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HIZBUL MAN WANTED IN 11 TERROR CASES HELD: DELHI POLICE

'PUNJAB DYSP KILLED BY AUTO DRIVER WITH SERVICE WEAPON' P7

Cong to focus on 255 seats in LS, signals willingness to make room for INDIA allies

In 2019, party contested 421, won 52



Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge with Y S Sharmila, who joined the party in New Delhi. Anil Sharma

REPORT, PAGE 5

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

AMID PULLS AND pressures from allies of the INDIA bloc, the Congress leadership Thursday told state units the party would focus on 255 seats in the upcoming Lok Sabha elections, signalled perhaps its readiness to contest in a lesser number of seats than in the 2019 national elections.

It also announced that seat-sharing talks with INDIA partners would begin immediately.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

ADHIR FUMES AT TMC '2-SEAT OFFER' PAGE 5

8 former Navy personnel in Qatar jail: 60 days to file plea, says MEA

DIVYA A
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

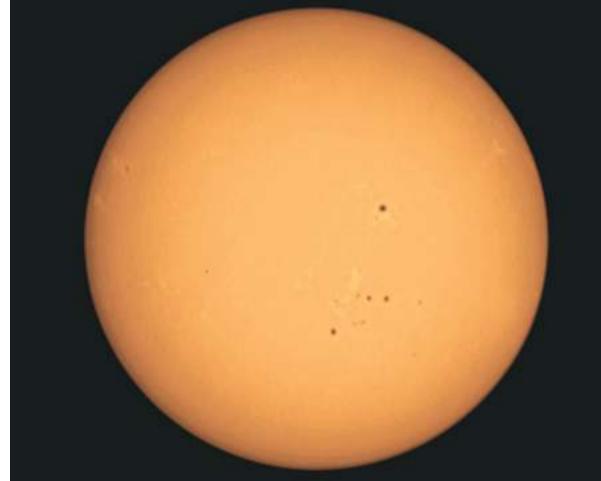
copy of the court order, which is confidential in nature," said MEA spokesperson Randhir Jaiswal. "Further, the legal team has got 60 days to file an appeal in the Court of Cassation, which is the highest court in Qatar. Our legal team is working on this issue, to decide the next course of action, and we are in touch with the families and the legal team," he said.

Asked whether the 60-day period would be counted from the day of the appellate court's order, which was December 28, Jaiswal said: "I would assume it

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CRITICAL MANOEUVRE TO INJECT SPACECRAFT IN 'HALO ORBIT' AROUND L1 POINT

Aditya L1, ISRO's mission to study Sun, set to be placed in final orbit tomorrow



The full disc of the Sun captured on December 6, 2023, by SUIT onboard Aditya L1. ISRO

7 payloads offer comprehensive study of solar phenomena

ANONNA DUTT & ANJALI MARAR
NEW DELHI, BENGALURU,
JANUARY 4

ADITYA L1, India's first mission to study the Sun, is inching closer to its destination, and would be injected into its final orbit on January 6 evening.

The spacecraft, launched on September 2, would get into what is known as a 'halo orbit' around the Lagrange Point 1 (L1), one of the five spots in the moving Sun-Earth system, where the gravitational effects of the two bodies roughly balance each other.

These five spots are relatively

stationary to the Earth and Sun, and offer a somewhat stable location for a spacecraft to view the Sun. The L1 point is about 1.5 million kilometres from the Earth. This is just 1 per cent of the total distance between the Earth and Sun.

"Aditya L1 has already reached the L1 point and the manoeuvre (on January 6) will put it in the desired orbit. Without getting into the orbit, the spacecraft will continue to travel towards the Sun," an ISRO official said.

Though the L1, like the other Lagrange points, is a relatively stable position, it is difficult to keep the spacecraft firmly fixed at that location. It is much better

to get into an orbit around this point, called 'halo orbit'. Moving into this three-dimensional orbit also offers the spacecraft an opportunity to view the Sun from different angles.

"Aditya L1 will make it to a halo orbit around the L1 point. As the Earth moves around the Sun, the L1 point will also move. So does the halo orbit," Annapurni Subramaniam, director, Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, told *The Indian Express*.

Getting into this orbit is quite challenging, and it is the first time that ISRO is attempting such a manoeuvre.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

GEN NARAVANE'S MEMOIR

Army reviews former Chief's book on Ladakh standoff details

Publisher told not to share excerpts until review over; Naravane says gave manuscript many months ago

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA & RITU SARIN
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE INDIAN Army is reviewing the memoir of its former chief General M M Naravane that discloses details of a conversation he had with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on the night of August 31, 2020, following the movement of Chinese PLA tanks and troops in Rechin La on the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, *The Indian Express* has learned.

Excerpts from the memoir, *Four Stars of Destiny*, were published by news agency Press Trust of India on December 18. Publisher Penguin Random House has been asked not to share excerpts or soft copies of the book until the review is over.

The Ministry of Defence is also said to be involved in the exercise "at some level".

The memoir provides insight into the military standoff with China in eastern Ladakh in 2020, including the Galwan Valley clashes, and the Agnipath scheme. The book was earlier scheduled to hit the stands this month.

Reached for comment by *The Indian Express*, General Naravane

Former Army Chief Gen M M Naravane

EXPLAINED E On the ground

GENERAL NARAVANE'S memoir with details on the standoff in Ladakh comes at a time when India and China are still holding military and diplomatic talks to resolve the situation along the LAC. The last disengagement was in September 2022 in the Gogra-Hot Springs area.

Indian troops continue to be denied access to traditional patrolling points and the issue of PLA presence in the Dapsang Plains and Demchok remains.

did not respond to specific questions on whether official clearance had been obtained before

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE WORLD

CLINTON TO TRUMP, EPSTEIN FILES NAME RICH & FAMOUS, BUT NO 'CONSPIRATORS'

PAGE 12

ALLEGED PLOT TO KILL PANNUN

SC declines Gupta kin plea for intervention: It is for Govt to decide

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE SUPREME Court Thursday declined a plea by family members of Indian national Nikhil Gupta to intervene in his detention in the Czech Republic over an alleged plot to kill US-based Khalistan separatist Gurpartaw Singh Pannun, a designated terrorist under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

Gupta, who is lodged in a prison in Prague, has been accused by US authorities of plotting to kill Pannun at the behest of an Indian official. He was arrested in June last year and Czech courts are considering his extradition, as requested by the US.

While presiding over a two-judge bench, Justice Sanjiv Khanna said it is a "sensitive" matter and that it is for the government to take action.

"This is a sensitive matter for

the government also. It has its own ramifications. We will not, in this court, make any statement. It is for the government to do what they want," he said.

The bench, also comprising Justice Dipankar Datta, said, in the order, "We have examined the prayers made in the present writ petition. Keeping in view the principles of public international law and sovereignty and comity of courts, we don't think any of the prayers can be granted."

The bench noted that the petition by family members of Gupta said that he had already been granted consular access.

Hours later, Randhir Jaiswal, spokesperson for the Ministry of External Affairs, responding to a question, said, "We are yet to see the formal order of the Supreme Court. We will take things as it comes. Once we see the order, we will see what are the next steps forward."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

SPORT

BUMRAH, SIRAJ BOWL INDIA TO HISTORIC WIN

PAGE 17

After the game, Rohit talked about the challenge of winning on these shores. "When you come to this part of the world, it's always difficult but we take pride in our performance outside of India. South Africa always challenges us, and for us to come out here and win, we can take pride in this performance," he said.

Though India, in the fourth inning, needed to cross the 79-run target for a win, it wasn't

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

that lasted just 107 overs – less time than needed to binge-watch a season of an OTT show. In terms of deliveries bowled, this was the shortest Test match in 90 years.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Punjab Cong MLA gets bail, held in new case; party calls it vendetta

JAGPREET SINGH SANDHU & KANCHAN VASDEV CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 4

HOURS AFTER he was granted bail by the Punjab and Haryana High Court in a case under the NDPS Act and Arms Act, Sukhpal Singh Khaira, Congress MLA from Bholath, was arrested Thursday by Punjab Police in a fresh case.

The new case against Khaira was registered Thursday at

Subhanpur police station in Kapurthala under IPC sections 195A (threatening any person to give false evidence) and 506 (criminal intimidation). It was on the complaint of Ranjit Kaur, wife of Kashmire Singh, a resident of Dograwal and the com-

plainant in the earlier case against Khaira.

In her complaint, Ranjit Kaur stated that five persons came to her house with their faces covered, and threatened her with dire consequences if she gave a statement against Khaira.

Khaira's son Mehtab Khaira alleged that the new case had been registered as part of a conspiracy to arrest his father. "If Khaira was still in jail, how could he threaten anyone or intimidate anyone?" he said, adding they

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

fighting a case against Gunasekhar since 2020 over attempted land grab. He and his men did not let us farm our land for three years," Krishnan said.

He added that his elder brother Kannaiyan and he were forced to survive on a meagre pension of Rs 1,000 per month and the free ration rice all these years.

Their lawyer Pravina added, "The brothers were unable to farm on their own land for years due to threats from BJP leaders. They started ploughing their land for the first time in years today and still, there was resistance from the land mafia."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The brothers were booked for money laundering based on a 2017 incident despite their acquittal in the same case by a trial court in 2021. The 2017 case pertains to the brothers setting up unauthorised electric fencing around their farm that resulted in the deaths of two Indian bison. ED sources told *The Indian Express* that the brothers' 2021 acquittal had been "overlooked".

BJP's Thirupathy told *The Indian Express*, "The party's Salem leaders say the BJP has no role to play in the entire episode. The ED summons have nothing to do with the land dispute between Gunasekhar and the

farmers. In fact, both parties have filed multiple cases against each other, including both civil and criminal. The ED case was registered against the brothers in connection with the killing of two bison. The agency had collected details of the farmers from the state forest department and sent them summons."

Meanwhile, refusing to talk about why a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), 2002, had been registered against the elderly farmers, a top ED source in Chennai said, "It was a lapse on our part. The whole issue was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Kannaiyan, Krishnan with lawyer Pravina (centre). Express

Tamil Nadu farmer brothers blame local BJP leader over land dispute, party says he has filed counter complaint

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, JANUARY 4

IN JULY 2023, when an envelope containing summons from the Enforcement Directorate (ED) was delivered to brothers Kannaiyan, 72, and Krishnan, 66, Dalit farmers in Tamil Nadu's Salem district, in a case of alleged money laundering, the two brothers merely had Rs 450 in their bank account, their lawyer Dalit G Pravina said.

What made the ED summons odd, besides the fact that the senior Attur residents owned just 6.5 acres, was that they were engaged in an ongoing dispute over agricultural land with G Gunasekhar, a senior leader of the BJP's Salem East wing. BJP state spokesperson Narayanan Thirupathy said both Gunasekhar and the brothers have filed complaints against each other on charges of land grab. Gunasekhar was unavailable for comment.



'Abuse of the process of law': HC quashes rash driving, caste abuse case against journalist

JAGPREET SINGH
SANDHU
CHANDIGARH, JANUARY 4

THE PUNJAB and Haryana High Court (HC) on Thursday quashed an FIR registered last year against Times Now Navbharat reporter Bhawana Gupta for allegedly knocking down a Dalit woman with a car and abusing her with casteist slurs.

"It is a fit case where the continuation of criminal proceedings shall amount to an abuse of the process of law, and the Court invokes its inherent jurisdiction under section 482 CrPC and quashes the above captioned FIR and all subsequent proceedings qua the petitioner," a bench of Justice Anoop Chitkara said.

Gupta, cameraman Mrityunjay Kumar and the driver of their car, Parmender Singh Rawat, were arrested over the accident in May 2023.

While the accused were charged under sections 279, 337 and 427 of IPC, the journalist was booked also under sections 3 and

Mahua withdraws plea from HC over order to cancel govt house

New Delhi: Trinamool Congress leader Mahua Moitra on Thursday withdrew her plea in the Delhi High Court, challenging an order cancelling her government accommodation and said she will approach the Directorate of Estates.

The court noted the submission of senior advocate Pinaki Misra appearing for Moitra that

4 of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The HC had already quashed the Aditya-L1 mission to Kumar and Rawat. Through her counsel, Gupta contended that even if the allegations were to be taken as gospel truth, she had no intention to abuse the woman with the words attributed to her in the FIR, because she had never met her and was unaware of her caste.

The counsel also argued that the FIR was politically motivated, concocted and would throttle the voice of the media. The state counsel, however, argued the probe was at a nascent stage and that Gupta had intended to insult the woman with casteist abuses and violated the SC/ST Act provisions.

Justice Chitkara held that the offences under IPC sections 279 (rash driving) and 337 (causing hurt by doing any act so rashly or negligently) were attributed to the vehicle's driver and that section 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of fifty rupees) was related to the damage of a mobile phone that had fallen because of the impact of the accident.

he will withdraw the writ petition and approach the Directorate of Estates.

The court said that since the plea was withdrawn without any substantial arguments advanced by the petitioner, it has therefore "not made any observation on the merits of the case and it is open for the Directorate of Estates to apply its own mind..." ENS

FROM PAGE ONE ■ FULL REPORTS ON
WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Aditya L1 set to be placed in final orbit

"This manoeuvre is critical. It involves the firing of thrusters in order to change the speed and trajectory of the spacecraft. If the intended orbit is missed in the first attempt, there would be multiple subsequent corrections and thruster firings required," said Dibyendu Nandi, solar physicist and Chair, Space Weather and Monitoring Committee, Aditya L1 mission.

As on Wednesday, Aditya had successfully completed 124 days in space. Since September 18, just 16 days into its journey, Aditya had started collecting scientific data and imaging the Sun. The scientists have, so far, obtained the first sneak peek into high-energy X-ray of solar flares, full solar disc images and others.

Aditya has seven scientific payloads of which the Visible Emission Line Coronagraph (VELC), Solar Ultraviolet Imaging

Telescope (SUIT), Solar Low Energy X-ray Spectrometer (SoLEXS), High-Energy L1 Orbiting X-ray Spectrometer (HELOS) are designed to directly track the Sun. There are other in-situ (on site) measuring instruments like the Aditya Solar Wind Particle Experiment (ASPEX), Plasma Analyser Package for Aditya (PAPA), and Advanced Tri-axial High Resolution Digital Magnetometers.

Four instruments, including

PAPA and one component, the Solar Wind Ion Spectrometer, of ASPEX, were switched on during the spacecraft's cruising phase and are reportedly functioning well. Aditya will be inserted into a halo orbit around L1, from where the satellite will have full access to solar storms, radiations and other emissions emerging from the Sun even before they are directed towards Earth or come under the influence of the Earth's magnetic field.

SUIT, seated on the top deck of the Aditya-L1, will be among the first to get operational once the spacecraft reaches L1.

The mission is being keenly watched across the world as its seven payloads offer a comprehensive study of the solar phenomena. The instruments can study the sun at multiple wavelengths, they can study the radiation, particles, and magnetic fields released by the Sun, and see these phenomena in different directions.

The spacecraft also has a coronagraph that will allow scientists to look much closer to the surface of the Sun and complement the data from NASA and European Space Agency's Solar and Heliospheric Observatory (SOHO) mission – the only other satellite currently located in L1 position.

"To study the faint light coming from the corona, we need to artificially block the bright light from the photosphere or the surface of the Sun. The catch in doing that is we may not be able to block only the photosphere – the size of the occulting disk is usually bigger than the photosphere. If we assume the size of the photosphere to be 1 unit, the occulting disk has been of 2 units for previous missions. For the first time, with the Aditya L1 mission, we are trying to see as close as possible to the beginning of the corona with a smaller occulting disk that is just 1.05 times the photosphere," Prof RRamesh from the Indian Institute of Astrophysics had told The Indian Express recently. The coronagraph on SOHO that was lost had an occulting disk that was 1.1 times the radius of the Sun surface.

-ANJALI MARAR WORKS
WITH THE RAMAN RESEARCH
INSTITUTE, BENGALURU

• Army reviews its former Chief's book on Ladakh standoff details

handing over the manuscript to the publishers or if the book release had been delayed on account of the review undertaken by the Army.

"I have done what I had to do and submitted the manuscript to the publishers many months ago. It is up to the publishers to tell whether there is a delay or not. They are the ones in touch and are not expected to tell me everything," he said.

Penguin Random House did not respond to questions from The Indian Express regarding the review and whether it would affect the timeline for the book launch.

Last month, the PTI quoted excerpts from General Naravane's book which spoke of a communication between him and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on August 31, 2020 when the Chinese were

moving tanks and men at Rechin La.

General Naravane, according to the report, recounts Singh's direction as well as a flurry of phone calls between the Defence Minister, External Affairs Minister, the National Security Advisor and the Chief of Defence Staff that night on the sensitive situation.

After Singh's call, General Naravane writes that a hundred different thoughts "flashed through" his mind. "I conveyed to the criticality of the situation to the RM (Raksha Mantri), who said he would get back to me, which he did, by about 2230 hours."

"He said that he had spoken to the PM and that it was purely a military decision. 'Jo ucchit samjho woh karo' (Do whatever you deem is appropriate). I had been handed a hot potato. With

this carte blanche, the onus was now totally on me. I took a deep breath and sat silently for a few minutes. All was quiet save for the ticking of the wall clock," he writes in his memoir.

The book gives out some details about the deadly Galwan Valley clashes and stated that Chinese President Xi Jinping will not forget June 16 any time soon as PLA troops suffered "fatal casualties", for the first time in over two decades, in the incident.

The book also talks about the Agnipath scheme for recruitment of soldiers, airmen and sailors into the Defence services and the discussions of various aspects of the scheme before it was finally announced.

Currently, serving officers of the armed forces and bureaucrats are governed by specific rules for

publishing a book. However, for retired officers, the matter falls into a grey area.

For instance, Section 21 of The Army Rules, 1954, states that no person under the Act shall publish in any form whatever or communicate directly or indirectly to the press any matter in relation to a political question or on a service subject or containing any service information, "or publish or cause to be published any book or letter or article or other document on such question or matter or containing such information without the prior sanction of the Central Government," or any officer specified by the Central Government in this regard.

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• SC declines Gupta plea for intervention: For Govt to decide

In November last year, India had announced the setting up of a high-level probe committee to look into the security concerns shared by the US regarding the alleged plot to kill Pannun on American soil. On the status of the probe, Jaiswal said, "The high-level committee has been constituted and will look into all the issues that were highlighted. Once they come up with the findings, more details will be shared."

The plea by Gupta's family, filed through Advocate Rohini Musa, said he was a law-abiding citizen hailing from a humble background, and was "seeking relief in a matter fraught with complexities".

According to the plea, the genesis of Gupta's predicament dates back to June 30, 2023, when he was illegally detained at Prague Airport in the Czech Republic. From the outset, it said, the circumstances surrounding his arrest were marked by irregularities, with no formal arrest warrant presented, and the apprehension executed by self-claimed US agents rather than local Czech authorities.

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They were taken into custody in

caught in the diplomatic crossfire" between India and the US.

Taking up the plea, Justice Khanna said, "I don't think we can grant you any relief. Consular access is the only thing he is entitled to and he has already got that".

However, Senior Advocate C A Sundaram, appearing for Gupta, said it was only once and about three months ago. Subsequently, there had been an indictment and order to extradite him, he said.

Sundaram said he is not getting into merits and added that Gupta is now in solitary confinement.

But the bench said, "We are not concerned with all that. Don't argue something which we will not go and examine. This is a matter relating to public international law. We have to respect the sovereignty and jurisdiction of the other courts."

"The only thing under the Vienna Convention you are entitled to is consular access. In case consular access is denied or is not acceptable, you can approach the authorities. That's all. Your list of dates says consular access was granted twice," it said. Sundaram said

It also said he was a "hapless victim

Gupta as a citizen is only seeking assistance. "I have sought assistance from the Indian Embassy, the Ministry of External Affairs. I have not received a response from any of them. I am saying as an Indian citizen, wherever I may be, I have a right to seek from my state assistance to enable me to defend myself in whatever manner I can."

On Gupta's behalf, Sundaram said, "Why I am seeking assistance in this matter from Indian authorities is because there has been a subsequent indictment superseding the earlier one which indictment is going completely on the basis that I have acted at the best and authorities concerned with the Union of India".

But the bench said it is not going to get into matters pending before a foreign court.

Sundaram said, "I am not saying that I am saying that at least to defend myself against this, I need some cooperation from the Ministry."

Justice Khanna said, "This is a sensitive matter. Whether they (the government) want to deal with it or not, it is for them to decide" and added that he had been given consular access.

• 8 former Navy personnel in Qatar jail: 60 days to file plea

former Navy officers and one sailor who were on death row, one has been sentenced to 25 years imprisonment, four have been given 15 years each, two face 10 years each, and one has been sentenced to three years.

According to sources, the sailor received the most lenient sentence, while the officer who served as the Managing Director of Dahra Global was handed the harshest.

On December 28, while announcing that the appellate court in Qatar had "reduced" the death sentences, the MEA had said: "The detailed judgment is awaited. We are in close touch with the legal team as well as the family members to decide on the next steps... Our Ambassador to Qatar and other officials were present in the

Court of Appeal today, along with the family members. We have stood by them since the beginning of the matter and we will continue to extend all consular and legal assistance. We will also continue to take up the matter with the Qatari authorities."

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They were taken into custody in

blown out of proportion by social media ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Tamil Nadu." The envelope with ED summons to the brothers also mentioned their caste as 'Hindu Pallars', an inclusion the agency later attributed to "clerical error".

Recalling their fight with ED, Krishnan said his brother, their lawyer Pravina and he visited the agency's Chennai office, nearly 250 km away, on July 5, 2023.

Krishnan said, "ED officials gave us two bundles of forms, some 20 pages each. Since we are illiterate, Pravina helped us fill them. Then, she was asked to leave so they could interrogate us. This, despite us having already submitted our land records. When she told them that PMLA permits a lawyer to stay present during questioning, they got angry. They denied the existence of such a law and even tried to send her away. We told ED officials that we would leave if she was not allowed to remain

present during our interrogation."

Not allowed inside, Pravina said she called the nearby Nungambakkam police station for help.

"Citing rules, the police team requested that I should be allowed inside. When ED officials refused, my clients decided not to cooperate with them. Before we left the ED office, an official shouted at us for calling the police to the ED office. They said they would send summons again, even if I called Chief Minister M K Stalin. I recorded a video of them saying that and went to the DGP's office, where I filed a case seeking action against them," said Pravina.

Claiming that she did not get justice from the state police either, the lawyer alleged, "They refused to register an FIR on my complaint owing to pressure from Delhi. They interrogated me for several hours on December 31 and then asked me to rewrite my complaint, but I refused to do so."

To a query on Pravina's allegations,

a senior police officer said, "We asked her to file a proper complaint since she had given us a compilation of multiple incidents, both related and unrelated. Technically, it was impossible for us to file an FIR."

Pravina alleged, "The brothers were forced to mortgage their land to borrow Rs 50,000 to appear before the ED and other proceedings. And now, these elderly men will have to pay it back despite the PMLA case being a baseless one."

Meanwhile, her husband B Balamurugan, a Deputy Commissioner-rank officer with Chennai (North)'s CST and Central Excise department, wrote to President Droupadi Murmu in connection with the case a few days ago. In his letter, he has sought the dismissal of Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for "converting the ED into an extended arm of the BJP". Balamurugan has, in the past, accused his colleagues of "imposing" Hindi on him.

But as they have done in the past, India showed they have a way of picking themselves up after soaking up the first blow. They have done it in Australia, where they went from 36 all-out in Adelaide to a great series tri-

• Cong to focus on 255 seats in LS

go-ahead to start talks with constituents of the INDIA bloc.

Sources said Kharge told a separate meeting of AICC general secretaries and state in-charges, state Congress presidents, and Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leaders earlier in the day that the party would focus on 255 seats. Rahul Gandhi too attended the meeting. State leaders read it as an indication the party was prepared to contest in a lesser number of seats this time to accommodate parties of the INDIA alliance.

"There is already an alliance which is called the INDIA alliance. And we will be talking to parties with influence in various areas and keeping their influence in view, we will have our dialogue.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, the party contested in 421 seats and won 52. It was part of alliances in a handful of states – with the RJD in Bihar, NCP in Maharashtra, JD(S) in Karnataka, JMM in Jharkhand, and the DMK in Tamil Nadu. Accordingly, it had contested in only nine out of the 40 seats in Bihar, seven of the 14 seats in Jharkhand, 21 of the 28 seats in Karnataka, 25 of the 48 seats in Maharashtra, and nine of the 39 seats in Tamil Nadu. In Uttar Pradesh, it contested in 70 of the 80 seats.

The Congress knows that seat sharing is going to be fraught with difficulties in some states, especially Delhi, Punjab, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh.

While the AAP has signalled it was willing to have a seat sharing pact with the Congress in Punjab, the state unit of the Congress believes any truck with AAP, which is in government in the state, would be suicidal. The Bengal unit too is against any alliance with the TMC. In UP, the SP had signalled it would contest in 65 seats, leaving just 15 for the Congress and the RLD.

