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NEET & IIT-JEE

# THE WORLD

TOP OF THE  
WORLD



Julian Assange

AUSTRALIA  
Parliament  
wants Assange  
back home

**Melbourne:** Australian Prime Minister Anthony Albanese said Thursday he hoped for an amicable end to the prosecution of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange after lawmakers ramped up pressure on the United States and Britain by passing a motion calling for the Australian citizen to be allowed to return to his home country. Albanese told Parliament the days before Britain's High Court of Justice hears Assange's appeal next week against extradition to the US on espionage charges were a "critical period." "I hope it can be resolved amicably. It's not up to Australia to interfere in other countries, but it is appropriate for us to put our very strong view," he said. AP

CHINA  
Beijing blames  
Taipei for death  
of fishermen

**Beijing:** China has condemned the death of two of its fishermen who drowned during a pursuit by Taiwan's coast guard, saying the incident undermined the "mutual goodwill between compatriots" on both sides of the Taiwan Strait when they were celebrating the Chinese New Year. Following the death of the two fishermen after a boat chase by the Taiwanese Coast Guard on Wednesday, China also called it the "result of offensive actions pursued by Taiwanese officials" and asked Taipei to ensure the safety of fishermen from the Chinese mainland. PTI

KUWAIT  
Parliament  
dissolved amid  
political gridlock

**Dubai:** Kuwait's emir on Thursday dissolved parliament, the latest dissolution to strike the oil-rich nation's legislature amid years of political gridlock. The state-run KUNA news agency announced the decree from the country's ruling emir, Sheikh Meshal Al Ahmad Al Jaber. It blamed "offensive and uncontrolled" utterances by lawmakers for the decision. Parliament has been repeatedly dissolved after failing to move forward, with Kuwait's Constitutional Court in 2023 annulling a 2022 decree overturning such an annulment. AP

UNITED STATES  
Indian gets 51  
months in jail  
for fraud

**Washington:** A 24-year-old Indian national has been sentenced by a US court to 51 months in jail for defrauding an elderly American woman of USD 150,000 through a computer-hacking scheme, a US attorney said. Sukhdev Vaid of Haryana, pleaded guilty in December 2023 to wire fraud. He defrauded the woman through an international computer-hacking scheme that targeted elderly and resulted in more than USD 1.2 million in total losses. PTI

## Pak top court seeks assurance from govt of military's exclusive focus on defence matters

SAJJAD HUSSAIN  
ISLAMABAD, FEBRUARY 15

**PAKISTAN'S SUPREME** Court has come down hard on the powerful military's commercial activities and sought a commitment from the government to ensure the armed forces exclusively focus on defence-related matters rather than business ventures.

The assurance was sought by Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP) Qazi Faez Isa, who was heading a three-judge bench in a case scrutinising the use of military lands for business purposes.

The top court emphasised that all institutions of the country must stay within their constitutional boundaries, the Dawn newspaper reported on Thursday. The matter was initiated by former CJ Gulzar Ahmed in 2021 when the court's attention was drawn to the alleged illegal use of cantonment board lands in Karachi, which were acquired for strategic purposes but used for commercial gains. On Wednesday, Justice Isa regretted that the army had set up

marriage halls on military lands and then sought assurance from Attorney General for Pakistan Mansoor Usman Awan that the military would not engage in running business.

"Can you get this assurance?" Justice Isa asked Usman, adding that every institution should remain within its domain and work according to its mandate.

The attorney general conceded that the principle demanded that everyone should do their own job.

At the hearing, the counsel for the Evacuee's Trust Property Board (ETPB) told the court the building from which the dispute erupted belonged to the board since the individual to whom the land was allotted sold it on fake papers after which a five-storey building was built on the land.

Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar wondered if the ETPB was a bystander when the building was being constructed. Chief Justice Isa observed that it would not have been possible without the involvement of the Sindh Building Control Authority. PTI



Outside Imran Khan's party office in Lahore. Reuters

### IMRAN PARTY TO PROTEST TOMORROW

**Islamabad:** Jailed former Pakistan PM Imran Khan's party Thursday gave a call for nationwide "peaceful protests" on Saturday against its "marginalisation" in politics, saying it will not allow the people's mandate for it to be "stolen" by rivals. PTI

## Indian-origin motel owner shot dead in US

**Washington:** A 76-year-old Indian-origin motel owner was shot dead by a customer in the US state of Alabama following an altercation over a room, the latest in a string of tragedies to shock the community in the country. Pravin Raojibhai Patel, who owned Hillcrest Motel in Sheffield, was shot dead last week. According to Sheffield Police Chief Ricky Terry, William Jeremy Moore, 34, was arrested for the shooting death of Patel on February 8, WAFTV, a television station in Huntsville, reported.

Officials said the shooting was the result of an altercation that occurred when Moore came to the property looking to rent a room. PTI

JAILED FORMER Pakistan prime minister Imran Khan on Thursday sought the help of the US with a special message to Washington that it should play a role and voice concern about his country's "rigged" general elections. It was a purported diplomatic cable – the cipher – that Khan, 71, had waived at a public rally in March 2022 claiming that the US wanted to oust his government, soon after which his political stars took a downhill journey leading to incarceration, a conviction in multiple cases and even being disbarred from fighting the polls.

After a meeting Khan in jail, PTI speaker Asad Qaiser told media persons that the party has

nominated Umar Ayub Khan as the prime ministerial candidate.

"Khan has given a message that the US should raise its voice against the alleged rigging in elections. He also gave a special message with regard to America that the US had not played their role accordingly," Qaiser said. "If they are champions of democracy, then they should voice it if they think the polls were not fair." PTI



## SHOOTING AT KANSAS CITY EVENT

Fans flee after shots were fired in Kansas City, Missouri, US. A barrage of gunfire erupted on Wednesday near a celebration of NFL champion Kansas City Chiefs' Super Bowl victory, killing one and wounding 22. Police ruled out terror attack. Reuters

## 7 killed, 18 injured in Ukraine missile strike on Russia's Belgorod

REUTERS  
BELGOROD, FEBRUARY 15

SEVEN PEOPLE including a one-year-old girl were killed in a Ukrainian missile attack on Thursday on the southern Russian city of Belgorod, regional governor Vyacheslav Gladkov said. Eighteen other people, including four children, were hospitalised with injuries, with six in serious condition, Gladkov said, adding that four people, including two children, had already been released for outpatient treatment. He said the dead child's name was Valentina.

"We are all grieving with the families and friends of the victims," Gladkov wrote on Telegram. "I want to express my sincere condolences, realising that there are no words that can comfort this grief."

Later Gladkov said that another four injured, including two children, would be treated in Moscow.

Belgorod is the nearest ma-

jor Russian city to the border with Ukraine, and the city and surrounding region have come under frequent attack since February 2022, when Russia sent its forces into Ukraine in what it calls a "special military operation".

Russian authorities said 25 civilians were killed in the largest of these attacks at the end of December.

The Russian health ministry said it had despatched a team of medical specialists from federal centres to Belgorod.

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Loan facility of ₹1 lakh crore  
under Agriculture  
Infrastructure Fund**

Government of India

00-222013/02/22/224

**RIGHT TO INFORMATION ABOUT CANDIDATE**

applicable to political parties: 5-judge bench

**COURT SAYS PERMITTING UNLIMITED  
contributions violates free and fair polls****SCHEME 'NOT LEAST RESTRICTIVE'**  
means to achieve goal of curbing black money

# Supreme Court lets the sunlight in

Upholding citizen's right to know, court strikes down electoral bonds scheme, secret funding of polls

**SC orders SBI to give  
details of bonds to EC,  
sets March 13 deadline****ANANTHAKRISHNANG  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15**

INA historic verdict barely weeks before the Lok Sabha polls are set to be notified, the Supreme Court struck down Thursday the Narendra Modi government's 2018 electoral bonds scheme of anonymous political funding.

Highlighting that "the information about funding to a political party is essential for a voter to exercise their freedom to vote in an effective manner", a five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud, said that changes made in the laws to implement the scheme were unconstitutional.

Holding the scheme "violate" of the constitutional right to freedom of speech and expression and right to information, the court did not agree with the Centre's contention that it was meant to bring about transparency and curb black money in political funding.

In its two separate but unanimous verdicts spanning 232 pages, the court also directed the

**BUSINESS AS USUAL**

By UNNY



The five-judge bench headed by CJI D Y Chandrachud (centre), including (from left) Justices J B Pardiwala, Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai and Manoj Misra, on Thursday. ANI

**INSIDE**

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## All eyes on SBI and EC as wait begins for names of electoral bond donors

**RITIKA CHOPRA**

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

SBI, the authorised financial institution under the scheme, to submit by March 6 the details of electoral bonds purchased since April 12, 2019 till date to the Election Commission which will publish the information on its official website by March 13.

"SBI must disclose details of each electoral bond encashed by political parties which shall include the date of encashment and the denomination of the electoral bond," the bench said.

On April 12, 2019, the SC, in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

opportunity to read the order in detail but it's abundantly clear to us that SBI will have to share the names of those who purchased electoral bonds. So there's no doubt about it," said an EC official who requested anonymity.

What remains uncertain at this moment is whether the data shared by SBI will be presented in a format that helps one immediately match the bond buyer to the political party that received

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## FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORT ON  
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

## SC orders SBI to give details of bonds to EC, sets March 13 deadline

an interim order, had asked political parties to submit details of donations via electoral bonds to the EC in a sealed cover to be kept in the safe custody of the commission till further orders.

The SC also directed that poll bonds which are within the validity period of 15 days but have not been encashed by political parties shall be returned by the political party or the purchaser – depending on who is in possession of the bond – to the issuing bank which shall refund the amount to the purchaser's account.

The bench, also comprising Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, struck down a set of amendments.

"The Electoral Bond Scheme, the proviso to Section 29C(1) of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (as amended by Section 137 of the Finance Act 2017); Section 182(3) of the Companies Act (as amended by Section 154 of the Finance Act 2017); and Section 13A(b)(b) of the Income Tax Act (as amended by Section 11 of the Finance Act 2017) are violative of Article 19(1)(a) and unconstitutional," the bench said.

It held that "the deletion of the proviso to Section 182(1) of the Companies Act, permitting unlimited corporate funding to political parties is arbitrary and violative of Article 14".

Section 29C of the RPA as amended by the Finance Act 2017 stipulated that the political party need not disclose financial contri-

butions received through electoral bonds. Section 13A of the IT Act as amended said that the political party does not have to maintain a record of contributions received through electoral bonds. Section 182 of the Companies Act 2013 was amended by the Finance Act 2017 by which the earlier requirement of disclosure of particulars of the amount contributed by companies to political parties in their profit and loss accounts was deleted and donors were only required to disclose the amount contributed without disclosing particulars about the political party to which the contribution was made.

The court did not agree with the Centre's submission that the political party which receives the contribution does not know of the identity of the contributor as neither the bond would have their name nor could the bank disclose such details to the party.

The court argued that "de jure anonymity of the contributors does not translate to de facto anonymity." Saying that the scheme is not fool-proof, the court said that there are "sufficient gaps" in the scheme which enable political parties to know who paid what.

For example, Clause 12 of the scheme says the bond can be encashed only by the party by depositing it in the designated bank account. "The contributor could physically hand over the electoral bond to an office-bearer of the po-

litical party...or the contributor could after depositing the electoral bond disclose the particulars of the contribution to a member of the political party for them to cross-verify....ninety four percent of the contributions through electoral bonds have been made in the denomination of one crore. Electoral bonds provide economically resourced contributors who already have a seat at the table selective anonymity vis-à-vis the public and not the political party," the court said. The government had argued that the scheme was intended to curb blackmoney and ensure that contributions to parties flow through legitimate banking channels.

But the bench held that the scheme does not satisfy the least restrictive test necessary for imposing curbs under Article 19(2) on the right to information under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. "The purpose of curbing blackmoney is not traceable to any of the grounds in Article 19(2)". The court added that the scheme "is not the only means for curbing blackmoney in Electoral Financing" and "there are other alternatives which substantially fulfil the purpose and impact the right to information minimally when compared to the impact of electoral bonds on the right to information".

For contributions below Rs 20,000, electronic transfer is the "least restrictive" and "Electoral Trust" for amounts above that, it

pointed out.

The bench held that "the right to informational privacy extends to financial contributions to political parties which is a facet of political affiliation" but added that "the Constitution does not establish a hierarchy between the right to information guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) and the right to informational privacy to political affiliation, traceable to Articles 19(1)(a), 19(1)(b), 19(1)(c), and Article 21".

The SC said, "we are unable to see how the disclosure of information about contributors to the political party to which the contribution is made would infringe political expression... Under the current Scheme, it is still open to the political party to coerce persons to contribute. Thus, the argument of the Union of India that the Electoral Bond Scheme protects the confidentiality of the contributor akin to the system of secret ballot is erroneous".

On the amendment to Section 182 of the Companies Act permitting unlimited political contributions by companies as manifestly arbitrary, the SC said "the ability of a company to influence the electoral process through political contributions is much higher than making a distinction between profit-making and loss-making companies for the purposes of political contribution".

The provision as amended by the Finance Act of 2017 does not recognise that the harm of contributions by loss-making companies in the form of quid pro quo is much higher. Thus the amendment...is manifestly arbitrary for not making a distinction between profit-making and loss-making companies for the purposes of political contribution".

The court pointed out: "The purpose of Section 182 is to curb corruption and electoral financ-

ing. For instance, the purpose of banning a government company from contributing is to prevent such companies from entering the political fray. Amendment to Section 182 by permitting unlimited corporate contributions authorises unrestrained influence of companies in the electoral process. This is violative of the principle of free and fair elections and political equality captured in the value of one person, one vote."

The verdict said financial contributions to political parties are usually made for two reasons – they may constitute an expression of support to the political party or the contribution may be based on a "quid pro quo".

"The huge political contributions made by corporations and companies should not be allowed to conceal the reason for financial contributions made by another section of the population: a student, a daily wage worker, an artist, or a teacher. When the law permits political contributions and such contributions could be made as an expression of political support which would indicate the political affiliation of a person, it is the duty of the Constitution to protect them," it said.

In October last year, the bench began hearing arguments on the four petitions, including those filed by Congress leader Jaya Thakur, the Communist Party of India (Marxist) and the NGO Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

## • SC draws a new red line

this from how the electoral bonds scheme is operationalised rather than taking the state at its word. Justice Sanjiv Khanna, in his concurring opinion, stated that addressing a donor's "fear of retribution" for his political affiliation cannot be legitimate state interest.

CJI D Y Chandrachud also questions whether donor anonymity can be a legitimate state interest for all donors: distinguishing individuals such as "a student, a daily wage worker, an artist, or a teacher" from a corporate donor.

Asking the question whether there could have been less restrictive alternatives that could achieve the same objective marks a significant departure in the way the Supreme Court has historically attempted to balance competing rights.

The judicial approach in balancing two fundamental rights has largely been done by attaching significance to one right over the other. The court has also, in several cases framed this debate by placing public interest over in-

dividual fundamental rights which gave the state an upper hand.

For example, in 2018, the Supreme Court had restricted the right to protest around Delhi's Jantar Mantar to give effect to the right to a peaceful residence and the state's power to regulate such activities.

It was in the seven-judge bench landmark ruling in 2017 where the SC upheld the right to privacy as a fundamental right that it prescribed a definite and "structured" proportionality test.

This test essentially requires the state to show that its action, restricting a fundamental right, is proportional to its goal. This is a guard against arbitrary action that could completely wipe out a right in the garb of pursuing even a "legitimate state interest".

While the privacy ruling laid down the law, it was an academic exercise. Constitution benches since then have applied this test to uphold the law: Aadhaar (2018) and Demonetisation (2023). Electoral bonds, therefore, is a significant departure.

## • PM thanks Qatar Emir

brant Indian community in Qatar's development and their enthusiastic participation in various international events held in Qatar," the MEA said.

In a post on X, Prime Minister Modi said: "Had a wonderful meeting with HH Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad. We reviewed the full range of India-Qatar relations and discussed ways to deepen cooperation across various sectors. Our nations also look forward to collaborating in futuristic sectors which will benefit our planet."

Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra said: "The Prime Minister thanked the Emir for his support for the welfare of the Indian community, and, in this regard, expressed his deep appreciation to the Emir for the release of eight Indian nationals of Al-Dahra company. We are extremely gratified to see them back in India."

The MEA said Modi also met "Father Emir, His Highness Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani" and congratulated him on his "visionary leadership that paved the way for Qatar's development over the past decades".

Father Emir affirmed that India and Qatar share an unwavering bond, epitomised by mutual trust and cooperation. He also appreciated the role of the Indian community in Qatar's development and in nourishing the bilateral partnership," it said.

Modi, who arrived in Doha on Wednesday night after concluding a two-day visit to the United Arab Emirates, also met Qatar Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani.

The two leaders exchanged views on expanding bilateral cooperation in sectors such as trade, investment, energy, finance and technology. They also discussed recent regional developments in West Asia and emphasised the importance of upholding peace and stability in the region and beyond," the MEA said.

Modi also attended a dinner hosted in his honour by Qatar's Prime Minister.

## Sarfraz sizzles on Test debut

dishing out throw-downs, paying opposition teams to come play friendly games in which Sarfraz would bat the whole innings regardless of whether the team lost or not.

Life was not easy for the Khans. Naushad, who once sold toffees and cucumbers in trains and also sold track-pants after migrating from Azamgarh in Uttar Pradesh to supplement the meagre income he got as a Class 4 employee of the Western Railway, once had to tell him in the past. "We came from the slums, used to stand in queues for the toilet where my sons would be slapped and overtaken. We came from nothing and will go back to nothing. Sarfraz told me one day, 'Abbu, so what if this (playing for India) doesn't happen. We can always go back to selling track-pants'."

All those memories would have flashed across Sarfraz's mind when he waited for nearly four hours for his turn to bat on Thursday. "I was padded for four hours but told myself that I have kept so much patience, time to keep more," he would reveal later at the press conference.

The Commission's stand in the top court on electoral bonds has always been that it hurts transparency. In 2019, in its affidavit submitted to the apex court, the poll watchdog had informed SC that changes made in several laws relating to political funding would have "serious repercussions" on transparency.

"The court's verdict on Thursday only bolsters EC's long-standing position on electoral bonds. We have stood for transparency and this order endorses just that," the official said.

## • All eyes on SBI, EC as wait begins for donors' names

## • Three lost vision to pellet injuries

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OUTER DELHI'S ALIPUR: MORE CASUALTIES FEARED

# 7 workers charred to death in massive blaze at paint factory

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

SEVEN WORKERS were charred to death in a massive fire that broke out inside a paint factory in Outer Delhi's Alipur on Thursday evening. The victims are yet to be identified, said police. DCP (Outer North) Ravi Kumar said more workers may be feared dead as no one was able to escape.

According to Delhi Fire Services (DFS) chief Atul Garg, the blaze broke out at the single-storey factory before engulfing the entire premises. "We received a phone call about the fire at 5.30 pm from Bhogarh at Dayalpur market in Alipur," he said.

Twenty-two fire tenders were rushed to douse the fire, which took around two hours, said officers.

Seven bodies have been recovered so far. Police said the fire was preceded by a blast.

The factory was used for manufacturing paint material, added police. The exact reason behind the incident is yet to be ascertained, and further investi-



Smoke billows after a fire broke out in a paint factory, at Alipur, Thursday. Police said the fire was preceded by a blast. PTI

gation is underway, said police.

Meanwhile, families anxiously waited to see if any of those dead were their loved ones. Shyamu Kumar said his 19-year-old brother, Shubham, worked at the factory. "I don't know where my brother is... he recently joined the factory... He

is missing along with several others... more are feared dead... around a dozen workers used to work at the factory."

In May 2022, 27 people were killed and a dozen injured in a massive fire at a four-storey commercial building near Mundka Metro station. More than 20 charred bodies were recovered.

In January 2018, a fire at an illegal firecracker packaging unit in Northwest Delhi's Bawana Industrial Area left 17 workers dead.

IN WEST DELHI'S KIRTI NAGAR

## Man killed, decapitated after 2 cars collide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15



The victim's car, a Hyundai Elantra, was flung over the divider. Express

A FREAK accident in West Delhi's Kirti Nagar left a 27-year-old man dead — and decapitated — after his car collided with another vehicle on Wednesday.

Police said the victim, Vansh Jolly, a resident of Mansarovar Garden, worked as a marketing agent for a cosmetic product company. He is survived by his mother.

CCTV footage of the incident shows the victim's car, a Hyundai

Elantra, being flung over the divider and crashing into another four-wheeler on the other side of the road. Police said that Jolly's head got caught in the driver's side window and was crushed and dismembered.

Footage also showed his body lying in the driver's seat.

DCP (West) Vichitra Veer said at 5.45 pm, they received news that a man had died after two cars collided, with one of them hitting the road divider, at BCD Chowk in Kirti Nagar.

Officers said the other vehicle, a Toyota Etios, was being

driven by one Rajesh Arora, who runs an auto parts manufacturing unit. He sustained minor injuries and his vehicle was damaged.

"Prima facie, it appears Jolly lost control of the vehicle... a mechanical inspection of the car is underway," said police.

Police said a case under IPC sections pertaining to rash driving and causing death by negligence has been lodged against unknown persons. Officers said the CCTV footage of the incident has been collected to ascertain the sequence of events.

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E-mail to CP, Delhi at: [cp.sanjayarora@delhipolice.gov.in](mailto:cp.sanjayarora@delhipolice.gov.in), write to: CP, Delhi at P.O. Box. No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

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PHD CHAMBER  
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# BHARAT STARTUP & MSMEs SUMMIT 2024

February 16, 2024 | 9:00 AM  
Dr. Ambedkar International Centre, New Delhi

## Chief Guest



## Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar

Hon'ble Vice President of India

### PHDCCI - Leadership



Mr. Sanjeev Agrawal  
President, PHDCCI



Mr. Hemant Jain  
Sr. Vice President, PHDCCI



Mr. Rajeev Juneja  
Vice President, PHDCCI



Mr. Saket Dalmia  
Immediate Former President  
PHDCCI



Dr. Ranjeet Mehta  
Executive Director  
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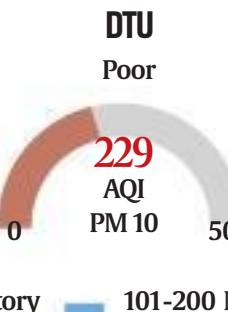
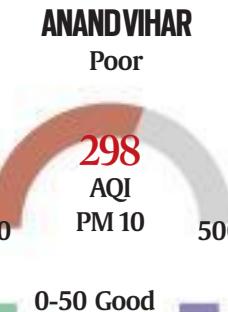
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# THE CITY



**S K Y W A T C H**  
**FORECAST:** February 16  
Mainly clear sky. Shallow to moderate fog in the morning.

**MAX: 26** 1.6°C above normal | **MIN: 9** 2°C below normal

Discuss audit report on Jal Board at budget session: BJP challenges AAP

**'Irregularities in DJB flagged in CAG report'**

The report has pointed out instances of the utility underestimating its expenditure, hence losses

in 2017-18 accounts. The report also highlights irregularities in the way the utility handles its assets.

Delhi Jal Board chairman Pradeep Kumar Singh said the report is "a reflection of the fact that there is no accountability in the system".

The Indian Express report on February 15.

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

THE BJP on Thursday slammed the AAP-led Delhi government over a "massive corruption" in the Delhi Jal Board during the 2017-18 fiscal — based on Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) audit findings.

Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva demanded that the audit report be "discussed immediately" on the floor of the Delhi Legislative Assembly, during the ongoing budget session.

"According to the CAG audit, the accounts of the Jal Board are not being fully disclosed, and the accounts that are being shown are not reliable," said Sachdeva.

"As per the rules, within three months of the financial year-end, accounts need to be deposited with the CAG, but according to the audit, no accounts have been deposited

since 2015, and these accounts have been written in 2021," Sachdeva said, adding that the Jal Board had informed the CAG of a loss of over Rs 9,300 crore, but when the accounts were deposited, only over Rs 2,700 crore were found, which meant, there was no record of more than Rs 6,500 crore.

Delhi BJP secretary Harish Khurana said it was "only after the BJP moved court over the matter that an affidavit by the CAG, stating that it had written 21 letters to the Jal Board over the delay, surfaced. "After the court's order, the Jal Board had to compulsorily provide details of its accounts to the CAG, and now that the audit of the 2017 accounts has come out, it will prove that this is going to be the biggest scam in Delhi," alleged the Delhi BJP secretary.

The AAP government, led by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, had said in December 2023 that it would take action against any erring officers if irregularities were proved. Water Minister Atishi had said that as "allegations of irregularities" were made, an audit since 2008 was being sought by the Delhi Chief Minister. "As the opposition is raising allegations of financial irregularities and mismanagement in the DJB, the CM has ordered a CAG audit of the Board's accounts from 2008 till date to bring out the truth... The Delhi government will take strict action against all those involved if any discrepancy comes out..." Atishi had said.

## SESSION EXTENDED

# Budget delayed, prep took longer than expected: Atishi

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

DELHI'S BUDGET will not be presented next week as preparation took "longer than expected", Finance Minister Atishi said on Thursday.

Delhi's annual financial statement is sent to the L-G for his assent and comments. Once this process is complete, the L-G sends it back to the Chief Minister, who then forwards it to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA). Once approved, the budget can be tabled in the Legislative Assembly.

The budget session of the Delhi Assembly commenced on Thursday with L-G VK Saxena's speech on the achievements of the Delhi government in the ongoing financial year. Officials said that the budget was supposed to be tabled on Monday.

This is not the first time that Delhi's budget presentation has been delayed. Last year, a day before it was to be presented, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal alleged that the MHA had not cleared the budget. This year, the Delhi government said that the delays were at its end. "We received L-G sahab's approval on February 14. Earlier, the budget was passed by the cabinet on February 11, and on February 13, it was sent to L-G for his assent. There has been no delay from the L-G's side. Today the budget will be sent to the MHA," she added.

The budget session, accordingly, has been extended, with the tabling of the budget expected either in the last week of February or the first week of March.

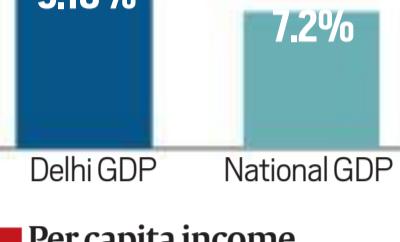
"It takes approximately 10-15 days for the budget's final approval and presidential assent. I estimate it won't be presented before February 25; it's possible that it will be presented after February 25," Atishi said.

BJP, meanwhile, called the failure to present the budget a "clear administrative failure" of the AAP government. Leader of opposition Ramvir Bidhuri said BJP MLAs will meet the L-G and demand that the government be dismissed.

The government admitted in the Assembly there was a delay in making the budget, but no reason was given. We want to know the clear reason and the one responsible... How was the date approved without the budget being prepared?" he asked.

## HOW DELHI FAERED IN 2022-23: WHAT L-G SAID IN SPEECH

### ECONOMY (2022-23)



■ Per capita income around 2.6 times higher compared to national average



L-G Saxena with CM Kejriwal. Amit Mehra

■ To enhance bed capacity, construction of new hospitals and re-modelling of 19 existing hospitals and 94 dispensaries expected to be completed this year.

■ Proposals for 5 new hospitals at Bindapuri, Baprola, Deendarpur, Keshavpuram and Sangam Vihar; more than 12,000 beds will be added.

■ More than 1.35 lakh CCTVs installed in RWAs/MWAs throughout Delhi to improve security.

■ About 93% households of in Delhi now have access to piped water supply.

■ Delhi saw modernisation of public transport system with over 7,100 buses servicing 500 routes; 1,650 of these are electric.

■ Free travel for women in govt buses surpassed 100 crore free trips.

■ Annual average PM 10 down from 324 ppm (parts per million) in 2014 to 219 ppm in 2023; PM 2.5 down to 106 ppm in 2023 from 149 ppm in 2014.

■ No. of 'good days' in terms of AQI up from 157 in 2018 to 206 in 2023.

