



मिशन रोज़गार



उत्तर प्रदेश लोक सेवा आयोग उत्तर प्रदेश अधीनस्थ सेवा चयन आयोग एवं विद्युत सेवा आयोग द्वारा निष्पक्ष एवं पारदर्शी भर्ती प्रक्रिया के अंतर्गत चयनित

852 उत्तर प्रदेश पावर कॉरपोरेशन के विभिन्न पद

141 दंत चिकित्सक (चिकित्सा विभाग)

391 आयुर्वेद चिकित्सा अधिकारी (आयुष विभाग)

14 समीक्षा अधिकारी हिंदी/उर्दू (उत्तर प्रदेश सचिवालय)

42 सहायक अभियोजन अधिकारी (गृह विभाग)

123 अवर अभियंता (आवास विभाग)

210 अवर अभियंता (सिंचाई विभाग)

09 निरीक्षक (राजकीय कार्यालय निरीक्षणालय, प्रयागराज)

(कुल पद 1,782)

को नियुक्ति पत्र वितरण

योगी आदित्यनाथ मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तर प्रदेश द्वारा

गरिमामयी उपस्थिति

ब्रजेश पाठक

उप मुख्यमंत्री
उत्तर प्रदेश

स्वतंत्र देव सिंह

मंत्री, जल शक्ति तथा बाढ़ नियंत्रण
उत्तर प्रदेश

ए.के. शर्मा

मंत्री, नगर विकास, शहरी समग्र विकास, नगरीय रोजगार
एवं गरीबी उन्मूलन, ऊर्जा एवं अतिरिक्त ऊर्जा स्रोत, उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. दयाशंकर मिश्र 'दयालु'

राज्य मंत्री (स्वतंत्र प्रभार), आयुष, खाद्य सुरक्षा
एवं औषधि प्रशासन (MOS), उत्तर प्रदेश

मयंकेश्वर शरण सिंह

राज्य मंत्री, संसदीय कार्य, चिकित्सा शिक्षा,
चिकित्सा एवं स्वास्थ्य, परिवार कल्याण तथा
मातृ एवं शिशु कल्याण, उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनेश खटीक

राज्य मंत्री, जल शक्ति
उत्तर प्रदेश

रामकेश निषाद

राज्य मंत्री, जल शक्ति
उत्तर प्रदेश

डॉ. सोमेन्द्र तोमर

राज्य मंत्री, ऊर्जा एवं
वैकल्पिक ऊर्जा, उत्तर प्रदेश

दिनांक : 25 फरवरी, 2024 | समय : पूर्वाह्न 11:00 बजे | स्थान : लोक भवन सभागार, लखनऊ

युवाओं को रोजगार, डबल इंजन की सरकार

लाइव प्रसारण

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सूचना एवं जनसम्पर्क विभाग, उत्तर प्रदेश

THE WORLD



TOP OF THE WORLD



Donald Trump. Reuters

UNITED STATES

NY fraud verdict finalised, clock on appeal starts

New York: The staggering civil fraud judgment against Donald Trump was finalised in New York on Friday, making official a verdict that leaves the former president on the hook for more than USD 454 million in fines and interest. The procedural step by the New York county clerk starts the clock on Trump's appeals process, while allowing the debt to begin racking up post-judgment interest of nearly USD 112,000 each day, according to New York Attorney General Letitia James's office, who brought the case. Judge Arthur Engoron ruled that Trump lied for years about his wealth in order to secure favourable loans and make deals that helped prop up his real estate empire. AP

SPAIN

Apartment block fire toll rises to 10, say officials

Valencia: Police found a tenth body in an apartment block devastated by a huge fire in Spain's third largest city of Valencia, authorities said on Saturday. The blaze, fanned by strong winds, broke out on Thursday evening in the affluent El Campanar district. Authorities confirmed a 10th body had been found on Saturday morning, in a new statement on X. Around 100 survivors are being housed at a local hotel as they wait for a more permanent solution. PTI

UNITED STATES

Fund shortage: Migrants let go at bus stop

San Diego: Hundreds of migrants were dropped off Friday at a San Diego bus stop instead of at a reception centre that had been serving as a staging area because it ran out of local funding sooner than expected, showing how even the largest city on the southern border is struggling to cope with the influx of people. Migrants who previously had a safe place to charge phones, use the bathroom, eat a meal and arrange to head elsewhere in the US were now left on the street as migrant aid groups scrambled to help out as best they could with makeshift arrangements. AP

UNITED KINGDOM

WWII bomb detonated at sea, 10k evacuated

Plymouth: A World War II-era bomb whose discovery prompted one of the largest peacetime evacuations in British history has been detonated at sea, the Ministry of Defence said on Saturday. The 500-kg explosive was discovered Tuesday in the backyard of a home in Plymouth, a port city on the southwestern coast. Over 10,000 people were evacuated to ensure their safety as a military convoy transported the unexploded bomb through a densely populated residential area. PTI

\$61-BN U.S. AID STILL BLOCKED BY REPUBLICANS

4 Western leaders reach Kyiv on war anniversary, pledge backing

Biden to join G7 video conference, Zelenskyy invited

REUTERS
KYIV, FEBRUARY 24

EUROPEAN COMMISSION President Ursula von der Leyen vowed that Europe would back Ukraine until it was "finally free" as she and three other Western leaders arrived in Kyiv to show solidarity on the second anniversary of Russia's full-scale invasion.

The visit by von der Leyen and the prime ministers of Italy, Canada and Belgium - Giorgia Meloni, Justin Trudeau and Alexander De Croo - was a show of support as Ukraine suffers shortages of military supplies that are hurting it on the battlefield.

"More than ever, we stand firmly by Ukraine. Financially, economically, militarily, morally. Until the country is finally free," Von der Leyen wrote on the social media platform X. They visited Hostomel airport, site of a ferocious battle at the start of the invasion.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy embraced Western leaders and delivered a televised speech against a backdrop of wrecked aircraft. "Two years ago we met enemy troopers here with fire, and two years later, we are meeting our friends, our partners, here," he said.

However, \$61 billion in aid promised by U.S. President Joe Biden is being blocked by Republicans in Congress, casting



(From left) Canada Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, Italian PM Giorgia Meloni, Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen and Belgium Prime Minister Alexander De Croo at the Memory Wall of Fallen Defenders of Ukraine, Kyiv, Saturday. Reuters

a long shadow over Kyiv's hopes of pushing back the much larger, better supplied Russian military.

Biden was due to take part in a video conference of fellow leaders of the Group of Seven (G7) major democracies on Saturday, with Zelenskyy invited to join in.

Setbacks in the east have left Ukraine's army looking vulnerable. Seeking to maintain Western focus on Ukraine, Zelenskyy has warned that Russian President Vladimir Putin may not stop at Ukraine's borders if he emerges victorious. Putin dismisses such claims, and casts the war as a wider struggle with the US, which he says aims to dismantle Russia.

EXPLAINED

Ukraine's troop shortage woes

MANY UKRAINIAN men continue to evade the war. Meanwhile, lawmakers have spent months weighing a controversial proposal to increase the conscription pool. Shortages have forced Ukraine to focus on preserving the lives of soldiers, at times at the expense of territory.

Navalny's body handed over to kin

ASSOCIATED PRESS
FEBRUARY 24

THE BODY of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny has been handed over to his mother, a top aide to Navalny said Saturday on his social media account.

Ivan Zhdanov, the director of Navalny's Anti-Corruption Foundation, made the announcement on his Telegram account and thanked "everyone" who had called on Russian authorities to return Navalny's body to his mother.

Earlier Saturday, Yulia Navalnaya, Navalny's widow, accused President Vladimir Putin of mocking Christianity by trying to force his mother to agree to a secret funeral after his death in an Arctic penal colony.

"Thank you very much. Thanks to everyone who wrote and recorded video messages... Alexei Navalny's body has been given to his mother," Zhdanov wrote.

Navalny's mother, Lyudmila Navalnaya, is still in Salekhard, Navalny's press secretary Kira Yarmish said on X, formerly Twitter. Lyudmila has been in the Arctic region for more than a week, demanding that Russian authorities return his body.

NEPTUNE NOW HAS 16 MOONS, URANUS 28

NEW MOONS SPOTTED AROUND URANUS, NEPTUNE

ASTRONOMERS FOUND three previously unknown moons in our solar system — two additional moons circling Neptune and one around Uranus. The distant tiny moons were spotted using powerful land-based telescopes in Hawaii and Chile, and announced Friday by the International Astronomical Union's Minor Planet Center. The latest tally puts Neptune at 16 known moons and Uranus at 28.

"Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province Haj Ali on Saturday summoned the session of the provincial assembly on February 28 for the election of Chief Minister of the province," an order issued from the office of the governor said.

The KPK Assembly has a total strength of 145 members including 10 women and four minorities elected in reserved seats. PTI

Ceasefire talks underway in Paris as Israel strikes central, south Gaza cities

Mossad chief talks to Egypt, US, Qatar delegates: Source

REUTERS
CAIRO, RAFAH, FEBRUARY 24

GAZA TRUCE talks were underway in Paris on Friday, in what appears to be the most serious push for weeks to halt the fighting in the battered Palestinian enclave and see Israeli and foreign hostages released.

A source briefed on the ceasefire talks, who could not be identified by name or nationality, said talks had begun with Israel's head of Mossad intelligence service meeting separately with each party - Qatar, Egypt and United States.

"There are budding signs of optimism about being able to move forward toward the start of a serious negotiation," the source said. Egypt's Al Qahera TV News also reported that the talks had begun.

An official from Hamas said the militant group had wrapped up ceasefire talks in Cairo and was now waiting to see what mediators bring back from the weekend talks with Israel.

Mediators have ramped up efforts to secure a ceasefire in Gaza, in the hope of heading off an Israeli assault on the Gaza city of



Palestinians line up for free food in Rafah on Friday. Reuters

Rafah where more than a million displaced people are sheltering at the southern edge of the enclave. Israel says it will attack the city if no truce agreement is reached soon. Washington has called on its close ally not to do so, warning of vast civilian casualties if an assault on the city goes ahead.

As night fell over the impoverished strip, an air strike targeting a residential unit in central Gaza's Deir Al-Balah killed at least 22 Palestinians, health ministry spokesman Ashraf Al-Qidra said. Health officials said many family members of Mahmoud Abu Zeite, a comedian with 1.2 million online followers, were among the dead. There was no immediate comment from Israel.

At a morgue in Rafah, a family knelt by the body of their child, killed by Israeli strikes overnight into Friday. At least 29,606 Gazans have been killed in Israeli strikes on Gaza since October 7, the Gaza health ministry said on Friday.

BRASIL PRESIDENT ACCUSES ISRAEL OF COMMITTING GENOCIDE IN GAZA

ASSOCIATED PRESS
DEIR-AL-BALAH, FEB 24

BRAZIL'S PRESIDENT alleged Saturday that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians, doubling down on harsh rhetoric after stirring controversy a week earlier by comparing Israel's military offensive in Gaza to the Nazi Holocaust.

Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, President Luis Inacio Lula da Silva wrote on X, that he would not give up his "dignity for falsehood".

"What the Israeli government is doing is not war, it is genocide," he wrote Saturday. In response to Lula's initial comments, Israel declared him a persona non grata, summoned Brazil's ambassador and demanded an apology.

RETURN TO POLICY TRUMP REVERSED

New Israeli settlements in West Bank against international law: US

REUTERS
FEBRUARY 24



US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken

THE BIDEN administration on Friday said Israel's expansion of settlements in the occupied West Bank is inconsistent with international law, signaling a return to long-standing US policy on the issue that had been reversed by the administration of Donald Trump.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the United States was "disappointed" in Israel's announcement of plans for building new housing in the occupied West Bank, saying it awarded Israel most of what it has sought during decades of conflict, including nearly all the occupied land.

"They're also inconsistent with international law. Our administration maintains a firm opposition to settlement expansion, and in our judgment this only weakens, doesn't strengthen, Israel's security," Blinken said.

In November 2019, Trump's

administration announced it no longer viewed Israel's settlements on West Bank it captured in 1967 Middle East war as "inconsistent with international law," a reversal of four decades of US policy.

In January 2020, the Trump administration announced a peace plan for the conflict, which was embraced by Israel and rejected by the Palestinians as it awarded Israel most of what it has sought during decades of conflict, including nearly all the occupied land.

President Joe Biden has proposed further expansion of settlements, saying it was counterproductive to lasting peace, but Friday was the first time a US official said the practice was inconsistent with international law.

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In its notice to Marwat, the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party said, "A tense situation has arisen due to your statement."

It asked him to submit an apol-

ogy letter within two days, saying that action would be taken according to party policy in case of a non-satisfactory answer, Geo News reported.

"Incompetence and poor performance are the reasons behind Gohar's removal as chairman. Barrister Gohar is a gentleman but his performance was not satisfactory," he told Geo News Friday.

Gohar Thursday announced that PTI's next chairman nominee is Barrister Ali Zafar.

IMRAN PARTY LEADER GETS NOTICE FOR SAYING CHIEF WAS 'REMOVED'

National Party leader gets notice for saying chief was 'removed'

Islamabad: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan's party Saturday issued a show-cause notice to senior leader Sher Afzal Marwat and sought his apology for making claims that party chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan has been "removed" for his "incompetence" and "poor" performance.

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"All the climbers to Everest would be provided the electronic chip by the government after paying a certain amount. It will be fitted in the climber's jacket," Rakesh Gurung, Director at the Department of Tourism told PTI.

The chips would cost around USD 10 to USD 15, he said.

According to Gurung, the chip will help make the expeditions safe and facilitate emergency rescue operations.

Some reputed climbing agencies have already provided the electronic chips to their climbers, Gurung said.

PTI

PTI SET TO FORM GOVT IN PAK'S KPK PROVINCE

PTI set to form govt in Pak's KPK province

Peshawar: Jailed former prime minister Imran Khan-led Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) is set to form a government for the third consecutive time in the restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province when the Assembly session is held on February 28.

"Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) Province Haj Ali on Saturday summoned the session of the provincial assembly on February 28 for the election of Chief Minister of the province," an order issued from the office of the governor said.

The KPK Assembly has a total strength of 145 members including 10 women and four minorities elected in reserved seats. PTI

PTI

MEASURE TO EASE RESCUE OPERATIONS ON WORLD'S HIGHEST PEAK

Nepal to make electronic chips must for Everest climbers

SHIRISH B PRADHAN
KATHMANDU, FEBRUARY 24

NEPAL WILL soon be making it mandatory for all climbers headed to Mount Everest to carry an electronic chip that would be helpful in rescue in case of any emergency at the world's highest peak.

The government will soon be formulating a rule for making such a chip mandatory starting from Spring this year when the climbing season starts for Mt. Everest with the opening of the narrow window available to climb



A wide field of view image of Schomberger crater sent by Odysseus lunar lander. Reuters

Since 1953, 300 persons have lost their lives while climbing Everest, according to Nepal government data

during their respective expeditions to Mt Everest.

The Everest base camp is situated at an altitude of 18,000 feet. Any search and rescue operation from the base camp onwards to the Summit becomes a tedious job because of the snow storms, avalanches, and other

extreme weather events.

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PTI

• Can Opp politics address aspirations expressed by Modi with national identity and pride?



Political philosopher Michael Sandel was at Adda, Friday.

a tin ear to that dimension of politics and aspiration."

Sandel is Anne T. and Robert M. Bass Professor of Government Theory at Harvard Law School.

His "Justice" lecture series has received tens of millions of views online, earning him the label of "rockstar political philosopher."

His seminal works on distress in democracy, the moral limits of markets, and the many myths of meritocracy have shaped both public discourse and several areas of academic research in politics and society across the world.

At Adda, Sandel was in conversation with Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, and Deputy Associate Editor Aakash Joshi. It spanned a broad sweep: the role of opposition in a democracy, what disagreement looks like in a world with a breakdown of civil liberties, and how to bring back a spiritual wholeness to liberal politics.

On the appeal of strongman political figures, Sandel underlined the need to look within.

"The success of right-wing au-

thoritarian populist figures and those is usually a symptom of the failure of progressive politics.

I certainly think that's true in the United States with the success of (Donald) Trump. It should be an occasion not to look down on those people who are voting for Trump and similar candidates,

but an occasion to ask if he is as disagreeable as we think he is,

what does that say about us?"

Why have we failed to offer a compelling alternative? Does it have something to do with the tendency of elites to look down?"

Explaining this in the context of India, he asked: "Can there be an opposition party that reimagines an alternative vision of democracy that draws on India's democratic tradition? Which is itself a source of great national pride. But (also one) that re-articulates the meaning of that democratic tradition in a way that speaks to the aspirations that (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi has articulated and expressed with national identity and pride?"

On the tendency of democracies to tilt in favour of majorities, Sandel drew a distinction.

"Democracy is not only about voting or majorities. Democracy, at its best, describes a public culture of deliberation, an ongoing argument and contestation. And so for democracy to flourish, it's necessary (there) be sites and occasions for genuine citizen deliberation about these kinds of questions," he said.

Why should a political party

that can win elections based on its popularity with the dominant community, care for the minority? It's simple, said Sandel.

"Because one day, they too will be in the minority. And even more importantly – if they can't bring themselves to imagine that possibility – respecting the minority is a fundamental condition of the

politics and aspiration."

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On the appeal of strongman



The library inside a community centre, West Gorakh Park. *Gajendra Yadav*

Delhi's forgotten libraries

Scattered across the city — in varying stages of neglect — are 32 branches of the Hardayal Municipal Public Library. SAMAN HUSAIN visits 15 of them to find out what's in store for these once-vibrant hubs

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

ONE A homeless shelter, another a makeshift wedding venue, many more locked up and gathering dust — this is the fate that has befallen most of the 32 branches of the Hardayal Municipal Public Library in Delhi. At two libraries that are open and seemingly functional, it is their patrons — students preparing for competition exams — who virtually run them.

Funded by the Municipal Corporation of Delhi (MCD), these once vibrant hubs of learning have been languishing in neglect for several years with little to no upkeep. At the heart of the crisis is a lack of funds — for the libraries as well as their staff, who have not been paid for years. As a result, six branches are permanently closed while 12 others, according to documents accessed from the library's head office in Chandni Chowk, are marked temporarily closed. *The Indian Express* has learnt.

The first — and the oldest — one is located in the heart of Chandni Chowk. Established in 1862 as a British reading room, it was later renamed after freedom fighter and member of the Gadar Party, Lala Har Dayal Mathur. Last year, due to a shortage of funds, the library had no electricity for nearly four months, forcing students to study in the dark.

How did these libraries first come about?

According to MM Chandra's *'Swarn Itihas ke 154 Warsh'*, the beginning of the library movement in Delhi can be traced back to the establishment of the Delhi Public Library in 1951 which was initiated as a UNESCO project. As the years passed, more branches popped up all over the city, said Chandra in his book. It was during this time that the many Hardayal libraries were opened.

Rajender Singh Yadav, librarian at the main library, said, "More branches were opened as and when the demand for them started increasing... the last branch was established in West Patel Nagar as recently as 2022."

A sorry state

When *The Indian Express* visited 15 branches of Hardayal library, it found that 13 of them were either poorly maintained or locked. Only two were functional.

Daryaganj, near Golcha Cinema

Opened in 1946, this branch has been non-functional for the last three years, despite being marked as functioning in documents. "Locals used to once visit the library to read newspapers and magazines but due to the fund crunch, it is mostly closed now," said Rajdhani, who owns a grocery store next door.

The exterior, meanwhile, painted in the colours of the Indian Flag during the G20 Summit, belies the condition inside — bereft of books, the walls bore signs of neglect and decay, the tables and chairs were dusty, and the second floor was a jumbled mess of broken furniture pieces.

In the absence of a librarian, Nitin Kumar, a *safai karamchari* operates it now. He said, "More than nine newspapers in Hindi, Urdu and English used to be available at the library once... residents still come here asking for newspapers but nothing is available now."

Azad Market, Library Road

A rusty board bearing the library's name hangs on a weathered building, which has been non-functional for the past five years. The entry gate was encroached upon by shop owners of the market that is famous for wholesale canvas and tarpaulin products.

Looking past the neglect, one can faintly see the intricate teal-coloured wooden detailing — with many pieces now missing.

Shyam Dhinra, a business owner in the area, said, "As an avid reader, I was a regular visitor to the library. This branch dates back decades, even my father grew up studying



(Clockwise from above) Library branches at Azad Market; Shankar Gali, which now houses a DUSIB shelter on the first floor; the library at Mayur Vihar, where students were studying for exams; and the Daryaganj branch which has been non-functional for 3 yrs. *Gajendra Yadav*

here. It's been closed for years now... the library operator sometimes visits to check on it."

Shankar Gali, Old Delhi's Kalyanpur

At this branch, a rusty board hung crookedly, its once-bold text faded. The ground floor of the building had one table, eight chairs, and an empty book rack — all blanketed by a thick layer of dust. "We have 1,200 books but they are currently locked elsewhere. Due to lack of funds, we are unable to order magazines and newspapers," said Asha, the library operator.

While the library once used to occupy two floors, the first floor is now being used as a DUSIB women's shelter. "It's been closed for the last 20 years," said Mobin, a resident.

Shalimar Bagh

The library was found locked, with residents claiming the premises was being used as a Baraat Ghar. "It's been a year and a half since the building was emptied of its books

and sent to an office in Rohini. The guards visit occasionally but it is not being used as a library anymore but a Baraat Ghar instead... the last wedding took place a week ago," claimed Rohit, who runs a *pav bhaji* stall outside.

The library board has not been removed and the building sports a picture of Hardayal.

West Gorakh Park, inside an MCD community centre

Devoid of any books, shelves and furniture, the library had many missing window panes and *paan* stains on its walls. Empty alcohol bottles also littered the premises. "In the absence of a night security guard at the community centre, we've seen break-ins and thefts of valuables housed in the library," said Atul, a staff member at the centre.

Mayor's House, Lancer Road, Timarpur
A library used to once exist on the premises. "But it has been closed for 10 years now... there was talk to shift the library elsewhere but

we have not got an update on the proposal," said a staff member at the Mayor's house on condition of anonymity. Meanwhile, it is marked as 'temporarily closed' in documents.

MCD Primary School, Mehrauli Dargah

This branch was locked. Fruit sellers outside said the operator visits for two hours daily but otherwise, it's mostly closed.

Malviya Nagar

"The library inside the community centre has been non-functional for the last five years," said Niraj Kumar, who owns a shop in front of the centre in Malviya Nagar Old Market.

Community centre near Bhalswa landfill

According to area residents, the library once operated within the centre but has remained shut for several years.

Community centre, Mayur Vihar Ph II

Despite the absence of any staff. Here too, there



were desks and chairs and longer tables, occupied mostly by students. "The library operator visits to unlock the facility at 8 am and then to lock it around 8 pm... during this time, we study here," said students at the library who were preparing for competitive exams.

This branch too was closed after workers went on a strike, but it was unlocked after students wrote to the head office pleading with them to reopen the facility.

Rahul, a student, however, pointed to the lack of amenities at the library. "The washrooms are dirty and smelly. There has been no drinking water after a water cooler was stolen from the second floor a year ago."

But many students emphasised that it provides them a good place to study peacefully. Some had even used the walls to stick notes or hang charts. "It's always better to sit in groups while preparing for competitive exams because if we have any doubts, then we can discuss them with others and teach each other," Saloni, a student, said.

Other branches inside MCD community centres at Mayur Vihar Pocket F, Rohini Sector 13, Ramesh Nagar, Jahangirpuri and Majnu Ka Tila were inaccessible as the doors of the centres were locked. Residents too were unaware of their existence.

Behind the crisis

For the last 35 months, employees — from book cleaners, sanitation workers, and library operators — of the various branches have been sitting on *dharna* as their salaries have not been paid since 2021. On February 14, on the directions of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the MCD released salaries of 96 employees due for five months of 2021; salaries for the remaining 30 months remain pending. Addressing the staff, Kejriwal had said, "A provision has been made for your salaries for the remaining period and it will be released soon..."

At the core of the issue was a political tussle between AAP and BJP over the elections to the library's managing body.

Last April, MCD Mayor Shelly Oberoi had committed to paying the library staff. A verification committee was also formed for salary distribution. The civic body had stated the committee would submit a report in 15 days; which did not materialise.

Meanwhile, at the MCD's monthly house meeting on August 31, 2023, a motion was approved to establish a new managing body for the library, as the term of the current one selected during the BJP's MCD tenure had come to an end. On October 31 last year, Oberoi — who also serves as the library's ex-officio chairperson — appointed six of the 11 new members of the management committee. Preeti (who goes by one name), an AAP councillor from Dilshad Colony, was named the committee's secretary.

When contacted for comment, Preeti said, "We are still solving issues at the main heritage library in Gandhi Maidan... I will start visiting other branches to check what can be done to improve them and ensure they are functioning once again."

Recently, the MCD released a Rs 2.2 crore grant for the library — most of it was used to pay pending electricity bills and the 5-month salaries of employees. A grant of Rs 8.5 crore is still due.

However, according to the minutes of a recent managing committee meeting, they are now planning to close all branches that are non-functional. It is also going to hire more employees, for which there is a plan to set a degree in library sciences as an eligibility criteria. To improve the main library building, solar panels will be installed to meet the electricity needs.

"The CM is personally invested in improving the condition of the libraries because they are heritage buildings... at the moment, many libraries are not functional and instead they are being used by employees and guards to stay; these issues will be rectified soon," AAP sources said.

NORTHEAST DELHI RIOTS

4 yrs on, judgments in 12% of 695 cases; acquittals in 80%

CASE STATUS



The riots left 53 people dead. Archive



757



695



62

Being probed by NE district police

Transferred to Crime Branch

IN NORTHEAST DISTRICT

Arrests	2,174
Those out on bail	1,738
Those in jail	108
Chargesheets filed	367
Convictions	47
Acquittals	183
Persons discharged	50

SIT CRIME BRANCH

Cases worked out	45
Accused arrested	424
Cases cancelled	1
Charges framed	39
Convictions	1
Persons discharged	25
Persons in jail	52
Persons out on bail	331

noted that police identified the accused after considerable delay. In many cases, their testimonies became doubtful in the absence of police station records.

■ In 16 acquittals, there were contradictions in the statements of police witnesses or police officers.

■ In 13 acquittals, police witnesses identified the accused, saying that they knew them before the riots broke out. However, their testimonies did not stand the test of trial.

■ In seven acquittals, the court noted that the witnesses, during cross-examination, stated that they were "suffering from memory loss" or other illnesses which made it difficult for them to identify the accused and "were also taking medicine for the same".

■ In one, there was only a single public witness whose testimony the court found to be not substantive.

■ In another, the court was doubtful that the police witnesses, who were the only eyewitnesses in the case, were present when the incident occurred.

■ In one acquittal, a video wasn't considered as evidence because it wasn't tested for tampering and the FSL report for the video was missing.

■ In another, the court noted

that the sole witness could have been tutored by the investigating officer.

■ One acquittal, the court noted, was a case of double jeopardy – the accused was already convicted in another FIR with similar allegations.

■ In another, the court noted that a police witness, who was the eyewitness, identified the accused but saw him at a different property than the one where the incident took place.

■ In four acquittals, the court noted that the police deposed in "a general way".

In the case of 45 acquittals out of 68, witnesses (either some or all) turned hostile. In three acquittals, police could not trace the eyewitnesses. Further, in the vast majority of acquittals, while a case of rioting or unlawful assembly was made out, the witnesses were unable to identify the accused.

Police sources told *The Indian Express* that apart from the 695 cases, 62 other riot cases were transferred to the Crime Branch – taking the total to 757. In these 62 cases, charges were framed in 39 and 424 accused were arrested according to sources. One person was convicted, 331 people are out on bail and 52 are still in jail.

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The Ramlila was staged by Shri

STUDENT SUICIDE: ARMY ORDERS PROBE

Cops probe Instagram video, to question other students

a case of abetment of suicide against the school.