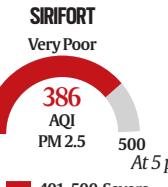
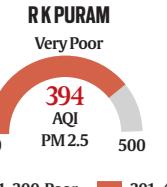
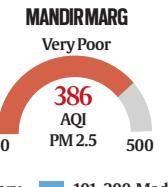
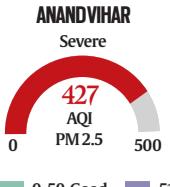
The party has decided to hold talks with INDIA parties on a state-to-state basis. In other words, it means the Congress would hold talks with the AAP, for instance, on

seat sharing in Delhi and Punjab separately, as also states like Gujarat and Haryana where the Arvind Kejriwal-led party claims to have some influence.

The same will apply with the Left as also other parties which would want to contest in more than one state under the banner of INDIA alliance.

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S K Y W A T C H
FORECAST: January 5
Mainly clear sky. Cold day to severe cold day conditions at few places.
AQI: Very poor
MAX: 13 6.3°C below normal | **MIN: 6** 0.9°C below normal



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Modi Sarkar ki Guarantee

Electrification of every household

2 crore 86 lakh houses get electricity connections under Saubhagya Yojana



BRIEFLY

WFI case:
Delhi Police
begins fresh
arguments

New Delhi: The Delhi Police on Thursday started afresh its argument on whether to frame charges against former WFI chief Brij Bhushan Sharai Singh before a local court in an alleged sexual harassment case lodged against him by women wrestlers. The police made the submissions before Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Priyanka Rajput, who recently started hearing the matter after the judge trying the case earlier was transferred. PTI

Amritpal aide
arrested from
railway station

Amritsar: Punjab police Thursday arrested Waris Punjab De head Amritpal Singh's associate Gurpreet Singh in an 11-month-old case. A case against Gurpreet, from Tarn Taran, was registered in February 2023 at Ajnala police station for the alleged kidnapping of one Varinder Singh. Gurpreet was arrested from a railway station in Delhi, when he was returning from Takht Hazur Sahib in Nanded, Maharashtra. Gurpreet was travelling with Amritpal Singh's parents and supporters, who were returning after praying for Amritpal's release from jail. ENS

Delhi court
grants bail to
Deepak 'Boxer'

New Delhi: Gangster Deepak 'Boxer', who was nabbed in Mexico by the Delhi Police and brought to the city in April last year, was granted bail in one of the criminal cases registered against him. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Sonam Gupta was hearing the bail plea of Deepak Pahar alias 'Boxer' in an FIR registered at the Punjabi Bagh police station. The city police's crime branch is probing the case. PTI

L-G ASKS FOR CBI PROBE

7 mohalla clinics 'faked' data to test ghost patients: Inquiry

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4



Since Jan 1 last year, the govt has been providing the facility of 450 types of medical tests for free to poor patients. Archive

ONLY THE digit "0" being entered in the section meant for mobile numbers in 11,657 cases; the space left blank in 8,251 cases; mobile numbers of 3,092 patients entered as 999999999; 400 mobile numbers beginning with 1,2,3,4 or 5; and the same number being used more than 15 times in around a thousand cases. These are some of the methods allegedly employed at seven mohalla clinics in Delhi to get lakhs of tests conducted on dummy patients, payments for which were made to private diagnostic firms, as per an inquiry by the Vigilance department.

L-G V K Saxena recommended CBI inquiry into the matter Thursday. "Data clearly revealed that fake lab tests were carried out at these mohalla clinics that need to be further inquired," an official from the L-G's office said.

According to the enquiry report, as many as 20,000 tests were recommended by the outsourced labs either on blank mobile numbers or on "0" digit. The L-G's office claimed the scam runs into hundreds of crores.

Since January 1 last year, the Delhi government has been providing the facility of 450 types of

medical tests for free to poor patients at the Mohalla Clinics across the city. Two private companies were hired to conduct them.

The alleged scam first came to light in September 2023 after it was noticed that some doctors and staff of seven Mohalla Clinics in Southwest, Shahdara and Northeast districts were fraudulently marking their attendance through pre-recorded videos.

These clinics are in Jaffar Kalan, Ujwa, Shikarpur, Gopal Nagar, Dhansa, Jagjeet Nagar and Bihar Colony. The doctors were later de-empowered and a complaint registered against them.

Health Minister Saurabh

Bharadwaj, meanwhile, said he had received complaints against a few doctors coming late or leaving early and ordered action against them in September, and that both cases were linked.

"A few mischievous doctors exploited the system... They handed over their pre-recorded video to fellow mohalla clinic employees, asking them to play it in front of the camera to forge their attendance... 26 employees, including seven doctors, were caught in such malpractices at different places... We fired them and ordered strong action," he said.

The vigilance report said a random analysis of lab data for 3 months — July to September 2023 — in Metropolis and Agilus Lab Management Information System (LMIS) was carried out and it was observed that even during the period when the now de-empowered doctors were marking their attendance fraudulently, lab tests are being recommended, which hints that they were being recommended in the absence of treating doctor, in clear violation of rules.

At present, 533 mohalla clinics are functional. Each has a doctor, one assistant, a pharmacist, and one multitasking worker who ensure cleanliness and general maintenance of the clinic.

"It is the responsibility of officials to conduct random checks at their levels. Who has appointed the DGHs? Who has appointed the Health Secretary? We have not appointed them. Officials chosen by them are engaging in malpractices and they are recommending a CBI investigation? They are launching a probe against their chosen ones, not us," said Bharadwaj.

"We've recommended suspension of the Health Secretary in writing to the L-G, and even in Supreme Court... They claim corruption worth hundreds of crores has taken place in mohalla clinics, but still, they don't suspend the Health Secretary. What are they waiting for?" he added.

"In this fake case, they have put and continue to keep several AAP leaders in jail... There is no proof against any of them... Goondagardi is taking place openly... The BJP now wants to arrest me," he alleged.

Stating that his most significant asset and strength was his honesty, the CM alleged the BJP

was making false allegations and sending him "illegal summons" to defame him instead of going after the corrupt. This, he added, was part of the BJP's playbook of forcing Opposition leaders to join the party after registering false cases against them. "There are numerous examples of leaders with cases against them either being dropped or being discarded... as soon as they join BJP... Manish Sisodia, Sanjay Singh and Vijay Nair are not in jail for corruption but because they refused to join the BJP," he alleged.

Kejriwal, meanwhile, scheduled a three-day visit to Gujarat from January 6 to 8. AAP sources said it was part of a tour related to the polls, and jan sabhas and party events are on his agenda.

In a video message, the AAP convener accused the BJP of damaging India's democratic values for political gains. "For the last two years, every agency under the BJP has conducted numerous raids and made multiple arrests in the name of the alleged excise scam but has not been able to recover a single paisa... If corruption has really happened, then where did crores of rupees go? The truth is that no corruption has occurred," he said.

"We're recommended suspension of the Health Secretary in writing to the L-G, and even in Supreme Court... They claim corruption worth hundreds of crores has taken place in mohalla clinics, but still, they don't suspend the Health Secretary. What are they waiting for?" he added.

Contending that he had presented himself for questioning in the case before the CBI in mid-2023, Kejriwal said he was ready

to cooperate but only when it came to legal and due process in the case. "... We are being able to confront the BJP today precisely because if we had done any corruption, we would've been with the BJP..." he said.

"... every drop of my blood is for the country... what the BJP is doing today is bad not only for India but also for democracy... we need your support..." he added.

Meanwhile, Delhi BJP president Virendra Sachdeva accused AAP of seeking to create a ruckus to be able to portray Kejriwal as a victim. "... they have stolen, executed corruption, and now are trying to create a ruckus... they want to make even the results of their theft an event," he alleged.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Rambir Singh Bidhuri said Kejriwal had lost the right to remain in his post since the AAP government had become "a breeding ground for scams".

Directions from L-G, health minister to fortify mohalla clinic registration ignored

ANKITA UPADHYAY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

show an ID proof and register with their mobile number. Following this, an assistant clicks their photo on the tablet.

However, new allegations in the vigilance report indicated that the system was not enough. The report has pointed to an alleged scam involving fake mobile numbers and ghost patients.

As per the report, while the total number of mohalla clinics increased from 450 to 519 in 2022, the total number of patients in its OPDs substantially came down — from 3,416 per month per clinic in 2021 to 1,824 patients in 2022.

Further, the total number of diagnostic tests reported to have been conducted by an outsourced agency increased disproportionately.

Similar instructions had come from Health Minister Saurabh

atlety — 6,30,978 tests a month in 2021 to 9,30,000 tests a month in 2022. This aspect requires to be examined to rule out any malpractices," the report said.

Before the enquiry, the L-G last year had asked the health department to ensure a system of online registration of patients as well as Aadhaar-based/biometric tracking of patients be set up within three months. However, no action was taken by the state health department.

The vigilance department, in its report, asked the Health and Family Welfare department to submit a report on why it did not pay heed to the L-G's directions for almost nine months.

Investigation found that the accused had cheated more than 100 people and amassed Rs 2.5 crore.

Bharadwaj in a meeting with officials last April when he had asked the health secretary to form a flying squad or an inspection team in each district. This team was to make physical inspections at each clinic and check if OPD consultation exceeds more than 125 a day. In case numbers were found to have been deliberately exaggerated, the empanelled doctor concerned was to be removed. An action-taken report was supposed to be filed in May. However, no action was taken.

Meanwhile, while assigning the contract to two new diagnostic labs last January, the L-G had asked for an impact-assessment report on the working of the private labs from the health department. No such report was filed.

Investigation found that the accused had cheated more than 100 people and amassed Rs 2.5 crore.

DCP Dr Joy N. Tirkey said, "They would use WhatsApp DP of officers and call up people posing as policemen."

The accused have been identified as Md Nasar Ali (24), and Santosh Kumar Yadav (27).

The matter first came to light in December 2023 when a retired bank officer approached Delhi Police alleging that unknown persons, posing as officers from the Crime Branch, had called him and demanded Rs 2 lakh against the "release" of his grandson, who they said had been arrested in a kidnapping case.

Police said the accused had been arrested on January 4, 2024, and were held in custody. They were released on bail on January 5, 2024.

After party on New Year's Eve, Chinese national found dead in Noida rented home

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOIDA, JANUARY 4

A 48-YEAR-OLD Chinese national living in Noida died under mysterious circumstances following a New Year's Eve party with his colleagues, police said Thursday.

The deceased, Tanxiaohua, worked as a senior engineer at a mobile camera manufacturing factory in Noida's Sector 85. He had been living in Sector 92 for the last five months.

Officials said that the man had parted with his friends on December 31 and was found dead the next morning.

He lived in a rented accommodation in an independent house along with four of his colleagues, also Chinese nationals. Police received information about his death on New Year's Day, said a police officer.

His colleagues told police that Tanxiaohua did not wake up the next morning after the party and was taken to a private hospital, where doctors declared him dead on arrival.

Police reported the matter to the Chinese Embassy in Delhi and sought the consent of the deceased's family to carry out a post-mortem.

A police officer said permission was received on Wednesday.

He added that the cause of death is yet to be ascertained as the body was sent for an autopsy on Wednesday.

No case has been registered in the matter yet, according to police.

POLICE SEARCHED HOTEL, COULDN'T FIND BODY; IT WAS MOVED INTO A BMW 5 HRS LATER

Woman's murder at Gurgaon hotel: Cops probe if accused connected to gangster

AIswarya Raj
GURGAON, JANUARY 4

A DAY after former model Divya Pahuja was shot dead in a Gurgaon hotel, police said they are looking into any alleged connections the accused had with gangsters. The 27-year-old was arrested in 2016 for allegedly providing information to Haryana Police on gangster Sandeep Gadoli that led to him being killed in an alleged fake encounter in a Mumbai hotel. She was released on bail last year.

Police said they found that the main accused in Divya's murder, hotel owner Abhijeet Singh, had allegedly been in touch with gangster Binder Gujjar — suspected to have planned Gadoli's murder — since 2006 through a land deal and paid to educate his children.

DGP (Crime) Vijay Partap said following Divya's release from prison last July last year, Gujjar introduced her to Abhijeet. "Abhijeet claimed Divya had recently spoken to Gujjar. But we

have not formed a conclusion as we need to probe further. Divya's sister, Naina, also named Gadoli's siblings in the FIR. We will check if they have any links to the murder.

Police went to the hotel and checked Abhijeet's room (number 114), but allegedly didn't find anything suspicious. At 10.44 pm, after they left, CCTV footage showed two men carrying the body to a blue BMW. "We came to know Divya was in room number 111 after her body was moved. Suspicious that the woman was not found, we rechecked the hotel; this time, Divya's room, too," said the DCP.

"Abhijeet allegedly asked Anup to help him dispose of the

Tuesday. The murder took place at 5 pm. DCP Partap said at 9 pm, they got a tip-off from Anup, hotel's leaseholder, about the body.

Hailing from Hisar, Abhijeet graduated from NIT Kurukshetra in 1989 and was an engineer at a firm till he took over the hotel. He owns a house in South Extension.

Police said they traced the BMW to a bus stand in Mohali, but the body was not inside. The DCP said preliminary probe suggested Divya was murdered as she demanded money from Abhijeet by allegedly threatening him with objectionable photos and videos. The DCP added that they are checking if the money was transferred to her bank account as Abhijeet claimed Rs 6 lakh was extorted from him.

Apart from Singh, two staff of City Point hotel — Hemraj and Om Prakash — were arrested. Police also said they identified the two men who took the body, who are yet to be nabbed. Police also said the BMW belongs to a friend of Abhijeet's. The murder was committed using an illegal weapon, the DCP said.

Divya was arrested in 2016 for allegedly providing information to the whereabouts of gangster Sandeep Gadoli, leading to his being killed in an alleged fake encounter at a Mumbai hotel. She was released

on bail last year.

Naina alleged, "Abhijeet is trying to save Gadoli's family. There is a clear pattern in the way the crime was carried out. Gadoli was killed in a hotel room, and so was she. He was shot, and so was she..."

Naina also said her family has not been contacted by Gadoli's kin since her release.

She further said she texted Divya on Tuesday and felt something was amiss seeing her response. "We have a habit of sharing each others' location... I traced her location to South Extension... I called Abhijeet at 7.30 pm and he denied she was with him. In

CCTV footage from the hotel, he looked nervous around the same time after I called... Gadoli's sister and his brother arranged this in the same pattern (as his death)... Naina alleged.

She added that her daughter's name has been dragged through the mud since she was 18.

Three people, including the owner of the City Point Hotel where she was murdered, Abhijeet Singh (56), were arrested in the case Wednesday.

Her mother Sonia said Divya was loved by everyone. "She never raised her voice at anyone. She was inspired by the lawyer who appeared for her (in the case) and wanted to learn from her. I can't wrap my head around the fact that she is gone," she said.

Sonia added that her daughter

was shot dead inside a Gurgaon hotel, her family is still awaiting news of her body which is yet to be recovered.

How cyber gangs used data files to find targets, dupe them

JIGNASA SINHA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

INVESTIGATION INTO gangs involved in work-from-home and OTP scams has led Delhi Police to thousands of data files used by cyber criminals across Delhi-NCR to cheat people.

One of the gangs, busted in Outer Delhi, was found operating 32 bank accounts – each dealing with transactions worth Rs 1.6 crore in two days. To run such large-scale operations, the accused used data sourced either from vendors online or from marketing companies, said police.

Police found that the three men arrested in this case – Nirmal Vijay (45), Mosin (31), and Javed Chanda (42) – worked out of Gujarat and Rajasthan and would target the elderly and women.

DCP (Outer) Jimmy Chiram said they worked with unknown associates in China who helped them with logistics and took care of bank accounts to receive the cheated amount. "The accused would contact elderly people, mostly women, and offer them a job from home – like YouTube videos or posts on a site to earn money. The accused would later ask for investments in the name of reaching a higher level and cheat the victims," said the DCP.

Police investigation also revealed the accused had organised data sets allegedly tailored to their requirements. "We seized two laptops and 11 phones and found the data they have stored... more than half of the data hasn't been used. The accused said they would only target a small segment... 400-800 individuals in a go. Each data folder has multiple files and each

The accused used data sourced either from vendors online or from marketing companies, said police

file has at least 300-500 data entries," said an officer investigating the case. Police said this data was further segregated into different files such as "age above 40", "age above 60", "women", "men in Delhi-NCR", "unemployed women" etc. The Indian Express accessed one such file that showed the data had age, name, phone numbers, gender, employment status, and address mentioned.

However, police suspect most of the data is "repetitive" and not sourced from reliable sources.

Last October, two men from a cyber gang, Sandeep Dalal (31) and Chanchal Singh (43), were arrested after more than 50 complaints were received against them on the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal. Police said the duo was running a WFF scam.

They also cheated people by posing as technicians from software firms taking their personal information, including OTPs. Police found that the accused in this case too used data sets in bulk and sold the data to other gangs.

"They worked in collusion with persons from marketing companies. We found the men were in touch with officials from telecom companies, employment-focused firms, and apparel companies from where they stole data... All these companies have data on people based on their gender, employment, and other factors," said a police source.

FIRST SEVERE COLD DAY OF THE SEASON

Delhi shivers, sees colder day than Shimla, Dharamshala

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

DELHI SHIVERED on Thursday as the maximum temperature dropped to 12.5 degrees Celsius, seven degrees below normal. This, so far, is the season's lowest and the first 'severe cold day' of the season.

The difference between the maximum and minimum temperature was barely 5 degrees, with the mercury touching 7.7 degrees Celsius in the morning, a degree above normal.

The day in Delhi, in fact, was colder than in hill stations like Shimla, which recorded a maximum temperature of 13 degrees Celsius, and Dharamshala, where the maximum temperature was 19.2 degrees Celsius.

The cold in the city is here to stay, at least for two more days, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said, with the maximum temperature on Friday expected to be around 13 degrees, which may increase to 14 degrees on Saturday.

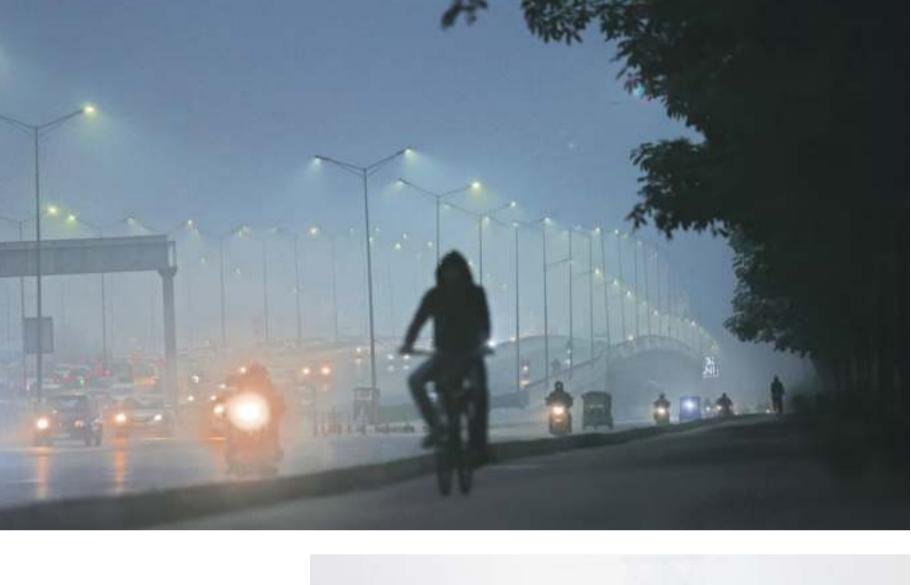
According to IMD officials, the start of the next week may bring light rain.

A 'cold day' is recorded when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or lower and the maximum temperature is 4.5 to 6.4 degrees below the normal. A 'severe cold day' is recorded when the maximum temperature is 6.5 degrees or more below the normal.

While the temperature at Safdarjung weather station, the city's base observatory, was 12.5 degrees Celsius, it was lower in other parts, including Palam (11.4 degrees Celsius), Ridge (12 degrees Celsius) and Ayanagar (11.6 degrees Celsius).

According to IMD officials, severe cold and cold day conditions were seen in several parts of north and central India.

"Due to persistent low cloud cover and consequent unavail-



(Above) A cyclist makes his way through the cold; and (R) a group of children enjoy a game of cricket, in New Delhi on Thursday.
Tashi Tobgyal

ability of sunlight, maximum temperatures were in the range of 12-18°C, which are below normal by 2 to 6°C, over many parts of Punjab-Haryana-Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and adjoining north Madhya Pradesh, resulting in severe cold day conditions over these areas," IMD said in a statement.

"Under the influence of

warm and moist southwesterly winds, minimum and maximum temperatures are likely to rise by 2 to 4°C January 7 onwards. Isolated to scattered very light/light rainfall is also likely over Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, south Haryana, south Uttar Pradesh between January 8 and 9," an IMD official added.

Regrading detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in

For Principal Chief Materials Manager

WESTERN RAILWAY

MATERIAL MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT

E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE No.S/01/2024 Date 01.01.2024

Sr.No.	Short Description of Item	Quantity	T.O.D.	Tender No.
1	Manufacture and supply of 6 mm Thick Nylon Cord Reinforced Sole plates with horns RDSO Drg. No. T-9630.	579 Set	24-Jan-24	26239131
2	Manufacture and supply of Cast Steel slide chair RDSO Drg. No. T-9636 and Cast Steel Special Flat Bearing Plate to RDSO Drg. No. T-9637 to T-9649 and M.S. Flat Tie Bar to RDSO Drg. No. T-9650 for retro fitment in 10125 mm.	579 Set	25-Jan-24	26239132
3	Loclite 518 Sealant	806 Nos	25-Jan-24	4232139
4	Thin walled E Beam Size single core x 240 SQMM.	6675 Mtr	29-Jan-24	10235088
5	Rotor assembly with cooling fan.	5 Nos	31-Jan-24	22235140
6	Manufacture and supply of PSC Bridge wider sleeper for Guard Rail WITH RDSO DRG. NO. T-8970.	8175 Set	07-Feb-24	26239106

REVERSE AUCTION

1	Manufacture and supply of 10125 mm curved switches with ZU-1-60 / 60E1A1 Thick Web Tongue rail for 1 in 12 Turnout	500 Set	25-Jan-24	26239130
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Regrading detailed notice EMD, Purchase restrictions and detailed tender conditions, please visit website www.ireps.gov.in and www.wr.indianrailways.gov.in

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GOVERNMENT OF CHHATTISGARH, WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER MAHANADI CIRCLE: WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT RAIPUR (CHHATTISGARH)

e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

e-Procurement Portal:<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>

(First Call)

Dated: 02.01.2024

Online Tenders are invited for the following works up to 23.01.2024 at 17.30 Hour

Name of Work:- Remodelling & C.C. Lining work from R.D.0.00m. To 2310m. & construction of 10Nos. Direct Outlet of Sub minor No.1 and construction of 02 Nos. structure of Simga minor No. 1 of Singa Distributory under Bhatapara Branch Canal.

Probable Amount of Contract:- Rs. 139.19 Lakh's

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh Integrated e-Procurement Portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) from Date 09.01.2024, at 17.31 Hours (IST) onwards.

NOTE:- All eligible/interested contractors/bidders are mandated to get enrolled on the Integrated e-Procurement portal (<https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>) and get approval on specific vendor class from PWD under Centralized Contractor/Supplier Registration in order to download the tender documents and participate in the subsequent bidding process.

Sd/-
Executive Engineer
MRP Disnet Division No. 3, Tilda
For, Superintending Engineer,
Mahanadi Circle, Raipur (C.G.)

06853

SALUTE THE SOLDIER

22 JUL 67 - 04 JAN 96



We pay our deep homage to Maj RK Laul, SC (Posthumous), who was Killed in Action while fighting the enemy in 'OP RAKSHAK', J&K in the year 1996.

His dauntless courage and sacrifice will forever inspire the organisation.

CO & all ranks of 6th Battalion

Brigade of The Guards



Constable Desha Singh
Ramesh Vill- Sri City Barugund
Distt- Khammam
Telangana



Constable Bhukya
Ramesh Vill- Midda
Distt- Firozpur
Punjab

INDO-TIBETAN BORDER POLICE (ITBP)

05 January, 2024

ITBP salutes its bravehearts Constable Desha Singh of 12th Bn and Constable Bhukya Ramesh of 4th Bn, who made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty on this day in the Indian Mission at Afghanistan and Arunachal Pradesh in 2008 and 2023 respectively.

DIRECTORATE OF INCOME TAX (SYSTEMS) INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT

MINISTRY OF FINANCE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

Notice Inviting Tender for selection of Managed Service Provider (MSP) to Design, Develop, Implement, Operate and Maintain the Income Tax Business Application 2.0 (ITBA 2.0)

Tender Reference No. RFP/ITBA2.0/2023-24 dated 22.12.2023

The Income Tax Department intends to engage a Managed Service Provider (MSP) to Design, Develop, Implement, Operate and Maintain the Income Tax Business Application 2.0 (ITBA 2.0).

The ITBA 2.0 project is envisaged to be used by the authorized users/ officials for undertaking their day-to-day duties / official functions under the various Acts [like but not limited to Income Tax Act 1961, The Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income & Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act 2015, DTVSV Act, Prohibition of Benami Property Transactions Act, Taxation Laws Amendment Acts, provisions of the Finance Act such as Equalization Levy etc.; Treaties or Agreements (Such as DTAAs); DTDR Scheme, PMGKY or any other voluntary compliance schemes, etc.] administered or to be administered by the CBDT or within the scope of the Board administering the same.