PASS % (for academic session 2022-2023) X XII

99.68% 98.96%

15 New govt schools opened in 2023-24

## L-G SAXENA HIGHLIGHTS AAP GOVT'S ACHIEVEMENTS — AMID DISRUPTIONS

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

Singh Bidhuri, who led the eight-member opposition's disagreement with the L-G's address, called it "a white lie".

Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel later asked marshals to escort the BJP MLAs, barring Bidhuri, out of the House after they repeatedly interrupted the L-G's address.

The L-G further said that out of the Rs 78,800 crore budget for the 2023-24 fiscal, Rs 43,700 crore was allocated for implementation of developmental schemes, programmes and capital projects; 21% of this was for the education sector, the highest among all states and union territories.

With approximately 12% of the budget allocated to public health, the sector, Saxena continued, remained a primary focus of the government.

"Delhi being the national capital attends to people from all

parts of the country and all walks of life... My government seeks to fulfill their aspirations through sincere responsiveness and efforts," the L-G added.

Meanwhile, the LOP alleged, "The address given by the Arvind Kejriwal government to the L-G to read out is nothing but a bundle of lies. This government has completely failed on every front."

BJP MLA Vijender Gupta said the AAP had promised to open five new colleges every year but the current situation was such that 12 government-funded colleges in Delhi University were "on the verge of closure."

BJP MLA Ajay Mahawar, meanwhile, questioned why the AAP government did not implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme in Delhi despite several courts questioning the state of existing medical facilities in the city.

## Jindal university suspends two students for 'Ram temple discussion, putting up posters'

**VIDHEESHA KUNTAMALLA**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

TWO STUDENTS OF O P Jindal Global University were suspended for allegedly putting up posters and engaging in a discussion regarding the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, which varsity officials called "a serious violation of the student code of conduct". On Thursday, a section of students protested against the suspension.

The university student disciplinary committee (USDC), in its February 10 notice to one of the students, said, "You were allegedly involved in a serious violation of the student code of conduct of the university space."

Anjoo Mohun, varsity's Chief

You were found to have been putting up posters and engaging in conversation that involved extremely derogatory and provocative words and/or phrases aimed at detrimentally affecting the integrity and tranquility of the university space."

Historian Mohun, varsity's Chief Communication Officer, told *The Indian Express* that the students were suspended by the Office of the Chief Proctor as per guidelines for student conduct at the university" and did not elaborate further.

The notice stated, "...Members of the USDC unanimously decided to impose the following penalties..." The varsity suspended the student for the remainder of the

Varsity terms the incident 'a serious violation of student code of conduct'. Archive

spring 2024 semester and said he would be allowed to enter campus on August 1. It asked the student to submit two undertakings, signed by him and his parents, taking liability for any further breach of code of conduct that would ren-

der a graver punishment, including suspension or expulsion.

The notice said the student, in his written response, "Argued that you were only exercising your right to free speech in a democratic setup". The student acknowledged he was not a part of any student organisation that "aligns with any specific political ideology, in particular". The poster of the public discussion, organised by the Revolutionary Student League on February 7, read: "Ram Mandir: A farcical project of Brahmanical Hindutva Fascism".

The student organisation claimed the discussion was interrupted by a section of students chanting slogans of 'Jai Shri Ram', said the father in the complaint.

Around 3.45 pm on Monday,

I told my son that I would pick him up from his school, but he said he would take a cab as there was traffic congestion. Nearly 10 minutes later, I got a call from the school about my son being hospitalised..." the father told *The Indian Express*, adding that his son suffered severe injuries, including on the face. He said his son told him that a fellow student conspired with 19 people, including bouncers from outside, to attack him.

"They called him outside the school, surrounded him, and forcibly made him get inside one of the five cars they were driving... The accused intended to take my son away forcibly... The school staff confirmed these details, and the incident was captured on CCTV," said the father in the complaint.

## AAP'S PROPOSED SCHEME TO SETTLE WATER BILLS WAS BLOCKED, SAYS MINISTER

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
GURGAON, FEBRUARY 15

A 16-YEAR-OLD student has been assaulted by his classmates and outsiders near his school in Gurgaon, police said on Thursday, adding that three persons have been booked so far.

Police said the Class 11 student of a private school was assaulted by about 20 people on Monday.

The victim's father said the accused, who were trying to forcibly take his son away in their cars, attacked the boy when he resisted.

"Around 3.45 pm on Monday,

I told my son that I would pick him up from his school, but he said he

would take a cab as there was

traffic congestion. Nearly 10 minutes

later, I got a call from the school

about my son being

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and forcibly made him get inside

one of the five cars they were

driving... The accused intended

to take my son away forcibly... The school staff confirmed these details, and the incident was captured on CCTV," said the father in the complaint.

"Noida

## MBA GRAD KILLED IN PG, ACCUSED FOUND DEAD IN FLAT

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NOIDA, FEBRUARY 15

A WOMAN murdered in Noida, a man found hanging in Ghaziabad — and a possible discord between two "friends" that may have prompted the crimes.

Officers in the Noida Police who are probing the murder-suicide said the duo, Aman Kumar (25) and Shalini Tripathi (24) hailed from Mathura and had known each other for four-five years. Shalini had done an MBA and was working in the HR department of a private firm.

On Wednesday, Aman went to Shalini's PG in Nawada village in Noida's Sector 58 where he allegedly strangled her. He then went to his rented home in Ghaziabad and hanged himself.

The woman was taken to Fortis Hospital in Sector 62 by her

**'MEER KI DILLI, SHAHJAHANABAD: THE EVOLVING CITY'**

## Delhi fest celebrates 18th-century Urdu poet Meer Taqi Meer

**UDBHAV SETH AND ADITYA VADDEPALLI**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

A FOUR-DAY festival honouring the work of Meer Taqi Meer, a renowned 18th-century Urdu poet, kicked off at the India International Centre (IIC) in Delhi on Thursday.

The festival titled 'Meer ki Dilli, Shahjahanabad: The Evolving City' — hosting book launches, seminars, and cultural events — is organised by Anjuman Taraqqi Urdu (Hind), one of the oldest Urdu literary institutions in India.

Delivering the keynote address on Thursday, Saif Mahmood,



Javed Akhtar and Saif Mahmood during the event at India International Centre in Delhi on Thursday. Suanshu Khurana

feature Dastan-i-Mir — a dastangoi presentation by Mahmood Farooqui and Darain Shahidi.

Historian Ali Nadeem Rezvi is scheduled to speak at the festival at 10:30 am on Friday on the trans-

sition from Dehlvi-i-Kunha, the first and the oldest city built by Qutubuddin Alai, the founder of the Delhi Sultanate, to Shahjahanabad, the seventh city built in 1648 by Shah Jahan.

"Earlier, Delhi was called the city of the dead as it was full of tombs. There is no archaeological evidence about the city between the Vedic period and the 10th century AD. Our session will explore the city's transition from the Mahabharata period to when it was called Shahjahanabad. We will explore the emergence of the Persian language," said Rezvi.</p



Govt. of Haryana

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### All India Institute of Medical Sciences, AIIMS Majra (Rewari)

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### Bhiwani-Dobh Bhali Rail Line Doubling

Cost over Rs. 470 crore

### Manheru-Bawani Khera Rail Line Doubling

Cost over Rs. 410 crore

### Rewari-Kathuwas Rail Line Doubling

Cost over Rs. 350 crore

### Kathuwas-Narnaul Rail Line Doubling

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## Inauguration

### Rohtak-Meham-Hansi New Rail Line

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### Jyotisar Anubhav Kendra

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## Train Service on Rohtak-Meham-Hansi Section

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**Sh. Narendra Modi, Prime Minister**

Presided over by

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# POLL BONDS VERDICT

## Money creates exclusionary impact on candidates, parties: SC

### LEADERSPEAK

We welcome the decision of the Supreme Court today, which has struck down this 'Black Money Conversion' scheme of the Modi Government, calling it "Unconstitutional". We remember how the Modi Govt, PMO and FM bulldozed every institution - RBI, Election Commission, Parliament and Opposition to fill BJP's coffers. No wonder, 95% of the funding was received by BJP.

**MALLIKARJUN KHARGE**  
CONGRESS CHIEF

The right of the people to know has been placed above all clever legal arguments marshalled to defend the illegal Electoral Bonds Scheme. The judgement of the Hon'ble Supreme Court is a great victory for transparency, the right to know and, if I may add, level playing field in elections.

**P CHIDAMBARAM**  
EX-FINANCE MINISTER

This (bonds) was...a part of...sincere efforts to make elections transparent. The honourable Supreme Court has given its judgment and we respect it. What we have to say on the verdict will be decided after going through the verdict.

**RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD**  
BJP LEADER

The Hon'ble Supreme Court has rightly held that the #Electoral Bonds are unconstitutional. This will ensure a transparent electoral process... This judgment has restored #democracy and level playing field for all political parties. It has also ensured the common man's faith in the system.

**M K STALIN**  
TAMIL NADU CM

CPI welcomes Supreme Court's judgment declaring electoral bonds as unconstitutional. We opposed electoral bonds from the very beginning. In the past decade, BJP has time and again tried to corrupt and compromise our electoral system. SC has put a halt to one such malpractice today.

**D RAJA**  
CPI GENERAL SECRETARY

The decision of the Honorable Supreme Court on the illegality and immediate abolition of electoral bonds is a welcome decision for the revival of democracy. This is an expose of the illegitimate policies of BJP. This decision is also a revelation of the BJP-corruption bond. When accounts of last 10 years are asked from taxpayers, shopkeepers and businessmen, then why should it not be asked from BJP.

**AKHILESH YADAV**  
SP CHIEF

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN G**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

IN ITS judgment Thursday striking down the Electoral Bonds Scheme, the Supreme Court said that "money creates an exclusionary impact by reducing the democratic space for participation for both candidates and newer and smaller political parties".

While discussing the "close association between money and politics", Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud in the opinion authored for himself and Justices B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra said, "It is believed that money does not vote but people do. However, studies have revealed the direct and indirect influence of money on electoral politics. The primary way through which money directly influences politics is through its impact on electoral outcomes."

The ruling stated that the two ways in which money influences electoral outcomes are through vote buying and through incurring electoral expenditure for



Advocate Prashant Bhushan speaks to mediapersons in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

political campaigns.

"Campaigns have a measurable influence on voting behaviour because of the impact of television advertisements, campaign events, and personal canvassing. An informed voter is one who is assumed to be aware of the policy positions of the candidate or the party they represent and votes on a thorough analysis of the pros and cons of electing a candidate," it stated.

"On the other hand, an uninformed voter is assumed to not possess knowledge of the policy

positions of the candidates. Campaigns have an effect on the voting behaviour of both an informed and an uninform voter. The impact of campaigns on an informed voter is supplementary... Electoral campaigns reduce the uncertainty about candidates for an informed voter. For an uninform voter, electoral campaigns play a much more persuasive role in influencing electoral behaviour because campaigns throw more light on candidates," it said.

"Political parties", the court

### THE GLARING GAPS IN THE SCHEME, ACCORDING TO THE FIVE-JUDGE BENCH

- A 'political party' is a relevant political unit... the right to information about a candidate contesting elections is also applicable to political parties.
- Information on political funding would enable voter to assess if there is correlation between policy making and financial

contributions.

- Electoral bonds provide economically resourced contributors who already have a seat at the table selective anonymity vis-à-vis the public and not the political party.
- There are sufficient gaps in the scheme which enable

parties to know the particulars of contributions made to them.

- Argument of the Union of India that the scheme protects the confidentiality of the contributor akin to the system of secret ballot is erroneous.

- Scheme does not provide

any regulatory check to prevent trading of bonds, though Clause 14 states that bonds shall not be eligible for trading.

- It is not the least restrictive means to achieve the purpose of curbing black money in the electoral process. There are other alternatives.

said, "use innovative techniques of campaigning by going beyond the traditional methods of advertisements, door-to-door campaigning and processions to increase outreach".

"For example, political parties sponsor religious festivals and community fairs, organise sporting matches and literary competitions where cash awards are given. These outreach techniques leave a lasting impression on the minds of uninformed voters. Thus, enhanced campaign expenditure proportionately increases campaign

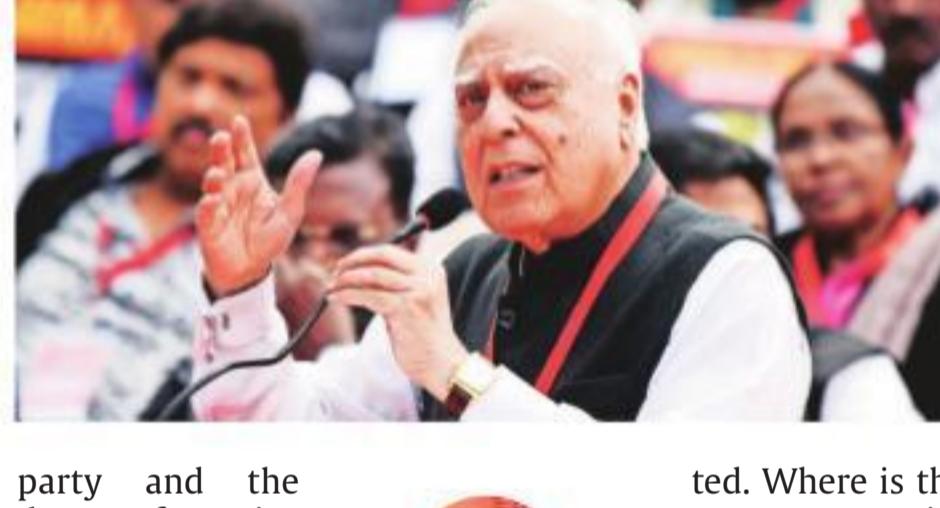
outreach which influences the voting behaviour of voters", it said.

The SC said that "money also creates entry-barriers to politics by limiting the kind of candidates and political parties which enter the electoral fray. Studies have shown money influences selection of candidates by political parties because parties would prefer fielding candidates who would be able to substantially self-finance their campaign without relying on the party for finance. In this manner, candidates who belong to socio-eco-

party extending to costs related to coalition propaganda, print and digital advertising, vehicle and equipment hire, political rallies, food transportation, and daily expenditure for party cadres. The compromises which newly formed political parties have to make lead to a dilution of the ideology of the party in exchange of its political sustenance.

In this manner, money creates an exclusionary impact by reducing the democratic space for participation for both candidates and newer and smaller political parties".

## 'Neither Ordinance nor law can set aside Supreme Court verdict'



SENIOR ADVOCATE and Rajya Sabha MP **KAPIL SIBAL** who led the argument for the petitioners in the Supreme Court case against the electoral bond scheme speaks to **MANOJ CG**. Sibal lays down the notable aspects of the judgment that struck down the scheme, why he thinks it is a scam, and if the Opposition should now make this its main election issue.

### What is your first reaction to the Supreme Court verdict striking down electoral bonds as unconstitutional?

It is a historic verdict. It tries to restore the concept of free and fair elections, which is the basic structure of the Constitution. It tries to bring about transparency in the electoral system, tries to bring about accountability, sets aside all the amendments that had been made by my late friend Arun Jaitley that were intended only to aggrandise the political party in power at the Centre, which is the BJP. In many senses, this is perhaps one of the most historic decisions this court has rendered.

### What are the striking aspects of the judgment in your view?

The first thing is they have held that the Right to Information under Article 19(1)(a) is fundamental to democracy. Relying upon the KS Puttaswamy and the other judgments, the Supreme Court has said a citizen has the right to know who contributed how much money to the political party in power. When you are contributing this kind of money through these bonds... obviously, the contributions are huge and there could be an element of quid pro quo and therefore the citizen has a right to at least have that information. So, in a sense, it is taking forward the concept underlying Article 19(1)(a), which is the right to information in the electoral process to ensure that there is a level playing field.

Remember, they used to take their MLAs from one city to another to ensure they were protected. The second is the amendments protected the political

party and the donors from income tax. It also protected the political party from disclosing or allowed the political party not to disclose the funding it had received through electoral bonds.

The third is there was no limit to funding... Under the previous law, it was only 10% of the average profits of a company for the last three years that could be funded through the individuals concerned or the entities concerned to the political parties. That limit was removed so you could contribute as much as you wanted and even a loss-making company could continue (funding) under the scheme... So, all those amendments have been set aside as violative of Article 14.

So, it is a great day for transparency, Right to Information, and for ensuring free and fair elections. But at the same time, the Supreme Court also realised that this electoral bond scheme had nothing to do with elections. Because it is white money it could not be used for curbing black money and this goes only to one political party so that they can use this money for any expenses that they want, including toppling governments.

Remember, they used to take their MLAs from one city to another to ensure they were protected.

Where is this money coming from? It came from these bonds. And during the elections, if you have paid for all sites for advertisements, if you hired helicopters, all the planes, where did that money come from? From these bonds.

So, it skewed the entire electoral process and it had nothing to do with black money because the use of black money is rampant... In fact, it represented a scheme through which the donors, the big industrialists, could bond with the political party in power. That is the bonding scheme.

### You mentioned the word quid pro quo. Is there any evidence to suggest that there was or could be a quid pro quo?

How will we know at this point? Now, this information has to be given by the political party to the State Bank of India (SBI), which within three weeks of this judgment will give it to the EC. And within one week thereafter, the EC has to publish it on its website. Then, we will get to know the extent of the bonds given by the donors, who was the purchaser of the bond and to what extent it was given. Once we know the purchasers of the bond we will know the kind of favours the purchasers have gotten because that will be available

in the public domain.

So we will know what the quid pro quo is. Then what we can do after that is a separate issue. But this information will be available and, of course, as you remember Modi ji (PM Narendra Modi) always asks, 'Where are the scams of the BJP, where are those scandals of BJP?' Most of them are still under the carpet because they ensured that none of these scams are investigated at any stage. But here is a scam that is out in the open. And perhaps the biggest scam in the history of India.

### So you are alleging that scams lie in the details of the electoral bonds that will come out?

The scheme itself is a scam. The Supreme Court has struck it down. There is no element of proportionality. There is no element of reasonableness. It is a scam without a doubt. Now, to what extent this scam was made on the basis of a quid pro quo is the next step but that is something that needs to be investigated. They will not investigate because you know the ED and the CBI under their direction. We will have to do it.

### While the BJP has got the lion's share of the contributions through electoral bonds, the Opposition parties too have got. They will also be affected.

Sure, they will be. At least that information will come out. And we also made clear that some of these big industrialists were funding all political parties.

### Many of the Opposition parties are in government in states.

That is right. They must be funding all political parties because they may have economic interests in each of those states.

### Could they also face the heat?

Why not? The fact of the matter is the heat will be faced mostly by the BJP because it is their scheme. It is not the scheme of the

Opposition. So, why should they be facing the heat? They were using this scheme, which is now termed to be unconstitutional.

### At least three regional parties – BJD, DMK and TMC – have got almost all their funding through electoral bonds. They will also be hit hard.

Why not? If the BJP is hit, the others should also be hit. But the scheme was not brought by them. The BJP brought it.

### What's the alternative funding model in your view now?

The earlier law prevails. We are in the midst of an election... So let's talk about it after the elections and a new government is put in place.

### Do you think the Opposition parties should now make this their main election issue?

It should be made a national issue. It is a great opportunity for all political parties in the Opposition to get together and fight the election on this basis.

### Will it have resonance among people? It is, after all, not a bread-and-butter issue.

People know they have got ₹5,000-6,000 crore like this. Do you think the people are not going to respond? Of course, people are going to respond.

### Do you apprehend the government coming out with some steps to negate the judgment?

They cannot. An Ordinance cannot set aside a judgment. No law can set aside a judgment. They can bring an Ordinance to put in place a new funding system. But not this.

### Do you think the government will do that?

I don't think so. Because this information will be available only by March 13. By that time, the model code of conduct will come in.

Individual, company, firm or association of persons, provided the person or body is a citizen of India or incorporated or established in India. These are valid for 15 days from the date of issue.

SBI issued them in denominations of ₹1,000, ₹10,000, ₹1 lakh, ₹10 lakh and ₹1 crore. According to SBI, donors gave ₹1,056.73 crore in 2018, ₹5,071.99 crore in 2019, ₹363.96 crore in 2020, ₹1,502.29 crore in 2021, ₹3,703 crore in 2022 and ₹4,818 crore in 2023.

With details of donors exempt from Right to Information Act, SBI has only been providing the total number of EBs sold and encashed over the years and the number of parties eligible to encash EBs. On

November 2, 2023, the Supreme Court ordered the Election Commission to submit data of the electoral bonds received by political parties till September 30.

Political parties mobilised ₹570.05 crore through electoral bonds in the 30th phase in January 2-11, 2024. Ahead of the recent state elections, political parties garnered ₹1,006 crore in the 29th phase of the sale of bonds from November 6-20.

SBI has charged ₹3.50 crore to the government towards commission, printing and other expenses for managing and operating the electoral bonds scheme. The irony of EB scheme is while donors who buy bond are not required to pay any service charges (commission) to SBI and even printing cost of EBs, it is the government or ultimately, the tax-payers who bear this cost... for enabling transactions of anonymous tax-free funding to political parties," RTI activist Commodore Lokesh K Batra (Retd) said.

## Ex-CECs welcome verdict: 'Addresses EC concerns, victory for India's democracy'

**DAMINI NATH**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

FORMER CHIEF Election Commissioners (CECs) Thursday welcomed the Supreme Court's decision on declaring the electoral bond scheme unconstitutional, noting that it addressed concerns raised by the Election Commission (EC), including the potential for funneling funds from shell companies and money laundering.

Former CEC O P Rawat, who was the Election Commissioner in 2017, had raised concerns with the government when the scheme was being discussed. He said Thursday's judgment has "addressed all concerns of the EC about shell companies and loss-making firms funnelling money

through electoral bonds". The Supreme Court judgment has ushered in a big electoral reform. While it won't have a major impact on the Lok Sabha elections, as the polls are too close and parties would have mobilised resources already, the election arena will be improved," Rawat said.

He said the problem of black money in political funding, which was one of the arguments of the government in favour of introducing the scheme, had not been "obliterated" by the scheme. He said a cap on political parties funding would be a way to address that.

According to Finance Ministry documents obtained under RTI, Rawat had "expressed doubts the electoral bonds can be misused by shell companies" during a

meeting on September 22, 2017, where then Economic Affairs Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg briefed the EC about the scheme.

Another former CEC, S Y Quraishi, said the judgment was a boost for transparency. "Every single objection that Constitutional experts had raised has been addressed by the Supreme Court in our favour. SBI has been asked to give the electoral bond information to the EC to make it public. It is a victory for democracy in India," he told *The Indian Express*.

Former CEC Navin Chawla, too, welcomed the judgment. "It is an extremely important judgment because the EC has for years been seeking means to increase transparency on where the funds for elections come from and where they're spent. The electoral

bond scheme was shrouded in mystery from the start."

"The transparency that has been sought has been brought about now. There is no choice for the EC but to defer to the SC judgment and make the details public. It is a step worth applauding," Chawla said. Even as T S Krishnamurthy echoed his former colleagues in his appreciation for the SC, he said the government should now bring in a transparent mechanism of electoral funding. Asked what he thinks a good alternative would be, he said, "I have said this in the past there should be a national election fund where people can donate and then this corpus can be used to conduct elections. Corporates and individuals should not directly donate to a political party."

Supreme Court, presided by CJI DY Chandrachud, Thursday held the changes made in the law to introduce the electoral bonds scheme as unconstitutional.

An analysis of the annual audited account statements submitted by the parties to the EC puts the worth of the contributions via bonds to the BJP at ₹6,565 crore, from 2017-2018 till 2022-2023. Regional parties in power in states are also big recipients of electoral bonds funds, with the TMC, that has been in government in West Bengal since 2011, declaring contributions worth ₹1,093 crore over the years in the category of "electoral bond/electoral trust". There is no clarity on how much of that amount is via bonds alone.

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DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## MISSION TELANGANA

IT IS no secret that the BJP wants to achieve remarkable success in Telangana in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. The party's master strategist, Amit Shah, seems to have a clear plan for the BJP in the state. He recently met party MLA Venkata Ramana Reddy – the giant killer who defeated both current Chief Minister Revanth Reddy and former CM K Chandrasekar Rao in Kamareddy constituency – triggering speculation over the latter's role in the strategy. Sources said the party's central leadership is open to the idea of MLAs who exhibited exceptional leadership qualities in the Assembly elections contesting the Lok Sabha polls.

## VARSITY VISIT

CHIEF JUSTICE OF India Justice DY Chandrachud is likely to inaugurate Dr Rajendra Prasad National Law University, Prayagraj, on Friday. The university has been established through an Act by the Uttar Pradesh government. Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath is the varsity's chairperson, while serving SC judge Justice Manoj Misra is the Visitor of the university. A book 'Courts of Uttar Pradesh' may also be released on this occasion, said an official.

## TEMPLE COIN

THE RAM Temple in Ayodhya is gaining currency, literally. On Thursday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman released a coloured coin showcasing the Ram Temple on one side and the idol of Ram Lalla on the other side. The minister was participating in an event to mark the foundation day of India Government Mint located in Kolkata.

## 'A sinister design at play': Mamata accuses BJP for Sandeshkhali row

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 15

ASSERTING THAT all necessary action has been taken to restore peace in Sandeshkhali, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday accused the BJP and RSS of "fomenting trouble" in the area.

For the past week, Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas has been witnessing protests by residents against local TMC leaders, accusing them of land grabbing and sexually harassing women.

Speaking in the Assembly during a discussion on the state Budget, the chief minister said: "It has come to light how BJP workers have been brought and how violence has been instigated in the area (Sandeshkhali). The primary target was (TMC leader) Sheikh Shahjahan and ED entered the area targeting him. Following this, they ousted everyone from there and fabricated an adivasis (tribals) versus minorities fight."

"It is not new. The RSS has a base there. Riots took place there seven to eight years back. It is one of the vulnerable riot spots. We handled the situation strongly during Saraswati Puja or else there were other plans," she said, adding "a sinister design is at play".

Stating that 17 people have been arrested in Sandeshkhali so far, the chief minister said that no one involved in any wrongdoing would be spared.

"We are looking into the sit-



West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee addresses the budget session of the Assembly in Kolkata, Thursday. ANI

uation. No one involved in any wrongdoing will be spared. I have sent the state women's commission there... A team of women police personnel is visiting every house to listen to their grievances. Some people may have anger against our government. We will definitely address the issues that will be reported. I need to know the matter to act on it," the CM said.

On Monday, when West Bengal Governor CV Ananda Bose visited Sandeshkhali and met the residents of the area, Chief Minister Banerjee for the first time spoke on the issue and said that those responsible for the violence have been arrested and necessary steps have been taken to maintain law and order situation in the area.

The CM's remark came soon after Governor Bose described

the situation in Sandeshkhali as "ghastly, shocking, and shattering to my senses".

On Sunday, police had arrested three political leaders -- suspended TMC leader Uttam Sardar, BJP observer for Basirhat Lok Sabha constituency Vikas Singh, and CPI(M) leader and former MLA Nirapada Sardar -- on charges of arson, instigating violence among others.

Shahjahan Sheikh, who is wanted by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in connection with its probe into the alleged irregularities in the public distribution system, has been absconding since January 5 when a team of ED officials was attacked allegedly by a mob of his supporters.

In another scathing attack on the BJP government at the Centre over its handling of farmers' protest, Mamata condemned the police action on farmers from Punjab trying to reach Delhi, saying the BJP was running a "government of Ravan" which has crossed all "Lakshman Rekhas".

The TMC supremo also postponed her visit to Punjab, saying it was the time "to stand with the farmers". "Farmers are protesting, and the country is burning. But the BJP is not bothered. It is the government of Ravant that has crossed all Lakshman Rekhas. The BJP has crossed all limits of civility. The day farmers reach Delhi, the BJP leaders will understand the reality," the chief minister said in the Assembly during a discussion on the state Budget.

TMC leader Shantanu Sen said, "The country saw how Sukanta did a drama during the BJP's protest. When our leader Abhishek Banerjee, our MPs and MLAs went to Union Minister Nitin Jyoti's office and were heckled by Delhi Police, what steps did this committee take?"

