



# DRISHTI JUDICIARY

An initiative by Drishti IAS

## JUDICIARY FOUNDATION COURSE

— English Medium —



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Mukherjee Nagar Centre



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Via Drishti Learning App



Hindi Medium

Launching Soon

### Principles of Justice, Equity and Good Conscience



#### The Grundnorm

- Drishti proudly stands as a testament of excellence
- Over 20+ Years of experience
- Proficiency in addressing the distinct challenges of entrance examination
- Proven record in guiding aspirants to achieve success



#### The Evidence

- Course materials encompass printed class notes updated with new laws
- Drishti Publication's Prelims Practice Series offers exam-focused practice
- The Mains Capsule Series provides in-depth coverage of exam topics
- Monthly compilations of Legal Current Affairs to keep students updated



#### The Territorial Jurisdiction

- Tailored classes focused on state-specific laws covering key regions such as Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and Bihar
- In-depth exploration of legal frameworks covering old & new criminal laws
- Specialised classes addressing key subjects: General Studies, Judgement Writing, Framing of Charges (Civil & Criminal), and Language



#### The Trial

- Regular class tests to assess understanding and progress
- Answer writing practice with evaluation via Drishti Learning App
- Answer evaluation and feedback from experts
- Opportunity for students to refine skills through 500 answer evaluations



#### The Procedure

- Thorough syllabus coverage from basic to advanced levels
- Emphasis on fundamental concepts
- Hybrid learning model incorporating live-streamed classes
- Drishti Learning App availability for seamless access



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# THE WORLD

TOP OF THE  
WORLD



Chinese Premier  
Li Qiang. Reuters

CHINA  
Premier's annual  
press conference  
ends after 30 yrs

Beijing: China has scrapped one of the most widely-followed events on its economic and policy calendar, the premier's post-parliament news conference, a move seen by some observers as a sign of the country's increasingly inward focus and centralised control. For three decades, during a period when China was opening up, the briefing had offered foreign investors and governments insights into how Chinese policymakers regard the challenges of managing what is now the world's second-largest economy. In a surprise announcement Monday, a spokesman said China's Premier Li Qiang will not brief the media at the close of this year's annual parliament session. **REUTERS**

THAILAND  
Court acquits  
ex-PM Yingluck  
in govt funds  
misuse case

Bangkok: A Thai court on Monday acquitted former Prime Minister Shinawatra, now living in exile, on charges of mis-handling funds for a government project in 2013, the latest legal victory for the powerful family of former premier Thaksin Shinawatra. The action comes shortly after Thaksin, Yingluck's brother, was released on parole for corruption-related offences. **REUTERS**

IRAN  
Hardliners retain  
hold as poll  
results get out

Tehran: Iranian hard-line politicians dominated the country's vote for parliament, results released Monday showed, maintaining their hold on the legislature in a vote that saw calls for a boycott and an apparently low turnout. Of 290 races held for parliament, voters decided 245 seats in the first round, and of the 245 politicians elected, 200 were supported by hard-line groups in voter guides published before the election, according to an Associated Press analysis. The analysis identified some 45 incoming lawmakers as being relatively moderate, conservative or independent. **AP**

JAPAN  
24 fishermen  
rescued from  
sinking ship

Tokyo: A Japanese coast guard helicopter rescued 24 fishermen as they desperately clung to the deck of a tilting, half-submerged ship being pounded by high waves Monday morning off an island chain southwest of Tokyo. One crewmember thrown from the rocking ship into the rough seas before the arrival of the rescuers was found dead. The Fukuei Maru No. 8 stalled due to an engine failure Sunday evening in the Pacific Ocean, about five hours after it departed the Yaizu Port in central Japan en route to South America. **AP**

## BARS STATES FROM DISQUALIFYING CANDIDATES FOR FEDERAL OFFICE

# Major relief for Trump as Supreme Court restores him to Colorado primary ballots

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 4

THE US Supreme Court handed Donald Trump a major victory Monday, barring a constitutional provision involving insurrection and reversing Colorado's exclusion of him from its ballot.

The justices unanimously overturned a December 19 decision by Colorado's top court to kick the former president off the state's Tuesday Republican primary ballot after finding that the US Constitution's 14th Amendment disqualifies him from again holding public office. The Colorado court had found that Trump took part in an insurrection for inciting and supporting the January 6, 2021, attack on the US Capitol by his supporters.

But four of the nine justices, in-



Ex-President Donald Trump

cluding the court's three liberal members, faulted the rest of the court for announcing rules limiting how the constitutional provision may be enforced in the future.

The ruling was issued on the eve of Super Tuesday, the day in the US presidential primary cycle when the most states hold nominating contests.

The Supreme Court's decision came five days after it agreed to

decide Trump's claim of immunity from prosecution on charges related to trying to overturn his 2020 election loss to Biden. The court acted in a speedier manner in deciding the ballot disqualification issue, benefiting Trump, than it has in resolving the immunity question. Delays in deciding the immunity issue could help Trump by delaying his criminal trial.

The 14th Amendment's Section 3 bars from office any "officer of the United States" who took an oath "to support the Constitution of the United States" and then "engaged in insurrection or rebellion against the same, or given aid or comfort to the enemies thereof."

"We conclude that states may disqualify persons holding or at-

tempting to hold state office. But states have no power under the Constitution to enforce Section 3 with respect to federal offices, especially the presidency," the unsigned opinion for the court stated. The justices found that only Congress can provide against federal officeholders and candidates.

"BIG WIN FOR AMERICA!!!"

Trump wrote on his social media immediately after the ruling.

He was also barred from the ballot in Maine and Illinois based on the 14th Amendment, but those decisions were put on hold pending the Supreme Court's

ruling in the Colorado case.

Colorado Secretary of State Jena Griswold expressed disappoint-

**EXPLAINED**  
**E** Cong could still pose hurdle

THE RULING says only the Congress can enforce the 'insurrection' provision against federal officers. Trump still faces a threat if he wins the Presidential elections, as the Congress which should certify his win, could disqualify him over the 2021 Capitol incident. The only check in it is the clause "subject of course to judicial review."

ment at this "stripping states of the authority" to enforce the disqualification clause. "Colorado should be able to bar oath-breaking insurrections from our ballot," she wrote in a social media post.

Hamas, arbiters press on with Gaza truce talks as Israel boycotts

Cairo: Hamas and Egyptian mediators said on Monday they were pressing on with talks on securing a ceasefire in Gaza, despite an Israeli decision not to send a delegation. Israel has declined to comment publicly on the Cairo talks, including its decision not to attend. A source said Israel would stay away because Hamas refused a request to list which hostages are still alive.

"Talks... continue... regardless of whether the occupation's delegation is present..." a Hamas official said Monday. Egyptian sources said mediators were in touch with Israel, allowing negotiations to continue. **REUTERS**

The ceremony was attended by former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and other PML-N workers, PPP leader and Sindh chief minister Murad Ali Shah was also present on the occasion.

On Sunday, Shehzad comfortably won a majority in the newly-elected Parliament amidst sloganning by the Opposition.

EX-PM GILANI POISED TO BECOME SENATE CHAIR

Islamabad: Former Pak Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, who is tipped to become the chairman of the Senate, has submitted his nomination papers to contest the election to be held Friday, according to a media report.

Gilani, who won the February 8 election to the National Assembly from Multan in Punjab has vacated his seat and will contest for a Senate seat from Islamabad. **PTI**

COPS RAID HOUSE OF OPP PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE

Karachi: Ahead of the presidential polls in Pakistan, authorities in Balochistan have raided the house of opposition presidential candidate and veteran politician Mahmood Khan Achakzai in the provincial capital, Quetta, and reclaimed a piece of government-owned land "illegally occupied" by him. **PTI**

## Israel conducts biggest Ramallah raid in years, kills teen in refugee camp

REUTERS  
RAMALLAH, MARCH 4

ISRAELI FORCES raided the Palestinian administrative capital of Ramallah in the occupied West Bank overnight, killing a 16-year-old in a refugee camp during their biggest such operation into the city in years, Palestinian sources said on Monday.

The Israeli military said that during the action, a riot broke out between Palestinians throwing rocks and petrol bombs and the soldiers, who responded with live fire. They said forces held a six-hour-long counter-terrorism operation in the camp, apprehending two, questioning others.

Witnesses in Ramallah said the Israeli forces had driven dozens of military vehicles into the city, the headquarters of the Palestinian Authority (PA) led by President Mahmoud Abbas which exercises limited self-rule over parts of the West Bank.

The Palestinian health ministry said Israeli forces shot and killed 16-year-old Mustafa Abu Shalbak while raiding Am'aari refugee camp. The Palestinian foreign ministry said Israeli occupation authorities were making lives of Palestinians in the West Bank "unbearable hell" with actions including raids, detentions, warning of "serious risks" of plunging the West Bank into "violence and anarchy".

The trip by Benny Gantz, a



Palestinians search for bodies, survivors in rubble after an Israeli airstrike in Rafah, Monday. AP

## Harris meet with Netanyahu rival Gantz exposes rift in Israel's wartime cabinet

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, MARCH 4

PRIME MINISTER Benjamin Netanyahu rebuked a top Cabinet minister arriving in Washington on Sunday for talks with US officials, according to an Israeli official, signaling widening cracks within the country's leadership nearly five months into its war with Hamas.

The trip by Benny Gantz, a

centrist political rival who joined Netanyahu's wartime Cabinet following Hamas' October 7 attack, comes as friction between the US and Netanyahu is rising.

An official from Netanyahu's far-right Likud party said Gantz's trip was planned without authorization from the Israeli leader. The official said Netanyahu had a "tough talk" with Gantz and told him the country has "just one Prime Minister."

Gantz is scheduled to meet on

Monday with US Vice President Kamala Harris and National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan and on Tuesday with Secretary of State Antony Blinken, according to his National Unity Party.

Over the weekend, Harris issued a forceful call for a temporary cease-fire deal in Gaza, which administration officials say would halt fighting for at least six weeks, and also increased pressure on Israel to not impede the aid that workers

were trying to get into the region. The White House has been advocating for that framework deal for weeks.

"Given the immense scale of suffering in Gaza, there must be an immediate cease-fire for at least the next six weeks, which is what is currently on the table," Harris said during an appearance in Selma, Alabama, on Sunday. "This will get the hostages out and get a significant amount of aid in."

## Abortion now a constitutional right in France

Versailles: France on Monday enshrined the right to abortion in its constitution, a world first welcomed by women's rights groups as historic.

Prachanda accused the Nepali Congress of being a "reactionary force" that was trying to use him.

NC leader and former Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba told his party colleagues that he did not expect this "dishonesty" from Prachanda.

Prachanda dumped Nepali Cong-

ress and formed a new party, CPN-Oli.

The coalition of the two big Left parties in Nepal was previously openly supported by China, whereas both India and the US were against it.

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# Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

## Means ensuring well being of the poor

**Hamara Sankalp  
Viksit Bharat**

Scan for more information

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



**'Abuse of rights':  
SC pulls up  
Udhayanidhi  
on his Sanatan  
Dharma remark**

DMK leader  
made the  
remarks in  
September  
2023

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

REBUKING TAMIL Nadu minister Udhayanidhi Stalin for his "eradicate Sanatan Dharma" remark, the Supreme Court on Monday said he had abused his right to free speech.

The two-judge bench of Justices Sanjiv Khanna and Dipankar Datta was hearing Udhayanidhi's plea to club the FIRs filed in different states over his remarks.

"You abuse your Article 19(1)(a) right (freedom of speech and expression). You abuse your Article 25 right (freedom of conscience, freedom to profess, practice and propagate religion). Now, you are exercising your Article 32 right (to file a plea in the Supreme Court directly)? Do you not know the consequences of what you said?" Justice Dutta said.

"You are not a layman. You are a minister. You should know the consequences," he said.

Appearing for the DMK leader, senior advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi said he was not arguing on the merits of the matter, but only seeking to club the FIRs filed in six states. "I will suffer my

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**THE WORLD**

**TRUMP WINS COLORADO BALLOT DISQUALIFICATION CASE AT TOP COURT**

**SHEHZAD TAKES OATH AS PAK PM FOR SECOND TIME**

**Delhi announces Rs 1,000 per month for women over 18, earmarks Rs 2,000 crore**

**GAYATHRI MANI**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4



**Delhi Finance Minister Atishi with CM Arvind Kejriwal after presenting the Budget.** Praveen Khanna

government pension schemes and government employees.

Presenting the AAP government's tenth budget with a total outlay of Rs 76,000 crore for 2024-25, Finance Minister Atishi said, "So, whether she is a

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**DELHI BUDGET INSPIRED BY RAM RAJYA: CM** PAGE 4

**EXPRESS NETWORK**

**SET TO RESIGN TODAY, JUSTICE GANGOPADHYAY SAYS WORK DONE**

PAGE 6

Within a couple of hours, Modhwadia, 67, confirmed he felt "suffocated" and that ending his 40-year association with the Congress was a "relief".

"If there is any leader who has travelled most extensively for the Congress or held events for the party, it is me. If I have had to quit the party, it is for the Congress to introspect why I was forced to do so," he said.

In his resignation letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Modhwadia said, "Since my dissent, I have met scores of people who were offended by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Monday, the SBI said it "intends to comply in full, with the directions issued" by the court. "However, there are certain practical difficulties with the decoding exercise and the timeline fixed for it... due to the stringent measures undertaken to ensure that the identity of the donors was kept anonymous," it said, adding that "matching of the donor to the donations made would be a complex process".

The bank said that "as per the gazette notification" of January 2, 2018, "whereby the central government framed the Electoral Bond Scheme 2018, it was categorically provided under Clause 7 (4)" that "the information furnished by the buyer shall be treated as confidential by the authorised bank and shall not be disclosed to any authority for any purpose, except when demanded

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**'ANONYMITY MAKES TASK TOUGH'**

**Poll bond details:  
Will comply, SBI  
tells SC, but need  
time until June 30**

Says can't meet March 6 deadline due to challenge of matching donation to donor

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN G**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

CALLING IT a "time consuming exercise", the State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday asked the Supreme Court to extend the deadline for submitting details on purchase of electoral bonds to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to June 30. The Lok Sabha election process would be over by then.

The ruling focuses only on the scope of immunity from prosecution when

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**WHEN LAWMAKERS  
TAKE BRIBES** PAGE 12

**Blow to Cong  
in Gujarat, its  
ex-state chief  
quits, cites  
'insult to Ram'**

Arjun Modhwadia has not announced his next move yet

**ADITI RAJA**  
VADODARA, MARCH 4

ARJUN MODHWADIA was conspicuous by his absence at the media interaction of the Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee (GPCC) on Monday, which shared the itinerary of Rahul Gandhi's Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra which enters the state on March 7. Although the Porbandar MLA was already on his way to hand over his resignation to the Speaker, Congress leaders remained in denial when asked about the rumours that Modhwadia had quit.

Within a couple of hours, Modhwadia, 67, confirmed he felt "suffocated" and that ending his 40-year association with the Congress was a "relief".

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In his resignation letter to Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, Modhwadia said, "Since my dissent, I have met scores of people who were offended by

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Telangana Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy in Adilabad on Monday. PTI

**'PM matlab bada bhai':  
Revanth seeks Modi's  
help for Telangana**

Rao, who skipped meeting Modi several times during the PM's visits to the state.

Addressing the Prime Minister in Hindi, Reddy said, "Hamare hisaab se Pradhan Mantri matlab bada bhai (According to us, Prime Minister means elder brother). Only with his help can chief ministers take their states forward. It is my request that if Telangana has to

progress, if it has to move ahead like Gujarat, your help is required. To reach your goal of a 5 trillion dollar economy, India needs five metropolitan cities

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

means to build on self-awareness and self-esteem of students by communicating the strengths and areas of improvement.

At all stages, going beyond academic learning, students are assessed on self-awareness, interpersonal relationships, problem-solving, emotional quotient and creative skills. Each student has to reflect on their own progress at the end of an activity by circling statements such as — "I was able to learn something new" or "I was able to express my creativity" or "I was able to help others in some way".

For example, at the end of an activity, a student of Class 1 will

circle what they were able to do and not do. A child can self-evaluate her performance through descriptive remarks such as "I liked doing this work", "I could ask my friends for help", "I followed my teacher's instructions" by colouring smileys that say 'yes', 'no' or 'not sure'. This "student's self-reflection" is part of the HPC for all students from Class 1 to Class 8.

At middle stage (Class 6 to Class 8), students are encouraged to set their own academic and personal goals and a definite timeline by which they wish to achieve these goals at the beginning of the year. Students are also required to fill in their expecta-

tions from a teacher with respect to areas where they need help. The HPC for middle stage also includes an "ambition card" where a student can fill in her ambitions for the year and mention areas where she must improve, skills and habits she must develop to achieve her ambitions.

The HPC will also link home and school by making parents an integral part of a child's learning process. It will include inputs of parents like ability to do homework, following lessons in the classroom and even student's ability to balance screen time with extra-curricular activities at home.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

(HPC) for foundational stage (Classes 1 and 2), preparatory stage (Classes 3 to 5) and middle stage (Classes 6 to 8) and is currently working on developing one for the secondary stage.

The NCERT has asked all states to either adopt the HPC or adapt it according to their requirements.

Traditionally, assessment in schools has been primarily focused on year-end examinations, with the responsibility solely placed on teachers. The HPC, aligned with the recommendations of the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) to make evaluation

more "learner-centric", marks a departure from this approach by considering various aspects of learning, including diverse skills and competencies, rather than solely relying on marks obtained in periodic tests. Its aim is to track not only students' academic performance but also their cognitive, socio-emotional abilities, and creativity during class activities.

To achieve this, the HPC emphasises on a descriptive form of evaluation where students are active participants. Each child will be able to evaluate not only their own performance but also of their classmates. According to the NCFSE, the HPC is a

**WHAT IS HOLISTIC PROGRESS CARD**

- New form of student evaluation based on recommendations of NEP 2020
- Doesn't depend on marks or grades to evaluate a student's academic performance
- Instead, it gives greater role to parents in tracking a student's achievements in class



- Students' own perception of their performance and what they wish to achieve in school included for the first time

means to build on self-awareness and self-esteem of students by communicating the strengths and areas of improvement.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

• PM matlab bada bhai': Revanth

and Hyderabad wants to contribute. Please support us in the Metro rail... Just as you developed the Sabarmati river, we want to re-generate our Musi river," he said to cheers from the audience.

This is Modi's first visit to Telangana after the Congress came to power in December. Reddy indicated that the Congress government in the state did not want friction with the Centre.

Earlier in the day, Modi dedicated to the nation the NTPCs 800 MW (Unit-2) of Telangana Super Thermal Power Project in Peddapalli and the electrification project of the Ambari-Adilabad-Pimpalkhuti railway line. He also laid the foundation stone for railway, highway and power projects

worth over Rs 7,000 crore. Speaking at the event, Modi said, "The various projects launched today will ensure development of Telangana and its people."

"In the last 15 days, we have inaugurated five AIIMs, two IITs, three IIIMs, and 200 railway projects. This is Viksit Bharat," he said.

Referring to Telangana as the land of tribal leaders Ramji Gond and Komaram Bheem, the PM said the BJP always prioritised the empowerment of tribals.

Targeting the previous BRS government, he said Kaleshwaram lift irrigation project was a major scam it perpetrated. "TRS changed its name to BRS, but their corruption and dynastic politics did not change," he said.

#### IN REMEMBRANCE

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

(a) IC-52881Y	Brigadier	Apinder Singh
(b) 15675351A	Havildar	Kafal Masih
(c) 15679486Y	Havildar	G Anandan
(d) 15695294L	Havildar	Debjit Das
(e) 15755929L	Sgtm	Maram Reddy Verra
		Brahmananda Reddy
(f) A4200517N	Agniveer	Gajela Venkatesh

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

#### NORTHERN RAILWAY

##### TENDER NOTICE

##### Invitation of tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T. No. 50 (A,B)-23-24/WE

Name of work with its location

(A) Setting up of press briefing room/studio room in Railway Board in the S/o SSE/W/RB under ADENE/E-III

(B) Repair of drainage/sewerage arrangement at Tilak Bridge Railway Colony in the section of SSE/W/RB under ADENE/E-III.

Approx. cost of work (A) 10999998.84 (B) 9994000.00

EMD amount (A) 205000.00 (B) 199900.00

Completion period of work (A) 04 Months (B) 06 Months

Date and Time for submission of tender and opening of tender Closing date of tender on 26.03.2024 at 15:00 hrs.

Website particular notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc. www.ireps.gov.in

128-W/269/OET-23-24/WE/NIT/50(A,B) Dated: 04.03.2024.

690/24

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Ph. No : 9425601556, 9340714903

प्रेस-विज्ञप्ति

संभाग रोडा के अंतर्गत मुख्यमंत्री पुलिस आवास योजना के अंतर्गत 24 एन.जी.ओ. एवं 96 आराक्षक आवास-गृहों का निर्माण कार्य सतता जिला सतना के कार्य हुए निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना क्रमांक 15/2023-24 (ऑनलाइन निविदा क्रमांक MPPHCL/TENDER No. 2024\_MPPHC\_341220\_1 आमंत्रित की जाती है। उक्त निविदा प्रपत्र दिनांक 30.03.2024 समय 17:00 बजे तक ऑनलाइन खोरी एवं प्रस्तुत किये जा सकते हैं एवं निविदा सूचना व अन्य विवरण Portal : <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> पर देखे जा सकते हैं।

म.प्र. मायम/114104/2024

परियोजना यंत्री

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## PERMITS PARTY TO MOVE L&amp;DO

## SC to AAP: Vacate Rouse Avenue land by June 15

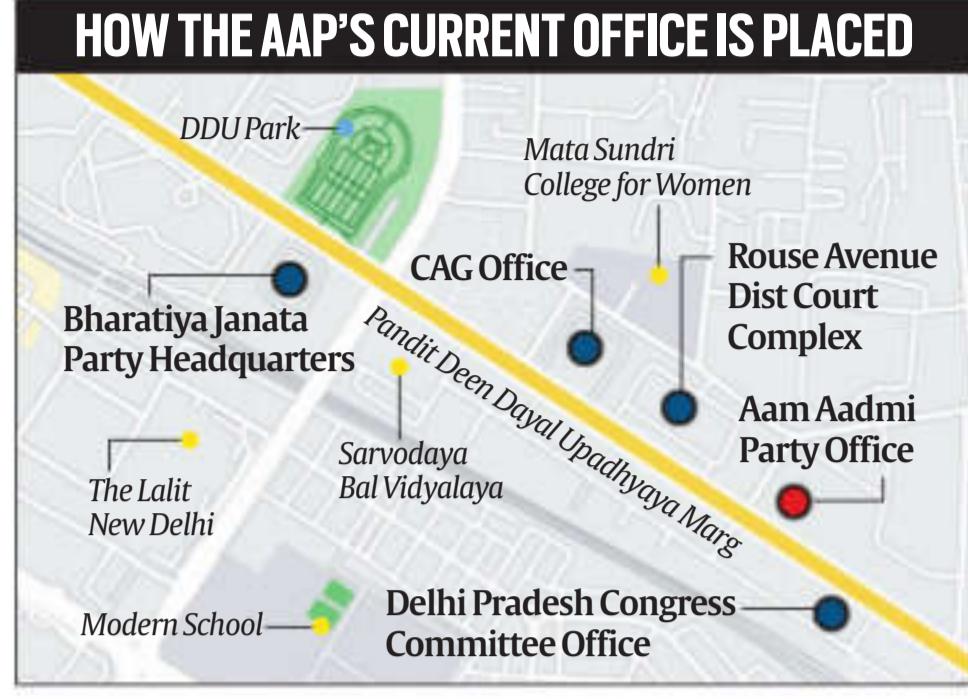
EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

NOTING THAT the land has been allotted to the Delhi High Court for expansion of judicial infrastructure, the Supreme Court on Monday asked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to vacate its office in Rouse Avenue in the national capital by June 15.

"In view of the impending general elections, we grant...time until June 15, 2024, to vacate the premises so that the land that has been allotted for the purpose of expanding the footprint of the district judiciary can be duly utilised on an expeditious basis," a three-judge bench presided by Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud said.

The bench, also comprising Justices J B Pardiwala and Manoj Misra, permitted the AAP to move the Land and Development Office (L&DO) of the Government of India for allotment of land to set up the party's office. It also asked the L&DO to process the application in accordance with the law and communicate the decision within a period of four weeks.

Hearing a matter related to judicial infrastructure on February 13, the SC, while expressing displeasure over the functioning of a political party office on land allotted to the HC, had directed that "on the next date of listing, a specific timeline shall be furnished to this Court for the removal of the encroachment." Though the name of the



HOW THE AAP'S CURRENT OFFICE IS PLACED

political party was not taken in the hearing, it later became clear that the reference was to the AAP office in Rouse Avenue.

Subsequently, the AAP, in an intervention application filed before the court, denied that its office is an encroachment and told the SC that it was officially allotted to it by the Government of National Capital Territory in 2015.

