanjia Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru – 560 001. Phone No. 080-22265383 website : www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-50/604/2023-24 Date:03.02.2024

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK Karnataka Public Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tender under two cover bid system is invited for the work mentioned below as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from eligible Agencies, Individual Firms, Company, Public Sector Undertakings having registration as mentioned below & have got adequate financial resources, suitable construction equipments, technical man power & past experience for the following work as per the schedule given below:

Name of the Work: Formation of Industrial Layout at Japanese Industrial Park (General Industrial Area) at Vasanthanarasapura Industrial Area, III Phase, Tumakuru District.

Last date for submission of bids is: 19.02.2024 upto 04:30 pm

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the Karnataka Public Procurement Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>

Sd/-
DIPR/CP/3404/Zen/2023-24
Chief Engineer-1, KIADB Bengaluru

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PSG

NDTV 24x7

From Page One**40 killed in U.S. air strikes in Iraq, Syria**

Militants had left the area and gone into hiding in the days since the Jordan attack, local sources said.

The White House said the U.S. had informed Iraq ahead of strikes. Baghdad later accused the U.S. of deception, saying a U.S. claim of coordination with the Iraqi authorities was "unfounded".

Iran called the attack a strategic mistake by the U.S. while Iraq summoned the U.S. envoy in Baghdad.

U.S. Lieutenant-General Douglas Sims, the director of the Joint Staff, said the attacks appeared to be successful, triggering large secondary explosions as the bombs hit militant weaponry.

Despite the strikes, the Pentagon has said it does not want war with Iran and does not believe Tehran wants war either, even as Republican pressure has increased on U.S. President Joe Biden to deal a blow directly. The top Republican on the Senate Armed Services Committee, Roger Wicker, criticised Biden for failing to impose a high enough cost on Iran, and taking too long to respond.

Iran, which backs Hamas, has sought to stay out of the regional conflict itself even as it backs groups that have entered the fray from Lebanon, Yemen, Iraq and Syria - the so-called "Axis of Resistance" that is hostile to Israel and U.S. interests.

U.S. Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin said after the strikes that Biden had directed additional action against the IRGC and those linked to it. "This is the start of our response," Mr. Austin said.

"We do not seek conflict in the Middle East or anywhere else, but the president and I will not tolerate attacks on American forces," he said.

BJP veteran Advani to get Bharat Ratna

He remembered, Mr. Advani said, the late senior Jan Sangh leader Deendayal Upadhyaya, the late Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, and his own late wife Kamala.

His 1990 Ram Rath Yatra, which traversed India, whipping up support for a campaign to build a temple on the site of the Babri mosque, led not just to the mosque's destruction in 1992, but also redefined national politics for decades to come, along with the Mandal Commission's recommendations. It gave the BJP a fillip in national politics to the point where it formed the government in 1996 (for 13 days) and in 1998 (for 13 months), and finally, for a full term between 1999 and 2004.

Mr. Advani went on to serve as the Union Home Minister in the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance government from 1998 to 2004. From 2002 to 2004, under Vajpayee's leadership, he served as the Deputy Prime Minister. He then remained the Leader of Opposition during much of the Manmohan Singh-led UPA era (2004-2014).

Some wrinkles did appear in his relationship with the RSS and the BJP when, in the wake of the Vajpayee government's defeat in 2004, Mr. Advani made an attempt to recalibrate his image from a political hawk to a more broad-based leader, making a landmark six-day trip to Pakistan in June 2005.

However, his praise for Pakistan's founder and the right-wing's bete noire, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, describing him as secular led to controversy in India.

A rapprochement with the RSS ensued soon afterwards as he was projected as the BJP's Prime Ministerial candidate in 2009; however, that year's election saw the return of the UPA government under Dr. Singh.

ED lodges complaint against Kejriwal

On Saturday, a team led by an Assistant Commissioner of Police (ACP)-level officer arrived at the CM's residence and insisted that they serve the notice on Mr. Kejriwal in person as it is in his name even as officials at the CM's residence stood their ground, saying they were ready to take the notice and acknowledge it. The CM House officials eventually received the notice.

AAP leader Jasmine Shah posted a video on X (formerly Twitter) of his interaction with a purported Crime Branch officer, where he said, "I asked a simple question to the officer standing in front of the entrance of the residence of CM Arvind Kejriwal. Under which law is he insisting to hand over a notice personally to CM? He had no answers. It is clear they are only here to do nautanki [drama]."

Commenting on the ED's case against Mr. Kejriwal, Union Minister Parshottam Rupala said in Ludhiana on Saturday that the arrest of the Delhi Chief Minister was neither a priority nor the target.

Court permits Hemant to attend trust vote

To win the vote of confidence, the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM)-led ruling alliance will need the support of 41 MLAs. In their letter of support submitted to Governor C.P. Radhakrishnan, 43 MLAs have signed. The total strength of the Jharkhand Assembly stands at 80, after the recent resignation of JMM MLA Sarfaraz Ahmad.

The ongoing political crisis in Jharkhand was triggered by the arrest of Mr. Hemant Soren by the ED in connection with the money laundering case.

Time to rethink, reimagine and reform legal systems, says Modi

At Commonwealth meet, Chief Justice of India calls upon law officers to uphold honour of the legal profession and remain impervious to the politics and conduct themselves with dignity in court, ensuring the integrity of legal proceedings

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday underscored the need to "rethink, reimagine and reform" legal systems even as Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud pointed out that government law officers should remain impervious to the politics of the day and conduct themselves with dignity in court.

The Chief Justice said law officers, from the Attorney-General and the Advocates-General of the States, whose posts are envisaged in the Constitution, to others such as the Solicitor-General, Additional Solicitors-General and Additional Advocates-General, were the first point of contact between the court and the government. They must uphold the honour of the legal profession through exemplary conduct from both within and outside the courtroom.

"The greatest glory of



Narendra Modi and D.Y. Chandrachud attend the inaugural event of the Commonwealth Attorney- and Solicitor-General Conference. ANI

the Attorney-General is not to win cases for the government but to ensure that justice is done to the people," Chief Justice Chandrachud quoted from jurist Nani Palkhivala's letter to Soli Sorabjee on the latter's appointment as India's top law officer in 1989.

'Officers of the court'
It is the duty of the law officer to tell the government when it does not have a valid case, Chief Justice Chan-

drachud said. "Law officers bear a greater responsibility in upholding ethical standards compared to private practitioners, given their role as guardians of the rule of law... It is imperative that law officers remain impervious to the politics of the day and conduct themselves with dignity in court, ensuring the integrity of legal proceedings... A crucial aspect of executive accountability

drachud said.

"Law officers bear a greater responsibility in upholding ethical standards compared to private practitioners, given their role as guardians of the rule of law... It is imperative that law officers remain impervious to the politics of the day and conduct themselves with dignity in court, ensuring the integrity of legal proceedings... A crucial aspect of executive accountability

drachud said.

ery", said countries need to expand cooperation in the investigation and justice delivery while respecting each other's respective jurisdictions.

"When we work together, jurisdiction becomes a tool to deliver justice without delaying it," Prime Minister Modi said.

Expand cooperation

The Prime Minister and Chief Justice Chandrachud were speaking at the Commonwealth Attorney- and Solicitor-General Conference 2024 on Saturday.

The conference witnessed the participation of Attorneys-General and Solicitors-General from Commonwealth nations spanning the Asia-Pacific, Africa, and the Caribbean along with various international delegations.

The Chief Justice referred to the guidelines issued recently by the Supreme Court in a judgment which cautioned judges against leveraging the power to summon officials as a tool to pressure the government.

Mr. Modi, speaking on the topic of "Cross-border challenges in justice delivery

and justice delivery while respecting each other's respective jurisdictions.

"When we work together, jurisdiction becomes a tool to deliver justice without delaying it," Prime Minister Modi said.

Radical changes

The Prime Minister highlighted the radical changes in the nature and scope of crime in recent times, and of multinational criminal networks and their use of the latest technology in funding and operations.

Mr. Modi drew attention to the fact that economic crimes in one region were used to fund crimes in another.

He trained the spotlight on the challenges of the rise of cryptocurrency and cyber threats.

"The issues of the 21st century cannot be tackled with a 20th century approach," Mr. Modi said, underscoring the need to "rethink, reimagine and reform" legal systems.



Banwarilal Purohit

Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit quits

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Governor Banwarilal Purohit on Saturday tendered his resignation from his position as the State's Governor, and the Administrator of the Union Territory of Chandigarh.

Citing "personal reasons" and "other commitments" for his resignation, Mr. Purohit sent a letter to President. His resignation came a day after he had met Union Home Minister.

Mr. Purohit has been Punjab's Governor since August 2021. After the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government was formed in Punjab in 2022, Mr. Purohit and Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann remained at loggerheads on numerous occasions over different issues. The rift between the Governor and the AAP government remained on public display often.

Ladakh protesters seek Statehood and constitutional safeguards

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Ladakh observed a complete shutdown on Saturday as thousands gathered in Leh to demand constitutional safeguards, protection of cultural identity and environment, and Statehood for the Union Territory.

Chering Dorjay Lakrook, a member of the Leh Apex Body (LAB), said that a record number of people joined the procession and protest in Leh.

"All parts of Ladakh were shut down. People from China border and Nubra Valley travelled to Leh to participate in the protest. We will continue to press for our four demands," Mr. Lakrook said.

The LAB and the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), representing the Buddhist majority and Shia Muslim-dominated regions respectively, are jointly protesting for Statehood for Ladakh, the inclusion of Ladakh in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, thus giving it a tribal status, job reservation for local people and a Lok Sabha seat each for Leh and Kargil.

Fight for a cause

A former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) member from Ladakh, Thupstan Chhewang (76), said that he would fight for Ladakh's cause till the last breath.

He was accompanied by Sonam Wangchuk, an education reformer and one of the popular faces from the region who inspired the Hindi movie *3 Idiots*.

Ladakh was turned into



Public outcry: People taking out a protest in Leh on Saturday to demand constitutional safeguards, protection of cultural identity and environment, and Statehood for Ladakh. SAJJAD KARGILI

a Union Territory, as the Centre ended the special constitutional position of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and split the State into two Union Territories – without a Legislative Assembly – on August 5, 2019.

The Ministry of Home Affairs has constituted a high-powered committee to address the grievances and demands of the people of Ladakh.

The committee led by Minister of State (Home) Nitayanand Rai held its first

meeting on December 4 last year. The next meeting is scheduled for February 19.

The committee has agreed to examine the demand of civil society groups in Ladakh to provide "constitutional safeguards" for the Union Territory.

In the past four years, Ladakh has shut down on multiple occasions amid fears of disempowerment of the local people and overreach of bureaucracy.

The reports received by the CBI are forwarded to the Multi Agency Centre (MAC) under the Intelli-

30 Indian fugitives were located abroad in 2022: govt. report

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

gence Bureau and the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

Data on passports

India uploaded data relating to 22,49,822 lost, stolen or revoked Indian passports to the Interpol SLTD (stolen lost travel document) database till December 31, 2022. The report stated that 1,333 cases of use of STLD-recorded Indian passports were reported or detected by agencies in other countries.

Interpol shared 304 reports on "foreign terrorist fighters" with the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in 2022, the report says.

+

Interpol maintains a database of suspected foreign terrorist fighters.

The data, which includes intelligence on the capabilities, means and emerging trends of foreign terrorist fighters, the report said. Four other requests under mutual legal assistance treaty (MLAT) were also received.

Of the 124 LRIs sent to other countries by India, seeking assistance in criminal matters, only 38 were executed in 2022.

BJP MLA held for shooting of Shinde faction leader; Fadnavis orders probe

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

BJP MLA Ganpat Gaikwad was arrested on Saturday for allegedly shooting Mahesh Gaikwad, a leader of the Eknath Shinde-led faction of Shiv Sena, at a police station in Maharashtra's Thane. Mr. Mahesh Gaikwad sustained six bullet wounds and is in critical condition at a private hospital in Thane.

Upon his arrest, Mr. Ganpat Gaikwad said he had no regrets in doing so. Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis ordered a high-level inquiry with a special investigation team.

The Uddhav Thackeray faction called the incident "an absolute failure of law and order" in the State. "A BJP MLA opened fire inside the police station and the person who was shot is close to the CM and a former corporator. Both their parties are in power, does this mean there is no fear of law and order," said Thackeray faction spokesperson Anand Dubey.

The two parties had come with a complaint over a land dispute and an heated argument escalated, said Deputy Commissioner of Police, (DCP), Zone IV, Thane, Sudhakar Pathare.

On account of violation

According to its website, which is under construction, TASOSS is an official

T.N.-based Christian social service organisation loses FCRA registration

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has cancelled the Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration of a Christian organisation – Tamil Nadu Social Service Society (TASOSS).

The non-governmental organisation (NGO) is the second Tamil Nadu-based Christian association whose FCRA registration has been cancelled this year.

organisation of the Tamil Nadu Catholic Bishops Conference.

The Ministry's orders said the organisation is no longer eligible to receive foreign donations and the registration has been cancelled on account of "violation".

The NGO is registered as a "social" organisation. Registered associations

under the FCRA can receive foreign contributions for social, educational, religious, economic and cultural programmes.

Cancelling registrations

FCRA registration is mandatory to receive foreign donations.

The cancellation comes days after the Ministry revoked the FCRA registration of World Vision India (WVI). Its parent arm, the U.S.-based World Vision, is one of the largest Christian voluntary groups with a presence in over 100 countries.

As of February 3, there were 17,019 FCRA-registered NGOs active in the country. The FCRA registration of nearly 6,000 NGOs ceased to operate from January 1, 2022, as the MHA either refused to renew their application or the NGOs did not apply.

IN BRIEF



Two Naxalites killed in encounter in Chhattisgarh

Two Naxalites were killed in a gun battle with security forces in Narayanpur district of Chhattisgarh, the police said on Saturday. The encounter took place near Gomagai village, where a team of security personnel was out on an anti-Naxalite operation on Friday, an official said. The operation was launched following a tip-off about the presence of 'Arab,' alias Kamlesh, secretary of the Nelnar area committee of Maoists, he said. Bodies of two Naxalites, along with a .12-bore gun and a muzzle-loading gun, were recovered from the spot, he said. Earlier this week, three CRPF personnel were killed and 15 others injured in the encounter in Sukma. The CM (in picture) had paid tributes to them.