Said an officer, "A day before the incident, one of his classmates uploaded a video on a social media platform wherein they had purportedly shown a broken chair in a class... three more children were seen in the video, apart from the victim. We will be questioning them after getting the consent of their parents."

According to the boy's parents, Army Public School in Delhi Cantt had summoned them to complain about the said chair, scolded their son "badly", and allegedly denied him his admit card to sit for the Class X board exam. After this incident, they found their son hanging at their home. The boy's father filed a complaint accusing the teacher and school principal of causing mental trauma to his child and wife, forcing his son to take the extreme step. Police then lodged

an FIR against the school.

Added the officer, "The principal and teacher of the school submitted the said video to us

and have denied making any

statements which might have

affected the child's mental

health... Their statements are yet

to be recorded. Once the stu-

dents are done with their ex-

ams, they will be questioned to

know more about the deceased

child and the possible reasons

why he took the step."

Meanwhile, police have

formed a Special Investigation

Team (SIT) to probe the case.

Police earlier told *The Indian Express* that the admit cards of a few other children, seen in the video, had also been withheld by the school administration and a probe into the same is ongoing.

The case has been lodged un-

der IPC section 306 (abetment of

suicide) at Vasant Vihar police

station on the complaint of the

father, an Indian Army havaldar.

He alleged, in the complaint,

that the school principal and

teacher "drove his child to sui-

cide" after denying him his ad-

mit card for his board exam and

insulting his child and wife over

the issue of a broken chair, de-

spite his wife saying she was

willing to pay Rs 10,000 for the

child and the possible reasons

why he took the step."

On Saturday morning, sev-

eral parents and children of the

school held a protest outside the

principal's house, holding plac-

ards and demanding action

against her in connection with

the case. The principal has not

responded to questions seeking

comment.

The Indian Army has ordered

an investigation into the inci-

dent. In a statement, the Indian

Army, Western Command, said:

"The school management stays

firmly committed to safety and

well-being of all its students. An

in-depth investigation is being

carried out on this tragic and un-

fortunate incident."

The Indian Army and the

school management at Shankar

Vihar "is pained" at the death of

the Class 10 student and "stand

firm with the bereaved family in

this moment of grief", the state-

ment said. —WITH PTI INPUTS

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Teen killed outside school in NE Delhi: Cops apprehend student in case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

A CLASS VI student of a private school in Northeast Delhi was apprehended by the Delhi Police for allegedly killing a 14-year-old boy of his school, officers said on Saturday.

According to officers, the two students got into a fight over a petty issue outside the school premises and the accused boy allegedly punched the victim, who was a class VIII student in the face.

Officers said that the incident took place on Friday, following which the victim was admitted to a hospital with head and face injuries. He later died.

"The incident spot was littered with blood spots and after scanning CCTV footage, the juvenile was apprehended late on Friday," said police.

Ramlila used to pass by Chawri Bazaar... But it is my first time watching it in Urdu," said Raees Ahmad, an audience member. Talat, a student, said, "Urdu is a dying language and it is great to see it getting representation through the Ramayana... this will also help the Urdu-speaking populations understand the epic better."

The Ramlila was followed by a supplementary panel discussion 'Ramayana in the Mirror of Urdu'. The festival will conclude Sunday.

'DASTAN-E-RAMAYAN' STAGED AS PART OF FOUR-DAY FESTIVAL

At Sunder Nursery, a unique Ramlila — in Urdu

SAMAN HUSAIN

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

WATCHING RAMLILA is not a new experience for residents of Delhi where different committees present a grand spectacle each year around Dussehra. But as people gathered at Sunder Nursery on Saturday, they were in for something unique and unprecedented: A Ramlila in Urdu.

'Dastan-e-Ramayan: Ramlila in Urdu', hosted by the Delhi government as part of its four-day Urdu Festival, saw the actors presenting Ramlila in a blend of Sanskrit, Hindi, and Urdu.

"Urdu is a very sweet language that connects one person to another... Through these programmes, we aim to introduce Delhi's millennia-old art and culture to young generation of the country... This programme is an endeavour to foster mutual brotherhood and love among people..."

Saurabh Bharadwaj, Minister of Art, Culture and Languages, said.

The Ramlila was staged by Shri

Shradha Ramlila group from Faridabad. Said director Anil Chawla, "Our families were refugees from Pakistan, where audiences used to watch the Ramlila in Urdu... The script of our rendition has been passed down the generations."

Chawla's nephew Kunal es-

sayed the role of Lord Ram while his younger brother Sharwan portrayed the demon-king, Ravan.

The Ramlila began with the

portrayal of Sita's abduction, mix-

ing chaste Hindi with the poetic flow of Urdu. As the story unfolded, the actors also merged dialogues with musical notes. In a scene, Hanuman and Ravan could be seen engaged in a verbal confrontation through Urdu poetry and shayari.

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If there is an industry in the history of India that has always been important for the country, it is the textile industry.

NARENDRA MODI
PRIME MINISTER



INSPIRED BY THE
FABRIC OF INDIA
FORWARD TO
VISION 2024

FILE EN ROUTE: DELHI GOVT

Budget stalled:
L-G shoots off
letter to CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24



L-G VK Saxena

QUESTIONING WHY the Delhi Budget continued to be subjected to delays despite requisite clearances, L-G VK Saxena Saturday wrote to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal asking why it was "stalled for no apparent reason" at the level of the Delhi government.

The Delhi government responded to the matter by seeking to clarify that the document was en route to the L-G's office for clearance as per norms. However, Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri alleged the delay was deliberate so it could be used as an excuse by Kejriwal to evade the Enforcement Directorate.

The AAP chief has received a fresh summons from the probe agency, asking him to appear for questioning in the Delhi excise policy case on February 26.

In his letter, Saxena wrote, "... addressed the Budget Session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly on 15.02.2024..

Subsequently, the House was informed by you... that the presentation of the Annual Financial Statement... will be delayed because of delays on part of the GNCT of Delhi in finalising the same and that MHA would need time to clear it..."

"...despite Annual Financial Statement being ready and available with the Government, after due clearance of Government of India since as long as 19.02.2024, it is yet to reach me..." he added.

Farmers' protest: Singhu, Tikri borders to be partially reopened

New Delhi: Authorities in Delhi on Saturday initiated the process to partially reopen the Singhu and the Tikri borders with Haryana, almost two weeks after these were sealed in view of the farmers' "Delhi Chalo" march, officials said.

A Delhi Police officer said one lane of the service lane at the Singhu border and one lane at the Tikri border are being opened to allow vehicular movement.

The partial reopening of the

two border points will bring relief to commuters travelling from Delhi to Haryana, he said.

The two border points were sealed on February 13 as protesting farmers from Punjab began their march to press the Centre for their demands.

According to another police officer, the decision was taken after the protesting farmers announced a halt to the march till the end of this month. PTI

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA MINISTRY OF DEFENCE EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS) STATION HEADQUARTERS(ECHS CELL), AGRA

Phone: 0562-2411201
E-Mail ID: oicechscellagra69@gmail.com

1. Station Headquarters, Agra (ECHS Cell) invites applications to engage following ECHS staff on contractual basis in ECHS Polyclinics Agra, Etah, Mainpuri and Firozabad for a period of 11 months/ one year renewable for additional period of one year/tilt attaining the maximum age subject to performance of candidates / other conditions according to the criteria as mentioned above each post-

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(b) Medical Specialist MD/MS in Speciality concerned/DNB 1 - - 1 Rs. 37,500/- for 1st Year and Rs. 1,00,000/- for 2nd year.

(c) Medical Officer MBBS 2 2 2 Rs. 75,000/-

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(e) Lab Assistant DMLT/Class I Lab Tech Course (Armed Forces) - 1 - - 1 Rs. 28,100/-

(f) Lab Technician B.Sc. (Med Lab Technology) - - 1 1 Rs. 28,100/-

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(k) Chowkidar Edn 8th pass or GD trade for Army Forces. - 1 1 - 1 Rs. 16,800/-

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4. Interview Date, Timing & Venue. Candidates must reach Station Headquarters, Agra on 15 Apr 2024 (subject to change) by 0900hrs. Candidates must bring all original certificates/ mark sheet/degree of 10th matrix, 10² & 12th matrix, 10² & 12th certificate, academic transcript and discharge book. PPO, service records and 02 P size photographs at the time of interview. Medical fitness Certificate is mandatory. No T/DA is admissible. Only candidate meeting the Qualitative Requirements may apply.

5. Co/I/C Col. OIC ECHS St HQ Agra

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9. Co/I/C Col. OIC ECHS St HQ Agra

7-0, 5-2, or 4-3: BJP brainstorms to chalk out own seat formula

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

WITH THE AAP-Congress seat-sharing formula for the Lok Sabha polls formally out, the BJP is understood to have begun working out its own equation for the capital's seven Parliamentary seats. While candidate selection is now the next step for all the three principal political protagonists in Delhi, for the BJP, which has held all the seven Lok Sabha seats in the city for the last 10 years, the issue is different — whom to repeat and whom to skip, party sources said.

According to party sources, the BJP too has its own permutations and combinations when it comes to seats, much like the AAP-Congress's four-three pact. "There are several possibilities which range from seven-zero, that is replacing all sitting MPs and fielding fresh faces to five-two as well as four-three — replacing five and repeating two or

replacing four and repeating three," a party source said.

"The AAP-Congress alliance will certainly impact the party's approach to candidate selection in Delhi since the contest is now bipolar and not tri-corner as it was in 2019," the source added.

The BJP Central Election Committee, which will take the final call on candidates to be fielded, was originally scheduled on Friday but was postponed to February 29, as per party insiders.

Sources said the CEC was understood to have decided on the candidature of upwards of 160-odd individuals the BJP would field in the elections, which included "at least two seats" from Delhi. "That the party is yet to announce an in-charge for Delhi like it has for other state units is proof enough that... the matter is firmly in the hands of the national leadership," a party leader said.

"While the final decision will take time, the party is likely to repeat sitting MPs on the Northeast and West Delhi seats if it goes for the five-two scenario; if it decides on four-three, South Delhi is likely to be added to this list," he added.

Meanwhile, the AAP-Congress combine and BJP pulled out all stops against the other following the announcement of the alliance. Delhi Congress chief Arvinder Singh Lovely said, "The INDIA alliance will sweep all 7 seats as BJP MPs have totally neglected the city for the past 10 years... the fact that BJP is set to replace sitting Delhi MPs is proof enough that they have done nothing for the Capital."

AAP National General Secretary (Organisation) Sandeep Pathak said, "AAP will contest from here and Congress from there: We won't fight like this. This election will be fought by the INDIA block. BJP's calculations and strategy will go wrong due to the alliance."

Delhi BJP chief Virendra Sachdeva said, "BJP is confident it will win each of the 7 Lok Sabha seats based on our work, support of our workers, and people."

Trying to implement water bill scheme soon, CM tells residents

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

HOURS AFTER the AAP-Congress alliance was formally announced, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal hit the streets for an interface with citizens over the alleged obstruction of the one-time settlement scheme for water bills by the BJP-Centre.

Meeting residents in Southeast Delhi's Govindpuri, which falls under the Kalkaji assembly constituency represented by senior AAP leader Atishi, who also accompanied him, Kejriwal sought to assure residents of rectifying erroneous water bills.

In what party insiders said was similar to visuals of the AAP convenor disconnecting faulty power connections prior to the formation of the party's maiden government in 2013, the CM told the scheme "as soon as possible."

Kejriwal sought to emphasize that the Delhi government was committed to implementing the scheme "despite BJP's

hindrance through the L-G." Sources said Kejriwal was likely to take part in "a large event" at the party's headquarters on the issue — which allegedly affects over 11 lakh households — over the coming days. "We have made water free. Still, if such high bills are coming, it's wrong... We are trying to bring a scheme to waive off incorrect bills, but the BJP is stopping the scheme through the L-G... The BJP has a feed with me, why are they har-

bouring such enmity with the people?" he alleged.

The CM said those who have received wrong bills should not pay them and that the government was trying to implement the scheme "as soon as possible."

The scheme seeks to allow consumers to settle arrears by paying re-casted bills in one go; these will get re-casted in an automated manner and customers will not have to individually get their bills rectified at DJB offices.

CM Arvind Kejriwal during an interaction with local residents over water bills, Saturday. PTI



MAN KILLED IN DWARKA HIT-AND-RUN

'Incident has left us shattered... haven't told his grandchild'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

THREE DAYS after a hit-and-run case left his father-in-law dead and his daughter, 5, injured, Dwarka resident Prashant Goswami says he does not know how the minor girl will cope with the loss in the family.

Goswami said he is yet to inform his daughter about Kumar's death. "My father (in law) used to pick and drop her, mostly on his scooter. We never knew such an incident would happen. It has left us shattered," he added.

Meanwhile, police are yet to arrest the accused person.

DCP (Dwarka) Ankit Singh said though no arrest has been made yet, the vehicle involved in the accident has been identified.

According to police, the incident took place near Dwarka Sector 17 on Wednesday

(L) Victim, Arun Kumar; his grandchild was injured

afternoon.

CCTV footage of the incident showed Kumar riding his scooter with his granddaughter at her residence in Sector 12 after picking her up from nursery school when a Mercedes hit them.

Goswami said he is yet to inform his daughter about Kumar's death.

"My father (in law) used to pick and drop her, mostly on his scooter. We never knew such an incident would happen. It has left us shattered," he added.

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BRIEFLY

2 men found with banned Chinese e-cigarettes, arrested

Noida: The Noida Police Saturday said it has arrested two men and allegedly recovered a large number of China-made e-cigarettes sourced from Nepal. The e-cigarettes — the use of which is banned in India — were being transported by the accused in a car and meant to be supplied in Delhi, a senior officer said.

Man stabbed to death while resisting robbery

New Delhi: A 32-year-old man was stabbed to death while resisting four people from robbing him at a park in East Delhi's Madhu Vihar, police said Saturday. The incident occurred late Friday night, they said. The victim was identified as Narendra. PTI

E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) / 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Union Bank of India (secured creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder:

Name & Address of Branch	Name & Address of Borrower/ Mortgagor/ Guarantor	Amount Due	Property Details	Reserve Price/ EMD/Bid Multiplier
Union Bank of India, Bettiah 2 Branch, CHRISTIAN QUARTERS, CHURCH ROAD BETTIAH, West Champaran	1. Borrower: M/s Gaurav Traders (Prop. Mrs. Anamica Singh), Ward No. 1, P.S- Bettiah Town, Dist- West Champaran, Bihar.	Rs. 4,19,418.99/- as on 31.01.2024 plus Interest and other Expenses	Land & building in the name of Sri Niraj Kumar Singh, S/o Sri Dhruv Singh situated at Mauza Pachim Kargaha, Ward No. 1, P.S- Bettiah Town, Dist. West Champaran bearing land detail as under:- Thana No.-137, Tazui No.-951, Khata No.- 264, Plot No. -41/2, Area 2222 sq ft. Boundary: N- Md Khursid Alam, S- Khesra No. 414, E-Yadavji, W-Rakabali, R-Ward No. 1, P.S- Bettiah Town, Dist. West Champaran, Bihar-845438	

Shah, Nadda meet core BJP teams of key states

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

UNION HOME Minister Amit Shah and BJP president J P Nadda met the core party teams of key states, including Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Telangana, on Saturday, for thrashing out the nitty-gritty of the BJP's Lok Sabha polls preparations.

UP CM Yogi Adityanath and Chhattisgarh CM Vishnudeo Sai were also present at the party office for the meeting.

Sources said the discussion was on first drawing the lists of candidates for the seats that the party had lost last time, which are generally known as C-category seats.

The announcement of this list will happen only after the central election committee of the party meets, and this, sources say, is likely to happen either by month-end or the first week of March. Before this meeting, Nadda met state in-charges and co-incharges and discussed chunaav prabandhan (managing the nitty-gritty of the election) over the next two months, said sources.

SPECIAL TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE

UP govt cancels constable exam over paper leak, retest within six months

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 24

AFTER PROTESTS by aspirants alleging a paper leak, the Uttar Pradesh government Saturday announced that the police constable recruitment examination held on February 17 and 18 stands cancelled and will be held again within six months.

The government has decided to get the paper leak investigated by the UP Police Special Task Force (STF).

In a statement, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said that those found involved in using unfair means during the exam would face stringent action. "Those involved in using unfair means are under STF radar, and some big arrests have happened," the CM said. In a post in Hindi on 'X', Adityanath said: "There can be no compromise with the sanctity of examinations. Those who toy with the hard work of youngsters will not be spared."

A total of 48 lakh candidates appeared for the exam to fill 60,244 police constable positions. Over 2,370 examination centres were set up in 75 districts. Officials Saturday said a case was registered in Lucknow over the alleged paper leak. The case was filed Monday against one Satya Arman Kumar, who had appeared in the examination, and one Neeraj, who allegedly pro-



Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during the Bharat Jodo Nyay Yatra in Moradabad, Saturday. PTI

vided the leaked paper to Kumar. Both have been arrested and sent to judicial custody.

More than 240 people were arrested and detained by the police across Uttar Pradesh for allegedly using "unfair means" in the recruitment exam.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Saturday termed the cancel-

lation of the exam a "victory of youth unity and student power".

Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav posted on X: "The cancellation of the examination is a win of the youth, and defeat of BJP's miscreants. Initially, the BJP people were saying there was no paper leak. Have they accepted it now? This means the officers and criminals were hand-in-glove and the government also gave them backing. Despite all the evidence, the government had to bow down because of the fear of defeat in elections."

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra posted on X in Hindi: "Till yesterday, people sitting in the government were making statements in an attempt to deny the paper leak. When their lies could not stand before the power of the youth, the examination was cancelled today."

"Leaking of papers of every examination in UP is not only a proof of the corruption prevalent in the BJP government, what is more serious is the careless and misleading attitude of the government," she said.

UP also orders probe into leak of RO/ARO exam

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 24

THE UTTAR Pradesh government has ordered an investigation into the preliminary examination for the recruitment of Review Officer/Assistant Review Officer (RO/ARO) conducted by the Uttar Pradesh Public Service Commission (UPPSC) on February 11.

The examination, conducted on February 11 at 2,387 centres across 58 districts in UP, had seen participation from 64 per cent of the total 10,76,004 registered candidates. A total of 411 vacancies were to be filled by the examination. Earlier, the Commission had constituted a three-member committee to investigate the allegations of paper leak amid protests by students and aspirants.

UNVEILS ₹34K-CR PROJECTS IN CHHATTISGARH

Cong thinks only about its children, your dreams are my resolution: PM



Prime Minister Narendra Modi virtually attends the Viksit Bharat, Viksit Chhattisgarh programme on Saturday. PTI

new heights of development.

Modi targeted the Congress for "dynastic politics", saying: "They think about their children's future but your dreams are my resolution.. Congress cannot think beyond nepotism, corruption and appeasement."

On corruption, the PM said he has fulfilled his promise of bringing back the money of the poor and punished those who looted the money. The PM said when the Congress was in power, its own Prime Minister had said that when New Delhi sends a rupee to a village, only 15 paisa reaches it.

He said: "Chhattisgarh has diligent farmers, dynamic youth and a treasure of natural resources – everything needed to be a developed state. But after Independence, those who ruled the country for a long time had a narrow vision. The Congress formed the government many times but forgot to envision the future of the country."

The

ten projects unveiled Saturday related to coal, solar energy, railway and roads. Chief Minister Vishnu Deo Sai and his cabinet ministers were present at the event. The PM said when India becomes the world's third-largest economy in the next five years, Chhattisgarh will reach

The government was transforming the "annadata" (food producer) into "urjadata" (power producer) by assisting farmers to set up small-scale solar plants on barren farmlands, Modi said.

EXPORT TARGET ₹50,000 CRORE

India eyeing annual defence production of ₹3 lakh cr in FY29

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 21

BY THE financial year 2028-29, India's annual defence production is expected to touch a whopping ₹3 lakh crore and export of military hardware is poised to reach ₹50,000 crore, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said Saturday, announcing that high-end systems like aero-engines and gas turbines will be produced within the country.

In an address at a defence conclave, Singh, delving into structural defence reforms, said the three services used to work in silos earlier but now they are ready with better coordination to deal with any challenge jointly. "Earlier, the three services used to work in silos. We focused on their integration which was an out-of-the-box step and the need of the hour. It was a little difficult in the beginning, but today our military is ready with better coordination to deal with every challenge together," he said at the Firstpost Defence Summit.

Singh said the government has been focusing on jointness among the Indian Army, the Navy and the Indian Air Force that would ensure enhanced coordination in times of "crisis".

"Today, our military is using weapons and platforms, which are manufactured on our own soil," he said.

4 defence manufacturing hubs in Maharashtra soon

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, FEBRUARY 24

DEPUTY CHIEF Minister Devendra Fadnavis Saturday said Maharashtra will revise its aerospace and defence manufacturing policy, first formulated in 2017. Industries Minister Uday Samant, meanwhile, said the state will soon have four defence manufacturing clusters.

Both were speaking at the MSME Defence Expo in Pune.

Fadnavis said: "In 2017, Maharashtra became the first state to have an Aerospace and Defence policy. Maharashtra now has 600 defence MSMEs who

have created a value and assets worth ₹12,000-15,000 crore."

He added, "Defence industries across the world are now keen on working with Indian entities. So we have taken a decision to revise this policy. Special focus of the renewed policy will be on how we take ahead the success achieved by MSMEs."

Samant said, "The government of Maharashtra will soon take a decision on creation of four defence clusters at Nagpur, Shirdi, Pune and Tumagir. Over the last few days, I have seen the impact of the defence sector MSMEs in Maharashtra. We want to make Maharashtra a hub of defence manufacturing."

"भारत की पारंपरिक चिकित्सा पद्धति सिर्फ इलाज तक सीमित नहीं रही है, बल्कि ये लाइफ की एक होलिस्टिक साइंस है। आज आधुनिक दुनिया की जो लाइफ स्टाइल है, जो नई-नई बीमारियां हम देख रहे हैं, उससे पार पाने के लिए हमारी ट्रेडिशनल नॉलेज बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है!"

- नरेन्द्र मोदी

Central Government dedicates distinctive healthcare to Haryana

Inauguration of Central Research Institute of Yoga and Naturopathy at a cost of about Rs. 64 crore

By **Sh. Narendra Modi**

Prime Minister
(Through Video Conferencing)

and

Under the chairmanship of

Sh. Manohar Lal

Chief Minister, Haryana

200 Bedded hospital dedicated to yoga and naturopathy

Focus on prevention and treatment of diseases related to lifestyle

People of Haryana and Delhi will get significant health services

Facilities of OPD, treatment block, yoga and food block along with the hospital

First project of its kind by Central Government in Haryana

Extensive campus of 19 acres

August Presence

Sh. Mansukh L. Mandaviya

Union Minister,
Health and Family Welfare

Sh. Sarbananda Sonowal

Union Minister,
AYUSH

Dr. Munjapara Mahendrabhai

Union Minister of State,
AYUSH

Sh. Anil Vij

Minister of Home, Health, AYUSH and Medical Education and Research, Haryana

Dr. Arvind Kumar Sharma

MP (Lok Sabha) Rohtak,
Haryana

February 25, 2024 | 4 pm | Village Devarkhana, District Jhajjar

Live broadcast: DD News and on youtube.com/ddnews

Department of Ayush, Haryana

New crime laws to come into effect from July 1

Provision related to hit-and-run cases under Bharatiya Nyay Sanhita on hold

MAHENDER SINGH MANRAL
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

THE CENTRE has issued three gazette notifications, informing that the three new criminal laws — Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita and Bharatiya Sakshya Act — will be effective July 1. But it has put on hold the provision related to hit-and-run cases under the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita.

The new laws were passed by Parliament in the Winter Session. President Droupadi Murmu gave her assent to the three laws on December 25. Last month, Prime Minister Narendra Modi directed that new criminal laws should be rolled out in a targeted manner in all Union Territories (UTs).

The gazette notification is issued on Friday reads, "In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (2) of section 1 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023 (45 of 2023), the Central Government hereby appoints July 1, 2024, as the date on which the provisions of the said Adhiniyam shall come into force."

"In exercise of the powers conferred by sub-section (3) of section 1 of the Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita, 2023 (46 of 2023), the Central Government hereby appoints July 1, 2024, as the date on which the provisions of the said Sanhita, except the provisions of the entry relating to section 106(2) of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, 2023, in the First Schedule, shall come into force," it adds.

Last month, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla had a meeting with chief secretaries, advisers to administrators and all the police chiefs of UTs to review their preparedness. They were asked to immediately flag issues that they faced in the process of implementation of the laws to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

Bhalla asked them that they should conduct a comprehensive review of their existing infrastructure as well as the requirements for the roll-out of the new laws. They were also asked to conduct necessary consultations with the stakeholders concerned, including the high courts concerned, to make realistic assessments," said a source, adding that PM Modi has desired that UTs must implement the laws immediately from the date of notification.

In January, transporters' associations across the country staged protests against certain provisions under the new code, as per which any driver who causes the death of a person by rash and negligent driving and flees from the spot will be jailed for up to 10 years and/or fined. The Centre had assured all transporters that a decision on enforcing the stringent provisions in such cases under Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita will be taken only after consultation with the All India Motor Transport Congress (AIMTC).

The Government has also decided to form a team of 3,000 officers who will train police officers, investigators and forensic

Competing claims of Ahmed Patel's kids, no tribal face behind AAP getting Bharuch

ADITI RAJA &
KAMAAL SAYED
VADODARA, SURAT, FEB 24

THE DISCOMFORT in the Congress camp in Gujarat was apparent when the seat-sharing agreement in five states/UTs with the AAP for the Lok Sabha polls was announced by the two parties in Delhi on Saturday — an agreement that included Bhavnagar and Bharuch seats, where the AAP has already announced its incumbent MLAs Umesh Makwana and Chaitar Vasava, respectively, as candidates.

The two seats have significance for the Congress as Bhavnagar district is home to Gujarat Congress chief Shaktisinh Gohil, while Bharuch is the home turf of Congress stalwart, late Ahmed Patel.

Even as Vasava reached out to Congress leaders and said the seat would be won "as a tribute" to Ahmed Patel, the latter's son Faisal, who has gone public about his desire to contest from Bharuch, indicated that the issue has not been settled. He told mediapersons outside his Bharuch home, "We will fight together, but the issue is not over yet, the story is still unfolding."

Minutes after the INDIA bloc announced Chaitar as its candidate from Bharuch, Vasava said, "I welcome the declaration of my candidature... I thank Mallikarjun Kharge, Rahul (Gandhi), Shaktisinh Gohil and the family of Ahmed Patel in Bharuch, including Mumtaz (Ahmed Patel's daughter) and Faisal. I assure them all that we will take the Congress workers and leaders into confidence and proceed ahead. We will sit together and strategise for the elections. We will win Bharuch as a tribute to Ahmed Patel ji."

The Bharuch seat, which has a sizeable number of tribal votes, has been represented by tribal leaders of the BJP since 1989, with the incumbent BJP MP Mansukh Vasava having held it for six terms since 1998. Ahmed Patel had held

Another merchant vessel attacked, Navy comes to aid

AMRITA NAYAK DUTTA
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

IN THE latest in a series of attacks on commercial vessels in the western Arabian Sea, a Palau-flagged merchant vessel (MV) caught fire after it came under a likely drone or missile strike Thursday, drawing assistance from an Indian Navy ship.

The Navy destroyer, deployed in the Gulf of Aden for maritime security operations, swiftly reached the vessel on Thursday afternoon. Explosive ordnance disposal specialists then boarded the vessel and sanitised it for any residual risk before it was cleared for transit, the Navy said.

A medical team also provided assistance to an injured crew member, the Navy said. The incident took place south east of Aden, Yemen.

Since November, Yemen's Houthi rebels have launched drone and missile attacks on commercial ships, especially those bound for Israel, in the Red Sea and surrounding waters. They have maintained that they are acting over Israel's war in Gaza.