The ITBA 2.0 project aims to streamline and digitalise the income tax processes, enhance digital user experience, and manage grievances effectively. The scope of work of the project includes setting up facilities, procuring and installing hardware/software at the Data Centers, deploying manpower, and ensuring state-of-the-art solutions, etc.

The Income Tax Department is inviting bids from the Managed Service Providers (MSPs) using the 'Quality and Cost Based Selection' for Designing, Development, Implementation, Operation and Maintenance of the ITBA 2.0.

The RFP for ITBA 2.0 can be obtained by the authorized representative of the bidder from the office of Assistant Director (Systems)-3, Income Tax Department (Dr. Sumit Kumar Yadav), Room No 101, 1st Floor, Ayakar Bhawan, Sector-3, Vaishali, Ghaziabad 201010 by submitting a duly signed Letter of Authorization, Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA), Pre-contract Integrity Pact and paying ₹ 50,000/- (non-refundable) in the form of a crossed demand draft from any Nationalized/Scheduled Bank drawn in favor of "The Accounts Officer, Zonal Accounts Office, CBDT, New Delhi", payable at New Delhi.

The RFP will be available on all working days during office hours till the last date of submission of bids. The format of all documents and other details are available with **Tender ID: 2023_DREV_785650** on the <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app> and www.incometaxindia.gov.in.

Note:- Only the vendors who have purchased the RFP from the Department will be allowed to attend the Pre-bid Conference and the bid queries will be entertained only from them.

IMPORTANT DATES

ACTIVITY	DATE
Date of release of RFP	26.12.2023
Date, time and venue for pre-bid conference	22.01.2024 at 10:00 AM Conference Hall, 23rd Floor of E-2 Block, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Civic Centre, Minto Road, New Delhi-110002
Date and Time for Site visit (for all Bidders)	23.01.2024 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM
Last date for submission of queries by bidders	29.01.2024
Response to bidders' queries by the Department	21.02.2024
Bid Submission Start Date	10.03.2024
Bid Submission End Date	21.03.2024 up to 5:00 PM

CBC-15403/11/0016/2324

**PUBLIC (ELECTIONS-II) DEPARTMENT
SECRETARIAT, CHENNAI-600 009.**

Tender Ref. No.1/2024

TENDER NOTIFICATION

e-Tenders are invited from reputed Companies / Agencies for Live Webcasting on the day of Polling and Recording on the day of Counting for the General Elections to Lok Sabha, 2024 for a period of one (1) year as per the guidelines/instructions of the Election Commission of India, in the state of Tamil Nadu. The details can be seen in the tender document which can be downloaded free of cost from the websites <https://tntenders.gov.in> and <https://elections.tn.gov.in>

1. Queries from the Companies/Agencies should be raised in the website <https://tntenders.gov.in> up to 05:00 PM. on 22.01.2024. The reply to the queries of the Companies/Agencies shall be uploaded by this Department by 05:00 PM on 24.01.2024 in the website <https://tntenders.gov.in>.

2. The last date for submission of tenders through <https://tntenders.gov.in> – up to 3.00 P.M. on 02.02.2024.

3. Technical Bids Opening to ascertain the Number of bids received – 3:30 P.M. on 02.02.2024.

4. Detailed Technical Evaluation by the Tender Evaluation Committee – will be decided later.

5. Financial Bid Opening - Those bidders who have Technically qualified will be



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FRESH START

THE BJP national leadership seems to be relieved to see its Karnataka unit making "the right noises" ahead of the Lok Sabha elections. Since mid-November, the state unit under the newly appointed party president B V Vijayendra has been organising multiple protests, the latest one being the statewide stir against the arrest of a man in connection with a 31-year-old case related to Ram temple agitation. Senior party leaders have also appreciated the choice of office-bearers – apparently Vijayendra has made some "brave choices keeping the interests of the party in mind" – in the state unit. But the most important part, according to sources, is that the state party leaders have come together after a long time in the Karnataka BJP, which was riddled with internal strife.

THE EVM QUESTION

FACING QUESTIONS from the Opposition and some activists about the use of EVMs and VVPATs, the Election Commission has once again updated the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) section on its website and added nine questions and answers. These include details of the size of VVPAT slips, the power pack and reserve power available for VVPATs and why the screen of the VVPAT is of a dark shade (to allow voters to see their slip, but to also maintain secrecy of the vote). The last question on the list is "when was the legal framework for VVPAT introduced?". The answer: August 14, 2013. This, sources said, shows that VVPAT was introduced by the UPA government led by the Congress, which is now demanding 100% counting of VVPAT slips.

India, Nepal sign power pact, MoU in renewable energy

YUBRAJ GHIMIRE

KATHMANDU, JANUARY 4

NEPAL ON Thursday signed a long-term agreement for the export of 10,000MW power to India in the next 10 years and an MoU for cooperation in renewable energy while External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and his Nepali counterpart N Paudyal jointly inaugurated 3 cross-border transmission lines. Jaishankar is on a two-day visit to the Himalayan nation.

India's Energy Secretary Pankaj Agrawal and his Nepali counterpart Gopal Sigdel signed the bilateral agreement.

The power export agreement was signed during the 7th meeting of the Nepal-India Joint Commission. On Thursday, an MoU for cooperation in renewable energy was also signed by the Nepal Electricity Authority and National Thermal Power

WITH PTI INPUTS

Officials told to complete Maratha quota survey in 7 days

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI, JANUARY 4

IN A BID to stop social activist Manoj Jarange-Patil from entering Mumbai on January 20 for his protest demanding Kunbi (OBC) status for Marathas, the Maharashtra government has directed officials to complete the survey work to fix social and educational backwardness of the community within seven days.

Remarks against PM: No SC relief for Cong's Khera

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

The Supreme Court Thursday rejected Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera's appeal to quash criminal proceedings in connection with certain alleged objectionable remarks made against PM Narendra Modi in February 2023.

Khera had approached the apex court against the Allahabad HC, which had refused to quash the criminal proceedings. The matter then came up before a bench of Justices B R Gavai and Sandeep Mehta.

"Wishing away an offence, is that possible?" asked Justice Mehta as the bench proceeded to dismiss it. Khera, chairperson of Congress's media and publicity wing, had made the alleged remarks during a press conference in Mumbai on February 20 last year. Based on complaints, FIRs were lodged against Khera in Assam and UP, and he was arrested on February 23 last year.

Cong renames Rahul yatra 2.0: 15 states, 100 Lok Sabha seats in over two months

Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra will cover Arunachal, pass through Modi, Sonia seats, spend most time in UP

LALMANI VERMA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE CONGRESS Thursday renamed its coming yatra from Manipur to Mumbai the "Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra" and said it would invite all INDIA bloc leaders to join it. Led by senior party MP Rahul Gandhi, the party will crisscross through 15 states, 110 districts, and 100 Lok Sabha seats in approximately 66-68 days. Initially, the party planned to cover 6,200 km in 14 states but has now added Arunachal Pradesh to its route.

The logistics and other details about the yatra were finalised at a 3-hour meeting that Congress chief Mallikarjun Kharge and Rahul had with AICC general secretaries, state in-charges, state Congress chiefs, and Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leaders.

"The parties of the INDIA bloc, parties allied with the Congress in different states, and civil society organisations are invited to participate in the yatra," said Congress communications chief Jairam Ramesh.

Explaining why the yatra name was tweaked, Ramesh said, "The idea of justice is the

Court order on plea to make ASI Gyanvapi report public likely today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, JANUARY 4

THE VARANASI district court is expected to pass an order Friday on a petition seeking opening of the sealed envelopes containing the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) report based on a scientific survey of the Gyanvapi mosque complex.

The ASI had undertaken the survey on Varanasi court orders which had ordered it to ascertain whether the mosque was "constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple".

Meanwhile, the ASI, which filed the report on December 18, on Wednesday submitted an application, urging the court to postpone for four weeks the disclosure of its findings.

Earlier, the 4 women petitioners in the lead petition in the district court had filed an application seeking opening the ASI report in the courtroom and to provide the parties with a copy of the report.

The court had on July 21 last year ordered a scientific survey of the complex to ascertain whether the mosque was "constructed over a pre-existing structure of a Hindu temple".

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Chowdhury, whose relations

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Jaishankar and Saud virtually inaugurated 3 cross-border transmission lines completed with India's help—132 kV Raxaul-Parwanipur, 132 kV Kushaha-Kataiya and New Nautanwa-Mainahiya lines, officials said.

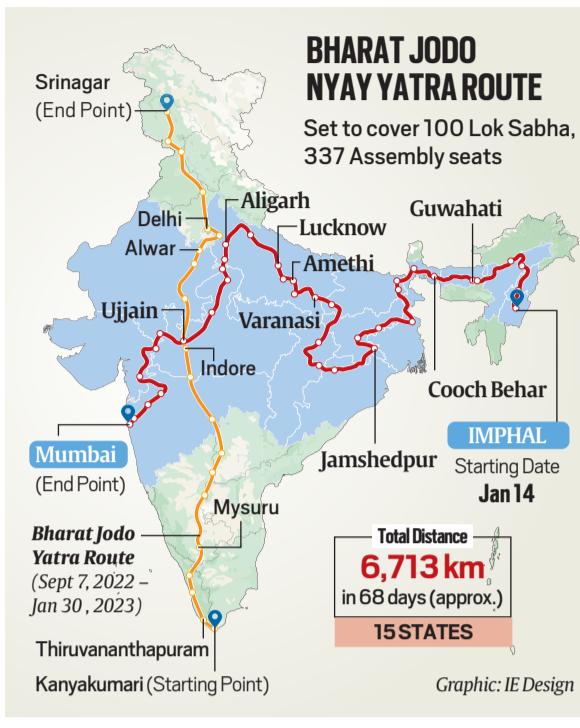
WITH PTI INPUTS

pleted within 7 days. The district collectors are authorised to increase the number of enumerators as many as required," it said.

Gokhale Institute of Politics and Economics, Pune has prepared the questionnaire which has over 100 questions. It has also prepared the mobile app where the answers will be recorded. Sources said that the over one to one-and-a-half lakh employees will be working as enumerators. Despite the government's rush,

The state government on Thursday issued a government resolution authorising district collectors to enrol as much human resources available. "Talathis, police patil, kotwals have been directed to work along with enumerators to collect the data," said the resolution. The survey will be undertaken of all communities falling under the open category.

The survey work to check social and educational backwardness of Marathas should be com-



idea of the yatra. We had a Bharat Jodo Yatra for 140 days, it proved to be a transformative movement in Indian politics, everybody was of the unanimous view that we should combine the two

and that is why the yatra is now called Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra."

He added, "Everyone said that we should strengthen the alliance and there should be no shortcoming from the Congress's side

Adhir fumes at 2-seat 'offer', hits out at INDIA ally: 'Don't need Mamata's pity'

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA
KOLKATA, JANUARY 4

THE PRECARIOUS INDIA alliance in West Bengal suffered another jolt Thursday, with state Congress president Adhir Chowdhury lashing out at TMC chief Mamata Banerjee, saying his party was not dependent on her "mercy".

Chowdhury was reacting to reports that the TMC was inclined to offer the Congress only 2 seats in the state as part of the Opposition grouping. The Congress currently holds that precise number from West Bengal, including Chowdhury's own constituency Berhampur and Malda Dakshin, from where Hasem Khan Choudhury is the MP – both of which are the party's traditional strongholds.

Sources said the Congress is pushing for 6 seats from the state.

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Absolutely wrong: SC on Calcutta HC advice to girls to control sexual urge

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE SUPREME Court Thursday reiterated its disapproval of the Calcutta High Court verdict advising adolescent girls to "control sexual urges" and said that "writing such judgments is absolutely wrong". "See the kind of findings...What kind of principles have the judges invoked! HC says POCSO section should be amended and as it is not amended, they will exercise power under Section 482...From where such concepts come, we do not know. We want to address," Justice A S Oka presiding over a two-judge bench said. Section 482 deals with the inherent powers of the High Court.

On Thursday, senior advocate Huzeifa Ahmad, appearing for West Bengal, informed the bench, also comprising Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, that the state government had filed an appeal challenging the Calcutta HC order on October 18, 2023. In its order in a

The SC, which took suo motu cognizance, had on December 8, 2023 issued notice to the state of West Bengal and sought to know if the state intended to challenge the judgment.

It added that "... the honourable judges are not expected to either express their personal views or preach."

Tejashwi: Will back bid to make Nitish INDIA convener

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, JANUARY 4

BIHAR DEPUTY Chief Minister and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav met Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Thursday in a reported bid to lend his party's support to any move by the Janata Dal (United) to make Nitish the convener of INDIA bloc and also to clear the air on reported strained ties between the RJD and the JD(U).

The meeting comes a day before Tejashwi has to appear before the Enforcement Directorate in connection with the land-for-jobs case. RJD sources called it a "courtesy call". This was the first

case of kidnapping and sexual assault of a young girl, a division bench of Justices Chitta Ranjan Dash and Partha Sarathi Sen of the Calcutta HC had also stated it was the duty of every adolescent girl to "protect her right to integrity of her body".

Ahmadi contended that besides certain parts flagged by the SC, there were also other problematic paragraphs. Justice Oka remarked, "every paragraph is problematic. We have marked all the paragraphs."

The SC said both matters will have to be heard together and directed the Registry to list the West Bengal appeal along with the suo motu proceedings pending before it on January 12.

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It added that "... the honourable judges are not expected to either express their personal views or preach."

JD(U) leaders, meanwhile, have been stepping up pressure on the Congress for ceding INDIA bloc national convener role to Nitish. The party's chief spokesperson K C Tyagi said, "Nitish is a rare leader with such a clean image. He enjoys a great national standing."

meeting between Tejashwi and Nitish in the last one month during which the RJD leader had not shared the dais with the CM on at least four occasions despite scheduled events.

On Wednesday, when asked about speculation of Nitish being made INDIA bloc convener, Tejashwi said: "We would support it if it happens."

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BJP leaders say the PM's visit, his announcement of development projects and the party's growing activities in

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, JANUARY 4

IN A gesture of courtesy, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar called up Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha MP Kalyan Banerjee on Thursday to wish him on his birthday and convey New Year greetings. He also invited Banerjee for dinner at his residence in New Delhi.

Kalyan Banerjee was at the heart of a controversy after he mimicked the Vice President, who is also Chairman of the Rajya Sabha, in the presence of opposition leaders and MPs at the stairs of the Parliament on December 19. Banerjee, a senior lawyer and TMC Lok Sabha MP, were among those suspended from Parliament.

He later defended his action at a public meeting in Hooghly calling mimicry an "art form" and citing his "right to expression."

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Kalyan Banerjee said, "Around 8:30 am, we received a call from him (Jagdeep Dhankhar). We exchanged greetings and he spoke with me and my wife. He invited us to his house. Whenever we are in Delhi, he has invited me and my wife to his residence for dinner. It was nice speaking with him. I have spoken with him earlier too. It was good to receive a call from him."

After Banerjee mimicked Dhankhar, criticism poured in from several quarters, including former Dropout Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

However, Banerjee was seemingly unapologetic. Soon after the incident, while speaking to *The Indian Express*, he said, "I am surprised he took it personally. Does he behave like this only? It is an art form."

On December 26, Banerjee said he would repeat the act a thousand times since it is his right to freedom of expression.

"I thank Hon'ble @VPIndia for his warm greetings on my birthday. I'm overwhelmed that he personally had a telephone conversation with my wife and conveyed his blessings to my entire family. He also invited my wife and me to have dinner at his residence in Delhi with his family." Banerjee posted on X.



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After Banerjee mimicked Dhankhar, criticism poured in from several quarters, including former Dropout Murmu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

However, Banerjee was seemingly unapologetic. Soon after the incident, while speaking to *The Indian Express*, he said, "I am surprised he took it personally. Does he behave like this only

EXPRESS NETWORK

MAHADEV APP
ED sends papers to MEA for extraditing two Dubai-based betting kingpins

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE ENFORCEMENT Directorate (ED) has sent several documents to the Ministry of External Affairs to initiate extradition proceedings against two Dubai-based kingpins — Ravi Uppal and Sourabh Chandrakar — main promoters of the Mahadev online betting app, days after a fresh charge sheet was filed before a special court in Raipur against their five associates by the agency which is investigating alleged money laundering in the online gambling case.

In September, the ED had initiated the process of issuing a Red Corner Notice (RCN) against Chandrakar, 28, and Uppal, 43, both of whom hail from Bhilai in Chhattisgarh. "First, Uppal was detained in Dubai by the immigration department on the basis of an RCN issued by the Interpol at the behest of the ED, and later his associate Chandrakar was also detained. Since, both have a citizenship of Vanuatu, an island country in the Pacific Ocean, they would be extradited," the sources said.

Sources said a team was sent to Dubai to complete legal documentation work and initiate extradition proceedings. "Chandrakar and Uppal have been staying in Dubai for nearly two years. Uppal is said to be an engineering graduate and they operate from Dubai and keep 80 per cent of the profits. The duo is suspected to have made Rs 5,000 crore from this app, but things will clear after they are extradited," the source said.

"Alleged cash courier Aseem Das, police constable Bheem Singh Yadav, Shubham Soni, a prominent executive linked to the app, were among the five named in the complaint," the sources said.

"We have also sent the fresh prosecution complaint to the MEA, asking it to share with the concerned authorities in Dubai to get them extradited. The special PMLA court may take cognizance of the charge sheet on January 10," an official said.

Government sources said that the process to appoint her as DGP was delayed due to an administrative process. Shukla was on central deputation heading the Sashashtra Seema Bal, before which she was additional director general of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). While in the state police, she served as Pune police commissioner and headed the State Intelligence Department (SID) when the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP government was in power.

Though Shukla has been the frontrunner to the post since the then incumbent DGP Rajnish Seth was appointed as MPSC chief in October, the order to this effect was issued on Thursday. Seth, who retired on Sunday, took charge as the chairman of the Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) on Monday.

Government sources said that the process to appoint her as DGP was delayed due to an administrative process. Shukla was on central deputation heading the Sashashtra Seema Bal, before which she was additional director general of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF). While in the state police, she served as Pune police commissioner and headed the State Intelligence Department (SID) when the Devendra Fadnavis-led BJP government was in power.

The recovery was made during searches conducted at 12 locations in Jharkhand, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Bihar in connection with the Sahibganj illegal stone mining case. This is in continuation of the earlier 51 searches and eight arrests made by the ED in connection with the case.

"During the search operation, various incriminating documents/records, digital devices and cash amounting to Rs 36.99 lakh, including Rs 7.25 lakh from the camp office of Ram Niwas Yadav, the ED of Sahibganj were recovered..." the ED said, adding that the total amount of illegal stone mining in Sahibganj is Rs 1,250 crore.

Let there be light: 2 remote villages along LoC get electricity for first time

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
SRINAGAR, JANUARY 4

KUNDIYAN AND Patroo — two remote villages in North Kashmir's Kupwara district, along the Line of Control — have got electricity for the first time. The development will touch the lives of around 1,300 residents.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Deputy Commissioner, Kupwara, Ayush Sudar said, "Until now, the villages were getting electricity through the operation of diesel generator sets for four hours a day. They have

Hizbul Mujahideen militant wanted in 11 terror cases held in Nizamuddin: Delhi cops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE DELHI Police Special Cell Thursday said it has arrested a 32-year-old Hizbul Mujahideen militant who was wanted for the last 13 years over at least 11 terror-related cases in Jammu and Kashmir. Javid Ahmed Mattoo was nabbed from Delhi's Nizamuddin area.

Police said they are currently questioning Mattoo, terming him the "last surviving A++ category J&K-based terrorist". The militant, who is from Kashmir's Sopore area, was carrying a reward of Rs 10 lakh. Police said he was also on the radar of the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

According to the police, a few days back, they received information that a terrorist from Jammu and Kashmir would be coming to Delhi to collect arms and ammunition. "We found he was doing this at the behest of Pakistan's ISI. We also found that his Pakistani-based handler would carry out terror strikes in Kashmir and other places," said an officer.

Special Commissioner, Special Cell, HGS Dhaliwal said: "We knew he was an A++ category terrorist and had come to Delhi recently. He was hiding near the Nizamuddin-DND area. He was finally caught on Thursday. We have seized his 9 mm pistol, six live cartridges, one magazine and a stolen Santro car."

Mattoo is a college dropout and is said to be a member of a seven-person terror module operating in North Kashmir since 2010. Sources said Mattoo hadn't been active since 2012-13 and was hiding in different parts of Kashmir, Pakistan, and Nepal to evade police and agencies.

Police said his arrest has revealed the workings of his module. Police said the seven members were involved in the killing of five police personnel, at least half a dozen grenade attacks and causing injuries to more than a dozen police personnel.

In the last decade, Mattoo switched between several appearances — sporting at various times a long beard, clean-shaven look and the disguise of an old man. He was seen around Delhi last week communicating with various arms suppliers, police said, adding that they suspect he was looking for arms to orchestrate another attack on police (in Sopore) ahead of Republic Day.

His associates have been identified as Abdul Majid Zargar, Abdul Qayyum Nazar, Tarik Ahmed Lone, Imtiyaz Kundu, Mehraj



Javid Ahmed Mattoo, a Hizbul Mujahideen militant, following his arrest in Delhi on Thursday. PTI

Halwai and Waseem Guru. Police said Nazar, Halwai, and Guru were all residents of Sopore and were killed in different gunbattles with security forces. Nazar was the operational in-charge of the module.

Lone, too, died when he was cornered by security forces in Kashmir. He allegedly jumped from a bridge while trying to escape but drowned.

Police said all of them were Pakistan-trained terrorists. Zargar and Kundu still survive.

Dhaliwal said Zargar is currently hiding in Pakistan and handling other Hizbul Mujahideen cadres from Pakistan, including Mattoo. "Besides indulging in terror activities, he also managed finances and logistics including the procurement of weapons from ISI handlers across the border," said Dhaliwal.

Police said Kundu, too, has been in Pakistan since 2015-16. He is currently working with another terror accused identified as Shaheen.

"As per our inputs, Mattoo is the last surviving A++ terrorist from Jammu and Kashmir. He has been hiding his identity for years to evade arrest. In these years, he was in touch with his associates from the module.

Despite the intense search operation against him, he has been involved in some serious terror attacks since 2010-11 and evaded agencies," said Dhaliwal.

According to police, on the night of December 31, Dalbir Singh Deol — a weightlifter and an Arjuna awardee posted with the Punjab Armed Police — took an auto from Jalandhar bus stand to drop him home at Khojewal village, around 14.5 km away. Midway through the journey, say police, the DSP and the driver, Jalandhar resident Vijay Kumar, got into an argument over where Deol wanted to be dropped.

According to police, Kumar, who has been living on rent in a retired police inspector's home, managed to get his hands on Deol's Glock 9 mm service pistol and shoot him. Deol's body was found near a canal in Jalandhar's Basti Bawa Khel area in the early hours of January 1.

Following the murder, police launched an extensive manhunt to track the accused, using technical surveillance and scrutinising data of mobile phones that were active in the area around the time of the murder. "The probe even-

Auto driver killed Punjab Dy SP with service revolver: Police

Cop was weightlifter, Arjuna awardee

JAGDEEP SINGH DEEP
JALANDHAR, JANUARY 4



Dy SP Dalbir Singh Deol was killed on Dec 31

tually led to Kumar's arrest. He had been booked around six years ago, in a case of assault, but since the complainant did not want to pursue it further, it was quashed," said Jalandhar Commissioner of Police Swapan Sharma.

Sharma said that Deol had taken an auto since his vehicle had met with an accident. According to an officer, another policeman, Jugal Kishore, who was returning home from duty, spotted the DSP's body and raised an alarm. Police have also recovered the weapon used in the crime.

Deol's cousin Ranjeet Singh told *The Indian Express* that the family is in shock.

"The entire village was proud of him. He lost his mother and sister in a road accident a while back, and his father passed away about five years ago. He is survived by his wife and two sons, aged 25 and 10. The elder son is physically challenged," he said.

"Deol was posted at Sangrur and would visit home on the weekends. On December 31, he had gone to Jalandhar to run some errands," he said.

Monu Manesar gets bail in attempted murder case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, JANUARY 4

police had brought Manesar from a Rajasthan jail to Gurgaon on a production warrant.

The case in which he got bail is related to a clash in Pataudi in which four people had suffered injuries, including Mohin Khan, 20, who suffered a gunshot wound. Police remand papers stated that during the probe, Monu confessed to his involvement in the incident.

On October 16, Monu was granted bail by a Nuh court for a hate speech case ahead of the Jalabishek yatra in Nalhar temple on August 28.

Global Times article hails Modi for India's strides in economic, foreign policy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

ments over the past four years. It acknowledges India's robust economic growth, improvements in urban governance, and a shift in attitude towards international relations, notably with China.

"For example, when discussing the trade imbalance between China and India, Indian representatives earlier used to primarily focus on China's measures to reduce the trade imbalance. But now they are placing more emphasis on India's export potential," said Zhang in the article.

