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Tuesday, 16th January, 2024



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THE WORLD

TOP OF THE WORLD

PAKISTAN

Can't defer Feb 8 polls: Poll body tells Senate

Islamabad: Pakistan's election commission on Monday rejected a resolution passed by the Senate earlier this month seeking a delay in the February 8 general election, stating that all arrangements have been completed and it won't be "advisable" to put off the polls. On January 5, the upper House of Parliament passed a non-binding resolution seeking a delay in the general election, citing cold weather and security concerns, increasing the political uncertainty in the country. The resolution received support in the Senate but was slammed as "unconstitutional" by major political parties. It was passed with only 14 lawmakers out of the Senate's 100. In the statement Monday, the ECP said it deliberated on resolution and observed that caretaker governments had been issued directions for "beefing up security matrix". PTI

Taiwan loses ally, accuses China of post-poll ploy

Taipei: Taiwan lost one of its few remaining diplomatic allies Nauru to China on Monday, just days after it elected a new president, and accused China of attempting to pressure it while it affirmed the will of Taiwanese to go out into the world. China claims Taiwan as its own territory with no right to state-to-state ties, a position Taiwan strongly disputes, and the two have for years traded accusations of using "dollar diplomacy" as they compete for diplomatic recognition. Taiwan security officials told Reuters before Saturday's election that China was likely to continue to whittle away at the handful of countries that maintain diplomatic ties with Taipei. PTI

BELARUS

Political prisoner dies after getting no medical care

Tallinn: A political prisoner has died in prison in Belarus after authorities failed to provide him with proper medical care, a human rights group said Monday, a death that spotlighted cruel conditions in Belarusian prisons. Vadim Krasko died of pneumonia in a penal colony near the northeastern city of Vitebsk after prison authorities had been slow to take him to a hospital, ignoring his pleas for help, the respected Viassna human rights centre said. He died on January 9, but the penal colony only reported his death now. AP

PAKISTAN

Nawaz daughter calls rival PTI 'terrorist party'

Lahore: Senior PML-N leader and former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's daughter Maryam Nawaz on Monday said that Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party was deprived of its cricket bat election symbol because it is a "terrorist party". Addressing the election rally of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party in Okara city, some 125 km from Lahore, Maryam fully supported Chief Justice Isha's decision to deprive the PTI of its iconic poll symbol. PTI

ISRAELI TANK ATTACKS NEAR REFUGEE CAMPS IN CENTRAL GAZA

Israel continues to bombard targets in north, south Gaza, toll 'crosses 24,000'

UN agencies renew appeal for humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza

REUTERS
CAIRO, JANUARY 15

ISRAELI FORCES bombarded targets across Gaza on Monday as the toll in Gaza went above 24,000 according to Gaza health officials.

A total of 24,100 Palestinians have been killed and 60,834 have been injured in Israeli strikes on Gaza since October 7, they said.

Twelve Palestinians were killed and others wounded in an Israeli airstrike overnight on a house in Gaza City in the north, health officials said, while plumes of smoke rose above the main southern city of Khan Younis, also shelled by Israeli tanks.

Hamas-affiliated Palestinian Press Agency SAFA reported fierce clashes between Hamas militants and Israeli forces in Khan Younis, while Israeli tank barrages were also reported near



After an Israeli strike in Rafah on Monday. Reuters

the Al-Bureij and Al-Maghazi refugee camps in central Gaza.

In a statement, the Israeli military said it had killed two Palestinian fighters in an airstrike on their vehicle as it was transporting weapons in Khan Younis, and also raided a Hamas command centre in that city.

United Nations agencies renewed their appeal on Monday for a humanitarian ceasefire in Gaza as almost two million dis-

placed people shelter in tents and other temporary accommodation amidst fighting in the south.

"We need unimpeded, safe access to deliver aid and a humanitarian ceasefire to prevent further death and suffering," said Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, head of the World Health Organization (WHO), adding that hunger would further harm the sick and make "an already terrible situation catastrophic".

Houthi-fired missiles hit US ship in Red Sea

REUTERS
DOHA, LONDON, JANUARY 15

QATAR SUSPENDED liquefied natural gas (LNG) shipments via the Red Sea and six more oil tankers changed direction as disruption to the crucial trade route extended to the energy sector after U.S.-led strikes against Houthi militants.

Attacks on ships since October by Yemen's Houthis, who say they are acting in solidarity with Palestinians, have hit commerce and alarmed major powers in a regional escalation of Israel's more than three-month war with Hamas militants in Gaza.

In the latest apparent attack, a U.S.-owned bulk carrier was reportedly struck by a missile near Yemen's port of Aden, causing a fire in a hold but no injuries on board, according to British

Maritime Security firm Ambrey.

That could mark a widening of targets for the Houthis, who have previously said they will only target Israeli ships or those en route to Israel.

In response to the instability, the world's second largest LNG exporter QatarEnergy has now held back at least four gas tankers from the Red Sea, a senior source said.

At least six more oil tankers were also steering clear on Monday, making 15 since last week's Western strikes in Yemen, according to tracking data. Prior to that, it was mostly container ships avoiding the area in fallout from the Gaza war.

In the latest Western military action in the region, the United States said late on Sunday that its fighter aircraft shot down an anti-ship cruise missile fired by the militants toward a U.S. destroyer.

Trump seeks early victory as Iowa caucus kicks off Republican race

Ex-president's sway puts Nikki Haley, Ron DeSantis in race to be runner-up

REUTERS
DES MOINES, IOWA, JAN 15

DONALD TRUMP is the overwhelming favorite to push past his rivals and stake an early claim to the Republican presidential nomination on Monday when low-key bone-chilling temperatures to cast the first votes in the 2024 campaign.

The former president's dominant position has turned Iowa's first-in-the-nation contest into a race for second place, as both Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley are aiming for a clear runner-up finish to emerge as the chief alternative to Trump.

"This is showtime. This is what we've been waiting for," Haley told supporters at a dinner in Des Moines. A strong second-place showing for either Haley or DeSantis would keep alive the idea that Trump's march toward the nomination is not a foregone conclusion.

A commanding victory for Trump in Iowa would bolster his argument that he is the only candidate in the Republican field capable of taking on Democratic President Joe Biden in the November election.

It would also spell trouble for his challengers, especially DeSantis, who has wagered his campaign's viability on Monday's Iowa caucus, pouring resources into the Midwestern state and barnstorming all of its 99 counties.



Donald Trump. Reuters

A third-place finish could prove fatal to DeSantis' prospects. Polls show the Florida governor far behind Trump and Haley in the more moderate state of New Hampshire, where Republicans will choose their nominee eight days from now.

Both DeSantis and Haley have expressed confidence that they will exceed expectations in Iowa, though neither has predicted victory. Ken Cuccinelli, who founded the Never Back Down committee that supports DeSantis, said months of organizing would help turnout. "We'll see how much the people of Iowa reward his work level, which is beyond any other candidate in the race," he said.

In 2008, 2012 and 2016, the winner of Iowa's Republican caucuses did not go on to secure the nomination, in part because Iowa's large evangelical population means the state is more socially conservative than the country as a whole.

N Korean minister in Moscow to meet Lavrov as 'weapons deal' concern grows

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MOSCOW, JANUARY 15

NORTH KOREA'S foreign minister is visiting Russia on Monday for three days of talks, as international concern grows over an alleged arms cooperation deal between the two countries.

A delegation led by Foreign Minister Choe Son Hui arrived in Moscow on Sunday, according to North Korea's official Korean Central News Agency. She is to meet her Russian counterpart, Sergey Lavrov, on Tuesday, Russian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharchova said.

Choe is visiting at Lavrov's invitation, the ministry said.

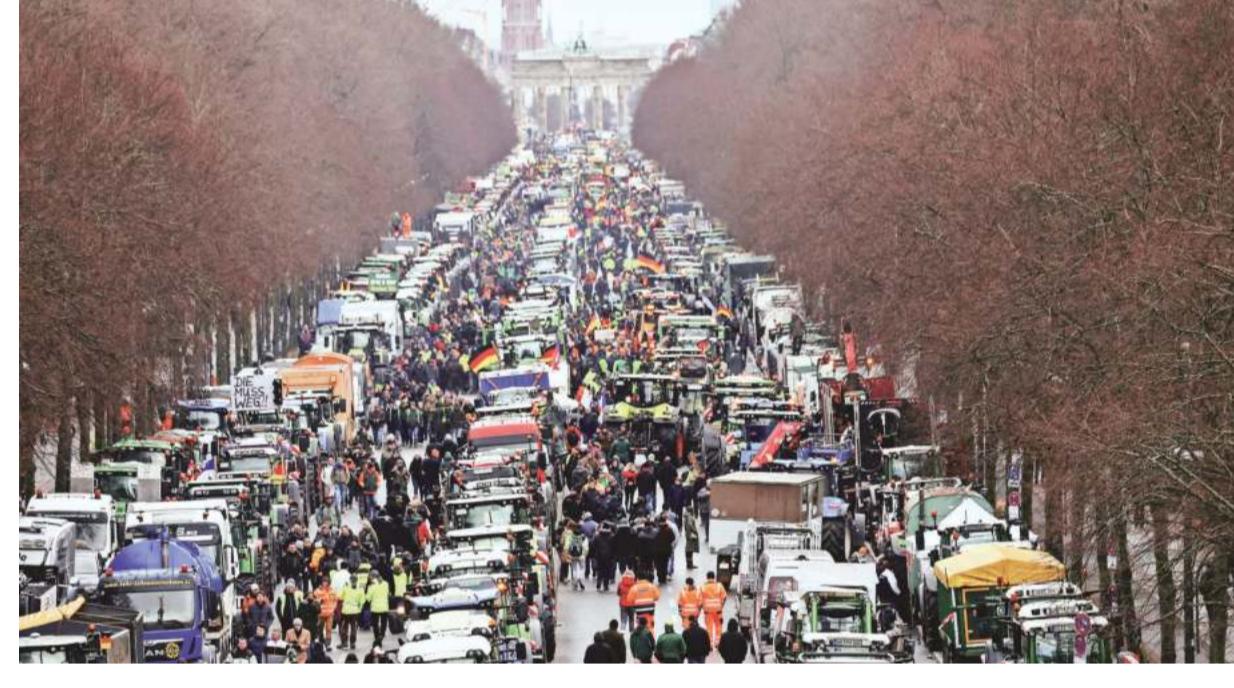
The United States and South Korea say North Korea has provided Russia with arms, including artillery and missiles, to help its fight in Ukraine.

The Biden administration said it has evidence that missiles provided by North Korea to Russia have been used in Ukraine.

In a joint statement last week, the U.S., South Korea and their



Choe Son Hui (left); Sergey Lavrov



TAX PROTESTS IN BERLIN

German farmers protest against slashing vehicle tax subsidies of the so-called German Ampel coalition government near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin on Monday. Thousands of tractors and over 10,000 people gathered in Berlin Monday, capping a week of protests against higher taxes for farmers. Reuters

Sunak party set for epic fail in polls, says survey

REUTERS
LONDON, JANUARY 15

BRITISH PRIME Minister Rishi Sunak's Conservative Party is set for an electoral defeat on a par with its heavy loss to the Labour Party in 1997, according to a YouGov opinion poll published in the *Telegraph* newspaper.

The 14,000 people surveyed by YouGov represented about seven times the usual number of people involved in the firm's polls.

Asked about the latest forecast of a heavy electoral defeat, Sunak said the only poll that mattered was the national election which must be held by January 2025 but which he has suggested will take place later this year.

That would represent an 11.5% swing to Keir Starmer's Labour, the biggest collapse in

support for a governing party since 1906, the newspaper said.

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Muizzu's comments came amid an unease in the Maldives' bilateral ties with India after he took office in November last year.

Muizzu, who returned to the Maldives on Saturday after a high-profile state visit to Beijing at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, noted that China has provided assistance to the development of the

Beijing backs our sovereignty, ties set to reach new heights: Muizzu

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MALE/BEIJING, JANUARY 15

MALDIVIAN PRESIDENT Mohamed Muizzu has praised his country's strategic relationship with China, saying the two countries respect each other and Beijing fully supports the Indian Ocean island's sovereignty.

Muizzu's comments came amid an unease in the Maldives' bilateral ties with India after he took office in November last year.

Muizzu, who returned to the Maldives on Saturday after a high-profile state visit to Beijing at the invitation of his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, noted that China has provided assistance to the development of the



Mohamed Muizzu and Xi Jinping in Beijing. Reuters File

China is not a country that would interfere with the internal affairs of the Maldives, which is why the two countries have a strong relationship, Muizzu was quoted as saying in an interview with China's state-run CGTN channel.

He added that the Maldives and China respect each other, and China fully supports Maldives' sovereignty.

The President expressed his belief that the China-Maldives relations will continue to grow stronger in the future, the official PSM News quoted him as saying in the interview. He also said Xi puts the interest of citizens first and that China's economy has reached new heights under his leadership.

THE TO-DO LIST HAS GROWN FOR 2024'S WORLD ECONOMIC FORUM

War, climate change, AI tops charts as world leaders meet in Davos

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARANÁ (ARGENTINA), JAN 15

THE EARTH is heating up, as is conflict in the Middle East. The world economy and Ukraine's defense against Russia are sputtering along. Artificial intelligence could upend all our lives.

The to-do list of global priorities has grown for this year's edition of the World Economic Forum gaggle of business, political and other elites in the Alpine snows of Davos, Switzerland. It gets going in earnest Tuesday and runs through Friday.



The gathering is mostly high-minded ambition and a venue for decision-makers in an array of fields to meet. AP

Over 60 heads of state and government, including Israeli President Isaac Herzog and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky will be heading to town to hold both public appearances and closed-door talks. They'll be among more than 2,800 attendees, including academics, artists and international organization leaders.

The gathering is mostly high-minded ambition – think business innovation, aims for peace-making and security cooperation, or life-changing improvements in health care – and a venue for decision-makers in

an array of fields and industries to connect.

It is also regularly panned by critics as an emblem of the yawning gap between rich and poor: Young Swiss Socialists staged a rally Sunday to blast the forum and brand attendees as "the richest and most powerful, who are responsible for today's wars and crises."

"Davos is easily mocked. But in current times it is hard to get people together to talk in a room on shared global issues and the value of face-to-face conversations is very real, as the COVID-19 pandemic showed," Bronwen

Maddox, director of the Chatham House think tank, said in an email.

While Davos is generally big picture, regional conflict can cast a long shadow – like the war in Ukraine did a year ago, prompting organizers to exclude any Russian delegation. Herzog, the Israeli president, whose job is more ceremonial than is Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's, will be on hand for a Davos session Thursday, and the prime ministers of Qatar, Jordan and Lebanon also will be attending.

Testament to how technology has taken a large and growing slice of attention in Davos, the perennial one of late has been the search for creative and promising ways to fight climate change.

The Indian EXPRESS

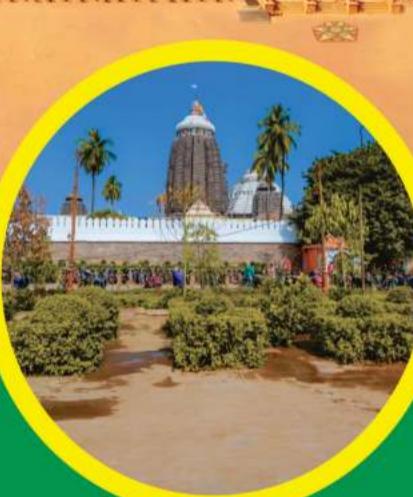
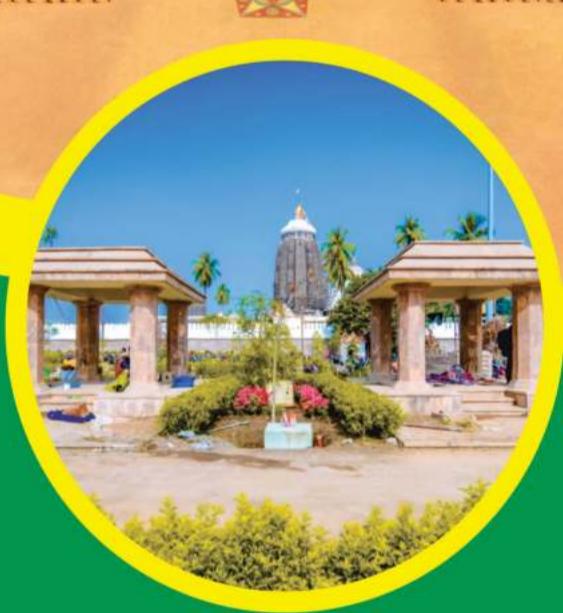
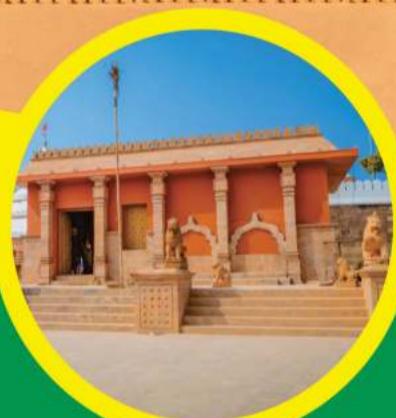
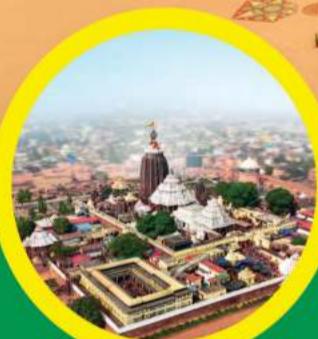
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THE INDIAN EXPRESS, TUESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2024



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

Apart from fog, what else is behind delays at Delhi airport

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

WITH DENSE fog hitting flight operations on Sunday in North India, particularly at the country's largest airport — New Delhi's Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport — airline networks were riddled with disruptions that had a cascading effect even in other parts of the country.

Social media platforms saw numerous passengers complaining about long delays and cancellations, and about being stuck in aircraft for hours. In one incident, a passenger physically attacked an IndiGo pilot.

Fog at one busy airport can cause widespread disruptions as airline networks and operations are complex, with aircraft and crew serving on multiple flights across sectors. Complications like crew duty time limits being exceeded due to delays and lack of

parking stands for incoming aircraft due to congestion compound problems.

What happened Sunday

On Sunday, as many as 508 outbound flights from the IGI airport were delayed while 87 were cancelled, as per data from flight tracking service Flightradar24. As for inbound flights, 414 were delayed while 42 were cancelled. Dense fog hit operations on Monday too, but the situation appears to have improved with the weather clearing up and visibility improving.

The fact that one of the runways equipped to handle aircraft movements in low visibility is currently inoperative worsened matters. The Delhi airport has four runways, of which two are Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT IIIB-compliant, which means they are equipped to handle aircraft in extremely low visibility. One of the two such runways is under maintenance for re-

carpeting, and therefore, has not been in operation for weeks.

The problem was further complicated as the only operational CAT IIIB-compliant runway was reportedly recently downgraded in category from one end due to construction activity close to the runway. This meant that CAT IIIB landings could only operate from one side of that runway.

At one point, even this portion of the runway was rendered ineffective as visibility dipped to zero.

It is worth noting that having CAT IIIB-compliant runways is not enough. Airlines are also required to deploy aircraft equipped for ILS CAT IIIB and pilots trained to handle low-visibility operations. These requirements could also have added to the woes.

Cascading effect

EXPLAINED AVIATION

For the sake of understanding, let us consider a courier delivery vehicle, which is supposed to deliver a planned number of orders during the day at different locations. If it gets inordinately delayed at any of the locations, subsequent deliveries will also be delayed or cancelled for the day, unless the courier service is able to quickly deploy another delivery vehicle. But what if a large number of delivery vehicles get stuck at the same location? The operations would see a cascading impact.

This cascading effect on the network was apparent at the Mumbai airport, the country's second-largest, which was unaffected by fog but had 362 delayed departures and 30 outbound flight cancellations on Sunday, as per Flightradar24 data. Delhi-Mumbai is the busiest aviation route in India with over 700 weekly flights between India's political capital and financial capital.

In instances of such disruptions, airlines with large and dense networks and high aircraft and crew utilisation levels tend to suffer more. While such parameters reflect efficiency in operations, finding and deploying spare aircraft and crew at a short notice can be hugely problematic.

Beyond the fog

With numerous flights delayed or cancelled on Sunday, the congestion build-up at the Delhi airport also led to long queues for departure, leading to passengers being stuck in aircraft for hours before take-off. Often in such cases, passengers get restless and demand to be deplaned instead of spending hours inside the aircraft. However, deplaning is not a simple process and requires clearances from airport security, as boarding is completed and luggage is already loaded onto the plane. Deplaning the passengers so they can wait at the terminal may also re-

THIS WORD MEANS

DAVOS SUMMIT

The annual meeting of the World Economic Forum is being held from January 15 to 19 in Davos, Switzerland

THE WORLD Economic Forum (WEF) is holding its Annual Meeting from January 15 to 19 in Davos, Switzerland. Attendees include António Guterres, UN Secretary-General; Ajay Banga, President, World Bank Group; Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation; and political leaders from India, the US, China, France and Sri Lanka, among others.

Who initiated the World Economic Forum?

German professor Klaus Schwab founded the WEF. He was a mechanical engineering graduate who then earned a Master of Public Administration degree from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University.

From 1972 to 2003, Schwab was a professor of business policy at the University of Geneva. He founded WEF in 1971, originally known as the European Management Forum.

It introduced the concept of "stakeholder capitalism." According to Schwab, "it is a form of capitalism in which companies do not only optimise short-term profits for shareholders, but seek long term value creation, by taking into account the needs of all their stakeholders, and society at large."

The WEF website says of the idea: "a company should serve all its stakeholders, not just its shareholders: employees, suppliers, and the community it is part of."

As an extension of that idea, business, government and civil society leaders have made their way to the high Alps "to consider the major global issues of the day and to brainstorm on solutions to address these challenges," it adds.

What happens at WEF?



People walk inside the venue on the first day of the annual meeting in Davos, Switzerland, on Jan 15. Reuters

Initially, Schwab focused the meetings on how European firms could catch up with US management practices. Events in 1973, namely the collapse of the Bretton Woods fixed exchange rate mechanism and the Arab-Israeli War, saw the Annual Meeting expand its focus from management to economic and social issues.

Two years later, the organisation introduced a system of membership for the 1,000 leading companies of the world.

Davos brings together some 3,000 paying members and selected participants — among whom are investors, business leaders, political leaders, economists, celebrities and journalists — for up to five days to discuss global issues across 500 sessions.

In the past, it has been used as a location for pivotal international diplomacy as leaders are able to break tensions in the mountain town.

The WEF also publishes rankings such as the Global Competitiveness Report and the Global Gender Gap Report.

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PHONE CONVERSATION

Modi and Putin discuss 'special strategic' ties, future roadmap

Call a day after NSAs in Davos talk Ukraine; Swiss flag India's role

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, Iran President Ibrahim Raissi in Tehran. PTI

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin Monday had a "good conversation" in which they discussed a range of aspects related to the "special and privileged strategic partnership" between the two countries.

In a post on X, Modi said he and Putin also agreed to chalk out a roadmap for future initiatives.

"Had a good conversation with President Putin. We discussed various positive developments in our Special & Privileged Strategic Partnership and agreed to chalk out a roadmap for future initiatives. We also had a useful exchange of views on various regional and global issues, including Russia's Presidency of the BRICS," the PM said.

Subsequently, a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said the two leaders reviewed progress on a number of issues of bilateral cooperation as a follow-up to recent high-level exchanges between the two countries.

"They positively assessed the developments in bilateral

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED E Balancing act

DURING THE last 23 months of Russia-Ukraine war, India has maintained steady ties with Russia while also advocating a peaceful resolution to the conflict through dialogue and diplomacy. The phone call comes a day after NSAs of several countries met in Davos to discuss a peace plan for Ukraine, with host Switzerland asserting India can play a key role.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 15IT IS official now: the *shyam rang* (dark coloured) Ram Lalla idol sculpted on 'Krishna Shila' (black stone) by Mysuru-based sculptor Arun Yogiraj has been selected for installation in the *garba griha* (sanctum sanctorum) of the new Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

Champat Rai, Secretary of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, said 11 of the total 15 members of the Trust chose the idol, based on the "impression it left". He said the old idol would also be installed in the

Arun Yogiraj's Ram Lalla idol to be installed: Ayodhya Trust confirms

Workers install a door inside the Ram temple on Monday. ANI

sanctum sanctorum.