Odisha govt. to come up with language policy for Odia

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Saturday announced to come up with a special language policy aimed at the promotion of the Odia language. Inaugurating the first-ever "World Odia Language Conference" in Bhubaneswar, Mr. Patnaik said, "Language is a unifying factor for a race." "Odia can be enriched further with the addition of new words. Culture and technology have their influences on language," he said calling upon experts to deliberate on these issues. "There should be discussion on good Odia literature and its usage. We must know the history of our language, reflect on the present condition of the language and lay foundation for the future," Mr. Patnaik said.

Chhattisgarh to give cash to married women from March 1

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Chhattisgarh will roll out the *Mahatari Vandana Yojana* – a monthly cash assistance scheme for married women – from March 1, announced Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai on Saturday. Eligible beneficiaries will receive ₹12,000 per year, transferred to their bank accounts in monthly installments of ₹1,000 under the scheme. The *Mahatari Vandana Yojana*, a key BJP election promise, played a pivotal role in securing women's support, thus contributing to the party's return to power after a five-year gap. While the benefits would commence from March 1, the online application process for the scheme would be open from February 5 to 20, 2024.

Woman judge found dead at official residence in UP.

A 27-year-old civil judge posted in Badaun district of Uttar Pradesh was found dead at her official residence on Saturday. The death caused a stir, with top district police officials reaching the spot and launching an investigation. "Around 10 a.m., the local police were informed that a woman judge had not reported for duty and was not reachable on phone. When the police reached the judicial quarters, they found the body hanging from a fan," Alok Priyadarshi, Senior Superintendent of Police, said. (*Those in distress or having suicidal tendencies can dial Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health - OII-4076 9002*)

SUDOKU



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7	4	9	3	6	1	5	2	8
8	2	1	7	4	5	3	9	6
3	5	6	8	2	9	7	4	1
4	3	8	1	7	2	6	5	9
5	1	2	6	9	3	4	8	7
6	9	7	4	5	8	2	1	3
9	7	5	2	8	6	1	3	4
2	6	3	9	1	4	8	7	5
1	8	4	5	3	7	9	6	2

No. SS6068 Distribution: www.hindufeatures.com

Manipur CM meets Shah, discusses State issues

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Manipur Chief Minister N. Biren Singh met Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday amid fresh violence in the State.

After the meeting, Mr. Singh said in a post on X, "Rest assured, the Government of India is set to take some important decisions in the interests of the people of Manipur."

His post said, "Engaging in a profound exchange, we discussed matters of paramount importance concerning our State."

Some 10 people had been killed since January 1 in different incidents reported from the State.

After meeting Mr. Shah, the Chief Minister met senior officials of the Union Home Ministry at North Block.

"Post-meeting with Hon'ble Union Home Minister Shri @AmitShah Ji, I convened with senior officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs at the North Block, New Delhi. Held a productive discussion on the strategic measures undertaken for fostering peace in Manipur," he said.

Manipur has been affected by ethnic violence between the Meitei community and Kuki-Zo people since May 3, 2023.

Around 200 people have been killed in the violence while thousands of persons have been displaced from their homes.

Military, police bust racket illegally selling Army's new uniforms

One person was held and 40 counterfeit uniforms were recovered; individuals in Rajasthan, Delhi are suspected to be part of nexus

Dinakar Peri
NEW DELHI

In the first major recovery of illegally sold counterfeit uniforms made according to the Army's new digital combat pattern, a joint operation by Southern Command Military Intelligence, Pune and Bhingar Camp Police Station, Ahmednagar nabbed one person and recovered 40 such counterfeit uniforms.

A statement from the local police said that the arrested individual was from Nashik district; on questioning, he said that he had brought new combat uniforms for sale without having a valid licence. A case has been registered and investigation is being conducted by the Bhingar Camp police station.

Investigation has highlighted that a major racket of illegal sales of the new combat pattern uniform is being run in the open market, with the possible involvement of individuals in New Delhi and Rajasthan, a defence source said.

10-year IPR
The new digital pattern combat uniform was unveiled by the Army on January 15, 2022, and the old



Wrong channel: The counterfeit Army uniform sets which were being sold in Ahmednagar. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

uniform is in the process of being replaced. The new uniform has a contemporary look and the fabric has been made lighter, stronger, breathable, quick drying, and easier to maintain.

The Army has obtained the Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) for the design and camouflage patterns for a 10-year period, extendable for another five years.

"The above has been done to prevent unauthorised vendors from manufacturing and selling the combat pattern dress in the open market, as it was posing a serious security threat for the Indian Army and the nation as a whole," the Army had stated earlier.

As per orders, the new

uniforms will only be sold in the Army's unit-run canteens. Due to the IPR, the Army now possesses exclusive rights to the design and can file a legal suit against any design infringement and unauthorised reproduction of this design, it had stated.

To introduce the new uniform, 50,000 sets were procured through the Canteen Stores Department (CSD) and delivered to 15 CSD depots across the country. The Army had also conducted workshops to train civil and military tailors in stitching the new uniform to the specified design, in coordination with instructors from the National Institute of Fashion Technology, Delhi.

Court to look into the curious case of 'planted' earrings

Krishnadas Rajagopal
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has decided to examine the bail plea of a 22-year-old man who alleges that the Maharashtra Police planted a pair of gold earrings on him to frame him in a theft-and-murder case.

In fact, the man said the ornament was recovered months ago from another man whom the police said was his co-accused.

A Bench headed by Justice Hrishikesh Roy has issued notice to the State of Maharashtra.

The petitioner, Monu Kisanlal Kumar, is one of the two accused in the murder of a woman at a construction site in 2021. Kumar has been behind bars for two years now.

Though the Maharashtra Police *panchayama* shows the ornament was found on Kumar, his lawyers, Sriram Parakkat and Sana Raees Khan, drew the attention of the Bench to police records showing that the same piece of jewellery was recovered months ago from the co-accused in the case.

"On the recovery of the earrings on the basis of the statement made to the police, counsel points out that this is highly improbable in as much as on November 26, 2021, the recovery of earrings is shown from accused no. 1. Curiously, the same article is shown to



On the recovery of the earrings, the counsel points out that this is highly improbable in as much as on November 26, 2021, the recovery of earrings is shown from accused No. 1.

SUPREME COURT

have been recovered from the accused no. 2, on January 15, 2022," the top court recorded in its recent order.

According to the police, Kumar and his co-accused, Shivkumar, were interrupted by the victim during the theft. They stopped her from raising an alarm by fatally attacking her.

The duo allegedly stole ₹30,000, a small bag containing identity documents, a chain and the victim's gold earrings.

Kumar's lawyers argue that the FIR was filed after a day's delay and is based on hearsay. There was no eyewitness to confirm that he had played any part in the crime. The case against him was based on the statement given by Shivkumar, amounting to an extra-judicial confession. His name was maliciously repeated in the police, they said.

The top court has listed the bail plea after three weeks.

Khap our culture, can't assess it on isolated incidents: Dhankhar

Press Trust of India
FARIDABAD



Jagdeep Dhankhar

Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar on Saturday said *khap* (clan-based outfits) is our culture and a symbol of the depth of our civilisation, and it cannot be evaluated on the basis of some isolated incidents. He was addressing a gathering after releasing the book, *9 Incredible Years of Haryana Government: Emergence of a New and Vibrant Haryana* at Surajkund.

"Look at our culture of *khap*. Go into the background of *khap*. You will find that *khap* is positive. You cannot assess it on isolated incidents," said Mr. Dhankhar. He also praised *akhadas* (organisations of religious leaders) in Haryana, saying they have a glorious history.

The Vice-President said India has changed in the past 10 years, from being in

the news for scams, to now poised to becoming the third-largest economy in the world. "Today we are the fifth-largest economic power in the world. We have left Canada, England and France behind. In the next two-three years, India will be the third-largest economy in the world, surpassing Japan and Germany," Mr. Dhankhar said.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya and Chief Minister Manohar Lal were among the dignitaries present at the event.

Elephant captured in Kerala found dead on arrival at Bandipur tiger reserve

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU



The Forest Department captured the elephant in Belur taluk on January 16. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In a tragic turn of events, a 25-year-old tusker, which was captured in Kerala and was being shifted to Bandipur in Karnataka, was found dead on arrival in the early hours of Saturday.

The elephant, nicknamed "Thanner Komban", was originally captured in an operation in the Belur forest range of Hassan district on January 16, 2024, in a bid to reduce conflict in the region. After tranquilisation and radio-collaring, the elephant was released in the wild in the Moololehole range of Bandipur Tiger Reserve which is a tri-junction and abuts Wayanad in Kerala and Mudumalai in Tamil Nadu.

"The free-ranging elephant moved towards the Wayanad side in Kerala and entered the Taluk office compound of Manan-

thavady town following which a decision was taken by the Forest Departments of both the States to tranquilise and relocate it to Bandipur from where it had come," said Ramesh Kumar, Director, Bandipur Tiger Reserve.

He said the entire operation including tranquilili-

sation was done by the Kerala team and only a few mahouts and other staff were sent from the Bandipur side for their assistance. The tusker was tranquilised on Friday at 5.40 p.m. and shifted to Bandipur at 10.30 p.m. but the elephant died en route, said Mr. Ramesh

Kumar. The elephant's death came to light when the truck carrying it reached the Ramapuram camp around 1.30 a.m. on Saturday and officials who went to examine it, found that it had collapsed, he added.

It is not clear whether there was an overdose of tranquilisers as being suspected in certain quarters among activists who have blamed the authorities of both the States and accused them of a botched up operation that led to the death of a majestic animal. The postmortem of the elephant was conducted in the presence of the Forest Department staff of both States and samples of the viscera were collected and sent to the laboratory for analysis.

Mr. Ramesh Kumar said the elephant died of shock and trauma and postmortem report indicates that there was a blood clot in the heart.

Dusted Apollo sighted for first time in Himachal's Chamba

Vikas Vasudeva
CHANDIGARH



Dusted Apollo, a rare high-altitude butterfly, was photographed in Chamba district of Himachal Pradesh. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

of Dusted Apollo extends from Ladakh to west Nepal and it flies between 3,500 to 4,800 metres in the inner Himalayas.

Dusted Apollo is extremely rare and has never been photographed before in Himachal Pradesh.

Found in Chamba

Lovish Garlani, a butterfly expert and researcher associated as a technical consultant with the State Forest Department, told *The Hindu*, "The Dusted Apollo species closely resembles Ladakh Banded Apollo (*Parnassius stoliczkanus*). But the discal band on the upper fore wing in Dusted Apollo is complete and extends from costa to vein one, whereas the discal

Rare species *Regal Apollo*, protected under Wildlife Protection Act, was found at Manimahesh

Pradesh and five of them are declared as Scheduled species. Most of the Apollo butterflies are now endangered and need immediate attention for their conservation and protection," Mr. Garlani said.

Concerned over the declining trend of the number of butterflies in the State, Mr. Garlani said there was an immediate need to protect these rare butterfly species. "Community awareness about poaching and the importance of these species may play an important role in their conservation. Also, establishing butterfly parks and conservation reserves in the State should be on the priority list of the government," he said.

band is incomplete and extends only up to vein four in Ladakh Banded Apollo. After it was photographed in Chamba, its identification was confirmed a month ago after thorough scientific examinations."

Another rare species,

SEOUL

S. Korea summons Russian envoy over criticism of Yoon's remarks



South Korea on Saturday summoned Russia's envoy in Seoul to lodge a complaint over Moscow's criticism of recent remarks by South Korea President Yoon Suk-yeol on North Korea's pursuit of a nuclear arsenal. Seoul said the remarks would only have a negative impact on the relationship between the two countries. REUTERS

U.S. downs 8 drones off Yemen, strikes 4 on ground

Agence France-Presse
WASHINGTON

American forces shot down eight drones near Yemen and destroyed four more on the ground, the U.S. military said on Saturday, announcing a series of incidents that took place the previous day.

The strikes and shoot-downs in and around Yemen came as American forces launched a wave of air raids on Iran-linked targets in Iraq and Syria in retaliation for an attack that killed three U.S. troops last weekend.

A U.S. Navy destroyer shot down one drone on Friday morning while F/A-18 warplanes and another ship downed seven later in the day, and American forces destroyed four more before they could be launched, the Central Command (CENTCOM) said on social media.

CENTCOM said the four drones destroyed on the ground belonged to Yemen's Iran-backed Houthi rebels.

MOSCOW

Reporters detained at Moscow protest held by soldiers' wives



The Russian police on Saturday released about 20 reporters, who had been detained at a protest in Moscow by wives of men mobilised to fight in Ukraine. The women have staged rare protests outside the Kremlin walls for weeks — an uncomfortable movement for the authorities that has so far not been put down. AFP

U.S. air strikes on Iran-linked groups anger Iraq and Syria

Washington cites attack on its base in Jordan as reason for reprisal but refrains from striking inside Iran; Hamas accuses U.S. of 'pouring oil on fire'; Russia calls for UN Security Council meeting

Agence France-Presse
DAMASCUS

The United States struck overnight Iran-backed groups in Iraq and Syria in retaliation for a deadly attack on U.S. troops, drawing condemnation Saturday from government and groups in the region.

The U.S., which promised more strikes, blamed Sunday's drone attack on a U.S. base in Jordan on forces backed by Iran.

U.S. forces however did not strike inside Iranian territory, with both Washington and Tehran seemingly keen to avoid all-out war.

But with tensions already running high in the face of the Israel-Hamas war in Gaza, both the Syrian and Iraqi government joined Tehran in accusing Washington of undermining regional stability.

National Security Coun-



Root cause: The remains of the U.S. troops, killed in an attack on a base in Jordan, being received at the Dover Air Force Base. REUTERS

cil spokesman John Kirby said U.S. warplanes struck "more than 85 targets at seven facilities", four in Syria and three in Iraq. "These targets were carefully selected to avoid civilian casualties," he added.

But the Iraqi government said civilians were among at least 16 people killed in the country's west, and Damascus also reported civilian deaths, but a war monitor said all 29 killed in the U.S. strikes on Syria were fighters.

Grave situation: Iraq

"This aggressive air strike will push the security situation in Iraq and the region to the brink of the abyss," Iraqi government spokesman Bassem al-Awadi said.