Zhang also said that with its rapid economic and social development, India has become more strategically confident and proactive in creating and developing a "Bharat narrative".

The Singapore Court of Appeals dismissed an appeal filed by India against enforcement of a \$101 million international arbitration award to German telecom major Deutsche Telekom over the cancellation of a 2005 satellite deal between Bengaluru start-up Devas Multimedia and ISRO's Antrix Corp.

The Singapore Court of Appeals dismissed the Indian plea, saying that most of the issues raised in the plea were addressed during the arbitration by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Geneva and subsequently by the Swiss Federal Supreme Court.

Deutsche Telekom, which held a 20.73 per cent stake (through a subsidiary) in the now-liquidated Devas Multimedia, was awarded a compensation of \$101 million by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in Geneva on May 27, 2020, after India annulled the satellite deal between Devas and ISRO's Antrix Corp, citing security reasons in February 2011.

Deutsche Telekom has cited the cancellation as a violation of the 1995 Indo-German Bilateral Investment Treaty. The German firm moved courts in Singapore and the US for confirmation of the award... The Singapore court has also directed the Indian government to pay \$130,000 to Deutsche Telekom over the litigation.

Alcohol ban eased so nobody has a reason to not come: GIFT City MD

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GANDHINAGAR, JANUARY 4



Relaxation in prohibition law in view of competition with global financial hubs: Tapan Ray, MD & CEO of GIFT City

of the Vibrant Gujarat Global Summit (VGGS) next week.

Ray said, "For the financial services centres, there is a lot of competition worldwide. When GIFT City competes with Dubai, Singapore, and London, if you stay low (on facilities), the financial services won't come here. So, it has been relaxed to ensure that nobody has a reason not to come to

India has not sent any artillery ammunition to Ukraine: MEA

New Delhi: India on Thursday rejected reports that claimed spotting certain Indian-origin artillery shells in Ukraine, and categorically asserted that it has not sent any ammunition to that country.

Randhir Jaiswal, External Affairs Ministry spokesperson, said that New Delhi has neither sent nor exported any artillery ammunition to Ukraine. "We have also seen some media reports in this regard. We can categorically say that we have not sent any of this artillery ammunition to Ukraine," he told the media.

Jaiswal's remarks came in response to a question on reports about Indian-made artillery shells being spotted in Ukraine. India has been maintaining that the conflict in Ukraine must be resolved. PTI

Additionally, she said that by 2024-end, all villages of Keran will get BSNL mobile network. Other service providers, including Airtel and Jio, "will be roped in" for providing and enhancing phone connectivity to the area.

Block development chairman, Keran, Mohammad Syed Khoja said that for the residents, this is a dream come true. "We used to get two to three hours of low voltage power through a decade-old diesel generator set, which could hardly light up a bulb. We were using candles to light up our homes. Now our children will study under electric lights and perform well."

Under the Street Vendors (Protection of Livelihood and Regulation of Street Vending) Act, 2014, state governments are required to constitute "one or more

committees" comprising a retired civil judge or a judicial magistrate as the chairperson along with two other professionals.

Street vendors having grievances, including instances of harassment by police and other local

authorities, can approach GRCs and submit a written application regarding the same. The GRC is authorised to conduct an enquiry and redress the grievance.

However, GRCs have only been set up in 17 states, and that too, not in all urban local bodies of those states, according to sources.

During the first national semi-

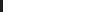
inar on the issue of implementation of GRCs on Thursday, Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said, "Only 17 states have constituted such committees so far... These GRCs have the potential to foster a more inclusive and supportive environment." He also said that the seminar was with

10 years on, grievance redressal panels for street vendors yet to be set up across states

an aim to alert states that have not implemented GRCs yet.

According to sources, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MoHUA) is likely to issue guidelines to states for an effective implementation of GRCs; and issues such as payment of honorarium to chairpersons of different GRCs are likely to be addressed.

Arbind Singh, national coordinator of the National Association of Street Vendors of India (NASVI) — which has been demanding the implementation of GRCs across cities — said rules enacted by states also had many "gaps".



Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri



Arbind Singh

Paschimanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam Ltd., Victoria Park, Meerut

E-TENDER NOTICE E-tender is invited for supply of 3500 Nos. LT TVM Cat (C) Meter against tender specification no. PVNL-MT/COM/16/23-24. EMD is Rs. 84,000 and the tender is to be submitted by 14:00 hrs of 03.02.2024 and the Part-I of tender shall be opened after 17:00 hrs of the same date. In case of amendment in NIT or extension in opening date, information will be published on e-tender website www.etender.up.nic.in and on www.pvnl.org. Sd/- Superintending Engineer (Commercial) "SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATION" Help line Number for Information of Theft of Electricity: "1800-180-3002 (Meerut) & 1800-180-8752 (Lucknow)" पत्रांक: 2035 दिनांक: 04.01.2024

UPSIDA
उत्तरायण आधिकारिक विवाद प्राधिकरण
ए-निवाद सूचना

एतदवाच्या सूचना किया जाता है कि विभिन्न आयोगों के सदस्यों के अन्तर्गत विकास/अनुरक्षण/उच्चीकरण कार्यों हेतु सरकारी विभागों/नियमों/प्राधिकरणों/विधियों/नगर निकायों में पौरीतृत फर्मों/हेतु दारों से इन्विदायां आमत्रित की जाती है, जिसका अपलोड करने की सापेक्षता निन्मवत है—

1. क्रम सं 1 से 2 पर अंकित निवादा दिनांक 08.01.2024 को पूर्वान्ह 11.00 बजे से दिनांक 15.01.2024 को अपराह्न 5.00 बजे तक अपलोड की जा सकती है, जिन्हें दिनांक 16.01.2024 को पूर्वान्ह 11.00 बजे खोला जायेगा (अल्पालिका)।

निवादाताओं द्वारा केवल शाप पत्रों की मूल प्रतीक्षा खोलने की तिथि से दो कार्यालयका के अन्दर कार्यालय जैसा जमा की जाए सकती है। इन्विदा के माध्यम से आमत्रित की जाने वाली निवादाओं का विवरण निन्मवत है—

क्रमांक	कार्य का नाम	कार्य की लागत रु. (लाख में)
1	Upgradation of existing balance roads in phase-I, II & III at I.A. Masuri Gulawathi Road Distt:- Hapur (under AIIM).	323.21
2	Resurfacing/Strengthening of all Internal Roads at I.A. Pilakhni Saharanpur.	229.61

नोट:— निवादाताओं द्वारा केवल शाप पत्रों में समस्त कर सहित दरे अंकित करें। जीपीएसटी अपने देख सोगा।

निवादा सम्बन्धी विस्तृत जानकारी प्राधिकरण की [website](http://www.onlineupsidc.com): पर रित इन्विदा की [website](http://etender.up.nic.in): पर देखे जा सकती है। अन्य जानकारी हेतु कार्यालय के प्रबन्धक (प्रिविले) के मोबाइल नंबर 879130769 पर घरान नामांकनका अपनाएं।

प्रयाण नामांकनका अपनाएं। और अपनाएं। कार्यालय, कानपुर


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

TENDER NOTICE

E-tender is Re-invited for the supply of following item.

(1) 77672.

Note : For more details, log on to website

<https://mahatenders.gov.in>

PRO/AAM(M)/124/2023

GENERAL MANAGER

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN WATER SUPPLY & SEWERAGE BOARD

O/o Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle No.V, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad - 94. T.S.

e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender Notice Name of Work Estimate Contract Value
No. & Date supply, delivery and pipe line strengthening work including installation of valves and chambers for equitable water supply with laying of 200/150mm dia at Road no.22 from Plot No.490 to 308 and Road No.35 from Plot No.745 to 1429 and Road No.36 from Plot No.764 to 906 and Road No.38 to 46 from Plot No.785 to 938 and Road No.47,8,10,13,21 and 35 and Providing by- Pass arrangements at 2000 L/M/D Capacity ESLR in Bhagayath Phase-4 under Upper Section, Sub-Divn.I, O&M Division, XCV, Uppal.

(1) Tender Document will be available online from dt: 05.01.2024 from 9.00 AM onwards and the last date for receipt of tenders is 19.01.2024, (2) Name & address of Chief General Manager (Engg). Concerned - Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle-V, HMWSB, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad-500094. (3) The Contractors / firms are required to upload the information in the "ZIP" format preferably.

(4) Further details can be seen on <http://tender.telangana.gov.in>.

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The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE RIGHT SUPPORT

Existing MSP and procurement policy favours only a few crops, creates market distortions. It needs to be corrected

OILSEEDS AND pulses farmers today suffer policy discrimination on two counts. The first is from their minimum support prices (MSP) being largely on paper – unlike with rice, wheat and sugarcane, where the government assures MSP either through large-scale direct procurement, or by forcing mills to pay. Mustard is currently selling at Rs 5,000–5,100 per quintal in Rajasthan and *chana* (chickpea) at Rs 4,700–4,800 in Maharashtra, as against their respective MSPs of Rs 5,650 and Rs 5,440. And this is even before the crops now in the field are to be marketed in about two months' time. The second bias has to do with imports. Wheat attracts 40 per cent import duty, with these at 70 per cent for milled rice and 100 per cent for sugar. As against this, crude palm, soyabean and sunflower oil are importable at zero duty. So are most pulses, barring *chana* and *moong* (green gram).

It is not for nothing that India's edible oil imports have risen from 11.6 million to 16.5 million tonnes (mt) between 2013–14 and 2022–23, with the latter valued at \$16.7 billion and meeting almost two-thirds of the domestic consumption requirement. That's not a record the Narendra Modi government would be terribly pleased about. Things have been better in pulses, where imports have fallen from a peak of 6.6 mt in 2016–17 to 2.5 mt in 2022–23, translating into a 90 per cent-plus self-sufficiency ratio. But the current year has seen a resurgence of imports, with the Modi government swinging from a producer to pro-consumer stance ahead of national elections. Price and tariff support apart, oilseeds and pulses have not received research and development attention anywhere near that for wheat, rice or sugarcane. Denial of approval for genetically-modified hybrid mustard and herbicide-resistant soyabean technologies is a manifestation of this official indifference. Even in pulses, the breakthroughs have been largely limited to breeding of short-duration and photo-thermo insensitive varieties in *chana* and *moong*.

It's not surprising then – and welcome, in fact – that various departments within the government are flagging concerns over the extant MSP and procurement policy favouring only a few crops, as a report in this newspaper has revealed. Farmers, like all rational economic actors, respond to price signals and incentives. MSPs should supplement, not supplant markets. The two sub-sectors of Indian agriculture that have registered the highest growth over the last two decades – livestock and horticulture – are the ones that are the most market-led. The crops sub-sector, on the other hand, has exhibited less dynamism, in which MSP-based market distortions have certainly played a role. That needs correction. The best way to do it is by replacing all price-based supports, whether MSP or input subsidies, with per-acre income transfers.

DISPIRITING NO-SHOW

Indian Science Congress has missed its date. It faces a credibility deficit, but it can be salvaged and repaired

THE NO-SHOW of the Indian Science Congress this year is unprecedented, but not surprising. The annual event, going back more than a hundred years, has suffered a serious loss of reputation in recent years. Organised by a private society called the Indian Science Congress Association, but funded by the government, it was meant to showcase the best of Indian science, popularise it and inculcate a scientific temper among students and the general public. The forum served its purpose admirably through most of this period, attracting the who's who of India's scientific community, and serving as a stage for engaging scientific discussions between scientists, university and college teachers, and students.

But the decay in the last couple of decades has been unmistakable. Most of the country's respected scientists now avoid the event. Leading research institutions and laboratories have only a token presence, if at all. And there is little discussion on contemporary issues of science. In recent years, the event has attracted more attention for the controversies it has generated than for hosting any meaningful scientific debate. The stage had been hijacked by relative nobodies with scant credentials in science. The scientific community was unhappy, the government was unhappy, and it seemed to be a really bad advertisement for Indian science. Though a direct fall-out of the government withholding its Rs 5 crore funding, the current predicament of the Indian Science Congress Association is, therefore, largely of its own making. But disbanding the event, as some suggest, is in no one's interest. The Science Congress has a useful role to play, more so in these times when disinformation and misinformation are so widely prevalent. It is the only forum of its kind that brings people even in small towns and cities face-to-face with multi-disciplinary science, and allows interaction between the scientific community and others. It can play an important role in expanding the research base, and build capacities within universities and colleges, which is also the aim of the government's new initiative, the setting up of the National Research Foundation.

The Science Congress is not beyond repair. A more careful scrutiny of papers, presentations and speakers, stricter adherence to relevant topics in discussions, and regular engagement with leading scientists and research institutions can be the first few steps towards reestablishing trust. In the last few years, the government has also begun organising the India International Science Festival, which many see as a counter to the Science Congress. But one need not be cancelled for the other to thrive. Let this setback to the Science Congress be temporary, let it be a wake-up call for reform.

PINEAPPLE PIZZA

Traditionalists must remember, anything can be used as topping in the world's favourite food

AREBELLION IS brewing in Naples, and it tastes like pineapples. In his restaurant on the Via dei Tribunali, the so-called "best known pizza street in the world", Italy's most well-known *pizzaiolo* (pizza chef) Gino Sorbillo has created one topped with the fruit. Outraged Italians accuse him of violating one of the most sacred tenets of pizza-making. In response, Sorbillo, who was himself a pineapple-on-pizza sceptic until recently, points to the excellent contrast in flavour between the sweet, acidic fruit and the three smoked cheeses that he puts on top. Taste, he suggests, trumps the demand for authenticity.

At the heart of the row is a question that has periodically roiled the food world: How much can a preparation be allowed to depart from its "authentic" form, before it becomes a whole other dish? Italians have long mythologised pizza's role in their nation's unification in the 19th century (with the red-white-green of the classic margherita representing the *tricolore*). For them, acceptable toppings include tomatoes, Italian cheeses like mozzarella and scamorza, vegetables commonly found in Italy, such as aubergines and artichokes, mushrooms and meats made with pork. Anything else, including beef and chicken, is a no-no, while pineapple is anathema.

This may be a hard truth for traditionalists to swallow, but the fact is that pizza has been embraced around the world not only for how delectable it is, but also for its incredible adaptability. It has made pizza, almost uniquely among other equally global foods, amenable to every personal and cultural quirk there is, expressed most frequently in the choice of pizza topping: Reindeer meat in Finland, haggis in Scotland, mango in the Philippines and palak paneer in India. Italy, Naples in particular, is rightly proud to be the birthplace of a true classic. But it may be time to accept that pizza now belongs to the world.



UPENDRA BAXI

AMIDST COMPETITIVE GLOBAL politicking, as the world struggles to contain the toxic legacies of 2023 – cruel regional wars, civic conflicts and undeniable stories of anthropogenic harms – technocrats, ecocrats, and bureaucrats across the world continue to device and launch quiet initiatives portending a better and larger future for human rights.

One such initiative led, in early October 2023, to the Report of the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High-Level Committee on Management joint session on the use and governance of AI and related frontier technologies hosted, significantly, by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Of course, the UN system had already begun its work on "frontier technologies" and artificial intelligence (AI), including the development, in 2019, of a United Nations system-wide strategic approach and road map for supporting capacity development of AI. The principles for the ethical use of AI in the United Nations system were adumbrated in the famous UNESCO declaration which prescribes many values and principles, chief being the following: Respect, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms and human dignity; ecological sustainability; diversity and inclusiveness. These range across eleven areas of specific concern that include good governance and just development. A "system-wide normative and operational framework on the use of AI in the United Nations system, based on these principles for the ethical use of AI" was finally recommended.

Important though these are for humanistic future development and applications of AI, they would be sheer flights of fancy if further work on this code were to ignore all talk of "digital sovereignty" and performances of digital diplomacy. In one way or another, the principle of territorial sovereignty is slowly but surely being transformed into that of digital sovereignty. Transborder, multilevel governance of AI is at the very heart of corporate governance, and sovereignty over peoples and nations is being transformed into masses of accumulated classified data. Disinformation, misleading information, and even hate

AI has now irreversibly 'revolutionised' warfare. The use of unmanned lethal autonomous weapons systems, abbreviated in an unconscious irony by the US Defence Department as LAWS, illustrates complete machine-learning dependence and dehumanisation of the means of warfare, setting back the project of international humanitarian law. The overall project of 'humanising' AI applications in all contexts, civil or military, must continue lest, as the poet T S Eliot said in *The Waste Land*, we lose it in the 'awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never retract'.

speech, are the order of the day and the big question now is how to prevent these evils in governance and development so that some truth and accountability is ensured.

Karl Manheim and Lyric Kaplan, in a 2019

article in the *Yale Journal of Law and Technology*, portray in some macabre detail the threats "fuelled by growing deployment" of AI tools that lead to "[manipulation of] the preconditions and levers of democracy" and "threats to decisional and informational privacy". AI is "the engine behind Big Data Analytics and the Internet of Things." While some consumer benefit ensues, their "principal function at present is to capture personal information, create detailed behavioural profiles and sell us goods and agenda." Privacy, anonymity and autonomy remain the "main casualties of AI's ability to manipulate choices in economic and political decisions" to the extent that, unless determined steps at global, regional, and national levels are taken now, privacy and democracy will rapidly become wonders of the past!

The present digital wars between the US and China, in fact, represent three different "digital empires" in complexity as well as collision, as Anu Bradford analyses in a book-length study of China, the US and EU law and regulation regimes (*Digital Empires*, 2023). She shows that the free digital model of the US, which amounts to complete freedom to the AI industry (the techno-optimistic model) revolves the models of free speech and open markets, leaving the form and content entirely open to free market forces. Free market fundamentalism has nurtured the growth and global eminence of the social media industry which (according to the Business Research Company) rose from \$193.52 billion in 2001 to \$231.1 billion in 2023, and is expected to grow to \$454.37 billion in 2027.

All this techno-optimism run "wild" is yielding to the appeal of an "authoritarian" model of regulatory reach, based on state surveillance and hegemony over private AI companies. The Chinese state-driven regulatory model is on "the ascent worldwide, leading to growing concern in the US, the EU, and the rest of the democratic world about the

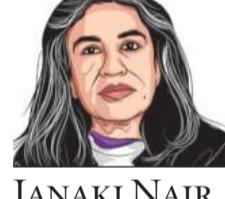
implications of that ascent."

The worry that "China's regulatory model will prevail is real, both normatively and descriptively" because while China's technological development is impressive, its way of "harnessing that technology is often deeply oppressive". The Chinese state-driven model also "appeals to many developing authoritarian countries" because it "combines political control with tremendous technological success". In contrast, the very few actually existing "democratic" societies seem to prefer the EU model, seen as providing the "necessary building blocks of a more equitable and human-centric digital economy." The EU Declaration on Development on November 22, 2021, privileges a human rights-based approach to development, postulating respect for human rights as "a precondition for the achievement of inclusive and sustainable development".

Bradford reminds us about the promise of an uncertain future of the technopolitical, although it remains open "whether surveillance capitalism, digital authoritarianism, or liberal democratic values will prevail as a foundation for human engagement and for our society as we advance further into the digital era".

We would need to go far afield to even begin to look at the uses of AI technologies for war or terror purposes or perspectives. But AI has now irreversibly "revolutionised" warfare. The use of unmanned lethal autonomous weapons systems, abbreviated in an unconscious irony by the US Defence Department as LAWS, illustrates complete machine-learning dependence and dehumanisation of the means of warfare, setting back the project of international humanitarian law. The overall project of "humanising" AI applications in all contexts, civil or military, must continue lest, as the poet T S Eliot said in *The Waste Land*, we lose it in the "awful daring of a moment's surrender which an age of prudence can never retract."

The writer is professor of law, University of Warwick, and former vice chancellor of Universities of South Gujarat and Delhi



JANAKI NAIR

FROM A HIGH Court judge to columnists and opposition parties, hearts have been haemorrhaging for the woman from Vantamuri in Belagavi district, Karnataka, who was stripped, almost strangled, and tied to a pole by about 13 people from the village who were enraged that her son had eloped with a girl from the same area. Most commentators have reached for the epic reference to Draupadi's *vastraharan*, to shame men – whether from the village itself, the police, or even ruling party legislators – into taking responsibility. Why this savage "throwback" in the "progressive" state of Karnataka, the High Court judge asked indignantly, while castigating, variously, the collective chauvinism of local men, and the police for not behaving like Krishnas in the midst of Duryodhanas and Dusshasanas. He called for colonial-era punishments to be imposed on the entire village, except for one mysterious saviour, Jehangir.

Perhaps the good judge's indignation will be quickly sobered if he learns that Karnataka has "progressed" from being the fourth state in the Indian Union, behind Odisha, UP, and Assam, in cases involving the stripping of women, to claim third place in 2022. The state accounts for 1,328 of 9,101 cases filed under section 354B in 2022, according to the National Crime Records Bureau. The Vantamuri incident was no exception. It is an ominous sign of how the bodies of women continue to be the bearers of family and community honour. They are the preferred site of family and community humiliation, even as young people are making defiant choices in choosing life partners.

MYTH OF PROGRESSIVE KARNATAKA

Crimes against women, sex-ratio crisis point to new forms of violence in the state

The violence at Vantamuri came on the heels of a shocking revelation about the scale of sex-selection – leading to female foeticide – in the (relatively) prosperous districts of Mandy, Hassan, Mysore and in border regions such as Bagalkot and Belagavi.

Long undetected, it had led to well over 900 abortions in just three years. The sex ratio in some districts has declined so sharply that an increasing number of men are without eligible brides

We had a reminder of how women who chose to attend college wearing hijab or burkha could be denied a right to education. At that time, the aggressors, goaded by a supremacists government then in power, seamlessly adopted the language of "secular uniformity" to "strip" Muslim women. The state and high court too adopted a language hostile to women's rights to education in the name of "secular uniformity". It took the exceptional judgment of Supreme Court Judge Sudhanshu Dhulia to bring the question squarely back to a woman's right to education. Meanwhile, in that time of righteous anger from the empowered majority, and defensive self-assertions by the minority, no metaphorical Draupadi was available to bring the community patriarchs of all shades to shame. Were it not for feminist and civil rights activists, the woman student would have stood alone. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's recent announcement of a rollback of the hijab ban has quietly receded under electoral compulsions.

In contrast to what the HC judge has said, might economic "progress" itself have been the root cause of increasing attacks on women (and female foetuses) in Karnataka?

The violence at Vantamuri came on the heels of a shocking revelation about the scale of sex-selection – leading to female foeticide – in the (relatively) prosperous districts of Mandy, Hassan, Mysore and in border regions such as Bagalkot and Belagavi. Long undetected, it had led to well over 900 abortions in just three years. Preliminary reports seem to suggest that as agricultural work for women shrinks, particularly in cash crop areas, their worth has declined. The sex ratio in some districts has declined so sharply that an increasing number of men are without eligible brides. A Haryana-like search for brides from "elsewhere" has begun in Hassan and Mandy.

Who would have suspected that an economic powerhouse like Karnataka conceals some of the most egregious forms of discrimination against women? The long-recognised advantages of matrilaterality in much of southern India, which allowed women to be less estranged from their natal families after marriage, seem to be no bulwark against relentless economic pressures.

The crisis of sex ratios, and violence against women generally also occurs amid renewed reports that farmer's suicides are on the upturn. Scholars have noted the rising tensions posed by rapidly marketised agricultural production, (and increased risk-taking by vulnerable farmers) on the one hand, and a social structure that is strained to retain – indeed create – a family form that is appropriate to these transformations.

The new forms of violence against women are also a backlash against an increasing number of young women and men who are making difficult choices, straining against family, caste or religious ties that bind. They yearn for a new tomorrow. The Chief Minister could well roll back the hijab ban in support of young women's education, but only the people of Karnataka can take a truly visionary future forward. For now, there are few signs of such systematic reimaging.

The writer is a Bengaluru-based historian



JANUARY 5, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

PM-AKALI TUSSLE

PM INDIRA GANDHI said that she was perplexed by the continuing agitation in Punjab even though the Centre had agreed to "almost all demands of the Akalis". She was even more perplexed by the charge of opposition parties that the Congress (I) was keeping the agitation alive for the sake of "political gains".

TAMIL LEADERS TALKS

THE SRI LANKAN Tamil leaders held urgent consultations with the visiting Indian special

envoy, G Parthasarathy. Both Parthasarathy, sent by Mrs Indira Gandhi, and President Jayewardene, spent time trying to secure "some forward movement" towards the January 10 amity talks.

BOMBING IN LEBANON

ISRAELIS HAVE OPENED their new year's account of hostility with the Arabs by bombing for the second consecutive day, the Shia areas of Lebanon. Their air raid near the town of Baalbak caused heavy casualties and damage. Nearly 100 people including women and chil-

dren had died and about 403 injured.

NAXALITE ESCAPES

KONDAPALLI SEETHARAMAIAH, LEADER of the CPI (M-L) people's war group, escaped from police custody after his group, the Naxalites, Mohammed Ibrahim, the constable guarding the 63-year-old Naxalite, was shot twice from point-blank range and he collapsed immediately as Seetharamaiah was whisked away by his supporters dressed as policemen.