"Arun Yogiraj, a resident of Mysuru, hails from generations of sculptors... You cannot imag-

ine the kind of life he has lived to sculpt the idol... He has not kept his phone with himself for 15

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Man assaults IndiGo pilot after delay in flight, is arrested

Fog disrupts flight schedules, over 500 flights from IGI Airport hit

ARNABJIT SUR & SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

A PASSENGER on a Delhi-Goa IndiGo flight was arrested on Sunday for allegedly assaulting the plane's pilot after a delay of over 10 hours due to dense fog in North India. According to flight tracking service, Flightradar24, while the plane was scheduled to take off at 7:40 am, it finally left at 6 pm.

The passenger, Sahil Kataria

(35), owns a toys and stationery shop in Delhi's Amar Colony, police said, adding that he and his

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MORE REPORTS
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**DECODING TAAPSEE PANNU'S 'DUNKI' DIET: 'DIVERSITY HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE KEY POINT IN HER MEAL PLANNING'**

Taapsee Pannu's nutritionist Mumun Ganeriwal opened up about the actor's 'Dunki' diet, which kept changing as per the film's shoot in locations like London, Jeddah, Pune, Mumbai, Budapest, and Kashmir

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EXPRESS AUDIO**The Goa murder case, Deora quits Congress, and Maldives' deadline**

Unfolding the story behind Suchana Seth, who allegedly murdered her four-year-old in Goa, Milind Deora's exit from the Congress, and Maldivian President Mohamed Muizzu's deadline for India to withdraw its military personnel from there

Week before son's 'murder', Suchana Seth made another visit to Goa with child

PAVNEET SINGH CHADHA
PANAJI, JANUARY 15

SUCHANA SETH, the Bengaluru-based CEO of a tech start-up accused of killing her four-year-old son in a Goa hotel, had visited the state with her child the previous week too and stayed at a five-star hotel for five days, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

According to police sources, Suchana came to Goa on New Year's Eve (Sunday) and returned to Bengaluru on January 4. Two days later, she made a "last-minute" plan and returned to Goa on January 6. She checked into Hotel Sol Banyan Grande in North Goa's Candolim, where the child was allegedly murdered.

Meanwhile, a children's court in Panaji extended Suchana's police remand by five days. She was produced in court in Goa on Monday afternoon after her six-day police remand ended.

The Goa Police had sought eight-day custody of the accused, submitting to the court that she was "only talking in bits and parts" and "not disclosing certain things" in the investigation. They informed the court that they were taking the assistance of a psychiatrist for the questioning.

"She has shown the weapon with which she slit her wrists... but certain things... murder weapon and all, she has not revealed. We have to interrogate her. She is only talking in bits and parts... The DNA tests are pending..." the police officer told the court.

The court asked Seth if she had anything to say, to which she replied, "No, I don't."

Seth's advocate, Franco, said, "The court has extended her custody till Friday. The vakalatnama (a written document submitted before a court by lawyers declaring that a client had authorised them to represent the client in a legal proceeding) is yet to be filed."

A family court in Bengaluru had allowed Venkatraman to see his son every Sunday, but according to police, Suchana had not been letting that happen.

According to Venkatraman's lawyer Azhar Meer, over the last one year, the family court in Bengaluru had incrementally given orders in favour of his client.

"On December 31 (Sunday) when she arrived in Goa, she told her husband that their son was unwell, so she could not send him to meet him. The consecutive visits to Goa over the two weekends suggest she did not want her hus-

WITNESS IN CASE TURNS HOSTILE
Teen who spent 5 months in prison for 'spitting on procession' granted bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BHOJPAL, JANUARY 15

THE MADHYA Pradesh High Court last month granted bail to an 18-year-old man accused of spitting on devotees during the Mahakal Loka procession in Ujjain, taking note of the fact that the main complainant and a witness, who made the allegations, have turned hostile.

The accused, who spent over five months in jail, was arrested on the basis of witness statements. Further, the police had alleged that he was in a video purportedly showing some people spitting on the procession.

Following his arrest and protests by right-wing outfits, the Ujjain district administration had razed "illegal constructions" at his home as a heavy police contingent stood guard and drummers played in the background.

A single judge bench of Justice Anil Verma granted bail to the accused on December 15, taking note of the fact that "complainant has been examined before the trial court but he has turned hostile and did not support the case of prosecution and he also denied his relevant portion of his FIR. Eyewitness also turned hostile and did not support the prosecution's case."

The court also observed that "no test identification parade has been conducted by the investigating officer" and that "investigation is over and chargesheet has been filed". A TIP proceeding is conducted so that witnesses who

claim to have seen the accused at the time of the incident can identify them from a lineup.

The police registered an FIR under IPC sections 295A (deliberate and malicious acts, intended to outrage religious feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs), 153A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race, place of birth, residence), 296 (disturbing religious assembly), 505 (statements conducive to public mischief) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention). The police had booked two others who were minors at the time.

As per the prosecution, on July 17, at about 6:30 pm, the procession was underway. "When it came near Tanki Square, some unknown boys were at the terrace of the building... and started spitting on the procession vehicle... The police, based on a complaint, registered a case," Varsha Singh, the government advocate, argued.

Advocate Vivek Singh, the lawyer for the accused, contended that the "accused is innocent and has been falsely implicated in this matter".

Singh argued that the "complainant and eyewitness have been examined before the trial court and they have both turned hostile and have not supported the case of the prosecution".

The prosecutor responded, "Accomplice has been identified in the CCTV footage and this is a serious case relating to communal harmony, therefore he does not deserve bail."

FROM PAGE ONE
Modi, Putin discuss 'special strategic' ties, future roadmap

relations," it said, adding that the PM conveyed to Putin his best wishes for Russia's Presidency of BRICS in 2024 and assured him of India's full support. The two leaders agreed to remain in touch, it said.

The official readout by the Kremlin of the phone conversation also called the ties between India and Russia "a particularly privileged strategic partnership".

It added: "The achievements in practical cooperation in such areas as trade, economic, scientific and technical cooperation, energy, transport and logistics, and cooperation in the Russian Far East were noted with satisfaction."

Putin and Modi expressed interest in further intensifying mutually beneficial bilateral ties and wished each other success in the upcoming elections -- presidential in Russia and parliamentary in India, the Russian statement said.

Both leaders emphasised their "readiness to closely coordinate their approaches to the BRICS agenda", it said, adding that "India intends to help implement the goals and objectives of Russia's chairmanship".

"The leaders also touched on several other international issues, including the situation around Ukraine," it added. The Russian

Ukraine war has been going on for close to two years now, with no signs of relenting.

The phone call between the two leaders comes a day after a meeting of the national security advisors of almost 80 countries in Davos to discuss a peace formula for Ukraine, with host Switzerland asserting that India can play a key role leveraging its influence with Russia. India was represented at the meet by its Deputy NSA Vikram Misri.

The meeting also saw many participants echoing India's position that war can never be a solution and that dialogue was a must to resolve the situation. During his

conversations with Putin, Modi has said that it is not a time of war.

Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis said participation from BRICS countries, including India, is very important, as these are countries which have got some relations continuing with Russia. He also lauded the position taken by countries like India, saying their actions are facilitating this collective movement.

Last month, External Affairs Minister Jaishankar had made a five-day visit to Russia. After their meeting, Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov had praised India for taking a "responsible approach" to discussing geo-

political hotspots like Ukraine. Jaishankar had said that India-Russia relations remain "very steady, very strong" and are based on "strategic convergence", "geopolitical interests" and are "mutually beneficial".

Days after returning from Russia, Jaishankar also spoke to his Ukrainian counterpart Dmytro Kuleba and discussed the ongoing Russia-Ukraine conflict. Kuleba said he informed his Indian counterpart about "Russia's recent escalation of terror and mass air attacks, which caused civilian suffering and destruction".

India and Russia have an annual summit at the leaders' level, where the Indian Prime Minister and the Russian President visit each other's country every alternate year. However, after the war in Ukraine broke out, Modi did not travel to Russia for the annual summit in 2022, and Putin could not come for the G20 summit in Delhi in September last year.

While it is Modi's turn to visit Russia for the annual summit, the visit didn't take place last year. No reasons have been cited so far, and "scheduling" has been the key challenge, sources said. The last summit was held on December 6, 2021 in Delhi, during Putin's visit.

• Arun Yogiraj's Ram Lalla idol to be installed: Ayodhya Trust confirms

days and did not speak to his children for 15-20 days at a stretch. He was so engrossed in his work. His idol has been selected and everyone appreciated it," Rai said at a press conference in Ayodhya.

Yogiraj was among three sculptors shortlisted to carve idols depicting a five-year-old 51-inch-tall Ram Lalla (child Ram) in standing form. While two idols, sculpted by Yogiraj and Ganesh Bhatt, were carved in dark stone, the third one by Satyanarayan Pandey is pure white.

Rai said on Monday that the

other two idols would be given "due respect".

Before the official announcement, Union Minister of Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi, in a social media post earlier this month, had said the idol carved by Yogiraj would be installed.

"The worship of the present idol has been going on for the last 70 years and it will be seated in the sanctum sanctorum of the original temple along with the new idol. The worship of the idol will continue even after January 22, in the same manner as it has

been done so far," Rai said.

According to Rai, the new idol, which weighs 150-200 kgs, will be installed in the sanctum sanctorum on January 18. The rituals in the run-up to the "Pran Pratishtha" (consecration ceremony) will begin from Tuesday and will continue till January 21, he said.

The idol will also be part of a ritual called "adhiwas", during which the "jal niwas", "fai niwas", "anna niwas", "ashadi niwas" and "ghee niwas" for the idol will be done, he said. The Ram Temple "Pran Pratishtha" on January 22

will begin at 12:20 pm, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, RSS Chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Chief of the Trust Mahant Nititya Gopal Das will be among those present at the ceremony.

The ceremony will also be attended by all the trustees of the temple trust, seers of about 150 sants and over 500 people associated with the construction of the temple.

While 121 acharyas will conduct the rituals under

Ganeshwar Shastri Dravid, the lead Acharya would be Laxmikant Dixit of Varanasi.

Yogiraj hails from a family which has been sculpting idols for five generations – it once worked for the royal Mysuru family. He is popular for having carved the 30-foot statue of Subhas Chandra Bose, which is placed in the canopy behind Amar Jawan Jyoti near India Gate in New Delhi, and the 12-foot-tall statue of Adi Shankaracharya in Kedarnath, Uttarakhand.

In Karnataka, his mother, Saraswathi, said the family was

elated about the selection of his idol. "He was not expecting his idol to be selected. He told me that he would be happy if any idol was finalised as all the sculptors had worked very hard. He is very happy that the efforts he put in for six months have borne fruit," she said.

Saraswathi said she was yet to see the idol. "We may see it in the coming days," she said, adding, "He would have been happier if his father was alive. His father was very proud of his achievements."

WITH ENS, BENGALURU

• Man assaults IndiGo pilot after delay in flight, is arrested

wife were going to Goa for their honeymoon. His wife, too, was deboarded following the incident,

by text messages/email.

Since Sunday, social media platforms have been replete with posts from angry passengers complaining about long delays and cancellations, and even being stuck in aircraft for hours.

As many as 508 outbound flights from the IGI Airport were delayed while 87 were cancelled on Sunday, as per data from flight tracking service Flightradar24.

Further, 414 inbound flights were delayed and 42 were cancelled.

Regarding the IndiGo incident, Devesh Mahla, Deputy Commissioner of Police at Indira Gandhi International Airport, said they received a complaint

from the pilot, Anup Kumar, alleging that Kataria had assaulted and misbehaved with him.

"He hit the pilot and created nuisance on the aircraft. A complaint has been received from Kumar and an FIR has been registered for voluntarily causing hurt and wrongful restraint," said Mahla.

The video of Kataria rushing towards the pilot and lunging forward to hit him was recorded and posted online by a Russian model and actress, Evgenia Belskaia, who was on the same flight.

"Every hour, the IndiGo flight staff would come and say there

is one-hour delay, two-hour delay, so like this they made us wait for 10 hours," Belskaia said in a video she posted online. After the long wait, when passengers were finally asked to board the flight, Belskaia said the airline made them wait for an additional two hours inside the aircraft.

"People were really angry and obviously they were asking questions from the crew," Belskaia said on her Instagram story. "Then the pilot said we are asking too many questions..."

Belskaia said she didn't support Kataria's actions, but pointed out that passengers were fed up after waiting for hours.

"The incident is being referred to the independent internal committee for appropriate action, and inclusion of the passenger on the 'no-fly list' as laid down in regulatory guidelines," it added.

Amid the fog-related disruptions at IGI Airport, the central government has asked the airport to expedite the return to service of a runway capable of low-visibility flight operations, Scindia said.

Urging passengers to cooperate with carriers in "this difficult period", he cautioned that unruly behaviour will be "dealt with strongly".

IB report reveals security lapses at Delhi airport Eastern Cross taxiways

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

A TEAM of intelligence bureau (IB) officers has found several lapses at the dual elevated Eastern Cross taxiways (ECTs) – a threat to the aircraft security – and asked the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) to take action at the earliest.

In July 2023, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia inaugurated the ECT at the Indira Gandhi International Airport (IGIA) – the only airport in the country to have an elevated taxiway with roads passing below it.

After visiting the ECT, the IB shared their report with the BCAS, CISF, Delhi Police and asked them to take proper action. On January 9, a joint inspection was conducted by all the agencies concerned and they de-

cided to form a patrolling team. The intelligence bureau officers recently visited the ECT after being informed about the lag in security arrangements, said a source, requesting anonymity. "After visiting the ECT, they found that the safety and security of the aircraft and its passengers were at risk as its taxiing was clearly visible from the area. Even the non-metallic road outside the perimeter wall and running parallel to the ECT has become a parking area for vehicles. Also, fencing along the ECT rampart could easily be crossed over with the support of vehicles parked there – a major threat to aircraft security," said the source. A perimeter wall is the exterior wall surrounding a structure or a building.

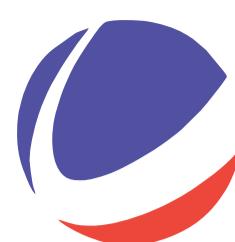
During the security audit, they found out that several people also travel on the 2.1-km-long ECT road as no dedicated officers from agencies concerned

were deployed to check the same.

"The area is isolated now, and the CISF or the Delhi Police do not patrol the area. There is a sentry post near the road leading to IGIA – the largest airport in the country – below the ECT, but there were no security personnel. This sentry post could be used as a hideout for wrongful activities," said the source, citing the audit report.

The ECT has reduced the travel time on the tarmac by passengers, before flight departure and landing. "It was found out during the audit that at many places along the ECT stretch, the perimeter wall had gone short due to soil deposition... Anyone can easily climb the perimeter wall and enter the apron side," said the source.

When contacted, BCAS officials declined to comment on the same.



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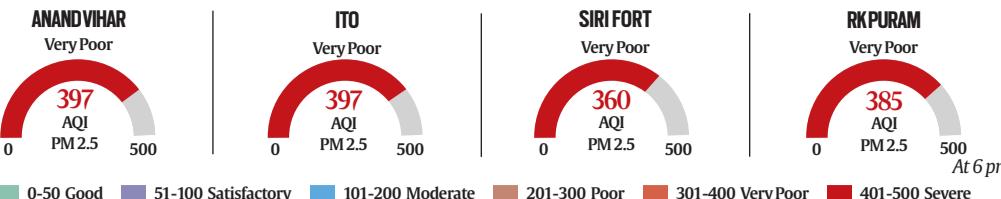
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S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: January 16
 Partly cloudy sky. Dense to very dense fog in morning. Cold wave conditions at isolated places
MAX: 21 | **MIN: 4**
 0.1°C below normal | 3.4°C below normal

FIGHTS AND ARGUMENTS BREAK OUT AS PASSENGERS LEFT FUMING

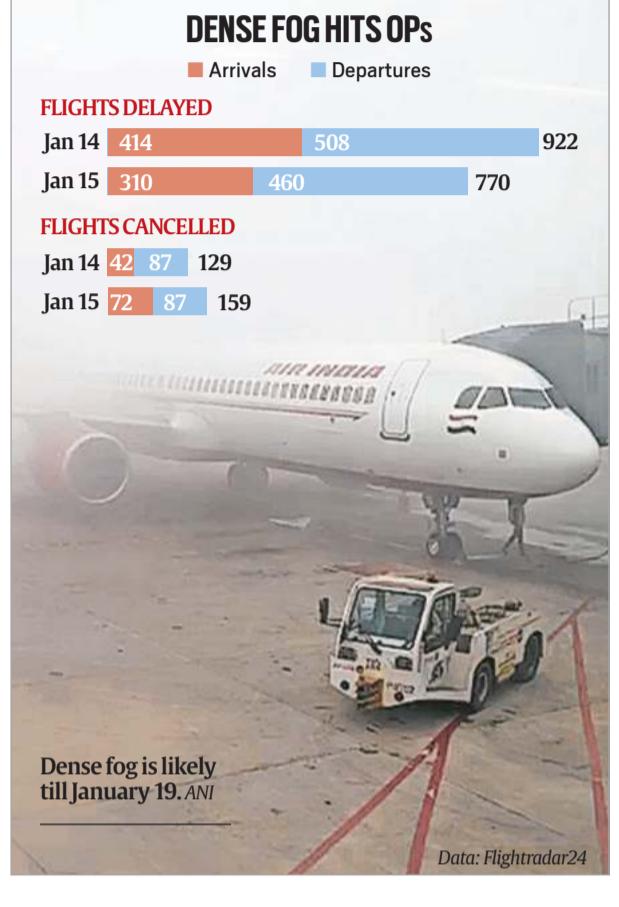
Chaotic Sunday at Delhi airport, flight delays spill over into Monday

UPASIKHA SINGHAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

MULTIPLE FLIGHTS delayed and cancelled, passengers left fuming: Delhi airport was a scene of chaos after unprecedented foggy conditions hit operations on Sunday and Monday.

On Sunday, the airport reported zero visibility between 4 am and 9 am. Although 15 landings could take place during that time, take-offs were not possible. On Monday, five flights were diverted between 1 am and 5 am – four to Jaipur and one to Ahmedabad.

Many passengers took to X to complain. One such passenger, Madhukar Pandey, wrote about passengers having a verbal altercation with IndiGo staff. "Passengers for 5 am flight to Turkey were boarded at 8 am & deboarded at 12 pm as pilot wake-time was over. Passengers were sent to a hotel, brought back for a 9 pm flight & now being told that it's rescheduled for 4.30 am." Pandey had been flying to Delhi from Lucknow on an 8 pm flight to avoid foggy conditions but still faced delays.



Capital braces for cold wave and dense fog over next 2 days

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

WHILE COLD wave conditions are set to persist in Delhi for the next two days, dense fog is likely till January 19, going by the India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast.

The IMD has issued an 'orange' alert for Delhi for Tuesday and Wednesday, with officials saying it was on account of the combined effect of low temperatures and dense fog, with the possibility of air and rail transport disruptions.

On Monday, the national capital recorded the lowest minimum temperature for the winter so far – 3.3 degrees Celsius – which is four degrees below normal for the Safdarjung weather station, the city's base observatory. This was the fourth consecutive day that the minimum temperature has remained below 4 degrees Celsius in Delhi.

Cold wave conditions are expected in parts of the city on Tuesday and Wednesday – the IMD marks a 'cold wave' in the plains when the minimum temperature is 4 degrees or lower. Dense to very dense fog (visibility of less than 200 m) is also on the forecast for the two days.

Clear skies and the availability of a significant amount of moisture have been contributing to the cold and foggy conditions, according to IMD scientists.

"Conditions are favourable for these low minimum temperatures – the skies are clear across northwest India. This means that



Date	Min	Max	Weather
Jan 16	4.0°C	21.0°C	Cold wave and dense fog in the morning (Orange alert)
Jan 17	4.0°C	22.0°C	Cold wave and dense fog in the morning (Orange alert)
Jan 18	6.0°C	23.0°C	Dense fog
Jan 19	5.0°C	23.0°C	Dense fog
Jan 20	5.0°C	22.0°C	Fog
Jan 21	5.0°C	22.0°C	Fog

in the day time, temperature rises, and at night, since there are no clouds, the energy gained by the earth during the day time goes back to the atmosphere rapidly in the early hours. That brings with it a rapid fall in temperatures, when the minimum temperature falls below 4 degrees. Along with this, moisture is available since humidity in January usually stands at around 80% to 90% and wind speed is low, so fog forms in the early hours. This fog layer has been dissipating during the day," said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist, IMD.

"Conditions are favourable for these low minimum temperatures – the skies are clear across northwest India. This means that

US citizen alleges rape: 'Accused forced himself on her at work seminar'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

A DAY after an Indian-origin US citizen alleged she was raped by her colleague at a five-star hotel in Lutyens' area, investigators said the woman alleged the accused forced himself on her after a work seminar last year. Her complaint also mentions she was given a "juice-like" drink after which she felt "dizzy" and was allegedly sexually assaulted.

Police haven't made any arrest yet. The accused hasn't been called for questioning. The Indian Express has learnt. Sources said he is the CEO of an NGO with offices in Delhi and Gurgaon. The woman has now quit her job. Sources said she will soon be called to record her statement and the accused will be called for questioning. Police haven't approached the hotel yet.

The woman, who lived in the US earlier, worked as the Assistant General Manager at the same NGO. She approached police Saturday saying she was raped by the accused last year.

A senior police officer said, "She alleged she met the accused at the five-star hotel on September 14 last year for a seminar... she said she consumed a drink and felt dizzy. She alleged he sexually assaulted her when they were alone. The woman said she doesn't remember which room she was taken to..."

A case under sections of rape has been registered. Police said the woman was "scared" of the accused and didn't file a complaint earlier because of his "influence".

"Complainant and accused were known to each other. The man is a friend of the woman's uncle, who helped her get the job," said Additional DCP (New Delhi) Ravi Kant Kumar Sunday.

Oberoi's access to her seat by occupying the elevated platform.

They also made attempts to ensure that Municipal Secretary Shiva Prasad did not leave his of-

ce; a police team had to be called in to escort him into the House which was scheduled to begin at 2 pm. It ended around 6.30 pm with the announce-

ment that the two agendas stood passed despite four hours of commotion in between.

"Our councillors led by the Leader of Opposition Sardar Raja

Publish real-time info on delays, tell passengers via WhatsApp: SOP to airlines

SUKALP SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

AIRLINES SHOULD publish real-time information regarding flight delays on their websites, inform affected passengers through WhatsApp messages and email, and sensitise their staff at airports to communicate with passengers. These were among the SOPs issued by the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) to carriers Monday in view of massive disruptions in services due to fog.

Air India responded to passenger dissatisfaction in a post on X, stating: "Air India regrets the disruption to operations arising from the last few days' dense fog in North India, including at our main Delhi hub, which resulted in some diversions and desynchronisation of aircraft and crew rotations. We are working hard to restore schedules, and sincerely regret the inconvenience caused to our passengers."

According to Flightradar24, which tracks flights live, the adverse weather conditions led to delays in 310 arriving flights and 72 cancellations on Monday; 460 flights were delayed and 87 cancelled in departures. On Sunday, 414 flights were delayed in arrivals and 508 in departures. The airport also saw 42 cancelled flights in arrivals and 87 cancelled departures.

IndiGo released a statement

WHAT DOES THE SOP STATE?

- Airlines to publish accurate real-time information regarding flight delays on their websites, inform affected passengers through WhatsApp messages and email, and sensitise their staff at airports to communicate with passengers.
- Carriers must also sensitise staff at airports to communicate with and continuously guide and inform the passengers about flight delays.
- Airlines are also required

"In view of the prevalent fog season and adverse weather conditions, airlines may cancel, sufficiently in advance, such flights that are anticipated to be delayed or consequentially delayed on account of such conditions beyond a period of 3 hours with a view to obviate congestion at the airport and mitigate passenger inconvenience," the DGCA said.

fluctuated for several hours, and at times, dropped to zero between 5 am to 9 am. Authorities, therefore, were compelled to enforce a shut-down of operations for some time even on CAT III runways (CAT III runways cannot handle zero-visibility operations.)

