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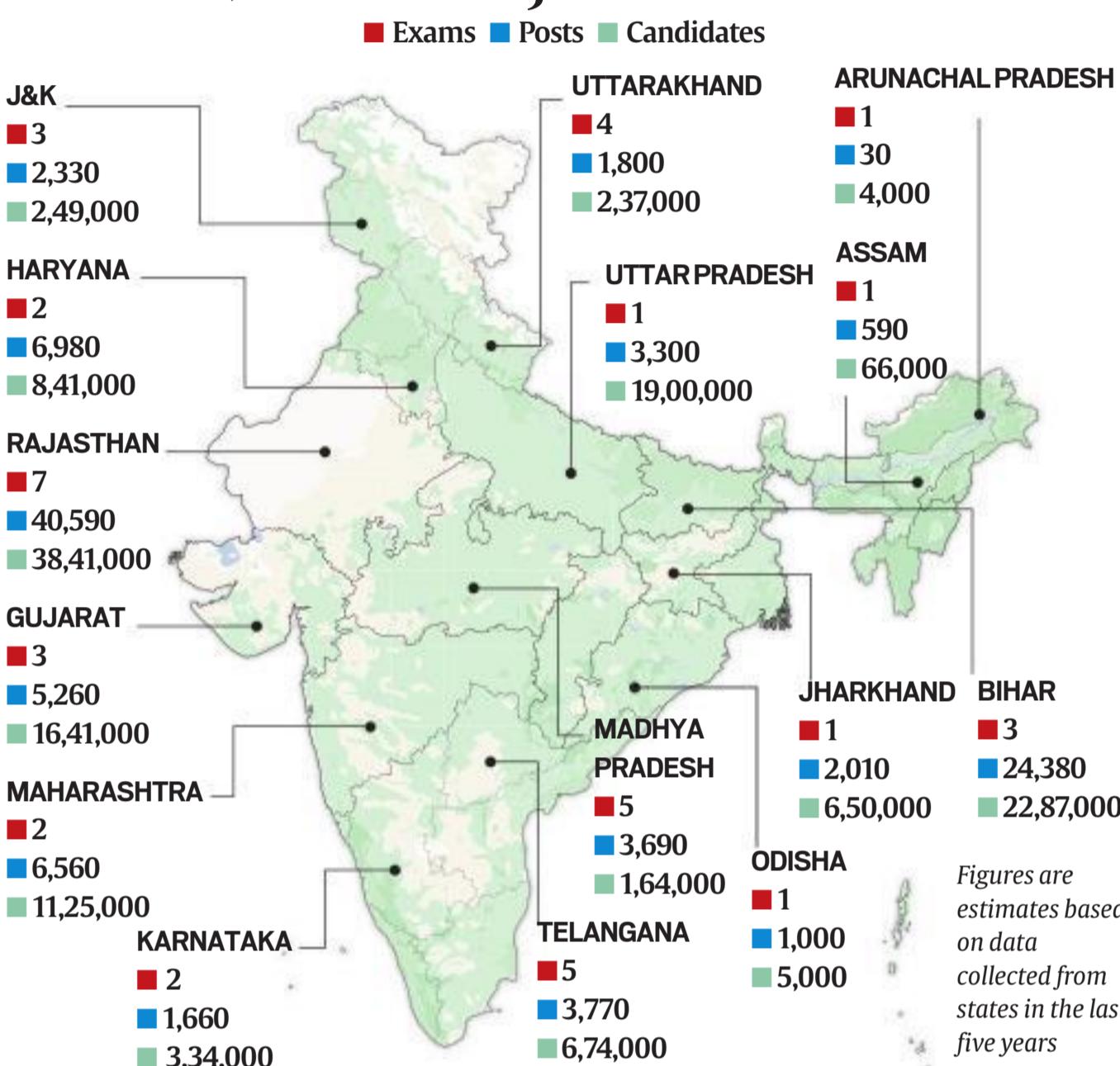
 Training of **1 crore 50 lakh** youth under PM Kaushal Vikas Yojana, employment opportunities created


AN EXPRESS INVESTIGATION

The big all India exam leak

5-year fallout: Distress and despair hit 1.4 crore candidates; some wait 2 years plus; little action

15 states, leaks in 41 job-recruitment exams



10 years jail, Rs 1 cr fine: Bill in for Central exams...

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE GOVERNMENT on Monday introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha to penalise "malpractices in public examinations" with jail term of 3 to 10 years and fine which can extend to over Rs 1 crore.

The Public Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill,

2024, is applicable to central recruitment and entrance exams conducted by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Staff Selection Commission (SSC), Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), and **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

EXPLAINED PAGE 12

...but it's in states where the rot is wide and deep

SUKRITA BARUAH, ANAND MOHAN J, HAMZA KHAN & SREENIVAS JANYALA
NEW DELHI, GUWAHATI, BHOPAL, JAIPUR, HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 5

THE BILL introduced Monday says it will serve as a "model draft for States to adopt at their

discretion." This couldn't be more timely. For, it is in states that the problem of exam leaks is most acute — and widespread.

The Indian Express investigated 41 documented instances of leaks over the last five years in recruitment exams across 15 states — their governments cutting across party lines. What **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

'CONG FAILED AS OPP, DIDN'T LET OTHERS BE ONE'

PM slams Congress 'cancel' culture, predicts BJP sweep

'Can gauge nation's mood, NDA will get over 400 seats, BJP 370'

LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

IN A blistering attack on the Congress, the primacy of its Gandhi family and what he called the party's "cancel culture," Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in arguably his last speech in the 17th Lok Sabha, said that he, and the nation, are convinced that the Opposition has resolved to remain in the opposition for



PM Narendra Modi in Lok Sabha on Monday. PTI

decades while the BJP will return for a third term with 370 seats and cross the 400-mark for the

"Ekhi product baar baar launch karne ke chakkarmen, Congress ki dukhan tala lagne ki naubat aa gayi hai. (Congress shop is on the verge of closure in its attempts to launch the same product again and again)." Modi said in his more than 90-minute reply to the discussion on the motion of thanks

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

PLEA ON CHANDIGARH MAYOR ELECTIONS SC: Murder of democracy, prosecute returning officer

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

COMING DOWN heavily on the conduct of the returning officer during the Chandigarh mayoral polls on January 30, the Supreme Court said Monday that what happened during the election

was "mockery of democracy" and underlined that "we will not allow democracy to be murdered like this".

A three-judge bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud made the remarks while hearing the petition of AAP-Congress combine

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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WHY ABHISHEK BACHCHAN'S ROAD TO SUCCESS HAS BEEN SO BUMPY: BURDEN OF LEGACY OR BAD CHOICES?

Over the years, Abhishek Bachchan, son of iconic actors Amitabh Bachchan and Jaya Bachchan, has shown his acting chops, but the road to recognition has been quite bumpy for him

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EXPRESS AUDIO

Hemant Soren's arrest, trend of acting DGPs, and Akhilesh's claim

In 3 Things, we talk Hemant Soren's arrest, about the emerging trend of appointing acting DGPs in certain states, and about Akhilesh Yadav's claim of not being invited to the Uttar Pradesh leg of Rahul Gandhi-led Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORT ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

PM slams Congress 'cancel' culture

on the President's address, in a reference to Rahul Gandhi and his ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra.

The Prime Minister, who led the BJP to two resounding victories in the last two Lok Sabha elections, singled out the Congress for being responsible for the failure of the opposition and said he would return to power for a third term to set the tone for the country for the next 1,000 years. "I can gauge the mood of the nation, it will definitely give NDA more than 400 seats and the BJP at least 370 seats. And it's not very far. At most, 100-125 days are remaining," he said. "Abki baar," Modi said to the chants of his MPs, "ab ki baar 400 paar."

"For several decades you were sitting here (in the Treasury benches), but now you have resolved to stay there (opposition benches) for several decades," Modi told the Opposition. "The people will bless you and keep you there. You will achieve greater heights and will be soon seen in the public galleries (of the House)," he added.

Modi said that many in the opposition have "lost the courage" to fight elections so some are trying to change their seats while others want to come to Parliament via Rajya Sabha.

Identifying dynasty politics, corruption and failure in governance as the Congress's principal ghosts of the past, he blamed the party for the plight of the opposition. "It was a time when the country needed constructive opposition... But the Congress has failed to be a good opposition and it did not let other parties also to become one. The party did not let other bright leaders to come up. The Congress has done so much damage to itself, the opposition, Parliament and the country," Modi said.

This sharp attack comes as the Congress tries to cobble a coalition

EXPLAINED

E Behind attack on Cong

WHILE PRIME Minister Narendra Modi focussed his attack on the Congress, what stood out was his conscious omission of regional parties. The BJP has defeated the Congress twice in parliamentary elections, but it has struggled to defeat regional parties in state elections – an exception being the SP in Uttar Pradesh. **PAGES 5**

building. Congress says cancel. I am surprised because these are not Modi's achievements, these are the achievements of the country."

The Prime Minister said his third term would witness India becoming the third largest economy in the world. He quoted the interim budget speech of former finance minister P Chidambaram in 2014 in which he had said that the country's GDP would become the third highest in 30 years.

Referring to the Congress's counter that this ranking was inevitable and had little to do with this Government, Modi said: "They even lost the capacity to dream, let alone resolve. They said it will take 30 years. Now I'm saying the country will reach the third position. I have led the country to the fifth position.. You should be happy about it. But what illness has gripped you?"

Modi said that what the BJP had done in 10 years in a range of development works from housing for the poor to sanitation to electrification would have taken decades and generations under Congress regimes.

Referring to two speeches from the past, Modi argued that both Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi had a very poor opinion of

the capability of Indians. "Let me read out what Nehru said from the Red Fort on Independence Day," said Modi. "He said, 'Indians are not used to working hard. We don't work as hard as people in Europe or Japan or China or Russia do. These communities have become prosperous through their hard work and intelligence.' So, Nehru was giving certificates to other countries, while looking down on Indians. He thought Indians were lazy and lacking in intelligence. Indira's beliefs were no different," Modi said in Hindi.

The Prime Minister then quoted Indira as having said: "Unfortunately, when a good task is about to be completed, we get complacent, and when a difficulty arises, we lose hope. Sometimes, the entire country seems to have accepted a defeatist attitude."

"Looking at the people in Congress today, it seems that Indira could not assess the people of the country correctly but assessed Congress absolutely correctly... I have confidence in the strength of the people of India."

With the Opposition accusing the Centre of misusing its investigating agencies, Modi said that the agencies, which are independent and autonomous, were acting against corruption. "Whoever wants to blame me, keep doing that. I will keep taking action against corruption. I am assuring the people of India that I will not let anyone loot this country and those who have looted will have to return it."

Modi ridiculed the opposition INDIA bloc, which he had once termed as Champaia, an alliance of arrogance. "A few days ago, they put together a 'Bhanumati ka Kunba' (Bhanumati's clan, meaning a rag-tag group of disparate people)" but then they started 'Ekla chalo re (Walk alone)', he said in an apparent reference to TMC leader Mamata Banerjee's announcement that she would not share any seats with the Congress or Left in West Bengal.

• 10 years jail, Rs 1 cr fine: Bill in for Central exams

National Testing Agency (NTA).

The NTA conducts exams for admission to higher educational institutions, like the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for engineering, National Eligibility Cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical, and Common University Entrance Test (CUET) for undergraduate and post-graduate studies.

Apart from these designated public examination authorities, all central ministries and departments, as well as their offices for recruitment, will also come under the purview of the new law when passed.

The Bill, introduced by Jitendra Singh, Minister of State, Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, provides punishment for "persons, organised groups or institu-

tions" indulging in unfair means for "monetary or wrongful gains". Candidates appearing for the exams have been left out of its purview.

Section 3 of the Bill defines "unfair means" as "any act or omission done or caused to be done by any person or group of persons or institutions, and include but not be restricted to, any of the following acts for monetary or wrongful gain: leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof; participating in collusion with others to effect leakage of question paper or answer key; accessing or taking possession of question paper or an optical mark recognition response sheet without authority."

Section 9 states that all of

fences shall be cognizable, non-bailable and non-compoundable.

"Any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences under this Act, shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than three years but which may extend to five years and with fine up to Rs 10 lakh. In case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed," states Section 10 of the Bill.

The Bill provides for harsher punishment for "organised" paper leaks, defining the offence as an "unlawful activity committed by a person or a group of persons indulging in unfair means in collusion and conspiracy to pursue or promote a shared interest for wrongful gain in respect of a pub-

lic examination".

"If a person or a group of persons, including the examination authority or service provider or any other institution, commits an organised crime, he shall be punished with imprisonment for a term not less than five years but which may extend to ten years, and with fine which shall not be less than Rs 1 crore. In case of default of payment of fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed," states Section 11 of the Bill.

While the provisions will be binding for central public examination authorities, it will serve as a model draft for states. Some states like Gujarat and Assam already have their own legislation in this regard.

• Murder of democracy, prosecute returning officer: SC

candidate for the mayor's post Kuldeep Kumar who lost to the BJP's Manoj Sonkar after the returning officer declared eight votes of the alliance invalid.

After watching a video of the election proceedings, CJ Chandrachud, referring to returning officer Anil Masih, said, "What is he doing? It's obvious that he has defaced the ballot... This man has to be prosecuted. This is a mockery of democracy. It's muddling democracy. Is this the way he conducts an election? We are appalled by what has happened. We are simply appalled by what has happened."

Agreeing to the request by Senior Advocate AM Singhvi, who appeared for Kumar, the bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, ordered that the meeting of the newly elected body scheduled for February 7 be deferred pending further orders.

It also asked returning officer Masih to present before the court on February 19, when it will hear the matter again, "to explain his conduct as it appears in the video". "Is this behaviour of a returning officer? (He) Looks at the camera, faces the ballot and then obviously where there is a cross at

the bottom, he just keeps it in the tray. The moment there is a cross at the top, the man defaces the ballot and looks at the camera to see who is looking at him," CJ Chandrachud said.

"Please tell your returning officer that the Supreme Court is watching... And we will not allow democracy to be murdered like this. The only thing, the great stabilising force in this country, is the purity of the electoral process, but what has happened here!" the CJ said as Solicitor General Tushar Mehta urged the bench to not form an opinion without taking all facts into account.

Mehta said, "Your Lordships have seen only one side of the picture." The CJ then said that the entirety of the video be produced before the court during the next hearing. Mehta agreed to do so.

Senior Advocate Maninder Singh, appearing for Sonkar, sought to draw the court's attention to some regulations regarding conduct of the election, but the CJ said, "We are not going to go by the regulations. We want our conscience to be satisfied. Otherwise hold a fresh election. We will direct who the returning officer shall be. Conduct a fresh election."

Mehta once again urged the

bench to not "form an opinion based on something said very selectively". But the CJ said, "Why is he (the returning officer) looking at the camera like a fugitive? He has to be doing his duty. He looks at the camera and quietly he defaces the ballot."

Singhvi said the "returning officer happens to be an acknowledged, active working worker of a political party which is opposed to us". "We are 20. There are two parties in alliance. Admittedly, 16 is their number. 36 is total. Voting is done. Thirty-six people come and vote. A tray is kept where the 36 votes fall. The man is supposed to sign. He picks up each, and while signing, in many of these 8 which have been disqualified – as the video will show – he makes squiggles. After the squiggles... he says these 8 are disqualified; all the 8 are mine, so I become 12..."

"We direct that the entire records pertaining to the election of the mayor of the Chandigarh Municipal Corporation shall be sequestered under the custody of the registrar general of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. This shall include the ballot papers, videography of the entire electoral process and all other material in the custody of the returning officer." Mehta said the returning officer had already handed them over to the Deputy Commissioner, Chandigarh, on

January 30 in a sealed format. The bench then directed that the Deputy Commissioner should hand over the records to the Registrar General of the High Court.

Singhvi said the "returning officer happens to be an acknowledged, active working worker of a political party which is opposed to us". "We are 20. There are two parties in alliance. Admittedly, 16 is their number. 36 is total. Voting is done. Thirty-six people come and vote. A tray is kept where the 36 votes fall. The man is supposed to sign. He picks up each, and while signing, in many of these 8 which have been disqualified – as the video will show – he makes squiggles. After the squiggles... he says these 8 are disqualified; all the 8 are mine, so I become 12..."

He urged the court to inter-

vene saying "this is complete negation of democracy". He sub-

mitted that the apex court had laid

down in Indira Gandhi's case that "purity of elections is part of basic structure".

Kumar had approached the Supreme Court after the Punjab and Haryana High Court declined to grant interim relief.

• It's in states where the rot is wide and deep

emerged was startling: The leaks derailed schedules of as many as 1.4 crore applicants, applying for a little over 1.04 lakh posts.

So sweeping is the distress – among candidates, their families, and successive batches of candidates – that exam leak and disruption was a hot talking point in the most recent state poll campaigns. More so as it is linked to job vacancies at a time when the government employment pie is shrinking across states.

In Rajasthan, the BJP trained its guns against the then ruling Congress, alleging the involvement of senior party functionaries in paper leaks. In Telangana, the Congress attacked the BRS government over leaks in TSPSC-conducted examinations. Both defeated the incumbent.

The issue even figured in the Prime Minister's poll speeches who, speaking in the coaching hub of Kota last November, alleged that the Congress had "sold papers for all exams" and guaranteed that all those involved in paper leaks will be put behind bars.

The investigation by the newspaper's team of state correspondents covered a range of recruitment exams – from teacher eligibility tests in Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh to police recruitment examinations in Assam, Rajasthan, Karnataka, and Jammu & Kashmir; from a forester recruitment examination in Uttarakhand to engineer recruitment exams in Telangana, Arunachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir and Rajasthan.

Each leak was distinctive: in Assam, the question paper was

circulated on WhatsApp minutes after the exam started; in Rajasthan, a state employee allegedly stole the paper from a government office; in Madhya Pradesh, police claimed the accused managed to "hack into servers" of a private company in Mumbai tasked with conducting the examinations; and in Maharashtra, a student approached the police reporting a leak on social media.

Whatever the nature of the leak, its cascading effects have taken many a toll.

After the cancellation, the long wait

In most cases, the wait for re-examination is long. Take, for instance, the Group-I prelim examination conducted by the Telangana State Public Services Commission. It was held on October 16, 2022 but cancelled in March 2023 after a Special Investigation Team probing allegations of paper leak found credible leads supporting the allegations.

The re-examination conducted on June 11, 2023 was also cancelled after some candidates approached the Telangana High Court alleging irregularities. More than 3.8 lakh candidates were competing for 503 posts to various departments through this screening exam, the first step of the selection process. The wait continues.

In at least 15 cases, exams were held almost a year after the leak; in four cases, the wait for two years; and in seven cases, the candidates still wait.

In Gujarat, almost 6 lakh candidates appeared in a recruitment exam for close to 4,000 posts of clerks and office assistants.

leak, but no FIR was registered and the re-examination has not yet been held.

Scandal after scandal has prompted various state governments to introduce their own legislation against examination malpractices. Following the outcry when the paper for the Rajasthan Eligibility Exam for Teachers leaked in 2021 – affecting 12.67 lakh candidates and for which more than 100 people were arrested – the state government passed a law with provisions of punishment for up to 10 years of imprisonment and fines of up to Rs 10 crore, as well as of attachment and confiscation of property, for paper leaks. Despite this, more paper leaks have followed, after which the state government amended the law to increase the maximum punishment to life imprisonment.

Multiple states issued such laws and ordinances in 2023. Jharkhand, Uttarakhand and Gujarat all introduced anti-cheating laws, which have provisions for imprisonment of both examinees and service providers found using unfair means. The laws introduced by all three states also have provisions for disbarring examinees found guilty from writing future recruitment exams for a specified period of time.

The Assam state government introduced a similar ordinance in October 2023 and introduced a bill to this end in the assembly session on Monday.

The promises and assurances

Many states say they are moving to introduce anti-cheating legislation.

In Madhya Pradesh, following this year's Pariksha pe

Charcha, School Education Minister Rao Uday Singh spoke about bringing in stricter laws to prevent exam leaks. "We are also discussing ways to ensure there are stringent provisions for bail for those accused in paper leaks for all kinds of examinations... We are also mulling introducing stricter rules governing third parties which conduct examinations to ensure there are no leaks..." During elections, there were protests by students across Bhopal and Indore (during the patwari paper leaks), and the government took swift action – the examination was paused and an investigation ordered. It is top priority for us," said a senior official of the education department.

While the Bharat Rashtra Samiti government in Telangana had appointed a Special Investigation Team to probe the causes and persons involved in leaks during its tenure, it did not specifically ask for a plan to stop them. The SIT is yet to submit its report. However, TSPSC officials have decided that moving forward, exam administrators will not store question papers in computers inside rooms where others are also working. The new Congress Government in Telangana is also mulling moving the pen and paper exam online.

Newly appointed TSPSC director, former DGPM Mahender Reddy, has said that his first task is to formulate a plan to prevent leaks.

Following the new BJP government coming into power in Rajasthan, in his first press conference, Chief Minister Bhajan Lal Sharma announced setting up of a Special Investigation Team to check paper leaks in the state. A month and half later, School Education Minister Reporting by Arun Sharma, Jammu; Kiran Parashar, Bengaluru; Parimal Dabhi, Ahmedabad; Pallavi Smart, Mumbai; Avneesh Mishra, Dehradun; Sukhbir Siwach, Chandigarh; Santosh Singh, Patna; Sujit Bisoyi, Bhubaneswar; Abhishek Angad, Ranchi; Asad Rehman, Lucknow; and R Radhika, New Delhi

Maintain status quo on land where mosque was razed: HC to DDA

MALAVIKA PRASAD
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE DELHI High Court Monday asked the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) to maintain till February 12 "status quo" with respect to the land in Mehrauli where a mosque — Akhoondi Masjid — was demolished by the authority on January 30.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sachin Datta, listing the matter on February 12, said, "... it is directed that till next date of hearing, status quo shall be maintained in respect of land comprising new khasra numbers... situated in village Mehrauli... It is made clear the aforesaid order shall not prevent DDA/other civic agencies from taking requisite steps in adjoining areas/land for routine maintenance/restoration/other development works."

The order came in an application moved by the petitioner, managing committee of Delhi Waqf Board, seeking interim relief. Its counsel, advocate Shams Khwaja, argued Monday that demolition action has been taken "illegally" without following due process of law. He also argued that the action disregards a March 23, 2022, HC order where a "survey was directed" to be conducted with respect to the land.

DDA counsel Sanjay Katyal argued that the petitioner has "no locus to represent the Waqf Board", pointing to Delhi government's January 10 order wherein the Principal Secretary, Home Department (GNCTD), concerned has been appointed as the board's administrator till it is reconstituted. He further said DDA's action was taken pursuant to recommendations of the religious committee's January 4 meeting.

Revised plan to connect Aqua Line to Gr Noida West gets nod

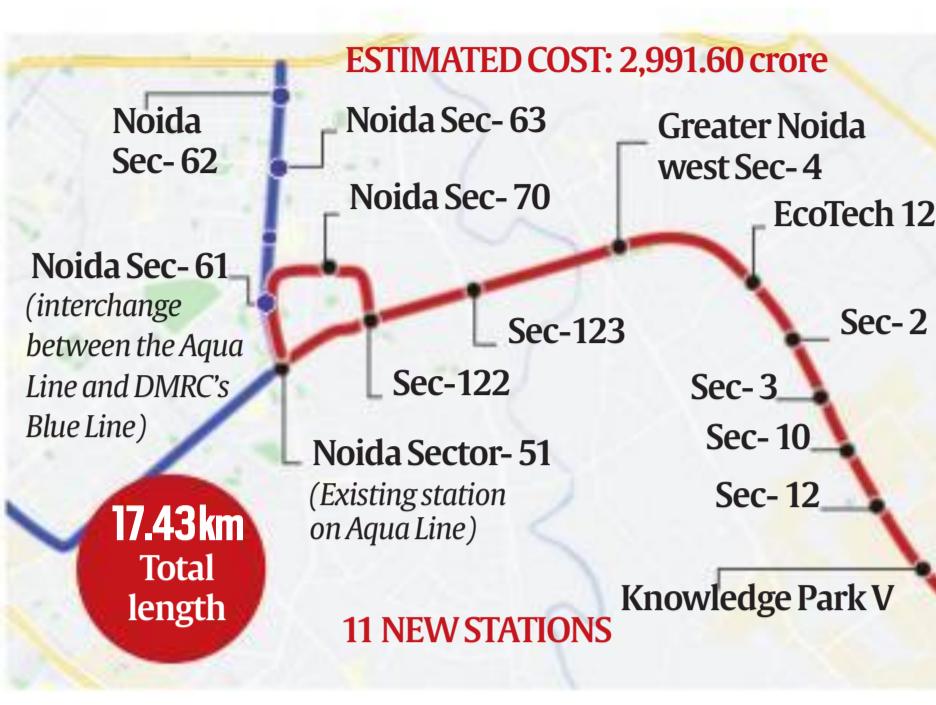
DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, FEBRUARY 5

IN A step closer to bringing Metro connectivity to Greater Noida West, the Noida Metro Rail Corporation (NMRC) Monday approved the revised Detailed Project Report (DPR) for the extension of the Aqua Line corridor. The extension will have 11 stations starting from the existing one at Sector 51 (Noida) to Knowledge Park V (Greater Noida). (see map)

The DPR has been approved with slight changes in its alignment to ensure seamless connectivity. The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) was entrusted with preparing the modified report.

The project is expected to provide relief to residents of

THE PROPOSED ROUTE



Greater Noida West, who have been demanding public transport facilities for a long time.

"This project will provide ease of access to commuters in Noida, Greater Noida West and

He further said that the Noida Sector 61 station will serve as an interchange between the Aqua Line and DMRC's Blue Line. He added that the DPR will be sent for approval by the Uttar Pradesh Government and the Centre. As per the report, the total completion cost of the project is estimated to be Rs 2,991.60 crore, covering a length of 17.43 km.

In the earlier DPR, a foot overbridge was planned to connect Sector 51 (Aqua Line) and Sector 52 (Blue Line) stations. However, the NMRC sought changes, stating that the bridge would not resolve commuters' problem permanently owing to the 430-metre distance between the two stations. It said that even if there is a provision for travellers, it will be hard to encourage commuters to use the bridge.

Airport arrests help bust fake visa racket

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

On September 7, 2023, Resham Singh landed at Delhi airport from Almaty, Kazakhstan, and presented his passport for arrival immigration clearance. During scrutiny, a residual gum mark was detected on one of the pages. On questioning, Resham revealed that a fake visa sticker was earlier affixed on the page, which he later removed.

Placed under arrest for tampering with his passport, the Punjab resident led police to Mangu Singh, who had allegedly promised to send Resham to Portugal in lieu of Rs 9 lakh, a part of which the latter's father had transferred into the agent's account. Delhi Police arrested Mangu, 41, last week from Punjab's Barnala.

Police said Mangu had been involved in sending at least 50 people abroad through fake and manipulated visas in the last one year. As part of its operation to crack down on such agents,

HOW IT OPERATED

■ Agent Mangu Singh promises to send Resham Singh to Portugal in lieu of Rs 9 lakh. Mangu arranges a fake Russian visa



Accused Sunil Luna

■ Resham Singh travels to Almaty, Kazakhstan, and eventually to Russia where authorities deny him entry

■ Resham returns to Almaty and removes the fake Russian visa

■ At IGI airport, officials spot residual gum mark on

Delhi Police last week also arrested another man, Sunil Luna, 33, from Rajasthan's Nagaur.

Officials said Luna was also involved in similar dealings as Mangu, and had targeted almost an equal number of people, although they were not connected with each other.

Elaborating on how Mangu duped Resham, DCP (IGI) Usha Rangnani said, "The agent had

promised to send Resham to Portugal through an illegal way and arranged for a (fake) Russian visa for the purpose. Resham travelled to Almaty and eventually to Russia where immigration authorities refused him entry, forcing him to come back to Almaty... on reaching there, he removed the fake Russian visa."

An arrest warrant was issued and a three-member team of

Delhi Police's IGI unit was formed to arrest Mangu. During questioning, Mangu said he had worked in Malaysia between 2003 and 2013 where he came in touch with other agents, said police. He also confessed to having received Rs 3 lakh from Resham.

About Luna, the DCP said, "He used to provide fake Singapore visas to passengers in lieu of Rs 1.2 lakh each."