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

THE LOK Sabha Privileges Committee on Thursday summoned the chief secretary of West Bengal and other senior officers on a complaint filed by BJP MP Sukanta Majumdar over alleged "misconduct, brutality and life-threatening injuries" to him.

The Balurghat MP sustained injuries when he fell on the bonnet of a van during a scuffle with the police at Taki in North 24 Parganas district on Wednesday while trying to march towards Sandeshkhali where people have been protesting against a local TMC leader. The committee has summoned Chief Secretary Bhagwati Prasad Gopalika, Director General of Police Rajeev Kumar, North 24 Parganas District Magistrate Sharad Kumar Dwivedi, Basirhat SP Hossain Mehdi Rehman, and Additional SP Partha Ghosh to appear before it on February 19.

The Speaker held that Ajit Pawar's assertions about vote share and majority in legislature are not disputed by the Sharad Pawar faction. Narwekar also dismissed the pleas of Sharad Pawar and Ajit Pawar factions to disqualify MLAs after a vertical split in the party in June last year. While the Sharad Pawar faction had sought disqualification of 41 rival MLAs, his nephew Ajit Pawar's faction had sought disqualification of 10 MLAs of the other faction.

The Speaker noted the two factions emerged in NCP on June 30, 2023. "Ajit Pawar faction constituted the will of the party," the Speaker held, adding that he was pained to observe that in the present case, the misuse of 10th Schedule of the Constitution "becomes apparent and it should not be used to devise inter-party discipline or to stifle collective dissent by threatening them of disqualification. Common party workers cannot remain mere onlookers," he said.

"In the present case, the legislative majority is undisputed. At present, Ajit Pawar faction has

## Ajit faction 'real NCP': Speaker dismisses pleas for disqualification

OMKAR GOKHALE & ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 15

Maharashtra Speaker Rahul Narwekar's verdict comes on two pleas filed by both groups six months after the party split. ANI

41 out of 55 MLAs, Ajit Pawar faction's assertion that they have legislative majority in Maharashtra and Nagaland is not disputed by the Sharad Pawar faction.

"Going against the wishes of Sharad Pawar is dissent expressed by members of the political party and cannot be seen as an act of leaving the party. Members of a party expressing concerns over political behaviour/actions of other members does not amount to defection or desertion.

Examination of the motive of members is relevant to determine whether collective dissent was honest within a political party and not inviting disqualification under the 10th Schedule of Constitution," he added.

While adjudicating the petitions, Narwekar said as per SC judgment in Shiv Sena case, he had to rely on three parameters to come to the conclusion, which are: the constitution of Shiv Sena constitution, the leadership structure of the party and the legislative majority of the party.

## SUPREME COURT VERDICT ON POLL BONDS

## How the verdict counters former FM Arun Jaitley's arguments

APURVA VISHWANATH AND VIKAS PATHAK  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

ON JANUARY 2, 2018, the then Finance Minister Arun Jaitley announced in the Lok Sabha the finalisation of the Electoral Bonds Scheme, arguing that it was a step towards curbing the flow of black money into the funding of political parties.

Six years later, a five-judge constitution bench of the Supreme Court struck down the electoral bonds scheme, terming it "unconstitutional" as it violated the Right to Information Act, a facet of the Fundamental Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression under Article 19 (1) (a) of the Constitution.

## What the SC said

The court said since information on the funding of political parties is essential, the electoral bonds scheme violates the right to information.

Elaborating on a quid pro

quo — a link between political funding and policy making — CJL D Y Chandrachud said lack of disclosure about corporate funding is "unconstitutional".

On the government's reasoning that the Electoral Bonds Scheme curbs black money, the court said the objective does not justify the "encroachment of fundamental rights". The court here applied the three-pronged test outlined in the 2017 Justice K S Puttaswamy (retd) v Union of India ruling that upheld privacy as a fundamental right and concluded that the electoral bond scheme is not the least restrictive method that the government could have adopted.

The government scheme, as per the proportionality test, would have to essentially satisfy three aspects — first, the existence of a law. The electoral bond scheme was brought through the Finance Act that introduced a series of amendments in the Income Tax Act and the Representation of the People Act. Second, the law must

demonstrate a legitimate state interest that has a nexus to the object sought to be achieved by Parliament. The government argued that the objectives range from curbing black money to protecting the privacy of the donors. The third, and the most crucial, is whether the encroachment upon fundamental rights is proportional to the objection sought to be achieved. Here, the CJL said the state did not adopt the least restrictive method.

The court declared amendments to the Income Tax Act and Section 29C of the Representation of the People Act unconstitutional.

## What Jaitley had said

The former Finance Minister had in an article posted on the PIB website on January 7, 2018, sought to explain why who donated how much to a political party could not be disclosed.

"How much each donor has distributed to a political party would be known only to the donor. This is necessary because

once this disclosure is made, past experience has shown, donors would not find the scheme attractive and would go back to the less-desirable option of donating by cash. In fact, the choice now has to be consciously made between the existing system of substantial cash donations, which involves total unclean money and is non-transparent and the new scheme which gives the option to the donors to donate through entirely a transparent method of cheque, online transaction or through electoral bonds. While all three methods involve clean money, the first two are totally transparent and the electoral bonds scheme is a substantial improvement in transparency over the present system of non-transparency," Jaitley had said.

"Despite strengthening various institutions for the last seven decades, India has not been able to evolve a transparent political funding system... The conventional system of political funding is to rely on donations. These do-

nations, big or small, come from a range of sources — from political workers, sympathisers, small business people and even large industrialists... The sources are anonymous or pseudonymous. The quantum of money was never disclosed... It is a wholly non-transparent system. Most political groups seem fairly satisfied with the present arrangement and would not mind this status quo to continue. The effort, therefore, is to run down any alternative system which is devised to cleanse up the political funding mechanism," Jaitley wrote.

He explained the scheme he had placed in Parliament envisaging "total clean money and substantial transparency". "A donor can purchase electoral bonds

from a specified bank only by a banking instrument. He would have to disclose in his accounts the amount of political bonds that he has purchased. The life of the bond would be only 15 days. A bond can only be encashed in a pre-declared account of a political party. Every political party in its returns will have to disclose the amount of donations it has received through electoral bonds to the Election Commission. The entire transactions would be through banking instruments... Some element of transparency would be introduced in as much as all donors declare in their accounts the amount of bonds that they have purchased and all parties declare the quantum of bonds that they have received".

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## ALL INDIA INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES, BATHINDA

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Director & CEO, AIIMS, Bathinda

CBC 17184/12/0010/2324

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Director, NCCS

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Registrar

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Seminar Room, Library Building Prime Ministers Museum and Library Teen Murti House, New Delhi  
All are Welcome.  
Those wishing to have their names added to the email list may please email us at: [ccs2nmml@gmail.com](mailto:ccs2nmml@gmail.com)

## EXPRESS CAREERS

EXPRESS CAREERS

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

THE "UNKNOWN income" of political parties from donations made under Rs 20,000 "has not shown ebbing" during the period 2018-22, data furnished to the Supreme Court shows.

Citing the data, the concurring judgment of Justice Sanjiv Khanna said, "The total unknown income, that is donations made under Rs 20,000, sale of coupons etc has not shown ebbing and has substantially increased from Rs 2,550 crore during 2014-15 to 2016-17 to Rs 8,489 crore during 2018-19 to 2021-22." It said "the share of income from unknown sources for national parties rose from 66% during 2014-15 to 2016-17 to 72% during 2018-19 to 2021-22. Between the years 2019-20 and 2021-22 the bond income has been 81% of the total unknown income of national parties".

The court said the "...total income of the national parties without other known sources... increased from Rs 3,864 crore during 2014-15 to 2016-17 to Rs 11,829 crore during 2018-19 to 2021-22. The bond income between 2018-19 and 2021-22 constitutes 58% of the total income of the national political parties".

The court said the "...total income of the national parties without other known sources... increased from Rs 3,864 crore during 2014-15 to 2016-17 to Rs 11,829 crore during 2018-19 to 2021-22. The bond income between 2018-19 and 2021-22 constitutes 58% of the total income of the national political parties".

The hard copy of online application form & self attested copy of documents must reach by 31 March 2024 at 05:00 pm. to the office of Registrar, SDSUV

# In Maharashtra, private schools within 1-km radius of govt school will not be under RTE

PALLAVI SMART  
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 15

PRIVATE SCHOOLS within one-kilometre vicinity of a government or aided school in Maharashtra will not be obligated to provide admissions under the Right to Education (RTE) quota for students from economically backward sections of the society, according to amended rules for implementation of RTE in state.

The school education department of the state issued a gazette notification dated February 9 that stated, "Provided that the lo-

cal authority shall not identify the private unaided school, for the purposes of 25 per cent admission of disadvantaged group and weaker section under the Maharashtra Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Rules, 2013, where government schools and aided schools are situated within one-kilometre radius of that school."

The notification also clarifies that in case of no aided school in the area, private schools will be identified to give RTE admissions

and will be eligible for reimbursement for the fees. A new list of schools obligated for the RTE admission will be prepared now, considering the new rule, the notification stated.

A senior official from the school education department said that the RTE admissions led to an additional expenditure of reimbursement of the fees. "With the new rule, state's own schools will be given preference for RTE admission, before diverting them to private schools," said

the official. Private school managements have welcomed the move, pointing out the pending reimbursements to be paid by the government for RTE admissions. They have been opposing RTE admissions for some time now, especially due to the pending reimbursements, which they claim is over Rs 2,000 crore.

SC Kedia, secretary of Unaided Schools' Forum in Mumbai, said, "It is their own compulsion now rather than our demand."

Rajasthan BJP candidates file papers for RS polls

Jaipur: BJP's Chunnilal Garasiya and Madan Rathore filed the nomination papers on Thursday for the biennial elections for three Rajya Sabha seats from Rajasthan. Both the candidates presented two sets of nomination papers each to Returning Officer Mahaveer Prasad Sharma.

ENS

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**NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER**  
Divisional Railway Manager, N.W. Ry. Bikner for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender for the following works upto 15.00 Hrs. on 11.03.2024. (1) Tender No.: 157 Name of work with its location: AMC of Rail Drilling Machine with supply of spares for a period of two years under ADEN/ Track/ Bikner for 2023-24 & 2024-25 Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 1922508.50/- Earnest Money: ₹ 38500/- (2) Tender No.: 158 Name of work with its location: Conditioning of CMS Crossing, Tongue Rails, Cup Wedges etc. under ADEN/Suratgarh. Approx. cost of the work: ₹ 4988516.45/- Earnest Money: ₹ 99800/- Note: Other terms and conditions will be shown on website www.reps.gov.in 202-DP/24

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For and on behalf of the President of Republic of India, Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Construction-II), North Western Railway, Jaipur invites E-Tender for the following work upto 15.00 Hrs. on the mentioned date. (1) Tender No.: ELC/JP/KTWS-NNL/UT/09/23 (2) Name of work: Electrical work of station building, PF, Quarters, FO, Approach road, PF Shelter, Circulating area, modification of LT/LHT power lines etc. in connection with KTWS-NNL doubling project. (3) Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 1506720.00/- (4) Earnest Money to be deposited: ₹ 225300/- (5) Date & Time of closing E-Tender, Date & Time of Opening E-Tender: 12.03.2024 upto 15.00 Hrs., 12.03.2024 at 15.30 Hrs. (6) The Details of above E-Tender are available on Website: [www.ireps.gov.in](http://ireps.gov.in) 198-DP/24

Follow us at

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
FEBRUARY 15

A "SURPRISE" lunch with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Parliament canteen in New Delhi last week, as the 17th Lok Sabha headed to a close, has landed Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) Kollam MP N K Premachandran in the middle of a slugfest in his home state of Kerala.

The ruling CPI(M)-led Kerala government is using the lunch, in which Premachandran was the only MP belonging to an INDIA bloc party present, to attack the Congress, saying



RSP MP NK Premachandran

Premachandran sharing a table with Modi a demonstration of "the Congress-BJP nexus".

The RSP is an ally of the Congress in Kerala while it sides with the Left in West Bengal. All three parties – the CPI(M), RSP and Congress – are a part of the Opposition INDIA bloc.

On Tuesday, CPI(M) trade

union wing Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) held a march in Kollam demanding Premachandran's resignation over the issue, with the lunch providing fresh fodder for the CPI(M) and Congress's constant barbs at each other in Kerala, particularly over the BJP.

Sources said that the Kollam MP was one of eight parliamentarians – the others seven including 4 from the BJP; 1 from the TDP that is considering an alliance with the BJP; 1 of the BSP, that is equidistant from both the NDA and INDIA; and 1 of the BJD, which is friendly towards the BJP -- who had received a call around 2.30 pm on February 7 from PM Modi, telling them: "Chaliye, aapko ek punishment

dena hai (Let's go, I have to deliver you a punishment today.)"

Premachandran's RSP was earlier part of the CPI(M)-led LDF and he won twice from Kollam under its banner, before shifting allegiance to the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) ahead of the 2014 LS polls. He retained the seat as a UDF candidate in the 2019 elections.

CPI(M) Central Committee member and LDF convener P Jayarajan said Premachandran's attendance at the lunch with Modi was proof of the UDF-BJP links. "The Kollam MP only extends support to those who have destroyed the secular fabric of India. He has joined hands with those who have destroyed mosques and madrasas."

He said, "India has become self-reliant in chickpeas and many other pulse crops, with only a slight deficiency remaining in pigeon peas and black gram. Consistent efforts are being made to attain self sufficiency in pulses by the year 2027."

## 'Migrants are problem': Radical Goa party's Lok Sabha election pitch

**PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA**  
PANAJI, FEBRUARY 15

SAFEGUARDING GOAN identity and land, addressing "uncontrolled" migrant influx, and upholding the livelihoods of people of Goan origin – these are among the top issues in the Revolutionary Goans Party's manifesto for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections.

Addressing a press conference on Thursday, RGP's Virendra Borkar, the MLA from St Andre constituency, said the party would start door-to-door campaigning from Friday and distribute pamphlets highlighting its vision.

In its vision document for Goa's 2022 Assembly polls, the party had focused on 'Niz Goenkars', or original Goans. They defined this as anyone who has been living, or has parents or grandparents who were living, in Goa 'prior to December 20, 1961 (a day after Goa was liberated from Portuguese rule) and his family, who were citizens of India post liberation, irrespective of nationality they hold currently'.

## J&K seat-sharing: NC digs in heels, PDP says 'rise above differences'

**NAVEED IQBAL**  
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 15

THE NATIONAL Conference (NC) Thursday said it would contest all three Lok Sabha seats in Kashmir Valley and had "informally discussed" seat sharing with the Congress in the Jammu region.

"We have no connection with the NDA," NC vice-president Omar Abdullah said. "Neither are we going to knock on their doors in the future nor are our doors open for them. Today, our focus is to stop the BJP and, for this, we have informally discussed seat-sharing with the Congress."

Omar's clarification that his party continues to be a part of the INDIA alliance came after his father and NC president Farooq Abdullah said: "On seat-sharing, I want to make it clear that the

## Efforts being made to attain self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027: Munda

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

OBSERVING THAT India has become self-reliant in chickpeas and many other pulse crops, Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda Thursday said "consistent efforts" are being made to attain self-sufficiency in pulses by 2027.



Agriculture Minister Arjun Munda

Munda said the Centre is working "diligently" to improve agriculture production and to raise the living standards of farmers.

Consumer Affairs Minister Piyush Goyal said that in a short span of time, "Bharat Chana Dal" has captured 25% of India's market for gram pulses. Goyal said the government has been successful in managing inflation.

"We have today seen 10 years of average inflation ranging between 5-5.5 per cent amongst the lowest decade of inflation that India has seen in its 75 years of Independence," Goyal said.

Sharing initiatives taken by the government for protecting the interests of farmers, NAFED Managing Director Ritesh Chauhan said, "In life one may require services of a doctor, lawyer, a policeman, and a preacher. So, keep them close. But I would add that it is the humble farmer who provides us our three meals a day."

farmers, thereby giving them a reasonable and attractive rate of return for their farming activities." Talking about Bharat brand pulses and wheat flour, Consumer Affairs Secretary Rohit Kumar Singh said that for the first time the government has intervened in the retail market. "Many western economists will tell you that government should not be in the business of doing business. But I beg to differ, if it suits the interests of the citizen of the country and the consumers, the governments must intervene and we should not be left to the mercy of the markets," Singh said. Singh warned foreign pulse traders not to take advantage of the situation in India.

"Sometime we see that some

geographies, I can name Myanmar and some east African countries, where traders will like to take advantage of the situation in India... Please do not indulge in that... If you want to take undue advantage, we will go after you," Singh said.

Sharing initiatives taken by the government for protecting the interests of farmers, NAFED Managing Director Ritesh Chauhan said, "In life one may require services of a doctor, lawyer, a policeman, and a preacher. So, keep them close. But I would add that it is the humble farmer who provides us our three meals a day."

PM to launch a slew of projects in Rajasthan, Haryana today

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will launch multiple development projects worth more than ₹26,750 crore in Rajasthan and Haryana on Friday.

A statement said Modi will inaugurate and lay the foundation of development projects costing more than ₹17,000 crore in Rajasthan via video conference and will also address the 'Viksit Bharat Viksit Rajasthan' programme. He will later visit Rewari in Haryana and inaugurate and lay the foundation of multiple development projects worth over ₹9,750 crore related to urban transport, health, rail and tourism sectors, it said.

The Rajasthan projects cater to sectors including roads, railways, solar energy, power transmission and drinking water.

**UPSIDA** UTTAR PRADESH STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY UPSIDA Complex : A-1/4, Lakhimpur, Kanpur - 208024

Notice for Public Objection/Suggestion on layout plan of Industrial Area Mathura Site-A, Mathura by Which Industrial Plot No C-60 has been sub-divided & created three new Plot's namely C-60/A (Measuring 1535.667 Sqm.), C-60/B (Measuring 1535.667 Sqm.) & C-60/C (Measuring 1535.667 Sqm.).

1. (a) The layout plan of Industrial Area Mathura Site-A, Mathura of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) situated in District-Agra has been prepared.

(b) A copy of thereof will be available for inspection at the Regional Manager Office of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) at Administrative Building, Industrial Area EPIP, Shastripuram, Sikandra, Distt. Agra-282007 (U.P.) between the 10.00 am to 5.00 pm. on all working days till the date mentioned in Para 3 hereafter as well as website [www.onlineupsida.com](http://www.onlineupsida.com).

2. Objections and suggestions are hereby invited with respect of the Draft Amended layout Plan.

3. Objections and suggestions are shall be sent in writing to the office of Regional Manager, Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) at Administrative Building, Ind. Area EPIP, Shastripuram, Sikandra, Distt. Agra-282007 (U.P.) within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice mentioning subject "Regarding Public Objections/Suggestions on Draft Partial Amendment in layout plan for Industrial Area Mathura Site-A, Mathura."

Any person making the objections or suggestions should also give his/her name, address, Email ID and Contact Number.

(Regional Manager) U.P. State Industrial Development Authority

4. Any person making the objections or suggestions should also give his/her name, address, Email ID and Contact Number.

(Regional Manager) U.P. State Industrial Development Authority

5. Any person making the objections or suggestions should also give his/her name, address, Email ID and Contact Number.

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(Regional Manager) U.P. State Industrial Development Authority

23. Any person making the objections or suggestions should also give his/her name, address, Email ID and Contact Number.

Sonia thanks Raebareli voters, says age, health behind exit

MAULSHREE SETH  
VARANASI, FEBRUARY 15

CONGRESS LEADER Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is most likely to join her brother Rahul Gandhi, whose Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will be entering Uttar Pradesh through Chandauli on Friday.

With former Congress president Sonia Gandhi announcing that she would not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections from Raebareli, Priyanka accompanying her brother on most of the yatra's UP stretch has strengthened the speculation that she could contest from her mother's erstwhile seat.

In an emotional letter to the people of her parliamentary constituency Raebareli, Sonia Gandhi on Thursday informed them about her decision to not contest from the Congress stronghold. "Whatever I am today is because of you... But due to increasing age and health, I will not contest the upcoming Lok Sabha elections," wrote Sonia Gandhi, a day after she filed her Rajya Sabha nomination papers from Rajasthan.

Thanking the people of Raebareli for their continued support, she wrote, "The roots of our family in Raebareli are very deep. I am proud to say that whatever I am today, is because of you... I know you will stand by me and my family in the future, just as in the past."

"After this decision, I will not have the opportunity to serve you directly but my heart and soul will always remain with you," Sonia Gandhi, who won from Raebareli in the last four consecutive elections, wrote in Hindi.

The Congress yatra will reach Amethi on February 19 and Raebareli the next day as per the party's schedule. For the past two years, neither Rahul nor Priyanka have had any public interaction in the two constituencies.

## 11 in race for 10 Rajya Sabha seats in UP as BJP fields 8th candidate

ASAD REHMAN  
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 15

UTTAR PRADESH is headed for the February 27 Rajya Sabha elections to fill the 10 seats that are falling vacant, with the two largest parties, the ruling BJP and the principal Opposition Samajwadi Party (SP), appearing to have enough members in the state Assembly to elect seven and three Rajya Sabha MPs, respectively.

However, with the BJP fielding its eighth candidate, the fight for the 10th Rajya Sabha seat in the state has become an interesting one, with both the BJP and the SP looking to edge out each other in the polls.

On Thursday, when the BJP's Sanjay Seth filed his nomination for the Upper House polls, he became the party's eighth candidate to do so. Seth was previously elected to the Rajya Sabha as an SP candidate in June 2016. He later switched to the BJP fold.

The BJP has also nominated former Union minister R P N Singh, ex-MP Chaudhary Tejveer Singh, state party general secretary Amarpal Maurya, former



BJP candidate Sanjay Seth files his nomination papers for the Rajya Sabha elections, in Lucknow on Thursday. Express

state minister Sangeeta Balwant, party spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi, former MLA Sadhna Singh and former Agra mayor Naveen Jain for the Upper House.

The SP's Rajya Sabha list includes senior leader and actor Jaya Bachchan, Dalit leader Ramji Lal Suman and former state chief secretary Alok Ranjan.

If the BJP had not nominated an eighth candidate, the state would not have needed an election as all 10 candidates would have won unopposed. But with

11 candidates in the fray, the polls will take place to determine the 10 winners.

Currently, the state has 399 MLAs with four seats in the Assembly being vacant. The Rajya Sabha MPs are elected by a system of proportional representation, according to which each candidate in UP will require at least 37 votes to win.

The BJP has 252 MLAs and its NDA allies account for 34 MLAs. The Jansatta Dal Loktantrik, which has two MLAs and is

headed by strongman politician Raja Bhaiya, is also expected to vote in favour of the BJP.

If the BJP manages to get all the 36 votes from these parties, its total number of votes will reach 288. However, for its eight candidates to get elected, the BJP will need 296 votes (37 multiplied by 8). As things stand, the BJP will fall short by eight votes.

If the two Congress MLAs vote for the SP candidates, taking the SP's tally to 110, the latter will still fall short by one vote to reach the required 111 votes (37 multiplied by 3) to get its three candidates elected.

Compounding the SP's troubles, Pallavi Patel, the leader of the Apna Dal (Kamervadi) faction and its MLA, has said she will not vote in the elections, citing the Akhilesh Yadav-led party's negligence of the PDA - Pichde (backwards), Dalits and Alpasankhyak (minorities) communities. Akhilesh has raised the PDA pitch as part of the SP's Lok Sabha campaign.

By fielding its eighth candidate in the fray, the BJP has put the SP in a position of disadvantage with cross voting likely to feature in the polls.

## 4 RS seats in Karnataka: Cong fields 3 candidates, BJP and JDS one each

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, FEBRUARY 15

THREE CANDIDATES from the Congress and one each from the BJP and the JD(S) on Thursday filed nominations for the February 27 Rajya Sabha polls to four seats from Karnataka. Among the Congress picks is AICC treasurer Ajay Maken, and the BJP nominee will replace Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar.

The other two Congress candidates – Syed Naseer Hussain and GC Chandrashekhar – have been renominated. While the BJP has fielded RSS worker and former MLC Narayana

Bhandage, its ally JD(S) has nominated Kupendra Reddy, necessitating a contest among the five candidates for the four seats.

The elections would otherwise have seen three Congress candidates and one BJP nominee win the four seats on the basis of their parties' numbers in the Assembly. The JD(S) has fielded a candidate in the hope of possible cross-voting from Congress legislators, an assumption dismissed by Deputy Chief Minister and Congress state president DK Shivakumar.

Responding to a query on the possibility of cross-voting in favour of Reddy, who has friends across parties, Shivakumar said the the support of three independent MLAs. The minimum votes required for a candidate to sail through is 45.

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The borrower/s have failed to repay the amount. Notice is hereby given to the borrower/s and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic / physical possession of the properties described here in below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under section 13 (4) of said Act read with the rule 8 of the said rules on the dates mentioned against each account.

The borrower/s in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies and any dealing with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for the amounts and interest thereon.

Sl. No	A. Name of Branch B. Name of the Borrower	Descriptions of the Property	A. Date of Demand Notice, B. Date of Symbolic/Physical Possession Taken, C. Claim Amt on date of possession.
1.	A. BO: Chandaura,Gaya B. Shri Khurram Heyat S/o Md. Khan Ali.	1.Hypothecation of Vehicle (BUS) Registration No-BR02PB88810 Dated:10.10.2022, Chasis No-MAT 514011NFJ08987, Engine/Motor No-3.3LNGD05HX2 525367, Maker-Tata Motors Ltd, Model -Star Bus Prime 40+DL912/52. 2. Property covered under Sale deed No-3654 Dated: 10.03.2014, Bearing Khat No-43(Old),Plot No-04 (Old), 1557(New),M.S Plot No-4963,Proportionate Area-581.41 sq.ft ,Flat No-402, 4" Floor in the Apartment namely Star Apartment having built up area-1335 sq.ft, situated at Mohalla-Khan Road, Katari Hill Road, P.S-Rampur Thana, Distt-Gaya, Property is Bounded by North-Stair Case & Lobby, South-Open Space & Side Set Back Area, East-Flat No-401 West-Open Space & Rear Set Back Area, Upper-Roof ,Lower-Flat No-302,in the name of Md. Khurram Heyat S/o Md. Khan Ali.	A.01.12.2023 B.14.02.2024 (Symbolic Possession) C.Rs.20,62,785.04/- (Rupees Twenty lakh sixty two thousand seven hundred eighty five plus four Paisa only) as on 01.12.2023 plus further interest w.e.f 01.12.2023 and other expenses until payment in full.
2.	A.B.O:Pura Wazirganj, B. M/S Sumitra Kisan Sewa Kendra 2. Prop.Sanju Sharma W/o Sadhu Sharun Sharma.	Hypothecation of entire Stocks & current assets, Receivables and other assets safe fixture and furniture etc of the unit and Hypothecation of Plant & Machinery purchased out of banks finance.	A.21.11.2023 B.14.02.2024 (Symbolic Possession) C.Rs.53,97,343.83/- (Rupees Fifty three lakh ninety seven thousand three hundred forty three and eighty three Paisa Only) as on 31.10.2023 plus further interest w.e.f 01.11.2023 and other expenses until payment in full.

Place: Gaya

DATE: 15.02.2024

(Authorised officer )

Punjab National Bank

## Himachal: Amid rumblings in Congress over Singhvi, BJP names candidate for lone RS seat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15



BJP's Harsh Mahajan files his nomination papers in Shimla on Thursday. ANI

speaker and ex-Cabinet minister Des Raj Mahajan.

Sources in the Congress said the state party leadership was not in favour of fielding a candidate from outside, arguing that the state had rarely – in fact on only two occasions – had an outsider as Rajya Sabha MP. "The high command miscalculated and imposed an outsider... that is where the BJP saw the chink and opportunity. I am sure Singhvi will sail through but the party should not have fielded a person from outside the state," a Congress leader said.

In the Assembly, the ruling Congress has 40 members while the BJP has 25. There are three independents. "We will contest

elections. He was then the working president of the Himachal Pradesh Congress. A former state minister, Mahajan is a three-time MLA. He is the son of former Himachal Assembly

the election to win and I have also filed nomination for winning the seat," Mahajan said.