It further read: "However, to mitigate the situation in the near future, following steps have been taken: a. Delhi Airport has been asked to immediately expedite operationalisation of CAT III-enabled 4th runway (in addition to the existing CAT III-enabled runway) to the satisfaction of DGCA, in order to get approvals. b. The DGCA will issue an SOP for airlines on better communication and facilitation of passengers to minimise discomfort..."

The move comes after Civil Aviation Minister Jyoti Prakash Singh instructed DGCA to issue an SOP to airlines on "better communication and facilitation of passengers" affected by cancellations and delays. He also asked aviation authorities to expedite return to service of a runway capable of low-visibility flight operations.

Earlier, Scindia, in a post on social media platform X wrote:

"Yesterday, Delhi witnessed unprecedent fog wherein visibility

unruly behaviour amidst this is unacceptable, and will be dealt with strongly in line with existing legal provisions..."

On Sunday, social media was replete with posts by passengers complaining about long delays and cancellations. In one incident, a passenger attacked an IndiGo pilot.

Delhi airport has four runways of which two are Instrument Landing System (ILS) CAT IIIB-compliant, which means they are equipped to handle aircraft in extremely low visibility. One of the two CAT IIIB-compliant runways is under maintenance for re-painting and has not been in operation for weeks. It is worth noting that having CAT IIIB-compliant runways is not enough in low-visibility; airlines are also required to deploy aircraft equipped for ILS CAT IIIB and pilots trained to handle low-visibility operations.

Chest infections & flu cases spike: Mix of winter, pollution, say docs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

WINTER SEASON mixed with high pollution levels has led to an increase in flu cases in Delhi-NCR. Doctors said while the spike is seen every year with the dip in temperature, the number of chest infections is more than usual this time. Even as hospitalisation rate is not very high, several people are queuing up for consultations online and in OPDs, they added.

Doctors said a majority of these patients are suffering from Influenza A H1N1 virus, some with H3N2 virus, and others with chest infections aggravated by H1N1 and other viral and bacterial infections.

Hospitalisation due to chest infections is not alarming and is mostly seen elderly patients who had some kind of comorbid condition which was aggravated by H1N1, Covid and other bacterial infections," said Dr Vikas Maurya, head of the Pulmonology Department at Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

Runny nose, sneezing, cough,

This was expected during winters but they are more as compared to usual numbers. If one has low oxygen then hospitalisation is required," he added.

According to Dr Lalit Dar, Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology at AIIMS Delhi, what is being witnessed presently is Influenza A H1N1, which is not considered as a pandemic strain. "It is one of the seasonal influenza strains. We are seeing a large number of influenza H1N1 cases and occasional cases of influenza B. So that is what is probably responsible for this," he said.

breathlessness, throat pain and diarrhoea have been majorly reported in patients. Some also reported low oxygen and shortness of breath due to which they have been hospitalised.

At Indraprastha Apollo Hospital, Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, Senior Consultant, Internal Medicine, also blamed pollution mixed with winter for the problem. "People who had Covid in the past are also affected as they have compromised lungs," he added.

Dr Chatterjee said there has been a rise in hospitalisation of patients with chest infections: "...

According to Dr Lalit Dar, Professor and Head, Department of Microbiology at AIIMS Delhi, what is being witnessed presently is Influenza A H1N1, which is not considered as a pandemic strain.

"Despite all the efforts of AAP, the House meeting was not allowed to proceed today, but... it has passed two resolutions in the interest of the people of Delhi," he said.

"... my chair was pulled and I was not allowed to sit. When I tried again, BJP councillors pulled the mike... Despite this, in the third attempt I passed two important resolutions in the interest of the people of Delhi," Oberoi said.

Leader of the House, AAP councillor Mukesh Goel, termed it a 'Black day' in the history of the MCD.

Responding to AAP's allegations, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva accused it of conducting house meetings in "autocratic and unconstitutional" ways.

Statements on demolition of slums intended to 'mislead people': DDA

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

THE DELHI Development Authority on Monday said that statements regarding the demolition of slums in Delhi were "false" and "mischievous" and "motivated with an intent to mislead the people".

The DDA's statement came a day after Delhi ministers Atishi and Saurabh Bharadwaj visited two slum clusters in the capital and accused the BJP of conspiring to remove the slum dwellers.

The statement cited media reports about the statements made by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) leaders, including Atishi, Bharadwaj and Gopal Rai, alleging "surveys being conducted by the DDA for demolishing slums".



BJP councillors staged a protest in the MCD House, Monday. Amit Mehra

Oberoi's access to her seat by occupying the elevated platform.

They also made attempts to ensure that Municipal Secretary Shiva Prasad did not leave his office; a police team had to be called in to escort him into the House which was scheduled to begin at 2 pm. It ended around 6.30 pm with the announcement that the two agendas stood passed despite four hours of commotion in between.

ment that the two agendas stood passed despite four hours of commotion in between.

"Our councillors led by the Leader of Opposition Sardar Raja

Shetty; Oberoi, however, told reporters after the meeting, "Despite all the efforts of AAP, the House meeting was not allowed to proceed today, but... it has passed two resolutions in the interest of the people of Delhi," Oberoi said.

Leader of the House, AAP councillor Mukesh Goel, termed it a 'Black day' in the history of the MCD.

Responding to AAP's allegations, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva accused it of conducting house meetings in "autocratic and unconstitutional" ways.



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For 3 months, woman sexually harassed on way to work; FIR filed

DHEERAJ MISHRA
NOIDA, JANUARY 15

"I WANT to study further and support my family. But these things break you mentally and physically. Nobody can understand the pain I am going through." For the past three months, a 22-year-old woman was subjected to constant sexual harassment and molestation by four men as she travelled between Bulandshahr to Greater Noida and Ghaziabad in trains and autos for work.

Fearing the men and their threats, she didn't file a complaint initially. She tried to evade them by switching jobs, but the accused continued to chase her everywhere.

Finally, last week, the woman approached police in Greater Noida and lodged a complaint. Police have now arrested a 22-year-old man, Hitesh Kumar Solanki, a resident of Bulandshahr. The others are on the run.

The victim, a BCom graduate, works for a real estate company in Ghaziabad. She said she had to find a job as her father was paralysed and there was no one else to support her family.

Recounting her harrowing ordeal, the woman told *The Indian Express*: "They have been harassing me for around three months. Earlier, I used to work in Gautam Buddh Nagar. I used to take an early morning train for Dadri and then an auto. They followed me everywhere I went... they would sit in the same train compartment and then the auto. That's why I changed jobs to Ghaziabad."

The woman tried to evade them by switching jobs, but the accused continued to chase her everywhere

She further alleged, "Many times, they were drunk... they would spill beer on me... They even stole my slippers and other things, making me run from one compartment to another in search of them. They used to touch me everywhere... they tried to touch my private parts. When I objected, they said I cannot stop them or do anything. They used to flaunt their money and say 'bahut paise hain mere pass, chalo room par chalte hain'."

The victim said she had informed the Government Railway Police of the incident earlier. "The GRP apprehended one of the accused, Bittu, and sent him to jail. But he (got out on bail) kept doing the same thing. They used to molest my friend too. We were afraid to file a complaint. But things went too far and I decided to fight them and approach police," said the woman.

"... Women should speak up against such men. They have made my life hell, I cannot keep quiet now," the victim cried.

Police said an FIR under IPC sections 354 (assault or criminal force to woman with intent to outrage her modesty) and 294 (obscene acts) has been registered and attempts are being made to arrest the other accused as well.

RAN NETWORK OUT OF PARTS OF DELHI, DUBAI: POLICE

Expired visas, over 200 victims: Delhi Police bust 'Dunki' racket

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

VISITS TO embassies to get photos clicked, expired visas, fake police clearance and educational certificates, all on the pretext of sending more than 200 Bangladesh and Nepal nationals to European countries—the Delhi police on Monday said it had busted a large "Dunki racket" in the city.

The police arrested nine men—six alleged traffickers and three men who allegedly wanted to immigrate—who ran an elaborate network out of different parts of the city as well as Dubai.

The tip-off came from a police informer who claimed that a Bangladeshi national, Mohd Anwar Kazi (22), was living in India illegally and would arrive in East Delhi's Mayur Vihar near Pocket 1. He was arrested on January 5.

Subsequently, two more persons, Mohd Kholilur Rahman (22) and Emran Hossain were arrested. All three had contacted traffickers to find their way to Europe and had paid up to Rs 5 lakh to them.

Kazi produced his original passport which had a previous X-Misc Double Entry Visa with special endorsement 'To face Greece visa application centre in New Delhi'. He was also found in possession of a Greek Work Permit. His mobile phone revealed he was in touch with agents or traffickers involved in an organised crime syndicate," said ADPC (East) Achin

Garg. The ADPC said that he had also asked a trafficker to provide him with fake identity cards such as Aadhaar and PAN cards.

Police found that the three had come to Delhi on a valid visa from Bangladesh but had overstayed for three months. Kazi told the police that a trafficker, Akbor alias Altaf, lives in Sarita Vihar.

'Dunki network'

During interrogation, the three said they were staying in India with hopes of going to any European country.

TRAFFICKING GANG BUSTED



Police officials with four of the accused. Express

visa; post this, fake papers were created. They were given fake Aadhaar cards on the pretext of letting them move freely in India till their visa was made.

"They said that the traffickers were working on a large-scale collaboration with a consultancy firm in Dhaka, Bangladesh," added Garg.

Based on this information, Younus Khan, Mohd Ibraheem and Mohd Ali Akbor were arrested from their residence in Sarita Vihar and several fake documents and list of victims were seized from their possession.

The three said the head of the operation was based in Dhaka and runs a manpower consultancy, and has associates in Bangladesh.

and India who send people from Bangladesh to European countries using 'dunki' routes through India. Police are trying to trace the man and will serve a notice to the Bangladesh law enforcement authorities regarding his arrest, Garg said.

He added, "The kingpin of the operation contacted Bangladeshi nationals and sold them dreams of working in European countries. They are charged an advance of anywhere between Rs 1 lakh and Rs 5 lakh."

The victims were later received in India by the accused. "Mohd Ibraheem had opened multiple shell firms from where he used to hand out fictitious work permits to victims to keep them interested in the process.

The victims were also asked to pay more money for the visas and to get Aadhaar cards and other identity documents made so that they can move freely in India. They used to employ agents from Kolkata to get their fake Aadhaar cards made," said the officer.

Police also suspect the involvement of embassy employees. "Akbor used to pay an Indian man with connection in the embassies where the accused would visit and get pictures clicked and show the victims that their work was progressing," said Garg. Another man, Mohd Modassir Khan was also held for allegedly creating fake work permits and sending them to Akbor. "On January 10, one Gaurav Gulati was arrested who told us that he was trained in editing documents..." added Garg.

The three said the head of the operation was based in Dhaka and runs a manpower consultancy, and has associates in Bangladesh.

AAP to hold recitals of Sundarkand across city, starting today

MALLICA JOSHI
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

WITH DAYS to go for the Ayodhya Ram temple consecration ceremony, the AAP is set to hold recitals of Sundarkand, which is part of Ramcharitmanas, in all Assembly constituencies in Delhi.

Senior AAP leader and Minister Saurabh Bharadwaj announced on Monday that starting Tuesday, AAP MLAs and councillors would hold a Sundarkand paath every month in the 70 Assembly constituencies.

event. This programme will be held in every Vidhan Sabha [segment], and then in every ward and mandal monthly. There will be 2,600 of these events each month eventually," Bharadwaj said.

According to AAP sources, while the CM will make clear the party's stand on attending the January 22 Ram Mandir consecration ceremony only after getting a formal invitation, the party does not want to give the impression that it is taking a stand against the temple. "The decision on whether to attend or not will be taken in due course. Congress leaders have already stated that they will not attend and they are our alliance partners. Irrespective of the final decision, we want to make it very clear to the people that we are not opposed to Ram," said a senior AAP leader.

The BJP, meanwhile, questioned why the AAP did not hold regular Hanuman Chalisa paath all these years. BJP President Venkatesh Sachdeva said, "It is the fear of losing votes which is forcing Kejriwal and his partymen to talk of Hanuman Chalisa."



Will be held in each Assembly seat, then in every ward and mandal, says Saurabh Bharadwaj

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GOVT & POLITICS

AAP, Congress come together for Chandigarh mayoral polls

HINA ROHTAKI
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 15

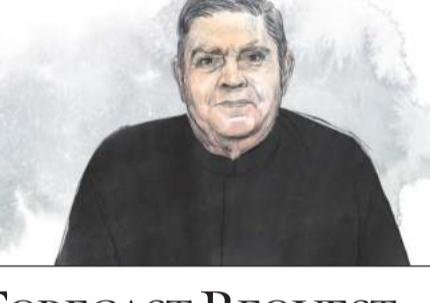
MAYORAL polls in Chandigarh took an interesting turn Monday when AAP and Congress came together and nominated their joint candidates against the BJP.

As part of the tie-up, it has been decided that AAP will fight for the mayor's seat, while Congress will contest the posts of senior deputy mayor and deputy mayor. AAP's Kuldeep Kumar Tita will be the joint candidate of AAP-Congress for the post of mayor who will take on BJP's Manoj Sonkar. The Chandigarh mayoral elections will be held January 18.

H S Lucky, Chandigarh Congress president, said, "Yes, we had to announce this alliance because with BJP having its mayor for eight years and the way it has been adopting the agendas, there is no democratic atmosphere at all."



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FORECAST REQUEST

SPEAKING AT a function in the Capital to mark 150 years of India Meteorological Department (IMD), Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar said in a lighter vein that he is looking forward to the day when the IMD would be able to "predict the weather condition of the two Houses of Parliament for the presiding officers". "I am pretty sure you will find a way out," he quipped amid a roar of laughter from the other guests on the dais, including Earth Sciences Minister Kiren Rijiju.

BUDGET BUZZ

WITH THE upcoming Pran pratishtha at Ayodhya's Ram temple dominating the news, officials from the Press Information Bureau have been tasked with creating a buzz on social media around the upcoming interim budget, to be presented on February 1. All state PIBs have been asked to put up coordinated posts. This was reiterated by PIB principal DG Manish Desai on Monday morning after only four states – Tripura, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Gujarat – put up posts in regional languages on X. Posts highlighting budget announcements from previous years started trickling in from other states later in the day.

CONMAN ALERT

THE NATIONAL Medical Commission recently issued a public notice stating that someone had been impersonating its chairman Dr BN Gangadhar over the phone. The matter first came to the notice of officials of the commission when representatives of colleges who knew the chairman informed that they had received a call from a number stating that there were deficiencies in their registration. Though a police complaint was lodged immediately, the number continued to be used by the impersonator even a month later, prompting the commission to issue the notice. The number shows up as 'Chairman NMC' on the caller identification app Truecaller.

Rahul, Uddhav were set to meet and discuss Deora seat: Chennithala



Cong leader Ramesh Chennithala

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 15

A DAY after the resignation of former Lok Sabha MP Milind Deora from the Congress, allegedly for denying him a ticket from Mumbai South constituency, the party on Monday clarified that seat sharing distribution in Mumbai was not final which was conveyed to Deora.

Ramesh Chennithala, the AIIC-in-charge for Maharashtra, told *The Indian Express* he had personally spoken to Deora. "I had specifically told him the seat sharing for Mumbai was not final and he should not make any wrong decision in haste. He was also told that Uddhav Thackeray and Rahul Gandhi were to have a special discussion on the Mumbai South seat before finalising the candidate. He did not wait because it seemed he had made

Sena row: Shinde's camp goes to HC, Uddhav's to SC challenging Speaker's decision on MLAs

VALLABHO OZARKAR & OMKAR GOKHALE
MUMBAI, JANUARY 15

DAYS AFTER Maharashtra Assembly Speaker Rahul Narwekar gave his decision to dismiss disqualification petitions filed against 54 Sena MLAs by one another and recognised the Chief minister Eknath Shinde-led faction as the real Shiv Sena, the Uddhav faction and Shinde Sena on Monday approached the Supreme Court and Bombay High Court respectively against Narwekar's decision.

While Bharat Gogawale, chief whip of the Shinde Sena, on Monday approached the Bombay HC challenging the January 10 decision of the state speaker, the Sena (UBT) moved the SC against the Speaker's decision to not disqualify the Shinde-led Sena MLAs. Through its plea, the Sena (UBT) also challenged the Speaker's decision to recognise Shinde faction as the real party and Bharat

Gogawale as Sena whip.

Stating that the order was patently unlawful and perverse in nature, Sena (UBT), through the petition sought a provisional stay on the speaker's order, an interim relief by restraining Shinde faction MLAs from attending the state legislative assembly, and to suspend their membership for as long as the current petition was pending before the SC. It sought an interim relief to restrain the Shinde faction whip or any other leader from issuing any directions to the group of Shiv Sena (UBT) MLAs to avoid being forced to follow Gogawale or any other leader from the ruling Sena faction.

Moreover, the Sena (UBT) sought interim relief to restrain Shinde faction MLAs from attending the Assembly and to suspend their Assembly membership during pendency of the present petitions.

"Grant interim relief restraining the respondents, either through Sh. Bharat Gogawale or any other person, from issuing directions to the group of Shiv Sena MLAs led by Sh. Uddhav Thackeray; and Pass such other/further order(s) as this



Eknath Shinde, Uddhav Thackeray. File

Maharashtra Legislative Assembly during pendency of the present petitions," the petition said.

In order to avoid being forced to follow Bharat Gogawale or another leader, the Sena (UBT) urged the apex court to pass restraining orders to the Shinde faction whip or any other leader from issuing any directions to the group of Sena (UBT) MLAs. "Grant interim relief restraining the respondents, either through Sh. Bharat Gogawale or any other person, from issuing directions to the group of Shiv Sena MLAs led by Sh. Uddhav Thackeray; and Pass such other/further order(s) as this

Hon'ble Court may deem fit and proper in the interest of justice," the petition stated.

Meanwhile, the Shinde Sena moved the Bombay High Court as well against the order. Gogawale claimed that the Speaker's decision was "arbitrary, unconstitutional and illegal" and he failed to consider that MLAs from Sena (UBT) had voluntarily given up membership of the party. He said the Speaker failed to consider material on record, therefore the order of not disqualifying the Sena (UBT) MLAs was "bad in law" and should be quashed and set aside.

Narwekar, in his January 10 verdict, had held that as the Shinde faction was held to be the "real Shiv Sena" when the rival factions emerged, Sunil Prabhu (representing the Uddhav faction) "ceased to be the duly authorised whip from June 21, 2022" and Gogawale was validly appointed chief whip. The Shinde faction had filed counter petitions seeking to disqualify the Uddhav Sena MLAs. Dismissing the plea, the Speaker

had held that the grounds taken by them that the MLAs had "voluntarily given up" the party's membership was "allegation" and no material was provided to substantiate it. He had also held that the whip was not duly served to the Sena (UBT) faction. Narwekar held the whip issued by Gogawale on July 3 "didn't contain words indicating that the said Whip, if not followed, would result in disqualification, so Gogawale's plea must be rejected."

The Shinde Sena sought to set aside the Speaker's order in favour of Sena (UBT) and declare that members of the Uddhav faction are disqualified. The next date for hearing in Gogawale's plea is January 22. However, the same may be mentioned for urgent hearing earlier. On January 11, Maharashtra Speaker Rahul Narwekar declared the faction led by CM Shinde was "the real political party". Narwekar had also dismissed all 34 petitions, filed by both sides, seeking disqualification of 54 MLAs of the two factions.

MEETS RAISI, AMIR-ABDOLLAHIAN



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar meets with his Iran counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian in Tehran. Reuters

Jaishankar in Iran, discusses Chabahar, Red Sea attacks

Says attacks on ships in India's vicinity of grave concern to world community

DIVYAA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar on Monday said attacks on ships in the vicinity of India is a matter of "grave concern" to the international community and such threats have a direct bearing on India's energy and economic interest, underlining that this "fraught situation" is not to the benefit of any party.

As part of his two-day visit to Iran, Jaishankar called upon President Ebrahim Raisi and conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's greetings, also seeking Raisi's guidance on "further development of ties" between the two nations.

Jaishankar, who is visiting Iran in the middle of an escalating West Asian conflict and challenging situations in the Red Sea, also had meetings with his Iranian counterpart Hossein Amir-Abdollahian, Secretary of the National Security Council Ali Akbar Ahmadian, and Minister of Roads and Urban Development Mehrdad Baqrash, with whom he discussed cooperation on the strategically vital Chabahar port.

"Conveyed the greetings of PM Narendra Modi. Expressed condolences over the Kerman attack," Jaishankar posted on X after his meeting with Raisi, adding, "Apprised him of my productive discussions with the Iranian Ministers. Value his guidance for further development of ties."

Modi and Raisi recently met in Johannesburg, and have been in frequent touch through letters and phone.

In Tehran, Jaishankar, while reiterating India's "uncompromising position against terrorism in all forms and manifestations", also spoke about "the deeply concerning situation in Gaza", which he said, figured during his discussions with Amir-Abdollahian, among other things.

Speaking at a joint press statement with Iranian foreign affairs minister, Jaishankar said, "We exchanged perspectives

and assessments on certain regional and global issues and developments. Both of us are concerned about the recent events in West Asia, and we emphasised the importance of preventing further escalation of violence and hostilities."

"India has a long-standing and uncompromising position against terrorism in all forms and manifestations. This remains so very much. At the same time, we strongly believe that it is imperative to avoid loss of civilian life in any conflict situation," he said.

"I stressed on the need for all parties to avoid provocative and escalatory actions, and to facilitate movement towards dialogue and diplomacy," he said during the press statement.

He also spoke about threats to maritime shipping in the region and stressed that it's important that this issue is "speedily addressed", in an apparent reference to targeting of merchant vessels in the Red Sea by Iranian-backed Yemen's Houthi rebels.

"We have even seen some attacks in the vicinity of India. This is a matter of great concern to the international community. Obviously, it also has a direct bearing on India's energy and economic interests. This fraught situation is not to the benefit of any party and this must be clearly recognised," he said.

Talking about discussions on the Gaza situation, he said, "The loss of civilian lives, especially that of women and children, was our primary focus. There is a visible humanitarian crisis that needs to be addressed and the creation of sustainable humanitarian corridors is the need of the day. We welcome the international community's efforts in that direction. India has delivered shipments of relief material to Gaza and contributed to the UNRWA," the minister said.

Jaishankar began his engagements in Iran on Monday by meeting Bazrash after which the two sides reached a final agreement to develop Chabahar port in southeastern Iran.

PM RELEASES FIRST INSTALMENT UNDER TRIBAL WELFARE SCHEME

Story of Ram is not possible without welfare of poor, deprived, says Modi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

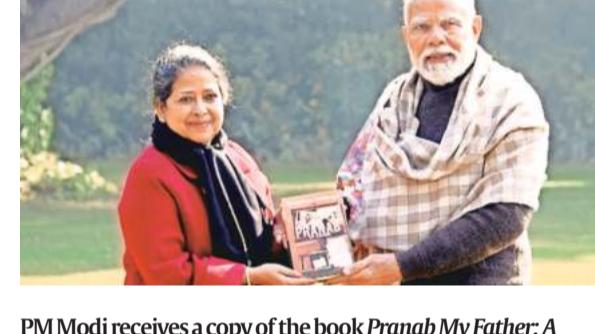
ASSERTING THAT the "story of Ram" is not possible without the welfare of the poor, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said four crore houses have been built for them in the last 10 years.

After releasing the first instalment of Rs 540 crore welfare funds to one lakh beneficiaries of Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana – Gramin (PMAY-G) under Pradhan Mantri Janjati Adivasi Nyaya Maha Abhiyan (PM-JANMAN) via videoconferencing, Modi referred to the upcoming Ram temple inauguration in Ayodhya on January 22.