On how Luna's racket came to light, the DCP said, "On September 22-23, an Assam resident arrived as a deportee from Dubai... He had departed for Dubai on September 19 from IGI Airport on a UAE tourist visa but his entry was denied by Dubai Air Border Control on the ground of forged visa. During scrutiny of his travel documents, it was found that a Singapore sticker visa was affixed on the passport, which lacked security features. It was found to be fake."

The passenger was placed under arrest after which he revealed that his journey to Singapore was arranged by Luna.

— By S. K. SINGH

OBITUARY



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दिल्ली सरकार
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Cong finalising names for each LS seat in Delhi

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

candidates for each Lok Sabha seat," a senior party leader said.

"Feedback from the ground as well as the state leadership is being collated and discussed with representatives from the Central leadership. The process is expected to be completed soon. We want to enter the next phase of alliance talks (with AAP) without our own choice of candidates," another senior leader said.

According to the leader, alliance talks for several states across the country are underway and those for Delhi were likely "any day". Lovely said the Delhi Congress will "fully honour alliance commitments", but the party will continue the process of selecting candidates.

AICC in-charge for Delhi Deepak Babaria, at the meeting Monday, said the Congress was "working towards strengthening the India Alliance partnership".



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Rule 8 (1)

WHEREAS The undersigned being the authorized officer of The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Limited (HSBC) having its Registered Office at 52/60, Mahatma Gandhi Road, Mumbai 400001, and one of its offices at 25, Birla Towers, Barakhambha Road, New Delhi 110001 under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated 29.05.2023 (published in newspapers on 28.07.2023) u/s 13(2) of the captioned Act, calling upon M/s M.S. International (Partnership firm through its Managing Partner Akhilesh Srivastava) (Borrower) having office at 1st Floor, 240, Sector 19, Dwarka, New Delhi 110075 and Mr. Akhilesh Srivastava (Partner/Guarantor) and Mrs. Manisha Srivastava (Partner/Guarantor); to repay the amount mentioned in the Notice being Rs. 2,53,09,004.69/- (Rupees Two Crore Fifty Three Lakh Nine Thousand Four and Paise Sixty Nine Only) as on 24.05.2023 together with interest thereon within 60 days from the date of receipt and/or publication of the said Notice.

The borrower, guarantor(s)/mortgagor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower, guarantor(s)/mortgagor and the public in general that the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of HSBC has taken physical possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the captioned Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this 05th day of February of the year 2024.

The borrower, guarantor(s)/mortgagor in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of HSBC for an amount of Rs. 2,53,09,004.69/- (Rupees Two Crore Fifty Three Lakh Nine Thousand Four and Paise Sixty Nine Only) as on 24.05.2023 along with interest thereon.

The borrower, guarantor(s)/mortgagor attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

DESCRIPTION OF THE MORTGAGED IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

All that part and parcel of the Residential Property bearing Plot No. 55, Pocket 16, Sector 20, Rohini, New Delhi 110085, bounded as follows:

On the North by - No Entry, On the East by Plot No. 54, On the South by Plot No. 64, On the West by - Plot No. 56

Sd/- Date: 5th February, 2024 Authorized Officer Place: New Delhi The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp. Ltd.

Inauguration of a NEW SCHOOL BUILDING

of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar School of Specialised Excellence, A 6, Paschim Vihar, Delhi

World class school to promote specialised education in Humanities and STEM



Highlights

- More than 50 classrooms equipped with green board and furniture
- 13 state-of-the-art labs to promote enquiry based learning
- 2 libraries with rich collection of books
- Toilet blocks on every floor and 2 lifts
- Air-conditioned multi-purpose hall with a 130-seat capacity

Tuesday, 6th February 2024

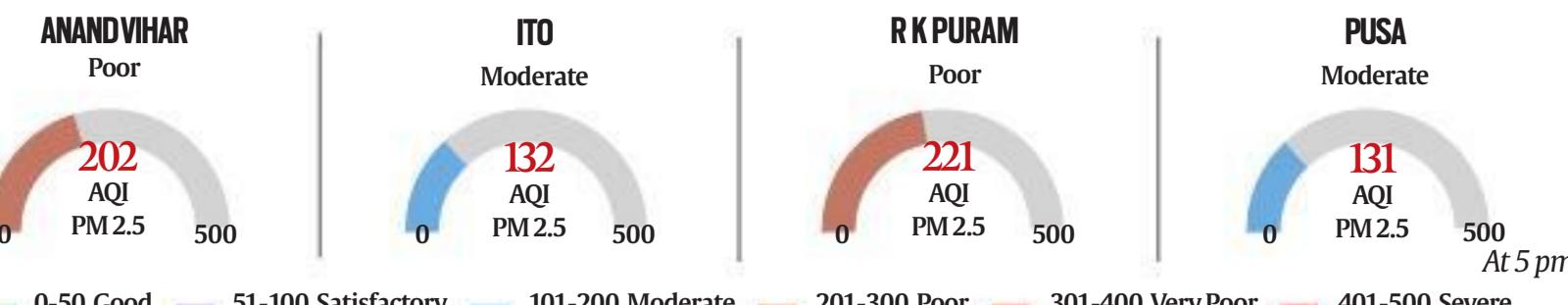
Chief Guest

Arvind Kejriwal, Chief Minister, Delhi

Guest of Honour

Atishi, Education Minister, Delhi





S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: February 6
 Mainly clear sky becoming partly cloudy towards afternoon/evening.

MAX: 22 1.3°C below normal | **MIN: 9** 0.4°C below normal

Only six CT scan machines in Delhi govt hospitals for 3 cr residents: HC

MALAVIKA PRASAD & ANKITA UPADHYAY
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

EXPRESSING CONCERN that there are only six CT scan machines in all Delhi government hospitals to cater to the city's 3 crore population, the Delhi High Court Monday said the court wants to address structural issues affecting the health sector.

According to the minister, state government hospitals are staring at a situation where even new hospitals don't have sufficient staff to make them operational. He pointed to newly built facilities – Indira Gandhi Hospital in Dwarka, Burari Hospital, and Ambedkar Nagar Hospital – which have 2,400 beds but can utilise hardly 20% of their capacity due to large vacancies. "Even in existing hospitals... there is a vacancy of over 33% of the total sanctioned strength of doctors... leading to under-utilisation of existing infrastructure," he said.

In the report, Bharadwaj said he had requested the L-G and health department officials to ensure posts of specialists and general duty medical officers are filled through the UPSC; in the interim, doctors and paramedical staff should be appointed on a contractual basis. He said the Chief Minister had sent a similar request to the L-G, Bharadwaj, in the report filed through Tripathi, also said between September and October 2023, he had convened meetings with hospitals and the staff, but despite "inviting Secretary (Health) to each meeting, he did not attend a single one.

Denying this, Kumar said, "That's a factually wrong statement... Wherever I was not able to go, I took permission and sent my special secretary and somebody along. There have always been officials from our end accompanying the minister. I have been there in the meetings. The minutes... will indicate my presence."

The court listed the matter for next hearing on February 12.

On non-functioning equipment, the bench orally said, "In the last hearing, some officer had tried to portray the best bed ratio and everyone is being attended to in all respects. We don't agree with this... when a patient who did not get admitted to four hospitals lost his life... You have six CT scan machines for a 3 crore population (of Delhi)? We, sitting in this court, know the machines aren't working..."

Meanwhile, the court was apprised by advocate Santosh Kumar Tripathi that Health Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj had filed a status report which says there are a lot of shortcomings including that of medicines, staff etc. He also said there is a major shortage of specialist doctors.

The report says only 1 in 4 posts of radiologists are filled – of 32 sanctioned posts, 25 are vacant. There are no paediatric surgeons in the report.

A single judge bench of Justice Swarana Kanta Sharma observed, "The background of the petitioner, being a Chief Minister, necessitates an acknowledgment of the inherent sense of responsibility that comes with such a significant political role. As a leader with political standing and maturity, the petitioner is presumed to be aware of the potential impact of his actions, including retweets on the public perception." Justice Sharma said that social media platform X serves as a "megaphone" that amplifies messages and broadcasts them to an extensive audience, and provides the ability to communicate with millions of people at the "stroke of a button".

The HC said that if the woman wants to approach AIIMS for delivery and future course of action, she is free to do so. It further observed that it is certain that AIIMS, "being a premier institute", would render all facilities and advise her.

It also said that if the woman is inclined to give her newborn child for adoption, then she is free to approach the Union of India. The court directed the Union of India to "ensure the process of adoption takes place at the earliest and in a smooth fashion".

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

transgender individuals for the Transport Department. This initiative is expected to benefit thousands of transgender individuals in Delhi," said Gehlot.

According to the 2011 Census, the population of transgender persons in India is 4.87 lakh. The percentage of population in Delhi is 0.86%.

"The transgender community has been neglected by everyone to date. In the history of 75 years since Independence, no other government has done anything for the transgender community. They have been perceived with great disregard," said Kejriwal. The government said that the decision was taken because at present, there is no acknowledgement of individuals within the third gender community on bus passes, leading to a lack of representation.

Members of the community are compelled to choose between male and female genders when using bus passes, causing distress and discomfort as their true identity is not recognized, the government said in a statement. It also said that transgender persons are routinely "berated by conductors, especially when individuals from the community choose the female gender".

Kejriwal announces free bus tickets for transgender persons

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
 NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

"WHEN A public figure tweets a defamatory post, the ramifications extend far beyond a mere whisper in someone's ears," said the Delhi High Court on Monday, upholding summons issued to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in a criminal defamation case for retweeting an allegedly defamatory video posted by YouTuber Dhruv Rathee in 2018.

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IN PARLIAMENT

BUDGET SESSION

From China and Maldives to Gyanvapi and Mathura, Adhir questions Govt in Lok Sabha

Says Govt should stop scaring Muslims; On China, Rajnath says India not weak now

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE OPPOSITION in the Lok Sabha sought to corner the government on Monday over tackling Chinese influence in the region, inflation and growing communal atmosphere in the country.

During the debate on the President's address to Parliament, Opposition parties also alleged that the government was misleading people on development.

"Now that elections are here, you have gone under the shelter of Shri Ram. We all believe in Ram but do not patent Him. Do not make him a tool for elections."

Mahatma Gandhi said Ram Rajya is not Hindu Raj but a divine kingdom... It is good that the Ram Temple has been built.

But now there is a discussion on Gyanvapi mosque, Mathura. There are 20 crore Muslims in the country. It will be better if you stop scaring them," Congress leader of the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said.

Chowdhury called the Presidential address a BJP "election manifesto" and asked why it did not make a single mention of the country's security concerns. "I wish to ask the Defence Minister what is the situation in Ladakh. You said you will establish status quo ante. Where is it?"



Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury speaks in the House on Monday. PTI

Day by day the situation in Ladakh is worsening. About 2,000 sq km have been encroached... We have been demanding a discussion on China... What is happening in Maldives? Where was Ajit Doval?" Chowdhury said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh took exception to Chowdhury's remarks and said, "I disagree with everything he has said about Sino-India relations. I condemn it... India is not weak anymore... India knows how to give a befitting reply. It is not good to put down one's own country in the House for no apparent reason. If it was their government, we would stand by them for the country."

To this, Chowdhury said, "For

the country, even we stand with you. You please fight. But you are not fighting. You are scared. That is why we are worried."

Chowdhury also questioned the government's narrative on development.

"What is viksit bharat? When we will become viksit bharat, I do not know... To confuse people they keep talking about fifth largest and third largest economy. But please tell people what is the per capita GDP. In 2023, our per capita GDP is \$2,600. Do you know what is the per capita GDP of the two countries you want to leave behind? Germany's per capita GDP is \$52,800 and of Japan it is \$30,900. In per capita income, we are placed at 142nd

rank," he said.

NK Premchandran of RSP expressed disappointment at the President not mentioning minorities. "It is a political speech. Every section of society was mentioned in the speech, but not even a word was spoken about the minorities of the country. You are talking about inclusive development. What about the minorities? There was also total omission of the problems faced by the labour class... The secular-democratic fabric of the country is under threat," he said.

Shiv Sena (Uddhav) MP Arvind Sawant raised the issue of Manipur. "The President spoke about culture and civilisation. But our civilisation was shamed in Manipur and the President did not mention a word about it. I feel sad. She spoke about Nari Shakti Vandana, but at the same time our sports women were humiliated, we must not forget. You say 25% people have been pulled out of poverty but you are giving free flight to 80 crore people. There is a paradox," he said.

Pratima Mondal of TMC said, "It is astonishing there is no mention of Manipur and the humiliation suffered by women sportspersons. The country witnessed the rapists of Bilkis Bano being garlanded. Being the Constitutional head, a woman and a mother, madam President should have raised her voice".

It was as if Modi wanted the Lok Sabha elections to be framed as a battle between the BJP and the Congress, a political rival he has convincingly defeated twice in parliamentary elections and in countless state polls since 2014.

The BJP has struggled to defeat regional parties in state elections – an exception being the Samajwadi Party (SP) in Uttar Pradesh – but has managed to trounce the Congress with ease. The BJP hence perceives the Congress as the weakest link in the alliance.

The Prime Minister's political attack was sharp, not necessarily fresh. What stood out was his conscious omission of regional parties, most of them the BJP's rivals. He hardly named any but focused all his jibes, barbs, and attacks at the Congress. He called the Nehru-Gandhi family a "shahi parivar (royal family)" without, of course, naming Rahul Gandhi,

accused the Congress of trying to relaunch the same "product" again and again, and came down heavily on dynastic politics.

But why this sharp attack on the Congress? Congress leaders said the Prime Minister perhaps

Framing LS poll battle, why Modi gave Cong undivided attention

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

WITH GENERAL elections just around the corner, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday turned to his preferred foe Congress, making the grand old party the centrepiece of his attack in his last full-fledged speech in Lok Sabha before the polls. The framing was all too familiar, from finding fault from Jawaharlal Nehru to Indira Gandhi and lampooning Rahul Gandhi who is the embattled Opposition party's last and constant hope.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge posted on X, "The Prime Minister cannot sleep without mentioning the name of Congress. He spoke about nepotism, our leaders have sacrificed their lives for the country. I want to ask Modi ji, who from your party or your political ancestors sacrificed their lives for India's freedom, unity, and integrity?"

"It was virtually his Lok Sabha poll campaign launch speech. And it was clear that he wanted to reinforce the Congress-BJP binary, the UPA-NDA binary. He mentioned the corruption charges faced by UPA government... he talked about (Jawaharlal) Nehru, Indira Gandhi, and Congress's so-called treatment of social justice icon Karpoori Thakur because we are talking so much about caste census and OBC representation," said a Congress leader.

"He has proved he is scared of Congress. He spoke about 370 seats for BJP and 400-plus seats for NDA... Despite such bravado, he somehow seems to feel that the Congress alone can challenge the BJP," said Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

Another Congress leader, however, argued that the PM's speeches had always reflected the clash of two ideas that began in 1947. "The two ideas represented by the Congress and the RSS... The Sangh could never forgive Nehru for turning India into a secular state," he said.

in the President's address. "It is a make-believe situation," he said.

He said the President said the government had given jobs to "lakhs of youth" but did not mention the exact numbers. "Should we take it as another jumla," he asked.

Ray said the President cited NITI Aayog to state that about 25 crore people had been lifted out of poverty in the past decade. "A series of lofty claims have been made in this report card of the government to carry out a disinformation campaign on the eve of Lok Sabha elections."

Another TMC MP, Nadimul Haque, accused the government of "federal terrorism" and said, "In the states where you can't win democratically, you deliberately starve them of funds."

Haque also demanded the government to bring out a white paper on black money, with regards to the Panama, Paradise papers (as reported by *The Indian Express* in collaboration with ICII). "The government promised that black money will be recovered from tax havens abroad. In the Panama, Paradise leaks, names of thousands of rich Indians were revealed, who had parked black money in different tax havens. I demand a white paper from the government on this issue," he said.

DMK MP Tiruchi Siva, too, hit out at the government over its record on federalism. "This government is anti-federal, anti-secular, anti-poor, pro-rich. It is anti-women, anti-MSME, anti-CPSUs, pro-corporates, anti-farmers and anti-labour, pro-Centre and anti-regional... There is a blatant attempt to undermine regional parties and local issues," he said.

TMC MP Sukhendu Sekhar Ray also hit out at the government over unemployment and income inequality. He said he counted the words "Viksit Bharat" were mentioned at least six times and "amrit", including in "Amrit Kaal", about 10 times

Opp's targets Govt over black money, seeks white paper on Panama, Pandora

DIVYA A & DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

CONGRESS LEADER Durgavijaya Singh on Monday raised concern over the reliability of EVMs and said the details of the software used in such machines should be placed in the public domain. He was replying to the Motion of Thanks to the President's address in the Raja Sabha.

He also accused the Narendra Modi government of failing to bring back to the country economic offenders like Nirav Modi.

"If they can bring back Lord Ram to the temple after 500 years, why can't they bring back Nirav Modi?"

"Where are these people? You promised to bring black money back. Where is it?" he said.

"As many as 28 political parties have written to the Election Commission, raising doubts over the EVMs," he said, adding, "Is the EC objective? It could not find time to meet 28 parties in the last six months."

CPI(M) MP John Brittas accused the BJP of "using Lord Ram" for political gains. The Left MP said the PM should stick to his duties and go to Manipur. "The primary responsibility of the PM is to give 'pran' to citizens, not the Gods. He should obviously stick to his duties... he should go to Manipur and conduct a 'Praan Pratishtha' for citizens," he said.

DMK MP Tiruchi Siva, too, hit out at the government over its record on federalism. "This government is anti-federal, anti-secular, anti-poor, pro-rich. It is anti-women, anti-MSME, anti-CPSUs, pro-corporates, anti-farmers and anti-labour, pro-Centre and anti-regional... There is a blatant attempt to undermine regional parties and local issues," he said.

Politically vitiated: FM on claims Govt not releasing funds to non-BJP ruled states



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

Replying to a question from Congress member Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury in the Lok Sabha, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Monday strongly refuted claims that the Centre was withholding funds to non-BJP ruled states.

Sitharaman said that the devolution of taxes was based on the recommendations of the Finance Commission and she had no discretionary powers.

"This apprehension that some states are being discriminated against is a politically-vitiated narrative which, I am sorry to say, vested interests are happy to go about saying," she said.

Citing Karnataka, Chowdhury said "an entire ministry has been agitating against the indiscriminate and arbitrary attitude of your administration". There is a "perception" that non-BJP ruled states were being deprived of their legitimate dues, he said.

In her reply, Sitharaman said 100% of the state GST is transferred automatically to the states



RELIGIOUS LEADERS IN HOUSE

PM Narendra Modi meets a group of religious leaders representing various communities at Parliament on Monday. ANI

Water pollution curbs: Bill allowing exemption to industrial units tabled

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE CENTRE on Monday introduced a Bill that would enable it to prescribe the norms for nominating chairpersons of State Pollution Control Boards, exempt certain industrial units from restrictions, and decriminalise "minor offences" related to water pollution.

The Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Amendment Bill, 2024 was introduced in the Rajya Sabha by MoS for Environment Ashwini Kumar Choubey. It would be applicable to Himachal Pradesh and Rajasthan, and any other state that passes a resolution under the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act, 1974.

Currently, the Act prescribes imprisonment of up to three months for not informing the State Board about abstraction of water from a stream or well in a substantial volume and not providing information about construction, installation or operation of disposal system. The Bill amends it to a fine between Rs 10,000 and Rs 15 lakh.

The Act states the chairman of the State Pollution Control Board will be nominated by the State government, to which the Bill adds "in such manner as may be prescribed by the Central Government". The Bill enables the Centre to "exempt certain categories of industrial plants" from the restrictions on new outlets and discharges. It also enables the Centre to "issue guidelines" on matters relating to grant, establishment of any industry, etc.

THE SUPREME Court order on Ram Temple was a verdict, not justice, SP MP raises minority concerns

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE SUPREME Court order on Ram Temple was a verdict, not justice, Samajwadi Party MP from Moradabad S T Hasan told Lok Sabha on Monday even as he raised the issues of Kashi and Mathura. Hasan was speaking during the debate on the President's address to Parliament.

The Supreme Court gave a verdict and the Ram Temple issue was resolved. It was a verdict and not justice, but it was resolved.

Now the issue of another mosque has come up... Gyanvapi... then there will be Mathura... then Taj Mahal,



SP MP Syed Tufail Hasan in Lok Sabha on Monday. ANI

but Article 371 was not touched. We were told terrorism will be finished... but every second day there is an incident. The message that the Triple Talaq Bill generated led to people starting to have problems with hijab and azaan as well. Is the same country we to-

gether bleed for to get freedom. Where will it stop?" he said.

Hasan also raised the Israel-Palestine issue. "Our government announced support to Israel within five hours. No one supports terrorism. But if a state turns terrorist, kills women, children and elderly, is it not our duty to oppose that state. A message should have gone from our government and Parliament that this tyranny must end," he said.

He alleged the government had removed "modern teachers" from madrasas. "Maulana Azad scholarship was withdrawn. Why was the budget of AMU and Jamia Millia reduced? And then you say you do not discriminate on the basis of religion," he said.

CALLING THE move "illegal", Congress MP Imran Pratapgarhi in the Raja Sabha on Monday raised concerns over the demolition of a heritage mosque in Mehrauli by the Delhi Development Authority on January 30.

Speaking during Zero Hour, Pratapgarhi said there had been a spate of demolitions of places of worship, including the Akhondi mosque, a madrasa, and a temple in Mehrauli at 5 am. "DDA, which was founded in 1957, is terming the Mehrauli mosque that is many hundreds of years older than it, an encroachment. Do development authorities not adhere to the Places of Worship Act, 1991?"

He also raised concerns over

the Akhondi mosque was built, an ASI publication in 1922 said it was repaired in 1853-1854.

Later during Zero Hour, BJP MP Harnath Singh Yadav argued against it. In his Zero Hour submission, Yadav appealed to the government to repeal the Act, saying it was against the principles of secularism and equality enshrined in the Constitution. He said the Act gives legal sanctity to the "capture of Gyanvapi and Shri Krishna Janmabhoomi by foreign invaders". "This law creates differences between Lord Ram and Lord Krishna, when they are both avatars of Lord Vishnu... This law is unconstitutional. In national interest, I demand that this law be repealed immediately," he said.

While it is not known when



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



SARI POWER

THE SARI WALKATHON organised by the Ministry of Textiles, which has been enthusiastically welcomed by many BJP women MPs in their constituencies, saw its biggest success last weekend in Rajasthan's Kota, represented by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. The event, meant to raise fitness awareness as well as support local weaves, recorded the participation of around 10,000 women from Uttarakhand, Goa, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Assam, Telangana, Kerala, Haryana, Jharkhand, Maharashtra and Gujarat, sporting their state's traditional saris. Birla, who flagged off the 2-km walk, termed it a "programme meant not only to encourage women but also to empower them".

VIRTUALLY, PERSONALLY

LAST WEEKEND, Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud as the chief guest delivered the keynote address at the 72nd convocation at Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda. An unintentional mix-up of words by the CJI, who was virtually attending the event, left people amused when he said he wanted to "personally" apologise to Rajmata Shubhanginiraje Gaekwad, the Chancellor of the university, for not being able to "personally" attend the event.

MISSING' QUESTION

DEPUTY CHAIRMAN of Rajya Sabha Harivansh inadvertently skipped a question while presiding over the House on Monday. Chairman Jagdeep Dhankhar returned to the chair and clarified that the question was not taken due to "certain technical problems". As Opposition MPs protested, Harivansh clarified from his seat that the question just "slipped through the computer, it went ahead". When the Opposition MPs continued their protest, the Chairman expressed his confidence in Harivansh, saying there could not have been a Deputy Chairman with "better qualities and independence, more than I have". The skipped question was taken up later.

Cong, AAP back Gujarat House resolution hailing Modi for temple event

PARIMAL DABHI

GANDHINAGAR, FEBRUARY 5

THE GUJARAT Assembly on Monday unanimously passed a resolution, moved by CM Bhupendra Patel, congratulating PM Narendra Modi for Ram Temple consecration. The resolution was welcomed by all, including Opposition parties Congress and AAP.

Extending his party's support, senior Congress MLA Arjun Modhwadia reminded the House it was then-PM Rajiv Gandhi who allowed foundation stone laying ceremony in 1989 at the site, where the temple has come up in Ayodhya. Umesh Makwana of AAP also supported the BJP move and said a hospital and a college should be built in the campus of the temple.

Modhwadia had earlier criticised his party's decision to decline the invitation for the consecration ceremony.

In his resolution, the CM stated, "...We all know that owing to a far-sighted Prime Minister, devoted Hindu community, which waited for more than 500 years, could consecrate Ram Lalla

at a grand temple in Ayodhya."

He added, "...the people of Gujarat became emotional on January 22 when a son of Gujarat and former leader of this August House, Narendra Modi, consecrated Ram Lalla."

"In India, good governance (means) standards set by Lord Ram... But invaders and foreign regimes destroyed these cultures... Lakhs of lovers of our culture made sacrifices for centuries. As a result, we could rebuild Ram Temple through constitutional means," Patel said.

Welcoming the resolution, Congress' Modhwadia said, "When we have got this Ram temple through constitutional means, we welcome it. We welcome its consecration as well."

"In 1986, the locks of Ram Mandir were opened for the first time and the CM (of UP) was Vir Bahadur Singh of Congress and the PM was Rajiv Gandhi. It was Rajiv Gandhi who in 1989... gave permission for stone laying (of the temple)," said Modhwadia.

AAP's Makwana suggested the House should congratulate those who have made sacrifices for the Ram temple.

Rahul: INDIA bloc will remove 50% quota cap if voted to power

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 5

CONGRESS LEADER Rahul Gandhi Monday promised a nationwide caste census and removal of the 50 per cent cap on reservation if the INDIA bloc forms the government at the Centre after the Lok Sabha polls.

Gandhi also launched a scathing attack on PM Narendra Modi, saying when the demand for caste census was raised and the time came to give rights to OBCs, Dalits and tribals, the PM stated there are no castes, but when it is time to get votes, he says he is an OBC.

Gandhi also alleged the BJP tried to topple the JMM-Congress-RJD government in Jharkhand and as the CM was a tribal and congratulated all alliance MLAs "as that they stopped the BJP-RSS conspiracy and protected the government of the poor".

Gandhi claimed Dalits, tribals, and OBCs were made bonded labourers and their participation was lacking in big companies, hospitals, schools, colleges and courts. "This is the biggest question before India. Our first step would be to get a caste census in the country," he said.

Noting that more than 50 per cent reservation cannot be given under existing provisions, Gandhi promised that an INDIA government would "throw out" the 50 per cent cap on reservation.



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra on way to Ranchi on Monday, PTI

"I am giving you a guarantee that backward sections of society will get their rights," he said.

Gandhi also came down heavily on the Modi government over what he said was an attempt to privatise PSUs in order to ben-

efit its "crony capitalist friends".

The BJP, meanwhile, said Gandhi's "all Yatras have flopped". He (Gandhi) travelled in three states and the Congress sunk in these states," MoS Nisith Pramanik said.

New Delhi: The Election Commission has asked political parties to refrain from using children during election campaigns "in any form whatsoever", saying there will be "zero tolerance" for it.

The advisory, the poll panel said, was in continuation of earlier directives to parties and candidates to address "plummeting levels of campaign discourse and to maintain respectful discourse towards Persons with Disabilities".

"Parties have been advised not to use children in election campaigns in any form whatsoever including distribution of posters/ pamphlets or to participate in slogan shouting, rallies, election meetings, etc," an ECI statement said Monday. ENS

Assam introduces Bill to curb paper leaks, proposes 10-year jail

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 5

ON THE same day that Centre introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha to curb malpractices in government recruitment exams, the Assam government also tabled a similar Bill in the state Assembly.

Laying out the proposed punishments in case of malpractice in such exams, the Bill tabled on Monday – the first day of the Assam Assembly's Budget session – also sought to notify special courts to try offences under the Bill and to empower the government to designate a police officer, with the rank of deputy superintendent and above, to investigate such offences.

The Bill proposed the state government, in consultation with the Chief Justice of the Gauhati High Court, can designate and notify special courts that are not below a court of Additional District and Sessions Judge.

The Assam Cabinet had in October 2023 issued the Assam Public Examination (Measures for Prevention of Unfair Means in Recruitment) Ordinance. The Bill introduced Monday also has the same name, and will come into effect from the date of its publication in the Assam Gazette.