THE IDEAS PAGE

Professor of Swaraj

JPS Uberoi's idea of a truly indigenous science did not carry, unlike today, an implicit claim for exemption from critical scrutiny and the tacit expectation of loud celebration



SATISH DESHPANDE

PROFESSOR JIT PAL Singh Uberoi's death (he would have disdained euphemisms) on January 3 provides a sombre occasion for thinking, once again, about the meaning of what is being referred to today as "indigenous knowledge". For, though he was formally a professor of Sociology for some three decades (1968-1998) at the Delhi School of Economics in the University of Delhi, "JPS" (as he was popularly known) was by vocation a professor of swaraj.

The word meant something crucial and specific to him; in fact, it encapsulated his intellectual manifesto. It first occurs in the title of a famous 1968 essay, "Science and Swaraj". In it, JPS rails against the fake internationalism of Western science that no longer speaks in "the old terms of colonial tutelage or racism" but in "the new fashion of a false cosmopolitanism and false humanitarianism" that nevertheless reproduces the old power relations between the imperial West and the rest. The consequences of colonial relations in science are misrecognised as the apparent lack of originality in Indian science. JPS ends the essay with a call for a "national school, avowed and conscious", because of his conviction that: "Until we can concentrate on decolonisation, learn to nationalise our problems and take our material and intellectual poverty seriously, we will continue to be both colonial and unoriginal."

It is important to note the differences between the contemporary campaign for "decolonisation of the academy" that is backed by state power today and the "avowed and conscious" intellectual nationalism that JPS Uberoi advocated. For JPS, the need for nationalism in science arises because though the "aim and method of science are no doubt uniform throughout the world, but the problem of science in relation to society is not." Thus, universal science needs to be pursued differently in different social circumstances, particularly those involving material inequalities. Hence, science in a poor country must be different from science in rich countries, despite aspiring to the same ideals.

Intellectual swaraj for JPS is defined as an active stance that takes its socio-political location seriously while still aspiring for the universals of Science with a capital S. "Indigenous science" is to be recognised by the attitudes it adopts towards problems and puzzles, not by the indigeneity claimed for its authors or concepts. Truly scientific indigenous concepts will be the byproducts of indigenous programmes of research and discovery – they will not be found fully fashioned and ready-to-use in our great and ancient culture.

The differences are made sharper when one considers JPS's criticism of another famous text that is being claimed as a manifesto by Hindu nationalists today, namely the 1931 lecture titled "Swaraj in Ideas" by the philosopher Krishna Chandra Bhattacharya. Dismissing Bhattacharya's essay as "a somewhat trite statement",



CR Sasikumar

Uberoi takes issue with its statement of the problem which "does not stand outside – let alone bring into question – the master system of classification" of Western knowledge that separate the arts and the sciences, or knowledge, belief and action. This leads Bhattacharya to concede the world of (natural) science to the West, confining "Indian" ideas to family life, religion, a distinctive style of doing history, philosophy or literature, or "practical life" in conformity with the ideals and beliefs of the masses. JPS ends his critique with this sentence: "Swaraj, or the freedom and the sovereignty of self-rule and self-reform, will be achieved through a simultaneous re-examination of the foundations of science, art or culture and politics, their divisions and interrelations with philosophy, or it will not be achieved at all in the world of thought."

Read today, Uberoi's critique may seem unduly harsh, particularly in light of Bhattacharya's warnings against "the danger of national conceit and the unthinking glorification of everything in our culture and the depreciation of everything in other cultures", even if these are deemed to "require less stressing". On the other hand, it is instructive to note the difference in ambition between the two. For Uberoi, any topic at all – including Western ones -- can be the object of an indigenous (or Indian) science. As he writes in his book that tries to revive interest in the German thinker Goethe as a natural scientist (rather than the literary figure he is in the Western tradition): "India as a culture area will be nowhere... in the world of knowledge... if it does not first defy the European monopoly on the scientific method, established in modern times. It is no solution to propose to wait until we

Intellectual swaraj for JPS is defined as an active stance that takes its socio-political location seriously while still aspiring for the universals of Science with a capital S. "Indigenous science" is to be recognised by the attitudes it adopts towards problems and puzzles, not by the indigeneity claimed for its authors or concepts. Truly scientific indigenous concepts will be the byproducts of indigenous programmes of research and discovery – they will not be found fully fashioned and ready-to-use in our great and ancient culture.

should ourselves become Europeans. We must recognise other 'non-standard' methods of the organisation of knowledge in the sciences and the arts, within and without the university, and other principles of the relation of knowledge to life, whether European or non-European."

To appreciate why JPS and his brand of indigenous knowledge will be missed we only have to look at what passes in the name of indigeneity today. To start with the obvious contrasts, consider the proposal to reject "Western" definitions of anaemia (in women) or stunting (among children) in favour of indigenous ones, which will presumably make our health statistics look better; and compare it to the pride with which the national growth rate of the gross domestic product (GDP) is said to be one of the highest in the world in recent times. If there are reasons to question definitions of anaemia, are there no reasons to question GDP as the preeminent measure of national economic health?

At a deeper level, the claim to indigeneity today seems to be accompanied by an implicit claim for exemption from critical scrutiny and the tacit expectation of loud celebration. Perhaps the most worrying aspect of dominant ideas of indigeneity today is that they tend to be selective, singular, and systematically exclusionary in what they choose to sanctify as indigenous. While this may be the reality of our time, we can take perverse heart in one of JPS Uberoi's one-liners: "I am not interested in reality; I am interested in the truth".

The writer is visiting professor at the Institute for Social and Economic Change, Bengaluru. Views expressed are personal

My teacher, my guiding light

Ghulam Mohiuddin Wani helped me in my journey, opened up new worlds



MIRWAIZ UMAR FAROOQ

"A person who is not thankful towards people can never be thankful towards the almighty." – Prophet Mohammad (PBUH)

GHULAM MOHIUDDIN WANI, also known as Mahad Sahab, passed away in Srinagar on December 17. He shaped my spiritual path at one of the most crucial and critical junctures of my life. I need to acknowledge him in the most generous way possible for, besides being my teacher, mentor and guide in religious matters, he epitomised the finest confluence of Islamic belief and spiritual practice, moderation and a deep sense of responsibility towards traditions and culture.

It was not easy for me to inherit the mantle of the Mirwaiz (chief cleric) when my father Mirwaiz Maulvi Mohammad Farooq attained martyrdom in 1990. I was a playful 17-year-old schoolboy. In a situation when we were bereft and grieving, I was suddenly enjoined to take over the responsibility of carrying forward the hallowed religious obligation of upholding the mission of the Mirwaizeen-e-Kashmir. The institution of the Mirwaiz is unique to Kashmir. In an unbroke

nation of my father and a committed adherent of the Mirwaiz family's religious legacy, he volunteered his services to mentor me. He held me by the hand and hoisted me up the ladder to the Mirwaiz's pulpit. A self-taught man, Mahad Sahab was a devout businessman. When it came to matters of faith and practice, he was unique in many ways. Although he belonged to the more orthodox Salafi school of thought (Ahl-e-hadees), he was of a Sufi temperament, dedicated to understanding the teachings of Islam as a means to get close to Allah with humility and gratefulness.

He possessed great reverence for Sheikh Abdul Qadir Jilani, Khwaja Bahauddin Naqshbandi and other Sufi peers. He would guide me in compiling a Wa'aaz (sermon) for the special occasion of the urs of the Sufi peers and would make it a point to participate in the congregation. I would observe him engrossed in the Wa'aaz, which he had helped to compile with great attention and devotion. Later, he would tell me, "I experience a very different feeling when you are at the mimbar (pulpit) and recite from the bayaz (teachings)".

Immediately after my father's death, my first sermon at Jamia Masjid from the teachings of Mirwaiz Ahmadullah, was in Kashmiri. Although I could speak the language, I was not fluent in writing or reading it. Mahad Sahab ensured I was introduced to verses written by Kashmiri's leading saint, Sheikh-ul-Alam also known as Sheikh Nooruddin Wali. This became an entry point for me into the Kashmiri language. It was followed by an introduction to Persian, espe-

cially the writings of Jami, Khusrav and Rumi.

Being a Mirwaiz requires special learning that no ordinary school or university can impart. The clerical tradition adopted the unique form of Wa'aaz-o-Tableegh (propagation through sermons) to educate people and bring the teachings of Islam to them. The distinctiveness was in the fact that it was completely based on the oral conventions of listening, repetition and absorption. This system continues without any distortion. A Wa'aaz puts special emphasis on the life of the Prophet (PBUH) and is suffused with reverence, devotion, love and praise for him. It also delves into the role and significance of the pious and learned saints and scholars of Islam. The language traditionally has been Kashmiri and Persian, recited at specific moments during the Wa'aaz, giving a unique structure to the recitations.

As I embarked on this extraordinary journey of becoming a Mirwaiz, an intense period of initiation and education came from Mahad Sahab. He introduced me to this knowledge system with its etiquette and nuances. The qutab khana (library) at the Mirwaiz Manzil is home to a rich collection of manuscripts, some of which are over 400 years old. These manuscripts and bayaz are a treasure of Islamic learning and calligraphy. Mahad Sahab was well-versed in these and cherished and valued them. I would be deeply impressed by his knowledge and understanding as he traversed through the manuscripts of Mirwaiz Rasool Shah, Mirwaiz Ahmadullah or Mirwaiz Atiqullah and steered me through them. He would emphasise that moderation and bal-

ance were the key messages that came through the religious practice and teachings of the Mirwaiz. He would guide me through these ancient manuscripts and prepare my sermons for the contemporary congregation. He was among the few people who knew the oral tradition of passing on the local knowledge, known as Seena ba Seena.

It was through a process of osmosis, through oral repetition and listening, that he had imbued the institution, its methodology and structure. It was through the same process that he transferred the knowledge system to me. We would have a learning session every day before he would begin his day at his shop. His gift of the repertoire of Manajaat, Na'at and Manqabat in Kashmiri, Persian and Arabic opened up a new world for me.

It makes me sad that since the time I was placed under house arrest – and my Wa'aaz-o-Tableegh was proscribed – in August 2019 under the new dispensation in Kashmir, I was not able to meet Mahad Sahab. He too was extremely anguished by this and would speak with me on the phone. Now, with his death, the precious 33 years of association have come to an end. His life exemplified the virtues he imparted, leaving an enduring impression on those who had the privilege of knowing him. And I have lost my guiding light.

The writer is the current chief cleric of Kashmir and preaches at the Jamia Masjid in Srinagar where, since August 2019, authorities have disallowed him to continue this tradition

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Air pollution's increasing severity in Dhaka and elsewhere demands a serious response. We urge the government to prioritise a coordinated action plan with a robust implementation policy before this silent killer claims more lives."

—THE DAILY STAR, BANGLADESH

Cowboy legislation

Latest example of Modi government's legislate-first-discuss-later approach is the passing of three criminal laws



ZERO HOUR
BY DEREK O'BRIEN

THE FIRST THREE days of the new year witnessed a massive strike by truck drivers across northern and western India. Petrol pumps started running out of fuel, there was panic buying, and prices of vegetables and milk skyrocketed. The truckers and their owners were protesting one of the provisions in the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (one of the three new criminal Acts bulldozed recently in Parliament). The Union Home Secretary finally pulled the handbrake on the provision in the bill that called for stringent penalties in hit-and-run cases. **Cowboy legislation**

This is symptomatic of a larger malaise. Legislate first, discuss later. Your columnist has often called this "Cowboy Legislation".

The disaster that was demonetisation. A nation locked down for Covid with just four hours notice. Three farm laws irresponsibly passed and then forced to be withdrawn because of a powerful movement. Or, take 2017, when GST was hastily implemented ignoring warnings. Thereafter, 129 amendments and 741 notifications related to GST have had to be issued in five years. The Data Protection Act of 2023 was passed after only 52 minutes and 67 minutes of debate with only nine and seven MPs taking part in the discussion in Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, respectively. The latest example of Modi and Shah's "cowboy legislation" is the three criminal law bills which mocked Parliament.

All this recklessness impacts, more than anyone else, the marginalised. Consider this: After five years in prison, 121 tribals accused in the 2017 Burkapat Naxal attack were acquitted by the NIA court citing lack of evidence. They were able to attend court only twice during the trial, in spite of the mandatory in-person appearance. As per the Prison Statistics of India Report 2021, 77 per cent of the total prison population are undertrials. Three out of five undertrial prisoners lodged across Indian prisons are from the Dalit, Adivasi and OBC communities.

This serves as a stark reminder of the systemic flaws within India's criminal justice framework which predate any proposed amendments. Two of my learned colleagues in the Home Affairs standing committee which examined the criminal law bills for almost three months, P Chidambaram (INC), N R Elango (DMK), along with your columnist, submitted comprehensive dissent notes. The notes red-flagged against the implementation of more stringent laws that could exacerbate the current injustices.

Lack of diversity

The first draft of the three criminal law bills was made by the Ranbir Singh

Committee. The committee was composed entirely of men from similar social, professional, and economic backgrounds and experience. It lacked representation from various marginalised groups, including women, Dalits, religious minorities, Adivasis, LGBTQs, and persons with disabilities. The absence of diverse perspectives was a significant concern, particularly when addressing matters of such magnitude and societal impact.

Disregard for procedure and skewed stakeholder consultation

The ruling dispensation has a brute majority in the Home Affairs standing committee. Little wonder, dissent notes from Opposition MPs notwithstanding, it was nothing but a parliamentary rubber-stamping committee. Those consulted were from an extremely limited and mostly homogeneous group of stakeholders. Accomplished legal superstars like Justice U U Lalit, Madan Lokur and others were not called in to testify. (It must be mentioned that one of the heads of the BJP legal cell made the cut).

The pre-legislative consultation policy of 2014 mandates a 30-day consultation period with the general public before a law can be approved by the cabinet for introduction in Parliament.

This consultation process, which involves sharing the draft with the public, must be accompanied by: (i) Explanations for its enactment, (ii) Financial considerations, and (iii) An evaluation of the law's potential impact. Moreover, the comments received during the consultation should be made available on the ministry's website.

In the case of these Criminal Law Bills, however, a committee was formed with its members and objectives shrouded in secrecy, shielding it from public scrutiny. There exists a notable absence of a clear and compelling rationale for why such a substantial reform was undertaken. Especially since the Home Minister himself stated in Parliament that the primary objective was to alter a few specific sections of the law.

Eliminating the Opposition

The laws were rashly amended to incorporate draconian definitions of sedition, disregard for special statutes, rape not being gender neutral, extensive police custody, and who can be branded a terrorist. The Bills were passed in an almost empty House, as the government had suspended 146 Opposition MPs. These MPs represented 34 crore people, 25 per cent of India's population. Parliament has been turned into a deep, dark chamber.

We are all for reform. Who can be against reform? But in the name of reform, let us not become more repressive than the colonisers. While there is an undeniable need to reform the colonial era criminal framework, the current criminal law Acts will treat citizens worse than how "native subjects" of the Raj were dealt with.

The writer is Member of Parliament and Leader, All India Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party (Rajya Sabha). Research Credit: Chahat Mangtani

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

PERSONNEL FOR DUTY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Don't neglect the force' (IE, January 4). The primary role of the CAPFs is to guard borders and intercept the designs of terrorists, insurgents, and anti-national elements.

Their services are also requisitioned to assist the civil administration in case of natural calamities, riots and special events like G20. The jawans are professionally trained to undertake these duties but require a strong leader for effective management. In the 1960s-70s, IPS officers assigned to be DSG in CAPFs, were inducted at the level of Commandant/SSP. They ensured the efficient performance of the forces. That practice should be reintroduced to extract the best output from CAPFs.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

COST OF FREEDOM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'A crime on campus' (IE, January 4). Nearly two months after a female student was allegedly disrobed and sexually assaulted on the IIT-BHU campus, an incident that led to widespread protests, police arrested three men. But are we surprised that these three accused, shameless and hateful criminals are not just BJP members but office bearers of their IT cell? The delay in arrest has been because of the accused's "closeness to senior BJP leaders". This incident exposes how the BJP is playing with women's dignity and is protecting those accused of atrocities, harassment and rape. It is an indication that

that the BJP's slogan of "Beti Bachao-Beti Padhao" was just a hoax.

SS Paul, Noida

RISING INEQUALITY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Reset the growth priority' (IE, January 4). As the Indian economy continues to register strong growth potential, the unaddressed issue of the growing disparity in wealth distribution in the country points towards innate weaknesses in our economic policies. The fruits of economic growth have to be redistributed fairly, either by strengthening public infrastructure or building institutions that ensure that it trickles down to the lowest rungs.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Barasat

INDIA STRATEGY

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Opposition position' (IE, January 3). The opposition parties must not ignore the elephant in the room – their need to project a leader of stature. INDIA's fight is against Narendra Modi who has transcended his own party. Next, it must make a realistic assessment of party strength – the present demands of parties are meaningless. What they could do in each state is that the most dominant party in the region contests against BJP and other partners go there to canvas support for the ally without claiming any seat. INDIA must present a manifesto with a road map to convince voters that it is superior to the BJP.

YG Chouksey, Pune





Javier Milei

ARGENTINA

Court suspends labour changes in Milei's reforms

Buenos Aires: President Javier Milei suffered a judicial blow Wednesday as a court suspended labor rule changes he recently announced as part of sweeping deregulation and austerity measures aimed at reviving Argentina's struggling economy. Milei's decree announced in December established several changes in labor rules, including increasing job probation from three to eight months, reducing severance compensation and allowing the possibility of dismissal for workers taking part of blockades during some protests. Alejandro Sudera, one of the three judges, said the administration went beyond its authority. AP

FRANCE

'UK not helping curb migrants across Channel'

Paris: The United Kingdom is not sufficiently coordinating with France in efforts to reduce the number of migrants crossing the English Channel in small boats, according to a French report that points to the "uncertain effectiveness" of illegal migration policies. France is "struggling to develop operational cooperation arrangements" with the U.K., according to the report published Thursday by France's Court of Accounts, a body in charge of auditing the use of public funds, independent from the government and parliament. AP

SIERRA LEONE

Ex-president booked over coup, treason

Freetown: Former President Ernest Bai Koroma has been charged with treason for his alleged involvement in a failed coup attempt in November. Sierra Leone's government said Wednesday. Koroma has also been charged with misprision of treason, which is the crime of concealing knowledge of treasonable acts, according to a statement from the ministry of information and civic education. AP

NORTH KOREA

Kim to modify S Korea policy to more hostile

Seoul: North Korea is shaking up the way it handles relations with South Korea, enacting changes to policy and government organisations that would effectively treat the South as a separate, enemy state. The moves, which break with decades of policy, could have North Korea's foreign ministry taking over relations with the South, and potentially help justify the use of nuclear weapons against Seoul in a future war, analysts said. Since the Korean War ended both nations have had policies that treat each other differently. But in a year-end party meeting last week, Kim Jong Un said peaceful reunification is impossible, and government would make a "policy change". REUTERS

THE WORLD

BOMBINGS ON SOUTH GAZA REFUGEE CAMPS HEAVIER, SAY RESIDENTS

US warns Houthis over Red Sea strikes, calls for urgent Security Council action

Blinken to visit Tel Aviv, other West Asian capitals to soothe tensions between Israel & Hezbollah

REUTERS & AP

UNITED NATIONS,
WASHINGTON, JANUARY 4

THE UNITED States called on the UN Security Council Wednesday to take urgent action against Yemen's Houthi rebels for attacking ships in the key Red Sea trade route and warned their longtime financier Iran that it has a choice to make about continuing to provide support to the rebels.

The United States and 12 allies issued what amounted to a final warning to Houthi rebels on Wednesday to cease their attacks on vessels in the Red Sea or face potential targeted military action.



Gazans near a morgue in a Khan Younis hospital after Israeli airstrikes on south Gaza's Al-Mawasi camp on Thursday. Reuters

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken will depart Thursday for West Asia, including a stop in Israel, a US official said Wednesday. The official said US diplomatic envoy Amos Hochstein will travel to Israel to soothe tensions between Israel and Hezbollah.

Meanwhile in Gaza, Israeli shelling killed 14 Palestinians including 9 children on Thursday in Khan Younis coastal area packed with people who had fled attacks in other parts of the enclave, Gaza health ministry officials said. Residents also said Israeli planes and tanks bombed refugee camps in the centre of Gaza in heavier attacks than in previous days.

OFFICIAL QUIT OVER
BIDEN'S GAZA POLICY

Washington: A senior official in the US Education Department stepped down on Wednesday, citing President Joe Biden's handling of the conflict in Gaza, the latest sign of dissent in the administration as deaths continue to grow in the war.

Tariq Habash, a Palestinian-American, was appointed in Biden's presidency as part of a build-out of the Education Department's student loan expertise. REUTERS

IS says it's behind suicide blasts in Iran; Soleimani's soldiers will retaliate: Tehran

2 bombers detonated vests, says IS; Iran authorities call for mass protests

REUTERS

DUBAI, JANUARY 4

ISLAMIC STATE claimed responsibility on Thursday for two explosions in Iran that killed nearly 100 people and wounded scores at a memorial for top commander Qassem Soleimani who was killed in Iraq in 2020 by a US drone.

In a statement posted on its affiliate Telegram channels, the militant Sunni Muslim group said two IS members had detonated their explosive belts in the crowd which had gathered at the cemetery in the southeastern city of Kerman on Wednesday for the anniversary of Soleimani's death.

Teheran earlier blamed the explosions on "terrorists" and vowed revenge for the bloodiest such attacks since the 1979 Islamic Revolution. The twin blasts also wounded 284 people, including women and children.

"Very strong retaliation will be meted out to them by the hands of the soldiers of Soleimani," Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber told reporters in Kerman.

Earlier, an unnamed source told the state news agency IRNA that the first explosion at the cemetery in Kerman, Soleimani's home town, "was the result of a



People visiting the blast site in Kerman on Thursday. AP

suicide bomber's action".

"The cause of the second blast was most likely the same," the source told IRNA.

The United Nations Security Council in a statement condemned Wednesday's "cowardly terrorist attack" in Kerman and sent its condolences to the victims' families and the Iranian government. State TV showed crowds gathered at dozen cities across Iran, including Kerman.

Iranian authorities have called for mass protests on Friday, when the funerals of the victims of the twin blasts will be held, state media reported. Iran's powerful Revolutionary Guards Corps described the attacks as a cowardly act "aimed at creating insecurity and seeking revenge against the nation's deep love and devotion to the Islamic Republic".

"Every strong retaliation will be meted out to them by the hands of the soldiers of Soleimani," Iran's First Vice President Mohammad Mokhber told reporters in Kerman.

Earlier, an unnamed source told the state news agency IRNA that the first explosion at the cemetery in Kerman, Soleimani's home town, "was the result of a



Ukrainian prisoners of war after being released by Russia on Thursday, in Sumy, Ukraine. AP

PUTIN OFFERS CITIZENSHIP FOR THOSE WHO FIGHT FOR RUSSIA

Russia, Ukraine swap over 200 POWs each after UAE mediation

REUTERS

KYIV, JANUARY 4

UKRAINE AND Russia on Wednesday announced their first exchange of prisoners of war in nearly five months, with more than 200 freed by each side after what both said was a complex negotiation involving mediation by the United Arab Emirates.

Russian Defence Ministry said 248 military personnel had been handed over by Ukraine. Kyiv said it had brought home 230 people - 224 soldiers and six civilians - in what it said was the largest documented swap of troops so far.

The UAE foreign ministry acknowledged its role, saying in a statement that the swap was pos-

sible due to its "strong friendly relations" with both countries.

A video released by Ukrainian officials showed returning prisoners draped in the country's flag filing off a bus, singing the national anthem.

Russia released a similar video of returning uniformed prisoners arriving in Belgorod in buses. "I'll be home in five hours, roughly speaking, that's going to be a joy," said one man.

Despite a lack of talks on how to end the 22-month war, Kyiv and Moscow have held many prisoner swaps since early months of war.

Putin issues decree to issue citizenships

Russian President Vladimir Putin issued a decree on Thursday

allowing foreign nationals who fight for Russia in Ukraine to obtain Russian citizenship for themselves and their families.

The order said people who have signed contracts during what Moscow calls its "special military operation" in Ukraine can apply to get Russian passports for themselves and their spouses, children and parents.

They must provide documents showing that they signed up for a minimum of one year.

The measure appeared to be aimed at creating additional incentives for foreigners with military experience to apply to join Russian ranks. Moscow does not publish data on the number of foreigners fighting on its side against Ukraine.

US airstrike in Baghdad kills militia commander

ASSOCIATED PRESS

BAGHDAD, JANUARY 4

A US airstrike on the headquarters of an Iran-backed militia in central Baghdad on Thursday killed a high-ranking militia commander, militia officials said.

Thursday's strike comes amid mounting regional tensions fueled by the Israel-Hamas war and fears it could spill over into the region. It also coincides with a push by Iraqi officials for US-led coalition forces to leave Iraq.

The Popular Mobilization



Members of Iraqi militia attend killed leader's funeral in Baghdad, on Thursday. AP

Force, or PMF, a coalition of militias that is nominally under the control of the Iraqi military, announced in a statement that its deputy head of operations in Baghdad, Mushtaq Taleb al-Saidi, or "Abu Taqwa," had been killed.