The Himachal Congress had earlier urged Sonia Gandhi to contest. While Gandhi too was an outsider, there would not have been any divergence of opinion on her candidature given her stature.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu called Mahajan a "symbolic leader" and asserted that the Congress has the majority in the Assembly.

Former Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur claimed that a large number of Congress MLAs are "not feeling comfortable" and hoped that they may exercise a "conscience vote".

## MODI SARKAR KI GUARANTEE ATMANIRBHAR STREET VENDORS

### Disbursement of PM SVANidhi Loan

For the first time since independence street vendors are getting affordable loans

-Shri Narendra Modi



#### Scheme Features

##### PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi): Strengthening Street Vendors Across India

- Unlocking Opportunities for Street Vendors with a Special Micro Credit Facility
- Street Vendors Can Secure Loan up to Rs. 10,000 Initially
- Upon Timely Repayment, Access Higher Loan Amounts of Rs. 20,000 and Rs. 50,000
- Over 80 Lakh Loans Disbursed, Totaling Rs. 10,678 Crores

Since the launch of PM SVANidhi on 01 June, 2020, over 2 lakh street vendors in Delhi alone have benefited, with Rs 220 crore

#### Chief Guest

##### Shri Hardeep Singh Puri

Hon'ble Minister of Housing and Urban Affairs, Petroleum & Natural Gas

#### Guests of Honour

##### Shri Vinai Kumar Saxena

Hon'ble Lt. Governor, NCT of Delhi

Benefits of PM SVANidhi are being given to an additional 10,000 street vendors today

Smt. Meenakshi Lekhi

Hon'ble Minister of State for External Affairs and Culture

Dr. Bhagwat Kishanrao Karad

Hon'ble Minister of State for Finance

Date: 16<sup>th</sup> February, 2024 | Time: 11:00 AM | Venue: Jawahar Lal Nehru Stadium (Weight Lifting Auditorium), New Delhi

# EXPRESS NETWORK

Cop suspended:  
Mob storms  
Manipur police  
station, one dead

SUKRITA BARUAH  
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 15

AT LEAST one person was killed and several others injured in Manipur's Churachandpur town as security forces used force to repel hundreds who had mobbed the district Superintendent of Police's office following the suspension of a Kuki police personnel.

As the town was rocked with violence on Thursday evening, a doctor at the Churachandpur District Hospital confirmed that at least one person succumbed to injuries, while police posted there stated that many had been injured. According to a police statement, "a mob numbering approximately 300-400 attempted to storm" the office and pelted stones. Visuals from the evening also showed that the mob had committed arson and a police officer posted in the town said they had set ablaze some police vehicles.

Videos also showed parts of the District Collector's office being set ablaze.

**UP firecracker blast:** All four victims minors, probe ordered

**Lucknow:** The UP government has ordered a magisterial inquiry into the firecrackers explosion at the venue of Bundelkhand Gaurav Mahotsav in Chitrakoot that left four children dead on Wednesday.

The four children, aged between 10 and 15 years, died after a stash of firecrackers, intended for a celebratory display, caught fire. According to officials, the explosion was so massive that it created a two-feet-deep crater at the venue. Initially, the victims could not be identified as they had suffered severe burns. On Thursday, they were identified as Prabhat Patel (10), Yash Mishra (11), Paras Sharma (10), and Mohit (15) -- all residents of the area and hailing from lower middle class families. **ENS**

**HC rejects plea seeking to stop Anant Ambani's wedding at zoo**

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

The Delhi High Court has refused to entertain a plea to direct Reliance Industries' zoo and a trust to not hold Anant Ambani and Radhika Mehta's wedding events at Greens Zoological, Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre (GZRC), a mega zoo being developed on 280 acres by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) 30 km away from Jamnagar in Gujarat.

Advocate and self-proclaimed animal lover Rahul Narula had approached the High Court seeking directions to the Animal Welfare Board of India to file a complaint as he thought the wedding scheduled for March will harm the animals in the area. Narula sought directions against Radhe Krishna Temple Elephant Welfare Trust and GZRC. Noting that the plea was filed based on an apprehension, the bench of Justices Suresh Kumar Kait and Girish Kathpalia observed that it can't be entertained.

**Chirag Koradia**, Joint Commissioner of Police (Sector 1), said Modi was summoned for interrogation, following which he arrived at the police station around 8 am. Modi, who was quizzed for over four hours, was accompanied by his lawyer Sanjay

## ED swapped hard disks, altered files in pen drive: TN ex-minister Senthil Balaji in court

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 15

FORMER TAMIL Nadu Transport Minister V Senthil Balaji has accused the Enforcement Directorate of tampering with digital evidence related to a money laundering case against him. He made the allegations during a bail application hearing in the Madras High Court on Wednesday, a day after he resigned from the cabinet post he had retained even after his arrest six months ago.

Senior Counsel C Aryama Sundaram, representing Balaji, urged Justice N Anand Venkatesh to grant him bail, arguing that the credibility of the

digital evidence, including hard disks and pen drives, had been compromised. Citing alleged discrepancies in evidence, Sundaram noted instances such as switching data from an HP branded hard disk mentioned in the seizure report to a Seagate hard disk produced in court, raising questions about the authenticity of the seized items.

"The brand of digital evidence such as pen drive and hard disk recorded in the seizure mazar and the ones produced in the court are entirely different," Sundaram said, emphasising the inconsistency and potential manipulation of evidence.

Sundaram argued that the evidence relied upon by the ED had been fabricated by the



Former TN Transport Minister V Senthil Balaji

agency itself, and alleged that files on the pen drive and hard disks were created in 2015 but modified in 2022. Initially, the pen drive was reported to contain 284 files/folders, but this number was later modified to 472, with forensic analysis revealing that after seizure, certain

files had been deleted and new files added, he argued. Sundaram argued that the primary evidence, and by extension all evidence based on digital evidence, must be considered suspect.

Arguing for bail, he said that with the investigation now complete and Balaji no longer serving as a minister, there was no basis for the prosecution's claim that he might influence witnesses.

Sundaram also challenged the ED's reliance on Rs 1.34 crore deposited in Balaji's bank accounts between 2013 and 2022 as ill-gotten wealth. He contended that these deposits had been declared to the income tax department, with proper accounts maintained. He pointed

out that after deducting Balaji's salary of Rs 58,94,000 received as an MLA during the same period, the alleged proceeds of crime would fall below the minimum threshold of Rs 1 crore required to invoke the PMLA.

Justice Venkatesh adjourned the hearing, scheduling the ED to present its counterarguments.

The case against Balaji, who served as transport minister from 2011 to 2015, stems from the ED's investigation under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, 2002. The probe was initiated based on multiple cases registered by the state police regarding an alleged cash-for-jobs scam. Ever since his arrest in June 2023, his bail pleas have repeatedly been rejected.

## Top court allows withdrawal of pleas against UAPA provisions

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

IN A sudden turn of events, individuals and groups who had challenged the constitutional validity of the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in the Supreme Court withdrew their pleas on Thursday, saying they have decided to move appropriate forums.

A bench of Justices Bela M Trivedi and Pankaj Mital, which had on Wednesday said it will not allow "proxy litigation" to challenge the vires of the anti-terror law UAPA, allowed as many as eight petitions to be withdrawn after the petitioners' counsels said they would like to approach the jurisdictional high courts for relief.

The bench had asked the counsel for petitioners to seek instruction by Thursday whether they want to approach the high court to quash the FIR in UAPA cases or challenge the vires of the law in the top court.

Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for three civil society members, including a journalist, who were booked under the anti-terror law by Tripura police in 2021 over their social media posts on riots in the state, said he has received instructions from his clients to withdraw the petitions.

Bhushan said the interim order dated November 17, 2021, granting protection from arrest be extended by two weeks.

Justice Trivedi said the court is not going to pass any such order but orally asked the Tripura police to not take any coercive action.

"Normally, we would not have entertained such petitions under Article 32 of the

Constitution. We are not going to pass any such order. We are not saying anything in the order but you (Tripura police) don't do anything," she said.

Bhushan urged the bench to allow the petitioners to appear before the high court through videoconferencing.

Justice Trivedi said the Supreme Court cannot micro-manage everything and they should approach the high court for appearance through videoconferencing or any other relief.

A similar request was made by NGO Foundation for Media Professionals for withdrawal of a petition challenging the constitutional validity of provisions of the UAPA with liberty to approach the appropriate forum. The bench allowed the NGO's request.

On Wednesday, the top court had said it would hear challenge to the vires of the UAPA provisions by only those who are personally aggrieved by it and had refused to hear senior advocate Huzefa Ahmad, who appeared for some writ petitioners challenging the anti-terror law.

"The petitioner must be an aggrieved party and there must be a violation of their rights. Only then can the question of challenging the vires of a legislative provision arise," it had said.

The bench had said that in PIL matters, the doctrine of locus standi may not apply in a strict sense, but where vires of a law has been challenged, there should be some semblance of involvement.

"Otherwise, it will be a proxy litigation on behalf of other persons, who do not want to come to the forefront. That would not be permissible. We have to be careful about allowing such proxy litigation," Justice Mital had observed.

## Police: Bihar man's death unrelated to Haldwani violence, killed over affair

AVANEESH MISHRA  
DEHRADUN, FEBRUARY 15

A MAN from Bihar, who was thought to have been killed during the violence that broke out last week in Uttarakhand's Haldwani following the demolition of a mosque and madrasa, was actually murdered in an unrelated incident, police said on Thursday.

According to police, Prakash Kumar Singh was murdered by a police constable and his associates because of an alleged affair with the constable's wife. His family had earlier told *The Indian Express* that Singh, 24, was in Haldwani city in search of employment. Police were informed last Friday about a body, later identified as Prakash's, being found with gunshot wounds to his head two-three kilometres away from the epicentre of the previous day's violence in Haldwani's Banbhupura area.

During this time, "Prakash developed illicit relations with Suraj's sister, and constable Birendra Singh's wife, Priyanka. Later, Prakash started using his objectionable videos with Priyanka to blackmail her. Priyanka, however, kept this thing hidden from her husband," Meena said.

According to the SSP, a day before his murder, Prakash had called constable Birendra Singh and after this, Priyanka told her husband about the situation. Then, the constable, along with his wife and "his partner Naeem Khan, aka Babloo, conspired to murder Prakash".

"He (Birendra) called Prakash to Haldwani through his wife. Birendra asked Prakash Kumar to delete Priyanka's video from his mobile, but when Prakash Kumar refused, constable Birendra along with his colleagues shot Prakash dead..." the SSP said.

**Cadila Pharmaceuticals Chairman and MD Rajiv Modi in Ahmedabad on Thursday.** Express

Thaker. Modi's interrogation comes after Mathew was questioned nearly two weeks ago.

Last December, the Gujarat High Court had set aside a magistrate court's order that refused to entertain the Bulgarian national's complaint. The HC directed that a senior IPS officer appointed by the state DIG (Law and Order) should investigate the woman's complaint within two months.

**Former Indian Navy sailor Ragesh Gopakumar**

bars, Ragesh said that initially, they were lodged in separate cells. But later, after the Ambassador's intervention, two persons were allowed in a cell. "We couldn't inform our families initially; we were all shattered.

Recalling their time behind

## Caste census social X-ray, will also hold fiscal survey: Rahul

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, FEBRUARY 15

SENIOR CONGRESS leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said if INDIA bloc is elected to power in 2024, it would conduct a caste census, along with a financial survey to know the situation and status on the ground.

Saying that "caste survey is social X-ray", Rahul said an estimated 73 per cent OBCs, SCs and STs of the country have marginal or no representation in big corporates, media houses or even in high courts.

Addressing a public meeting at Aurangabad during the second leg of his ongoing Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra, Rahul said PM Narendra Modi, who used to claim that he was an OBC, now says that there were only two castes – rich and poor.

Though Aurangabad and adjoining Saraswati Lok Sabha seats once used to be strongholds of the Congress, the two seats had been represented by BJP for the last two polls. Rahul would enter UP on Friday after travelling to Gaya.

Beginning his speech by asking the public "how was their

mood", Rahul reiterated his stand on caste census, which he termed as "revolutionary" a step as was the country's Freedom Movement, Green Revolution, and bank nationalisation. Alleging that the Modi government was working "only for a few rich people", Rahul said: "You recently saw the inauguration of Ram temple in Ayodhya. Did you see any farmer, labourer or unemployed person there?"

The next step of social justice is conducting a caste census. We also talked about legal guarantee

for the minimum support price to farmers. After we started saying so, PM Modi started saying that there were only two castes – rich and poor. One would recall that we had waived farm loans worth Rs 72,000 crore. Social justice will come with economic justice."

Taking a swipe at PM Modi, Rahul said: "I have heard that the PM is embracing some king in Dubai. I am meeting people... The RSS and BJP are engaged in igniting caste versus caste and religion versus religion fights. Manipur was put on fire."

**Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Rahul Gandhi and K C Venugopal in Aurangabad, Thursday.** ANI

## Bulgarian national rape case: Rajiv Modi questioned for 4 hrs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, FEBRUARY 15

MORE THAN one-and-a-half months after he was booked for the alleged rape and sexual harassment of a Bulgarian national, Cadila Pharmaceuticals chairman and managing director Rajiv Modi appeared before the Ahmedabad Police on Thursday morning for questioning.

On December 31, 2023, the Sola police station had booked Modi and another official of his company, Johnson Mathew, on charges of rape, outraging a woman's modesty and criminal intimidation under the Indian Penal Code. The FIR had followed after the Gujarat High Court directed the police to take action on the allegations made by the 27-year-old Bulgarian.

Chirag Koradia, Joint Commissioner of Police (Sector 1), said Modi was summoned for interrogation, following which he arrived at the police station around 8 am. Modi, who was quizzed for over four hours, was accompanied by his lawyer Sanjay

**Rakesh Solanki of Sola police**

Advocate for the complainant, Rajeshkumar Mishra, had written to Koradia on February 1, complaining that the Bulgarian national has gone missing and requested the police to trace her. Mishra told *The Indian Express* on Thursday that she is currently at Geneva in Switzerland.

Inspector Rakesh Solanki of Sola police, also the investigating officer in the case, said: "We took the statement of Johnson Mathew around 10 to 15 days ago. Today, we took the statement of Rajiv Modi. Further investigation is underway and (once probe is over), we will present everything from the investigation before the Gujarat High Court."

The complainant has alleged that she was employed as both a flight attendant and a personal assistant to Modi since August 2022. She claimed she was sexually harassed multiple times between February and March 2023. She also alleged that she was removed from her position last April for resisting Modi's alleged "illicit demands".

Sharma said the girl and the person who invited her to his flat met through social media – "recently". "All of them are students. While the girl is a minor, the four boys are adults and hail from UP, Bihar, and West Bengal. They have been booked under POCSO Act," she said.

**Four students held in Kota for 'raping minor'**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
JAIPUR, FEBRUARY 15

FOUR PEOPLE, all of them students of a coaching centre, have been arrested for allegedly raping a minor girl in Rajasthan's Kota, police said Thursday.

Kota ASP Uma Sharma said according to the girl, the incident took place on February 10. "The girl said that she knew a youth through social media. He invited her to his flat, and when she went there, she was raped. There were three other persons there apart from the person she knew," Sharma said, adding while the incident took place last Sunday, the case was lodged on Tuesday. The four accused, all adults, were initially detained, and were finally arrested on Thursday.

Sharma said the girl and the person who invited her to his flat met through social media – "recently". "All of them are students. While the girl is a minor, the four boys are adults and hail from UP, Bihar, and West Bengal. They have been booked under POCSO Act," she said.

After mauling him, the lions stood nearby till their caretakers coaxed them into the feeding cages, following which the man's

**Lions at Tirupati zoo maul Alwar man who jumped into enclosure**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 15

A MAN was mauled to death at Sri Venkateswara Zoological Park in Tirupati after entering the lions' enclosure there. The incident took place Thursday afternoon when Prahlad Gujjari (34), who hailed from Rajasthan's Alwar, jumped into the buffer zone around the enclosure.

Tirupati Superintendent of Police Mallika Garg said a security guard raised an alarm and ran after Gujjari. "When he saw the security guard running towards him, Gujjari jumped onto a water tank and climbed over the 12-foot-high fence surrounding the enclosure, which has a lion and two lionesses. He jumped and fell in front of the lions, which mauled him. He died on the spot," Garg said.

Sharma said the girl and the person who invited her to his flat met through social media – "recently". "All of them are students. While the girl is a minor, the four boys are adults and hail from UP, Bihar, and West Bengal. They have been booked under POCSO Act," she said.

After mauling him, the lions stood nearby till their caretakers coaxed them into the feeding cages, following which the man's

**Man 'beheads wife, dances with head in park', held**

**Kolkata:** A 35-year-old man was arrested after he allegedly killed his wife and was seen dancing with her head in a park in Purba Medinipur district on Wednesday, police said. The man, Gautam Guchhait, is a resident of Chistipur village of Patashpur in Purba Medinipur district, they added. Incidentally, Guchhait had jumped into a lion's enclosure at the Alipore zoo in Kolkata in 2021.

According to police, on Wednesday morning, Chistipur residents saw Guchhait dancing with a severed head and sitting on the bench of a park. "He sat on the bench for almost 30 minutes. Local residents were too afraid to nab him, so they informed the police. We rushed to the spot and arrested him," said police.

They also said that the man was suspected to be mentally unstable. Police said his wife Fulrani's (27) body has been sent for post-mortem examination.

Super

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PWD**  
**NORTH KAMRUP TERRITORIAL ROAD DIVISION, RANGIA**

No Tech/36/0

**PRESS NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER**

Executive Engineer PWD, North Kamrup Territorial Road Division, Rangia re-invites bids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 1 (one) no. of package for Construction of Roads & Bridges including Routine Maintenance for 4 (four) years under Mukhya Mantri Path Nirman Achanani (MMPNA) for the year 2023-24 in Rangle LAC of Assam amounting to **Rs. 50.00 Lakh (approx) (Including 12% GST and 1% LWC)** from approved & eligible contractors registered with APWDRD, Assam.

Details may be seen from **14-02-2024 to 23-02-2024** at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Amendment/Addendum to the SBD, if any and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Formal work order will be issued after receipt of Administrative Approval from competent authority.

Note - NIT value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour cess (1%) etc.

Sd/-

Executive Engineer PWD,  
North Kamrup Territorial Road Division, Rangia

JANASANYOG/CF/5524/23/15-FEB-24

**Jawaharlal Nehru Aluminium Research Development and Design Centre**  
(An Autonomous Body under Ministry of Mines, Govt. of India)  
Amravati Road, Wadi, Nagpur - 440 023.  
[www.jnarrdc.gov.in](http://www.jnarrdc.gov.in) (07104-220701)

निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना/NOTICE INVITING TENDER - FEBRUARY 2024

Director, JNARDC, Nagpur, invites online e-gem bids from reputed firms for the following items.

निवेदक, निम्नलिखित निविदा की आमंत्रण के लिए प्रतिक्रिया कंपनियों से आवाजान प्रस्ताव आमंत्रित किया है।

Tender No./ E-gem bid	Description of Equipments/ Work	Refundable EMD (₹)	Last date of tender submission	Date of tender opening	Date of downloading tender
GEM/2024/B/ 4630531	THERMO GRAVIMETRIC ANALYZER (TGA) (QTY-02)	3,00,000/-	06.03.2024 (2100 Hrs.)	06.03.2024 (2130 Hrs.)	Available at e-gem portal
GEM/2024/B/ 4609062	X-RAY FLORESCENCE SPECTROMETER (XRF)	4,50,000/-	01.03.2024	01.03.2024 (2100 Hrs.)	(2130 Hrs.)
GEM/2024/B/ 4646940 (2nd Extension)	X-RAY DIFFRACTOMETER (XRD)	4,50,000/-	24.02.2024 (2100 Hrs.)	24.02.2024 (2130 Hrs.)	

The details are available in the tender document which will be available for download from our office website [www.jnarrdc.gov.in](http://www.jnarrdc.gov.in) or <https://mkp.gem.gov.in> or e-mail: [purchaserjnarrdcnagpur@gmail.com](mailto:purchaserjnarrdcnagpur@gmail.com)

वरिष्ठ प्रशासनिक अधिकारी

**GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM**  
**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER, PWD (BORDER ROADS & NEC WORKS),  
ASSAM, CHANDMARI, GUWAHATI-03**

No.CE/Maint/MMPNA/01/2023-24/24

**PRESS NOTICE RE-INVITING TENDER**

The Chief Engineer (Border Roads & NEC Works), PWRD, Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3 invites Rebids on behalf of Governor of Assam for 22 (Twenty Two) nos. of packages amounting to Rs 2498.93 Lakhs (approx) including GST etc. from approved and eligible contractors registered with PWRD, Assam, subject to approval of works proposes under "Periodic Renewal/Repair of roads under Mukhya Mantri Path Nabikaran Achanani for the year 2023-24 in 20(Twenty) LACs of Assam".

Details may be seen from **14-02-2024 to 21-02-2024** at website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in). Amendment /Addendum to the SBD, if any, and further notifications shall appear in this website and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The contractor/bidder must be registered with the Electronic Tendering System (ETS) of PWRD, Assam website [www.assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in).

Formal work order will be issued after receipt of Administrative Approval from competent authority.

Note:-N.I.T Value is inclusive of GST (12%), Labour cess (1%) etc.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer, PWRD  
(Border Roads & NEC Works)  
Assam, Chandmari, Guwahati-3

JANASANYOG/CF/5512/23/15-FEB-24

**OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER  
MAHANADI PROJECT RAIPUR**

Notice No. 10/SAC/2023-24 Rudri

Rudri/date 09/02/24

**EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)**

"Geophysical Investigation of Masonry / Concrete Dam of Ravishankar Sagar Dam Gargal Distt.-Dhamtari (C.G.)"

The expression of Interest is hereby invited from the leading firms/organizations of India having past experience for handling similar work in Government organization for "Geophysical Investigation of Masonry / Concrete Dam of Ravishankar Sagar Dam Gargal Distt.-Dhamtari (C.G.)."

Government of Chhattisgarh is interested to perform "Geophysical Investigation of Masonry / Concrete Dam of Ravishankar Sagar Dam Gargal Distt.-Dhamtari (C.G.)". The EOI would be evaluated and shortlist of qualified organization would be prepared. The short-listed organization will be supplied request for proposal (RFP) including Terms of Reference (TOR) and will be given adequate opportunity to submit the proposal.

The interested firms/organizations should furnish full information about their relevant activities, supported by documentary proof, describing their full time and part-time expert staff, office strength financial turnover for last 5 years.

**Application:**

1. Interested agencies have to submit their proposal with non refundable cost of application for as Rs. 5000.00 in the form of D.D. in favour of "Executive Engineer, Water Management Division Rudri Code No. 38, Dist.-Dhamtari Chhattisgarh" through speed post/Registered post A/D to the Chief Engineer Mahanadi Project Raipur (C.G.)

A. Last date for submission of EOI documents-----29/02/2024 till 5:30 PM

B. Date of opening of EOI proposal document-----04/03/2024 at 3:30 PM

2. Further details regarding the project, can be viewed on sub portal of water Resources Department, Chhattisgarh website <http://cgwrd.in> Announcements from Date 14/02/2024

3. If considered necessary, the eligible organizations shall be called for making a Power Point Presentation at short notice.

4. All the right to reject any or all the responses received, without assigning any reason whatsoever, is reserved.

5. Expression of Interest submitted personally will not be accepted.

Sd/-  
Executive Engineer  
Water Management Division  
Rudri Code No. 38 (C.G.)  
For Chief Engineer, Mahanadi Project Raipur

Notice No. 10/SAC/2023-24 Rudri

Rudri/date 09/02/24

**Office of the Superintending Engineer,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Circle, P.W.D., Nainital -263002**

Letter No. 710 /41M-2/2023-24

Dated 13/02/24

**National Competitive Bidding (E-Tendering)**

The Superintending Engineer, 2<sup>nd</sup> Circle, Public Works Department Nainital on behalf of "Hon'ble Governor of Uttarakhand" invites Tender in Two Bid System through e-tender for the following civil engineering works. All related Information will be available online in <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> from Dt. 17-02-2024

SL. No	Name of work	Earnest money (in Lakh Rs)	Cost of Tender	Validity of tender	Time of completion	Confractor's category of Registration
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1	Under Annual Maintenance in the year 2024-25, Renewal work by SDBC in Km. 66 to 75 of Ramnagar - Kaladhungi - Haldwani - Kathgodam Chorgaliya Sitarganj Biji State Road No-41 -	5.09	5000+ GST	120	03 Month	Registered in Class 'A' and above in any State Govt./Central Govt. or any Govt. Undertaking in road works.

The Details of Tender Documents form may be seen and can be Downloaded from Website:

[https://assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) from 15/02/2024 and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The re-bid will be opened on the E-procurement portal as per the scheduled mentioned above.

Works will be allotted subject to receipt of AA from the competent authority, otherwise re-bid/re-bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever by the bidder/bidders on this account shall be entertained from this end.

The tender inviting authority reserves the right to accept and reject any Bid/Tender, and to cancel/annul the Bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to the award of contract.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer PWD  
Dibrugarh Road Circle, Dibrugarh

No. DRC.XIII/16/98/NIT/DIB/Pt-1/114

**SHORT NOTICE INVITING RE-TENDER**

This office of the Superintending Engineer, P.W.D., Dibrugarh Road Circle, Dibrugarh on behalf of Governor of Assam invites re-bid from the approved and eligible contractors/Firms registered with Assam PWD (Roads/Building) for the following works.

SL. NO	NAME OF WORK	ESTD Value (in Lakhs)	EMD/Bid Security Fees (in Rs)	Tender Fees (in Rs)	Pre Bid Date & Time	Last Date & Time of Bid Submission	Date & Time of Bid Opening
1	Landscaping of WRD Guest House, Dibrugarh under SOPD-G for the year 2023-24.	104.51	209100.00	3000.00	N/A	26/02/2024 Upto 14:00 Hrs	At 16:00 hrs

The Details of Tender Documents form may be seen and can be Downloaded from Website: [https://assamtenders.gov.in](http://www.assamtenders.gov.in) from 15/02/2024 and also at the office of the undersigned during office hours. The re-bid will be opened on the E-procurement portal as per the scheduled mentioned above. Works will be allotted subject to receipt of AA from the competent authority, otherwise re-bid/re-bids may be cancelled and no claim what so ever by the bidder/bidders on this account shall be entertained from this end.

The tender inviting authority reserves the right to accept and reject any Bid/Tender, and to cancel/annul the Bidding process and reject all Bids at any time prior to the award of contract.

Sd/-

Superintending Engineer PWD  
Dibrugarh Road Circle, Dibrugarh

JANASANYOG/CF/5521/23/15-FEB-24

**Maharashtra Airport Development Company Ltd.**  
CIN: U45203MH2002SGC136979

**TENDER NOTICE**

Tender for selection of agency for end to end maintenance of Cessna Citation CE560 XLS (Citation XLS, VT-VDD) Aeroplane for Government of Maharashtra.

The detailed tender document can be downloaded from the website [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in) from 15/02/2024 from 16.00 hours.

Vice Chairman and Managing Director



**MAHILA ARTHIK VIKAS MAHAMANDAL,**  
GRIHA NIRMAN BHAWAN (MHAV),  
Mezzanine Floor, Kalanagar, Bandra (East)-400051

Mahila Arthik Vikas Mahamandal (MAHV). A Government of Maharashtra Undertaking, invites Tender for supply of Desktops, Laptops & Printers.

For detail document, interested bidders should visit, E-Procurement system of Govt. of Maharashtra (GoM) i.e. Tenders Maharashtra [https://www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in)

All rights are reserved with Managing Director.