Iraqi Prime Minister Mohamed Shia al-Sudani declared three days of

SHANGHAI

China says Philippine vessel 'illegally' landed on disputed atoll



China said on Saturday a small civilian vessel from the Philippines had "illegally placed itself on the beach" of an atoll in the South China Sea that both countries claim. The vessel, which landed on the Spratly Islands atoll on Friday, was there for supply purposes, the China Coast Guard posted on the Weixin platform. REUTERS

LOS ANGELES

Carl Weathers, who acted as Apollo Creed in *Rocky*, dies at 76



Carl Weathers, the U.S. actor who played boxer Apollo Creed in the *Rocky* franchise, going toe-to-toe with Sylvester Stallone in some of cinema's most memorable — and bloody boxing moments, has died, his family said on Friday. He was 76. Weathers, also starred in the 1987 film *Predator*, opposite Arnold Schwarzenegger. AFP

Thailand and Sri Lanka sign free trade agreement

Reuters

COLOMBO

Thailand and Sri Lanka signed a Free Trade Agreement on Saturday, a move Sri Lanka hopes will help it emerge from its worst financial crisis in decades.

The Agreement is aimed at enhancing market opportunities, with negotiations covering various aspects such as Trade in Goods, Investment, Customs Procedure and Intellectual Property Rights.

A delegation headed by Thai Prime Minister Srettha Thavisin arrived in Colombo on Saturday to sign the FTA along with other agreements and Mr. Thavisin will also attend Sri Lanka's 76th Independence Day celebrations on Sunday.

Imran, wife Bushra get 7-year jail term for 'un-Islamic marriage'

Press Trust of India

ISLAMABAD

A Pakistan court on Saturday sentenced jailed former Prime Minister Imran Khan and his wife Bushra Bibi to seven years imprisonment in the 'un-Islamic nikah' case, less than a week before the general elections.

Mounting woes

This is 71-year-old Mr. Khan's fourth conviction since 2022 adding to the troubles of the beleaguered founder of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party ahead of the February 8 polls.

Mr. Khan's first husband, Khawar Maneka, had filed the case, alleging that she violated the Islamic practice of observing the man-

He was earlier sentenced to 10 years in the cipher case and 14 years in the Toshakhana case

datory pause or *Iddat* between two marriages.

Mr. Maneka also accused his ex-wife and Mr. Khan of being in an adulterous relationship before marriage, a crime punishable by death by stoning.

The court also slapped fines of (Pakistan) Rs.5,00,000 each on the couple. They were present in the courtroom when the verdict was announced.

Earlier this week, Mr. Khan was sentenced to 10 years in the cipher case and 14 years in the Toshakhana case.

KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919
NO: KPCL/2023-24/OW/WORK INDENT1185 Date: 02.02.2024

BRIEF TENDER NOTIFICATION

(Through KPP Portal only)

Tenders are invited through GoK e-Procurement platform <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> from individuals/reputed firms/Joint Venture Companies/Consortium of Companies for the work of "Design, Engineering, Manufacturing, testing at manufacturer's works before dispatch, supply, transportation storage at site, intra-site transportation, Insurance, erection, testing and commissioning of 8 nos. Vertical Francis Reversible Pump-Turbines and Synchronous Motor-Generator sets each of 250MW capacity along with all associated auxiliary and ancillary equipment, 420KV GIS, Pothead Yard & Power evacuation Structures including civil and HM works at Sharavathy Pumped Storage Project on EPC basis at Upper Dam (Shivamogga) & Lower Dam (Uttara Kannada), Karnataka. Those who have not registered in KPP portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in> may do so in order to participate in the tender. The calendar of activities, bid notification containing the qualifying criteria for the bidders, Earnest Money Deposit and other details can be accessed from KPP Portal <https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in>. Further details can be obtained from Chief Engineer (Civil) Designs, KPCL, Green Building, 1st Floor, Drug Controller's Office premises, Palace Road, Bengaluru-560001, E-mail: cecdkpcl@karnataka.gov.in

OFFICE OF THE ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, KOTA ZONE, PWD RAJASTHAN

Email : acepwdkota@rediffmail.com
Notice Inviting Bid No. 29/2023-24
NIB No. PWD2324A4257

Bid No.-2363 Dated 29.1.2024

The Rajasthan Public Works Department is engaged in the development of Bridges and as part of this endeavour, it has been decided to undertake in following works in the State of Rajasthan on EPC Basis through an Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract.

The Rajasthan PWD, now invites bids from eligible contractors for the following project:-

State	Section	Name of work	Estimated Project Cost (Rs. in lacs)	Completion period	Maintenance period
Rajasthan	Inderganj-Chambal-Dhijari-Rajpole-Irawa-Piploda-Shanawada Road SH-120 in Distt. Kota	Construction of High Level Bridge on Ch. 51/500 Inderganj-Chambal-Dhijari-Rajpole-Irawa-Piploda-Shanawada Road SH-120 in Distt. Kota UBN No. PWWD2324WLOB18347	1227.75	12 Month	10 years / 12 Months

The complete BID document can be viewed / downloaded from official e-procurement portal of Rajasthan Government <http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> or <http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> from 05.02.2024 to 26.02.2024 (up to 18.00 Hours IST). Bid must be submitted online only at <http://www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> on or before 26.02.2024 (up to 18.00 Hours IST). Bids received online shall be opened on 28.02.2024 (at 15.00 Hours IST).

Bid processing fee (RIST), Bidding Document Fee, Correctness Certificate on Non-Judicial Stamp Rs. 250/- in prescribed format. Power of Attorney and Joint Bidding Agreement etc. shall be submitted online before 26.02.2024 (up to 18.00 Hours IST). Please note that the Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all or any of the BIDs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

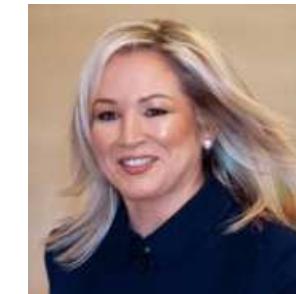
(A. K. Sahu) Addl. Chief Engineer PWD Zone Kota

DIPR/C/472 Date: 24-01-2024, Place: Hyderabad

Northern Ireland appoints Irish nationalist as First Minister in a historic shift

Reuters

BELFAST



Michelle O'Neill

Northern Ireland's Parliament appointed an Irish nationalist as First Minister for the first time on Saturday, a historic milestone in a state established a century ago to ensure the dominance of pro-British unionists.

Hamas, whose unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel sparked the current spiral of violence in the region, accused Washington of pouring "oil on the fire".

Meanwhile, Russia called for a UN Security Council meeting "over the threat to peace and safety created by U.S. strikes on Syria and Iraq".

The Syrian Foreign Ministry said the strikes served to "inflame the conflict in the Middle East (West Asia) in an extremely dangerous way".

U.S. President Joe Biden said the overnight strikes were only a beginning. "Our response... will continue at times and places of our choosing," he said.

The appointment came as Sinn Fein's pro-British rival, the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP), formally ended a two-year boycott of the power-sharing government after this week striking a deal with the British government to ease trade frictions.

"This is an historic day which represents a new dawn," Ms. O'Neill, 47, said

in her acceptance speech. "I will serve everyone equally and be a First Minister for all."

Ms. O'Neill and Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald represent a shift to a new generation of Sinn Fein politicians not directly involved in the region's decades-long bloody conflict between Irish nationalists seeking a united Ireland and pro-British unionists wanting to remain the United Kingdom.

The post of deputy First Minister, which has equal power under Northern Ireland's system of power-sharing government but less symbolic weight, is to be taken by the DUP's Emma Little-Pengelly.

State Bank of India STRESSED ASSETS MANAGEMENT BRANCH, SECUNDERABAD.
Address of the Branch: Door No.5-9-76, 2nd Floor, Prabhat Towers, Opp: SBI, Amaravathi LHO, Chapel Road, Gunfoundry, Hyderabad-500001.
Authorized Officer's Designate Name: Shri. A V U Prabhakar, Asst. General Manager, E-mail Id: team4samb.sec@sbi.co.in, Mobile No.8008572402, Land Line No.(Office): 040-23251921
Appendix - IV-A [See Proviso to rule 8 (6)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE OF IMMOVABLE ASSETS UNDER THE SECURITISATION AND RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT, 2002 READ WITH PROVISION TO RULE 8(6) OF SECURITY INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULE 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable properties mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As Is Where Is, As Is What is and Whatever there is" basis on 06.03.2024, for recovery of Rs.50,62,79,52,38 (Rupees Fifty Crore sixty two lac seventy nine thousand five hundred twenty five and paise thirty eight only) as on 31.12.2015 and interest from 01.01.2016 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc. due to the State Bank of India, Secured Creditor and to the other members of the consortium namely 1) Punjab National Bank: Rs.44,51,68,425/- as on 30.04.2016 with interest due from 01.03.2017 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc., 2) Union Bank of India: Rs.41,96,26,000/- as on 31.10.2015 with interest from 01.11.2015 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc., 3) Andhra Bank (Now merged with Union Bank of India): Rs.35,56,396,73 as on 31.03.2016 with interest from 01.04.2016 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc... and 4) Indian Bank: (Loan made to Pridhi ARC): Rs.40,77,23,185/- as on 31.01.2016 with interest from 01.02.2016 with incidental expenses, costs, charges etc., less any amount paid by the Borrower/Guarantors, the Company and recovery made through auction sale of properties/other modes, from the borrower M/s Varigate Projects Private Limited, Plot No.436, Road No.80, Jubilee Hills, Phase-III, Hyderabad-500033, represented by its Managing Director, Shri G.L.Siva Reddy and Guarantors: 1) Shri. Gunreddy Lakshminarayana Reddy, S/o. Shri.G.Ravindranatha Reddy, Villa No.36, Lumbini SLN Springs, Gachibowli, BSD Botanical Garden, Hyd-500034. 3) Shri. Kudumula Pradeep Kumar Reddy, S/o. Shri Kudumula Venkata Muni Reddy, # 9-430, Sririvasa Nagar, Proddatur, Kadapa Dist-516454. 3) Shri. Kudumula Pradeep Kumar Reddy, S/o. Shri Kudumula Venkata Muni Reddy, # 9-430, Sririvasa Nagar, Proddatur, Kadapa Dist-516454. 5) Smt. Kotimreddy Anita, W/o. Shri Kotimreddy Sridhar Reddy, Plot No.255 & 256, Flat No.5A, Dineni Habitat Apartment, Srinagar Colony, Hyderabad. 6) Shri. Madala Saikumar (S/o. Late. Madala Ramalingeswara Rao, Flat No.404, 416 - 17, Creative Avenue Apartments, Marripalem, VUDA Layout, Visakhapatnam. 7) The Managing Director, M/s Varigate Hotels India Private Limited, Plot No.564 - A/17, 3rd Floor, Serene Work Space, Road No.92, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-500036. 8) The Proprietor, M/s Varigate Logistics & Warehousing Company, Plot No.436, Phase-II, Road No.80, Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad-500033.

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES:

Property No.1: All that the Industrial Property bearing Plot No.2 in Sy.No.55 part, 554 part & 555 Part admeasuring 700 sq ft over land area of 2.26 ghs situated at SIPOT Industrial Complex at Hosur Village limits of Zuzuvadi, Hosur Taluk, Krishnagiri Revenue District, Tamil Nadu State belonging to M/s Varigate Logistic and Warehousing Company vide Sale Deed Doc.No.16169/2006 dated 22.09.2006 registered at office of the Sub-Registrar, Hosur and bounded by: North: Plot No.3, South: Plot No.1, East: Private Land, West: 12.20 meter wide SIPOT Feeder Road.

Reserve Price: 23,13,00,000/- **EMD:** 2,31,30,000/- **Auction date:** 06.03.2024

Auction Time

SCIENCE

Reducing ammonia emissions through fertilizer management

The Hindu Bureau

Based on machine learning, researchers have come up with detailed estimates of ammonia emissions from rice, wheat and maize crops.

The dataset enabled a cropland-specific assessment of the potential for emission reductions, which indicates that effective management of fertilizer in the growing of these crops could lower atmospheric ammonia emissions

from farming by up to 38%. The paper was published in the journal *Nature*.

Challenging action

Atmospheric ammonia is a key environmental pollutant that affects ecosystems across the planet, as well as human health.

Around 51-60% of anthropogenic ammonia emissions can be traced back to crop cultivation, and about half of these emissions are associated

with three main staple crops: rice, wheat and maize.

However, quantifying any potential reductions in ammonia emissions related to specific croplands at high resolution is challenging and depends on details such as nitrogen inputs and local emission factors.

Optimised strategy

Yi Zheng from the Southern University of Science and Technology, Shenzhen, China and others

used machine learning to model ammonia output from rice, wheat and maize agriculture worldwide on the basis of variables that include climate, soil characteristics, crop types, irrigation, tillage and fertilization practices.

To inform the model, the researchers developed a dataset of ammonia emissions from over 2,700 observations obtained via systematic review of the published literature.

Using this model, the re-

searchers estimate that global ammonia emission reached 4.3 teragrams (4.3 billion kilograms) in 2018.

The authors calculated that spatially optimising fertilizer management – as guided by the model – could result in a 38% reduction in ammonia emissions from the three crops. The optimised strategy involves placing enhanced-efficiency fertilizers deeper into the soil using conventional tillage practices

during the growing season.

The researchers found that under the fertilizer management scenario, rice crops could contribute 47% of the total reduction potential, and maize and wheat could contribute 27% and 26%, respectively.

Without any management strategies, the authors calculated that ammonia emissions could rise by between 4.6% to 15.8% by 2100, depending on the level of future greenhouse gas emissions.

SNAPSHOTS



New insights into early language acquisition of a child

A new machine learning model – trained on video and audio recorded from the first-person perspective of one young child for over a year – has provided insights into early language acquisition. Not only do the findings offer a valuable framework to understand how children learn words and concepts, but they could be critical in developing AI systems that can learn language in more human-like ways. The model provides a foundation for investigating how children acquire their first words.



Large herbivores' effects on ecosystems depend on size

The effect of large herbivores on plant abundance and diversity depends more on their size and diet than whether they are native or introduced into their host ecosystems, as per a meta-analysis of over 200 studies. The findings counter the widely held notion that the impacts of introduced megafauna are distinct and more harmful than those of native megafauna and suggest that trait-based ecology provides better insight into megaherbivore-plant interactions than concepts of species origin.