On Monday, senior advocate A M Singhvi, appearing for the AAP, told the SC that the said land was allotted to GNCTD in 1993 by L&DO.

Pointing out that the AAP was among the six national political parties in the country, Singhvi said it had requested the central government to provide land in NDMC area suited to its status, but was told to go to Badarpur.

"The ruling party has...entire office headquarters on the same road... there has to be a level playing field... Is it conceivable that two months before the elec-

tions, I am put on the road?", Singhvi said.

Advocate K Parameshwar, the amicus curiae in the case, said it was only a building on the land that was allotted to the political party for "temporary office building for party work" and not the entire land.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the AAP "cannot hold the Supreme Court and High Court to ransom that will not come unless given some other land." Singhvi countered this and said, "you are the one holding me to ransom by not giving me (land)." The senior counsel also took exception to the party being called "encroachers".

Mehta, however, referring to the fact that the allotment to AAP was revoked in 2017, said records showed they were encroachers.

The CJI too said, "After 2017, you have no lawful right to be in occupancy. That you cannot deny."

## Mistakenly served 'dry ice' as mouth freshener at Gurgaon eatery, five diners land in hospital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
GURGAON, MARCH 4

AFTER CONSUMING what they were told was mouth freshener – but turned out to be "dry ice" – at a restaurant in Gurgaon Saturday night, five diners were rushed to a hospital after they began spitting out blood. Prima facie, police believe, a waiter mistakenly served them dry ice.

The five – Neha Sabarwal, Manika Goenka, Pritika Rustagi,

Deepak Aroda and Himani – along with others were having dinner at Laforests cafe in Sector 90 around 9.30 pm. Ankit, who was also part of the group and the complainant in the case, said after their meal, a waiter offered them a mouth freshener.

"Upon consuming it, they experienced a burning sensation in their mouths, followed by bleeding... they started throwing up blood. I did not consume the mouth freshener as I was holding my one-year-old daughter...

"The doctor advised us to

We inquired about the contents of what we were given and the waiter showed us an open polythene packet, which I took possession of," said the Greater Noida resident in his complaint.

Ankit then called police and arranged for an ambulance to take his friends to Arav Hospital in Sector 90. The complainant claimed the doctor examined the 'mouth freshener' sample, which he had taken along with him, and said it was dry ice.

"The doctor advised us to

hand over the packet to the hospital... He said it could be fatal," Ankit said, urging police to file a complaint against the restaurant.

Police said they have registered an FIR against the waiter, who gave them the substance, under IPC sections of causing hurt by poison and criminal conspiracy at Kherki Daula police station. As per the FIR, the doctor said the patients suffered chemical burns poisoning.

"We have sent the sample to FSL to ascertain what the sub-

stance was. Prima facie, it is dry ice and the staff mistook it for mouth freshener. Three people are still admitted to the hospital, but their condition is better," said police.

Meanwhile, the restaurant's manager, Gagan, said it was the negligence of the staff that led to the incident. "The incident took place after dinner and the staff gave out the substance. Police are taking action against the staffer; they have taken sam-

## Day after Greater Noida mall mishap, victim's father stages dharna; maintenance firm blames the wind



Gajendra Yadav

The incident took place at Galaxy Blue Sapphire Mall.

liability of the incident lies with the person who was in-charge of the maintenance of the mall. Culprits are being identified. We will arrest them soon," the officer said.

Atul Kumar, Additional District Magistrate (Finance), said District Magistrate Manish Kumar Verma has constituted a committee to inquire into the incident. "A technical team carried out a preliminary investigation to ensure there is no other fault in the building, which can lead to another incident," said Kumar, who is the head of the committee.

DR. A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY UTTAR PRADESH

Jankipuram Extension, Sector-11, Sitapur Road, Lucknow-226031

Letter No. : A.K.T.U.R.O./STORE/2024/860 Dated : 28.02.2024

## Notice for Direct Recruitment

As per the responsibility/instructions given in the Govt. order no. File No. 16-109/65/2023-1-64/148425/2024, dated 02 February, 2024, regarding recruitment of faculty members, the previously published advertisement no.: F.S.R.E.C./2021/01 dated: 06.09.2021 is hereby cancelled. Fresh applications are invited for the appointment to the vacant posts of Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor in the following Government aided degree engineering institutions on direct recruitment basis:-

Bundelkhand Institute of Engineering and Technology, Jhansi	Rajkiya Engineering College, Kannauj
Kamla Nehru Institute of Technology, Sultanpur	Rajkiya Engineering College, Mainpuri
Rajkiya Engineering College, Ambedkar Nagar	Rajkiya Engineering College, Sonbhadra
Rajkiya Engineering College, Azamgarh	Uttar Pradesh Textile Technology Institute, Kanpur

All information related to the recruitment and the online application forms will be available on the website of the university i.e. <https://aktu.ac.in> and the websites of the related institutions from 01.03.2024. Interested candidates can fill their application form online till 21.03.2024. If there is any amendment in this regard, it will be made available on the websites of the university and institutions.

Registrar

## EXPRESS Careers

IDBI BANK Regd. Office: IDBI Tower, WTC Complex, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005. CIN: L65190MH2004GOI148838 Tel.: 6655 3355

IDBI Bank Ltd.

Advertisement No. 16/ 2023-24

## Appointment of Data Protection Officer (DPO)

Post Name	Vacancy
Data Protection Officer (On Contract)	1

For eligibility criteria (age, work experience, job profile etc.) and other details, please visit the 'Careers' section of the Bank's website [www.idbibank.in](http://www.idbibank.in)

Applications received on or before March 15, 2024, will only be considered.

NOTE: IDBI Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any/all application(s) without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever. Any addendum/modifications with regards to the selection process shall only be published on the Bank's website ([www.idbibank.in](http://www.idbibank.in)) and not through any other media. Candidates are requested to regularly visit the website as above, for update in the matter.

General Manager- HRD

IDBI BANK Regd. Office: IDBI Tower, WTC Complex, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 400 005. CIN: L65190MH2004GOI148838 Tel.: 6655 3355

IDBI Bank Ltd.

Advertisement No. 15 / 2023-24

## Appointment of Chief Information Security Officer (CISO)

Post Name	Vacancy
CISO (On Contract)	1

For eligibility criteria (age, work experience, job profile etc.) and other details, please visit the 'Careers' section of the Bank's website [www.idbibank.in](http://www.idbibank.in)

Applications received on or before March 14, 2024, will only be considered.

Note: IDBI Bank reserves the right to accept or reject any/all application(s) without assigning any reason(s) whatsoever. Any addendum/modifications with regards to the selection process shall only be published on the Bank's website ([www.idbibank.in](http://www.idbibank.in)) and not through any other media. Candidates are requested to regularly visit the website as above, for update in the matter.

General Manager- HRD

Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur

মার্কিন অঙ্গরাষ্ট্রীয় বিশ্ববিদ্যালয়, পূর্ব পশ্চিমা সুন্ধান, শিবপুর

(An Institution of National Importance under MOE, Govt. of India)

Employment Notification

Recruitment against Non -Teaching Posts

Advt. No. RO/MA/24/03 Date:04.03.2024

Applications in the prescribed format are invited from the Indian Nationals for Direct Recruitment to the following Officer Cadre Post at the Indian Institute of Engineering Science and Technology, Shibpur:

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Post	Pay Band & Grade Pay	Category
1.	Deputy Registrar	2	PB 3 (Rs.15600-39100/-) with Grade Pay of Rs.7600/-	UR-1 OBC-1

For detailed information refer to Institute's website [www.iiests.ac.in](http://www.iiests.ac.in). The application duly filled in all respects should reach to the Registrar on or before 28.03.2024 by 5.30 p.m.

Registrar

## Video shows damaged roof at Vasant Kunj mall; part of renovation work, say staff

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

AFTER A purported video of Ambience Mall in Southwest Delhi's Vasant Kunj popped up on social media, showing a damaged roof and debris strewn across different floors, the Delhi Police said it is probing if it was due to a collapse. No reports of any injuries have come in, officers said.

A spokesperson for the mall, however, said it was part of renovation work on the false ceiling and the premises was shut on Monday for the work. "The false



A videogram showing debris at the spot. Express

ceiling required renovation work and it was a planned move... no business was affected and there was no damage to any mall prop-

## Delhi tops in forced evictions

New Delhi: According to Housing and Land Rights Network's annual report on forced evictions in India, Delhi topped the list with 78 incidents between 2022 and 2023. According to the report, around 2.78 lakh people were evicted by various state authorities in Delhi.

The report notes that Delhi saw evictions in 44 sites in 2022 and 17 sites in 2023. What contributed to the city's high numbers in these two years were demolitions before the G20 summit in September 2023. "The Delhi Development Authority (DDA), admittedly, carried out 49 demolition drives in Delhi since 1 April 2023 in which an area measuring 229.137 acres was claimed to be 'reclaimed,'" the report highlights. ENS

Further examination revealed that one Amardeep Kumar had come to the hotel after taking the said Indigo flight from Delhi. "On questioning, Kumar stated that he had come to the hotel to meet his brother-in-law, Mohd Nazrul Islam, 29, who had been staying there for almost a month," said police.

On examining Islam's mobile phone, police found that he had deleted the entire history from his phone. With the help of Cyber Police and Special Task Force of Kolkata, necessary details from Islam's phone were recovered. And indeed, police learnt, the email was sent from Islam's device.

## Fake profile, mounting debt

Islam told the police about his connection with Kumar, and his motive behind sending the hoax message. "A Bangladeshi national, he did a course in 2017 in Airlines, Tourism and Hospitality from a university in Punjab where he met a girl named Soniya and they became friends...they later grew apart but in 2020, he again came in touch with the woman through social media and told her that he was pursuing a PhD from USA and had also earned a US visa," said an officer.

According to police, Soniya "got impressed" and married Islam in April last year.

His wife continued staying in Punjab and Islam would visit her every three to four months from Kolkata. But soon, she got suspicious and insisted he take her along to the US.

"Islam kept deferring the trip on the pretext of being stuck in Kolkata due to the ongoing farmers' protest...the wife then decided to send her brother, Kumar, to check on her husband...Islam sent out the



The arrested man is a Bangladeshi national. Express

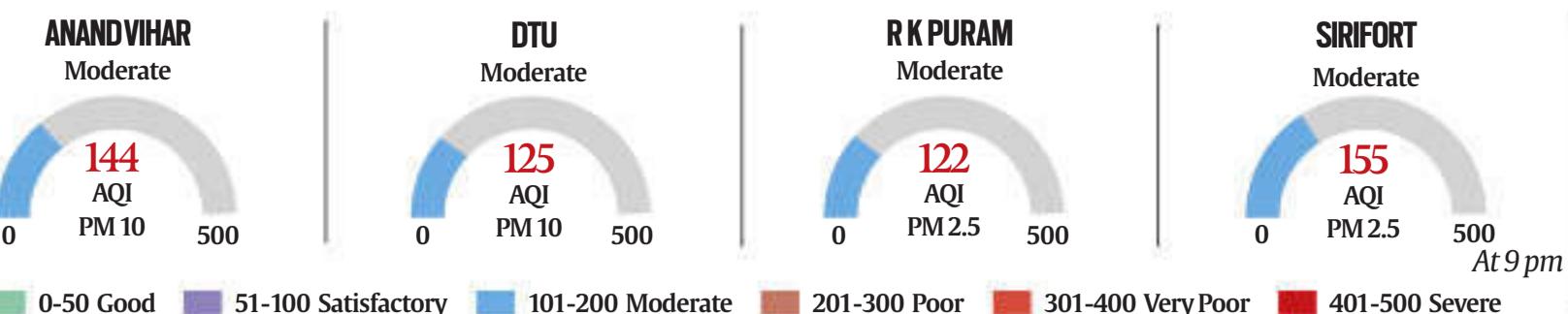
hoax as he wanted the flight that his brother-in-law was in to be cancelled," said DCP Rangnani.

Police said Islam had been staying in India for the past few months to avoid his lenders in Bangladesh as he was "under a debt of around Rs 50 lakh".

Exhibiting works of over 50 artists

Till 10 March, 2024

Visual Arts Gallery



S K Y W A T C H  
FORECAST: March 5  
Partly cloudy sky.

MAX: 26 1.4°C below normal | MIN: 13 0.4°C below normal

GIVE US ALL 7 LOK SABHA SEATS, I WILL GET SEVEN MORE HANDS: CM'S APPEAL TO VOTERS

# In 'Ram Rajya' budget, AAP govt's election push



Finance Minister Atishi seeks the blessings of former Deputy CM Manish Sisodia's mother before the Budget session, Monday. PTI

**GAYATHRI MANI**  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

ANNOUNCING A 'Ram Rajya' Budget with schemes aimed at wooing its core voter base — women — the AAP-Delhi government is leaving no stone unturned ahead of two crucial elections.

The 2024-25 Budget, presented by Finance Minister Atishi on Monday, is likely to be the government's last as the Delhi Assembly polls may take place before next year's session.

With an outlay of Rs 76,000 crore, it has also reduced from last year's Rs 78,800 crore.

Appealing to Delhites to vote

for the INDIA alliance — which the AAP is a part of — and make it win the Lok Sabha polls, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said at a press conference: "Today, we made a big announcement for my sisters and mothers in Delhi... for women empowerment... Rs 1,000 will be credited to their account every month."

Before the 2020 Assembly polls, the government had announced the 'pink ticket scheme' for free bus travel for women.

Kejriwal also said previous governments had only one theory, "trickle-down economics", which benefited only a particular section: "... Ours is a bottom-up theory, where the poor benefit; because when a poor person gets money, he or she invests in his family's basic needs which helps boost the economy... (Similarly), when women receive money, they will buy things they need and it will help the economy..."

He further emphasised the AAP government's slew of subsidies in several sectors: "Delhi has a very honest government (AAP) which saves money... unlike other parties... and spends it on the public by providing free electricity, water, health services, Teerth Yatra Yojana and travel for women..."

The CM also said the Budget is inspired by teachings of Ram Rajya: "We've been working towards education, health, and roads but the condition of village roads was left unnoticed.

Delhi, 13 from Punjab, Assam, Haryana, then we will have 25-30 MPs and will be more powerful; then no one will stop the work in Delhi. When you go to vote, think of Delhi..." he added.

Meanwhile, outlining the aspects of the new financial assistance scheme for women, the CM said: "Today, we made a big announcement for my sisters and mothers in Delhi... for women empowerment... Rs 1,000 will be credited to their account every month."

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## KEY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### MUKHYAMANTRI MAHILA SAMMAN YOJANA

Rs 1,000 financial assistance per month for women

**Who will benefit:** All women aged above 18 years (excluding taxpayers, beneficiaries of government pension schemes and govt employees)

**Budget:** Rs 2,000 crore

### BUSINESS BLASTERS SENIOR

After a successful launch in schools, the Delhi govt has proposed this scheme for universities and ITIs to promote entrepreneurship among college students

**Who will benefit:** Any student wishing to begin a startup will be given seed money. Currently for school students, the seed money is Rs 2,000

**Budget:** Rs 15 crore

### DEVELOPMENT OF VILLAGE ROADS

Redevelopment and upgrading of 1,000 km of roads in villages to provide a better commuting experience

**Who will benefit:** 360 villages

**Budget:** Rs 900 crore

### UNAUTHORISED COLONIES

Developing infrastructure like roads, laying sewer and water lines and other facilities in such colonies

**Who will benefit:** 1,800 unauthorised colonies which house 30% of the city's population

**Budget:** Rs 902 crore



Women above the age of 18 are eligible for the govt's new scheme. Archive

## BUDGET ESTIMATES

### RUPEE COMES FROM

#### Total receipts Rs 76,000 cr

- 77.3% Tax revenue
- 0.5% Capital receipts
- 2% Opening balance
- 1.3% Non-tax revenue
- 1.5% Normal Central Assistance & Other Central Grants
- 4.2% Centrally Sponsored Scheme
- 13.2% Small savings loan

### RUPEE GOES TO

- 22% Education
- 13% Housing and Urban Development
- 11% Public health
- 10% Others
- 10% Transport
- 9% Social Security and Welfare
- 9% Weather and sanitation
- 6% Public debt
- 4% Interest payment
- 4% Energy
- 2% Agriculture, rural development

\*app percentages are approximate values

## CUTS AND INCREASES

Sectors	2024-25	2023-24	Difference
Medical and Public Health	3,423 cr	4,830 cr	-1,407 cr
Education	5,476 cr	7,565 cr	-2,089 cr
Transport (total)	6,731 cr	9,048 cr	-2,317 cr
PWD (total)	1,218 cr	3,061 cr	-1,843 cr
Social Security and Welfare	5,980 cr	4,333 cr	+1,647 cr
Rural Development, Agriculture	1,029 cr	435 cr	+767 cr
Housing & Urban Development	4,395 cr	5,462 cr	-1,067 cr
Water Supply & Sanitation	7,195 cr	6,342 cr	+853 cr

Keeping that in mind, we have allocated a separate budget for redevelopment of village roads..."

When asked about the 'Ram Rajya' push, Kejriwal said, "We

believe in Ram Rajya... We have mentioned the concept in several budget presentations... even during Manish (Sisodia)'s time."

On if the announcements will have an impact on Lok Sabha vote

banks, the CM said, "Yes, it should... why not... Kejriwal jo bolta hai wo karta hai..."

The CM also said this budget was very emotional for him: "... I thank the people of Delhi for

electing us... for me every person living in Delhi is like my family. I try to take care of them like I care for my parents, daughter and son by providing them better education and health facilities..."

"Last year, Rs 503 crore was allocated, and only around Rs 450

crore was spent. Every year, allocations of ongoing expenses is de-

cided based on actual expen-

tures," he added.

"Since we have cleaned so

many heads in the budget this

time, some expenditure of the

education sector has shifted from

the scheme head to the non-

residential sector, which is the same for Technical Education," Atishi said.

**HEALTH:** Outlay was reduced by over Rs 1,400 crore. This includes cuts for several government hospitals: for Dr Ambedkar Hospital, the budget

has been reduced from Rs 14 crore to 5 crore; for GB Pant Hospital, from Rs 60 crore to Rs 25 crore; for GTB Hospital from Rs 22 crore to Rs 8 crore; and Lok Nayak Hospital, its biggest medical facility, from Rs 49 crore to Rs 23 crore.

"For hospitals too, a lot of expenditure goes to the establishment side. There are two types of hospitals, government and society hospitals. In the case of society hospitals, all funds are grant-in-aid; some expenditures of our government hospitals come under the scheme head and some in the establishment head. It's apparent that overall expenditure on hospitals has not reduced i.e. Rs 6,125 crore," Atishi explained.

**TRANSPORT:** The budgetary outlay for the department saw the steepest cut — Rs 6,731 crore for 2024-25 as compared to Rs 9,048 crore for 2023-24. Cuts include halving expenditure on deployment of bus marshalls.

Meanwhile, the Grant-in-Aid, a bailout, for the ailing Delhi Transport Corporation went up from Rs 22 crore to Rs 28 crore.

Additional funds for subsidies to DTC and cluster buses also rose from Rs 35 crore to Rs 39 crore.

**EDUCATION:** This sector was second in terms of cuts in allocation — upwards of Rs 2,000 crore.

The outlay has gone down to Rs 5,476 crore this time from Rs 7,565 crore last year. These include cuts in sub-departments

such as Elementary Education (down to around Rs 5 crore from 8 crore).

The outlay for secondary education saw a slight increase.

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**PWD:** It saw an overall de-

crease of over Rs 1,800 crore in allocation — down to Rs 1,218 crore from Rs 3,061 crore.



# Viksit Bharat Viksit Odisha Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee



**Gift of Development Projects worth over  
₹ 20 Thousand Crore for Odisha**

## Dedication to the Nation of

- Bansapani-Daitari-Tomka-Jakhpura Rail Line (162 KM)
- 4-laning of Singhara-Binjhabahal Section of NH-49 for 104.176 km
- 4-laning of Binjabahal-Teleibani Section of NH-49 for 78.318 km
- 6- laning of Tangi-Bhubaneswar Section of NH-16 for 56.788 km
- 4- laning of Balasore-Jharpokharia Section of NH-18 for 81.26 km
- Khurda Road - Barang 3rd Rail Line (32.34 KM)
- 5 Million Litres per day capacity seawater desalination plant at Ganjam

## Foundation Stone Laying for

- 8-laning of Chandikhol-Paradip Section of NH-53 for 77 km
- 4L+PS/2L+PS from km 0.000 to 35.800 (Kuakhia-Mangalpur Section) of NH 20
- Electric Loco Periodical Overhauling Workshop at Norla
- Wagon Periodical Overhauling Workshop at Kantabanji
- Wagon maintenance facilities at Baghuapal

## Inauguration of

- Mono Ethylene Glycol (MEG) Project at IndianOil's Paradip Refinery
- IndianOil's Paradip-Somnathpur-Haldia Product Pipeline
- IndianOil LPG Import Terminal at Paradip
- CONCOR Container Depot in Kalinga Nagar area

## Flagging Off of

- New train between Puri-Anand Vihar Terminal from Kendujhargarh Station
- New Train between Paradeep-Kendujhargarh from Paradeep Station
- Container Train from MMLP Jajpur, Odisha to ICD Dadri, Uttar Pradesh

## PROJECT BENEFITS:

Big step towards energy independence and self reliance

Creation of 60 Lakh mandays of employment

Improved connectivity between Odisha and the adjacent states of West Bengal, Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh

Efficient rail connectivity to drive in trade and industrial growth in the region

Enhancing Port Connectivity to Paradip Port

by  
**Shri Narendra Modi**  
Hon'ble Prime Minister

In the august presence of  
**Shri Raghubar Das**  
Governor, Odisha

**Shri Naveen Patnaik**  
Chief Minister, Odisha

**Shri Dharmendra Pradhan**  
Union Minister of Education and Skill Development and Entrepreneurship

**Shri Bishweswar Tudu**  
Minister of State for Tribal Affairs & Jal Shakti

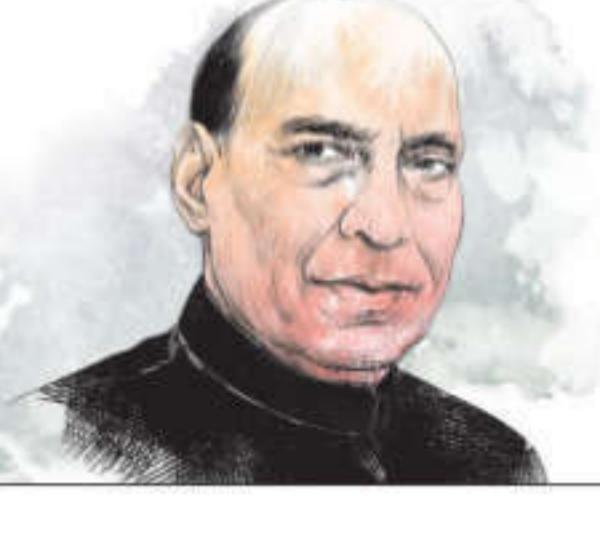
Chandikhol, Odisha, Tuesday | 5<sup>th</sup> March, 2024, 3:15 PM



Watch the programme live on DD News  
epaper.indianexpress.com



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## GIFT FOR WIFE

AT A fair organised at the recently concluded naval multinational exercise, MILAN, in Visakhapatnam, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh bought a pendant for his wife from one of the stalls put up by Naval Wives Welfare Association. The stall displayed a range of artificial jewellery, clothes, shawls and home décor items for thousands of people, including foreign dignitaries, visiting the fair. Out of the many things, a particular neck piece caught the attention of the Defence Minister. Singh digitally paid for the purchase.

## FOR THE PARENTS

REFERRING TO the makers of the Constitution as "founding fathers" is common despite the fact that 15 women were part of the Constituent Assembly. In its seven-judge constitution bench judgment on the limits of parliamentary privilege, the Supreme Court marked a shift. The judgment authored by Chief Justice D Y Chandrachud referred to the makers as the "founding parents" in the ruling.

## YET TO DECIDE

WHILE THE Congress is still in talks with its allies over seat sharing in some states, including Maharashtra, Bihar, and Jharkhand, the party's central election committee (CEC) will meet for the first time on March 7 to clear the first list of candidates for the Lok Sabha elections. The BJP announced its first list of 195 candidates Sunday. Some of the allies of the Congress such as the Samajwadi Party and the AAP, too, have come out with their first list of candidates. Sources said the Congress CEC is expected to discuss names of candidates for seats where it is going solo and the first list will be out soon.

## Odisha legislator joins BJP, fourth BJD MLA to do so in a month

SUJIT BISOYI  
BHUBANESWAR, MARCH 4

Premananda Nayak quit BJD recently, alleging neglect

AHEAD OF the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls in Odisha, BJD's Telkoi MLA Premananda Nayak on Monday joined the BJP, the fourth sitting legislator to join the saffron camp in the past one month.