Last Date & Time for submission of Tenders: Till 15<sup>th</sup> March, 2024 till 1.00 pm

Email ID : [procurement.mahim@gmail.com](mailto:procurement.mahim@gmail.com)

Managing Director,  
MAHV, Mumbai

Mobile No.: 85019 49467

**कार्यालय जोधपुर नगर निगम, उत्तर**  
जोधपुर नगर निगम एवं पर्यावरण विभाग, जोधपुर, राजस्थान, विहार लाल मार्ग, जोधपुर-342001, ई-टेंडर प्रक्रिया से निगम शर्तों के संबंध में पर्यावरण (E-EWSD-I) संबंधित को जोधपुर-लाल मार्ग, ई-टेंडर प्रक्रिया से निगम शर्तों को जोधपुर नगर निगम विभाग द्वारा जोधपुर नगर निगम विभाग द्वारा जोधपुर नगर निगम

## A VITAL VERDICT

SC striking down electoral bonds scheme is a landmark moment, affirms the people's right to know

**I**NTRODUCING THE ELECTORAL bonds scheme in Union Budget 2017-18, the then finance minister, Arun Jaitley, had underlined that transparency in political funding is fundamental to the fairness of the election process. However, rather than helping clean up the shadowy world of poll finance, the electoral bonds scheme, which Jaitley had called the first step, had, over the years, invited criticism for increasing the system's opacity. Concerns over the scheme's structure based on anonymous donations were voiced even by the Election Commission and the Reserve Bank of India. The bonds allowed donors and parties to keep their association hidden from the public – the State Bank of India, a government-owned bank, and not an independent institution like the RBI, could track the donations. The Supreme Court's decision to strike down the changes in the law introduced to create electoral bonds is, therefore, enormously welcome, especially because it is anchored in the citizen's right to know. A five-judge bench headed by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud ruled that the donor secrecy provision is "unconstitutional" and "arbitrary and violative of Article 14". CJI Chandrachud set the tone for the verdict by stressing that, "information about funding of political parties is essential for the effective exercise of the choice of voting." In the name of informational privacy, electoral bonds restrict the Right to Information to an unacceptable extent, the bench held unanimously.

Studies by the Association for Democratic Reforms show that the BJP garnered the lion's share of the bonds issued in the first tranche. Analysis of declaration data shows that in the six years since the scheme was introduced, around 55 per cent of the funds extended through the bonds have gone to the BJP – Congress came a distant second with less than 10 per cent. A report in this paper in November 2019 revealed the lopsided nature of this financing system – electoral bonds with denominations of Rs 1 crore accounted for more than 91 per cent of the Rs 5,896 crore raised in the first 11 phases of the sale of bonds. All this lent credence to allegations of corruption and cronyism, and perceptions of an uneven playing field. The government maintained that donor anonymity was necessary to shield contributors from potential retribution. But as the five-judge bench pointed out, "at a primary level, political contributions... enhance access to legislators. This access also translates to influence over policy making. There is also a legitimate possibility that financial contributions to a political party would lead to a quid pro quo arrangement because of the close nexus between money and politics." The court has also pointed out that the ability of a company to influence the electoral process through political contributions is much higher when compared to that of an individual – both in terms of the quantum of money contributed, and the purpose of such contributions.

Attempts to make political funding more transparent must continue. As the SC has said, "There are means other than electoral bonds to achieve that purpose". The government must be guided by the principles of transparency and accountability as it gives the issue a deeper look. That's the central message of the SC's landmark verdict.

## BACK TO SQUARE ONE

With Brij Bhushan Singh reasserting clout over game's administration, wrestling's bad news won't go away

**A**T THE END of last year, when office-bearers of the new Wrestling Federation of India were elected, they included no one related to BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, the erstwhile WFI chief who faces charges of sexual harassment by the country's top female wrestlers. But at the poll venue that day, a banner hinted that Singh's control over Indian wrestling was far from over. "Dabda hai, dabda rahega (our clout will remain)" – was the writing on a placard flaunted by one of Singh's family members. Those fears have now come true. Last weekend, Singh's son, Karan, was elected president of the Uttar Pradesh Wrestling Association. It's a no-brainer that he would now have influence in the national body since the WFI is currently headed by Sanjay Singh, a close aide of his father. And with the ban on WFI being lifted by the United World Wrestling (UWW), Indian wrestling is back to square one. The two protesting wrestlers – Olympic medalists Sakshi Malik and Bajrang Punia – have requested the government, which suspended the WFI after Brij Bhushan continued to rule by proxy, to step in. Renewed protests loom on the horizon.

In this atmosphere of confusion and chaos, the only sport that has consistently medalled at Olympics, is suffering as its athletes are left in the lurch. In the past few weeks, there have been two National Championships – one recognised by the government. There is ambiguity over the dates, venues and eligibility for selection trials for the Olympic qualifiers since the wrestlers are unsure who is in charge – the WFI that has Singh's men or the ad hoc committee set by the government.

For over a year now, wrestling administrators have stayed more in the news than the potential medalists at Paris. There is a real danger that wrestling might draw a blank since the wrestlers are distracted and ambiguity remains about who is in charge. While the mat-craft of young and talented wrestlers – Anshu Malik, Aman Sehrawat and Antim Panghal – ought to be the focus, the tug of war continues to push sports in the background. Poor results at Asian Games and World Championships are bad omens. With administrators busy plotting to retain their own dabda, the reputation of Indian wrestlers internationally continues to take a beating.

## SELLING POINT

Products don't push themselves. As an eye-catching ad shows, it needs subversive messaging and appeals to consumers' feelings

**E**VEN AS HE battled alcoholism and other personal demons, Don Draper, fictional advertising executive and anti-hero of the show *Mad Men*, could be counted on to come up with profound observations about human nature and the art of selling. "You are the product. You feel something. That's what sells," he tells his protégé Peggy Olson in a season two episode, in response to her assertion – an advertising cliché, if ever there was one – that "sex sells". On the face of it, with its wink-wink-nudge-nudge references to sex (including an image of a lock opening a key), a recent viral commercial for a sexual wellness brand, starring Ranveer Singh and adult film actor Johnny Sins, seems to conform to the cliché: It draws attention to itself by, well, talking about sex.

Look closer, however, and it becomes evident that the commercial has important points to make: About why female desire cannot be ignored and the need to destigmatise the topic of sexual health. These are startlingly modern concerns, addressed amidst the regressive setting of a saas-bahu serial. And so, through subversion, feelings – of dissatisfaction and shame – experienced by a vast number of people, are addressed. The stickiest advertising campaigns – whether they feature a girl in a polka-dotted dress commenting on recent news developments while selling butter, or an ecstatic woman dancing onto a cricket field to congratulate her match-winning partner while munching on a bar of chocolate – understand the persuasive power of appealing to "feelings".

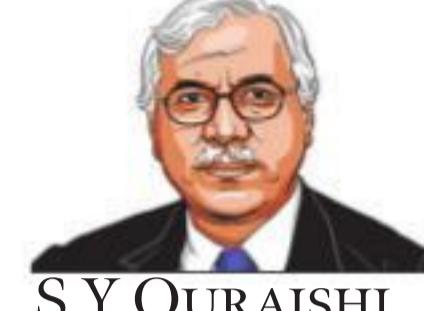
All feelings and enlightened discourse aside, though, any advertisement's ultimate success can only be measured in terms of how well it does its primary job, which is to persuade consumers that its product is worth spending their hard-earned money on. As Draper put it in his hard-nosed way, "What you call love was invented by guys like me... to sell nylon."

## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

### WORDLY WISE

ONE SHOULD ALWAYS PLAY FAIRLY WHEN ONE HAS THE WINNING CARDS. — OSCAR WILDE

# Democracy's guardian angel



S Y QURAISHI

In striking down the opaque Electoral Bonds Scheme, Supreme Court has lived up to its role

FEBRUARY 15, 2024 will go down in India's history as a golden day. The Supreme Court has struck a decisive blow on behalf of democracy, which it has held as the basic structure of the Constitution. The five-member Constitution Bench, in a unanimous verdict, upheld every challenge to every aspect in the electoral bonds case, declaring the scheme unconstitutional. It ordered the SBI to stop issuing electoral bonds immediately and submit all information of the bonds sold, and the names of all the donors and recipients, to the Election Commission of India (ECI).

The Court said the scheme violates the right to information. It rejected almost every argument of the government's lawyers with hard-hitting remarks like "Constitution does not turn a blind eye only because there is a possibility of misuse". And "Curbing black money is not the only ground for electoral bonds". In retrospect, the launch of the scheme through the Union budget of 2017 was itself intriguing. The late finance minister, Arun Jaitley, started with two promising statements: "Without transparency of political funding, free and fair elections are not possible". And: "For the last 70 years, we have failed to achieve this transparency". Our natural expectation was that his third sentence will achieve what he seemed to have set out to do.

Instead, he introduced a scheme that reeked of secrecy and opacity. The excuse was that donors want secrecy as they are afraid of reprisals (obviously from the ruling dispensation). Add to it, the amendment of Section 29(C) in RPA 1951, which has immunised donations through electoral bonds from scrutiny by the ECI, which allows corporates to transfer unaccounted money. The introduction of electoral bonds was not an isolated action. The Finance Act of 2017 introduced amendments to several laws, including the Reserve Bank of India Act, Companies Act, Income Tax Act 1961, Representation of the People Act, and Foreign Contribution Regulation Act, to pave the way for electoral bonds.

Three significant changes did not receive adequate attention. Firstly, the limit of 7.5 per cent of profits that a company could donate was not just raised but completely eliminated, allowing a company to donate 100 per cent of its profits to a political party. Even

loss-making companies could now make political donations, potentially legitimising crony capitalism. It was heartening to see the SC comment on it. Moreover, Section 29B of the Representation of the People Act, 1951, prohibits political parties from accepting contributions from foreign sources, and Section 3 of the 2010 Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act restricts foreign contributions to candidates, legislative members, political parties, and party office-holders. When, in 2014, Delhi High Court found that Congress and BJP had accepted foreign funds in violation of the FCRA 1976, the BJP government passed a retroactive amendment via a 2016 Finance Bill, replacing the 1976 Act with the modified 2010 statute. This move effectively shields any foreign financing of elections from scrutiny. This is a matter of great national concern.

Significantly, independent institutions like the RBI and ECI had raised serious doubts before the inception of the scheme. According to documents furnished by *Huffington Post*, the RBI had expressed its concerns to the government on the scheme by underlining that it would allow "unauthorised and non-sovereign entities to issue bearer bonds", in turn undermining the "core principle of central banking legislation" (RBI Act). Additionally, it said the scheme would encourage money laundering and the introduction of electoral bonds was worthless since "existing banking instruments like cheque and demand drafts" could achieve the same purpose. However, the government remained unmoved in its path to achieve opaque political funding, ironically in the garb of transparency.

In 2017, the ECI in its letter to the law ministry warned that electoral bonds would help in hiding illegal donations and lead to mushrooming of shell companies to turn their black money to white. The government brushed off its concerns. It is important to remember that citizens' right to know was settled by the apex court in 2003 when it mandated candidates to declare their financial dealings and criminal cases while filing nominations. The Supreme Court ruled that the right to know about public officials is derived from the constitutional right to freedom of expression.

Now that we are back to square one, let's

In 2017, the ECI in its letter to the law ministry warned that electoral bonds would help in hiding illegal donations and lead to mushrooming of shell companies to turn their black money to white. The government brushed off its concerns. It is important to remember that citizens' right to know was settled by the apex court in 2003 when it mandated candidates to declare their financial dealings and criminal cases while filing nominations. The Supreme Court ruled that the right to know about public officials is derived from the constitutional right to freedom of expression.



NARAYANI GUPTA

A CENTURY AND a half ago, the people of Shahjahanabad used to climb the southern ramparts of the city wall between Turkman Gate and Dilli Gate to look at the Khandrat Kalan (the great ruins), vestiges of earlier Delhis. From the 1920s, the khandrat were mapped and identified by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). Interspersed were the areas broadly called Jungle Baazar (the forests outside). The landscape of these was familiar to the city folk, for here lay the shrines they visited – Hindu, Sikh, Sufi. Between the trees and shrubs lay jheels, streams, rocky outcrops, and hills, all the way south to Mehrauli. Nature and manmade habitats intersected in the Delhi Triangle (the area between the Yamuna and the arc of the Ridge from the south curving round from west to north, and sloping into the river before Wazirabad). All the Delhis till the present one were within this triangle.

The decision to build a new city was announced in December 1911. From 1912 began the listing of structures and the mapping of requisitioned villages and their lands south of Shahjahanabad. The inhabitants were shifted, areas were cleared to be laid out as roads and houses, parks and gardens.

The process has never stopped. As the urban and "urbanisable" (DDA-speak) acreage keeps growing, villages are "acquired". Villagers of Mahipalpur go for morning walks on the lush green tracks leading to the airport, recalling it was once theirs; two generations ago, erstwhile villagers of Khairpur worked as

Of course, the perceived needs and aspirations of town-dwellers change. But our historic city has a richness that can reconcile modern activities with the spirit of the past. The monuments of centuries past communicate with the visitor who approaches them quietly. Sanjay Van does not need 'mushairas' or folk-dances or loud merriment. The sufi saint with whom the undulating landscape is associated sought – and found – peace in its birds, trees, its night sky.

birds, trees, its night sky. A word on Lodi Garden – it is an example of how urban governments should work. The monuments are looked after by the ASI, the lawns by the NDMC. This spirit of cooperation has to be extended, else we have a recipe for disaster. Imagine a situation where the Sheesh Gumbad is demolished because it encroaches on the lawns! This is now happening near Mehrauli, in Sanjay Van, an invented forest delineated in 1994. Mehrauli and the Ridge have been continuously inhabited since at least the 10th century. The splendour of this landscape has been nibbled away over recent decades. It was put under the Forest Department of Delhi, which has its office in DDA's Vikas Minar. On Martyrs' Day, before sunrise, the Department was in the Van to remove "encroachments" which had happened in the 14th century. The DDA has explained that they have wonderful plans for the Forest: To use it for recreational facilities such as paragliding, rock climbing, guided nature walks and promote environmental awareness.

Of course, the perceived needs and aspirations of town-dwellers change. But our historic city has a richness that can reconcile modern activities with the spirit of the past. The monuments of centuries past communicate with the visitor who approaches them quietly. Sanjay Van does not need 'mushairas' or folk-dances or loud merriment. The sufi saint with whom the undulating landscape is associated sought – and found – peace in its

birds, trees, its night sky. The issue is about control of land. This becomes easier to achieve if one is not distracted by sentimental arguments about heritage. Till the 1980s, the ASI had suffered from a lack of friends, low self-esteem, and low funds. It was the only whipping-boy for all complaints about historic buildings. From the '80s, "heritage" suddenly became the most (over)used word. Heritage when applied to recipes and to handicrafts has been discussed and promoted spiritedly. But when brought into a discussion on historic architecture and landscapes, it becomes fuzzy, listless, often confrontational. It is also ill-informed. Today, there is no excuse for misinformation. But most of us lose our way in basketfuls of rules, gazette notifications, building bye-laws from which information has to be teased out.

While history may be in the past, heritage is in the present. The patina of years changes it and makes it more appealing. Making a list of and photographing built heritage once is not enough. It has to be a continuous process.

Our city's most impressive monuments include three towers housing decision-makers – the Vikas Minar looking down on the Jama Masjid, the Nagar Palika on Sansad Marg, the Nagar Niwas, looming over south Shahjahanabad. From that height they draw the map of our city. How, from that height, will they hear our little voices?

The writer is a Delhi-based historian



## FEBRUARY 16, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### PUNJAB LATHICHARGE

THE POLICE FIRED teargas shells and resorted to lathicharge at Karnal and Panipat to disperse mobs damaging private and public property in retaliation to the incidents in Punjab. According to reports, there was tension in Karnal, Panipat, Yamunanagar and Jagadhri, where most of the shops remained closed in a spontaneous protest against the Punjab incidents.

### PAKISTAN'S ATOM BOMB

PRIME MINISTER IINDIRA Gandhi has said that India was in touch with countries re-

portedly helping Pakistan in the manufacture of the atom bomb since it would materially affect the security of this country. In an interview to two Polish journalists, she said India still believed that the greatest danger was of a conventional war, but it could not but be concerned about Pakistan acquiring such a capability.

### LIC ACTION DISPUTED

BOMBAY HIGH COURT allowed Escorts Ltd and H P Nanda to amend their writ petition against the Union of India, the Reserve Bank of India and others, including Swraj Paul and companies controlled by him, to implead Life

Insurance Corporation of India as the 13th respondent to the petition and challenge the action of the LIC calling for a meeting of the petitioner company to replace nine directors.

### WARNING FOR UP

CONGRESS (I) GENERAL secretary Rajiv Gandhi said strict disciplinary action would be taken against detractors who tried to disrupt the normal functioning of the government or the party. Reacting sharply to the recent activities of dissidents in Uttar Pradesh, Mr Gandhi said the current dissidence would fizzle out in a day or two. The dissidents have very meagre support against their tall claims.

# THE IDEAS PAGE

## Re-energising RTI

Supreme Court's judgment on Electoral Bonds Scheme is a much-needed boost for the flagging Right To Information Act



YASHOVARDHAN AZAD

**THE HISTORIC DECISION** by the Supreme Court (SC) declaring the Electoral Bonds (EB) scheme as unconstitutional has given a big boost to the flagging Right to Information Act. The SC weighed in its favour under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution as against informational privacy. The Solicitor General (SG), arguing before the Court, had stated that citizens have no right to donor or recipient identities; the finance minister had opined that political reticence was also a cause for denial of information. Earlier, a Central Information Commissioner (CIC) turned the RTI Act on its head with the decision that information disclosure on EBs was not in public interest. Such orders, while poor in quality, also hinted at the opacity of the regime.

It is this context that makes the SC judgment truly a landmark one. The SC averred that the voters' right is breached by the anonymity clause and that information on political parties is essential. Poll bonds, in fact, are violative of fundamental rights and infringement of RTI is not justified for curbing black money. The two goals of the RTI Act — transparency and accountability — were clearly on the judges' minds while delivering this unanimous judgment.

Whether the SC judgment will put the RTI Act back on track remains to be seen. The year 2023 ended on a sombre note for the Act. Vacancies in Information Commissions, mounting pendency, delayed hearing of second appeals, opacity and the casual approach of officers in dealing with RTI queries were pointers of difficult days ahead. Three lakh twenty-one thousand appeals were pending before the various Commissions as of June 30, 2023. Sarak Nagrik Sangathan, in its recent study of State Information Commissions' performances, found that four out of 29 are defunct and at least three are still headless. In ten, the waiting time for hearing after filing an appeal is over a year. Nineteen have not cared to file their annual report, which is mandatory under the Act. The CIC itself boasts of only three commissioners with eight vacant posts. At this rate, there is hardly any hope of clearing the backlog.

The RTI era in India began with the filing of the first query in a police station in Poona on October 12, 2005. The end of the first decade left clear indications that RTI was a work in progress. Public authorities were still not geared to manage the growing demand for information. Repeated queries arising from personal vendetta raised concerns. Compliance with the Commission's orders saw delays in some cases, while pendency increased. The pursuit of queries regarding corruption led to the murder of many RTI activists.

The CIC faced its first major test with a landmark judgment delivered on June 3, 2013, which brought political parties under the ambit of the RTI Act. The ruling party and the Opposition baulked at its audacity. Advised by legal luminaries, they neither complied with nor appealed against the decision. The order had a debilitating impact on the CIC. The body could have, at best, fined



C R Sasikumar

a political party spokesman or an official Rs 25,000 and done little else to ensure compliance with its orders. It also signalled the beginning of a lack of trust between the Commission and the government. Today, its commissioners are shorn of their former status and fixity of tenures.

A decade on, reiterating the government's stand on the issue, the SG argued before the SC in June 2023, that the CIC order cannot be used to seek a writ from the SC to bring political parties under the ambit of the RTI Act. Legally, the SC is right, but what does a common person do when parties cleverly choose not to comply, nor appeal against the CIC order — this, while there is a compelling demand that political parties thriving on public money should be more open to public scrutiny?

While issues such as these and the PM CARES Fund are from relatively recent years, even information from over 20 years ago is withheld on security grounds. The Henderson Papers are doomed to the archives and access to the correspondence between Roy Bucher, the second Army commander-in-chief, and Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, resting in the Nehru Memorial Library, is denied because the Ministry of External Affairs feels that foreign relations would be impacted. Revelation of Robert McNamara and Richard Nixon's observations on Indira Gandhi has not impacted our relations with US; neither have Winston Churchill's trenchant and acerbic comments on India hampered relations with the UK.

Things can still turn around if the govern-

ment shows the will to resurrect the RTI regime. Let a committee under the Ministry of Personnel, comprising information commissioners, officials and even civil society members, examine issues and take appropriate measures. The Prime Minister has often stressed on transparency and accountability and that is exactly what the Preamble of the RTI Act embodies. The RTI Act was once called a "sunshine legislation", rated as one of the best in the world and even emulated by a few nations.

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In the early '90s, a catchy slogan from rural Rajasthan — "Hamara Paisa, Hamara Hisab", coined by the Mazdoor Kisan Sangathan Samiti (MKSS) — resonated across villages, townships and the corridors of power in Jaipur. Access to government records on public expenditure in villages was a long-standing demand and it ushered in a mass movement, garnering support from all quarters. As replies started coming in from officials in village durbars, the MKSS, led by crusaders Aruna Roy and Nikhil Dey, scripted a historic win for the right to information.

The time has come for India, boasting of a rising economy and moral and political clout, to energise the RTI regime, which would only add heft to its position in the comity of nations. Let us hope that the SC judgment acts as a catalyst in strengthening the RTI Act and restoring it to its past glory.

The writer is chairman of DeepStrat, a former central information commissioner and a retired IPS officer who served as secretary, security, and special director, Intelligence Bureau. Views expressed are personal.

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## A Pyrrhic victory

SC's electoral bonds verdict turns back clock, is more idealistic than pragmatic

nations will be restored.

The SC judgment stops the State Bank of India (SBI) from issuing any more EBs forthwith. The SBI has also been directed to submit the details of EBs purchased since April 12, 2019 (the date of the interim order of the SC) to the ECI. The details to be submitted shall include the date of purchase of each electoral bond, the name of the purchaser and the denomination of the electoral bonds purchased.

The SBI has also been directed to submit the details of the political parties, which received and deposited the contributions through EBs from the date of the same interim order. The details to be furnished shall include the date of encashment and the denomination of each of the electoral bonds. These details have been directed to be furnished by March 6. The ECI has been directed to publish the information received from the SBI on its website by March 13.

By this date, most details of the EBs issued after April 12, 2019, would be in the public domain — which companies purchased the EBs with details of each EB purchased and details of each EB received by the political parties. The SC has taken care to prescribe the mode of disposal of EBs currently in transit as well. The EBs, which are within the validity period of 15 days but have not been encashed by the political parties so far, will be returned by the political

party to the purchaser-donor. Upon deposit, the issuing bank shall refund the EB amounts in the purchaser's account.

The SBI has not been asked to provide the specific identification number of each EB issued and received. It has also not been asked to match the purchaser and depositor for each EB. Therefore, the information to be furnished by SBI and to be placed by the ECI on its website will not lead to the discovery of exact information relating to which company provided which EB to which political party. Perhaps a data analyst would figure it out in due course. That, however, will not be easy.

From the judgment read out by the Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, and major details available so far, the five-judge bench, including Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, appeared to have based the judgment on two major principles.

The SC laid stress on the virtues of "open governance" and accepted the idea that "information about funding of political parties is essential for the effective exercise of the choice of voting". Further, the SC wanted to discourage/stop corporate funding for political favours. The SC said: "At a primary level, political contributions give a seat at the table of contributors, i.e. it enhances access to legislators. This access also translates to influence over policymaking. There is also a

legitimate possibility that financial contributions to a political party would lead to quid pro quo arrangement because of the close nexus between money and politics."

The Court did apply the restrictive means test of the doctrine of proportionality but found that the EB system did not satisfy the same. The SC accepted the argument that there are means other than EBs to achieve the purpose of curbing black money, even assuming it to be a legitimate objective. It viewed EBs as infringing, to an unjustifiable degree, on the right to information.

EBs are now history.

Only profitable corporates would be able to make political donations within the limit of a maximum of 7.5 per cent of profits — though this route was always available, it was seldom used. It is unlikely to be used going forward as well. Political parties will need funding for the upcoming Lok Sabha elections. How will they receive contributions?

Most likely, the corporates and the political parties will fall back upon the pre-2018 route of splitting the funding into cash donations of less than Rs 20,000 per donation. Or, they may resort to making completely unaccounted political donations. In sum, India will have a Pyrrhic victory. It is a triumph of idealism over pragmatism.

The writer is a former finance secretary

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Only if it is successful in overturning the ROs' decisions in a significant number of seats and improving its numerical strength can the PTI think of ousting the PML-N-led government inside parliament. Otherwise, the PTI dream of again forming the government at the centre it will have to wait." —DAWN, PAKISTAN

## This is not how India really lives

Daily struggles of ordinary men and women do not find a place in the government's budget rhetoric



ZERO HOUR

BY DEREK O' BRIEN

**Food security:** "India's food diversity is a dividend for global investors."

**Scenario A:** Kavita decides to buy her family's monthly ration from the government-subsidised ration shop. The prices are low but so is the nutritional value. Kavita's is not a one-off case. Her reality confirms what various independent surveys say, like the Global Hunger Index where India ranked 111 out of 125 countries. Kavita's reliance on subsidised options amplifies the struggles faced by countless low-income Indian families whose nutritional needs remain unfilled.

**Scenario B:** Kavita opts to buy groceries from the supermarket close by. It gives her more options, and better quality, albeit at a higher cost. Kavita reduces the number of meals she has in order to afford the quality. Her predicament supplements the report recently published by FAO, IFPRI, UNICEF, WFP, and WHO which finds that three out of four Indians (a staggering one billion people) cannot afford a healthy diet.

**Health:** "The Ayushman Bharat scheme has greatly helped the poor."

**Scenario A:** Rekha visits a government hospital and waits in a long queue. She desperately needs medical assistance. She knows the treatment she will get here is of poor quality, but this is all her pocket allows. Not just the quality of the treatment, but the process of accessing it is also difficult. Data stored with government hospitals under the Ayushman Bharat scheme is riddled with errors. This pushes Rekha, and citizens like her, further away from timely healthcare. The numbers either misidentify the dead, incorrectly record surgery details or entirely leave out beneficiaries from the list. If Rekha is lucky enough to not get entangled in all the red tape, she would be treated at a government facility, where resources are limited and facilities often subpar. What more can one expect from a government that invests a mere 2.1 per cent of GDP in healthcare? Endless out-of-pocket expenditure coupled with insufficient government support impoverishes 55 million Indians every year.

**Scenario B:** Rekha attempts self-medication to save money. This severely jeopardises her health. According to the recent NFHS report, the proportion of households that typically avoided utilising government health facilities between 2019 and 2021 was a staggering 49.9 per cent. This means that half the country does not turn to government facilities in their time of need. Reality gets worse for Indian women like Rekha. Six out of 10 women from the general category, and seven out of 10 women from the tribal community have reported at least one concern in accessing healthcare. P.S: The International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS) Director and Senior Professor K S James, who was behind this year's NFHS data, was suspended by the Union government shortly after the release of the report.

The voices of Kavita, Rekha and Mohan did not find a place in the Prime Minister's marathon monologue in Parliament.

The writer is Member of Parliament and Leader, All India Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party (*Rajya Sabha*). Additional research credit: Chahat Mangtani, Varnika Mishra

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### TEMPLE & MOSQUE

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Abu Dhabi enhances Ayodhya joy, says PM, opens UAE temple' (IE, February 15). It is deeply symbolic that while the temple has arisen in Abu Dhabi with the full support of the UAE authorities, here in Mehrauli, a 600-year-old mosque was demolished with 10 minutes' notice by the Delhi Development Authority on January 30.

Jawid Laiq, New Delhi

### TIME FOR RESOLUTION

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Plainly on MSP' (IE, February 15). The ongoing confrontation between farmers and the Centre is worrisome. There are reasons to blame the government's intransigence for the current ugly scenario, but, as the editorial points out, a legal guarantee on MSP will be nothing short of financial harakiri. Moreover, the government cannot yet again give the message that it is being held to ransom by the farming community, as had happened at the time of the repeal of farm laws. With daily commutes also facing a harrowing time due to the agitation, a resolution must be found soon.