Arterial pressure pulses link heartbeat, brain rhythmicity

Heartbeat-induced pulsations of cerebral blood vessels can directly influence brain activity. This reveals a previously unknown brain-intrinsic mechanism for detecting cardiovascular activity. Interception (perception of sensations from inside the body) plays an important yet not fully understood role in providing rhythmic sensory feedback on bodily activity that, in turn, modulates neuronal activity. These oscillations are considered to be fundamental.

How many trees do we have?

**D. Balasubramanian**

A detailed analysis of the earth's trees was made a few years ago. The method for this global effort utilised ground-based sample counts extended to calculations on images from satellites, using sophisticated algorithms (*Nature*, 2015). The study estimated that our planet has about three trillion trees.

The number came as a surprise, as it was much higher than all earlier scholarly estimates. And the satellite images also provided a measure of how these trees are distributed over the earth. The world average works out to a little over 400 trees per human.

South American rainforests contain 15-20% of all

the trees on earth. Another large number, mostly conifers, is present in the Boreal forests or Taiga of the Northern latitudes, spread over Canada and Russia. As a result of this profusion of coniferous trees, every Canadian resident has the 'luxury' of nearly 9,000 trees.

In sharp contrast, 15 lakh people who live in the Middle Eastern Island nation of Bahrain make do with just 3,100 trees. About five trees per sq. km.

Other oxygen sources

It should be noted that vast areas of the earth are grasslands with relatively few trees. In all, grasses produce nearly as much oxygen as the trees of the world. Then we have marine cyanobacteria and algae – photosynthesis in these microscopic creatures produces as much oxygen as all the land plants. Besides producing oxy-

**Big differences:** The diversity in India's geography results in differences in forest cover. GETTY IMAGES

gen, trees play an important role in removing carbon from the atmosphere.

Trees that lived millions of years ago, after being submerged in swamps and buried, slowly turned to coal, thus locking up carbon for a very long time. Of course, you can quickly undo all that effort by burning the coal in a ther-

mal power plant to produce electricity, along with a lot of globe-warming carbon dioxide.

India's forest cover

The estimate for our own country is about 28 trees for every person. A high population density, and a long history of deforestation has led to this number.

Bangladesh, where the population density is three times that of India, has six trees per citizen. Both Nepal and Sri Lanka have a little over a hundred trees per person.

The diversity in India's geography results in large differences in natural forest cover. Moist tropical forests, with their dense

canopies, high rainfall, and rich biodiversity are seen in the Western and Eastern Ghats, the Northeast, and the Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

Eighty percent of the land area in Arunachal Pradesh is under forest cover; in Rajasthan it is less than 10%.

There is still a long way to go for India's Forest Policy goal of one-third area under forests. Reforestation efforts contribute towards this goal, but of greater importance is the prevention of deforestation. The southern States are faring better at this.

The India State of Forest Report (ISFR) 2021 states that the three States with the best improvement in forest cover are Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu.

(The article was written in collaboration with Sushil Chandani, who works in molecular modelling)



Question Corner

More evidence

Is there new evidence that Mars once had lakes, rivers?

of sediments deposited on the crater floor. The lake subsequently shrank and sediments carried by the river that fed it formed an enormous delta. As the lake dissipated over time, the sediments in the crater were eroded, forming the geologic features visible on the surface today. Perseverance's soil and rock samples will be brought back to Earth by a future expedition and studied for evidence of past life. Between May and December 2022, Perseverance drove from the crater floor onto the delta.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in

FAQ

Why are nations revising rules for foreign students?

Has the political turmoil between India and Canada last year played a role in the tightening of rules for student visas?

Maitri Porecha

The story so far:

Migrating abroad, especially to English-speaking countries, is set to become harder for Indian students aspiring to pursue a higher education, what with countries such as Canada and the U.K. tightening rules to seek admissions to universities.

What are the new set of changes?

Following the political turmoil between India and Canada in December last year, the Canadian government issued revised requirements that it said are 'to better protect international students.' The foremost of these was to upwardly revise the Guaranteed Investment Certificate (GIC) amount from 10,000 Canadian dollars, which amounts to ₹6.15 lakh, to over double at 20,635 Canadian dollars, close to ₹12.7 lakh. In another instance, the U.K. announced that come 2024, international students will be restricted from bringing in dependant family with them as they pursue their studies.

Countries such as Germany and Australia too have gradually increased the GIC amount by approximately 10% annually. As on May 2023, the amount required to apply for a German visa is 11,208 euros which is ₹10 lakh, up from the earlier cap of 10,000 euros.

Higher education experts say that an amount as low as ₹6.15 lakh is not enough for a student to survive in an expensive country like Canada. "Canada had earlier kept a low

GIC threshold to attract students, but the government realised that this was not enough to keep up with rising housing costs, inflation. While other countries like Germany and Australia gradually increased the amount by 10% year-on-year, the Canadian jump of 100% came as a shocker because the hike occurred in one go," said Ankur Dhawan, president of ed-tech start-up UpGrad Abroad.

Which students have been hit the most?

In the latest tweak of rules, Canada has said that it is restricting the total number of study permits or student visas it plans to issue to 3.6 lakh (earlier this was nearly four lakh). India alone used to send up to 1.4 lakh students to Canada, approximately 80% percent of whom went to study diploma level courses there.

Earlier, aspirants looking to migrate to Canada would take any diploma as the 'study abroad' option, essentially as a passport to migrate to the country in poorly equipped educational institutions, while a spouse visa work permit would allow their spouses to work while the aspirant studied. People would take on hefty loans to fuel this move. Now Canada has stated that while they will issue a spouse visa, the spouse will not have a work permit. Akshay Chaturvedi, CEO of LeverageEdu, opines, "In some sense it's a great step towards solving Canada's 'diploma mills' problem, it will shut down bad institutions and also de-incentivise agents who engage in shoddy practices."

How are tightened rules affecting students?

While Canada aims to rein in its burgeoning 'diploma mills' problem, it has eased norms for masters program students to come in. Masters students can apply for a three-year work permit after their course is complete. However, the stricter guidelines have put those who want to seek a Bachelor's degree in Canada in the lurch.

Take for instance, 21-year-old Manvir Singh, a resident of Rajnandgaon in Chhattisgarh who during the years from 2022-2023 was enrolled in the University of Yorkville and completed his first two years of bachelors in Business Administration (BBA) remotely. Mr. Singh was supposed to get admitted for his third-year on-campus studies from May 2024. Mr. Singh who has deposited his third-year fees of \$15,000 and has submitted a GIC of \$20,900 has now been advised by the University to put his visa application on hold. "All visa applications of students wanting to go to study in Canada are on hold till March this year, as universities need to figure out how to send attestation letters to students which will have to be secured from the Canadian government," Mr. Singh said.

What about other foreign countries?

UpGrad Abroad analysed data of 25,000 aspirational students who showed interest in studying abroad. While 18% of this pool was interested in studying in Canada during the data collected between January to July last year, this demand dropped by half to 9.3%, in the data analysed between July and December, last year.

On the contrary, a destination like Germany, which had initially been in demand with nearly 17% students, is now attracting demand from 32% students. Apart from Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, the Netherlands and Finland, Mr. Dhawan added that newer destinations like Taiwan and Israel are also emerging in the list of potential study abroad destinations as they want to attract Indian talent to their countries.

Why is fiscal consolidation so important?

Why was the fiscal deficit estimate announced in the recent Union Budget considered to be ambitious? How does a government fund its expenditure? What is the difference between fiscal deficit and national debt? How much is the Centre expected to borrow from the market?

Prashanth Perumal

The story so far:

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced during her Budget speech that the Centre would reduce its fiscal deficit to 5.1% of gross domestic product (GDP) in 2024-25. She further added that the fiscal deficit would be pared to below 4.5% of GDP by 2025-26. The FM's projections surprised most analysts who expected the government's fiscal deficit target would be slightly higher, at about 5.3% or 5.4% of GDP. The government's revised estimates also lowered the fiscal deficit projection for 2023-24 to 5.8% of GDP.

What is fiscal deficit?

Fiscal deficit refers to the shortfall in a government's revenue when compared to its expenditure. When a government's expenditure exceeds its revenues, the government will have to borrow money or sell assets to fund the deficit. Taxes are the most important source of revenue for any government. In 2024-25, the government's tax receipts are expected to be ₹26.02 lakh crore while its total revenue is estimated to be ₹30.8 lakh crore. The Union government's total expenditure, on the other hand, is estimated to be ₹47.66 lakh crore.

When a government runs a fiscal surplus, on the other hand, its revenues exceed expenditure. It is, however, quite rare for governments to run a surplus. Most governments today focus on keeping the fiscal deficit under control rather than on generating a fiscal surplus or on balancing the budget.

The fiscal deficit should not be confused with the national debt. The national debt is the total

A high fiscal deficit can adversely affect the ability of a government to manage its overall public debt

amount of money that the government of a country owes its lenders at a particular point in time. The national debt is usually the amount of debt that a government has accumulated over many years of running fiscal deficits and borrowing to bridge the deficits. The fiscal deficit is generally expressed as a percentage of a country's GDP since it is believed that the figure shows how easily the government will be able to pay its lenders. In other words, the higher a government's fiscal deficit as a share of GDP, the less likely its lenders will be paid back without trouble. Countries with larger economies can run higher fiscal deficits (in terms of absolute numbers of money).

How does government fund its fiscal deficit?

In order to fund its fiscal deficit, the government mainly borrows money from the bond market where lenders compete to lend to the government by purchasing bonds issued by the government. In 2024-25, the Centre is expected to borrow a gross amount of ₹14.13 lakh crore from the market, which is lower than its borrowing goal for 2023-24, as it expects to fund its spending in 2024-25 through higher GST collections. Economists were expecting that the Centre would set a borrowing target of about ₹15.6 lakh crore for 2024-25.

It should be remembered that central banks such as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) are also major players in the credit market, although they may not always directly purchase government bonds. The RBI may still purchase government bonds in the secondary market, from private lenders who have already purchased bonds from the government. So, when a government borrows from the bond market, it not only borrows from private lenders but also indirectly from the central bank. The RBI purchases these bonds through what are called 'open market operations' by creating fresh money, which in turn can lead to higher money supply and also higher prices in the wider economy over time.

Government bonds are generally considered to be risk-free as the government can – under the worst-case scenario – get help from the central bank, which can create fresh currency to pay off the lenders. So governments generally do not find it hard to borrow money from the market. The bigger problem is the rate at which they are able to borrow the money. As a government's finances worsen, demand for the government's bonds begins to drop forcing the government to offer to pay a higher interest rate to lenders, and leading to higher borrowing costs for the government.

Monetary policy also plays a crucial role in

how much it costs governments to borrow money from the market. Central bank lending rates which were near zero in many countries before the pandemic have risen sharply in the aftermath of the pandemic. This makes it more expensive for governments to borrow money and could be one reason why the Centre is keen to bring down its fiscal deficit.

Why does the fiscal deficit matter?

The fiscal deficit matters for several reasons. For one, there is a strong direct relationship between the government's fiscal deficit and inflation in the country. When a country's government runs a persistently high fiscal deficit, this can eventually lead to higher inflation as the government will be forced to use fresh money issued by the central bank to fund its fiscal deficit. The fiscal deficit recently reached a high of 9.17% of GDP during the pandemic and has since improved significantly and is projected to drop to 5.8% now.

The fiscal deficit also signals to the market the degree of fiscal discipline maintained by the government. A lower fiscal deficit may thus help improve the ratings assigned to the Indian government's bonds. When the government is able to fund more of its spending through tax revenues and borrow less, this gives more confidence to lenders and drives down the government's borrowing cost.

A high fiscal deficit can also adversely affect the ability of the government to manage its overall public debt. In December, the International Monetary Fund warned that India's public debt could rise to more than 100% of GDP in the medium term due to risks although the Centre disagreed with the assessment. It is also worth noting that the Centre has been keen on tapping the international bond market. A lower fiscal deficit may help the government to more easily sell its bonds overseas and access cheaper credit.

What lies ahead?

The Centre plans to bring down its fiscal deficit in 2024-25 to 5.1% of GDP despite having plans to boost capital expenditure and to spend on other programmes. So, most of the revenue to fund such spending will have to come from tax collections. The Centre expects tax collections to rise by 11.5% in 2024-25. It has also projected a cut in expenditure on fertilizer subsidy, from ₹1.88 lakh crore in 2023-24 to ₹1.64 lakh crore in 2024-25. The amount spent on food subsidy is also projected to drop from ₹2.12 lakh crore in 2023-24, to ₹2.05 lakh crore in 2024-25. Trying to balance the budget primarily through raising tax rates to increase tax collections, however, could come at the cost of economic growth since taxes can act as a dampener on economic activity. There is no guarantee, however, that the government will be able to meet its fiscal deficit target, which is seen as ambitious by many, as its projections may turn out to be wrong.



Clear target: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during the third day of the interim Budget session of Parliament, in New Delhi on February 2. ANI

The dispute over Varanasi, Mathura mosques

Why is the spotlight back on the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991? Why do courts feel the legal bar on changing status of places of worship does not apply to these suits? Are there exceptions? What are the arguments on either side?

K. Venkataraman

The story so far:

The Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991, is once again in focus, albeit in a context in which its objectives are being ignored. Civil suits questioning the religious character of mosques at Varanasi and Mathura are progressing apace. These developments show that legislation freezing the status of places of worship is inadequate to stop Hindu claimants from making determined legal efforts to achieve their goal of replacing them with temples.

Why was the Places of Worship Act enacted?

When the Babri-Masjid Ram Janmabhoomi dispute gained momentum, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and other Hindu organisations took up the case of two other mosques – the Gyanvapi mosque in Varanasi and the Shahi Idgah in Mathura. In September 1991, the P.V. Narasimha Rao government enacted a special law to freeze the status of places of worship as they were on August 15, 1947. The law kept the disputed structure at Ayodhya out of its purview as it was then an ongoing litigation.

What are the Act's main features?

The Act declares that the religious character of a

In both disputes, the mosque committees say the Places of Worship Act prohibits such litigation

place of worship shall continue to be the same as it was on August 15, 1947. It says that no person shall convert any place of worship of any religious denomination into one of a different denomination or section. It declares that all suits, appeals or any other proceedings regarding converting the character of a place of worship, which are pending before any court or authority on August 15, 1947, will abate as soon as the law comes into force. No further legal proceedings can be instituted.