"On the one hand, Diwali is being celebrated in Ayodhya, and on the other hand one lakh people from the extremely backward tribal community are also celebrating Diwali," the PM said as he mentioned the transfer of funds into the bank accounts of the Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups (PVTGs) for the construction of pucca houses.

Modi said the story of Ram (Ram Katha) is not possible without the welfare of the poor.

"Treta mein Raja Ram ki katha ho ya aaj ki Ram katha, bina gareeb, bina vanchit, bina vanavasi bhai-



PM Modi receives a copy of the book *Pranab My Father: A Daughter Remembers* from Sharmista Mukherjee in Delhi. PTI

bahan ke kalyaan ke sambhav hi nahin hai. (Be it the story of Raja Ram in Treta Yug or the story of Ram today, it is not possible without the welfare of the poor, the deprived, and the forest-dwelling brothers and sisters), Modi said.

"We are continuously working with this thought. We dedicated 10 years to the poor. In 10 years, we have built four crore permanent houses for the poor," he said.

"Modi worships and reaches out to those who were never cared for," he said.

Speaking on PM-JANMAN, Modi said that in two months, 80,000 Ayushman Bharat cards have been distributed, roughly 30,000 farmers from extremely

backward tribal communities have been linked to the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, and bank accounts of 40,000 such beneficiaries have been opened.

The PM said that more than 30,000 underprivileged people have been given Kisan Credit Cards, and about 11,000 have been given land leases under the Forest Rights Act during the PM-JANMAN campaign. He said the government plans to spend more than Rs 23,000 crore on the PM-JANMAN campaign.

On providing pucca houses to the PVTGs, the PM said money has been transferred directly to the accounts of the tribal beneficiaries. They will get up to Rs 2.5 lakh for a pucca house, he said.

LESS THAN two weeks after his roadshow and rally in Thrissur, where he kicked off the BJP's Lok Sabha campaign in Kerala, PM Narendra Modi will be back for a two-day visit starting Tuesday as part of which he will review booth-level preparations and interact with local leaders for the polls two months from now.

This is the first time that the PM is holding an event for booth-level workers in Kerala. It indicates that the BJP is actively attempting to strengthen its cadre as it looks to break its jinx in the southern state.

The party has never won a Lok Sabha seat in Kerala, which has swung between the Left and the Congress so far. The only time it won an Assembly seat was in 2016, but it lost this too to CPI(M) in 2021. Modi is slated to reach Kochi on Tuesday evening and hold a roadshow. **FULL REPORT**
www.indianexpress.com

Research papers to views on reform: 1-nation, 1-poll panel gets thousands of suggestions in over a week

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

IN THE 10 days since it sought comments from the public, the 'One Nation One Election' committee has received thousands of suggestions and feedback regarding simultaneous elections, with some respondents sending in academic research papers,

some sharing their views on all possible electoral reforms and some opposing the idea. *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The high-level committee had invited suggestions from the public through a public notice published on January 5, with Monday (January 15) being the last date for submissions.

According to sources, around 8,000 emails and submissions of

feedback through the committee's website had been received as of the end of last week. The final number was expected to increase, they said, adding that several submissions include those who have sent lengthy research papers on the topic and some who have given their opinion on other potential electoral reforms.

Among those who responded to the committee was the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), which in its letter on Monday wrote that simultaneous elections would lead to "artificially cutting short or extending the terms of elected assemblies which strikes at the root of Parliamentary democracy". Opposing the proposal, AIMIM chief and MP Asaduddin Owaisi also wrote to the committee on Monday.

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What's wrong in an Opp party criticising the ruling side?

You should, but you have to be constructive and cannot be blindly critical. We can be critical during elections, which is once in five years. I don't think voters appreciate continuous criticism. They want a party that gives suggestions as well.

When did you take the final decision to quit on day of Rahul yatra launch...

It was ridiculous, reinforced belief I was doing right thing'

then it raises a serious concern.

Were you told you won't be fielded from Mumbai South in 2024 polls?

No. But I was not given a clear path ahead. It is not about ticket only. I was raising the issue on behalf of the party organisation.

Because Delhi leadership's view was that the UBT was eating us up by becoming something like AAP or TMC in our state (Maharashtra). I said, Yes! You are right. That is UBT's ultimate aim. If Delhi thought this, then I said that we should be smart while negotiating. Who are they to tell us to start from zero? They do not have their house in order.

But our surrender shows that the party as an organisation has lost its path. I don't want to be critical of one person. But it has lost touch with reality, cultural

SENSEX: 73,327.94 ▲ 759.49 (1.05%) NIFTY: 22,097.45 ▲ 202.90 (0.93%) NIKKEI: 35,901.79 ▲ 324.68 HANG SENG: 16,216.33 ▼ 28.25 FTSE: 7,585.19 ▼ 39.74 DAX: 16,621.73 ▼ 82.83



GOLD

₹63,550



USD RATE

₹82.89



OIL

\$79.32



SILVER

₹76,700

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 12

International market data till 1900 IST

INDIA'S GOODS EXPORTS IN DECEMBER ROSE 1 PER CENT

Trade deficit hits 3-mth low; easing commodity prices reduce import bill

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

DRIVEN BY A rise in global demand for engineering and electronic products, India's goods exports in December rose 1 per cent while the trade deficit narrowed to a three month low due to lower imports on the back of easing commodity prices, official data released by the commerce and industry ministry on Monday showed.

This is only the third instance in the ongoing financial year when the monthly goods exports have risen compared to last year as weak demand from the western countries and property crisis in China slowed global demand.

"India's merchandise trade deficit printed at \$19.8 billion in December 2023, lower than ICRA's estimate of \$22.7 billion, owing to a better-than-expected performance of exports in the month. Given this, we expect the Current Account Deficit (CAD) to print at \$16-18 billion in Q3 FY2024, lower than our earlier estimate of over \$20 billion, al-



Services exports registered a steep fall of over 10% to \$27.88 billion in December compared to \$31.19 billion last year. File

beit nearly twice the reading seen in Q2 FY 2024," Aditi Nayar, Chief Economist, Head Research and Outreach, ICRA Ltd said.

However, services exports registered a steep fall of over 10 per cent to \$27.88 billion in December compared to \$31.19 billion last year. This comes amid a decline in fresh export orders for Indian services firms amid demand slowdown from regions like Australia, Canada, Europe, West Asia and South America. As

per HSBC India Services Purchasing Managers' Index, fresh export orders for Indian services firms grew at the slowest pace in December since June 2023.

"There has been a major decline in the goods trade deficit. We are beating global trends and we hope to do the same in the last quarter of the ongoing financial year. But we are waiting and watching what is happening in the Red Sea region. There will be

some negative impact because of the disruption and we will assess the impact next month," commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said during the press briefing.

Official data showed that goods exports jumped nearly 1 per cent to \$38.45 billion in December from \$38.05 billion compared to last year. Meanwhile imports slipped 4.85 per cent to \$58.25 billion from \$61.22 billion, taking the trade deficit to a three month low of \$19.8 billion.

While engineering exports jumped 10.19 per cent, electronic exports surged 14.41 per cent and iron ore exports jumped a sharp 265.64 per cent, petroleum products exports slipped 17.71 per cent, textile exports declined 12.56 per cent and leather exports declined 10.84 per cent.

Gold imports in December jumped by a sharp 156.47 per cent to \$3.03 billion compared to \$1.18 billion in the year ago period.

Director General of Foreign Trade Santosh Sarangi said that Increase in gold imports and gems and jewellery exports is

partly explained by import of gold using advance authorisation scheme, doing value addition and re-exporting gold jewellery.

"Gold is coming through the advance authorisation route, largely gold bars, which is then going out after conversion into jewellery. In some cases they are taking advantage of the rupee Vostro account, RBI had allowed in July 2022," he said, adding that most of such imports are from the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

However, he clarified that such a rise in imports could have happened with or without a trade deal between India and UAE.

"For engineering exporters, it has been quite a challenging time. Tensions in Europe and now in West Asia have caused a fair amount of downside risks. There are projections that global growth would slow down in 2024, and issues like high interest rate and low consumer spending would continue to bite this year as well," Engineering Export Promotion Council of India (EEPC) India Chairman Arun Kumar Garodia said.

The RED Sea shipping crisis could impact India's exports to Europe the most as about 80 per cent of the outbound shipments to Europe takes place through the Red Sea region, the commerce and industry ministry said on Monday.

This assumes significance as India's goods exports to the European Union (EU) have already slowed due to weakening demand in the backdrop of the Russia-Ukraine war. The EU contributes to over 15 per cent of India's total goods exports.

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The ministry said that there has been an increase in attacks on commercial shipping vessels travelling through the lower Red Sea since mid-November and 80 per cent of India's merchandise trade with Europe passes via Red Sea.

"The cost is increasing due



The EU contributes to 15% of India's goods exports. File

to the Red Sea disruption. But ultimately it will depend on demand. The US exports are also through the Suez route.

Transport charges are surging. An additional congestion surcharge is also being charged. But if the demand is robust the ships will go.

If they are not time sensitive products they will move. It is a global issue. Whole of commodity moves from the eastern to the western part through the Red Sea route," commerce secretary Sunil Barthwal said at a press briefing.

The ministry said that the Red Sea region is vital for 30 per cent of global container traffic

and 12 per cent of global trade and about 95 per cent of vessels have rerouted around the Cape of Good Hope, adding 4000 to 6000 nautical miles and 14 to 20 days to journeys.

"Consignment has been put on hold due to high freight and surcharges (as per PCRS). The sailing of most of the ships have been impacted and generally postponed by 2-3 weeks as the incoming ships, with longer routes, are delayed. As of now, container availability has not been seen as an issue as adequate empties are available. However, the combined impact of higher freight costs, insurance premiums, and longer transit times could make imported goods significantly more expensive," the ministry said.

Indian shipments of low value products such as agriculture and textiles to Europe are primarily expected to face the impact of disruption in the Red Sea region.

Amid deepening tensions in the West Asia region, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Sunday started his two day visit.

FULL REPORT ON

www.indianexpress.com

India's multidimensional poverty rate down to 11.28% in 2022-23 from 29.17% in 2013-14

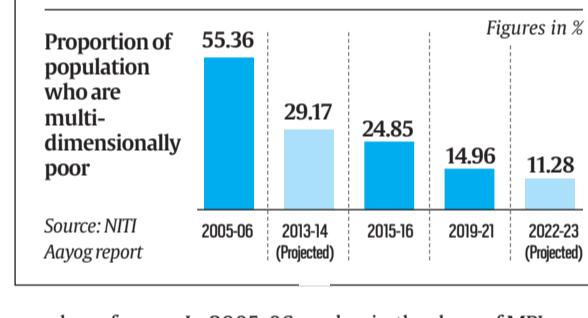
AGGAM WALIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

THE SHARE of India's population living in multidimensional poverty is estimated to have fallen to 11.28 per cent in 2022-23 from 29.17 per cent in 2013-14, according to a discussion paper released by NITI Aayog on Monday. In absolute numbers, NITI Aayog estimates a total of 24.82 crore people escaped multidimensional poverty in the last nine years.

States like Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan recorded the sharpest decline in the number of people classified as poor based on the Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI), which considers twelve different indicators of poverty included under three broad dimensions, namely health, education, and standard of living.

The discussion paper also notes that the severity of deprivation declined at a slightly lower rate between 2015-16 and 2019-21 compared to 2005-06 and 2013-14. Severity of deprivation measures deprivations the average multidimensionally poor person suffers from.

At the same time, reduction of deprivation was faster after 2015-16 in terms of reduction in share of MPI poor out of total population compared to the decade before, owing to a lesser



number of years. In 2005-06, the share of MPI poor in India's total population was 55.34 per cent. The discussion paper, which uses previously released MPI data based on National Family Health Survey (NFHS) as part of NFHS-5 data collected between 2019-21 was collected before the pandemic. BVR Subrahmanyam added that India is likely to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 1.2, which calls for reducing "at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions" much ahead of 2030.

Based on these three NFHS datasets, NITI Aayog estimated that the share of MPI poor in the years 2013-14 and 2022-23 with technical inputs from Oxford Policy and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The discussion paper was released by NITI Aayog Member Prof. Ramesh Chand in the presence of NITI Aayog CEO BVR Subrahmanyam. Prof. Chand noted that without the impact of the coronavirus pan-

demic, the share of MPI poor in 2022-23 would have been much lesser. The paper also notes that it "may not fully reflect the impact of Covid on the economy" as part of NFHS-5 data collected between 2019-21 was collected before the pandemic. BVR Subrahmanyam added that India is likely to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 1.2, which calls for reducing "at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions" much ahead of 2030.

As per the paper, indicators in the standard of living dimension showed highest levels of deprivation in 2005-06. For instance, 74.4 per cent of the population was deprived of cooking fuel in 2005-06, which fell to 58.47 per cent in 2015-16, and further to 43.9 per cent between

2019-21. Similarly, 70.92 per cent of the population was deprived of adequate sanitation facilities in 2005-06, which reduced to 51.88 per cent in 2015-16, and further to 30.93 per cent between 2019-21. The sharpest decline between two periods was recorded by the indicator measuring deprivation of access to bank accounts, which fell to 9.66 per cent in 2013-14 from 58.11 per cent in 2005-06.

According to the estimated share of MPI poor in 2013-14 and 2022-23, Bihar recorded a 53 per cent drop from 56.3 per cent share of MPI poor in 2013-14 to 26.59 per cent in 2022-23. Jharkhand also recorded a 50 per cent drop from 47.13 per cent share of MPI poor to 23.34 per cent. Uttar Pradesh, which had a lesser share of MPI poor in 2022-23 than Bihar, Jharkhand, and Meghalaya, recorded a decline to 17.4 per cent from 42.59 per cent in 2013-14.

India's definition of multidimensional poverty is measured using twelve indicators including nutrition, child & adolescent mortality, maternal health, years of schooling, school attendance, drinking water, electricity, housing, and assets. MPI seeks to measure poverty in a more holistic manner as opposed to solely relying on income levels to assess deprivation.

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KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice

Tender No : SE/PHC/KKID/140_141/2023-24
Jal Jeevan Mission - CWSS to Kavilumpara and Maruthomkara in Kozhikode District 1. Construction of 11.00 LL GLSR cum Sump, Construction of 4.00 LL GLSR, Supplying and laying 300 mm Dia CWPW, 450mm Dia CWGM, & pump sets. Supplying & Laying 250m DI K9 Clear Water Gravity main from Chekkarakkara 4.00LL sump to 12.50LL OHSR & Construction of 12.50LL OHSR at Odanakode at Kavilumpara GP. EMD : Rs . 50,000,000,000.00, Tender Fee : ₹ 4,560+(297)GST, Last Date for submitting Tender : 05-02-2024 04:00 hrs. Phone : 0495-2371046, Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in, www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Superintending Engineer PH Circle Kozhikode

KWA-JB-GL-6-2074-2023-24

To maintain credibility, the SRO-FT should operate independently, free from the influence of any single member or group of members," RBI said.

The SRO-FT should maintain impartiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure unbiased oversight over its members, said the RBI

Fintech SRO should be development-oriented, independent: RBI draft

EN SECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 15

A SELF-regulatory organisation (SRO) in the fintech sector should operate independently and be development-oriented, actively contributing to the growth and evolution of the industry, according to a draft framework released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday.

An SRO is a non-governmental organisation that sets and enforces rules and standards relating to the conduct of entities in the industry (members) with the aim of protecting the customer and promoting ethics, equality, and professionalism.

In September last year, RBI had asked fintechs to establish an SRO themselves.

In the draft framework for recognising SROs for the fintech sector, RBI said a fintech SRO (SRO-FT) should maintain impartiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure unbiased oversight over its members.

RBI has sought feedback on the draft framework from various stakeholders by end of February 2024.

"To maintain credibility, the SRO-FT should operate independently, free from the influence of any single member or group of members," RBI said.

The SRO-FT should maintain impartiality, avoid conflicts of interest, and ensure unbiased oversight over its members, said the RBI

We, The Ahmednagar District Central Co-operative Bank Ltd. Ahmednagar; are inviting sealed tenders for leasing the below mentioned properties of Dr. B. B. Tanpure Sahakar Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. Shrivijayanagar, Tal. Rahuri, Dist. Ahmednagar. "Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest (SARFAESI) Act 2002". Bank has appointed Shri. N. K. Patil, General Manager of Bank as Authorized Officer of Dr. B. B. Tanpure Sahakar Sakhar Karkhana Ltd. Shrivijayanagar, Tal. Rahuri, Dist. Ahmednagar.

Advertising program is as follows : The terms of the tender as well as information will be available at Head Office of the Bank from dt. 16/01/2024 onwards.

Dates of Re Tender process are as follows :

SN	Particulars	Date
1	Tender Form Sale	16/01/2024 to 25/01/2024
2	Property Inspection Program	25/01/2024 to 29/01/2024
3	Last date for submission of tenders	30/01/2024
4	Date of ReTender Opening	Will be informed

SN	Name of Factory	Capacity MT	Minimum Expected Rent Amount	Details of Assets	Deposit Amount Rs.	Due on

</

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

POLITICS OF DIPLOMACY

Maldives reported deadline to remove Indian troops deserves Delhi's attention. But an outsize reaction must be avoided

SINCE THE ELECTION of Mohamed Muizzu as president, Maldives has undoubtedly been moving away from India and closer to China. The China-Maldives joint statement at the end of Muizzu's visit bears testimony to their bonhomie. The trip saw barely veiled references to India's "bullying". Then on Sunday, Ahmed Nazim, policy director at the Maldives President's office reportedly said that the "Maldivian delegation" at the first India-Maldives High-Level Core Group meeting "proposed the removal of Indian troops by March 15". The deadline did not find a mention in the official statements by the foreign offices of the two countries. The statement, coming as it does on the heels of the controversy over the juvenile remarks by Maldivian ministers about Prime Minister Modi's Lakshadweep visit, deserves attention. But an outsize reaction must be avoided.

Muizzu's turn to Beijing may seem like a decisive shift but it is of a piece with the political see-saw in Male, which has had an unfortunate effect on the country's external orientation. Muizzu's predecessor, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, was seen as being pro-India and the current president ran on an "India out" campaign. The withdrawal of Indian troops from the country was a poll promise, more political than strategic – India reportedly has less than 90 soldiers in Maldives. Solih's predecessor Abdulla Yameen tilted towards Beijing. The fact that India plays a significant role in Maldivian politics should not be surprising. Militarily, economically and strategically, India looms large over its neighbours. Some aspects of India's internal politics – expansionist rhetoric, conflating religion and illegal migration during polls – too can make many in the neighbourhood uncomfortable and be used to whip up sentiments by those seeking power. Social media jingoism and calls for boycotting a smaller neighbour do not help matters.

How should Delhi react to the Muizzu government's snubs? The answer is clear and was framed by External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday: "... politics is politics," he said and added that "it can't be guaranteed that every country will support or agree with India every time." Smaller countries like Maldives will do their best to leverage the rivalries among greater powers – in this case, India and China. What makes the current "India Out" push disturbing is the all-or-nothing approach. There seems to be little recognition of the realities of geography or convergent interests. The fact remains that Maldives is a mere 700 km from the Indian coast and over 6,000 km from China. From the tsunami in 2004 to the drinking water crisis a decade later, India was the first to rush to the Maldivians' aid. At the same time, China's strategic interests in the Indian Ocean make smaller littoral states perfect targets for Beijing's diplomatic outreach. Delhi must continue to engage with Male, as well as the people of Maldives. As the regional power, it need not be thin-skinned.

A DREARY WINTER

Delhi's persistent pollution crisis frames the need for an all-year plan for clean air. So far, mechanisms are failing

DELHI'S PROBLEMS WITH poor air quality usually attract attention during late autumn, especially in the run-up to, and after, Diwali. That's when stubble burning is at its peak in the states neighbouring the NCR. However, data shows that good or even moderately satisfactory air eludes the capital's residents for most parts of the year, especially in winter. This season has been particularly harsh for the city's residents this year, bringing back memories of 2016 when the Delhi government was forced to implement the odd-even scheme of road rationing at the Supreme Court's directive. On Sunday, Delhi registered severe on the AQI register. The Commission for Air Quality Management (CAQM) – the Union government pollution monitoring agency set up in 2021 – has resorted to a familiar set of measures. It has brought back the ban on the construction and BS-III petrol and BS-IV diesel four-wheelers. These measures might provide temporary relief. But from the history of the NCR's pollution crisis, one thing is clear – Delhi, and most Indian cities, need an all year action plan to improve air quality.

There is now considerable information on the variables linked to the capital's pollution. But data is only an enabler – it can facilitate action. The CAQM is mandated to do that. But the agency has functioned more like a regulator whose primary responsibility is to implement the Graded Action Response Plan, which comes into play when bad air becomes an emergency. At times, the Commission has taken stock of measures to control dust in the capital. It needs to do more. CAQM hasn't, for instance, developed a synergy between the different bodies whose work is crucial to ensure that residents in the capital and its neighbourhood breathe clean air – the Delhi government, CPCB, the city's transport department and emission monitoring outfits in the NCR.

In 2019, the government launched the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP) to reduce pollution by 20-30 per cent by 2024 compared to 2017. In 2022, the programme's goalposts were shifted – 40 per cent reduction in pollution by 2026. Most independent studies show that progress under NCAP has been slow and at best incremental. Last month, the Centre told Parliament that cities in Delhi-NCR have utilised less than 40 per cent of the funds allocated to curb air pollution. The omissions are clearly at multiple levels. Measures to improve matters, even when they have been made, are not showing results.

REBEL WITH A RAGA

Prabha Atre questioned tradition, but also explored it through her music

IN THE EARLY 1970s, when the world of Hindustani classical music was swept by the Kishori Amonkar wave, an HMV record, *Night Melodies* by Prabha Atre, a 43-year-old singer from Pune, made a splash. Comprising three presentations – Raag Maru Bihag, Raag Kalavati and a thumri in Mishra Khamaj – that cut across gharanas, the record struck a chord with classical music enthusiasts across the country. The *pièce de résistance* was a *bandish* in Raag Kalavati, *Tan man dhan*, which has become one of the raga's most popular renditions – much like Kishori Amonkar's stellar presentation of another specimen of night music, Raag Bhooth.

Atre, the Kirana gharana doyenne and among the more progressive Hindustani classical music artistes passed away in Pune at 91, just before she was to leave for Mumbai for a concert. She spent her life not just upholding the classical tradition but also questioning it. Describing the idea of singing a raga at a particular time as redundant, Atre didn't want to live in the inwardly world of *sadhana* alone. *Riyaaz* mattered, but so did her audience. She also liked delineating a raga through the use of *sargam*, considered *declassé* in the serious world of Hindustani khayal *gayaki* – also the topic of her PhD thesis.

After questioning the system – like Amonkar and Kumar Gandharva – Atre decided to speak about it through her books, conversations, performances and lectures, riling many musicians and critics. She was called a rebel. Born to teacher parents, with no musicians or interest in music in the family, Atre's singing talent was discovered by her father's friend, who took her to Mumbai to learn from Sureshbhai Mane, Ustad Abdul Karim Khan's son. After his unforeseen death, his sister, the legendary Hirabai Barodekar took over. As a science and law graduate, Atre had a long stint with the AIR, before heading the SNDT University's music department, where she flipped the music curriculum, allowing students to explore various genres. "Why should they stick to only classical music," she'd ask.



SHAILAJA TETALI AND USHA RANI POLI

LAST WEEK, THIS newspaper reported ('Govt set to roll our vaccine drive to fight cervical cancer', IE, January 12) that the government is planning to include cervical cancer vaccine in the universal immunisation programme; an inoculation campaign targeted at girls in the nine to 14 age group is likely to commence this year. This is a positive development.

Cervical cancer is the second-most common cancer among women in India, mostly affecting the middle-aged. With 1,23,907 new cases and 77,348 deaths in the year 2022, India contributed to one-fifth of the global burden. The main cause is the presence of persistent high-risk type of Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) infection along with co-factors like low socioeconomic conditions, low immunity status, other genital infections, smoking etc, that facilitate initiation and progression to cancer. Cervical cancer is preventable and curable if detected early.