Nayak, a former minister, had resigned from the BJD recently, alleging neglect in the ruling dispensation. Nayak, a tribal face, was first elected to the state Assembly in 2009 and again in 2019. He had served as the minister of skill development and technical education in Naveen Patnaik's cabinet from May 2019 to June 2022. The BJP is likely to field Nayak from Telkoi Assembly segment.

Gopalpur MLA Pradeep Kumar Panigrahy, Chilka MLA Prasanta Jagdev, who were expelled from the BJD over various charges, had joined the BJP in the recent past. Similarly, BJD's Jayadev MLA Arabinda Dhal switched to the saffron camp on Sunday, alleging neglect in the party.

On Monday, former BJD MLA Rajendra Das also joined the BJP.

## Former Calicut University V-C is BJP's LS candidate from Malappuram seat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, MAR 4

Dr M Abdul Salam. File

The BJP in 2019 as the party was making efforts to bring in more minority faces into its fold.

In 2021, Salam contested the state polls from Tirur, but lost to IUML's Kurukkoli Moideen, managing to garner only 5.33 per cent votes.

His tenure as Calicut University V-C was marked by controversial moves, including the bid to sell off varsity land and to admit students for degree courses without a plus-two qualification.

Salam was V-C of Calicut University from 2011 to 2015, nominated by IUML. He joined

## BJP LEADERS ADD 'MODI KA PARIVAR' TO SOCIAL MEDIA HANDLES

## Modi counter to Lalu jibe: '140 cr people of country are my family'

VIKAS PATHAK  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

BJP LEADERS rallied around Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday as he sought to counter RJD chief Lalu Prasad's "no family" jibe, saying the country's "140 crore people are my family".

Union Ministers and top party leaders added "Modi ka parivar (Modi's family)" to their social media handles even as Modi told a rally at Adilabad in Telangana the people of the country "consider me their own... love me like a member of their family".

"And that is why I say 140 crore people of this country are my family. The youth... crores of daughters, mothers and sisters... all the poor people in the country, they are my family. The millions of children and elderly in the country are Modi's family. Those who have no one belong to Modi and Modi belongs to them. My Bharat, my family," Modi said.

The Prime Minister's remarks came a day after Prasad, at a rally of the Opposition INDIA bloc in Patna, said, "Modi keeps counting how many leaders have their children in politics. What can we do if Narendra Modi does not have a family of his own? He keeps bragging about the Ram temple. He is

The social media drive is reminiscent of a similar campaign by the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha election in 2019, when party leaders prefixed "Chowkidar" to their Twitter profile names to counter Congress leader Rahul



PM Narendra Modi with actor Vyjayanthimala in Chennai, Monday. The PM arrived in Tamil Nadu from Telangana. PTI

not even a true Hindu. In Hindu tradition, a son must shave his head and beard upon the demise of his parents. Modi did not do so when his mother died".

The top leaders who added "Modi ka parivar" to their social media handles in solidarity with the PM included Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, BJP chief JP Nadda and UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. By Monday afternoon, the phrase was trending on X.

The social media drive is reminiscent of a similar campaign by the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha election in 2019, when party leaders prefixed "Chowkidar" to their Twitter profile names to counter Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi's "Chowkidar chor hai" jibe at PM Modi.

BJP spokesperson Sudhanshu Trivedi said the RJD chief's remarks against Modi were driven by the Opposition's "grudge and jealousy". "For years, we all have been seeing that they (Opposition) have made disrespectful and offensive statements against PM Modi with a feeling of jealousy, grudge, and inferiority complex... I want to remind everyone that for him (PM) the family is the entire country," Trivedi said.

Meanwhile, targeting the PM, Congress's Rahul Gandhi wrote in a Hindi post on X: "Farmer in debt, youth unemployed, labourers helpless. And Modi's 'real family' is looting the country."

Drug smuggling in TN has DMK blessings: PM

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
CHENNAI, MARCH 4

LAUNCHING A scathing attack on the M K Stalin-led DMK government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said he was concerned about the "uncontrolled" drug smuggling in Tamil Nadu and cautioned people about the "party ruling you".

He also targeted Stalin's son and state minister Udhayanidhi Stalin, who was pulled up by the Supreme Court over his Sanatan Dharma remarks, saying that insulting the faith of crores of people was an identity of the dynasts.

The PM was in the state to inaugurate the core loading procedure of the country's indigenous Prototype Fast Breeder Reactor at Kalpakkam. He later addressed a party rally in Chennai city.

"With blessings of the ruling party here, Tamil Nadu is witnessing uncontrolled drug smuggling and selling... Such a party is ruling you. You should be very cautious about it," he said. FULL REPORT [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



Tapas Roy leaves the Assembly after submitting his resignation to the Speaker in Kolkata on Monday. Express

## Veteran Tapas Roy quits TMC: 'Party didn't stand by me'

Speculation he may contest against TMC's Sudip Bandopadhyay from North Kolkata

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, MARCH 4

JANUARY 12, the ED raided my house. Even after 52 days of the raid, my party did not support me even once. (Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee did not call me once. No one stood with me or my family," said Roy.

"There is so much corruption in the party. The Sandeshkhali (allegations of sexual assault and land-grabbing against a section of TMC leaders) episode has also pained me a lot," he added.

Sources said the MLA was upset as the CM defended Sheikh Shahjahan in the Assembly but did not speak a word in his support.

Meanwhile, speculation is rife. Roy may join the BJP and contest against TMC MP Sudip Bandopadhyay from North Kolkata seat.

Speaking to mediapersons, Roy said, "The Trinamool Congress is not for me anymore. I am a free bird. I will let you all know about my next course of action later."

His statement came after Education Minister Bratya Basu and TMC state secretary Kunal Ghosh visited Roy's North Kolkata residence and held a meeting for over an hour. According to sources, they were trying to dissuade Roy from leaving the party.

After the two TMC leaders left, Roy held a press conference at his residence and expressed anguish that no one from his party called him up or his family when the Enforcement Directorate (ED) raided his premises on January 12 in connection with an alleged recruitment scam in civic bodies.

"For the last 23-24 years, I have been with the TMC. On

January 12, the ED raided my house. Even after 52 days of the raid, my party did not support me even once. (Chief Minister) Mamata Banerjee did not call me once. No one stood with me or my family," said Roy.

"There is so much corruption in the party. The Sandeshkhali (allegations of sexual assault and land-grabbing against a section of TMC leaders) episode has also pained me a lot," he added.

Sources said the MLA was upset as the CM defended Sheikh Shahjahan in the Assembly but did not speak a word in his support.

Asked about Tapas Roy and the chances of him joining the saffron party, state BJP president Sukanta Majumder said, "Politics is a game of possibilities. But at this time I have nothing to share on this."

CPI(M) politburo member Sujan Chakraborty said, "Although the TMC is our political opponent, Roy was courteous.

A person like him leaving the party shows that the TMC is now a party of strongmen and criminals like Sheikh Shahjahan and not a place for good politicians."

Criticising Roy's move, TMC youth wing general secretary Debangshu Bhattacharya said, "Why did he decide to leave the party just 15 days before the Lok Sabha elections are to be announced?"

RLD and SBSP likely to get berths in UP cabinet today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, MARCH 4

ceremony, Chief Minister Adityanath will chair a Cabinet meeting at 11 am, officials said.

The Cabinet expansion was being speculated since Samajwadi Party MLA Dara Singh Chauhan switched sides and contested the bypoll from Ghosi in Mau on a BJP ticket. Though he lost the election, Chauhan was made an MLC.

While the names of Chauhan and Rajbhar were confirmed earlier, the RLD too is believed to have got the confirmation about its one leader, a member of the Dalit community from Muzaffarnagar, sources added.

There have also been speculations that at least one Opposition MLA who recently supported the BJP candidates in the Rajya Sabha election will get a ministerial berth.

Ahead of the swearing-in



Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay at Calcutta High Court on Monday. PTI

## Justice Gangopadhyay set to resign today: 'My work done'

SWEETY KUMARI  
KOLKATA, MARCH 4

ROOM NUMBER 17 of the Calcutta High Court, which has been the centre stage for litigants, lawyers and media for the past two years, witnessed an emotional scene on Monday, a day after Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay announced his decision to resign.

A large number of lawyers and common people gathered in the courtroom on Monday, meant to be the last working day of Justice Gangopadhyay at the High Court.

Justice Gangopadhyay, who said that he would join politics and could also contest the Lok Sabha elections, entered the courtroom at 2.36 pm on Monday. With a smile on his face and folded hands, he greeted those present in the courtroom.

He then said: "I am dropping all the cases. Write it down. I only want to see one case... In this matter, a vigilance inquiry was conducted by the registrar vigilance of this court. The report shows very, very serious allegations against the district judge. I request the chief justice to look into the report and take steps in accordance with the law. In my view, if the report is found to be true and correct, the district judge should

be removed from her service. Now, allow me to leave."

As he got up from the chair, a lawyer said: "We won't leave you. We want your lordship here in the courtroom. For more than 34 years, you have been here," said a lawyer. The judge corrected the lawyer. "For 29-30 years, I have been here. I have other work," he said.

As he sought permission from everyone to leave the courtroom, a woman raised her hand. With tears in her eyes, she said in Bengali, "Sir, aami apnar paad chhe pronam korte chai (I want to touch your feet). It is because of you that my son is getting treatment. I have come to see you here today after I came to know about your decision to resign. I don't know what will happen now since you are leaving. I will forever be in your debt."

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be removed from her service. Now, allow me to leave."

So you did not get adequate response from the party's leadership to your objections?

Ignore kiya gaya (I was ignored)... But the bigger question is that ever since that person (Maurya) registered his own party... has he spoken against Sanatan Dharma or Hindus? A person who used to speak against Durgaji, Laxmiji, Hanumanji, Hindus, Sanatan Dharma and even Brahmins, has not spoken a word since then. I have a count of his statements against Sanatan Dharma and Brahmins and he has been in the SP-87. He had come to destroy the party, and did his job.

But Swami Prasad Maurya also pointed fingers at you as he left the SP?

Swami has never been a personal issue for me, instead it is a political issue. My fight with him is of ideas. I come from a Savarna (upper caste) family, but no one can point a finger at me that I have ever disrespected anyone. In 2004, I installed a statue of Sardar (Vallabhbhai) Patel at Raebareli, later a statue of Jhalkari Bai. I fought for the rights of the people who sell milk, and cases were registered against me.

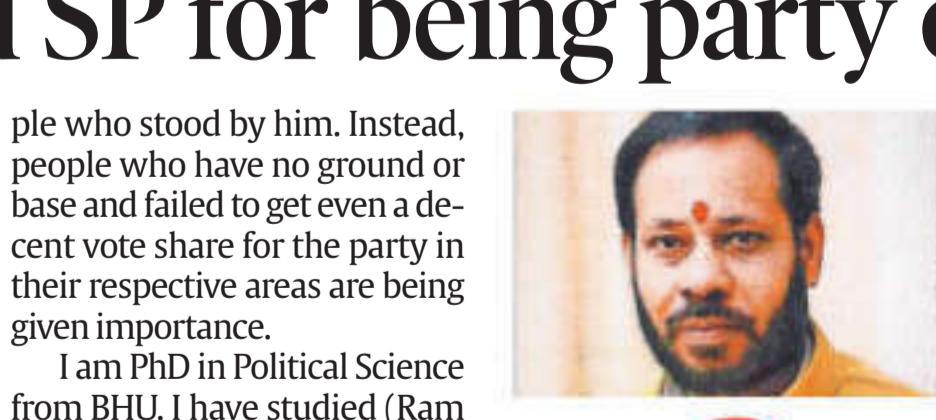
One can fight one Swami Prasad. But if in a party, over two dozen Swami Prasads who have come from the SP take root, and abuse Hindu gods, or a caste, one can't tolerate this.

There is talk that you may contest from Raebareli for BJP or accept a position in govt?

It is too early to say; I am still an SP MLA. But I would say that the way the Prime Minister or the Chief Minister worked during the Covid pandemic and have ensured houses for the poor and toilets in villages, even being in the Opposition, these things attracted me. (And) While dharma is only an issue of faith for me, if someone abuses it, then it is not acceptable to us.

What would you say has changed in the SP, and what is forcing leaders to leave?

Any individual, society or political party, if it deviates from the ideology with which it was established, then it becomes impossible to save that individual, family, society or political party. Ram Manohar Lohia had started a Ramayan Mela in Ayodhya, and the government gave funds for it too. What kind of an ideology is it that allows speaking against the Ramcharita Manas?... we had joined SP for being a part of the ideology of Ram Manohar Lohia, and not Periyar (seen as the father of the Dravidian movement in Tamil Nadu and a sworn atheist).



THE EXPRESS

INTERVIEW

WITH

MANOJ KUMAR

PANDEY

FORMER SP CHIEF WHIP



# 60 DAYS OF TRANSFORMATION

## MADHYA PRADESH BRINGS VALUE TO GOVERNANCE



NARENDRA MODI

Prime Minister



DR. MOHAN YADAV

Chief Minister Madhya Pradesh

### Cyber Tehsil operative in all districts A historic step to overhaul revenue administration

**A**RADICAL change is going to take place in the interest of the citizens through the Cyber Tehsil System in the revenue administration reform of Madhya Pradesh. The Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually launched the Cyber Tehsil Project in all districts on 29th Feb.'24 simultaneously launching a number of development projects worth Rs 17000 crore.

As intended by Chief Minister Dr. Mohan Yadav, disposal of revenue cases and disputes will be possible in a very short time. After implementation in the land records, the concerned beneficiary and stakeholder will be able to get the verified copy of the land records and the relevant order.

Now the pending cases can be resolved with quality with the help of technical assistance. Disposal of cases is taking an average 15 to 17 days in cyber tehsils. This is a significant achievement compared to the 60 days taken in the manual process.

Every year about 14 lakh mutation cases are registered in the state. Out of this, 8 lakh cases relate to mutation after execution of sale deeds. About 2 lakh undisputed cases related to purchase and sale of entire Khasra.

Against this backdrop, Cyber Tehsil has been established for paperless, faceless and online transfer and updating of land records within 15 days.

In this way, 2 lakh mutation cases related to purchase and sale of Khasra can be resolved through cyber tehsils. Apart from quick disposal of land records updating is done at the same time.

The burden of resolving undisputed cases at the tehsil level will be reduced. For the Cyber tehsil system, the Revenue Department has amended the



Madhya Pradesh Land Revenue Code, 1959 and made provisions for Cyber Tehsil in Section 13-A. Cyber Tehsil Project started from 01 June 2022 as a pilot project in District Sehore and Datia. The project is now put in place in all districts.

#### HOW IT WORKS ?

- The process from registration to name transfer has been implemented in Cyber Tehsil.
- Cyber Tehsil has been linked to 4 different platforms namely Sampada Portal, Bhulekh Portal, SAARA Portal and RCMS Portal.
- In Cyber Tehsil, such cases are eligible

for resolution - complete Khasra, which has not been divided and such land which has not been mortgaged or mortgaged in any way.

- After registration on the portal and after registration, the case will be automatically registered on the revenue portal.
- After this the investigation will be done by Cyber Tehsildar. After the information, a memo will be issued for advertisement and Patwari report. After this, the land records will be updated by passing an order.
- If the claim is not received after ten days, orders will be given through e-mail and WhatsApp.

■ During the execution of sale deed (registration) in the Registrar's office, the applicant will have to give the necessary processing fee and general information in the prescribed format.

- In case of registrations which cover the entire Khasra number or the entire plot and there is no division of any Khasra or plot, details of the registered sale deed (registry) will be generated through automated process.
- It is sent to the tehsil on the RCMS portal.
- Cyber Tehsildar matches the registered documents with the revenue land records and issues notice through SMS to the buyer, seller and all the residents

of the concerned village. This notice also contains a link for objection. An online memo is also issued for Patwari report.

- If no objection is received within ten days and if there is no objection in the Patwari's memo, then the Cyber Tehsildar passes the transfer order in the case and updates the records.
- Upon resolution/passing of the order, the concerned person is informed through SMS and the status of the order passed through e-mail.

#### WHICH CASES TO BE RESOLVED ON PRIORITY?

In Cyber Tehsil, such cases are being resolved (transfer) in which the entire Khasra number or the entire plot is involved and there is no division of any Khasra or plot.

#### DISPOSAL OF OVER 17000 CASES

Till now, final orders have been passed in 17,152 cases and land records have been verified through automated process.

100% implementation has been done. Verified copies of the final orders have been sent to the applicants through email and WhatsApp.

#### REVISED SET-UP OF TEHSILDAR/NAIB TEHSILDAR

15 Tehsildars/Naib Tehsildars will be required in the cyber tehsil established in the office of the Chief Revenue Commissioner.

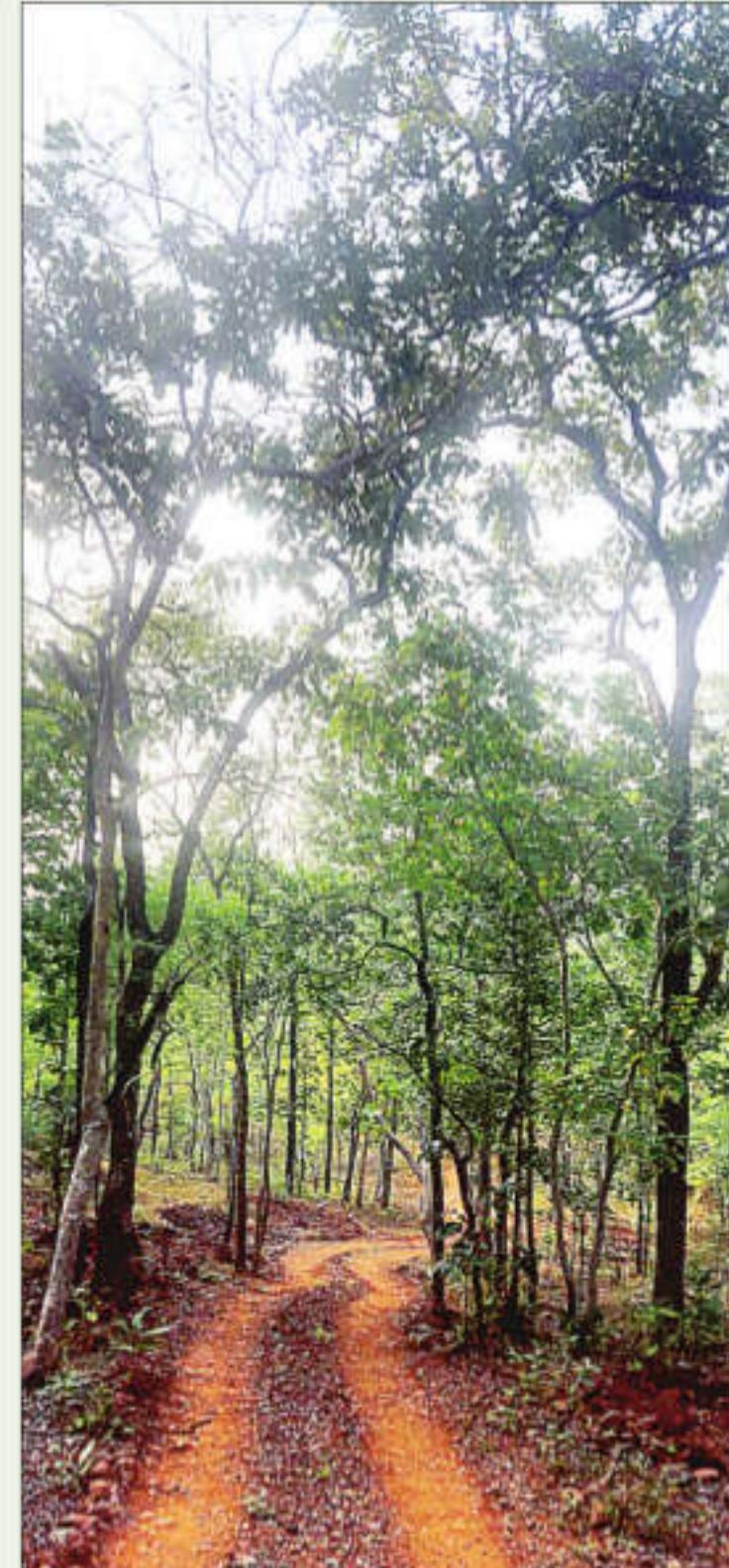
This arrangement can be implemented immediately by attaching additional Tehsildars/Naib Tehsildars. A proposal will be brought to review the set-up of Tehsildar/Naib Tehsildar, which will also include the proposal for creation of 15 Tehsildar/Naib Tehsildar posts in Cyber Tehsil.

#### BENEFITS OF CYBER TEHSIL

- After registry, case for title transfer is registered even without applying.
- In this process, buyer and seller do not need to be present at the Tehsil office for name transfer.
- The entire process is end to end online, decision-making, and paperless.
- The entire process is transparent. There is no human intervention.
- Notice to buyer, seller and all residents of the village will be received through SMS. Notice also on RCMS portal.
- Objections can be filed online.
- Copy of final order is given through email or WhatsApp to the applicants.
- As soon as the order is passed, the land records (khasra/maps) are automatically corrected.
- The process of implementation of orders and revenue records will be completed in 15 days except government holidays.
- This system has eliminated the limits of jurisdiction.
- This system has provided a unique facility of updating land records in real time. From this there will be no manual interference.
- There is a facility to submit Patwari report online.
- It will be resolved in minimum time. Earlier these processes took an average of 60 days. This process will be completed in both Cyber Tehsils on average 15.
- PDF copy of the order passed by Cyber Tehsil, the applicant will get it through email/WhatsApp. Its copy will also be uploaded on the RCMS portal.

## GREEN GOVERNANCE

### Bison Resorts, Madhai Gets First Five Swachhata Green Leaf Rating Certificate Of Recognition



**B**ison Resorts, Madhai, in the heart of Narmadapuram, Madhya Pradesh has taken the lead by obtaining the first Five Swachhata Green Leaf Rating Certificate of Recognition. This accolade solidifies the resort's commitment to responsible tourism practices and sets a commendable precedent for the industry.

This recognition of Bison Resorts serves as a clarion call for other tourist facilities across all States/UTs to actively involve themselves in enhancing the aesthetic and sanitation levels of tourist spots. With the current progress trend of Swachh Bharat Mission and the SGLR, potential to redefine the image of the tourism sector, positioning it as a global ambassador for cleanliness and responsible tourism.

In a major move to revolutionize sanitation practices in India's burgeoning tourism industry, the Department of Drinking Water & Sanitation (DDWS), Ministry of Jal Shakti, in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, has introduced the Swachhata Green Leaf Rating (SGLR) initiative.

This visionary program aligns with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's emphasis on providing world-class hygiene and sanitation facilities for tourist, marking a crucial step towards cleaner and more sustainable tourism practices.

All tourist facilities enhance aesthetic and sanitation levels at tourist destinations. As ambassadors of hospitality & development, all tourist facilities should actively involve themselves in enhancing the aesthetic & sanitation levels of our tourist spots.

With its investment in the desired direction of responsible sanitation, the hospitality sector will be able to attract increased tourist footfall while simultaneously achieving brand value for itself.

#### THIS MILESTONE ACHIEVEMENT FOR BISON RESORTS HAS BEEN COMMENDED FOR DEDICATION TO RAISING SANITATION STANDARDS.

Hospitality sector plays an important role in attracting an increased tourist footfall while contributing to a positive image of responsible tourism. As ambassadors of country's hospitality and development, Bison Resorts exemplifies the spirit of responsible tourism. The Swachhata Green Leaf Rating is just a recognition of our tourism industry.

The SGLR initiative seamlessly aligns with the Travel for LIFE (TFL) program under Mission LiFE, fostering awareness about sustainable tourism. By nudging both tourists and businesses to adopt practices harmonious with nature, the SGLR program aims to develop an economically viable, responsible, and resilient tourism industry.

## ECONOMIC SECURITY OF TRIBALS

### Organic certificate for export of minor forest produce

In order to promote export of minor forest produce, tribal dominated districts will soon get organic certificate. Social security has been widened for tendu leaf collectors by including them in Sambal Yojana.

For the economic security of the tribal families involved in tendu leaf collection, the tendu leaf collection rate has been increased from Rs 3000/- per standard bag to Rs 4000 per standard bag. The collection rate in 2003 was only Rs. 400/- per standard bag. As a result of this decision, approximately Rs 560 crore has been distributed to the collectors as remuneration.

Along with the remuneration, the net profit received from the trade of tendu leaves is also shared with the collectors. This dividend has also increased. In 2003, only 50 per cent of the net profit was shared with collectors as bonus, now 75 per cent is being distributed to the collectors as bonus. The amount of bonus distributed in the year 2002-03 was Rs 5.51 crore while the amount of bonus distributed in the year 2022-23 is Rs 234 crore.

At present, 38 lakh members of about 15 lakh families are involved in minor forest produce collection work. More than 50 percent of these belong to the tribal community. To protect them from exploitation by middlemen and to provide them the benefits of their collected minor forest produce, a three-tier structure of cooperative has been created. There are 10 primary forest produce cooperative societies formed at the primary level

with the membership of 15.2 lakh collectors. At the second level, there are district level unions in 51 districts and at the top level, Madhya Pradesh State Minor Forest Produce Federation is functioning at the apex level.