Vijai Pant, Hempur

### LIMIT THE POWER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Governor in a china shop' (IE, February 15). The office of the governor plays an important role in upholding the constitutional fabric. It ensures that the functioning of the state machinery is in alignment with the constitutional spirit. The good office is meant to act as a bridge between the Union government and the respective state. It is high time the incumbents of the office resist the temp-

tation of expressing their personal and political opinions while performing their ceremonial duties and responsibilities. Policymakers of the day should consider constitutional safeguards to limit the discretionary power vested in the governor's office to a bare minimum. A fixed tenure may motivate governors to look after the interests of the state and its people while in office.

Sudip Kumar Deo, Barasat

### LOVE THYSELF

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'One and enough' (IE, February 15). Belgium's initiative to normalise being single is a step towards challenging the social stigma surrounding single people. Some individuals decide not to get romantically involved by choice and it is unjust to impose societal expectations on them. Instead of stressing the need for a romantic partner for joy, society should give due importance to the practice of self-love and self-acceptance.

Kamia Namitha, Bengaluru

### UNFULFILLED PROMISE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Farmers' protest, lessons unlearnt' (IE, February 15). The Union government's reluctance to accede to the demands made by the farmers during the protests of 2021 has left them with little option but to re-launch their movement. Back then, PM Modi had been prudent enough to repeal the three controversial farm laws and had promised to look after their welfare. But he has not walked the talk. Let the "feeders of the nation" be heard as there have been many unfortunate instances of farmer suicides in the recent past.

SS Paul, Nadia



SUBHASH CHANDRA GARG

THE SUPREME COURT (SC), on February 15, extinguished the Electoral Bonds (EB) Scheme (2018), by holding all the amendments made in the Representation of People Act (RPA), the Companies Act (CA) and the Income Tax Act (ITA) violative of the fundamental right to information under Article 19(1)(a) and the right to equality (Article 14) of the Constitution.

The amendment in Section 29C of the RPA excluded the EBs from the requirement of mandatory reporting by political parties to the Elections Commission of India (ECI). Section 13A(b) of the ITA was amended to make cash donations of only Rs 2,000, received other than by way of cheque, bank draft, electronic clearing system or electoral bonds, eligible for tax exemption from income tax.

The amendment of Section 182(1) and Section 183(3) of the CA, on the other hand, had the effect of making every company, loss-making or profit-making, eligible to make unlimited corporate funding to political parties as the earlier ceiling of 7.5 per cent of profits (Article 14) of the Constitution.

The SC judgment stops the State Bank of India (SBI) from issuing any more EBs forthwith. The SBI has also been directed to submit the details of EBs purchased since April 12, 2019 (the date of the interim order of the SC) to the ECI. The details to be submitted shall include the date of purchase of each electoral bond, the name of the purchaser and the denomination of the electoral bonds purchased.

The SBI has also been directed to submit the details of the political parties, which received and deposited the contributions through EBs from the date of the same interim order. The details to be furnished shall include the date of encashment and the denomination of each of the electoral bonds. These details have been directed to be furnished by March 6. The ECI has been directed to publish the information received from the SBI on its website by March 13.

Party to the purchaser-donor. Upon deposit, the issuing bank shall refund the EB amounts in the purchaser's account.

The SBI has not been asked to provide the specific identification number of each EB issued and received. It has also not been asked to match the purchaser and depositor for each EB. Therefore, the information to be furnished by SBI and to be placed by the ECI on its website will not lead to the discovery of exact information relating to which company provided which EB to which political party. Perhaps a data analyst would figure it out in due course. That, however, will not be easy.

From the judgment read out by the Chief Justice of India, DY Chandrachud, and major details available so far, the five-judge bench, including Justices Sanjiv Khanna, B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, appeared to have based the judgment on two major principles.

The SC laid stress on the virtues of "open governance" and accepted the idea that "information about funding of political parties is essential for the effective exercise of the choice of voting". Further, the SC wanted to discourage/stop corporate funding for political favours. The SC said: "At a primary level, political contributions give a seat at the table of contributors, i.e. it enhances access to legislators. This access also translates to influence over policymaking. There is also a

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The Court did apply the restrictive means test of the doctrine of proportionality but found that the EB system did not satisfy the same. The SC accepted the argument that there are means other than EBs to achieve the purpose of curbing black money, even assuming it to be a legitimate objective. It viewed EBs as infringing, to an unjustifiable degree, on the right to information.

EBs are now history.

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**UPSIDA** UTTAR PRADESH STATE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
UPSIDA Complex : A-1/4, Lakhnupur, Kanpur - 208024

Notice for Public Objection/Suggestion on layout plan of Industrial Area Site-A, Sikandra, Agra by Which Industrial Plot No B-2 has been Sub-divided & created two new Plot's namely B-2 (Measuring 1948.575 Sqm.) & B-2/1 (Measuring 1948.575 Sqm.).

- (a) The layout plan of **Industrial Area Site-A, Sikandra, Agra** of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) situated in District Agra has been prepared.
- (b) A copy of thereof will be available for inspection at the **Regional Manager Office of the Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA)** at Administrative Building, Industrial Area EPIP, Shastriupuram, Sikandra, Distt. Agra-282007 (U.P.) between the 10.00 am to 5.00 p.m. on all working days till the date mentioned in Para 3 hereafter as well as website [www.onlinesupsida.com](http://www.onlinesupsida.com).

2. Objections and suggestions are hereby invited with respect of the Draft Amended layout Plan.

3. Objections and suggestions shall be sent in writing to the office of Regional Manager, Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA) at Administrative Building Indl. Area EPIP, Shastriupuram, Sikandra, Distt. Agra-282007 (U.P.) within 15 day from the date of publication of this notice mentioning subject "Regarding Public Objections/Suggestions on Draft Partial Amendment in layout plan for Industrial Area Site-A, Sikandra, Agra." Any person making the objections or suggestions should also give his/her name, address, Email ID and Contact Number. (**Regional Manager**) U.P. State Industrial Development Authority

**Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd**  
Shankarsheth road, swargate, Pune - 411037

**EXTENSION - 2**

Regarding the extension for tender purchase & submission dates published in RFP for Tender No. 01-CE-2024 = Selection of Eligible Bus Manufacturer to Design, Manufacture, Supply, Commission and Support of 12 Meter 100 CNG Non AC BRT buses for 12 years. Interested bidders can participate as per following dates:

**Duration** : 15/02/2024 TO 26/02/2024 till 05.00 pm

**Acceptance Details** : 15/02/2024 TO 26/02/2024 till 05.00 pm

**Technical tender opening date** : 27/02/2024 till 05.00 pm

All relevant details of the procurement are available in Request For Proposal (RFP) document. The RFP document is available & can be purchased online from [www.mahatenders.gov.in](http://www.mahatenders.gov.in).

All subsequent notification, announcement, changes, extension & amendments would be posted on website.

Sd/-

(Nitin Navrkar)  
Joint Managing Director

Pune Mahanagar Parivahan Mahamandal Ltd

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, FORESTS & CLIMATE CHANGE  
Regional Office, Chandigarh

Online Proposal No.:  
FP/HR/TRANS/416694/2023  
To,

The Additional Chief Secretary (Forests), Government of Haryana, Haryana Civil Secretariat, Chandigarh, (fcosres@hry.nic.in)

Subject: Division of 16.0591 Ha. (Mahendergarh 4.8914 Ha., Rewari 2.2428 Ha. & Hjajjar 8.249 Ha.) of forest land in favour for Sh. Deputy General Manager Power grid Narela Transmission Ltd.(100% wholly owned subsidiary of Power Grid Corporation of India Ltd.) for Construction 765kv Dlx Khetri Narela transmission line (Hexa AL59), under Forest Division and Distt.Mahendergarh, Rewari & Hjajjar Haryana. (Online Proposal No. FP/HR/TRANS/416694/2023)-req.

Ref: (i) State Government's Stage-I Compliance Letter No. 4552-3-1-2023/6994 dated 27.10.2023.

(ii) 65th REC MoM Dated:25.01.2024

Sir/Madam,  
Kindly refer to the subject cited above and letter under reference for seeking prior approval in accordance with section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 for diversion of 16.0591 ha forest land for non-forestry purpose. After careful examination of the proposal, I am directed to convey in-principle approval for the above-mentioned project, subject to the following conditions:

**1. General Conditions**

1. Cost of Compensatory Afforestation, as per CA scheme, may be realized from the user agency.
2. Cost of Additional Compensatory Afforestation, as per CA scheme, may be realized from the user agency.
3. Net Present Value (NPV) of the forest land 16.0591 ha. being diverted for non-forestry purpose may be realized from the user agency, as per Ministry's directions issued vide letter No. 5-3/2023/FC (Vol-I) dated 06 January 2023 and Hon'ble Supreme Court of India's Order WPC/No. 2021/95, I.A. No. S66, dated 30th October 2022, 28th March, 2008, 24th April, 2008 and 9th May 2008.
4. The Net Present Value (NPV) of the forest land and all other CA levies shall be deposited through web portal of Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change [www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in).
5. Complete compliance report will be uploaded in the e-portal ([www.parivesh.nic.in](http://www.parivesh.nic.in)).
6. User agency should ensure that the compensatory levies (CA costs, NPV, etc.) are deposited through challan generated online on web portal and deposited in appropriate bank only. Amount deposited through other mode will not be accepted as compliance of the Stage-I clearance.
7. The complete compliance of the FRA, 2006 shall be ensured by way of prescribed certificate from the concerned District Collector.
8. Details Mitigation plan to avoid Electrocution and collision of the birds duly vetted by the Chief Life Warden, Haryana needs to be submitted within three months.

**2. General Conditions**

1. The Legal status of the forest land shall remain unchanged.
2. The number of trees/plants to be felled shall not in any way exceed the number indicated in the proposal and no harm shall be done to the wildlife during felling of trees. The felling of trees/plants will be carried out under the strict supervision of the State Forest Department and the amount spent on felling of trees/plants will be deposited by the user agency to the State Forest Department.

3. As per the proposed CA Scheme, Compensatory afforestation (CA) and Additional Compensatory afforestation shall be taken up by the State Forest Department over degraded forest land, C-70 Nada Beat, Panchkula Block, Panchkula against diversion in Mahendergarh Forest Division, C-3, R-70 chowki Beat, Panchkula Block, Panchkula & C-5, R-70 Burjkotian Beat, Burjkotian Block, Panchkula against diversion in Hjajjar Forest Division and C-6, R-70 Kolsu Beat, Burjkotian Block, Panchkula against diversion in Rewari Forest Division in Haryana at the cost of the user agency. The plantation shall be done within one year from the date of issue of approval. As far as possible, a mixture of local indigenous species shall be planted and monoculture of any species shall strictly be avoided.

4. The State Government shall upload the KML files of the degraded forest area accepted for raising compensatory afforestation in the E-Green watch portal of FSI, before handing over of forest land to the user agency.

5. The forest land shall not be used for any purpose other than that specified in the proposal.

6. The user agency shall pay additional amount of NPV as and when increased by the order of Hon'ble Supreme Court and the State Government will ensure that the increased amount is deposited.

7. No kind of damage will be done to the adjoining forest land. Simultaneously, all efforts will be made to save adjoining forest and forest land.

8. No labour camp shall be established on the forest land.

9. Sufficient firewood, preferably the alternate fuel, shall be provided by the User Agency to the labourer after purchasing the same from the State Forest Department or the Forest Development Corporation or any other legal source of alternate fuel.

10. The boundary of the diverted forest land shall be suitably demarcated on ground at the project cost, as per the directions of the concerned Divisional Forest Officer.

11. The forest land proposed to be diverted shall, under no circumstances, be transferred to any other agency, department, or person without approval of the Central Government.

12. The layout plan of the proposal shall not be changed without prior approval of Central Government.

13. Any other condition may be stipulated by this regional office from time to time, in the interest of conservation, protection and development of forests & wildlife.

14. User Agency shall obtain Environmental Clearance as per the provisions of the Environmental (Protection) Act, 1986, if applicable.

15. The initial permission will be given to this proposal for 99 years. After that the permission shall again be obtained from the Government of India. The period of diversion under this approval shall be co-terminus with the period of lease to be granted in favor of the user agency or the project life, whichever is less.

16. Violation of any of these conditions will amount to violation of Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and action would be taken as per para 1.16 of consolidated guideline and clarifications on Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980 and Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Rules, 2023, MoEF&CC.

**3. Specific Conditions**

1. Width of right of way for the transmission line shall be limited to 67m;

2. The user agency shall install circuit breakers at suitable places besides maintain necessary ground clearance to prevent electrocution of wild animals;

3. No approach road shall be constructed in the forest area for transportation of steel and other material required for the transmission line. As far as possible the User Agency shall use the existing road and the proposed RoW for the transportation of the material and in the event of non-availability of such facilities, the User Agency shall transport material manually without construction of any path.

3.2. 1. To minimize the felling for construction of transmission line, user agency shall comply with the following guidelines:

1. Below each conductor, width clearance of (10 mts. Hexagonal bundle)7m for quadrupole bundle would be permitted for carrying the tension stringing equipment. The free on such strips may be felled but after stringing work is completed, the natural regeneration will be allowed to come up;

2. One outer strip may be left clear to permit maintenance of the transmission line;

3. In the remaining width the right of way felling/pollarding/pruning of trees will be done with the permission of the local forest officer whenever necessary to maintain the electrical clearance, trees shall be allowed to be felled or lopped to the extent required, for preventing electrical hazards by maintaining the minimum 9-meter clearance between conductors and trees. The sag and swing of the conductors are to be kept in view while working out the minimum clearance mentioned as above;

4. User agency in consultation with the State Forest Department prepare a detailed scheme for creation and maintenance of plantation of dwarf species (preferably medicinal plants) in right of way under the transmission line, and provide funds for execution of the said scheme to the State Forest Department; and

5. In case a portion of the transmission lines to be constructed is located in hilly areas, where adequate clearance is already available, trees shall not be cut;

6. It will be the responsibility of the State Government/User Agency to obtain all other prior approvals/clarifications under all other relevant Acts/Rules/Court's Rulings/instructions, etc., including environmental clearance, as applicable to this proposal.

After receipt of the compliance report on the fulfillment of the conditions mentioned above, the proposal shall be considered for final approval under section 2 of the Van (Sanrakshan Evam Samvardhan) Adhiniyam, 1980. Transfer of forest land shall not be affected till final approval is granted by the Government in this regard.

Your's faithfully  
(Raja Ram Singh)  
Dy. Inspector General of Forests (Central),  
MoEF&CC, RO, Chandigarh



**राजस्थान विश्वविद्यालय, जयपुर**

ई-निविदा की संदिग्ध सूचना

राजस्थान विश्वविद्यालय में मार्ग के आधार पर किया पर वाहन लेने के लिये वार्षिक दर सविदा हेतु अन लार्सन निविदाएँ आमंत्रित की जाती हैं अतः इच्छुक फर्म / कम्पनी / निविदाएँ दिनांक 26.02.2024 को 12:30 बजे तक इ-प्रोस्ट्रेट पोर्टल पर ई-निविदा आमंत्रित कर सकते हैं तभी निविदा प्रपत्र एवं शर्त <https://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in> पर आउटलोड की जा सकती है।

UBN No. : URA2324SLOB00211

कुलसाचिव  
राजस्थान विश्वविद्यालय, जयपुर

NIB No. : URA2324A0077

CHIEF GENERAL MANAGER/TSSPCL

DIPR R.O. No: 947-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2023-24, Date: 15-02-2024

Regd. Office.: PSPCL Head Office, The Mall, Patiala

CIN: U40109PB2010SGC033813; Website: [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

(Dy. CE/ Hydel Project, PSPCL, Patiala) Contact No. 9646118754

Tender Enquiry No. 313/HPD/ED-II/RSD-129 Dated: 06.02.2024

Dy. CE/ Hydel Projects, PSPCL, Shed A-3, Shakti Vihar, PSPCL, Patiala invites E-Tender Supply, and Supervision of Erection, Testing & Commissioning (ETC) of Brake and Jack assembly of unit no. 4 at Ranjit Sagar Dam, PSPCL, Shahpurkandi.

For detailed NIT & Tender Specification please refer to <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in> from 22.02.2024 onwards.

Note: Corrigendum and Addendum, if any will be published online at <https://eproc.punjab.gov.in>

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**

**Tender Notice**

30-Elect-58-T-2023-24-E3  
Electrical work in connection with repair & maintenance of electrical assets with other associated works in the jurisdiction of DEEG.

Approx cost of the work in ₹ 74.70 lacs

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

Bid Security Rs. 149400.00

Date & time of submission of tender 26.03.2024, 12.00 Hrs

Opening of tender 26.03.2024, 12.00 Hrs

Website & notice board [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi

509/2024

Serving Customers With A Smile



General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: Approx. 35 years, Height: about 5'7", Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing : Black Jeans Black T-Shirt Black Inner Blue Jacket was found UER-2 Expressway, Between Madanpur and Rani Kheda Village Kanjhawala, Delhi In

this regard DD No.28A, dated 14.02.2024 has been lodged at PS Kanjhawala, Delhi.

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

Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

**SHO**

P.S., Kanjhawala, Delhi

Ph : 011-25951486,

7065036152

DP/1871/RD/2024

**The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking (OF THE BRIHANMUMBIA MAHANAGARPALIKA)**

**TENDER NOTICE**

**E-tenders are invited for the supply of following items.**

(1) Triennial Contract for Clearance and Transportation of the Undertaking's Materials (2) 78224 - i3 Personal Computers.



# Mangaon Nagarpanchayat, Mangaon

Tal. Mangaon, Dist. Raigad, Pin code-402 104  
E-mail : nagarpanchayatmagaon@gmail.com; M.N. : 02140263056

MNP/Tender add/1929/2023-2024 Date : 14.02.2024

## Announcement Of E-Tender Notice

THE Chief Officer, Mangaon Nagarpanchayat for the undermentioned works from the registered experienced and willing contractors of the appropriate category in the public work department of the state government calling for tenders through tender method.

Sr.No.	Name of Work	Amount of Work	EMD	Tender Form Fee
1	Construction of administrative building for Mangaon Nagarpanchayat.	14,98,08,818/-	14,98,088/-	1,500/-

### Terms and conditions of employment

The entire process above will be done online through e-tendering on computer system information about the said e-tender notification required documents certificate etc. will be available on the web site <https://www.mahatenders.gov.in>.

Signature/- Signature/-  
Chief Officer Vice President  
Mangaon Nagar Panchayat Mangaon Nagar Panchayat Mangaon Nagar Panchayat



# PUBLIC NOTICE

This is to inform to all concerned that

## Dewan Motors (DEWAN BAJAJ)

F 1/1, Mahavir Enclave, Palam Dabri Road, Dwarka, Delhi  
who was working as our Authorised Dealer on principal to principal basis is no longer our dealer for Sales & Service w.e.f. 26th July 2023  
(Motorcycle Business Unit)

For public information only

### BAJAJ AUTO LIMITED

Regd. Office: Mumbai-Pune Road, Akurdi, Pune - 411 035.

### कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूंटी

#### ई-पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई-पुनर्निविदा सं- 23/RI/2023-24/RWD/KHUNTI, दिनांक- 15.02.2024  
कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूंटी द्वारा निम्न विवरण के अनुसार e-procurement पद्धति से पेक्षक के रूप में निविदा आमंत्रित की जाती है।

1. योग्यता का नाम-

क्र०	आईडी०	प्रखण्ड	पथ का नाम	प्राकलित राशि (रुपये में)	अग्रधन की राशि (रुपये में)	कार्य सामानी की अवधि
1	RWD-KHU-STPKG-16/2023-24	मुरूँ	1. T013 खूंटी तोरा मुख्य पथ से कुंजला तक पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-1.150 किमी०)	11,28,92,100.00	22,58,000.00	15 माह।
		मुरूँ	2. घासपाल से दारला तक पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-1.600 किमी०)	(घासपाल करोड़ अंतर्वास लाख बाहरे हजार एक सौ रु० मात्र।)		
		मुरूँ	3. L049 दारला से विश्रांतक तक पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-1.300 किमी०)			
		मुरूँ	4. L024 अंगीरी० से उदरु० तक पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-1.390 किमी०)			
		मुरूँ	5. L021 अंगीरी० से शोंगी० तक पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-3.300 किमी०)			
		मुरूँ	6. विचार गम्पिया० मेन रो० जलमज्जा० से खूंटी० तोरा० मुख्य पथ तक भाया० पाय० पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-3.500 किमी०)			
		मुरूँ	7. खूंटी० तोरा० मुख्य पथ से खूंटी० चाइवारा० मुख्य पथ तक भाया० कुंजला० दुलवा० टोरी० इदर० गरटोली० पथ का सुदृशीकरण कार्य (ल०-9.600 किमी०)			

2. वेबसाईट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि- 16.02.2024।

3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय- 23.02.2024 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे।

4. निविदा खालीन की तिथि एवं समय- 06.03.2024 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे।

5. निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले पदधिकारी का नाम एवं पता- कार्यपालक अभियंता, ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूंटी, फैन-835210।

6. ई-निविदा प्रोक्रिट का दरमाप सं- 943170803।

7. अग्रधन की राशि स्वीकृत परिमाण विषय के अनुसार भी मान्य होगा।

विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट [jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in) में देखा जा सकता है।

कार्यपालक अभियंता

ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल, खूंटी

PR 319044 Rural Work Department(23-24)#D

### SECTION 1

#### Superintending Engineer, 4th Circle, HPPWD Shimla HP

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER (NIT)

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 roads under National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development for following work from the eligible and approved contractors registered with HPPWD and HP Jal Shakti Vibhag (Contractors of HP Jal Shakti Vibhag are eligible to participate for the works 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 HPPWD.

1.

District	RIDF	Name of the work	Estimated Cost (Rs. lacs)	Total Cost (Rs. lacs)	Period of Completion	Bid Security (Rs. lacs)
			Construction	Maintenance		
Shimla	XXIX	C/O Thathal Nallah to Rachhani road Km. 0/0 to 4/675	317.15	Nil	317.15	18 months

2. Cost of Bid Form: Rs. 5000/- per package/job (non-refundable) only (Online) in favour of Executive Engineer, Theog, HPPWD, Theog.

3. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The bid document is available online and bid should be submitted online on website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in). 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](http://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 bids; however, the successful bidders must get registered in appropriate class with appropriate authorities before signing the contract.

4. Submission of Original Documents: Nil

5. Last Date/ Time for receipt of bids through e-tendering: 27.02.2024 upto 1400 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](http://www.hptenders.gov.in). The technical qualification part of the bids will be opened online at 1500 Hours on 27.02.2024 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 as specified, 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 accept 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 like Cement/Steel/Bitumen/Explosive etc. shall be arranged by Contractor at his own level.

9. The bids for the work shall remain valid 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 the 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 updates, 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.

Superintending Engineer,  
4th Circle, H.P.P.W.D.,  
Shimla-3  
E-mail: hp-shi3@nic.in

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### कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय

ग्रामीण विभाग प्रमण्डल, दुमका

(rdsddumka1@gmail.com)

अल्पकालीन ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना

ई-निविदा सूचना संख्या- RDSD/DMK/MMGSY/48/2023-24

1. कार्य की विस्तृत विवरण:-

क्रम संख्या	कार्य का नाम	प्राकलित राशि	अग्रधन की राशि	परिमाण विपरीकरण	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि
1	दुमका जिला के पौड़ीगाहाट प्रखण्ड में ग्राम धोरावाली की राशि	3	4	5	6

2. वेबसाईट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि :- 22.02.2024

3. ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की तिथि एवं समय :- दिनांक 22.02.2024 से दिनांक 29.02.2024 को अपराह्न 5:00 बजे तक।

4. निविदा शुल्क एवं अग्रधन की राशि के बीच Online Mode द्वारा ही स्वीकार्य होगी।

5. निविदा आमंत्रण का नाम ई-ग्रामीण विभाग से खूंटी जिला से जिस जायेगा, उसी जायेगा में अग्रधन की राशि पायगी। अग्रधन यात्रा को बद कर दिया जाता है तो सारी जबाबदी आपकी होगी।

6. निविदा खालीन का स्थान :- e-Procurement Cell, कार्यपालक अभियंता का कार्यालय ग्रामीण विभाग प्रमण्डल, दुमका

7. विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए वेबसाईट [www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in](http://www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in) एवं कार्यालय की राशि पायगी।

विस्तृत जानकारी को देखा जा सकता है।

PR 318991 Rural Work Department (23-24)\_D

कार्यपालक अभियंता,

## Classifieds

## PERSONAL

I, Mahajan Maharaj Krishna Raghuvalshal S/o Maharaj Krishan Mahajan R/o Block No G-7/2087, Ranjit Nagar, Jamnagar, Gujarat have changed my name from Mahajan Maharaj Krishna Raghuvalshal to Maharaj Krishan Mahajan permanently.

0040714569-2

I, Mahajan Aka Kupra Shobitsingh Maharaj Krishna S/o Maharaj Krishan Mahajan R/o RZF-763/38-B Flat No-3 K.V.Aptt, Raj Nagar-2, Palam Colony, Delhi have changed my name from Mahajan Aka Kupra Shobitsingh Maharaj Krishna to Shobit Mahajan permanently.

0040714569-1

I, Madhukar Kumar S/o Shambhu Nath Singh R/o C-117, Ground-Floor, Ramprastha Colony, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201011, have changed my name to Kumar Madhukar.

0040714620-1

I, Kavita Kumar Singh D/o Late Shri Prabhu Dayal Yadav and wife of Mr. Yogesh Kumar, residing at B-1044, 4th Avenue, Greater Noida West, Gautam Budh Nagar, Uttar Pradesh have changed my name after marriage from Kavita Yadav to Kavita Kumar Singh for all purposes.

0040714511-1

I, Jayanta Prasad Sharma S/o Late Guru Prasad Sharma R/o R-790-A, First Floor, 101 Bajaj Enclave, Gali No.-8 Kakrola New Delhi-110078 have declare that in school record my minor son his name mentioned as Ishan Kaushik instead of Ishan Kaushik Sharma. In future, he will be known as Ishan Kaushik Sharma for all future purposes

0070889298-2

I, IQRA MERAJ daughter of MERAJ UDDIN, Residence of, House No: 1608, Gali Masjid Karor Wali, Gali Qasimian, Ballimaran, Delhi-110006, I have changed my name to IQRA PARVEEN for all purposes

0070889292-1

I, GULUS/O HARBHAN SINGH R/O RZ-269/210, GALI NO. 8B, INDRA PARK, PALAM COLONY, DELHI-110045 have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as RANJEET SINGH.

0070889263-1

I, EX(TS)Naik Gh Rasool Loone, S/O-Ab Karim Loone, R/O-Wanpora Gurez, District-Bandipora. In my Pension record name of my wife has been wrongly mentioned as Khatuni Bano Loone instead of Khatoon Begum. It needs correction. Objections be filled to 9-JAKLI within seven days.

002472184-1

I, Chandra Shekhar Kumar, S/O-Chhathu Mahto, R/H.O. No. 33, G.No. 2, Shiv Kunj Sant Nagar Burari, New Delhi - 110084 have changed my name to Chandeshwar Mahto for all future purposes.

0070889270-1

I, Chandra Mohan S/o Jiwachh Jha R/o H.O. No.43, Gali No.34, B-Block, Kaushik-Enclave, Burari, Delhi-110084, have changed my name to Chandra Mohan Jha.

0040714620-2

I, BRINADIYAT TOPPO W/O NO. 647167M RANK EX HAV LATE RAFAIL KHALKHO R/O HOUSE NO. 106, STREET NO 1, DEEP ENCLAVE PART-2, VIKAS NAGAR, UTTAM NAGAR, DELHI-110059 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO BERNKA KHALKHO VIDE AFFIDAVIT DATE 14-02-2024 BEFORE DELHI.