His hopes of getting a ticket notwithstanding, Krishnam, 59, and originally from Sambhal, does not have a promising electoral record. While in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, he had finished fifth in Sambhal, in 2019, he had come third.

What could hold Krishnam in good stead is his good ties with leaders of other parties, including the SP.

For examinees indulging in unfair means, the Bill proposed

'Nitish given time till 12th for floor test... The way BJP operates, have to be cautious'

THE CONGRESS Sunday flew all its MLAs in Bihar to Hyderabad, where the party is in power, ahead of the February 12 trust vote in the state. In an interview with **MANOJ C G** state Congress president and Rajya Sabha MP **AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH** talks about why the MLAs have been sequestered, seat-sharing talks in the state, and why he thinks that Nitish Kumar's exit from the INDIA bloc "is good in a way".

Why have you flown all Congress MLAs in Bihar to Hyderabad?

We have to be cautious if we have to stop the (Nitish Kumar) government from winning the trust vote. There is huge anger among their MLAs. But they want to prove the majority at any cost. You must have seen in Jharkhand also all the Opposition MLAs stayed together even after the oath-taking of the Chief Minister (Champai Soren). So, we are taking all precautions. The way the BJP operates, we also have to be cautious.

But sequestering the MLAs and taking them to Hyderabad also sends a message that the party doesn't have trust in its MLAs.

We have complete trust in our MLAs. In fact, it was their suggestion to stay together. That is one part.

Within three days after taking the oath, the Jharkhand government is seeking a confidence vote today (it won the vote). In Bihar.. Kumar still has not taken the floor test. It was first said the trust vote would take place on February 5, then changed it to the 10th and now it is said it would take place on the 12th. So who is scared and who is in a dilemma, you can understand.

Do you think there are problems in the BJP and the JD(U) and they are not confident?

What do you think? If there were no problems, why was the floor test pushed to the 12th? In Jharkhand, we did not seek a different date.

Is the Congress confident of getting more seats under the new arrangement on seat sharing? Will there be a repeat of the 2019 formula?

The Congress will get its legitimate share. We are confident. In 2019, the Congress contested nine seats. My son contested on the RLSP (Rashtriya Lok Samta Party) symbol. So, we contested 10 seats. Now, Nitish Kumar has walked out. In 2019, Upendra Kushwaha, Jitan Ram Manjhi, and Mukesh Sahani too were there. All of them are not with us. So, we have to rework the arrangement. FULL INTERVIEW

www.indianexpress.com



THE EXPRESS

INTERVIEW

WITH

AKHILESH

PRASAD SINGH

CONGRESS BIHAR CHIEF

Cong's UP woes mount, now ex-Priyanka team member praises PM for Ram Temple construction

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 5

THERE IS no end to troubles for the Congress in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the Lok Sabha polls. After INDIA bloc partner Samajwadi Party (SP) took it by surprise by unilaterally declaring candidates for 16 Lok Sabha seats, senior leader Acharya Pramod Krishnam, who has twice contested on a Congress ticket – from Sambhal in 2014 and Lucknow in 2019 – now appears to be sulking.

Krishnam, 59, who recently met Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to invite them for the foundation-laying ceremony of 'Kalki Dham' in Sambhal district, has all praise for the

Acharya
Pramod
Krishnam.
File

just like the PM had worked towards the construction of the Ram Temple.

He has also been targeting his own party for its decision to not attend the Ayodhya consecration ceremony, as well as Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra. He asked the party to correct its mistake in not accepting the Ram Temple invite, saying Lord Ram belongs to everyone. Then, he said that looking at the Yatra, it appeared that the Congress was preparing for the 2029 elections, not 2024.

Krishnam in fact also said that Modi has "divine powers", adding that followers of Sanatan Dharma wanted him to lay the foundation of the Kalki Dham,

Sources within the Congress said that while Krishnam – earlier a part of its Uttar Pradesh Advisory Council, formed to assist Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in her role as UP in-charge for the Congress – has always been vocal about expressing his thoughts, one of the reasons for his sulking could be the SP decision to declare candidates for both Sambhal and Lucknow, which Krishnam has been eyeing.

While the Congress has not accepted the SP list and is hoping to get at least Lucknow, this is not going to be easy.

The SP Sambhal candidate is its sitting MP from the seat, Shafiqur Rehman Bargi, and in Lucknow, the party sees a better chance for itself given that it stood second from there in 2019, though Krishnam too performed well with over 1.80

lakh votes; the winner was the BJP's Rajnath Singh. The SP has named its veteran leader Ravidas Mahrotra from there.

The 1.8-lakh votes for Krishnam were surprising given that the Congress had been decimated elsewhere in the state, winning just 1 seat (Rae Bareli, with Sonia Gandhi as candidate), with even Rahul Gandhi losing from Amethi.

His hopes of getting a ticket notwithstanding, Krishnam, 59, and originally from Sambhal, does not have a promising electoral record. While in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections, he had finished fifth in Sambhal, in 2019, he had come third.

What could hold Krishnam in good stead is his good ties with leaders of other parties, including the SP.

For examinees indulging in unfair means, the Bill proposed

an imprisonment up to three years and fine not less than Rs 1 lakh. For people, whether entrusted with conducting the exam or not, contravening the provisions of the law, the proposed penalty is imprisonment of at least five years, extending up to 10 years, and a fine of at least Rs 10 lakh that can extend up to Rs 1 crore.

Also, it proposed an examinee convicted under the Bill will be debarred from writing any public exam for two years.

The Bill also proposes in cases of persons in organised crime acting in contravention to it, the court can make an order to attach the property of the person to recover "any wrongful gains".

www.indianexpress.com

SC asks CJ to decide on judge's suo motu action against ministers in Tamil Nadu

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE SUPREME Court on Monday asked the Madras High Court Chief Justice to decide who should hear the suo motu proceedings initiated by a single judge against the discharge of some Tamil Nadu ministers in corruption cases.

Hearing applications filed by some of the ministers against whom the proceedings were revived, a bench of Justices Hrishikesh Roy and P K Mishra ordered, "we deem it appropriate to say that the suo motu matters should be considered by the Honourable Chief Justice. He may either take the matter himself or to another judge as he may consider appropriate. Thereafter, the matter will proceed on merits."

The bench, however, clarified that its "order should not be construed as making comments on the concerned judges hearing the suo motu matters".

The matter before the SC pertained to corruption cases against two TN ministers KKSSR Ramachandran and Thangam Thenarasu being revived suo motu by a single-judge bench of Justice Anand Venkatesh in 2023.

Hearing their appeal against this, the SC had sought a report from the HC Registry.

Perusing the report, the bench said that it appeared that the single judge had asked the Registry to get the cases numbered whereas the appropriate way would have been to ask them to be numbered after permission from the HC Chief Justice who is the master of roster.

Senior Advocate Rakesh Dwivedi appearing for the HC said that the CJ's approval was secured as per applicable rules. Senior Advocate A M Singhvi appearing for the appellants said such orders could create havoc.

SC notice to EC on duplicate voter entries

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE SUPREME Court on Monday sought the response of the Election Commission's response to a plea raising the issue of duplicate voter entries in electoral rolls.

A bench of CJI D Y Chandrachud and justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra issued notice to the EC on the plea filed by NGO Samvidhan Bachao Trust. Senior Advocate Meenakshi Arora, appearing for the NGO, submitted that the electoral rolls were updated only in relation to individuals who have died or changed their place of residence.

She said that no steps were taken to address duplication of names in electoral rolls.

The SC directed the poll panel to file its response on the issue of non-mentioning of duplication in data collection by district officers.

punjab national bank

CIRCLE SASTRA CENTRE, R J PALACE,
RAJ KASHI NATH MORE, GAYA

CORRIGENDUM

With reference to the E-auction Notice Pertaining to Punjab National Bank (Gaya) Published on dated 25.01.2024 on Page No.3 In the Indian Express, Point no 3 in the column of Terms and Conditions to be read as "3. The sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website https://www.mstccommerce.com on 15.02.2024 @ 11:00 AM." Rest facts and figures will remain unchanged.

Authorised Officer
Punjab National Bank

DASTI
IN THE COURT OF SH. BHUPESH KUMAR,
DISTRICT JUDGE (COMM. COURT-05)
ROOM NO.22, BLOCK - I, SOUTH-EAST
DISTRICT, SAKET COURTS, NEW DELHI.

NOTICE FOR PUBLICATION

(ORDER 5, Rule 20 of the CPC.)
CS COMM. NO. 107/2022

PUNJAB NATIONAL BANKPlaintiff,
vs.

SH. RAJESH SINGHDefendants.
to,

SH. RAJESH SINGH
S/o SH. CHANDAN SINGH R/O TA-235A, 1ST
FLOOR, GALLI NO.4, TUGHLAQABAD EXTN., GALI NO.3, DELHI-110019.

ALSO AT- RZ-1/4AC, MADHY MARG,
TUGHLAQABAD EXTN., GALI NO.3, DELHI-110019.

ALSO AT- L-2/5B, TOP FLOOR, LIG, DDA FLAT,
KALKAJI, DELHI-110019.

Whereas Plaintiff has instituted that above suit for RECOVERY against the defendants, to be heard and determined by the Court in person or by a pleader on the 12th day of MARCH 2024, at 10:00 O' clock, to answer the same, failing which the Suit will be disposed of ex parte.

Given under my hand and the seal of the court, this 31st JANUARY, 2024 to be published in English Newspaper "INDIAN EXPRESS".

NOTE : Defendant is informed to file WS within a period of 30 days from the date of receipt of summons with advance copy to the plaintiff and filling of WS in commercial suit in 120 days period is mandatory and no extension can be granted.

District Judge
(Commercial Court-05,
South-East, Saket, New Delhi)

Varthana Finance Private Limited
(Formerly known as M/s. Thirumeni Finance Private Ltd.)
Registered Office at : No. 5 BC-110, Varasiddhi, 3rd Floor, Outer Ring Road, Service Road, 3rd Block, HRBR Layout, Kalyan Nagar, Bangalore-560043. Website: www.varthana.com, Email: care@varthana.com, Phone : 080-66457777, Branch Office : Office : 1162 & 1163, Tower B-1, 11th Floor, Space ITech Park, Sector 49, Sohna Road, Gurugram-122010.

DEMAND NOTICE
Notice under Section 13(2) & (3) of The Securitisation And Reconstruction Of Financial Assets And Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002.

We hereby serve upon you this notice, the contents whereof you may kindly note: That you the Borrower along with Co-applicants/Mortgagors have approached and requested for grant of the credit facility from M/s Varthana Finance Private Ltd. (hereinafter referred to as "Company") (Formerly known as Thirumeni Finance Private Limited). This Demand Notice issued on 22-01-2024, the contents of which are being published herewith as per Sec. 13(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, by way of alternative service upon the Borrower/ Co-Applicants/ Mortgagor No. 5 for service of notice, since notices could not be served on the given addresses. At your request and instance, we granted you the following credit facilities (hereinafter collectively referred to as "credit facility"). The details are mentioned below.

Loan Account No: U22GUR-GUR-019905, U21GUR-GUR-018036, S19GUR-GUR-009163 and U23GUR023225. Sanctioned loan amount Rs.7,22,000/-, Rs.15,02,232/-, Rs.80,98,460/- and Rs.37,99,377/- Total Liability as on 22-01-2024 Rs.1,14,92,043/- (With Contractual Rate Of Interest), Name & Address of Borrower, Co-Applicants & Mortgagors : 1. Ms. Shri Om Sal International School, Represented by its Authorized Signatory, Jawahar Nagar, Mohinder Garh, Haryana - 123029. 2. Ms. Maa Saraswati Devi Shiksha Samiti, Represented by its Authorized Signatory, Jawahar Nagar, Mohinder Garh, Haryana - 123029. 3. Mr. Ramesh Saini, S/o. Sher Singh Saini, H No. 38/2, Mohalla Jawar Nagar, Mahendra Garh, Haryana - 123029. 4. Mrs. Nisha Saini, W/o. Dhara Chand Saini, H No. 38/2, Mohalla Jawar Nagar, Mahendra Garh, Haryana - 123029. 5. Mr. Bhawani Sahai Bharaman, S/o. Mohar Singh Saini, Ward No.2, Rewan Road, Near Moda Wala Mandir, Mohalla Saini Enclave, Narnaul, Haryana - 123001. Also at - Mr. Bhawani Sahai Bharaman, S/o. Mohar Singh Saini, H No. 38/2, Mohalla Jawar Nagar, Mahendra Garh, Haryana - 123029.

You have availed of the above mentioned credit facilities from time to time and utilized the amount and further, while availing the financial assistance you have given an undertaking for repayment of the said financial assistance in terms of the said agreement(s)/document(s). You have also created a mortgage by way of Deposit of Title Deeds/ Registered Mortgages creating security interest in favor of the Company which is more fully described in below Schedule.

That you continued to enjoy the above credit facility, however, you became irregular and failed to maintain the financial discipline, despite our repeated request and reminders from the officers of the Company you have failed and neglected to repay the said dues/ outstanding liabilities. The operation of and conduct of the above said credit facility has become irregular and the debt has been classified as Non-Performing assets (NPA) in accordance with directives/ guidelines relating to asset classifications issued by the Reserve Bank of India consequent to the default committed by you in repayment of principal debt and interest thereon accordingly Loan Account has been classified as Non-Performing Asset on 14-01-2024, and hereby recall the said loan / credit facility and call upon you to pay the entire outstanding balance together with interest and all sums payable by you under the said Agreement.

On account of defaults committed by you, you are jointly & severally liable to pay to us the total outstanding dues of 22-01-2024 Rs.1,14,92,043/- with agreed contractual rate of interest, until the date of payment, together with incidental expenses, cost and other charges, thereon.

Under the circumstances, we hereby call upon you to repay the above said entire dues of Rs.1,14,92,043/- (Rupees One Crore Fourteen Lakh Ninety Two Thousand Forty Three Only) as on 22-01-2024 together with future interest from 20 January, 2024, at contractual rate plus legal costs/charges thereon within 60 (Sixty) days from the date of this notice. If you fail to repay to the Company the aforesaid sum with further interest and incidental expenses, cost as stated above in terms of this notice U/Sec. 13(2) of the Act, the Company will exercise all or any of the rights detailed under Sub-Section (4) of Section 13 and under other applicable provisions of the said Act.

You are also put on notice that in terms of Sub-section (13) of Section 13 you shall not transfer by sale, lease or otherwise the said secured assets detailed below without obtaining written consent of the Company.

This notice is without prejudice to the Company's right to initiate such other actions or legal proceedings, as it deems necessary under any other applicable provisions of Law to recover its legitimate dues.

If you have any representations to be made in response to this, please mark the same to the Authorized Officer, M/s Varthana Finance Pvt Ltd., Varasiddhi, SBC-110, 3rd Floor, Service Road, 3rd Block, HRBR Layout, Bangalore- 560043.

Description of the Immovable Property (Secured Asset): All that piece of parcel of the Property bearing Khewat No.253/45, Kathoni No. 273 Mustaq & Kila No.162/2(12-9) Measuring 2 kanal (1080 Sq. Ft.) 7 malta (1907.75 Sq. Ft.) situated at Village Jawahar Nagar, Tehsil & District. Mahendergarh (Haryana) and bounded on: East By: Road West By: Other Property North By: Other Property South By: Other Property.

Date : 06.02.2024, Place: Gurugram Authorised Officer, Varthana Finance Private Limited

**OFFICE OF THE RECOVERY OFFICER-II/
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL, PATNA**
2nd Floor, (A, B & F Wing) Kapuri Thakur Sadan, Kendriya Karamchari Parivar (GPOA), Ashiana Digla Road, Patna-800025.

DEMAND NOTICE
NOTICE UNDER SECTIONS 25 TO 28 OF THE RECOVERY OF DEBTS & BANKRUPTCY ACT, 1993 AND RULE 2 OF SECOND SCHEDULE TO THE INCOME TAX ACT, 1961.

RC/233/2023 01.02.2024
PUNJAB NATIONAL BANK
Versus
M/S RAVI KUNJ VASTRALAY AND OTHERS.

To,
(CD-1) M/s Ravi Kunj Vastralay and others, Proprietorship Concern Through its Proprietor Alak Chandra Verma, Ban Bazar, Besides PNB, Munger, Bihar-811201
(CD-2) ALAKH CHANDRA VERMA S/o Late Rajendra Prasad Verma resident of Mohalla-Lalli Pokhar, Kanth Colony, P.S. Kasim Bazar, P.O. and District- Munger Pin-811201
(CD-3) SURYA BHUSHAN KUSHWAHA, S/o Late Puna Mandal resident of Mohalla Lalli Pokhar, Kanth Colony, P.S.-Kasim Bazar, P.O. and District- Munger, Pin-811201

This is to notify that as per the Recovery Certificate issued in pursuance of orders passed by the Presiding Officer, DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL PATNA in OA/462/2021 an amount of Rs 3301305.00 (Rupees Thirty Three Lakhs One Thousand Three Hundred Five Only) along with pendentiflits and future interest @ 14 % Compound Interest monthly w.e.f. 02/12/2021 till realization and costs of Rs, 34,000 (Rupees Thirty Four Thousands Only) has become due against you (Jointly and severally/ Fully/Limited).

2. You are hereby directed to pay the above sum within 15 days of the receipts of the notice, failing which the recovery shall be made in accordance with the Recovery of Debts Due to Banks and Financial Institutions Act, 1993 and Rules there under.

3. You are hereby ordered to declare on an affidavit the particulars of yours assets on or before the next date of hearing.

4. You are hereby ordered to appear before the undersigned on 05/03/2024 at 10:30 am. for further proceedings.

5. In addition to the sum aforesaid, you will also be liable to pay:

(a) Such interests as is payable for the period commencing immediately after this notice of the certificate/execution proceedings.

(b) All costs, charges and expenses incurred in respect of the service of this notice and warrants and other processes and all other proceedings taken for recovering the amount due.

Given under my hand and the seal of the Tribunal, on this date: 01/02/2024
Recovery Officer
DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL PATNA

IN REMEMBRANCE

Corps of Signals salutes its following Signallers who left us for their heavenly abode during the month of Jan 2024.

- (a) 15727407Y Havildar Mukund Ravindra Anandrao
- (b) 15671327M Naik Pradeep Lamba
- (c) 15671963A Naik Shiv Shankar Ram
- (d) 15680089M Havildar Santosh Kumar K G
- (e) 15746389W Sigmn Sunil Mahto

On behalf of the Corps, we sincerely pray to Almighty for peace to the departed souls & strength to the bereaved families to bear this irreparable loss.



**Government of India
Ministry of Tourism**

Gwalior Bhubaneswar Goa Noida Nellore

Indian Institute of Tourism & Travel Management
(An Organization of the Ministry of Tourism, Government of India)

Govindpuri, Gwalior- 474011

Selection for the Post of Director

IITTM is an autonomous institute (registered under the Societies Registration Act) of Ministry of Tourism, Govt. of India that was established in 1983. It is the premier institute in the country in the field of tourism education, training research and consultancy. It is a five campus institute with headquarters at Gwalior and other centers at Bhubaneswar, Noida, Goa and Nellore. It runs MBA (Tourism & Travel Management) & BBA (Tourism & Travel) courses from its campuses along with a large number of training programmes to cater to the needs to the market.

Director IITTM is responsible for management of the institute and is required to drive it towards excellence and benchmark with the best in the world. Institute is in the process of selecting the Director. The appointment shall be made on contract basis for tenure of 3 years with possibility of further extension as per IITTM Recruitment Rules and depending upon the merit of the case.

Applications are invited from willing and eligible candidates for the post of Director of IITTM on contract basis in the Pay Level-15 (7th CPC). Circular for this vacancy along with the details of pay scale and related benefits, qualifications, other eligibility conditions and application form can be downloaded from www.tourism.gov.in or www.iitm.ac.in. Completed applications shall reach Director (HRD), Ministry of Tourism, East Wing, 7th Floor, Chandrakoot Building, 36-Janpath, New Delhi – 110001 in a sealed cover subscribing in bold letter "APPLICATION FOR THE POST OF DIRECTOR, IITTM", so as to reach latest by 1700 hrs on 20.02.2024.

STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSET RECOVERY BRANCH (SARB)
2nd Floor, Patna Main Branch Building, West Gandhi Maidan, Patna-800001
Ph. No. (Office) : 0612-2219043, 2219385, Fax No. : 0612-2219385, E-mail : sbi.05176@sbi.co.in

SUBSEQUENT SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 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 property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of State of Bank of India, the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As Is Where Is", "As Is What Is" and "Whatever there is" on 27/02/2024 (Tuesday) for recovery of the dues of the borrower/guarantor, other details of the e-auction are as under.

Sl. No.	Name of Borrower(s)	Amount of Demand (as per SARFAESI notice)	Short Description of the immovable property	Reserve Price	
				EMD Amount	Bid Increment Amount
1.	Dhara Holiday LLP : Partners Shri Rahul Kumar S/o Late Ramesh Prasad Verma, Shri Rohit Kumar S/o Late Ramesh Prasad Verma, Smt. Swarn Kiran W/o Shri Varun Kiran and his guarantor Pratibha Verma W/o Late Ramesh Prasad Verma, Smt. Pooja Kumari W/o Shri Rahul Kumar.	Rs. 4,62,58,847.06 as on 15.07.2021 plus accrued interest, charges, other miscellaneous expenses etc.	All that part and parcel of the property (flat) in the name of Smt. Pooja Kumari W/o Shri Rahul Kumar and Shri Rahul Kumar S/o Late Ramesh Prasad Verma, Deed No. 5247 dated 20.04.2018 at Flat No. 804, 7th Floor, (2BHK) Block-A, Sai Enclave, Vijay Singh Yadav Path, Mauza-Mustafapur, PS-Khagaul, Dist-Patha, Thana No.-36, Tauzi No. - 5276, Katha No.-165, Plot No. - 179, Area - 1100 Sq Ft. Boundaries : North-Flat No. 806, South - Flat No. 802, East- Flat No. 803, West- End Wall of Apartment. Property ID : SBINDHAFLT804	₹ 40,00,000.00 ₹ 4,00,000.00 ₹ 20,000.00	

e-Auction Terms And Condition

1. Date of e-auction : 27.02.2024 (Tuesday) Time : 120 Minutes. Form 12.00 Noon to 02.00 PM, with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes each.
2. Website/portal for e-auction <https://mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi/index.jsp>.
3. The General Terms and Condition are available on- <https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi/in-the-news/auction-notices/sarfaesi-and-other>.

This publication is also a 15 days notice to all the borrower/guarantors require under Rule 8(6) of Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002

NB: 15 days Sale Notice to Borrower/Guarantors has already been sent by Regd. Post at their last known address. In case they do not receive the said notice this E-auction Sale Notice may be treated as substituted mode of service.

Date: 05.02.2024
Place: Patna

AUTHORISED OFFICER
STATE BANK OF INDIA, SARB, PATNA

कनारा बैंक
भारत सरकार का उपकरण

Canara Bank
A Govt. of India Undertaking

Canara Syndicate

[Rule 8 (1)] POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property) [Section 13 (4)]

Whereas : The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Canara Bank under Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (Act 54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued a Demand Notice on below mentioned date calling upon the following borrower to repay the below mentioned amount in the notice to repay within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general, that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him / her under section 13 (4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 & 9 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on following date.

The borrower's particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **Canara Bank**, for below mentioned amount.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of section 13 (8) of the Act, in

EXPRESS NETWORK

Friend tied to a tree, woman tourist 'sexually assaulted' in Bengal; 2 held

SWEETY KUMARI
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 5

A WOMAN tourist was allegedly sexually assaulted as her male friend was tied to a tree and beaten up in Digha town of Purba Medinipur district Saturday night, police said. Hours later, the police arrested two persons.

According to police, the woman and her friend reached Digha Saturday night and were trying to find a hotel when they met the two accused.

"The woman and her friend were on a motorcycle and were looking for a hotel. They were asking about hotels when they met the accused. The accused took them to a secluded spot on the pretext of taking them to a hotel and then dragged them. They tied the man to a tree after beating him up. The woman was taken to another forest and allegedly sexually assaulted," said a senior police officer.

The woman and her friend reportedly sought local residents' help and reached the nearest police station. Based on the woman's written complaint, Digha police arrested the two accused from a village of the coastal town Sunday.

"The accused were nabbed hours after we received the complaint. Prima facie, it appears two people were involved in the incident," Additional SP (Rural), Purba Medinipur, Shubendra Kumar told *The Indian Express*.

The accused have been remanded in police custody for 14 days. The incident evoked sharp criticism of the state government from Opposition parties. The BJP said its woman MLAs would be taking out a protest against the incident in Kolkata.

Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari said, "We have been saying for a very long time law and order in Bengal has collapsed. Our women MLAs will protest against atrocities against women in the state during the Budget session."

Gandhi family can't fight from UP, says Anurag

New Delhi: No one from the Gandhi family is in a position to contest from Uttar Pradesh because the Congress party had opposed the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, I & B Minister Anurag Thakur said on Monday.

He said while the BJP has delivered on the ideological issues since its inception, the Congress and its friendly parties have consistently worked to see that the plans for the temple construction were obstructed. "No one from the Gandhi family is in a position to contest from Uttar Pradesh... because the Congress had done everything to obstruct the temple construction. It never refrained from it – it by sending lawyers to oppose Ram Lalla or when its friendly parties trained guns on the kar sevaks," Thakur said.

Thakur also said the development works under the Narendra Modi government would lift the BJP's prospects in the southern states. **ENS**

NEGOTIATIONS UNDERWAY: MUIZZU

Indian troops will be sent back by May 10: Maldives President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE, FEBRUARY 5



Mohamed Muizzu flags need to bolster Maldives' military capabilities

MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT Mohamed Muizzu Monday said the first group of Indian military personnel will be sent back from the island nation before March 10 and the remaining manning two aviation platforms will be withdrawn before May 10, as he articulated the need to bolster the Indian Ocean archipelagic nation's military capabilities.

In his maiden address to Parliament, Muizzu said the support of a large majority of the Maldivian citizens for his administration was for the "pledges to withdraw foreign military troops from the country." Soon after taking oath on November 17, Muizzu formally requested

India to withdraw 88 military personnel from his country by March 15, saying the Maldivian people have given him a "strong mandate" to make this request to New Delhi.

His government is also re-

viewing more than 100 bilateral agreements with India by the previous government.

The main opposition party,

After the latest round of bi-

lateral talks, India said on February 2 that a "set of mutually workable solutions" was agreed upon with the Maldives for continuing the operations of Indian aviation platforms in the island nation.

"...Is it a small blessing that we remain independent under our own power? Even in the present times, there are people in much larger countries who are sacrificing limb and life to gain this right," the President was quoted as saying by *The Edition* newspaper. He, however, did not name any country.

The President said his government has officially communicated that it will not renew the agreement enabling foreign nations to measure and map the Maldivian oceans and coastlines.

After the latest round of bi-

U.P. BUDGET OUTLAY RS 7.36 LAKH CR; KERALA EYES Rs 3 LAKH CR INVESTMENT IN 3 YRS

UP govt dedicates Budget to Ram: 'It is for lok mangal'

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 5



UP CM Yogi Adityanath with Finance Minister Suresh Khanna in Lucknow on Monday. **Vishal Srivastav**

DAYS AFTER the inauguration of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, the BJP government in UP Monday dedicated its Rs 7.36 lakh crore outlay Budget for 2024-25 to Lord Ram, saying it was inspired by "Ram Rajya" and was for lok mangal (public welfare).

Following the presentation of the Budget, CM Yogi Adityanath said: "Today's budget has been dedicated to Lord Ram and is for lok mangal (public welfare)."

"Budget ki shuruwat mein, budget ke madhya mein aur anth mein bhi Prabhu Shri Ram hain... Iske vichar mein, sankalpa mein, ek ek shabd mein Prabhu Shri Ram hain (Lord Shri Ram is at the start of the budget, at the centre and in the end.. Lord Shri Ram is in the thought, pledge and in every word of the Budget)," he added.

FULL REPORT
www.indianexpress.com

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 5



Kerala Finance Minister KN Balagopal greets CM Pinarayi Vijayan, Monday. **PTI**

THE KERALA Budget 2024-25, presented in the Assembly Monday by Finance Minister KN Balagopal, plans to convert the state into a medical hub, overhaul the higher education sector to attract international students and bring in necessary reforms in the land sector to attract investment in agriculture and industry.

It also plans to review the NPS and implement a 'revised scheme' for state pensioners.