Most cervical cancer and precancer cases can be detected in the reproductive age group. Cervical cancer has a long pre-invasive phase that lasts for 10–15 years. This provides a window of opportunity to detect and treat the neoplasia in pre-invasive stages by simple outpatient treatment modalities, preceded by early detection of cancers. When cervical cancer is detected and managed at an early stage, it is found to have over 93 per cent cure rate. Cervical cancer can be prevented through HPV vaccination of girls. Women can be screened for pre-cancers and treatment can be initiated. Lack of awareness, fear of cancer, early symptoms of disease not being evident, and women not being screened are the reasons that detection of the disease happens in advanced stages, resulting in high mortality.

This was confirmed through findings from a population-based cross-sectional study that was conducted by the Indian Institute of Public Health-IIPH Hyderabad in 2021 to evaluate cancer-care pathways in five districts of Andhra Pradesh. It showed that for 68 per cent of patients, the first point of contact after having cancer symptoms was traditional healers and only 3 per cent had received HPV vaccination. Similarly, for Telangana, the projected increase in the number of cancer cases and the workload for can-

A jab in time

Cervical cancer vaccine drive must be accompanied by quality treatment, preventive and palliative care

cer care using radiation, surgery and chemotherapy treatments are estimated (by IIPH researchers) to increase by about 28 per cent in the next decade. This is in addition to the existing leakages from "screened-positive" to the "diagnosis confirmation" step in the patient journey funnel for cancer care. The estimated patient leakage varied from around 70-90 per cent from "screened-positive" till "treatment completion".

Cervical cancer is the only non-communicable disease that can be eliminated, with the potential to make significant contributions to Sustainable Development Goal 3.4 of reducing premature deaths by one third by 2030. The WHO advocates for interventions that are simple, feasible, scalable and are already showing initial successes in many low or middle income countries (LMICs). WHO's global strategy incorporates clear targets and means of accountability, along three strategic pillars – widespread HPV vaccination, screening, and early diagnosis and treatment of cervical pre-cancer and cancer. The proposed targets are 90 per cent girls fully vaccinated by 15 years of age with two doses of HPV vaccine; 70 per cent women screened with a high-performance test at 35 and 45 years of age; and 90 per cent of women with cervical pre-cancer and cancer receiving treatment, including palliative care, to achieve a goal of less than four cases per 1,00,000 women.

The Government of India has implemented cancer screening by trained nurses even in primary health centres under the National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke – the NPCDCS programme. Screening tools like visual screening tests and HPV tests are simple and easily available. Even if any precancerous abnormality is detected, it can be treated by simple, painless outpatient treatment methods. Evidence-based management algorithms are in place for guidance. Similarly increased uptake of the HPV vaccine by eligible girls will prevent the disease. Indigenous HPV test kits and HPV vaccines can be a boon for resource-scarce settings, enabling scaling up of activities further. The promising new developments like single dose HPV vaccination, self-sampling for HPV

testing, artificial intelligence technologies for easy and accurate diagnosis and treatment will further accelerate the future potential in elimination of cervical cancer even in LMICs. However, there is an urgent need to strengthen population-level awareness on causes as well as prevention methods for cervical cancer, encourage the uptake of HPV vaccine, devise strategies to overcome vaccine hesitancy, and encourage age-appropriate screening, especially using HPV testing. This must be combined with capacity building for scaling up pre-cancer treatment processes, smooth referral linkages, ensuring quality cancer treatment and palliative care services as required, and ultimately strengthening the health systems to be prepared to cater the entire gamut of services for cervical cancer.

Efforts will have to be consistent to ensure screening programmes, integrating latest technology for accurate and early diagnosis. This should be coupled with strengthening cancer registries both at the population level and hospital based, with improved referral linkages. Mechanisms to reduce the financial burden for care should be strengthened. Along with all these, it is essential to build and strengthen partnerships at the primary, secondary, tertiary hospital level with NGOs working in communities, innovators striving to develop tests at individual level, and public health professionals.

It is, therefore, vital to connect all the dots in patients' care pathways – swiftness in diagnosis and referral for treatment, improving quality of care, while incorporating digital technologies and easy communication. It will be useful to issue followup reminders and linking palliative care early on, which is essential to strengthen the efforts towards elimination. Collaborations and partnerships in latest research and adopting successful models in community outreach and care pathways are equally crucial to enable us to march towards eliminating cervical cancer.

Tetali is Additional Professor, Dean-Research and Policy Support, Indian Institute of Public Health Hyderabad and Usha Rani Poli is Senior Consultant Gynec Oncologist, Hyderabad



VRINDA SHUKLA

UTTAR PRADESH HAS a new feather in its cap. At 70.8 per cent, it has registered the highest conviction rate in the country in cases of crimes against women in 2022, as per the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau. This is the result of remarkable political support, strong administrative intent and meticulous monitoring of the state's ambitious flagship programme – Mission Shakti.

Mission Shakti was launched in October 2020 to make improvements to women's safety, dignity and empowerment in a state that has been infamous for its feudal mindset towards women and the consequent violence and exploitation faced by them. It is based on two founding pillars. The first involves a concerted attempt to ensure that the schemes and benefits rolled out by various departments for the upliftment and empowerment of women reaches the last mile. The second promotes women's safety by ensuring easy access to law enforcement services, cracking down on crimes against women, and getting criminals punished in a time-bound manner. In pursuit of the second objective, special women's help desks have been operationalised at all 1,500-plus police stations in the state, supervised 24/7 by women police personnel. A culture of prompt registration of FIRs, time-bound investigations and maximising convictions has been carefully cultivated over the last four years. As a result, 13,099 convictions were awarded in UP in 2022 for crimes against women, which alone account for more than one-third of the total 37,551 convictions na-

JUSTICE ON THE UP

Uttar Pradesh has made great strides in conviction rates for crimes against women

The magnitude of the achievement, thus recorded, is evident from the comparative conviction statistics of large states with a similarly heavy crime load.

Rajasthan at 37.2 per cent, Maharashtra at 11.2 per cent and West Bengal at 8.9 per cent pale in comparison to UP's nearly 71 per cent conviction rate. There is every reason to rejoice in this spectacular achievement of the UP government.

This reflects a remarkable change in the work culture and accountability of the criminal justice system in the state.

The first and most significant change involves communicating, in no uncertain terms, that the work of the police does not end with investigation and chargesheets but with the actual conviction. The police has taken a lead in building synergies with prosecution officers and the judiciary. Dedicated monitoring cells have been constituted in all districts to pursue trials, to personally connect with the most important prosecution witnesses and to facilitate their appearance on the date of the hearing. The hitherto under-supervised public prosecutors and ad hoc government counsels have also started feeling the heat of accountability. This has been achieved through scaled-up monitoring at all levels creating a charged professional atmosphere.

Forensic science laboratories, a weak link in the justice delivery system, have been infused with a new energy. Sensitive and conviction-worthy cases of crimes against women are being taken off the long waitlist for DNA match or viscera analysis for priority testing. The state is frantically working on expanding the network of forensic labs to relieve the pressure on existing infrastructure. The first forensic institute of the state – the Uttar Pradesh State Institute of Forensic Science, affiliated with the National Forensic Sciences University, Gujarat – has become operational to cater to the massive requirement of forensic experts for the growing number of labora-

tories and to institutionalise scientific-evidence-driven crime investigation.

As a result of these efforts, the number of convictions within a matter of days and weeks of the commission of the crime is consistently growing. Healthy competition among the districts in seeking maximum punishment in the minimum possible time, is being encouraged, with the top performers being felicitated at state-level ceremonies and in the press. It is noteworthy that the felicitation is reserved for the on-ground crusaders – the investigating officer, public prosecutor and constables pursuing the case in court. There is, thus, an overall attempt to not just demand accountability from the key components of the criminal justice system but to also inculcate in them a sense of ownership for the case concerned.

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There is every reason to rejoice in this spectacular achievement of the UP government. There is robust global research to support the belief that only a time-bound justice delivery system is a powerful deterrent against the commission of crimes against women.

The writer is an IPS officer serving as SP Bahraich, Uttar Pradesh. Views are personal



JANUARY 16, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

PM ON IMF LOAN

PRIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi announced the Centre's decision not to draw over \$1 billion available under the credit arrangement with the International Monetary Fund. In her broadcast on the completion of four years of government, she claimed vast improvement in the economic situation.

INDO-PAK TRADE

TWO SUB-COMMISSIONS ON trade and economic matters, set up under the Indo-Pakistan Joint Commission, began their deliberations.

The talks were held in a "cordial atmosphere" with both sides adopting a "business-like approach" to the proposals for the promotion of cooperation between the two countries.

CLASHES IN J&K

VIOLENCE FLARED UP again in parts of Kashmir Valley and Jammu province as an aftermath of the clashes between the police and Congress(I) workers. A total of 25 people were injured. The clashes between Congress(I) supporters and the police were the result of processions taken out by the party to protest against the police firing at Bijbehara, PCC(I)

chief, Mufti Mohammad Sayeed's hometown.

OPPOSITION MEET

THE THREE-DAY CONCLAVE of the non-Congress (I) chief ministers and leaders, which concluded in Calcutta, decided to launch a mass struggle against the policies leading to escalating prices, the destitution of the people and the unemployment problem. Releasing the resolutions passed, West Bengal Chief Minister Jyoti Basu said all the 18 political parties resolved to fight against misrule and corruption leading to the authoritarian rule of Mrs Indira Gandhi.

THE IDEAS PAGE

In good hands

Army Chief's annual media interaction presented a mature assessment of security issues facing India, making room for pragmatic solutions



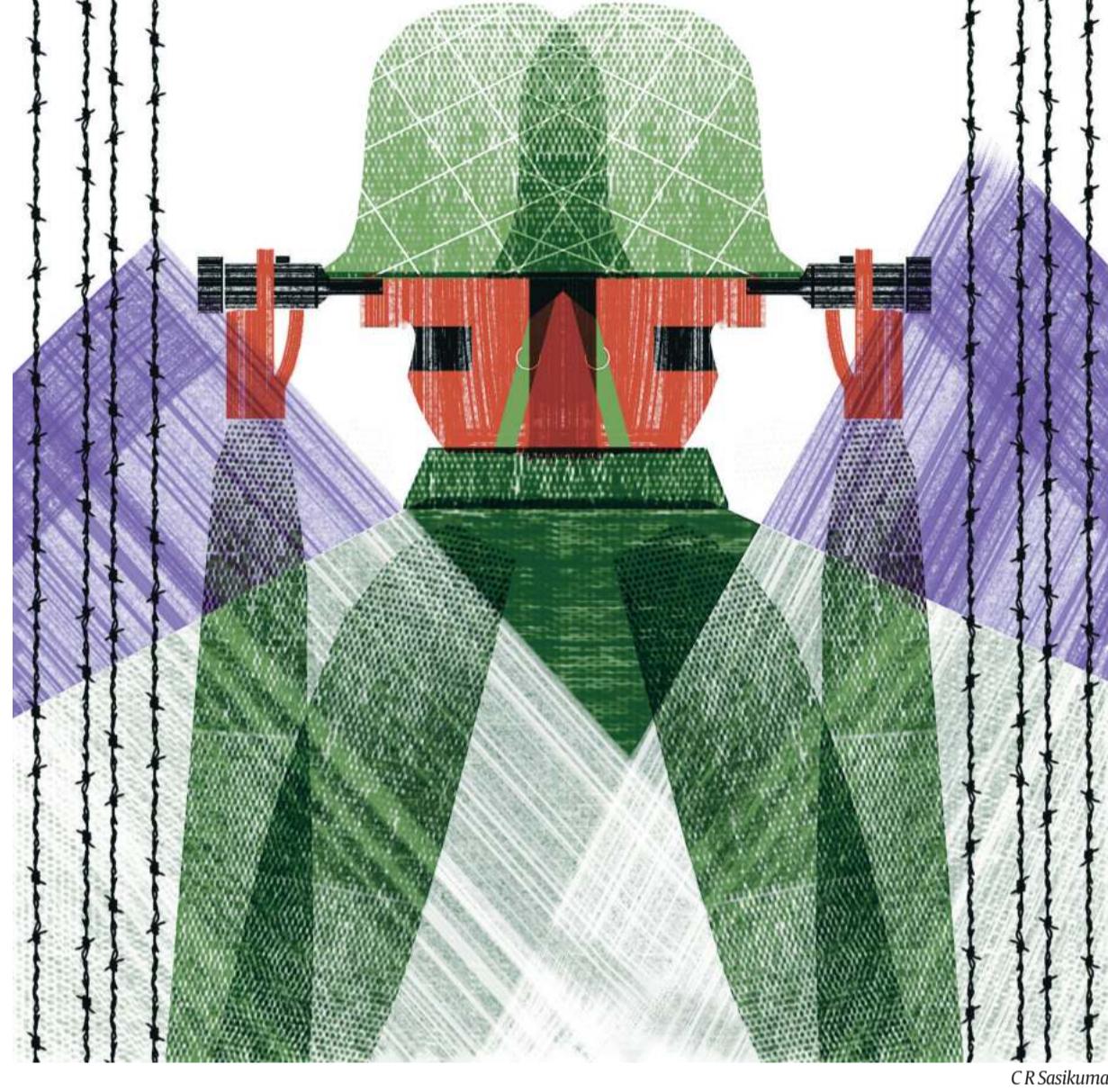
SYED ATA HASNAIN

EVERY YEAR, ON January 11, the Army Chief holds a media interaction and responds to media queries related to India's military strategic security issues, ranging from how borders were being handled against specific threats to internal security issues. The various aspects of modernisation, upgradation and procurement are, of course, inevitable. This year was General Manoj Pande's second and last media interaction of his tenure. He reflected upon a period which has been afflicted by conflict resurgence and instability in some areas while exuding full confidence about the state of the Army and its ability to deliver the nation's security needs. To his credit, the Chief was neither defensive nor in denial of the problem areas, articulating a mature assessment of various situations.

Even without prioritising, Manipur and J&K instantly come to mind. The Chief was emphatic in saying that in Manipur, the level of violence had decreased and that the Army was working with several central and state agencies to restore the situation. Yet, the fact that of the 5,000-odd small arms stolen from state police armories, only about 30 per cent of the weapons have been recovered, confirms the challenge before the Assam Rifles and the Army's III Corps. The situation remains volatile at the Indo-Myanmar border, too. That volatility adds complexity.

In addition, the Free Movement Regime (FMR) with Myanmar permits movement of border populations up to 16 km on either side of the border without visas; only permits are required. This, too, facilitates infiltration by undesirable and anti-national elements, along with smuggling of narcotics and contraband. The potential of negative situations remains high and the Chief expressed concern on the fact that only 20 Assam Rifles (AR) units are available for border sealing; others remain on the counter-insurgency (CI) grid and work in conjunction with other forces. What the Chief did not mention is the fact that AR units, by virtue of their near permanent deployment in the Northeast, are the best geared to handle the situation. This is one entity which can do with expansion, considering the scope for proliferation of security issues in the Northeast.

Complaints against their lack of neutrality and bias towards one community or the other are an inevitable part of CI operations, where efforts to counter an effective force such as AR will invariably be made. The Army has to resist this since the management of AR has always remained a contentious subject. The Manipur turbulence is likely to persist as ethnic battle lines are drawn up and remain even more complex than when the issue took centre stage in May 2023. Thus far, it has remained restricted to some states in the Northeast, but unless tackled robustly, has the potential to spread to various areas, bringing chaos across the vulnerable Northeast. It is good that PM Sheikh Hasina's electoral victory in Bangladesh ensures no interference from that quarter but something more permanent needs to be worked out to neutralise the potential of external support. The Chief's clarity is encouraging but this will need to be integrated with political and social narratives to take it to a successful end.



C R Sasikumar

The Army Chief was frank about the situation in J&K, terming it to be a concern. It's a welcome admission which in no way smacks of negativity. In fact, only if the threats are realistically assessed will there be more pragmatic solutions, all available in the Army's vast repertoire of experience. The attitude reflected by the Chief is indeed a welcome departure from the defensive and routine responses that sometimes emanate from professional quarters. It's refreshing to see admission by the Army's highest office that "there were tactical lessons to be learnt from the series of setbacks in the region, which claimed the lives of 20 soldiers in the past year in ambushes by terrorists, and that the Army is studying tactics employed by the adversaries in the area". The abysmal ratio of losses to achievements, perhaps one of the highest of the long J&K counter-proxy campaign, needs a fresh approach. General Pande's mature outlook and *raksha mantri*'s deep support for winning hearts and minds augur well for the coming years.

There is the entire gamut of issues of the northern borders with China along the LAC. In this context, General Pande stated, "Our operational preparedness in these areas continues to be of a very high level. The deployment is both robust and balanced... Currently, our attempt is to continue to talk to go back to the status quo ante which existed in the middle

Even without prioritising, Manipur and J&K instantly come to mind. The Chief was emphatic in saying that in Manipur, levels of violence had decreased and that the Army was working with several central and state agencies to restore the situation. Yet, the fact that of the 5,000-odd small arms stolen from state police armories, only about 30 per cent of the weapons have been recovered, confirms the challenge before the Assam Rifles and the Army's III Corps. The situation remains volatile at the Indo-Myanmar border, too.

of 2020. And once that happens, we can look at the larger issue of troop reduction". That is as good a message as any needed to give confidence to the political community and the larger public. What is clear is that the trust deficit is so deep that no dilution in deployment can be afforded at this juncture. While no danger of an impending war exists, tactical level differences can always manifest as misunderstandings. Any professional will tell you that change is unlikely unless there is a let-up in the international geopolitical situation, which currently exudes only mistrust among all key players. While China has attempted to coerce India, it has not succeeded, although it perceives it has put us on the defensive. India has kept its options open, without going overboard in any direction. What the Army Chief needs to do is to keep the Army in a high state of readiness, reorder force structuring for the optimum response to two-front threats and avert any tactical and sub-tactical triggers which can upset the apple cart.

The Chief must also prepare his force for the inevitable technology transformations and even for what may appear mundane – threats from climate change. With regard to the latter, not many will advise him but the wise need no push on issues which stare them in the face.

The writer, a member of the National Disaster Management Authority, is former corps commander of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Without good governance... it will be impossible to tackle the challenges the government currently faces... [they] will likely get worse, unless there is a dramatic shift in how our policymakers conduct their business. The ministers would do well to heed the prime minister's directives."

—THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

A tectonic shift

In 2024, the international order is changing. Days of readily granting market access as a reward for geopolitical alignment are over



MOHAMMED SOLIMAN

as a reward for geopolitical alignment.

In response to the perceived ineffective ness of multilateralism, a new trend of minilateralism has emerged. Minilateralism involves the formation of small groups of countries that share common interests and are willing to coordinate their actions on specific issues. Examples of minilateral arrangements include the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue (QUAD), AUKUS, I2U2, and the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor. Minilateralism offers several advantages over traditional multilateralism. It allows countries to focus on a narrower range of issues and make decisions more quickly and efficiently. It also provides a more flexible and agile framework for cooperation, as countries can join or leave minilateral arrangements as their interests dictate. However, minilateralism also has its drawbacks. It can lead to competition among minilateral groups, as countries try to advance their own interests at the expense of others. The proliferation of minilateralism could also create a fragmented international system, making it more difficult to address global challenges that require cooperation from a wide range of countries.

The year 2024 looms under the chilling shadow of interstate wars, cast long by Russia's invasion of Ukraine. It lays bare the international order's vulnerability to the unchecked ambitions of power, and ushers in a historic pivot: The return of an era where an increasing number of leaders believe in

using military power to achieve political goals, with consequences as dire as they are unpredictable for global security and stability. While the Russia-Ukraine war and the Israeli military campaign in Gaza capture headlines, simmering tensions across the globe threaten to erupt into renewed interstate conflict. In Venezuela, President Nicolás Maduro threatens to annex Guyana's resource-rich Essequibo region. Meanwhile, the Horn of Africa teeters on the brink after a deal between Ethiopia and Somaliland, which grants Addis Ababa access to the Red Sea while acknowledging the breakaway region's autonomy, sparking concerns about its implications for regional stability. In Myanmar, the military junta faces setbacks following a major offensive by rebel forces, raising anxieties about the potential spillover of the conflict into China due to their existing ties with some rebel groups. Finally, the unresolved dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan threatens to erupt into another round of conflict.

As the mid-2020s loom, the tectonic plates of global order are undergoing a dramatic shift. Resurgent nationalism, protectionism, minilateralism, and the spectre of renewed interstate wars paint a stark picture of a world teetering on the edge of a new era. In this post-post-Cold War era, the very pillars of the international order established in the aftermath of World War II are on the verge of fundamental reshaping. In this seismic upheaval, the most important question hangs heavy in the air: Can we reimagine a global order that transcends American dominance and charts a new course for the future?

The writer is a director at the Middle East Institute

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

VIGILANTE PROBLEM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'The moral police again' (IE, January 15). The growing instances of vigilante assaults on interfaith couples raise serious concerns in society. The issue with it is not just about targeting men or women; rather, it revolves around the freedom of choice that every individual should possess. As long as the relationships are not unlawful, assaulting someone and sharing videos of such incidents on social media is abhorrent and a misuse of technology and power. It is concerning that political parties often remain silent on these pressing issues, and vigilantes continue to roam freely without a sense of shame. This raises the question: will these misdeeds ever cease?

Dev Athawale, Amravati

A PARTISAN VOICE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A truth forsaken' (IE, January 15). Even if we accept (for the time being) that Dravidianism in the South is a product of the work done by Christian missionaries during colonial rule, it doesn't justify the portrayal of Dravidianism as anti-India. For a country as diverse as ours, the existence of multiple identities is only logical. The range of our identities as Indians, based on differences in religion, caste, class and other factors does not necessarily mean that any one person is somehow less Indian than another. Rather, like the different colours of a rainbow, our multiple identities merge to form a larger identity of us as Indian citizens.

Saurabh Dagade, New Delhi

Shubhada H, via email

Not a majoritarian message

Ram temple sets right India's civilisational history, reinforces its syncretic nature



SUDARSHAN RAMABADRANI AND GURU PRAKASH PASWAN

INDIA'S CIVILISATIONAL history has a unique vantage point. It contains examples of and lessons from individuals who hold contemporary relevance several thousand years after they have gone. Rama is one such character. The boycott by some leaders of the Opposition, particularly the Congress, of the Ram Temple Pran Pratishthan at Ayodhya betrays a parochial and closed mindset. It also shows their disconnect from India's people, its civilisation and culture.

What often inspires people is that Ram was anchored in Dharma, despite the tremendous and unexpected upheavals he faced. In Hindu culture, Dharma is defined as one's duty; besides, of course, the substratum of life. His life story has resonated not just in the common man's home in India but across the globe and has left an indelible impact. Safe to say, Ram is not an ideological obsession but gives hope to millions that if life is lived well, it can be a rewarding experience and a path to divinity. This is the fulcrum of Indian thought.

Ram is incredibly relational. Mahatma Gandhi also recognised that Ram's life is his message. Per our research for *Makers of Modern Dalit History*, a paper by Kanad Sinha details that in his dialogue with Narada, the sage Valmiki is said to have asked the former if he knew any man who was truly virtuous, mighty, righteous, truthful, steadfast in his vows, of exemplary conduct, benevolent to all creatures, learned, capable, good-looking, self-controlled, of proper temperament, judicious, envy-free, and fearless in battle. Narada answered that

so many qualities are hard to find in one person. But Ram, born in the Ikshvaku lineage, was known among people as one such person.

Ram was never above questions or criticism throughout his journey. But he never left the side of the truth. Sri Aurobindo has also written beautifully about how Valmiki has ensured that the Ramayana is ingrained in the national character of India. So much so that in 2020, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his address at the Ram Janmabhoomi puja at Ayodhya, underscored, "Ram is in all and for all".

Ram is an embodiment of inclusion. For Shabari or Guha in the Ramayana, their single-minded devotion enabled them to get a glimpse of him and serve him to the best of their capacity. It is due to these characters that Ram's journey in the forest is made possible. In his masterpiece *Mastery*, Robert Greene explains the importance of imbibing social intelligence. Greene adds that one of the components of social intelligence is to empathise with others and understand their point of view. Ram's life and his interactions with Shabari, Sita, Guha, Hanuman, Lakshman, Bharat, Dasharath, Vibhishana et al, make it clear that he exemplified unmatched high levels of social intelligence.