Last month, a Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker, Marlin Luanda, came under a missile at-



Indian Navy's explosive ordnance disposal team responds to a distress call from a Palau-flagged cargo vessel MV Islander in the Gulf of Aden. PTI

tack and a drone strike was reported on another Marshall Islands-flagged vessel, MV Genco Picardi. The Navy rendered assistance in both incidents.

In December, a Liberia-flagged merchant vessel, MV Chem Pluto, came under a drone attack about 220 nautical miles southwest of Porbandar, while it was on its way to New Mangalore. It was carrying a crew of 22, of whom 21 were Indians.

A day after that incident, a Gabon-flagged commercial oil tanker, MV Sai Baba, on its way to India with 25 Indian crew members, faced a drone attack in the maritime domain.

southern Red Sea along with another Norwegian-flagged ship.

Admiral Ben Key, the UK's First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff had said Friday that the recent events in the Red Sea area are a major threat to free economic trade around the world. He said the Houthi's activities are denial and have nothing to do with the war in Gaza.

Earlier this week, defence minister Rajnath Singh had said that the events of the last few months in the western Indian Ocean have brought to fore some extremely pressing challenges in the maritime domain.

J&K: In boost to BJP, NC leader among Paharis to join fold

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, FEBRUARY 24

tice" has been done to them by the Modi government. He was recently seen at the PM's rally in Jammu on February 20.

Ever since the passage of the Central legislation granting Scheduled Tribe (ST) status to the Pahari ethnic group during the recent Budget Session of Parliament, several leaders from the community have joined the BJP, including former NC minister Mushtaq Ahmad Shah Bukhari and former MLC Shehnaz Ganai, besides Abdul Qayoom Mir and Iqbal Malik, both Rajouri District Development Council members.

The crossover was formalised at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday. Vijayadharan, a three-time MLA from Vilavancode in the Kanyakumari district, made her resignation from the Congress public on Saturday. Her switch to the BJP is viewed as a blow to the Congress in the state, with its tally now dipping to 17 MLAs in the 234-member Assembly.

Vijayadharan was reportedly upset with the party leadership's decisions, including being overlooked for the post of the floor leader in the Tamil Nadu Assembly and not being nominated as the candidate for the Kanyakumari LS constituency in 2019 and its subsequent by-election in 2021. Sources said a clear message from the party that she would not be fielded in the Lok Sabha seat in 2024 led to her decision to quit.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

FARIDABAD MARATHON

MY CITY MY RUN

3 March, 2024
Surajkund, Faridabad

HALF MARATHON (21.1 KM)
10 KM RUN
FUN RUN (5 KM)

Chief Guest
Sh. Manohar Lal
Chief Minister, Haryana

OPEN CATEGORY

	Half Marathon	10 Kms
1st	₹1 Lakh	₹50,000
2nd	₹75,000	₹30,000
3rd	₹50,000	₹20,000

MASTERS CATEGORY

₹50,000

For other Attractive Prizes in Different Categories Please Scan QR Code

Please Scan QR code for Registration and Detail of Prizes

AMBASSADOR
MARY KOM

Information, Public Relations, Languages and Culture Department, Haryana www.prharyana.gov.in Follow us on

In blow to Tamil Nadu Congress, 3-time MLA defects to BJP

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, FEBRUARY 24

IN A development apparently anticipated by the Tamil Nadu Congress for weeks, sitting party MLA Vijayadharan has joined the BJP, marking a significant defection from the grand old party.

The crossover was formalised at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Saturday.

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ANDHRA PRADESH CAPITAL REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Lenin Center, Governerpet, Vijayawada-520002 (A.P.)

GeM TENDER NOTICE

NIT No.05/MAU61-ADMN01S(GIS)/T/2024-GIS Dt: 24-02-2024
Name of Work: Providing of AMC/renewal/Up-gradation of existing ArcGIS software for one year. Estimate cost of Rs.33.60 lakhs (including all taxes) The bid can be downloaded on GeM portal from 26-02-2024 to 07-03-2024 up to 14.00 Hrs. Bid end date 07-03-2024 up to 14.00 Hrs, bid opening date 07-03-2024 @ 14.30 Hrs. For further details please refer to https://gem.gov.in and https://crda.ap.gov.in

Sd/- COMMISSIONER, APCRDA, Vijayawada

Appeal for Identification



General Public is hereby informed that a male dead body Name: Unknown, S/o Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: About 30/40 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Built: Strong, Hair and Eyes: Black, Wearing: Trouser (Lower) Black Color Sweater and Windcheater Black Color on Both hand of Windcheater "CHUNMEIJF" has been printed and naked feet. Has been found in Drainage (NALA) in front of Majlis Park Metro Station Delhi in decoyed condition.

In this regard DD No. 32-A, Dt. 19.02.2024 has been lodged in PS Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. The body has been preserved at mortuary BJRM, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

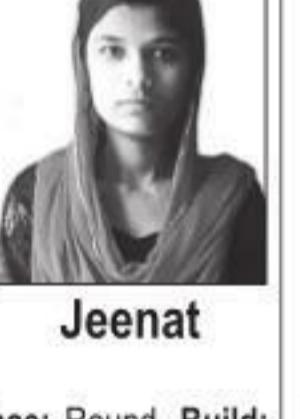
Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following.

SHO
P.S., Adarsh Nagar, Delhi
Ph. : 011-28672452,
8750870529

DP/2293/NW/2024

SEARCH OF MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), Name: Jeenat D/o Gulab R/o H.No. 434, Gali No.9, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi Aged: 21 years, has been missing from Sangam Vihar, New Delhi since 29.01.2024. In this regard a DD No.142-A, Dated 05.02.2024, has been lodged at P.S. Sangam Vihar, New Delhi. her physical description is as under:



Height: around 5' Feet, Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Build: Thin, Wearing: Mehendi colour suit and Salwar. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing female, may inform to the following at E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in or website : http://cbi.nic.in Tele No : 011-23014046 (Direct), 23015229 & 23015218.

P.S. Sangam Vihar, New Delhi
DP/1663/SD/2024 Ph: 011-26044546, 8750870833, 7065569303

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
DEPARTMENT OF WATER RESOURCES
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER & BASIN MANAGER,
SUBARNAREKHA & BUDHABALANGA BASIN,
AT/PO:- LAXMIPOSI, DIST:-MAYURBHANJ
Mail Id: cebmsbb2019@gmail.com

Government of Odisha "e" PROCUREMENT NOTICE
Bid Identification No. 49/23-24 of CEBM, SBB, Laxmiposi

1. Name of work : A. Raising and Strengthening Panta to Parikh/T.R.E.
Saline Embankment

B. Restoration & Protection to right bank of river
Gangahar near village Bhurudha, Bhadrasia,
Gaudagao, Barabanga & Mayuraga.

C. Restoration and Protection to left bank of river Gangahar
near village Sitakot, Shrimarpur, Gangapura and Murtudai.

2. Estimated Cost : A. Rs.1111.80 Lakh
B. Rs. 1099.51 Lakh
C. Rs. 862.71 Lakh

3. Bid Security/ E.M.D. : A. Rs.11,11,800/-
B. Rs.11,00,000/-
C. Rs.62,800/-

4. Period of Completion : 18 (Eighteen) Calendar Months

5. Class of Contractor : "A" Class and "Special" Class

6. Date & Time of availability of bid document in the portal : 26.02.2024 at 10.00 AM

7. Last date/time for receipt of bid in the portal : 18.03.2024 up to 5.00 PM

8. Date of opening of bid : 19.03.24 at 11:00 A.M.

9. Name & Address of the O.I.T : Chief Engineer & Basin Manager, O/o the CERBM,
Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin, Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj

Further details can be seen from the e-Procurement Portal "[https://tenderodisha.gov.in](http://tenderodisha.gov.in)".

Sd/-
Chief Engineer & Basin Manager
Subarnarekha & Budhabalanga Basin,
Laxmiposi, Mayurbhanj

OIPR-3249/11/0010/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING
ENGINEER
P.H. DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR
AT CHATRAPUR
Email-eepchpr@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Invitation For Bids (IFB)

SI. No. Name of work Bid Identification No Estimated cost (Rs. in Lakh) Period of completion Document for online bidding Name & address of office inviting Bid From To Superintendent Engineer, P.H Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

1. Procurement of 100mm to 300mm size dia Pipe in connection with the work- Construction reservoir of storage with filling & arrangement, laying of pipe line and other ancillary works for Augmentation of water supply to Khalikote NAC under State Plan (BASUDHA) 2023-24

Identification No 88/03/SPHC/2023-24 dt. 21.02.2024

715.75 3 (Three) Calendar Months 11.00 Hrs of 27.02.2024 17.30 Hrs of 12.03.2024

2. Superintending Engineer, P.H Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

The Technical Bid shall be opened on dt. 13.03.2024 at 11.00 AM

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [https://www.tenderodisha.gov.in](http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in)

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer (PH)
PH Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

OIPR-13172/11/0026/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING
ENGINEER
P.H. DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR
AT CHATRAPUR
Email-eepchpr@gmail.com

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
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Sd/-
Superintending Engineer (PH)
PH Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

OIPR-13172/11/0026/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING
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OIPR-13172/11/0026/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING
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NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement
Invitation For Bids (IFB)

SI. No. Name of work Bid Identification No Estimated cost (Rs. in Lakh) Period of completion Document for online bidding Name & address of office inviting Bid From To Superintendent Engineer, P.H Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

1. Procurement of 100mm to 300mm size dia Pipe in connection with the work- Construction reservoir of storage with filling & arrangement, laying of pipe line and other ancillary works for Augmentation of water supply to Khalikote NAC under State Plan (BASUDHA) 2023-24

Identification No 88/03/SPHC/2023-24 dt. 21.02.2024

715.75 3 (Three) Calendar Months 11.00 Hrs of 27.02.2024 17.30 Hrs of 12.03.2024

2. Superintending Engineer, P.H Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

The Technical Bid shall be opened on dt. 13.03.2024 at 11.00 AM

Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal [https://www.tenderodisha.gov.in](http://www.tenderodisha.gov.in)

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer (PH)
PH Division, Bhanjanagar at Chatrapur

OIPR-13172/11/0026/2324

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING
ENGINEER
P.H. DIVISION, BHANJANAGAR
AT CHATRAPUR
Email-eepchpr@gmail.com

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IMPLEMENTATION PANEL HOLDS FIRST MEETING

Uttarakhand UCC: Portal to register live-in relationships, marriages likely

AVANEESH MISHRA & LIZ MATHEW
DEHRADUN, NEW DELHI,
FEBRUARY 24

THE RULES Making and Implementation Committee for Uttarakhand's Uniform Civil Code (UCC) had its first meeting on Saturday, during which it formed a sub-committee dedicated to simplifying the registration process for live-in relationships, marriages and others by offering the services online.

In its first meeting, the committee also formed two other sub-committees – one to make the rules for the implementation of UCC and another to train government officials regarding the implementation.

Earlier this month, the Uniform Civil Code, Uttarakhand, Bill 2024, which seeks to "govern and regulate the laws related to marriage and divorce, successions, live-in relationships, and

matters related thereto", was passed in the Assembly following a two-day discussion. The Bill will now be sent to President Droupadi Murmu for her assent after which it will become law.

A source said that after the UCC is implemented, registration of marriage, divorce, live-in relationships, and succession can be done online. "The approval of the registration that is done online will be given once the Aadhaar number is verified," said the source.

After the UCC Bill was passed, the state government had formed the Rules Making and Implementation Committee of the UCC, and in this, we made a work plan on how to make the set of rules in the minimum possible time and implement them. There are three main points of the UCC, which are marriage and divorce, live-in relationships, and succession. We have to prepare rules for them as soon as possible. It is decided that a sub-committee will work on this daily. This sub-committee will include Manu Gaur, Amit Sinha, and some Additional

EXECUTING THE CODE

- Approval for online registration of live-ins, marriages after verification of Aadhaar
- Another sub-panel formed to train government officials regarding implementation
- Sub-committee formed to make rules for UCC implementation.
- Rules on implementation expected to be completed in next three-four months

Today was the first meeting of the Rules Making & Implementation Committee of the UCC, and in this, we made a work plan on how to make the set of rules in the minimum possible time and implement them. There are three main points of the UCC, which are marriage and divorce, live-in relationships, and succession. We have to prepare rules for them as soon as possible. It is decided that a sub-committee will work on this daily. This sub-committee will include Manu Gaur, Amit Sinha, and some Additional

Secretaries. We will also include a law expert," he said.

"The second aim is to make it user-friendly, with technological intervention. For that, we will look into the possibility of creating a mobile application or web portal for all kinds of registrations. A sub-committee is formed for that purpose. Information Technology Development Agency (ITDA) Uttarakhand will have a major role in that. Another sub-committee has been formed for the training purpose. We want to decentralise the registration process and take it to the local level. The employees there need to be well-trained. Surekha Dangwal and Ajay Mishra will be part of that. All three sub-committees will work in parallel," he said.

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communities from its purview. Uttarakhand's UCC Bill proposes common laws on marriage, divorce, inheritance, and live-in relationships for all citizens, irrespective of their religion.

AT DELHI UNIVERSITY'S 100TH CONVOCATION

Days of nepotism gone, power corridors sanitised of corrupt elements: V-P

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

GONE ARE the days of patronage, nepotism and favouritism, and power corridors have now been sanitised of corrupt elements, Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar told students at Delhi University's 100th annual convocation on Saturday.

"The India that awaits you is not just welcoming, but actively enabling...this is a nation transformed, ready to propel you towards your dreams...the India that awaits you is a level playing field," he said.

On the occasion, a total of 1,38,020 degrees were awarded to undergraduate and postgraduate students; of these, 79,475 students were women. As many as 659 students were awarded their PhDs. At the ceremony, 207 medals and awards were presented to students, with more women – 110 – receiving them as compared to men, who bagged 57 of them.

"The medal distribution ceremony here reminded me of Kartavya Path on January 26. Girls! Your gender was in full command. It is in full command here as well and I can tell you the world will change like never before," Dhankhar, who is the Chancellor of the University and was the chief guest at the convocation, said, al-



Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar and Delhi University V-C Yogesh Singh with a student in New Delhi on Saturday. PTI

luding to women participants at the Republic Day Parade.

Stating that enforceability and accountability to law is "now the new norm", Dhankhar said, "...gone are the days of patronage, nepotism and favouritism...corruption, which hits the vulnerable the most, has been a bane for society for too long. Now the dark clouds of corruption have vanished."

"Power corridors where big decisions are taken were once infested with corrupt liaison agents. They are gone and power corridors are now sanitised of corrupt elements. Opportunities are determined by merit and not patronage," he said, adding that governance is open and accessible and serves the people at large, "not just the privileged few".

He referred to infrastructure – the Bharat Mandapam and the new Parliament building – as "symbols of the nation soaring towards new heights," and added that on the international front, India is "significantly defining global order".

He also referred to the reservation of one third of seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislatures for women as "an epochal development" that will "geometrically and qualitatively improve our policies and governance."

3RD MEET WITH LADAKH, KARGIL LEADERS

Invite legal experts to work on Sixth Schedule, statehood demands: MHA

NAVEED IQBAL
SRINAGAR, FEBRUARY 24

ELUSION of Ladakh in DANICS was opposed and reservation in jobs for Ladakhis was proposed. "For non-gazetted posts, there is some provision but we have sought reservation in gazetted posts too," said KDA member Sajjad Kargili.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that a domicile provision for J&K was also discussed but it was rejected by LAB and KDA, which said that "if Sixth Schedule is on the table, it will cover requirements of domicile".

Three representatives from KDA – Sajjad Kargili, Asgar Ali Karbalai and Qamar Ali Akhoon – and Thupstan Tsewang, Nawang Rizgin Jora and Dorjay Lakrook from LAB were present at the sub-committee meeting with MHA officials on Saturday.

On the demands for a Service Selection Board and reservation in divisional and district-cadre jobs in Ladakh, "a notification may be expected soon", said Cheering Dorje Lakrook, a member of the sub-committee.

Representatives from both the socio-political groups previously met the MHA officials as part of a high-powered committee on December 4 last year and on February 19 this year.

LAB and KDA have been spearheading the movement in Ladakh with four main demands – statehood for Ladakh, safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, job reservation for the youths of Ladakh and creation of separate parliamentary constituencies for the two parts of the region.

During Saturday's meeting, in-

Modi to inaugurate AIIMS Kalyani today; Bengal pollution board says no green nod yet

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 24

DAY before All India Institute Of Medical Science (AIIMS) Kalyani in West Bengal is to be inaugurated virtually by Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with four other AIIMS branches in the country, the West Bengal Pollution Control Board (WBPCB) Saturday said the facility is yet to get environmental clearance.

The BJP accused the TMC government in West Bengal of "creating roadblocks for political purposes".

"A project bigger than 20,000 sq m requires environment clearance (EC) as per the guidelines of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change guidelines, imposed an environmental damage cost and a penalty. Combined together, the amount was around ₹15 crore and 20 lakh. However, AIIMS Kalyani applied for an exemption as it contended that it was a health facility and did not require an EC," said Rudra.

"The state government did not have the authority to exempt this amount. Therefore, we had to file a case with the National Green Tribunal against this violation. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court also issued a stay on two memorandums issued by MoEFCC. Unless new orders come in this regard, we cannot issue EC to any project under violation category," Rudra added.

AIIMS Kalyani officials said PM would inaugurate the institute along with four others across the country. Governor CV Ananda Bose and Union ministers are likely to attend the event.

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EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 24

NATIONALIST CONGRESS Party (Sharadchandra Pawar) president Sharad Pawar on Saturday unveiled his party's election symbol – a man blowing a *turha* (a traditional trumpet) – at Raigad fort.

The fort was the capital of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Maratha empire and Pawar dubbed it as an inspiration to launch a new struggle for people's welfare. "To establish a people's government, we need to struggle... It is an inspiration to launch a new struggle for people's welfare and a government which works for their upliftment," he said. Pawar was brought to the fort top in a palanquin.

The event comes two days after the Election Commission of India (EC) granted the 'man blowing trumpet' symbol to Pawar's party. In January it awarded the Nationalist Congress Party name and its original election symbol 'Clock' to Ajit Pawar faction.

Pawar said, "The trumpet will bring happiness to the people who are struggling due to rising

In view of the Rajya Sabha election, the EC gave the NCP (SP) name to the Sharad Pawar faction.

Last week, the Supreme Court had asked the EC to stick to the name given to the Sharad Pawar faction but had asked it to quickly assign the party a symbol.

Pawar said, "The trumpet will bring happiness to the people who are struggling due to rising

inflation and unemployment."

State NCP (SP) chief Jayant Patil said it is a symbol of bravery, victory and inspiration to fight.

Deputy Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said, "Finally, Sharad Pawarji went to Raigad after 40 years... The credit for his visit to Raigad... should be attributed to Ajit Pawar. Let's see where and how this *tutari* (trumpet) blows."

There has been no discussion or debate on this matter. It's still not very clear to us on what basis this decision has been taken. For now, it appears that they will issue an ordinance but they will have to bring a Bill in the Assembly so then we have to dis-

cuss the matter there," he said.

Assam Congress leader Debabrata Saikia argued that far from putting a stop to "illegal marriages", repealing the act would result in more.

"No doubt, it is an old act enacted during British rule.

"The system of qazis will be abolished. So if illegal weddings take place, we will not know. The abolition might encourage more illegal marriages"

— DEBABRATA SAIKIA
CONGRESS LEADER

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— AMINUL ISLAM
AIUDF GENERAL SECRETARY

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, FEBRUARY 24

A DAY after West Bengal DGP Rajeev Kumar assured Sandeshkhali residents that law and order would be restored in the area soon, protests against local TMC leaders in the unrest-hit North 24 Parganas spread to two more villages Saturday.

Sandeshkhali has been tense since February first week after villagers went on a rampage while accusing TMC strongman Shahjahan Sheikh and his aides of land grab and sexual harassment.

Over the past two days, similar protests have erupted in Jhupkali and Belmajur villages of Sandeshkhali. In Jhupkali, protesters had set ablaze the guard room of a fishery on Friday alleging that it was set up on encroached land.

West Bengal DGP Rajeev Kumar had visited Belmajur on Friday night. Accepting that there had been a "mistake", he had assured villagers that the police

would "establish the rule of law". In Halderpara, residents reportedly chased family members of a local TMC leader alleging he had forcibly grabbed their land and given it to Sheikh's brother Sirajuddin. Meanwhile, police set up a complaint centre in Belmajur and received over 50 complaints.

West Bengal ministers Partha Bhownick and Sujit Bose also visited Belmajur Saturday. Talking to media, Bhownick said, "We got a report that the routes of irrigation channels in Sandeshkhali have been diverted to drain saltwater in different fields. We'll restore those canals within 20 days."

Hitting out at the state government on Saturday, the BJP likened the situation in Sandeshkhali to 'Nandigram'.

Meanwhile, DYFI state secretary Minakshi Mukherjee, who took a different route to reach Sandeshkhali to avoid being stopped by the administration, was stopped by the police and taken to Sandeshkhali ferry ghat on the banks of River Kalagachhi.

The EC had taken "serious note" of cases where officers were being transferred to adjacent districts within the same constituency by state governments.

In a statement, the EC said it had strengthened the existing transfer policy "to ensure that officials are not able to disturb the level playing field in the elections".

Officers who are posted in their home district or have completed three years at one place are to be transferred before elections, as per ECI policy.

"Plugging the loopholes in the existing instructions, the Commission has directed that, except for the States/JTs that comprise up to two Parliamentary constituencies, all States shall ensure that officers who are transferred out of the district are not posted within the same Parliamentary constituency. It has been reiterated that the transfer policy of the Commission must be adhered to in both letter and spirit and not just being camouflaged to show compliance," the EC statement said.

The EC said the rule applied to transfers that have already been ordered in accordance with the EC's prior instructions.

cising a sensitive matter.

"The government should not make unilateral decisions on any issue involving social custom, religious beliefs, and public sentiments. The views of the scholars of the communities concerned need to be sought in these matters. We have seen the BJP government playing politics on the issue of Muslim marriage registration. With the input of community stakeholders, no one would probably object to unanimously creating a custom or tradition. Because otherwise there may be tension," he said.

Lurinjyoti Gogoi, president of the Assam Jatiya Parishad & General Secretary of the United Opposition Forum also accused the state government of politi-

SUKRITA BARUAH
GUWAHATI, FEBRUARY 24

FOLLOWING THE Assam Cabinet's decision to repeal the Assam Muslim Marriage and Divorce Registration Act of 1935, opposition parties accused the BJP of attempting to polarise the state ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

On Friday night, Cabinet minister Jayanta Malla Barua had announced the Cabinet's decision to repeal the 1935 act, calling it a significant step towards introducing UCC but it will bring the death of the BJP."

His party's general secretary Amiul Islam stated that the move is a violation of Muslim Personal Law (Shariat) Application Act, 1937 and of Constitutional provisions on religion. "If they want to stop child marriage, there were other options that the government could have explored within the ambit of the law... Our party is also clear that we are against child marriage. But this is a political gimmick and election oriented.

Debabrata Saikia argued that far from putting a stop to "illegal marriages", repealing the act would result in more.

"No doubt, it is an old act enacted during British rule.

"The system of qazis will be abolished. So if illegal weddings take place, we will not know. The abolition might encourage more illegal marriages"

— DEBABRATA SAIKIA
CONGRESS LEADER

There has

BRIEFLY

UTTAR PRADESH

Army jawan held for murder of colleague

Meerut: A jawan was arrested for shooting his colleague dead outside the headquarters of the Garuda Division of the Indian Army in Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly late on Friday evening and trying to pass it off as a suicide. The police said Havildar Ratna Rajesh, 42, shot Kamal Joshi, 40, who was posted in Dehradun and had come to Bareilly to enquire about the VRS for which he had applied months ago. Kamal, who hailed from Assam, lived with his family in Dehradun. CCTV footage revealed that Ratna Rajesh shot Kamal in the neck using the rifle, killing him on the spot.

ENS

KERALA

Governor sends back govt list for IC posts

Thiruvananthapuram: Kerala Governor Arif Mohammed Khan has sent back the list of names given by the state administration for appointment as Information Commissioners, government sources said on Saturday. Khan sent back the names as there were some complaints against some of the persons on the list and there was no vigilance report with regard to the allegations about them, the sources said.

PTI

RAJASTHAN

Weddings on 'Palace on Wheels' soon

Jaipur: Destination weddings, corporate meetings and even wedding shoots could soon be held on one of the world's most beautiful and luxurious trains - the Palace on Wheels. The Rajasthan government has given in-principle approval for opening the doors of the train for the people wanting to make their important moments more memorable. "It will not only boost destination weddings in Rajasthan, but will also instill faith and respect for Rajasthani art, culture, and Vedic wedding traditions among foreign tourists," Deputy CM Diya Kumari said.

PTI

ASSAM

Wild elephants trample two to death

Goalpara: Two persons were trampled to death by wild elephants in Assam's Goalpara district, police said. They said the two victims, including one female, were travelling on a motorbike when they encountered a herd of wild elephants near a bridge in the Gualguli area on Friday night. "They were on their way to their homes in Gualguli from Lakhipur," the police said.

PTI



Sudarshan Setu between Okha and Bet Dwarka island in Gujarat ahead of its inauguration by PM Narendra Modi on Sunday.

India's longest cable-stayed bridge opens today

GOPAL KATESHIYA
RAJKOT, FEBRUARY 24

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will on Sunday inaugurate Sudarshan Setu, India's longest cable-stayed bridge, in the Gulf of Kutch. Also known as Signature Bridge, it will link mainland Gujarat with Bet Dwarka island off Okha coast in Devbhumi Dwarka.

Signature Bridge is technically

a sea-link, first for Gujarat. Its total length is 4,772 metres, including a 900-m-long cable-stayed section. The four-lane bridge, constructed at a cost of Rs 978 crore, was funded by the Union government.

After the Union Territory of Diu, located at Una coast in Gir Somnath, Bet Dwarka is the second largest island off Gujarat coast. At present, the only means of transport between Bet Dwarka and mainland Gujarat is

the ferry boat service running from Dwarka to Okha, the nearest point of mainland. The Signature Bridge will provide all-weather road-connectivity to the island. The bridge is supported by 32 piers, which supports seven cable-stayed spans of 900-m length. Besides its 27-m-wide carriageway, the bridge has walkways on either side, its pillars decorated with verses of Bhagavad Gita and images of Lord Krishna. Solar panels form

the roof of these walkways. The bridge, constructed as a part of National Highway 51 that runs along the sea coast of Saurashtra, was built by the NH division of Gujarat roads and buildings department. The government had awarded the contract to SP Singla Constructions Private Limited. The Panchkula-based firm was in news last June when its under-construction Aguwan-Sultanganj Ganga bridge in Bihar collapsed.

ANDHRA PRADESH ASSEMBLY POLLS

TDP-JSP first list of 99 out; 57 seats on hold amid BJP suspense

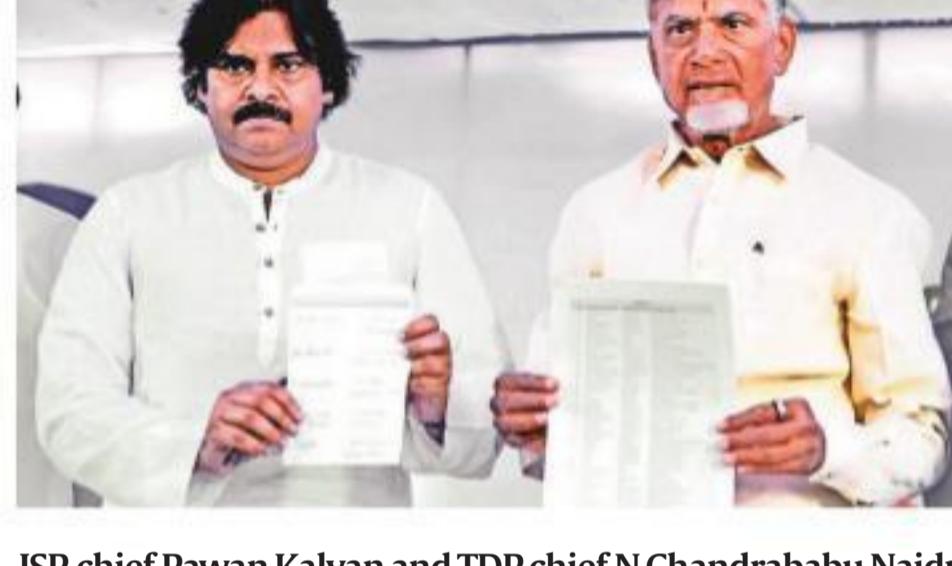
SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, FEBRUARY 24

THE TELUGU Desam Party (TDP) and the Jana Sena Party (JSP) on Saturday jointly declared their first list of candidates for the Assembly elections in Andhra Pradesh, to be held simultaneously with the Lok Sabha polls.