Balagopal, however, did not announce new mega projects in the budget for the fourth year of the second consecutive regime of the LDF government helmed by Pinarayi Vijayan.

On the tax proposals side, the minister has mooted levying land tax from apartment dwellers (for their undivided share of land) and revising the fair value of land after 13 years.

Banks would be levied a sum on loans given mortgaging land.

The minister said programmes are being planned to attract investment of Rs 3 lakh crore within the next three years. "The thrust areas will be short-term tourism projects, allied developmental activities around Vizhinjam seaport, which is likely to be commissioned this year, Cochin Ports, development of industrial corridors and IT and IT-enabled services. **FULL REPORT**
www.indianexpress.com

'Shariat law not automatically applicable': Court upholds adopted son's right to inherit

NIRBHAY THAKUR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

A DELHI court on Saturday upheld the inheritance rights of an adopted son of a Muslim man who passed away. According to Muslim Personal Law, an adopted child is not granted the right to inherit the property of parents. However, the Court in this case noted that the deceased Zamir Ahmed had exercised his choice under section 3 of the Shariat Act and had chosen not to be bound by Muslim Personal Law on the subject of adoption.

Noting that Ahmed's adopted son will have all the rights and privileges as his biological son, The court was hearing a suit filed by one Iqbal Ahmed, the brother of the deceased man who was seeking share in his property in accordance with the Muslim Personal Law according to which one-fourth share of the property would go to the widow of Zamir Ahmed as the couple had no biological son.

The other people involved in

this suit were six brothers and three sisters of Zamir who claimed 3/4th share of the property wherein the brothers would get double the share as the sisters.

According to Muslim Law of inheritance, there are three classes of legal heirs: sharers, residuary and distant kindred. The court noted that of the 12 Quranic sharers, only the widow of the deceased has survived.

The Court noted that since the deceased had elected not to be governed by Muslim Personal Law on the subject of adoption, the adopted son would now be a residuary instead of the siblings and was entitled to a share in the property along with the widow who was a sharer.

Lucknow: THE PRAYAGRAJ police on Sunday registered an FIR against a 31-year-old assistant professor at Allahabad University on charges of rape and criminal intimidation based on a complaint filed by a 23-year-old graduate student. The woman alleged that the assistant professor has been harassing her for the past year.

She also alleged although she registered a complaint with the university authorities, no action was taken against the accused. ACP (Prayagraj) Rajeev Kumar Yadav said the medical examination of the woman was underway and a probe is on. The students' union has sought the suspension of the accused. **ENS**

Asst prof booked for 'raping' varsity student

NOT A FOWL CRIME

A bird in hand is worth two in the news: When 'Gurjit da Kukkar' became talk of town

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR
BATHINDA, FEBRUARY 5

IT WASN'T fowl as far as crimes go. Still, a recent seizure by the police in Balluana village of Punjab's Bathinda has become the talk of the town. After all, it isn't every day that a "case property" rides in the lap of the official sitting in the front seat of a police car that is zippering all over the village to complete case formalities.

A tip-off on January 21 saw the Sadar police crack down on an illegal cockfight taking place on the outskirts of Balluana village. A video that went viral later showed hundreds of people running through nearby fields to escape the three-person raiding party.

Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI)

Nirmaljit Singh said the team managed to arrest Rajwinder Singh Raju, one of the three organisers of the banned sport. The team also "seized" one injured prize fighting rooster and 11 trophies from the spot.

While Rajwinder was released on bail the very same evening, Gurjit da Kukkar or Gurjit's rooster, who is named after its owner Gurjit Singh, remained at the police station till next morning since it was case property connected to a banned sport and alleged gambling.

On the day it was seized, the police took the rooster in the official car to the local veterinary hospital for treatment of injuries sustained on its neck and legs during the illegal fight. After the bird's medical examination, the

rooster was relegated to police custody.

While in the custody of the police, the rooster was fed its "usual" diet of almonds and dry fruits, officials said. The bird, they added, was packed off to a Balluana-based breeder for "safe-keeping" the very next day. Stating that such roosters cost nearly Rs 20,000, the police said their owners spend at least Rs 1,000 per month on "special diet".

The police said, "Our team made multiple visits to ensure that special attention was being given to its feed."

Besides Rajwinder, the police also booked under Section 11 (prohibits causing unnecessary pain and suffering to animals) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, Jagbir Singh



The rooster seized by police in Punjab's Balluana village. **Special Arrangement**

accused have been released on bail, the police said. The law bans dogfighting,

Zakir Hussain, Mahadevan, Chaurasia, Selvaganesh win big at 66th Grammys

Tabla maestro wins three Golden Gramophones

SUANSHU KHURANA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5



THIS MOMENT, an eight-track pandemic project by Indo-jazz super group, Shakti, created by exchanging audio files over the Internet and discussing them through a WhatsApp group, has won the Grammy for Best Global Music Album at the 66th Grammys.

The famed outfit, currently comprising ace percussionist Ustad Zakir Hussain, British guitarist John McLaughlin, kanjira player V Selvaganesh, violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan and vocalist Shankar Mahadevan, all of whom live in different parts of the world, has attempted to create an ethos that cuts across all cultures through intertwining of music from the East and West, dexterous improvisations, enthralling solos and massive precision.

"India, we are proud of you," said an emphatic Mahadevan while accepting the award with Selvaraj and Rajagopalan in a dazzling ceremony held at crypto.com arena in Los Angeles on Sunday. **PTI**

and an embroidered jacket – accepted the golden gramophone and said, "...Without love, without music, without harmony, we are nothing". 'Pashto' went on to beat Falu and Gaurav Shah's 'Abundance in Millets', a song about millets that also gave a Grammy nomination to PM Narendra Modi, whose speeches were included in the song.

"The discovery, each time you sit as a group to play and perform, is like climbing Everest from different angles. Every time, it is a whole different point of view, marvelling at how you do the same but it's not the same," Hussain had said in a statement about the album that attempts to intermingle Eastern and Western sounds and North Indian classical music with Carnatic classical music.

Hussain, who was also awarded the Padma Vibhushan last year, won two more Golden Gramophones – one for the Best Global Music Performance for the song 'Pashto' – from the album 'As We Speak', which was created in collaboration with flautist Rakesh Chaurasia (nephew of Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia), American banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck and noted composer and bassist Edgar Meyer. 'As We Speak' was also declared the Best Contemporary Instrumental Album.

Rakesh touched Hussain's feet on stage, before the tabla maestro, dressed in an all-white ensemble – a white kurta, trousers, and an embroidered jacket – accepted the golden gramophone and said, "...Without love, without music, without harmony, we are nothing". 'Pashto' went on to beat Falu and Gaurav Shah's 'Abundance in Millets', a song about millets that also gave a Grammy nomination to PM Narendra Modi, whose speeches were included in the song.

But Shakti was to find its groove to influence generations of musicians worldwide. The band disbanded in 1978 but Hussain and McLaughlin kept in touch, collaborating in 1984 for a short Shakti tour. But it was in 1997 when the Arts Council in

Britain contacted Hussain to renew the band. The revised line-up had mandolin giant U Srinivas and flute legend Pt Hariprasad Chaurasia for a while. Mahadevan, Selvaraj, and Rajagopalan joined much later but brought a different vigour to the idea of common ground through varied styles.

Fifty years later, Shakti, with its new members and founders Hussain and McLaughlin embarked upon their 50th-year tour in January 2023 to celebrate the music they had worked hard on for half a century and released 'This Moment'. This album is a crystallisation of five decades of love and dedication. Our musical evolution recorded here, is a revolution in the history of Shakti. McLaughlin had said in a statement last year.

US-based India-origin pianist Vijay Iyer, who was nominated with Arooj Aftab and Shahzad Ismaily for 'Shadow Forces' for the well-known Punjabi song 'Haayo rabba naiyo lagda dil mera' in the Best Alternative/Jazz Album category, was bested by 55-year-old American musician Meshell Ndegeocello for her album 'The Omnichord Real Book'.

Dispute with tailor in Damoh snowballs into protest, MP CM orders inquiry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOJPAL, FEBRUARY 5

MADHYA PRADESH CM Mohan Yadav has ordered an investigation into an incident involving two communities in Damoh city, after a video emerged of a man making inflammatory speech outside the local police station.

The Damoh SP has recommended the National Security Act be invoked against the man.

On Saturday, during a dispute that broke out between a local tailor and his customer over delay in stitching clothes, a cleric was allegedly manhandled. Following this, a crowd gathered outside the local police station

and demanded the arrest of the men accused of manhandling the cleric. One man from the crowd, identified as Akram Khan Rain, used a loudspeaker to make threats of violence if authorities did not take action in 24 hours.

Akram Khan and two of his associates were subsequently detained, Kotwali police station in-charge Anand Singh said. On the incident, he said, "A petty dispute occurred on Saturday between one Lallu Sharma and tailor Ansar Khan over the delivery of stitched clothes on time. Sharma and his associates misbehaved with one Hafiz (a cleric) when he intervened."

"Soon, a large number of people gathered at the police station demanding to arrest and bulldoze the house of the accused (who misbehaved with the cleric) within two hours," he said.

The cleric and some others were also trying to pacify the crowd, Singh said, adding that based on a complaint lodged by the tailor, police had registered a case and arrested two Saturday.

A case was also registered against 30-40 people in connection with the gathering outside the police station. The case was filed under IPC sections 153A, 143 and 147, Singh said. Damoh Collector Mayank Agrawal said a magisterial probe has been ordered to look into what triggered the protest and to identify those responsible.

Gurjit. To a question on the bird being handed over to the accused who was booked for cruelty against it, Bathinda police said, "We handed over the bird to its owner as per the law," said Sadar SHO Balwinder Singh.

What if Gurjit tries to get rid of the living evidence against him?

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

PAYMENT BLOCKED

Regulatory measures — like RBI's action against Paytm — must seek compliance, but should not be excessive

LAST WEEK, THE Reserve Bank of India announced a series of measures against the Paytm Payments Bank. Under section 35A of the Banking Regulation Act, 1949, the central bank barred the payments bank from accepting any deposits, undertaking credit transactions in customer accounts, wallets, FASTags, and others, after February 29. Action against the payments bank has been taken with the comprehensive system audit report and subsequent validation report of external auditors revealing "persistent non-compliances and continued material supervisory concerns". Shares of One97 Communications, which runs Paytm services and has a stake of 49 per cent in the payments bank, are down 42.35 per cent over the past five days.

This, however, is not the first time that the payments bank has found itself in the regulatory crosshairs. In March 2022, the RBI had directed the payments bank "to stop on-boarding of new customers with immediate effect". In October last year, the central bank had imposed a Rs 5.39 crore fine on it due to deficiencies in regulatory compliance, including, as reported in this paper, its failure to "identify the beneficial owner in respect of entities" that came on board its platform for providing pay out services, and delaying informing on a "cyber security incident", among others. Following the central bank's actions now, with issues over new customers coming on board the platform, and non-compliance with KYC norms among others, sustaining existing financial relations or building new ones is likely to prove challenging for the entity. As per a note by analysts at Macquarie, "the bigger issue is Paytm has not been on the good books of the regulator and going forward, their lending partners also could possibly re-look at the relationships in our view."

Paytm is one of the largest fintech players in the country. As per the bank's website, it has over 300 million wallets and 30 million bank accounts. It has around 100 million KYC customers, and is also the largest issuer of FASTags. The central bank's actions will have an impact on both customers and merchants. On Sunday, the Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), fearing disruptions, advised small traders, vendors, hawkers, and others, to switch to other payment modes. However, the lack of compliance, the non-adherence to KYC norms despite the issues being repeatedly pointed out, is inexplicable. All entities must ensure compliance with the regulatory architecture. At the same time, the regulatory pushback, while ensuring compliance, must not be excessive. In the past as well, some questions have been raised over interventions in the area of payments such as e-mandates. Actions must be carried out in a transparent manner, acknowledging the implications for millions of users. Considering the rapid expansion of the digital economy, and especially financial transactions, regulatory interventions, while ensuring the stability of the financial system, must take care not to throttle innovation.

A COLLECTIVE LOSS

Akhoondji Masjid demolition raises questions of due process, underscores need to strengthen conservation mechanism

THE DEMOLITION OF the Akhoondji mosque in Mehrauli on January 30 by Delhi Development Authority (DDA) as part of its anti-encroachment drive calls into question, yet again, the nature of due process and the lacunae that exist in cultural conservation. While its precise history remains unknown, the Akhoondji mosque, located in close proximity of the Qutub Minar, a UNESCO World Heritage site, is believed to have been between 600 and 700 years old, built during the reign of Delhi Sultanate's Razia Sultana, and listed by the Archaeological Survey of India in 1920. The DDA has contended that it has followed due process in compliance with the directions of the Ridge Management Board — the structure's "encroachment" on Sanjay Van in south Delhi, a city forest the edifice predates by several centuries — is said to legitimise its actions. It is an argument that does not pass muster. The Delhi High Court has sought an explanation on why the structure was razed without notice, directing DDA to maintain status quo on the land until the next hearing on February 12.

This is not the first time that the DDA's anti-encroachment drive has come under criticism. Last year, its drive to clear unauthorised encroachments on government land housing protected ASI monuments in the villages of Mehrauli and Ladhak Sarai had met with a pushback from several quarters. But the present case is particularly disquieting because it points to what a weaponisation of a rightful mandate might do to a significant part of Delhi's cultural heritage — its Islamic past. It also underscores the need to strengthen the conservation mechanism to address such questions. In a city like Delhi, with its wealth of heritage monuments, demolitions cannot happen in an arbitrary manner. In December last year, the New Delhi Municipal Council had asked for public opinion on a proposal to demolish the 150-year-old Sunehri Bagh Masjid, a Grade-II heritage structure near the Parliament, to ease the movement of traffic. While its fate still hangs in balance, it had, rightfully, initiated a larger conversation around the proposal. The DDA could have followed its example.

Any conversation about Delhi's history comes to rest on its storied past — the cities on whose foundation the modern metropolis rests, the rise and fall of dynasties that shaped its tryst with power. But Delhi is also a city of survivors, a city that knows how to co-exist cheek by jowl with its *mandirs* and *mosques*, *jhuggis* and highrises, its pasts and its present. Any attempt to change that composite culture, or to shrink it, will be a collective loss.

MUSIC TO THE EARS

Golden Gramophones for Shakti and As We Speak are a triumph for world music and its possibilities

WHEN SHAKTI, THE free-spirited Indo-jazz supergroup, came to life over 50 years ago, keeping the concept of improvisation at its heart, many jazz purists were perplexed. Mainly because they didn't know what to make of the diverse East-meets-West sounds that were the brainchild of tabla exponent Ustad Zakir Hussain and British bassist John McLaughlin. The two had joined forces with violinist L Shankar and ghatam legend Vikku Vinayakram to find a common ground to create world music when the term hadn't been coined and many would loosely and somewhat disdainfully call it "fusion".

Shakti was an experiment that took time to make its mark. It slowly opened up a unique world of possibilities in an attempt to invite people to understand cross-cultural music. The music was an expression of each musician's experience, but with restraint; they always had to accommodate the other. This was more than just music. It was a life lesson. For something to be accepted, it has to stand the test of time. And Shakti has, for more than five decades.

On Monday morning, the endeavour got the prestigious Grammy stamp for its Covid album — This Moment — an eight-track album, which is only the band's second in 50 years.

With founders Hussain and McLaughlin and new members of the band — vocalist Shankar Mahadevan, kanjira player V Selvaganesh and Vinayakram's son and violinist Ganesh Rajagopalan, Shakti walked away with the Best Global Music Album for their dazzling interplay of sounds. This year, Hussain was at the helm of another world music album — As We Speak — with flautist Rakesh Chaurasia, American banjo virtuoso Béla Fleck and noted bassist Edgar Meyer — which won the Best Global Music Performance for the song Pashto. The quartet also won the award for Best Contemporary Instrumental Album. Hussain's words on stage, just after Chaurasia touched his feet as a mark of respect, summed it up: "Without love, without music, without harmony, we are nothing."

Demography and destiny

Committee on population growth should reshape policy, not get mired in old alarmist discourse



SONALDE DESAI

IN HER SPEECH, while presenting the 2024 budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman promised a committee to study India's population growth to ensure that the nation is on target to meet the *Viksit Bharat* goal by 2047. Coming nearly 50 years after the brutal implementation of the population control programme in 1976, I hope this move reflects a shift in public discourse regarding the course of India's demographic transformation.

India is and will remain the world's most populous nation for the foreseeable future. Nonetheless, it does not appear to be the fearsome prospect it once appeared to be. Fertility has steadily declined to a level where two parents are being replaced by two children and all segments of the society have begun to adopt family planning. Moreover, India has learned not to let the burden of a growing population pose an obstacle to its continued economic growth. However, we have yet to adapt to the changes that population transformation brings. I hope this committee will focus on reshaping the policy agenda that rides the inevitable demographic wave and not be mired in the old discourse of population bomb. This will require focusing on several priorities.

First, we must recognise that India's demographic destiny for 2047 has already been written. The workforce of 2047 has already been born and will look very different from the workforce of 2024. Today 33 per cent of the population is aged 20-29, while 23 per cent of the population is aged 40-59. But in 2047, the proportion of the younger population will decrease, and the proportion of older working ages will increase, with each forming about 28 per cent of the population. To ensure that this growing proportion of middle-aged workers can keep up with the changing demands of an increasingly technologically driven economy, we must invest in continued skill upgradation and on-the-job training above and beyond formal education.

Second, all of India will not undergo de-

mographic changes at the same pace. Just as fertility decline first emerged in southern, more developed states, population aging will also be most visible in these states. Dependency burden, defined as the number of individuals ages 15-59 supporting children under 15 and older population above 60, will vary dramatically between states. For example, demographer P M Kulkarni estimates that in 2021, in Bihar, 44 working-age adults supported 100 dependents, while in Tamil Nadu, 50 adults supported the same population; this will flip with the worker-to-dependent ratio changing to 47 in Bihar and 24 in Tamil Nadu by 2051.

In short, the future of India's elderly and children will rest on workers' productivity in states we have historically considered demographic laggards, such as Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh. How can we invest in the workers in these states to ensure the future welfare of all Indians? This will be the challenge that the newly formed 16th Finance Commission will face as it decides on inter-state allocations.

Third, as fertility declines, the burden of child care for women drops. My analysis of National Family Health Survey data, undertaken with sociologist Sojin Yu, shows that in 1993, an average woman spent about 14 years caring for children under age five, while that number dropped to eight years in 2021. However, time freed up from childcare has not been utilised in increased participation in the workforce. Unless we find ways of creating a welcoming labour market for women, we will waste the opportunity of turning a demographic dividend into a gender dividend. One of the best ways of expanding women's ability to participate in the job market may be to improve the availability of childcare, possibly through creative combinations of Anganwadi and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural

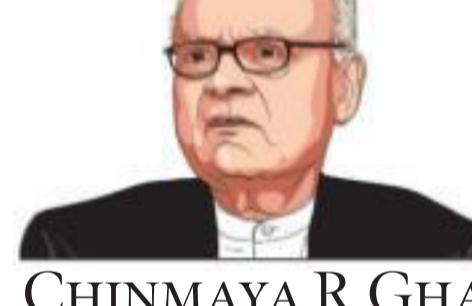
Employment Guarantee Scheme. There is no reason why permissible MGNREGA works cannot include rotational provision of childcare under the supervision of a trained early childhood educator.

Fourth, a combination of rising numbers of elderly and a declining number of children to care for them means we must increase the ability of this older population to be self-sustaining. A combination of policies will be needed, including rising retirement age, enhanced old age pension schemes, and increased ability to sell land or homes, assets in which most of the wealth of the India elderly resides.

Historically, the population dialogue in India has been dominated by concerns about population explosion. However, it is time for us to move beyond the Emergency era fears and learn from the experiences of other countries. In its quest for rapid population control, China implemented a strict one-child policy, bringing it to a demographic cliff where the needs of its aging population have begun to drag down its economic growth. Relaxing the one-child limitation has been unsuccessful in increasing fertility. This suggests that India should refrain from a similar panicked reaction and let fertility decline continue at a natural pace. If demography is destiny, let us adapt to it with grace.

These complex challenges require multifaceted attention from demographers, economists, sociologists, and public policy experts. The move to set up a high-powered committee to evaluate the challenges posed by demographic transformation in conjunction with the 16th Finance Commission will allow its recommendations to flow into government spending priorities, creating a virtuous cycle.

The writer is professor at the University of Maryland and the National Council of Applied Economic Research. Views are personal



CHINMAYA R GHAREKHANI

WHAT IS COMMON between the war in Ukraine and the war in the Middle East? Both are a case study in miscalculation. Vladimir Putin thought he would subdue Ukraine within a matter of weeks. Benjamin Netanyahu thought he would crush Hamas within a matter of days. Both wars have run into a kind of stalemate. Ukraine will simply not agree to any solution short of the complete withdrawal of Russian forces from what it regards as "occupied territories". Hamas is refusing to accept any proposal short of a permanent ceasefire and withdrawal of Israeli troops from the Gaza Strip.

Of course, there is a huge difference between the two wars. Putin's Ukraine war was unprovoked whereas Netanyahu had ample provocation when Hamas carried out a brutal attack on Israel on October 7, 2023. That trauma, however, does not and cannot justify Israel's no-holds-barred war on Gaza. South Africa's case against Israel accusing it of committing genocide on the Palestinians in Gaza cannot be dismissed.

Israel, by its disproportionate, indiscriminate and nonstop bombardments on civilian targets in Gaza has managed to do two things: alienate world public opinion against it and generate unprecedented support for a Palestinian state. It has also managed to annoy its most powerful and indispensable ally by openly defying Joe Biden's call for restraint. Netanyahu has also caused fissures in Israeli society which is focused on getting back the Israeli hostages in Hamas's custody. Worse, differences seem to have emerged within his cabinet.

And what about President Biden? He too has failed in preventing the escalation of the

A FARAWAY PEACE

Israeli ministers' proposal of mass Palestinian 'emigration' from Gaza is disquieting

Which country will agree to absorb these 'emigrants'? No, thank you, will be Egypt's response. Palestinians are not popular in any Arab country; the governments are anxious to normalise ties with Israel, as some have done under the so-called Abraham Accords. The war will delay the realisation of their desire but will not derail it. Already, reports suggest that secret talks between Saudi Arabia and Israel for normalisation of relations are continuing notwithstanding the war. Israel could endeavour to follow Britain's example of persuading one or two African countries to settle illegal migrants in return for a handsome financial reward.

Any proposal that calls for Arab states to deploy troops to monitor the Israeli-Gaza

border is a non-starter. No Arab country will offer to act as Israel's security guard.

America has rejected Israel's idea to create a buffer zone on Gaza's side. Perhaps, the most practical proposal is the one Egypt is reported to

have discussed with the main protagonists as well as with Qatar and the US.

It involves a phased exchange of Israeli hostages and Palestinian prisoners in Israeli jails, ending with a permanent ceasefire. A government of experts would be appointed — by whom is not clear — to run both the West Bank and Gaza. It would work with all parties and the Palestinian factions to agree on parliamentary and presidential elections. Israel is reported to have offered a two-month suspension of hostilities in return for getting back all the hostages. It is also willing to let the Hamas leadership emigrate to another country. But Hamas, in perhaps a miscalculation of its own, is insisting on a permanent ceasefire and withdrawal of all Israeli troops before returning the hostages.

In this writer's view, the United Nations will have to be an indispensable part of any solution, Israel's allergy to the international organisation notwithstanding.

In the Middle East, one must always expect the unexpected. There surely are secret negotiations going on over all aspects of the highly volatile situation in the region. Let us hope that we will be pleasantly surprised one day when we hear about some breakthrough.

The writer is India's former permanent representative to the UN and author of Centres of Power: My Years in the Prime Minister's Office and Security Council



FEBRUARY 6, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

BJP'S CHARGESHEET

THE BHARATIYA JANATA Party and the Lok Dal have decided to submit a chargesheet to the President on March 6 against Mrs Indira Gandhi's regime, highlighting its failure on the economic, law and order, and employment fronts. Similar chargesheets are to be submitted against Congress (I)-run state governments to their respective governors between March 13 and 17.

ANDHRA PROTESTS

THE CONGRESS (I)-SPONSORED state pan-

chayat raj, cooperative societies and municipalities convention has decided to organise mass movements against the mandal setup in Andhra Pradesh. The convention, attended by 15,000 delegates, felt that the mandals would scrap the posts of samiti presidents whose term was yet to expire. The session pointed out that setting up mandals was not in the manifesto of the Telugu Desam Party.

MISSING DIPLOMAT

THE INDIAN DIPLOMAT suspected to have been kidnapped in Birmingham by a group of Kashmiri militants remains untraced

amidst mounting police concerns. The police and detectives are searching all possible houses, restaurants and public houses including pubs in Birmingham generally frequented by the suspected Kashmiri youths. It is feared that they might have taken their "catch" away.

CHANDNI CHOWK FIRE

A MASSIVE FIRE ravaged Moti Bazar in the Chandni Chowk area of Delhi destroying about 20 shops and causing damage of Rs 1 crore. Three buildings collapsed. There were no casualties among the residents.

THE IDEAS PAGE

What Pakistan needs & won't get

It needs a broad political consensus and a strong government, functioning without the army's interference, to deal effectively with its many challenges



SHARAT SABHARWAL

ON JANUARY 30, a special court in Pakistan convicted and sentenced to 10 years imprisonment the former Prime Minister Imran Khan and former Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in the so-called cipher case. They were held guilty of mishandling and misusing a classified communication from the Pakistan embassy in the US to claim a conspiracy by the former army chief Qamar Bajwa with the Americans to oust Imran Khan from power.

The very next day, Imran and his wife were sentenced to 14 years imprisonment in the Toshakhana case on the charge of misappropriating a jewellery set received by him as Prime Minister from the Saudi crown prince. The court has also debarred them from holding public office for 10 years. The hurried proceedings in both the cases and non-action against irregularities in the handling of similar gifts by other holders of high offices are reminiscent of Nawaz Sharif's summary convictions in the run-up to the 2018 election. More cases are pending against Imran Khan.

The above developments are further pointers that the coming election will be a mirror image of the 2018 polls. Imran Khan was the beneficiary of the army's support then and Nawaz Sharif was at the receiving end of their wrath. By a curious twist of fate, the roles have been reversed. Imran Khan's strong opposition to the army following his ouster and the rancour between him and the army chief Asim Munir have made him a persona non grata with the army. Since he gained considerable popularity thereafter, the army has fallen back upon its time-tested strong-arm tactics to put him and his party down.

The Election Commission has deprived Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) of its evocative election symbol, a cricket bat, alleging irregularities in holding intra-party elections – a charge of which almost all political parties in Pakistan would be guilty. This will force PTI candidates to contest as independents with different election symbols, causing confusion among their supporters. Many PTI candidates faced difficulties in filing their nomination papers and getting them accepted by the returning officers. The party has found it tough during election campaigning. Its attempts to carry out campaigns on social media have repeatedly been met with widespread disruption of internet services, reportedly by the authorities.

In contrast, since his return from exile, Nawaz Sharif has got relief in the judicial cases against him. The supreme court has cleared the path for him to contest the election by upholding the retrospective application of a law passed during Shehzad Sharif's prime ministership, which reduces the period of disqualification from holding public office, handed down to Nawaz by the apex court in 2018, from life to five years.

In view of the tight control of the army-led establishment on the electoral scene, the election campaign has remained lacklustre,



CR Sasikumar

with Bilawal Bhutto being the most active campaigner. He has been targeting Nawaz Sharif with an eye on reviving the PPP's fortunes in Punjab, where it had remained marginalised in the last two elections. PML(N) started its poll campaign barely three weeks before the election, with Nawaz Sharif ceding the limelight largely to his charismatic daughter, Maryam. The challenge for all the parties is to woo the voters below the age of 35, whose number has surged to nearly 57 million from around 47 million in the last election. They are disenchanted with the old-style politics and constitute the core of Imran Khan's support. A survey released by Gallup Pakistan recently shows Nawaz Sharif's popularity has gone up significantly since June 2023, but no appreciable decline in Imran Khan's following during the same period.