There are a couple of exceptions to the rule. The 1991 Act will not apply to ancient and historical monuments and archaeological sites and remains that are covered by the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act, 1958. It will also not apply to any suit that has been finally settled or disposed of, any dispute that has been settled by the parties before the 1991 Act came into force, or to the conversion of any place that took place by acquiescence.

What is the status of the ongoing cases on the Gyanvapi mosque?

A suit was filed in 2022 in the Varanasi district court by a group of Hindu women worshippers seeking to assert their right to worship deities they claim are still found on the premises of the Gyanvapi mosque. The plaintiffs say they have a right to worship Ma Sringar Gauri, Ganesh, Hanuman and other "visible and invisible" deities. Also pending is another batch of suits filed in 1991 seeking a declaration that a part of the site of the Gyanvapi mosque belongs to Lord Vishweshwar.

The main basis for the suits is that the Hindu side says that an old temple of Lord Vishweshwar lies at the centre of the Gyanvapi compound. The site, they contend, is the abode of the 'self-manifested' deity since time immemorial. They claim that the temple was demolished on the order of Emperor Aurangzeb in 1669.

So far, court orders have favoured the position that these suits are not barred by the Places of Worship Act. On the district court's order, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has conducted a survey of the premises.

The ASI's report, submitted to the Varanasi district court, claims that a temple existed there prior to the construction of the mosque. Subsequently, the court has allowed the conduct of Hindu prayers at a cellar on the premises. The order allowing Hindu prayers has been questioned by the Anjuman Intezamia Masjid Committee, which administers the Gyanvapi mosque.

The suits in Mathura pertain to the Shahi Idgah mosque that stands adjacent to the Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple there. These suits claim that the mosque was built over the birthplace of Lord Krishna. The mosque committee, however, denies the allegation. The dispute was settled through a compromise between the Sri Krishna Janmasthan Seva Sansthan and the Shahi Idgah Trust in 1968, and implemented through a decree in 1974. As part of the settlement, the Sansthan had given up a portion of the land to the Idgah. The current suits challenge this compromise as 'fraudulent' and seek the transfer of the entire parcel of land to the deity. The Allahabad High Court has transferred to itself all suits pertaining to the Mathura dispute.

Why hasn't the Act barred suits on Gyanvapi and Shahi Idgah?

In both disputes, the respective mosque committees sought rejection of the suits on the ground that the Places of Worship Act prohibits such litigation. However, court orders so far say the Act does not bar these suits and that they must go on.

In the Gyanvapi worshippers' case, the ruling is that the suits aimed to assert the right of worship of the Hindu deities and did not seek to convert the status of the mosque. Regarding the earlier batch of suits, the Allahabad High Court has taken the view that the Act does not define the term 'religious character'. A structure cannot have the dual character of being both Hindu and Muslim, and that only an examination of evidence can determine its religious character. The Act cannot be an absolute bar on proceedings to ascertain its religious character, it held.

Regarding the Mathura dispute, the district court has taken the view that the suits are not barred by the Places of Worship Act, as what is under challenge is the compromise decree based on the 1968 agreement. As the decree was drawn up before the commencement of the 1991 Act, it is not applicable to the case, it has held.



In conflict: The Sri Krishna Janmabhoomi Temple and the Shahi Idgah Masjid at Mathura in Uttar Pradesh. R.V. MOORTHY

PROFILES

Commander of the 'Axis'

Esmail Qaani

Four years after he took over the command of the Quds Force after the assassination of Qassem Soleimani, General Qaani is at the centre of a spiralling regional crisis with Iran-backed militias in West Asia stepping up attacks on American and Israeli troops as well as commercial vessels in the Red Sea

Stanly Johny

When Esmail Qaani was chosen to lead the Quds Force, an elite wing of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), in January 2020, immediately after Qassem Soleimani was assassinated by the U.S. outside the Baghdad airport, many doubted whether the veteran would be able to fill the very large shoes of the 'Shadow Commander'.

Over the years, Soleimani, who was the chief of the Quds Force from 1998 until his death, had built a mythical status in the Islamic Republic as the protector of the revolution and the force multiplier of Iranian influence in West Asia. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the Supreme Leader, called him "a living martyr" while he was leading the Quds Force. Both his detractors and admirers described him as "the lynchpin" for his role in building a network of militias that were loyal to Tehran, which came to be called the 'Axis of Resistance'. He was the viceroy of Iran's proxies. And his death left a huge vacuum, not only in Tehran's command structure but also in its forward defence doctrine, this was the space Brig. Gen. Qaani had to fill.

Four years later, Gen. Qaani is at the centre of a spiralling regional security crisis in West Asia. As the external arm of the IRGC, the Quds Force is responsible for coordinating with the different Iran-backed militia groups, from Hezbollah (Lebanon) to Hamas (Palestine) and Houthis (Yemen) to Kataib Hezbollah (Iraq). The axis became hyperactive ever since the Israel-Hamas war broke out on October 7, 2023.

Hezbollah is engaging Israeli troops in a limited way from Southern Lebanon; Houthis have turned the Red Sea into a battlefield and the Iraq-based Popular Mobilisation Forces, including Kataib Hezbollah, have carried out at least 165 attacks on U.S. troops and assets in Iraq, Syria and Jordan since October 7.

On January 28, three U.S. service personnel were killed in a drone attack on an American logistics hub in Jordan, most likely by Kataib Hezbollah, escalating the tensions. The

attack has triggered calls in Washington for a direct attack on Iran. Will it restrain Gen. Qaani's network?

Children of war

Born in 1957 in the holy city of Mashhad, which hosts the shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Imam of Shia Islam, Esmail Qaani grew up in the Shah's Persia. Like millions of others in his generation, he was also swept by the revolutionary fervour of the late 1970s, which shook Iran and toppled its thousands of years old monarchy. In the early 1980s, when the newly born theocratic republic was fighting a war of existence with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Mr. Qaani joined the IRGC, which was founded in the immediate aftermath of the 1979 revolution to protect the Islamic Republic.

According to one account, IRGC commander Mohsen Rezai was looking for guardsmen to form a division in Iran's Khorasan province. Morteza Qorbanie, one of his deputies, gave him three names – Nour-Ali Shoushtari, Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf and Esmail Qaani (all three would go on to become influential figures in the Islamic Republic). By the time the war came to an end in 1988, Rezai appointed Mr. Qaani as the head of the Fifth Nasr Division, which fought several heroic battles during the 'Sacred Defence', as the war with Iraq is known among the state circles. He was, in the words of Mr. Khamenei, "one of the most prominent military commanders during the Sacred Defence".

Gen. Qaani later recalled that his close relationships with both Soleimani and Ayatollah Khamenei went back to the days of the Iraq war. "We are the children of war," he said about himself and Soleimani. Mr. Khamenei, also from Mashhad, used to lead mourning ceremonies for Imam Reza with "the boys from Mashhad," who served in the Fifth Nasr Division. Gen. Qaani once wrote in a state booklet.

His battlefield experiences, close ties with the Supreme Leader as well as unflinching commitment and loyalty to the revolutionary regime helped his quiet ascent in the IRGC. In



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

late 1990s, after Soleimani was appointed as the commander of the Quds Force, Gen. Qaani was named his deputy. While Soleimani's focus was on building the Shia networks across West Asia, Gen. Qaani was responsible for the Guards' activities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Central Asian republics. Some reports say he was instrumental in Iran's fight against drug trafficking from the Taliban-ruled Afghanistan (1996 to 2001) as well as Iran's support for the Northern Alliance, the ethnic militia coalition that was fighting the Taliban from northern Afghanistan in the late 1990s with support from Iran, India, Russia and Central Asian countries.

Unlike Soleimani, who was seen as a

charismatic and popular leader at home, Gen. Qaani kept a low-profile, staying focussed on the operational aspects of the Quds Force. He spoke rarely to the media, and whenever he did, he unapologetically displayed his loyalty to the revolution. "The Islamic Republic is the safe haven of all [world revolutionary] movements," he said on one occasion, defending the country's support for different militias in the region. In 2012, when Syria was falling into chaos, Gen. Qaani told a state media outlet that the presence of the IRGC in Syria "prevented many massacres", admitting, for the first time, that Iranian troops were present in Syria, fighting alongside the forces of President Bashar al-Assad in the

country's civil war.

When his profile rose within the IRGC, it also attracted international scrutiny. In March 2012, Gen. Qaani was added to the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List by the U.S. Department of Treasury. The designation stated that Gen. Qaani's "authority covers IRGC-QF [Quds Force], financial disbursements to IRGC-QF elements, including elements in Africa, as well as to various terrorist groups, including Hezbollah."

Shadow war

Gen. Qaani took over the Quds Force at a time when the shadow war between Israel and Iran was intensifying. The U.S. hoped that taking out Soleimani would weaken Iran's overseas operations. But from 2020, the Quds Force, under the command of Gen. Qaani, doubled down on its support for the militias. During the same period, Israel had stepped up targeted attacks against Iranian assets and figures both inside and outside Iran. The country was grappling with a series of protests. Arab countries were moving closer towards Israel. The Mullahs were under pressure.

In early 2023, Gen. Qaani held a series of clandestine meetings, reports about which emerged later, with the leaders of the pro-Iran militia groups. Their agenda: to launch a fresh wave of attacks on Israeli targets.

After the October 7 Hamas attack on Israel, Gen. Qaani publicly declared the Quds Force's support for Hamas. "Your brothers in the Axis of Resistance stand united with you ... the resistance will not allow the enemy to achieve its dirty goals in Gaza and Palestine," Gen. Qaani said in a message to Hamas. He was not bluffing. In the past four months, the Axis has carried out multiple attacks, from the Red Sea to the U.S. hub in Jordan, turning the Gaza war into a regional security crisis.

With pro-Iran militias' Jordan attack and America's counter strikes in Syria and Iraq, the crisis has entered into a circle of retaliatory violence, with potential for an all-out war. Gen. Esmail Qaani, calm, resolute and ruthless, sits at the centre of this vortex.

THE GIST

Born in 1957 in the holy city of Mashhad, which hosts the shrine of Imam Reza, the eighth Imam of Shia Islam, Esmail Qaani grew up in the Shah's Persia

In the early 1980s, when the newly born theocratic republic was fighting a war of existence with Saddam Hussein's Iraq, Mr. Qaani joined the IRGC

His battlefield experience, close ties with the Supreme Leader as well as unflinching commitment and loyalty to the revolutionary regime helped his quiet ascent in the IRGC

Chosen successor

Champai Soren

JMM picks a veteran with administrative and political experience to lead the Jharkhand government in an election year

Amarnath Tewary

Following Hemant Soren's resignation as Chief Minister and arrest in an alleged land scam case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, Champai Soren was elected leader of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) Legislative Party, and with the support of 47 alliance MLAs, he took oath as the new Chief Minister on February 2.

Jharkhand was carved out from Bihar as a separate State in November 2000 and out of the total 81 seats in the Assembly, nearly 40 are tribal dominated, where Mr. Champai could be a decisive factor in the Assembly election due in November.

The ruling alliance leaders said Mr. Champai could be a tough challenger for the BJP's tribal faces such as Babul Marandi and Arjun Munda.

He is seen as a compromise consensual candidate within the party as Mr. Hemant's push to name his wife, Kalpana Soren, as Chief Minister had triggered differences within his family, with his sister-in-law Sita Soren coming out against the move.

Mr. Champai, 67, the six-term MLA for Seraikela, was the Minister of Transport, Scheduled Caste and Backward Class Welfare in the Hemant Soren Cabinet.

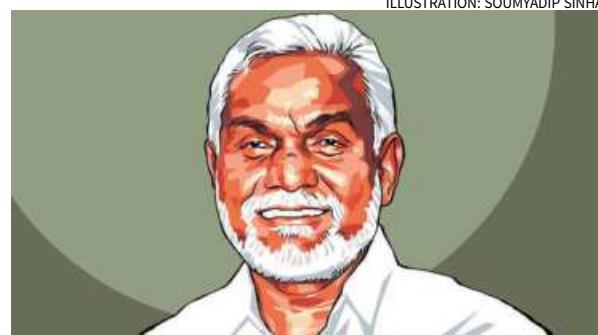


ILLUSTRATION: SOUMYADIP SINHA

He is the vice-president of the party.

In the 2019 Assembly election, Mr. Champai defeated the BJP's Ganesh Mahli in his traditional constituency. In the 1980s and '90s, Mr. Champai, along with JMM founder Shibu Soren, father of Mr. Hemant, had played an active part in the movement for a separate statehood for Jharkhand. Shibu Soren is popularly known as 'Guruji' in the State.

Mr. Champai is still close to Mr. Shibu Soren and his family members. Before leaving to take oath as Chief Minister on February 2, Mr. Champai went to meet Mr. Shibu Soren at his residence in Ranchi. "He is my guru and I came to take his blessings before taking oath," he said. Mr. Hemant and his wife Ms. Kalpana are often seen touching Mr. Champai's feet in public to show their respect.

Mr. Champai is known as the "Tiger of Kolhan" for his "warrior-like skills" during the statehood agita-

tion in 1980s and 1990s. The Kolhan area is one of five divisions in Jharkhand, comprising East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum and Seraikela-Kharsawan districts. Since 2005, Mr. Champai has been an MLA from Seraikela.

His first Assembly election victory was in 1991 as an Independent candidate in Seraikela in undivided Bihar.

Son of a farmer

Born in 1956, he comes from Jilinggora village of Seraikela-Kharsawan, and is the eldest of four siblings. He is married to Manko Soren and is father of seven children. His father, Simal Soren, was a marginal farmer and mother, Madho Soren, a homemaker. In his early days, he helped his father in farming and was a keen football player.

Later, he started championing the cause of unorganised contractual labourers of Tata Steel in Jamshedpur and fighting

for tribal rights. He was popular among unorganised contractual labourers in Jamshedpur.

"He was given due respect even by Tata Steel management... he was not a meek, mute, or laid-back leader, always on toes for his folks," recalled former Tata Steel employee Ratnakar Krishnan. Mr. Champai had also contested the Lok Sabha election unsuccessfully in Jamshedpur in 2019.

Mr. Champai has never been to college. But tribal leaders of Jharkhand affirmed that "he is more intelligent and agile than many of the educated young legislators". He could sense the political moves of Opposition parties quickly, they say.

Mr. Champai was chosen to replace Mr. Hemant because of his "straight politics, fighting tendencies and good relations with political party leaders", State Congress president Rajesh Thakur said.