Sage Valmiki is single-handedly responsible for giving the world Ram. Today, his works are a subject of study not just in India but across the globe. The advice of Sage Narada to Ratnakar to chant 'Mara, Mara' in reverse 'Rama, Rama' transformed Ratnakar into Valmiki and enabled him to commit to the

path of social transformation and change. Communities in India have been so inspired by Ram that they have tattooed themselves with his name, such as the Ramaami community founded by Parusaram in Chhattisgarh, who were denied entry into temples owing to their social origin. To date, the community members have a copy of the Ramcharitmanas and are well-versed in Ramkatha.

Culture, connectivity, and commerce are three important pillars of India's foreign policy. No doubt, Ram has emerged as the pivotal catalyst for India's shared legacy with several countries and has contributed immensely to the country's soft power. Be it Joko Widodo of Indonesia presenting world leaders with a small box with a figurine of characters from the Ramayana or Barack Obama carrying Hanuman in his pocket. A Muslim-majority country, Indonesia, has also not shied away from Ram or the Ramayana.

There are many instances that critics point out where what Ram did was not right. But his motivation was the ideal and its representation, not appeasement. He was objective in the true sense, doing what was right and refraining from doing any wrong. Ram is about values. Why do families so fervently follow and recite the Ramayana? Or, for that matter, why did the streets wear a deserted look when Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayana* was on television? The character of Ram has the power to bring people together and not just inculcate the right values but live the values. Imbibing these values will ensure we collaborate to solve the world's challenges and not have conflict over them.

Ram is about valuing public opinion and keeping people's interests at the forefront. A contemporary understanding of Ram will enable world leaders to keep people's interests as a lodestar. The temple in Ayodhya is not an attempt at a majoritarian message but at setting right India's civilisational history. They do not perhaps realise that Ayodhya means "a place where there is no conflict". And that the temple is a powerful symbol of the syncretic nature of Indian society, and as such is meant to avoid any future conflicts.

Finally, Ram is not about anything abstract.

In the song 'Pal pal hai bhaari' from *Swades*, the lyrics can be loosely translated into English as "Ram is in compassion, in all, in unity, in progress; he is present in both friends and foes' hearts; in everyone's thoughts; he is in every house, every courtyard; so much so that whoever removes Ravan from their hearts, Ram is present there too". In the age of the 21st century, it is important to internalise Ram as a quality. We understand there is a long way to go for India to develop and progress on several social indicators. In pursuit of transforming into a developed country, contemporising Ram will help India cement itself as a responsible power and signify to the world as the real "vishwamitra" – friend of all.

Sudarshan Ramabadrani is a policy expert and author. Guru Prakash Paswan is national spokesperson, BJP. Views are personal

FOR OUR FUTURE

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Leading the climate dance' (IE, January 15). The writer has presented a well-balanced analysis of the impact of the environment on India's future trajectory. Given our experience, most of the seminal changes in socio-economic fields have been driven from the top. The campaign for a defecation-free India has to be driven by the PM himself. People rarely accept changes voluntarily if they are inconvenient. Given this background, the political class must bell the cat and take tough decisions today to prevent imminent catastrophes. Information technology can be leveraged intelligently to communicate the rationale behind these decisions.

Shubhada H, via email

British woman
'sexually harassed'
on Karnataka
train, probe on

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
BENGALURU, JANUARY 15

A 30-YEAR-OLD British woman was allegedly sexually harassed by an unidentified person on a train running between Hospet and Bengaluru on January 11.

Police filed a case against the man, who, according to a complaint filed by the woman, "looked like a railway employee wearing an identity card". The woman, who has been touring India, filed the complaint with the Bengaluru Bengaluru City Railway police after her arrival from Hospet's Hampi to Bengaluru. She said in her complaint that she was sick during the journey and the man took advantage of the situation.

The British traveller said she had visited Munnar in Kerala on December 31, Madurai on January 4 and reached Bengaluru on January 6 from where she travelled by bus to Hampi. She made the return journey to Bengaluru from Hampi on January 10 night on train number 16591 in A1 coach. An hour after the train left Hospet, she sought medical help and the worker on the train "moled and sexually harassed" her.

Based on the complaint filed by the woman, railway police registered a case of sexual harassment under Indian Penal Code Section 354A, and launched an investigation to find the suspect involved in the case.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
No. DNR/S&T/Tel/2024/3 Danapur, dtd. 12.01.2024. Divisional Railway Manager (Signal & Telecom), East Central Railway, Danapur Division, for and on behalf of President of India invites tenders on web portal www.reps.gov.in for the following work: 1. Name of work with its location : Provision of alternate communication for Control Circuit/ Block working/ Other Circuits through Wireless System for Long Sections of Danapur Division. 2. Approximate Cost of work : Rs. 11118455.14. 3. Bid Security : Rs. 205600.04. 4. Last Date & Time of Submission : Up to 15.00 hrs, on 02.02.2024. 5. Opening of tender : 15.30 hrs, on 02.02.2024. 6. Website particulars where detail of the work and criteria can be seen are : www.reps.gov.in. 7. Address of the office from where detailed information can be obtained : Sr. DivnI. Signal & Telecommunication Engineer, East Central Railway, Danapur. Note: Any corrigendum if required will be uploaded on above website before 14 days.

DSTE/Danapur
PR/2099/DNR/S&T/T/23-24/32

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER
O & M CIRCLE, M.P.P.K.V.V Co. Ltd., Rewa
(Telephone no. 9425424302 e-mail- seoficerewa@yahoo.com)

No. SE/O&M/053-10/08/6548 NOTICE INVITING TENDER dtd : 09.01.2024

Online tenders are invited for Outsourcing of Unskilled, Semi-skilled and Skilled Manpower Required for Miscellaneous Works at O&M Circle, MPKVVCL, Rewa. The bid seals will be received online on the e-portal <http://mptenders.gov.in> or <http://www.mpxc.co.in> up to date & time indicated below. The online tenders will be opened in the office of the undersigned as mentioned in tender notice. If desired, the bidder or their duly authorized representatives may remain present at the time of opening of tenders.

Tender Specification No

Name of the Work/ services

Approx. Val (Rs. In Cr.)

Tender Fees (In Rs.)

EMD (In Rs.)

Date for opening of tender online (12:00 Hrs*)

SE(ONM)-053-10/08/6548 DT 09.01.2024 (E-Tender No. 2024_PKVVC_325216_1)

Outsourcing of Manpower Required for Miscellaneous Works under the jurisdiction of O&M Circle MPKVVCL, Rewa

Mpxc

NOTE:- Other details can be seen in the complete tender documents available on e portal <https://mptenders.gov.in>.

Sd/-
Superintendent Engineer (O&M)
MPKVVCL, Rewa Circle

Office of the Superintendent Engineer
O & M CIRCLE, M.P.P.K.V.V Co. Ltd., Rewa
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PARIKRAMA PROJECT AT PURI TEMPLE

Odisha to mobilise 10k devotees daily for a month; Opposition says politics with govt funds

SUJIT BISOYI
BHUBANESWAR, JANUARY 15



The heritage corridor around the Jagannath Temple will be inaugurated on January 17

THE ODISHA government has planned to mobilise around 10,000 people daily for a month to visit the Shree Mandira Parikrama Project - a Rs 800-crore heritage corridor around Puri's renowned Jagannath Temple - which will be inaugurated on January 17.

The Naveen Patnaik government has directed district collectors to ensure smooth movement of devotees from every panchayat and civic body to Puri from January 22. Special fund has been allocated for the purpose.

"Smooth movement of devotees from your district to Puri for witnessing the Shree Mandira Parikrama Prakalpa is the priority as emphasised by the Chief Secretary via videoconferencing on January 12," said panchayati raj secretary S K Lohani in a letter to the collectors.

The collectors have been asked to make requisition for adequate number of buses for movement of devotees while elaborate plans have been made at the transit camps for their comfortable stay. Every district will appoint a nodal officer for the overall coordination of the exercise, while every district will set up a control room for monitoring.

Odisha Director-General of Police (in-charge) Arun Kumar Sarangi said Puri has been put under a security blanket with deployment of around 80 platoons (over 3,000 personnel) for the grand opening ceremony. Patnaik on Monday appealed to people to dedicate themselves to the devotion of Mahaprabhu Jagannath as it's a day of celebration for the Odia community. Patnaik has also appealed people to join the January 17 celebrations by lighting diyas, reciting bhajans and kirtans and blowing conches in their own ways.

"The Parikrama project is a massive infrastructure push around the Jagannath Temple. Completion of the project will be a historical day for Odisha. It will enhance the experience of lakhs of devotees visiting the temple every day. People of the state should see the project," said a senior government officer.

The Opposition has criticised the move calling it an exercise to garner support for the ruling BJD by spending money from the state exchequer. Around Rs 20 crore has been approved for mo-

bilising devotees from villages to Puri. The Parikrama project, a 75-metre free passage built around the outer walls (Meghamada Pacheri) of the shrine, is aimed to ensure security to the temple and provide basic civic amenities to the devotees. It has been developed with an investment of Rs 800 crore.

Massive arrangements have been made by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for its inauguration on Wednesday, five days before the consecration ceremony of Ayodhya Ram temple. Senior officers of the state government are camping in Puri to oversee the preparations.

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MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 15

A DAY before the start of the consecration rituals for the Ayodhya temple, senior Congress leaders of Uttar Pradesh arrived in the town to offer their prayers to the existing Ram Lalla idol at the once disputed site.

While the state Congress leaders were there, on Makar Sankranti day, as per a previously announced programme, a surprise addition was the party's Rajya Sabha MP from Haryana, Deepender Hooda. The UP Congress had announced its decision to be in Ayodhya to offer prayers on January 15 soon after the party leadership declared that it would stay away from the consecration ceremony as it had become an 'RSS-BJP event'.

The Congress leaders, many of whom took a dip in the Saryu river, to chant of Jai Shri Ram, offered prayers at the Hanuman Garhi temple, and visited the Ram Lalla idol, included AICC general secretary in-charge of UP Avinash Pande, Congress state president Ajay Rai, AICC secretary in-charge of UP Dheeraj Gujjar, and Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhna Mishra, and the party's national face and PCC member Supriya Shrinate.

The leaders also met Ram Temple chief priest Satyendra Das.

Asked about the party's visit



UP Congress state president Ajay Rai, MP Deepender Hooda, PCC member Supriya Shrinate and other party leaders at the makeshift Ram temple in Ayodhya on Monday. Express

ahead of the consecration, which the leadership is not attending, the Congress leaders said the two should not be linked. Their visit was mainly to mark the "auspicious day of Makar Sankranti" and part of a usual exercise to visit temples on the day, they claimed.

While UP Congress leaders travelled together from Lucknow, Pande, Hooda and Shrinate reached Ayodhya directly, and later left from the town for Delhi.

Pande said: "Every person can come and offer their prayer when they deem fit, and it should not be politicised... Prabhu Ram hamare hridaya mein hain, desh ke kan-kan mein basey hue hain. Prabhu Ram sabke hain" (Ram exists in our hearts, in every little thing of this

country. He belongs to everyone.)" Rai said: "What's so different about the 22nd? The idol that exists is already consecrated, isn't it? We are going to visit that."

Hooda cited Makar Sankranti as the reason for his visit, adding that he sought Ram Lalla's blessings "for the prosperity of all." "This is not my first visit to Ayodhya and the Ram Temple. I visited the temple one year ago too," he said. On the leadership's decision, he said: "The party has explained its position... Our party believes in all faiths."

Shrinite, the chairperson of Congress Social Media and Digital Platforms, who is one of the party's leading voices defending the leadership's decision to de-

cline the invite for the consecration, said: "The UP Congress Committee had decided to go to Ayodhya on the 15th. I am from UP, an AICC delegate from UP and also a PCC member. So I went."

"The invite for the January 22 event was for three (Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury). And it was for something which is a political event being done in the garb of a religious ceremony.

Today is Sankranti, a huge festival... The BJP is not the sole custodian of rituals and religion. Lord Ram's biggest message is goodness and justice, something that the Bharat Jodo Yatra aims to deliver. I prayed for peace and prosperity for all," Shrinate said.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 15

BAHUJAN SAMAJ Party (BSP) president Mayawati on Monday acknowledged that she has received an invite for the Ram Temple consecration ceremony but is yet to decide on attending the event.

Speaking to mediapersons on her 68th birthday, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said the BSP welcomes the Ram temple consecration ceremony, scheduled to be held on January 22 in Ayodhya, and that her party has no objection to it.

"...Not just this, but when a similar programme will be held for the Babri mosque, then our party will not have any objection because our party does not discriminate on the basis of religion. We respect all religions," she said.

She also hit out at the BJP governments at the Centre and states, saying they "have been hiding their failures" by doing politics in the garb of religion and culture.

Reiterating that the BSP will contest the upcoming Lok Sabha polls alone, Mayawati said: "With the backing of people from backward communities, Dalits, tribals, Muslims and other religious minorities, we had formed a full majority government in Uttar Pradesh in 2007, and that is why we have decided to contest the Lok Sabha polls alone."

The BSP chief said that in an al-



BSP chief Mayawati releases the 19th volume of her biography on her 68th birthday, in Lucknow on Monday. Vishal Srivastav

liance her party "lost more and gained less", while "the parties al-

lying with BSP gain full".

"This is the reason that most parties in the country want to ally with the BSP... Our party can also form a post-poll alliance for government formation in the state and Centre with the correct share in the government," she added.

Amid reports that talks are being held within the Opposition INDIA bloc over BSP's inclusion, Mayawati hit out at Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav, accusing him of trying to mislead people by "changing his stand like a chameleon". She also claimed that "cheating" through Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) led to BSP's recent electoral losses.

She also clarified that she would continue to be active in politics. Last month, Mayawati had declared her nephew Akash Anand as her political successor.

Mayawati: Got invite, yet to take decision on attending event

National Startup Day, 2024

State Level Programme

Chief Guest

Sh. Bandaru Dattatraya

Hon'ble Governor of Haryana

January 16, 2024 | 11:00 am onwards

Hartron Innovation and Startup Hub
Plot No.-1, Udyog Vihar, Phase-I, Gurugram

Initiatives to encourage Startups

- Haryana State Startup Policy focuses on four major pillars: Infrastructure Augmentation, Fiscal Support, Regulatory Easing, and Entrepreneurship Development
- 6000+ Haryana-based Startups recognized by DPIIT out of which more than 45% are Women-Led-Startups
- 14+ Unicorn Startups are based in Haryana
- New Incubation Centres in State universities to instil an entrepreneurial spirit amongst the students.

Department of Industries & Commerce, Haryana
and Hartron

Feels like I have got them back: Sister of two Kolkata kar sevaks killed in Ayodhya in 1992

SANTANU CHOWDHURY
KOLKATA, JANUARY 15

SITTING BELOW the portrait of her late brothers in her two-storey house in the Ram Bagh area of north Kolkata, Purnima Kothari (52) finds it difficult to hold back her tears.

"My life has finally come full circle. It will be more so on January 22," says Purnima whose brothers Ram Kothari (22) and Sharad Kothari (20) were killed in police firing in Uttar Pradesh's Ayodhya follow-

ing the Babri Masjid demolition on December 6, 1992. The two had left their Kolkata home for Ayodhya the previous month to participate in the Ram Temple movement as kar sevaks.

"It feels like I have got back my brothers. The sacrifice of my brothers and several others did not go in vain," says Purnima who will be in Ayodhya to attend the temple consecration ceremony. For the last 33 years, Purnima has been regularly visiting Ayodhya in memory of her late brothers. The 52-year-old says she along with her daughter has



Purnima Kothari will be in Ayodhya to attend the event on January 22. Partha Paul

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)			
ZONAL OFFICE, GAYA ZONE Rajlaxmi Complex, Near A.P. Colony, Gaya-823001, Tel-0631-221043 / 0312220336 / 0312220246 Email: zo.gaya@bankofindia.co.in			APPENDIX-IV (See Rule-8(1))
Name of Borrower /Guarantor	I) Branch & Date & Amount as per Notice U/s 13 (2)	Description of the Immovable Property	Date of Possession of Assets
Borrower: Shri Anil Singh & Co-borrower Mrs. Gita Devi	(I) Branch-Nawada (ii) Date-31.08.2023, Rs. 8,54,204.15/- Interest thereon.	All that part and parcel of the property consisting of Khatu no. 172, Plot No-2813, Mauza- Budhaul, Purnia, Ps- Nawada, Thana No. 375, District- Nawada, Pln-805110, admeasuring 3.50 decimal in the name of Mrs. Gita Devi W/o-Sri Anil Singh. Bounded-North-Sunil Rao, South-Rasta then Sunil Pandey, East-Sharan Mishra, West-Gali then Sudama Mistry	11.01.2024

Date: 11.01.2024
Place: Nawada

* With further interest at applicable rate till Re-payment.

Authorized Officer

Bank of India

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Property)			
State Bank of India Stressed Assets Recovery Branch (SARB) 2nd Floor, Patna Main Branch Building, West Gandhi Maidan, Patna - 800001 Ph. No. (Office) : 0612-2219043, 2219385, Fax : sbi_05176@sbi.co.in			
Rule - 8(1)			
Whereas,			
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the BANK OF INDIA under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice as detailed in the table hereunder written calling upon the below mentioned borrowers to repay the amount shown in the respective notices mentioned against their names in the table within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers/guarantors mentioned below having failed to repay the amount shown in the respective notices issued u/s 13(2) within the stipulated time, notice is hereby given to the aforementioned borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the properties (Secured Assets) described in the table given below in exercise of powers conferred on me under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with rule 8 of the said rules against the respective property.			
The aforesaid borrowers/guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property/ies mentioned in the table hereunder written and any dealings with the said property/ies will be subject to the charge of the BANK OF INDIA for the amount shown in the respective column of the table and interest thereon.			
Whereas,			
The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the State Bank of India under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated 05.08.2022 calling upon the borrower/ Guarantor as mentioned below to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.			
The borrower/ Guarantor having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/her under section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on this 12th day of January of the year 2024.			
The Borrower/Guarantor in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the State Bank of India for the amount mentioned below plus accrued interest, Charges, other miscellaneous expenses etc. thereon.			
The Borrower's/Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.			
Name of Account/Borrower & address	Name of Owner of property	Description of the property mortgaged / charged	Date of Demand Date of Possession Outstanding
M/s Riddhi International Prop. Prity Prakash Newa Lal Chowk, NH - 31, Purnea (Bihar) - 854301	Smt. Priti Prakash, W/o Shri Raj Ranjan Bhaskar and Smt. Rita Devi W/o Late Rajendra Prasad Mandal situated at Mauza - Madhopara, Mohalla - Chhatti Pukhar, ward number 26 (new) / 6 (old)	All that part	

Essar Electric Power Development Corporation Limited

Essar House, 11 K.K. Marg, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai - 400034, India.

NOTICE

1. Essar Electric Power Development Corporation Limited ("EEPDL"), having its office at Essar House, 11 K.K. Marg, Mahalaxmi, Mumbai - 400034, India has made an application for surrender of Category II Inter-State Trading License before Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, New Delhi in accordance with CERC (Procedure, Terms and Conditions of Trading License and other related matters) Regulations, 2020 and amendment thereof ("Regulations").
2. EEPDL has duly complied with the requisites for surrender of license as per Regulation 20(3) of the Regulations.
3. Complete application filed before Ld. CERC is available at www.essar.com for access by any person.
4. Objections or suggestions, if any, be filed before the Secretary, Central Electricity Regulatory Commission, 3rd & 4th Floor, Chandernok Building, 36, Janpath, New Delhi - 110001 with a copy of the objection(s) suggestion(s) to the applicant or its authorized agent, within 30 days of the publication of the notice in the newspaper.

Sd/-
Place: Mumbai
Date: 15-01-2024Rajmohan Thirunavukaran
Director**Varthana Finance Private Limited**

(Formerly known as Thirumani Finance Private Ltd.)

Registered Office at: No. 5BC-110, Varasidhi, Outer Ring Road, Service Road,

3rd Block, HRB Layout, Kalwan Nagar, Bangalore-560043. Website: www.varthana.com, Email: care@varthana.com, Phone: 080-68455777, Branch Office: Sushma Infinium, Unit no 3,

4th Floor Near Best price Chandigarh Ambala Highway, Zirakpur - 140603.

POSSESSION NOTICE (Rule 8(1) (For Immovable property)

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorized Officer of the M/s, Varthana Finance Private Ltd. (Formerly Known as M/s. Thirumani Finance Private Ltd.) Chandigarh, Under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a Demand Notice dated: 11-10-2023, calling upon the Applicants / Co-Applicants / Mortgagors, In Loan Account No's. S19CHA-CHA011753 , U21CHA-CHA-018077 , U23CHA-A023212 . 1. Ms. Shree Gyan Jyoti Middle School, Represented by its Authorised Signatory, VPO Deep, Pundri, Kathal - 136026. 2. Ms. Ms. Bhagat Singh Group of Education Society, Represented by its Authorised Signatory, VPO Deep, Pundri, Kathal - 136026. 3. Mr. Radhe Shyam, S/o, SH. Bhole Ram, Near Khera Deep, Kathal, Kathal - 136026. 4. Mr. Mahinder Singh, S/o, Balwant Singh, D.K. 47, Ward No. 11, Kathal, Haryana-136026. 5. Mrs. Dayawanti, W/o, Nar Jayan, Near Khera Deep, Kathal, Haryana-136026. 6. Mrs. Sudesh Devi, W/o, Mahinder Singh, Sain Mohalla, Ward No.11, Pundri, Kathal, Haryana-136026. 7. Mrs. Pushpa Devi, D/o, Shikumar VPO-Teontha, Kathal, Haryana -136024. To repay the amount mentioned in the said notice being a sum of Rs.27,95,875/- (Rupees Twenty Seven Lakhs Ninety Five Thousand Eight Hundred Seventy Five Only) as on 10-10-2023, to repay agreed contractual rate of interest together with incidental expenses, cost and other charges etc, as details mentioned in the Demand Notice, till the date of payment, with 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

However the Applicants / Co-Applicants / Mortgagors herein above having failed to repay the full amount with interest/other charges, notice is hereby given to the Applicants / Co-Applicants/Mortgagors in particular and to the public in general that the undersigned being Authorized Officer of the M/s, Varthana Finance Private Ltd, Chandigarh Branch has taken POSSESSION of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on this day of 12-01-2024.

The Applicants/Co-Applicants/ Mortgagors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the M/s. Varthana Finance Private Ltd, Chandigarh for an amount of Rs.30,16,97,162/- (Rupees Thirty Lakh Sixteen Thousand Nine Hundred Seventy Two Only) as on 11-01-2024 with agreed contractual rate of interest, as mentioned herein above until the date of payment together with incidental expenses, cost and other charges. The Applicants / Co-Applicants/Mortgagors attention is invited to provisions of Section 13(8) of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured Assets.

Description of the Immovable Property : All the piece and parcel of the property bearing Plot/Land Comprising in Kawhno, 72 Kite 62 Rakha 355 Kanal 4 Marla its 63/7104 share i.e.

3 Kanal 3 Marla and Kawhno no 69 Kite 4 Rakha 32 Kanal 71/60 share i.e. 1 Kanal 8 Marla and Kawhno no. 74 Kitte 86 Kanal 11/1731 share i.e. 11 Marla Total Rakha 5 Kanal 2 Marla (Possession Delivered upon Khasrao, 31/16 min North) Situated in Rakha Village Deep, Tehsil Pundri and District Kaithal Haryana Measuring 5 Kanal 2 Marla approximately. North : Land Bhoop Singh South : Radhe Sham East : Rasta & khet West : Land Devat.

Date: 16-01-2024, Place: Rakha Village Deep Sd/-Authorized Officer, Varthana Finance Private Limited

STATE BANK OF INDIA
STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH (SARB)

2nd Floor, Patna Main Branch Building, West Gandhi Maidan, Patna-800001

E-mail: sbi.05176@sbi.co.in**Publication of Notice regarding Possession of property u/s 13(4) of SARFAESI Act 2002**

Notice is hereby given under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, a demand notice was issued on the dates mentioned against each account and stated hereinafter calling upon them to repay the amount within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The Borrower/Guarantors having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general that the undersigned has taken Possession of the property described herein below in exercise of power conferred on him/her under Section 13 (4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said Act.