Of the 99 candidates announced so far, five belong to the JSP while the remaining 94 are from the TDP.

However, while the TDP will contest 94 seats out of total 175 Assembly seats, the JSP will contest 24 seats while the remaining 57 seats have been kept pending. Sources in the TDP said that both the TDP and the JSP are waiting to see if the BJP joins their alliance, which would necessitate seat-sharing in the 57 seats.

The prominent names among the TDP candidates announced include party chief N Chandrababu Naidu, who will contest from his home turf of Kuppam, and his son and party general secretary N Lokesh, who will contest from Mangalagiri. The party's state unit president, K Atchan Naidu, will contest from Tekkali, while the former Andhra



JSP chief Pawan Kalyan and TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu in Vijayawada on Saturday. PTI

Pradesh BJP chief Kanna Lakshminarayana will be fielded by the party from Sattenapalle.

Some of the other high-profile TDP candidates are Kishore Kumar Reddy, the younger brother of former Congress CM Kiran Kumar Reddy, contesting from Pileru, and Naidu's brother-in-law and actor Nandamuri Balakrishna, from Hindupur.

Reacting to the first list of candidates, state BJP president D Purandeswari maintained that any decision on joining the alliance would be taken by the BJP central leadership and that there

was no such indication so far.

TDP insiders said following Naidu's meeting with top BJP leaders in Delhi last month, the alliance has been finalised. They said the TDP has offered 5-6 Lok Sabha seats (out of a total of 25) and 40 Assembly seats to the BJP-JSP combine.

Meanwhile, YSRCP general secretary and adviser to the government, Sajala Ramakrishna Reddy said, "Pawan Kalyan got what Naidu dropped. I really pity Pawan Kalyan."

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

Allahabad HC imposes ₹15 lakh fine on assistant professor for 'frivolous' case against colleagues

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, FEBRUARY 24

THE ALLAHABAD High Court on Friday imposed a Rs 15 lakh fine on a female assistant professor of a university for filing a frivolous case against her three senior colleagues on several charges, including voyeurism and criminal intimidation, and under the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, in

lie. In separate orders, the court quashed the court proceedings and imposed a fine of Rs 5 lakh each on the assistant professor. "Because of the filing of frivolous cases, the reputation and image of the applicant and his colleagues, who are professors and people with high morals and reputation, had been tarnished," Justice Pramod Kumar said.

The court further said, "In this case, there is pure abuse of process of law where the com-

plainant, just to wreak the personal vengeance against the head of department, had tried to implicate him and his colleagues by filing false and frivolous cases. Whenever the seniors/head of department/professors asked her to teach properly and to take classes regularly, she would file a complaint against them. The complainant knows the provisions of law very well and she had been abusing the provisions of law for personal gain."

Jaahnavi Kandula was mowed down by a police vehicle last year. He was driving at more than 119 km/h on the way to a report of a drug overdose call. Kandula was thrown 100 feet when she was struck by the speeding police patrol vehicle.

On Wednesday, the King County Prosecutor's Office said they would not move forward with criminal charges against Dave due to a lack of evidence to prove a criminal case beyond a

reasonable doubt.

India's consulate in Seattle also said it was monitoring the progress in the case and will extend all possible support in ensuring justice for Kandula and her family.

On the recently released investigation report of the King County Prosecution Attorney on the unfortunate death of Jaahnavi Kandula, the Consulate has been in regular touch with the designated family representatives and will continue to extend all possible support in ensuring justice for Jaahnavi and her family," the mission said in a post on X.

"healing gesture", a symbolic closure of a chapter on a past row, and a nuanced acknowledgment of PTR's diligent work ethic and his bid to "apply correctives in his tone and tenor". In the state's political circles, PTR's transfer of portfolio was seen as a "demotion".

On Friday, Stalin reminded the audience that PTR is a "professional", a former top banker, a graduate of premier institutions such as NIT Trichy and MIT, who chose to return to India to serve his people, and that his entry into politics was not just a career shift but a continuation of a legacy — "to serve the Tamil community on the footsteps of his father and grandfather."

In the "leaked audio", PTR was purportedly heard claiming that Stalin's son Udhayanidhi and his son-in-law Sabareesan had allegedly amassed huge wealth by illegal means.

On Friday, Stalin reminded the audience that PTR is a "professional", a former top banker, a graduate of premier institutions such as NIT Trichy and MIT, who chose to return to India to serve his people, and that his entry into politics was not just a career shift but a continuation of a legacy — "to serve the Tamil community on the footsteps of his father and grandfather."

The CM's acknowledgment not only served to vindicate PTR's work, but also highlighted his importance for the DMK. A top source close to the Chief Minister's Office told *The Indian Express* that after the controversy and portfolio change, PTR did not violate the decorum.

"He worked hard. He is one of the best hands in the party and Cabinet," the source said.

Married to an American and settled in Chennai with his wife, two sons and half a dozen dogs, PTR is also not in sync with the DMK's atheistic ideology.

FULL REPORT ON
www.indianexpress.com

10 CHILDREN, 13 WOMEN AMONG DEAD

24 killed, 30 injured as tractor-trolley falls into pond in Kasganj



Rescue operation underway at the accident site in Kasganj, Uttar Pradesh, on Saturday. PTI

AMIT SHARMA
MEERUT, FEBRUARY 24

AT LEAST 24 people, including women and children, were killed and around 30 were injured when a tractor-trolley carrying around 40 people fell into a pond in Uttar Pradesh's Kasganj district on Saturday. The injured persons have been admitted to a local hospital and rescue operations are underway, the police said.

The accident took place on the Riyazganj-Patiyal Link Road near Gadhai village. The police said that the people travelling in the trolley were from Jaithara village in UP's Etah district and were heading towards Kadarganj to take a holy dip in the Ganga.

The accident took place on the Riyazganj-Patiyal Link Road near Gadhai village in Kasganj district.

The police said that the people travelling in the trolley were from Jaithara village in UP's Etah district and were heading towards Kadarganj to take a dip in the Ganga.

Local residents said that the accident took place because the tractor-trolley was being driven at a "high speed."

President Murmu termed deaths in the accident "heart-wrenching" in a post on X. PM Modi called the loss of lives "heartbreaking" and "saddening" in his X post.

a bulldozer. The injured have been admitted to hospital. A few passers-by were also hit by the tractor when it fell." Kasganj SP Aparna Rajat Kaushik said.

"Rescue efforts are on and proper medical care is being given to those injured" said Ravinder, Commissioner, Aligarh division. Two children aged below ten years also succumbed at the Aligarh hospital on Saturday afternoon, taking the death toll to 24.

Offering condolences, CM Adityanath announced a compensation of ₹5 lakh each to the families of those killed and ₹50,000 to those injured.

President Murmu termed deaths in the accident "heart-wrenching" in a post on X. PM Modi called the loss of lives "heart-breaking" and "saddening" in his X post.

President Murmu termed deaths in the accident "heart-wrenching" in a post on X. PM Modi called the loss of lives "heart-breaking" and "saddening" in his X post.

Kerala LoP late for press meet, Congress chief uses expletive

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, FEB 24

CONGRESS STATE president and Member of Parliament from Kannur K Sudhakaran has landed in a controversy for using alleged offensive words to address Opposition Leader in Kerala Assembly VD Satheesan.

Sudhakaran used the offensive language as Satheesan did not reach a press meet even after everyone arrived there.

Embarrassed by the usage of the derogatory word, other Congress leaders reminded Sudhakaran that mike (media) and camera were on. Soon after, Satheesan turned up at the press conference, which was held as part of the ongoing state-wide protest yatra of the Congress ahead of the Lok Sabha elections.

After the video of the incident went viral, both the Congress leaders tried to play it down. "We are like brothers. He has the freedom to say so. Anyone would use such language as Satheesan did not reach a press meet even after everyone arrived there.

Sudhakaran blamed the media for the controversy. "I said it was unfair to the media to invite them and then make them wait. There is no difference of opinion between us," Sudhakaran said.

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Across THE AISLE



P CHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in

Twitter @Pchidambaram_IN

The record of the BJP/NDA government in the last 10 years has been uninspiring. Against the UPA's record of 6.7 per cent under the new series (it was 7.5 per cent under the old series), the NDA government has been able to register a growth rate of only 5.9 per cent over ten years

Under 6 per cent is uninspiring

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi regularly refers to himself in the third person rather than I or My.

There is a word for that habit: *illeism*. It may be a passing fancy, but it has established one fact: that Mr Modi is the government of India and Mr Modi alone is responsible for the good and the bad of the government. All others – ministers with the exception of Mr Amit Shah, party leaders, MPs, even chief ministers – have been reduced to inconsequential. The irony is that they seem to be happy to be inconsequential! Our appeals or criticisms have, therefore, to be addressed to the Hon'ble PM alone.

PM has coined a new slogan: *Viksit Bharat* or Developed India. In the long chain of slogans starting with *Achhe Din Aane Wade Hain*, I hope it is the last one. Many slogans have fallen by the wayside. Developed India is a goal that the PM has said we must reach by 2047. Whoever is in government between now and 2047, India will be a more developed country than what it is in 2024, just as India is a more developed country in 2024 than it was in 1947. The catch is the definition of Developed India.

MOVING GOALPOST

We must first fix the goalpost. It cannot be a moving goalpost. For 'USD 5 trillion economy', the original target year

was 2023-24. Step by step it has been moved back to 2027-28. By the close of 2023-24, the size of India's GDP will be Rs 172 lakh crore. That is equal to USD 3.57 trillion at the current exchange rate. If the exchange rate remains the same, at different growth rates the goal of USD 5 trillion will be attained in different years:

Growth Rate %	Number of Years	Will reach goal in
6	6	2029-30
7	5	2028-29
8	4.5	Sep 2028

If the dollar:rupee exchange rate worsens, the goalpost must be moved further back.

The record of the BJP/NDA government in the last 10 years has been uninspiring. Against the UPA's record of 6.7 per cent under the new series (it was 7.5 per cent under the old series), the NDA government has been able to register a growth rate of only 5.9 per cent over ten years.

Will the BJP be able to step on the gas and increase the growth rate? No one in the BJP can answer the question because the growth rate will depend on external factors as well as domestic management of the economy. Uncertainty apart, if Mr Modi is able to win a third term and the economy grows at 8 percent a year, India's GDP will barely reach USD 5 trillion in

the fifth year of the third term.

WHAT IS 'DEVELOPED'?

Suppose India's economy will reach the level of USD 5 trillion in 2028-29, can India be called a developed country? At USD 5 trillion and a population of 1.5 billion in 2028-29, the *per capita income* will be USD 3333. That will place India in the category of *lower middle income economy*. Based on *per capita income*, India's current rank among the countries of the world is 140 (in nominal terms). In 2028-29, the rank may improve by 5-10 places.

This elaborate exercise is only to rubish the obsession with self-glorying descriptions such as '*fastest growing economy*', '*fifth largest economy in the world*' or '*USD 5 trillion economy*'. None of these appeal to me and should not to the Hon'ble PM as well.

RELEVANT QUESTIONS

The questions that are relevant and that must be debated in the forthcoming elections are:

1. Multi-dimensional poverty is a blot on India and 22 crore people are below the poverty line. When will India wipe out the blot? According to UNDP, 27 crore people were lifted out of poverty during 2005-2015. When will 22 crore people be lifted out of poverty?

2. The current unemployment rate (8.7 per cent) has devastated millions of lives, caused the best qualified youth and the semi-skilled workers to migrate, and triggered a rise in crime. When will young people be gainfully employed? When will we wipe out the shame of post-graduates and Ph.Ds applying for the post of watchman and railway track maintainer (gangman)?

3. When will the Labour Force Participation Rate (LFPR) rise above 50 or 60 per cent? When will the female LFPR rise beyond 25 per cent?

4. When will private consumption of wage goods rise? When will the poor be able to afford to buy sufficient grain for their families?

5. When will the stagnation of wages in real terms end?

Unemployment and inflation are the two biggest concerns of the people. I cannot remember when the Hon'ble PM last spoke on the two burning issues. I cannot also remember when the Hon'ble PM last spoke on China; on Manipur; on political defections; on breaking political parties; on the right to privacy; on moral policing; or on bulldozer justice. Political parties must raise these issues again and again and force the Hon'ble PM to break his calculated silence on the issues that matter most to the people. As the only one who matters in the BJP, he must speak.

Fifth COLUMN
TAVLEEN SINGH
Twitter @tavleen Singh

Dissidence strengthens democracy

MY MOTHER died last week. Without being able to say goodbye to a grandson she helped me bring up. He was a small boy when I was off covering conflicts and political turmoil in distant places, and it was in her house that I would leave my son. It would have been impossible to manage without her. In recent months, when she was very sick, I did my best to try and get my son an ordinary tourist visa to visit her and failed. One high official was honest enough to admit that he had to agree to never say another word against the government and there might be a chance. The rest never got back to me. My mother spent the last five years of her life wondering when she would see him again. Towards the end, I could not mention his name without her bursting into tears.

India was my son's home until an act of extraordinary spite caused him to be exiled. When he wrote the article in *Time* magazine that caused this to happen, politicians at the highest levels of the BJP and its army of trolls on social media went out of their way to say that he was persona non grata not because of that article, but because he was anti-India. One very vocal BJP spokesman went to the extent of tweeting that he was a 'trained ISI agent'. The Home Ministry has the capability to discover that this is rubbish, but chooses not to.

The withdrawal of the OCI (Overseas Citizen of India) of a French journalist recently comes as the latest proof that visas to India have been weaponised. She is married to an Indian and has lived here for twenty years but no longer can because the government saw her journalism as having 'malice' towards India. Who decides these things? Is there a press censorship wing in the Home Ministry?

The more important question is why a Prime Minister with the highest approval ratings of any world leader should be so thin-skinned? Narendra Modi likes to see himself as not just the leader of India but as a world leader of great influence and unusual power. A Vishvaguru. He appears not to have noticed that only those leaders who have democratic credentials can achieve this position. Men like Vladimir Putin, who recently killed Alexei Navalny in a penal colony above the Arctic Circle, will always be seen as brutal dictators.

Modi also likes to boast in the high forums of the world that India is the 'mother of democracy'. It sounds like no more than an empty boast every time dissidents are punished for their dissidence. It is not just dissidents from the 'Khan Market gang' that are now being silenced, but farmers and those who support their protest. It was revealed last week that X, once Twitter, was ordered to take down handles that showed sympathy for the protests. This newspaper reported that officials in X said that they were told that if they did not block certain handles, the platform and its employees could face potential penalties, including significant fines and imprisonment'.

This kind of menacing tone damages not just the image of the Prime Minister as a Vishvaguru, but the image of India. If India has earned the respect of the world, it is because while other post-colonial countries ended up in the hands of despots, tin-pot dictators and religious fanatics, India managed to keep the light of democracy alive. If dissidence dies, then democracy dies. And dissidence in India has been severely endangered in recent years. Student leaders and journalists have spent years in jail without trial simply for disagreeing with government policies. And the whole machinery of the BJP has been used to malign them as 'anti-nationals'.

So far, these dissidents have come mostly from the despised Khan Market gang, but if they now include farmers, then it is time for the Prime Minister to realise that he is entering dangerous territory. Every poll and every political analyst predicts that his winning a third term is a certainty. This has much to do with the feeble-minded 'potted plants' who stand against him, but that is a whole other story. This week, my mother died without being able to say goodbye to a beloved grandson. I want only to make a political point through my personal story.

Out of my personal loss comes the hope that when Narendra Modi becomes prime minister again later this year, he will choose to strengthen the roots of democracy in India and not crush them further. These roots will thrive only if dissidence is celebrated instead of being extinguished, as it has been under monsters like Putin. Navalny's murder in prison has not had the attention in India that it got in other democratic countries. So may I suggest to all of you a documentary called *Navalny* on Netflix. It tells the story of a man who was killed because he chose, after surviving an attempt to poison him, to return to Russia to fight for democracy.

In India, we celebrate elections with fervour and festivity but too often forget that democracy is about more than elections. What it is fundamentally about are the rights that democracy gives ordinary people to speak out if they disagree with government policies. People who dare do this are heroes not criminals.

AFTER NAVEEN, WHO?

A common question in Odisha's political circles is, "After Naveen Patnaik, who?" The Chief Minister, who has been in office since 2000, is 77 and in frail health. While his trusted former private secretary V K Pandian has resigned from the IAS and joined politics, he can hardly be expected to lead the party as he is Tamilian, while the proud slogan of the BJD is 'Odisha for Odias'. Two potential candidates are Patnaik's nephews, Arun Patnaik, the son of the CM's businessman brother Prem, and Aditya Singh Mehta, the son of Patnaik's late sister, celebrated author Gita Mehta. Neither of his kin speak Odia or have lived in the state, but that was the case with Naveen too before his surprise entry into politics. The CM is reportedly agreeable to promote his nephews, provided they are willing to put in the time and effort to work in the state.

BJP TAKES CHARGE

The BJP took complete charge before the confidence vote in the Bihar Assembly to ensure that Nitish Kumar won with the backing of the NDA. Nitish practically disappeared during the crisis operation, though the difference between the NDA and RJD-Congress alliance boiled down to just three to four MLAs. A night before the trust vote, a meeting was arranged with a few RJD MLAs considered potential defectors, but Nitish did not show up. When he was asked to speak personally to half a dozen wavering JD(U) MLAs, instead of adopting a conciliatory tone, he took an aggressive tone suggesting that if they wanted to leave the party, they could. If three RJD MLAs switched to Nitish's side during the vote, it was due to the efforts of the BJP.

FAMILY MATTERS

Supriya Sule may receive parliamentary of the year awards for her oratory and liberal views, but politics is won at the grass roots and not by media polls, says cousin Ajit Pawar, who believes he is the upper hand in the Baramati Lok Sabha constituency. Ajit has nursed the constituency assiduously and controls its cooperatives. Supriya confines herself largely to elite circles in Delhi and Mumbai.

Although he has swallowed up his uncle Sharad Pawar's NCP, Ajit is reportedly reluctant to field his wife Sunetra against Supriya. That would lead to a total split in the close-knit Pawar clan. But the BJP is insistent that Ajit nominate a family member against Supriya. Most Pawars have either distanced themselves from the politics or aligned with the patriarch. The only other option is Ajit's youngest son Parth, who lost the 2019 Lok Sabha election and does not want to contest from a risky constituency.

While this was the first disruption to the simultaneous poll schedule, it was Indira Gandhi's decision to hold the Lok

Sabha elections in 1971 that completely disrupted the cycle. When Indira took over the Congress following the deaths of Nehru and Shastri, the party not only had a shrinking footprint but the old guard wasn't willing to give her a free run.

In 1969, Indira split the Congress and effectively ended the factionalism within the party by getting a larger share of Congressmen on her side and staying afloat with the support of the CPI, DMK and others in Parliament. She had taken a populist turn to the Left, nationalising banks and abolishing privy purses to former princes by an executive order. When the Supreme Court quashed the abolition of the privy purses, she sought the dissolution of the Lok Sabha, choosing to go to the people for endorsement of her policies.

"Since Indira Gandhi's opponents in the Congress (O) controlled the party organisations in many key states... she needed to create an electoral arena where national issues and her charismatic personality could mobilise electoral support directly without relying on the local party machines," writes Csaba Nikolenyi of Concordia University in an academic paper published in 2010 in the journal *Political Studies*.

US political scientist and author Lloyd Rudolph wrote in the *Asian Survey* in December 1971, "Mrs. Gandhi's intention in holding a snap, delinked election was to produce a national referendum on her policies and leadership".

Weiner writes, "Paradoxically, the opposition parties contributed to Mrs. Gandhi's efforts to turn the electorate towards national issues. By singling out Mrs. Gandhi as the prime target (and without offering any national leader as an alternative),

they supported the efforts of Mrs. Gandhi's supporters to make her a national leader."

Indeed, the 1971 Lok Sabha polls saw the Congress, with a few allies, trouncing a grand alliance of Opposition parties to secure 350 Lok Sabha seats with 43% votes. Writing about the effect of non-simultaneous elections on voter turnout, Rudolph notes that in 1971, when the states and the Lok Sabha voted separately, the voter turnout was 55.25%, down from 1967, when elections were held simultaneously. "The decline in participation broke the upward secular trend (in voter turnout) that prevailed between the first general election in 1952 (45.7%) and the fourth in 1967 (61.3%)", he says.

Nikolenyi says the delinking of the Lok Sabha and Assembly polls would signal the rise of regional parties in India. "The separation of national and sub-national electoral cycles facilitated the emergence and proliferation of state-based and regional parties that benefited from the isolation of national issues from the local electoral context," he says.

Indeed, much later, the rise of regional parties and the decline of the Congress after 1990 – accompanied by the rise of the BJP as a national player – would lead to the Lok Sabha polls witnessing electoral arrangements between the two national parties and different regional parties, thus keeping the state parties relevant even on the national stage.

Nikolenyi points out that Canada and Australia have consciously maintained a separation of national and state elections "as a safeguard that protects the autonomy of the two levels of government in federal states".

On the LOOSE
LEHER KALA
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There's also an (unsavoury) thrill to watching someone else's life fall apart that stems from the selfish fear, could this be me? For the introspective, someone else's lunacy is a way to understand ourselves.

Long before Netflix immortalised femme fatales in the tens of binge-able documentaries available, between the 15th and 18th century in Europe, crowds gathered to watch women hanged publicly for witchcraft.

In the 1980s and 1990s, we grew up on pulp-fiction novels by James Hadley Chase, where it was usually a seductive enchantress who led a man to certain ruin (One of his wry titles was *You Never Know With Women*). Stories on the murdering female appeals to a base instinct but beyond the blood and gore, they highlight the complicated path that ruined so many lives.

The writer is director, *Hutkay Films*

www.indianexpress.com

When women are deadly

advantage. Netflix informed the court that it would refrain from releasing the series until February 29.

There are some crime cases so hauntingly disturbing they become part of national folklore. References still pop up about the Ranga-Billa case, Aarushi Talwar's murder, the Burari deaths and indeed the mysterious disappearance of 25-year-old Sheena Bora in 2012.

Since the main accused is the foxy looking mother, a model of female success and ambition, it arouses a certain morbid curiosity. We're hooked, not by the senseless tragedy of a dead young woman, but because of the fathomless tangle of horrifying family secrets that came tumbling out of the Mukerjea household. From the outside, it seemed the power couple inhabited a rarefied, parallel universe, a pipe dream for the or-

inary public. But on the inside, domestic ugliness posited them in the throes of looming disaster. And therein lies the roots of all true crime fascination – the steady unraveling of the shattering gap between projection and reality.

Murderers, they're just like us, observed Agatha Christie, philosophically, in one of her many novels. The formula – someone is murdered, the detective is introduced, they rule out suspects and reveal the perpetrator in a dramatic gathering at the end – endures, because killers are rarely strangers to their victims.

There was no diabolical plot construction required because Christie very naturally depicted the fact that monsters lie dormant among us, everywhere. Pushed enough, anybody is capable of gross heinousness. It is worth noting though, that in crime fiction, as in real life, men

outnumber women murderers completely. In our heads, crime is hyper masculine, so when a woman is at the centre of an unnatural death, we're revolted because, well, murder is most unladylike.

Few recall the word 'filicide', which is out of popular usage because a parent killing their child goes against the order of nature. Yet, it's not all that rare. Recently, there was the case of a Bangalore CEO who attempted to leave a Goa hotel with the remains of her 4-year-old son in a bag.

That men kill is not news, so the why is seldom explored. But when women turn villainous, we want to understand the psychological background that brings on such a disastrous step. True crime stories bring to the fore the difficult truth – that a successful career trajectory is no protection against momentary madness.

The writer is director, *Hutkay Films*

GEMINI'S 'PROBLEMATIC' RESPONSES

After Centre's threat, Google says 'addressed' AI response on PM Modi

SOUMYARENDRA BARIK

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

A DAY after *The Indian Express* reported that the IT Ministry was sending a notice to Google over "problematic and illegal" responses generated by its platform Gemini regarding Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the company has said that it has addressed the issue, and is "constantly working on improving" the system.

On Friday, a senior government official had told this paper that the company's generative AI platform Gemini (formerly Bard) had earlier also presented a user, who sought a summary of an article from a conservative outlet, with an objectionable response, and the fresh responses on the Prime Minister have been the trigger for issuing the notice.

"We've worked quickly to address this issue. Gemini is built as a creativity and productivity tool and may not always be reliable, especially when it comes to responding to some prompts about current events, political topics, or



The controversy is symbolic of the tussle over the future of protections to generative AI platforms. File

evolving news. This is something that we're constantly working on improving," a Google spokesperson said in a statement.

The controversy is symbolic of the tussle between lawmakers and tech companies over the future of safe harbour protections to generative AI platforms like Gemini and ChatGPT.

Google recently apologised for what it described as "inaccuracies in some historical image generation depictions" with its Gemini AI tool after criticism that it depicted white figures (such as the US Founding Fathers) or groups like Nazi-era German soldiers as people of colour.

According to a screenshot

shared by a user on X, Gemini was asked whether PM Modi is a "fascist", to which the platform responded that he has been "accused of implementing policies some experts have characterised as fascist", which based on factors like the "BJP's Hindu nationalist ideology, its crackdown on dissent, and its use of violence against religious minorities".

However, according to the screenshot, when it was asked a similar question about former US President Donald Trump, Gemini responded with: "Elections are a complex topic with fast-changing information. To make sure you have the most accurate information, try Google Search."

Responding to the post, MoS for Electronics and IT Rajeev Chandrasekhar said, "These are direct violations of Rule 3(1)(b) of Intermediary Rules (IT rules) of the IT Act and violations of several provisions of the Criminal code". These rules pertain to basic due diligence that is required of intermediaries like Google to enjoy immunity from third-party content.

No need of experimenting 'unreliable' models: MoS IT

New Delhi: Union Minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar on Saturday made it clear to Google that explanations about unreliability of AI models do not absolve or exempt platforms from laws, and warned that India's digital 'nagraks' "are not to be experimented on" with unreliable platforms and algorithms. The minister's comments came after Google conceded that the chatbot "may not always be reliable" in responding to certain prompts related to current events and political topics. PTI

Most valuable chipmaker: How Nvidia saw a 250% surge in revenues amid AI stock rally

ANIL SASI

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

SHARES OF Nvidia Corporation, the undisputed king of advanced chips that are driving artificial intelligence (AI) applications, surged the most in about nine months after the American chipmaker delivered yet another bumper earnings forecast. Nasdaq-listed Nvidia's stock surge added fresh momentum to what is being described as a 'FOMO' AI stock rally that has already propelled the Santa Clara-based chipmaker to the title of the world's most valuable chipmaker, eclipsing storied competitors such as Intel and AMD.

Nvidia's revenues during the fourth quarter of 2023 topped \$22 billion, an over 250 per cent surge compared to the previous year, higher than analysts' consensus forecast of around \$20 billion, while its gross margins – a key profitability metric – surged to well over 700 per cent during the quarter. "Accelerated computing and generative AI have hit the tipping point," Chief Executive Officer Jensen Huang said in the statement. "Demand is surging worldwide across companies, industries and nations."