A US official who spoke on condition of anonymity to provide information that has not yet been publicly released confirmed that US forces conducted a strike on a vehicle in Baghdad on Monday against the group Harakat al-Nujaba. The group, one of the militias within PMF, was designated a terrorist organ-

ization by Washington in 2019. Iraqi military spokesman Yehia Rasool said in a statement that the Iraqi army blames the US-led International Coalition Forces for the "unprovoked attack on an Iraqi security body operating in accordance with the powers granted to it" by the Iraqi military.

The PMF, a group of Iranian-backed, primarily Shiite militias, were also key in the fight against Islamic State after it overran much of Iraq in 2014. The PMF is officially under the command of the Iraqi army, but in practice the militias operate independently.

BUILT ON VIRGIN LAND, CITY WILL SERVE AS HIGH-TECH MODEL FOR EGYPT'S FUTURE AWAY FROM CAIRO'S CLUTTER, CHAOS

Egypt plans expansion of new capital as first residents trickle in

PATRICK WERR

CAIRO, JANUARY 4

Egypt is preparing to spend billions doubling the size of a lavish new capital it is building in the desert 45 km (28 miles) east of Cairo, where the first residents are trickling in, the head of the company overseeing the project said.

The city is the biggest of a series of mega-projects that President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi says are needed for economic development and to accommodate a growing population of 105 million, but critics say increase



The city is the biggest of a series of mega-projects that the president says are needed for economic development. Reuters

lation, which is growing by an estimated 1.6% a year.

Though the pace of works appears to have slowed recently, phase one of the city already includes a 70-storey tower, an opera house with five halls, a mega mosque and the Middle East's biggest cathedral. An electric train from eastern Cairo began operating last spring.

Up to 100,000 housing units have been finished and 1,200 families have moved in, he added. Major banks and other businesses will move their headquarters by the first quarter of 2024.

ACUD is poised to appoint a

consultant to draw up a master plan for the capital's second, third and fourth phases, Abbas said.

Phases one and two will each have a projected 1.5 million residents, and each will cover 40,000 feddans (168 square km). Work on phase two should run from later this year until 2027.

A plant near the Cairo suburb of Maadi will send 800,000 cubic metres per day of scarce Nile water, starting in two years. A second, 700,000-cubic-metre plant is planned. Together the two will consume roughly 1% of Egypt's share of the Nile's water. ACUD hopes to inaugurate a

giant sports area, the Olympic City, with a 93,000-seat stadium, by the second quarter, Abbas said.

ACUD, owned 51% by the military and 49% by the housing ministry, spent 500 billion Egyptian pounds on phase one infrastructure and buildings, Abbas said.

That works out to about \$16 billion at the current exchange rate, or \$32 billion before Egypt began a series of devaluations in March 2022. Second phase infrastructure will cost another 250-300 billion pounds, he said. In 2019, Abbas' predecessor put the price tag for the new capital at \$58 billion. REUTERS

NO BOMBSHELL REVELATION

Clinton to Trump, Epstein files mention rich and famous, but no 'co-conspirators'

Prince Andrew, who previously settled under age sex lawsuit, is also named

ASSOCIATED PRESS

NEW YORK, JANUARY 4

Jeffrey Epstein died by suicide in 2019 in jail

who travelled with Epstein.

Epstein's accuser Johanna Sjoberg testified in a newly released deposition that she once met Michael Jackson at Epstein's Palm Beach, Florida, home, but that nothing untoward happened with the late pop icon.

The documents being unsealed are related to a lawsuit filed in 2015 by one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Giuffre. She is one of dozens of women who sued Epstein for abusing them at his homes in Florida, New York, the US Virgin Islands and New Mexico. This suit was against Ghislaine Maxwell, Epstein's former girlfriend who is now serving a 20-year prison term for helping recruit and abuse his victims.

Giuffre's lawsuit was settled in 2017, but the court had kept some documents sealed because of concerns on privacy rights of Epstein's victims and others whose names had come up in the legal battle. More documents were to be released in coming days.

Vatican moves to calm dissenting bishops over blessing same-sex lovers

REUTERS

VATICAN CITY, JANUARY 4

THE VATICAN on Thursday moved to calm Catholic bishops in some countries who have balked over last month's approval of blessings for same-sex couples, telling them that the measure is not "heretical" or "blasphemous".

In a five-page statement, the Vatican's doctrinal office also acknowledged that such blessings could be "imprudent" in some countries where people who receive them might become targets of violence, or risk prison or even death.

Catholic bishops in some countries, particularly in Africa, have expressed various degrees of dissent over the December 18

declaration, known by its Latin title *Fiducia Suplicans* (*Supplicating Trust*), which was approved by Pope Francis.

The fact that the Vatican needed to issue a five-page clarification of an eight-page declaration – little more than two weeks after it was issued – appeared to underscore the extent of the confusion it caused in many countries.

After the original declaration was issued, a number of Catholic bishops' conferences issued statements stressing that the blessings did not amount to an official approval of gay sex or a sacrament of marriage for same-sex couples. It said: "Evidently, there is no room to distance ourselves doctrinally from this declaration or to consider it heretical, contrary to the Tradition of the Church or Blasphemous."

To retain ties with other countries, Myanmar junta to free 9k prisoners

REUTERS

JANUARY 4

MYANMAR'S MILITARY government will release 9,652 prisoners, including 114 foreigners, under an amnesty to mark the country's independence day, state media reported on Thursday.

The Southeast Asian nation has been in turmoil since the military seized power in February 2021, reversing a decade-long democratic exper-

iment, and used deadly force to crush protests.

"With the intention of main-

taining relations with other countries and on humanitarian grounds, 114 foreign prisoners will be pardoned," the junta said in a brief announcement on state media. "They will be deported."

Among those still imprisoned is Nobel laureate Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been appealing sentences adding up to 27 years in detention.

Authorities typically release some prisoners to mark the day when Myanmar declared independence from British rule.

SENSEX: 71,847.57 ▲ 490.97 (0.69%) NIFTY: 21,658.60 ▲ 141.25 (0.66%) NIKKEI: 33,288.29 ▼ 175.88 HANG SENG: 16,645.98 ▼ 0.43 FTSE: 7,723.07 ▲ 40.74 DAX: 16,617.29 ▲ 78.90


GOLD
₹ 63,550

USD RATE
₹ 83.22

OIL
₹ 75.79

SILVER
₹ 76,900

Note: Gold, silver rates at Delhi spot market, gold per 10g, silver per 1 kg; Crude oil (Indian basket) as of January 3

International market data till 1900 IST

Disney, RIL start antitrust diligence on media merger

REUTERS
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

BILLIONAIRE MUKESH Ambani's Reliance Industries and Walt Disney have appointed law firms and started antitrust due diligence of their planned media and entertainment merger, four people familiar with the matter said.

Reliance has appointed Indian law firm Khaitan & Co and Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas, while Disney has roped in AZB & Partners, the people said.

The appointments are the latest sign of progress as Reliance and Disney, which each have a major streaming service as well as 120 television channels between them, look at merging into an entity to create an entertainment superpower in the world's most populous nation. Ambani's group is expected to have a majority stake in the entity.

A fifth source said senior Disney executives from Burbank headquarters and top Reliance officials from Mumbai travelled to London in late December and signed a non-binding term sheet on the deal.

Reliance said it had "no comments to offer", calling the story "speculative", without elaborating. Disney declined to comment. Khaitan and Shardul also declined to comment, while AZB did not immediately respond to Reuters queries.

Any possible merger between Reliance and Disney is likely to face antitrust challenges and could draw intense scrutiny, with assets such as TV channels likely to be shed to assuage concerns of their combined market power, Reuters has reported.

Three of the sources familiar with the Reliance-Disney merger due diligence said the work for antitrust review was in initial stages. If a deal was struck between Reliance and Disney, it would be the second to reshape India's TV and streaming landscape as Japan's Sony also plans to merge its India business with India's Zee Entertainment.

JUST 4 OF 12 FIRMS CURRENTLY PROFITABLE

Over half of IPO-bound startups are still in the red

AYANTIBERA
BENGALURU, JANUARY 4

MORE THAN half of the startups looking to launch initial public offerings (IPOs) this year are still struggling to post profits.

Of the 12 startups which have either filed their draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) or are looking to list this year, eight have incurred losses, showed latest annual filings by the companies. This includes unicorns such as FirstCry, MobiKwik and Ola Electric.

A back-of-the-envelope calculation shows that the combined loss of these eight startups stood at over ₹8,000 crore, largely led by Swiggy, Oyo and Ola Electric.

Besides these, health tech startup Portea Medical, flexible workspace provider Awfis, baby-care retailer FirstCry, and fintechs MobiKwik and PayMate have also reported losses in their latest annual filings.

While it isn't mandatory for companies to report a net profit to list on the exchanges, National Stock Exchange (NSE) norms stipulate that they should have

Need more security on Red Sea route: Shippers to Commerce Ministry at meet

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

SHIPPERS, EXPORTERS and freight forwarders Thursday sought additional security in the crucial Red Sea trade route at a meeting called by Commerce Secretary Sunil Barthwal to assess the impact on Indian goods trade, sources aware of the development said.

Top shipping companies such as Swiss-Italian Mediterranean Shipping Company are learnt to have conveyed their inability to cushion exporters from additional cost impact on existing contracts, given the need to reroute shipments via a longer route to avoid the Red Sea section.

The Indian Express reported last month that the freight rates for Indian shipments headed to



Top shipping firms are avoiding the key Red Sea trade route

Europe and Africa could surge as much as 25-30 per cent if the ongoing security concern along the Red Sea trade route – the shortest trade route for ships moving from Asia to Europe – were to continue.

"The government wanted to assess the impact during the meeting and understand how

"A number of exporters are holding back shipments because the freight rates have gone up as major shipping lines are using the Cape of Good Hope route," Sahai said.

The External Affairs Ministry Thursday said the government is closely watching the unfolding situation in the Red Sea amid growing global concerns over Yemen-based Houthi militants stepping up attacks on several commercial ships in the region.

Earlier, the Indian Navy said its ships and aircraft remain "mission deployed" to maintain surveillance and undertake maritime security operations in the North and Central Arabian Sea.

"We attach very high importance to freedom of navigation, free movement of commercial shipping. It is an evolving situation and we are looking at all as-

IndiGo withdraws fuel charge after ATF prices decline

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

WITH JET fuel (ATF) prices cooling off over the past few months, India's largest airline, IndiGo, has withdrawn fuel charges it had imposed on domestic and foreign routes from October. The fuel charge, announced by IndiGo early October, was based on distance slabs and varied between ₹300 and ₹1,000 per sector.

"IndiGo... is pleased to announce the removal of fuel charge applicable on its domestic and international routes, effective January 04, 2024. The fuel charge had been introduced in October 2023, following a surge in aviation turbine fuel (ATF) prices. With recent reduction in ATF prices, jet fuel prices have also cooled down in the international market.

The airline added that considering the dynamic nature of ATF prices, it will continue to adjust fares "to respond to any change in prices or market conditions".

The introduction of the fuel charge, which came at the onset of the peak festival travel season, followed four consecutive monthly hikes in jet fuel prices, taking them to their highest in 2023 by early October. ATF prices have since seen three consecutive reductions. Jet fuel prices have declined nearly 14 per cent since October.

ATF is a major cost for airlines and for Indian carriers, it accounts for over 40 per cent of operational expenses. In India, ATF prices are deregulated and set in line with global rates. Along with the decline in international crude prices, jet fuel prices have also cooled down in the international market.

While initial delays in IT hiring are possible, demand for experts in artificial intelligence, machine learning, data science and cybersecurity is expected to go up, said the report.

Hiring expected to recover in 2024: Report

Overall hiring is expected to grow this year with the job market showing signs of recovery in December, the Foundit Annual Trends Report said Thursday.



HIRING EXPECTED TO GROW IN

- Manufacturing
- Banking, financial services and insurance
- Auto
- Retail
- Travel and tourism

According to data from the Foundit Insights Tracker, hiring activity in 2023 was 5 per cent lower than in 2022, indicating a slowdown in the job market.

The report said increased demand for talent with expertise in emerging technologies is anticipated in 2024.

Source: Foundit Annual Trends Report;
Text: PTI

FY25 FIGURE MAY BE SET AT ₹30,000 CR

Govt may slash disinvestment target for next fiscal by 40%

PRASANTA SAHU
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE CENTRE may aim for a modest disinvestment target of around ₹30,000 crore in 2024-25, 40% lower than the target of ₹51,000 crore for the current financial year, which is set to be missed by 60%, official sources said.

This would represent a progressive lowering of the ambition on this front, though the sources said the target for the next fiscal is being kept at realistic levels, considering that elections and new government formation would make it difficult to conclude any big-ticket sale in the year even if

the process is initiated.

However, there will be last-ditch efforts to bridge the gap between the disinvestment receipts for the current fiscal – ₹10,052 crore so far – and the budget estimate (₹51,000 crore). The plan is to hit the buoyant markets with a few offers for sale, before the year draws to a close.

Non-debt capital inflows through this route could be around ₹20,000 crore or 40% of the target in FY24. The year has

seen delays in the execution of most of the strategic disinvestment plans, including that of IDBI Bank, NMDC Steel and Container Corporation (Concor), partly due to a spate of

state elections.

According to the sources, a few more OFSes that are to be expected in the January-March quarter are Indian Railway Finance Corporation, NLC India and Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders. These firms are in the pipeline because they haven't met the market regulator's norm that the minimum public shareholding in listed firms should be at least 25%.

Of the transactions that the government could conclude next fiscal are that of the IDBI Bank disinvestment, wherein the Centre and LIC would together sell a 60.72% stake in the bank.

SBI RAISES ₹250 MN VIA GREEN BONDS

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, JANUARY 4

STATE BANK of India Thursday said it has raised ₹250 million through the issuance of 'green notes' or 'green bonds' to fund sustainable projects. The senior unsecured green floating rate notes, rated 'BBB-' by S&P, were issued on a floating rate basis of 1.2 per cent above Secured Overnight Financing Rate and have been listed on the India International Exchange.

POWER GRID CORPORATION OF INDIA LIMITED

(A Government of India Enterprise)
Corp. Office : "Saudamini", Plot No.2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, (Haryana)
Regd. Office : B-9, Qutab Institutional Area, Katwaria Sarai, New Delhi-110 016
Website: www.powergrid.in, CIN: L40101DL1989G01038121

A MAHARATNA PSU



EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) FOR PROCUREMENT OF HEAVY LIFT PROGRAMMABLE DRONE

POWERGRID, the largest power transmission utility of India, through this EOI intends to identify indigenous heavy lift programmable drone manufacturers for procurement of drone for quick transportation of the transmission line construction materials to hilly areas, across wide water bodies, over large forest areas etc. The complete EoI Documents are available at POWERGRID's website <http://www.powergrid.in>.

For any correspondence, clarification, and submission of Expression of Interest documents in this regard, interested Firm/vendors can contact "Manager (TD)", POWERGRID, "Saudamini", Plot No. 2, Sector-29, Gurugram-122001, Mob: +91-7042892657; Email: pradeep.7@powergrid.in

PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT

Uttarakhand Disaster Preparedness & Resilience Project (U-PREPARE)

4TH Floor, DDPM Tower, Haridwar Bypass Road, Ajnabpur Khard, Dehradun

Website: www.ukdisasterrecovery.in E-Mail: pd.udprpaf@gmail.com

Tender Ref. No.: 219 /03/PMU/U-PREPARE/Vehicle/2024 Date: 04/01/2024

NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

The Government of India has applied financing from the World Bank towards the cost of the U-PREPARE and intends to apply part of the proceeds for following package of services.

Hence Quotations are invited for the following package and the RFQ document of which, can be downloaded from the website <https://uktenders.gov.in> on or before 18/Jan/2024. Quotation must be submitted online on the website <https://uktenders.gov.in> on or before 12:30 PM 18/Jan/2024. Quotations will be opened on 18/Jan/2024 at 3:00 PM.

Note: 1. The corrigendum for the above package will be uploaded on website www.uktenders.gov.in and www.ukdisasterrecovery.in

2. Email id procurement@powergrid@gmail.com may be contacted for any information.

Sd/- Program Director

KWA-JB-GL-6-1973-2023-2024

Superintending Engineer PH Circle

Muvattupuzha

Kerala Water Authority e-Tender Notice

Tender Ref. No: Re-308/2023-24/EPHC/MVPA

JMM WSS to Velloothoo Panchayat in Idukki District Package II/Construction of OHSS cum Pump house near Kathippara and GLSR at South Kathippara, Supply and erection of CF pumpset at Kathippara and laying distribution line to Zone 7 and 8 General civil work

EMD: Rs. 2,00,000, Tender fee: Rs. 11,025/-, Last Date for submitting Tender:

11-01-2024 04:00:00 pm, Phone: 04852835637

Website: www.kwa.kerala.gov.in www.etenders.kerala.gov.in

Superintending Engineer PH Circle

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आस्ट्रेलिया सरकार
पथ निर्माण विभाग
कार्यपालक अभियन्ता का कार्यालय
पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, लातेहार

(2nd Call), ई-प्रोक्सीरमेंट संख्या

ई-टेन्डर रिफरेंस संख्या— RCD/LATEHAR/08/2023-24 दिनांक—04.01.2024

1.	कार्य का नाम	बारसाड से तिसिया पथ में तेकु नाला (वैनो—4.00 किमी) एवं बुदा नाला (वैनो—8.00 किमी) पर उच्च स्तरीय सेतु निर्माण कार्य
2क.	प्रावकलित राशि (रुपये में)	रु. 19,41,43,806.00 (उन्नीस करोड़ एकतालीस लाख तीस हजार आठ सौ छह रुपये) मात्र
2ख.	विल सिक्युरिटी— (रुपये में)	रु. 19,42,00,00 (उन्नीस लाख बयालीस हजार) मात्र
3.	कार्य पूर्ण करने की अवधि	30 (तीस) माह
4.	वेबसाइट पर निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि	08.01.2024 को पूर्णाहन 10.30 बजे से
5.	निविदा प्राप्ति की अविमति एवं समय	22.01.2024 को दोपहर 12.00 बजे तक
6.	निविदा आमंत्रित करने वाले कार्यपालक अभियन्ता, पथ निर्माण विभाग, कार्यालय का नाम एवं पता	कार्यपालक अभियन्ता, पथ प्रमण्डल लातेहार, पिन कोड—829206
7.	ई-प्रोक्सीरमेंट कार्यालय का संपर्क संख्या	06565-247907
8.	ई-प्रोक्सीरमेंट सेल का हेल्पलाइन संख्या	0651-2403007

नोट: निविदा की प्रावकलित राशि घट—बढ़ सकती है।

निविदा की अन्य जानकारी <http://jharkhandtenders.gov.in> पर देखी जा सकती है।

कार्यपालक अभियन्ता

PR 315129 Road(23-24)#D पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, लातेहार

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer/Const./Northern Railway, 4th Floor, DRM Office, New Delhi-110001 invites e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:-	
1. Name of work and location : Design, Supply, erection, testing & commissioning of : New Bridge Over Yamuna River in place of old Yamuna Bridge No.249 between Shahdara and Old Delhi Railway station.	
2. Completion period of the work : 12 (Twelve Months)	
3. Approx. Cost of work : Rs. 1,90,69,269.7	
4. Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online) : Rs. 2,45,400	
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender : Tenders may be uploaded upto 16:00 hrs. on date 04.01.2024 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11:30 hrs. on 29.01.2024	
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document : The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in and tender document is available on www.ireps.gov.in . Above tender document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 15.01.2024 to 29.01.2024. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.	
No.: 336-Dy.CEE/C/NLDS/2023-24 (R) Dated: 04.01.2024 34/2024	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

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EXPLAINED LAW

Kejriwal, Soren refuse ED summonses: what now

Is the ED bound to reveal whether it is summoning someone as an accused or a witness? What can ED do if they don't 'cooperate'? Can not appearing lead to arrest?

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

DELHI CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal has cited Rajya Sabha elections, Republic Day celebrations and the Enforcement Directorate's (ED)'non-disclosure' and 'non-response' approach as reasons for not appearing before the investigating agency. Kejriwal has been summoned by the ED multiple times in connection with the Delhi excise policy probe, with the most recent being for January 3.

In his earlier responses to two such summonses, Kejriwal alleged in a letter that they were issued at the behest of the BJP, and it was unclear in what capacity he was being called — "as a witness or a suspect".

Jharkhand CM Hemant Soren has similarly refused seven summonses by the ED in a money laundering case.

Is the ED supposed to reveal in what capacity a person is being summoned?

The provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), under which summonses are issued to people to join investigations, nowhere mention that the agency must declare whether they are being called as accused or as witnesses.

Also, the provisions are not clear on whether the summonses are to mention the grounds for questioning. In practice, however, the ED always mentions the case in which a person is being summoned to give evidence. "How can we declare a person as witness or accused even before questioning him or conducting proper investigations? Following the probe, we may reach a conclusion that the person is not required even as a witness, let alone be arraigned as an accused," an ED official said.

How is a summons issued?

Summonses for interrogation are issued by ED under Section 50 of the PMLA.

According to the provision, "The Director, Additional Director, Joint Director, Deputy

Director or Assistant Director shall have power to summon any person whose attendance he considers necessary whether to give evidence or to produce any records during the course of any investigation or proceeding under this Act", and "all the persons so summoned shall be bound to attend in person or through authorised agents", as directed by the ED officer.

What if the person refuses to appear?

The law has provisions for penalty of up to Rs 10,000 and invocation of Section 174 of the Indian Penal Code, which stipulates a jail term of one month and/or a fine of Rs 500 in case of non-appearance against an ED summons. Under Section 63 (2) (C) of the PMLA, if a person refuses to respect the summons issued by ED or refuses to produce documents or evidence as demanded, he "shall pay, by way of penalty, a sum which shall not be less than five hundred rupees but which may extend to ten thousand rupees for each such default or failure".

Section 63 (4) says: "Notwithstanding anything contained in clause (c) of sub-section (2), a person who intentionally disobeys any direction issued under section 50 shall also be liable to be proceeded against under section 174 of the Indian Penal Code."

Is this ground for arrest, then?

To arrest a person under Section 63 of the PMLA, the ED would have to get a fresh case registered under Section 174 of the IPC, followed by a trial. Never has this route been followed in the history of the agency.

The other legal route is to get non-bailable warrants issued against the person refusing summons. However, sources said, this would not be easy since most of those refusing summons, including Kejriwal and Soren, give written reasons for non-attendance. The ED would have to convince the court that the non-cooperation is deliberate and there is *prima facie* evidence of the person being involved. Also, court judgements have held that Section 50 does not allow the ED to arrest a person summoned.

How can ED arrest for non-cooperation?

There are no extant provisions in the PMLA to arrest for non-cooperation. There is also no limit to how many summonses the agency must issue before reaching the conclusion that the person concerned is not cooperating. The law is clear that an arrest can be made only if the officer is convinced that the person is guilty of the offence of money laundering.

Section 19 of the PMLA says, "If the Director, Deputy Director, Assistant Director or any other officer authorised in this behalf by the Central Government by general or special order, has on the basis of material in his possession, reason to believe (the reason for such belief to be recorded in writing) that any person has been guilty of an offence punishable under this Act, he may arrest such person and shall, as soon as may be, inform him of the grounds for such arrest."

How have courts interpreted this?

The Delhi High Court on October 19, 2023

said the ED's power to issue summonses under Section 50 of the PMLA does not include the power to arrest a person. A single-judge Bench of Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani also said the power to arrest under Section 19 of the PMLA is not untrammelled and that "authorities do not have the power to arrest on their whims and fancies".

Though, said the Bench, Section 19 of the PMLA grants the power of arrest to designated ED officers, "it is clear that the power of arrest does not reside in Section 50 nor does it arise as a natural corollary of summonses issued under Section 50."

The HC said a person apprehended arrest can file for anticipatory bail even if they are not named as an accused in the Enforcement Case Information Report. "The power under Section 50 of the PMLA to issue summonses to a person and to require the production of documents and record statements, which is akin to the powers of a civil court, is different and distinct from the power under Section 19 to arrest a person," said the HC judge.

EXPLAINED GLOBAL

JEFFREY EPSTEIN CASE DOCUMENTS RELEASED: WHAT WE KNOW SO FAR



A protest against Jeffrey Epstein in New York in 2019. Reuters

DOZENS OF previously sealed court documents related to Jeffrey Epstein were made public late Wednesday, as a court releases more records from a years-old lawsuit.

The first 40 documents, of around 250 expected to eventually be unsealed, largely mention figures whose names were already known, including high-profile friends of Epstein's and victims who have spoken publicly.

Here's what we know about the documents released so far:

Who was Epstein?

A millionaire known for associating with celebrities, politicians, billionaires and academic stars, Epstein was arrested in Palm Beach, Florida, in 2005 after he was accused of paying a 14-year-old girl for sex. Dozens of other underage girls described similar sexual abuse, but prosecutors ultimately allowed the financier to plead guilty in 2008 to a charge involving a single victim. He served 13 months in a jail work-release program.

Epstein continued to mingle with the rich and famous for another decade, often through philanthropic work.

Federal prosecutors in New York charged Epstein in 2019 with sex trafficking. He killed himself in jail while awaiting trial.