0070889265-1

I, Archana Bhat W/o Vikram Dhar R/o,Flat-No.331,New Ashiana Apartment, Sector-6, Plot-No.10, Dwarka, New Delhi-110075,have changed my name to Archana Dhar.

0040714620-4

I, Muskan, D/O Krishan Kumar Bansal, R/O 435/33, Onkar Nagar C, Tri Nagar, North West Delhi, Delhi, 110035 have changed my name to Muskan Bansal

0070889196-1

I, Yash Pal Rohila s/o G D Rohila r/o T-106, Gali No.-4, Shivaji Nagar Narela Delhi-110040 have changed my name to Yashpal Rohila.

0040714496-1

I, Mohammad Sahban S/O, Aley Hasan R/o T-398 Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin New Delhi - 110013 have changed my name to Mohd Sahban.

0040714481-1

I, Manish Kumar S/O, Ex Mwo Murari Prasad Swarnkar R/o 246, P Block, Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, Delhi 110059 have changed my name to Maneesh Kumar.

0040714547-1

I, Khushal S/o Sh. Brij Mohan R/o A-410, J.J. Colony, Hastsal, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi -110059 have changed my name to Khushal Dhingra for all future purposes.

0040714469-1

I, Anand Raj S/o Thammaiah R/o # 154/D, Cantonment Railway Quarters, Benson Town, Post Bangalore, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560046, have changed my name to Anand Raj T

0070889231-1

I, Indu Bala w/o Yashpal Rohila r/o T-106, Gali No.-4 Shivaji Nagar Narela Delhi-110040 have changed my name to Indu.

0040714496-2

I, Devender Kumar Gupta, s/o late Shri B.P. Gupta, R/o-103/3/126, sector-5, Rajender Nagar, shibabad ghaziabad, have changed my name to Devendra Kumar Gupta, permanently.

0040714607-1

I, Sarabjeet Sethi, w/o Vaishno Sethi, c-144, 2nd-floor back-side mansarovar-garden delhi, have changed my name to Sarabjeet Sethi., Permanently.

0040714607-2

I, Virinda Shree, D/o Sanjeev Sharma R/o A-202, Mayurdhawji Aptt, Geeta colony, Delhi-110031, have changed my name to Brinda Shree.

0040714596-2

I, Umesh Chandra, S/o, Atar Pal Sharma, ADD-ROOM NO.307A, THIRD FLOOR, 10, BLOCK, CGO COMPLEX LODHI ROAD, SOUTH DELHI-110003, have changed my name to UMESH CHANDRA GAUR, for all future purposes.

0040714591-4

I, Tanvi Anand Gupta, W/o Kanju Anand, R/o C10-901, Prakteet Grand City, Siddharth-Vihar, Ghaziabad (UP)-201009 have changed my name to Tanvi GUPTA, for all future purposes.

0040714596-1

I, Shyam Sunder Aneja, F/o-Sandeep Aneja R/o-251/21A, Street No.5, Idgah Road, Bholanath-Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi-32, have changed my name to Sham Sunder Aneja. Shyam Sunder Aneja and Sham Sunder Aneja is one and the same person.

0040714578-2

I, Shoila S/o Abdul Mateen, R/o-A-70, Gali No.3, Masjid-Wali-Gali, Babarpur Shahdara, East-Delhi-110032, have changed my name to Mohd. Shoila. Shoila And Mohd. Shoila is one and the same person.

0040714578-1

I, Shivali Singh, D/o Shri V.P. Singh, R/o B-42B, 3rd Floor, Kalkaji, South Delhi, Delhi-110019, have changed my minor son's name, from Nanak Raj aged 04 years to Pradyut Singh for all future purposes.

0040714609-11

I, Shashi Bala Wadhwa W/o-Ashok Kumar Wadhwa R/o-A-168, Derawali Nagar, Delhi-9, have changed my name to Shashi Wadhwa, permanently.

0040714607-7

I, Kavita Gupta, W/o, PRASHANT GUPTA, residing at 1/10709, Gali No-1 SUBHASH-PARK NAVNEEN SHAHDARA DELHI-110032, have changed my minor son's name, from RISHABH GUPTA to RISHABH AGGARWAL, for all future purpose.

0040714607-6

I, Shivali Singh, D/o Shri V.P. Singh, R/o B-42B, 3rd Floor, Kalkaji, South Delhi, Delhi-110019, have changed my minor son's name, from Nanak Raj aged 04 years to Pradyut Singh for all future purposes.

0040714609-11

I, Sureshkant Jain W/o Lalit Kumar Jain ADDRESS-FLAT, NO-2801, 28TH FLOOR, TOWER-C, Mahindra-Luminare SECTOR-59, Gurgaon, Haryana-122011, HAVE CHANGE MY NAME TO SURESH KANTA JAIN.

0040714578-7

I, Himanshi D/o Anil Nagpal, R/o SD-59 PITAMPURA, DELHI-110088, have changed my name to HIMANSI NAGPAL permanently.

0040714609-4

I, Shashik Ali, S/o Habibulla, R/o 6-177 STREET PAKKI BARA HINDU RAO, DELHI 110006, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOHAMMAD SHAKIR, FOR ALL PURPOSES.

0040714591-5

I, Sanjeev Kumar, R/o Plot-16, SF, Pocket-10, Pearl Apartment, Ramprastha-Greens, Sec-9, Vaishali, Ghaziabad (UP) have changed my minor daughter name, from Shreeja TO SHREEJA SHARMA.

0040714596-2

I, Samriti Thaper, W/o Kuldeep Singh R/o HOUSE NO.127, GROUND-FLOOR, A-4 BLOCK, PASCHIM-VIHAR, NEW DELHI-110063, have changed my name to SMRITI KAUR.

0040714578-10

I, Rohit Jain, R/o-4592, B-5&, Vasant Kunj, South-West Delhi, Delhi-110070, have changed the name of my minor son Siddhant Jain to Siddhant Veer Jain, for all purposes, vide-affidavit no. IN- DL2936591433687W Dated- 18/01/2024.

0040714596-3

I, Rajeev Kumar Kataria S/o Harpal Singh R/o 4379/7, JAI MATA MARKET, TRI NAGAR, DELHI-110035, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO RAJEEV KATARIA.

0040714609-1

I, Qasim, S/o Abdul Ghani, R/o 253, Kucha baqa-ullah, Tirahe behram-khan daryaganj, Delhi-11002, have changed my name to MOHD QASIM, Permanently.

0040714578-5

I, Paridhi Rajesh Lohia, D/o Rajesh Lohia, R/o B-42, 3rd Floor, East Krishna-Nagar, East Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Paridhi Lohia, for all future purposes.

0040714607-5

I, Om prakash, S/o-Rampat Tarwan, Address-Plot-no-587, 4th-floor, sector-9 Gurgaon, Haryana-122001, changed my name to Om Prakash Tarwan.

0040714607-4

I, Nirmal, D/o Late Tilak Raj Kharra, R/o P-34/B-1, Dilshad Garden, Delhi-110095, declare that my deceased brother namely Late Sanjeev Kumar Kharra, S/o Late Tilak Raj Kharra has been wrongly written as Surjeet in his medical records. That the actual name of my brother is Late Sanjeev Kumar Kharra.

0040714596-1

I, Anand Raj S/o Thammaiah R/o # 154/D, Cantonment Railway Quarters, Benson Town, Post Bangalore, Bangalore, Karnataka- 560046, have changed my name to Anand Raj T

0070889231-1

I, Indu Bala w/o Yashpal Rohila r/o T-106, Gali No.-4, Shivaji Nagar Narela Delhi-110040 have changed my name to Indu.

0040714496-2

I, Mohammad Sahban S/o, Aley Hasan R/o T-398 Basti Hazrat Nizamuddin New Delhi - 110013 have changed my name to Mohd Sahban.

0040714481-1

I, Manish Kumar S/O, Ex Mwo Murari Prasad Swarnkar R/o 246, P Block, Mohan Garden, Uttam Nagar, Delhi 110059 have changed my name to Maneesh Kumar.

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I, Khushal S/o Sh. Brij Mohan R/o A-410, J.J. Colony, Hastsal, Uttam Nagar, West Delhi, Delhi -110059 have changed my name to Khushal Dhingra for all future purposes.

0040714469-4

I, Devender Kumar Gupta, s/o late Shri B.P. Gupta, R/o-103/3/126, sector-5, Rajender Nagar, shibabad ghaziabad, have changed my name to Devendra Kumar Gupta, permanently.

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I, Sarabjeet Sethi, w/o Vaishno Sethi, c-144, 2nd-floor back-side mansarovar-garden delhi, have changed my name to Sarabjeet Sethi., Permanently.

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I, Virinda Shree, D/o Sanjeev Sharma R/o A-202, Mayurdhawji Aptt, Geeta colony, Delhi-110031, have changed my name to Brinda Shree.

0040714596-2

I, Umesh Chandra, S/o, Atar Pal Sharma, ADD-ROOM NO.307A, THIRD FLOOR, 10, BLOCK, CGO COMPLEX LODHI ROAD, SOUTH DELHI-110003, have changed my name to UMESH CHANDRA GAUR, for all future purposes.

0040714591-4

I, Manish Kumar, S/o ROOP LAL SHARMA, HOUSE, NO-C-60, AMAN PURI, R.G. PUBLIC SCHOOL, NANGLOI DELHI-110041, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MANISH SHARMA.

0040714578-8

I, Mansi Mishra, W/o Sh. Manish Kumar Shukla, R/o-153-1, Regent, Shipra Sun-City, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P-201014, have changed my name from Mansi Mishra to Mansi Mishra in every document, Mansi Mishra and Mansi Mishra are one and same person.

0040714609-3

I, Manu Kumari Kabra, W/o Subodh Kumar Chandak, A.D.B-2001, CLEO COUNTY, SECTOR-121 NOIDA, Noida, Gautam Buddha Nagar, U.P.-201301 Have changed my name to MANU CHANDAK, for all future purposes.

0040714578-3

I, Navina Sarin W/o Mr. Anil Sareen R/o B-2/212, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi-110029, have changed my name to Navina Sareen.

0040714614-2

I, Zeenat Ajaz W/o Sajid Ali Khan R/o H-203 GH-0



'INFORMATION ABOUT FUNDING OF POLITICAL PARTIES IS ESSENTIAL FOR ... EXERCISE OF THE CHOICE OF VOTING'



JUSTICE J B PARDIWALA



JUSTICE SANJIV KHANNA



CJI D Y CHANDRACHUD



JUSTICE B R GAVAI



JUSTICE MANOJ MISRA

The huge political contributions made by corporations and companies should not be allowed to conceal the reason for financial contributions made by another section of the population: a student, a daily wage worker, an artist or a teacher.

— CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA D Y CHANDRACHUD

Retribution, victimisation or retaliation against any donor exercising their choice to donate to a political party is an abuse of law and power. This has to be checked and corrected. As it is a wrong, the wrong itself cannot be a justification or a purpose.

— JUSTICE SANJIV KHANNA

# Proportionality in Electoral Bonds case

Was the extent of state's encroachment into the rights of individuals proportional to its objectives of curbing black money, protecting donor privacy?

**APURVA VISHWANATH**

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

UNDERLINING THAT the restrictions on free speech by the electoral bonds scheme are not "proportional" to its goal, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) DY Chandrachud, unanimously struck down the scheme.

Essentially, the judicial review of the electoral bonds scheme involved examining whether the extent of the state's encroachment into the rights of individuals was proportional to achieve its objectives — curbing black money and protecting donor privacy.

**What is the proportionality test? How does the Court decide whether the state action is proportional?**

A law passed by Parliament cannot interfere with Part-III of the Constitution that lists out the inviolable fundamental rights. The only interference with Article 19(1) — which guarantees the fundamental right to free speech — permissible is to the extent that the "reasonable restrictions" listed in Article 19(2) are not flouted. The test to decide whether an action is a reasonable restriction is the proportionality test.

In the 2018 SC ruling that upheld the Aadhaar Act, Justice Chandrachud in his dissenting opinion said that the proportionality test is "the dominant best practice judicial standard for resolving disputes that involve either a conflict between two rights claims or between a right and a legitimate government interest." The test is deemed necessary to guard against arbitrary action, so that the state cannot extinguish the right entirely even in pursuance of a legitimate state interest. For

## ELECTORAL BONDS

THESE WERE interest-free bearer instruments which citizens or corporations could purchase from the State Bank of India, and then donate to political parties to fund election expenses. They were introduced in the 2017 Union Budget by then finance minister Arun Jaitley to "cleanse the system of political funding in the country" and bring about "transparency in electoral funding in India".

example, the right to life cannot be taken away to ensure law and order.

The test was formally laid down as the

best practice in the 2017 seven-judge Bench Puttaswamy ruling, which recognised the right to privacy as a fundamental right. Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul in his concurring opinion stated that the state action to be upheld must show: (i) The action is sanctioned by law; (ii) The proposed action must be necessary in a democratic society for a legitimate aim; (iii) The extent of such interference must be proportionate to the need for such interference; and (iv) There must be procedural guarantees against abuse of such interference."

### What was the government's argument?

In the electoral bonds case, the government had argued that curbing black money and protecting donor anonymity are both legitimate aims for the state. While tackling black money is fairly non-contentious, the government argued that donor anonymity is also a legitimate state interest since it seeks

to give effect to a fundamental right — the right to privacy of the donor.

On the extent of interference with the voter's right to know, the government argued that the right to information only operates against information in the possession or in the knowledge of the state. It cannot operate for seeking information not in the knowledge or possession of the state, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta argued.

Finally, on the issue of safeguards, Mehta said that on a court order, all the details can be furnished for a criminal investigation.

### How did SC apply the test?

Justice Khanna, applying the proportionality test in his separate opinion, said that donor anonymity cannot be a legitimate state aim. He also held that voters' right to know supersedes anonymity in political party funding.

CJI Chandrachud, however, applied the "double proportionality" test. Since the case involves balancing facets of two competing fundamental rights — the right to information and the right to privacy, the proportionality test would not be enough.

According to him, the proportionality test is for when a right is directly tested against state action, but for a "balancing" of rights, the court needs to go further. Essentially, the court will have to examine the matter from the perspective of both rights and decide if the state has adopted the "least restrictive" methods to realise both rights. Additionally, whether the measure has a disproportionate impact on any one of the two rights also has to be looked at.

The CJI in his opinion pointed out that there are less intrusive methods, such as the electoral trusts scheme, to achieve the objective of curbing black money and protecting donor anonymity.

## Amendments in 3 key laws that SC struck down, restored status quo

**AJOY SINHA KARPURAM**

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

ALONG WITH the Electoral Bonds Scheme, the Supreme Court on Thursday struck down amendments that the government made in key laws to facilitate corporate donations to political parties.

Before the Electoral Bonds Scheme was introduced in January 2018, the Finance Act, 2017 amended the Representation of the People Act, 1951 (RPA), the Income-tax Act, 1961, and the Companies Act, 2013. The amendments allowed electoral bonds to cut through restrictions on political party funding by doing away with the donation limit for companies, and removing the requirements to declare and maintain a record of donations through electoral bonds.

Thursday's judgment has restored the *status quo* that existed before the Finance Act, 2017 was passed, in all of these statutes.

### THE RP ACT, 1951

Section 29C requires parties to prepare a report detailing the donations received by them in a financial year. They are required to declare all contributions higher than Rs 20,000, and specify whether they were received from individuals or from companies.

**WHAT FINANCE ACT, 2017 DID:** The Finance Act, 2017, amended the RP Act to in-

clude an exception to Section 29C. It said that the requirement to declare all donations in excess of Rs 20,000 would not apply to donations received through Electoral Bonds.

**WHAT THE SC SAID:** The court struck down the amendment, and observed that the original requirement to disclose contributions of more than Rs 20,000 did an effective job of balancing voters' right to information with the right to privacy of donors, as donations below this threshold were far less likely to influence political decisions.

### COMPANIES ACT, 2013

Changes were made to Section 182, which details the prohibitions and restrictions a company must abide by when giving to parties.

Prior to the amendment, Section 182(1) capped the amount of money a company could donate in a single financial year, limiting it to 7.5% of the company's average net profits during the previous three financial years.

Section 182(3) required a company to disclose any amount contributed to any political party along with the particulars of the amount donated and the name of the receiving party.

**WHAT FINANCE ACT, 2017 DID:** This section was amended to remove the cap on the amount of money a company could donate to a political party. Also, only the total amount contributed had to be disclosed — and the company would no longer be required to declare which political party it had

sent a donation to, nor the specific amount.

**WHAT THE SC SAID:** The court struck down this amendment. Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud observed that "permitting unlimited corporate contributions authorises unrestrained influence of companies in the electoral process".

The court held that this violated the right to free and fair elections, and restored the original provision which is meant to curb corruption in electoral financing.

### INCOME-TAX ACT, 1961

Section 13A(b) of the Act says that a political party shall not include voluntary contributions as part of its total income, but it is required to maintain a record of all contributions received that are above Rs 20,000. This record must include the name and address of the person who has made the donation.

**WHAT FINANCE ACT, 2017 DID:** The Act amended this section to include the words "other than contribution by way of Electoral Bond". Also, a new Section 13A(d) was added, which required that all donations exceeding Rs 2,000 must be given through certain methods, which included Electoral Bonds.

**WHAT THE SC SAID:** The court held that exempting political parties from maintaining a record of donations received through Electoral Bonds would violate the right to information of voters under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution. The court struck down both the amendment to Section 13A(b), and the new Section 13A(d).

**TURNING BACK THE CLOCK**

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## Objections that RBI, EC raised on the Electoral Bonds Scheme

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 15

AT THE TIME it was being conceived, the Electoral Bonds Scheme faced criticism from two key institutions — the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the Election Commission of India (ECI). While both had differing concerns, prevention of money laundering was a common ground.

### RBI's objections

There were multiple rounds of discussions between the RBI and the Finance Ministry on electoral bonds. In January 2017, the RBI first objected to the proposal to enable other banks to issue electoral bearer bonds for donations to parties before the Finance Act 2017 was enacted.

The RBI had three main arguments:

■ Such an amendment would enable "multiple non-sovereign entities to issue bearer instruments". The RBI had argued that this proposal — to allow any other bank to issue EBs — "militated against RBI's sole authority for issuing bearer instruments which has the potential of becoming currency". RBI was of the opinion that if such EBs are issued in sizable quantities, they "can undermine the faith in banknotes issued by the Central Bank".

■ The RBI also noted that while the

### STAKEHOLDERS' ARGUMENTS

identity of the person or entity purchasing the bearer bond will be known because of the Know Your Customer requirement, the identities of the intervening persons/entities will not be known. "This would impact the principles of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002," it stated.

■ The RBI was of the opinion that the intention of introducing electoral bonds — that the electoral contributions be paid out of tax-paid money — can be accomplished by cheque, demand draft, and electronic and digital payments. "There is no special need for introducing a new bearer bond in the form of electoral bonds," it stated.

As the discussions continued, the RBI persisted with its view that it should be the only authority to issue such bonds. In September 2017, when it was presented with the draft scheme, the RBI stated that permitting a commercial bank to issue bonds would "have an adverse impact on public perception about the scheme, as also the credibility of India's financial system in general and the central bank in particular."

The RBI reiterated "the possibility of shell companies misusing bearer bonds for money laundering transactions". It also warned that the "issuance of electoral bonds in the scrip form could also expose it to the risk of forgery and cross-border counterfeiting..."

## Regulating political funding: Rules around the world, India's challenge



**EXPERT EXPLAINS**

ARADHYA SETHIA

IN THE JUDGMENT written for himself and Justices B R Gavai, J B Pardiwala, and Manoj Misra, Chief Justice of India (CJI) D Y Chandrachud dwelt at length on the close association of money and politics, and the influence of money over electoral outcomes.

The question of the funding of political parties goes to the heart of India's democracy. A fruitful party funding framework must give attention to at least four key aspects — regulation of donations, expenditure limits, public financing, and disclosure requirements.

### Regulation of donations

Some individuals or organisations, for instance, foreign citizens or companies, may be banned from making donations. There may also be donation limits, aimed at ensuring that a party is not captured by a few large

donors — whether individuals, corporations, or civil society organisations.

Some jurisdictions rely on contribution limits for regulating the influence of money in politics. US federal law imposes different contribution limits on different types of donors.

**Limits on expenditure**

Expenditure limits safeguard politics from a financial arms race. They relieve parties from the pressure of competing for money even before they start to compete for votes.

Therefore, some jurisdictions impose an expenditure limit on political parties. In the UK, political parties are not allowed to spend more than £30,000 (about Rs 30 lakh) per seat.

In the US, the Supreme Court's expansive interpretation of the First Amendment has come in the way of legislative attempts at imposing expenditure limits.

**Public financing of elections**

Some countries provide public funding of parties. In Germany, parties receive public funds on the basis of their importance within the political system. Generally, this is measured on the basis of the votes they received in past elections, membership fees, and the donations received from private sources.

German "political party foundations" receive special state funding dedicated to their work as party-affiliated policy think tanks.

A more recent experiment in public funding is that of "democracy vouchers", which are used in local elections in Seattle, US. The government distributes a certain number of vouchers, each of which is worth a certain amount, to eligible voters who can use them to donate to the candidate of their choice. The voucher is publicly funded, but the choice of the beneficiary is the voter's, who gets to "vote" with this money before casting her ballot.

However, some recent studies have pointed out that this system may promote

more extremist candidates.

### Disclosure requirements

This aspect of the regulation of private money in politics formed the crux of the Electoral Bonds case. Disclosure requirements nudge voters against electing politicians who have used or are likely to use their public office for *quid pro quo* arrangements. As such, disclosures may discourage parties from using public office to benefit their donors.

Disclosure as regulation rests on an assumption that the information supply and public scrutiny may influence politicians' decisions and the electorate's votes.

However, at times, anonymity serves a useful purpose of protecting donors. A donor may fear retribution or extortion by parties in power — and may be deterred from donating money to a party of her liking.

### The Chilean experiment

Is it possible to reap the benefits of anonymity and still prevent *quid pro quo* arrangements? An experiment in Chile sought to ensure "complete anonymity" of party funding.

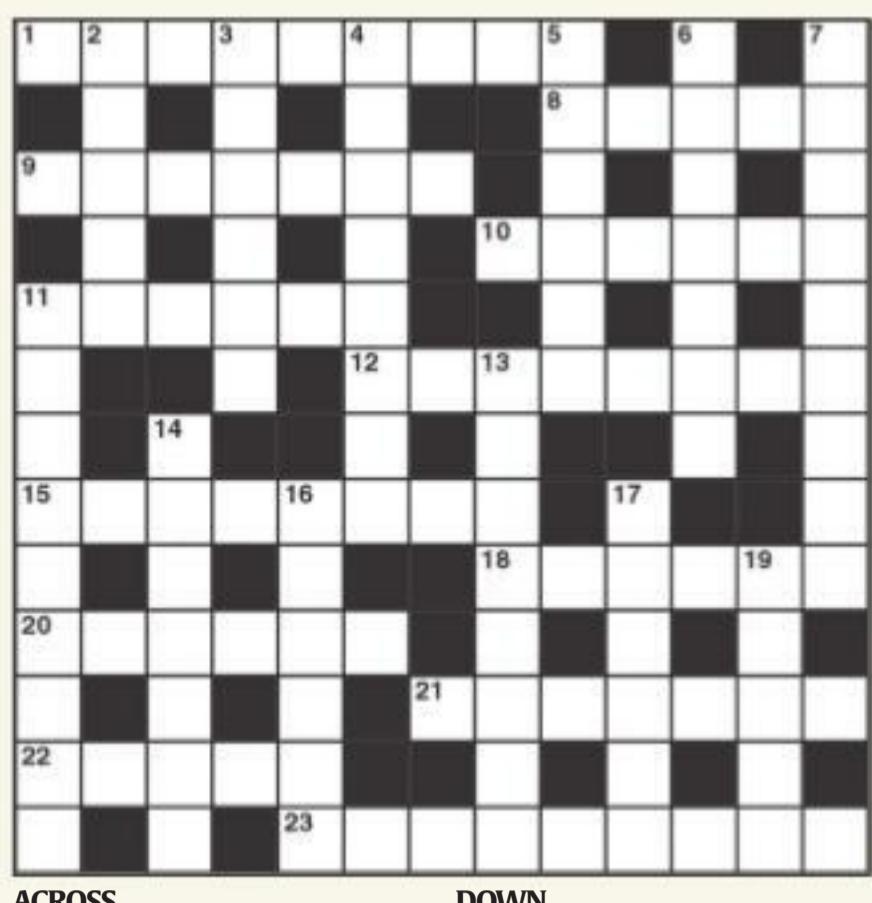
Under the Chilean system of "reserved contributions", donors could transfer to the Chilean Electoral Service the money they wished to donate to parties, and the Electoral Service would then forward the sum to the party without revealing the donor's identity.

If the complete anonymity system worked perfectly, the party would not be able to ascertain the sum donated by any specific donor — and would find it extremely difficult to strike *quid pro quo* arrangements.

However, it would be in the interest of donors (who want government patronage)

### F

## CROSSWORD 5289



- ACROSS**
- Agreement about amateur professional stage performer (4)
  - Embarrassed after hesitation having sinned (5)
  - A little cogitation is enjoyable (7)
  - Cable from ship to shore (6)
  - Fancied a new red mat (6)
  - None left unhurst? (3,5)
  - Shoved round in the wrong way and disciplined (8)
  - Game admission of defeat (3,3)
  - Performs again in response to prompting (6)
  - One's kid supplies supple leather (7)
  - Fit he may be - in a pinch (5)
  - Uninterrupted flow of traffic (4,5)
- DOWN**
- Spirit rises after the French animal appears (5)
  - Nodding acquaintance? (3-3)
  - One patch is laid out as a memorial (8)
  - Go and get better again (6)
  - Quietly agrees it could be some omen (7)
  - Love on the dole is trouble (9)
  - Change of speed before pace is reckless (9)
  - Sweetheart is one entitled to affection (8)
  - His suffering has no legal force (7)
  - Start to show to advantage (3,3)
  - His accounts may be all at sea (6)
  - Epic story written 151 years after Christ's birth (5)

Solutions Crossword 5288 Across: 1Sawn-off, 4Exact, 7Earn, 8Disposal, 10Light verse, 12Damage, 13Stoops, 15California, 18Terminus, 19Park, 20Lenin, 21Expense Down: 2Spell, 2Wordgame, 3Foiled, 4Exposition, 5Also, 6Tallies, 9Stagnation, 11Fountain, 12Digital, 14Minute, 16Ankle, 17Iron

## 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 quip.

Good company and good           are the very sinews of virtue. - Izaak Walton (9)

BPEOR

CEPRSU

EPICS

EIPTCD

Answers: PROBE, SPICE, SPICE, DEPICT  
Walton: Good company and good discourse are the very sinews of virtue. - Izaak

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry &amp; T Lewis



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBES by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## Difficulty Level 5s

**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.

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

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

## SOLUTION SUDOKU 5473

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

## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

If you're handling complex emotional situations, please be practical, flexible and prepared to alter long-standing arrangements where necessary. Partners will eventually come to appreciate your wisdom and maturity, with welcome results all round.



**LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)**  
Please avoid all forms of intrigue and unconventional behaviour. This is a moment to keep your head below the parapet and stay away from risky situations. Peace and quiet are of the essence, for you need to recharge your batteries and restore your morale.

## TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 20)

You are reluctant to break the habits of a lifetime, but a charming relationship between Venus and Jupiter suggests that pleasing and harmonious conditions will greet those who have done what must be done. Strangely, freedom sometimes comes when you do what you have to.



**SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)**  
You must be prepared to involve colleagues and associates in your plans. Within an overall context of goodwill and co-operation you should now be able to make the most of your emotional intensity, determination and unparalleled leadership qualities.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Ambitious Geminians are now well into a phase which emphasises the role of personal contacts. This means, as the old cliché runs, that who you know is at least as important as what you know, if not more so. Still, if there are people who are prepared to help you, you're fortunate.



**SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)**  
As the days pass, you may begin to plan your financial future. Clean up your act - this doesn't mean spending less, but better - and paying more attention to the facts. It's all a question of finding a lifestyle which suits you. Ultimately, though, it is your emotional welfare which counts.

## CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

There's a lot on your mind, there's no doubt about that. It looks as if someone is trying hard to pressurise you into making an early decision. However, you may smile and ignore their protestations. You will be on top in all discussions, negotiations and meetings.



**AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)**  
An unexpected turn of events may prompt you to alter plans or even change the whole direction of your life. The important consideration from your point of view is to take the initiative rather than wake up and discover that fate has let you down.



**VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)**  
Venus' motion today may not have immediate personal consequences.

However, within the week you should become aware of new feelings, especially of a romantic nature. You will learn to appreciate qualities in loved ones that once annoyed you.



**PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)**  
You are now coming under Venus' glorious rays, surely a sign that your social life and emotional morale are about to improve. You may allow more time for pleasure, gratification and self-indulgence, for all those activities which make life worth living.



## CORPORATE BRIEFS

## INAUGURATION—SCOPE

National Meet of Forum of Women in Public Sector under the aegis of SCOPE, was organized in Bengaluru. Atul Sobti DG, SCOPE addressed the meet inaugurated by Her Highness, the Maharani of Mysore, Smt. Pramoda Devi Wadiyar. Attended by over 650 participants from across the country, the meet was held in the presence of Ms. Varsha Raut, President, WIPS & senior officers of Public Sector fraternity.

## TOURNAMENT—SBI

SBI, LHO, New Delhi, organized Inter Circle Football Tournament recently. Sixteen Circle teams of the Bank from across the country participated in the tournament. The program was inaugurated by Kalpesh K Avasia, CGM, New Delhi Circle on 05.02.2024. The teams were divided in four groups & scheduled league matches took place. The closing ceremony of the 5-day event was held on 09th February 2024.



## SPVS' TRANSFER – RECPDCL

RECPDCL handed over five project-specific SPVs (Special Purpose Vehicles), formed for the construction of Inter-State Transmission Projects through a tariff-based bidding process recently. The SPVs were handed over to M/s Power Grid Corporation of India Limited (PGCL), M/s Indridig 2 Limited & Indridig 1 Limited (Consortium) and M/s Aprava Energy Private Limited.

## NEW DELHI WORLD BOOK FAIR—NBT

D Pradhan, M/o Education & Skill Development & Entrepreneurship declared New Delhi World Book Fair '24 open recently at Bharat Mandapam. National Digital Libraries for All, announced in the Budget 23-24, was also launched at the inaugural function alongside the innovative E-learning platform, E Jaadui Pitara'. World Book Fair 2024 is themed 'Multilingual India: A Living Tradition (Bahubhashi Bharat: Ek Jeevant Parampara)'.



## FOUNDATION DAY—INDIAN OVERSEAS BANK

IOB's Regional Office in Dehradun alongside all its local branches celebrated the 88th Foundation Day of the IOB recently. Sr. RM, Atul Singh inaugurated the Regional Office & garlanded the photo of the bank's visionary founder, Late M.C.T.M Chettiyar. This was followed by CSR activities – tree plantation, health checkup camp for customers at the Kanwali branch & grocery service at the Akhil Bhartiya Mahila Ashram in Kanwali.

## INITIATIVE—BANK OF INDIA

Bank of India has taken a historic initiative for greater use of legal tender coins among the public as per the guidelines of the RBI. To promote the use of coins among the general public, Arbindo Mishra, Zonal Manager of Ghaziabad Zone of BoI, sent coin distribution vans to various places recently for this special purpose. The employees accompanying the van said that there was enthusiasm among the public to collect the coins.



## RETAIL EXPO – CANARA BANK

The two-day Retail Loan Expo of Canara Bank was inaugurated recently by Dharmendra Singh, City Magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar & Rajesh Kumar Singh, GM, Circle Office, Delhi, at Noida's GIP Mall. In this Retail Loan Expo, Canara Bank gave on-the-spot approvals of home loans, car loans, education loans & mortgage loans to the customers at the lowest interest rate.

## SURGERY—SIR GANGA RAM HOSPITAL

The tumour, weighing nearly 5 newborn babies nearly 14 kg & 2 & half feet in length, was compressing on all structures of his abdomen, including his liver, kidneys, stomach, small bowel, large bowel, Urinary bladder & spleen, doctors said. Dr Saumitra Rawat, Chairman and Head of Institute of Surgical Gastroenterology, GI & HPB Onco-Surgery & Liver transplantation at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital performed the Surgery with his team.



## INDIA AIRBUS C295 PROGRAMME RECEIVES APPROVAL FROM INDIAN REGULATOR

Marking a milestone in the 'Make in India' C295 programme, the Airbus Defence & Space QMS for the C295 aircraft has received approval from the DGAQA, the Indian regulatory authority, to produce detailed parts & sub-assemblies in India. As per the approval, the certificate for which was formally handed over on February 12. Airbus Defence & Space is working with Tata Advanced Systems Limited to produce detailed parts and sub-assemblies at various locations in India. The certificate of approval was presented by Sanjay Chawla, DGAQA, to Michael Schoellhorn, CEO of Airbus Defence & Space, & Masood Hussainy, Head, Aerostructures & Aeroengines, Tata Advanced Systems Limited, at the C295 Main Components Assembly facility in Hyderabad. This is a significant step of a comprehensive quality assurance roadmap agreed between Airbus Defence & Space & DGAQA for the C295 'Make in India' programme, in close collaboration with TASL.



## MOU—RITES

RITES & AD Ports Group, a leading facilitator of global trade, logistics & industry, announced a strategic MoU to explore joint ventures & collaborations in key areas of trade and logistics. The collaboration brings together RITES rich expertise in transport infrastructure development & project management with AD Ports Group's extensive portfolio of world-class ports, logistics solutions, & vertically-integrated business clusters. The MoU aims to bring about mutual engagement with the objective of exploring potential opportunities of joint cooperation for working together in the upcoming IMEC.



## PRATT &amp; WHITNEY OPENS NEW INDIA DIGITAL CAPABILITY CENTER

Pratt & Whitney, an RTX business, announced the establishment of its new IDCC in Bengaluru. The new center will accelerate innovation & drive digital & business transformation for Pratt & Whitney worldwide. The facility will be co-located with Pratt & Whitney's engineering and supply chain operations centers of excellence. The location will also facilitate close collaboration with other RTX businesses in India including Collins Aerospace and RTX Enterprise Services. Pratt & Whitney has begun recruiting its first tranche of employees for the IDCC & is expected to grow to over 300 employees by 2027.

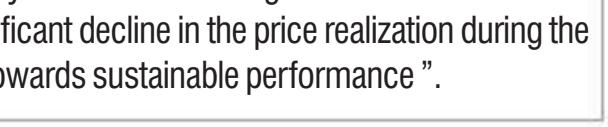


## MKU BRINGS VEGVISIR'S SITUATIONAL AWARENESS SYSTEMS TO INDIA

MKU Limited proudly announced a landmark collaboration with Vegvisir, a trailblazer in situational awareness systems for armoured vehicles. The signing of an MoU signifies a pivotal moment in MKU's dedication to advancing defence capabilities. This partnership is set to empower over 10,000 armored vehicles, including Main Battle Tanks, Infantry Fighting Vehicles, & Armored Personnel Carriers, with state-of-the-art technologies meticulously tailored to meet the unique requirements of the Indian Armed Forces. The collaboration also underscores MKU's prominent role as a leading force in shaping the future landscape of defense technology in India. The collaborative initiative took shape at the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit during the recent visit of Tii Riiusal, Estonia's Minister of Economic Affairs & Information Technology.



OIL INDIA LIMITED announced its financial results for the nine months that ended Dec. 31, 2023. The company demonstrated resilience & agility in a dynamic market environment, achieving significant milestones across key performance indicators. OIL's EBITDA for the nine months ended Dec. 31, 2023, rose to Rs. 8,474.47 cr from Rs. 8,399.17 cr during the corresponding period last year, the EBITDA margin also improved to 47.28% vis-à-vis 44.96%. The Earnings Per Share during the period is Rs. 32.49/share. On the operational front, OIL achieved a commendable 5.68% increase in Crude Oil production, reaching 2.511 MMT compared to 2.376 MMT in the same period last year.



SAIL has declared its financial results for the quarter & 9 months ending 31st Dec., 2023. The Company has achieved its best ever performance in production & sales for 9M of the fy. The crude steel production & sales volume have registered a growth of

# Two priceless tons, a fifty worth the wait

Rohit Sharma and Ravindra Jadeja pile on hundreds while Sarfaraz Khan rollicks on debut with 62 off 66 balls, as India ride the morning storm

SIRRAM VEERA

RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 15

ROHIT SHARMA dropped his bat down at the non-striker's end during India's nightmarish first hour as he seemingly couldn't comprehend what was happening, and had to see the big-screen replays to suss out if there were any demons in the pitch.

Near the end of day's play, he would fling his cap in frustration in the dressing room when Sarfaraz Khan, who revealed the true nature of the pitch with the jazziest knock of the day, was run out after a horrible mix-up with Ravindra Jadeja.

In between these two moments with bat and the cap, he led India's revival along with Jadeja and enjoyed Sarfaraz's own version of Bazball as India recovered from 33 for 3 to end the day on 320 for 5.

In the end, it was the oldest plan in the book that got Rohit. Telegraphed by the English that we have no other option but the short ball, Rohit fell, pulling softly to mid-wicket where Ben Stokes accepted it with great relish and relief.

Something snapped in him around the first hour mark as three of his top-order partners had combusted on arrival and he suddenly started to make the move to take the attack to England. He had been hit flush on the helmet grill by Mark Wood's bouncer, hassled outside off by James Anderson, and also beaten by a turner from left-arm spinner Tom Hartley.

Suddenly he had had enough in the 13th over as he cut Hartley to the point boundary before slog-sweeping from the middle stump line over midwicket. A ball later, he tried to reprise the adventurous shot but got a leading edge to the left of slip, where Joe Root clanged it.

In the next over, Anderson dinked one in off a length to hit the pad and though the umpire Joe Wilson upheld it, the DRS showed there was an inside edge.

The next two balls did contrasting things: one cut back to thud into the thigh, other shaped away past the outside edge. Rohit began to walk down the track to bunt the next to the off. In Anderson's next over, he charged out and managed to scoop it just over mid-on. Finally, came a pressure-relieving four when he caressed an Anderson ball to the point fence. It was probably the jailbreak moment of that frenetic phase.

But it set the tone for the day. Fresh plans from England were first countered a bit iffily before he would turn authoritative. When Hartley pinged the pad with an armer and beat him on the outside edge, Rohit ran down the track to crash-land it over long-on. When Hartley squeezed out an outside edge, Rohit's response was to ping the fine-leg and point boundary. When Root replaced Hartley, Rohit put him into the long-on stands.

He reached his hundred with a dab off Rehan Ahmed but the celebration wasn't much. An impassioned look on his face as he raised his bat towards the dressing room, a chat with Jadeja before he gently acknowledged the crowd.

In the interim, Rohit took the attack to Rehan, collecting a six and fours that included a fabulous helicopter-ish twirl. England now threw the ball to Mark Wood in the 60th over with just one clear plan: bowl bouncers. But Wood could only get in two balls at Rohit in his first two overs of this spell: both bouncers with tennis-ball bounce lapped around the corner for singles. But in his next over, the 64th of the innings, Wood rapped the gloves with a high bouncer that Rohit was totally out of control but had tried to reach out to connect. In the third ball of that over, came the wicket delivery.

Rohit opened up his stance seemingly in preparation for the short ball but was rushed a touch and pulled it weakly to Stokes. He shut his eyes and threw his head back as he walked away. The skipper had done the job for the day taking his team out of trouble.

## Sarfaraz's revelations

Rohit's exit led to the most charming passage of play as Sarfaraz Khan, the man intimate with waiting after all these years in domestic cricket made that wait worthwhile with a most entertaining knock.



Rohit Sharma had to contend with bouncers, including one from Mark Wood that crashed into his helmet grill, on Day One of the third Test. Reuters

**Rohit's exit led to the most charming passage of play as Sarfaraz Khan, the man intimate with waiting after all these years in domestic cricket made that wait worthwhile with a most entertaining knock.**

mate with waiting after all these years in domestic cricket made that wait worthwhile with a most entertaining knock.

There were two phases to his batting, bookended by Wood's bouncer barrage. He swayed, ducked from the bouncers. In between, when the spinners Hartley and Root operated from both ends, he went after them in a style that would have brought a smile to those who have watched him in first-class cricket.

Unbeaten on 110 on the opening day of the third Test against England in Rajkot as India finished at 326/5, Jadeja was far more flamboyant than in the recent past: the follow-throughs finished with a flourish, the arms stretched out far more for the cover drives, the attempted punches off back foot whooshed more. More than the shots, the finishing touches stood out.

In the end, when the hundred moment came up with a dab to the on side, Jadeja must have had mixed feelings. He had just sold the dummy, running out the dashing Sarfaraz Khan, and hence perhaps his celebrations were muted. Nevertheless, it was his knock that oozed solidity that changed the day's fortunes for India.

"Bapu! Bapu!" — screamed a bunch of youngsters at wide long-boundary as he came out to bat ahead of the debutants Sarfaraz Khan and Dhruv Jurel with India in a semi-crisis at 33/3. The situation, if not the pitch, was dicey. Two potential problems lay in the surface: the skidding ball from the fast-

## Jadeja, this team's most correct Test batsman

SIRRAM VEERA  
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 15

IT'S HIS occasional mistakes that get noticed. Otherwise, Ravindra Jadeja's batting has become such a blur of compactness that it's astounding. Ever since 2018, when he returned to the Indian team after what he once called, "months of sleepless nights", his Test batting has stepped up to another level. He has the close bat-and-pad press against spinners, leaves the deliveries outside off when facing seamers and is the only batsman in this team who comes closest to playing the ball correctly in the traditional 'V'.

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Ravindra Jadeja looked more assured than Rohit Sharma. Reuters

fading grassy patches, and the occasional seam movement from a couple of cracks on a length. The top-order had already made a mountain of those molehills.

How will Jadeja go here? He was far more solid than Rohit Sharma in the initial phase of their partnership. He

**Unbeaten on 110 on the opening day of the third Test against England in Rajkot as India finished at 326/5, Jadeja was far more flamboyant than in the recent past**

too soon began to open up. Not in the conventional sense of the word, but in his intent. The bat flourishes began to be more noticeable: extending more than usual. It also led to an iffier phase in the second session with James Anderson going around the stumps. Jadeja, usually compact, tried to punch those balls but missed a few. Then came the away-shaper from Anderson that straightened a touch to rush past the outside edge.

England kept trying on a relatively flat pitch. To the left-arm spinner Tom Hartley, they had packed the on-side field for Jadeja in his 40's: Short mid-on, short leg, short midwicket, deepish mid-on and deep midwicket. Jadeja eased one between Stokes and short mid-on and Crawley at short midwicket to make a quiet statement.

Rehan Ahmed ripped his leg breaks on a length outside off but Jadeja is one of the better forward-stretchers in this team. Time and again, he leaned inexorably, bat and pad close together to nullify Rehan.

### 'Short stuff'

In the final session, England turned to Mark Wood to see if he could dislodge Jadeja with short stuff. In the past, the ball at rib cage area has had him in a bit of a bother as he can

sort of contort his body and shovel the ball. But this time around, there were no such signs as he swayed away from the bodyline. Elsewhere, he was solid and punchy.

There was a moment when India had crossed 200 and Jadeja was on 72 when Wood tried a short ball at the body. It didn't climb as much and Jadeja who was swiveling into a pull, checked his shot. They had a fine-leg and deep backward square-leg in but to everyone's surprise, the ball flew off the fat edge for a six. A surprised Jadeja checked the sweet spot as Rohit came across for a light punch on the gloves. Wood tried another bounce a short while later, but it rose ever so slowly from the surface that Jadeja tapped it down to midwicket.

Not that it stopped Wood from trying and he went round the stumps for a few more, but it was anaesthetised by the pitch and by Jadeja without much fuss. And when he swatted another short ball from that angle through wide mid-on to move to 83, Wood was taken off the attack.

In the first Test, on a track that helped the spinners more, Jadeja was perhaps far too circumspect. Or rather, he didn't try to extend himself, continuing with the approach that had put him as the sole spinner-batsman overseas. Axar Patel had batted with more positivity but in this game, admittedly in an entirely different situation, Jadeja asserted himself far more.

He shut the shop at the exit of Rohit Sharma and guided Sarfaraz Khan through a tricky phase before he began to enjoy the youngster's attacking style of play. But the fact that he had a hand in Sarfaraz would nag him a touch on a day when he did everything else splendidly well.

## FROM MAIDAN TO TEST WHITES

# When padded up for over four hours, Sarfaraz reminded himself of years of toil

SIRRAM VEERA

RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 15

OF ALL the charming delights that Sarfaraz Khan rolled out on the most entertaining Test debut by an Indian in recent memory, it was his reply to a question about how he handled the wait, the nerves, and batttered as attackingly as he did that stood out. Sarfaraz said in an absolute matter-of-fact way: "I play the spinners really well and the fielders were all up. I have been doing this for a long while now".

Statement of facts dropped without any 'mike-drop' grandstanding to them.

As if there was no other way out there. As if he hadn't seen the Indian top order combust. As if he hadn't seen it was Mark Wood with the ball when he stepped out. As if he wasn't fully aware of how a failure against bouncers would immediately end his Test career with comments of 'there he goes again, told ya, he can't play the bouncers, domestic runs and all are fine but no use at this level'. As if he hadn't waited long for his tryst

with this moment. As if he wasn't aware of the unbelievable turmoil of his emotional father in raising two sons, with the sole mission of making them play for India.

He has had to wait for the big break despite a mountain of runs in domestic cricket. On Thursday, too, he had to remain patient while waiting in the dressing room for this turn to bat.

"Yes I was padded up for four-and-a-half hours. I told myself I have waited for so many years, let me show more patience and wait a bit more," Sarfaraz said.

When he came out to bat, Wood and England were waiting with the bouncer trap. They must have seen Sarfaraz hop around a bit in the IPL with that line of attack. They have also seen how Shreyas Iyer had handled it in the earlier Test. Sarfaraz, though, didn't take that route.

He swayed, ducked, and managed to contort his body into positions of safety. Admittedly, the ball was soft, the pitch was comatose then, but it's the little signs that one looks for in these moments. Signs of ei-



Ravindra Jadeja talking to him in the middle helped Sarfaraz Khan (in pic) get over the initial nerves and make a fifty on Test debut. Reuters

ther ego coming in to show the world that he isn't afraid of bouncers or actual fear of failure against the short balls. Neither came.

Sterner tests would come in more diffi-

time," said Sarfaraz. "I am someone who likes to chat in the middle. So I had told him to speak to me. When you are new, there is bound to be some nervousness: thoughts of would I get out etc. When I tried playing that first sweep, he said 'take your time'."

More emotions about his journey rushed through. As he has always done, he brought up his father's struggle and goal in raising two sons for exactly this moment. His younger brother had just starred in the Under-19 World Cup and now it was his turn to make the father proud.

"My father has worked really hard on my and my brother's cricket. This is the proudest moment of my life. All my father's efforts have paid off. It felt good he saw me getting the Test cap. My wife was also emotional. I felt very happy that I could do this for them."

### SARFARAZ KHAN

AFTER HIS TEST DEBUT

in that initial phase. "There was a bit of nervousness early but once I got into my zone it was fine. I knew runs would come."

### 'Take your time'

Here is where Jadeja also helped, talking to the youngster after every other ball. A longer chat ensued when Sarfaraz tumbled over, failing to connect with a powerful sweep shot that he is known for in domestic cricket. "Jaddu bhai said, wait, take your

time," said Sarfaraz. "I am someone who likes to chat in the middle. So I had told him to speak to me. When you are new, there is bound to be some nervousness: thoughts of would I get out etc. When I tried playing that first sweep, he said 'take your time'."

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A response to how he felt about being run out by Jadeja also stood out. "It happens. It's cricket. These things happen." With a smile. There must have been obvious disappointment but the disarming way he said it almost made one believe every word.

# Rollercoaster vs familiar foes

India's 4-6 defeat against Australia had all elements we are familiar with, and some newer ones too

MIHIR VASAVDA

BHUBANESWAR, FEBRUARY 15

THE 60 minutes on a breezy night under lights against Australia neatly summarised the 60 years of Indian hockey since they stopped being the world masters. Suffering, comeback, hope before things eventually fall apart.

On Thursday at the Kalinga, there were at least two elements that aren't usually associated with an Indian performance against Australia – comeback and hope. For those clinging on to some positives to take away from India's 4-6 defeat in the FIH Pro League, it would be that.

The tennis set-like scoreline doesn't reflect how good India were – albeit in spells – and how unfair the final score might feel to the players who left everything on the field.

There were spells in the match when Blake Govers, one of world hockey's deadliest goal-scorers, resembled a goalkeeper trying to save a penalty kick. Raising both his arms, swinging them wildly in the air, and dancing.

Unlike the wily shot-stoppers, the scorer of two goals in the first two minutes of the match wasn't just trying to throw off his opponents. It was also a desperate attempt by a bunch of rattled players to block a pass.

With Australia intercepting everything India played along the dark blue turf, the home side showed rare tactical ingenuity – especially while playing the Kookaburras – to make the dark sky above, their canvas. India turned to a style they have tried before but seldom against Australia: aerial passes.

Every bit was compelling to watch. Australia were faster off the blocks than a 100m sprinter. Govers gave them a two-goal lead inside the first three minutes, one from a penalty corner (a soft goal where 'keeper Krishan Pathak could have done better) and the second a thunderous field goal.

The two-goal burst triggered fears of another spanking at the hands of Australia. More so because Australia were playing as if there were 22 of them on the field and not 11 – closing down Indian players within seconds of them receiving the ball and easily intercepting passes.

So, Harmanpreet Singh and Manpreet Singh began to play long floating passes to disrupt Australia's rhythm. And disrupt they did. The two most experienced outfield players lobbed the ball deep into the Australian 'D', putting the defenders in a deep conundrum. Other



India turned to a style they have tried before but seldom against Australia: aerial passes. Hockey India

INDIA 4	AUSTRALIA 6
Grovers 2'2'	
Harmanpreet 12', 20'	Sukhjeet 18'
Mandeep S 29'	Zalewski 40'
	Sharp 52'
	Anderson 55'
	Welch 58'

Indian players, too, joined in as India lifted even simple short passes to beat the Australian stick, which was rooted to the ground in anticipation of the usual, grounded passes.

In doing so, India's players showed impeccable technical abilities as they took utmost advantage of hockey's five-metre rule for aerial balls. The regulations dictate that a player must not infringe upon the 5m territory of the opponent receiving the aerial ball until it is controlled and on the ground.

The receivers of the long passes from

Harmanpreet, Manpreet and, occasionally, Hardik Singh positioned themselves smartly inside the Australian box, giving them enough space to launch attacks.

Three of India's four goals originated from aerial balls.

For the first, Hardik – on the left – played a cross-field aerial pass to Sumit, who won a penalty corner after drawing a foul from Matt Dawson. Harmanpreet, who seemingly can do no wrong at the moment, fired his flick at an angle to find the inside of the post.

The equaliser came minutes later. Harmanpreet Singh played a deflected lobbed ball to Harmanpreet, who lobbed it forward towards Raj Kumar Pal. The midfielder found a defender's foot and won a corner. The sustained spell of pressure led to a goal as Sukhjeet Singh completed the move with a shot that went between the legs of Australian goalkeeper Andrew Charter.

Manpreet's aerial pass in the 20th minute gave India the lead. An Australian defender encroached upon the 5m space of the Indian receiver, resulting in a penalty corner which Harmanpreet once again converted.

Until India were able to stick to this plan, they had the Aussies pinned to the mat. They did the rare and unthinkable of turning a two-goal deficit into a two-goal advantage after Mandeep Singh scored a fine field goal thanks to a defence-splitting Harmanpreet pass.

But the moment they gave up control and their bread-and-butter tactic, India disintegrated. Australia just had to manage the landing zones of India's lobbed passes better to completely negate the strategy.

If India thought they finally found a way to challenge the Aussies, they snuffed it out within minutes. For all the progress India has made, it showed how much ground there is still left to cover.

Indeed, Pro League performances come with a rider as the tournament is a testing ground for big events. But the numbers don't lie. From the Tokyo Olympics till now, Australia have scored five or more goals against India seven times – on three of those occasions, they netted seven.

And as India coach Craig Fulton summed up after the match, a team can't expect to win if they concede six.

## Prannoy shows off tricks in thrilling 3-game win

SHIVANI NAIK

FEBRUARY 15

TRAILING 1-11 in the opening set, HS Prannoy got tongues wagging. It got cranky and borderline nasty as he lost the opener 6-21. By the end of his 6-21, 21-18, 21-19 win against Weng Hong Yang, however, fans watching on the YouTube stream couldn't stop gushing about his back-from-the-dead skills. Though India lost the group-stage tie 2-3 to China at the Badminton Asia Team Championships, not affecting their quarterfinal progress, Prannoy served a reminder of why he was India's No 1.

It's a script that forces double takes each time you watch it.

The rivalry between them is two-finals old, both winning one match each, but it always gets exciting. On Thursday in Shah Alam in Malaysia, Prannoy pulled off another one of his rope-a-dope hijinks.

Indian men will next face Japan in the quarters while the women, having toppled China, will play Hong Kong. A potentially tricky opponent Kodai Naraoka perhaps lies in waiting for Prannoy.

This year marks the 50th anniversary of Muhammad Ali's Rumble in the Jungle against George Foreman where he leant on the ropes letting his opponent have his punches and expending energy, absorbing the blows, before he countered with his own blitz.

Prannoy at 1-11 down was on the ropes. By the time the score read 11-9 in the second, Prannoy was stringing Weng along both flanks, having risen from his sluggish start, the first set almost a prologue to the rest of the match. The change in momentum happened gradually without the intelligent Chinese realising the ebb of it, but it was visible in Prannoy's hand speed and stomp of the feet.

For one, the 31-year-old started striking the shuttle high and sending it into a taller parabola that would tire out Weng's arms just returning stroke after stroke. Prannoy gave the shuttle proper altitude, catching him on the high forehead at the back court, using his height. Just the prolonging rallies ate into Weng's energy. Then came the net confrontations, and the Indian is a master at the forecourt with angles and raw anger with which the shuttle is lasered in.

It was the faster back and forths combined with the most frustrating length that broke down Weng at 21-18. In the decider, the hand speed noticeably went up when the duo was deadlocked at 9-9. By now he was charging to



India face Japan in the quarterfinal where HS Prannoy will be expected to lead the way. Twitter

the net, and though the Chinese No 16 matched the No 7 in aggression, he didn't have half of Prannoy's subtle tricks.

At 16-18, Weng reckoned he was surging to the finish line. But it was on 17-18 that Prannoy pulled out his signature backhand straight whip along the lines, a shot of such skill that the Chinese was left dumbfounded.

Prannoy played it from almost the backleft corner, and with that torque, the most likely angle would be a crosscourt on the backhand. The Indian sent it straight as an arrow.

Prannoy's backhand got him to 20-18 at the net. Because it is HSP vs WHY, it cannot be over till there's some dramatic ending. Prannoy dumped the silliest of smashes into the net to make it a giddy 20-19. For 21-19, it was once again one of those vertiginous tall floaters which had Weng reaching out high, and ending in the net.

Lulling opponents into a cushy start in the first set and getting them to believe they are on top of this, is Prannoy's thing. Since the beginning of 2022, he has lost 24 first sets, and won 13 of those matches. A perennial slow starter, he is known to acquire a calm reading on opponents in this period, get a measure of the drift, looks suitably brooding and bored, if not beaten already. And then he switches at a flick.

Not all of it is by design and secret plan. Maybe he genuinely takes time to get started. Hedging on the first set and leaving it to the end like MS Dhoni looks grand, but can backfire. In his 30s, playing three sets also prolongs recovery for next day's round. His team has been working on getting him revved up quickly so he can wrap up in two sets. But when he drops the first, for opponents, there's no guarantee that when he's down, he's bound to be out.

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