The Borrower/Guarantors in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of the STATE BANK OF INDIA for an amount mentioned below and interest thereon.

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

Name of Account / Borrower & Address	Name of Proprietor/Partners/Guarantors /Owners of Property etc.	Description of the property mortgaged/charged	Date of Demand Notice Date of Possession	Amount Outstanding
M/s Mahaveer Automobiles, Mahaveer Complex, NH-31, Ford Company Chowk, Purnea-854301	1.Sri. Dashrath Kamti Suman, S/o Late Mahaveer Kamti 2. Sri. Manju Kumar, S/o Dashrath Kamti Suman	All that part and parcel of the property consisting Registered Mortgage of land and building in the name of : Sri. Dashrath Kamti Suman, S/o Late Mahaveer Kamti, vide mortgage deed no 179 dated 04.01.2019 and deed no. 3173 dated 29.02.2020, Mohalla-Prabhat Colony, Khata No-668, Khesra No-1856/2631, situated at Mauza-Madhubani, Thana No-123/1, Ward No-13 (Old)30 (New), Area-3 Kattha (6.30 decimal) Boundaries: North-Brick Soiling, South-Rajendra Bishwas, East-Hari Narayan Yadav, West-Kachchi Rasta	10.08.2023	Rs. 53,36,278.47 (Rupees Fifty Three Lacs Thirty Six Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Eight and Paise Forty Seven only) as on 31.07.2023 plus accrued interest, Charges, other miscellaneous expenses etc from 01.08.2023 thereon
			11.01.2024	

(Authorized Officer)
State Bank of India, SARB, Patna**SBI State Bank of India**

STRESSED ASSETS RECOVERY BRANCH

2nd Floor, Patna Main Branch Building, West Gandhi Maidan, Patna-800001

Ph. No. (Office): 0612-2219043, 2219385, Fax: 0612-2219385, E-mail: sbi.05176@sbi.co.in**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF MOVABLE PROPERTIES**

E-auction Sale Notice for Sale of Movable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 6(2) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is", As is What is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 14.02.2024 (Wednesday).

Other details of the e-auction are as under:

Name of Borrower(s)	Amount of Demand (as per SARFAESI notice)	Description of the property	Reserve Price below which the property will not be sold	Name of Mortgagor/ Guarantor	Date of (13/2) under SARFAESI Act
			EMD Bid Increment Amount		Date of (13/4) under SARFAESI Act
Shri Chandra Kumar S/o Shri Satya Narayan Prasad, Near Madhyamik Shikshak Sangh, Navratna Hata, PS-K Hat, Dist.-Purnea, Pin-854301	Rs. 65,09,898/- as on 31.01.2023 with further Interest, Cost Charges, Other Miscellaneous expenses etc, less deposit/ recovery made thereafter, if any.	1. AC Deluxe Bus No.: BR10PB/2042, Make/Model: Ashok Leyland/Jan/2018, Type of Vehicle: AC Deluxe Bus (Vehicle Class-HPV), Seating Capacity: 48, Chassis No.-MB1PREHD5JAHH5275, Engine No.: HWEZ429630, MANUFACTURED: 2018, DATE OF REGISTRATION: 10.07.2018, Tax Paid upto: 09.01.2023, Fitness valid upto 16.08.2024, Insurance valid upto 19.01.2024. (Property ID for e-auction: SBIN867157995241)	₹18,00,000/- ₹1,80,000/- ₹10,000/-	Shri Chandra Kumar S/o Shri Satya Narayan Prasad	10.02.2023 16.05.2023

e-Auction Terms and Condition

1. Date of e-auction: 14.02.2024 (Wednesday), Time: 120 Minutes from 12:00 Noon to 02:00 P.M. with unlimited extension of 10 Minutes each.
2. Website/portal for e-auction-<https://msiscecommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp>.
3. The General Terms & Conditions are available on- <https://sbi.co.in/web/sbi-in-the-news/auction-notices/sarfaesi-and-others>.
4. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorised Officer, there is no encumbrance on the property/ies put on auction and claims/rights/dues/affecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold will all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorised Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/rights/dues. The sale shall be subject to rules/conditions prescribed under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of security Interest Act, 2002.

This publication is also a 15 days notice to all the borrower/guarantors require under Rule 6(2) of Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002.

Date : 11.01.2024

Place : Purnea

AUTORISED OFFICER
STATE BANK OF INDIA, SARB, PATNA**PRADESHIK COOPERATIVE DAIRY FEDERATION LIMITED**

26 PARK ROAD, MUMBAI - 400001, INDIA. 022-23648100

NOTICE INVITING TENDER(NIT)
(E-Tender mode only)

E-tenders are invited by PCDF Ltd., under two bids for the Supply of Aluminium Milk Transport Cans 20 ltr. with its lid on running rate per dozen to be supplied to the concerned dairy units located all over U.P. The Processing fee of Tender document is Rs. 26000.00 (With GST).

The details & submission of the Tender bids are only applicable to the concerned dairy units.

Any tenderer who fails to appear in the tender portal <http://tender.up.nic.in> and departmental website www.paragmilkuip.com only, MD PDFC reserves the right to cancel any of the E-bids or cancel the Bidding process without assigning any reason thereof.

Incharge (Materials)

PRADESHIK

COOP

DAIRY

FEDERATION

LIMITED

NIT

E-Tender mode only

E-

Tender

mode

only

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Devender Nath Koul S/O Late Kashi Nath Kaul, R/o A-5 C/8A, DDA Flat, Janak Puri, Janakpuri B-1, West Delhi, Delhi-110058, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as Devender Nath Kaul.

007088335-1

I, Ashok Arora S/o Ganga Ram R/o W-73, 2nd Floor, Ram Nagar, Tilak Nagar, New Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Ashok Kumar Arora, for all purposes. 0040708377-1

I, Anju Kumari W/o Ajay Kumar Singh R/o F204, Trident Embassy, GH-05B, Sec-1, G.Noida have changed my name to Anju Kumari Singh.

007088339-1

I, Vineet Kumar Kalra S/o Mangal Sain Kalra R/o 153, Sukhdevi Vihar, New Delhi-110025, have changed my name to Vineet Kalra

007088326-1

I, Vanisha D/o Ram Kishan Duvvesh R/o FLAT NO-68, PLOT NO-28, KAMAKSHI APARTMENT, SECTOR-6, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110075 have changed my name to Vanisha Duvvesh for all future purposes. 0070883387-1

I, Sulena Devi W/o Devender Singh R/o D-223, Prem Nagar-2, Kirari Suleman Nagar, Delhi-110086, have changed my name to Gujo Devi

0070883378-1

I, Sonu Gupta D/o Laxmi Prasad Gupta and W/o Harish Chandra Maheshwari R/o 21, Main Road, Chandreshkhar Azad Nagar, Bhakra, Distt-Alirajpur, Madhya Pradesh-457882, have changed my name to Pooja Maheshwari 0070883380-1

I, Roopam D/o Ram Kishan Duvvesh R/o FLAT NO 68, PLOT NO-28, KAMAKSHI APARTMENT, SECTOR-6, DWARKA, NEW DELHI-110075 have changed my name to Roopam Duvvesh for all future purposes. 0070883370-1

I, Rajinder Singh S/o Surender Singh R/o D-401, Apex Green Valley Apartment, Vaishali, Sector-09, Ghaziabad, UP-201010 Have changed my son name Sanraj Singh to Sanraj Singh Renohtra for all future Purposes. 0040708437-1

I, Neelu Gandhi D/o Sh. Surendra Kumar Gupta W/o Sh. Kumar Gandhi R/o G-17, Vikas Marg, Preet Vihar, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Nilu Gandhi for all purposes.

0040708376-1

I, Manisha Gorsia have changed my name from Manisha Gorsia to Manisha wife Saurabh Chaudhary resident of B-134 near Kasna bus stand Sigma-3 Greater Noida district Gautam Buddha Nagar Uttar Pradesh. In future I should be known as Manisha wife Saurabh Chaudhary. 0070883365-1

I, Chander Sain S/O, Om Prakash Arora R/o 19, 4th Floor, Radhey Puri Extension-1, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051 have changed my name to Chander Sain Arora. 0040708436-1

I, Narendra Tiwari S/O RAJ KUMAR TIWARI R/o A-6-13,SECTOR-18,ROHINI,DELHI-110089.HAVE CHANGED MY CHILD NAME AKSHITA TIWARI TO ASHITA K TIWARI.

0040708439-3

I, Kumar Aman S/o Ishwari Vishwakarma permanent R/o 100, Naya Tola, Near Tata Indicom Tower, Ward No.18, Jehanabad, Bihar-804408 and present R/o QR No. G-45, Camero Complex, Subroto Park, Western Air Command, New Delhi-110010 have changed the name of my minor son ABHIMANA SHARMA aged 8 years and he shall hereafter be known as ADVIK SHARMA

0070883329-1

It is general information that I garga prasad s/o shri babu ram residing at 669 near barat ghar punvaras colony, pocket 4 sector a-6 narela delhi-110040 declare that the name of mine has been wrongly written as garga prashad in my Driving licence no. DL07 1997076467. The actual name of mine is garga prasad which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have compiled with other legal requirements in this connection.

0070883376-1

I, Yashvi D/o Rajkumar,R/o-215/Street.No.17,Then Singh Nagar,Anand Parbat,New Delhi-110055,have changed my name to Yashvi,for all future purposes. 0040708437-2

I, Kanhaiya Lal S/o Dharm Pal R/o Hameer Thok, Village Chhata, Mathura, UP have changed my name to Kanhaiya.

0070883386-1

I, Varsha Yadav,daughter of Late Shri Vijay Pal Yadav Resident of H.no.184,First Floor Sector-5 Wavecity NH24,Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201002,declare that I have changed the name of my minor son from Yuvin Mrinal Khurana to Yuvin Yadav,for all purposes in future. 0040708439-7

I,TRIBHUWAN PRASHAD THAKUR,S/O RAGHUWANSH THAKUR,R/O-4/7,3,PUNJABI BAGH,WEST Delhi-110026,have changed my name to TRIBHUVAN PRASAD THAKUR,for all Purpose. 0040708449-4

I,SHYAMALI JANA,W/O SUNIL KUMAR JANA,R/O FLAT NO-603 TOWER KM-14 JAYPEE GREENS WISH TOWN,SECTOR-134 NOIDA UP HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SYAMALI JANA. 0040708449-2

I,SHIVANI W/O RAHUL SHARMA R/O HNO. 135, BUDHPUR, BIJAPUR,DELHI-110036.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHIVANI BHARDWAJ FOR ALL PURPOSES. 0040708439-5

I,SHEKHAR SHRAN,son of,Ram Das Presently,residing at,B-502, Jeet residency, New Palaj,Gandhinagar,Gujarat-382355,have changed my name,from SHEKHAR SHRAN to SHEKHAR SARAN,vide-Affidavit,Dated-15.1.2024 0040708473-10

I,SEEMA W/O PUSHPENDRA KUMAR,R/O A-7/26-27 SECOND-FLOOR,SECTOR-17,ROHINI NORTH,WEST DELHI-110085,CHANGED MY NAME TO SEEMA SINGH. 0040708443-10

I,Runama Preveen,w/o Neshruddin,H.No.6,Gail.No.5,Islam Mehrauli,Delhi, 110030,have changed my name to Runama Parveen, permanently.

0040708449-1

I,RAJESH Kumar,S/O Rikhab Chand Kochar R/o C-118,Surya Nagar,Ghaziabad,UP,have changed my name to Rajesh Kochar,for all purposes.

0040708449-5

I,REEMA GUPTA,W/O VINOD KUMAR GUPTA R/O HNO.H-96,H-BLOCK,J.J.COLONY,SHAKURPUR ,DELHI-110034.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO REEMA.

0040708443-4

I,RAJIV KUMAR SHARMA,S/O JAGDISH CHANDER SHARMA,R/O-143,VIDYA VIHAR APARTMENT,SECTOR-9,ROHINI,DELHI-110085,have changed my name to RAJIV KUMAR. 0040708456-1

I,Prity Pahwa, D/o-Mahesh Kumar Bajaj, R/o H.No.-326,2nd and 3rd-Floor,Bhera Enclave, Paschim Vihar,Delhi,have changed my name to Priya Bajaj,for all purposes.

0040708443-2

I,VIPAN MALHOTRA S/o Sh. Manohar Lal R/o 18/22A, Double Storey,Moti Nagar,New Delhi-110015,have changed my name to VIPAL MALHOTRA. 0040708443-1

I,Parashwar Parsad Pasbola,S/o Baswanand,R/o M-19,Arjun Apartment, Vikaspuri,Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Parashwar Parsad.

0040708479-1

I,Kumar Gandhi S/o Chandrakant Ramanlal Gandhi R/o G-17, Vikas Marg, Preet Vihar, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kumar Gandhi for all purposes.

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I,Manisha Gorsia have changed my name from Manisha Gorsia to Manisha wife Saurabh Chaudhary resident of B-134 near Kasna bus stand Sigma-3 Greater Noida district Gautam Buddha Nagar Uttar Pradesh. In future I should be known as Manisha wife Saurabh Chaudhary. 0070883365-1

I, Himanshu Gupta, W/O Rajeev Jyoti Pradhan R/o A4385, B 5&6, Vasant Kunj, New Delhi, have changed my name to Himanshu Pradhan for all purposes.

0040708391-1

I,Chander Sain S/O, Om Prakash Arora R/o 19, 4th Floor, Radhey Puri Extension-1, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110051 have changed my name to Chander Sain Arora. 0040708436-1

I,NARENDER TIWARI S/O RAJ KUMAR TIWARI R/o A-6-13,SECTOR-18,ROHINI,DELHI-110089.HAVE CHANGED MY CHILD NAME AKSHITA TIWARI TO ASHITA K TIWARI.

0040708439-3

I,Kumar Gandhi S/o Chandrakant Ramanlal Gandhi R/o G-17, Vikas Marg, Preet Vihar, Delhi-110092 have changed my name to Kumar Gandhi for all purposes.

0040708376-2

I,Varsha Yadav,daughter of Late Shri Vijay Pal Yadav Resident of H.no.184,First Floor Sector-5 Wavecity NH24,Ghaziabad Uttar Pradesh-201002,declare that I have changed the name of my minor son from Yuvin Mrinal Khurana to Yuvin Yadav,for all purposes in future.

0040708439-7

I,Mukesh Kumar,S/o-Late Sh.Kishan Lal,R/o-C/5-175 Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053,have changed the name of my minor daughter from Ridhima to Ridhima Gaur,for all purposes.Ridhima and Ridhima Gaur is one and the same-person. 0040708443-3

I,TRIBHUWAN PRASHAD THAKUR,S/O RAGHUWANSH THAKUR,R/O-4/7,3,PUNJABI BAGH,WEST Delhi-110026,have changed my Minor-Daughter name From Diksha to Diksha Shokeen. 0040708456-4

I,Manish Kumar,R/o-57,Zamrudpur,G.K.Part-I,Delhi-110048,my father's name,has been wrongly written,Mohan Parkesh in my 10th-Certificate.The actual name of my father Mohan Prakash. 0040708449-4

I,SHYAMALI JANA,W/O SUNIL KUMAR JANA,R/O FLAT NO-603 TOWER KM-14 JAYPEE GREENS WISH TOWN,SECTOR-134 NOIDA UP HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SYAMALI JANA. 0040708449-2

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I,NARENDER TIWARI S/O RAJ KUMAR TIWARI R/o A-6-13,SECTOR-18,ROHINI,DELHI-110089.HAVE CHANGED MY CHILD NAME AKSHITA TIWARI TO ASHITA K TIWARI.

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0040708439-7

I, NAND GOPAL,S/O LAL CHAND R/O 107,DEEPAL ENCLAVE,PIITAMPURA,DELHI-110034.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO NAND GOPAL GARG.

0040708439-1

I, PANKAJ S/O SURESH SINGH,R/o,H.NO-102 D2,BASANT-LINE,PAHAR GANJ,NEW DELHI-110055,have changed my name to PANKAJ SINGH,for all,future purposes.

0040708456-6

I, PRADNYA AJITKUMAR DESHMUKH,wife of,Vikram Singh Dattajirao Ghorpade Presently,residing at,Village-Tamanakwada, Tal,K

FIH Olympic qualifiers: How India can still make it to Paris

MIHIR VASAVDA
JANUARY 15

IT'S a situation the men's team is fairly familiar with: a big tournament, a seemingly straightforward task made hugely complicated and not knowing which side will turn up on the match day, the sensationally skilful or frustratingly awful.

The women have followed in their footsteps. In two days, India's hopes of qualifying for the Olympics have gone from touching the nadir, thanks to the opening-day defeat to the US, to being resurrected in the most extraordinary fashion with a win over New Zealand on Sunday. When the Savita Punia-led team returns to action in the Olympic qualifying tournament on Tuesday, they'll hope there will be no more twists. That bit, though, won't be entirely in their hands. Before they take the field in Ranchi at 7:30 pm local time, India will have their eyes fixed on the outcome of the earlier match between the USA and New Zealand. For, it will set the target for the hosts against an Italy side capable of creating trouble.

The scenarios, from India's perspective, are simple: if New Zealand (3 points, goal difference -1) fail to win against the USA (6 points, goal difference 3), then India (3 points, goal difference 1) will simply have to defeat Italy (0 points, goal difference -5).

However, if New Zealand beat the US, India will not only have to beat Italy but they might have to do it with a handsome margin as the goal difference will come into play given that three teams – New Zealand, the USA and India – will all be level on six points. India haven't had a lot of trouble scoring against lower-ranked teams, as the match against New Zealand on Sunday and the Asian Champions Trophy a couple of months ago showed. But their strength will be put to test in a do-or-die situation where careers will be at stake, especially against a tricky Italy side that is physical and maintains a robust defensive structure.

Or, as India coach Janneke Schopman put it, an opponent that's 'Argentinian spirited'. 'It's going to be tough because they are feisty, they are Argentinian-spirited, mediterranean-style. But if we move the ball, if we show patience, then our skills will come to shine,' Schopman said after the win on Sunday.

Schopman pointed out the two areas where the outcome will be more or less decided: the penalty corner conversion and positioning of the attackers inside the D'.

India's PC rate has been abysmal so far – in the two matches, they've earned 12 corners but converted only 1, with Udit Duhan who celebrated her 26th birthday on Sunday scoring with a superb slap-shot.

Ditto with creating field goal chances, where – if not for Salima Tete – India would have been made to struggle against New Zealand. But eventually, it'll come down to patience and decision making. These were the key reasons – along with a high level of discipline – between India's two performances over the weekend.

India will need more of the latter on Sunday. For, this team also has the habit of ditching the game plan when frustrated by their opponents. Another bad habit they've picked from the men's side.

SCENARIOS

If New Zealand (3 points, goal difference 1) lose or draw against the USA (6 points, goal difference 3), then India (3 points, goal difference 1) will simply have to defeat Italy (0 points, goal difference -5). In that case, the USA and India will qualify for the semifinals.

If New Zealand beat the US, India will not only have to beat Italy but they might have to do it with a handsome margin as the goal difference will come into play given that three teams – New Zealand, the USA and India – will all be level on six points.

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Rusty Osaka falls at first hurdle on Grand Slam return, Gauff advances

REUTERS

MELBOURNE, JANUARY 15

NAOMI OSAKA was disappointed to bow out of the Australian Open in the first round on her Grand Slam return on Monday but thought she was making rapid progress in her comeback after 15 months out of the game.

The Japanese former world number one, who took time out to have daughter Shai, went down 6-4 7-6(2) to French 16th seed Caroline Garcia on the Rod Laver Arena court where she won two of her four Grand Slam titles.

"I thought it was a really good match. For me, I felt like I did the best that I could possibly do," she told reporters.

"I think I still feel like a bit disappointed... I did feel nervous, but I felt like I kept telling myself to be positive. I thought I kept doing better as the match went on."

"So, yeah, I'm not too happy right now, but

I think I can learn from the progress."

Taking on the experienced Garcia was always going to be a big challenge for Osaka, who had played only two matches in Brisbane two weeks ago since her return to tournament tennis.

A double fault gave Garcia the first break point of the match in the fifth game and the former world number four converted it to edge ahead.

Osaka had a sniff of a break back at deuce in the eighth game but dumped a routine backhand into the net and Garcia held with back-to-back aces before going on to take the set.

Twice U.S. Open champion Osaka won her first three service games of the second set to love, but Garcia was serving so well that Osaka was unable to build any pressure with her returns.

"I felt like I was constantly on my back foot and really hesitant," Osaka added.

"I think I still feel like a bit disappointed... I did feel nervous, but I felt like I kept telling myself to be positive. I thought I kept doing better as the match went on."

"So, yeah, I'm not too happy right now, but

she was sure it would not be too long before Osaka was back at the top of the game.

"She has had an amazing career, she has been away for 15 months and been through a lot," the 30-year-old said.

"Six months after giving birth and she's playing amazing, so we have to watch out."

It was Osaka's earliest exit in eight visits to the Australian Open and her third successive loss in the opening round of a Grand Slam after she fell at the first hurdle at the French and U.S. Opens in 2022.

The 26-year-old was clearly struggling to reconcile her disappointment at the loss with the fact that she was so competitive after such a long period on the sidelines.

"Of course, there's a voice in my head that is, 'Who are you to think you can come back and immediately start winning matches?'" Osaka said.

"I don't know, I kind of always expect myself to stand a chance anyways."

Gauff keeps her nerve

Coco Gauff calmed her opening round nerves to beat Slovakia's Anna Karolina Schmiedlova 6-3 6-0 at the Australian Open on Monday, with the fourth seed taking some time to find her groove on serve after making some adjustments ahead of the new season.

Gauff, the newest member of the Grand Slam champions club after her U.S. Open success last September, traded breaks freely with Schmiedlova after her opening service game but settled into her stride to produce a late hold and wrap up the first set.

The 19-year-old stepped up a few gears in the next set as Schmiedlova continued to struggle on serve and raced ahead 3-0 with a superb cross-court winner from the deep to draw loud cheers from fans on Rod Laver Arena.

"I was a little bit nervous coming in today," said Gauff. "You probably could tell. I was able to just calm down and then play my good, not my best, but good tennis from that point."

LONG READ

Lessons from the rise and fall of shooting stars

There are no straightforward answers to why Saurabh Chaudhary and Jitu Rai suffered their slumps in form, but there are lessons to be learned as Indian shooting contingent eyes a redemption in Paris

WORLD BEATER TO INDIA NO. 35

MIHIR VASAVDA / SHIVANI NAIK

SAURABH CHAUDHARY, the pistol shooter about whom his former coach once said 'speaks 24 words in 24 hours', stuttered while trying to articulate the reasons for his lost invincibility.

"I have been doing the same thing," Chaudhary said, breaking the pause. "I look at the target, aim and shoot."

It was early 2023 and Chaudhary was trying to return to the national team. Three years earlier, in February 2020 just days before the world would be locked down, the then 18-year-old had offered the same 'look, aim and shoot' explanation when he was asked to describe his genius.

That afternoon, standing under the crisp spring sun on the lawns of the Constitution Club in the heart of the Capital, Chaudhary was basking in the afterglow of a scarcely believable year that saw him catapulted into the rare status of a sure-shot medal winner at Tokyo Olympics.

A lot had changed in the intervening years. Yet, in Chaudhary's words, nothing had.

The pandemic may have turned the world upside down. An Olympics of historic firsts and heartbreaks may have come and gone, leaving the shooters more bruised than any other Indian athletes. But Chaudhary remained shy and inscrutable.

There was one big difference, which wasn't so apparent a year ago as it is today: the reports of the demise of his form were not greatly exaggerated.

Last year, Chaudhary did not make the cut for the World Championships and the Asian Games. He finished 203rd at the National Championships with a score of 569 and shot a score of 557 – lowest among the 56 shooters in the 10m air pistol ranked by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) in December – at the National Games. In the NRAI's provisional 10m air pistol rankings released last month, Chaudhary is placed 35th on the list of 56 shooters.