In "Eklavya Vanvasi Shiksha Vikas Yojana" started in 2011 for the education of children of tendu leaf workers, more than Rs 14.00 crore has been provided to 15,026 students.

Minor Forest Produce Processing and Research Center Barkheda Pathani was established in the year 2004-05. It has got the license to make 840 medicines based on minor forest produce while 350 medicines are being manufactured.

In order to provide fair price of forest produce to the minor forest produce collectors, the state government has also declared the minimum support price for 32 major minor forest produce so that the collectors can get remunerative price.

To increase the income of minor forest produce collectors, attention is also being given to processing and approval has been given for the establishment of 126 Van Dhan Kendras under the Pradhan Mantri Van Vikas Yojana. Of these, processing of products has also been started by about 70 Van Dhan Kendras.

Under the PESA, 268 gram sabhas in 20 districts in the collection year 2023-24, 13363 standard bags of tendu leaves were collected generating a business valuing at Rs. 7.19 crore. Collection has started this season.



TENDU LEAF



# EXPRESS NETWORK

## BRIEFLY

DELHI

Diagnosed with cancer, cured now: ISRO chief

New Delhi: ISRO chairman S Somanath has revealed that he learnt about being diagnosed with cancer on the day of the launch of India's Aditya L1 mission. In an interview with Tarmak Media House, Somanath said he underwent an operation to remove the growth in his stomach, followed it up with chemotherapy and was now completely cured of the disease. "Undoubtedly, they would have been shocked. But now, I perceive cancer and its treatment as a solution. There is a message that it is not incurable," he said when asked about the reaction of his family members to the diagnosis. He said he would be undergoing regular checkups and scans, but he was now completely cured and has resumed duties.

PTI

## Two more NHAI officials held in bribery case

New Delhi: A day after arresting six persons, including two NHAI officers, in an alleged ₹20-lakh bribery case in Maharashtra's Nagpur, the CBI on Monday has arrested two more NHAI officials, including a deputy general manager posted in Madhya Pradesh in connection with a bribery racket busted by the agency, taking the total number of arrests to eight. The CBI busted the bribery racket on Sunday, arresting NHAI General Manager and Project Director Arvind Kale, posted in Nagpur, who had allegedly received ₹20 lakh bribe, and Deputy General Manager Brijesh Kumar Sahai, posted in Harda, MP.

ENS

## KARNATAKA

Kerala man held over acid attack on three girls

Bengaluru: A man allegedly threw acid at three girl students of Kadaba Government Pre-University College in Dakshina Kannada district Monday. The incident occurred when the victims were about to enter the examination hall of the college. The accused has been identified as Abeen Shibi, 23, from Malappuram in Kerala. Shibi, who has been arrested, claimed during interrogation that one of the victims had spurned his advances, and he took the step "to show my disappointment in love". Karnataka Health Minister Dinesh Gundu Rao condemned the attack on the three students, directing authorities to ensure that victims received essential medical care.

ENS

## Rethink 5% customs duty on newsprint, INS appeals to govt

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE INDIAN Newspaper Society (INS) Monday appealed to the government to reconsider the imposition of five per cent customs duty on newsprint. The measure will come as much-needed relief to the print media industry, said the organisation, which counts newspapers, periodicals and magazines across the country as its members.

INS said the factors affecting the price and availability of newsprint – geopolitical uncertainties, logistics, rupee depreciation and customs duty – have created a formidable burden for publishers in the country.

The escalations in West Asian conflicts, as well as the conflict between Russia and Ukraine,

have significantly affected the global supply chain, including for newsprint, the organisation said in a statement Monday.

"Coupled with the Red Sea issue, where cargo ships are being continuously targeted, has further exacerbated the situation, leading to disruptions in the transportation of essential commodities, including newsprint. Resultantly, the newsprint suppliers are cancelling the earlier confirmed orders of the publishers," the statement says.

The INS said many newsprint mills in India and abroad have either suspended or ceased production, sparking supply concerns.

The fluctuating currency exchange rates contribute to the rising costs of importing newsprint, straining the financial viability of newspapers and publications, it said.

## NIA set to take over Bengaluru cafe blast case, registers FIR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BENGALURU, MARCH 4

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) Monday registered an FIR in connection with the March 1 bomb blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in Bengaluru on the directions of the Home Ministry and it is expected to take over the investigation being conducted by the Bengaluru crime branch.

Nine people were injured in the lunch-hour blast at Rameshwaram Cafe in the Whitefield tech hub of Bengaluru. A man who came to the restaurant wearing a cap, glasses, and a mask around 11.30 am, whose images have been captured by CCTV cameras at the cafe, is suspected to have planted an IED in a corner of the cafe. The device exploded at 12.56 pm.

The NIA FIR was registered Monday on the basis of a provision in the NIA Act of 2008, which allows the Centre to order the NIA to register a suo motu case even without a reference or



The Bengaluru crime branch is currently investigating the lunch-hour blast at Rameshwaram Cafe. PTI file

receipt of information from the state government.

"There is a provision in the NIA law that allows the registration of a case on the orders of the Central government if the Central Government is of the opinion that a Scheduled Offence has been committed which is required to be investigated under this Act, it may, suo motu, direct the Agency to investigate the said offence."

With the Bengaluru police invoking terrorism clauses of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) of 1967 in an FIR reg-

istered with the HAL police station soon after the blast at the cafe, the case involves a scheduled offence that the NIA is mandated to probe, a senior Karnataka police officer said.

Monday an Inspector General of Police (IGP), a Deputy Inspector General (DIG) and a Superintendent of Police (SP) of the NIA met Karnataka police chief Alok Mohan and Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda to discuss the case handing over to the NIA.

"The NIA has registered an FIR. The Bengaluru police is still conducting the investigations until the formal process of handing over the case is completed.

There will be a meeting of NIA and Bengaluru police officers in the next few days to exchange notes on the progress of the investigations since March 1," Dayananda said.

NIA's FIR incorporates the facts stated in the FIR filed by the Bengaluru police at the HAL police station on March 1 under the UAPA law and will take up the case as a new NIA FIR.

Under Section 6 of the NIA Act, which outlines the rules for

## Jharkhand gangrape: HC seeks report, dist judge meets victim

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
RANCHI, MARCH 4

THE JHARKHAND High Court Monday took suo motu cognizance of the Spanish woman's gang rape in Dumka district and asked the state government to file a report on the matter.

A division bench comprising Acting Chief Justice Shree Chandrashekhar and Justice Navneet Kumar issued notices to the DGP, chief secretary and the SP of Dumka in this regard.

The court will hear the case again on March 7.

Meanwhile, Anil Kumar Mishra, Dumka's Principal District Judge (PDJ) and Chairman of the District Legal

Services Authority, said the woman is "emotionally shattered" but physically stable. Mishra made the observations in a report to the Jharkhand Legal Services Authority (JHLASA) after meeting the woman. The visit came after JHLASA executive chairman Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad took cognisance of the incident. According to a JHLASA official, the PDJ and his team directed that compensation of Rs 10 lakh be paid to her.

The woman was allegedly raped by seven men on Friday night after she and her partner stopped in Dumka for the night while on a biking trip.

Four people have been arrested, and police are on the lookout for the other accused.

Meanwhile, the Spanish couple posted a picture of the accused on social media and appealed to the public to help the police in finding them. In a post in Spanish, the couple said, "(India) is a great country and worth visiting. It has its good things and its bad things... And thanks to the police and everyone."

On Monday, the High court observed: "The incident of crime of any kind against a foreign national may have serious national and international repercussions including impacting the tourism economy of the country. A sex-related crime against a foreign woman is likely to bring adverse publicity against the country and thereby tarnish the image of India across the globe."

— PTI/INPUTS

## Delhi HC seeks Centre response on French journalist's plea against work ban

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE DELHI High Court Monday sought the Centre's response to a plea by French journalist Vanessa Dougnac, an OCI card holder, against the denial of nod to carry out journalistic activities in India.

A single-judge bench of Justice Subramoniu Prasad issued notice to the Centre through the ministries of Home Affairs and External Affairs and listed the matter for next week.

In her plea, Dougnac said the September 2022 communication from the Foreigners Regional Registration Officer denying her permission for journalistic activity in India was illegal, arbitrary and in violation of the principles of natural justice and due process.

## 17-yr-old girl gangraped in UP's Hathras, 1 held

AMIT SHARMA  
MEERUT MARCH 4

A 17-YEAR-OLD girl was allegedly gang-raped by two men when she was returning home after attending a wedding function at a guest house in the Hathras district of Uttar Pradesh in the early hours of Sunday.

The Hathras police arrested one accused and are conducting raids to nab the other. The police said the victim, a resident of the Aligarh district, used to be hired to shower flowers on guests at weddings and on the night of March 2, she performed her duties at the guest house in Hathras.

"At around 3 am on March 3, she came out of the guest house and waited for a transport to take her home when the two men, aged around 22 years, said they would drop her off in Aligarh on their bike. While on the way to Aligarh from Hathras, they stopped the bike and took her to

a desolate place by the roadside where they took turns to rape her," said Hathras Additional Superintendent of Police (ASP) Ashok Kumar Singh.

The police said that the accused fled from the scene after the crime, and she came out onto the road seeking help. A passerby came to her rescue and informed the area police station.

"We have lodged the First Information Report (FIR) and sent her for the medical examination. She told us that the accused were part of the catering team at the wedding function," said the police officer.

Hathras had witnessed a sensational gangrape-murder three years ago. In September 2020, a 19-year-old Indian woman was allegedly gang-raped in Hathras by four upper-caste men, and she died two weeks later in a Delhi hospital. A court in Hathras in March 2023 convicted the main accused and acquitted three others of all charges in the case.

— PTI/INPUTS

She (Suchana) gave clear and rational answers in her assessments. She did not report any active death wishes or suicidal tendencies. Her judgement is intact and no psychotic or pervasive mood symptoms were elicited in responses," the report said.

Last month, Suchana's father had moved the court, seeking directions to get her evaluated to assess her mental health.

— PTI/INPUTS

have significantly affected the global supply chain, including for newsprint, the organisation said in a statement Monday.

Coupled with the Red Sea issue, where cargo ships are being continuously targeted, has further exacerbated the situation, leading to disruptions in the transportation of essential commodities, including newsprint. Resultantly, the newsprint suppliers are cancelling the earlier confirmed orders of the publishers," the statement says.

The organisation appealed to the government to reconsider the five per cent customs duty. "This will provide much-needed relief to the print media industry, allowing publishers to manage their operational costs more effectively and ensure the continued dissemination of credible news and information to the public," said the statement signed by INS president Rakesh Sharma.

The INS said many newsprint mills in India and abroad have either suspended or ceased production, sparking supply concerns.

The fluctuating currency exchange rates contribute to the rising costs of importing newsprint, straining the financial viability of newspapers and publications, it said.

istered with the HAL police station soon after the blast at the cafe, the case involves a scheduled offence that the NIA is mandated to probe, a senior Karnataka police officer said.

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Under Section 6 of the NIA Act, which outlines the rules for

## Hiranandani Group founder questioned by ED in FEMA case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, MARCH 4

NIRANJAN HIRANANDANI, the founder and managing director of Hiranandani Group appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) at the agency's Ballard Estate office in Mumbai on Monday where officials questioned him in connection with a Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violation case.

Leaving the ED office after a 10-hour questioning session, Hiranandani said: "We have answered their questions multiple times. It is related to FDI. There is nothing new."

The central agency had last month conducted searches at Hiranandani Group premises in and around Mumbai. After the searches, the agency summoned Niranjan Hiranandani and his son Darshan for questioning.

Niranjan Hiranandani had earlier skipped a summons citing health concerns, while Darshan Hiranandani had requested the agency to give him some time to join the probe.

Sources said the accused group routed investments of more than ₹400 crore in the form of FDIs received in group companies with real estate projects in Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

As spokesperson for the group stated: "The company representative will remain fully cooperative in submitting required documents as was done previously multiple times and will appear when needed."

This, coupled with the fact that that plaintiff publicly acknowledged receipt of certain gifts from Shri Darshan Hiranandani, as set out in paragraph 65 of the report of the Ethics Committee of the Lok Sabha, completely discredits the plaintiff's denial in totto to the contents of the defendant No. 2's (Dehdrai) communication dated 14.10.2023," the High Court said.

The court said Moitra had failed to make out a case for interim injunction, while making it clear that its observations are for deciding only the interim plea.

The court said there was nothing preventing Moitra from making a "full disclosure" in her plaint about sharing her login credentials and receiving gifts from Hiranandani.

But it said this omission was "conspicuous" in light of Moitra's own "public statements" and Hiranandani's "sworn affidavit".

The court said Moitra from

making a "full disclosure" in her plaint about sharing her login credentials and receiving gifts from Hiranandani.

— PTI/INPUTS

statement will be recorded under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) once she deposes.

Moitra is being investigated by the CBI too. It is conducting a preliminary inquiry into the allegations against Moitra on the reference from the Lokpal," an official said.

The agency had sent the first summons to her last month, but Moitra sought a few weeks' time.

In the fresh notice, she has been asked to appear at the ED office in Delhi on March 11. "Her

medical examination is being conducted by a board of doctors under the Mental Healthcare Act.

Suchana's advocate, Franco, said: "The operative part of the order is that she will have to be referred to a medical board under the Mental Healthcare Act for further assessment. A letter will be issued to the investigating officer concerned to produce her before a board of doctors for an assessment of her mental health condition.

The plea also states to look into the history of her illness."

Goa police had earlier told the Children's Court that her mental health assessment did not find any case of psychopathology and that she gave "clear and rational answers" during her medical examination.

Citing a report of the medical examination conducted at the Institute of Psychiatry and Human Behaviour (IPHB) in Bambolim on February 2, Goa police had said that "serial mental status examinations did not reveal any case of psychopathology".

"She (Suchana) gave clear and rational answers in her assessments. She did not report any active death wishes or suicidal tendencies. Her judgement is intact and no psychotic or pervasive mood symptoms were elicited in responses," the report said.

He said Gujarat has become a policy-driven state under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "In our state, we have formulated sector-specific policies that give impetus to the development of various fields." He cited the examples of India's first semiconductor plant that is coming up in Gujarat.

— PTI/INPUTS

Highlighting the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit, Patel said the biennial investment meeting has played an important role in taking Gujarat's development story to new heights.

He also expressed confidence that the first Vibrant Summit has emerged as a foundation for making India a developed country by 2047.

He said Gujarat has become a policy-driven state under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership. "In our state, we have formulated sector-specific policies that give impetus to the development of various fields." He cited the examples of India's first semiconductor plant that is coming up in Gujarat.

— PTI/INPUTS

Opposition parties as "anti-women" while highlighting the initiatives taken by the Modi government for the welfare and empowerment of women. The BJP's women workers in various cities have been organising protests over the issue.

Some BJP leaders admitted that in the previous Assembly polls, the party could not stall CM Mamata Banerjee's third term because of the "overwhelming support" the TMC got from women voters.

10

# The Indian **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY

**RAMNATH GOENKA**

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## POINT OF THE SUBSIDY

**Objective behind India's foodgrain procurement is to help citizens, ensure food security, not distort global trade**

**A**T THE WORLD Trade Organisation's 13th ministerial conference in Abu Dhabi, Thailand replaced its ambassador, Pimchanok Vongkhoron Pitfield, after the Indian government lodged a protest against her remarks on its public stockholding programme. Pitfield had said that India's rice procurement programme for PDS is not for the people, but for capturing the export market. Thailand is the second biggest rice exporter after India. It is also part of the Cairn Group -- a group of 20 nations that includes rice exporters such as Thailand and Vietnam as well as countries like Australia, Brazil and Canada. The group, which pushes for liberalisation of global trade in agriculture, has raised questions in the past as well over India's programme on grounds that it is "distorting" global food prices and "hurting" the food security of other countries. They are missing the point.

The Indian government procures foodgrains for meeting objectives such as its commitments under the National Food Security Act, and other schemes. It is directed towards ensuring food security for a large part of the country's population, not for distorting global food trade. The requirement of rice and wheat under these welfare schemes is not more than 60 million tonnes. Even after making adjustments for an additional quantity for open market interventions, the total requirement is not significantly more. Procurement did rise during 2021-22 and 2022-23 in excess of the requirements for the public stockholding programme. But stocks declined as beneficiaries were given 5 kg of free grain per person per month in addition to their existing quota under the National Food Security Act during the Covid period and because of two poor wheat crops.

In turn, India has legitimate concerns over the manner in which subsidies are estimated at the WTO. The price level at which the calculation is carried out to determine if the product specific support exceeds the specified ceiling of 10 per cent of the total value of production is outdated. The calculation, carried out at 1986-88 prices, tends to overestimate the subsidy. As per the calculations, the value of India's rice production was \$46.07 billion, while the subsidies it gave were pegged at \$6.31 billion. This works out to 13.7 per cent, higher than the prescribed ceiling. As reported in this paper, India and other developing countries are seeking a sustainable solution for the issue of public stockholding for foodgrains. Procurement of foodgrains at the minimum support price and distribution under the NFSR is a pact the Indian government has made with its farmers and citizens. Countries across the world have different ways of helping their farmers. In fact, other countries such as the US and the EU, are estimated to give far more subsidies to the farmer than India.

## A BIG FAT PROBLEM

**Lancet report on obesity highlights seriousness of the issue. It should be a wake-up call for policymakers**

**I**N RECENT YEARS, studies and surveys have flagged a distinct shift in India's disease burden. Non communicable diseases such as diabetes, strokes and heart ailments claim more lives in the country compared to infectious diseases. Experts have also underlined the links between these lifestyle-related diseases and obesity. Long thought to be an urban problem, obesity has become a health threat in rural parts of the country in the last decade. Now, a study published in the medical journal, *The Lancet*, has revealed that it also affects children. More than 12 million children (7.3 million boys and 5.2 million girls) in the country, aged between five and 19, were grossly overweight in 2022, up from 0.4 million in 1990. A gender skew also marks the rise in obesity levels: *The Lancet* study found 44 million women and 26 million men aged above 20 in India to be obese, up from 2.4 million women and 1.1 million men in 1990.

WHO defines obesity as an "abnormal or excessive accumulation of fat that poses health risks". Like in most parts of the world, in India too the problem stems from an increase in sedentary lifestyles, improvement in living standards and access to processed foods. The recently released results of the Household Consumption Survey show that Indians are spending less on cereals and pulses and more on beverages, refreshments and processed food. According to a joint study conducted by WHO and ICRIER last year, India's ultra-processed food industry grew at a compound annual growth rate of 13.37 per cent in terms of retail sales value between 2011 and 2021. Unfortunately, the country's nutrition-related policies, such as Poshan 2.0, do not give adequate attention to unhealthy eating habits. The National Programme for Prevention and Control of Cancer, Diabetes, Cardiovascular Diseases and Stroke does recommend screening and early interventions to check the obesity-related risk factors from becoming complicated. The guidelines recommend annual screening for excess weight in children as young as two to six years old. However, a lack of awareness about the seriousness of the issue, including in the medical community, means that these prescriptions are rarely followed.

India is not the only country with an intractable obesity problem. WHO notes that no country is on track to meeting its target of bringing down obesity to 2010 levels by 2025. However, in several parts of the world, conversations have begun on trying to deal with the problem through measures such as higher taxes on unhealthy food and incentives for healthy food, front-of-pack nutrition labelling to guide consumers and awareness programmes. India has been an outlier to such discussions. *The Lancet* report should serve as a wake-up call for policymakers.

## SENSE OF AN ENDING

**Merriam-Webster says it is fine to use prepositions to conclude sentences with**

**T**HIS IS THE type of arrant pedantry up with which I will not put," Winston Churchill is claimed to have said, rebelling against the autocracy of grammar Nazis insisting that no sentence in the English language take recourse to prepositions as a note to end on. Merriam-Webster seems to have realised the merit in Churchill's argument: In a shock declaration, the publisher of the eponymous American dictionary and reference books has announced that it is perfectly acceptable to do so. "The idea that it should be avoided came from writers who were trying to align the language with Latin, but there is no reason to suggest ending a sentence with a preposition is wrong," it announced on social media, riling up purists who claimed that the venerable institution has little idea about the pandora's box its verdict would open up.

Truth be told, the preposition dilemma has haunted the English language for long. Like the Oxford comma or starting a sentence with a conjunction, the use of prepositions at the end of the sentence is something that the jury has been unable to agree upon. Merriam-Webster had first waded into the debate in 2020, claiming that the obduracy to embrace prepositions at the end of a sentence was an inherited snobbery, espoused by the 17th century poet and literary critic, John Dryden, who had acquired it himself from the grammarian Joshua Poole. The latter had, in his 1646 treatise, *The English Accidence*, set out "a short, plaine, and easie way for the more speedy attaining to the Latine tongue, by the help of the English". It is this tyranny, Merriam-Webster asserted, that has made miserable the lives of English language speakers, and one whose time had come to be rid of.

Love it or hate it, there's no denying that Merriam-Webster's proclamation helps open possibilities up. After all, what indeed is language if it does not update itself periodically to best represent the time it speaks for. That is a freedom one must not let go of.



PRATAP BHAU MEHTA

# Shaadi Number One

**Publicness of Ambani festivities represents a broader shift in culture**

tainment, and the owners of news have become the news.

Some of this may be due to a broader shift in culture: If you don't perform your identity on social media you might as well not exist. Even the most intimate aspects of our identity are acquiring a plebeian aspect to them: What friends think of each other, parents of their kids, in-laws of their prospective brides, expressions of love (or hate), seem to be more than half addressed to an abstract public audience rather than to the object of that sentiment. A sense of publicness used to be irrelevant to a whole range of virtues and sentiments like philanthropy, piety, devotion, compassion, love, friendship, familial bonds. Now publicness is becoming constitutive of their meaning. There is often thought to be a tension in social media performances. There is both self idealisation, presenting myself in the most ideal way, and authenticity: This is who I am. When a public script tries to combine both, as the Ambani wedding scripts attempt to do, the result becomes a perfect embodiment of our age.

But there is also a deeply political aspect to this. Adam Smith, who did not think envy was a potent sentiment, worried about the political power of the rich. For this reason, the rich, while conspicuous in their consumption, always operate in the shadows; the facade that wealth did not shade into other forms of power had to be kept up. By any measure India is a grotesque plutocracy. But it is striking the degree to which the plutocracy is now so transparent, a feature to be flaunted, not a bug to be regretted. The fascinating thing about the event is not the conspicuous consumption. It is the show of power.

What has changed to make this power now a matter of display? Three things come to mind. They who allocate capital allocate power is an old adage. But what has changed is the myth-making around the capabilities of big capital, not just the system of capitalism. There is the construction that an Ambani (or potentially an Adani) can execute and deliver like no other organisation might. If you want big refineries, ports with fast turnaround times, cheap telecom, global champions, big capital is your only bet. Never mind

the regulatory manipulations, to use a polite word, that make this possible: Behold the grandeur of outcome. In some ways, these events also become a hallmark of execution capabilities. Second, in the Ambani case, there is the spectacle of the world showing up: From the Emir of Qatar to Rihanna. This is, in a vicarious way, the world paying obeisance to India. So what if India is not rich. At least it has the world's richest.

It also counts as being Number One in something. This is a projection of national power, without embarrassment. The third is a perfect ideological alignment between Indian capital and the project of Hindu nationalism. Capital has to be visible in that project; it has to make a public show of its devotion to the cause. Capital, in turn, can be recast as a nationalist project, and no better vehicle for it than a perfectly sanskari capitalist family. All these three make this also a perfect nationalist moment.

Doubtless the Ambanis are charming, wonderful and thoughtful people. And doubtless, all the people present had genuine personal affection for the Ambanis. But as a public spectacle, the idea that one can get anyone, no matter how powerful, to show up and make them dance, is quite a show of power. It also explains something of why we put up with overwhelming concentrations of power. A figure that has overwhelmed power can cut everyone down to size. You might be secretary of state or the world's greatest star. But you still show up to an event if the Ambanis summon.

In politics, you might think you are an important leader. But you can be cut down to size by the Biggest One in a matter of seconds. So we are quite happy to have One Big Leader cut down everyone to size. Only the ONE is above us. Everyone else, even the most powerful, have to pay their respects. There is something perversely democratic about the idea that we are all beholden to power, be it from state or capital. The point of these public displays is to demonstrate the truth we hide from ourselves.

*The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express*



RINKU GHOSH

## A REBEL, AN ICON

**Iris Apfel's unique style defied fashion's ageist, conformist standards**

**I**F ONLY COLOUR, as the late Iris Apfel said, could bring the dead back to life. For, if there was one word to define the American style icon and designer, who died at 102, it would be just that — "colourful". A free thinker and an all-embracing inclusivist, above all else, Apfel blurred many lines — between what's fashionable and unfashionable, between the elite and the plebian, youth and old age and, most importantly, between please-all uniformity and a self-loving individuality.