The US attorney in Manhattan then prosecuted Epstein's former girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, for helping recruit his underage victims. She is serving a 20-year prison term.

What are these records about?

The documents being unsealed are part of a 2015 lawsuit filed against Maxwell by one of Epstein's victims, Virginia Giuffre. Giuffre said the summer she turned 17, she was lured away from a job as a spa attendant at Donald Trump's

Mar-a-Lago club to become a "masseuse" for Epstein — a job that involved performing sexual acts.

Giuffre also claimed she was pressured into having sex with men in Epstein's social orbit, including Britain's Prince Andrew, the former New Mexico Governor Bill Richardson, former US Senator George Mitchell and the billionaire Glenn Dubin, among others. All of those men said her accounts were fabricated. Giuffre settled a lawsuit against Prince Andrew in 2022.

What can we expect to see?

The people named in the records include many of Epstein's accusers, members of his staff who told their stories to tabloid newspapers, people who served as witnesses at Maxwell's trial, and people who investigated Epstein.

There are also boldface names of public figures known to have associated with Epstein over the years, but whose relationships with him have already been well documented elsewhere. AP

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GRAPHIC DESCRIPTION

The Ram Temple in Ayodhya

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will inaugurate the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Mandir on January 22. The Pran Pratishtha or consecration ceremony of the Ram Lalla idol will be preceded by a weeklong ritual beginning January 16. Only five people — the Prime Minister, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Governor Anandiben Patel, RSS Sarsanghchalak Mohan Bhagwat, and a priest — are expected to be present in the sanctum sanctorum during the consecration

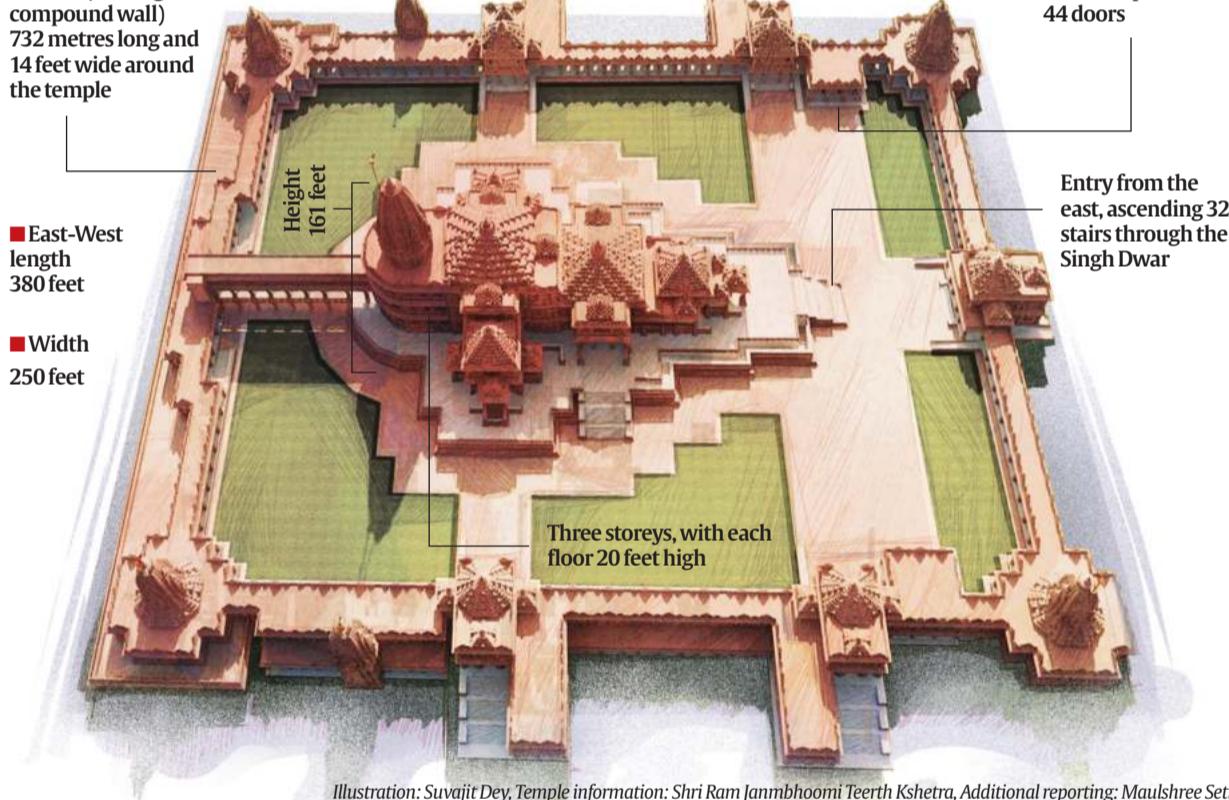


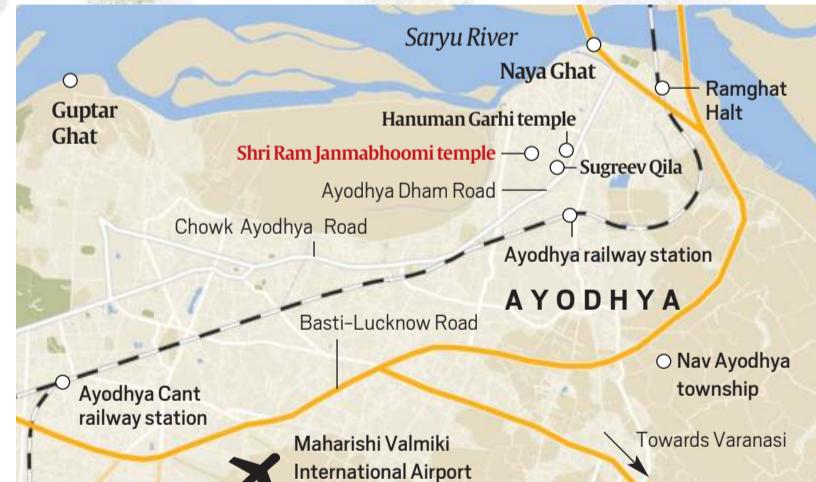
Illustration: Suvajit Dey, Temple information: Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra, Additional reporting: Maulshree Seth

PRAN PRATISHTHA

CHIEF PRIEST Acharya Satyendra Das said Pran Pratishtha was a ritual "in which life and energy is instilled into an idol by praying to God", after which prayers can be offered to the idol. Before the final ritual, *nau grah* prayers to all gods and goddesses, including earth, water and fire, are offered, Satyendra Das said.

"**TILL THE** prayers are offered, the idol's eyes will be kept covered... The eyes will be opened before the completion of the consecration for which astrologers have decided on the *Abhijeet Muhurt* lasting 84 seconds, which is 12.30 pm," he said.

AFTER THE consecration ceremony, the idol will be decorated with ornaments.



KEY FEATURES OF TEMPLE

BUILT in Nagara style of temple architecture; **IDOL** of Ram Lalla in *sanctum sanctorum*; Shri Ram Darbar on the first floor

FIVE mandaps (halls): Nritya Mandap, Rang Mandap, Sabha Mandap, Prarthana Mandap, Kirtan Mandap

STATUES of deities on pillars and walls

MANDIRS at four corners of compound dedicated to Surya, Bhagwati, Ganesh, Shiv. On northern and southern arms, temples to Annapurna and Hanuman respectively

TEMPLES to Mahashrī Valmiki, Vashishtha, Vishwamitra, Agastya, Nishad Raj, Shabri, etc proposed in the complex

FOUNDATION built with 14-metre-thick layer of roller-compacted concrete, giving it appearance of artificial rock. 21-foot-high granite plinth to protect against ground moisture

NO IRON has been used anywhere

EMPHASIS on environmental and water conservation, with 70% of the 70-acre area being left green

RAMPS and lifts for the elderly and differently abled devotees

SEPARATE block in complex with bathing area and washrooms. Also, sewage treatment plant, water treatment plant, power station

PILGRIMS Facility Centre for 25,000 people will have medical & locker facilities

BEFORE JANUARY 22

JAN 16: Vishnu Puja and *gau daan* at Saryu embankment

JAN 17: Ram Lalla idol will be taken for *Shobha Yatra* or *nagar bhraman* with the eyes shut. Water from Saryu will be taken to temple in a *kalash*.

JAN 18: Prayers to Ganesh and Varun, other rituals, and chanting of *mantras* at the temple

JAN 19: *Nau grah shanti havan* at temple site to please all planets

JAN 20: *Sanctum sanctorum* to be washed with Saryu water, prayers to be held for *vaastu shanti*

JAN 21: Ram Lalla's throne to be washed with Saryu water in 125 *kalashas*

JAN 22: Prayers and rituals, followed by *Pran Pratista* at *Abhijeet Muhurt*

Why Eknath Shinde has revived a dargah dispute in the Malanggad hills

ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, JANUARY 4

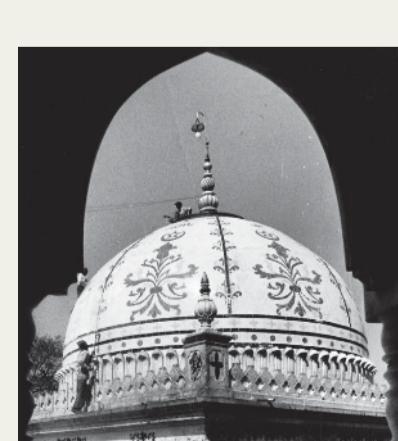
AS THE countdown starts to the next elections, it's a fight from the scratch for Eknath Shinde. Though he split the Shiv Sena with enough numbers to not just retain the party but become Maharashtra's Chief Minister, Shinde now faces a BJP buoyed by more poll wins and a combative Ajit Pawar-led NCP.

Against this background comes the roll of a well-tested dice — a dispute involving the centuries-old Haji Malang Dargah.

The shrine, and the dispute

Located on the lowest plateau of Malanggad, a hill fort on the Matheran ranges, the Haji Malang Dargah is revered by both Hindus and Muslims. Chandrashekhar Ketkar, one of

**EXPLAINED
POLITICS**



The Haji Malang Dargah in Thane district. Archive/Deepak Joshi

members of the trust that runs the dargah, whose family has been managing it for the past 14 generations, told *The Indian Express*: "Anyone claiming that the dargah is a temple is doing it for political mileage... In 1954, the Supreme Court in a case related to control of the dargah within the Ketkar family observed that the dargah was a composite structure that cannot be governed either by Hindu or Muslim law, but only by its own special custom or by general law of trusts."

The trust has both Hindu and Muslim members, and while the shrine is a dargah, Hindus perform *aarti* on its premises on full moon day.

The first sign of communal strife over the shrine came in the mid-1980s when Shiv Sena leader Anand Dighe started an agitation claiming that the shrine belonged to Hindus, as it was the site of the 700-year-old Machindranath temple. In 1996, he insisted on leading 20,000 Shiv Sainiks to the

shrine to offer prayers.

The then Chief Minister Manohar Joshi along with Shiv Sena leader Uddhav Thackeray also attended a prayer that year. Since then, the Sena as well as right-wing groups refer to the structure as Shri Malang Gad.

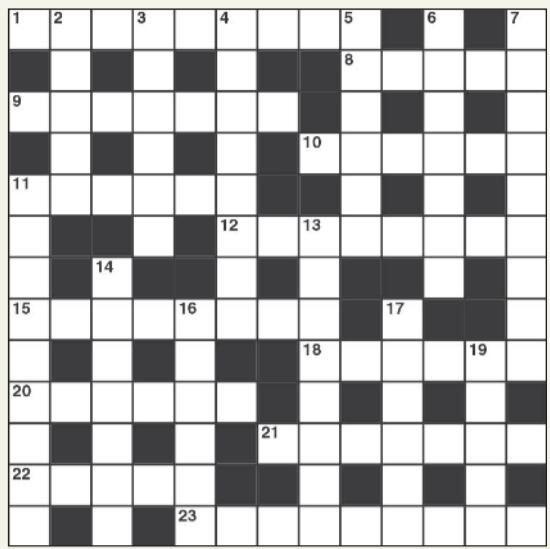
The movement helped burnish Dighe's credentials as "Dharmaveer, or warrior of the faith", granting him an almost legendary status within the Shiv Sena. Dighe's protege, Shinde sees himself as the inheritor of his legacy — and now, his dargah claims.

The poll factor

Recent reports have indicated that the opposition Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi alliance is holding strong against the BJP-Shiv Sena-Ajit Pawar NCP grouping in the state. Shinde is in a particularly vulnerable position as, while he has been acknowledged as the real Shiv Sena by courts and has most of the legislators and MPs by his side, this has not been tested on the ground.

The biggest challenge Shinde faces is countering Shiv Sena

CROSSWORD 5253



ACROSS

- 1 A great thinker tries a lot to be unconventional (9)
 8 A master of many subjects (5)
 9 Able to accommodate a chopper (7)
 10 Girls admired by the troops though stuck up (3-3)
 11 One who hardly rules? (6)
 12 A rash complaint (8)
 13 Infantry consisting of a thousand bowmen (8)
 14 A Quaker may display it (6)
 20 Came in for the pictures (6)
 21 Can a saint have a game of cards? (7)
 22 Current issue between banks in Germany (5)
 23 Servicemen who have a job to do (4,5)

DOWN

- 2 Get better of exchanges in court (5)
 3 Mark the sailor is a six-footer (6)
 4 Remove it perhaps for extra pay (8)
 5 Irene gets excited about many a fur (6)
 6 Clapping and praise in the orchestra section (7)
 7 Change one's bank maybe (5,4)
 11 Integral part of one's best suit (5,4)
 13 Stamp on a stamp (8)
 14 Wild at having turned it into disused currency (7)
 16 Play for the village (6)
 17 Gale blows itself out to a smooth finish (6)
 19 Surgical treatment on twitch in the eye (5)

Solutions Crossword 5252 Across: 1 Oysters, 4 Sally, 7 Sewn, 8 Received, 10 Spotlights, 12 Clever, 13 Breech, 15 Obituaries, 18 Mandrake, 19 Idle, 20 Nancy, 21 Retired Down: 1 Oasis, 2 Sawbones, 3 Sleight, 4 Sweetbread, 5 Love, 6 Yiddish, 9 Elderberry, 11 Bewilder, 12 Caveman, 14 Stoker, 16 Steed, 17 Anon

JUMBLED WORDS

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

Better to be occasionally cheated than perpetually _____. - B.C. Forbes (10)

CNIIO

FLNRUU

IYSSS

AEMNCP

Answers: Better to be occasionally cheated than perpetually **suspicious**. - B.C. Forbes

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis

RJ DICTATES HIS MEMOIRS TO HIS PHONE...

MY VERY FIRST MEMORY WAS OF THE DUMPSTER BEHIND THE SNAK-N-SNARF, WHERE I ATE MY FIRST TWINKIE...



...SIMILAR TO THE DAYS I HAD MY 2ND THROUGH 122, 640TH TWINKIE.

SO, ONE DOZEN TWINKIES EVERY DAY SINCE.

1-13 © 2005 by Michael Fry & Tom Lewis. Used by permission of Scholastic Inc.

A DOZEN TWINKIES A DAY KEEPS THE SOUL-SUCKING BANALITY OF EXISTENCE AT BAY.

SPOKEN LIKE A TRUE ADDICT.

DAY TODAY

BY PETER VIDAL

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20)

You may now need to change your approach to partnerships, especially professional ones. It is a time to rely on past experience and emphasise the positive virtues of authority and tradition. Stick to tried and tested methods and you won't go far wrong.

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)

Take advantage of all planetary movements aligned with your ninth solar house to clear up all long-standing problems. Don't flap around, however, for your reputation are at stake. Never forget that other people's good opinion of you is essential to your image of yourself.

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

You're a complicated person, and that's why others can't always be expected

to understand you. Your personal world is so often one of conflict but look closely and you'll see that affection lies around every corner. Realise that love is but a breath away.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 24 - Dec 22)

A few simple statements may do much to safeguard your long-term happiness and security. I am not going to tell you what to say, for only you know exactly what is on your mind. But I can advise you to strike while the iron is hot, and not to waste time while others make the running.

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

So much which was established and seemed to last for ever has been turned upside down, leaving many of you bewildered. I am not surprised, for Uranus is a disturbing planet. However, the dust is already beginning to settle, and when it does a new and brighter world will emerge.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

Your special skill lies in spotting the opportunities that other people miss. You can turn almost any situation to your advantage. The message of the moment is teamwork, and by enrolling partners on your side you can cross every valley and climb every mountain.

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20)

It is up to you to determine where you let your dreams take you now. There is something distinctly feminine about the current mood, in the traditional meaning of the term: intuitive, graceful, loving and sensitive. But you must also cope with a determined streak of total independence.

CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



SUDOKU 5432

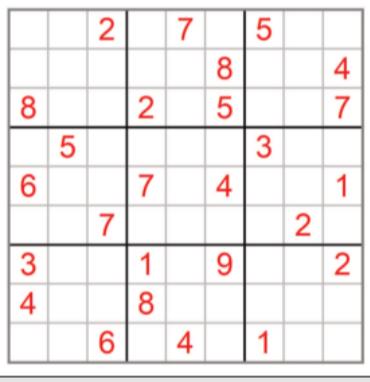
Difficulty Level 5s

Instructions

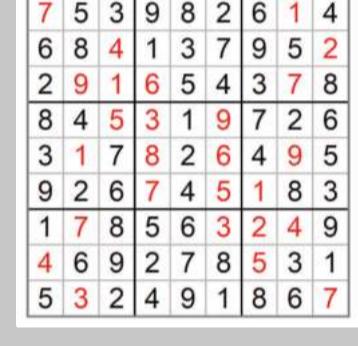
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

Difficulty Level

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



SOLUTION SUDOKU 5431



PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON

(SECTION 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that the accused Simeon Franklin Chukwudi, S/o Simeon, R/o (1) 8, Bishop Street, Owerri, IMO State, Nigeria, (2) Room No. 28, 352, D 2, Munirka Village, Delhi, has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in FIR No. 139/2022, U/s 20 NDPS Act and 14 F Act, registered at P.S. Saket, Delhi, and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused Simeon Franklin Chukwudi, cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Simeon Franklin Chukwudi, has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of said warrant). Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Simeon Franklin Chukwudi, of case FIR No. 139/2022, U/s 20 NDPS Act and 14 F Act, P.S. Saket, Delhi, is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 26.02.2024.

By order

Gaurav Gupta,
 A. S. J. / Special Judge (NDPS Act),
 Room no. 505,
 Saket Courts, Delhi

DP/21/SD/2024

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that female male namely **Harkesh Pal** S/o Ram Bhawan R/o A-28, Gali No. 17, Baprola Vihar, Baprola, Delhi Age: 38 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long, Built: Thin, wearing Sky colour Shirt, Sky colour Pant and Plastic Chappal in feet, has been missing/kidnapped from his house since 08.12.2023 at 8:00 AM. In this regard a DD No. 72A, dated 20.12.2023 has been lodged at P.S. Ranholi, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in

Fax: 011-24368639

Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641

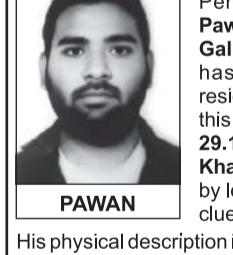
DP/95/OD/2024

SHO

P.S. Ranholi, Delhi

Ph. No.: 011-28363001, 9311735687

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that this Person (depicted in the photo) namely **Pawan S/o Suresh Yadav R/o A-118, Part-3, Gali No. 05, 1st Pusta, Sonia Vihar, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped from his residence since 28.12.2023 at 11:00 AM. In this regard a FIR No./DD No. 90-A/23 Dated 29.12.2023 has been lodged in PS Khajuri Khas, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this person but no clue has come to light so far.

His physical description is as under:-

Sex: Male, Age: 28 years, Height: 5' 4" ft., Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Built: Medium, Wearing: Black colour T-Shirt and grey colour Lower and chappal in feet.

Any person is having information or clue about this missing/kidnapped person may kindly inform to the following:-

SHO

P.S. Khajuri Khas, Delhi

Ph. No.: 011-22962765

Mob. No.: 8750870727

DP/28/NE/2024

कर्पालक अधियंता का कार्यालय
 ग्रामीण कार्य विभाग, कार्य प्रमण्डल,
 लोहरदगा
 शुद्धि पत्र

एतद् द्वारा सूचित किया जाता है कि इस कार्यालय से आमंत्रण ई-अल्पकालीन पुनर्निविदा आमंत्रण सं-04/2023-24/RWD/LOHARDAGA दिनांक 14.12.2023 PR No. 313603 (Lohardaga) 23-24(D) द्वारा प्रकाशित ई-अल्पकालीन निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना के कमांक-2 में वेबसाइट में निविदा प्रकाशन की तिथि एवं समय 29.12.2023 के रथान पर दिनांक 06.01.2024 कमांक-3 में ई-निविदा प्राप्ति की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय 05.01.2024 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे के रथान पर दिनांक 15.01.2024 अपराह्न 5.00 बजे एवं कमांक-4 में निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय 08.01.2024 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे के रथान पर 17.01.2024 अपराह्न 3.30 बजे पढ़ा जाय।

अन्य शर्तें यथावत रहेंगे।

कार्यालय अधियंता
 ग्रामीण कार्य प्रमण्डल, लोहरदगा।

PR.NO.315096 Lohardaga(23-24):D

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

See Section 82 Cr. P.C.

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Ganesh, S/o Gopal, R/o A-112, Gupta Colony, Prahadpur, Delhi** has Committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in a E-FIR No. 1026/19 U/s 356/379 IPC, at PS North Rohini, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said **Ganesh** cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said **Ganesh** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Ganesh** of E-FIR No. 1026/19 U/s 356/379 IPC, at PS North Rohini, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 13.02.2024.

By order

Ms Deepali Srivastava
 Metropolitan Magistrate (North West)
 Room No. 107, 1st Floor
 Rohini Court, Delhi

DP/14941/RD/2023(Court Matter)

SHO

General Public is hereby informed that one male person was found dead at footpath under Mayapuri Flyover, Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 91A dated 16.12.2023 has been registered at P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi. The dead body has been preserved for identification at DDU Hospital Mortuary, Delhi for 72 hrs. The description of the dead body is given as under Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 45 years, Height: 5'5", Face: Long, Complexion: Sallow, Built: Thin, Identification mark: Cut Mark on head, Wearing: Brown Colour T-shirt, Blue Colour Lower. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the dead person but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about this dead person please inform undersigned.

P.S. Rajouri Garden, Delhi
 Ph.: 011-25448885, 25453990,
 8750871127

DP/152/WD/2024

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF A PERSON ACCUSED

(See Section 82 Cr.P.C.)

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused person **Shiva @ Shiv, S/o Chhalera Nath, R/o Jhuggi No. B-72, Indira Vihar Colony, Delhi** has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in Case FIR No. 1683/2015 U/S 392/394 IPC PS Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the said accused **Shiva @ Shiv** can not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused **Shiva @ Shiv** has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused **Shiva @ Shiv** of FIR No. 1683/2015 U/S 392/394 IPC PS Mukherjee Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 27.02.2024.

By Order

Neeti Suri Mishra
 Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (North)
 Room No. 117, Rohini Courts, Delhi

DP/108/NW/2024

Appeal for Identification

Kohli, Rohit inform BCCI they're available for T20Is

DEVENDRA PANDEY
JANUARY 4

INDIA'S BATTING stars Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli have informed the BCCI that they are available for selection in the shortest format despite not featuring in T20 Internationals since the 2022 T20 World Cup, *The Indian Express* understands.

The selection committee will meet on Friday to pick the team for the three T20 games against Afghanistan and for the first two Tests against England.

The series against Afghanistan starts on January 11, while the five-match Test series versus England begins on January 25.

The Indian team will be playing only three T20 Internationals against Afghanistan before the World Cup in June.

Meanwhile, with Hardik Pandya and Suryakumar Yadav unavailable for selection due to injury the selection committee will have to pick a new captain for the T20s.

In another development the selection committee is likely to rest fast bowlers Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah for upcoming games against Afghanistan.

Siraj and Bumrah played key roles in India's thumping win over South Africa at Cape Town on Thursday. India levelled the two-match series.

The Indian Express understands that the two pacers will now play in the Test matches against England.

The Indian team management wants their two-in-form pacers to be fully fit for the long series against England at home. Three selectors SS Das, Salil Ankola and chief selector Ajit Agarkar are in Cape Town.

In another development the selection committee is likely to rest fast bowlers Mohammed Siraj and Jasprit Bumrah for upcoming games against Afghanistan.

Working hard to fix fitness, fielding woes: Harmanpreet

India skipper skipper Harmanpreet Kaur on Thursday said quick fixes in the fielding and fitness department were not possible but her team will plug those gaps eventually with the help of recently appointed full-time support staff.

The team has struggled with fielding and fitness issues for a long time.

As India Women prepare to take on Australia in a three-match T20 series starting here on Friday, the focus is on how Harmanpreet ends her poor run with the bat following six single-digit scores in nine outings.

Also, India dropped a total of eight catches over the last two ODIs – seven in the second match itself – in their 0-3 loss to the mighty Aussies.

"If we talk about the team's performance, we are playing very good cricket in patches. Fielding and fitness are something that we have been talking about for a long time. We have been working on it too," Kaur told the media.