According to Bloomberg data, Nvidia's market capitalization has now increased by more than \$600 billion this year – bringing its valuation to nearly \$1.90 trillion. Prior to the results announcement, analysts at Goldman Sachs had pegged Nvidia as "the most important stock on planet Earth", a reflection of the fact the chipmaker currently controls over 80 per cent of the AI chip market and is likely to remain in a dominant position well into the future.

The Nvidia rally seems to have lifted many boats, with shares of American 'voice AI' startup SoundHound and British chip designer Arm, companies where Nvidia recently said it had invested in, both surging nearly 5 per cent in Thursday's trade. Competitor AMD also surged over 10 per cent while AI-linked stock Palantir went up over 2.5 per cent. Besides AMD, Broadcom and Marvell Tech, the other chipmakers in the AI race, too surged in what is being described by analysts as an AI FOMO, or 'fear-of-missing-out', rally.



Nvidia's revenues during Q4 of 2023 topped \$22 billion, an over 250% surge compared to the previous year. File

GPU wave

Nvidia has a stranglehold over highly prized chips called graphics processing units, or GPUs, which crunch data for AI models. There are two reasons for the shortage: One, the generative AI boom has led to the demand for these specialised chips to skyrocket, given that GPUs have the computing power and operational efficiency to run the calculations that allow AI companies working on LLMs (large language models), such as ChatGPT or Bard, to chomp down on massive volumes of data.

Two, Nvidia's virtual monopoly over GPUs has meant that the chipmaker is now swamped with orders that it is struggling to deliver. GPU used, completely changing the equation in which GPUs were seen as add-ons to CPUs. Nvidia dominates the global market for GPUs and is likely to maintain this lead well into the foreseeable future.



AI wave, data centre demand

If Taiwan-based foundry specialist TSMC is the most important backend player in the semiconductor chips business, Nvidia (with Intel, AMD, Samsung and Qualcomm) is at the front end. Since 1999, when Nvidia first popularised the term GPU with its GeForce 256 processor, the company's chips have been coveted as shaping what is possible in graphics. Nvidia GPU chips such as the new RTX range are now at the forefront of the generative AI boom based on LLMs.

Nvidia's data centre business has recorded a growth of over 10% during the most of last calendar year versus flat growth for AMD's data centre unit and a dip in Intel's data centre business unit. Alongside the application of GPUs, the company's chips are comparatively more expensive than most CPUs on a per unit basis, resulting in better margins.

FULL REPORT ON [www.indianexpress.com](#)

Byju continues to be CEO, board remains unchanged

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 24

A DAY after shareholders voted to oust Think & Learn Pvt Ltd (the parent company of Byju's) founders from the board and key positions, founder and chief executive officer (CEO) Byju Raveendran said he "continues to remain the CEO, the management remains unchanged and the board remains the same".

In a letter to the employees, Raveendran said the claims made by a small group of select minority shareholders that they have unanimously passed the resolution in the Extraordinary General Meeting (EGM) is completely wrong.

"Only 35 out of 170 shareholders (representing around 45 per cent of shareholding) voted in favour of the resolution. That in itself shows the very limited support that this ir-



Only 35 out of 170 shareholders voted in favour of the resolution, said CEO Raveendran. File

relevant meeting received," he said.

"I am writing this letter to you as the CEO of our company," he wrote in the letter.

"Our Shareholder Agreement grants the authority to modify the board's composition, the management team, and the CEO's role exclu-

sively to the board, not to a group of shareholders," Raveendran said. Recognising this, these few select investors have framed their resolution in a manner that requests the board to merely 'consider' changes to the current board structure, rather than directly mandating it, he said.

At Friday's EGM, a lot of these essential rules were violated, Raveendran said. "This means that whatever was decided in that meeting does not count, because it didn't stick to the established rules," he said.

"To pass any resolution the meeting needs to have a proper quorum, a set of people who are mandatory. Our Articles are clear on the quorum requiring the presence of at least one Founder Director. Consequently, any resolutions taken at the meeting are not en-

forceable as per law," he said.

The resolutions passed at the EGM included the removal of founder Byju Raveendran as CEO, his wife Divya Gokulnath and brother Riju Raveendran from their respective management roles and as Directors.

Moreover, shareholders led by Prosus also moved the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) against oppression and mismanagement by the company.

The EGM resolutions included a request for the resolution of the outstanding governance, financial mismanagement and compliance issues at Byju's, the reconstitution of the board of directors so that it is no longer controlled by the founders of Think & Learn and a change in the leadership of the company, said statement from Prosus, a leading global technology investor.

Our governance model is worth studying: FM Sitharaman

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU

MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 24

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Saturday encouraged management students to study the governance model adopted by her government in the past few years and derive lessons from it.

"During Covid, we could come out of it. Later on, also with the (ongoing) wars in Russia-Ukraine and Middle East conflict) and disruptions in the supply chains (caused due to Red Sea-related uncertainties), we are still the fastest growing economy. This model of governance and this model of handling the Indian economy is worth studying," Sitharaman said during her ad-



Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman speaking at the inauguration of new BITS campus in Mumbai. @nsitharaman007

dress at the inauguration of the new campus of BITS Pilani in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region, near Kalyan.

The finance minister said these studies would be very interest-

ing and she would like to see the outcome.

She said management students should look at the minimum government and maximum governance model, which

the present government has adopted since 2014. This model has enabled the government to be very receptive to public suggestions, and be responsive in changing administration and its requirements towards meeting the expectations of the people.

Sitharaman said the biggest asset of her government is transparency. According to her, the government was able to clear corruption because it adopted technology. Technology helped in monitoring of all transactions on a real-time basis.

"The government scaled up the Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), and today India's DPI, the 'India Stack,' is an envy of the world," she said.

The finance minister said the government is considered as one

Indian forex reserves decline to \$617.23 bn

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

INDIA'S FOREX reserves declined \$5.24 billion to \$617.23 billion for the week ending February 9, according to weekly data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday.

The forex kitty stood at \$622.5 billion for the week ended February 2.

However, in the current fiscal, the forex reserves have increased \$50.28 billion, the RBI data showed.

Foreign currency assets, which constitute the largest component of the reserves, dropped \$4.07 billion to \$546.52 billion during the week under review, as per the latest data.

The reserves had peaked in October 2021, when kitty had reached \$645 billion. During this time, the ride-sharing platform Uber on February 22 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to explore an integration with the network to expand the range of mobility offerings on the Uber app.

The partnership with ONDC, a non-profit private organisation founded by the Indian government's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, is expected to advance Uber's objective of providing all Indians with dependable, safe, and reasonably priced rides.

Khosrowshahi also discussed "Building Population Scale Technology" with Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani at an event in Bengaluru.

Under-employment is a problem for India, says Arvind Panagariya

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI, FEBRUARY 24

PITCHING FOR labour reforms, the chairman of the 16th Finance Commission and former NITI Aayog Chairman Arvind Panagariya on Saturday said that "unemployment" is not a problem for India but "under-employment" is.

Speaking at a session 'The Economic Whisper: how to fuel growth with jobs' at the concluding day of the two-day ABP Network's 'Ideas of India' summit here, he also sounded optimistic that the jobs problem in the country will be solved over the next 10 years.

"Unemployment is really not India's problem in my view. Our problem is underemployment, so productivity is low. So the job

that can be done by one person often gets done by two people or maybe three people. And that is where I think, the real challenge of jobs is creating well-paid high-productivity jobs," he said. Stating that in the economy's jargon, India is a labour-abundant and capital-scarce country, he said, "What we have done is to put much of the capital in very selective sectors which are in any case very capital intensive".

"We got the situation where much of the capital is working with very few workers. And then you have a host of workers in agriculture in micro and small enterprises where the capital is hardly present. So then you got a lot of workers working with very little capital. And when that is the case, it translates into low productivity," Panagariya said.

Taking to X, both business leaders appreciated their conversation on the Indian growth story and their vision for the sub-continent.

"Absolutely captivating chat with @dkhos, CEO of @Uber. His vision for Uber's expansion in India is truly inspiring, especially his commitment to uplifting Indian drivers and their dignity. Excited for future collaborations with Dara and his team! #UberIndia," Adani said in a post on X. The Uber CEO said he met the head of ports-to-energy con-

glomerate over breakfast for an "absolutely terrific conversation". He also highlighted the mobility service provider's commitment to accelerate EV transition in India.

Adani also posted pictures of the meeting but the two did not say where the meeting took place. The pictures seem to suggest the meeting took place at

Adani group's headquarters in Ahmedabad.

"An absolutely terrific conversation with @gautam_adani over a delicious breakfast about India's phenomenal growth and rising entrepreneurship. @Uber is committed to scaling up shared mobility and accelerating transition to EVs -- looking forward to take our partnership

to the next level," Dara replied to Adani's post.

The Uber CEO arrived in India earlier this week. During this time, the ride-sharing platform Uber on February 22 signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) to explore an integration with the network to expand the range of mobility offerings on the Uber app.

The partnership with ONDC, a non-profit private organisation founded by the Indian government's Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, is expected to advance Uber's objective of providing all Indians with dependable, safe, and reasonably priced rides.

Khosrowshahi also discussed "Building Population Scale Technology" with Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani at an event in Bengaluru.

The country's reserve position with the IMF also declined \$28 million to \$48.32 billion in the reporting week.

[www.indianexpress.com](#)

Classifieds

PERSONAL

Pallavi Sharma w/o Abhishek shukla r/o W/O: Abhishek Shukla G-46 B.K. DUTT COLONY JOR BAGH LANE Lodi Road New Delhi - 110003 inform that name of mine has been wrongly mentioned as Pallavi Shukla in my Husband Passport, my true and correct name is Pallavi Sharma

0040716300-1

Babli Pandey D/o Ram Raj Pandey R/o Flat No. - 367, Krish Apartments, D-Block Near Day School, Vikas Pur, West Delhi, Delhi- 110018, have changed my name to Krishna Pandey

0070890833-1

Ashok Aggarwal S/o Raghunath Pardas Aggarwal R/o F-3/1 2nd Floor, Model Town-2, Delhi-110009 have changed my Name to Ashok Kumar Aggarwal for all future purpose.

0070890794-1

Arvind Kumar Ghildiyal S/o Sh- Chandra Ballabh Ghildiyal R/o RZG/14 MANDIR MARG, MAHAVIR ENCLAVE-1 NEW DELHI-110045 I declare that my correct and full name is Arvind Kumar Ghildiyal for all purpose.

0070890867-1

It is for general information that I, Vandana W/o Late Manoj Kumar R/o at X/1762, Rajgarh Colony, Street-No. 10, Krishna Nagar, Delhi-110031, declare that name of mine wrongly written as Annu Chaurasia in my Identity Card for J&K Migrant Regd. No.-18582. The ACTUAL name of mine Vandana respectively which may be amended accordingly.

0040716033-3

Name-Garv Father Name-Late Shree Shiv Prakash Mother Name-Rajni Class-12th-C CBSE Board Roll

No.26603354, Student Of Apex Public, School Sant Nagar, Burari Resi. Address-H.N.62, Gali No.16, A2-Block West, Sant Nagar burari Delhi-84

0040716423-2

Name-Garv Father Name-Late Shree Shiv Prakash Mother Name-Rajni Class-12th-C CBSE Board Roll

No.26603354, Student Of Apex Public, School Sant Nagar, Burari Resi. Address-H.N.62, Gali No.16, A2-Block West, Sant Nagar burari Delhi-84

0040716423-2

It is for general information that I, Sonia Rani W/o Raman Kumar, R/o House Number-18/308, OLD Char Chaman, Karna (Rural) (Part) (1), Karna, Karna, Haryana-132001, declare that name of mine has been wrongly written as Sonia in my minor son's Neev Kathpal aged 16 years in his 10th Class School Certificate cum marksheets. The actual name of mine is Sonia Rani, which may be amended accordingly.

0070890836-1

It is for general information that I Radha D/o Sanjeev Gupta Residing at A-317 T-huts GP-block, Pitampura, Delhi-110088, declare that name of mine and my father has been wrongly written as Radha Kumari and Sanjeev Kumar in my 10 class marksheets and certificate. The actual name of mine and my father Radha and Sanjeev Gupta, respectively which may be amended accordingly. It is certified that I have complied with other legal requirements in this connection.

0040716429-4

I, hitherto known as KANCHAN KAUR, D/o SHRI GULAB SINGH, R/o Villa no.16, Anand-Villa, Sector-16, Sector-16B, Opp. Novel Valley-Villa, Gautam Budh Nagar, Greater-Noida

West, U.P.201306, have changed my name and shall hereafter be known as KANCHAN VATAN.

0040716418-8

I, Yatin Verma alias Om Verma, S/o-Manish Verma, R/o-B.3-Gali No.7, Kanti-Nagar-Ext., Krishna-Nagar, Delhi-110051, have changed my name to Yatin Verma permanently. Om Verma and Yatin Verma is one and the same person.

0040716418-9

I, Vikas Gupta S/o Jai Chand, R/o House No.2085, Ward No-31, Huda Sector-2, Palwal, Haryana-121102, have changed my name to Vikas Goyal.

0040716409-9

I, VINITA LOHANI, W/O-DEEPAK LOHANI, R/O-PLOT No-46, 45/17, Third Floor, DLF phase -1, Behind Mega Mall, Sikanderpur Ghosi(68), Gurgaon, Haryana-122002, have changed my name to DEEPIKA LOHANI

0040716429-2

I, JUMESH KUMAR, S/O PARSHURAM SHARMA, R/O-D-410, Gali No.9, BHAJAN PURA, GARHI-MENDU, NORTH-EAST DELHI-110053, have changed the name of my-minor son VANSH SHARMA aged-14-years and he shall hereafter be known as DEVAANSH SHARMA.

0040716418-5

I, SAHIB SINGH BHALLA, S/O BAWA MANINDER SINGH BHALLA, R/O H-1/3, BAWA-FARM ANSAL-VILLA, SATBAR-MEHRALI, DELHI-110074, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAHIB BHALLA.

0040716409-4

I, Rukaiya Khanam/Rukeshwa W/O Aneesh Ahmed, R/O New F-230, G/F-Block, Raghubir Nagar, Delhi-110027, have changed my name from Bikhali Lal Gupta To B.L. Gupta for all purposes.

0040716422-4

I, Ravi Garg, S/o-Shri Shiv Kumar Garg, R/o-39/A, 77, West Punjabi Bagh, Delhi-110026, have changed my name to Ravi Kumar Garg for all future purposes.

0040716429-1

I, Rahat Fatima, W/o Shakeel Ahmad R/o RZ-3300-A, Gali no.37, Tuglakabad Extn, Kalkaji, Delhi-110019, have changed my name to Rahat Fatima for all purposes.

0040716422-1

I, NICKY ROY wife of VIKASH ROY, residing at 95, circular road, anad bazaar, danapur cantt, patna-801503, bihar, have change my name from NICKY ROY to NICKY KUMARI, vide-affidavit, dated-24.02.2024.

0040716418-10

I, Mohd Imran, S/o Sameyim, Address:- Ward.No. 5, Idgah colony, sonipat(131001), Haryana have a change my name to Mohd Imran Nadwi, For All Purpose.

0040716409-2

I, MUNISH KUMAR TANK, S/o, Mangal Ram Taank, presently residing at 1212, Laxmibai-Nagar, New Delhi-110023, have changed my name, from MUNISH KUMAR TANK to MUNISH KUMAR TAANK, For all, future purposes.

0040716418-7

I, MOOL CHAND'S/O MANGE RAM WADHWA R/O PLOTNO.408,WZ-198, CHAND NAGAR, TILAK NAGAR, DELHI-110018, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO MOOLCHAND WADHWA.

0040716409-8

I, MOHD SOHAIL, S/O-AMIN ALI, R/O-D-67, D-Block, J.I Colony, Wazirpur, Ashok Vihar, North-West-Delhi, Delhi-110052, Declare that name-of my-father and my-mother has been wrongly-written as Mohd Amin and Sahida Bano in my 10th Class, Roll-No.8193088 and 12th-Class

0040716418-1

I, Sudha Upadhyay W/o Hari Binod Upadhyay R/o 166D, Pkt-F, GTB Enclave, Delhi have changed my name to Sudha Upadhyay forever.

0070890854-1

I, Srishti D/o Anuj Kumar R/o 76, Dani Mohalla Jonapur, Delhi-110047 have changed my name to Srishti Ambawata

0070890870-1

I, Smt. SHARDA W/o LATE AJIT SINGH DABAS, R/o C-10/6, SECTOR-15, ROHINI, DELHI-110085, THAT BOTH NAMES Smt. SHARDA AND Smt. SHARDA DABAS, PERTAINS TO ONE AND THE SAME PERSON.

0040716422-6

I, Kunal Bawejia, S/o Sh. Shyam Sunder Bawejia, R/o-563, Ward, No.9, 27 Foot Road, Dabua Colony, Faridabad Niz, Faridabad, Haryana-121001, have changed my name Kavya Bawejia to Kunal Bawejia, for all, Future Purposes.

0040716422-3

I, Kausalya Kaur, W/o Arjun Singh, R/o-5D/22 A, Gali No.7, VISHNU GARDEN EXTN, TILAK NAGAR, WEST DELHI, West Delhi, 110018, changed my name to Kausalya Kaur.

0040716422-2

I, KM. YASMIN, W/O SHAKIL AHMAD, HOUSE NO-SF-304, PLOT NO-74, SECTOR-6, VAISHALI, I.E. SAHIBABAD, GHAZIABAD, UTTA R PRADESH- 201010, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO YASMEEN KHANAM, FOR ALL, FUTURE PURPOSE.

0040716409-6

I, KHURSHED AHMED S/O SHAFAQ UR REHMAN R/O 105, GALINQ, NEAR AMINA MASJID, WAZIRABAD VILLAGE, DELHI-110084, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO KHURSHID AHMED.

0040716409-7

I, JENITHA MURUGAN, W/O SUBRAMANIAN MURUGAN, R/O A-100, SUDARSHAN PARK, MOTI NAGAR, KARAMPURA, DELHI-110015, have changed my name to JENITHA DEVI.

0040716418-4

I, Harmeet Singh alias Harmeet Singh Sethi, S/o Kulbir Singh Sethi R/o-H.No.90-LU-Block, Pitampura-Delhi-110034, have changed my name to Harmeet Singh Sethi.

0040716423-3

I, Giriraj Singh S/O Kishore, H.no.12, P.T.S. Colony 7TH Battalion, Malviya-Nagar, Delhi-110017, HAVE CHANGED MY SON'S NAME FROM Rudraksh Singh TO Rudraksh Singh.

0040716409-1

I, GITI PATHAK, W/O DEVENDER KUMAR PATHAK, HOUSE, NO-629, SECTOR-3 BALLABGARH, FARIDABAD, HARYANA 121004, Changed My Name To GEETA PATHAK, For All, Future Purposes.

0040716409-3

I, GIRISH KUMAR GULIANI, S/O DHALLA RAM GULIANI, R/O-WZ-471 A/1 MS-BLOCK GALLI, NO.6 HARI-NAGAR DELHI-110064, have changed my name to GIRISH GULIANI.

0040716418-2

I, DILIP KUMAR S/O RAM RAJ GUPTA R/O E/209, STREET NO.4 SHASTRI NAGAR DELHI-110052, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO DALIP KUMAR GUPTA

0040716423-1

I, Bhavdeep Singh, S/o Inderpal Singh Dhingra, R/o-H No-15, Road No-44, West Punjab-Baghd-Delhi-261102, have changed my name to Bhavdeep Singh Dhingra.

0040716418-1

I, Babu/Priyanka Negi, W/o Manju Bhutani, R/o 1497-A, Rani Bagh, Shakur Basti, Delhi-110034, Have Changed My Name to Priyanka Bhutani.

0040716418-6

I, B.L. Gupta, S/o-Ram Lal Gupta, R/o-H.No.43A, Hara Enclave, Part-2, Kiran Suleman Nagar, Delhi-110086, have changed my name From Bhikali Lal Gupta To B.L. Gupta for all purposes.

0040716429-3

I, Umesh Kumar, S/o PARSHURAM SHARMA, R/O-D-410, Gali No.9, BHAJAN PURA, GARHI-MENDU, NORTH-EAST DELHI-110053, have changed the name of my-minor son VANSH SHARMA aged-14-years and he shall hereafter be known as DEVAANSH SHARMA.

0040716418-5

I, Sahib Singh Bhalla, S/O BAWA MANINDER SINGH BHALLA, R/O H-1/3, BAWA-FARM ANSAL-VILLA, SATBAR-MEHRALI, DELHI-110074, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME TO SAHIB BHALLA.

0040716409-4

I, Rukaiya Khanam/Rukeshwa W/O Aneesh Ahmed, R/O New F-230, G/F-Block, Raghubir Nagar, Delhi-110027, have changed my name from Bikhali Lal Gupta To B.L. Gupta for all purposes.

0040716422-4

I, Anis Ahmed/Aneesh Ahmed S/o Kalu Khan, R/o New F-230, G/F-Block, Raghubir Nagar, Delhi-110026, have changed my name to Aneesh Ahmed.

0040716429-1

I, Vir Pratap Singh S/o Sh. Kalu Singh, R/o WZ-17/1, Third Floor, Mukherjee Park, Tilak Nagar, Delhi-110018, have changed my name to Vir Pratap Singh to Vir Pratap Singh Nagi for all future purposes.

0040716422-5

I, Tayyaba Rehman W/o Abdul Rauf and D/o Khaliq Ur Rehman R/o B11/20, Gali No.5, Kabir Nagar, Purvi Shahdard, North East Delhi, Delhi-94 have changed my name from Tayyaba alias Tayyaba Rauf to Tayyaba Rehman for all future purposes.

0040716423-1

I, Inderjit Singh S/o Gurnam Singh R/o-A/2-115, 2nd Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi-110048, Have Changed My Name to Inder Jeet Singh for all Purposes

0040716423-4

I, Hari Binod Upadhyay S/o H.K. Upadhyay R/o 166D, Pkt-F, GTB Enclave, Delhi have changed my name to Hari Binod Upadhyay forever.

0040716295-1

I, TEJPAL SINGH S/o SH. HANS RAM R/o 23, VILLAGE DAYAL PUR, NORTH EAST, DELHI-110094, HAVE CHANGED MY NAME FROM TEJPAL TO TEJPAL SINGH IN FUTURE FOR ALL PURPOSES.

0040716418-1

I, Suhail Khan S/o Noor Alam R/o 41/8, Pocket-7, Sector-82 Noida U.P. have changed my name to Sohail Serwani for all future purposes.

0040716418-1

I, Sudha Upadhyay W/o Hari Binod Upadhyay R/o 166D, Pkt-F, GTB Enclave, Delhi have changed my name to Sudha Upadhyay forever.

0070890878-1

I, Gurvinder Pal Singh S/o Late Prit Pal Singh Jawanda R/o F-312, Alpha-II, Greater Noida U.P. have changed my name to Gurvinder Pal Singh Jawanda for all future purposes.

0040716409-1

I, De Sudhir Kumar S/o Biswanath De R/o 82/1, Ibrahimpur Road, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-70032 have changed my name to Sudhir Kumar De

0070890869-1

I, Davinder Singh S/o SUKHBIR SINGH R/o 749/3, PANAJA Kalan, Tikkri Kalan



कार्यालय जेल अधीक्षक,

केन्द्रीय जेल बिलासपुर (छत्तीसगढ़)



राजेन्द्र नगर, थाना सिविल लाईन जिला बिलासपुर छत्तीसगढ़, पिंग कोड 495001

Ph. No. 07752-224090, 224000 E-mail-centraljailbilaspur.cg@gov.in

वार्षिक निविदा सूचना वर्ष 2024-2025

दवाइयों के क्य हेतु

बिलासपुर दिनांक 21/02/2024

क्रमांक 501 /निवांह/2024

केन्द्रीय जेल बिलासपुर में परिषुद्ध वंशियों के उपचार हेतु लगें वाली जेमेक्स / ग्रांडेड दवाइयों प्रयोग करें हेतु वार्षिक निविदा वर्ष 2024-25 सीलबंद लिफांक में दिनांक 26.03.2024 को अपग्रह 03:00 बजे तक अनंत्रित की जाती है। निविदा प्रत्र अधोहस्ताकरण के कार्यालय से अपनी फॉम के लेटे पेपर, जिसमें जी.एस.टी. नंबर एवं पैन नंबर अंकित हो, में आवेदन प्रस्तुत कर रखें 1000.00 (रुपये एक हजार मात्र) नगर भुगतान कर दिनांक 23.03.2024 के दोपहर 01:00 बजे तक कार्यालयन दिवस में प्रत्र किये जा सकते हैं। यह राशि किसी भी दशा में वापस नहीं की जाएगी। निविदा प्रपत्र एवं निविदा संबंधी अन्य जानकारी जेल विभाग की वेबसाइट www.jail.cgi.gov.in से डाउनलोड किया जा सकता है। ऐसे निविदाओं को निविदा फॉर्म निविदा प्रस्तुत करें समय कार्यालय में नगद जमा करनी होगी।

ट्रीप-कंपनियों द्वारा जिन जेमेक्स दवाइयों का उत्पादन नहीं किया जाता, वहाँ दवाइयों ग्रांडेड खारीदी जाएगी।

निविदा विको की अनियंत्रित विधि एवं समय दिनांक 23.03.2024 अपग्रह 01:00 बजे तक

निविदा जमा करने की अनियंत्रित विधि एवं समय दिनांक 26.03.2024 अपग्रह - 03:00 बजे तक

निविदा हेतु निविदाओं अपानत राशि निविदा मूल्य का 01 प्रतिशत

निविदा खालीने की अनियंत्रित विधि दिनांक 26.03.2024 साथे 04:00 बजे

हस्ता/-
जेल अधीक्षक

केन्द्रीय जेल बिलासपुर

08055

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT NATIONAL HIGHWAYS PROJECTS e-procurement notice INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB) NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Dated-
1. The Chief Engineer, National Highway, HP PWD, Shimla hereby invites Bids for Performance-Based Maintenance of Roads through e-tendering from experienced firms/organizations for operation and maintenance works and activities for the following sections of the National Highways.

SL. No.	Sections	Length (km)	Estimated Bid Cost/ Total Bid Value (Rs. Lacs) Excluding GST	Bid Security (Rs. Lacs)	Contract Duration (month)
Maintenance works and activities (PBMC) on NH-21A (New NH-105) Km 35/00 to 49/00 in the State of Himachal Pradesh.	14.00 km.	1466.59 Laes	14.67 Laes	60 Months	

2. The complete BID document can be viewed / downloaded from official portal of the CPPW website https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app from 22.02.2024 to 26.03.2024 (upto 11:00 Hrs. IST). Bidder must submit its Financial bid and Technical Bid at https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app on or before 26.03.2024 (upto 11:00 Hrs. IST). Bids received online shall be opened on 27.03.2024 (at 11:30 Hrs. IST).

3. Bid through any other mode shall not be entertained. However, originals of Bid Security, document fee, Power of Attorney and Joint Bidding Agreement etc. shall be submitted physically by the Bidder on or before 27.03.2024 (upto 11:00 Hrs. IST). Please note that the Authority reserves the right to accept or reject all or any of the BIDs without assigning any reason whatsoever.

Officer In-charge
Ministry of Road Transport and Highways
Chief Engineer,
National Highway, Niranjan Bhawani
HPPWD, Shimla-171002
Phone/ Fax 0177-2629416, e-mail: ce-nh-hp@nic.in
Chief Engineer (NH) HP.PWD. Shimla-2

6319/HP

Follow us on

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WARNER OUT OF FINAL T20 TIE
David Warner has withdrawn from the third and final match of Australia's Twenty20 series against New Zealand in Auckland on Sunday with adductor soreness. Cricket Australia announced on Saturday.