In fact, her life was all about extending possibilities and drinking it to the lees. Some would call her style hedonistic, although Apfel was anything but that. The secret lay in her beady eyes, behind her much-imitated owl glasses, which had weathered many a storm in life. Apfel was born in 1921, during the Great Depression, when a lack of resources challenged creativity. Having studied art history at the New York University and art at the University of Wisconsin, she interned with an interior designer. With her husband, she set up a firm that restored curtains, upholstery and other fabrics, including at the White House, while quietly challenging the limits of textile design.

Apfel's line of work sparked her interest in collectibles, antiques and odds and ends, such as porcelain cats, dolls, gilded mirrors, bejewelled vases and fruits and stuffed

birds — all of which found representation in the clothes she made and wore. She also collected clothes during her travels, developing a deep respect for native weaves and traditions. That's how Apfel's baroque excess harmonised into an original masterpiece. Nothing was an oddity or insignificant; everything fell in place. And there was always a method to the madness.

So be it an haute couture gown in metallic hues or the brightest reds and yellows, a feathered cape or a silken scarf, Apfel could accessorise anything with multicoloured bangles from a flea market, a long necklace of street-side beads and a designer choker of precious stones worth over a million. As she walked down the streets of New York City in high boots, with her fingers covered in tribal rings, the pantomime costume would turn into the latest benchmark of boho-chic. She democratised and repurposed fashion, made it eclectic, gender agnostic, accessible and breathable. "Life is grey and dull. You might as well have some fun dressing up," she had said in a documentary on her life by Albert Maysles.

It is by breaking the ageist stranglehold on an industry that equates glamour with youth and good looks that this silver-haired genius convinced everybody that "it's nice to be old." Her exuberant presence in fashion week front rows was not about compulsive reverse-ageing, but about the right of everyone to express themselves with abandon. Iconoclasm comes easy to celebrities but became a cultural icon in her 80s, more so after the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York showed her wardrobe in an exhibition called 'Rare Avant' at its Costume Institute in 2005. In 2018, at 96, she inspired a line of Barbie dolls mirroring her fashion sense. The following year, at 97, she signed a modelling contract with IMG at the insistence of Tommy Hilfiger and at 100, she collaborated with H&M for a fashion line. She was not a mere rebel, or a "whacko" as some critics pointed out — she believed that even old people had a right to the fullness of being, rather than being seen as a geriatric liability.

As a woman, Apfel had broken many moulds, choosing not to have children without explaining why and adopting fluid lines that didn't pressure women to get into shape and conform to classic cuts.

Apfel died in the middle of Paris Fashion Week. Perhaps to remind us to fight for the front row with originality of ideas rather than unquestioning acquiescence. That alone would make people sit up and take notice. As would her last book, due in August. Aptly, it's called *Colourful*.

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## MARCH 5, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### AFSPA IN PUNJAB

**T**HE PUNJAB GOVERNMENT declared the districts of Amritsar, Gurdaspur and Kapurthala, as disturbed areas under the Armed Forces (Punjab and Chandigarh) Special Powers Act, 1983, for three months. The order vests vast powers with the police and paramilitary forces, including powers to arrest and search premises without a warrant. This action comes in the wake of the unabated spate of violence in these areas.

### PM ON INDIA-US TIES

**P**RIME MINISTER INDIRA Gandhi has said

that the global strategy of the US administration does not find a place for India. "Although there is a lot to talk about democracy and freedom, I think that the people in Washington are really a little irked when we do assert our freedom of judgement, assessment and action, which so many other countries don't," PM Gandhi said.

### JANATA ELECTIONS

**R**EPORTS ON THE Janata Party presidential poll indicate that the current president, Chandra Shekhar, has received overwhelming support. The counting will take place in Delhi on March 6 for the party's first-ever pres-

idential elections. Shekhar's lone rival, Subramanian Swamy, was expecting support from Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat. But reports suggest otherwise.

### VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

**N**EARLY 1,000 PEOPLE have died in a week of religious violence in the northwest Nigerian city of Yola where fighting is still raging, the government-owned *New Nigerian* newspaper reported. Hospital sources gave a figure of 250 and a government official said that 137 people had died. The newspaper said about 500 bodies had been removed from the Yola hospital for a mass burial.

# THE IDEAS PAGE

## Let Pakistan be

Bilateral engagement is a high-cost and low-reward exercise. The costs are higher in Pakistan, where the new government is weak and hobbled by multiple domestic challenges



**RAJA MANDALA**  
BY C RAJA MOHAN

AS SHEHZBAZ SHARIF takes charge as the Prime Minister of Pakistan this week, the focus inevitably turns to the prospects for ending the current freeze in bilateral relations with India. However, the expectations for a new beginning must be tempered for several reasons.

For one, improving bilateral relations is not an urgent priority for India or Pakistan. For Delhi and Islamabad, bilateral engagement is a high-cost and low-reward exercise. In addition, the higher the ambition for a productive bilateral relationship, the greater the political costs of organising it. The costs are higher in Pakistan, where the new government is weak and hobbled by multiple domestic challenges. PM Narendra Modi, expected to begin a third term at the end of May following the general elections, is in a much better position to take risks in engaging Pakistan. Still, he also insists on terms of his own.

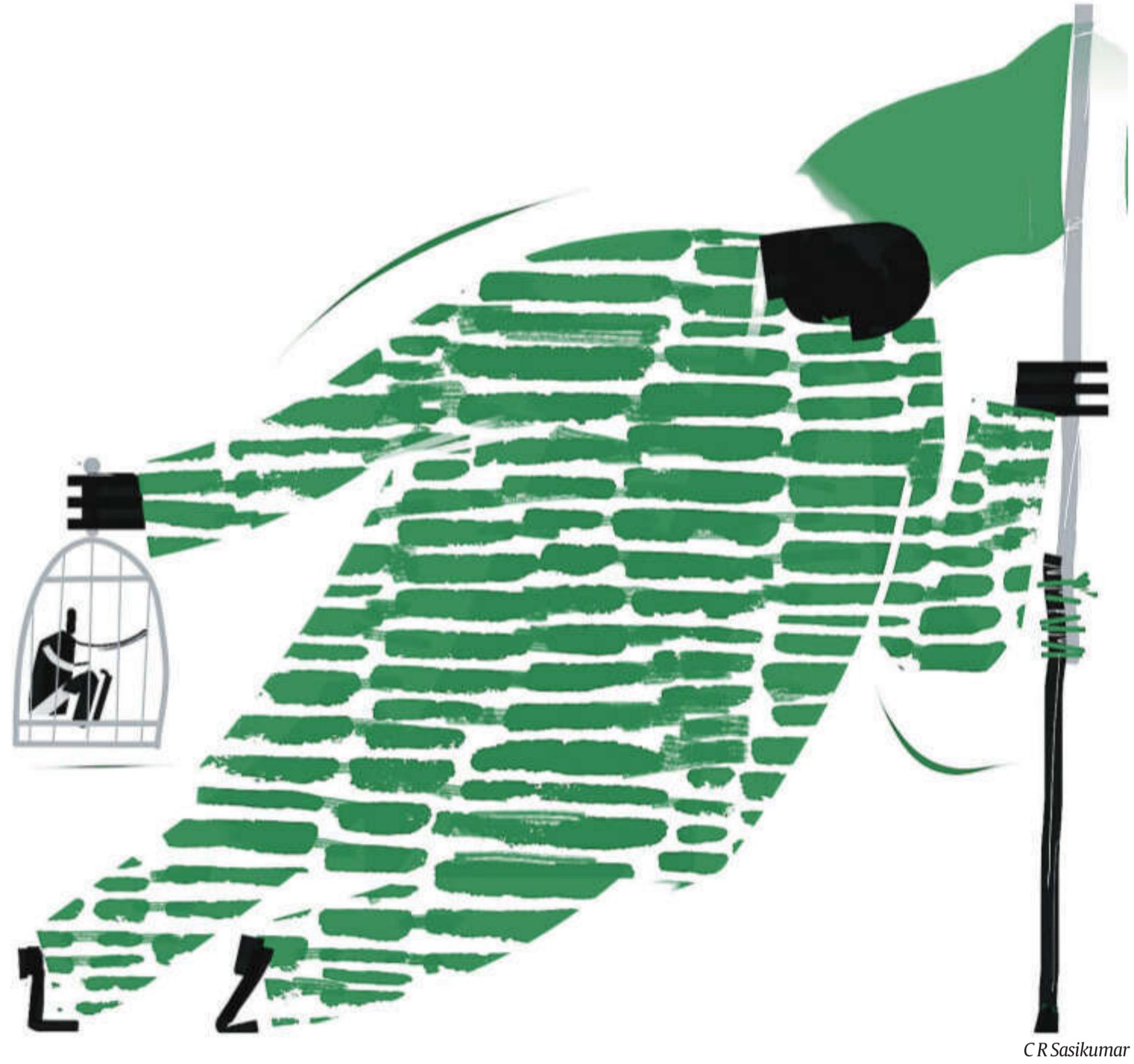
Under Modi, Pakistan has dropped down the list of India's foreign policy priorities. He has demonstrated that India can live with the freeze in bilateral relations. He has also helped India break free from the terms of engagement with Pakistan that were negotiated in the early 1990s when India was at one of its most vulnerable moments.

Pakistan, in contrast, continues to be obsessed with India but has tied itself in knots over bilateral relations. It has put pre-conditions on the engagement. In public, Pakistan insists that India must roll back the 2019 changes in the constitutional status of Kashmir. This is asking for the impossible from the Modi government.

There might be some room for finesse here; but not too much. In essence, any resumption of talks would need Pakistan to get off the high horse it had climbed onto in August 2019.

In February 2021, the then Pakistan army chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, when negotiating the ceasefire on the border, was signalled some flexibility on Kashmir. But Imran Khan had vetoed any steps towards the normalisation of relations without Indian concessions on Kashmir. It is unclear if General Asim Munir and PM Sharif have enough political capital to move forward with India amidst their bitter battle with the immensely popular Imran Khan. Any positive movement in Pakistan on relations with India would involve swallowing the bitter pill that Kashmir cannot be the main focus of engagement with India. Can Pakistan continue to throw good money after bad in promoting the Kashmir insurgency? Does it have the political room to normalise ties with India by putting the Kashmir issue on the back burner?

In his first speech, Sharif talked about improving ties with neighbours but also referred to "freeing" the people of Kashmir. It is not easy for Pakistan's leaders to shed the "ideology" of liberating Kashmir even as that goal looks ever more unrealistic. For Pakistan, the real challenge is coming to terms with the shifting balance of power with India. While Pakistan has always seen itself as equal to India, the last three decades have magnified the rapid divergence in



C R Sasikumar

their relative power in favour of India.

India's aggregate GDP at \$3.7 trillion is now 10 times larger than Pakistan's, struggling at barely \$350 billion. This gap will continue to expand in the coming years. If success breeds success, failure tends to beget failure. While India celebrates its status as the fastest-growing major economy, Pakistan is brooding over its relative economic decline.

In his first address after being elected as Prime Minister, Sharif underlined the need for "deep systemic surgery" in Pakistan. According to Sharif, the stark choice is to "get rid of the life in debt" or forever keep the head down "in shame". He insisted that the new government will help Pakistan rise and stand on its own feet. But talk is cheap; serious economic reform is hard even in the best of circumstances. India, which began its reform and opening up at the turn of the 1990s, took over a decade to stabilise and grow its economy. In theory, Pakistan could do the same. However, the Sharif government lacks the political legitimacy to embark on a serious reform programme. Nor is it clear if it has the policy competence.

Imran Khan's supporters, who form the largest bloc in the National Assembly, brand the government as a "mandate thief". The populist Pakistan People's Party, one of the coalition partners, wants to dissociate itself from the pain-inducing reforms. Cynics could argue that army backing is more important than popular legitimacy or political support. Still, the fact is that long overdue reforms will inflict enormous economic pain on the people. Army Chief Munir is all in favour of reform. But the army-led deep state in Pakistan is arguably at one of its weakest moments, and questions remain about its ability to persist with reform.

Unfavourable balance of power is an unforgiving condition. It demands internal change and external reorientation. Rawalpindi is struggling to navigate between China and the US — Pakistan's two long-standing friends — now at each other's throats. Its traditional friends in the Gulf — Saudi Arabia and UAE — are now best friends with India. Four decades of Pakistan's investment in controlling Afghanistan has gone awry, with the US withdrawing from the country and the Taliban returning to power. Put starkly, Pakistan's problems with Khorasan are a lot worse and more immediate than its historic grievances against Hindustan.

Pakistan has headaches other than those generated by India. Delhi, then, has no option but to continue with a minimal engagement with Pakistan. What Delhi could build on, though, is a very counter-intuitive development in Pakistan — the grudging admiration for PM Modi. Reconnecting with the divergent social, political and economic formations of Pakistan could serve India well if and when Rawalpindi is ready to try out a positive approach to Delhi.

History does not offer much reassurance — Pakistan has rarely completed reform programmes negotiated with the International Monetary Fund. But there is always a first time, and Pakistan may get it right this time. There will be consequences — intended or unintended — whether Pakistan succeeds or fails in its internal reform plans.

Unfavourable balance of power is an unforgiving condition. It demands internal change and external reorientation. In the past, external geopolitics often created enough space for Pakistan to defer and delay serious internal reform. Today, Pakistan finds itself in an unfavourable situation. Rawalpindi is struggling to navigate between China and the US — Pakistan's two long-standing friends — now at each other's throats. Its traditional friends in the Gulf — Saudi Arabia and UAE — are now best friends with India. Four decades of Pakistan's investment in controlling Afghanistan has gone awry, with the US withdrawing from the country and the Taliban returning to power. Put starkly, Pakistan's problems with Khorasan are a lot worse and more immediate than its historic grievances against Hindustan.

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The writer is a contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"The WTO needs reform. It requires a better system to resolve trade disputes... to make it simpler for smaller countries to use... But abandoning the WTO would be a grave mistake, leaving the world without a multinational cop to keep countries trading fairly."

— THE WASHINGTON POST

## Why minerals are critical

Lack of access to them may be the biggest roadblock to India's net-zero goal



**SOMIT DASGUPTA**

TWO IMPORTANT STEPS have been taken by the government in the past year on the subject of critical minerals. The first was to identify a list of 30 critical minerals (apart from rare earths, which are clearly identified in the periodic table) in July 2023 and the second was to amend the existing mining laws in November 2023 to allow private sector participation in the auction of 20 blocks of critical minerals/rare earths. Critical minerals have no particular definition and countries identify the minerals critical to them using their own criteria. The US has identified 50 minerals while Japan has identified 31. Critical minerals and rare earths should not be used interchangeably as is done very often. India has identified 30 critical minerals depending upon their disruption potential, substitutability, cross-cutting usage across different sectors, import reliance, recycling rates etc. The states/UTs which house these 30 identified critical minerals are Bihar, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Jammu and Kashmir.

China, incidentally, has been using its monopoly position on rare earths to settle political scores with countries like the US and Japan by restricting their exports and also the related technology. China's dominant position in the business of critical minerals and its willingness to arm-twist other countries has clearly rattled the world community. It has led to the formation of the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). India, too, has joined the MSP. The aim of the MSP is to bolster the critical minerals supply chain. The MSP includes countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden and Norway, which have deposits of critical minerals, and also countries like Japan and South Korea which have access to processing technology.

Though one needs critical minerals for decarbonisation, it is not limited to just that. They are also required for fertilisers, construction, magnets for industries, transport, consumer electronics, defence, etc. As far as decarbonisation is concerned, one may note that when it comes to building a solar PV plant or a wind farm or electric vehicles, they require more minerals than their fossil fuel counterparts. An electric car needs six times the mineral input when compared to a conventional car and an on-shore wind plant requires nine times more mineral resources than a gas-fired plant.

The International Energy Agency (IEA) has estimated that in order to meet the Paris Agreement targets, the share of clean energy technologies in the total demand for critical minerals over the next two decades would be over 40 per cent for copper and rare earths, 60-70 per cent for nickel and cobalt and 90 per cent for lithium. In general, mineral demand for clean energy technologies would rise by at least four times by 2040 to meet the climate goals.

This massive surge has certain implications for this sector. These resources are concentrated in a few countries and, in the case of lithium, cobalt and rare earths, the world's top three producing nations control well over three-fourths of global output. Specifically, Australia has 55 per cent of lithium reserves, China has 60 per cent of the rare earths, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has 75 per cent of cobalt, Indonesia has 35 percent of nickel, Chile has 30 per cent of copper reserves.

When it comes to critical minerals/rare earths, China needs a special mention. Not only does it have a major share of rare earth reserves, it has also completely monopolised the processing capacity of these minerals. China processes 35 per cent of the world's nickel, 50-70 per cent of lithium and cobalt and nearly 90 per cent of rare earths. Not just that, Chinese companies have made investments in Australia, Chile, Indonesia and the DRC, among others, to source those minerals which it is not endowed with sufficiently. China has also monopolised the manufacture of finished products as it supplies 78 per cent of cathodes, 85 per cent of anodes, 70 per cent of battery cells and 95 per cent of permanent magnets made from rare earths. It would be pertinent to add that the Mountain Pass Mine, a rare earth mining company based in the US, exports a major part of their output to China since they do not have processing capacity within the country. In the past, the US was happy to have the processing done in China since it was cheaper and because processing is very energy intensive and leads to a lot of carbon emissions.

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When it comes to critical minerals/rare earths, China needs a special mention. Not only does it have a major share of rare earth reserves, it has also completely monopolised the processing capacity of these minerals. China processes 35 per cent of the world's nickel, 50-70 per cent of lithium and cobalt and nearly 90 per cent of rare earths. Not just that, Chinese companies have made investments in Australia, Chile, Indonesia and the DRC, among others, to source those minerals which it is not endowed with sufficiently. China has also monopolised the manufacture of finished products as it supplies 78 per cent of cathodes, 85 per cent of anodes, 70 per cent of battery cells and 95 per cent of permanent magnets made from rare earths. It would be pertinent to add that the Mountain Pass Mine, a rare earth mining company based in the US, exports a major part of their output to China since they do not have processing capacity within the country. In the past, the US was happy to have the processing done in China since it was cheaper and because processing is very energy intensive and leads to a lot of carbon emissions.

China, incidentally, has been using its monopoly position on rare earths to settle political scores with countries like the US and Japan by restricting their exports and also the related technology. China's dominant position in the business of critical minerals and its willingness to arm-twist other countries has clearly rattled the world community. It has led to the formation of the US-led Minerals Security Partnership (MSP). India, too, has joined the MSP. The aim of the MSP is to bolster the critical minerals supply chain. The MSP includes countries like Australia, Canada, Sweden and Norway, which have deposits of critical minerals, and also countries like Japan and South Korea which have access to processing technology.

Though one needs critical minerals for decarbonisation, it is not limited to just that. They are also required for fertilisers, construction, magnets for industries, transport, consumer electronics, defence, etc. As far as decarbonisation is concerned, one may note that when it comes to building a solar PV plant or a wind farm or electric vehicles, they require more minerals than their fossil fuel counterparts. An electric car needs six times the mineral input when compared to a conventional car and an on-shore wind plant requires nine times more mineral resources than a gas-fired plant.

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12

# E. EXPLAINED

THIS WORD MEANS

**SUPER TUESDAY**

Super Tuesday is an important day in the Presidential elections process of the US. Here's what happens



Nikki Haley has challenged Trump as the Republican Party's Presidential candidate. Reuters

party's will, although some have criticised the process for not letting voters directly choose their candidate.

**Super Tuesday**

This year, states will hold their primaries and caucuses from January to June. In March or February, one Tuesday sees multiple states going to polls the same day, and is called Super Tuesday. March 5 will see polls in 15 states, including Alabama, Alaska, California, Massachusetts, and Texas. The results of Super Tuesday have often indicated the candidate who will eventually be chosen as the party nominee for the Presidential polls.

**The scenario this year**

No surprises are likely. From the Democratic Party, US President Joe Biden is seeking re-election and he does not have significant challengers.

Among Republicans, a crowded field that initially included Florida Governor Ron DeSantis and entrepreneur Vivek Ramaswamy has now thinned to Trump and Haley.

Delegates are seen as representing the

## Study reveals how star dunes are formed, how long it takes



**PAPER CLIP**

NEW RESEARCH

The answer: about 900 years, accumulating roughly 6,400 metric tonnes annually as wind blows sand through the desert.

Star dunes make up just under 10% of the dunes in Earth's deserts and are the tallest ones, surpassing other types such as crescent-shaped barchan dunes and straight and lengthy linear dunes. They also have been spotted on Mars and on Saturn's large moon Titan.

"Star dunes are formed in areas with complex wind regimes, which means winds blowing from different directions, and net sand accumulation, points within the desert where big piles of sand can be blown around to form giant dunes," said Birkbeck University of London sedimentologist and study co-author Charlie Bristow.

REUTERS

The study focused upon a star dune in eastern Morocco called Lala Lalla, situated within the Sahara Desert.

Scientists on Monday unveiled the first in-depth study of a star dune, revealing the internal structure of these geological features and showing how long it took for one of them to form.

The study focused upon a star dune in eastern Morocco called Lala Lalla, situated within the Sahara Desert.

The researchers used ground-penetrating radar to peer inside the dune and employed luminescence dating to determine how long Lala Lalla has taken to form, a method based on the amount of energy trapped inside the grains of sand.

If an MP who "has bartered away his independence by agreeing to speak or vote in a particular manner in lieu of illegal gratification (bribe)" is protected from criminal prosecution, MPs thereon "would only be seeking a licence to indulge in such corrupt conduct", Justice Agarwal said.

The majority's interpretation of the "in respect of" phrase would create an "anomalous situation", Justice Agarwal said. In such cases, MPs could be prosecuted for bribery only if they did not speak or vote in accordance with the purpose of the bribe, but would be immune from prosecution if they did give the necessary speech or vote, he said.

Justice Agarwal proposed that the phrase "in respect of" should be read as "arising out of" so that the legislator is protected from any civil or criminal liability that follows the speech or vote given.

This would also allow legislators to be held accountable for criminal acts that preclude the vote or speech by recognising that these acts are independent and separate from legislators' actions in Parliament or a Legislative Assembly.

Justice Agarwal stated that the offence of bribery is complete the moment a bribe is accepted, and that it is irrelevant to consider if the purpose of the bribe was carried out — including when the purpose was a speech or a vote by a legislator.

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**EXPLAINED LAW**

# When lawmakers take bribes

Supreme Court has overturned the 26-year-old verdict in the JMM bribery case. What did it rule?

## How top court interpreted the privilege of legislators

### A corrupt vote or a vote of conscience by MPs?

The court also had to decide if a lawmaker gets immunity if he accepts a bribe but votes as per his conscience or party line and not as per the request of the bribe-giver. Essentially, without a quid pro quo, accepting money still be equated to graft?

The Court analysed Section 7 of the Prevention of Corruption Act, which deals with "offence relating to public servant being bribed".

"The mere "obtaining", "accepting" or "attempting" to obtain an undue advantage with the intention to act or forbear from acting in a certain way is sufficient to complete the offence. It is not necessary that the act for which the bribe is given be actually performed," the court said.

### What the law says, what top court had to decide

Article 105(2) of the Constitution states: "No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Parliament or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of a House of Parliament of any report, paper, votes or proceedings."

Article 194(2) provides identical protections to members of state Assemblies.

Before the seven-judge Bench was essentially the interpretation of this provision. This provision was previously interpreted in the 1998 JMM Bribery ruling, so the correctness of that ruling had to be tested.

### Interpreting the law on privileges of MPs and MLAs

Tracing the history of parliamentary privileges in India, the SC said that unlike the House of Commons in the UK, India does not have 'ancient and undoubted' rights vested after a struggle between Parliament and the King. These rights in India, even during colonial times, have flown from a statute, which after independence transitioned to a constitutional privilege. This the court cited as reason to interpret privilege in a way that fits with the larger ideals of the Constitution.

There are two components of parliamentary privilege. One is what the House exercises collectively — which would include the power to punish for its contempt, the power to conduct its own affairs, among others. The second is for individual rights — say exercise of free speech by each member. This, the court said, has to pass a test.

The ruling cited the "necessity test", which means that for a member to exercise a privilege, the privilege must be such that without it "they could not discharge their functions." Naturally, accepting bribes cannot be said to be necessary to discharge one's functions as a lawmaker, unlike, for example, having the right to free speech.

The court also said that the Constitution environs probity in public life.

"Corruption and bribery of members of the legislature erode the foundation of Indian Parliamentary democracy. It is destructive of the aspirational and deliberative ideals of the Constitution and creates a polity which deprives citizens of a responsible, responsive and representative democracy," the ruling stated.



Former PM PV Narasimha Rao on the way to appear in the JMM case in the trial court in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, in Nov 1996. Archive/Virendra Singh

This means that accepting a bribe is an offence as is, and it does not depend on whether the public servant acted differently.