A not-so-latent actor in the ongoing political drama is the army chief, Asim Munir. Having consolidated his position within the army following the PTI violence against some army establishments in May last year, he has led from the front, including in areas such as economic management. The Shehzad Sharif government gave him a prominent role in the newly created Special Investment Facilitation Council to attract foreign investment. In view of the large youth vote, he addressed a gathering of university students recently. Responding to a question about the inability of civilian governments to complete their five-year tenure (a phenomenon in which the army has been instrumental), he said that the

There is a widespread perception in Pakistan that no single party will get a majority, but that Nawaz Sharif is headed to become prime minister a fourth time. This will imply a role for the army in crafting the ruling majority by manipulating the legislators of the smaller parties beholden to it and the PTI members elected as independents. Nawaz Sharif is the most experienced and pragmatic politician. However, with his well-known proclivity to assert civilian supremacy, will he be the army's choice for the prime ministership and if so, how long will such an arrangement last?

tenure did not amount to a licence to misgovern for five years. His comment harked back to Pakistan's tradition of the army sitting in judgement over civilian governments.

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The writer is a former High Commissioner to Pakistan

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Pakistan remains beset, inter alia, with a precarious economy, a rising wave of terror and vulnerability to climate-induced disasters. Its relationship with India remains fraught, that with the Afghan Taliban is close to a dangerous turn, and it had a serious clash with Iran recently – contained for now, but things could blow up again. It needs a broad political consensus and a strong government, functioning without the army's interference, to deal effectively with these challenges. The forthcoming election is unlikely to move it closer to any of the above goals.

The writer is a former High Commissioner to Pakistan

Gated communities of mind

Reforms require a school system built on equity, there can't be classroom at a click



SUKANTA CHAUDHURI

THIS NEWSPAPER RECENTLY carried a number of articles on education. While differing in subject, they imply a consensus that India cannot provide quality education to all its youth. Of course, it is never phrased this negatively; rather as constructive, even upbeat proposals that take a fraction of the challenge as the whole. The writers tend to see education as an exclusive, not a public, good – exclusive to a class if not an individual. India has a vast middle class, a dream market for goods and services. This is also the dominant educated class, a thriving market for education as for consumer wares.

A fallacy thereby arises. One can enjoy the use of one's car or TV regardless of others. But one can neither draw nor bestow full benefit from one's education if the blessing is not widely shared. Manish Sabharwal and Ashish Dhawan ('Shastra and Shashtra', IE, January 29) suggest selective development, even "overinvestment" in a few institutions so that they shine in world rankings and "help build industries". It is doubtful if industry, or any other sphere, can derive full benefit from outstanding management without matching support all the way down, or if a few centres of excellence can flourish in an otherwise dull milieu. The "percolation theory" does not work – this meritocracy is a gated community of the mind.

The authors cite China's strategy to ensure high university rankings. They might instead have considered a basic fact: Virtually China's entire population enjoys effective school education. So does every country star-

ring in global university rankings. By contrast, last month's Annual Status of Education Report (ASER) confirms the disheartening condition of India's schools.

One might argue for selective upgrading at the school level too. But that happened long ago. Our school system includes a large, exclusive and well-funded private sector. That has not reformed the educational scene generally. It is not a good precedent for further hierarchising our already hierarchic higher education system.

Every year, the JEE and NEET exams destroy some young lives because a staggering number of candidates are battling to enter a handful of institutions. If there were 230 IITs instead of 23, 10 times as many aspirants would find places. Of course, all 230 would not be of equal standard or eminence. Through inevitable academic selection, some would do better than others. But what we have today is a ghost of this model, with widening disparities.

Beyond lip service, India has consistently ignored the imperative role of a meaningful school education for all. The new National Education Policy has not taken off at the school level. Its truly game-changing proposal, an Early Childhood programme merging anganwadis with primary school, is in cold storage. It astonishingly accepts that all children need not attend full-time schools. The proposed top-of-the-class PM-Shri schools will number 14,500 – less than 1 per cent of all schools in India. A 2021 UNESCO report found a shortage of 11.16 lakh teach-

ers, with 69 per cent vacancies in rural schools and 1.1 lakh single-teacher schools (89 per cent of them in rural schools).

The latest ASER report reveals that 25 per cent of 14 to 18-year-olds cannot read a Standard II textbook; 43 per cent cannot do Standard III sums. Most students study humanities. This is hardly by choice: Few schools are equipped for science teaching.

It is simply unreal to talk of an exclusive world-class system in this milieu. But even when we admit the problem, our search for quick-fix solutions and our trust with technology make us resort to computers.

Digital learning is an immense boon. But the computer is not a magic wand. Some types of material and pedagogic practice lend themselves to digitisation, others do not. The endemic use of computers in evaluation has spawned the ubiquitous multiple-choice question, stunting students' capacity for connected thought. Contrary to Madhav Chavan's assertion (IE, January 18), there cannot be a "classroom at a click".

It is impossible to teach a child to read, write and count in an online mode. Hence, the grave danger that many children of the pandemic might grow up devoid of literacy or numeracy. When these children grow up, how will they join the workforce? How will India's economic ambitions accommodate them?

There is also the issue of digital access. By

most children. During the pandemic, the Education Ministry claimed that 85 per cent students availed of online classes. A parliamentary committee found the figure to be 30 per cent. Can two or more children share a smartphone to any purpose with the adults of the family? What about poor connectivity? Above all, would the educated elite accept a smartphone as an adequate device for their own children's learning needs? There is no escaping the bottom line: The nation cannot educate its children through quick fixes, cost-cutting and cherry-picking.

No developed nation has got where it has without effective school education for all its citizens. India would be rash to think otherwise. Effective schooling calls for enough capable teachers and infrastructure (including digital support) for all students. If this is assured, higher education would automatically fall into place. There would be no need to nurture certain institutions like hothouse plants by short-changing the rest. Rather, all institutions would compete for resources and privileges.

The public university system developed in 50 years of Independence had moved appreciably in this direction. It was frustrated by our failure to develop an adequate school system. For all our brave rhetoric, we have not built substantively on either front since then. We cannot put off the challenge any longer.

The writer is professor emeritus, department of English, Jadavpur University

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The reason there cannot be political and policy stability in the country is not that we have a proportional representation system that will nearly always result in hung parliaments. It is that most of our top leaders have become incapable of seeing beyond their immediate personal interests..." — THE KATHMANDU POST

The mark of a winner

Bharat Ratna to L K Advani is part of the Hindutva Fevicol, showcases BJP's capacity to rise above internal differences — a quality Congress lacks



VINAY SITAPATI

THAT PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and Lal Krishna Advani are not fond of each other is hardly a secret. Rather like the relationship between Sonia Gandhi and P V Narasimha Rao, one felt the other sought to steal the party from what was rightfully theirs. The difference, however, is in the way Sonia Gandhi's Congress party treats Rao versus how Narendra Modi's BJP treats Advani. The Congress has underplayed the former prime minister's achievements, including liberalisation, while exaggerating his role in the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Modi may also have sidelined Advani, but he dutifully greets the 96-year-old on his birthday every year. And his government has just announced a Bharat Ratna, the nation's highest civilian honour, for LK Advani.

Advani and Vajpayee also rose above their differences — with each other and with Modi. No matter what their private feelings, they never sought to split the party in their image or hurt its electoral prospects to further their self-interest.

These outward trappings of family unity are a product of a certain reading of Hindu history. In the RSS's telling, Hindus have lost to invaders because they fight with each other, rather than standing united. At shakhas — the daily building block of the RSS — the movement faithful discuss history lessons such as the third battle of Panipat in 1761. In their telling, the Afghan warlord Ahmad Shah Abdali was able to win because the local Muslims rallied behind him. The Maratha confederacy, on the other hand, was riven by internal disputes between the Peshwas, Holkars, Gaekwads, and the Scindias. They also received little help from the Jats, Rajputs, and Sikhs. The Hindu side lost because it lacked unity.

There might be factual inaccuracies with such a sweeping narrative but this lesson of history has been turned into an organisational ethic by the RSS and the BJP. To break the party would be to repeat the failings of the Hindu past. Stay united no matter what. Not all BJP leaders have adhered to this — Shankersinh Vaghela's rebellion in Gujarat in 1995, for instance. But these exceptions only prove the rule that the sangh parivar splits and breaks up much less than other parties. The couple may squabble, but they rarely divorce.

Modi's gesture to honour Advani despite their differences is very much part of this Hindutva Fevicol. It shows that Modi — like Advani — has internalised the importance of a public show of party unity. Others can learn from this gesture. Dravidian politics would be very different had Karunanidhi and M G R not divided the movement because of personal egos; the Congress would not be in the condition it is in, had it not gone through episodic splits and desertions. And, the INDIA opposition block might have a real chance if it focused on unity rather than opportunity. Disagree within as much as you like, but present a united face without. It's why the BJP wins.

The writer is a professor of law & politics. He is the author of Jugalbandi: The BJP Before Modi and Half Lion: How PV Narasimha Rao Transformed India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A STALWART

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Bharat Ratna Advani' (IE, February 5). Unlike leaders of the Sangh Parivar who would never be apologetic about the Babri Masjid demolition, LK Advani, one of the tallest leaders of the BJP who brought the party in the mainstream is apologetic. This quality makes him different. He said, "If I had any apprehension that the incident(Babri demolition) could take place, I would not have gone to Ayodhya". He also had the courage to praise Jinnah and be proud of Hinduism without being anti-Muslim. Though he foresaw the possibility of curtailment of liberties, he could not have imagined the sellout of TV media to the ruling dispensation.

LR Murmu, New Delhi

PLUG THE GAPS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Budget questions, no answers' (IE, February 5). Proposals such as a focus on the railways, doubling the number of airports, reducing corporate tax, and no changes in income-tax slab make it a budget with the haves in mind. The finance minister failed to include any big jump in allocation for farmers, women, youth and poor. The budget said nothing about the very real issues of unemployment, India's poor performance on human development indices and the effects of the downside in the global economy. Positive thinking regarding the economy has turned into toxic positivity.

SS Paul, Nadia

PROTECT CHILDREN

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In the dock' (IE, February 3). Zuckerberg's apology in the US senate offers a peek into the "meta world" of online child abuse. Social media users encounter indecent child related content regularly but a majority of them turn a blind eye. The stakeholders, parents, government and social media corporations must identify and fulfil their due responsibilities. While parents can guide, counsel and keep a check on screen time, the government can work on enforcing child protection laws. These media giants should also have a civil and moral liability for inflicting trauma on children via media on their platforms.

Sagar Borade, Chhattisgarh

WHAT FARMERS NEED

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Neglecting the farm' (IE, February 2). Governments since independence have not tackled the issues of the farm sector. Resultantly, what ails the farmers remains to be resolved. The main problem is cost. The invested amount is not recovered when the produce is sold. Subsidies are not adequate. Farmers are not impressed by the terms used by experts. Only real assistance from the government in the preparation of the soil, seeds, fertilisers, irrigation, pesticides, agri-implements, harvesting, transportation of crops to the market and delivery at MSP may ease the difficult situation.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2024

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If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to explained@indianexpress.com

EXPLAINED LAW

What's in Bill to stop cheating in job exams

Proposed law prescribes tough penalties for use of 'unfair means' in recruitment exams. What are unfair means, and what is the rationale for such legislation?

HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE PUBLIC Examinations (Prevention of Unfair Means) Bill, 2024, was introduced in Lok Sabha on Monday. The Bill aims to prevent "unfair means" in order to "bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examinations system".

What is meant by the use of "unfair means" in a public examination?

Section 3 of the Bill tabled in Parliament lists at least 15 actions that amount to using unfair means in public examinations "for monetary or wrongful gain".

These acts include: "leakage of question paper or answer key or part thereof" and colluding in such leakage; "accessing or taking possession of question paper or an Optical Mark Recognition response sheet without authority"; "tampering with answer sheets including Optical Mark Recognition response sheets"; "providing solution to one or more questions by any unauthorised person during a public examination", and "directly or

indirectly assisting the candidate" in a public examination.

The section also lists "tampering with any document necessary for short-listing of candidates or finalising the merit or rank of a candidate"; "tampering with the computer network or a computer resource or a computer system"; "creation of fake website" and "conduct of fake examination, issuance of fake admit cards or offer letters to cheat or for monetary gain" as illegal acts.

Which exams are "public examinations" as defined in the Bill?

Under Section 2(k), a "public examination" is defined as any examination conducted by a "public examination authority" listed in the Schedule of the Bill, or any "such other authority as may be notified by the Central Government".

The schedule lists five public examination authorities: (i) the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), which conducts the Civil Services Examination, Combined Defence Services Examinations, Combined Medical Services Examination, Engineering Services Examination, etc.; (ii) the Staff Selection

Commission (SSC), which recruits for Group C (non-technical) and Group B (non-gazetted) jobs in the central government; (iii) the Railway Recruitment Boards (RRBs), which recruit Groups C and D staff in the Indian Railways; (iv) the Institute of Banking Personnel Selection (IBPS), which recruits at all levels for nationalised banks and regional rural banks (RRBs); and (v) National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducts the JEE (Main), NEET-UG, UGC-NET, the Common University Entrance Test (CUET), etc.

Apart from these designated public examination authorities, all "Ministries or Departments of the Central Government and their attached and subordinate offices for recruitment of staff" will also come under the purview of the new law.

The central government can add new authorities in the schedule through a notification as and when required.

What punishment does the proposed law provide for violations?

Section 9 of the Bill states that all offences shall be cognizable, non-bailable, and non-compoundable — which means that an arrest

can be made without a warrant and bail will not be a matter of right; rather, a magistrate will determine whether the accused is fit to be released on bail. A non-compoundable offence is one in which the case cannot be withdrawn by the complainant even when the complainant and the accused have reached a compromise, and a trial must necessarily follow.

Punishment for "any person or persons resorting to unfair means and offences" can be three to five years in prison, and a fine up to Rs 10 lakh. If the convict fails to pay the fine, an additional punishment of imprisonment shall be imposed, as per the provisions of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sahita, 2023, Section 10(1) of the Bill says.

Under Section 10(2), a service provider who is engaged to provide "support of any computer resource or any material, by whatever name it may be called" for the conduct of the examination can be fined up to Rs 1 crore, along with other penalties.

The Bill provides for harsher punishment in cases of organised paper leaks, where "organised crime" is defined as unlawful activity by a group of persons colluding in a conspiracy "to pursue or promote a shared

interest for wrongful gain in respect of a public examination".

Section 11(1) says the punishment for organised crime will be "imprisonment for a term not less than five years but which may extend to ten years" and a fine "which shall not be less than one crore rupees".

Why has the government brought this anti-cheating Bill?

There have been a very large number of cases of question paper leaks in recruitment exams across the country in recent years. An investigation by *The Indian Express* found at least 41 instances of paper leaks in 15 states over the last five years, in which the process of hiring for government jobs was disrupted. The leaks touched the lives of 1.4 crore applicants for about 1.04 lakh posts.

The Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill says: "Malpractices in public examinations lead to delays and cancellation of examinations, adversely impacting the prospects of millions of youth. At present, there is no specific substantive law to deal with unfair means adopted or offences committed... It is imperative that elements that

exploit vulnerabilities of examination system are identified and effectively dealt with by a comprehensive Central legislation."

The Statement adds: "The objective of the Bill is to bring greater transparency, fairness and credibility to the public examination systems and to reassure the youth that their sincere and genuine efforts will be fairly rewarded and their future is safe."

"The Bill is aimed at effectively and legally deterring persons, organised groups or institutions that indulge in various unfair means and adversely impact the public examination systems for monetary or wrongful gains."

It clarifies that "Candidate as defined in the Bill shall not be liable for action within the purview of the Bill and shall continue to be covered under the extant administrative provisions of the concerned public examination authority."

The Bill, once it becomes law, will also serve the important function of being "a model draft for States to adopt at their discretion". This, the Statement says, "would aid States in preventing the criminal elements from disrupting conduct of their State level public examinations".

EXPLAINED EDUCATION

FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FROM THE 2021-22 HIGHER EDUCATION SURVEY

R RADHIKA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE ALL India Survey of Higher Education (AISHE) 2021-22 report, released on January 25, found that 4.33 crore students are currently enrolled in a higher educational institute — up from 4.14 crore in 2020-21, and 3.42 crore in 2014-15.

The survey captured total student enrolment at eight different levels: undergraduate, postgraduate, PhD, MPhil, diploma, PG diploma, certificate, and integrated programmes. In all, 10,576 standalone institutions, 42,825 colleges, and 1,162 universities/university level institutions responded to the survey.

Female enrolment greater

The number of women enrolled in higher educational institutes has steadily increased. From 1.5 crore in 2014-15, there was a jump of 32% to 2.07 crore in 2021-22.

The biggest rise was seen at the PhD level. In 2021-22, the total PhD enrolment was 2.12 lakh of which 98,636 were women, up from 47,717, eight years ago.

Since 2014-15, 91 lakh more students have joined higher educational institutes as of 2021-22. Of these 55% were women. The proportion of women is highest at the PG level, where 55.4% are women.

GER and gender parity

The Gross Enrollment Ratio indicates how many students are part of the higher education system in a given population. The estimated GER for the age group 18-23 years in India is 28.4, the report said.

Among states and UTs, Chandigarh, at 64.8, boasts of the highest GER, followed by Puducherry at 61.5, and Delhi at 49.

The Gender Parity Index (GPI) shows the ratio of the female GER to the male GER. A GPI of 1 indicates parity between the two genders; any number between 0 and 1 shows a disparity in favour of males, whereas a GPI greater than 1 indicates a disparity in favour of females.

The survey observed that in 26 states and Union Territories, the GER was in favour of women. At the all-India level, the GPI was 1.01, and for the Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) categories, the GPI was 1.01 and 0.98 respectively.

Arts over sciences

The Bachelor of Arts (BA) programme had the highest enrolment, with 1.13 crore students out of the total of 3.41 crore who enrolled in UG programmes.

At the PG level, in 2021-22, the enrollment in Arts was 34.2%, followed by science (14.8%), commerce (13.3%), and engineering (11.8%).

At the PG level, the highest number of students enrolled in the social science stream at 10.8 lakh. At PhD level, however, social sciences (26,057) stood at third spot after engineering (52,748) and science (26,057).

Primacy of govt institutions

Even though there are more private universities, students prefer government educational institutions. As many as 73.7% of all students attend government universities, only 58.6% of all universities.

Demographics

In the 2021-22 academic year, 1.07 crore students were estimated to have graduated from UG, graduate, doctorate, master's, and other diploma/certificate programmes. Among the graduates, 54.6 lakh or roughly 50.8% were women.

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THERE ARE 718 snow leopards in India — in Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Sikkim and Arunachal Pradesh, the Snow Leopard Population Assessment in India (SPA) has estimated. The study, carried out between 2019 and 2023, is a major leap in the understanding of the species.

Snow leopards are believed to occupy around 1 lakh sq km of the higher Himalayan terrains in India. As recently as 2016, the cat's status was unknown in as much as one-third of its range. This went well with the legend of the "ghost of the mountains" built around the elusive cat's mastery of stealth and camouflage.

But for this 'ghost' to have a future — and since the future of most species is increasingly determined by human actions — knowledge of the cat's status across its range is necessary for framing the right policies. This is also a question of securing the future of Indians, because the snow leopard's habitat is where all major Himalayan rivers, which sustain life across much of the country, spring to life.

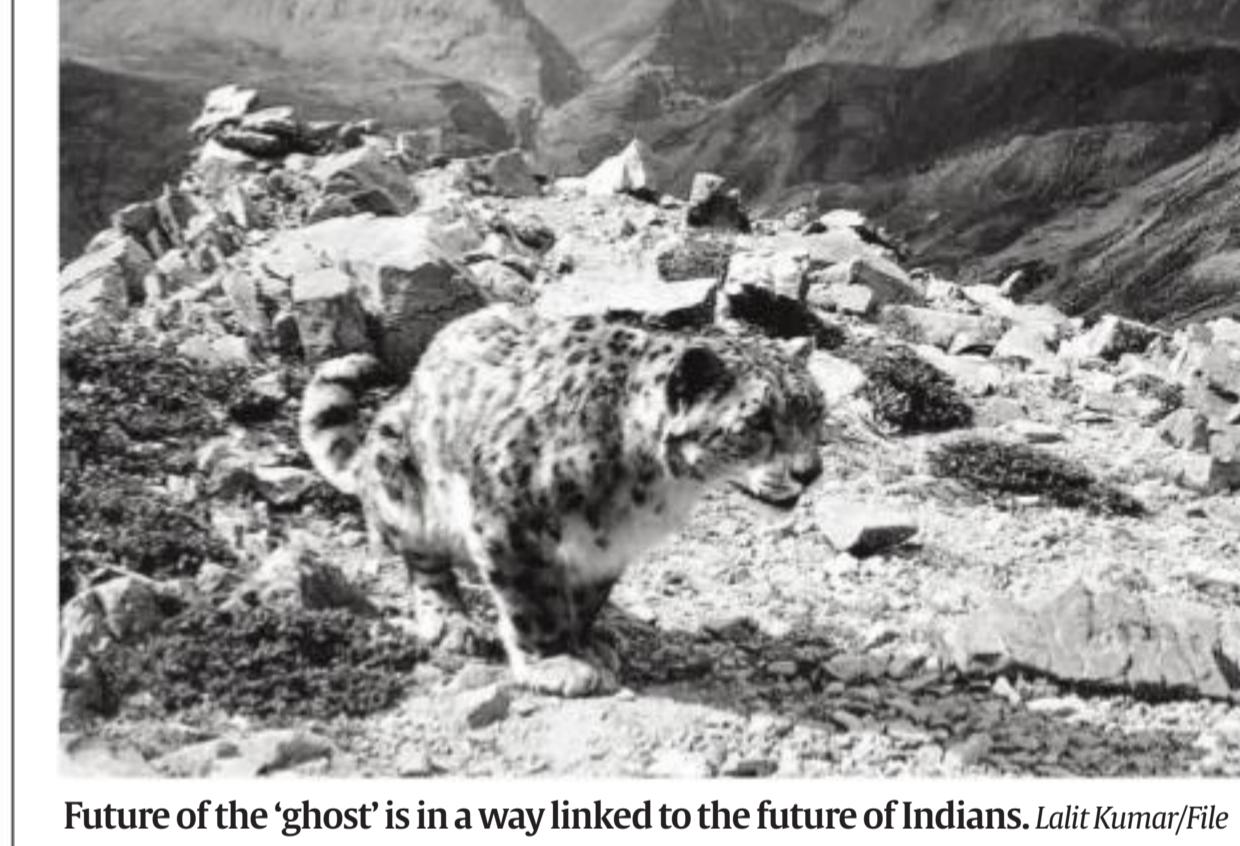
Yet, a national effort to count snow leopards across its range remained daunting.

The challenges

The first and foremost challenge is the unforgiving terrain snow leopards occupy. While the cold deserts of Ladakh and Spiti are their strongholds, snow leopards range all along the higher Himalayas, above the tree line between altitudes of 10,500 feet and 17,000 feet. Much of this habitat is not accessible by motorable roads, and its rugged air makes even routine fieldwork, such as locating suitable sites for placing camera traps, a test of endurance.

Analysing photos camera-trapped in the field poses the next challenge. Specialised software can identify unique individuals by comparing stripes or rosettes on both flanks from a pool of photographs. But unlike tigers, zebras, or even leopards, snow leopards do not yield to artificial intelligence.

For long, researchers have grappled with the issue of misidentifying individual snow leopards "as their spot patterns may not be easily recognised when their thick fur gets ruffled or when their body is photographed at different angles". To overcome this challenge, a global consensus of researchers rec-



Future of the 'ghost' is in a way linked to the future of Indians. Lalit Kumar/File

NUMBERS IN THE WILD

Area	Camera trap locations	No. of unique individuals	Density estimates*	Estimated numbers
Ladakh	956	126	0.34	477
Uttarakhand	382	40	0.7-1.04	124
Himachal Pradesh	284	44	0.08-0.37	51
Arunachal Pradesh	115	8	0.26	36
Sikkim	99	14	0.40	21
Jammu & Kashmir	135	9	0.75	9
Total	1,971	241	—	718

*Per 100 sq km; Source: Status of Snow Leopard in India, 2023

The exercise

The Wildlife Institute of India (WII) partnered with NGOs Nature Conservation Foundation and WWF-India to prepare India's snow leopard estimation protocol in 2019.

The ground work was carried out in the next three years. In all, photographs collected from 1,971 camera trap locations led to the identification of 241 unique individuals, which was extrapolated to an estimated population of 718 snow leopards in India. This extrapolation is done as cameras cover a limited area, and do not capture all leopards

across their habitat. In Ladakh, camera traps were placed at 956 locations covering 8,604 sq km for 120 to 180 days. Based on their distinctive forehead patterns, 126 unique adult individuals were identified from 10,789 images. The population was estimated to be 477 across 47,728 sq km.

In Jammu and Kashmir, only 9 unique individuals were identified by deploying 278 camera traps at 135 locations. Even after dropping four individuals due to poor image quality and unfavourable capture angles, this data set fell short of providing a comprehensive estimate for the snow leopard population across 949 sq km, noted SPAI.

In Himachal Pradesh, 44 unique individuals were identified from 187 photos captured across 284 camera trap locations, leading to an estimated population of 51 over 25,000 sq km. From 41 unique individuals identified from 396 snow leopard photos, Uttarakhand estimated a population of 124 occupying 12,768 sq km.

Arunachal Pradesh estimated a population of 36 across 14,156 sq km, from 8 unique snow leopards identified from 115 camera trap locations. In Sikkim, 14 unique individuals were identified from 64 snow leopard photos captured from 99 camera trap locations. The estimated population was 21 snow leopards across 400 sq km.

In the 1980s, a guesstimate of a global population of 4,000-7,500 snow leopards cited 400-700 individuals in India. In the 1990s, another guesstimate put 200-600 snow leopards in India out of a global count of 3,020-5,390. In 2016, India's leading snow leopard researchers came together to put the national estimate at 516.

The present count of 718 is consistent with the trend, and suggests overall population stability. Yet, this is just the beginning of understanding the elusive species, its dispersal, competitive land use patterns, and mortality trends.

Infrastructure development is causing a rapid influx of labour camps in the higher Himalayas who often depend on scarce natural resources for fuel and food. Such migrations, along with a boom in tourism, have also led to garbage mismanagement which, in turn, is fuelling an explosion in the free-ranging dog population that competes with snow leopards.

Controversy over two age-old Assamese traditions, now with Gauhati HC

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 5

THE GAUHATI High Court Thursday directed district administrations concerned to prevent buffalo fights from taking place outside the stipulated time period in Assam, in response to a plea by People for Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) India. The court has admitted petitions by PETA India seeking a ban on the traditions of buffalo and *bulbuli* (songbird) fighting during Magh Bihu, even as the Assam government works towards their revival.

Old traditions

The fights are part of Assamese folk culture, associated with Magh Bihu, the winter harvest festival, which takes place in January.

During Magh Bihu, buffalo fights, locally called *moh jui*, are held in different parts of

Assam, with Ahatguri in Morigaon district being the biggest centre. There, the fights have been conducted for many decades by the Ahatguri Anchali Moh-jooj arr Bhogali Utsav Udjapan Samiti, and draw huge crowds.

Bulbuli fights are an attraction at the Hayagriv Madhab Mandir in Hajo, around 30 km from Guwahati. Participants rear birds for around two weeks ahead of Bihu, before making them fight.

"The practice is very old, we cannot really say when it started. But it was held with great pomp by the Ahom rulers," Shiba Prasad Sarma, *doloi* (administrator) of the temple, told *The Indian Express*.

Stopped after SC ruling

The fights

SENSEX: 71,731.42 ▼ 354.21 (0.49%) NIFTY: 21,771.70 ▼ 82.10 (0.38%) NIKKEI: 36,354.16 ▲ 196.14 HANG SENG: 15,510.01 ▼ 23.55 FTSE: 7,656.14 ▲ 40.60 DAX: 16,957.26 ▲ 39.05



GOLD

₹63,350



USD RATE

₹83.06



OIL

\$79.03



SILVER

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of February 2

International market data till 1900 IST

A 50-fold increase in imports of 'gold findings': trigger for pre-Budget duty hike

AANCHAL MAGAZINE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

JUST A week before the presentation of Budget 2024-25, the Finance Ministry hiked import duties on a specific, relatively unheard category of the jewellery segment called gold findings, which are small components such as hooks, clasps, clamps, pins, screws used to hold the whole or a part of a piece of jewellery in place. Reason: a sharp surge of over 5,000 per cent in the imports of the gold findings this year.