BRIEFLY**Medal rush for India at Asia Cup Archery**

Baghdad: Indian archers bagged four medals including three gold in the compound section as they faced little competition in the Asia Cup Leg 1 here on Saturday. The archers have also confirmed 10 more medals including at least three gold on Sunday. The men's, women's and mixed compound teams won the three gold medals, defeating their Iranian counterparts in all the three finals. The women's team won 223-229, the men's side triumphed 232-229 and mixed team emerged 159-157 winners. PTI

India add four medals at Asian Track Cycling

New Delhi: The Indian cyclists continued their dominant show to add four more medals, including two gold, in the Asian Track Cycling Championship here on Saturday. Harshita Jakhra displayed remarkable skill and determination to emerge as the standout performer, winning the silver medal in the individual pursuit event in the women's junior category. Harshita produced an amazing time of 2:32.081 seconds, exhibiting grit and tenacity throughout the race. She narrowly missed out on the gold to Kazakhstan's Mariya Yelkina. PTI

Nagal gets wildcard for Dubai main draw

Dubai: Indian tennis star Sumit Nagal has received a wildcard for the main draw of the Dubai Championship, an ATP 500 event. While the qualifiers of the tournament began on Saturday, the main draw matches get underway on Monday. Nagal will be up against Lorenzo Sonego of Italy, currently world number 49, in the opening round. The 26-year-old Indian has had a remarkable run this year, qualifying for the main draw of the Australian Open last month, where he made it to Round 2 after beating Alexander Bublik of Kazakhstan. PTI

Abhay in Goodfellow Classic squash final

Ontario: Asian Games medalist Abhay Singh moved into the final of the Goodfellow Classic squash in Toronto with a comfortable 3-1 win over Abdelrahman Abdelkalek. The top-seeded Indian beat the Egyptian 11-5, 6-11, 11-7, 11-6 in 54 minutes in the semifinal of the USD 9000 event to advance to his second PSA Challenger Tour final in as many months after winning the JSW Willingdon event in Mumbai. World No. 66 Abhay will meet Elliott Morris Devred of Wales for the crown. PTI



Ravindra Jadeja seemed to be in a tearing hurry before he was caught by Ollie Pope at short leg on the second day of the fourth Test in Ranchi.

Sportzpics/BCCI

SANDIP G
RANCHI, FEBRUARY 24

WHEN THE second day ended, the sun was a distant, drowning spot in the Ranchi skies. The backdrop was more akin to an English evening, and the sorry scorecard would suggest that India were subjected to a harrowing spell of swing and seam bowling. The story couldn't have been more conflicting, as it was not the seaming ball but the spinning ball that confounded India's batsmen.

Paras Mhambre, India's bowling coach, would take objection to calling the surface a turner. "It was not a turner," he emphasized. "No ball spun alarmingly. It was the low bounce that made batting difficult here," he added.

When variable bounce kicks in, batting becomes nightmarish. Anywhere in the world; any time of a Test match. Suddenly, the judgement fades, the confidence fizzles and doubts creep in. It's like watching a horror movie, even when you watch the quiet passage, you are on the edge of the sofa, breaking into a cold sweat, fearing a sudden pang of dread lurking in the corner.

Many a ball kept low in Ranchi. Some

were so devious that the batsman could just hold their breath and thank their luck for leaving them unharmed. Technically, low bounce consumed just the wicket of Yashavni Jaiswal, not a grubber like Ben Stokes faced but still low. It's a familiar devil on most Indian surfaces, but usually does not interfere as early as in the second session of the second day. Mhambre admitted as much: "We didn't expect it this early." Or perhaps this low.

But as vile as the bounce was, Indian batsmen made their own life miserable. Static feet and frozen minds were the predominant theme of their dressing room march. Instructive is the example of Shubman Gill. For much of the innings, Gill's footwork was fluid. He essayed a brace of gorgeous off-drives, one apiece of James Anderson and Ollie Robinson. Both were just extensions of a defensive push, wherein he smoothly transferred his weight onto the front-foot.

Consequently, the England seamers shortened their length, the ensuing short balls he gracefully cut to the fence. Gill has been diligently working on this aspect of the game in the nets, and so far his front-foot had been moving fluidly. But against Shoaib Bashir, the front foot seemed chained to the crease.

He would make the initial stride and just

NUMBER PLATE 31

England off-spinner Shoaib Bashir bowled an unbroken 31-over spell. The 20-year-old, playing his second Test, bagged four wickets for 84 runs. He accounted for Yashavni Jaiswal, Shubman Gill, Rajat Patidar and Ravindra Jadeja.

pause. The second, small stride would never follow. Perhaps, he was too cagey of the (uneven) bounce Bashir was generating, that his stride was as indecisive as it was inadequate. Had his front-foot been more definite, the impact of the ball could have been outside the off-stump (it was umpire's call on review, eventually), and it would soon enough suspicion in the umpire's mind to not lift his index finger (hitting the stumps too was umpire's call).

You could empathize with Gill. He played with the bat held close to his leg, perhaps insecure of his jabby hands, in case the ball leapt. Ungainlier, though, was the dismissal

But as vile as the bounce was, Indian batsmen made their own life miserable.

of Rajat Patidar, a vastly experienced domestic unsure. His foot-work was an unsalvageable mess. His strides are short — which is not necessarily a bane, provided the movements are definite. But his was not. Perhaps the pressure of failures are piling up. And eventually, he played back to the ball that he would have been much better off defending on the front-foot. The skid rendered his hands helpless in staying off danger, from the ball blasting onto his stumps. His proficiency to repel spin bowling — given his immense domestic experience — seems grossly over-blown.

Chaos unfolds

Watching chaos unfold, India sent Ravindra Jadeja at No.5, a supposedly sensible move. He was the man in form, on the back of a hundred and one who relishes rescue missions. But he seemed a batsman in haste, one who wanted to unpack his machismo rather than grinding the team out of trouble. He faced 12 balls, made 12 runs, heaved two sixes and

got out, as though it was a tribute to his older, reckless self. He merely stretched, without getting near the pitch and jabbed at the ball. The over-spun ball bounced more than he had judged. The low hands of his when defending was now his enemy, and the ball shook off his gloves. Like Gill before, he too used hard hands, which stabbed at the ball.

Enter Sarfraz Khan, after twin half-centuries on debut, an instinctive destroyer of spin. But Bashir made him jumpily with a ball that lured him into the drive, dipped, kept straight and took the outside edge.

Tom Hartley then hit him on the pads with a skidder and sought a review. He was just saved by the angle that ensured the ball was not hitting the stumps. Hartley then began to bowl progressively slow at him and tempted him into a drive at one floated outside the off-stump. The ball turned away to grab the outside edge.

In isolation, none of the balls were unpredictable. But the minds of India's batsmen were cluttered and confused. No wonder the pundits say cricket is a mind game. It was not the swinging ball under gloomy English skies that preyed on their mind, but the more familiar low-bouncing balls under gloomy Indian skies.

ROOKIE PASSES TEST

Young Bashir learns on the job, leaves Indian batsmen in a spin



Shoaib Bashir processed the nature of the pitch, he configured the suitable length and the incisive line.

PTI

undid Jaiswal too. He was glued to his back-foot after reading the length, thinking he could bunt the ball through the off-side. But the ball kept low. The pitch played its part in the dismissal, then so did Bashir.

Batsmen's folly

It's the perfect length, where a batsman is unsure whether to go forward or back. Still, twinkled-toed batsmen would judge the length and readjust accordingly. But there are not too many of those throwbacks in this Indian side. Most of them were late and reactive. It's his length that deceived Shubman Gill and Rajat Patidar and made them either hang back and work it on the leg-side with the turn, or just plonk the front-foot and defend. Bashir would repeatedly hit the same spot. The precision is unusual to spot in a rookie, more so in a 32-over spell on the trot.

But it was not length alone that foiced the batsmen. At this level, batsmen would figure out such repetitive patterns. He would interchange it, bowl some slightly shorter and some others marginally fuller. The line too was impeccable, hitting the spot just outside the off-stump and breaking away. The extra speed meant the ball would skid more than it did from India's spinners.

Then, he would bring turn into play. The over-spun ball befuddled Jadeja, into an ugly stab; the side-spin outwitted Patidar. Bashir, thus, excites on so many levels, with his grit and heart too. Joe Root was impressed: "Shoaib is a great young lad to have in the group. He's got a great character, great sense of humour and huge ability and skill. Great to see him keep coming and asking a lot of questions."

His day had begun with an attempted piece of humour from Sarfraz Khan, who when fielding at short leg would yell: "Isko kuch nahin aata hain. Hindi bhi (He knows nothing, even Hindi)." He got out soon after, but the taunt clearly didn't age well.

It's this preconception that, to an extent,

line. Then he simply brought his tricks into play, with a rustic exuberance.

Bowling too full, where yawning cracks winked at him, would invite boundaries. Besides, he is not someone who looks to beat batsmen in the air with flight and loop. He would occasionally bowl full, but in the larger scheme of mixing up his lengths. He largely bowled on the shorter side of the good-length band. It's his default length.

Most tall bowlers tend to bowl a yard shorter than shorter bowlers. For this reason perhaps, batsmen are inclined to play them on the back-foot, looking to ride the bounce & work it on the on-side.

It's this preconception that, to an extent,

From losing contract to winning hearts



RAHUL PANDEY
FEBRUARY 24

IT WAS A brief conversation with Shane Warne, exactly five years in February 2019, that left an indelible mark on Shoaib Bashir, then just 16. The young spinner was with the Rajasthan Royal Academy in Surrey, where the late Warne was there to interact with the trainees. Bashir caught his eye and took him aside for a chat. Siddartha Lahiri, head of coaching at RR Academy, remembers the exchange like it was yesterday.

"Are you a spinner or a fast bowler?" asked the former Australian leg-spinner, according to Lahiri. "Spinner," responded Bashir, who's an offie.

"What do you need to do then?" the Aussie quizzed him again. It's one of those trick questions, Bashir reckoned. "Bowl!"

Warne corrected him, "No, spin the ball. Don't think of anything else. T20, T10, five-day, four-day, nothing. Just spin the ball."

It was a lesson Bashir put to good use as he bowled a compact 31-over spell in Ranchi on Saturday to disable the Indian batting at a decisive juncture in the series. In Yashavni Jaiswal, Shubman Gill and Ravindra Jadeja, he bested three Indian centurions in the series on Day 2 of the fourth Test.

Making his County Championship debut for Somerset last June, Bashir would hold his end against former England captain Alastair Cook no less, spraying a couple of deliveries that beat the southpaw on the outside edge.

"What impressed me was that he didn't bowl that many bad balls," the Englishman recently told the BBC, furthermore pressing on a trait which would've made Warne proud. "He turns the ball really hard."

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Sajana's journey: Braving floods at home to hitting last-ball six against DC

NARAYANANS
KOCHE, FEBRUARY 24

CHALLENGES, WHETHER on the field or off the field, are not new to Sajana Sajeevan. The 29-year-old came out to bat for the first time in her Women's Premier League (WPL) career, possibly with the most difficult task in cricket. Mumbai Indians needed 5 runs off 1 ball. She nervously deposited the ball over wide-long on for a six to cap off a memorable win for the defending champions against Delhi Capitals and became the talk of the town.

Flashback to August 2018, Sajana had been picked to play for India Reds in the Women's Challenger Trophy to be held in Bengaluru. But there was a catch. As Kerala reeled under the devastating floods, especially Sajana's hometown of Mananthavady in Wayanad, she was stuck at home and time was running out.

"There was water all around us and there was no way to get out of the house. I was sure that I was going to miss the matches. Not only us, but our neighbours were also trying to escape from the floods," Sajana recalled during

an interaction with *The Indian Express* in December after the WPL auction in which the Mumbai Indians picked her up for Rs 15 lakh.

Luckily, the police came to Sajana's help with boats just in the nick of time during the floods. "I took my cricket kit and a few clothes and hopped on to the boat. Even though I reached Bangalore to play in the Challenger Trophy, I was disturbed as our house was devastated by the floods. My teammates supported me a lot and I somehow managed to play on," she said.

Sajana's mental fortitude to deal with adversities was once again on display on Friday. MI captain Harmanpreet Kaur remarked how good her ball-striking in practice has been. Yatika Bhatia went further and labelled Sajana the Kieron Pollard of this team.

While Sajana, a right-hand batter and off-spinner, shot to instant fame under the Chinnaswamy Stadium floodlights, her story is one of toil, riddled with highs and lows in equal parts.

Like her junior Kerala teammate Minnu Mani, who made her WPL debut with Delhi and the senior Indian team last year, Sajana



Mumbai Indians' Sajana with her father Sajeevan and mother Sarada.

also hails from the tribal Kurichya community. Her father Sajeevan is an autorickshaw driver and her mother Sarada is a panchayat ward councillor.

Sajeevan said Sajana was the only girl child among the immediate family: "So she used to play with her male cousins and other friends. Those days, they used to play cricket with a bat made out of coconut petiole and plastic

I was a cricket fan and used to support her playing cricket but her mother and grandmother didn't like it back then. We were not financially sound and when I used to buy plastic balls for her during temple festivals, they used to scold me. "

SAJEEVAN
SAJANA'S FATHER

balls in the paddy fields. I was a cricket fan and used to support her playing cricket but her mother and grandmother didn't like it back then. We were not financially sound and when I used to buy plastic balls for her during temple festivals, they used to scold me."

Sajana studied in a government residential school in Pookode from Class 6 to 10, the years that formed the sportsperson in her. "I played all sorts of sports back then - basketball, volleyball, kho-kho, long jump, high jump, javelin throw, shot put, 800m run."

She became serious about cricket after

joining Mananthavady Government Vocational HSS for Class 11. "The physical education instructor there, Elsamma teacher, found a spark in me as a cricketer and she asked me to try for Kerala Cricket Association's trials," said Sajana, who went on to lead U-19 and U-23 teams.

Sajana told *Yastika* in a post-match chat on wplt20 about the financial crunch she faced. "I did not have funds to travel. When I was selected to play for my district, I started earning Rs 150 per day as a daily allowance. That was big money for me. Then, it went to (Rs) 300 and 900. I wanted to feel happy for my parents," she recalled.

Under Sajana's leadership, Kerala won the U-23 national T20 championship 2018. In the final against Maharashtra in Mumbai, Sajana was once again the star for Kerala, scoring an unbeaten 24 off 19 balls, seeing through a tricky chase.

Gambhir-gifted bat

Sajana fondly remembered the bat with which she hit that match-winning knock. It was gifted to her by Gautam Gambhir when

he came to Wayanad to play a Ranji Trophy game in 2016. "When Gambhir sir was practising, I was among a group of fielders. When he saw me stopping the ball without fumbling, he was impressed and gave me a bat. It was the first proper cricket bat I ever had and the most prized possession in my career. I even scored an 84-ball century in an U-23 match against Tamil Nadu with that bat."

After not getting picked for WPL 2023, Sajana was disappointed. "She had great hopes of playing in the first year of WPL and opening up her route into the national team. Even though she was dejected after the auction, she quickly recovered and got back to practicing more rigorously," said KCA coach Jestin Fernandez.

"Like Minnu, she also has to travel for nearly 50 km from her home to reach the Krishnagiri Stadium in Wayanad to practice but she makes it a point not to miss the sessions," said Fernandez, who witnessed Sajana's match-winning six from close quarters at the stadium in Bengaluru, along with several other members of the Wayanad cricket support system, including Elsamma teacher.

Silver lining: India's backline

Defence stands tall as India hold red-hot Australia to a 2-2 draw in Pro-League

VINAYAK MOHANARANGAN
FEBRUARY 24

WHEN THE FIH Pro League lineup for the Odisha mini tournament was confirmed, it was immediately obvious that the Indian men's hockey team would face four stern – and important – tests over two legs against Australia and the Netherlands. With Paris Olympics as the aim, these were the games where India would have to show what level they were at.

On Saturday in Rourkela, Harmanpreet Singh's men held Australia for a hard-fought 2-2 draw before losing the shootout 0-3 to miss out on a bonus point. With that result, India finished with three draws in regulation time against the two powerhouses and lost once 4-6 against Australia in a crazy match.

Harmanspreet gave India the lead with a drag flick (20'), before Blake Govers equalised from a penalty stroke (23'). Amit Rohidas, a local hero from hockey hotbed Sundergarh, fired India into the lead again from a Penalty Corner again (30'). Tom Craig (53') took the match to the shootout where India's forwards missed all of their chances.

While head coach Craig Fulton would have liked to see a win or two in there, to hold Australia – who had 6 wins in 6 matches so far – for their first draw will be considered a good night's work. And the key to it was defence, as Harmanpreet pointed out after the match.

Sample this: Australia had scored 28 goals in their 6 matches, for an average of 4.67. In addition, India tend to concede a bunch against the Kookaburras. In their last 10 official meetings – dating back to the Tokyo Olympics – India have let in a whopping 51 goals against the Aussies. It's a clash of styles that India have just not been able to keep a lid on in recent times.

For Fulton, that would have been the most frustrating aspect a few nights back when India went down 0-2 early, then stormed back to take a 4-2 lead before conceding four more in the second half. The South African, whose favourite word is perhaps control, the mantra is defend-to-win.

His team showed they could keep one of the freest-scoring sides relatively quiet, with a collective defensive display. Firstly, Manpreet Singh had a fabulous game in the midfield, breaking up play and going forward with creativity. But that meant Fulton



Defender Sumit (L) had an impressive game as India kept free-scoring Australia to just two goals. Hockey India

SHOOTOUT

AUSTRALIA	INDIA
✓ T Brand	✗ Akashdeep
✓ F Ogilvie	✗ Sukhjeet
✓ T Wickham	✗ Upadhyay

India have lost back-to-back shootouts to miss 2 bonus points.

needed others to step up in the defence. Sumit, who has had a fine few days in defence, was once again mighty impressive with his deep tackles.

When he broke up play, he wasn't afraid to carry it forward either.

When India made mistakes in the midfield on a couple of occasions, Hardik Singh and Manpreet dropped deeper to bail their

teammates out.

In goal, there was concern for India on the night as PR Sreejesh went off midway through the second quarter but came back with a bandaged knee in the final quarter and saved a stroke (that he conceded in the first place) from Govers to keep India ahead. Krishan Pathak had a better night too in goal.

It wasn't the cleanest of matches from both sides, both sides were guilty of losing the ball leading to transitions. The two strokes that India conceded on the night were both avoidable tackles from behind (Amit and Sreejesh). Australia's second goal also came from India losing the ball in their own area.

But where it lacked in quality, the match made up for in drama. There were mini scuffles across the pitch when the man-to-man marking got tight. The video umpire was

made to earn his payday as there was a barrage of reviews, with India successfully reviewing five times. Australia had a goal ruled out too via referral.

The moment of the night was goalkeeper Johan Durst pulling off an audacious save at the end of the third quarter to deny Abhishek. A rasping hit from the edge of the circle seemed destined to go in when Durst dived with the stick out to his right to deflect it behind. He'd eventually keep a clean sheet in the shootout too for a Player of the Match display.

Losing two shootouts back-to-back is not ideal for India, but the Pro League tiebreakers are usually low-key affairs, so that shouldn't worry India too much.

But to avoid a loss against Australia by keeping them to two goals is a performance that would fall under the positive bracket for control-driven Fulton.

RCB, who had a horrid run, losing five in a row in the inaugural season gifted their fans with a perfect start. RCB captain Smriti Mandhana received a thunderous welcome at the toss, the noise was more deafening than what Shah Rukh Khan got at the opening ceremony. Playing at their home venue, backed by probably the most loyal fan base in India, the home team managed to match the electrifying crowd with some quality cricket.

After being put into bat by UP Warriorz skipper Alyssa Healy, RCB had a steady start. They lost Sophie Devine (1) early. Mandhana looked in fine touch after the six she hit off Tahila McGrath's bowling. She even got a reprieve but failed to capitalise on it and McGrath had the last laugh.

UP Warriorz dropped three catches, two of them were of Meghna, who unlike her captain, made the most out of it. RCB No. 3, who was released by Gujarat Giants, scored a brilliant

44-ball 53. Meghna kept losing partners but she kept on hitting the boundaries as well. She rode her luck but kept RCB's scoreboard ticking. Elyse Perry too joined Devine and Mandhana in the hut as she perished cheaply.

Warriorz skipper Alyssa Healy made some smart bowling changes and rotated her spin-heavy attack wisely. At the halfway mark RCB were 64 for 3 with Richa Ghosh unable to find the gap, and Meghna was finding it hard to rotate the strike. It was over No 13, where RCB shifted gears. Meghna struck a six, while Ghosh hit a boundary and they collected 12 runs off Rajeshwari Gayakwad's over. Ghosh went into beast mode and tonked Saima Thakor for four boundaries.

Meghna, who was dropped on 16 and 22 got to her maiden WPL fifty. The 71-run stand for the fourth wicket was finally broken by Gayakwad, who got Meghna stumped and, in a span of two balls, she got rid of Georgia Wareham to bring Warriorz back.

However, Richa, who had cut, whipped, slashed, pulled and driven in disdain was not done yet. McGrath faced the brunt as Ghos hit her for a hat-trick of boundaries and completed her half-century in just 31 balls. Deepthi Sharma ended Richa Ghosh's fiery knock, but Shreyanka Patil's last ball six ensured RCB ended their innings with a flourish and put on 157 for 6 on a sluggish track.

For the Warriorz, Rajeshwari Gayakwad (2/24), was the pick of the bowlers.

BRIEF SCORES: RCB: 157/6 in 20 overs (Richa Ghosh 62, Sabbihene Meghna 53; Rajeshwari Gayakwad 2/24) vs UP Warriorz: 155/7 in 20 overs (Grace Harris 38, Shweta Sehwat 31; Sobhana Asha 5/22).

RANJI TROPHY ROUND UP

With a fighting 80, run-machine Indrajith continues to impress

VENKATA KRISHNA B
COIMBATORE, FEBRUARY 24

DURING HIS 206 minutes stay in the middle, the only occasion Baba Indrajith's bat came in violent contact with anything was when he punched it with his right hand after offering a return catch to Dharmendrasinh Jadeja. Right through his 139-ball innings, no batsman looked as fluent as Indrajith did.

A score of 80 looked every bit short of a score he personally had in mind, but on a slow, two-paced pitch, it was worth a three-figure knock. The disappointment of missing out on a century in a Ranji Trophy knockout that would put him on the selectors' radar was evident, but this was a knock that helped Tamil Nadu retain control of their quarterfinal against Saurashtra.

Apart from Indrajith, a well-crafted 65 from Boopathi Vaishna Kumar and a fighting 60 from RSai Kishore at No 3 meant Tamil Nadu comfortably overtook Saurashtra's first innings total of 183, and at stumps on Day 2, were placed 300/6. With Vijay Shankar and Mohammad Ali still in the middle, Tamil Nadu are aiming for a lead of at least 150 on Day 3 at the SNR College grounds here. With the cracks already opening up and the odd ball shooting low, defending champions Saurashtra have a real job on their hands to pull back control of the game.

When Prakash Ranjan Paul fell as the third



Since 2017 (minimum 40 matches), no middle-order batsman has scored more than Indrajith's 3498 runs.

wicket, Saurashtra were threatening to crawl back into the game in the first session. With Sai Kishore at the other end relying mostly on big hits to fetch runs, Indrajith didn't hesitate a bit to do the hardwork. For the first 78 balls he faced, all that Indrajith focussed on was rotating the strike, never letting Saurashtra spinners to settle down to a line. Against two left-arm spinners – Jadeja and Parth Bhut – who could run-through any opponents on a helpful track, TN nullified them to a great extent by ensuring there was a left-right pair throughout the innings until Vijay and Ali joined together late in the day.

By far the best player against spin,

Indrajith's plan was simple. "I'm generally a boundary-scoring player, especially against the spinners. But, this season, on these slow pitches, when I go into bat, the ball is generally old. So, it is not easy to pierce the gaps. I told Sai that I will pace my innings by taking strokes," he said at the end of the day.

And having gotten used to the pace of the pitch and with newcomer Boopathi in the middle, off the 79th ball he stepped out and lofted Jadeja for his first boundary over mid-on. From there on, Indrajith didn't look back. With Boopathi being steady and also using his feet, Saurashtra's spinners lacked the control they desired. With the two using their feet even to pierce the gap for singles and doubles, Jadeja, Bhut and off-spinner Yuvrajsinh Dodia erred at times by pitching it short, and were duly punished. In the first half-an-hour after tea, the two batsmen hit eight boundaries and a six as the lead kept swelling for TN.

Since 2017 (minimum 40 matches), no middle-order batsman in the world has scored more than Indrajith's 3498 runs. In this period, he has scored 13 centuries and has an average of 63.60, but has rarely found a place even in India A squads. Last season despite showing remarkable consistency, Indrajith didn't even find a place in the South Zone Duleep Trophy squad.

BRIEF SCORES: Saurashtra 183 vs Tamil Nadu 300/6 (Baba Indrajith 80, Boopathi Kumar 65, RSai Kishore 60; Parth Bhut 2/76).

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, FEBRUARY 24

MUSHEER KHAN makes it sound as if scoring a double century against Baroda is a ritual of sorts. Not too long after the day's play, he recalls the different occasions when he'd done so: the under-14 level, under-16... Now, he has won at the Ranji level too.

One of the stars of India's Under-19 World Cup campaign, Musheer smashed an unbeaten double-century against Baroda at the MCA-BKC ground on Saturday. The younger brother of Sarfaraz Khan, who made his India debut recently, the 18-year-old's 203 not out at the end of the second day helped Mumbai post a decent total of 384 in the quarterfinals.

Khan ran out of partners but in Hardik Tamore, he found someone willing to grit it out while he did the heavy lifting. Tamore scored a patient 57 off 248 balls. Meanwhile, Khan, who resumed on 128, was never in any discomfort as he waited for loose balls to keep the scoreboard ticking. He swept any ball that came within his range and cut if the ball was even fractionally wide.

"The feeling is surreal to bat after scoring 100 runs. When I was walking back to the dressing room, I realised how all my big runs have come from Baroda over the years," Khan said. "I scored 258 against Baroda in under 14, in Under 16, I scored 250. And now this double hundred came against Baroda, too. The idea was to bat the whole day and try to rotate the strike. If the ball is in my reach, I will try to hit or just rotate strike."

Khan and Tamore added an 181-run stand for the sixth wicket and it enabled Mumbai to recover after wickets early in the innings. The wicket-keeper batsman revealed the talks he had with Khan while batting. "I was trying to hold one end and give Musheer a hand. He was backing his shots. I have played with Sarfaraz from under-14 days but this was a superb knock from him (Musheer)," Tamore said. "We were speaking to each other and said even if we didn't get a run, we had to hang around as long as possible

for the team. We wanted to bat till lunch and then



POINT OF VIEW, PAGE 2

Reclaiming our lives

Shelja Sen on how to resist damaging ideas of beauty and live fullest, wild-spirited, magical, full-bodied lives

eye

ARTS etc, PAGE 3

In the same boat

Gulammohammed Sheikh on his solo in Delhi, why we must not forget Mahatma Gandhi, and intersections between his artistic pursuits



The forest goddess of the Sunderbans, Bon Bibi, has solutions to avert climate disaster. Theatre artists of the delta are struggling to preserve her cultural heritage

Dipanita Nath

AS PAINT begins to cover his face, Basudev Haldar stops being a *chashir chhele* (farmer's son) from Pakhiralay village in the Sunderbans, West Bengal, and starts to see himself as the mythical warrior of the forest, Shah Jongoli. He puts all of himself into the transformation in order to impress the courageous figure of Jongoli into the minds of the audience.

It is no ordinary audience. They are *jongol korar lok*, a term used for people, mostly men, who work in the surrounding forests — sons, brothers, fathers and husbands who search for fish, crabs and honey that they collect, literally, from the jaws of tigers.

Between 2020 and 2022, the pandemic years, tigers killed more than 30 people as unemployment forced islanders into the forest. On an average, four or five people get killed by tigers annually. "I want to fill the audience with the courage of Shah Jongoli because they work in the realm of Dokkhin Rai, the tiger demon, who haunts the forest and preys on humans," says Haldar, 33.

He is a performer of Bon Bibi's Palagaan, a form of theatre unique to the Sunderbans that explains the relationship between humans and nature. The fable exists in two late-19th century texts, both called *Bonbibi Johurana*.