The Court also said that it would be a violation of the right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution to create "an illegitimate class of public servants which is afforded extraordinary protection." Such a classification, the court said, would be manifestly arbitrary.

### Can court punish elected representatives?

Since Parliament also has the power to punish its members for contempt — the punishment here could be suspension from the House and even sentencing to jail term — the SC had to decide whether this meant courts had no role to play.

The SC held that both the court and Parliament can exercise jurisdiction on the actions of lawmakers in parallel. This is because the purpose of punishment by the House is different from the purpose of a criminal trial.

"The issue of bribery is not one of exclusivity of jurisdiction by the House over its bribe-taking members. The purpose of a House acting against a contempt by a member for receiving a bribe serves a purpose distinct from a criminal prosecution," the court said.



Former PM PV Narasimha Rao on the way to appear in the JMM case in the trial court in Vigyan Bhawan, New Delhi, in Nov 1996. Archive/Virendra Singh

Rao's Congress party had 251 MPs at the time, 13 short of majority in the 528-member Lok Sabha. However, the motion was defeated after 14 opposition MPs voted with the government — and Rao and the Congress stayed in power.

A year later, reports emerged that MPs of the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) had accepted bribes to vote against the no-confidence motion. In 1996, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) opened an investigation.

The CBI registered cases against six JMM MPs, accusing them of accepting bribes to vote in favour of the government. Ajit Singh, then in the Janata Dal, was accused of accepting a bribe to abstain from voting.

After Delhi High Court refused to quash the charges, Narasimha Rao and the other accused appealed to the Supreme Court.

### Majority opinion: Immunity under Articles 105(2), 194(2)

The Supreme Court had to decide whether legislators, by virtue of their office, enjoyed immunity from prosecution.

Justice S P Bharucha (later Chief Justice of India), who authored the majority opinion for himself and Justice Rajendra Babu, held that the bribe takers who cast their vote against the no-confidence motion were immune from criminal prosecution under Article 105(2).

Article 105(2) of the Constitution states: "No member of Parliament shall be liable to any proceedings in any court in respect of anything said or any vote given by him in the Legislature or any committee thereof, and no person shall be so liable in respect of the publication by or under the authority of a House of such a Legislature of any report, paper, votes or proceedings."

Article 194(2) provides identical protections to members of state Assemblies.

Pointing to the intended purpose of the Article, Justice Bharucha said that MPs must be allowed to exercise their freedom of speech in Parliament without fear of reprisal through court proceedings, and that their votes must be treated as an extension of this freedom. He held that in order to protect the independence of MP's, the phrase "in respect of" in the Article must be given a "broad meaning" to protect the MP from all civil or criminal proceedings that have a connection with anything they may have said or voted for in Parliament.

However, the court refused to extend the same protections to Ajit Singh, since he had neither made a speech nor cast a vote. It also refused to extend protections to bribe-givers. Justice G N Ray agreed with this interpretation of Article 105(2) in his concurring opinion.

### Dissent: accepting a bribe is separate from vote or speech

Justice S C Agarwal authored the minority opinion for himself and Justice Dr A S Anand. This dissent had a major bearing on the SC's decision to overturn the 1998 ruling.

Justice Agarwal observed that immunity from prosecution for bribery charges would place legislators above the rule of law, which is not the purpose of Article 105(2).

If an MP who "has bartered away his independence by agreeing to speak or vote in a particular manner in lieu of illegal gratification (bribe)" is protected from criminal prosecution, MPs thereon "would only be seeking a licence to indulge in such corrupt conduct", Justice Agarwal said.

The majority's interpretation of the "in respect of" phrase would create an "anomalous situation". Justice Agarwal said. In such cases, MPs could be prosecuted for bribery only if they did not speak or vote in accordance with the purpose of the bribe, but would be immune from prosecution if they did give the necessary speech or vote.

This would also allow legislators to be held accountable for criminal acts that preclude the vote or speech by recognising that these acts are independent and separate from legislators' actions in Parliament or a Legislative Assembly.

Justice Agarwal stated that the offence of bribery is complete the moment a bribe is accepted, and that it is irrelevant to consider if the purpose of the bribe was carried out — including when the purpose was a speech or a vote by a legislator.

# India's 'happy' leopard story: what headline number does not show

JAY MAZOOMDAAR

NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE 2022 Status of Leopards survey has put the population of the spotted cat in India at 13,874 (between 12,616 and 15,132), a 75% increase of 7,910 (between 6,566 and 9,181) over the 2014 estimate.

However, a more realistic comparison should consider the figure from 2018, when the number of camera points (26,838) was increased to almost three times the 2014 number (9,777). As a result, the number of leopards photographed increased to 5,240 in 2018 from 1,647 in 2014, which enabled a more realistic overall estimate of numbers.

The 2022 study, the results of which were announced by Environment Minister Bhupender Yadav last week, deployed cameras at 32,803 locations, and reported an 8% increase over the 2018 estimate of 12,852 (between 12,172 and 13,535) cats.

In the areas that were covered by both surveys, leopard numbers have risen by a modest 4.4%.

The small growth in numbers may suggest stability in the leopard population. But the cat is still not out of the woods — be-

cause that is where it is, literally.

### In tiger reserves and outside

Every third leopard estimated in the 2022 survey is inside protected areas — national parks, sanctuaries, or tiger reserves. According to Jacobson et al. (*Leopard (Panthera pardus) status, distribution, and the research efforts across its range: 2016*), protected areas account for only 11% of the leopard's range in India. This means 33% of the estimated leopard population is in 11% of its range. Areas outside these protected islands report a lower density — 67% of the population in 89% of the leopard's range.

But leopards in the peripheries of protected forests also make use of those areas.

Data on leopards that are either inside or using each of India's 44 tiger reserves offers a window to understand the contrasting fortunes of two distinct leopard populations — one that uses the country's most protected forests, and those in fringe or non-forest areas away from tiger reserves.

The 2018 study found 5,325 of the estimated 12,852 leopards in and around tiger reserves. In 2022, the number of leopards in and around tiger reserves climbed by 21% to 6,440. In contrast, the number of leopards away from tiger reserves fell by 1% from 7,527 to 7,434 (*Table above*).

### GAIN AND LOSS IN LEOPARD NUMBERS

Total Using TRs\* Rest

2018 12,852 5,325 7,527

2022 13,874 6,440 7,434

Gain 1,022 1,115 -93

Tiger reserves\* Source: WII, NTCA

ards away from tiger reserves fell by 1% from 7,527 to 7,434 (*Table above*).

The "all-India" surveys are in fact limited to tiger states, and do not account for potential leopard areas such as Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, J&K, Ladakh, and arid areas of Rajasthan.

But the general trend is unmistakable — and underlines the impact of conflict and poaching on leopards in unprotected areas, where the bulk of the population is.

According to Raza et al. (*Illuminating the Blind Spot: A Study on Illegal Trade in Leopard Parts in India (2001–2010)*: 2012), four leopards were being poached weekly in the preceding decade. Seizure data from 2010 to

2012 accounted for at least 466 leopards and 66 tigers — a 1:7 ratio. Those seizures would amount to at least 4,000 kg of bones, which are in high demand as traditional Chinese medicine, and fetch a higher price than pelts in the international market.

Records maintained by the Wildlife Protection Society of India show that more than 5,500 leopards have been poached since 1994. The count for the last five years (since 2019) exceeds 800. Occasional mega seizures suggest that only a fraction of poached animals are ever accounted for.

Against severe odds, the uniquely adaptable cat is still found outside protected areas in agro-pastoral landscapes, plantations, and near human habitations in both rural and urban settings. The Indian leopard population (subspecies *Panthera pardus fusca*) remains the largest surviving outside Africa.

But the very adaptability that has enabled leopards to live in closer proximity to humans than any other big cat has also made them vulnerable to poaching and conflict.

According to Raza et al. (*Illuminating the*

SENSEX: 73,872.29 ▲ 66.14 (0.09%) NIFTY: 22,405.60 ▲ 27.20 (0.12%) NIKKEI: 40,109.23 ▲ 198.41 HANG SENG: 16,595.97 ▼ 6.53 FTSE: 7,644.22 ▼ 38.28 DAX: 17,722.50 ▼ 12.57



GOLD

₹64,200



USD RATE

₹82.89



OIL

\$83.00



SILVER

₹73,800

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

International market data till 1900 IST

RBI bars IIFL  
Finance from  
disbursing  
gold loans

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

MUMBAI, MARCH 4

THE RESERVE Bank of India (RBI) on Monday barred IIFL Finance Ltd from sanctioning or disbursing gold loans or assigning, securitising or selling any of its gold loans in the wake of several regulatory violations by the company.

The company can, however, continue to service its existing gold loan portfolio through usual collection and recovery processes, the central bank said.

According to the RBI, certain material supervisory concerns were observed in the gold loan portfolio of the company, including serious deviations in assaying and certifying purity and net weight of the gold at the time of sanction of loans and at the time of auction upon default.

The RBI also noticed breaches in Loan-to-Value ratio, significant disbursement and collection of loan amount in cash far in excess of the statutory limit, non-adherence to the standard auction process and lack of transparency in charges being levied to customer accounts.

"These practices, apart from being regulatory violations, also significantly and adversely impact the interest of the customers," the RBI said.

## Classifieds

## PERSONAL

I.R. KRITHIKA W/O R.SANKARANARAYANAN R/o:491, 1st floor, Sector-5, Vaishali, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201010, have changed my name to S. KRITHIKA for all future Purposes. 0070892268-1

I, Praveen Kumar Priyadarshini, son of Shyam Narain Mishra, resident of B-903, Faculty Residence, IIT Delhi, Near Govind Puri Metro Station, Okhla Phase 3, Okhla Industrial Estate, South Delhi, Delhi, 110020, in form that "Praveen Kumar Priyadarshini" and "Praveen Priyadarshini" are names of one and the same person, i.e., Praveen Kumar Priyadarshini. 0070892225-1

I, Pratibha D/O, Ramesh Chander R/O Village Rohna (23), Sonipat, Haryana-131402 have changed my name and I shall hereafter be known as Pratibha Jangra. 0040717911-1

I, Naman Shabharwal S/o Hitesh Kumar R/o-B-69-70, 1st-floor front-side, Ram Nagar, Om Vihar, uttam-nagar, delhi, have changed my name to Naman Sabharwal. 0040717859-1

I, NOOR AFSHAN KHAN W/O SUHAIL ASHRAF R/O C-166, STREET NO.3, SANGAM VIHAR, WAZIRABAD, BURARI, DELHI-110084 declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as NOOR AFSHA in my minor son HUZEFA SUHAIR aged 17 years in his 10th class marksheets and certificate. The actual name of mine is NOOR AFSHAN KHAN. 0070892259-1

I, Mohd Faq Faizan S/o Farooq Ahmed R/o A-2/121, 2nd-Floor, Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi-110029 have changed my name to Mohammad Faq Faizan for all purposes. 0070892243-1

I, Mohd Arif Zaman Siddiqui, S/o Mr. Mohammad Masihur Zaman, R/o C-208/A, Abul Fazal Enclave Part-II, Shaheen Bagh, Okhla, Jamia Nagar, New Delhi-110025, have changed my name from Mohammad Arif Zaman Siddiqui to MOHD ARIF ZAMAN SIDDIQUI for all future purposes. 0040717848-1

I, Michelle Eric D/o Sh. Eric Rajan R/o 1560, Tower Romano, Mahagun Massc, Crossing Republik, Ghaziabad, UP declare that mother's name in my Class X & XII Marks Statement has been wrongly written as MARY ERIC. My mother's correct name is MARY MARGARET. 0040717845-2

I, MD SHOAIB MALS/S/O SHAMSHEER AHMED,R/O-2/3 VISHWAKARMA PARK LAXMI-NAGAR DELHI-92, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SHOAI MALK, FOR FUTURE. 0040717863-2

I, KRITIKA GAMBHIR W/O SAHIL KATYAL R/O-307, AGCR ENCLAVE KARKARDOMA DELHI-110092 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KRITIKA KATYAL. 0040717863-5

I, Jitender Kumar,S/o Raj Kumar, R/O C-6/28A/Block-6 Keshav Puram Delhi-110035, Changed my name to Jitender Wadhwa. 0040717953-2

I, Danesh Pathak S/o Surinder Pathak R/o D-165, Sec-55, Noida, GB, Nagar, UP-201301 have changed my name to Dinesh Pathak for all future Purposes. 0070892276-1

I, Chaudhry Khusrav Rehman S/o Nasim UR Rahaman R/o C-502, Icon Apartment Sector Chi-3, Greater Noida U.P. have changed my daughter name from Ayat Rahman to Ayat Rehman for all future purposes. 0070892263-1

I, Bhawna D/o Parvinder R/o Flat No.112,2nd floor,C-Block, Sector-14,Near-Omex Galleria Bahadurgarh District-Jhajjar Haryana-124507, changed my name to Bhawna Yadav 0040717953-1

I, Navita Berry W/O Nitin Chawla R/o-17/10B, Block,Tilak Nagar,Delhi-110018,have changed my name to Navita Chawla. 0040717924-1

I, Bhawya Chawla S/o Sh. Sanjeev Chawla R/o C-72, Vivek Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110095, have changed my name from Bhawya Chawla to Bhavye Chawla, vide affidavit number IN-DL5235177317936W, dated 01.03.2024, before notary Shyamala Pal, for all future purposes. 0040717851-1

I, Baldev Sharma s/o Chint Ram R/o Flat No.-301, 3rd Floor, A-37, Suraj Vihar, Dwarka, Delhi-110078 have changed my name to DASS BALDEV. 0040717843-1

I, Abhijeet Kumar Sinha S/o Late Shashi Kumar Sinha R/o C-504, Golf City, Sector-75, Noida, UP-201301 have changed my minor son's name from ARAV SINHA to AARAV SINHA for all future purposes. 0070892272-1

I, ABDUL WAHEED,S/o BHOLU SEKH, ADDRESS-E-117/13 JHUGGI, SUNDER NAGARI, DELHI-110093,changed my name to ABDULL WAHID. 0040717931-1

I, CHARANJEET CHAWALA S/O JASBIR SINGH R/O 6/7, 3RD FLOOR, SWARG ASHRAM COLONY DELHI-110009 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO CHARANJEET CHAWALA. 0040717931-2

I VENUGOPAL PRATAP MENON S/O KOZHIPURATH VENUGOPAL MENON R/O FLAT-NO-E/3 ANTRIKSH GREENS, PLOT-F-7, SECTOR-50, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR UTTAR PRADESH-201301 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRATAP VENUGOPAL FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

0070892245-1

I Tejal Singh S/o Shri Raja Ram R/o 369, Gali Chakkhi Wali, Kabir Basti, Malka Ganj, Subzi Mandi, Delhi-110007 have changed my name to Tejal for all purposes. 0040717841-2

I Shabu W/o Mohd Taki residing at H No-78, Chauhatta, Khurja-20313 Distt- Bulandshahar (U.P.) have changed my name to Saba for all purposes in future. 0040717846-1

I Rajveer S/o Simran Kaur R/o E-8/1, Phase-2, Vijay Vihar, Rohini Sector-7, District North West Delhi, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Rajveer Singh for all purposes. 0040717841-1

I, Naman Shabharwal S/o Hitesh Kumar R/o-B-69-70, 1st-floor front-side, Ram Nagar, Om Vihar, uttam-nagar, delhi, have changed my name to Naman Sabharwal. 0040717859-1

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I, Mandela Venkata Krishna Naga Santosh S/o Naryana Rao R/o 26-7-9, Surya Tejas Nagar, Palakkollu, Palakkal, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh-534260, have changed my name to Mandela Santosh KV 0070892236-1

I Keshav S/o Sh. Dilip Kumar R/o H.No. G-59, J.J. Colony, Shakur Pur, I-Block, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Keshav Pawar for all purposes. 0040717841-7

I Alim Siddiqui S/o, Md Ittiza Siddiqui R/o H.no. 65, Street No. 3, Prem Nagar 1, Khubram Park, Kirari Samandar Nagar, North West Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Md Alim Siddiqui. 0040717890-1

I Abdul Rasheed Ansari S/o Abdul Aziz R/o M-53, Batha House, Jamia Nagar, New Friends Colony, New Delhi-110025 have changed my name to Abdul Rasheed for all purposes. 0040717841-3

I, IMD Shakin,S/o Mohd Sabir, R/o-B-117,Gali No.11, Kanti-Nagar Extn.Block-B,Krishna-Nagar,Delhi-110051,declare that name of my late father has been wrongly written as MOD Sabir in my Passport No.M5791749.The actual name of my late father is MOHD Sabir.Which may be amended accordingly. 0040717863-8

It is for general information that I,Rakesh Kumar,S/o Suraj Singh,R/o Z-96, 2nd Floor, Dayalsar Road,Uttam Nagar,New Delhi-110059,declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Rakesh Thakur in my minor daughter namely Shreya Thakur aged 16 years in her 10th-class marksheets. The actual name of mine is Rakesh Kumar. 0040717931-10

I, AMARENDRA KUMAR, S/O/BASUDEO SINGH,ADD-PNO-127B,BLOCK-D IST FLOOR EDENBURG CITY PHASE-1,SECTOR-91, FARIDABAD, HARYANA-120130,changed my name to AMRENDRA KUMAR,for all,future purposes

I, SUBHANI ASIF,W/O HARIS UL ISLAM KUNWAR,R/o-DUPLEX NO-2,STREET:NO-11, IQRA-COLONY NAR ASYHA MASJID, DHORRA MAFI, ALIGARH, U.P-202002, changed my name to SUBHANI HARIS. 0040717922-2

I, ROMANA ASAD residing at S-9, Sector-7, Jasola Vihar, New Delhi-26, hereby declare that correct spelling of my name is ROMANA ASAD which has been mis-spelt in my previous passport as RAMANA ASAD 0050238304-1

It is for general information that I,Mohd Ashraf Siddiqui,S/o Moiuddin Siddiqui,R/o 1448,Chhatta Nawab Saheb,Farash Khan, Delhi G.P.O.North Delhi,Delhi-110006 declare that name of my father has been wrongly written as Moiuddin in my Passport No.W616065.The actual name of my father is Moiuddin Siddiqui. 0040717920-10

I, Rohit Kakkar S/o Parveen Kumar Kakkar R/o 3/113, Ramesh-Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Rohit Kumar Kakkar. 0040717944-5

I, Rishabh Agarwal,S/o-o- Kishan,R/o-B-12,1st,Floor,Anand Vihar,East-Delhi-110092,have changed my name to Rishabh Agarwal R/o Flat-11, Rohini Sector-17,ROHINI,110055,changed my name to Rishabh Agarwal

I, SANJAY JAIN,S/O JAGDISH PRASAD JAIN H.NO-201/4, KRISHNA GALI NO-2, MAUJPUR,SEELAMPUR,DELHI-110053 have changed my name to SANJAY KUMAR JAIN,for all,future purpose.

I, Rohit Kakkar S/o Parveen Kumar Kakkar R/o 3/113, Ramesh-Nagar, New Delhi-110015, have changed my name to Rohit Kumar Kakkar. 0040717944-5

I, Jitender Kumar,S/o Raj Kumar,R/o C-6/28A/Block-6 Keshav Puram Delhi-110035, Changed my name to Jitender Wadhwa. 0040717920-4

I, Ganesh kumar Sankhla, S/o-Lal Chand Sankhla,Address-D1/6, Janak Puri,New Delhi-110058,CHANGED MY NAME TO Ganesh kumar. 0040717863-1

I, VENUGOPAL PRATAP MENON S/O KOZHIPURATH VENUGOPAL MENON R/O FLAT-NO-E/3 ANTRIKSH GREENS, PLOT-F-7, SECTOR-50, NOIDA, GAUTAM BUDDHA NAGAR UTTAR PRADESH-201301 HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PRATAP VENUGOPAL FOR ALL FUTURE PURPOSES.

0070892245-1

I, Zeenat Khan W/o,Mohd Azad R/o-B-28/5-A,Flat-No.201,First-Floor,Sunshine Appt., Shaheen-Bagh, AbuFazal Enclave-II, Jamia-Nagar, Okhla,New Delhi-110025,have changed my minor son's name Taha Azad to Taha Azad Khan. 0040717944-4

I, Veena Rani W/o Sanjeev Sharma R/o Flat-2301, Tower-2, Lotus-300, Sector-107, Noida (U.P.201304) have changed my name to Veena Sharma for all purposes. 0040717862-3

I, Isha W/o Mohd Taki residing at H No-78, Chauhatta, Khurja-20313 Distt- Bulandshahar (U.P.) have changed my name to Saba for all purposes in future. 0040717846-1

I, Rajveer S/o Simran Kaur R/o E-8/1, Phase-2, Vijay Vihar, Rohini Sector-7, District North West Delhi, Delhi-110085 have changed my name to Rajveer Singh for all purposes. 0040717841-1

I, Naman Shabharwal S/o Hitesh Kumar R/o-B-69-70, 1st-floor front-side, Ram Nagar, Om Vihar, uttam-nagar, delhi, have changed my name to Naman Sabharwal. 0040717859-1

I, Nisha charan D/o Ashok Charan W/o Rodrick Gilbert R/o H.O.No-125/C, Bengali Colony, Mahavir Enclave, ND-110045 India, that I have changed my name after marriage from Neetu Charan to Neetu Gilbert. I hereby declare that both the names Neetu Charan and Neetu Gilbert Pertain to the one and the same person, that in future my name should be treated as Neetu Gilbert. 0040717858-1

I, Mandela Venkata Krishna Naga Santosh S/o Naryana Rao R/o 26-7-9, Surya Tejas Nagar, Palakkollu, Palakkal, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh-534260, have changed my name to Mandela Santosh KV 0070892236-1

I, Keshav S/o Sh. Dilip Kumar R/o H.No. G-59, J.J. Colony, Shakur Pur, I-Block, North West Delhi, Delhi-110034 have changed my name to Keshav Pawar for all purposes. 0040717841-7

I, Alim Siddiqui S/o, Md Ittiza Siddiqui R/o H.no. 65, Street No. 3, Prem Nagar 1, Khubram Park, Kirari Samandar Nagar, North West Delhi-110086 have changed my name to Md Alim Siddiqui. 0040717890-1

I, Mandela Venkata Krishna Naga Santosh S/o Naryana Rao R/o 26-7-9, Surya Tejas Nagar, Palakkollu, Palakkal, West Godavari, Andhra Pradesh-534260, have changed my name to Mandela Santosh KV 0070892236-1

I, Subhan S/o Mohd Sabir, R/o-B-117,Gali No.11, Kanti-Nagar Extn.Block-B,Krishna-Nagar,Delhi-110051,declare that name of my late father has been wrongly written as Rakesh Thakur in my minor daughter namely Shreya Thakur aged 16 years in her 10th-class marksheets. The actual name of mine is Rakesh Kumar. 0040717863-8

I, IMD Shakin,S/o Mohd Sabir, R/o-B-117,Gali No.11, Kanti-Nagar Extn.Block-B,Krishna-Nagar,Delhi-110051,declare that name of my late father has been wrongly written as Rakesh Thakur in my minor daughter namely Shreya Thakur aged 16 years in her 10th-class marksheets. The actual name of mine is Rakesh Kumar. 0040717863-8

I, Sanjeev Kumar S/o Hari Ram Sharma R/o Flat-2301, Tower-2, Lotus-300, Sector-107, Noida (U.P.201304) have changed my name to Sanjeev Sharma for all purposes. 0040717862-1

I, SUSHIL DUMARA,S/O-SHAM SUNDER,R/O-H.NO-204 FIRST-FLOOR PLOT-NO.123,NANGLOI EXTENSION-1,B-DELHI-110041,HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SUSHIL KUMAR DUMRA. 0040717921-3

I, PARNEET KAUR NAHAR,D/O MANMOHAN SINGH,R/O JP-25,WZ-BLOCK, STREET NO.3,JANAK-PARK,HARI-NAGAR,DELHI-110064.HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO PARNEET KAUR. 0040717912-1

I, Neetu Singh,W/o Bharat Singh,R/o H.No.829,Sector-9,Faridabad,have changed my name to Beena Devi after-marriage. 0040717921-2