He is said to have played a key role in the formation of the Arjun Munda-led BJP government in 2010 following differences with Mr. Hemant on "some issues". But later when Mr. Hemant formed a government in 2013, Mr. Champai was appointed Food Supplies and Transport Minister in the Cabinet.

And now, he is the head of the government.

Quest for credibility

UNRWA

The Israeli government alleges that a few of the UN Relief and Works Agency's staff were complicit in the October 7 Hamas attack in Israel

Adithya Narayan

Hours after the International Court of Justice in The Hague ruled on January 26 that Israel must do everything in its capacity to prevent "genocidal acts" from happening in Gaza, news broke of the complicity of a few UN Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) staff members in the cross-border attacks by the Palestinian militant group Hamas on Israel on October 7.

The Benjamin Netanyahu-led government collated its charges into a dossier and presented it to the U.S. government on the same day as the ICJ ruling. The file stated that of the 12,000-strong UNRWA staff working in the Gaza Strip, 12 had direct involvement in the attacks that saw more than 1,100 Israelis killed and close to 250 taken hostage.

Shocked by these allegations, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres promised criminal action against those involved, and the agency's chief, Philippe Lazzarini, said nine were terminated from service, while two were dead. The UN's Office of Internal Oversight Matters – the organisation's highest investigating authority – also opened an investigation into the matter.

As a fallout of these allegations, 13 countries, in-

cluding the UNRWA's largest donor, the U.S., have paused funding for the agency. In countermeasures, countries such as Saudi Arabia, Lebanon and Qatar have asked donors to reconsider their decision.

Right of return

The UNRWA is the only UN agency dedicated to helping refugees stemming from the Israel-Palestine conflict. It was established in 1949 to cater to refugees from the Arab-Israeli War of 1948, and began operations on May 1, 1950. That the agency exists to serve these refugees who still nurture hopes of the "right of return" irks Israel, as vast portions of their homeland lie in the West Bank.

They include the 2.3 million residing in the Gaza Strip, who despite calling the Israeli intelligence "highly credible", termed the UNRWA's role "indispensable". U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield also shared a similar view when she condemned the Israeli allegations but simultaneously called the aid group "the only organisation on the ground that has the capacity to provide the (required) assistance".

For those remaining in the besieged Strip, the UNRWA is their primary conduit of aid. Without funding, the agency says it will have to cease operations by the end of February. The subsequent impact will be limited not just to Gaza but will spread across the region.

Also, a halt to funding will be in direct contravention to the ICJ ruling, which asked for direct humanitarian assistance to reach Gaza, Francesca Albanese, the Special Rapporteur for Palestinian territories, wrote on X.

Though the UNRWA began functioning with the objectives of direct relief and work programmes, it has grown in scope and now admittedly involves itself in education, healthcare, relief and even micro-finance in Gaza. These are large shoes to fill.

The sentiment was best echoed when U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, who despite calling the Israeli intelligence "highly credible", termed the UNRWA's role "indispensable". U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield also shared a similar view when she condemned the Israeli allegations but simultaneously called the aid group "the only organisation on the ground that has the capacity to provide the (required) assistance".

REUTERS

President Donald Trump cancelled funding to coerce the Palestinians to the negotiations table. Upon coming to power in 2020, President Joe Biden reversed the decision, saying the move was consistent with U.S. values and crucial to a two-state solution.

In its early days, the UNRWA catered to 0.75 million refugees. That figure grew over the years and now stands at more than 5.9 million Palestinians, spread across Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank.

They include the 2.3 million residing in the Gaza Strip, who despite calling the Israeli intelligence "highly credible", termed the UNRWA's role "indispensable". U.S. Ambassador to the UN Linda Thomas-Greenfield also shared a similar view when she condemned the Israeli allegations but simultaneously called the aid group "the only organisation on the ground that has the capacity to provide the (required) assistance".

IN BRIEF



Reliance Power Q3 net loss widens to ₹1,136.75 crore

Reliance Power Ltd. reported widening of its consolidated net loss to ₹1,136.75 crore during the quarter ended December, due to increased expenses. It posted a net loss of ₹291.54 crore during the October-December period of preceding 2022-23 financial year, the company said in an exchange filing. The company's total income increased marginally to ₹2,001.54 crore in the reporting quarter compared with the ₹1,936.29 crore in the year-earlier quarter. PTI

India plans \$1.7-bn mop up via online gambling tax in FY25

The Union government expects to collect up to ₹40 billion (\$1.7 billion) in Goods and Services Tax (GST) next financial year by taxing online gambling companies, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra told Reuters on Saturday. The government in October imposed a 28% tax on funds that online gaming companies collect from their customers for every bet, shocking a nascent \$1.5 billion industry that is backed by global investors. REUTERS

Union govt. increases windfall tax on crude petroleum

The government has raised windfall tax on domestically-produced crude oil to ₹3,200 per tonne from ₹1,700 per tonne. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). According to an official notification, SAED on export of diesel, petrol, and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at nil. The new rates are effective from February 3. India first imposed windfall tax on July 1, 2022, joining nations taxing supernormal profits of energy firms. PTI

SBI Q3 net falls 35% on wages, pensions

Chairman Khara says provisioning of ₹7,100 crore toward wage increases and pension liabilities has not affected bank's asset quality during the quarter; Net Interest Income of India's largest bank increased by 4.59% Year-on-Year to ₹39,816 crore, but Net Interest Margin decreased by 35 bps

The Hindu Bureau
MUMBAI

State Bank of India reported third-quarter net profit plunged 35.5% to ₹9,164 crore as compared with ₹14,205 crore in the year-earlier period due to a one-time provisioning of ₹7,100 crore toward wage increases and pension liabilities, Chairman Dinesh Khara said at a press conference.

Out of the ₹7,100 crore, the bank provided ₹5,400 crore to correct the anomaly in pension, which had persisted since 2002, and another ₹1,700 crore

was provided for dearness relief neutralisation for pre-2002 retirees.

While, this drop in profit is the first in 12 quarters, Mr. Khara said SBI's asset quality remained healthy.

Net Interest Income

During the quarter ended December 31, 2023, the Net Interest Income (NII) of India's largest bank increased by 4.59% Year-on-Year (YoY) to ₹39,816 crore.

However, the bank's Net Interest Margin (NIM) decreased by 35 basis points (bps) YoY to 3.34%.

The bank reported healthy credit growth of



One-time charge: ₹5,400 crore provided to correct anomaly in pension and ₹1,700 crore for dearness relief neutralisation. REUTERS

14.4% YoY to ₹35,84,252 crore with domestic advances growing by 14.5%.

Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) advances crossed ₹10 lakh crore and ₹4 lakh crore, respectively.

Corporate advances and

Mr. Khara said.

Domestic advances growth was driven by SME advances, up 19.2% YoY, followed by agriculture advances, which grew by 18.1% YoY, he added. While retail personal advances and corporate loans registered YoY growth of 15.3% and 10.7% respectively.

Deposits grow

Deposits grew at 13% YoY, out of which current and savings account deposits grew by 4.48% YoY.

Loan loss provisions during the quarter increased 10.7% to ₹1,757 crore from ₹1,586 crore a

year earlier. Slippage ratio for the quarter increased by 17 bps YoY and stood at 0.58%.

NPAs reduce

Gross Non Performing Assets (NPAs) decreased by 11.8% to ₹86,749 crore as compared with ₹98,347 crore a year earlier.

Net NPA reduced by 4.58% to ₹22,408 crore from ₹23,484 crore in the year-earlier period.

Credit cost of the bank for Q3 FY24 remained flat YoY at 0.21%.

Capital Adequacy Ratio as at the end of Q3 FY24 stood at 13.05%.

Bourses cut Paytm daily limits to 10% after rout

Reuters

NEW DELHI

Stock exchanges have cut the daily limits for Paytm to 10%, from 20%, after a \$2 billion rout in the stock following a regulatory crackdown on the company's banking unit.

The new 10% limit will be applicable from Monday, the BSE and the National Stock Exchange said on their websites.

Paytm's market value crashed to \$3.7 billion as the stock slid 20% – its daily limit at the time – on both Thursday and Friday.

Expect GST Appellate Tribunals by July-Aug'

Vikas Dhoot
NEW DELHI



Sanjay Malhotra

The much-awaited Goods and Services Tax (GST) Appellate Tribunals, intended to resolve taxpayer disputes under the six-and-a-half years old indirect tax regime, may begin operations around July or August, Revenue Secretary Sanjay Malhotra said in an interview on Saturday.

"The process has been initiated. Very soon, you are going to see an advertisement in the media for the process of selection of the members and the president. And we hope that, quickly, in a period of six months or so from now, we are able to put some of the

tribunals in place," Mr. Malhotra told *The Hindu*.

"There are 31 benches spread over about 50 locations, most of which should become operational by July-August... so we should be in a position to do this soon after the new government takes charge,"

the Secretary noted.

Introduced on July 1, 2017, the GST framework included provisions to constitute Appellate Tribunals as the second appellate authority for hearing appeals against the orders passed by the Appellate Authority under the Central and State GST laws. However, in their absence, taxpayers have been compelled to seek relief from the High Courts, with the number of appeals under central GST laws having risen to about 15,000 by October 31 - 25% higher than the pending cases as on March 31 last year.

The Central GST law was amended in July to enable the creation of appellate tribunals, and the Finance Ministry notified the setting up of 31 tribunals across 28 States and eight Union Territories in mid-September. At the time, officials expected the first set of tribunals would become operational by December 2023 or January 2024.

align those provisions, which were steered through Parliament's winter session in December.

"Non-constitution of the Goods and Services Tax Appellate Tribunals is denying the taxpayers of second appellate remedy and consequently the taxpayers are seeking relief directly from the High Court, thereby burdening" the courts, Ms. Sitharaman had said in the Lok Sabha.

Taxpayers could withdraw their GST-related cases filed in High Courts and the Supreme Court and lodge them with the upcoming GST appellate tribunals to speed up their outcomes, the Minister had advised at the time.

NMDC readying the ground for a quantum jump by 2029'

We have shortlisted 6-7 minerals: lithium, gold, copper, aluminium, coking coal and iron ore; we are also debating our international policy on where to and how to go

INTERVIEW

Amitava Mukherjee**N. Ravi Kumar**

As India's largest iron ore producer, NMDC's growth trajectory mirrors the infrastructure sector's progress. The state-owned miner is readying strategies for its next phase of growth, one focussed on consolidation, and awaiting additional approvals for ramping up and looking beyond iron ore and mines in India, Director-Finance Amitava Mukherjee, who is holding additional charge as CMD, said in an interview. Edited excerpts:

As NMDC accelerates growth amid rising demand for iron ore, how does the road ahead look?

We are proud of our legacy as that is the springboard for the future. But NMDC historically has been under-performing given its growth prospects. Thus, whatever we did in 66 years has to be done in the next six years, by 2030. From a miner's perspective you have a huge canvas to paint. We have shortlisted 6-7 minerals. They are lithium, gold, copper, aluminium, coking coal and iron ore. Also, debating our international policy on where to and how to go. We also realise that lot of

years, for example not mined coal, not mined outside the country... so there are new things to do.

What investment do you foresee for the forays?

We do not have any investments done mineral-wise. In India, where it is an auction regime, we do not hope to get too many reservations. If we can get our permissions right, we should get 80 MT from our existing mines. Another 20 MT has to come from abroad or different miners. For coal we already have two mines and is likely to be 10-11 MT. In Australia we just started a gold mine. We are looking substantially at foreign assets. The draft proposal is that we want 5-10% of our revenues coming from abroad by 2030. Our portfolio will be a combination of exploratory mines, some in pre-production stage and some producing mines for which we will consider different agreements such as off-take agreement, equity participation and buyout depending on the opportunities. We are looking at opportunities all over the world, be it Western Africa or Australia. We have not looked at South America but that is something we will be looking into. Whatever we do, we need to be aggressive.

Could you elaborate on lithium mining plans?

We are pursuing 3-4 strategies. In Australia, we are partnering with Hancock. (For longer version click on: <http://thlink.in/lssng>)

That partnership initially was for magnetite and modified subsequently to include lithium exploration, which is likely to start any time now. With the strike zone right between our tenement we hope there will be lithium. The initial exploration process will take about 18-24 months, that is PFS (pre-feasibility study). And then, if you are successful, the BFS will take 36 more months and then the minning construction.

We are very hopeful because there are working lithium mines nearby.

Besides that we are negotiating with several companies which are in different stages, some PFS, some pre-mining stages. We are exploring options such as equity participation, off-take rights. While not much space is available in lithium, as whatever comes to the table is taken immediately, we have a few advantages. NMDC being government owned we are treated with lot of respect, second we have been in Australia for 10 years and the way we have supported [iron ore unit] Legacy, people know our background and are keen to work with us. Being a government company we are a natural ally for people looking beyond China in the lithium space.

The problem would be lithium refining which is now 99% in China, so you will have to develop lithium refining in India.