When performance season began mid-January, Bon Bibi's Palagaan was widely enacted but time is running out. Researchers say that the Sunderbans, in its present state, will cease to exist during the remainder of this century due to its vulnerable ecology and climate change. An archipelago of around 100 islands spread between India's West Bengal and Bangladesh, it has always been a troubled place for human habitation. It is the last natural habitat of the Bengal Tiger. The World Bank calls it the home of millions of Bangladeshis and India's poorest people. The main occupations are farming and fishing. According to the International Union for Conservation of Nature, the region is "one of the most significant human-tiger conflict hotspots".

It's a reality etched in folklore. The most enacted part of Bon Bibi's Palagaan, *Dukhey Jatra*, revolves around Dukhey, the child of a poor widow, who has been taken to the forest by his uncle Dhona and left there as food for the tiger. In despair, he begins to pray to the forest goddess Bon Bibi. A furious Bon Bibi and her brother Shah Jongoli defeat Dokkhin Rai and save Dukhey. But, when the tiger asks for forgiveness, the goddess adopts him as her son. Bon Bibi tells Dokkhin Rai that the little human boy, Dukhey was, now, his brother and he couldn't kill him.

"Bon Bibi's Palagaan is quintessentially a Sunderbans text because it is the story of a woman, Bon Bibi, who brings about a truce between the natural and the human worlds. This is an ecological parable for our time. If we are going to fight anthropogenic climate change, we need to cherish creatures other than ourselves," says Annu Jalais, author of a major anthropological work, *Forest of Tigers: People, Politics and Environment in the Sunderbans* (Routledge, 2010). "The story is about kinship between tigers and humans. We need to look out for each other, non-humans as well as other humans," she adds.

When the men of the Sunderbans come back home safely from the forest, it is believed to be by the grace of Bon Bibi.

Grateful families, who had made a vow for their return, carry out a ritual worship. Bon Bibi's Palagaan is, traditionally, performed as part of this ritual.

A visitor now has a better chance of watching Bon Bibi's Palagaan in a hotel than in the villages in Sunderbans



PARtha PAUL

Bon Bibi's Fables



PHOTOS COURTESY: SAJAL MANDAL

ous waves. It is an atmosphere that can inspire a three-and-a-half-year child, Dhiman Mondol, to pretend to be Dukhey and pester for a boat and his parents, who have also spent the evening at the play, to buy him a hull.

Now, the resilience of the art form is being tested. Repeated cyclones as well as erosion, land subsidence, disappearing islands and depleting forest cover have caused large-scale displacement, too. Haldar, who would like nothing better than to be with *gaan-bajana* (songs and music), is a migrant labourer.

He goes to north India to load sacks during the harvest season, to Tamil Nadu to work in hosiery factories and to the Andaman Islands to help in betel nut and coconut fields. "The Sunderbans is a place of *obhab* (scarcity) and whatever little we have is swept away by flood waters during cyclones. I don't mind earning a little less if I could stay with my people and my theatre. I want to carry on our tra-

FINE BALANCE
(Clockwise from top)
Ruma Mondol as the forest goddess Bon Bibi; Basudev Haldar

who plays the mythical warrior of the forest, Shah Jongoli; the audience at a show in Jharkhali in the Sunderbans

in the audience comes, touches my feet and gives an offering of Rs 10. These small gestures are a big honour," he says.

In the remote Anppur village, the clear air carries the smell of hay and a song, "*Dekh re Dukhey najar tuley/ Amije tor ma* (Raise your eyes and look, Dukhey/ for I am your mother)". It is the song of Bon Bibi comforting Dukhey in the forest, and rendered by the powerhouse performer of the islands, Ruma Mondol, 48. Ruma's present worry is that winter has become too warm, with only a few cool days. "We put efforts in the fields but don't get enough harvest. In this season, we should be growing chillies. They bring in a great deal of money. Now, the fields don't produce chillies at all," she says. She is not aware about terms such as global warming or of efforts to contain the global temperature rise to 2°C from pre-industrial times.

Ruma is in demand as Bon Bibi and Dokkhin Rai. Her hit scene is of the tiger emitting a bloodcurdling laugh as he prepares to kill Dukhey. On January 16, when a show was held in Anppur, the 500-odd audience turned silent as Ruma played her role. It was only after Bon Bibi defeated Dokkhin Rai, that the audience cheered up and tossed money at the actors.

"Even 20 years ago, people wanted us to perform all night. There was no TV or other entertainment. Modern audiences don't have the patience to watch for six-seven hours. The moment it is midnight, they are *hawa* (vanish into the air)," she says.

Her group, Rakhi Natya Sanstha, realised 15 years ago that they had to trim the tale. Ruma took the interesting bits and reduced the duration of the play to three hours. "It is not the same but people prefer it," she says. Other groups have edited out songs and di-

alogues to fit the two-three-hour show.

Nobody believed a day would come when film music and dance shows, organised by event management companies, would compete with Bon Bibi's Palagaan. On Basanti island, theatre and film actor Sajal Mondol says that folk arts, like *baul*, are wanning across rural Bengal. "The Sunderbans is an underdeveloped area, so people want a break from the hand-to-mouth existence. At the dance shows, people drink, gamble and dance and find that they are enjoying themselves. There are also big stars coming from Kolkata to perform," says Sajal.

"On the other hand, the number of ritual performances of Bon Bibi's Palagaan has come down. The play needs 15-20 people, so a performance costs Rs 15,000-20,000, which many people cannot afford," he says. On January 18, he collaborated with an organisation to hold a public performance of Bon Bibi's Palagaan in the scenic Jharkhali village.

A visitor now has a better chance of watching Bon Bibi's Palagaan in a hotel than in villages. Whittled to an hour, the play has been offered as entertainment in resorts since the tourism boom in 2002. "An intellectual crowd wants to know about Bon Bibi. During peak season, December to January, a troupe can get two shows a day, daily. The rest of the year, it is two or three shows a month. A theatre group earns Rs 2,000 per show," says Dipankar Mondol, a tour operator from Chargheri.

So, it is on holiday that most tourists first hear of the Sunderbans' syncretic context — how Bon Bibi and Shah Jongoli were born to Fakir Ibrahim and his second wife Gulalibibi. The twins had been sent by none other than Allah with the mission to bring about a truce between tigers and humans in the Sunderbans. They sought blessings in Mecca and Medina before travelling to the delta.

"Bon Bibi is venerated by everyone who enters the forest 'in peace' meaning those who take little from the forest, such as fishermen and crab collectors, and not hunters or loggers bearing firearms. Whatever their religion, people usually offer flowers and sweets and even little chicks that they release in the forest in Bon Bibi's name. Many islanders see the forest as a place where one's religion doesn't matter, what matters is respect towards the forest," says Jalais.

She adds that the legend of Bon Bibi prescribes rules about what one shouldn't do in the forest. "People must not desecrate the forest by defecating or urinating in it, they cannot be greedy, violent or angry. They must take only as much as they need and share equally whatever they bring back. This is contrasted with the village, which is a place of hierarchy, which is dirty and where people are divided into communal rivalries. The forest is seen as a sacred space that nurtures all equally, whether creature or human," says Jalais.

Anger, too, is temporary and good does not seek to vanquish evil as much as transform it. As Amitav Ghosh writes in his adaptation of the legend, *Jungle Nama* (Fourth Estate India, February 2021), Bon Bibi tells Dukhey to reconcile with his uncle Dhona who had sacrificed him to the tiger. "But you

must forgive him, rascal though he is; / to hate forever is to fall into an abyss," says the goddess.

The art form has survived due to passionate artists whose stories could fill an evening. The late Mastermoshai (literally, teacher, but referring to the director of a group), Bijoy Krishna Mondal, had sold his property and built a Bon Bibi's Palagaan group. "I used to see actors coming home and living with

us. There was practically no food or candles for us but my father used to focus on the troupe. I didn't like this because my father suffered in poverty until his death," says Dilip Mondal, 49, his son.

Dilip has been encouraged to keep performing by the West Bengal government, which has issued identity cards to thousands of folk performers like him and provides them with a monthly financial assistance of Rs 1,000 each. Dilip's son, Debasish Mondal, 28, didn't step into art at all. "We need an income. My father can barely get by," he says.

The open fields, under the night sky, are the theatre's age-old venue, with flickering Hazar lanterns providing illumination before electric grids arrived in the Sunderbans in 2018. The characters are larger than life, their costumes bright and the songs like melodi-

The legend of Bon Bibi prescribes rules for the forest, which include people must take only as much as they need

us. There was practically no food or candles for us but my father used to focus on the troupe. I didn't like this because my father suffered in poverty until his death," says Dilip Mondal, 49, his son.

New Delhi

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND

RANJIT LAL

Author, environmentalist and bird watcher



CLOAK AND DAGGER

An anemone's petal-like tentacles are poison tipped and can trap an unwary prey

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Your home is mine

From wrestling hermit crabs to chrysanthemum anemones — tide pools make for great discoveries

I'M BACK on the beach probably for the last time during this visit to Goa and the first thing that crosses my mind as I step out onto the cool sand and relish the breeze is how appallingly criminal it is to make our kids inhale the malicious, toxic, sandpaper air in places like Delhi. Here, the breeze is clean and crisp as a salad and lacy wavelets wash over our feet. But now it's time to focus: what will this session of tide-pooling yield? The tide is well out, and surfers along with their coach are setting out. But there, behind a rocky escarpment are two girls crouched over the sand, excitedly picking up something from the sand.

You make your way towards them, momentarily sidetracked en-route — and do what no naturalist should do: interfere with the process of nature. Up ahead is a crow showing breakfast interest in something lying on the sand — it's a stranded starfish lying belly-up. You deprive the crow of its breakfast (and promise it a piece of toast from your breakfast

the sand, furious combat resumes.

I check with my tide-pooling guru Sejal Mehta (author of *Superpowers on the Shore*, Penguin 2022) and she tells me that probably the little guy was trying to oust the larger one from its residence so it could move up in life. He was one ambitious fellow because he was about half the size of the owner of the mansion he wanted. Sejal informs me that she's seen one clean rip off the limbs of another in one such battle. The loser of such battles, rendered shell-less, is usually quickly devoured. Well, I thought, with our dispensations, we just go and bulldoze the houses of those we do not agree with, which is like throwing the baby out along with the bathwater. But at least the hermit crabs have a genuine reason for such deplorable conduct: They don't have the hard exoskeleton of 'true' crabs and have tender, exposed bottoms (abdomens) — juicy bites for any predator. So, they protect themselves by backing into discarded shells and hook onto these tightly.

And since like children, they keep growing, they have to be fitted out with larger-sized clothes every now and then. And here clearly the message going out was 'Dude, your home is now my home, so beat it.'

By now, you have learned that the place to look closely at is the underhung, portions of partially submerged rocks

learned that the place to look closely at is the underhung, portions of partially submerged rocks. You scan the pools and there it is: a glistening crab. It crouched at the entrance to the overhang, which was fringed with what looked like pale green streamers. Its claws were at the ready to embrace the first meal that came its way, its beady orange eyes implacable — a yogic ambusher this one, doing what my sister called the 'yum-yum' asana.

One discovery happily led to another and there just nearby was my second-ever anemone: its petal-like tentacles extended, looking like a bronzed chrysanthemum, and what appeared to be its cave-like mouth open. Those tentacles are poison-tipped, and trap unwary prey.

Anemones reproduce by splitting themselves in two or by spewing sperm and eggs out through their mouths — they have no compulsive need to go in search of partners, and is a killjoy way of making babies, but there it is. You meander back and check on your stranded starfish and are happy to note that yes, it was very much alive and has shimmered its way under the sand: you can merely make out its shadowy shape now.

You have learned by now that the place to look at is the underhung, portions of partially submerged rocks

later on), examine the starfish and put it back on the rock you found it on. Hmm... you decide, maybe placing it on the sand would be a better idea, because that crowd could still be around no matter what you promised it for breakfast — and it is far too exposed and hot out on the bare rocks. Right side up, the starfish blends perfectly with the sand, it is much paler underneath, which would make it difficult for predators swimming beneath it to spot it against the brighter sky above.

The two happy girls are collecting tiny empty butterfly shells with all the keenness of a pair of herons and you tell them about the starfish. They are delighted, even as you warn them not to collect it — because it will stink to high heavens. Also, it is alive. They move on as do you.

Next up, are a pair of what looks like sea snails, locked together in embrace. But then a claw sticks out of one of them and snails don't have claws. You pick up the pair: they are your old friends — hermit crabs, and they are grappling with each other like wrestlers. One is about half the size of the other. In your palm, they stop momentarily, perhaps embarrassed, but once you put them back on



Reclaiming our bodies, reclaiming our lives

What if we could live our fullest, wild-spirited, full-bodied lives?

IMAGINE

SHELJA SEN

Shelja Sen is a narrative and family therapist, writer, co-founder of Children First. In this column she curates the know-how of the children and youth she has the honour of working with. Email her at shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com

IT WAS Kashish, a 17-year-old who introduced me to the idea of 'pretty privilege'. As she shared in an email with me, 'It is really exhausting to keep up with the perfection that pretty privilege demands. It is like this all-consuming monster. I get up in the morning at 5 am to make sure I get two hours to get ready and look picture-perfect for the day. After school, I have to spend hours gymming or grooming myself. Growing up, I was always the ugly one and now that I have worked so hard to become pretty, I am scared I am going to lose it. When I am out with my friends, I do not have time to enjoy as I am so conscious of being judged, what angle I should be standing to show my prettier side in what lighting.'

As I read her words, it struck me how being a girl in the urban world nowadays is like a performance — 'camera, light, action' — make sure you show your prettiest selves as that is what your worth is. How have their lives become such a beauty circus?

I have to admit that when I heard the term 'pretty privilege', I brushed it off. In my work, I take an intersectional lens to deconstruct how mental health problems hide issues of social injustice. The marginalisation that is inevitable due to structural inequalities and the role of power and privilege. I had not factored in the importance of 'pretty privilege' as it seemed a little superficial to give it the

The problem is our society's constant judgment of women's bodies, which measures our worth through the measurement of our bodies

same significance as say caste or class. But the more I have reflected on it, I have realised that the problem is too endemic to be trivialised.

I started by going through my notes of every young girl I had met from the age of 10 to 25 in the past four years (since COVID 2020) and found one common thread in all — every girl, let me repeat it, every girl I had met in some way or the other had a fraught relationship with her body. 'I am ashamed of my body,' 'I think I am ugly,' 'I feel people are judging me for being fat.' I have met girls as young as 10, weighing themselves constantly, 13-year-olds who are quietly starving themselves to look skinny and 18-year-olds putting their bodies through gruelling diets, regimented gym routines with military precision.

You might be inclined to dismiss this as 'girls these days!', as if the problem is in them. The problem is our society's constant judgment of women's bodies, which measures our worth through the measurement of our bodies. Women have not been allowed to own

their bodies — there are strict norms on how "good girls" carry their bodies — cover-up, cow down, have neck voices, and of course, try to be "thin, fair and lovely."

French intellectual thinker Michel Foucault discussed how modern power operates on social control by inciting us to evaluate and police ourselves to become docile bodies. Patriarchy, social media,

beauty, diet and the fitness industry use this with such devious expertise by indoctrinating us into this self-surveillance by constant social comparison. It has perpetuated the idea of beauty, or I should say, one form of beauty — the Eurocentric one — which is being perpetuated and taken up very fast across the world. Algorithms flatten cultures so it is not surprising that our bodies are being colonised

at a rapid pace as we measure ourselves to dangerous Western beauty standards.

The way we talk to our girls becomes their inner voices and the way we talk about them becomes their life stories. Little girls get used to their bodies being inspected and dissected from the time they are little. Aunts, uncles, parents, grandparents, neighbours, teachers, random strangers on the streets — everyone has something to say. 'Too thin,' 'too fat,' 'so dark' 'not as pretty as her sister,' 'too short,' 'eyes too small,' to the point of even making predictions of her future, 'too tall to get married.' Boys and men also face some analysis but it never reaches this level of despairing scrutiny and surveillance where our worth and value depend on how we look. So, no wonder 'pretty privilege' becomes a much sought-after currency against our better judgement. As Kashish put it, 'I know it does not make any sense at all — I am exhausted, I cannot focus on my studies, have fun with friends as I am always so self-conscious — but I am not ready to let go of it.'

If we have to bring about a social change then it has to be taken up as part of the school curriculum, define clear guidelines for media, build solidarity groups that take collective action. We have to find clear intention and commitment to resist dominant and damaging ideas of beauty and gender.

A 21-year-old young woman, Sanna, shared with me that she had experienced intense body shaming as a child and now was committed to taking tiny steps by not letting other people's comments define her. In her words, 'I have found my own style of dressing that expresses my identity.' We need to raise our voice, write about it, make YouTube videos and question this narrow idea of beauty. Social media is a double-edged sword where on the one hand it indoctrinates constant preoccupation with perfection, but on the other hand, we are witnessing a movement where oppressive ideas of beauty are being resisted by posting pictures of unbridled, unfiltered swag.

What if rather than commenting on girls' bodies and seeing it as their most valuable attribute, we started appreciating their personhood, what interests them, their hopes, their dreams and what they stand for and what is important to them? What if children could grow up around women who were proud of the strength of their bodies, their whacky sense of style, unapologetic appetite for life? What if we could live our fullest, wild-spirited, magical, full-bodied lives?

Art by Seema Kohli whose images of the feminine form are ever so expansive, unrestricted, embodied and attuned to the living and spiritual world

On a Wing and a Song

Manhattan and Delhi are two stops that I hold closest to my heart. They are sanctums I have built my life upon, where I have lived my richest and fullest best

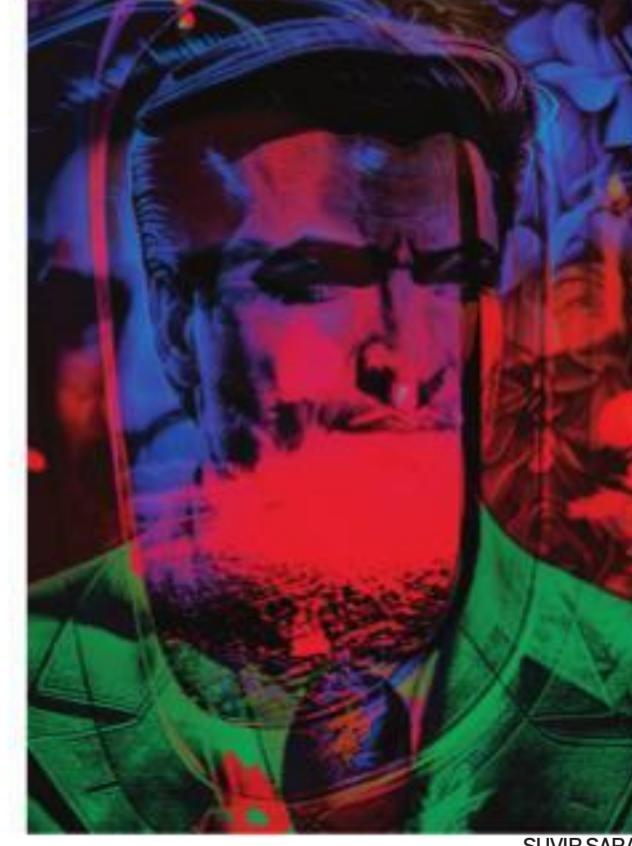
SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

acclaim and fame in a tough city, my struggles with sickness, my travels with book tours across most of the United States, my



TIME TO REFLECT

Reality hardly ever comes with crystalline clarity

town and country living and my having made home in a land seven seas away from Delhi, the city of my birth. Those few minutes of the plane finding its bearings and getting its wheels greased had me whirling and swirling in a cesspool of questions that made me both nervous and excited.

And then the plane took off. I saw Delhi's golden shimmering cityscape muddled by thick smog and winter fog and was reminded that reality of life; life's reality hardly ever comes with crystalline clarity. Delhi winters have been smothered by thick and chill fog since my earliest memories of living in this gorgeous capital city of Bharat. Every day, it seemed, brought thicker and cooler fog, and when it burned off, we basked in the soul-stirring brilliance of the glorious Indian sun. Sitting in wicker chairs spread on lush green grass on the front lawns of bungalows, we lunched outdoors and savoured juicy oranges that my Nani would patiently pit, peel and seed for us. The kindness of family and the love of friends and relatives had me in a daze as the plane cut through the thick smog and brought itself mile high.

Having navigated the memoryscape as the plane navigated the skies, I looked out of my window, where thick white clouds had

formed what to my pain-ridden brain seemed like a most comfortable mattress that might give me the sleep life had robbed me of the last several weeks. There was a purity to the clouds and their unbroken formation that made me feel safe. I imagined that I could make peace with sleep, wrapped in a comforter made of fluffy clouds. The clouds would be that sleeping pill which I wouldn't fear taking and the medication my tired mind, body and soul needed.

But, of course, that wasn't to be. And so for the next 12 hours, I distracted myself

from the pain with the cyber social circle of my life. The Wi-Fi on the plane got me connected to Instagram and WhatsApp, and with that to a world that occupied my mind-scape and my heartbeats and rhythm. The more I replied to pending messages that needed my attention, crossed stuff off of my to-do lists and finished tasks that seemed too mundane to finish in Delhi or Mumbai, the more I was ready to take on new tasks. Soon, I had gone through all the housekeeping on my cell and social media, and was just about able to snooze. But then I found myself humming old tunes, songs I had learned as a young boy to sing for Papa, who could never get enough of my singing Urdu ghazals and geet.

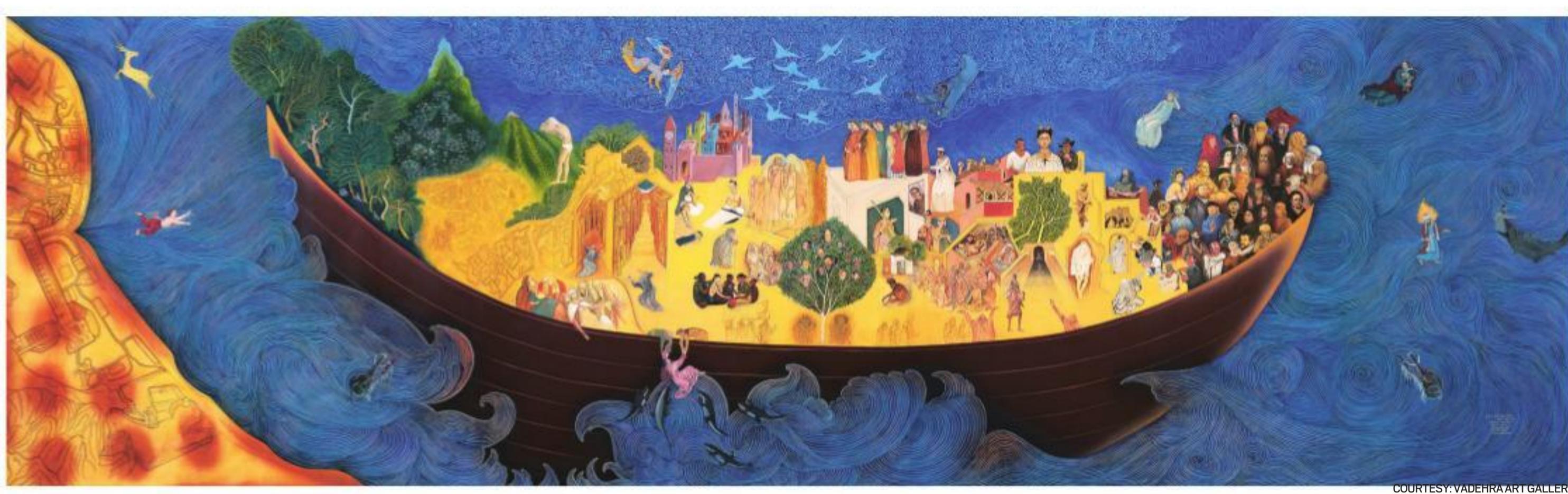
Each song I sang, each nazm I reflected upon, each ghazal I romanced, brought me closer to my inner self, made me connect to my loved ones, and brought alive memories that filled my heart with happy tears, some melancholy, and much gratitude. Gratitude to Hargobind phupaji, one-time Director General of the Border Security Force of India, and husband of my dad's elder sister, who has blessed my world with videos and mixtapes of Urdu ghazals and geet from Urdu plays. On that plane ride to Manhattan, in the sophistry of the words of Urdu poetry, I found the salve that healed mind, body and soul most holistically, and that bared the humanity we share with our fellow human, no matter where they live or pray.

Plane rides and mad travel don't break me at all. Work keeps me happily busy and distracted. Harsh suffering stemming from deeply vexing joint disease and rheumatoid

arthritis cannot shake my belief that tomorrow is a new day. Why then do I get butterflies in my tummy on a plane taking off from Delhi to Manhattan or vice versa? I believe the answer lies in the conditioning each city has given my mind, body and soul. I grew up a happy kid in Delhi, with an abundance of love and opportunities, of comfort and belonging. Manhattan made me become a fuller and more complete version of me, and it was in the US that I found my vocation, and through that the fame and celebrity that brought me comforts beyond what I could have imagined.

I found love in Manhattan, not once but twice and love that was fulfilling and awe-inspiring. It was after coming back to Delhi to, perhaps, die that I found life again and lost that love which had been mine for two decades. Now, at 51, I am single for the first time in almost three decades.

Manhattan and Delhi are two stops along my journey that I hold closest to my heart. They are also those sanctums I have built my life upon, where I have lived my richest, and created most fully. When I leave one, I fear losing what I have cherished; when I land in the other, I miss what was bothering me until I took off for the one I was hankering for. I live the life of a refugee who is making life in a land I have no connection to, and missing another with which I have connection but have become an outsider to. As the plane landed in Manhattan, I was ecstatic to again be one with the city of my heart and soul. I also found myself hungering for Delhi and Mumbai, where there is music to dance to, salve for my suffering and hope for my future.



COURTESY: VADEHRA ART GALLERY

'It's easy to kill an institution but it takes years to build one'

Gulammohammed Sheikh, 87, on his solo in Delhi and why we must not forget Gandhi

Vandana Kalra

Could you tell us about the titular work in your exhibition, "Kaarawaan". It sees the coming together of several of your inspirations and includes portraits of numerous artists, from Leonardo da Vinci to Frida Kahlo, Pablo Picasso and Bhupen Khakhar.