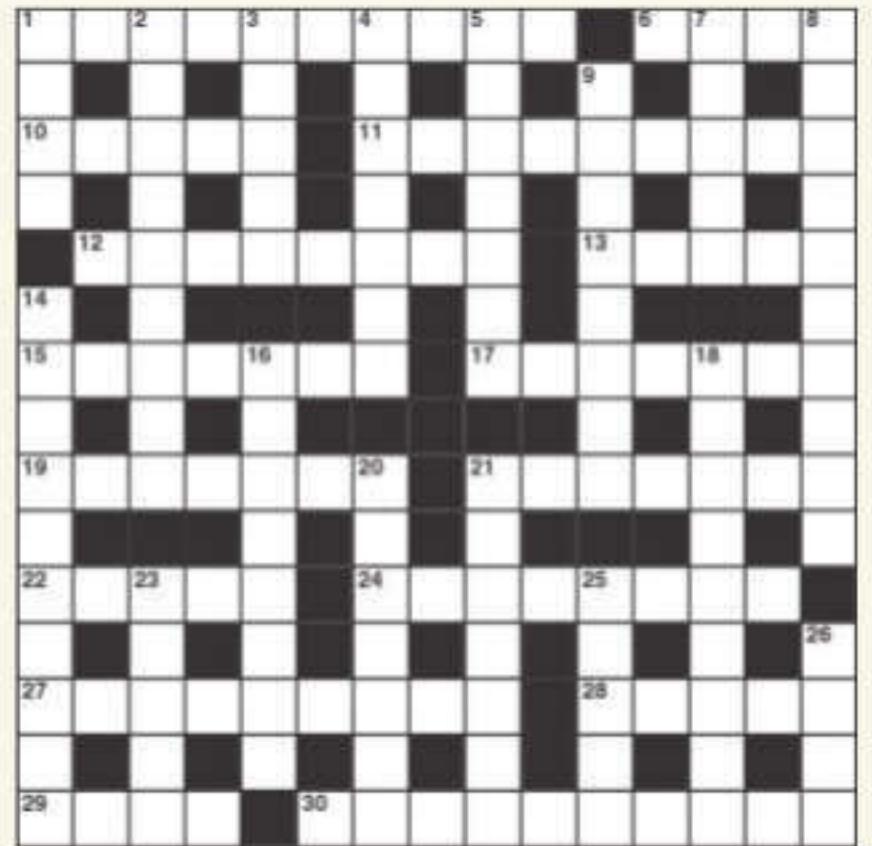
I, NEHA, D/O BISAN SINGH, R/O 779,80 FEET ROAD,SHALIMAR GARDEN,SAHIBABAD,GAZIABAD ADJUTTAR PRADESH-201005, changed my name to NEHA SINGH. 0040717922-7

I, Pooya Sardana,W/o Bharat Sardana,R/o H-91,Ashok Vihar,Phase-1,Delhi-110052, declare that wrongly written my mother name as Meena Sethi in my passport, but original name is Meena Seth. 0040717922-4

I, Subhan S/o Mohd Sabir, R/o Flat-2301, Tower-2, Lotus-300, Sector-107, Noida (U.P.201304) have changed my name to Subhan Singh for all purposes. 0040717922-5</



## CROSSWORD 5304



**ACROSS**

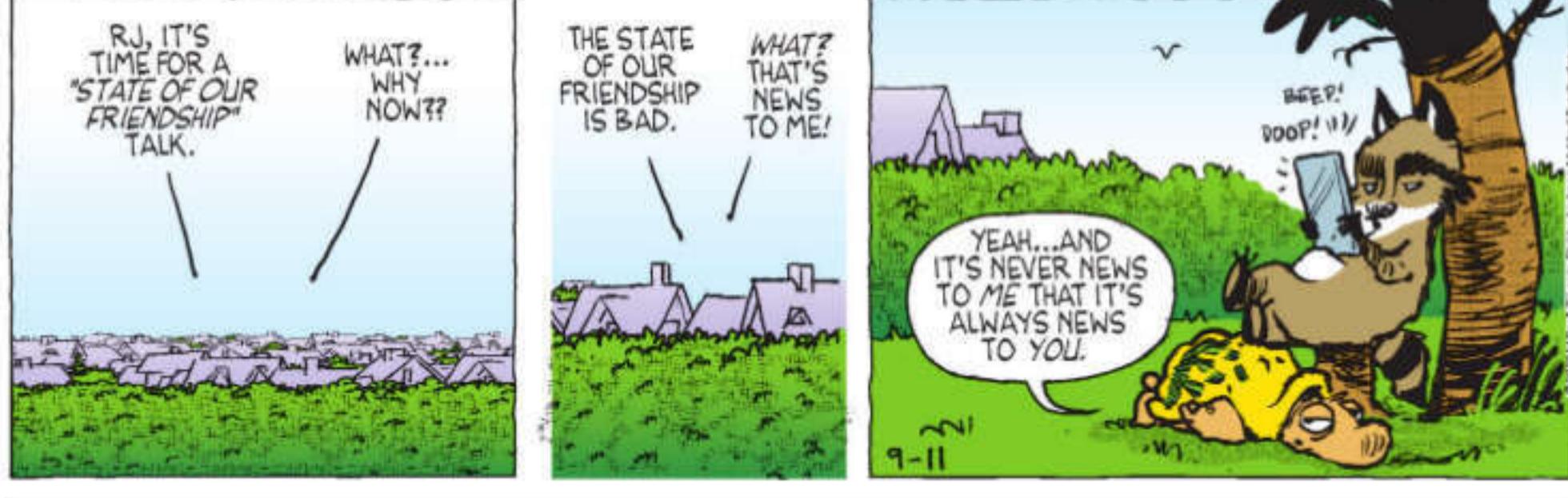
- Key man in the canal trade? (4-6)
- Capital punishment (4)
- Go-ahead colour (5)
- Tearful Scottish scenes we get on Christmas cards (9)
- Honest deal? (8)
- Decoys that break the rules (5)
- Wrested apart and scattered (7)
- New creator of atomic energy (7)
- It may get upset over trifles (7)
- Can turn on speed to make the land more productive (7)
- Refuse to be put out of operation by Capone (5)
- A patient compilation (4,4)
- Displeasing action against the defence (9)
- Club youth leader's dramatic device (5)
- Toy that gives you endless repetition (2-2)
- Sums up the scrambled egg as great (10)

**DOWN**

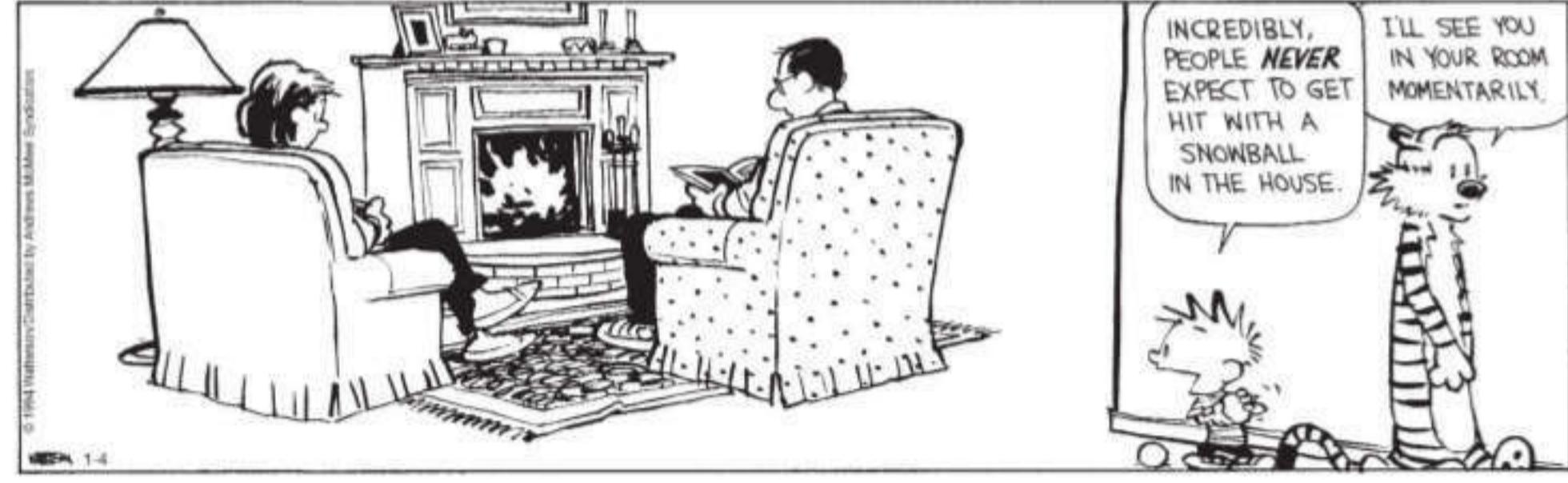
- Records that may finish up on the fire (4)
- A number possibly treasure animals (9)
- Yank goes round about East African republic (5)
- Not free to wed (7)
- Builder puts a point to a parson (7)
- 7 Bull ring? (5)
- Simple way for affluent living (4,6)
- Strong law is broken in the beginning (8)
- Subject for those who have the mind to study (10)
- Where strain will cause a parting (4,4)
- You may get carried away by it, in two ways (9)
- In a hurry to be stylish (7)
- Central rule can be broken (7)
- This by itself indicates equality (5)
- Prone to mendacity (5)
- One may get one's hooks into them (4)

Solutions Crossword 5303 Across: 1 Asphalt, 5 Hopes, 8 Provision, 9 Tug, 10 Arch, 12 Doublets, 14 Chased, 15 Cotton, 17 Wildfire, 18 Hyde, 21 Eft, 22 Easy-going, 24 Dress, 25 Resolve Down: 1 Alpha, 2 Pro, 3 Axis, 4 Tailor, 5 Handbook, 6 Patiently, 7 Signs, 11 Charlotte, 13 Leaflets, 14 Cowherd, 16 Eraser, 19 Eagle, 20 Ages, 23 Ill

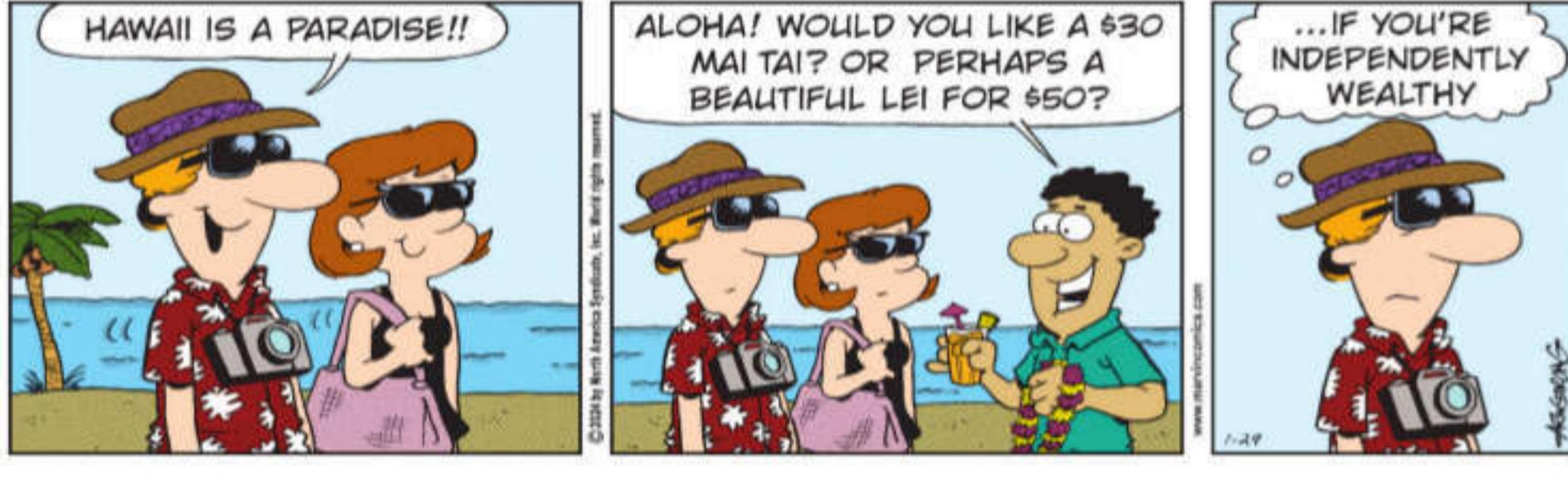
## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry &amp; T Lewis



## CALVIN &amp; HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



**SUDOKU 5492**  
Difficulty Level 3s  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

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

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 5491**

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

## JUMBLED WORDS

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

One's happiness depends less on what he \_\_\_ than on what he \_\_\_. - Liberty Hyde Bailey (5,5)

DGEEO

DEFONF

HOLSS

OOTWKW

Answers: One's happiness depends less on what he knows than on what he sees - Liberty Hyde Bailey

**SUDOKU 5492**

Difficulty Level 3s  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 5491**

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

**SUDOKU 5491**

Government of Odisha  
Office of the Chief Construction Engineer,  
Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur  
E-mail Id serwircle@bpl@yahoo.com  
Bid Identification No. Bridge tender Online RWCSBP- 70/2023-24  
No. 927 Dated: 01.03.2024

The Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur on behalf of Governor of Odisha invites online percentage rate Bid from experienced & eligible bidders for 01 (One) no. of Bridge work under Biju Setu Yojana for the year 2023-24.

1 Name of work : Bridge works under BSY for the year 2023-24.  
2 No. of works : 01 (One) no of Bridge works Details as per DTCN.  
3 Estimated cost : Approximately cost Rs. 409.93 lakhs  
4 Class of Contractor : "A" Class  
5 Cost of tender paper and mode of deposit : Rs. 10,00/- per set. (to be deposited On-line) in favour of concerned Executive Engineer.  
6 Mode of submission of tender : Tender should be submitted only On line in website [www.tendersissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersissa.gov.in) (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>)  
7 EMD and mode of deposit : 1% of estimated cost of the work to be remitted online as mentioned in DTCN.

8 Summary of key dates are provided below :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding	Last date & time for seeking clarification	Date & Time of opening of tender
		From To		Technical Bid Financial Bid
Chief Construction Engineer, Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur	Bridge Tender Online-RWCSBP-70/2023-24	06.03.2024 from 11.00 A.M. upto 5.00 P.M.	20.03.2024 up to 5.00 PM	18.03.2024 21.03.2024 21.03.2024 To be intimated later

\* Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [www.tendersissa.gov.in](http://www.tendersissa.gov.in) (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>)  
\* Subsequent modification/corrigendum/Addendum if required shall appear in website only.  
\* The amount put to bid, exclusive of GST.  
\* Bidder should inspect the road before bidding and quote his rate accordingly.

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 5491**

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

Sd/-  
Chief Construction Engineer,  
Rural Works Circle, Sambalpur  
OIPR-25091/11/0106/2324

Govt. of Bihar of Bihar

## DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

## ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

There's little in the way of short-term planetary aspects these days, but much happening in the way of long-term trends. Therefore you may expect a long-running domestic saga to reach a turning point. And, when it does, you'll be ready to push partners to the limit.

## TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

If you track the ups and downs in your moods, you'll realise that you are moving from a period of optimism and faith to one of practical commonsense. It may therefore be time to start making concrete plans. Try to look as far ahead as you can, and fill in the details later.

## GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Mercury, planet of the mind, is currently of little help to most people, but is a powerful support for you. You can therefore be sure that your advances will not be rebuffed, and that your romantic wishes will be granted. Look back to the past for the answers to the present.

## CANCER (June 22 - July 23)

There seems little question that you are going through a restless phase, and you may be looking to other people to satisfy your need for variety. However, partners could be looking to you for support, which might make life complicated. In that case, you'll have to act fast.

## LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)

Astrology is all about choices, and right now you must decide between a course of blatant self-interest and a path of self-sacrifice and service to others. Search out the middle way and don't get too het up. You see, although compromise is not always your strong point, it is necessary.

## VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sep 23)

As the Sun moves towards another encounter with Mars over the coming two weeks, you will approach a break with the past, possibly severing one particular involvement. Act now to shape the future to your needs, and don't imagine that any commitments are irrevocable.

## PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

The accent is so firmly on your social life that anything else will

come as an irritating distraction. If at all possible, try to keep professional obligations and family commitments to a minimum. Once financial matters are settled, you'll be able to pursue a romantic dream.

**OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER AGRA CIRCLE, P.W.D AGRA Short Term Notice inviting E-Tender**

Dated: 22.02.2024

Letter No. 952 / 14M-AC/2024  
1. The Superintending Engineer, Agra Circle, P.W.D, Agra on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the Percentage rate bids from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP, PWD, Bridge work. The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.

2. Sl. District Name of Work Estimated Cost (Rs. in Lacs) Bid Cost (Rs. in Lacs) Cost of Maintenance Cost (Rs. in Lacs) Time of Completion Address of Executive Engineer executing the work Address of Superintending Engineer Address of Chief Engineer Category of Contractor

<table border

## Another slow turner likely for fifth Test

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
DHARAMSALA, MARCH 4

THE CENTRE wicket at the Dharmshala Stadium looked like a blank sheet of brown paper. Unseasonal rain prevented the ground staff from doing a lot on it for the past few days but clear weather on Monday allowed curators to get down to work.

Over the next few days, the curators, in consultation with the Indian team management, will decide what type of pitch to provide, but it looks like England will once again be confronted with a slow turner at the picturesque venue.

Such tracks have helped the home team bounce back after losing the first Test in Hyderabad to win three games on the bounce to clinch the series ahead of the final match.

The Indian team management has realised what type of pitch plays to its strengths and is keen to stick to the tried and tested formula, and spinners are expected to come into the game under the Dhauladhar range as well.

Unseasonal rain left the stadium outfield a bit damp and now it looks like a carpet rolled across the ground.

The Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association (HPCA) had to give up a Test match against Australia in March as the outfit wasn't ready and the Indian board had to shift the game to Indore at the eleventh hour.

However, since then, the venue has hosted several 50-over World Cup games last year and also staged a few Ranji Trophy games to ensure that they don't face any criticism over the outfield.

The HPCA aims to make the final Test of the series a grand one and is expecting more than 5,000 travelling English fans for this game despite the hosts already winning the series.

### Rohit, Dravid for inauguration?

Meanwhile, posters around Dharamsala talk of India captain Rohit Sharma and coach Rahul Dravid inaugurating the third edition of the Khel Mahakumbh in Bilaspur district alongwith union sports minister and former BCCI president Anurag Thakur. According to a source, the duo are likely to fly down in a helicopter.

While addressing local media, BJP state secretary Narendra Atri said that various sporting activities will be conducted for the next few days at Luhnu ground, including kabaddi, volleyball, cricket, basketball and athletics. The road leading to the stadium has posters 'welcoming' Thakur, a former HPCA president, and his brother Arun Dhumal, the chairman of the IPL governing council.

Meanwhile, the Indian team had a rest day on Monday when they had a photo shoot for the T20 World Cup probables, who might be flown to the West Indies and USA in June. Players like Rinku Singh, who is not part of the Test team, were flown to Dharamsala and seen posing for shutterbugs at the stadium.

The Indian team will have its first practice session before the fifth Test on Tuesday afternoon.



Rinku Singh is not in the Test team but was flown to Dharamsala for a T20 World Cup shoot. X/BCCI

SANDEEP DWIVEDI  
DHARAMSALA, MARCH 4

THERE'S THIS old hill-lore about the scenic Dharamsala stadium. The narrator is the IPL chairman and Himachal Pradesh's seasoned cricket administrator Arun Dhumal. It's about former Test wicket-keeper Syed Kirmani's first visit here.

While walking past the front porch and the reception area, Kirmani got busy answering a phone call. That is till he reached the stands. It's when he froze. Dhumal says Kirmani cut the call and exclaimed: "Kya mai jannat mein aa gaya hu? (Have I reached heaven?)

South Africa has Cape Town and the magnificent Table Mountain, Sri Lanka flaunts its historic Galle Fort, New Zealand's hidden gem is Queenstown next to Lake Wakatipu – all famous for their screensaver-quality breathtaking beauty. But the competition gets unfair when Dharamsala points to its backdrop – the Himalayas. If stadiums had a beauty pageant, Dharamsala would be the popular choice to get the Miss World crown.

This week, like Kirmani, thousands will cut calls, slump in chairs at the first sight of the landscape-painting like pinkish-red strawberry shade pavilion posing against the pristine white backdrop of the imposing Dhauladhar range, a part of the Middle Himalayas.

The 5th India-England Test, starting here from March 7, is a dead rubber but still a large group of fans, stuffed in their cars, will suffer traffic jams and undertake the long uphill trek.

After two days of hail and thunderstorm, Monday was a dry day, the fragile sunlight frequently peeping through the crowd.

Despite the weather, for the Test romantics, the pull is too strong to withstand. If the game gets boring, there's always the snow-capped mountains to brood at – the sight best enjoyed with a cup of hot piping tea and that extra spicy pahadi dhaba style Maggi. Dharamsala does host IPL games and white-ball cricket but they can't match the Test experience. What's cricket at Dharamsala when Himalays have a blanket of darkness over it.

The fame of Dharamsala's beauty has spread wide. Though Bazball has been called out, the away fans have kept their promise, close to 5000 have already reached the venue at 1500 meters height.

"Last year when England was here for the World Cup game against Afghanistan, the schedule for this Test series was announced. That's when the Barmy Army executive came to me to tell me that he had started to get calls, English fans are very excited to be here," says Arun.

Suckers for the game's oldest format, admirers of small scenic village grounds; for many from England – as cricketer turned journalist Michael Atherton mentioned in his recent column – a trip to here is a tick mark on their bucket list. Dharamsala, meaning a resting place of pilgrims, continues to live up to its name.

■ ■ ■

Dharamsala didn't just happen overnight, it took a decade for this landscape to grow into an international facility. It was pretty much a labour of love for the local cricket association and an architect who believed in subtlety, proportion and blending his creations seamlessly into nature.

More than two decades back, the one-time BCCI secretary and present Sports and I&B Minister Anurag Thakur at 25 was the HP cricket chief. On an extensive state-wide recce in search for a clearing in the hills that could be turned into a cricket ground, he reached Dharamsala.

Arun says his elder brother Anurag, on a hunch, had gone off the beaten path and that's when he experienced a moment of pure serendipity. In front of him was the breath-taking mountain range and a highly uneven rocky field next to a college where cattle gathered to graze and students converged with their date. This is it, Anurag would say.

Enter Arun Loomba, a Chandigarh-based architect with experience of designing sports

## HPCA STADIUM, DHARAMSALA

1457m ABOVE MEAN SEA LEVEL

# How a stadium, with a view to die for, was born

A rocky field where cattle once grazed was transformed into a Test venue with a backdrop of breathtaking beauty – a Himalayan range



(Top) The HPCA Stadium in Dharamsala, the venue for the 5th Test match. (Left) The land before stadium came up. (Above) The stadium in its early days. HPCA

**"The challenge was to create an architectural genre that was colonial, pahari and Tibetan. The north pavilion has roof elements derived from Tibetan Gompas."**

ARUN LOOMBA,  
ARCHITECT OF HPCA STADIUM

**"When England was here for a World Cup game, the schedule for this Test series was out. The Barmy Army executive came to tell me that he had started to get calls."**

ARUN DHUMAL,  
IPL CHAIRMAN & VETERAN HPCA OFFICIAL

complexes. Today at 71, he has built sports stadiums in Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, UP and the all-new cricket complex at Mullanpur, Chandigarh.

Back in 1999-2000, Dharamshala was one of Loomba's early assignments. He was excited but he wasn't tempted to put together a modern steel and glass structure or

an outlandishly asymmetrical stadium complex. Didn't he think of a Lord's like pressbox? He chuckles. "My first thought was, whatever design should merge into the site of the stadium, it should gel with nature," says the architect.

Not surprisingly, the roof of the pavilion has the shape and colour scheme of the several houses mounted on the rambling hills. The stadium doesn't shout for attention. In the rural setting, this is no city scraper, more of a vast town square.

Among East India Company's early conquests in India, Dharamshala is the home of Tibet's government-in-exile and the seat of the Dalai Lama.

The foreign influence that has its stamp on the town's landscape can be seen at the stadium too.

Not surprisingly, the roof of the pavilion has the shape and colour scheme of the several houses mounted on the rambling hills. The stadium doesn't shout for attention. In the rural setting, this is no city scraper, more of a vast town square.

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Loomba explains: "The challenge was to create an architectural genre that was colonial, pahari and Tibetan. The north pavilion has roof elements derived from Tibetan Gompas," he says.

Architects are in a way screen-writers. When drawing building plans they also look to add an element of suspense and drama. The approach road to Dharamsala stadium doesn't prepare you for the jaw-dropping sight that is just minutes away. "The concept was once you enter the stadium, nature should expose itself to you and hit you," says Loomba. This is an architect of sober sensibilities speaking. Actually, the sight of Dhauladhar hits you like a thunderbolt from the skies.

■ ■ ■

After Loomba had painstakingly put together the drawings of the stadiums – AutoCad hadn't yet reached India – he would realise the difficulties of the project. Earth-movers would cry in agony, what with the excavation throwing up giant boulders.

Once the stadium started taking shape, other problems cropped up too. Getting big games was still an issue. The place didn't have quality hotels where teams could stay. "HPCA would then get land from the government on commercial lease to build a hotel which we would later give to hoteliers Radison to run. There were no flights here also that too was an issue," says Arun.

A lot has changed since then. Dharamsala is now a top tourist spot with several five-star properties – Taj, ITC and Hyatt. It also has one of the busiest airports in the state.

Even when there is no game, tourists flock to the stadium that they have longingly watched on their television screens. YouTube is flooded with amateur vlogs recorded on shaky cameras by awestruck tourists who manage clichés like "adbhut nazara", "kudrat ka ajuba" and "dharti pe swarg" to describe their Kirman moment.