(For longer version click on: <http://thlink.in/lssng>)

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER
LOCAL AREA ENGINEERING ORGANISATION, WORKS DIVISION - Madhepura

RE. NIT NO 07SB/2023-24

(CIVIL WORKS)

(Through e-procurement mode only - www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

The Executive Engineer, LAEO, Works Division- Madhepura on behalf of the Governor of Bihar invites percentage rate bid in two bid system (Technical/Financial) from the eligible and approved contractors registered in Bihar state works department/corporation/other State & Central Government/PSU or any Agency of National or International repute for following works. However, registration within the state of Bihar in any works department/corporation (in which registration facility is available) will be essential after issue of letter of acceptance

1.DETAILS OF WORK:-

Group No.	Name of work	BOQ Amount (Rs. in Lakh)	Amount of Earnest Money online mode or off line mode BG only (Rs. in Lakh)	Cost of B.O.Q. (non-refundable to be paid online only) (Rs.)	Bid Processing fee (non-refundable payment only through online mode) (Rs.)	Time of completion (in months)
01	02	03	04	05	06	07
01	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Raghunathpur Panchayat under Murliganj Block, District Madhepura.	304.65148	6.09400	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
02	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Babhni Panchayat under Gamharia Block, District Madhepura.	361.62825	5.23300	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
03	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Bhetwa Panchayat under Madhepura Block, District Madhepura.	303.60506	6.07300	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
04	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Chitti Panchayat under Ghailadh Block, District Madhepura.	257.31769	5.14700	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
05	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Israin Bela Panchayat under Kumarkhand Block, District Madhepura.	308.84583	6.17700	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
06	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Manpur Panchayat under Singheshwar Block, District Madhepura.	258.57726	5.17200	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
07	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Chikni Panchayat under Gamharia Block, District Madhepura.	261.46046	5.23000	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
08	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Dighi Panchayat under Murliganj Block, District Madhepura.	305.14101	6.10300	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
09	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Nadhi Khadhi Panchayat under Murliganj Block, District Madhepura.	303.73790	6.07500	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
10	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Gangapur Panchayat under Murliganj Block, District Madhepura.	305.12774	6.10300	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month
11	The Construction of Panchayat Sarkar Bhawan at Arraha Mahua Dighra Panchayat under Ghailadh Block, District Madhepura.	255.12077	5.10300	10000	According to e-proc2 Web page	14 Month

2.Date of issue of Notice Inviting Tender : Date : 29/01/2024

3.Start date and time for uploading of Bid : Date : 12-02-2024 - 10.00 AM. (only on website: www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

4.Time, date and place of Pre-Bid Meeting : Date : 15-02-2024 at 3:30PM office of the Chief Engineer, LAEO, Vishweshwaria Bhavan, 4th floor, Room no-423, Bailey Road, Patna-800015

5.Last Date and Time for uploading of Bid : Date : 17-02-2024 upto 3.00 PM (only on website: www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

6.Date of Opening Technical Bids : Date : 20-02-2024 - 3.30 PM (At least two working days after the date as mentioned in

Sport

RAISING THE BAR

Bumrah becomes fastest Indian pacer to pick 150+ wickets in Tests



Jasprit Bumrah, during the second Test match between India and England, became the fastest pacer to pick 150+ wickets in Test when he dismissed Ben Stokes on day two. Bumrah reached the feat after delivering 6781 balls. Umesh Yadav is second with 7661 balls. Mohammed Shami and Kapil Dev hold the next two spots.

Bumrah reverse-swings the balance India's way after Jaiswal's double ton

The pace spearhead's six for and Kuldeep's three-wicket haul hand the hosts a healthy 143-run lead; Anderson, Bashir and Rehan bag three each

ENGLAND IN INDIA

P.K. Ajith Kumar
VISAKHAPATNAM

Up went Jasprit Bumrah's arms in the air, his head tilted back a little. Another England wicket had fallen. That shy smile appeared on his bearded face, again.

Bumrah was sensational. His stunning spell of reverse swing swung the balance of the second Test towards India at the Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy Stadium on Saturday.

Batting a second time, India finished on 28 for no loss at stumps on the second day – that is a lead of 171. In reply to India's first innings score of 396, which was basically a solo effort from the double-centurion Yashashvi Jaiswal, England could only make 253.

The Englishmen may have been looking at a better score than that when Zak Crawley (76, 78b, 1x4, 2x6) and Ben Duckett gave them another brisk start. The dashing duo had added 59 when Duckett was dismissed by Kuldeep Yadav, who was playing his first Test since December 2022, with a ball that turned and took an edge to silly-point.

Crawley, however, was looking in ominous touch. He was involved in another promising partnership, with Ollie Pope for the second wicket.

But Crawley, while trying to hit Axar Patel out of



Clueless: Bumrah is pumped up after bowling Pope neck and crop. K.R. DEEPAK

the ground after stepping out, was out to a brilliant catch by Shreyas Iyer, who ran several yards back from backward point and timed his dive perfectly.

Show begins
A little later, the Bumrah show began.

The Indian pace spearhead had earlier been hit for four fours in an over by Crawley, something you usually don't get to see. He was brought back into the attack when Joe Root walked out to the middle. Root once again was undone by his nemesis.

Bumrah made him edge to slip, where Shubman Gill took the first of his four catches. Then, in his very next over, Bumrah produced a gem to remove

Pope, who scored a monumental 196 in England's come-from-behind victory at Hyderabad. On this day, the England vice-captain had no answer to the devastating yorker: his leg and middle stumps were knocked out of the ground.

Jonny Bairstow and captain Ben Stokes (47, 54b, 5x4, 1x6) managed to weather the Bumrah storm for a while. But the 30-year-old Gujarat bowler accounted for both of them, as he became the quickest Indian pacer to take 150 Test wickets.

This is his 34th Test and it was with a beauty that he created the milestone.

All Stokes could do was express his helplessness, rather eloquently with both hands, after being

bowled by one that shaped in late.

Bumrah finished with six for 45 from 15.5 overs. It was his best figures at home, a result of one of the finest exhibitions of pace bowling in India, on what was a batting track.

Earlier, India resumed at 336 for six with Jaiswal unbeaten on 179. While on 191, he slogged Shoaib Bashir for a six over square-leg and then followed it up with a four to reach his double hundred.

His extraordinary knock (209, 290b, 19x4, 7x6) was ended by James Anderson, who also presented a masterclass of pace bowling in these challenging conditions.

Anderson would, however, be overshadowed by Bumrah.

"Bumrah bowled unbelievably well," Crawley

CLINICAL

Sai Sudharsan's hundred gives India-A huge lead



Sai Sudharsan scored a ton against England Lions, as India-A made 409 in its second innings for a lead of 402 runs on the third day of their third unofficial 'Test' in Ahmedabad on Saturday.

The scores: India-A 192 & 409 in 107.1 overs (Sudharsan 117, Saransh 63) vs. England Lions 199 and 83/2 in 24 overs.

LIFELINE

U.P. Yoddhas secure an impressive and important victory



Superb defending by Sumit, complemented by raiders Gagana Gowda and Mahipal, helped U.P. Yoddhas secure an important 38-23 victory over U Mumba in the Pro Kabaddi League in Delhi on Saturday. In the other match of the day, Dabang Delhi got the better of Telugu Titans 44-33.

A fighting Mohun Bagan holds East Bengal

Amitabha Das Sharma
KOLKATA

Mohun Bagan SG fought back twice from being a goal down to hold traditional rival East Bengal 2-2 in an intensely contested action of the first Kolkata derby of the ISL-10, at the Salt Lake Stadium here on Saturday. Bagan had won all previous six meetings with its arch rival ever since the two started playing in the ISL.

EBFC scored in the third minute that set the tone of the highly charged contest. EBFC got its opener through the left after Nishu Kumar sent a cross that found Ajay Chhetri. The midfielder stuck his leg out to divert the ball into the net before the Bagan defence could react.

EBFC looked a more composed side after the break and regained the lead in the 55th minute off a penalty. Cleiton Silva found the target from a



Ecstatic: Mohun Bagan players celebrate after securing a draw. PTI

Brendan Hamill floater. The action remained quite evenly contested till half-time. Sadiku could have doubled his tally in the 40th minute but the Albanian striker shot over an open goal.

The results: Mohun Bagan SG 2 (Sadiku 17, Petros 87) drew with East Bengal 2 (Ajay 3, Cleiton 55-pen); Punjab FC 3 (Jordan 23, Majcen 71, Talal 77) bt Bengaluru FC 1 (Chhetri 15).

Newcastle salvages a draw with Luton

Reuters
NEWCASTLE

Newcastle United fought back from two goals down in a rollercoaster 4-4 draw against Luton Town, which stayed just outside the Premier League drop zone, at St James' Park on Saturday.

Important results: Premier League: Everton 2 (Harrison 30, Branthwaite 90+4) drew with Tottenham 2 (Richardson 4, 41); Brighton 4 (Dunk 3, Hinshelwood 33, Buonanotte 34, Pedro 85) bt Crystal Palace 1 (Mateta 72); Burnley 2 (Fofana 71, 90+2) drew with Fulham 2 (Palhinha 18, Muniz 21); Newcastle 4 (Longstaff 7, 23, Trippier 67, Barnes 73) drew with Liverpool 4 (Osho 21, Barkley 40, Morris 59-pen, Adebayo 62). LaLiga: Valencia 2 (Duro 14, Yaremcuk 23) bt Almeria 1 (Arribas 50). Bundesliga: Bayern Munich 3 (Pavlovic 45, Kane 70, De Ligt 86) bt Borussia Moenchengladbach 1 (Elvedi 35); SV Darmstadt 0 lost to Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Tella 33, 52). Heidenheim 0 drew with Borussia Dortmund 0.

'Watching events live helped me give a first-hand perspective to jury'



Somaya.

many of them perform. When you compare that with performances one has heard or read about, it's difficult to decide on a clear winner," Somaya said about the awards process this year.

"I was able to watch most of the events live. It helped me give a first-hand perspective to the jury. But then, comparing that to someone I have not seen personally made it challenging.

That's where having a jury as diverse as this – where members have watched multiple sports and some are even involved in administration – makes things easy for us. In addition to that, the feedback given to us by field journalists from *The Hindu* and *Sportstar* gave us a detailed picture of how the nominees stacked up. That helped our discussions be more thorough," he added.

Somaya lauded the Indian contingent's discipline and resilience in Hangzhou as he recollects the elation of seeing India cross the century mark in the medal tally. "At one stage, it didn't look like we'd go beyond 70 medals, our tally from the previous edition. As time went on, athletics (29 medals), shooting (22), and archery (nine) came good for us. Even disciplines like rowing and equestrian,

areas where we've thought winning might be difficult, came through. I am glad they've set a benchmark. This is the inflection year. Winning so many medals is a big thing. We will be better prepared and more confident in the Olympic year," he added.

The 2024 Sportstar Aces Awards are presented by Amul and powered by IDFC Bank in association with Indian Oil. The associate partners are Life Insurance Corporation of India, State Bank of India, Ramaiah University, Greyon, United India Insurance, India Cements and NTPC Limited. The education partner is Christ Deemed to be University, Bangalore. Casagrand is the realty partner. Big Basket is the grocery partner. Nippon Paint is the colour partner. Pratiyogita Darpan, SSVM Institutions and PSG are co-sponsors. NDTV 24*7 is the broadcast partner.

IN BRIEF



Mathews and Chandimal hit centuries, Lanka takes big lead

Angelo Mathews (141) and Dinesh Chandimal (107) scored centuries and shared 232 runs for the fourth wicket to take Sri Lanka to a strong position in the one-off Test against Afghanistan in Colombo on Saturday.

The scores: Afghanistan 198 vs Sri Lanka 410/6 (Dimuth Karunaratne 77, Angelo Mathews 141, Dinesh Chandimal 107).

LIVE TELECAST

Australia vs West Indies: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 9 a.m.

India vs England: 2nd Test, day 3, Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.

Ranji Trophy: Jio Cinema App, 9.30 a.m.

Sri Lanka vs Afghanistan: Only Test, day 3, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 10 a.m.

Serie A: Jio Cinema App, 5, 7.30, 10.30 p.m. & 1.15 a.m. (Monday).

La Liga: Jio Cinema App, 6.30, 8.45, 11 p.m. & Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 1.30 a.m. (Monday).

ISL: Sports 18-1 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 p.m.

Premier League: SS Select 1, 2 (SD & HD) & Jio Cinema App, 7.30 & 10 p.m.

PKL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Hotstar, 8 p.m.

Bundesliga: Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 8 & 10 p.m.

New Zealand vs South Africa: 1st Test, day 2, Prime Video, 3.30 a.m. (Monday).

Sunil clinches 87kg Greco-Roman crown

NATL. WRESTLING

Y.B. SARANGI

JAIPUR

Asian Games bronze medalist Sunil Kumar steamrollered Manoj Kumar to post a 9-1 win and claim the 87kg crown in the Greco-Roman competitions on the opening day of the National wrestling championships here on Saturday.

Asserting his class, Sunil, a former Asian champion, used his impressive power and firm grip to push Manoj out and draw first blood.

Manoj drew level because of Sunil's passivity.

Nevertheless, Sunil again regained the lead by pushing Manoj out and then rolled him to take the gold. Gyanender overcame a late charge from former World cadet champion Suraj to record a narrow 3-2 win in the 60kg final.

Gyanender rode on a takedown to lead 3-0 after the first period. Suraj used the referral system well to deny Gyanender a further two-point advantage and narrowed the gap to 3-2.

Gyanender staved off a strong challenge from Suraj in the final minute to



Gyanender, right, in action against Suraj in the 60kg final.
Y.B. SARANGI

emerge as the champion.

The medallists: Greco-Roman:
55kg: 1. Vishwajeet (Mah), 2. Sanjeev (MP), 3. Rohit Yadav (RSPB), Manjeet (SSCB); **60kg:** 1. Gyanender (SSCB), 2. Suraj (Har), 3. Vikram Kurade (RSPB), Pravin (Mah), 63kg: 1. Sunny Kumar (Har), 2. Shamsheer Singh (Pun), 3. Umesh (Del), Sandeep Kumar (Ukd); **67kg:** 1. Ashu (RSPB), 2. Sachin Sehrawat (Pun), 3. Vinayak Patil (SSCB), Vinay (Tri); **72kg:** 1. Kuldeep Malik (RSPB), 2. Sameer (Mah), 3. Vishal (Har), Ankit Gulia (SSCB); **77kg:** 1. Vikas (RSPB), 2. Karan (Gu), 3. Tarun (Pud), Rahul (SSCB).

82kg: 1. Rahit Dahiya (RSPB), 2. Neeraj (Del), 3. Shivaji (Mah), Lovepreet Singh (Pun); **87kg:** 1. Sunil Kumar (RSPB), 2. Manoj Kumar (Har), 3. Rohit Bura (MP), Ravinder Khatri (SSCB).

97kg: 1. Nitesh (RSPB), 2. Kapil (Pud), 3. Narinder Cheema (Pun), Sunil (Chd); **130kg:** 1. Naveen (SSCB), 2. Hardeep (RSPB), 3. Tushar (Mah), Mehr Singh (Gu).

Jyotsnil hits a career-best unbeaten 215 to put Baroda in command

RANJI TROPHY

Rakesh Rao

NEW DELHI

Baroda exposed Delhi's limited bowling resources to the hilt as it piled up 400 for five before bad light stopped play on the second day of their Ranji Trophy league match here.

Resuming at 202 for one, Baroda rode on overnight unbeaten batter Jyotsnil Singh's career-best unfinished 215 to reach a dominant position. During the course of the innings, Jyotsnil got past his previous high of 195 scored against Haryana at Vadodara in December 2022.