The value of imports of gold findings rose to Rs 5,212 crore this financial year (up to January 6), over 50 times higher than imports worth Rs 102 crore seen in the previous year till January 31, a senior government official told *The Indian Express*. This prompted the ministry to raise import duty on gold and silver findings, alongside coins of precious metals, to 15 per cent, even as the import duty on the broader segment of gold and silver bars was kept unchanged.

"The duty on gold findings was raised as a sharp increase in their imports was recorded over the last two months, which reflected the misuse of the duty arbitrage with other gold items. There were concerns about evasion, so the duty was changed," the official said.

Gold and silver bars attract a 15 per cent import duty, while gold and silver findings earlier faced 11 per cent import duty. Due to the difference in HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature) codes for gold and silver bars as compared to gold and silver findings, importers were making use of the duty arbitrage to import gold in the form of findings and coins, rather than bar.

Levied AIDC of 5 per cent and removed 1 per cent SWS, while keeping BCD unchanged at 10 per cent, resulting in a total effective duty rate of 15 per cent. The new duty rates became effective from January 22.

The government also attempted to plug the loophole of lower duty for other forms of precious metals. The duty on coins of precious metals was also hiked from 11 per cent to 15 per cent. The import duty on spent catalyst and ash containing precious metals was hiked to 14.35 per cent (including 10 per cent BCD and 4.35 per cent AIDC) from 10.09 per cent earlier (9.17 per cent BCD and 0.92 per cent SWS), bringing it at par with gold and silver ore.

"The rate on gold and silver findings was equalised with gold and silver bars to prevent circumvention from the higher duty of gold and silver bars," another official said.

Gold imports had jumped by 95 per cent year-on-year to \$7.23 billion in October. During April-October, gold imports rose by 23.01 per cent year-on-year to \$29.48 billion.

In November, gold imports moderated from the previous month to \$3.45 billion, even as they remained up 6.24 per cent year-on-year.

In December, gold imports jumped by a sharp 156.47 per cent to \$3.03 billion, compared to \$1.18 billion in the year ago period. Cumulatively, during April-December, gold imports rose by 26.64 per cent year-on-year to \$35.95 billion.

Now, the government has

EXPLAINED**The duty evasion**

THE IMPORT duty for gold and silver bars is 15 per cent, while it was 11 per cent for gold and silver findings. So, importers were getting gold in the form of findings and coins, rather than bars. Due to the difference in HSN (Harmonised System of Nomenclature) codes for gold and silver bars as compared to gold and silver findings, importers were making use of the duty arbitrage to import gold in the form of findings and coins, rather than bar.

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Now, the government has

ANNUAL SURVEY OF INDUSTRIES FOR 2020-21 AND 2021-22

Manufacturing saw more employment, profits despite Covid pandemic blows

AANCHAL MAGAZINE

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE COVID-19 pandemic affected the number of factories and fixed investments in the organised manufacturing sector in the country but profits and invested capital recorded an increase, Annual Survey of Industries (ASI) for 2020-21 and 2021-22 released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI) on Monday showed. Employment in the manufacturing sector took a hit during the lockdown-affected year of 2020-21, but then recovered in 2021-22 to levels higher than pre-pandemic.

Total number of employees in over 2.50 lakh factories decreased in 2020-21 to 1.60 crore from 1.66 crore in 2019-20, while the number of workers employed in the factories reduced to 1.26 crore from 1.31 crore during the same period.

The employment numbers in factories then showed a pickup in 2021-22, with the number of employees rising to 1.72 crore, marking a compounded annual growth

ANNUAL SURVEY OF INDUSTRIES 2020-21 & 2021-22

	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	CAGR For 2021-22
Number Of Factories	2,46,504	2,50,454	2,49,987	0.7
Number Of Workers	1,30,58,156	1,25,94,563	1,36,09,931	2.1
Number Of Employees	1,65,68,526	1,60,25,118	1,71,51,172	1.7
FINANCIALS				
Wages To Workers	₹2,28,90,520	₹2,22,61,548	₹2,64,55,930	7.5
Total Emoluments	₹4,91,72,897	₹4,83,89,031	₹5,60,82,801	6.8
Net Fixed Capital Formation	₹1,43,61,795	₹32,25,819	₹30,42,540	-54.0
Gross Fixed Capital Formation	₹4,16,71,537	₹3,13,61,805	₹3,30,07,225	-11.0
Profits	₹4,69,47,269	₹6,14,05,752	₹9,50,71,368	42.3
Value figures in ₹ lakhs				

which includes outlays on addition to fixed assets and net change in inventories grew 29.5 per cent to 7.02 lakh crore in 2021-22.

The ASI data is the principal source of industrial statistics and data for organised manufacturing. It relates to factories employing 10 or more workers using power and those employing 20 or more workers without using power.

The definition is slightly tweaked for states of Maharashtra and Rajasthan, wherein data is collected for factories employing 20 or more workers with power and factories having 40 or more workers without power. The survey also covers registered bidi and cigar manufacturing establishments.

On a net basis, net fixed capital formation recorded a decline of 54 per cent in 2021-22 as against the pre-pandemic year of 2019-20. The investment figures in the ASI surveys are in current prices terms. Profits in the manufacturing sector grew sharply for the pandemic-affected years, rising by 42.3 per cent (CAGR) to ₹9.51 lakh crore in 2021-22 as against ₹8.40 lakh crore in 2019-20.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

India's Jan services PMI hits 6-mth high

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

THE SERVICES sector growth in India rose to a six-month high in January as new business expanded at a faster pace amid buoyant demand from domestic and external clients, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted HSBC India Services PMI Business Activity Index rose to 61.8 in January, up from 59 in December, pointing to the sharpest rate of expansion in six months.

In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction. The survey is compiled from responses to questionnaires sent to a panel of around 400 service sector companies.

"India's services PMI rose to a six-month high in January. New business expanded at a faster pace and managers' expectation for future activity was strong. The new export business index accelerated, signalling that India's services exports remained robust," Ines Lam, Economist at HSBC, said.

JFSL shares surge 13.91% on reports of acquiring PPBL wallet business

the wallet business.

Jio Financial Services controls Jio Payments Bank through a joint venture with State Bank of India (SBI). Jio Payments Bank offered right issue of its equity shares in which SBI did not participate. Consequently, SBI's stake in the payment bank has reduced from 30 per cent to 23.02 per cent.

Paytm Payment Bank has over 30 crore wallets and 3 crore bank accounts, as per the information on the bank's website. It has over 10 crore KYC customers, with 4 lakh users added every passing month. The bank is the largest issuer of FASTag with over 80 lakh FASTag units issued. A payment bank can raise deposit up to Rs 20 lakh but it can't issue loans or credit cards.

In a big blow to Paytm's operations, the Reserve Bank of India last week barred PPBL from accepting deposits or top-ups in any of its key products—customer accounts, prepaid instruments, wallets, FASTags and National Common Mobility Card, among others—after February 29.

crude oil.

Oil imports from Russia—

currently India's largest supplier of oil—in January stood at 1.53 million bpd, 5.6 per cent higher from the previous month. Crude imports from Saudi Arabia—India's third-largest supplier—were at 690,172 bpd in January, a tad lower than December's 706,759 bpd. In all, Indian refiners imported a total of 4.81 million bpd of crude in January, 9.3 per cent higher than December, the Kpler data shows.

In December, US crude supply to India was nearly 158,000 bpd. But with the Red Sea troubles and consequent surge in freight rates for oil flows between the West and Asia, US crude likely became unviable for Indian refiners, forcing them to turn to their traditional suppliers in the Persian Gulf. Also, with payment woes hitting deliveries of Russia's Sokol crude, particularly to Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), there appears to have been little room for a ramp-up in import volumes from Russia.

FULL REPORT ON www.indianexpress.com

Red Sea crisis: India turns to West Asia to replace crude supply from the US

SUKALP SHARMA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

INDIA'S CRUDE oil imports from Iraq touched a 21-month high in January as refiners turned to West Asia to replace volumes from the United States (US), which were disrupted due to the sput in freight rates in view of the Red Sea crisis, an analysis of ship tracking data shows.

The US has been among India's top-five crude suppliers for some time now, with Indian refiners buying an average of 205,000 barrels per day (bpd) of US crude in 2023. However, in the first month of 2024, Indian refiners did not receive any US crude, according to preliminary data from commodity market analytics firm Kpler.

"Indian buyers had a mixed January when robust domestic demand and an almost complete lack of refinery turnarounds were sapped by panic buying as the Red Sea disruptions complicated the country's import options. With freight from the Atlantic Basin being prohibitive



Oil imports from Russia—currently India's largest supplier of oil—in January stood at 1.53 million bpd. File

New Delhi's second-largest source of crude—in January stood at 1.19 million bpd, up by a fourth from December volumes, and the highest since April 2022.

The disruption in supplies of US crude led to a boost in India's oil imports from the United Arab Emirates (UAE) as well. Oil imports from the UAE in January jumped nearly 81 per cent over December levels to around 326,500 bpd. Abu Dhabi is India's fourth-largest supplier of

oil, currently accounting for 11.5 per cent of India's crude imports.

India's oil imports from Iraq—

which had been the second largest supplier of crude to India in 2023, fell by 95 per cent in January. The drop in imports from Iraq was largely due to a decline in the price of Brent crude oil, which fell by 10 per cent in January.

India's oil imports from Saudi Arabia—

which had been the third largest supplier of crude to India in 2023, fell by 90 per cent in January.

India's oil imports from Iran—

which had been the fourth largest supplier of crude to India in 2023, fell by 95 per cent in January.

India's oil imports from Russia—

which had been the fifth largest supplier of crude to India in 2023, fell by 95 per cent in January.

has projected CPI inflation at 5.4 per cent for FY24, with Q3 at 5.6 per cent and Q4 at 5.2 per cent.

"We maintain our view that

the RBI MPC will keep the policy

rate unchanged at the February 8

policy meeting at 6.50 per cent,

sound optimistic on growth, rec-

ognize the sharp fiscal consolidati-

on in the interim budget, and re-

iterate the commitment to the 4

per cent headline inflation target,

THE WORLD



AFTER SWEEPING UP THREE AWARDS FOR RAP

KILLER MIKE ARRESTED FROM GRAMMY EVENT

RAPPER KILLER Mike was taken away from Sunday night's Grammy Awards in handcuffs by police after sweeping up three of the music industry's biggest prizes for rap. Los Angeles police offered no statement on the matter and two press officers on duty said they had no information. *The Hollywood Reporter* reported he was detained for an unrelated misdemeanor charge.

REUTERS

TOP OF THE WORLD

Yang Hengjun and his wife Yuan Xiaoliang. File

CHINA
Court grants Australian writer suspended death sentence

Sydney, Beijing: A Beijing court on Monday handed Australian writer Yang Hengjun a suspended death sentence on espionage charges, threatening a recent rebound in bilateral ties that followed several years of strained relations between Beijing and Canberra. The sentence, handed down five years after Yang was detained in China and three years after his closed-door trial on espionage charges, shocked his family and supporters. It also threatens a recent warming of relations between Australia and China, which was marred by tensions over Covid-19 and security.

REUTERS

IRAQ
8 local banks get ban from US dollar dealings

Baghdad: Iraq has banned eight local commercial banks from engaging in U.S. dollar transactions, taking action to reduce fraud, money laundering and other illegal uses of U.S. currency days after a visit by a top U.S. Treasury official. The banks are banned from accessing the Iraqi central bank's daily dollar auction, a main source of hard currency in the import-dependent country that has become a focal point of a U.S. crackdown on currency smuggling to neighbouring Iran.

REUTERS

SOUTH KOREA
Seoul signs security deal with Saudi

Seoul: South Korea and Saudi Arabia on Sunday signed a memorandum of understanding to expand defence cooperation, Seoul's Defense Acquisition Program Administration (DAPA) said, as Seoul looks to ink further arms sales in the region. The agreement will see the two establish a joint committee to form a working group for weapons systems research and development as well as production to continue cooperation in defence, DAPA said in a press release Monday.

REUTERS

SINGAPORE
Law gets passed to hold high-risk convicts after term

Singapore: Singapore on Monday passed a law to hold "dangerous offenders" indefinitely, even after they complete their jail sentences. The legislation applies to those above 21 who are convicted of crimes such as culpable homicide, rape and sex with minors, who are deemed to be at risk of reoffending upon release. In a speech in parliament, Law and Home Minister Shanmugam said: "An offender who continues to pose a real danger to others should not be released." The law means instead of being released after completing their prison terms, such offenders would need home minister to decide the release.

REUTERS

'VIP access' for Infosys: Sunak under Opp attacks

ADITI KHANNA
LONDON, FEBRUARY 5

THE UK'S Opposition Labour Party has claimed Infosys was effectively granted "VIP access" after a media report alleged the software services major was promised help to grow in Britain due to Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's familial connection with co-founder Narayana Murthy.

A *Sunday Mirror* report based on a freedom of information (FOI) request said Trade Minister Lord Dominic Johnson discussed UK operations of Infosys during a meeting at their offices in Bengaluru during a visit last April.

A readout of the meeting re-



Rishi Sunak and wife Akshata Murty in Manchester. File

portedly said Lord Johnson "made clear that he was keen to see a bigger Infosys presence in

the UK and would be happy to do what he could to facilitate that".

"After the Tories handed bil-

lions in taxpayers' cash to cronies for duff Personal Protective Equipment, the public will wonder why an outfit so personally close to Rishi Sunak appears to have been granted this VIP access. There are serious questions to answer," Labour shadow minister Jonathan Ashworth said.

Sunak's wife, Akshata Murty, has 0.91 per cent stake valued at around 500 million Pounds in the IT business co-founded by her father and received millions in dividends in the past financial year.

A "steering brief" for the meeting is reported to have said, it "would be good to reassure them on prospects for the UK economy and remind them of the support we can provide".

Lord Johnson is said to have outlined to the Infosys executives, whose names were redacted in the FOI documents, the advantages for the multinational as a result of the UK's high-potential individual visa scheme.

This is the latest Opposition attack faced by Sunak's wife over her business interests after Labour raised questions over Akshata Murty's decision to liquidate an investment venture named Catamaran Ventures.

The personal finances of Sunak and his wife have previously also been under scrutiny when it was revealed that Murty had legal non-domicile tax status, which meant she did not have to pay UK tax on her Indian income.

HOPES OF TRUCE HIGH**Blinken returns to West Asia as Hamas weighs ceasefire deal**

US Secretary of State meets MbS, seeks to forge normalization deal with Israel

REUTERS
DOHA, RIYADH, FEBRUARY 5



Antony Blinken leaves for West Asia on Sunday. NYT

Drone strike on Syria US base kills 6 Kurdish fighters

Amman: U.S.-backed Kurdish-led forces said on Monday that six of their fighters had been killed in an explosive drone attack by Iran-backed armed groups that came from areas of Syria's Deir al-Zor under the control of the Syrian government.

Farhad Shami, a spokesperson for the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), said in a post on X that the drone struck an SDF commando academy at a U.S. base at Al-Omar oilfield, resulting in the martyrdom of six of our Commando fighters.

The Islamic Resistance in Iraq - an umbrella group of Iran-backed Iraqi armed groups - Monday claimed responsibility for the drone attack on Al-Omar field on Sunday.

REUTERS

King Charles diagnosed with cancer, postpones public duties

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON, FEBRUARY 5

KING CHARLES III has been diagnosed with a form of cancer and has begun treatment, Buckingham Palace said Monday.

The palace says the cancer is not related to the king's recent treatment for a benign prostate condition. It did not say what form of cancer the 75-year-old monarch has.

The palace said "a separate issue of concern was noted" during Charles' treatment for an enlarged prostate last month. "Diagnostic tests have identified a form of cancer," it said.

"His Majesty has today commenced a schedule of regular treatments, during which time he has been advised by doctors to postpone public-facing duties," the palace said.

"Throughout this period, His Majesty will continue to undertake State business and official paperwork as usual."

It said Charles "remains wholly positive about his treatment and looks forward to returning to full public duty as soon as possible."

Both the leaders were convicted by a special court for a 10-year jail term in the cipher case

and have been imprisoned in Rawalpindi's high-security Adiala Jail, where their trial was held.

Khan, 71, and Qureshi, 67, are



Former Pak PM Imran Khan; Shah Mahmood Qureshi

Imran, Qureshi to do prison labour despite being high-profile convicts

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 5

PAKISTAN'S FORMER prime minister Imran Khan and ex-foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi despite being high-profile prisoners will have to perform their prison labour inside the compound, according to a media report.

Both the leaders were convicted by a special court for a 10-year jail term in the cipher case



Song of the Year: Billie Eilish, What Was I Made For?

Best New Artist: Victoria Monét

being kept separately as high-profile prisoners - in their capacity as a former prime minister and foreign minister, The Express Tribune newspaper reported.

Khan is the founder chairman of his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) while Qureshi is the vice chairman of the party.

Both the leaders are availing the facilities provided to inmates in a better-class prison similar to the ones they had before their conviction including access to an exercise machine, it said.

Meanwhile, four people were killed and at least one was injured in Monday's strike over the city of Kherson, the head of the local military administration said.

Zelenskyy confirmed in an interview with Italian broadcaster RAI TV released Sunday that he was thinking about removing General Valerii Zaluzhnyi, the commander-in-chief of Ukraine's armed forces. He said he was contemplating to ensure the country remains led by individuals who are "convinced of victory".

"A reset, a new beginning is necessary," Zelenskyy said. The review is "not about a single person but about the direction of the country's leadership."

"...you can't say here we replaced a single person... when we talk about this, I mean a replacement of a series of state leaders, not just in a single sector like the military," he said.

Nov polls in mind, Biden sets sights on Nevada

RACE FOR THE WHITE HOUSE

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LAS VEGAS, FEBRUARY 5

PRESIDENT JOE Biden on Sunday ticked through a list of reasons he says a second Donald Trump presidency would be a "nightmare" for the country as he

urged Nevada Democrats to vote for him in the state's presidential primary this week and for his party at large in November.

Biden opened a campaign swing with a fundraiser where he focused on Trump's ample history of provocative statements - his description of Jan. 6 rioters as "hostages," his musings about a former top military officer deserving execution, his branding of fallen soldiers as "suckers" and "losers," his wish to be a Day One "dictator," his vow to supporters that "I am your retribution," and more.

Then it was on to a community center in a predominantly Black



President Joe Biden at an event in Las Vegas, Sunday. AP

section of Las Vegas, where he told his crowd of several hundred that "you're the reason we'll make Donald Trump a loser again."

Biden said the stakes were huge when he took on Trump in

2020 — "what made America America, I thought, was at risk" — and they are even larger now as a likely rematch looms.

He told donors at the private home in Henderson, Nevada, that if they came to Washington, he'd show them the White House dining room table where Trump, according to ex-aides, sat transfixed for hours in front of the TV as the rioters he'd fired up with his rhetoric stormed the Capitol.

"We have to keep the White House," he said. "We must keep the Senate" and win back the House. Accomplish that, he said, and "we can say we saved American democracy."

Broader reset: Zelenskyy signals shakeup of military leadership

ASSOCIATED PRESS
KYIV, FEBRUARY 5

UKRAINIAN PRESIDENT Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he is thinking about dismissing the country's top military officer as part of a broader leadership shakeup, a possibility that has shocked the nation fighting a war to end Russia's invasion and also worried Ukraine's Western allies.

Meanwhile,

four people were

killed

and at least one was injured

in Monday's

strike

over the city

of Kherson,

the head of the local

military

administration

said.

Zelenskyy

confirmed

in an

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with

Italian

broadcaster

RAI

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the

country's

top

military

officer

as

part

of

a

broader

leadership

shakeup.

Both

Democratic

and

Republican

backers

of

the

Bill

pledged

to

push

ahead

despite

opposition

by

Donald

Trump

as

well.

REUTERS

DALI'S NICKNAME ALSO POINTS TO INFUX OF TECH EMPLOYEES WHO ARRIVED THERE SINCE RISE OF REMOTE WORK**Young Chinese flock to 'Dalifornia' to heal, escape from megacities**

VIVIAN WANG
DALI, FEBRUARY 5

Yashwantrao Chavan Academy of Development Administration (YASHADA)

Add- Rajbhavan Complex, Baner Road, Next to Sakal Nagar, Pune- 411 007 Phone No. 020-25608408/8268/8210.

E-Tender Notice

On behalf of Hon. Director General YASHADA, Pune, Registrar, YASHADA, Pune invites bids for Construction of Center for Good Governance [CGG]- Residential & Academic Building at Baner YASHADA Campus, Pune work from Registered as well as unregistered Contractor, and full filling the qualifying criteria in **B-2 Tender Format** as per Maharashtra Government, Public Work Department G.R. No. CAT/2017/Pra.Kra-08/Bldg-2, dt. 27/9/2018 and Public Work Department Mantralaya Mumbai Circular No. CAT/2017/Pra.Kra-08/Bldg-2, dt. 22/10/2018. Bids document can be downloaded from website <https://mahatenders.gov.in>, undersigned reserves all rights to accept or reject bids. Conditional bids will not be accepted. Brief Tender Notice and Other relied information available on following web site.

1. **Yashada's website www.yashada.org (Only Tender Notice)**
 2. **[https://mahatenders.gov.in](http://mahatenders.gov.in) (Tender Notice and Tender Document)**

(Any changes in the NIT will be Corrigendum's published on above website)

Registrar,
YASHADA Pune- 07

SECTION I

Superintending Engineer, 4th Circle, HP PWD Shimla HP

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Superintending Engineer, 4th Circle, HPPWD Shimla-3 on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh invites the Percentage Rate Bids, in electronic tendering system, for construction of road under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development for following work from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HP PWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag (Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the work having amount put to tender above Rs. 100 Lacs). Non registered contractors may submit the bids, however successful bidder has to register in appropriate class with appropriate authority in HP PWD.

District RIDF Name of the work Estimated Cost (Rs.) Total Cost (Rs.) Period of Completion Bid Security (Rs.)

District RIDF	Name of the work	Estimated Cost (Rs.)	Total Cost (Rs.)	Period of Completion	Bid Security (Rs.)
Shimla XXIX	Construction of Bridge over Giri river at Lakhot C/o 75243, double Lane Bridge on Lakhot, Koti Sherpa road (Portion Dubhi to Shergan) Over River at RD 7/00 and C/o approach road at RD 6/00 to 7/00 (SHE- C/o sub structure, Super Structure, R/Wall & B/wall for Both side approaches, Metalizing and Tarring, Catch water Drain in RD 6/00 to 7/00) Under NABARD	9,60,28,940/-	Nil	9,60,28,940/-	24 months 19,20,600/-

2. Cost of Bid Form: Rs. 500/- per package/job (non-refundable) only (Online) in favour of Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No 1, HP PWD, Shimla.

The bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have valid Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in NABARD may obtain the same from the website: www.hptenders.gov.in.

Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the valid digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

* Non-registered bidders may submit bid; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

4. Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering: 16.02.2024 upto 1000 hrs.

5. Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering: 16.02.2024 upto 1000 hrs.

6. The site for the work is available.

7. Only online submission of bids is permitted, therefore bids must be submitted online on website www.hptenders.gov.in. The technical qualification part of the bids will be opened online at 11:00 Hours on 16.02.2024 in the office of Superintending Engineer, 4th Circle, H.P.P.W.D., Shimla-3 by the authorized officers. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids, the bids will be opened online on the next working day at the same time.

8. The bidder is not required to quote his rate for routine maintenance. The rates to be paid for routine maintenance are indicated in the Bill of Quantities and the bidder is required to quote the rates in the Bill of Quantities. Further, the payment for routine maintenance to the contractor shall be regulated based on his performance of maintenance activities.

All the required materials shall be delivered/Cement/Sand/Steel/Bitumen/Explosive etc., shall be arranged by Contractor at his own level.

9. Bidders for the work shall remain liable for acceptance for a period not less than Seventy Five (75) days after the deadline date for bid submission.

10. Bidders may bid for any one or more of the works mentioned in the Table above. To qualify for a package of contracts made up of this for which bids are invited in the same NIT, the bidder must demonstrate having experience and resources sufficient to meet the aggregate of the qualifying criteria for individual contracts.

11. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The Employer shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid update, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidder's responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

12. The required documents shall be submitted in the form of original documents.

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69. Bidders for the work shall remain liable for acceptance for a period not less than Seventy Five (75) days after the deadline date for bid submission.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

Ishrat Jahan D/O Mohd Bashir R/OMohalla Gujran Wala, Malerkotla, Punjab-148023 have changed my name to Ishrat Parveen 0050235979-1

It is for general information that I, Poonam Bai D/O Ishwar Singh R/O Rampura (116), Mahendragarh, Haryana-123021, declare that name of my mother has been wrongly written as Krishna Devi in my 10th and 12th Class School Certificate Cum Marksheets. The actual name of my mother is Krishana Devi, which may be amended accordingly.