Amol Muzumdar, who was appointed the team's head coach in late October, informed in his first press conference before the T20I series against England that Munish Bali (fielding) and Troy Cooley (bowling) would be his support staff members.

"The best part is that now we have a regular support staff. In between, we had many coaches who had their own views on fielding and fitness," Kaur added.

"We have Munish sir now, he has to be given time. He is a very experienced coach and has worked with many players. He is trying his best but it is difficult to get results in one month," Kaur said. PTI

PITCH WOES

Hope they keep their eyes and ears open: Rohit takes a dig at ICC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JANUARY 4

INDIA SKIPPER Rohit Sharma called for a fair review of Indian pitches which more often than not receive criticism as compared to the pitches of other countries.

This comment came from Sharma after the Newlands Test ended in one and a half days with 33 wickets falling and India walking away with a historic victory which levelled the series 1-1.

"I don't mind being on pitches like this as long as everyone keeps their mouth shut in India and no one is talking about the pitches there," Rohit said on Thursday after the match. "Yes it is dangerous, but you come here (South Africa) to challenge yourself and you must face up to it. When you are here to play Test cricket, we talk about Test cricket, the ultimate prize, Test cricket

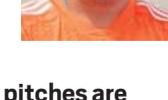
being the pinnacle and stuff like that. I think it's important that we also stand by it," he added.

"When you are put up against, a challenge like that, you come and face it. That's what happens in India, but, in India on day one, if the pitch starts turning, people start talking about 'Puff of dust! Puff of dust!' There's so much crack here on the pitch. People are not looking at that," he said.

Sharma also called out the match referees and pointed out there's inconsistency in the way the officials rate pitches in different countries.

"I think it's important that we stay neutral everywhere we go," Rohit said. "Especially the match referees. You know, some of these match referees need to keep their eye on how they rate pitches. It's quite important."

"I still can't believe that the World Cup final pitch was rated below standard. A player got a hundred there."



--ROHIT SHARMA

In India, when it turns on day one, people say 'Oh, there is a puff of dust'. We need to stay neutral, especially match referees. I would love to see how the pitches are rated. I still can't believe the World Cup final pitch was rated below standard. A player got a hundred there."

rated average). A batsman got a hundred there in the final. How can that be a poor pitch? So these are the things the ICC, the match referees, they need to look into and

start rating pitches based on what they see, not based on the countries. I think that's quite important.

"So I hope they keep their ears open, they keep their eyes open and look into those aspects of the game."

"Honestly, I'm all for pitches like this. We want to challenge playing on pitches like this. We pride ourselves on playing on pitches like this. Uh, but all I want to say is to be neutral."

Rohit was also asked why a pitch that turns is considered inferior to one that seems.

"Honestly, I would like to see how the pitches are rated," Rohit said. "I want to see that. Whatever... that chart, I would love to see it, how they rate the pitches, because Mumbai, Bangalore, Cape Town, Centurion, all different venues, overhead conditions are different. The pitches deteriorate quite fast when the sun is beating down that

hard on the pitch."

"And in India as well, we know that the conditions in India will spin without a doubt, but obviously people don't like it because it spins from day one. But that's not the point."

"If the ball seizes from ball one, that's okay, right, for everyone? That's not fair. The ball starts spinning from ball one, it should be okay, in my opinion."

"Otherwise, you stay neutral, and you start rating these kind of pitches also bad, because if you want the ball only to seam and not turn, in my opinion, that is absolutely wrong."

"So that's my judgement, that's my opinion on it. I'll stick by it because I've seen enough of cricket now and I've seen enough of how these match referees and the ICC looks into these ratings. I have no issues in how they want to rate, but stay neutral to everything that you do."

GARDNER, KERR AMONG NOMINEES

Dubai: Australia all-rounder Ashleigh Gardner and swashbuckling New Zealander Amelia Kerr were among nominees for the ICC Women's ODI Cricketer of the Year award as no Indian featured in the list. Besides Gardner and Kerr, also included in the list are England's Nat Sciver-Brunt and Sri Lanka's Chamari Athapaththu. PTI

Broken heart emoji to broad smile

Setback and heartaches of 2023 thing of past, India's premier fast bowler Bumrah back to leading from front



After Bedingham's wicket, it was classic Bumrah unleashing not just his wizardry but by his well-thought-out set-ups. PTI

SRIRAM VEERA
JANUARY 4

IT WAS a lovely little moment that came at the end of the shortest Test in 90 years in terms of overs bowled. In 107 overs, India had wrapped up a seven-wicket win, adventurously chasing down 79-run target, when Jasprit Bumrah walked up to the presentation ceremony to translate the man-of-the-match winner Mohammad Siraj's Hindi comments to English for the broadcasters.

That's when Bumrah was confronted with the task of relaying Siraj's rave about him to the world. Siraj had talked about how Bumrah assesses the pitch quickly and passes relevant information to him and all he needs to do is to be consistent with that. Bumrah smiled, paused, and then said those words in English but converted it all as a "we", a group activity rather than take credit, ending with a charming, "And it sometimes helps him (Siraj)," even as a smile creased his face.

There were no smiles before the tour but heart-broken emojis from him that had caused a big fitter in Indian cricket. It was interpreted as a reaction to not being given captaincy of Mumbai Indians when the franchise decided to replace Rohit Sharma with Hardik Pandya. There were no smiles even a couple of months prior to that emoji but apprehension in general at how the all-new Bumrah would bowl after a comeback from a lengthy hiatus to injury.

Neither were there any smiles after the last tour of South Africa where he led the team's attack along with Mohammad Shami but couldn't conjure any breakthrough miracles in two Tests, unable to defend a tough 200 plus totals in the last innings. It was batsmen's failure primarily that they couldn't give Bumrah and co. generous totals to defend, but the question does raise, especially after the consistently heroic performances in similar situations by world's best Test bowler Pat Cummins who always finds a way.

Skilful warrior

So, the distant past was smirking, the recent one with IPL heartbreak was raising eyebrows about his state of mind, but it was Bumrah the skilful warrior that turned up in South Africa to win the man of the series. He had already silenced the injury doubters by spectacular performances in the ODI World Cup and now he had firmly shut up the mouths of those who wondered if his body would be a limited-overs bowler or be as effective as before in Tests. It was as much a triumph of body

Our team is going through a transition but the message is the same — keep fighting. A lot of bowlers have been changed, the message in the team is, keep fighting. We fought it out in the last game as well. It requires a lot of patience. We are very happy that we were able to do it in this game."

-JASPRIT BUMRAH

as it was with the mind - and befittingly it came at Cape Town where he had made his Test debut. Circle of life, and all that.

Mind and body willing, he had to still rev himself to do the damage with the ball. Even on Thursday, especially as his team had imploded a day before, losing six wickets for nothing. If South Africa had gotten to a 175-run target, who knows what could happen.

Bumrah dealt a first-over blow to South Africa that must have settled the nerves. He

quickly sensed the nervy urge of David Bedingham to attack and forced him to hit a nipbacker on the up; one element was threat enough but the combined forces of the seam movement and vertical lift proved too much and it was nicked to the keeper.

Late last evening, Bumrah had already produced a pearler, one that kicked up steeply and with force from a length to startle Tristan Stubbs into edging. A similar delivery from Curtly Ambrose was good enough to sort out a young Sachin Tendulkar in the 1992 World Cup and this one with even more vicious lift proved too much for poor Stubbs. It would have troubled even the adult Tendulkar.

From that Bedingham moment on, it was classic Bumrah unleashing not just his wizardry but by his well-thought-out set-ups. It would have been easier for him to just keep hitting the length or back of length to extract bounce to harass the South Africans but he mixed his deliveries so expertly that a highlight reel might show as if batsmen needlessly self-destructed and flayed at deliveries. They didn't.

Bagfull of tricks

Bumrah would make them claustrophobic with his hard lengths and slip in the fuller wider potentially jail-break deliveries and suck them into injudicious drives. It was his version of 'zeher ka peda' - a colloquial term from Mumbai maidans from the past about the over-flighted sucker ball that spinners would bowl, only to fool the batsmen with weighted drops.

Marco Jansen hit a full-ball back to Bumrah, Keshav Maharaj sliced a drive to gully and Lungi Ngidi edged a real full ball that shaped away ever so slightly to slips. In between he had Kyle Verreyne to miscue a pull to mid-on. He nearly would have had South Africa's best batsman on the day Aiden Markram but an regulation chance was grassed by the wicket-keeper KL Rahul.

Siraj was right. Even in the first innings, Bumrah had led the way, deploying the leg-and-middle line of attack to the left-handers Dean Elgar and Tony de Zorzi. And how to keep it simple to the right-handers on and around the off-stump line.

On a pitch where no ball was ever going to

SCORECARD

SOUTH AFRICA vs INDIA

NEWLANDS, CAPE TOWN

Toss: South Africa, chose to bat

SOUTH AFRICA	55 all out
INDIA	153 all out
SA 2ND INNINGS	(O/N 62/3 in 17 overs)
Markram c Rohit b Siraj 106 (103b, 17x4, 2x6)	
D Bedingham c Rahul b Bumrah 11 (12b, 2x4)	
K Verreyne c Siraj b Bumrah 9 (7b, 1x4)	
M Jansen c & b Bumrah 11 (9b, 2x4)	
K Maharaj c lyer b Bumrah 3 (4b)	
K Rabada c Rohit b Prasidh 2 (12b)	
N Burger not out 6 (20b, 1x4)	
L Ngidi c Jaiswal b Bumrah 8 (10b)	
Extras (lb 1, nb 5) 6	
Total 365.0v (RR: 4.77) 176	
FoW: :4-66 (David Bedingham, 17.6 ov), 5-85 (Kyle Verreyne, 21.1 ov), 6-103 (Marco Jansen, 23.5 ov), 7-111 (Keshav Maharaj, 25.2 ov), 8-162 (Aiden Markram, 31.4 ov), 9-162 (Kagiso Rabada, 32.1 ov), 10-176 (Lungi Ngidi, 36.5 ov)	
Bowling: Jasprit Bumrah 13.5-0-61-6, Mohammed Siraj 9-3-31-1, Mukesh Kumar 10-2-56-2, Prasidh Krishna 4-1-27-1	

INDIA 2ND INNINGS

Y Jaiswal c Stubbs b Burger 28 (23b, 6x1)	
R Sharma not out 16 (22b, 2x4)	
S Gill b Rabada 10 (11b, 2x4)	
V Kohli c Verreyne b Jansen 12 (11b, 2x4)	
S lyer not out 4 (6b, 1x4)	
Extras (b1, lb 2, nb 1, w 6) 10	
Total 120v (RR: 6.66) 80/3	
FoW: 1-44 (Yashasvi Jaiswal, 5.4 ov), 2-57 (Shubman Gill, 8.3 ov), 3-75 (Virat Kohli, 11.1 ov)	
Bowling: Kagiso Rabada 6-0-33-1, Nandre Burger 4-0-29-1, Marco Jansen 2-0-15-1	

NUMBER PLATE

642

Number of balls bowled during the second Test in Cape Town – the least for a completed Test.

hit the stumps or fetch a lbw (barring one finally from Kagiso Rabada that kept a tad low to surprise Shubman Gill in the second innings), Bumrah was spot on with his lengths. He sowed doubts, Siraj reaped the rewards in the first innings – and it was a solo show in the second to ensure India didn't have to chase too many.

Now with such a priceless knock in his kitty, he can take over the captaincy from Temba Bavuma even in Tests with more confidence if that situation arises. Going by Bavuma's recent tribulations with his body and batting, it can well happen sooner than later.

Even in his dreamy moment of the hundred, when he punched Bumrah to a four, he remembered to dedicate the knock to his captain who was retiring after the game. A left-handed hand gesture towards the dressing room indicated who he was referring to, and a huge smile spread across his visage. Elgar was the loudest cheerleader of Markram from the dressing-room balcony on a day when Markram shed the self-doubter identity and presented a free-flowing attacking persona to the world. In the end,

Wrestling body may move court over suspension



BJP MP Brij Bhushan (left) with suspended WFI chief Sanjay Singh. PTI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JANUARY 4

THE WRESTLING Federation of India (WFI) may challenge the sports ministry imposed suspension in court after its executive committee meeting to be held in New Delhi on January 16, its newly elected president Sanjay Singh said.

The sports ministry suspended the WFI just three days after elections, which were held on December 21. Showing "blatant disregard for established legal and procedural norms" was cited by an official for the suspension of the WFI.

"At the executive committee meeting of the WFI, we will discuss challenging the suspension imposed on us by the sports ministry. A decision on whether to go to court or not will be taken at the meeting," Singh told *The Indian Express* on Thursday.

Sanjay Singh defeated former Commonwealth Games gold medallist Anita Sheoran in a one-sided election. Minutes after his appointment, Sanjay Singh met former president Brij Bhushan Sharhan Singh at his official residence, which had also doubled up as the WFI office. Anita had the backing of wrestlers, including Sakshi, who had protested demanding the arrest of Brij Bhushan, a BJP MP, after six women wrestlers had complained about sexual harassment.

Sanjay Singh also said that the calendar for the year would be finalised at the executive committee meeting to be held in mid-January.

"We will put out a detailed schedule for the tournaments for the year, including the senior nationals. The WFI does not recognise the ad-hoc committee set up to run wrestling. The WFI elections were conducted in a democratic manner. How can a federation which has been elected as per the rules be suspended? The WFI does not recognise its suspension by the sports ministry. The WFI will continue to run the sport in the country and we will put the interest of wrestlers first," Singh said.

He also highlighted the fact that there will be no Indian wrestler in five categories at the Zagreb Open and blamed it on mismanagement of the ad-hoc committee.

"The ad-hoc committee has badly handled the team selection for the Zagreb Open. Five weight categories will have no Indian wrestlers. If the elected federation was running the affairs, such a grave error would not have happened. The future of Indian wrestling is at stake. Those who don't know anything about the sport are making decisions and it is not working," Singh added.

U15, U 20 nationals in Jan-Feb

PTI adds: The IOA ad-hoc committee, managing wrestling in the country, will organise the U-15 and U-20 National championships for the previous year in January-February to ensure grapplers don't lose out on one precious year of competition.

Hundreds of young grapplers had marched to Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday, venting their ire at Bajrang Punia, Sakshi Malik and Vinesh Phogat for "spoiling one year of their careers by holding up wrestling activity in the country with their protests".

The three top wrestlers have been protesting since January last year, demanding action against former Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) chief Brij Bhushan Sharhan Singh, whom they accuse of sexually harassing women grapplers. "The ad-hoc committee for Wrestling Federation of India intends to organise the 2023 U-20 and U-15 National Wrestling Championships (FS/GR/WW) in January-February of 2024," said the IOA-constituted ad-hoc panel, headed by Bhupender Singh Bajwa, in a statement on Thursday.

U19: India beat Afghanistan by 9 wkts

Johannesburg: Left-arm pacer Naman Tiwari returned with figures of 4/11 in seven overs as India hammered Afghanistan by nine wickets to seal their final berth in the Tri-Nation Under-19 Tournament here on Thursday. Opting to bowl, India skittled out Afghanistan for 88 in 33 overs with Tiwari claiming 7-11-4. He was aided by pace-bowling partners, Dhanush Gowda and Aaradhya Shukla, who bagged two wickets each to blow Afghanistan away. Off-spinner Priyanshu Moliya also bagged two. Opener Adarsh Singh anchored the chase with a 39-ball unbeaten 52 (6x4, 2x6) as India cantered home with 227 balls to spare.

Brief Scores: Afghanistan 88 in 33 overs (Nasir Hassan 31; Naman Tiwari 4/11, Priyanshu Moliya 2/15, Aaradhya Shukla 2/20, Dhanush Gowda 2/23) lost to India 92/1 in 12.1 overs (Adarsh Singh 52 not out, Musheer Khan 14 not out) by nine wickets. PTI

Ranji Trophy will fight for relevance once again with a Test series against England and India A games in progress at the same time

VENKATA KRISHNA B
CHENNAI, JANUARY 4

THE SANATANA Dharma ground in scenic Alappuzha, a tourist hub, is where one of India's best spinners Kuldeep Yadav will begin this first class season — playing for Uttar Pradesh against Kerala.

How many games the left-arm wrist spinner will play in the country's premier first-class tournament is anybody's guess.

Ranji Trophy is being played in the middle of a packed schedule.

A five-match Test series against England begins on January 25. A shadow tour of the England Lions versus India A begins on January 12 in Ahmedabad, the same day as the second round of Ranji Trophy matches commence. Fringe players knocking on doors of the Test team will be part of the India A squad, while the best will be donning Test whites.

Not for the first time in an era when T20 cricket is the holy grail and the IPL a quick route to entry into the national side, Ranji Trophy — which runs till early February — will struggle for relevance. Not since the 2016/17 home season so India have as many as 13 Tests lined-up this year. But the diluted Ranji Trophy, sans the best of the rest outside the core of the Test squad, may not be the best yardstick to judge performance for selectors to build a bench for the Test squad.

Coaches of domestic teams are a worried lot.

Rotate 'A' squad

To prevent Ranji Trophy matches from being a watered-down affair because of India A engagements that run till February 4 and to have key personnel available, some of the coaches have asked selectors to at least rotate the players.

With the tournament now held in the second-half of the season; December to February instead of end of September to early January — several coaches complain

Unlike the Ranji Trophy, the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the domestic T20 tournament, has relevance because it is a talent-spotting opportunity for IPL scouts before an auction

"England and Australia will never schedule A series when County cricket or Sheffield Shield is on. When we tour these countries, we do it in the off-season or in the pre-season. This series (England Lions versus India A) could have been played in December. But now we have to lose our players," another veteran coach said.

But from the national team's perspective, it is easy to understand why this A series is important. With this being a shadow tour (played alongside the five Test matches between India and England) and coming at the end of a long season that included a World Cup, there are concerns about the fitness of a few Test players.

Two of India's best spinners aren't young anymore and the workload may take a toll. And given there are at least four young batsmen in the Test squad, the selectors feel they need to keep the reserves ready. Matches against the England Lions



Bihar players during a warm-up session ahead of their Ranji Trophy match against Mumbai in Patna on Thursday. ANI

will be key. But if the Future Tours Programme is prepared in advance, can't the domestic calendar be planned accordingly. The IPL has forced a change.

Before the Covid years, the Ranji was usually slotted to begin from September end or October first week. But with IPL auctions usually scheduled during this time, the BCCI advanced the Syed Mushtaq Ali and with Ranji Trophy pushed further down.

There are benefits, says WV Raman, former India opener and ex coach of Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

"When you start the tournament early (Sep-Oct), except for the western side, rain will be a factor in other places because of the north-east monsoon. While fog will be an issue in December-January in the northern belt, it doesn't hamper as much and as the tournament progresses into the last leg, it would only get better. Nowhere in the world can we have conditions which will be ideal for everything," Raman told *The Indian Express*.

Playing in this period also means, most of the matches are played on surfaces which have good grass cover, enabling lateral movement and aiding fast bowlers. Sans enough sunshine, pitches usually don't break easily and have shown a tendency to flatten as the game progresses in some places, which isn't a common occurrence at the top level.

"Of course during this phase there is nippy movement in some places with bowlers usually enjoying the conditions. You will have moisture in the surface that would aid movement, but you aren't playing in one particular zone. You get to play in different conditions and build your game," Raman added.

The Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy, the domestic T20 tournament, has relevance because it is a talent-spotting opportunity for IPL scouts before an auction. Playing in the shadow of a high-profile Test series and India A games, the onus will be on a special player to catch the attention of the selectors during the Ranji Trophy.

Oscar to leave jail 11 yrs after partner's murder



Pretoria: Oscar Pistorius' life story from before and after Valentine's Day 2013 reads like the script to two markedly different films — the first an inspirational sporting biopic and the second a grim tale of murder.

In the first he was the "Blade Runner", the multiple Paralympic gold medalist with carbon-fibre prosthetic legs who became the first double amputee to compete in the Olympics when he represented South Africa at the 2012 London Games. In the second he was the man convicted of murdering his 29-year-old girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp — a model and promising law graduate — shooting her through the door of a bathroom in his Pretoria home. On Friday, he will be back in the spotlight when he will be released from prison nearly 11 years after the killing.

REUTERS

Two golds for Pranati at National gymnastics



Bhubaneswar: Railways gymnast Pranati Das had a memorable day, clinching gold medals in uneven bars and floor exercise and finishing second in the all-around women's category in the Artistic Gymnastics Senior National Championship here on Thursday. Pranati's team-mate Pranati Nayak also had a fruitful day, winning the vault gold and a bronze in balance beam. Olympian Dipa Karmakar, representing Tripura, bagged three medals, including gold in the all-around category. The 30-year-old star gymnast also bagged silver in vault uneven bars. Odisha's Rakesh Kumar Patra capped the championships with two gold medals — all-around and rings — besides silver in parallel bars and bronze in the horizontal bar.

PTI

CURTAIN RAISER

Not First-class anymore

Last Date for submission of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) for Bid : 23.01.2024 upto 4:00 PM as per (IST)
Date & Time of E-auction :- 24.01.2024 from 1:00 PM to 5:00 PM as per (IST) with unlimited extension of 10 minutes each with Bid Incremental Amount of Rs. 10,000/-
For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please visit the websites <https://www.mstccommerce.com/auctionhome/bapi/index.jsp> & <https://www.ibapi.in>. The Borrower's and/or Guarantor's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section 8 of section 13 of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.
Note:- As per the Income Tax Rule, TDS @ Rate of 1% of Auction Price is payable by the successful auction purchaser, Hindi & English versions of this Notice are being published in Hindi & English Newspapers respectively. It is clarified that in case of any contradiction in Hindi and English version of the Notice, the English version of the Notice will prevail.

Date : 04.01.2024

Place : Firozabad

Authorized Officer (UCO Bank)

Zonal Office : 75/4, Siddhi Sadan, Halsey Road
Near Badshahi Naka Police Station, Kanpur - 208001
E-mail : zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

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UCO BANK

Honours your trust

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES [See proviso to Rule – 8(6)]

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property(ies) mortgaged/charged to UCO Bank Secured Creditor, the possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of UCO Bank Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is Where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" basis on 24-01-2024, for recovery of Bank's Dues from Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) to UCO Bank Secured Creditor. The details are described as below:

Sr. No. Name & Address of Borrower(s) / Guarantor(s) Demand Notice Date Description of Immovable Property(ies) with known encumbrances, if any Bank's Dues Reserve Price Earnest Money Deposit

Branch:- Firozabad, District -Firozabad; Contact Number(s):- +91-9870950490, +91-9334414353; Email Id:- firoza@ucobank.co.in, zokanpur.rec@ucobank.co.in

1. Borrower(s) Shri Ram Naresh Rajput S/o, Shri Nathu Ram @ Natu Ram Rajput and Smt. Malti Rajput W/o. Shri Ram Naresh Rajput, Both Address 1 : H. No. 95, Gayakwad Nagar (Santosh Nagar), Raipura Road, Opp. Sati Ashram, Firozabad-283203 (U.P.) Both Address 2 : H. No. 370, Nagla Karan Singh, Kotla Road, Firozabad-283203

28-06-2018 06-10-2018 (Symbolic Possession)

All that part and parcel of the property consists of land and building measuring 760.00 Sq. Ft (70.68 Square Meter) as per Bahi No. 1, Zila No. 9724, Page No. 163 to 190, Sl. No. 12525, Registered on 29.11.2013 at Sub-Registrar-1, Firozabad, situated at Mohalla - Gayakwad Nagar, Tehsil & District Firozabad standing in the name of Shri Ram Naresh Rajput S/o, Shri Nathu Ram Rajput R/o. H. No. 95, Gayakwad Nagar (Santosh Nagar), Raipura Road, Opp. Sati Ashram, Firozabad-283203 (U.P.).

Bounded by:- East - Plot Sunita Jain; West - 8 Ft. Wide Way; North - 14 Ft. Wide Way; South - Plot Sanjay Jain

Known Encumbrances, if any - Nil

Rs. 18,31,096.00 (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Thirty One Thousand Ninety Six Only) as on 26.06.2018 (inclusive of interest upto 31.10.2017) plus further interest thereon at the contractual rate, costs, charges and expenses etc. till date of payment.

Rs. 22,62,000/- Rs. 2,26,200/-

ON TUBE:
From 9.20 am onwards on Jio Cinema: Saurashtra vs Jharkhand, Gujarat vs Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh vs Assam.

TODAY'S KEY MATCHES
Gujarat vs Tamil Nadu at Valsad, Kerala vs Uttar Pradesh at Alappuzha, Karnataka vs Punjab at Bengaluru.

ON TUBE:
From 9.20 am onwards on Jio Cinema: Saurashtra vs Jharkhand, Gujarat vs Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh vs Assam.

WHAT IS NEW THIS TIME?
Solapur, will host a FC for the first time in 29 years when Maharashtra take on Manipur on Friday.

HOW IT PLAYS OUT
● Top two teams in each Elite group will make it to the quarterfinals. The bottom placed two teams (from all four groups combined) will be relegated to Plate next season.

● In the Plate category, after round-robin games, the top-four make the semi-finals. And the two finalists earn promotion to Elite next season.

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