"Every day we have footfalls of close to 3000 to 4000. We have now plans to come up with a museum and eateries," says Arun.

Loomba also has ideas about developing the stadium. They are grand. He dreams of building a revolving restaurant where over lunch from starter to dessert one can get a 360 view of "heaven".

Back in the day, he had made a proposal to light up Himalayas for match days and with D-H-A-R-A-M-S-A-L-A written on Dhauladhar like H-O-L-L-Y-W-O-O-D on Mount Lee.

■ ■ ■

Along with its captivating landscape, it's the warmth and hospitality of the hill-folks that add to Dharamsala's USP. Last year, New Zealand during the World Cup had Dharamsala as their base camp. During the stay they were sighted in remote villages interacting with the locals and exploring the hills.

"Rachin (Ravindra) told me he was bowled over by the beautiful place and wanted to be here when he next visits India. Then there was the England team. They too were here. After their game, they were at the bar till 5 a.m., after that they would go for a trek, and after that straight to the airport," says Arun.

But there happens to be one cricketer who can never forget this venue. In 2005, Dharamsala hosted a Pakistan vs Board President XI tour game.

Those were the days when the venue had rudimentary facilities. Shahid Afridi reportedly told the locals – "How to play cricket here. Bus idhar chai piyo aur vaadiyan dekho."

The moodiest of the lot, skipper Inzamam ul Haq too had complained about the hotel. This was the first week of March and the time of the Pakistan great's birthday. In an inspired move, the Himachal officials thought of making the day memorable for the tourists.

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Yashasvi's batting numbers and anecdotal evidence show that he has logged in those crucial 10,000 hours – it's the number acclaimed author Malcolm Gladwell has come up with. He says those many hours of training puts an athlete on the path to greatness. But in modern sports, even for Mumbai batsmen, a rider needs to be added. Having seen the fate of one double hundred scoring left-hander from Mumbai, that too against England, who was Tendulkar's close friend, greatness isn't that easy. To be a true great, along with those 10,000 hours, a sportsperson needs to have handled those mandatory 1000 days of stardom. For Yashasvi, which means 'successful' in Sanskrit, with this England series, that countdown has started.

### NURSERY OF INDIAN BATTING

## Takes a city like Mumbai (not Delhi) to shape a batsman like Jaiswal

SANDEEP DWIVEDI

HERE'S A request. While applauding India's bright new star Yashasvi Jaiswal's runs and his technical correctness, do give a hat-tip to his city Mumbai that has dutifully conserved its cricketing heritage like a precious family heirloom. Cricket's original Indian home hasn't allowed the wild winds of change to uproot the foundation of the game. Had it not been for Mumbai, Yashasvi wouldn't have happened.

His is a barely believable true story. As an 11-year-old son of a small-time shopkeeper in Bhadohi in UP, he had travelled all alone to the city that Bollywood keeps telling the world fulfils every dream. Yashasvi wanted to play for India, he was driven and focused. He eventually did. There was help from coaches, mentors and guardians but if one zooms out, a more heartening bigger picture emerges.

Yashasvi, the outsider with raw talent, was adopted by a system that still works on meritocracy. Unlike the erstwhile cricketing heavyweight Delhi, Mumbai still cares for its cricket and young cricketers. Had the young Yashasvi undertaken the shorter trip from home and reached Delhi, chances are the 22-



Yashasvi Jaiswal moved from Bhadohi in UP to Mumbai as an 11-year-old son of a small-time shopkeeper. PTI

pointed out that my bat was at an angle and there was the danger of the ball being deflected towards the slips," writes Gavaskar. Mr Bhandarkar, he goes on to add, was the kind who was prepared to sit "all night to dis-

cuss cricketing problems one might have".

For someone like Yashasvi, the dedicated coaches like Mr Bhandarkars were crucial to his growth. Unlike Gavaskar, Yashasvi didn't have a Test cricketer uncle like Madhav Mantri, whose India cap he could gaze at and dream. Nor did he have an elder brother like Ajit Tendulkar. His peers – Prithvi Shaw, Sarfraz Khan, Arman Jaffer – had "Cricket Fathers" who calibrated every step they took on a cricket field. For the teenaged migrant, who shared the maidan tent with ground staff, sold panji puri to make ends meet, there was a big-hearted city and its very giving cricket community.

The insatiable hunger for runs that Yashasvi shows too is part of the Mumbai batsman's DNA. With intense competition and the bar extremely high, a mere hundred would be fine for those who wish to play Kanga League all their lives. To make the office-goers at Churchgate stop and peek through the fence to watch a batsman play at Azad Maidan, one needs Grand Daddy hundreds. It's that hunger that made Yashasvi score two double hundreds in his first home Test series.

Focus and concentration is another trait

the city inculcates in its batsmen. Gavaskar would stand in slips so that his brain doesn't wander. He would even read books with bigger font size and avoided watching movies as he was told that this would affect his eyesight. When you have plans to bat flawlessly for days, you need to keep an eye on the devil that hides in the details. Yashasvi is a very safe slip-catcher. His first big story, done by The Indian Express reporter Devendra Pandey, has a stand-out quote by Mumbai's u-19 coach. It is about the teenager's "extraordinary game sense and unflappable focus".

Like most migrants, Yashasvi's dream wasn't confined to owning a house in Mumbai. He wanted a place of his own in the Indian team, he wanted to be in the neighborhood of batting greats. That's again a Mumbai trait. Tendulkar was barely 13, when he knew that he would surely play for India. So like those great men, Yashasvi didn't see a Mumbai cap or the Rs 4 crore per year "retained star" status at Rajasthani Royals as a destination. Like all Mumbai batsmen, he also sweated it out to reach those Test cap goals.

His off-season isn't about enjoying his earnings. Far away from the glitz and distract-

## Mandhana shines as RCB go third with win over UPW

RAHUL PANDEY  
MARCH 4

THERE HAVE been quite a few positives from the first half of WPL 2024. But perhaps none has been more eye-soothing than Smriti Mandhana's onside play. It was almost unfair that for the longest time in her career, a batter of her caliber hadn't fully embraced the leg side. A reservation the RCB captain seems to have left behind in the ongoing WPL season.

While her first fifty hadn't been enough to see through a 195-run chase last week, Mandhana once again took centre stage on Monday, leading RCB to a crucial 28-run win against UP Warriorz midway through the league stage. One that sees them make the top three ahead of the Delhi leg.

It was the elegant southpaw who had set the tone. Losing their last two games after winning as many to open their campaign had left RCB vulnerable, Mandhana admitted later. The message after losing the toss was clear, "to show the intent straightforward." And the left-hander walked the talk, fashioning a couple of maximums early in the powerplay. The second highlighted the ease with which she has taken down the bowlers on the leg side this season: clearing her front leg, bunting on her back leg and hoisting it over wide long on.

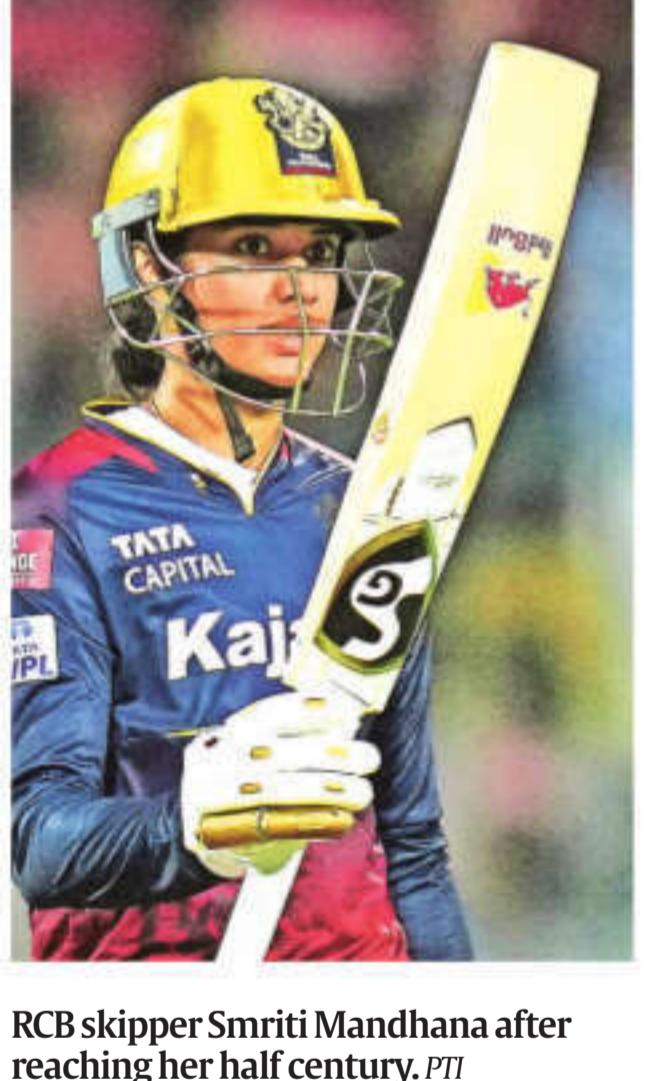
Apart from the renewed strength of her onside play, another tweak Mandhana has made to her batting has been staying deep in the crease to the spinners more often. The off-spinners have been her Achilles heel for a while, and Chamari Athapaththu had almost got her stumped with a quicker one.

So Mandhana targeted the region behind square on either side of the field for her boundaries. Against Athapaththu in the same over, she scooped her over fine leg. Off Sophie Ecclestone, she used the width on off from the left-arm spinner to gently dab down third man.

Mandhana put together her highest WPL score - 80 off 50 - eclipsing the 74 against Delhi last week. Accompanying her for the majority of her innings was Ellyse Perry, who scored her first fifty this season, breaking the sponsor's car window with a six in the process.

Even 199 looked chaseable as captain Alyssa Healy held the fort for UPW despite wickets tumbling at the other end. Unlike her counterpart, it was advancing too far down her crease that was the undoing of Healy as Richa Ghosh flashed the bails in time to put RCB at the favorable end in the points table.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Royal Challengers Bangalore 198 for 3 (Mandhana 80, Perry 58, Ecclestone 1-22) beat UP Warriorz 175 for 8 (Healy 55, Asha 2-29, Molineux 2-29) by 23 runs



RCB skipper Smriti Mandhana after reaching her half century. PTI

## TN no match for 'khadoos' Mumbai

Kishore-led side reflects on wrong decisions, as Shardul and Co revel in making it to yet another final

MIHIR VASAVDA  
MUMBAI, MARCH 4

"THE MATCH was lost at 9 am."

Sulakshan Kulkarni, Tamil Nadu coach who boasted he had Mumbai cricket 'on his fingertips', knew his team's fate was sealed the moment his captain decided to bat on a damp, green wicket at the toss on Day 1.

It was the first in a series of blunders the veteran domestic coach listed that saw his team succumb to an innings-and-70-run defeat. Kulkarni's former team, Mumbai, reached their 48th Ranji Trophy final where they will play either Vidarbha or Madhya Pradesh starting Sunday. Tamil Nadu's sorry semifinal ended the same way it started: Their batsmen staring at the pitch as if it had demons that danced only when they were in the middle, a look of disbelief plastered on their faces and reluctant walks back to the dugout.

When they look back, one cold stat will bare it all: Over two innings, Tamil Nadu managed 308 runs, only 36 more than Mumbai's last three batsmen in the first innings. Amusing, because Sai Kishore said after the second day that he trusted his batsmen to score 300-400 runs. Unless he meant a combined tally of both innings, Sai Kishore grossly overestimated his teammates in these conditions.

Kulkarni said he'd provided his captain with all the inputs from his years of experience of playing and working in Mumbai. "But I can only lead a horse to water, can't make it drink," Kulkarni said. "I even explained to them Mumbai's mindset." The other day, after his hundred, Thakur fell back on the age-old cliche to describe Mumbai's attitude. "Khadoos," he said. There are many connotations to this overused adjective. Aggression, in-your-face, arrogance... but Thakur was alluding to grit, especially of their lower order that virtually took the game away from Tamil Nadu with another stellar batting performance.

Thakur personified Mumbai's grittiness. Never more so than during this match.

After the win, the 'khadoos' Mumbaikar was more self-deprecating. "I started my journey as a fat kid," Thakur joked. Eleven years have passed since and Thakur, who quickly added he's a lot leaner now, began Tamil Nadu's demolition with a fabulous counter-attacking ton, his first in this format, on Sunday. He returned Monday morning to land a one-two punch, with two early wickets, that put the visitors out of their misery. In doing so, he also sounded out the selectors.

As much as a meeting of domestic cricket's two heavyweights, the semifinal was also where India discards and hopefuls crossed roads. Prithvi Shaw and Musheer Khan, Shreyas Iyer and Sai Kishore, Sai Sudharshan and N Jagadeesan.

Thakur was in the proverbial no-man's-land. Not in the scheme of things now but not told explicitly that he isn't needed anymore. His performance, a century with two wickets in each innings, is a reminder but will the pow-



Mumbai defeated Tamil Nadu by an innings and 70 runs on Monday. PTI

### RATHOD LEADS VIDHARBA CHARGE AGAINST MP

An unbeaten 97 by Yash Rathod helped Vidarbha script a superb fightback and reach 343 for six in their second innings against Madhya Pradesh on the third day of their Ranji Trophy semifinal here on Monday. Rathod, who faced 165 balls, received excellent support from his captain Akshay Wadkar (77, 139b) and the pair added 158 runs for the stubborn sixth wicket stand as the hosts recovered from a shakily 161 for five. Vidarbha, now, lead by a handy 261 runs. The first hint of resistance came when Dhruv Shorey (40, 65b) and Aman

Mokhade (59, 100b) made 84 runs for the third wicket after Vidarbha lost nightwatchman Akshay Wakharla in the second over of the day after resuming from 13 for one. However, left-arm spinner Kumar Kartikeya broke the alliance when he induced an edge from Shorey to press Himanshu Mantri into action behind the stumps. Vidarbha were 90 for three then, and from there they lost Mokhade and Karun Nair.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Vidarbha 170 & 343/6 (Y Rathod 97\*; A Agarwal 2/68) leads Madhya Pradesh 252 by 261 runs.

ers—that-be remember this performance when India next play a Test series in the second half of the year? Thakur wasn't too optimistic about that. Maybe, there was a realisation that he was aided by some baffling Tamil Nadu decisions. It started with the toss. Kulkarni hinted that the decision, made against the team's gameplan as captain Sai Kishore chose to go with his 'instincts', threw the batsmen off guard a bit.

It provoked a shuffling of the batting order. In the first chapter, Washington Sundar came at Number 7 and Pradosh Paul at one-down while Sai Kishore promoted himself to four. In the second innings, the batting order was shuffled with Sundar walking in at three, Paul dropped to number 5 and Sai Kishore bringing himself on at 7. The tinkering also affected how they played, with Kulkarni pointing out that in the first innings, when the pitch

got easier to bat in the afternoon and evening sessions, Tamil Nadu batsmen embarked on a blockathon that yielded no result.

Increasingly through the match, Tamil Nadu have an impression of being a one-man army, with Sai Kishore as the front and centre of everything, especially with the ball.

This was in stark contrast to Mumbai, where in different times of adversity a new player put his hand up and delivered. Thakur's innings is an example of it but so was the support he got from Tanush Kotian and Tushar Deshpande, the best No.9 and 10 with the bat in the country at the moment.

The same grittiness could be seen with the ball. Thakur provided the breakthrough by dismissing openers Sudarshan and Jagadeesan. When Pradosh Paul and Baba Indrajith offered resistance, Kotian stepped in to break the partnership. What followed was a procession with Shams Mulani scalping four. When Iyer caught the last man, Sandeep Warrier, to round off Mumbai's fine team show, there was still an hour and a half left to play on the third day. It didn't matter, for in Kulkarni's words, Tamil Nadu had lost the match on the first morning itself.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Tamil Nadu 146 & 162 (Indrajith 70; Mulani 4-53) lost to Mumbai 378 (Thakur 109; Kishore 6-99) by an innings and 70 runs.

## Chance for Satwik-Chirag, Prannoy to scope Paris battlefield

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN  
MARCH 4

THE FRENCH Open Super 750 is an event close to Indian badminton fans in recent years, given how well Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty have done in Paris in the past. It's the event where they made their first major breakthrough in 2019, reaching the final with three upset wins. In 2022, they went all the way to win their first Super 750 title.

All those results came in October, when the French Open is usually held. But in 2024, the tournament starts on Tuesday, in the middle of March. Why is that significant? The coming week will give the best shuttlers in the world their first look at the badminton venue for the Paris Olympics (and Paralympics).

Contrary to the proverb, in sports, familiarity can breed confidence. And that will be the big aspect of the next few days, not just

for the Indian contingent. Former international Guru Sai Dutt, who will be accompanying HS Prannoy as his coach, said one of the first things he looked for is how many the arena can seat. He points out how there wasn't a test event for badminton before Tokyo because of Covid-19 and it perhaps played a part in many early upsets.

"It is quite important to know where you are actually playing, how it feels to be moving on the court, how the conditions will be, and even to know how it looks from outside and inside," Guru told The Indian Express. "One of the first things I look at is how big the seating capacity is and the size of the hall. The bigger the arena is, slower are the shuttles and playing conditions. Major events in recent times like Asiad and Worlds have been in bigger halls, we haven't seen fast conditions mostly anywhere."

Moved from Pierre de Coubertin Stadium to the Adidas Arena at Porte de la Chapelle, 2024's French Open comes at a crucial juncture. It's vital for both earning

qualifying points to earn a place at the Olympic Games and for those who are all but assured of a spot in the final piece.

This newly set-up facility, with a capacity of 6,700 for badminton, is 2.5km from the Olympic and Paralympic Village. The Indian contingent is staying relatively closer to the venue, in a hotel about 15 minutes away, and as such there are no plans to simulate travel that would be similar during the Games.

"The hall looks big, it feels really good the moment you enter, you feel like getting on the court and playing. They have set it up nicely, it's dark and has an All England feel," Guru said after the contingent had their pre-tournament training session.

The former top 20 player pointed out there is no evident Olympic Games buzz on the streets yet, and it feels like any other BWF tournament in that sense, but to perform well in the tournament will be as important as collecting valuable data.

"It's not just about the one particular



Players training in the arena ahead of French Open 2024. ffbad/Instagram

HC wants govt, WFI to respond to wrestlers' plea against election

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, MARCH 4

THE DELHI High Court on Monday issued a notice to the Centre on a plea by grapplers Bajrang Punia, Vinesh Phogat, Sakshi Malik and Satyawart Kadian to set aside the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) elections held in December 2023.

A single-judge bench of Justice Sachin Datta issued the notice to the government through the sports ministry, WFI and the ad-hoc committee appointed to run the federation. The court granted time to the Centre's counsel to seek instructions in the matter and listed the matter for hearing on March 7.

Senior advocate Rahul Mehra, appearing for the petitioner wrestlers, argued that they have sought directions against the "illegal action" of the "suspended" WFI to conduct selection trials for the Senior Asian Wrestling Championships 2024 and Asian Olympic Games Qualifier, notified through its circular dated February 26, going against the directives of the ad-hoc committee.

The plea also seeks that the December 21 election held by the WFI be declared illegal and void ab initio, the ad-hoc committee be directed to continue administering the day-to-day affairs of the WFI, or in the alternative, a retired Supreme Court judge be appointed as an administrator to take over the affairs of the federation.

Sanjay Singh, a close aide of former president and BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, was elected president in the election. On December 24, the sports ministry suspended the elected body of the WFI for 'blatant disregard for established legal and procedural norms' and had subsequently directed the Indian Olympic Association to set up an ad-hoc committee to run the day-to-day affairs of the WFI. The petitioners would like to place on record that apart from them, there are many other athletes/wrestlers who are also facing similar harassment owing to their upright/honest stand against respondent no. 2/WFI and its officials over the illegalities by respondent no. 2 in collusion and under instructions of respondent no. 2's/WFI former President and member of Parliament from Kaiserganj constituency namely Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh," the plea submits. It also seeks a direction to the federation to "cease and desist" from undertaking any activity pertaining to the sport of wrestling.

It adds that WFI cannot be construed as a "legal, fair, unbiased body" to conduct free and fair trials and unless WFI is specifically restrained to conduct such events, it shall continue to mislead, threaten and create adversities for wrestlers.

The petitioners have sought that either a direction be issued to bring WFI into the conformity of the National Sports Code or in the alternative, the elections be declared illegal and WFI be immediately de-recognised.

match but the entire tournament, and how things change from day 1 to day 3 and so on. Condition during a match is just one aspect. Things will progressively change and we need to be aware. Sometimes in the morning, the conditions could be fast. And with more people coming in, things change. There could be a partial drift. I need to be aware if a shuttle is going short because of drift from a certain place."

Beyond preparations for the marquee event, a lot is riding on the next couple of weeks for the likes of Lakshya Sen, Ashwini Ponnappa-Tanisha Crasto and Gayatri Gopichand-Treasa Jolly.

Lakshya needs a deep run to push himself into the top 16 in the Race to Paris lists, while the women's doubles pairs are unfortunately pitted against one another right away, as their battle to take up one spot heats up. Meanwhile, Satwik-Chirag (top seeds), Prannoy and PV Sindhu will be looking to fine-tune their preparations as their place in Paris is more secure.

## Praneeth and coach Siyadath Ullah eye greener pastures in USA

SHIVANI NAIK  
MUMBAI, MARCH 4

B SAI Praneeth won India a men's singles World Championship bronze in 2019, after a gap of 36 years. And Mohammed Siyadath Ullah was guiding Kidambi Srikanth from the coach's chair when he beat Lin Dan to win the China Open in 2014. The two soft-spoken, high-achieving Hyderabadi, who were at the Pullela Gopichand academy from Day 1, will soon call the USA their home, as they relocate in the coming days, taking up coaching opportunities in the country that hosts the LA Olympics in 2028.

Sai, India's Tokyo Olympian says at 32, he could've plodded on the circuit for another two years, chasing smaller titles, but reckoned the time was right to make the shift. Moving to a club in Cary city of North Carolina, Sai said he was desperate for a change after having "lived the pressure life of an elite athlete for a very long time."

"I was trying, trying, trying the whole last year to revive my playing career, but once you play at a very good level, just winning Super 10s or Challengers isn't satisfying. I was not

able to find form and training for long periods increased injuries, so I just couldn't crack the Top 30s," says the 2017 Singapore Open champion, one of only four MS shuttlers to win a Super title. Playing Challengers also meant two matches a day which further battered his fitness.

"I've done whatever needed to be done as a player. I didn't want to 'just play.' There's a long life of 20-30 years in badminton ahead of me, so I decided to go to the next phase. I knew lots of people in the US and started looking for opportunities, finally going for the best one with good pay for club coaching in Cary," he explained. "There's enough good coaches in India," he quipped.

Planning to move with his family, he also knew it was financially a smart choice. "My wife is an IT professional, so she'll have lots of opportunities too," said, the father of a toddler.

Sai Praneeth was one of Gopichand's first three famous wards in 2003, along with Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap. "It's not necessary that good players make great coaches, but I really like coaching. So this is a good challenge," he said.

For Siyadath, who travelled when Sindhu

won her first international title at Maldives beating Marin, every last few days at the PGBA have been tearful as he'll miss his first coaching stint. But the Oregon Badminton Club at Portland offered good money. "It's good contract for my family financially, and such good opportunities don't come again and again. It's run by Ajit Joshi, originally from

Pune, and he's doing everything to make my stint comfortable," says Gopichand's trusted lieutenant, who devoted his last 20 years as development coach of all of India's top names.

His children are 10, 8 and 2, and after visiting his US cousin two months back, his mind was made up. "It's mostly beginners to train, very few seniors, so I'm good at that as

They are trying to bring more seriousness and professionalism into coaching in the US. I think I can be good at it. Plus easier working hours and more family time which I missed for two decades. This is the correct time," says the first assistant coach at Hyderabad's centre.

His father recently suffered an accident, and coming from a joint family, Siyadath stresses the money will help him. He will terribly miss the academy. "I have a special attachment with Gopi. He's a good listener, he's ready for change and never fixed on ideas and I learnt new things everyday from him. When I told him, he first asked me to stay back, but then he was happy for my growth. He said I could come back anytime I felt like," he says.

Siyadath, a calm, intelligent brain with wildly funny Telugu colloquial instructions, has been courtside for some important landmarks. When Srikanth won China Open beating Lin Dan, he was heard repeatedly telling him to 'forget he is Lin Dan and take the attack to him.' Siyadath would funnel the inspiring words into Srikanth's mind that he was playing far better than the legend that day, and he ought not to follow him, when he had better speed. Super Dan kept flicking,

but at a crucial juncture, with the coach screaming from behind him, Srikanth would flick the shuttle deceptively into the corner for a famous title victory.

"Helping Srikanth beat Lee Chong Wei at CWG team finals was also a good memory. But I have good equation with all of them. They were very respectful to me,"