0070887052-1

I, shafiq zehra,W/O nasir raza,R/o flat,no.21D,DDA FLATS,POCKET-4,near mother dairy new-zafarabad,delhi-110032,have changed my name to shafiq fatma,for all,future purposes. 0040712146-2

I, hitherto known as Bansil Lal Gera,R/O-59/9, First-Floor, Kalkaji Extension,New Delhi-110019, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME AND SHALL HEREAFTER BE KNOWN AS SUBHASH GERA. 0040712146-1

I,VAZID ALI,S/O SHABBEEER AHMAD,R/O F-25,ABUL-FAZAL ENCLAVE-1 JAMIANAGAR NEW DELHI-110025,IN MY VOTER CARD MY DETAILS ARE INCORRECT-VAZID ALI ANSARI,S/O SHABBEEER AHMED ANSARI CORRECT NAME ARE VAZID ALI,S/O SHABBEEER AHMAD. 0040712148-7

I,UMME FATAMA,W/O SYED AIAZ AHMAD,ADD-278D/12,NEAR-JASWANT APARTMENTS OKHLA JAMIA-NAGAR SOUTH,DELHI-110025,changed my minor child name MOHAMMAD TAMIM to MOHAMMAD TAMEEM,for all,future purposes. 0040712166-4

I,Swati W/O Rahul Mohta,R/o C-7,Ground Floor Ramprasha Colony,Chander-Nagar, Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh-201011.have changed my name to SWATI MOHTA.Permanently. 0040712166-2

I,Sushma Tomar/Sushma,W/O Shiv Shankar Sikarwar,R/o E-31,Chhattarpur-Extrn,Mehruli, New Delhi-110074,have changed my name Sushma Sikarwar,for all purposes. 0040712147-2

I,SUNNY TAXALI,S/O NAVIN TAXALI,R/O,FLAT.NO.102,TOWE R KT-10,KALYPSO-COURT,JAYPEE WISH TOWN,NEAR-AXIS HOUSE,SECTOR-128,NOIDA, GAUTAM-BUDDHA-NAGAR,UTTAR PRADESH-201301,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as VIRAAJ VARDHAN TAXALI. 0040712166-8

I,SUMITRA DEVI,W/O BALJEET SINGH, ADDRESS- VPO,SALHAWAS DISTT.JHAJJAR HARYANA,PIN CORD-124146,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUMITRA JAKHAR. 0040712147-4

I,SOURAV,S/O.DORILAL SHARMA,R/O-GALI-17-E-2/11,SHIV RAM PARK NANGLOI, WEST DELHI-110041,changed my name to SOURAV SHARMA for all,future purposes. 0040712166-6

I,SINI SIVAN KUTTY,W/O GIREESH NAIR, R/O B-12, GAUR CASCADES, RAJNAGAR EXTENSION,GHAZIABAD,UTTAR PRADESH-201017, changed my name to SINI SHIVAAN NAIR. 0040712148-3

I,Vikas S/o Late Jagbir Singh Dal R/o-E-304 Sipal,Vihar Sona,Road Sector-49 Gurgaon Haryana-122018,have changed my name to Vikas Dal 0040712147-10

I,SHANKAR DAYAL SUMAN,S/O YOGENDRA PRASAD,R/o D-926, 5TH AVENUE,GAUR CITY-1,GREATER,NOIDA-WEST,SECTOR-4,SHAH BERI, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR,UTTAR PRADESH-201009,have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as AVNEESH GUPTA. 0040712166-9

I,SHALINIE W/O-MAHIPAL TOKAS,R/o-T-3004 TATA PRIMANTI,SECTOR-72 SIKANDERPUR GURGAON HARYANA-122002,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHALINIE TOKAS. 0040712151-2

I,SAMITA SAGAR,W/O-KAPIL SHARMA,R/o-410,MADHUR JIVAN APARTMENT,PLT.NO-34 DWARKA,SECTOR-10,DELHI-110075,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAMITA SAGAR SHARMA. 0040712151-1

I,SAKSHI JAIN,W/O.AMIT JAIN,ADD-E-6/14,NEAR SEHAGAL PASTRY SHOP KRISHNA-NAGAR,EAST DELHI 110051,changed my minor child name AARADHYA to AMAYRA JAIN,for all,future purposes. 0040712166-7

I,Rohit Gandhi,Son of,Surinder Kumar Gandhi,R/o House.no-F-12/8 Third floor Chitranganjan Park New-Delhi-110019,Have changed my name to Rohit Kumar Gandhi Permanently. 0040712148-11

I,Sanya Chandhok D/o Sh. Kanwal Nath Chandhok W/o Sh. Rohit Anand R/o A-3/1809, Tower-11, Purvanchal Royal Park, Sector-137, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.201305 have changed my name to Sanya Anand for all purposes. 0040712053-1

I,Rekha Gupta,W/o Chetan Gupta,H/o-1158,Shora Kothi,Kamla-Nagar,Clock Tower,Sukhi Mandi,Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Rekha Gupta,for all future purposes. 0040712147-5

I,Ranvir Kirat Rawat,S/o Late Shri Dhari Singh Rawat,R/o 57-58,U.G.F,Pocket-4,Sector-22,Rohini,Delhi-110086,have changed my name,from Ranvir Kirit Rawat to Ranvir Kirit Rawat,for all,future purposes. 0040712147-1

I,Rahul Ganshyamji Mohta,S/O Ganshyam Mohta,R/o C-70,Ground-Floor Ramprasha Colony,Chander Nagar,Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh-201011,have changed my name to RAHUL MOHTA.Permanently. 0040712166-3

I,RK Luthra,S/O H.L.Luthra,R/o H-Ho 3 Ground floor (front side) Panchsheel-Vihar Khrki-Ext Near-Khrki DDA Flats. Malviya Nagar,Delhi-110017, my Name wrongly printed in Driving licence RK Luthra. The correct name is Ramesh Luthra.RKL Luthra & Ramesh Luthra both name are same-person. 0040712146-3

I,RAHUL VOHRA,S/O.Ravindra Kumar Vohra,F-101,Opposite-Agarwal Heightes,Uninav Heightes,Raj-Nagar Extension,Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh, 201017,have to changed my Name RAHUL KUMAR VOHRA,for all,future purpose. 0040712171-3

I,PRITA,D/O SANJAY KUMAR, R/O HOUSE-NO-16,ROZI COLONY,SECTOR-12,VIJAY NAGAR,GHAZIABAD,UTTAR PRADESH-201009,changed my name to PRIYA PRAPATI. 0040712148-4

I,Omniati W/o Shailendra Singh,R/O Flat,no D-712,Prabha-Apts Plot.no-11,Sec-23 Dwarka,New Delhi-110077,have changed my name to Omvati Singh,for all purposes. 0040712148-5

I,NAVIN SHARMA,S/O SH.CHATURBHJI SHARMA,R/O H.NO. 667/1,RAJA GARDEN, OLD FARIDABAD,KHERI KALAN(113), FARIDABAD,HARYANA-121002,have changed my name to NAL BABU SHARMA,for all,future purposes 0040712166-5

I,ASHOK S/O BHAVSAGAR SHARMA,ADD-RZ-20A/347, GALL NO-9/10,JAGDAMBA VIHAR WEST SAGARPUR, SOUTH WEST-DELHI-110046, changed my name to LAB BABU SHARMA,for all,future purposes 0040712166-6

I,Aditya Goel S/o Chetan Goel,R/o.H.No.-315,Ashoka Garden,Bharat-Nagar, Ashok-Vihar,Delhi-110052,have changed my name to Aditya Gupta,for all,future purposes. 0040712147-3

I,AFTAB MOHD ALAM,S/O LATE MOHD SAYEED ALAM,residing at,14/2ND-FLOOR GALI 20/A ZAKIR-NAGAR JAMIA-NAGAR DELHI-110025,have changed my name to AFTAB ALAM,for all,future purpose. 0040712150-7

I,Monika Arora W/o Lalit Wadhwa R/o B-52, Ram Nagar, Om Vihar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059, have changed my name to Monika Wadhwa after marriage. 0040712171-1

I,Maneesh Yadav,S/o Shayambabu Yadav,R/o C-744,Street-No.4,Shiv Bihari Karawal Nagar Delhi-110094, changed my name to Manish Yadav. 0040712150-6

I,YASHPAL SINGH JAMWALS/O Sub Maj/Hony Lt (now Capt) Kulip Singh R/o Vill Dodharu, PO Lagru, Teh Khundian,Distt. Kangra H.P.176031 have changed my name from YASH PALL SINGH to YASHPAL SINGH JAMWAL vide Affidavit No: IN/UP229199063908W dated 21.01.2024 before Notary Gautam Buddhu Nagar (U.P.) for all future purposes 0040712057-2

I,VEENAXI GOEL,W/O AJAY KUMAR R/O OP-5, TAMPURA DELHI-110034, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MEENAKSHI GOEL. 0040712147-6

I,IMATOOB HASSAIN/MATLOOB HUSSAIN,W/o Meboob Hasan R/o E-49/1Abul-Fazal Enclave Part-2,Sheena Bagh,New Delhi-110025,have changed my name to MATLOOB HASAN,Permanently. 0040712148-10

I,MANOJ KUMARS/O JAY BALLAB BHANDARI,R/o A-121,SECTOR-4,PUSHPI VIHAR, SOUTH DELHI-110017, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MANOJ KUMAR BHANDARI. 0040712148-8

I,Hiral Sameen Vyas,D/o -Piyush Pathak date of birth 30-09-1977,Residing at 0541,ATS Village,sector-93A,Old,Uttar pradesh-201304.Post marriage changed name to Hiral Sameen Vyas,now,I have changed my name to Hiral Vyas for all financial and non financial purposes. 0040712166-1

I,GEETA JASWANT SINGH, W/O RAVINDRA RAMA,R/O VILLAGE DHIKANA DISTRICT BAGHPAT,UTTAR PRADESH-261611,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO GEETA TOMAR. 0040712150-3

I,GARIMA,Aadhaar Number-399824316372,D/o Shri.Rakesh, R/o-Ward.No.12,Fartiya Tal Road,Loharu,Tehsil-Loharu, District Bhiwani(Haryana)-127201,have changed my name to Garima Kalkal for all,future purposes. 0040712150-2

I,Anmol Singh Kohli s/o Satnam Singh, R/o No.12, Nooti Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Anmol Singh, for all purposes. 0040712059-1

I,Rekha Gupta,W/o Chetan Gupta,H/o-1158,Shora Kothi,Kamla-Nagar,Clock Tower,Sukhi Mandi,Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Rekha Gupta,for all future purposes. 0040712147-5

I,Ranvir Kirat Rawat,S/o Late Shri Dhari Singh Rawat,R/o 57-58,U.G.F,Pocket-4,Sector-22,Rohini,Delhi-110086,have changed my name,from Ranvir Kirit Rawat to Ranvir Kirit Rawat,for all,future purposes. 0040712148-6

I,Rekha Gupta,W/o Chetan Gupta,H/o-1158,Shora Kothi,Kamla-Nagar,Clock Tower,Sukhi Mandi,Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Rekha Gupta,for all future purposes. 0040712147-5

I,Rekha Gupta,W/o Chetan Gupta,H/o-1158,Shora Kothi,Kamla-Nagar,Clock Tower,Sukhi Mandi,Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Rekha Gupta,for all future purposes. 0040712147-5

I,Rekha Gupta,W/o Chetan Gupta,H/o-1158,Shora Kothi,Kamla-Nagar,Clock Tower,Sukhi Mandi,Delhi-110007,have changed my name to Rekha Gupta,for all future purposes. 0040712147-5

I,FAUZIA SHAHID,W/o AGHA IRFAN AHMAD SHAH,R/o-B1 THIRD FLOOR,PLT.NO.6 BHASKAR COMPOUND,ABUL-FAZAL ENCLAVE-1,JAMIANAGAR OKHLA,NEW DELHI-110025,IN MY MARKSHEET MY NAME WRONGLY-MENTION FOUZIA SHAHID MY CORRECT NAME IS FAUZIA SHAHID. 0040712148-6

I,Dr. Sucharita Picasso,W/o Ram Picasso R/o HNo.903,Hello Tower Omaxe Heights,Sector-86,Faridabad,Haryana-121002,have changed my name to Sucharita Picasso. 0040712147-7

I,Dipali W/o-No.17009841TNK Mote Ashok Ramchandra, R/o-Lonarwadi,Tal-Kavathe Mahankal, Distt-Sangli, Maharashtra-416411,have changed my name,from Dipali to Dipali Ashok Mote, vide-Affidavit dated 03/02/2024, before-Notary Public-Delhi. 0040712148-6

I,Anurag S/o Anand Singh,R/o Qtr No-579, R.K. Puram, Sector-6 Postal Sb, Delhi-110022,have changed my name to Anurag Panchal. 0040712147-9

I,RAHUL VOHRA,S/O.Ravindra Kumar Vohra,F-101,Opposite-Agarwal Heightes,Uninav Heightes,Raj-Nagar Extension,Ghaziabad,Uttar Pradesh, 201017,have to changed my Name RAHUL KUMAR VOHRA,for all,future purpose. 0040712171-3

I,PRITA,D/O SANJAY KUMAR, R/O HOUSE-NO-16,ROZI COLONY,SECTOR-12,VIJAY NAGAR,GHAZIABAD,UTTAR PRADESH-201009,changed my name to PRIYA PRAPATI. 0040712148-4

I,Omveer Singh D/o Shri Ramesh Chander R/o 174, DDA Janta Flats, Pipli Phadlapur, New Delhi-110044, have changed my name to VEER SANGWAN for all purposes 0040712113-1

I,Nishtha Grover Malhotra,W/o parimoh Malhotra,R/o-7, Sanskrit-Nagar sector-14 Rohini Delhi-110085,have changed my name to Nishtha Malhotra, permanently. 0040712148-1

I,Pranjul Jain S/o Parveen Jain R/o/Ho.N.J-5/5, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051,have changed my name to Pranjul Jain for all future purposes. 0040712067-1

I,Batheri D/o Jai Singh and W/o Krishan Lal/R/o Near Ravidas Mandir, Hauz Khas, Hbrl, District- Kaithal, Kaithal, Haryana-136026, have changed my name to Bharti 0070887056-1

I,Nancy alias Nancy Kaur,D/o Harminder Singh,W/o Tanveer Singh Bhatia, R/o A-109, Ground-floor, Lajpat Nagar-Ist, South Delhi-110024,have changed my name to Nancy Kaur Bhatia 0040712055-1

I, Madan Lal S/o Khanchand R/o C-103 Neelamber Apartment Pitampura Delhi-110034 have changed my name from Madan Lal to Madan Lal Khurana permanently 0040712115-1

I,MANIK S/O RAJESH SHARMA, R/o Z-569, GALLI NO.19, PREM NAGAR-2,KIRARI SULEMAN-NAGAR,DELHI-110086,have changed my name to MANIK SHARMA. 0040712148-9

I,Junaid Mohd S/O MOHD Abdullah R/o 1912, Gali Rajan, Kucha Chellan, Darya Ganj, Delhi-110002 have changed my name to Mohammad Junaid S/o Mohammad Abdullah for all future purposes. 0040712142-1

I, JITENDER SINGH, S/O NIRBHAYA SINGH, R/O P-31 GROUND FLOOR, VISNU GARDEN, WEST DELHI, DELHI-110018. Have changed my name to JITENDER SINGH MATHARU for all future purposes. 0040712142-1

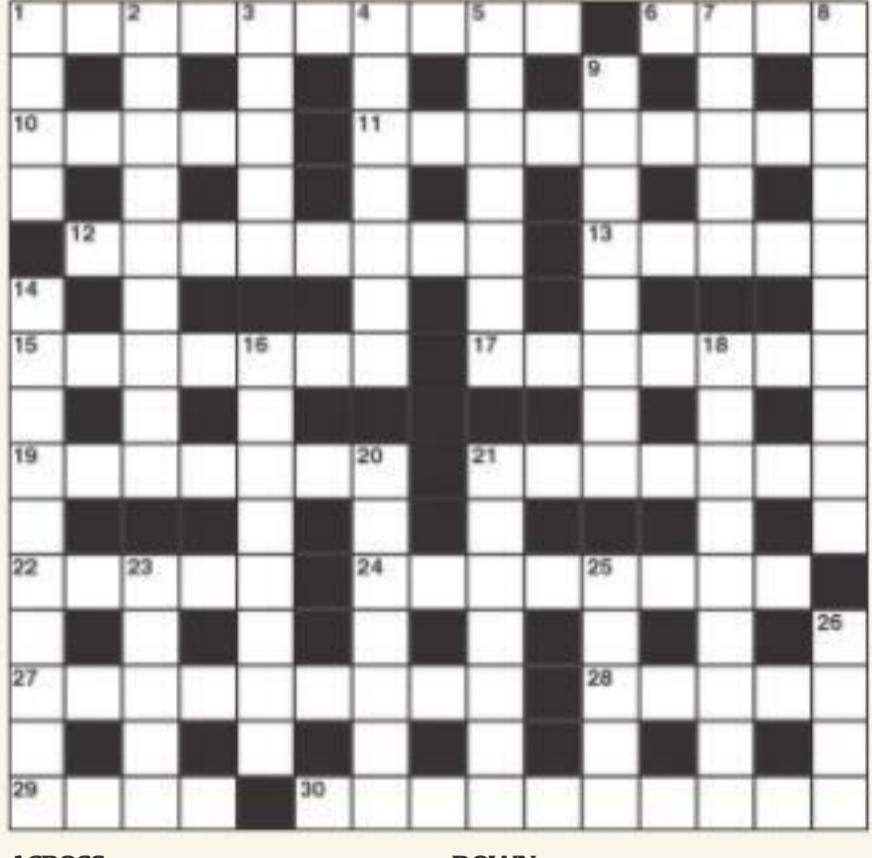
I,Indresh Khan S/o Ajai R/o H.no.132, New Ajanta park, near St Anthony School Khor Ghazab, Daulatpur, Paschim Vihar-Extension, New Delhi-110063, have lost my Original documents Possession-Letter, Possession Slip,Site Possession-Letter, NOC of water and Electricity connection of above address 0040712150-1

I,Hansa Gauri,W/o Jai Ram Jethwa,R/o 179,Around Jodhpur, DDA janta-flats,Paschim Vihar-Extension, New Delhi-110063 have lost my Original documents Possession-Letter, Possession Slip,Site Possession-Letter, NOC of water and Electricity connection of above address 0040712150-1

I,Shyam Sunder Singh S/o Unknown,Addl. No.41,Gali No.3,Subash Vihar North Block,Ghazipur Extension, New Delhi-110062, hereby disowned/ debared his son Prem Singh, his wife Nisha and son Neeshi from all their movable and immovable properties due to misconduct/misdeed of his son. My Clients are not responsible for any damages or loss caused by them. My Clients will be liable for his own risk, my clients will not be liable of any act of his son and his wife, in any manner whatsoever. 0040712150-1

I,Shyam Sunder Singh (Advocate) Enrolment No.D-570/2017 Office At 10/37, Ward No.1, Mehrauli, New Delhi-110030

CROSSWORD 5280



ACROSS

- Way out in the theatre perhaps (5-5)
- The last of many complaints? Definitely! (2,2)
- I held out for capital (5)
- Create a fuss as Adam and Eve had to do (5,4)
- Paper thrown at the match (8)
- One transaction that's flawless (5)
- Woodmen at play (7)
- Magnificent morning for an old lady (7)
- Change gears, points and lubricants (7)
- Aviation spirit (7)
- I complain when she returns (5)
- One is not expected to live on them (4,4)
- Insulting attack (9)
- Not qualified to give the final figure (5)
- Prententious tunes? (4)
- Just now- or just Christmas? (7,3)

DOWN

- Help a character in opera (4)
- Musketeer's call for a non-share policy? (3,3)
- What he does is appropriate (5)
- New area to decline after rising charges (7)
- Compulsive motoring (7)
- Draw a small amount (5)
- People having it agree - not to marry? (6,4)
- He may not like women. Bet Alice can change him (8)
- Horrified woman novelist on board perhaps (10)
- Parliamentary terms? (8)
- Very pleased with the lamp indeed (9)
- At least he's private (7)
- Effusive oil-producers? (7)
- Going with some hesitation to tender (5)
- People may decline to learn it (5)
- Parking place for sport (4)

Solutions Crossword 5279 Across: 1 Jupiter, 5 Tacks, 8 Policeman, 9 Nor, 10 Rock, 12 Identity, 14 Ignore, 15 Legend, 17 Squirrel, 18 Item, 21 Art, 22 Meditated, 24 Turns, 25 Parades Down: 1 Japer, 2 Pal, 3 Tuck, 4 Remade, 5 Tenanted, 6 Continent, 7 Strayed, 11 Conductor, 13 Trimmers, 14 Instant, 16 Held up, 19 Midas, 20 Stir, 23 Ted.

JUMBLE WORDS

Below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quiz.

Despise the enemy strategically, but take him seriously. (10)

TWAAI **AKSSCL**

AILTT **HOPSCY**

Answer: DESPISE THE ENEMY STRATEGICALLY, BUT TAKE HIM SERIOUSLY tactically

A.P. CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Lenin Centre, Governorpet, Vijayawada - 520 002 (A.P.)
NIT No. MAU61-ADMINIS/APWS/1/2022-IS/2nd call
Dt: 29/01/2024

GEN TENDER NOTICE (Second call)

Name of Work: Engaging an agency towards maintenance for Happy Nest Website and related services (<https://happynest.live/>) for the period of 1 year though Custom bid services in GeM. The bid can be downloaded on GeM portal from **06.02.2024 to 20.02.2024 up to 14.00 Hrs.** Bid end date: **20.02.2024 up to 14.00 Hrs.** Bid opening date: **20.02.2024 @14.30 Hrs.** For further details, please refer to <https://gem.gov.in> and <https://crda.ap.gov.in>

Sd/- COMMISSIONER, APRDA, Vijayawada.

NORTH CENTRAL RAILWAY G20
Notice For E-Auction

Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, North Central Railway, Prayagraj in terms of Railway Board letter dated 13.06.2022 invites bids through E-Auction module in IREPS for Parcel Scanners, Pay & Use, water Vending Machine, Parking and Rail Coach Restaurant at Prayagraj and Leasing of SLRs/VP in the following station/locations/Trains of Prayagraj Division.

COMMERCIAL PUBLICITY/ADVERTISEMENT:

S N : 1 E-Auction catalogue No : MSS-PS-24-2

Details of publicity: Contract for the work of operation of parcel scanner machine for scanning of all outgoing parcel at Prayagraj (02 Parcel Scanner Machine) KANPUR CENTRAL JN. (02 Parcel Scanner Machine) Railway Station (Parcel Office). E-Auction Start Date & Time : 09.02.2024 at 12.30 Hrs

S N : 2 E-Auction catalogue No : PRYJ-RCR-24-02

Details of publicity:Contract for setting up & operation of Rail Coach Restaurant (Restaurant On Wheels) for Period of 05 years at Kanpur, Govindpuri, Subedarganj, Prayagraj Chhoki, Aligarh Railway station.

E-Auction Start Date & Time : 19.02.2024 at 12.30 Hrs

Catering /MPS/WVM units

S N : 1 E-Auction catalogue No : PRYJ-MSS-WVM-24

Details of publicity: Water Vending Machines at Kanpur Central Railway stations for the period of 05 year. E-Auction Start Date & Time : 14.02.2024 at 12.00 Hrs.

Parking cum Access Control Rights

S N : 1 E-Auction catalogue No : PRYJ-CNB-RW-158

Parking Lot for Three Wheelers at location at Kanpur Railway Station in (Division PRAYAGRAJ). For 3 Years. E-Auction Start Date & Time :

06.02.2024 at 12.00 Hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No : PRYJ-ALJN-MX-24

Parking Lot for Two Wheelers, Three Wheelers and Four Wheelers at location at Aligarh Railway Station in (Division PRAYAGRAJ). For 5 Years. E-Auction Start Date & Time : 16.02.2024 at 12.00 Hrs.

E-Auction catalogue No : PRYJ-RW-160-24

Parking Lot for Three Wheelers at location at Prayagraj Railway Station in (Division PRAYAGRAJ). For 2 Years. E-Auction Start Date & Time :

19.02.2024 at 11.00 Hrs

Pay & Use toilets BOT basis

E-Auction catalogue No: PnU-SFG-Tol-35

Pay & Use toilets BOT basis at Subedarganj Railway Station for 15 years. E-Auction Start Date & Time : 19.02.2024 at 12.00 Hrs

Interested bidders may please visit official website for e-auctioning i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for further details and participating in e-Auction. Important note: 1. Bidders, who wish to participate in the e-auction module should have valid Digital Signing Certificate (DSC) and same may be procured form any of certifying authority of controller of Certifying Authorities (CCA) Government of India, details of same may be obtained from www.cca.gov.in. 2. Prospective bidders will be required to get themselves registered online at IREPS (Commercial Auction Module) 3. One time registration fee of ₹10,000.00/- and applicable GST(non-refundable) will be required to be paid online by the entity before participating in any commercial auction. 4. For more information, requirement and various aspects regarding this e-Auction, interested bidders are advised to visit <http://www.ireps.gov.in/epsn/jsp/common/learningCenter.jsp> 5. Earning Money Deposit (EMD): 5% of the total contractual bid value to be deposited online during the auction, EMD of the successful bidder will be retained as Security Deposit. 6. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute right to these contracts any point of time (or for taking any decision) depending upon the circumstances if any. 7. Railway Administration reserves the full and absolute right to short term these contracts any point of time (or for taking any decision) depending upon the continuation/ discontinuation of these trains or commencement of new train services. (para pertains to Leasing of SLRs/VP) 8. The successful bidder will also have to pay applicable GST as imposed by Govt. of India from time to time are applicable. Rail administration will not be responsible for this.

218/24(DG)

North central railways @PRONCR @northcentralrailway

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & I Lewis

CALVIN & HOBBES by Bill Watterson

MARVIN by Tom Armstrong

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You are beginning to doubt whether a number of financial commitments are worth the bother. You'll have to settle bills for purchases or other obligations which are due to work out more costly than you feared. Partners have the advantage, so don't push issues you can't win.

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

You may prepare yourself for what could be a hectic day, but there's no reason at all why you shouldn't come through with flying colours, having gained in self-respect and confidence. Your optimism shines through in the end.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

With Mercury still pestering the Sun, it's doubtful whether you'll be able to give a straight answer, but it doesn't matter as long as you know what you mean. There is so much still to be said in a treasured relationship, but you may not be able to say it yet.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Venus' helpful presence is boosting your morale, and whatever else happens today, it will be your sense of status and responsibility that is crucial to your well-being and happiness. A colleague at work may seem determined to disagree.

CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

These are uncertain times and you're not the only person to stop being so self-indulgent. How about relaxing for a change and splashing out some of your hard-earned cash on a treat for you and your friends? Work still seems to be going slowly, so take it easy if you can.

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Take domestic matters in hand and pay close attention to any and all possible causes of family friction. Some of the decisions that need to be taken may seem hard now but will be worthwhile in the long run. Your costs still appear to be rising, so keep an eye on unnecessary expenditure.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Your ruling planets, Saturn and Uranus, are currently making a rather powerful aspect to each other, and you may be under considerable pressure. But every cloud has a silver lining and even apparently major crises will bring welcome benefits in your direction.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

The planetary position is generally favourable, especially now that Venus and Jupiter are poised to help you on your way, and any difficulties you are currently facing are very much the result of your own bad management. So the solutions lie with you more than with the stars.

SUDOKU 5463

Difficulty Level 3s

Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy;
3s = Medium; 4s = Hard;
5s = Very Hard;
6s = Genius

SOLUTION SUDOKU 5463

BHAKRA BEAS MANAGEMENT BOARD (POWER WING)

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER

E- NIT No :- 06/2023-24, Dated: 05.02.2024

Name of Office: Executive Engineer, O&M Division, BBMB, Punjab Bagh, New Delhi-35.

Name of Work: White washing in residential double story quarters in BBMB complex at 220 KV S/St. BBMB Delhi.

Document Downloading 05.02.2024 15:30 hrs onwards

Receipt of Bids online 04.03.2024 upto 15:30 Hrs.

Opening Time 05.03.2024 15:30 hrs onwards

The detailed NIT including pre-Qualifying conditions and EMD, please visit BBMB Website: www.bbmb.gov.in or <https://etenders.gov.in>

1512-PR TS-4 | For your Better Tomorrow Save Energy Today

NORTHERN RAILWAY

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Northern Railway

Name of Work and its location 30-Elect-44-T-Ri-23-24-E3

Electrical work in connection with Repairing, Operation & CAMC of addressable Fire Alarm System at Rail Bhawan for three years.

Approx. Cost of the works in Rs. 59.88 Lacs

Address of the office Sr. Divil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

Bid Security Rs. 119800.00

Date & time of submission of tender 04.03.2024, 12.00 Hrs.

Opening of tender 04.03.2024, 12.00 Hrs.

Website & notice board www.ireps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 384/24

BEFORE DEBTS RECOVERY TRIBUNAL -II, DELHI.

4TH FLOOR JEEVAN TARA BUILDING PARLIAMENT STREET NEW DELHI -110001.

Notice under section 19(4) of the Recovery of Debts Due to Bank and Financial Institutions Act 1993 read with rule 12 & 13 of the Debts Recovery Tribunal (Procedure Rule) 1993 in the matter of TANO 206/2022 HDFC Bank Ltd.

DATE: 01.02.2024

APPLICANT

VERSUS

RESPONDENT

M/S PHONE ZONE & ORS.

DEFENDANT

1. M/s Phone Zone, 2. Mr. Gangaji Saran S/o Mr. Kewat Ram, 3. Mr. Lakshmi Kharbanda S/o Harjinder Singh, All At: G-3 Krishna Plaza II Plot No 3 Sect 12 Dwarka New Delhi 76 Also At 603 Badli Patti Village Paprawali Najafgarh Jhalikara South West Delhi 43 Also At 1, 2, Gali No 10 30 Foot Road Sangam Mar Extension Najafgarh New Delhi - 43

Whereas the above named applicant (s) have instituted a case for recovery of Rs 29,10,695.85/- (Rupee Twenty Nine Lakh Ten Thousand Six Hundred Ninety Five And Eighty Five Paisa Only) against you and where as it has been shown to the satisfaction of the Tribunal that it is not

Bumrah stokes up the series

India ride on individual brilliance, chiefly the fast bowler's match figures of 9/91, to beat England by 106 runs and level the series, but concerns remain for hosts

VENKATA KRISHNA B
VISHAKHAPATNAM, FEBRUARY 5

AS THE clock struck 2:12 pm, Tom Hartley's off-stump went for a walk. On a sun-soaked Vizag pitch, Jasprit Bumrah stood with his arms outstretched before the rest of his teammates mobbed him for one final time here. On a pitch that hardly showed any signs of coming to life, it was befitting that Bumrah (match figures of 9/91) gave finishing touches to a Test that he had single-handedly put India in control from Day 2 onwards. And on Monday, with the help of Ashwin, he helped India finally overcome the Bazball blues, posting a series-leveling 106-run win. After two rounds, it reads India 1, England 1. And when the series resumes after a nine-day break in Rajkot, it would need a brave punter to put money on which way this will end.

If the jubilant celebrations in the middle showed the magnitude of this win that comes sans Virat Kohli, KL Rahul, Ravindra Jadeja and Mohammed Shami, there were loud cries in the dressing room too. Head coach Rahul Dravid, who wasn't known for his animated celebrations during his playing days, celebrated each England wicket on the final day pumping his fists with unbridled joy. What a difference on week makes.

As soon as they wrapped up the win, Dravid stood in the corner alongside skipper Rohit Sharma and chairman of selectors Ajit Agarkar, engaging in a serious discussion. Despite the win that they have plenty to deliberate shows the potency of England's Bazball and lack of clarity over the availability of Kohli and Jadeja for the remaining three Tests.

"Just a little bit better than the last game?" Dravid said as to how the team is responding to Bazball challenge. "I think they're playing very well. It's not like wild slogging. They are actually showing some very good skills. Some of the shots they are playing require a lot of skill and ability. You can't just come there and execute those things and just say, 'well, I want to play attacking and not have the skills to execute it.' So I think there's more to it than just attacking cricket. They know when to pull back, they know when to attack. So they're playing slightly differently, no doubt about it, but they've been very successful. They know how to find that balance and we know we're up against the challenge and we're looking forward to it," Dravid added.