On Saturday, when 74 overs were possible, Baroda added 198 runs and lost four wickets. Though Delhi did well to restrict the flow of runs, Baroda stayed in control.

Jyotsnil resumed at 124 and batted through the day to add 91 runs.

He did lose the company of Shashwat Singh (72) to Ishant Sharma in the first over the day after the duo had raised 201 for the second wicket.

With Shivalik Sharma (45), Jyotsnil added 81 runs for the fourth wicket and



On a high: Jyotsnil acknowledges the cheers after reaching his double century. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

then added 51 with Mitesh Patel (22) for the fifth wicket. The ongoing sixth-wicket stand with Atit Sheth is worth 41 off 114 deliveries though Baroda would have loved to score at a faster pace.

The scores:
Baroda — 1st innings: Jyotsnil Singh (batting) 215, Kinit Patel b Ishant 2, Shashwat Rawat lbw Ishant 72, Vishnu Solanki c Lakshay b Vijayaran 12, Shivalik

Sharma c Himmat b Vijayan 45, Mitesh Patel c Dhull b Himmat 22, Atit Sheth (batting) 22; Extras (b-4, lb-4, nb-1, w-1); Total (for five wkts. in 138 overs): 400.

Fall of wickets: 1-3, 2-204, 3-219, 4-300, 5-359.

Delhi bowling: Ishant Sharma 19-6-43-2, Himanshu Chauhan 21-6-47-0, Pranshu Vijayan 23-3-91-2, Hritik Shokeen 43-5-123-0, Shivank Vashisht 24-3-67-0, Ayush Badoni 3-0-9-0, Himmat Singh 4-0-10-1, Arpit Rana 1-0-2-0.

RANJI TROPHY SCORES, ROUND 5, DAY 2

Elite: Group A: At:
Jamshedpur: Manipur 170 vs. Jharkhand 473/5 in 117 overs (Utkarsh Singh 116, V. Vishal 48, Virat Singh 48, Saurabh Tiwary 105 batting, Anukul Roy 97 batting).

Rohtak: Services 108 in 52 overs (A.P. Sharma 41 n.o., Aman Kumar 5/36) & 78/4 in 21.3 overs (Rajat Palwal 50 batting) vs. Haryana 103 in 39.2 overs.

Solapur: Saurashtra 202 & 164 in 43.2 overs (Chirag Jani 43, Jaydev Unadkat 45, H.A. Walunj 8/70) vs. Maharashtra 159 in 45.4 overs (D.A. Jadeja 4/61) & 104/5 in 27 overs.

Jaipur: Rajasthan 432 in 130.2 overs (M.J. Suthar 46, S.F. Khan 52, Deepak Hooda 77, A.B. Kookna 83 vs. Vidarbha 140/2 in 41 overs (Y.V. Rathod 68 batting).

Group B: Kolkata: Mumbai 412 in 94.3 overs (Surjyansh Shedge 71, Shivam Dube 72, Tanush Kotian 67, Atharva Ankolekar 46, Royston Dias 46 n.o.) vs. Bengal 199 in 56 overs (Anustup Majumdar 108 n.o.).

Patna: Bihar 182 vs. Andhra 313/5 in 86 overs (U.M.S. Girinath 41, Ricky Bhui 58, S.K. Rasheed 76 batting).

Raipur: Kerala 350 in 110.1 overs (Rohan Prem 54, Sachin Baby 91, Sanju Samson 57, Vishnu Vinod 40, Mohammed Azharuddine 85, Ashish Chouhan 5/100) vs. Chhattisgarh 100/4 in 44 overs (Sanjeet Desai 50 batting).

Kanpur: UP 548/4 decl. in 128.3 overs (Aryan Juyal 201, Karan Sharma 208, Aksh Deep Nath 53, Prince Yadav 46, Mrinmoy Dutta 4/116) vs. Assam 116/0 in 39 overs (Parvej Musaraf 53 batting, Rahul Hazarika 51 batting).

Group C: Ahmedabad: Tripura 146 & 330/9 in 77 overs (Bikram Rana 1-0-2-0).



Anmolpreet Singh (Punjab), 205 batting. FILE PHOTO

Kumar Das 82, Sudip Chatterjee 46, M.B. Mur Singh 72, Sankar Paul 50 batting, S.A. Desai 6/107 vs. Gujarat 172 in 49.3 overs (Sunpreet Bagga 42, Kshitij Patel 46, Parvez Sultan 7/58).

Surat: Railways 155 & 209/8 in 62 overs (Mohammed Saif 51 batting, S.A. Ahuja 48) vs. Karnataka 174 in 50.5 overs (Akash Pandey 5/63, Ayan Chaudhuri 4/39).

Chandigarh: Punjab 477/2 in 107 overs (Naman Dhir 86, Anmolpreet Singh 205 batting, Prabhhsimran Singh 171 batting) vs. Chandigarh.

Porvorim: Goa 241 & 10/0 in 4 overs vs. Tamil Nadu 273 in 90.2 overs (Narayan Jagadeesan 75, Prashad Ranjan Paul 71, Vijay Shankar 54, Darshan Mishal 4/77).

Group D: Cuttack: Odisha 322 in 120.2 overs (Shantanu Mishra 40, Sandeep Pataanik 44, Govinda Poddar 80, Biplob Samantaray 82, Aashirwad Swain 40, Gourav Yadav 5/69) vs. Pondicherry 127/4 in 43 overs (K.B. Arun Karthick 77 batting).

Delhi: Baroda 400/5 in 138 overs (J.K. Singh 215 batting, Shashwat Rawat 72, Shivalik Sharma 45) vs. Delhi.

Dharamshala: Himachal 169 vs. MP 68/4 in 27 overs.

Jammu: J&K 168/2 in 39 overs vs. Uttarakhand.

BCCI likely to help Nepal teams get training in India

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI

Having been a pillar of support for Afghanistan cricket for close to a decade now, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to extend infrastructure and exposure-related assistance to Nepal's talented players with the aim to maintain a robust cricketing eco-system in the South Asian region.

If all goes well, there is a strong possibility that the Nepal senior national team could train here and play some warm-up games before leaving for the USA to play the T20 World Cup in June.

Meeting

Cricket Association of Nepal (CAN) president Chatur Bahadur met BCCI secretary Jay Shah on the sidelines of a WPL meeting on Friday, with a request of helping the budding cricketers from his country get quality game time and access to infrastructure, which is not always readily available in the Himalayan nation.

'Competing to get some exposure after injury'

Y.B. SARANGI

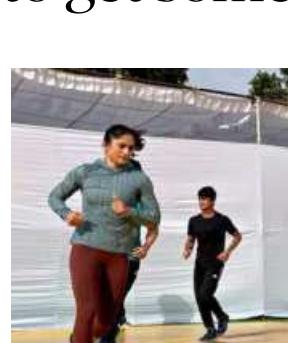
JAIPUR

Two-time World championships bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat is delighted to come back to competitive wrestling after nearly 16 months, when she dealt with a nagging injury and fought against 'injustice.'

The 29-year-old, who last competed in the 2022 World championships where she landed her second bronze, tried to return for the Asian Games last year but could not. She had knee surgery in August and returned to training in December.

Now, with the Paris 2024 in sight, Vinesh, who took part in two Olympics, is back to competitive mode at the National wrestling championships.

A younger Antim Pang-



Vinesh. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Right now Vinesh is making a comeback in 55kg without straining her body too much. As and when she will participate in more important events, she can go down to 53kg.

"I am cutting weight after a long gap, and there is no need to do it (drastically). Competing in 55kg here has no positives or negatives. I will compete here to get some exposure. In ranking events, many athletes don't compete in Olympic weights to avoid (unnecessary) weight cuts. The key is to save energy for main competitions," said Vinesh on the eve of Saturday.

With so many distractions, Vinesh – one of the three prominent faces who brought up various charges against former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

– has perhaps learnt how to switch off and switch on for her training.

"We try to combine life on the mat and beyond it. As senior athletes, the responsibility increases... if we don't do it, others cannot do it."

"I was continuously doing rehab. If we needed to meet someone, then Bajrang and Sakshi used to take that responsibility. I had stepped back a little bit even though we were together at every step. We are trying to continue our fight against injustice. Athletes' competition should not stop and there should not be any confusion for the athletes."

"A lot has happened and a lot is going on in wrestling at the moment. This year is crucial given the Paris Olympics is in sight." But a brilliant slap shot by Wen Dan in the 40th

Indian women begin Pro League campaign with loss against China

HOCKEY

Sports Bureau

Indian women began their FIH Pro League 2023-24 campaign on a losing note, going down 2-1 to China at the Kalinga Stadium, Bhubaneswar, on Saturday.

This was India's first loss in the Pro League to the Chinese in three games. India took the lead in the 15th minute through a diving deflection by Vandana Katariya that proved why she is rated so highly and was missed so much during the Olympic Qualifiers recently.

But a brilliant slap shot by Wen Dan in the 40th



One bright moment: Indian players celebrate after scoring the opener against China. BISWARANJAN ROUT

minute and a penalty corner rebound goal by veteran Bingfeng Gu saw China walk away with three points.

The Chinese clearly were the more disciplined side both in attack and defence, controlling the pace





Poetry in motion: A photographic monograph *Starling* released by the Danish photographer Søren Solkær. He has clicked the birds in symphony in Denmark, England, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Starling murmurations

Scientists have advanced various theories as well as have drawn inspiration from this and other similar behaviour to design swarming robots that can do many things from coordinate disaster relief to fight cancer

The Danish photographer Søren Solkær released his photographic monograph *Starling* on December 26, 2023. It is an exploration of starlings, which are passerine (perching) birds belonging to the family *Sturnidae*.

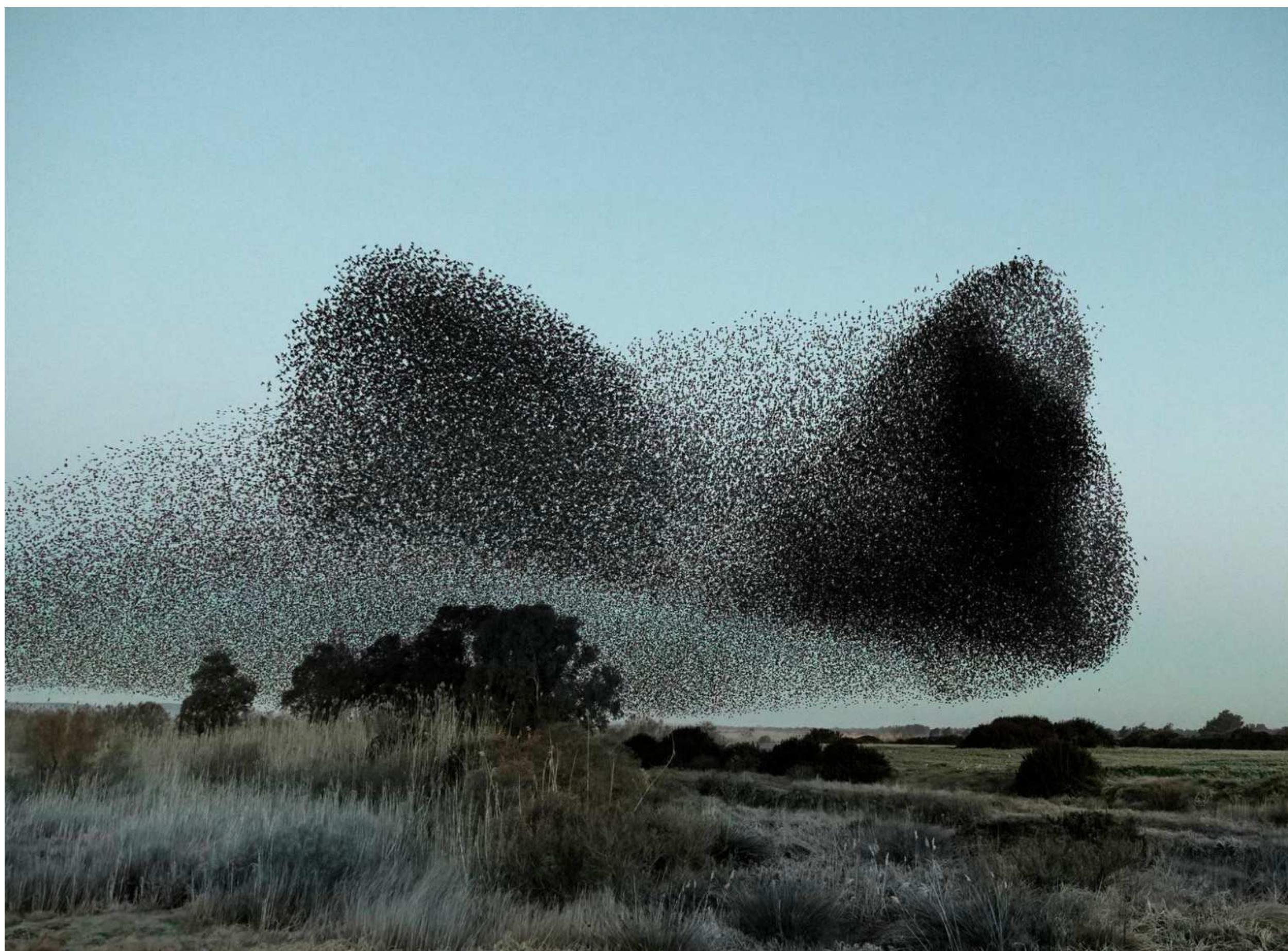
A starling is a fairly unremarkable bird in isolation, but when starlings swarm, thousands of them come together to form a swirling, undulating cloud - an awesome new life-like thing suspended in the air - called a murmuration. Every starling involved in this entralling formation is simply tailing the flight of a few birds around it, but as thousands follow this deceptively simple 'rule', the murmuration as a whole acquires its hypnotic fluidic quality.

We don't really know why starlings flock in this way. Scientists have advanced various theories, including to monitor, confuse or escape hawks and falcons - their predators - as well as have drawn inspiration from this and other similar behaviour to design swarming robots that can do many things from coordinate disaster relief to fight cancer.

Mr. Solkær has photographed starling murmurations in Denmark, England, Ireland, Italy, and the Netherlands; his new monograph has 138 images. He has also been examining the cellular peculiarities of starling feathers at the University of Copenhagen. His work is available at sorenolkær.shop.

(Text by Vasudevan Mukunth)





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