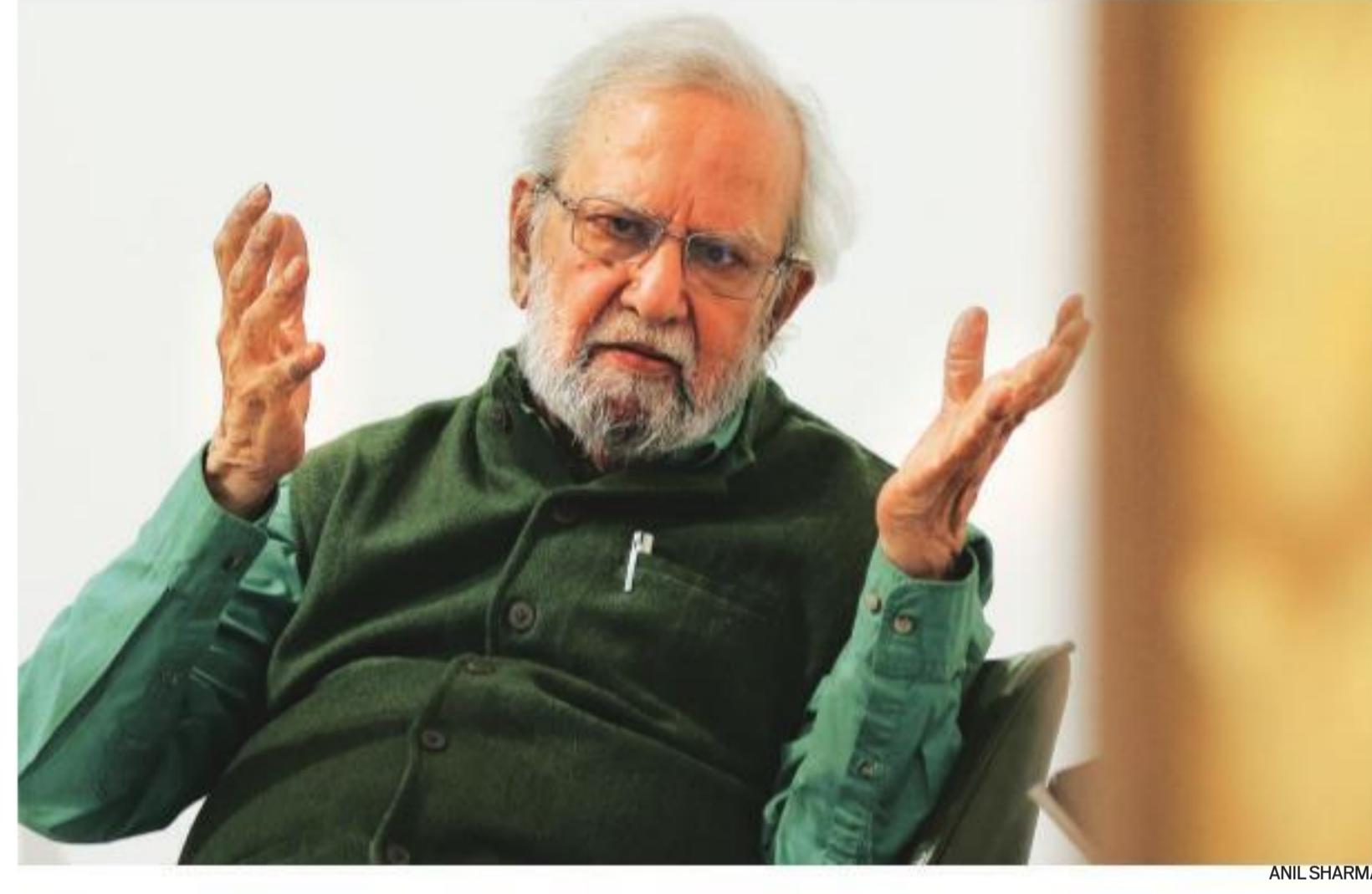
There comes a time in everybody's life when you think it is time to pack your world and embark on a 'voyage', but where do you go? *Kaarawaan* embodies that desire where the places and people who have been part of my life are invoked as a cargo. It includes the world of nature on the one hand and artists who have been part of your journey of art, on the other. These artists are like old friends, or soulmates of sorts. I have borrowed the boat from my favourite painter Nainsukh's painting 'A Boat Adrift' painted in 1765-75.

You also dedicate a *kaavad* (wooden box with painted narratives) to Baroda, the city that has been your home since 1955, after you left Surendranagar to study art at the Maharaja Sayajirao University.

The work looks at the changing landscape of Baroda, which has been taken over by huge malls and buildings. There seems to be mindless growth, glittery grandeur, leaving no room for the *mazdoors*, the *kaarigars*, the lower castes and the homeless. So the work carries a lament and melancholy for those on the margins. I see so much poverty around in the face of the growing number of high rise structures. This is the case with several cities across India.

You have grown up admiring Mahatma Gandhi. What prompted you to paint the *kaavad* devoted to him in this exhibition?

I wanted to make a statement that Gandhi is still there. We need to return to his ideas and ideals in the times we live in. We should remember that here was a man of deep conviction for building a just society



ANIL SHARMA

and strove to achieve it throughout his life. Among the images used, there is reference to an Abanindranath Tagore painting depicting a meeting between Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore. It depicts him wearing a topi and a kurta, stitched clothes he renounced after his long travels across India to adopt a single cloth to wrap round his body, in communion with the poorest of the poor. In erasing his memory we have wounded our own conscience. In forgetting Jallianwala Bagh or Noakhali, we have lost a sense of history. Art historian Arnold Hauser has succinctly put it: 'Those who forget history are condemned to repeat it.'

In the late '60s, through the journal *Vrishchik*, along with Bhupen Khakhar, you mounted a campaign to reform the Lalit Kala Akademi. Why is it that artists no longer address their concerns

ALL TOGETHER
Gulammohammed Sheikh in New Delhi (above); his 'Kaarawaan' (top) invokes the people and places that have been part of his journey. Sheikh's exhibition, organised by Vadehra Art Gallery, is on at Bikancer House in Delhi till March 12

regarding the functioning of national institutions of art?
Times have changed. The present generation does not depend on patronage from national institutions. When we were young, we were driven by an idealism for reforming our national institutions of art and mounted an all India movement of protest to achieve that goal. That doesn't happen now because artists today can afford to live on their art and there are other avenues of support and visibility. There seems to be a scant concern from all quarters about the deterioration of the institutions are plagued with. We don't seem to realise that we need to look for true professionals with relevant expertise to run these institutions. Our museums are in a terrible state. We have world class art there but are unconcerned to find expert art historians to run and nurture them.

Our educational institutions are also go-

ing from bad to worse. At the Faculty of Fine Arts, where I was teaching for almost thirty years, there have hardly been any appointments in the last twenty years! All senior posts are vacant. We hardly have practising artists teaching students. Youngsters are hired on contractual basis. Students do manage somehow but for how long? This institution was nurtured by stalwarts like NS Bendre, KG Subramanyan, others, and I too played my part. It is easy to kill an institution but it takes years of effort to build one.

Do you see intersections between your different pursuits – art, poetry and literature? You also listen to a lot of music.

I listen to music every morning and when I am working in my studio. It is primarily Hindustani classical vocal music: Mallikarjun Mansur, Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, amongst others, and of course Kumar Gandharva.

There is no friction or dichotomy between what I write and what I paint. Both are generated by the same mind; however, there could be overlaps, with poetic aspects entering the pictorial imagery and painterly elements simmering in poetry. Rabindranath Tagore, who started painting late in life, said 'My morning was full of songs, let my sunset be full of colours'.

Is painting as a medium under threat in the digital age?

I do not think painting is dead. There are other modes and media the artists use but many continue to paint. I don't denigrate digital technology and even dabble in it. I think there is enough room for both or many to co-exist.

My studio is like a workshop with several assistants who paint for me what I bid them to. So the mind and process is mine; but I have many pairs of hands. It allows me to interact with younger minds and in the process, paintings often gain from their individual insertions in harmony with my vision.

Tasting with her Heart

Slovenian Chef Ana Ros on being self-taught, honouring local ingredients and what ethical cuisine means to her

Rinku Ghosh

CHEF ANA ROS goes by practical logic and is not into food fads. "Do not mock the food that grows around you or the dairy, milk and cheese you are blessed with. That's why I do not like faux meats or use almond milk in my menu. If you don't want to consume meat, there is a lot of plant-based food that is delicious on its own. You don't have to infuse them with meaty flavours. So give up the mimicry, stay true to your origins and respect the legacy of food that you have grown up with," says one of the world's most celebrated chefs, who has turned her restaurant Hisa Franko in the Slovenian countryside into a food Mecca, which got its third Michelin star last year.

The secret lies in doing what she knows best and has grown up with — a memory of taste and the home food that seeped into her DNA. "I come from a family of mixed blood. My maternal family had great cooks, particularly my mother and grandmother. We would cook together during community feasts. There was no concept of restaurants back then. There were Italian and French influences, a lot of game and wild birds. You can say I grew up with taste and know everything by heart," she says. And since food of the hearth nurtured the family, she doesn't buy into the idea of low-cal platters. "You can count your calories with the same food. Just limit your portion. Just have 100 gm (half a cup) of cooked rice and pair it with 80 gm of meat and fibre each. I can have pasta every day, provided you don't overcook it, reduce serving size and load it with proteins and vegetables," says the 51-year-old.

A big believer in the seasonality and regionality of food, Ros, who curated her signature creations at the Taj, votes for the street food of old Delhi. "I love the flat-breads and spices. I haven't picked up a spice yet as I am still discovering the complexity and layer each brings. But since I love tomatoes, I can think of blending some with them," she says. At the Taj, she played on texture, contrasting the smoothness of potato with hay crust and teaming up sour butter with robust Indian spices. Then there was fermented pumpkin that added a different depth to the relish.

Ros was quite clumsy to begin with, hardly able to fry her egg. She loved ballet and at age seven had joined the national skiing team. After competitive sports, she trained to become a diplomat. And Hisa Franko happened only because her then partner Valter Kramar was its owner. She began helping out in the kitchen and was determined to succeed. "My mother told me whatever



MEMORY PALATE

Chef Ana Ros

you do, do it well enough to succeed. I had a disciplined childhood and creativity too needs discipline. I am self-taught, learnt through mistakes and because I am conscious of how invested I am, I aim to be three times better than anybody else," says Ros. Her food allows all the natural flavours, freshness and textures of the Soca Valley to come through as they are, using only as much technique as is needed.

Ros remembers visiting the iconic El Bulli, the Spanish restaurant which set the benchmark for progressive cuisine with molecular gastronomy. "It was unique till they did a lot of copy-pasting and had to shut down. In the end, we work for people, not Michelin stars. Food for people is the comfort of memories and imagining the infinite possibilities that nature has to offer. And that's about instinct, not technique. That's why I do not have signature dishes. All my dishes are ever evolving according to what the farmers grow and my local environment," says the chef who has made something as simple as a cauliflower ravioli, with goat kid liver in broth and black truffles, a global delicacy.

Of course, Ros has used her feminine instinct to take on the robust celebrityhood of male chefs. But she deftly tests being labelled as a top woman chef as it takes away from the hard work she puts in. Even now, she goes back to the books in the kitchen every night to see what could be done better and visits restaurants around the world for research. "Women chefs have to prove themselves that much harder as they are still battling the perception of them as skirt-wearing blondes or with curly hair. I was the only girl in the kitchen when I cooked the first time. Men became my friends after I got appreciation," says Ros, who works with farmer communities and helped them market their produce by making packaged food for local supermarkets during the Covid years.

Resource-consciousness is always at the back of Ros' mind. "Every change in the environment, be it less rain or too much rain and extremes of temperature impact the produce, requiring you to change your cooking in tandem. Also, we just can't order what we need like you do in Delhi. I cannot get a rack of lamb but have to take the full animal. We make sure to use every part of the animal or plant in our dishes. That's why I am a votary of ethical cuisine." That's also why she likes Indian cuisine.

'A just society requires sacrifice'

Nisha Pahuja on her Oscar-nominated documentary *To Kill a Tiger* and what powered her fight for justice

Alaka Sahani

NOMINATED FOR the Academy Award in the Best Documentary Feature category, Nisha Pahuja's *To Kill a Tiger* follows a father's fight for justice. When his 13-year-old daughter was abducted and sexually assaulted by three of their relatives in May 2017, a farmer in a village in Jharkhand reported it to the police and the men were arrested. But he faced another battle as villagers pressured him to drop charges and marry his daughter to one of the accused. Over the next several months, Toronto-based Pahuja followed his pursuit for justice, witnessing his family's resilience as well as moments of vulnerability.

***To Kill a Tiger* examines the complex ideas of masculinity while taking a close look at the hurdles and stigma that sexual survivors face.**

In a conversation over Zoom, Pahuja shares her experience of making the documentary, the strength of the survivor and her family, and why she wants *To Kill a Tiger* to be shown in India. Excerpts:

How did you get to know about the survivor and her father's fight for justice?

In 2017, I was making a film for the Centre for Health and Social Justice, a Delhi-based human rights organisation. They had started a gender sensitisation programme in Jharkhand and were working with men and boys in 30 villages. My aim was to follow their work, to look at the idea of masculinity and examine how it shapes men. The survivor's father was part of this programme. After this incident, the local NGO, Srijan Foundation, which was working with the Centre, stepped in to support



positions of power have to step back. Equality, for me, is the most significant fundamental right that we have to strive for.

The survivor and her family refused to be shamed. That's a stand that the family of the Delhi gang-rape victim too had taken. What's the source of their conviction?

In both cases, fathers of the victims fought for justice. It's extraordinary when a man stands up and says 'my daughter didn't do anything wrong'. The survivor's father is a role model for men. His daughter had the courage and, most importantly, the self-confidence to know that she deserved better. That's incredible. This sends out the message that survivors should fight, there is no shame that they should bear. Men need to become part of the fight... There is this idea that a woman's virginity is everything and the family's *izzat* is tied to it. That's the prejudice that needs to be looked at, understood and dismantled.

What were your challenges in making the documentary?

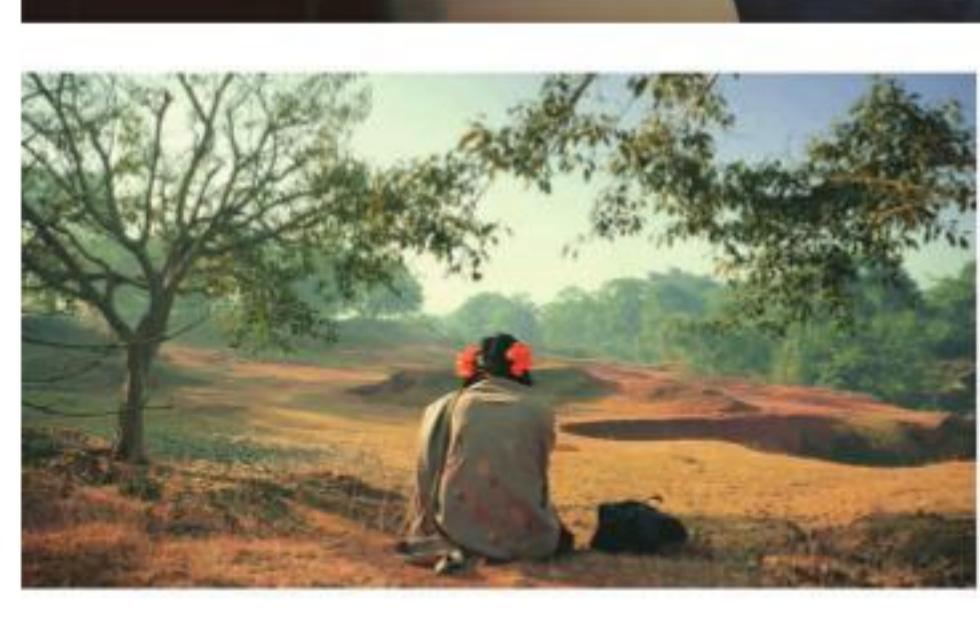
Everything was challenging. Going into a community knowing that you are not welcome is challenging. It was sad to witness the dismantling of the community bond. When you go against the collective, something erodes. That's something I had to navigate.

After the 2012 incident, changes were made in law.

Changing the law or recognising the fact that law needs to change is one critical part of it. But the real challenge is implementing the law. That takes time. Change is a slow and gradual process.

What are your thoughts on the power of a good documentary?

A good documentary can change public consciousness. I got into making documentaries to create an impact against the injustice I saw around me. As humans, we respond to stories. We have the ability to be empathetic. That's what stories and documentaries do — awaken the realm of empathy.



LONELY FIGHT
(Top) Nisha Pahuja; To Kill a Tiger follows a father's fight for justice for his daughter

ther's respect and love for her encouraged them to move forward. The trust that we built, as a crew, with this family was powerful and that comes through in the film.

At the core of the documentary is the idea of 'male ally-ship'. Can you talk about that?

I made *The World Before Her* (2012) which also looks at gender justice and women's rights. After the 2012 Delhi gang-rape, I felt we are looking at the incidents not the causes. If anything were to change, then the solution lay with (understanding) men and how they are raised. That's the case the world over. That's why the story of this simple farmer who fights for justice resonates strongly with the audience across the world.

The documentary also explores traditional ideas of masculinity. Why are we still stuck with our patriarchal ways?

It is all about power. When you are born and raised in privilege — be it colour, class or gender — no one wants to give it up. A just society requires sacrifice. It means that those in

his family.

What about their fight inspired you to follow it so closely?

Initially, when I started filming, I didn't know how far they would take the legal battle. Over the course of a few months, it became apparent that the family had tremendous resilience. What was extraordinary was that they were unified in their fight. There were times the pressure from the villagers was too much, but the survivor never wavered. Her fa-



New Delhi



Have eggs to freeze? Let's travel to India

Affordable costs, experienced doctors and high success rates have turned our metros into hotspots of the fertility tourism market

Ankita Upadhyay

WHEN BRUNA Alves, a Brazilian woman working with a surrogacy firm in Tel Aviv, Israel, wanted to freeze her eggs at 32, she chose India instead of her employer, even overlooking the fact that the company she worked for owned a chain of FDA-affiliated IVF clinics in Asia. "That's because Indian facilities offer some of the most affordable rates globally, the services are top-notch, the doctors are experienced, credible, proficient in English, easy to understand, and best of all, are always available on a video call to take care of your anxieties," says the now 34-year-old.

Young women like Bruna are increasingly opting for egg freezing, a minimally invasive process where their eggs or oocytes are extracted, frozen and stored, sealing them in at their best, so that they can be thawed, fertilised and implanted in their uterus when they are ready to become mothers. "The baby born would be as healthy as it would be if birthed by the mother early enough," says the country's top infertility expert, Dr Anjali Malpani. This is an example of how technology gives a woman agency to choose the time of her motherhood.

Comparing global rates, including those of her home country Brazil, Bruna ended up paying Rs 1.5 lakh for the procedure, which would have cost her Rs 3.50 lakh in Brazil and Rs 4.50 lakh in Israel. This procedure has been used for decades to help women with serious medical conditions, such as cancer, conceive post-recovery. "A majority of health insurance plans in Israel cover an egg freezing procedure when a mother's medical condition warrants it but healthy women cannot claim it and have to pay the full cost," she says. Bruna now makes an annual deposit of Rs

35,000 at the Infinite Fertility Clinic in Delhi's Vasant Vihar to preserve her eggs, which will be thawed and fertilised with a sperm in a test tube (in vitro fertilisation or IVF) when she is ready to get an embryo implanted anytime within 10 years. Her current partner has even agreed to travel with her.

She found it easy to freeze her eggs unfertilised and not as an embryo that would have required a donor sperm then and there. "I would have had to search for a sperm donor then. Also women who aren't sure if their current partner would co-parent their child or even continue the relationship in the first place find it easier this way," says Bruna, who is prioritising her career right now and isn't prepared to become a mother in a foreign country without family support.

INDIA AS A VALUE-FOR-MONEY DESTINATION

TRACKING HEALTHCARE SPENDING



NEED TO KNOW

Indian facilities offer some of the most affordable rates globally, the services are top-notch, the doctors are experienced, credible and are always available on a video call,' says Bruna

While Bruna's friends are now considering freezing their eggs in India too, the big centres in metros are slowly becoming fertility hubs that are widening the bouquet of medical tourism. According to Annu Puri, founder and director of Indicure, a Mumbai-based medical tourism company, the costs in India are almost one-third of that in advanced economies. "Also, Delhi and Mumbai, the two key centres have got the largest traction because of flight connectivity. Now Bengaluru and Hyderabad are also figuring high as destinations," she says. The potential is enormous as the global fertility tourism market is expected to grow by 30 per cent in 2030.

Dr Nisha Bhatnagar, Medical Director of the Infinite Fertility Clinic in Vasant Vihar, who harvested the eggs for Bruna, has been getting a lot of queries from women in Australia, Canada, African countries, Nepal and Bangladesh. "Even non-resident Indians (NRIs) are showing interest," she says.

Dr Ramyasree Parvathareddy, who works

ASMOOTH AND QUICK PROCEDURE

Bruna first took a scoring test at the Delhi clinic, where her fertile status was evaluated based on age, family history and specific medical conditions like PCOS and endometriosis. Some of her markers were off, so she was put on a pre-harvest protocol, which involved lifestyle correction and staying away from alcohol for five months in Israel. Then she came here, took the Anti Mullerian Hormone test that tells the woman about her ovarian reserve or the number of eggs. Any reading between four and five is healthy, while anything less than two is complicated. Bruna's looked good. Then she took the ovary stimulant injections for the eggs to be harvested easily. "I was fearful about the changes in hormones but I felt safe and comfortable. And there was no pain," she adds.



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Global egg freezing costs

US: Rs 25 lakh (egg storage cost: Rs 80,000 annually)

SPAIN: Rs 3 lakh to Rs 5 lakh

CZECH REPUBLIC: Rs 2 lakh to Rs 4 lakh

INDIA: Rs 1 lakh to Rs 5 lakh

CREDIT: FREEZE.HEALTH.COM AND BRITMED.COM

WHY INDIA HAS THE SAFETY AND TECH EDGE

Fertility treatments, including egg freezing, here are individualised for each patient, factoring their other health conditions, minimising side effects and discomfort. "Each woman has a different regime adapted to their parameters. A high-quality facility will prescribe only the level of medication necessary, both increasing safety and limiting discomfort. If we compare ourselves with other countries, we have the latest equipment at par with them but the costs are lower," says Dr Bhatnagar.

Mumbai-based Dr Malpani says that India's technology edge is promising better outcomes. "Traditionally, eggs were frozen by a slow dunk method that gradually reduced the temperature of the eggs. Unfortunately, this led to formation of ice crystals which can be detrimental to eggs. Vitrification or a fast-freeze process eliminates the chance of ice crystal formation. With this procedure, the survival rate for freezing and thawing increases to 98 per cent. That's why our success rate is high," she says.

Dr Archana Dhawan Bajaj, who runs an IVF clinic in Delhi, says India has a skilled pool of embryologists who assess freshly retrieved eggs under a microscope to determine maturation status. "Now there is new technology in the West that attaches a camera to the microscope, captures images of each egg and uploads them to an AI software for analysis. We, too, will be using it soon," she says.

Bruna took a break in Dharamshala on her India trip. Now that the pressure of the biological clock ticking is off, she is looking forward to birthing her child here when she and her partner are ready.

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backdrop of snow-capped peaks. This state is home to over 26 major tribes and more than 100 sub-tribes, each with its distinct dialect, customs, and traditional attire. Arunachal Pradesh is often referred to as the "Land of the Rising Sun" because it is one of the easternmost states in India. Kibithoo, India's easternmost point is where India receives the first rays of the sun every morning. Another top draw is the Sela Pass, which offers mesmerising views of snow-capped peaks and crystal-clear lakes, making it a perfect spot for landscape photography. The Golden Pagoda of Namsai also provides a stunning architectural subject against the backdrop of lush greenery. And how can we not talk of the wildlife here. The Namdapha National Park is a haven for wildlife enthusiasts, offering glimpses into the habitat of tigers, leopards, and the rare red panda.

As we have gone about this discussion, it's evident that each state or each Sister, as I should call it, with its distinct geographical identity, contributes to the overall beauty and diversity of the northeastern region of India.

Thus making it a region of immense interest for geographers, nature enthusiasts, and travellers alike. This cultural vibrancy, manifested in their festivals, dance forms, languages, and traditions, makes the region a living museum of human culture and an essential study for those interested in the dynamics of cultural preservation and evolution. All in all, the Seven Sisters of India represent a unique blend of cultural richness, natural beauty, and historical depth, making them a must-visit for travellers. What's your take? Have you planned a trip to the Seven Sisters of Incredible India? If not, better get planning, because India is indeed incredible. Until the next time, keep Celebrating Life!

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What are the Seven Sisters of Incredible India?

The Seven Sisters of India are a photographer's dream, offering a blend of panoramic landscapes, vibrant cultural scenes, and unique geological formations.



Neil Patil
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Let's now shift our discussion to Manipur, which is often called the "Land of Jewels" because of its unique and beautiful varieties of orchids. Home to Loktak Lake, Manipur offers a surreal landscape for photographers. Loktak Lake, the largest freshwater lake in the North East, is known for its unique 'phumdis' (floating islands). The early morning or late afternoon light here creates a magical atmosphere, perfect for capturing the serene beauty of this natural wonder. This state also is host to the Keibul Lamjao National Park, the only floating national park in the world. Speaking of dance, Manipur

boasts the classical dance form 'Manipuri', known for its grace and themes drawn from Vaishnavism.

Number 4 on our list is Meghalaya. Aptly named 'the abode of clouds', Meghalaya boasts the wettest place on Earth, Mawsynram. Mawsynram and Cherrapunji, both in Meghalaya, receive some of the highest annual rainfall in the world and as a result, the state is home to some beautiful waterfalls, notably the mesmerising Nohkalikai Falls, the tallest plunge waterfall in India. The capital city, Shillong, is often referred to as the "Scotland of the East" due to its picturesque landscapes. There's one more thing about Meghalaya, that I think is a super unique example of bioengineering by the state's Khasi tribe - the living root bridges. The incredible thing about these bridges is that the roots of the trees here, are made to grow in a certain way to form natural, sturdy bridges across rivers. The state is also home to the Mawlynnong Village, acclaimed as Asia's cleanest village. And who can forget the Dawki River near the Bangladesh border. The crystal-clear waters of this river make it another must-visit for stunning landscape shots.

Let's now speak of Mizoram. With its hilly terrain, Mizoram offer stunning

panoramic views of dense bamboo forests, serene lakes, and cascading waterfalls. The state is celebrated for its Chapchar Kut festival, marking the beginning of the farming season with vibrant dances, traditional music, and colourful attire. But when I think of Mizoram, it's more the hospitality of the people here that comes to mind. The Mizo people's hospitality is legendary, often welcoming guests with their traditional bamboo dance. To add to that, we have Mizoram's Blue Mountain (Phawngpui), the highest peak in Mizoram offering stunning views, while the Vantawng Falls and Tam Dil Lake are perfect spots for nature lovers.

Next up is the smallest of the Seven Sisters, Tripura. Adorned with palaces, temples, and diverse fauna, Tripura reflects a blend of Bengali and indigenous cultures, with the Garia Puja festival standing out. It is celebrated to honour the deity of livestock and wealth, featuring traditional music, dance, and elaborate rituals. Similar to the famous Wagah Border ceremony in Amritsar, you can experience the Indian Border Security Force's Flag Down parade at the India-Bangladesh border here. A famous temple here is the Tripura Sundari Temple, one of the 51 Shakti Peethas scattered across the Indian subcontinent. Speaking of architecture, two places really stand out in Tripura. First is the Ujjayanta Palace, located in the capital city of Agartala, which is an architectural marvel and now houses the Tripura State Museum. Second is the Neermahal Palace, located in the middle of Rudrasagar Lake, which provides a stunning architectural and natural scene. The reflections of the palace on the water during the golden hour after sunrise and before sunset create a beautiful symmetry, ideal for photography.

Finally, coming to the seventh sister, the land of the Dawn-lit Mountains - Arunachal Pradesh. Arunachal Pradesh boasts a diverse topography that includes the foothills of the Himalayas. Arunachal is renowned for its lush valleys, serene lakes, and the Tawang Monastery, one of the largest monasteries in the world, set against a

If you did scan the QR code, what was your score like? How many countries have you been to? How many states and countries that are on your bucketlist? What are your travel resolutions for this year?

These are questions that we ask each other every single day. I'm sure you ask these questions to your loved ones too. So we decided to create a fun Travel Portfolio game out of it. All 750+ team members at our offices have already played this game. We have found out our Indian State & Union Territory scores, and our 'Countries Travelled to' score. I want you to play this game too. Go on, scan the QR code and you can find out your own score.



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With that, let's get on with today's topic. What are the Seven Sisters of Incredible India? Many among us will already know that the "Seven Sisters of India" is a term used to collectively refer to the seven north-eastern states of India, comprising Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, and Tripura. Known for their geographical expanse that borders several countries including China, Myanmar, Bangladesh, and Bhutan, these states are celebrated for their rich cultural heritage, diverse ecosystems, and breathtaking landscapes. Despite being an integral part of India, the Seven Sisters possess a distinct identity that sets them apart from the rest of the country. This identity is rooted in their unique historical backgrounds, languages, traditions, and lifestyles that reflect the incredible diversity of India. So with the stage set, let's go on a deeper exploration of these Seven Sisters, one state at a time.

I want to start with Assam. Assam serves as the pivotal gateway to North East India and stands as the primary entry point, ensuring that travellers