Scroll a little up and the name of another enigma – shy and inscrutable like Chaudhary – who suffered a similar, dramatic slump in form – in the Rio to Tokyo cycle – stands out. Number 28: Jitu Rai.

● Before the Tokyo Olympics, Saurabh Chaudhary won every title possible: World and Asian Championship, World Cup and Youth Olympics. He even held the world record in the 10m air pistol.

● In the NRAI's provisional 10m air pistol rankings released last month, Chaudhary is placed 35th on the list of 56 shooters.

● Post Tokyo, he has not been able to make the cut for the World Championships and the Asian Games. He finished 203rd at the National Championships with a score of 569. At the National Games in December 2023, he shot 557 – the lowest among the 56 shooters in the 10m air pistol ranked by the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI).



Amidst the celebrations over the record quota places earned for the Paris Olympics last week, the tales of these two shooters offer caution.

One was born in the impoverished hilly district of Nepal, Sankhuwasabha. The other grew up in the badlands of Western UP. One had to leave his home, migrate to India, apply for citizenship and join the Army to become a sport shooter. The other didn't have to navigate any of this; the route was simpler – he constructed a makeshift shooting range in his backyard. One had to suffer a spate of rejections in the initial years before making it big. Everything the other touched from the get-go turned into gold.

The diverse paths that Jitu Rai and Saurabh Chaudhary traversed eventually took them to dizzying heights.

Between 2013 and 2016, Rai won a gold medal at the World Cup, Asian Games and Commonwealth Games along with a silver medal at the World Championship. Chaudhary did even better between 2018 and 2021 – he won nearly every title that was on offer leading up to the Olympics. Their contrasting journeys have converged at unprecedented crossroads.

Rai lost his place in the Indian team – to Chaudhary, incidentally – long ago. And now Chaudhary, once seen as an heir to the moniker 'Gold Finger', has been pushed out of the team. None, including Jaspal Rana, could nail down the pistol medal at the

Olympics and Vijay Kumar remains the lone winner in rapid fire, with air pistol failures being the most curious Games after Games.

The two Paris Olympics quota winners, Sarabjeet Singh and Varun Tomar (Chaudhary's cousin) have swiftly filled the void. But the question continues to haunt: Why, in consecutive Olympic cycles, have India's best air pistol shooters suffered an irreversible loss of form?

There are no straightforward answers but some of the best brains in Indian shooting have come up with theories.

Chaudhary and Rai shared the same 'look, aim, shoot' mantra. There were times when they went about their thing so nonchalantly that the duo gave an impression that they themselves weren't sure how they shot such high scores consistently. But when things fall apart, the simplicity can also be a bane.

Abhinav Bindra, who recovered from a setback at the Athens Olympics to win the

gold medal in Beijing, says: "Sometimes, there is a lack of self-awareness. Simple execution, without having much self-awareness of what's happening around them, within them. The challenge there is when things do break down, you don't have a method to go back to. It's about starting all over again. That's been the case to a degree with these athletes."

Voice in the NRAI believe the disappointment of not winning a medal at the Olympics impacted Chaudhary and Rai so deeply that they never could recover completely. Yet, it also remains a fact that both of them reached the final – Chaudhary, in fact, was the only Indian shooter to reach a shooting final at the Tokyo Games.

The young prodigy was one of the beneficiaries of the gun laws getting liberalised and the access to air pistols getting easier as a consequence. It allowed him to shoot at home without any professional help or supervision. It's all rosy until a certain point but when there's a dip in form – as he experienced – the self-taught ways can be an impediment.

More so in pistol shooting, says London Olympics silver medallist Vijay Kumar because of the finer nuances involved. "Pistol is a more difficult weapon than a rifle to master because it's one-hand-held only. Both, the trigger mechanism and balance in aiming and holding the weapon are in one hand. Controlling it is tougher," he says.

Vijay adds: "You need to understand your weapon so well that you can deal with a malfunction within seconds of realising it. Otherwise, it's just an excuse for a poor show. The ability to control the pressure at the Olympics is the single-biggest quality besides good technique. You might have given 100 domestic trials and won World Cups, but how well you accept the pressure of the Olympics and not let past success distract you, will decide if you get a medal."

Bindra did not comment specifically in the case of these two shooters, saying he wasn't aware of their process, but noted the 'importance of a strong foundation.'

"When you don't have a strong foundation, things can break down completely," Bindra says. "You can have success with er-

rors in technique but you can still go out and win. When you are in a purple patch, nothing can stop you. With every competition, the technique falls apart and one fine day, it completely falls apart."

The way Bindra explains, one needs to think of shooters like cars. With every mile run, the wear and tear gets worse. And unless it goes back to the garage, a complete breakdown isn't far away.

In shooting, Bindra says, the technique erodes with every tournament. "When you are in a competition, your hands are shaking and the heart rate will be up – that's unavoidable. So, your technical execution is going to break down as you are going to find a way to somehow get the shot out and perform well. And so, after every competition, your technique is failing apart to a degree," he says.

The shooting equivalent of returning to the garage is to go back to the range, 'clean up' the technique by repeating basic things over and over again rightly. "Focus on your foundation and plug whichever gap has to be plugged before they become a habit. You have to deconstruct to reconstruct," he says.

This means that in a packed season there could be very little time to find a month or two to 'return to basics'.

More so in the competitive landscape of Indian shooting. So, it might be tempting for a shooter to not mend an unbroken bridge but it's also why, Bindra says, a shooter needs to have a coach whom he can trust.

"Smart athletes won't go back to the basics when they hit poor form. That needs self-awareness. Not all athletes have the self-awareness. Hence the role of coaches is of absolute importance," Bindra says.



Naomi Osaka lost in straight sets to 16th seed Caroline Garcia. AP

"I think I can learn from the progress."

Taking on the experienced Garcia was always going to be a big challenge for Osaka, who had played only two matches in Brisbane two weeks ago since her return to tournament tennis.

A double fault gave Garcia the first break point of the match in the fifth game and the former world number four converted it to edge ahead.

Osaka had a sniff of a break back at deuce in the eighth game but dumped a routine backhand into the net and Garcia held with back-to-back aces before going on to take the set.

"I felt like I was constantly on my back foot and really hesitant," Osaka added.

"I was a little bit overthinking in my head where to go. I think that's something that will come in time, but right now it kind of sucks a little."

Garcia, who raced through the second-set tiebreak to clinch her place in round two, said

she was sure it would not be too long before Osaka was back at the top of the game.

"She has had an amazing career, she has been away for 15 months and been through a lot," the 30-year-old said.

"Six months after giving birth and she's playing amazing, so we have to watch out."

It was Osaka's earliest exit in eight visits to the Australian Open and her third successive loss in the opening round of a Grand Slam after she fell at the first hurdle at the French and U.S. Opens in 2022.

The 26-year-old was clearly struggling to reconcile her disappointment at the loss with the fact that she was so competitive after such a long period on the sidelines.

"Of course, there's a voice in my head that is, 'Who are you to think you can come back and immediately start winning matches?'" Osaka said.

"I don't know, I kind of always expect myself to stand a chance anyways."

BRIEFLY

Spanish rider dies after Dakar Rally crash

Riyadh: Spanish motorcycle rider Carles Falcon has died more than a week after crashing in the Dakar Rally in Saudi Arabia, his team said on Monday. Falcon, 45, had been in an induced coma since he was flown to hospital with severe injuries from a fall during the second stage on January 7. Race director David Castera told reporters at the time that the rider, who was competing in the endurance event for the second time, had lacked a pulse but was resuscitated by the first doctor to arrive on the scene.

REUTERS

PSG's Lee guides Korea to 3-1 win

Al Rayyan: South Korea beat Bahrain 3-1 in their Asian Cup Group E opener on Monday with Paris St Germain's Lee Kang-in rescuing his side with a second-half brace at the Jassim Bin Hamad Stadium. With the score tied at 1-1 after goals from Hwang In-Beom and Bahrain's Abdullah Al-Hashash, Lee turned on the style with two lethal strikes that had the South Korean fans at the small 15,000 capacity arena screaming in delight.

REUTERS

Israel footballer leaves Turkey after detention

Istanbul: Israeli soccer player Sagiv Jehezkel left Turkey on Monday, Turkish Interior Minister Ali Yerlikaya said on social media platform X, after he was questioned by police over a message he displayed on his wrist during a match alluding to the passage of 100 days since the Oct. 7 Hamas attack on Israel. "Sagiv Jehezkel, the Israeli footballer of Antalyaspor, left our country at 5:15 p.m. (1415 GMT)," the minister said. Turkish police had detained Jehezkel overnight and freed him on Monday. Justice Minister Yilmaz Tunc had said prosecutors were investigating Jehezkel on a charge of "inciting people to hatred and hostility" for displaying a note written on his bandaged wrist saying "100 days, 7.10", alongside a Jewish Star of David emblem.

REUTERS

Lakshay wins bronze at Asian shooting

Kuwait City: Asian Games silver medallist Lakshay Sheoran won bronze in men's trap but missed one of the two available Paris 2024 Olympics quota places by a whisker in the Asia Olympic Qualifiers for shotgun here on Monday. Sheoran finished third despite leading the 50-shot final for most of it. 15-year-old Iranian Mohammad Beyranvand struck gold and the first quota place, getting the better of silver winning Chinese Guo Yuhao, the latter missing his second shoot-off shot after both had tied at 40 hits.

PTI

Gurjar, Ankita claim cross-country titles

Gaya: Hemant Gurjar and Ankita of the Railways walked away with the men's and women's titles respectively at the one-day 58th National Cross Country Championships held here on Monday. But overall, Railways (28) finished second behind Services who clinched the title with 20 points in the men's team event. Haryana with 64 points was third. Railways on the other hand clinched the top honours in the women's team event with 16 points. Uttar Pradesh (41 points) were declared second with Maharashtra (77) coming third.

PTI

Prakhar slams unbeaten 404 for Karnataka, breaks Yuvi's record

PRATYUSH RAJ
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

IN MS Dhoni's biopic, there's a famous dialogue from the protagonist, "Bahut mara, dhaaga khol diya ek dum (He smashed us all over the park)," about Yuvraj Singh's 358 runs in the Cooch Behar Trophy final played between Punjab and Bihar.

"Twenty-four years later, Karnataka's Prakhar Chaturvedi walloped Mumbai team in the 2023-24 final with an unbeaten 404. The 358 Yuvraj scored at Keenan Stadium had stayed as a record for the highest individual score in a Cooch Behar Trophy final for more than two decades.

Batting first, Mumbai were bowled out for 380 runs and Prakhar's knock was enough to help Karnataka win on the first-innings lead as they looted 890 for 8. Vijay Zol's 451 not out for Maharashtra against Assam in the 2011-12 season remains the highest individual score in the tournament.

Sanjay Chaturvedi, Prakhar's father, is a

software engineer who now runs his own start-up, while his mother, Rupa Chaturvedi, is a technical officer in Defence Research & Development Organisation (DRDO).

"We are from Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh, but I have been living in Bengaluru for more than two decades now. I am an IIT BHU pass-out myself, and obviously, I wanted him to focus on his studies, but for the past couple of years, cricket has taken over. He has good grades in Class XII and is now in BA first year and is pursuing economics," Chaturvedi tells *The Indian Express*.

"Like any kid in the apartment, he used to play cricket. One day, a gentleman in our society told me, 'your son hits really well, why don't you put him in an academy?' His son also used to play cricket. In 2017, we moved him to SIX Cricket Academy. SIX is based at the Padukone-David Centre of Sports Excellence in Bangalore. Prakhar has represented the state U-16, now U-19. It is good to see that he is doing well in cricket, which he is really passionate about," he says.

KJeshwanth, former Karnataka captain and



Prakhar Chaturvedi smashed an unbeaten 404 for Karnataka. @BCCI

coach under whom Prakhar has trained for the past six years, believes this knock will silence all his critics.

"The boy has to go through a lot. He was struggling to make it into the state U-19 team. Not many people believed in his ability. He has been a very good player for us," says Jeswanth.

"Not only U-19, he was not selected for U-16 also. We had to make a presentation in front of the selectors to make them believe that he is a quality cricketer. I understand there is lots of competition. You can't blame the selectors. To see the ability of a player, a coach or a selector must have a vision, you can't rely on stats, even a computer can do that. Prakhar was performing but was not getting picked; they would give various reasons. Now he has shown what he is made of," he adds. Jeswanth feels the opener, who showed a tremendous amount of patience during his 638 balls stay at the crease, has got an excellent head on his shoulder and has the capacity to excel in all three formats.

"You have seen him batting in the longer

version. You will be amazed when you see him in the white ball. He plays risk-free strokes, and without slogging, scores quickly. He scores all his runs beautifully with proper technique. He never scores ugly," says Jeswanth.

"He can hit the ball a long way. You see his sixes, all three of them were long. He is famous for hitting big sixes in the Bengaluru circuit," he says.

The coach is also proud of the fact that seven of the 15-member Karnataka squad is from his academy. "Prakhar Chaturvedi, Dhruv Prabhakar, Samit Dravid, Agastya Raju, Samarth, Yuvraj Arora were in the playing XI, while Krishiv Bajaj was among the substitutes," he says. Prakhar's father credits his son's hard work, who would travel around 100 km every day for his cricket. "We live in Electronic City, while the academy is 50 km away in Devanahalli, where the academy is. It is like the other side of the city. He has done his hard yards. We saw the match on TV as well. *Majaa aaya kaafi, bahut maara isne* (Loved it, he played really well)," says Chaturvedi.

INDIA OPEN SUPER 750

Galaxy of badminton stars in Delhi

While all eyes will be on the doubles stars Satwik-Chirag, four reigning World Champions are also part of field

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 15

KUNLAVUT VITIDSARN and An Se Young made a fine start to 2023, winning titles at the India Open. Few months down the line, the two of them would go on to be crowned World Champions in Copenhagen. As the race to Paris 2024 heats up, the two defending champions and reigning Worlds gold medallists will be back in New Delhi along with a galaxy of badminton stars as the capital hosts the 2024 edition of the India Open Super 750 starting from Tuesday.

The India Open has been the prime BWF event in the country for more than a decade, but last year saw a significant upgrade as the tournament was moved up to Super 750 status, just two levels below the top grade on the World Tour.

For starters, as one of the six Super 750 events on the circuit, BWF mandates that a group defined by rankings as 'Top Committed Players' will be required to play, barring injuries and medical situations.

As one of the two major events in January, especially at the start of an Olympic year, the quality of badminton at the tournament will be as close to world-class as it can get.

From an Indian perspective, for the players who travel around the world in a packed calendar, constantly on the move, hopping in and out of flights and hotel rooms, India Open gives a chance to enjoy home comfort.

Fond memories

For HS Prannoy, India's top singles shuttler heading into the event, that means a lot. "To have a tournament of Super 750 stature is something very big for us. Especially for the fans, they can see a lot of top players closely, which doesn't happen that often, that's the best part. There are a lot of good memories associated with this tournament, for me now, there is a hunger to win it," the 8th seed, who will start with a tough fixture against Chou Tien Chen, said on Monday.

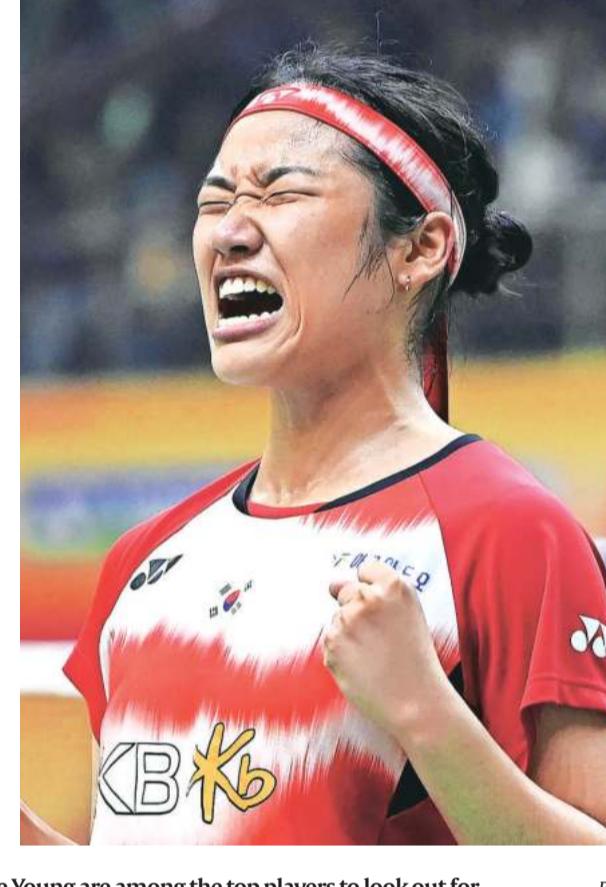
Prannoy is yet to win the tournament but India Open has a special place in his heart.

He fondly remembers 2013, when he came through qualification to enter the main draw and get the chance to face the man he grew up idolising: Indonesia's Taufik Hidayat. And going on to win that match no less, before taking on Lee Chong Wei. He might not have won the event yet, but it gave him the platform to make a name for himself.

"Definitely 2013 is special. To defeat Taufik, and then play Chong Wei was one of those biggest moments. Post that, I haven't had great results at the India Open as such. But just to see a lot of known faces coming to support you, is very special. They don't al-



Winners of the India Open 2023 Kunlavut Vitidsarn and An Se Young are among the top players to look out for.



ELITE FIELD

IN THE lead up to India Open, the withdrawal of three world No 1s and three other former world champions took some sheen off the strength of the field.

Prominent among them are Viktor Axelsen and Carolina Marin, both huge crowd favourites in Delhi. Flagbearers of Indian badminton for years, both PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal are absent as well. But despite that, here's the cream of the crop that will be in action:

INDIA'S TOP STARS: Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty, HS Prannoy, Lakshya Sen, Srikanth Kidambi

REIGNING WORLD CHAMPIONS: Kunlavut Vitidsarn, An Se Young, Kang Min Hyuk & Seo SeungJae, Chae Yoo Jung & Seo Seung-Jae

CURRENT WORLD NO 1: An Se Young, Liang Wei Keng & Wang Chang

REIGNING OLYMPIC CHAMPIONS: Chen Yufei, Wang Yang & Wang Chi Lin

GLOBAL SUPERSTARS: Tai Tzu Ying, Ratchanok Intanon, Akane Yamaguchi, Jonatan Christie, Anthony Ginting, Lee Zii Jia, Aaron Chia / Soh Wooi Yik

ference over the last two years," Mishra said.

Prannoy-Lakshya face-off

After the confirmation of withdrawals – a list that got lengthier than ideal – the good news for the Indian contingent is the promotion of a few more players into the main draw. Kiran George and Satish Kumar Karunakaran (men's singles), Aakarshi Kashyap (women's singles), Dhruv Kapila-MR Arjun and Krishna Prasad-Sai Pratheek (men's doubles), Ashwini Bhat-Shikha Gautam and Rutaparna Panda-Swetaparna Panda (women's doubles) have earned a chance to play.

But all eyes will be on Satwik-Chirag, fresh from their fine run to the final at Malaysia Open, Prannoy and Lakshya – who could potentially meet in the second round – as the Indian contingent looks to make amends for the missed opportunity in 2023. The tournament getting an upgrade is good for the game in general, but to see a home-tie winner in the end is the real marker.

RANJI ROUND UP

Dhull bites the dust

At Delhi, Yash Dhull's susceptible technique against raw pace was exposed by Umran Malik as Delhi's young batting stars collectively struggled in seamer-friendly conditions with only 42 overs play possible across four days.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi 1st Innings 134/6 in 42 overs (Anuj Rawat 47 not out). Match drawn. Points: Delhi 1, JK 1.

Odisha get 3 points vs MP

Odisha got valuable three points in an away game against Madhya Pradesh by virtue of big 180-run first innings lead in another game at Indore. After MP scored 318 in reply to Odisha's first innings score of 498, the home team managed 291 for 4 in 59 overs as Yash Dubey (91) and Himanshu Mantri (119) helped themselves with some easy runs.

BRIEF SCORES: Odisha 498 and (target 112) 38/1. MP 318 and 291/4 (Himanshu Mantri 119). Match Drawn. Odisha 3; MP 1.

Siddharth shines for Gujarat

Gujarat scripted a stunning turnaround by bundling out Karnataka for 103 on the final day to secure a dramatic six-run win. Set a 110-run target, Karnataka were cruising comfortably at 50 for no loss before the Gujarat bowlers, headlined by Desai's stellar 7/42 orchestrated a sensational collapse.

BRIEF SCORES: Gujarat 264 and 219; 80.2 overs (U Kumar 57, M Hingrajia 56; V Koushil 3/16, R Kumar 3/61, S Hegde 2/90). Karnataka 374 and 103; 26.2 overs (S Desai 7/42, R Vaghela 3/38). Points: Gujarat 6, Karnataka 0.

Tare, Dhapola star in big win Aditya Tare scored 100 and 79 and also took six catches as Uttarakhand demolished a below-par Himachal Pradesh by 88 runs to get six points in another game at Dharamsala.

BRIEF SCORES: Uttarakhand 231 and 227. HP 271 and (target 195) 106 in 31 overs (D Dhapola 5/31). Uttarakhand won by 88 runs. Points: Uttarakhand 6, HP 0.

Mumbai make it two out of two with bonus-point win

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, JANUARY 15

MUMBAI REGISTERED their second consecutive win in the ongoing Ranji Trophy when they defeated Andhra by 10 wickets at the MCA-BKC ground on Monday.

Left-arm spinner Shams Mulani finished with a 10-wicket match haul while left-arm seamer Royston Dias took three wickets. Andhra, who resumed on 164 for 5 on the fourth and final day, were bundled out for 244 runs, giving Mumbai merely 33 runs to chase for victory.

Andhra's overnight batsman Shaik Rasheed, who was batting on 52 overnight, could only add 14 runs while Nitish Reddy, who was unbeaten on 22, added eight to his tally on Monday.

The proceedings didn't take long on the final morning as Andhra surrendered to Mumbai's bowling line-up before lunch.

Thereafter, it took only 8.4 overs for



Left-arm seamer Royston Dias took three wickets for Mumbai.

skipper Ajinkya Rahane said the team will aim to play the same brand of 'courageous' cricket. "We have to be courageous. It is a long tournament and one will only win games when bowlers start to take wickets. The first aim is to take the first innings lead, in four days there are few games which provide outright results. I never believe in playing safe cricket. One has to be courageous, if one wants to achieve something," Rahane said.

After two big wins, Mumbai would like to remain consistent throughout the season. The skipper said he has told his team to be in the moment and play as per the conditions. Their top order has managed to get starts but none have managed to convert it into a three-figure score. But Rahane doesn't consider it a concern going ahead.

"Both the openers are new. These guys have done well in club cricket. It's all about giving freedom to players. They also know their mistakes, nobody wants to get out intentionally and these boys are learning. They have an attitude to learn and we also

keep talking to them," he added.

Brief Scores: Mumbai 395 & 34 for no loss beat Andhra 184 & 244 (Shaik Rasheed 66; S Mulani 6/63, R Dias 3/45) by 10 wickets.

Dube added to Mumbai squad

All-rounder Shivam Dube has been added to the Mumbai squad that will play Kerala in their third Ranji Trophy in Thumba. Dube is currently part of the Indian side for the ongoing T20I series against Afghanistan. Dube hit two unbroken half-centuries to take India home in the first two games. However, Shreyas Iyer won't be part of the Mumbai team as he will be joining the Indian Test squad on January 20 in Hyderabad.

Want to play 100 Tests: Rahane

Rahane wasn't part of the South Africa tour and hasn't been picked for the Test squad for the England series either. But the middle-order batsman hasn't given up hope and aims to play 100 Tests.

At Delhi, Yash Dhull's susceptible technique against raw pace was exposed by Umran Malik as Delhi's young batting stars collectively struggled in seamer-friendly conditions with only 42 overs play possible across four days.

BRIEF SCORES: Delhi 1st Innings 134/6 in 42 overs (Anuj Rawat 47 not out). Match drawn. Points: Delhi 1, JK 1.