This is why this win doesn't certify that India have turned a corner. Like in Hyderabad, even here India rode mostly on individual brilliance, starting from Yashasvi Jaiswal's 209 to Bumrah's 9/91, Shubman Gill's 104, Kuldeep Yadav's 3/71 in the first innings and Ashwin's 3/72 in the second after going wicketless in the first.

For India to consistently keep Bazball in check, they need the sort of collective effort that made them invincible at home in the past.

There are plenty of concerns to address and holes to fix before they can confidently put their hands up and say they have answers to what Bazballers throw-up to them. But for the time being, India can definitely breathe a sigh of relief that they have not let England run-away with a huge lead, which looked a possibility at one point in Vizag before Bumrah unleashed a spell for the ages.

"I have always known that it is going to be a tough series. They have a lot of experienced players. It is one of the things we forgot looking at their squad, three of them closing on 100 games and 184 (for James Anderson). Their spinners are young. It has been tough. We would like to be 2-0, but considering the cricket being played on both sides 1-1 is a fair position to be in" the head coach said.

It is definitely a fair position. Unlike

STROKES OF BRILLIANCE

AFTER YASHASVI Jaiswal's 209 and Jasprit Bumrah's six-wicket haul in the first innings, as head coach Rahul Dravid mentioned, India were kept in the game by individual performances right through the second Test. Day 4 was no different with Rohit Sharma, Kuldeep Yadav and Shreyas Iyer providing moments on the field that helped India overcome Bazball.

ROHIT'S CATCH

It was a catch that halted England's charge. As Pope cut Ashwin ferociously, Rohit appeared to move towards his right, but as the ball flew to his left, he put his hand out to pull off a sensational reaction catch. That he managed it within a reaction time of just 0.45 seconds made it all the more special as Pope's stay ended at 23.

KULDEEP'S STRIKE

Even though wickets were falling at the other end, Zak Crawley was still going strong, until Kuldeep delivered a straighter one that kept low and had him pinned to the crease. While the on-field umpire gave not-out, Kuldeep convinced Rohit to send it to DRS, which confirmed three reds as Crawley was the fifth wicket to fall.

SHREYAS RUN-OUT

Although England's top-order was out of India's way, the lone remaining headache was Ben Stokes. Having single-handedly taken his team home from improbable situations in the past, India had to get him quickly before he got set. And as the England captain took off on a tight single, Shreyas Iyer's throw from square-leg had Stokes just short of the crease as India smelled victory.

Hyderabad, where India pressed the panic button under pressure, they resisted here. Having started Day 4 on Monday, needing 332 runs and nine wickets in hand in pursuit of a 399-run target that no team has chased even before Indian soil, England stayed true to themselves. As James Anderson revealed on Sunday, they had seen India to be vulnerable and not clear in their approach. So despite this being a daunting task, they still managed to create a bit of scare.

That England stayed back at the ground even three hours after the match ended, warming down with a game of football before they head off to Abu Dhabi for a six-day break showed how confident they stand in terms of their game.

India's vision is a bit blurred, more so in the absence of key players. Some like Shreyas Iyer are still fighting to keep their spot in the XI. Shubman Gill just about managed to save his career with a second-innings hundred. KS Bharat, the wicket-keeper, hasn't quite grabbed the opportunities. Axar Patel is nowhere close to what he was when England toured here last and is merely playing because he can make useful contributions with bat. The rest of the series will either leave India confident about the immediate future or shove them back to a state of worry, searching for players good enough at this level. The stakes are that high.

What will England do now? Joe Root stopped Pope near the boundary line; it wasn't just a punch of gloves and 'good luck, mate' chat but a pretty earnest chat. Root reversed-swept his first ball and the camera zoomed in on Ashwin: did he look taken aback or was it the realisation that it was game-face-on



Jasprit Bumrah (L) took three more wickets on Monday to add to his game-changing six-wicket spell in England's first innings. Reuters

How India tripped Bazball as it sprinted to finish line

VENKATA KRISHNA B
VISHAKHAPATNAM, FEBRUARY 5

IT CAME down to a boxing bout, of sorts. England had landed a few Bazball-blows to leave India staggering and the 332-run target was shrinking rapidly. For most of the first session on Day 4, along with the bat-ball contest, it was mind games that delighted those who value the ebbs and flows of Test cricket. At one point, it seemed the decibel level was dropping. The Indians were getting nervous.

Jasprit Bumrah was seen off, Axar Patel was sawn off, and with India reluctant to turn to Kuldeep Yadav, it was up to Ravichandran Ashwin, who was wicketless in the first innings and had his reputation dented a bit in the first Test.

Usually restlessly tentative at the start when he tries to feel bat on ball, first Test hero Ollie Pope was motoring along. Ashwin had chosen his angle of attack the same as in the first Test: from round the stumps. But this time, his over-spin deliveries were extracting more bounce off the Vizag track.

Around him, Indian desperation lay in the air. Deep-set fields, a wincing Rohit Sharma, a frowning Rahul Dravid framed this gloom. It was then that Ashwin broke through with a ball that not only drifted away with the angle but bounced on Pope, who was hell-bent on cutting it but couldn't ride the bounce. The ball flew to the left of first slip where Rohit pulled off a reflex gem that would have made Mark Waugh purr in delight.

What will England do now? Joe Root stopped Pope near the boundary line; it wasn't just a punch of gloves and 'good luck, mate' chat but a pretty earnest chat. Root reversed-swept his first ball and the camera zoomed in on Ashwin: did he look taken aback or was it the realisation that it was game-face-on



R Ashwin took three wickets, including the crucial one of Ollie Pope. PTI

SCORECARD

INDIA vs ENGLAND

ACA-VDCD STADIUM, VIZAG

Toss: India, chose to bat

INDIA 1st INNINGS

396

ENGLAND 1st INNINGS

253

INDIA 2nd INNINGS

255

ENGLAND 2nd INNINGS (O/N)

67/1

Z Crawley lbw b Yadav 73 (132b, 8x4, 1x6)

R Ahmed lbw b Patel 23 (31b, 5x4)

O Pope c Sharma b Ashwin 23 (21b, 5x4)

J Root c Patel b Ashwin 16 (10b, 2x4, 1x6)

J Bairstow lbw b Bumrah 26 (36b, 5x4)

B Stokes run out (Iyer) 11 (29b, 1x4)

B Foakes c & b Bumrah 36 (69b, 4x4, 1x6)

T Hartley b Bumrah 36 (47b, 5x4, 1x6)

S Bashir c Bharat b Kumar 0 (8b)

J Anderson not out 5 (8b, 1x4)

■ Extras (b 8, lb 5, nb 2) 12

■ Total (all out: 69.2 overs) 292

■ FoW: 2-95 (Rehan Ahmed, 21.5 ov), 3-132 (Ollie Pope, 28.2 ov), 4-154 (Joe Root, 30.6 ov), 5-194 (Zak Crawley, 41.6 ov), 6-194 (Jonny Bairstow, 42.4 ov), 7-220 (Ben Stokes, 52.4 ov), 8-275 (Ben Foakes, 64.6 ov), 9-281 (Shaob Bashir, 67.3 ov), 10-292 (Tom Hartley, 69.2 ov)

■ Bowling: J Bumrah 17.2-4-46-3, M Kumar 5-1-26-1, K Yadav 15-0-60-1, R Ashwin 18-2-72-3, A Patel 14-1-75-1.

■ India won by 106 runs

ing in the first innings, he got a ball to skid on from the leg-and-middle line. An alarmed Crawley abandoned his front-foot play and tried to rush back. Mistake.

Out of position, he flailed at it across the line and got rammed on the pad. The umpire felt it was missing leg, even Rohit seemed to think so but Kuldeep implored his captain to take the DRS. Crawley had to go 194 for 5 but Bairstow was joined by Ben Stokes.

However, Bumrah would leave Stokes bereft of his partner with a screamer in the 44th over: The shiny side was outside, but this back-of-length ball tailed in sharply to starle Bairstow whose weak prod couldn't stop this from hitting his pad. He took the DRS but no luck; England 194 for 6 at lunch.

The second session threw the most puzzling visual of the day. The Pirate of England's adventurous ship, Stokes, in a daze, Shreyas Iyer rushed to his right, grabbed the ball, and had a sideways dart at the stumps to find an ambling Stokes just short of the crease. Iyer would show with his index finger how slim the margins were - Stokes would have known then it would be the margin of defeat too.

But this is England. Even with their captain abandoning them in a brain fade, Tom Hartley, who with his all-round ability has shown admirable fighting qualities, and Ben Foakes added 55 runs to reach 275 for 7 when Bumrah intervened. Again.

Sensing Foakes was all hard hands, he slipped in a slower one, and grabbed the return offering. What remained was the Ashwin watch - would he get to his 500th Test wicket - but it would be Bumrah who fittingly sealed the win by knocking out Hartley's off stump. The margin of victory - 106 runs - may not reveal the entire picture, but it is safe to say India have managed to weather a storm in Vishakhapatnam, a city used to witnessing cyclonic storms

Did you hear that: Experts' verdict on Root, DRS and Team India



Joe Root (L) was dismissed after mistiming a slog, while Zak Crawley was given lbw off a straighter one by Kuldeep Yadav after a contentious DRS call. PTI

the game for India, getting the better of Ben Foakes and then uprooting Tom Hartley's off stump to seal the 106-run win.

It was Bumrah's six-wicket haul, his best figures in India, that gave the hosts a sizeable first-innings lead and it's only fitting that the 30-year-old - now the leading wicket-taker in the series - caps off the win and is adjudged as player of the match. Even the opposition skipper isn't reticent in his praise.

"Jasprit is obviously on the opposing side but sometimes you just have to hold your hands up and say, what a player," Stokes tells the broadcasters in his post-match address.

Nasser Hussain on Sky Sports: "Really, it was just the magic of Bumrah. He got a 3-fer today but that spell in the first innings blew away England for 250 on a really flat pitch."

"That ball he bowled to Ollie Pope and that spell he bowled in the end was the difference for me. Sometimes you can be critical of your own team, sometimes you can go, 'You know what, they were touched by a genius today'."

Rohit Sharma in the post-match presentation: "Yeah, it is (a luxury to have Bumrah). I mean, look, he's a champion player for us. It's been a while, you know, that he's doing the job for the team."

Cook: "India will be relieved more than anything"

Stokes on Bumrah: "Just have to hold your hands up and say, what a player!"

The Indian pace spearhead sees through

India will be relieved more than anything. They were under the cosh after the first Test. This Indian side can definitely be beaten again. England have got close here without any hundreds. They'll be disappointed."

ALASTAIR COOK

FORMER ENGLAND CAPTAIN

Hyderabad. However, there are still three more Tests to come and the last English captain to win a Test series in India thinks if anything, the win in Vizag would have come as a relief for the hosts.

"India will be relieved more than anything. They were under the cosh after the first Test. This Indian side can definitely be beaten again. England have got close here without any hundreds. They'll be disappointed," says Cook on BBC TMS.

India coach Rahul Dravid is all praise for the visitors as well, stating there's much more to their tactics than just the slogan Bazball.

"They are playing very well. Whether you call it Bazball or whatever, I'm not sure how happy they are about it, but they are playing really good cricket."

"They've shown good skills. It's not like wild slogging. Some of the shots they are playing require a lot of skill and ability. There's more to it than just attacking cricket."

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

FEBRUARY 5

DAY 4, START OF PLAY: England are 67/1 and require 332 runs to win with Zak Crawley (29) and Rehan Ahmed (9) in the middle.

1ST SESSION

Nasser Hussain on Zak Crawley: 'India is best place to bat at top of the order'

Jimmy Anderson had forewarned after Stumps on Sunday that even a target of 600 wasn't big enough to keep England from chasing it, let alone 399. Crawley and Ahmed live up to Anderson's claim, scoring at almost 4.5 runs per over. The former brings up his fifty.

Hussain on Sky Sports: "From where Crawley was a year ago - everyone calling for his head, and that he shouldn't be in the Test side - look at how he played in the Ashes, look how he's playing now. The reason he's been so confident is that he's playing in that attacking mindset England are asking of him. India is the best place to bat at the top of the order, it's not reversing, it's not spinning. He's playing beautifully at the moment."

Alastair Cook: 'Root is desperate to fit in with Bazball, struggles with tempo'

The spinners pave the way for India to steadily comeback. First, Axar Patel gets rid of Ahmed before Ravichandran Ashwin picks Ollie Pope and Joe Root in quick suc-

Swing bowler from Rann of Kutch shining in U19 World Cup

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 5

GROWING UP, Raj Limbani had two options, either focus on studies like his other siblings or help his father in farming. But unlike his brother and sisters, Raj moved to Baroda, 550km away from Dayapar, a village in Rann of Kutch, to chase his dream of playing cricket.

"From our village, Pakistan border is only 27 km away. So generally, the kids from our village go to Ahmedabad, Surat or Baroda for studies. But in Raj's case, it was different. In 2017, he moved to Baroda just to play cricket," father Basant Patel tells *The Indian Express*.

"I am a farmer, so I told him to go and chase his dream. But if it won't happen, our arandi's farm (castor) is waiting for you. But right from a very young age, he had this passion towards the game, that sometimes even we failed to understand. But seeing him now playing for India puts a smile on my face," he says.

How Sikkim, Andaman fielded 'strong' teams at Natls

NIHAL KOSHIE
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 5

WEIGH-INS and verification of men's freestyle wrestlers completed closer to midnight, finalisation of jumbo draws that resulted in a delayed start on Monday and a mega entry list of 325 wrestlers across weight classes, with certain categories comprising 34 wrestlers and 16 first-round bouts.

States like Sikkim and Andaman and Nicobar, not known for wrestling prowess, fielded wrestlers named Rahul Rathi, Parvinder, Vinay Dahiya and Hritik Yadav. Mizoram, Meghalaya and Lakshadweep also had stronger-than-usual teams comprising a few wrestlers from powerhouse states. The entry list read pretty similar in women's freestyle, too, a day earlier. Puducherry, a lightweight in wrestling, finished third in the team championship.

Thirty-four teams, including institutional units Railways and Services, were represented on the final day of the Senior National Wrestling Championships as the Ad-hoc committee, with the mandate to run the sport, allowed those who turned up in Jaipur to participate — provided their papers, including licence book — were in order.

"We didn't stop anyone from competing at the Senior Nationals in Jaipur because this is the championship recognised by the sports ministry. We didn't want wrestlers to miss out on the opportunity. We welcomed every eligible wrestler. Even those who participated in Pune at the nationals conducted by the suspended WFI were given entry here. Some states had conducted two separate trials, one for Pune and one for Jaipur. In the end, only the best wrestlers will finish on the podium and be included in the camp, so the extra numbers don't matter," said an official.

Last week, the suspended WFI conducted its nationals in Pune, which was organised by its suspended president Sanjay Singh, a loyalist of former president Brij Bhushan Sharai Singh, who faces sexual harassment charges. The sports ministry had said the Pune nationals were unsanctioned while the one in Jaipur, conducted by the Indian Olympic Association appointed ad-hoc committee is the recognised one.

The state associations aligned with the suspended WFI didn't field teams in Jaipur, an official confirmed. So to ensure representation and to have strength in numbers, the ad-hoc committee contacted well-known coaches from the states that boycotted the Jaipur nationals and asked them to field active wrestlers.

"We don't know how the coaches selected the wrestlers they brought along, but at least there is maximum representation," said another official involved in conducting the Senior Nationals.

At the Pune nationals last week, Sanjay Singh had said that 25 state units had participated. Railways and Services, which attracts the cream of talent, didn't field teams in Pune.

Jayasuriya's 8-wicket haul lifts Sri Lanka to emphatic 10-wicket win

ASSOCIATED PRESS
COLOMBO, FEBRUARY 5

LEFT-ARM spinner Prabath Jayasuriya finished with eight wickets in the match to lead Sri Lanka to an emphatic 10-wicket win in the only test against Afghanistan, wrapping up the victory on the fourth day Monday.

Angelo Mathews (141) and Dinesh Chandimal (107) formed Sri Lanka's backbone in the first innings as they totalled 439 runs and take a 241-run lead. Afghanistan made 198 in the first innings and was bowled out for 296 in the second, giving Sri Lanka a target of 56 runs to win.

Dinum Karunaratne (32 not out) and Nishan Madushka (22 not out) knocked the target easily in the eighth over. Earlier, the tourists crumbled from their strong start to reach 252-7 at lunch, having started the day on 199-1. Ibrahim Zadran made 114 for Afghanistan, his maiden test century. Afghanistan started the day needing 42 runs to cover the deficit and hoping to build a fighting score, after Ibrahim Zadran and Noor

The right-arm swing bowler Raj has picked up only five wickets in four matches, but he can take wickets with the new ball, which has given India an early burst that has eased the pressure on Indian spinners and helped them win all their matches in the tournament so far.

With no infrastructure and not a single turf wicket, Raj started bowling with a tennis ball. Once he made up his mind to be a professional cricketer, the tennis ball was replaced by heavy cork balls. Basant also recalls how his son has fought through the harsh climate of Kutch.

"We live in a desert. The weather is also very harsh be it summer or winter. I have seen him battling heat-stroke in the summers and dry cold of winters. But it never stopped him. Playing in the sand was also not easy and to buy any equipment, you will have to go to the nearest city, which is 100 km away," recalls Basant.

In 2010, Basant's elder brother Manilal Patel, who works in Gujarat Electricity Board took a transfer to Baroda after the family's



Father Basant, a farmer, allowed his son Raj to move to Baroda to pursue cricket.

eldest daughter completed her intermediate. Seven years later, Raj, the youngest among the four joined them but not for studies. He came to pursue his dream.

"My father took a transfer so that we can get a good education. The idea was that he

would don the role of the parent in Baroda, while my uncle would look after the farm. With three of us, it worked completely fine, but in 2017, when Raj came, instead of looking for a good school, we were looking for a good cricket academy," narrates Hardik

Limbani, Raj's cousin, who works in the thermal plant in Baroda.

"The famous Moti Bagh Cricket Club was only 4kms away from our quarter. The cricket club is famous for producing the Pathan brothers (Yusuf and Irfan), then the Pandya brothers (Krunal and Hardik) and Deepak Hooda. We didn't have any hesitation at all," says Hardik. Digvijay Singh Rathore, coach of Raj says it is not the talent or his background that caught his eye but it was the thought clarity that impressed him the most.

"First time, I met him during the U-16 camp. When you ask any kid what they want to become, the natural answer will be 'to play for India.' But this guy came with a diary, where he has written down everything," says Rathore.

"He has written it down that he wants to play the U-16. In the first year of his U-19, he wants to attend the camp in NCA. Then he wanted to play the U-19 World Cup, followed by first-class cricket for Baroda, then India A and the last thing he mentioned was to represent India's senior team. You don't see such clarity in many budding cricketers. He has

ticked all the boxes so far and with the kind of hunger he has, there is a high chance that he will play for the senior team," adds Rathore.

Before the World Cup Raj Limbani was not the first-choice seamer for India. He was fourth in line after Naman Tiwari, Aradhya Shukla, and Dhanus Gowda. But it was his incisive spell of 7/13 against Nepal in the Asia Cup that helped him jump ahead of the rest.

Back in Dayapar, Basant Patel tries to finish all his work by 1 pm, so that he can rush back to his house and watch India's match.

"I have tweaked my routine a little for him. He has done his hard yards and I think credit must go to the coaches of Moti Bagh Club, who shaped his career. He once told me a story of how Irfan Pathan was impressed by his bowling at the club. I don't exactly recall the year but it was before Covid. Before the tournament, Irfan Pathan was at the NCA with the team, and he had spent a good 10 or 12 days with them," says Basant.

Live: 1:30 PM: India U19 vs South Africa U19 Semi-final, Star Sports Network, Disney Hotstar

Popping the Pimple

Five out of six Indians in the women's singles main draw at the WTT Star Contender Goa tournament last week used long pimples but the players risk getting found out in the long run by better players, coaches are concerned



Manika Batra's success inspired other Indian paddlers to opt for the long pimple rubber, a rarity on the international circuit.

against top players, who have understood how the rubber works.

The top players have also realised that it was just a passive rubber and they could use their tireless attacks to tire out the opponent. It's essentially why Manika and no Indian have entered even the top 30 of world rankings.

"Coaches who are not bothered about their wards coming into the top 30 of the world rankings will encourage it. They are just happy with them doing well at the national level. But they don't see Sreeja's or Manika's game," Ghosh says. "They think that just by putting the pips they are getting points, but it's not true. They don't get that many points with long pips. Sreeja gets most of her points by attacking with the forehand, Manika twiddles."

Long before Manika made the rubber famous, it was Neha Aggarwal Sharma who first ventured into territory unknown, and started to use the rubber that not many Indians used or rather, knew how to.

"When I started using it, I was seen almost as an outcast," Neha tells this newspaper. "It became even more difficult when I was in the national team and the coaches didn't know about it. There were times at the national camp when I would just play with another bat. I even stopped playing with it for some time when the results were not going my way."

By the time Manika joined Gupta's training centre in Delhi as a youngster, Gupta had

Back in 1998, as an 8-year-old, Neha was asked by her coach, the renowned Sandeep Gupta, to try out playing with a pimpled rubber on her backhand. Not one to question her coach, she agreed and together they went about on a journey of figuring out what exactly the long pips are capable of doing, how best to use it and what are the limitations of using it.

"They even went to Switzerland for an eight-day camp with Dr Herbert Neubauer, largely considered the pioneer of this rubber and whose equipment the top players use today. Out there, he taught them the intricacies of the rubber and 'added more weapons to the game,' as Neha puts it.

"When I started using it, I was seen almost as an outcast," Neha tells this newspaper. "It became even more difficult when I was in the national team and the coaches didn't know about it. There were times at the national camp when I would just play with another bat. I even stopped playing with it for some time when the results were not going my way."

By the time Manika joined Gupta's training centre in Delhi as a youngster, Gupta had

to a large extent, figured out what all the rubber could do and realised it could be put to best use only if the player had a powerful forehand. One of the key weapons that Gupta was able to teach both Neha and Manika was 'twiddling', something that Manika has now made famous.

"We used the pimpled rubber to reduce the speed of the ball and then change the grip mid-rally and use the plain side to attack. The shock effect of this variation confuses the opponents and gives us the point," Gupta explains.

However, barring Manika and to an extent, Sreeja, no Indian who currently plays with long pips has been able to do well and remain consistent mostly because top players can easily sort out the playing style of those who use these rubbers.

Being a passive rubber, the long pimplies are generally used by players to defend. It gets extremely difficult against top players who are unrelenting and tireless with their attacks.

"We've always been passive and wait for the opponent to make a mistake. What if they don't make a mistake? We shouldn't be

waiting for them to make a mistake," says Manika's coach Balgu. It was this thought on which the idea that Manika should use her defensive rubber to attack, took flight.

"Now, we may be losing against lower-ranked players which would never happen earlier but at the same time, we're also beating the top players which we also never did. The ultimate goal is beating the top Asians, the Chinese especially, right? How do you do that if you don't have something in your bag to threaten the opponent," Balgu adds.

The wins over top-20 players give them hope that they are in the right direction. "The whole part of evolving is adding new weapons to your game," Balgu says.

■ ■ ■

As more and more Indian players turn to these rubbers, it gives rise to a question: is the potential upswing purely because of the equipment or has Indian TT indeed taken a giant stride?

Ghosh, Sreeja's coach, points to the fact that the reason China is the gold standard in international table tennis is because the players there are taught the same basics in all parts of the country.

"In India, 10 players have 10 different actions but in China, 1000 players have the same action. You will only see a minor tweak in their action. In India, different coaches in different parts of India have different schools of thought and teach the basics differently. We need a national centre where not only the youngsters but the coaches are also coached."

Before India can have a centralised coaching programme, they need to figure out which is the right way to go. Go pimpled or flat?

Balgu, who has played with fast rubbers all his life, says that if used properly, the pimpled rubbers could well make India a powerhouse.

"We have this rubber, it's capable of much more than we ever thought. And we're yet to figure out everything it's capable of doing. We've got a headstart. If the other aspects of a player's game can complement it, India can become a powerhouse. We have an advantage as others don't try to play with it."

It's almost as if Balgu is reading out the verdict on the long-standing debate. In reality, though, the jury is still out.

Another poor batting show for Delhi, this time vs Baroda

DELHI produced yet another inept batting performance on Monday to end up with a single point against Baroda in a Group D match, thereby dashing hopes of a knockout qualification in this year's Ranji Trophy. After Baroda declared their first innings at 435 for 9, Delhi started the day at 113 for 4, and they were all-out for 177. Baroda enforced the follow-on and Delhi crawled to 68 for 1 in 34 overs when the two captains decided to shake hands.

Brief scores: Baroda 435/9 dec. vs Delhi

177 in 56.2 overs (Ayush Badoni 44, Jonty Sidhu 40, Atit Seth 3/39, Bhargav Bhatt 3/18) 68/1 in 34 overs (Yash Dhull 39 not out)

Jharkhand pulverise Manipur by innings and 102 runs

JHARKHAND completed a comprehensive victory by an innings and 102 runs here on Monday to clinch seven points in their Elite Group A match of the Ranji Trophy on Monday. Jharkhand dominated the game

through the course of play on all four days as they dismissed Manipur for a paltry 170 in the first innings and took a massive 334-run lead as they piled up 504/5 declared. There was no change in fortunes with the bat for Manipur in the second essay despite skipper K Langlonyamba Meitan's 88, as they folded for 232 to hand Jharkhand a victory with a bonus point here at the Keenan Stadium.

Brief scores: Manipur 170 and 232 in 93.3 overs (Langlonyamba Meitan Keishangbam 88; Pankaj Raunak 4/22) lost to Jharkhand 504/5d by an innings and 102 runs.

Karun Nair slams ton for Vidarbha against Rajasthan

RAJASTHAN earned three points by virtue of first-innings lead of a mere 41 runs as they played out a draw against Vidarbha at the Sawai Mansingh Stadium in Jaipur. In reply to the hosts Rajasthan's total of 432 for which they con-

RANJI ROUND-UP

sumed more than 130 overs, Vidarbha kept them on the field for about similar time duration, facing 125.3 overs to make 391. Karun Nair struck a 258-ball 112 with 12 fours to top score for Vidarbha while skipper and wicketkeeper-batter Akshay Wadkar made 59 and Yash Rathod scored 81.

Brief scores: Rajasthan 432 drew with Vidarbha 391 in 125.3 overs (Yash Rathod 81, Karun Nair 112, Akshay Wadkar 59; Manav Suthar 5/133).

Kerala's slender lead helps them gain three points

KERALA grabbed three points from their drawn contest against hosts Chhattisgarh for taking a slender lead of 38 runs in the first innings. The game ended when Chhattisgarh reached 79/1 in their second essay after Kerala set a 289-run target on the final day. Sachin Baby missed a century for the second time in the match as he was run out for 94 in Kerala's second innings after making 91 in the first. Baby's knock, combined with Mohammed Azharuddin's unbeaten 50 took Kerala to 251 for 5 declared on the final day.

Brief scores: Kerala 350 and 251/5d in 18 overs (Sachin Baby 94, Mohammed Azharuddin 50%; Ajay Mandal 2/93) drew with Chhattisgarh 312 and 79/1 in 22 overs (Rishabh Tiwari 39%; Basil Thampi 1/18)

Suresh, Pradush shine as Tamil Nadu beat Goa

SURESH Lokeshwar (52) and Pradush Ranjan Paul (65) struck half-centuries to help Tamil Nadu complete the formalities and win their Ranji Trophy Group C match against Goa by seven wickets, here on Monday. TN needed to score just 76 runs for the win after ending Day 3 on 61 for 1 from 26 overs. Overnight batters Lokeshwar and Paul completed their fifties but left the task of taking the team home to Baba Indrajith (7 not out) and Vijay Shankar (13 not out), as TN reached 142 for 3 in 49.5 overs chasing 137. Lokeshwar added 18 runs to his overnight score of 34 and he struck six fours during his 129-ball knock.

Brief scores: Goa 241 & 168 lost to Tamil Nadu 273 & 142 for 3 in 49.5 overs (Suresh Lokeshwar 52, Pradush Ranjan Paul 65; Darshan Misal 2/51) by 7 wickets.